

Summary

For years, tertiary education has been in the focus of school policy makers, research teams and groups of stakeholders. For example the communiqué of UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education 2009 in Paris repeatedly stressed social importance and responsibility of tertiary education which should help humanity with solving many social, economical, scientific and cultural problems. The aim of this theoretical-empirical thesis is to constitute terminological apparatus and informational base for deeper understanding of support systems for university students with special needs, to propose possible models or scenarios of supportive activities and to compare situation in the Czech environment with selected examples from foreign institutions.

The author defines and analyses the system of support for students with special needs in tertiary education and presents theories suitable for their description and understanding. Supportive structure of education is defined as a system of institutions and services, which helps to create optimal conditions, to solve problems and to remove shortcomings in functioning of an educational system. The support is understood as a system that consists of legislative and organisational measures, resources, interventions and services provided by educational institutions and other providers and that should operate in a coherent and coordinated way to have in the end positive effect on the recipient of the support (a student) in all phases of study (before admission to university, in the course of study and during transition to working environment) in order to achieve intended learning outcomes within a study programme.

Methodology of this work is based on comparative scheme recommended by Baraday and advanced by his followers. A system of support was delimited as a unit of comparison with respect of wider context. The structure of the comparison was divided into four parts: (1) context, general situation of tertiary education in a country, (2) specific legislation for tertiary education including equal opportunities, (3) access conditions for students with special needs and continuity of educational levels, (4) support within selected institutions of tertiary education.

In the end of this thesis the author generalises two models of support systems – centralized and decentralized – and suggests criteria for their internal and external evaluation.