

MONIKA CHEŁCHOWSKA

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-6243-2386>

KATARZYNA ĆWIRYNKAŁO

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2305-6069>

URSZULA BARTNIKOWSKA

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5706-5276>

AREAS OF (IN)ACCESSIBILITY IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION. A FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH REPORT WITH POLISH TEACHERS*

Introduction: Inclusive education is a multifaceted issue that creates space for educational and pedagogical activities for both students and teachers. In practice, however, there is a clear discrepancy between declared assumptions and the school reality, which continues to be characterised by numerous difficulties and barriers for participants in the educational process.

Research Aim: The aim of this study was to understand teachers' experiences related to the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools, with a particular focus on the broadly understood accessibility in education.

Method: A qualitative research design was employed, utilising Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Data were collected through nine focus group interviews with 70 teachers.

Results: The findings indicate a significant organisational and institutional gap, which exacerbates teacher frustration and prevents the full potential of the educational process from being utilised. Key challenges include difficult access to teaching aids, inadequate architectural space, insufficient knowledge and skills to work with students with diverse educational needs, and limited school resources. At the same time, several good practices were identified that improve the daily functioning of schools and can serve as a starting point for systemic improvements.

Conclusions: Recommendations are presented, aimed at increasing accessibility through tar-

* Suggested citation: Chelchowska, M., Ćwirynkało, K., & Bartnikowska, U. (2026). Areas of (In) Accessibility in Inclusive Education. A Focus Group Research Report with Polish Teachers. *Lubelski Rocznik Pedagogiczny*, 45(3), 143–158. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17951/lrp.2026.45.3.143-158>

geted training, active involvement of the school community, and strengthening of existing support systems.

Keywords: inclusive education, accessibility in education, teachers' experience, barriers in education

INTRODUCTION

Creating conditions conducive to inclusion in schools requires a multidimensional approach that encompasses both the organization of the teaching and learning process as well as the physical space, infrastructure, and teachers' working conditions. The contemporary understanding of accessibility in education goes beyond providing students with appropriate instructional methods. It also includes care for school architecture, access to teaching aids, specialist support, and opportunities for continuous professional development of teaching staff.

According to the *SJP PWN* (2026), "accessibility" means the possibility of easy access to or use of something. Accessibility in education is most often viewed from the perspective of students with diverse needs who should be provided with alternative, diversified working methods and forms of activity to enable their full participation in the educational process and achievement of educational success (Nijkowska, 2022). However, the contemporary approach to inclusive education emphasizes that accessibility does not apply solely to students but to the entire environment in which the school operates. In the academic literature, the concept of accessibility also refers to spatial and infrastructural conditions, which determine the real opportunity of utilising educational services by students and their families, affecting both the level of equal educational opportunities and the degree of social integration (Czapiewski & Janc, 2012). The literature also offers an even broader understanding of accessibility, which includes discursive, institutional, socio-economic accessibility, as well as accessibility related to individual agency (Stauber & Parreira do Amoral, 2015).

The contemporary approach to accessibility in the Polish education system is determined by the Act on Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Special Needs (Wojtas-Rduch, 2021). This necessitates introducing changes in the architectural, digital, as well as information and communication areas that will ensure accessibility for all students (Model dostępnej szkoły, 2024). The foundation of educational accessibility can be defined as Universal Design, which includes equity in access, flexibility, intuitiveness, perceptual accessibility, tolerance for error, low physical effort, and appropriate space required for use (Chimicz & Prokopiak, 2021). When actions resulting from universal design prove insufficient, it becomes necessary to apply reasonable accommodation, which involves the maximum possible reduc-

tion of barriers without referring to the needs of a specific, predetermined group of recipients (Bełza-Gajdzica et al., 2024).

Organizational and infrastructural conditions in schools affect not only students but also the professional functioning opportunities of teachers. Expanding the perspective of accessibility to include the teaching dimension makes it possible to perceive the relationship between the quality of teachers' working conditions and the real level of support provided to students. A teacher functioning in an environment characterized by a lack of resources, overload of duties, and limited access to specialist support has fewer possibilities for effectively differentiating teaching methods and individualizing the educational process (Piorunek & Kwiatkowski, 2020; Solarczyk-Ambrozik, 2020).

The contemporary reality, determining the directions of educational transformations, is increasingly described using the concept of the "VUCA world." The acronym VUCA stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (Casey, 2014; Sarid & Levanon, 2023; Vidal, 2023). As such, the category accurately reflects the dynamics of social, technological, and cultural processes that shape the environment in which schools operate, placing new adaptive and competency-related demands on both institutions and teachers.

