

Paju, Birgit

Inclusive teaching requires staff collaboration and a sense of community throughout the school

Wicki, Monika T. [Hrsg.]; Törmänen, Minna R. K. [Hrsg.]: *Bildung für alle stärken. Ein Handbuch für die evidenzbasierte Entwicklung inklusiver Schulen. Bad Heilbrunn : Verlag Julius Klinkhardt 2025, S. 157-163*



Quellenangabe/ Reference:

Paju, Birgit: Inclusive teaching requires staff collaboration and a sense of community throughout the school - In: Wicki, Monika T. [Hrsg.]; Törmänen, Minna R. K. [Hrsg.]: *Bildung für alle stärken. Ein Handbuch für die evidenzbasierte Entwicklung inklusiver Schulen. Bad Heilbrunn : Verlag Julius Klinkhardt 2025, S. 157-163* - URN: urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-332241 - DOI: 10.25656/01:33224; 10.35468/6167-11

<https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-332241>

<https://doi.org/10.25656/01:33224>

in Kooperation mit / in cooperation with:



<http://www.klinkhardt.de>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Dieses Dokument steht unter folgender Creative Commons-Lizenz: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.de> - Sie dürfen das Werk bzw. den Inhalt unter folgenden Bedingungen vervielfältigen, verbreiten und öffentlich zugänglich machen: Sie müssen den Namen des Autors/Rechteinhabers in der von ihm festgelegten Weise nennen. Dieses Werk bzw. dieser Inhalt darf nicht für kommerzielle Zwecke verwendet werden und es darf nicht bearbeitet, abgewandelt oder in anderer Weise verändert werden.

Mit der Verwendung dieses Dokuments erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen an.

Terms of use

This document is provided under following Creative Commons-Licence: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.en> - You may copy, distribute and transmit, adapt or exhibit the work in the public as long as you attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor. You are not allowed to make commercial use of the work or its contents. You are not allowed to alter, transform, or change this work in any other way.

By using this particular document, you accept the above-stated conditions of use.



Kontakt / Contact:

peDOCS

DIPF | Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsforschung und Bildungsinformation

Informationszentrum (IZ) Bildung

E-Mail: pedocs@dipf.de

Internet: www.pedocs.de

Mitglied der


Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

Birgit Paju

Inclusive teaching requires staff collaboration and a sense of community throughout the school

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Text untersucht inklusive Unterrichtspraktiken in Finnland und betont die Bedeutung von Zusammenarbeit und Gemeinschaftsgefühl im gesamten Schulumfeld. Aus einer kulturhistorischen Perspektive wird die Rolle der Zusammenarbeit analysiert, um das Bewusstsein der Lehrkräfte für ihre Praktiken zu erweitern und Widersprüche aufzudecken, die die Umsetzung inklusiver Bildung behindern. Die Lehrkräfte müssen ihre Rolle und Wahrnehmung in täglichen Situationen überdenken, und es sollten Strukturen geschaffen werden, die eine Zusammenarbeit ermöglichen. Inklusive Bildung erfordert die Entwicklung objektorientierter Praktiken, die sozial, kulturell und materiell vermittelt werden. Der Text zeigt, dass durch die Identifizierung und Bearbeitung von Spannungen im Schulsystem neue Perspektiven entstehen können, die zur Weiterentwicklung inklusiver Praktiken beitragen. Zudem werden drei Formen der Zusammenarbeit beschrieben: koordinierte Ansätze, gemeinsame Lösungsfindung und reflektive Kommunikation. Der Text betont die Notwendigkeit struktureller Veränderungen und fördert eine systematische Entwicklung der Zusammenarbeit, um den vielfältigen Bedürfnissen der Schüler gerecht zu werden.

Abstract

This text examines inclusive teaching practices in Finland, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and a sense of community throughout the school environment. From a cultural-historical perspective, the role of collaboration is analyzed to expand teachers' awareness of their practices and uncover contradictions hindering the implementation of inclusive education. Teachers need to rethink their roles and perceptions in daily situations, and structures that enable collaboration should be developed. Inclusive education requires the development of object-oriented practices that are socially, culturally, and materially mediated. The text demonstrates that identifying and addressing tensions within the school system can generate new perspectives that contribute to the

advancement of inclusive practices. Additionally, three forms of collaboration are described: coordinated approaches, joint problem-solving, and reflective communication. The text emphasizes the need for structural changes and promotes the systematic development of collaboration to meet the diverse needs of students.

