

EARLY-ASD Conference

Diversity, Neurodiversity, and Digital Social Stories in Early Childhood Education

Date: 1 September 2026

Venue: The Maria Grzegorzewska University (APS), Szczęśliwicka 40, 02-353 Warsaw, Poland

Conference organized by University of Warsaw (UW) & The Maria Grzegorzewska University (APS)

1

Conference Partners:

International Sociological Association, Research Committee 25 (ISA RC25)

Polish Educational Research Association (PERA, Warsaw Branch)

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Complutense University of Madrid (Spain)

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MELLIS Educational Technologies (Turkey)

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Volunteers – Magdalena Niedziółka, Zuzanna Chałubińska, Maria Czubak



Programme

08:30 – 09:00 | Rejestracja uczestników i powitalna kawa / Registration and Welcome Coffee in front of Aula C

- Accessible area for participants with disabilities
- Digital materials and limited printed versions
- Eco-friendly gadgets: reusable notebooks and pencils

3

09:00 – 9:30 | Otwarcie konferencji / Opening of the Conference **Aula C**

Welcome with representatives of APS and UW, co-organizing organizations (Chair: Prof. Rudi Roose Ugent, Belgium), UW; Prof. dr hab. Joanna Madalińska-Michalak, Prof. dr hab. Anna Odrowąż-Coates, dr hab. Anna Perkowska-Klejman
Accessibility information

- Eco-participation guidelines (zero waste, waste sorting)

9:30 – 10:30 | Sesja plenarna 1 – Wczesna diagnoza i wsparcie dzieci z ASD / Plenary Session 1 – Early Diagnosis and Support for Children with ASD **Aula C**

Opening Keynote by dr Ewa Grudzińska, Head of Social Work Dept.:
Directions of development and challenges of social work in Poland in the context of ASD interventions and professional preparation (20 minut)

Early ASD project - *Wprowadzenie do projektu i jego celów / Introduction to the project and its objectives and results (Prof. dr hab. Joanna Madalińska-Michalak, dr Agnieszka Siedler, dr Ewa Odachowska-Rogalska) (20 minut)*

Educational Resources for Adolescent Health Education in a Changing World: Lessons from Middle Schools in Mexico, Prof. Gabriela Argumedo, Mexico

Inclusive moderation with diverse speakers

10:30 – 11:00 | Coffee Break **in front of Aula C**

- Eco-friendly and locally sourced catering
- Vegan and gluten-free options
- Waste sorting, minimal plastic use

11:00 – 13:00 | Parallel Sessions

1. – *Support for families of children with ASD* – **AULA C**

Session Chair Prof. dr hab. Joanna Madalińska-Michalak, UW

- *Family Empowerment as the Foundation of Early Intervention for Children with Developmental Delays and Disabilities*, prof. Lawrence Meda, United Arab Emirates
- *Supporting Students on the Autism Spectrum in Israel: The Athena Fund's iPad and ImagineBox initiatives*, prof. Uri Ben-Ari, Israel

- *Navigating Daily Life: The Unseen Struggles of Autism Parenting*, Daniela Popa, Romania
- Book Presentation: *Inclusive Education and Neurodiversity: Theory, Research and Practice*. Edited by Joanna Madalińska-Michalak, Anna Odrowąż-Coates, Agnieszka Siedler and Sinan Kalkan

4

2. - ***Edukacja inkluzyjna – przykłady dobrych praktyk / Inclusive education – good practice examples - ROOM 1***

Session Chair Dr Krystyna Heland-Kurzak, APS

- *Using Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) to support inclusive practice in nursery: A Case Study of a caregiver working with a child with disabilities* Dr Krystyna Heland-Kurzak, APS
- *A Case Study of Social Competence in a Child with Emotional Dysregulation and Executive Functioning Difficulties*, Joanna Papińska, Belgium
- *Interventions to improve physical function for children with autism spectrum disorders: a review of selected research*, Ewa Odrowaz-Coates, Gabriela Doman, Dr Weronika Pyrzanowska, Poland
- *Development and validation of a questionnaire for measurement of minority stress in neurodiverse individuals*, Jan Gierzyński, Poland

3. - ***Policy and Neurodiversity in the conditions of forced displacement - ROOM 2***

Session Chair Dr Cecilia Maria Zsogon, APS

- *Legal – Social Protection Policies for Children in Georgia’s Occupied Territories*, Mariam Begvadze, Georgia
- *Teachers and School Counsellors Supporting Refugee Children with Special Educational Needs: A Qualitative Case Study from Türkiye*, Nurşen Okur, Turkey
- *Children and Deviant Behavior in the Digital Age*, Lika Chimchiuri, Georgia