When considering issues related to education and the learning process, which is based on continuous change and attempts to adapt to an ever-changing world, it is necessary to take into account their broad context, encompassing not only forms and methods of teaching and interpersonal interactions, but also the architecture and organization of school space. Within the framework of inclusive education, school space can serve as a tool that supports learning processes and the building of social bonds. Early pedagogical studies (Holewiński, 1908; Kiernicki, 1961; Zygmier, 1978), developed from the early twentieth century, pointed to the need to consider school space in the planning of educational processes. Similarly, more recent publications (e.g., Starzyk, 2020) highlight that despite meeting legislative standards, buildings approved for use by students and teachers do not always correspond to the actual needs of the future users of these spaces.

The architecture of the environment constitutes an important factor. It influences the effectiveness of teaching. Appropriate and safe learning spaces, well-equipped teaching laboratories, and recreational facilities such as sports fields help meet students' needs while fostering a positive atmosphere that encourages them to remain and learn (Walat, 2012).

Appropriate arrangement of furniture in classrooms supports intentional engagement of students in learning processes and creates conditions for undertaking joint attempts at problem-solving. In this context, the role of the teacher is important, as they should be creative, open to change, and oriented toward development (Lubowiecka, 2002). As research and analyses concerning inclusive education indicate, training and other forms of professional development for teachers should

not be limited exclusively to issues related to diagnosing special educational needs or teaching methods aimed at students with diverse developmental capacities. Organization of educational space, considered to be a tool that supports learning and teaching processes (Bałachowicz, 2015; Waloszek, 2014), is an important area of education. As emphasized by Gajdzica (2013), developing teachers' competencies in conscious shaping of the didactic environment promotes an increase in their sense of professional effectiveness and readiness to undertake innovative actions. In turn, Chrzanowska and Szumski (2019) note that a comprehensive approach to professional development may contribute to improving the quality of teachers' work and increasing their motivation to implement the assumptions of inclusive education. Educational accessibility is addressed in a multifaceted way by the "Model of an Accessible School," which considers both architectural and educational-social factors (Dziółko et al., n.d.).

Opportunities for teachers' further education are related not only to their personal engagement but also to the financing of various types of courses or postgraduate studies. Educational financing constitutes one of the key factors that determine the quality and accessibility of education. In Poland, the educational subsidy transferred to local government units from the state budget (Korolewska, 2010) is the main source of funding for the implementation of educational tasks. Various forms of financing are intended to allow for the organization of specialist support for those students who require it.

A holistic approach to education considers the needs of the entire school community and emphasizes that the safety and well-being of students and teachers depend on coherent spatial, financial, and organizational structure of the school. Despite extensive reflection and ongoing analyses of accessibility, as well as the introduction of increasingly broad legal and organizational changes, the process of inclusion in Polish schools continues to encounter numerous organizational and social barriers and difficulties (Sakowicz-Boboryko & Otapowicz, 2024). Therefore, it is important to explore how this process is perceived by teachers themselves.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND AIM

The aim of the conducted study was to understand teachers' experiences related to the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools, with particular emphasis on the broadly understood accessibility of education. The main research problem was formulated as the question of which factors hinder teachers in implementing inclusive education in mainstream schools.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Due to the unique nature of the research topic, the present study was embedded in the interpretative paradigm (Husserl, 1989). It also involved conducting focus group interviews with teachers working in mainstream and integrated schools and preschools. The study received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn (Decision No. 3/2025, dated 17 March 2025).

The qualitative study (using focus group interviews) was conducted with a group of 70 teachers (69 women and 1 man) aged between 26 and 62 years (mean age: 35 years). The participants represented diverse educational settings: 51.5% worked in preschools, 37.2% at the first stage of education (grades 1–3), 31.5% at the second stage (grades 4–8), and 5.7% in upper secondary schools (some participants reported working at more than one educational stage). The criteria for participant selection were: (1) being an active teacher or specialist working in a school, (2) teachers' participation in in-service training courses and/or post-graduate studies aimed at expanding professional competencies, and (3) providing informed consent to participate in the study. All participants had experience working with children with individual educational needs, primarily those on the autism spectrum (73.6%), with intellectual disabilities (41.4%), or with physical disabilities (29.9%). Their qualifications often combined subject-specific teacher education with additional specializations, such as special education, psychology, or speech and language therapy.

