

BOOK REVIEW

Uusiautti, S., & Määttä, K. (2018). *New methods of special education*. Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH

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The book's collection of new research topics in the field of special education, in this case, Finland, reviewed by experts from the University of Lapland, illustrates the bridging role of the volume. It focuses on special needs groups, such as those with autism spectrum disorders, people with emotional and behavioural disorders, people with special diseases, and high-ability students, who are most challenging for inclusive pedagogy. The main purpose of presenting research on students with special needs is to make the inclusive pedagogical process increasingly successful. The introductory and concluding chapters of the book are strongly philosophical and encourage the reader to think further. After some general thought, I will also present the values of the chapters.

In the interpretation of inclusion, integration and quality of life are nowadays interrelated. The relationship between inclusion and quality of life is represented by any endeavour that uses specific methods, tools, and content in the best interests of the child. It takes into account the differences between children in the design, organization and delivery of pedagogical procedures; and is based on the child's activity. Inclusive pedagogy is capable of adapting to the different personality traits, learning styles and rhythms of children, due to the preparedness of the teachers, the organizational forms, and the material conditions. In the area of teacher education, preparation for effective education is essential for inclusive education. Due to the reinterpretation of the concept of disability in international practice, the term 'assessment' has been suggested instead of 'diagnosis'. It has become an important aspect that condition knowledge should consider people with different atypical development rather than disability, and validate their thinking in the biological, psycho-social model. As one of the disciplines of educational science, special education can employ rich variants of differentiated education based on inclusive values. The introduction of new principles, expressions and practices is one of the main characteristics of the desired shift in special education; the widening of competences; the enrichment of pedagogical, therapeutic and rehabilitation knowledge and practice; the emphasizing the importance of prevention and early development. In our age, it has become important that special education, with its particular system of activities and scientific commitment, can integrate

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the growing multidisciplinary knowledge in practice, to develop it more effectively and efficiently in accordance with the new challenges. This is only possible if there is a change of attitude, a paradigm shift, which does not focus on biological, organic deficiencies, but on social, ethical and psychic aspects (Garel, 2010; Hevesi, 2018; Reindal, 2016).

In addition to the educator, the operation of an institution with an inclusive pedagogical approach also involves working with parents; accepting community; child-centred pedagogy; sufficient motivation; orientation to strengths; differentiated education and provision of appropriate material resources. The choice of methods of inclusive pedagogy is guided by the reform pedagogical concepts and the principles of cognitive psychology and constructive didactics (e.g., playing, free learning, exploratory learning, creative expression, relaxation). The realization of inclusion is thus closely linked to objective factors such as the scene of the institution; equipment, tools, special teaching aids; group size. On the other hand, it is related to subjective factors, such as the attitudes of the educational body; the personality and preparedness of a given teacher; special methods; the special education teacher and the other supporting professionals; and the group (Hevesi, 2018; Seligman, 2011).

According to researchers of life quality, one of the most important sources of happiness is the inclusive and supportive community. Following the perspective of social research, for the sake of the individual's well-being, individuals use the connections of their environment to form their social capital. More and more researches confirm that individuals and communities with adequate social capital stock are characterized by a better mental/health status and extensive socialization.

The introductory study of the volume draws the reader's attention to the present challenges of special education. It illustrates the change in the political and philosophical background of the development of an inclusive school, based on the experience gained over the past decades. It is well known in Europe that the efficiency of the Finnish education system is among the most successful, as confirmed by PISA measurements. Efficiency is based, among other things, on the adaptability of the education system: it reacts quickly to environmental changes based on assessments. The quality of teacher education is outstanding worldwide, too. The authors take into account the factors that hinder the efficiency of the Finnish education system today. There are large groups of students in inclusive schools whose successful education requires the application of new research-based methods. Teachers need to become more aware of the emotional and learning characteristics of special needs groups in order to provide an adaptive learning environment at school. Teachers have an increasing role in working with parents to alleviate social polarization. The study highlights several sociological aspects that encode students' success in school. The value of the study is that it does not idealize the effectiveness of an inclusive school, but highlights aspects for improvement. It identifies important research directions. Thus, it examines the relationship between the impact system of the inclusive school and the efficiency of learning and shows the connections. The main objective of the authors is to describe how the school can prepare students for inclusive social life, ethical behaviour and civic awareness. The following chapters, based on the interesting aspects in the introduction, present the research conducted among student groups that provide current data for researchers and educators alike.

In the second chapter of intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorders and young adults with disabilities to education, life skills, career difficulties came into focus. For autism, the researchers investigated the ability to communicate and connect. The theoretical frameworks of the research are based on the most modern theories, using new ways methodologically.



Especially intriguing and innovative is the use of ethnographic research, which was applied in the investigation of autistic students. Research on young adults and people with disabilities was a participatory narrative approach, featuring the latest research methodology apparatus.

The third chapter includes research on children and adolescents with emotional and relationship disorders. We have a comprehensive theoretical framework and interesting research questions in each study. The novelty of the research is that the researchers examine the perspectives of the teachers and parents too, besides the students. Factors that hinder the success of an inclusive school are examined in real-life school settings. For example, classroom research raises contemporary methodological issues, such as mathematical problem solving, the impact of games on learning, and social relationships. The personal developmental effects of school communities can be experienced in problem situations and during games. It is worthwhile to favour cooperative techniques that develop ethical behaviour. It is particularly intriguing to look at the background of the social exclusion in this chapter. Early school leaving is a European problem, which may be caused by a deficiency of poor institutional atmosphere, the violence, the persistence of poor learning outcomes, school, etc. We can also learn about the small group teaching that increases the young prisoners' motivation to finish their compulsory education. In this case, the description of the methodology also provides with the research of different forms of teaching.

In chapter four, more and more common diseases, such as eating disorders and narcolepsy, are the subject of study. These special conditions are partly the effects of the messages of the globalized world on the individual's emotional life and thinking, and on the other hand, they are chronic conditions that disable the learner in everyday life in the school environment. Special education does not deal with such cases, so it is instructive for the reader to discuss the cases.

Chapter five discusses possible topics that are revitalizing special education today. Inclusion has been mentioned before, but in this chapter, the reader can draw on ideas that are part of the modern pedagogical paradigm. There are curricular recommendations, and we find real, pedagogically effective, planned activities on the philosophical basis of inclusion. The effects of collaboration, co-teaching or supplementary teachers are examined. The situation of particularly gifted students is also under investigation, as they are one of the groups that deserve special attention. Each study also reflects on essential issues in teacher education. Researchers believe that university education and classroom practice should be closely linked. The central question is what the influences that motivate talented learners to develop and build results are based on abilities and intrinsic motivation.

Summarizing the message of the book, we can say that we have a beneficial reading in our hands. It discusses the recent research questions and methods that can give impetus to special education today. The cited literature is extremely rich. Each study is rich in information in itself, but together they have coherent methodological lessons that I wholeheartedly recommend to the readers. It is a useful reading for researchers, teachers and parents alike.

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