4. - ***National Session in Polish Language - ROOM 3***

Session Chair Dr Agnieszka Siedler, APS

- *Zmniejszanie presji maskowania w edukacji przedszkolnej i wczesnoszkolnej - na przykładzie pracy z Social Stories*, Agnieszka Siedler
- *Problem podwójnej empatii w praktyce szkolnej i akademickiej*, mgr Joanna Mazur-Okalowe z Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego

- Rozpoznawanie i różnicowanie wczesnych objawów ASD w edukacji, Ewa Odachowska-Rogalska

5. *Varia: Diversity, language and society - ROOM 4*

A - Chair: Ewa Kantowicz – Aula E – building D

Academic Teachers' Attitudes Toward State Higher Education Policy of Poland and Ukraine
- Roman Androszczuk

The connection between the consideration of social problems by management and politics and the safeguarding of social cohesion in Poland and Germany - Marta Czapnik-Jurak & Jörg Fischer

Social pedagogy and social work in Poland- disciplinary and professional relations - Ewa Kantowicz

B - Chair: Anna Odrowąż-Coates - Aula D – building D

The romanticisation of suffering and self-destruction in the emo subculture - an analysis of cultural discourses and narratives - Zuzanna Chałubińska

Who is Allowed to Narrate Inequality? Autosociobiography and the Conditions of Articulation - Susanne Pawlewicz

Learning to Feel “Not Enough”: A Socio-Pedagogical Perspective on Low SelfWorth in Adult Life, with Implications for Social Work - Anna Odrowąż-Coates

- Sessions with live captions
- Presentations shared digitally

13:00– 14:00 | Lunch Break

- Locally sourced catering
- Minimal use of disposable materials

14:00 – 16:00 | Workshops

PL - Warsztaty tworzenia historyjek digital social stories *dr Agnieszka Siedler, dr Ewa Odachowska-Rogalska* **AULA C**

ENG - Writing Our Way Through the PhD: Collective Autoethnography for Wellbeing
Magdalena Pietrzak, Ewa Duda-Maciejewska, Julia Zbróg, Jagoda Apanasewicz, Jan Gierzyński, Patrycja Mika **Room 1 building C**

ENG - From Autistic School Experience to Inclusive Teacher Education: A Participatory Workshop with an Educational Specialist *Gesa Kobs, Laura Schwörer, Julia Albrecht, Kiel University, Germany* **Room 2 building C**

ENG - Meeting Diverse Learning Needs: Differentiated Instruction for Students with Autism in Inclusive Classrooms *Sinan Kalkan, Aysegul Sukran OZ, Turkey* **Room 3 building C**

POSTER SESSION - AULA C - available throughout the day

Examples:

Activities of a teacher co-organizing education supporting the inclusion of neurodiverse students in early childhood education. POSTER, Małgorzata Mróz

Neuroadaptive Teaching Assistant: A Digital Tool for Real-Time Inclusion and Engagement of Students with Diverse Learning Needs. POSTER, Denis Filimonov

Inclusive Education and Neurodiversity: Theory, Research and Practice. POSTER. Joanna Madalińska-Michalak, Anna Odrowąż-Coates, Agnieszka Siedler, Sinan Kalkan

Rethinking Social Stories: Toward Neuroaffirmative Practices. POSTER, dr Agnieszka Siedler et al.

A Study on Hindi-English Code-Mixing in India: A Socio-Technical Perspective, Nibedita Roy, Apurbalal Senpati, India

Other POSTERS by doctoral students and doctoral candidates

16:00 – 16:45 | User-Friendly Resources for Teachers, Especially Preschool Teachers *dr Agnieszka Siedler, dr Ewa Odachowska-Rogalska* **AULA C**

- Overview of tools, materials, and educational platforms
- Workshop and recommendations for practitioners

16:45–17:00 | Closing of the Conference

Aula C

Closing session chaired by:

Prof. dr hab. Anna Odrowąż-Coates, APS

Prof. dr hab. Joanna Madalińska-Michalak, UW

Programme of the closing session:

- Summary of the conference proceedings /Conclusions on inclusion and sustainability
- Certificate ceremony (eco-folders with QR codes)
- Appreciation and invitation to continue cooperation within the project network
- Appreciation and closing remarks
- Invitation to future cooperation within the project network

Additional Notes

- All materials available digitally (report, presentations, e-book)
- *green conference principles*
- Full accessibility ensured (PJM, captions, accessible rooms)
- Online registration with accessibility options
- Post-conference publication and audiovisual materials to follow

Book of abstracts

Directions of development and challenges of social work in Poland in the context of ASD interventions and professional preparation (dr Ewa Grudziewska)

7

Contemporary social work in Poland is undergoing intense transformation as a result of social, demographic and cultural changes, as well as the growing diversity of needs among people receiving institutional support. One of the important but still insufficiently addressed areas is working with neurodiverse individuals, including those on the autism spectrum, with ADHD and other neurodevelopmental differences.