Data were collected through focus group interviews (Flick, 2010), allowing researchers to gather information from participants' group discussions on topics defined by the research team (Morgan, 1997). In this project, the researchers not only defined the thematic foci but also moderated the discussions. The topics focused on the following areas: teachers' competencies, adaptation of educational spaces to the needs of students and teachers, working conditions in schools from the teachers' perspective, and systemic constraints and lack of resources. Sample questions included: How do you assess your preparation for working within an inclusive education model? Which competencies do you consider crucial for working with students with diverse educational needs? What systemic changes could better support teachers' professional development around inclusive education? Which organizational conditions influence the quality of the classes you conduct? In addition, follow-up questions were asked to obtain more in-depth data that would illustrate the perspectives of the interview participants. In total, nine focus group interviews were conducted. Each interview lasted between 60 and 120 minutes, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was carried out in accordance with the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; see Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). The procedure included the following steps: (1) initial familiarization with the data, involving repeated and careful listening to the interview recordings, combined with reading the transcripts and making observational notes and reflections; (2) identification of preliminary themes, consisting of transforming the initial documentation into a set of emergent thematic categories at a higher level of abstraction; (3) development of the thematic structure, involving the search for connections and grouping of categorized content in order to establish a coherent structure comprising superordinate and subordinate themes; and (4) synthesis and presentation of results, culminating in the preparation of the final research report.

Phenomenology (Manen, 2023) made it possible to capture the subjective meanings and experiences of the interview participants, while the idiographic approach was crucial for data interpretation. The authors' intention was not to generalize, but rather to emphasize personal narratives and the meanings attributed to accessibility in their schools/preschools. This methodological stance enabled an analysis grounded in the perspectives of individuals directly involved in the phenomenon under study. To ensure the credibility of the research process, detailed notes documenting successive stages of the work were kept throughout the study. All transcripts were analysed by members of the research team, and the resulting interpretations were compared to examine potential differences in interpretation.

RESULTS

The analysis of the research material collected during the focus group interviews made it possible to identify the following recurring thematic areas: (1) Teaching aids and working conditions at school; (2) Systemic constraints and lack of funding; (3) Adaptation of space; (4) Examples of good practice; (5) Teachers' professional development in inclusive education: challenges, needs, and directions for change.

Teaching Aids and Working Conditions at School

Basic tools necessary for conducting engaging lessons include various types of teaching aids. According to the participants, the lack of an adequate base of materials that could be used during classes makes it difficult for them to plan and conduct the lessons they would like to implement. One of the teachers mentioned: *On a daily basis, I deal precisely with inclusion in every aspect - we include children, but for that we also need teaching aids, equipment, adaptation of conditions... (1F1).* This quotation illustrates, to some extent, a sense of helplessness in the face of the

system surrounding teachers, who recognize the need for change but lack the resources and space to implement their plans. Another participant added: *It would be nice if everything was actually adapted, if there were materials, support, tools* (1F3). The lack of teaching materials and tools is not only a problem for teachers but also for students, who often require individualized support and methods that will allow them to achieve educational success.

In the teachers' opinion, educational institutions are not sufficiently equipped with materials to rely exclusively on them during lessons. One interviewee confessed: *At the beginning of the school year, we get a list of things that need to be bought for the classroom. And although the list is long, we receive only part of what was written on it* (4F1). This statement shows that the needs in terms of materials necessary for work are not fully met. As one of the participants mentioned, teachers must purchase work tools themselves, on their own initiative: *What we buy ourselves, we have; what we bring from home, we have*. Another teacher recalled: *At home I have a wardrobe two by two meters, full of games, teaching aids, materials. All bought with my own money* (1F1). The lack of institutional support in providing materials intensifies the disparity between the expected actions of teachers and their real possibilities. The lack of institutional support deepens the gap between expectations and teachers' actual capabilities.

Systemic Constraints and Lack of Funding

Insufficient funding is a significant problem that very frequently appeared in the context of the functioning of the education system. This issue does not concern only the level of teachers' salaries. It has a multidimensional character and includes limited possibilities for financing necessary renovations and adapting school space to students' needs.

Teachers' statements particularly often referred to the situation of students with special educational needs, who possess an official statement of special educational needs. Attention was drawn to the fact that the educational subsidy assigned to these students is significantly higher than in the case of children without such statements. According to systemic assumptions, these funds should cover the costs of specialist classes, therapies, and additional support implemented in the institution. As one interviewee noted: *It should be the case that everything is adapted and that there are teaching aids, because after all, money follows every child with the statement [of special educational needs]* (1F10).

