

HISTORY

HISTORY OF THE FACULTY

The legal predecessor of the Faculty was the Special Education College for Primary Teachers, founded in 1900 as a higher education institution.

The first special education institute in Hungary was established for deaf students in 1802 in Vác, a city on the Danube Bend, 60 km from the capital. During the 19th century the national network of special education institutions gradually evolved.

The first special educators studied in Vienna. During the last decade of the 19th century different special courses for practitioners were separately established for those working with deaf, blind, mentally retarded and with stuttering pupils at respective special educational establishments. On the advice of Under-Secretary of State Sándor NÁRAY-SZABÓ MD, these courses were unified by the Department of Special Education of the Ministry of Church and Education Affairs in 1900.

This decision was not only due to economical and /or organisational reasons. The merging of these courses signified a new paradigm in Hungary that was unique even by international comparison. It reflects the professional conviction, that in a system of population-specific institutions for disabled persons the different professional responsibilities should be realised through a global remedial-educational process. Special educators must acquire an overall grasp of the elements of this process. They have to understand the total population with special educational needs in a comprehensive context of causes and consequences of impairments and disabilities as well as of their educational and remedial possibilities, and of the special conditions for socialisation and of the core situations of this process. They should develop a global professional identity for being able to participate in the abovementioned process in any given situation as organisers, guides or supporters.

Here we have to draw attention to an important feature of understanding the responsibilities of special educators in Hungary as identified by the first scientists and practitioners in this field. Already by the beginning of the 20th century they emphasised that special educational support should be provided to persons with disabilities throughout their whole lifespan, “from the cradle to the grave”. Even if the curriculum of teacher training focused on school education and if the services for the realisation of lifelong educational support could not be established, this way of thinking contributed a great deal to the unique professional identity and dedication of several generations of special educators in Hungary.

The unified Special Education College for Primary Teachers has functioned in Budapest since 1904. At first it offered a two year full-time training course to professionals with a qualification in primary or secondary education or in theology. Graduates received a comprehensive training and consequently were awarded with a general diploma in special education. They were then qualified to carry out all educational responsibilities in institutions for persons with disabilities.

The comprehensive model of training special educators was maintained for some decades by increasing the duration of training gradually up to 4 years (in 1928) in order to prepare students for the continuously widening range of responsibilities. In the course of time, however

it was necessary to reorganise the whole structure of training. Consequently students have received training in various optional population-specific fields since 1963.

The implementation of specialised training has been a gradual process. An increasing number of fields and recently (since 1992) even function-specific sections (for teachers and educational therapists) within each field have been offered as options by also maintaining the fundamental modules in special education. Specialised training followed first a three-field scheme and from 1972 a two-field one. The reformed curriculum that has been effective since 1992 introduced further important steps in specialisation.¹

In addition to the training of special educators the former College was the first school in Hungary to introduce the training of social professionals at college level (BA). The training of “social organisers” started in 1972, and the training of general social workers in 1990. For nearly 20 years the training of social organisers has prepared professionals for the care of the elderly, rehabilitation and mental health. When the process of developing a training course in social work in preparation for the reform of social provision started in 1987 it was with good reason that the committee elaborating the BA level training was led by experts from our College.²

In 1975 the College of Special Education adopted the name of one of its former directors, Gusztáv BÁRCZI. In the year 2000 the College was integrated into Eötvös Loránd University as the Bárcki Gusztáv Faculty of Special Education.

Our institution has always been a centre for undergraduate and further training, for scientific research and for professional development. Being the only institution of this kind it has always maintained close contact with the field. During the past 100 years the former college has become the centre for professionals working with persons with disabilities and one of the most important research centres in this field in Hungary, with a significant international reputation. Scientific research has always been conducted here from a multidisciplinary approach.

In the first half of the 20th century research was carried out mainly in the Laboratory of Remedial Psychology, led by Pál RANSCHBURG. Most of the early professors of the college started their professional career in the Laboratory, and became founders of disciplines themselves.

Pál RANSCHBURG (1870-1945) was a neurologist and psychiatrist, the founder of special educational or remedial psychology in Hungary. He was the first researcher to investigate and describe the “rule of homogeneous inhibition” in the psychology of memory, that became known in German literature as “Ranschburgsches Phaenomen”. Professor RANSCHBURG developed several assessment procedures and measurement tools and was also the first scientist in the world to describe disorders of reading, arithmetics and writing using the terms Legasthenie, Arithmasthenie, etc in his publications in German.

SOME OTHER NOTABLE SCIENTISTS AND PROFESSORS

Artúr SARBÓ (1867-1943), was a neurologist with international reputation and the founder of the science of speech and language therapy in Hungary.

József VÉRTES O. (1881-1953) was a psychologist and a researcher into the memory functions of persons with disabilities. He developed the general theoretical framework of special

1 For the description of the present structure of training please see the relevant chapter.

2 For details on the historical and social background of this process please see the chapter on social work training.

education and that of remedial psychology and founded the first primary and secondary school for children with neurosis and psychopathy.

Zoltán TÓTH (1883–1940) was a special educator who elaborated the system and terminology of the science of remedial education. His research on the memory and imagination of the blind brought him international reputation. He was the first vice president of the International Association of Special Education.

Lipót (Leopold) SZONDI (1893–1986) was a psychiatrist, the founder of fate analysis (a new direction in psychoanalysis), who elaborated the famous Szondi test, a projective procedure for assessing personality. After World War II he emigrated to Switzerland and founded the Stiftung-Szondi-Institut in Zurich in 1961.

Gusztáv BÁRCZI (1890–1964) was an ear-nose and throat specialist and a special educator. He elaborated the world famous procedure for countering surdomutitas corticalis. He was a scientist of international reputation epitomising the fourth phase (1930–1960) in the 400 year history of auditive training in hearing impairment. Professor BÁRCZI modernised the education of persons with moderate and severe mental retardation in Hungary and developed the educational programme of “Barczy Haus” in Brandenburg-Görden, Germany (1958).

Flóra ILLYÉS-KOZMUTZA (1905–1995) was a special educator and a psychologist. As a disciple of Lipót SZONDI she carried out research in family tree analysis. In the late 1930's she conducted the psychological part of a multidisciplinary longitudinal research study that aimed to create more equal opportunities for the healthy development of children living in the poorest and most disadvantaged families. The research team proved the significant influence of basic nutrition and other environmental factors on the physical, mental and emotional development of these children. Professor ILLYÉS-KOZMUTZA made an important contribution to the development of remedial psychology and was instrumental in modernising the training at our institution.

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Gusztáv Bárczi



Pál Ranschburg



Flóra Illyés-Kozmutza



Artúr Sarbó



Zoltán Tóth



József Vértes O.