The aim of the presentation is to analyse the directions of development of social work in Poland in the context of growing awareness of neurodiversity and to identify the challenges it poses for professional practice and the social support system. The paper will discuss issues related to the need to adapt social work methods to the diverse communication styles, cognitive functioning and sensory needs of clients, as well as the importance of an approach based on the strengths and respect for the subjectivity of neurodiverse people. Particular attention will be paid to systemic challenges such as insufficient staff training, limited availability of specialist training, lack of consistent working standards and insufficient cross-sectoral cooperation. The presentation also reflects on the role of social work in counteracting the social exclusion of neurodiverse people and in building inclusive social services that respond to contemporary social needs.

Introduction to the project and its objectives and results (Prof. dr hab. Joanna Madalińska-Michalak, dr Agnieszka Siedler, dr Ewa Odachowska-Rogalska)

Presentation pertains to project results of the project Upskilling Preservice Teachers to Support Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder through Digital Social Stories 2024-1-PL01-KA220-HED-000246304, co funded by EU.

EARLY-ASD is an innovative Erasmus+ project aimed at empowering preservice teachers to support young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) through early intervention strategies. The project focuses on enhancing the social and emotional skills of children with ASD by bringing together experienced partners from across Europe to ensure inclusive and effective education practices. In this presentation we will showcase the toolkit ready to use by professions of public trust, especially educators, social workers, carers, support staff.
<https://earlyasd.eu/web/project-results/>

Educational Resources for Adolescent Health Education in a Changing World: Lessons from Middle Schools in Mexico

Prof. Gabriela Argumedo, Mexico

Theme: Enhancing the development of knowledge, skills and experience. Background. The World Health Organization's Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!) framework highlights adolescents' needs for accessible health information. Health education for adolescents in Mexico has gained increasing relevance in response to complex epidemiological and

social challenges. Educational resources designed and adapted for adolescents remain limited and often insufficiently aligned with their social realities and learning preferences, particularly within middle school education in low to middle-income countries (LMIC). In addition, teachers frequently lack structured, age-appropriate, and evidence-based materials to address adolescent health topics in an engaging and culturally relevant manner. Aim. to report the development process and impact of a comprehensive set of health education resources, as well as the lessons learned from their pedagogical implementation in middle school settings in Mexico. Methods. The development of 35 educational videos, tutorials, and digital learning objects designed for upper secondary education published at Portal Academico, an open-access repository of educational resources for adolescents. Results. The materials were used to support the implementation of health education content with moderate student acceptance. Study guides for assessments also incorporated these materials alongside the official curriculum after its update in 2024. An unexpected outcome was their adoption by teachers from health-related and other academic areas, as well as their integration into teacher training courses. Conclusions. Developing reliable, high-quality educational resources tailored to adolescents is essential to enhance pedagogical practices directed to strengthen health literacy among Mexican adolescents.

8

Supporting Students on the Autism Spectrum in Israel: The Athena Fund's iPad and ImagineBox initiatives

prof. Uri Ben-Ari, Israel

Supporting Students on the Autism Spectrum in Israel: The Athena Fund's iPad and ImagineBox initiatives -- Uri Ben Ari, Founder and President, Athena Fund -- Abstract: This presentation presents two initiatives led by the Athena Fund, focusing on implementation of educational technologies for students on the autism spectrum in Israel. It examines two synergistic interventions: the "Digital ToolBox for Every Special Education Teacher" program, including iPads and additional resources, and the innovative "ImagineBox" project. While iPads provide personalized tools for self-expression and communication, the ImagineBox introduces immersive, multisensory learning environments through interactive content. Unlike the iPad, which serves as a personal, one-to-one tool tailored to the individual student's needs, the ImagineBox is designed as a shared, classroom-based solution that enables group learning and collaborative experiences within the classroom. ImagineBox classrooms have been established across Israel, with ongoing expansion. The immersive environment allows students to experience real-world scenarios in a controlled and safe environment. The presentation analyzes how these technologies support neurodiversity principles and inclusive education. Findings highlight that collaboration with teachers and schools in implementing these tools enhances teaching practices and enriches students' learning experiences, offering specific benefits for sensory processing and social interaction in diverse educational environments. These insights are illustrated through case studies from schools across Israel, demonstrating real-world implementation challenges and successes, including improvements in communication, social engagement, and classroom participation among students with ASD. This Israeli model can serve as a scalable model for other countries around the world facing similar challenges in special education. -- Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Immersive Technology, Inclusive Education, iPad Intervention, Multisensory Learning, Teacher Training.