However, the analysis of participants' narratives indicates a clear discrepancy between formal financial assumptions and everyday practice in educational institutions. Despite higher subsidies, schools often do not have sufficient funds to fully implement the recommendations included in the statement. This may result from the need to redistribute funds to other urgent institutional needs, budgetary constraints of the governing bodies, or a lack of transparency in the allocation of funds.

In this context, it is important to emphasize that a statement of special educational needs has the character of an administrative decision, and the recommendations included in it should be implemented obligatorily. *The statement is an administrative decision. If something is specified in it, for example additional classes or a co-teaching teacher, then money must follow* (1F5). The lack of adequate funding results in shifting responsibility for the implementation of these recommendations onto teachers, who, despite high motivation, are often forced to improvise and work beyond their standard duties. From the perspective of inclusive education, insufficient funding constitutes a significant risk factor that may lead to the deepening of educational inequalities and limiting real access for students with special educational needs to support consistent with their individual needs. This indicates the necessity not only to increase financial expenditures but also to introduce more precise and controlled mechanisms for distributing them and monitoring the implementation of decisions in school practice.

Difficulty in employing specialists who could provide support for students and teachers appears to also be an important limitation. Teachers repeatedly pointed to difficulties in finding staff. *There is also a problem with the availability of co-teaching staff* (4F3). The same difficulty was noted by another teacher, who indicated: *And in our institution it looks like this - when it comes to specialists, we have a shortage of them, especially in the field of psychology* (4F1).

Adaptation of Space

School space, understood as both the building and its surroundings, has a significant impact on the quality of educational activities as well as on the well-being of all participants present in this environment. During their statements, participants referred to spatial and facility-related barriers as some of the key factors hindering work and functioning at school. *We have a problem with space - more surface area would give us more possibilities, for example rooms for calming down or therapeutic rooms* (3F7). Mainstream schools increasingly have to respond to the diverse needs of students. Spaces in which students can rest from incoming stimuli or work individually are essential for carrying out activities that support achieving educational goals.

However, architectural problems sometimes hinder or even make it impossible for certain groups of students to function within the school environment. One teacher recalled the story of her student, "These architectural barriers do not concern only people with physical disabilities, because P. with Down syndrome is not physically disabled, and yet I cannot imagine him on those stairs" (7F5). Situations like these highlight the importance of thoughtful planning and design of school spaces, as they affect children's daily functioning and may even limit their ability to meet basic physiological needs. Such obstacles not only hinder movement within the school environment but may also create anxiety that extends to other settings and disrupts the learning process.

As one participant noted, *there is also a lack of rooms, a lack of classrooms to conduct additional corrective and compensatory classes (7F1)*. Despite the goodwill of staff and school management, it is not always possible to remodel a building in such a way that it fully meets diverse needs. Nevertheless, it is necessary to plan space and activities in a way that enables its use to be as safe and comfortable as possible. The lack of accessible rooms also contributes to the need to increase class sizes, which in turn promotes accumulating stimuli that may hinder high-quality learning and work within such a group (*A class of twenty students that includes pupils with such problems is a complete mistake, 3F7*). Finding one's place in such a large group, especially for students with special educational needs, can constitute a very significant challenge.

Examples of Good Practice

In their statements, teachers pointed to actions undertaken that, from their perspective, improved the quality of work and student functioning in educational institutions, "Good financing: in our case they have already started to monitor this, and there are calculations for specific children and specific institutions" (1F2). Such statements confirm that teachers are becoming increasingly aware of how institutions function administratively. Another teacher also drew attention to the financing of educational processes:

This year we employed a very good child psychologist. We also have a special education teacher. And I can see this year... We hired two professionals. We have 74 students. Since we are a private school, we can afford to pay these professionals. There is a huge amount of work. Students receive classes even though there are no indications in opinions or decisions, and I think these two professionals are able to monitor, diagnose, and suggest to the management staff—who then apply for financial support—an appropriate number of such classes. (6F5)

Adequate financial backing facilitates many actions aimed at improving children's functioning in institutions; however, as the interviewee pointed out, this would not be possible without reliable and committed work of all employees of a given institution.