Advance Organizer

Zielsetzung und Überblick

Das Kapitel „Inklusive Praktiken in Finnland: Kollaboratives Lehren in der inklusiven Bildung“ von Birgit Paju untersucht die Integration von kollaborativen Praktiken in finnischen Schulen zur Förderung der inklusiven Bildung. Es betont die Notwendigkeit der Zusammenarbeit unter Lehrkräften, um den unterschiedlichen Bedürfnissen der Schülerinnen und Schüler gerecht zu werden, und analysiert die strukturellen und kulturellen Faktoren, die eine effektive Zusammenarbeit in inklusiven Umgebungen unterstützen oder behindern.

Schlüsselthemen und Konzepte:

1. Zusammenarbeit und Gemeinschaft:
 - a) Zusammenarbeit ist essenziell für effektiven inklusiven Unterricht, entsteht jedoch nicht von selbst. Sie erfordert die bewusste Entwicklung von Strukturen und Praktiken in der gesamten Schule.
 - b) Lehrkräfte müssen ihre Rollen und Wahrnehmungen der inklusiven Bildung reflektieren und anpassen, um Widersprüche zu erkennen und die Unterrichtsorganisation zu verbessern.
2. Historischer Kontext und aktuelle Praktiken:
 - a) Finnland hat eine lange Tradition in der Sonderpädagogik, und die Umwandlung dieser Tradition in flexible inklusive Praktiken ist eine Herausforderung.
 - b) Die Debatte über inklusive Bildung wird oft als Konflikt zwischen Sonderpädagogik und allgemeiner Bildung dargestellt. Dies erfordert eine umfassendere pädagogische Betrachtung dieser Konzepte.
3. Objektorientierte Zusammenarbeit:
 - a) Inklusive Bildung umfasst die Entwicklung von Praktiken, die sozial, kulturell und materiell innerhalb der Lehrgemeinschaft vermittelt werden.
 - b) Das Lehrsystem, basierend auf Engeströms Aktivitätstheorie, unterstreicht die Bedeutung kollaborativer, objektorientierter Praktiken, um eine qualitativ hochwertige Bildung für alle Schüler zu schaffen.

4. Formen der Zusammenarbeit:

- a) Koordinierte Zusammenarbeit: Lehrkräfte arbeiten getrennt, stimmen ihre Bemühungen jedoch auf der Grundlage ihrer Expertise ab. Diese Methode führt oft zu fragmentierter Zusammenarbeit ohne einheitliches Ziel.
- b) Geteilte Zusammenarbeit: Lehrkräfte planen und führen Lehraktivitäten gemeinsam durch und teilen sich Rollen, um von der jeweiligen Expertise zu profitieren. Diese Methode ist zwar vorteilhaft, aber oft nur von kurzer Dauer.
- c) Reflektierte Kommunikation: Lehrkräfte führen kontinuierlichen Dialog und gemeinsame Handlungen durch, um traditionelle Rollen und Praktiken zu verändern und die Schüler besser zu unterstützen. Diese Form ist am effektivsten für nachhaltige inklusive Praktiken.

5. Herausforderungen und Lösungen:

- a) Lehrkräfte stehen vor der Herausforderung, alle Schülerinnen und Schüler gleichermaßen zu unterstützen.
- b) Das Ansprechen von Widersprüchen und Spannungen im Lehrsystem durch interaktive Kooperation kann zu neuen Perspektiven und Lösungen führen.
- c) Formalisierte Strukturen und sozialer Druck zur Zusammenarbeit, unterstützt durch den Lehrplan, sind notwendig, um sinnvolle kollaborative Praktiken zu entwickeln.

Verbindung zu Vorwissen und Kontext:

Dieses Kapitel baut auf bestehendem Wissen über inklusive Bildung und kollaborative Lehrpraktiken auf. Pädagoginnen und Pädagogen sowie Entscheidungstragende, die mit den Herausforderungen der Umsetzung inklusiver Bildung vertraut sind, können Einblicke in die strukturellen und kulturellen Veränderungen gewinnen, die zur Unterstützung einer effektiven Zusammenarbeit erforderlich sind. Durch das Verständnis der verschiedenen Formen der Zusammenarbeit und ihrer Auswirkungen können Beteiligte Strategien entwickeln, um eine inklusive und unterstützende Bildungsumgebung zu schaffen. Die finnische Erfahrung verdeutlicht die Bedeutung bewusster, langfristiger Bemühungen, um inklusive Praktiken in das Gefüge der Schulgemeinschaft zu integrieren, und bietet ein Modell für andere Bildungssysteme, die Inklusion fördern möchten.