Family Empowerment as the Foundation of Early Intervention for Children with Developmental Delays and Disabilities

prof. Lawrence Meda, United Arab Emirates

Family empowerment is widely recognised as a cornerstone for effective early intervention for young children with developmental delays and disabilities. This study explores how family empowerment is conceptualised and enacted within an early intervention centre from the perspectives of multidisciplinary specialists. The study employed a qualitative case study design within an interpretive paradigm. Nine specialists, including speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, social workers and a family counsellor, were selected to participate. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis. The findings highlight family-centered practice as both a guiding philosophy and an operational strategy. The results further indicate that family empowerment serves as a critical milestone in psychologically preparing families to accept their children's conditions, mitigating parental shock, denial, and stress, and gradually fostering acceptance and understanding of the child's needs. This process enables families to support their children more effectively. The study concludes that, through the support provided by multidisciplinary specialists to children with developmental delays and disabilities, families are not only empowered but are also positioned as active partners and, in many cases, the child's first and ongoing therapists.

Navigating Daily Life: The Unseen Struggles of Autism Parenting

Daniela Popa, Romania

This research explores the multifaceted challenges faced by parents of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the context of everyday life. Drawing on both a comprehensive literature review and a survey study conducted with 50 parents from Romania, the research identifies key areas of difficulty including the diagnostic process, behavioural management, financial strain, social isolation, educational integration, and emotional wellbeing. The study further examines coping mechanisms - such as peer-to-peer parental support and family resilience strategies - that families employ to navigate these challenges. Findings reveal that the diagnostic journey is described almost universally as stressful, confusing, and emotionally traumatic. The most frequently cited ongoing challenges include managing meltdowns/tantrums, difficulties within the educational system, limited professional support, and societal stigma. The results are consistent with international scientific literature. The research concludes with recommendations for strengthening support systems for families affected by ASD.

Using Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) to support inclusive practice in nursery: A Case Study of a caregiver working with a child with disabilities

Krystyna Heland-Kurzak

The presentation explores how Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) can enhance inclusive practice in early childhood settings by supporting a caregiver working with a very young child with a disability. It is based on a single in-depth case from a nursery, focusing on one caregiver who takes part in a VIG process involving video-recorded interactions with the child, followed by guided reflective sessions with a VIG supervisor.

The analysis highlights how VIG helps the caregiver to recognise and build on moments of successful interaction, such as shared attention, emotional attunement, and turn-taking. These insights lead to concrete changes in everyday practice, including more sensitive responding, clearer structuring of activities, and greater confidence in involving the child in group situations.

The case study is presented through short video clips, and caregiver reflections, illustrating specific shifts in communication and relationship-building. The presentation concludes with a discussion of the implications of using VIG as a practical tool for promoting inclusion in nurseries and of how such targeted, relational support can strengthen the participation and well-being of a child with a disability in early childhood settings.

A Case Study of Social Competence in a Child with Emotional Dysregulation and Executive Functioning Difficulties

Joanna Papińska, Belgium

10

This case study explores the social competence of a 7-year-old Polish girl attending a European School in Brussels, raised in a neurodiverse family context. Grounded in the heuristic Social Competence Model proposed by Nader-Grosbois (2011), the study evaluates four interrelated domains: theory of mind, social information processing, executive functions, and emotional regulation. A multi-method assessment approach was employed to capture cognitive, socioemotional, and regulatory aspects of the child's functioning. The findings reveal an uneven developmental profile, characterized by relatively preserved theory of mind abilities alongside significant difficulties in emotional regulation and executive functioning, particularly in everyday family interactions. Overall, the results highlight a heterogeneous pattern of socioemotional functioning, suggesting that strengths in basic theory of mind do not necessarily generalize to complex, real-life social contexts, and that difficulties in executive functioning and emotion regulation may contribute to challenges in daily social adaptation. These findings underscore the importance of comprehensive, context-sensitive assessment when examining social competence in children with diverse developmental profiles.

Interventions to improve physical function for children with autism spectrum disorders: a review of selected research

Ewa Odrowaz-Coates, Gabriela Doman, Dr Weronika Pyrzanowska, Poland

Interventions to improve physical function for children with autism spectrum disorders: a review of selected research. Ewa Odrowąż-Coates (<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-7292-7257>), Gabriela Doman (<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-2267-9121>), Weronika Pyrzanowska (<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3001-1530>). The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Health Sciences Department, 02-353 Warsaw, Poland. Introduction: Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are a heterogeneous group of neurodevelopmental conditions in which motor deficits increasingly move to the forefront, alongside variability in social communication and behavioral patterns. Motor limitations may significantly affect a child's level of physical activity, social participation, and the overall quality of daily functioning. The aim of this study is to review current research on interventions targeted at improving motor functions in children with ASD, with particular emphasis on their impact on activity and participation. Materials and Methods: A search for eligible studies was conducted in MEDLINE and PubMed databases using ASD, interventions, physical activity, motor skills as the key words. Articles published between 2022 and 2026 were analyzed. The selection of studies was purposive and limited to full-text articles published in English. The findings were analyzed qualitatively and categorized. Results: The reviewed body of research reveals that structured physical activity, including sports, gym sessions, swimming, has a significantly impact on health by improving child developmental outcomes. Conclusions: Physical activity is a recommended intervention for improving motor skills in children with ASD.