Some actions do not require financial resources but nevertheless make work easier. One such example is the standardization of practices related to specialist documentation, as mentioned by one teacher:

In our school, all Individual Educational and Therapeutic Programs (IPETs) follow one template. Every homeroom teacher receives it by email at the beginning of the school year. There are no miracles in them, just bullet points based on the regulation, and under each point there is space left. The homeroom teacher collects information from teachers, copies it into the IPET and the multidisciplinary assessment of the student's level of functioning. We give one copy to the parent and keep one for ourselves. I think this is good prac-

tice. When asked by an inspector from the education authority where this template came from, I replied that it is compliant with the Ministry regulation. (1F6)

Creating templates and ready-made formats accelerates documentation processes and allows teachers to focus on challenges related to implementing plans tailored to students' needs. A unified style of documents also enhances transparency and predictability in cooperation with parents.

Small class sizes is an additional asset in some schools. It enables more effective individualization of the teaching process and continuous monitoring of learning progress. One teacher stated: *In my school, by statute, classes can have a maximum of sixteen students. Only one class has that many. The others have even fewer (3F7).* Small class groups foster relationship-building within classes and allow teachers to respond to difficulties more quickly.

Cooperation and trust among teachers promote developing a culture of collaboration based on mutual support and openness to professional development:

In our school, we joined a new EU program that, among other things, assumes that we observe each other's classes. Often, these are not external observers but other teachers from the school. At first, I was very stressed about it, because no one wants to be evaluated, but after a few attempts and honest conversations I believe that such "supervisions" are incredibly necessary and helpful. Because you don't do it to show off, but to genuinely improve the quality of your work. (9F2)

This statement indicates that introducing actions such as peer observation, despite initial stress and fear of evaluation, over time builds trust among members of the teaching staff. Observing classes conducted by other teachers and having the opportunity for honest discussions about teaching methods ceases to be perceived as a form of control and begins to serve as supervision and joint learning. Such practices strengthen teachers' sense of professional security and foster reflection on their own teaching practice, which ultimately translates into higher educational quality and better responses to students' needs.

Teacher Development in Inclusive Education: Challenges, Needs, and Perspectives for Change

The quality of inclusive education implemented by schools does not depend solely on the organization of physical space but is equally related to the level of teachers' professional preparation. With the dynamic development of knowledge and methods of working with students with special educational needs, it becomes necessary to systematically seek and implement solutions that increase the effectiveness of didactic and educational activities. Interviewees pointed to gaps in the quality of teachers' preparation for work. *Not all teachers are trained, not everyone knows how to deal with such a child and simply how to help them (9F1).* Another participant

drew attention to his own feelings: *...all of this is frustrating, because there will be more and more children with difficulties, and teachers are not adequately prepared to work with them* (2F8).

In Poland, in mainstream schools, a teacher who teaches a given subject, while working with a student with a disability or a neurodivergent student, does not have to possess specialized education corresponding to a given disability or disorder. However, the lack of skills does not exempt teachers from responsibility for the quality of their work. Some actions that support learning and developmental processes in neurotypical children may, in relation to students with diverse educational needs, cause difficulties or constitute insurmountable barriers. One teacher stated: *Because awareness of the specific nature of functioning in a given disability is important, because later - if they do not have it - they become like a wall, they block* (1F5).

Teachers who participated in the study believed that educators need training to effectively address these challenges. One participant emphasized that appropriate approaches and concrete guidance provided during training can realistically influence changes in teaching practice. *You just need to approach it properly, because if there is training and teachers are given guidelines, then really most teachers will do it* (1F1).

However, it is often indicated that despite teachers' declared readiness to introduce changes, this does not always translate into concrete practical actions. In this context, it seems legitimate to ask whether openness to change is a dominant characteristic of the teaching community or whether it applies only to part of it. When considering this problem, it should also be considered that effective work with children requires not only appropriate formal qualifications but also certain personal predispositions. The lack of such predispositions – resulting, among others, from temperament traits, life experiences, or personality factors – may make it difficult to perform teaching tasks, particularly in the conditions of inclusive education.

DISCUSSION

The ability to adapt to the changing conditions of the surrounding educational world does not refer solely to teachers' beliefs and the actions they undertake. It also encompasses the educational space and the existing conditions of an institution's functioning, which result from its financial capacity. The current study indicates that providing teachers with the necessary teaching materials supports the educational process and fosters their professional development. These findings are confirmed by prior research by Abada and Hattie (2025), which show that the level of significance of the teaching aids used changes depending on teachers' level of experience. Regardless of the stage of professional development, however, appropriately selected teaching materials increase the attractiveness of lessons and enhance the effectiveness of proposed educational activities.