Collaboration and Community

Inclusive practices and collaboration belong together, but collaboration does not come about by itself. From a cultural-historical perspective, this chapter examines how different forms of collaboration are reflected in the arrangements of inclusive education. The role of collaboration is to expand the individual actors' awareness of their current practices and to see the contradictions hindering these. Teachers should examine their role and perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education in daily situations. Structures that enable collaboration between teachers must be developed throughout the school. To enhance inclusion, all elements of a teaching activity should be considered to produce a shared object-oriented view among the educators. Addressing the contradictions and forms of collaboration can make activities visible and change teaching arrangements.

Inclusion is actively instilled in the Finnish school system. Perceptions of inclusion, pupils' right to special needs education and the role of different professions require closer scrutiny in relation to how education has been organised over the decades. Finland has a strong tradition of special education. Transforming special needs education and mainstream education into flexible practices for learning and support is not easy. In this process, the staff's role is central. How to share an understanding of the factors influencing teaching and how to prepare to look at the implementation of teaching with new glasses? What is certain, however, is that something needs to be done differently to meet the diverse needs of pupils. Schools need to be prepared to find specific solutions together for facing more and more diverse communities in the future.

The inclusion debate in Finland can easily become bogged down in a confrontation between pupils with special support and pupils in general education. The argument that there is no special support if there is no special education teacher, and separate classroom should be examined pedagogically more broadly. The concepts of special education/special support and inclusion are examined in relation to conventional teaching practices, where one teacher is responsible for teaching a class or a specific subject based on the curriculum. The strong position of special needs education in the Finnish school system must also be understood. We need to re-examine the concepts and form our understanding of what inclusive education means and how the inclusion process is pushed forward.

This article examines teaching practices related to inclusion through the development of collaboration between teachers. Inclusive education means developing object-oriented practices that are transmitted socially, culturally, and materially (Paju, 2021). The cultural mediation of activities means that teachers evaluate and shape the tools developed in the teaching culture as well as concrete tools and concepts related to teaching. In addition, the activities are mediated by written and unwritten rules, the structural division of labor and the entire school community. The activities are relatively complex, in which case we refer to the teaching system

(Engeström, 2015; Paju, 2021). The figure below shows the teaching system based on the results of a survey of class teachers, subject teachers, and special needs (class) teachers. The teaching system has been built based on Engeström's theory of activity (Engeström, 2015).

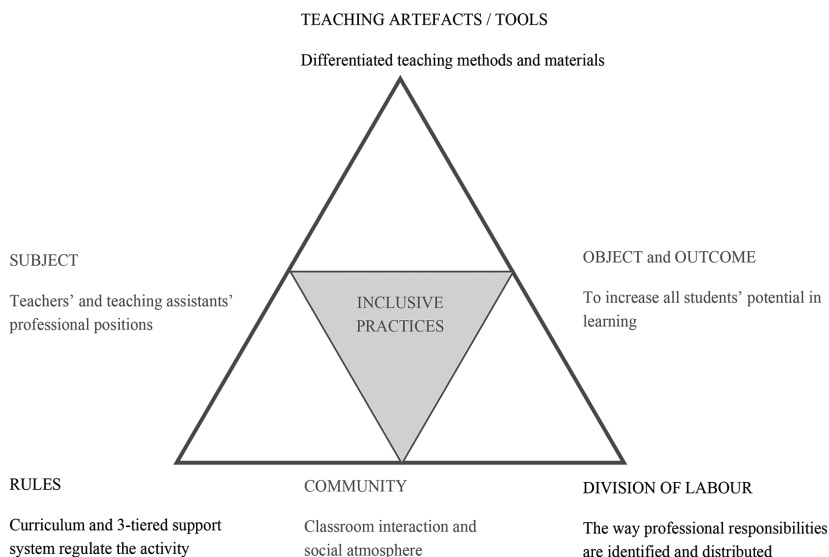


Figure 1: Teaching operating system (Paju, Kajamaa, Pirttimaa & Kontu, 2021)

Forms of Collaboration

When discussing managing teaching and everyone's role, different perspectives and practices become visible. Class teachers, subject teachers and special needs teachers have specific training. This affects the perspective from which they primarily view the objective of teaching. Class teachers emphasize teaching the whole group, subject teachers approach through the subject content and special education teachers focus on student support. The implementation of the support arrangement is understood as the task of special education experts (Paju, Rätty, Pirttimaa & Kontu, 2016). Therefore, the task would not belong to class teachers or secondary school subject teachers. All perspectives are needed. Good collaboration combines different perspectives into object-oriented inclusive teaching. The development of inclusive activities is based on object-oriented collaboration in the teaching system. The object of inclusive education is to produce high-quality education in the local school, where everyone learns and can use individual