Legal – Social Protection Policies for Children in Georgia’s Occupied Territories Mariam Begvadze, Georgia

The space in the occupied Abkhazia and so-called South Ossetia regions of Georgia is characterized by instability of children’s security and limited access to services, which makes their protection mechanisms a particular challenge. Given these challenges, the study assesses the extent to which existing legal and policy frameworks effectively protect children’s fundamental rights, such as education, health care, social assistance, identity, protection from violence, and a safe environment. The theoretical framework of the study is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), humanitarian law norms and international human rights standards, as well as Georgian national legislation and social protection programs. Particular attention is paid to issues of jurisdiction and effective control, legal difficulties in dealing with de facto administrations, and the role of international organizations (e.g., UNICEF, ICRC, UN agencies) in child protection practice. The study also examines the closure of the administrative dividing line, the so-called the impact of “borderization”, documentation problems and movement restrictions on children’s wellbeing. The available results indicate that despite the policies and programs developed by the Georgian government, significant barriers exist in practice: movement restrictions limit access to health and education services; identity and documentation problems hinder the receipt of social assistance; security risks and periodic detentions create psychosocial pressures on children and their families. Children with disabilities and families living below the poverty line were identified as particularly vulnerable groups. The study concludes that a conflict-sensitive approach is needed to increase the effectiveness of social protection, which will strengthen service delivery at the local level, develop mobile and remote support mechanisms, and strengthen coordination with international partners. It is also important to strengthen confidence-building and humanitarian engagement so that children’s rights do not become hostage to political processes.

Teachers and School Counsellors Supporting Refugee Children with Special Educational Needs: A Qualitative Case Study from Türkiye Nurşen Okur, Turkey

Refugee children often face serious challenges in accessing inclusive education, especially when they have special educational needs or neurodiverse conditions. In many cases, these needs remain undiagnosed because of limited resources, institutional barriers, and complex family situations. As a result, schools often become the first places where such difficulties are noticed and addressed. In this context, teachers and school counsellors play an important role in supporting refugee children and helping them participate in the education system. However, the everyday experiences of these professionals in working with refugee students who have special educational needs have not been widely explored. This study aims to examine how teachers and school counsellors support refugee students with special educational needs in Turkish schools and how cooperation between different educational actors contributes to inclusive practices. The research uses a qualitative case study design. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers and school counsellors working in schools that have refugee student populations in Eskişehir and Adıyaman, Türkiye. The interviews will focus on participants’ experiences, the challenges they face, and the strategies they use to support refugee children with learning difficulties or neurodiverse conditions. The data will be analysed using thematic analysis to identify common patterns related to classroom practices, institutional cooperation, and inclusion strategies. The study contributes to the literature on

inclusive education and refugee studies by showing how school professionals support vulnerable children in everyday educational settings. It also highlights the role of schools as important spaces for social inclusion for refugee children with different learning needs.

Children and Deviant Behavior in the Digital Age

Lika Chimchiuri, Georgia

This paper discusses the diverse aspects of children's deviant behavior in the digital age and the contemporary challenges associated with them. Technological progress has created a new social reality, where children's risks have transformed and acquired unusual ones, such as cyberbullying, online radicalization, and digital addiction. The paper analyzes the psychological impact of cyberbullying, a virtual form of aggression, on adolescents, as well as social problems and mental health improvements. Special attention is paid to the processes of online radicalization, algorithmic manipulations of extremist and group parameters in the regions to attract vulnerable youth. In addition, digital addiction is discussed as a behavioral problem that hinders the cognitive development and socialization of the child. The selected part is the role of predictive behavioral analysis in the field of child protection. Data processing enables early identification of potential information, but this technology raises an ethical dilemma: privacy versus security. The paper critically assesses the balance between ensuring the safety of the child and excessive intrusion into his or her personal space. The topic presents such key issues as: Virtual aggression - the dynamics of cyberbullying and prevention mechanisms. Algorithmic threats - ways of radicalization on digital platforms. Technological addiction - the impact of addiction on neuropsychological formation. Data analysis - the use of artificial intelligence to predict risks. Ethical balance - the conflict of interests of privacy and security. In conclusion, recommendations are presented on a complex approach, which involves both refining legislative regulations and raising the level of digital literacy in society.