At the same time, the present findings also indicate that a lack of access to teaching materials and the necessity to purchase them using personal resources cause frustration and discourage teachers from experimenting with methods and forms of work during classes. This problem points to systemic limitations in the functioning of schools, particularly around financing educational activities. This phenomenon has also been observed in the study of Bhuyan (2022), which indicates a strong correlation between the level of didactic resources and the quality of the learning process as well as teachers' well-being. The results of this research highlight systemic constraints that are especially visible when it comes to, again, financing educational activities.

Architectural conditions of the institution turned out to be a significant limitation in organizing students' presence at school and creating a safe space for its participants. This problem is not limited exclusively to the Polish school reality but is also noticeable in an international context. This is indicated by a report prepared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2013), which shows a close relationship between pedagogy and architecture, drawing attention to the impact of spatial organization on interactions, cooperation, and the feeling of safety of participants. The results of the report confirm that school space affects students' concentration, their motivation to work, and the formation of social relationships. This is further confirmed by the review by Pasenidou (2024), which presents school architecture as a specific carrier of values oriented toward presence, participation, and both educational and personal achievements within inclusive education.

The present findings also revealed several good practices implemented in schools which, according to teachers, genuinely improve the functioning of institutions and the quality of everyday teaching work. These practices include both financial and organizational measures, as well as solutions related to documentation and teacher collaboration. The importance of one of these dimensions (i.e., teacher collaboration) has been confirmed in the study of Pozas and Letzel-Alt (2023), which demonstrated a strong relationship between cooperation and synchronization of activities within the school environment, and outcomes in the context of implementing inclusion. Similarly, international research points to a range of solutions that can serve as responses to the identified problems. These include, among others, flexible classroom furnishings that promote collaboration (Barrett et al., 2019), involving students and teachers in the design of educational spaces (OECD, 2013), and the creation of sensory zones supporting students with diverse educational needs (Unwin et al., 2021). These practices demonstrate that adapting space does not have to be costly, if it is well thought out and based on the needs of the school community.

In a time of rapid social and educational change, school environments are also evolving. To respond effectively to these changes, teachers need to engage in continuous professional development. As Hejnicka-Bezwińska (2008) argues, professional development depends not only on acquiring knowledge but also on devel-

oping the competencies needed to analyze, interpret, and apply that knowledge in practice. The current findings also suggest that, in teachers' opinions, the effectiveness of inclusive education implementation is linked to the level of teachers' professional competencies and their readiness to engage in reflective practice, which is consistent with the results of the review by Rapisa et al. (2026). Formal employment in an educational institution alone does not guarantee adequate preparation for work, especially in the context of working with students with diverse educational needs. Considering the participants' statements, system-level and high-quality support for teachers' professional development becomes particularly important, encompassing enhancing methodological competencies and preparing for creating an accessible and inclusive educational environment.

LIMITATIONS

As with other qualitative studies, the findings of this project cannot be generalized to the entire population of teachers in Poland. The participants represented different stages of education, which made it possible to capture general trends. Concurrently, time limited the possibility of an in-depth analysis of challenges specific to a single type of institution. An additional limitation is the diversity of schools in which the participants were employed. These differences may have influenced teachers' experiences, making it difficult to formulate fully universal conclusions.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study identified significant gaps in the adaptation of school space, availability of resources, and systems of teachers' professional development. The findings also revealed a high level of teacher frustration related to various forms of inaccessibility that hinder implementation of the educational process. We suggest the following recommendations:

- Establishing a transparent system for collecting and sharing teaching aids among teachers to limit the need for individual purchases and to facilitate easy access to necessary resources.
- Introducing small but regular improvements in the organization of school space that enhance functionality of classrooms and adapt the educational environment to the current needs of students and teachers.
- Organizing systematic exchanges of experiences within schools, enabling teachers to share knowledge, good practices, and proven techniques for working with students, which would strengthen the competencies of the entire teaching staff.

