Inclusive Education: Socio-Psychological, Educational, and Social Aspects

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Abstract

This article includes the description of the research project „Inclusive Education: Socio-Psychological, Educational, and Social Aspects". The four countries Finland, Lithuania, Poland and Austria investigated the question how inclusive education can be successful. They analysed best practice examples under the aspects of social interaction, didactics/teaching methods and learning environment. The aim of this project is to support the equality of all learners concerning socio-psychological, educational and social aspects.

Keywords:	Schlüsselwörter:
Inclusion	Inklusion
Heterogeneity	Heterogenität
Differentiation	Differenzierung
Collaboration	Kollaboration
Inclusive Didactics	Inklusive Didaktik

1   Introduction

How can inclusive education be successful? This question was the focus of the InclEd research project. Best practice examples from Finland, Lithuania, Poland, and Austria were analysed with regard to social interaction, didactics/teaching methods, and learning environments with the aim of supporting the equality of all learners in these aspects. Students of primary teacher education will be supported by the provision of inclusive examples on an eLearning platform.

The scientific study is published in English. In all four countries, conferences for school authorities and teachers were organized to present the research project and to give ideas for quality development in inclusive education.

2   Research Question

What socio-educational aspects facilitate and enhance the quality of inclusive education?

2.1   Sub-questions

1.   What interpersonal interaction factors on the socio-psychological level of inclusive education prompt the manifestation of respect, dignity, equal rights, assistance, acceptance, co-operation, and willingness to be together?

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2. What factors of the educational reality of inclusive education determine full-fledged planning of the educational process as well as its implementation, curriculum personalization, assistance organization, and development of professional partnership networks?

3. How does the expression of inclusive education reflect the country's socio-cultural environment?

2.2 Dimensions of research analysis

1. Acknowledging every child's unique development and understanding that all children have many things in common

2. Socio-educational culture that encourages learning together (recognizing that in such interactions every person's uniqueness enriches the joint experience, and an individual failure leads towards a joint failure)

3. Inclusive education is built on the grounds of acknowledging an individual's strengths.

4. Learning assistance eliminates the obstacle causing the learning difficulties.

5. Sharing responsibility as the preconditions for every pupil's success (Spratt & Florian 2013, 2015)

6. **Other …**

3 Research Design

The research was carried out in the Integrative Lernwerkstatt Brigittenau (Inclusive Learning Centre Brigittenau) school. During the research, two classes were observed. In each class there are five pupils with special needs, and two pupils who were seriously mentally retarded; the others had learning disabilities. The two teachers took notes about their teaching experiences in their pedagogical diaries for four weeks. The researchers observed two classes for 10 days during lessons, breaks, and lunch time. The two special needs teachers were interviewed separately. The main themes of the interviews were the relationships between the pupils in the class, the relationship between the teachers and the pupils in the class, and the cooperation and communication between professionals in the school and in professional networks. Also, nine pupils were interviewed for the study. Parents from the monitored classes were interviewed as a group. The social structure of the monitored classes was mapped by socio-metric measuring. The pupils of both classes were asked various questions about their relationships with each other.

4 Analysed aspects

4.1 Interpersonal interaction between pupils

Adequate learning arrangements (collaborative learning, mutual support, choosing and changing learning places autonomously, etc.) and a good class community (pleasure to be together, creating equality, acceptance between the pupils, etc.) are essential for inclusive education.

4.2 Interpersonal interaction between pupils and teachers

In inclusive classes, learning and relationships are tightly interconnected. Also, good interaction between teachers and pupils is the basis for successful inclusive learning. The main factors are respectful interactions, support, equality, and frequent opportunities for participation.

4.3 Professional interaction network of teacher

A constructive, professional interaction network of teachers is an important basis for successful inclusive education. The main factors are the recognition of professionalism, cooperation between teachers, support from the school community, and a good network with other institutions.

4.4 Educational interaction of pupils' parents

Parents have a major role in school life as key partners. Important aspects for successful cooperation with parents are creating good communication between parents and teachers, mutual support, cooperation and collaboration between parents and teachers, and giving parents opportunities to influence school activities.

4.5 Learning – Teaching approach

The data generated in the Learning Centre Brigittenau were used to determine the most advantageous strategies for inclusive teaching. Six dimensions were identified for analysis: learning attitude, learning design, learning strategies, teaching methods, support for teachers, and the teaching process.

Adequate teaching methods include, for example, alternating teacher-centred instruction and autonomous work of pupils, differentiation, individual support, use of alternate settings, independent learning, peer learning, teaching current topics, and playful, creative, and inquiry-based learning.

The last part of the Erasmus+ project is to create two online courses in which every participating university takes part. Students of the four universities will attend and will receive an international degree.

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