12

Development and validation of a questionnaire for measurement of minority stress in neurodiverse individuals

Jan Gierzyński, Poland

Minority Stress is a specific, chronic type of stress experienced by people belonging to minority groups because of their minority identity and belonging to these groups (Meyer, 2003). Until recently, research on minority stress has mainly focused on people from sexual minorities (Meyer, 2003) and gender minorities (Hendricks & Testa, 2012; Testa et al., 2015). Only recently has the minority stress theory included the population of individuals on the autism spectrum, treating them as a specific minority group (Botha & Frost, 2020). However, this population remains relatively under-researched in terms of their minority stress experiences. Furthermore, people with other neurodiverse conditions, such as ADHD, have not been considered a minority population at all thus far, even though they may be perceived by society as different due to their characteristics and behavior. With improved diagnostics and growing public awareness of neurodiversity, it is important to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of neurodiverse individuals, which in turn will help to develop better and more adequate methods of support and assistance. The aim of the research project is to gain a deeper understanding of the minority stress among neurodiverse people and to develop a novel questionnaire to quantitatively measure it. Importantly, neurodiverse individuals are also involved in the project as consultants so that the final tool can accurately reflect their experiences and how they perceive them. The project also includes the validation

of the questionnaire on a sample of neurodiverse adults - with autism and/or ADHD diagnosis or self-identifying as those.

The romanticisation of suffering and self-destruction in the emo subculture – an analysis of cultural discourses and narratives

Zuzanna Chałubińska, Poland

Contemporary discourses on teenage subcultures increasingly emphasise the aestheticisation of suffering. This is especially true of the emo subculture, which since the beginning of the 21st century has been associated with music characterised by a rebellious attitude towards life, unconventional appearance and a specific lifestyle. The narrative surrounding emo also includes the romanticisation of mental illness and self-destructive behaviour, which pose significant challenges in terms of perspectives on youth, mental health and emotions. In media and popular discourse, the emo subculture is often presented as an environment that aestheticises suffering, suicide and mental crisis. The speech is theoretical and analytical in character and based on an analysis of the literature on the subject. The aim is to critically present the romanticisation of mental illness and self-destruction not as a one-dimensional threat, but as a complex cultural phenomenon that serves expressive, identity and community functions among young people. This approach requires in-depth reflection and interpretative caution in studies of teenage subcultures, including the emo subculture.

An important element of the presentation will also be a reflection on the functions that narratives of suffering can serve for young people who identify with the emo subculture. Analysis of the literature on the subject indicates that the aestheticisation of depression can be a form of emotional expression, a tool for identity building and an element of community creation, rather than merely an affirmation of self-destruction. In this context, the study will also discuss research on the romanticisation of mental health issues in popular culture and social media.

Academic Teachers' Attitudes Toward State Higher Education Policy of Poland and Ukraine

Androszczuk Roman, Ukraine, Poland

This presentation examines how contemporary higher education policies function as disciplinary and biopolitical mechanisms shaping academic subjectivities in Poland and Ukraine - two post-communist countries with distinct trajectories of neoliberalization and institutional stability. Drawing from ongoing comparative doctoral research, I analyze how academic teachers navigate and resist neoliberal governance regimes that prioritize standardized metrics, entrepreneurial self-management, and accountability systems over scholarly autonomy and collective knowledge production. The study employs a constructivist-interpretative methodology complemented by Foucauldian critical analysis (power/knowledge, governmentality, disciplinarization, technologies of the self) to investigate how policy language constructs "regimes of truth" about what constitutes valuable knowledge, valuable scholars, and valuable universities. Through online questionnaires and in-depth interviews with academics across diverse institutional contexts, the research reveals how neoliberal governmentality operates through: panoptic surveillance systems (parametrization, impact factors, h-index, continuous audits and evaluations); normalization mechanisms creating entrepreneurial academic subjects who self-monitor and optimize their "academic capital"; and disciplinary techniques that transform universities into factories of measurable outputs rather than spaces of critical inquiry.

Workshops

Workshop on development of digital social stories *dr Agnieszka Siedler, dr Ewa Odachowska-Rogalska*

The aim of the course is to support participants in developing practical competencies in designing digital social stories (Digital Social Stories – DSS) as an evidence-based educational approach that supports the social and emotional development of children with ASD. The EARLY-ASD project addresses a key need in teacher education by equipping pre-service teachers with specialized skills to support young children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

The project integrates experiential learning approaches through the use of digital social stories, aiming to reduce the gap between theory and practice in teacher education.