strengths and possibilities. From the results of the study, it was possible to conclude that a pupil who need special support was perceived as a pupil with a wide range different kinds of learning problems. Teachers felt that there is no tools or enough time to support all pupils at the same time. Behavioural challenges were the particular concern to the staff. Pupils with behavioural learning needs affect the peace and quiet of the entire group and demand lot of teacher's attention. Contradictions related to the professional competence, teaching practices and the activities of the entire class community raise emotions and uncertainty about the teacher's ability to teach pupils with special needs (Paju, Kajamaa, Pirttimaa & Kontu, 2018). When tensions within operating systems are identified and addressed, the true meanings of tensions can be understood. Rewording conflicts opens new sides and perspectives. Thus, contradictions are not negative things, but indicators for the development. Change in activities requires interactive cooperation that highlights conflicting experiences and is ready to look for a new angle to them.

The cooperation between teachers was analysed through three forms of collaboration (Engeström, Kajamaa, Lahtinen & Sannino, 2015). Interview data was used as a research material. The most common form of collaboration was a coordinating approach. A coordinating method of collaboration means that the object is differentiated based on teachers training expertise (Engeström et al, 2015). Class teachers/subject teachers and special education teachers worked separately in their classrooms or in the same classroom, but cooperation remained fragmented without a common operational goal. The operations were guided by a strong division of duties and work roles. From the point of view of the class teacher and subject teacher, the cooperation appeared confusing because there may be several actors in the classroom.

In the second form of collaboration, the object is more clearly shared. This means that solutions are sought together. The class teacher/subject teacher and the special education teacher planned, implemented, and evaluated the teaching activities together. They varied the roles in the class, and thus as many pupils as possible benefited from special education expertise in the classroom. However, in this form of collaboration, shared action was short-lived and aimed at solving a specific problem. Even though the collaboration was short-term activity, the experiences were seen rewarding. Shared activity supported their work and wellbeing overall.

The third form of collaboration is called reflective communication. Through discussion and joint action, traditional roles and practices were modified. Teachers pay attention to the shared object in their interaction. Both the object and the activity will be reassessed and developed together. A form of reflective communication appeared in situations when two classes and their teachers planned and implemented daily teaching together. The classes were either general education classes or combinations of general education and special education classes. The staff felt that the working method was rewarding and eased the pressure of the work. There was a colleague nearby who shared ideas and broadened views of different pupils'

situations. Teachers were motivated to work together and tried different pedagogical solutions for both the group and the individual pupil.

Challenges and Solutions

The results of the interview data revealed the established teaching practices and collaboration structures. Overall, collaboration between the staff members appeared fragmented and the work was divided between special needs teachers, subject teachers, and class teachers. In addition, the results made visible the practices in which object-oriented collaboration was realised. Confidential and conversational interaction was considered important and beneficial for the pupils and teachers' professional growth. When it comes to developing collaboration among teachers, it is easy to emphasise seeking interaction with the people with whom it seems most natural to work with. In this case, collaboration is mainly based on person-to-person interaction. Schools may have problematic social relations between teachers, for whatever reason, so promoting meaningful collaborative practice is complicated. However, the basis for collaboration is in the Finnish National Curriculum and, therefore, should be systematically developed. A slight social pressure for collaboration, combined with formalised structural changes, provide teaching staff to take a closer look at the advantages of shared practices.

References

- Engeström, Y. (2015). *Learning by expanding: An activity-theoretical approach to developmental research*. Second edition. Cambridge University Press.
- Engeström, Y., Kajamaa, A., Lahtinen, P. & Sannino, A. (2015). Toward a grammar of collaboration. *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 22(2), 92–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2015.1024326>
- Paju, B. (2021). *An expanded conceptual and pedagogical model of inclusive collaborative teaching activities*. Thesis. University of Helsinki, Faculty of Education. Retrieved 9/15/2021 from <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/326432>
- Paju, B., Kajamaa, A., Pirttimaa, R. & Kontu, E. (2018). Contradictions as drivers for improving inclusion in teaching pupils with special educational needs. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 7(3), 11–22. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v7n3p11>
- Paju, B., Kajamaa, A., Pirttimaa, R. & Kontu, E. (2021). Collaboration for inclusive practices: Teaching staff perspectives from Finland. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2020.1869087>
- Paju, B., Rätty, L., Pirttimaa, R. & Kontu, E. (2016). The school staff's perception of their ability to teach special educational needs pupils in inclusive settings in Finland. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20(8), 801–815. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2015.1074731>

Author

Paju, Birgit is Doctor of Education and Principal at Comprehensive School in Finland.