REFERENCES

- Abad, L. G., & Hattie, J. (2025). The impact of teaching materials on instructional design and teacher development. *Frontiers in Education*, Article 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2025.1577721>
- Bałachowicz, J. (2015). Szkoła jako przestrzeń budowania przyszłości. In J. Bałachowicz, A. Korwin-Szymanowska, & A. Witkowska-Tomaszewska (Eds.), *Zrozumieć uczenie się. Zmienić wczesną edukację* (pp. 11–96). Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej.
- Barrett, P., Treves, A., Shmis, T., Ambosz, D., & Ustinova, M. (2019). *The impact of school infrastructure on learning: A synthesis of the evidence*. World Bank Group.
- Bełza-Gajdzica, M., Ciborowski, M., Knopik, T., Olempska-Wysocka, M., & Wojciechowska, A. (2024). *Racjonalne usprawnienia w edukacji. Poradnik dla nauczycieli i nauczycielek*. Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.
- Bhuyan, T. (2022). A study on the uses of modern teaching aids in classrooms at the undergraduate level. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 10(4), 1-5.
- Cabała, M., Dziedzic, A., Łygas, M., Gawrył, M., Guratowska, K., Ławicka, J., Niedźwiedzka, A., Piwowońska, M., Prysak, D., & Zwirblińska J. (2024). *Model Dostępnej Szkoły - podręcznik wdrożeniowy*. Retrieved 10 March 2026 from: https://www.dostepnaszkola.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Model-Dostepnej-Szkoly_Podrecznik-wdrozeniowy.pdf
- Casey, G. W. (2014). Leading in a 'VUCA' world. *Fortune*, 169(5), 75-76.
- Chimicz, D., & Prokopiak, A. (2021). Koncepcja projektowania uniwersalnego w edukacji. *Szkoła Specjalna*, 1, 28-38. <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.8059>
- Chrzanowska, I., & Szumski, G. (2019). *Edukacja włączająca w przedszkolu i szkole*. Wydawnictwo FRSE.
- Czapiewski, K. Ł., & Janc, K. (2012). Dostępność do edukacji, jakość kształcenia i poziom wykształcenia mieszkańców a struktura funkcjonalna gmin województwa mazowieckiego. *Mazowsze Studia Regionalne*, 10, 33-52.
- Dostępność. (2026). *Słownik języka polskiego PWN*. Retrieved May 10, 2026, from <https://sjp.pwn.pl/slownik-synonimow/dost%C4%99pno%C5%9B%C4%87.html>
- Flick, U. (2010). *Projektowanie badania jakościowego*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Gajdzica, Z. (2013). Nauczyciele szkoły ogólnodostępnej o swoim przygotowaniu do pracy z uczniem niepełnosprawnym w kontekście przemian pierwszej dekady XXI wieku. *Chowanna*, 41(2), 263–273. <https://doi.org/10.31261/CHOWANNA.2013.41.21>
- Hejnicka-Bezwińska, T. (2008). *Pedagogika ogólna*. Wydawnictwo Akademickie i Profesjonalne.
- Holewiński, J. (1908). *O budowaniu i urządzaniu szkół: podręcznik praktyczny*. E. Wen-de i S-ka.
- Husserl, E. (1989). *Wykłady z fenomenologii wewnętrznej świadomości czasu*. Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

- Kiernicki, B. (1961). *Ład w szkole*. Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Korolewska, M. (2010). Rola państwa w finansowaniu oświaty. *Studia BAS*, 22, 153-178.
- Kwiatkowski, M., & Piorunek, M. (2020). *Jednostka, edukacja, organizacja wobec przemian rynku pracy*. Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej.
- Lubowiecka, J. (2002). Wielowymiarowe konteksty zawodowej roli nauczyciela. In M. Nowicka (Ed.), *Nauczyciel i uczeń w przestrzeniach szkoły* (pp. 91-100). Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego.
- Manen, M. (2023). *Phenomenology of practice. Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Routledge.
- Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. 2nd Edition. Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412984287>
- Nijakowska, J. (2022). Inkluzja: obecność, uczestnictwo, dostępność. *Języki Obce w Szkole*, 4, 9-15. <https://doi.org/10.47050/jows.2022.4.9-15>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2013.
- Pasenidou, F. (2024). The emerging intersection: the role of architecture in promoting inclusive education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 52(1), 79-95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2024.2427041>
- Pozas, M., & Letzel-Alt, V. (2023). Teacher collaboration, inclusive education and differentiated instruction: A matter of exchange, co-construction, or synchronization? *Cogent Education*, 10, Article 2240941. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2240941>
- Rapisa, D. R., Hermanto, H., & Suparno S. (2026). Teacher competency in practicing inclusive education: a systematic review. *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 20(2), 57-73. <https://doi.org/10.22329/jtl.v19i3.9373>
- Sakowicz-Boboryko, A., & Otapowicz, D. (2024). Szkoła ogólnodostępna wobec inkluzji uczniów z niepełnosprawnością – diagnoza wybranych problemów. *Kultura i Edukacja*, 144, 63-78. <https://doi.org/10.15804/kie.2024.02.03>
- Sarid, A., & Levanon, M. (2023). Embracing dualities: Principles of education for a VUCA world. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 55(12), 1375-1386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2022.2162384>
- Solarczyk-Ambrozik, E. (2020). Przeobrażenia pracy i zmiany wzorów przebiegu karier a globalna kultura edukacyjna–kompetencyjny wymiar planowania karier edukacyjno-zawodowych. In E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, M. Christoph, & R. Konieczna-Woźniak (Eds.), *Edukacja dorosłych a planowanie karier edukacyjno-zawodowych* (pp. 17–31). Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza.
- Starzyk, A. (2020). Współczesna architektura przedszkolna. *Builder*, 24(3), 46–50. <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0013.8539>
- Stauber, B., & Parreira do Amaral, M. (2015). Access to and accessibility of education: An analytic and conceptual approach to a multidimensional issue. *European Education*, 47(1), 11-25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10564934.2015.1001254>