Workshop Writing Our Way Through the PhD: Collective Autoethnography for Wellbeing

Magdalena Pietrzak, Ewa Duda-Maciejewska, Julia Zbróg, Jagoda Apanasewicz, Jan Gierzyński, Patrycja Mika

A large body of research shows that doctoral studies are often associated with high levels of stress, uncertainty, and isolation. Yet many of the emotional and relational dimensions of the doctoral journey remain unaddressed within the academic environment. This interactive workshop invites doctoral researchers to engage in collective autoethnographic analysis as a way of reflecting on and making sense of their lived experiences of doctoral education. Participants will actively engage in guided reflection supported by generative AI tools, and discussion in small groups. Together, we will explore how collective autoethnography can serve both as a research methodology and as a practice of self-understanding, validation, and community building. To evaluate the potential impact of the workshop, participants will be invited to complete brief research measures before and after the session. Depending on participants' interest and consent, the workshop may also form the basis for a collaborative autoethnographic publication, allowing attendees to further develop their reflections into scholarly output. The workshop requires active participation and is intended for doctoral researchers interested in reflecting their academic experiences, connecting with peers, and exploring new possibilities for wellbeing, and knowledge production.

From Autistic School Experience to Inclusive Teacher Education: A Participatory Workshop with an Educational Specialist

Gesa Kobs, Laura Schwörer, Julia Albrecht

This workshop explores how the perspective of an autistic learner can inform the preparation of preservice teachers for inclusive and neurodiversity-sensitive educational practice. It addresses the guiding question: What can future teachers learn from the school experiences of an autistic person in order to create learning environments that promote participation, understanding and appropriate support? The workshop is based on a participatory approach to teacher education in which people with disabilities contribute directly to the professional learning of future teachers. An educational specialist from the Institute for Inclusive Education at Kiel University will share and reflect on

her experiences as an autistic learner at school, with particular attention to barriers, supportive practices and expectations towards teachers. Her perspective will serve as the basis for a structured dialogue with participants on implications for inclusive teaching practice. The workshop will also introduce the educational approach of the Institute for Inclusive Education. At the institute, people with disabilities complete a qualification programme to become educational specialists and subsequently contribute to university teaching and professional development. As ambassadors for inclusion and participation, they work together with academic staff to design and deliver teaching formats that encourage reflection, perspective-taking and the development of inclusive professional competencies. Participants will be invited to reflect on how the perspectives of autistic learners and people with disabilities can be systematically integrated into teacher education. In doing so, the workshop presents a good practice example of inclusive higher education and contributes to the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in teacher education.

Meeting Diverse Learning Needs: Differentiated Instruction for Students with Autism in Inclusive Classrooms

Sinan Kalkan, Aysegul Sukran OZ

Individual differences refer to the unique constellation of developmental, cognitive, communicative, sensory, emotional, cultural, and environmental characteristics that shape how children learn and participate in educational settings. Among autistic learners, these differences are especially pronounced, reflecting the diversity of strengths, interests, sensory experiences, communication styles, and support needs that exist across the autism spectrum. Contemporary autism research increasingly emphasizes a strengths-based and neurodiversity-informed perspective that recognizes autistic learners as diverse individuals rather than a homogeneous group (Pellicano et al., 2022). Differentiated instruction is a learner-centered approach in which teachers proactively adapt curriculum, instructional methods, learning environments, and assessment practices to respond to students' varying readiness levels, interests, strengths, and support needs. In inclusive classrooms, differentiation is essential because equitable participation is achieved not by providing identical instruction, but by ensuring meaningful access to learning for every student. Research consistently identifies flexible teaching practices, environmental adaptations, collaborative problem-solving, and responsive teacher–student relationships as key elements of successful inclusion for autistic learners (Pettersson-Bloom & Holmqvist, 2022). This interactive 90-minute workshop is designed for pre-service teachers, classroom teachers, special educators, and professionals working with autistic children. Participants will examine how individual differences influence learning, engagement, behavior, communication, and participation in inclusive settings. Through autism-focused case studies, collaborative discussions, reflective activities, and hands-on lesson design tasks, participants will explore neurodiversity, resilience, risk and protective factors, sensory differences, learner strengths, motivation, temperament, and culturally responsive practices. The workshop is grounded in adult learning principles and emphasizes active engagement, peer collaboration, and authentic application. Participants will leave with practical, evidence-informed strategies for designing differentiated and inclusive learning environments that recognize and support the diversity within autism.

Poster Session

Activities of a teacher co-organizing education supporting the inclusion of neurodiverse students in early childhood education (POSTER), Małgorzata Mróz

16

Currently, the Polish education system is developing a model of inclusive education as a high-quality education for all. Education for all means creating a comfortable school space for all students, regardless of their needs and abilities. According to the principles of inclusive education, the teaching and learning process for able-bodied and physically healthy students takes place alongside students with a diagnosis of special education needs. Co-organizing teachers play a crucial role in the integration of developmentally diverse students. This presentation will present the activities of a teacher co-organizing education supporting the inclusion of neurodiverse students in early childhood education.

