



Innovative Practice in Kielce

The context for the use of ICT for Inclusion

Learners with special educational needs are frequently unable to choose a school because of the paucity of institutions that offer integrated education appropriate for learners with disabilities. Such learners are likely to encounter problems arising from the lack of specially trained teachers or special equipment in mainstream schooling. Nowadays, learners who do not have access to modern teaching tools, such as electronic notebooks, Braille printers or computers with specialised software either at home or at school, clearly do not have equal opportunities for development when compared with other learners. Therefore, parents and teachers should be encouraged to make the most of the available tools that could benefit learners with visual impairments. The purchase of necessary equipment such as the 'Homer' computer program, funded by the Polish National Disabled Persons Rehabilitation Fund (PFRON), is a good example of such practice.

The policy context

Our objective is to create a friendly atmosphere for all of our learners, including those who are blind or have visual impairment, not only by adjusting the physical environment, but also by enabling them to participate in activities in mainstream classes. Hence the use of ICT appears to be a vital factor in providing blind learners with equal opportunities to fulfil their academic potential through adapted instructional content in class and for homework assignments. We do not underestimate the social dimension, whereby ICT can be used as a tool to enhance communication with their peers after school. ICT should be seen as a means of helping blind people to become independent learners who are not excluded from lifelong learning because of their disabilities.

The use of ICT

Modern teaching aids play a very important role in the tailored didactic process for blind pupils who attend our school. Learners use computers with specialised software to help them absorb information easily, along with Braille printers, Braille lines, optical character recognition programs or computer speech synthesisers to read text. The software installed on personal computers allows learners to read the text written in black print independently. This ensures that blind learners have the opportunity to use the same textbooks as their classmates, while teachers who have access to such software can send notes and additional information electronically, without having to worry that the pupil will not read them.

Key outcomes and benefits

Learners with visual impairments can use these tools, which can be adjusted to their needs, to effectively assimilate content. This gives them equal access to knowledge as sighted learners. Of course, when placing a pupil with disabilities into a mainstream classroom, close co-operation between parents and teachers is essential during the implementation period and throughout the course of their studies. In retrospect and from my experience of dealing with the problems of disability on a daily basis, I believe that technology is a very important element for equal educational opportunities.



Main challenges and obstacles

The main problem is the lack of funds for the purchase of this type of equipment. There are also formal obstacles to helping pupils with specific learning difficulties.

Additional information

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