

**Oldřich Müller**

## **The Conception of Special Needs Andragogy at the Special Needs Education Department in Olomouc**

At the Special Needs Education Department at the Pedagogical Faculty of Palacky University we have been gradually trying to change the conception of pre-gradual and post-gradual studies in the way that we can effectively react to the changes that occur in the field of special needs education in the Czech Republic. One of these changes is the significant shift of attention towards the disabled persons of adult and senior age. The new conception of pre-gradual and post-gradual university level studies of special needs education in Olomouc includes also the successful creation and accreditation of the new study field, Special Needs Andragogy.

Before I mention the specifics of this study field, I must say that besides the process of creation of its curriculum, also specifying of the field subject has been conducted, including specifying the basic terminology, methodology, its position in the science system, etc.

The object of its interest is an adult person (or a senior) accepted in special needs education for the reasons of social handicap (mainly for the reason of health disability, lower economic self-sufficiency, different cultural or ethnic origin, his elderly age, etc.)

This client (in the view of helping profession) 'underlies' education, reeducation, diagnostics, therapeutic-formative intervention, compensation, rehabilitation, inclusion (integration), socialization or re-socialization and professional leadership (help or care) of special needs education andragogue with a university degree. This appears especially in the frame of educational, labor and social sphere of complex rehabilitation care.

The basic terminology includes especially the term adulthood. The term adulthood is quite complicated and ambiguous – and this is also the case when in the process of defining we choose the apparently most easily seizable age viewpoint. It is determined by the fact that the age of a human being includes the biological,

psychological, socio-cultural, and other dimensions (That is even more complicated concerning the special needs clients) and that these dimensions implicate significant variability of each client in the frame of each period.

In the special needs education andragogy, we regard as an adult the one who:

– either has finished education in the formal education system defined by valid rule of law, in the same time has taken a social role characteristic of adulthood and would be conferred with appropriate rights and duties,

– or has not finished education in the formal educational system (see former ‘un-educability’), but has taken some social roles characteristic of adulthood and some of the corresponding rights and duties has been conferred to them.

The formal educational system concerning education of special needs education clients today in the Czech Republic is defined especially by Education Act 561/2004 Sb. and implementary public notice 73 (from 9.2.2005) on education of children, pupils and students with special needs and children, pupils and students exceptionally talented.

From the point of view of the position in the science system, the special needs education andragogy can be considered as an independent border discipline. It is necessary to draw the attention to the real hazard of possible simplified comparison (eventually subordination) with the general andragogy. So that we prevent any speculations, we think as very necessary to warn that the special needs education andragogy is not any mechanically conceived ‘derivation’ of general andragogy (so as it is neither in the relation between special needs education and general pedagogy) – this discipline, with regard to its customer base (and especially in sequence to special needs education practice), to considerable extent will develop autonomously.

Special needs education andragogy can be internally structured into these spheres:

– basic terminology and theoretical base of the field,  
– history of the field,  
– methodology of the field (including diagnostics),  
– theory of the development (leadership, help, care) of the human potential of adult special needs clients in productive age (containing for instance special needs education andragodidactics, problems of development of human resources in an organization, etc.),

– theory of development (leadership, help, care) of human potential special needs education clients in senior age,

– theory of leadership and organization in institutions dealing with (besides others) development (leadership, help, care) of human potential of special needs education clients.

Not only these fields appear in the guaranteed study field mentioned above – the special needs education andragogy. The following paragraphs contain some observations on its specifics.

The study field is conceived as non-tutorial structured (into bachelor and consequential master degree) in the present and combined (distant) form.

The graduates will be qualified as special educators – andragogues with specialization on special needs education, educational-therapeutic, counseling and diagnostic activity in these institutions:

- Wealth Care Homes for the adults with disability,
- protected dwelling,
- sheltered workshops or other alternative forms of employment,
- employment agency realizing re-qualification courses and schooling for adults with special needs,
- unions and offices of social affairs,
- agencies for supported employment,
- non-state and non-profit organizations working on behalf of people with disability,
- psychiatric medical institutions and after-treatment institutions for psychiatric patients,
- special needs education and counseling centers,
- institution for remedy care,
- centers for treatment of dependencies,
- asylum centers for refugees,
- rest homes, hospices, etc.

Profiled study fields are:

- complex services for people with disability,
- special needs education andragogy for people with mental disability, and optionally: for people with hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disability, speech and language problems, and behavior problems,
- special needs education counseling,
- therapeutic techniques,
- special needs education diagnostics.

Profiled study fields are supplemented by practices in:

- organizations of non-profit sector working with adults with disability,
- institutions that offer temporary or enduring accommodation to persons with disability,
- institutions that deal with professional preparation and help with employment,
- institutions that cover evening schools or organize educatory courses and individual tutoring,
- institutions that take care of seniors, etc.

There is a special component of the special education andragogy – the institutional education of the seniors. Many of the questions concerning this problem have been answered by the project called ‘Module of alternative education of seniors in the context of paradigm changes in special education’ (resolved within the transformation and development programs of the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic for public universities). This project was focused on many particular duties

– although its indivisible component was also the transformation of functionally and interactively conceived methods in senior education. The output of the mentioned transformation of functionally and interactively conceived methods was especially the attestation of up to what level some of the originally therapeutic-formative approaches towards the socially handicapped persons can be used in the individual integration of seniors (the main focus was especially on the usage of motivation and formative potential of these approaches). The methods approved as very well transformed were especially the psychomotor therapies, functional and work therapies, expressive therapies (art therapy in the wider sense) and animal therapy.

## **Koncepcja Andragogiki Specjalnej w Instytucie Pedagogiki Specjalnej w Ołomuńcu**

### **Streszczenie**

Kadra naukowa Instytutu Pedagogiki Specjalnej Wydziału Pedagogicznego Uniwersytetu Palacky'ego stara się stopniowo zmienić koncepcję studiów przed- i podyplomowych tak, byśmy mogli skutecznie reagować na zmiany zachodzące w dziedzinie pedagogiki specjalnej w Republice Czeskiej. Zmiany te polegają na dostrzeżeniu potrzeb dorosłych i starszych osób niepełnosprawnych. Stąd, w nowej koncepcji przed- i podyplomowych studiów w zakresie pedagogiki specjalnej w Ołomuńcu powstał i został akredytowany nowy kierunek o nazwie Andragogika Specjalna. Obiektem zainteresowania tej nauki jest osoba dorosła (lub starsza) wymagająca edukacji specjalnej ze względu na trudności w funkcjonowaniu społecznym wynikające z niepełnosprawności fizycznej, niskiej samowystarczalności ekonomicznej, obcego pochodzenia kulturowego lub etnicznego, zaawansowanego wieku, etc.

Artykuł przedstawia proces tworzenia programu nauczania, precyzowania zakresu przedmiotu, włączając podstawową terminologię, metodologię, pozycję w systemie naukowym.