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Inclusive Education – Bildung Supporting Systems

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A very warm welcome! I am very happy to have the chance to talk to you to a topic I am not only involved as Vicepresident of the KFÖ and in this case I am responsible for education but also a professor and researcher at the “University college of teacher education of Christian churches in Wien/Krems”

The importance of inclusion

In 2010 the European Commission pointed out that one in six people in the European Union are disabled in different ways. Impairments do not often exclude people from some parts of life and society but they also cause poverty because of the limited access to employment. Fully put into practice the UN convention of Human Rights and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights the EC provided a framework to implement national strategies. The goal is to guarantee full participation to everybody in every part of life, society and economy. National strategies have to cover eight paradigms and areas: Accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health, and external action (EC, 2010:3). In the area of education it postulates lifelong inclusive teaching and learning. Disabled people should have the chance to attend the same schools and educational organisations as all the others. Disabled children and students must have the possibility to be integrated in regular systems by providing the support they need to participate equally (EC 2010:8). With this declaration the EC renewed the statements of the UNESCO world conference in Salamanca “on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and a Framework for Action” (UNESCO 1994). As a consequence national governments had to create plans to realize this strategy. Two decades after this first act it is obvious that the process is still ongoing and it needs a lot of effort and open-minded policy makers as well as stakeholders in the educational systems to realize the goals that were proclaimed to be reached by 2020: inclusive teaching in all schools and individual support catering to all special needs to develop self-conscious and autonomous people

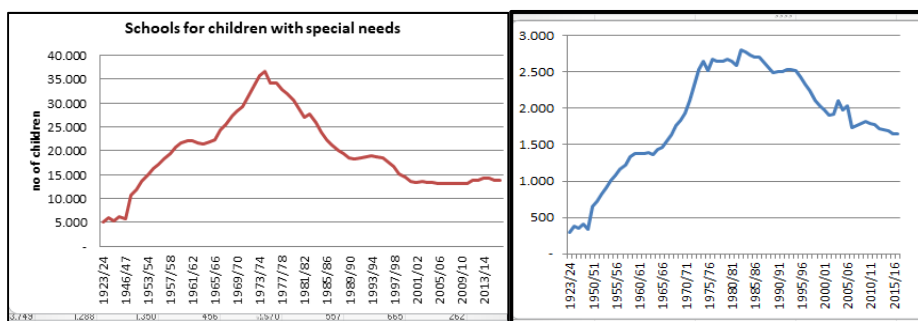
The national strategy

Although in the English language “integration” and “inclusion” are used synonymously German uses them as two different terms in educational matters. “Inclusion” means to provide different material for all the individual pupils with all their different abilities and needs. They all have access to everything, the teachers care for all of them. Whereas “integration” is realized as teaching disabled children in regular classes towards a special curriculum by grouping them separately and supporting them by specially trained and educated teachers using special material. Since the establishment of schools for children with special needs by law in 1962 the number of these schools first increased from 235 in 1972/73 to 349 in 1982/83. There were different schools for different types of handicaps

– for severe physical and linguistic disabilities, for deaf and blind pupils, for multi-handicapped pupils, for pupils with behavioural issues and for pupils with limited cognitive abilities. Since 1991 the number of pupils who attend schools for special needs has declined due to the policy and the results of the attempts in integration. They were succeeded by integration classes in regular schools. In order to become integrated in regular classes children need a special diagnosis (“Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf”) that describes their needs. It was first put into practice only for primary school children and in 1996 expanded to secondary school children (Seel, Scheipl 2004: 94-99). All these children are taught according to a special national curriculum for handicapped people.

The development of schools for children with special needs

Since the establishment of special need education the number of children increased until the midst of the 1970ths up to around 36 500 children in 2677 classes. In this time attending a school for special needs meant to be excluded from good job. Parents were only informed about the decision that their child had to attend this school. So special needs school were not quite well accepted. After the climax around 1975 the number of children as well as the numbers of classes declined. It is obvious that the proportion between the number of children and the number of classes got smaller so that nowadays there are fewer children in the classes. Schools for children with special needs are well accepted and although parents have the right to apply for integration in a regular school there are very many who decide their child should attend a special school because of the support, the care and the resources.



The current research project

The project deals with two main questions:

(1) In how far can findings about successful inclusive teaching be transferred into the context of inclusive language teaching?

These questions will be investigated by an empirical-qualitative method. About 30 teachers who have experience in integration classes in either primary or secondary schools will be asked using guided interviews (Mayring 2010)

The category-based results will be used to work on the second question:

(2) Which didactics and methods are appropriate for inclusive language teaching?

The project, which is located at the University College of Teacher Education of Christian Churches (Wien/Krems) in Krems, is still ongoing and there are some publications in press at the moment.

Findings in behalf of our today's topic

Next to findings concerning teaching esp. language teaching there is a very important focus on the (school) system and the relationship between all the participants.

Successful (inclusive) teaching and learning always depends on the participants – the teachers, the pupils and nevertheless on external predispositions. It is based on their competences, their knowledge and their self-concept, their attitudes, their beliefs and on their involvement and relationship, as also John Hattie pointed out in his meta-analysis.

Successful inclusion also needs a lot more resources than now – in behalf of the teachers, expert teachers, material, appropriate school building, etc.