- Unwin, K. L., Powell, G., Price, A., & Jones, C. R. G. (2021). The use of Multi-Sensory Environments with autistic children. *Autism*, 26(6), 1379-1394. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613211050176>
- Vidal, J. (2023). *Systems thinking in education: its application in a D-VUCA world*. SSRN. <https://doi.org/10.15390/EB.2024.12634>
- Walat, W. (2012). Edukacja architektoniczna w przedszkolu – zarys problematyki. *Edukacja-Technika-Informatyka*, 3(1), 248-265.
- Waloszek, K. (2014). Zapomniane (?) inspiracje dla wychowania. *Labor et Educatio*, 2, 221-246.
- Wojtas-Rduch, A. (2021). Ustawa o zapewnieniu dostępności osobom ze szczególnymi potrzebami a aranżacja przestrzeni klas dla uczniów z niepełnosprawnościami. *Konteksty Pedagogiczne*, 2(17), 47-63. <https://doi.org/10.19265/kp.2021.2.17.319>
- Zygner, H. (1978). *Zagadnienia nowoczesnej infrastruktury szkół*. Centrum Doskonalenia Nauczycieli w Kaliszu.

OBSZARY (NIE)DOSTĘPNOŚCI W EDUKACJI WŁĄCZAJĄCEJ. RAPORT Z BADAŃ FOKUSOWYCH POLSKICH NAUCZYCIELI

Wprowadzenie: Edukacja włączająca jest zagadnieniem wieloaspektowym, które tworzy przestrzeń do działań edukacyjnych i wychowawczych zarówno dla uczniów, jak i nauczycieli. W praktyce jednak istnieje wyraźna rozbieżność pomiędzy deklarowanymi założeniami a rzeczywistością szkolną, która wciąż charakteryzuje się licznymi utrudnieniami i barierami dla uczestników procesu edukacyjnego.

Cel badań: Celem niniejszego badania było zrozumienie doświadczeń nauczycieli związanych z realizacją edukacji włączającej w szkołach ogólnodostępnych, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem szeroko rozumianej dostępności edukacji.

Metoda badań: Zastosowano jakościowy projekt badawczy, wykorzystując interpretacyjną analizę fenomenologiczną. Dane zebrano za pomocą dziewięciu wywiadów grupowych z 70 nauczycielami.

Wyniki: Wyniki badania wskazują na istotną lukę organizacyjną i instytucjonalną, która pogłębia frustrację nauczycieli oraz uniemożliwia wykorzystanie pełnego potencjału procesu edukacyjnego. Kluczowe wyzwania obejmują utrudniony dostęp do pomocy dydaktycznych, niedostosowaną przestrzeń architektoniczną, niewystarczającą wiedzę i umiejętności do pracy z uczniami o zróżnicowanych potrzebach edukacyjnych oraz ograniczone zasoby placówek. Jednocześnie zidentyfikowano szereg dobrych praktyk, które usprawniają codzienne funkcjonowanie szkół i mogą stanowić punkt wyjścia do systemowych udoskonaleń.

Wnioski: Przedstawiono zalecenia mające na celu zwiększenie dostępności poprzez ukierunkowane szkolenia, aktywne zaangażowanie społeczności szkolnej oraz wzmocnienie funkcjonujących systemów wsparcia.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja włączająca, dostępność edukacji, doświadczenia nauczycieli, bariery w edukacji