Neuroadaptive Teaching Assistant: A Digital Tool for Real-Time Inclusion and Engagement of Students with Diverse Learning Needs POSTER, Denis Filimonov

Inclusive education for children with special educational needs (SEN), including ASD and ADHD, requires continuous adaptation of instructional strategies—a task that places significant cognitive load on educators, particularly in online settings. While early childhood and primary education increasingly rely on digital platforms, teachers lack real-time tools to objectively measure student engagement and adapt lesson delivery without disrupting the flow of instruction. We propose a neuroadaptive teaching assistant designed as an interactive web-based platform. The system collects behavioral metrics (e.g., line count, tool-switching frequency, error rate, and student-initiated signals) without the use of cameras or microphones, thereby protecting student privacy. These metrics, combined with a neuroadaptive profile generated from initial diagnostic information and teacher micro-assessments, enable the algorithm to provide immediate, non-intrusive recommendations to the educator. The platform suggests real-time adjustments to lesson tempo, visual presentation, or task format and can automatically implement supportive interventions—such as dimming inactive screen areas, highlighting key content, or issuing gentle audio-visual cues—to re-engage the learner. A functional prototype has been developed, featuring synchronized interactive whiteboards, dedicated virtual rooms, and a teacher dashboard for monitoring attention states. By compensating for functional limitations and reducing extraneous cognitive load, the assistant enhances student participation and supports the psychological and pedagogical rehabilitation goals of inclusive education. This poster will present the system architecture, the algorithm's logic for mapping behavioral data to adaptive strategies, and preliminary feedback from pilot testing. The tool offers a scalable solution for online schools, private tutors, and early intervention programs aiming to improve learning outcomes and retention among neurodiverse young learners.

Inclusive Education and Neurodiversity: Theory, Research and Practice. Volume Edited by Joanna Madalińska-Michalak, Anna Odrowąż-Coates, Agnieszka Siedler and Sinan Kalkan – POSTER.

Inclusive Education and Neurodiversity: Theory, Research and Practice, is the outcome of collaborative work developed within the Erasmus+ project EARLY-ASD – Upskilling Preservice Teachers to Support Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder through Digital Social Stories (2024-1-PL01-KA220-HED-000246304), coordinated by the University of Warsaw. The project brings together an international consortium of higher education institutions and educational technology organisations committed to improving teacher education and inclusive practices for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), starting from early childhood.

EARLY-ASD adopts a cross-disciplinary approach, integrating expertise from special education, early childhood education and care (ECEC), and educational technologies. The consortium aims to strengthen national and international cooperation among institutions involved in teacher education, with a particular focus on preparing pre-service and early-career teachers to support the social, emotional, and educational development of autistic children. In doing so, the project contributes to building sustainable networks of collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity building across participating countries.

Rethinking Social Stories: Toward Neuroaffirmative Practices.

POSTER, dr Agnieszka Siedler et al.

Using social stories as an example, we show that therapeutic support in early intervention can be neuroaffirming from day one. A child's social skills can be developed without teaching them that they must become someone else in order to be accepted.

Social Stories are one of the most commonly used interventions in preschools. However, they can often function as a subtle form of masking training. When designed in a neuroaffirming way, they support authenticity, agency, and a positive autistic identity. Poster inspired by findings of the EU funded project: 2024-1-PL01-KA220-HED-000246304: EARLY-ASD – Upskilling Preservice Teachers to Support Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder through Digital Social Stories.

A Study on Hindi-English Code-Mixing in India: A Socio-Technical Perspective, Nibedita Roy, Apurbalal Senpati, India

Code-mixing is quite prevalent, particularly in spoken discourse and social media texts. Code-mixing is a linguistic phenomenon, where words, phrases, or expressions from one language are inserted into another language within a single sentence or conversation. It is now widespread in digital communication, especially in multilingual contexts like India. English serves as an official language in the majority of states in India and hence most of the code-mixing instances English forms one part of code-mixing instances. Code-mixing among Indian languages such as Hindi, Assamese, and Bengali has relatively limited impact compared to code-mixing involving English [1]. So far, code-mixing has been observed mainly in social media texts, spoken communication, and informal discourse. Recently, it has been observed that Hindi terms are intentionally inserted into many official English documents. It can be observed in official notices, government websites, and even in many textbooks. So far, this issue has been addressed mainly in social media texts from a language-processing perspective

or in studies on neologisms [2]. This paper critically examines the socio-political aspects and government policies. Additionally, it attempts to address issues related to machine translation arising from code-mixing. To conduct this study, we collected code-mixed government documents, including official notices, government webpages, and textbooks recommended by various government agencies. So far, we have collected more than one hundred such documents and meticulously analyzed them to identify code-mixing elements. Analysis of these elements reveals that, in most cases, key Hindi terminologies are blended into English documents. In some instances, Hindi slogans or key phrases reflecting governmental visions or goals are embedded within English texts. Some of such instances are given in the following table. Additionally, we performed machine translation on these documents and highlighted the issues that arise.

POSTERS by doctoral students and doctoral candidates

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