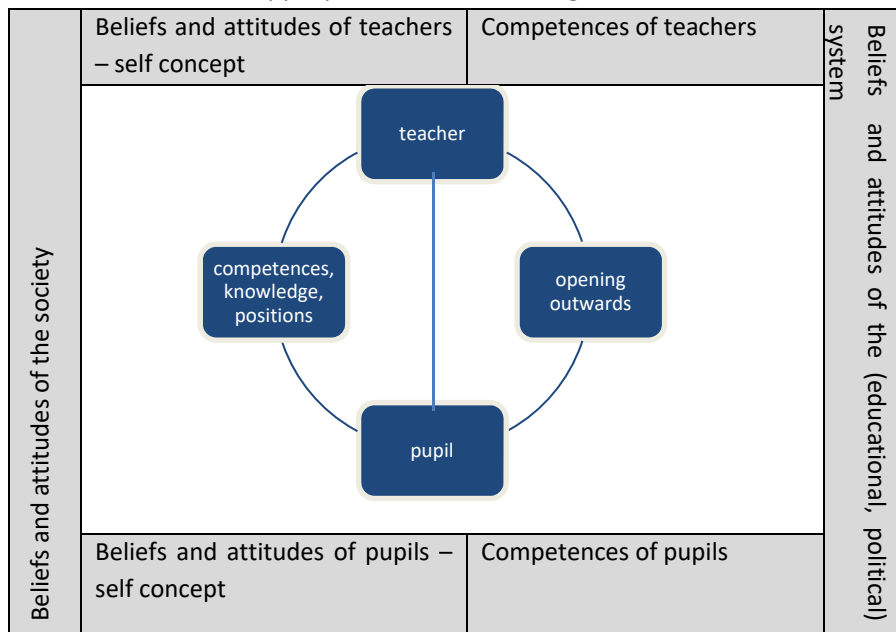
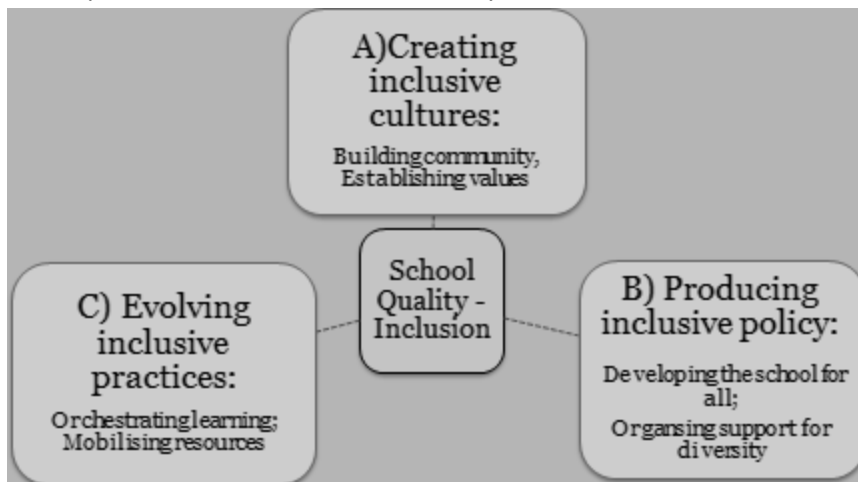


Figure 1: Modified framework of inclusion (Kiel, Weiß 2016:281)

The index for inclusion

Booth/ Ainscow (2002) created the “index for inclusion”. It has become an appropriate instrument to develop schools and other educational systems.



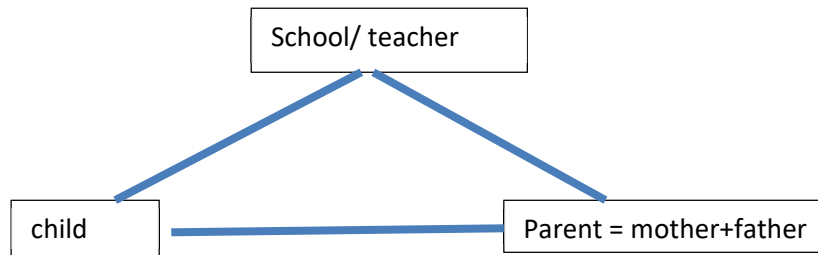
The cooperation within the system and with environment plays a crucial role in this index.

In the 1st dimension (A) – creating inclusive cultures – the construction of communities that include parents is as important as the agreement about the value of inclusion.

Inclusive policy at school means that all parts have to communicate in behalf of children diagnoses, supporting strategies, the transitional process but also severe problems and organisational rules.

The implementation of inclusive practices last but not least means to support the inclusive education by a wide range of resources – both personal and substantial.

The role of parents – the pedagogical triangle



Inclusive practices at schools are based on shared responsibility that includes regular meeting, enough time to discuss and involves open minded people with a focus on the strengths of the children and a more holistic picture of the child that helps to support the development of the individual person by adequate diagnosis. Parents should get to feeling to be welcome at school at any time – not only in case of urgent problems. Today children-parents-teachers-talks become more and more established at schools.

In this case fathers should play a more important, for many of them maybe a new role. In my experience as a teacher and headmistress I most of the time had to talk to mothers. They came to the former so called “parents-teachers-talk”, where most of the times problems were discussed, mother were involved in the creation of school programmes, school events, they joined their primary school child or their handicapped child during outdoor excursions. Only in urgent cases – especially if there was a conflict between a teacher and a child – fathers appeared. Not many of them found it valuable to be a partner of school in educational belongings.

The current campaign of the KFÖ about the **value of being a father** should motivate fathers to play an even more important part in their children’s lives. They should not miss the role of their lives.

Therefore – if we talk about supporting systems one of the most important is situated within families – the father! Don’t forget it and don’t miss that chance!

Thank you for your attention!

