

INVESTT

Inclusive Vocational Education and Specialised Tailor-made Training

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DISSEMINATION PAPER

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European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities

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Theoretical background

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusion and inclusive education are concepts that have gained increased attention during the last decades in global policies on education as well as in educational sciences. The concept can be traced back to the Salamanca statement (UNESCO 1994) and policy responses have been evident all over Europe (European Agency for the Development in Special Needs Education 2006). There are various characterisations of the concept, which depend on perspective and teaching context. The common factor to all definitions of inclusion is that they originate from the principle of human rights (UNESCO 2001; UNESCO 2003) and involves all aspects of education.

There is no unified definition of inclusive education. In fact, the term inclusive education is used by different groups to refer to different meanings (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Vislie (2004) emphasises the complexity of the concept, and she warns against attempts to understand inclusive education as a one-dimensional concept.

«When inclusion is interpreted in singular terms, then we disengage the concept from the dynamic dimension the concept is a part of and relate to: the exclusion. (...) At the level of practice, it is about counteracting exclusion as to create conditions for inclusion and equal opportunities for all within the community” (ibid: 20).

Vislie emphasises processes of inclusion and exclusion as the core of inclusion and she reduces the link between inclusion and integration. In her opinion, inclusive education does not concern specific groups or students with defined special needs. Rather, it is about reconstructing the school as a democratization project aiming at providing good education for all, and to reduce all kinds of exclusion. From this position, the division of labour between regular and special education is challenged. Instead of this division of labour, she searched for “a common discourse on the challenges connecting to the schools, the teaching and the upbringing in our time” (Vislie, 2003:4)

In line with Vislie, Ainscow and Miles (2008) discuss the problems related to the widespread use of one-dimensional interpretations of inclusive education. In their analysis of the field, they find that the dominating understanding of inclusive education is about “disability and special educational needs” (ibid.:17). They state that “There is a common assumption that inclusion is primarily about educating disabled students and others categorised as ‘having special educational needs’ in mainstream schools” (ibid.:8)

According to Porter (1995), there is a range of differences between integration and inclusion. While integration indicates more towards traditional directives in the school system, inclusion directs towards democratic educational systems. The table below illustrate main differences between integration and inclusion.

Integration emphasis	Inclusion emphasis
Needs of 'special' students	Right of all students
Changing/remedying the subject	Changing the school

Benefits to the student with special need of being integrated	Benefits to all students of including all
Professionals, specialist expertise and formal support	Informal support and the expertise of regular teachers
Technical interventions (special teaching, therapy)	Good teaching for all

(Source: Walker 1995 in Thomas et al. 2005)

Table 2: Contrast of inclusion and integration

Despite inclusion becoming a more and more established concept, its meaning is still related to the concept of integration. In most countries, there are various kinds of provisions targeted at different groups of students, based on assumptions that a certain percentage of children has such difficult forms of disabilities that they cannot be included into regular forms of schooling (Evans and Lunt 2005). That is why the question on what exactly we mean when we talk about inclusion is on point. Does the term inclusion refer to integration of all children into the local school or does the term refer to strategies for reducing exclusion through whole-school approaches.

What characterises inclusive education?

Florian and Spratt (2013:120) state that there is very little guidance in the literature about how an inclusive pedagogy should be enacted in a classroom setting. They claim that most literature on inclusive education focus on attitudes, beliefs and values of inclusive education, and some focus on underlying pedagogical knowledge that are required.

In their analysis of research of inclusive education, Ainscow and Miles (2008) find that most studies focus on students with disabilities and special needs. However, they also find that there are emerging groups of studies investigating the promotion of a School for all and Education for all (ibid: 18). These studies emphasise a broader concept of inclusive education and are placed within an educational field that investigates processes of exclusion and inclusion within the school. Instead of using special groups of students as a point of departure, they investigate the core concepts of education; teaching and learning, participation and social justice. Within this framework, participation in education is of special interest because it links learning with democratic rights (Nevøy & Ohna, 2014).

Characteristics of the term social exclusion such as for example: social participation, civil rights, polarization (inside/outside), and the meaning of perception for an individual, can be applied to various areas including education. The most common words traced in individual definitions of inclusive education are:

- All; for example: "...schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions/.../Regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discrimination, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all" (Salamanca Statement, UNESCO 1994).

- Participation; for example: “Inclusion referred to the processes of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the curricula, cultures and communities of local schools” (Booth and Ainscow 2002).
- Access; for example: “Inclusion in education involves learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular students to make changes for the benefit of students more widely” (Booth and Ainscow 2002).
- Diversity; for example: “Inclusion is how we deal with diversity...How we deal with difference” (Forest and Pearpoint 1992 in Florian 2005).

There is a sense of building conditions with inclusive education, which enables participation and access to education for all children. This definition of the term inclusion leads to another important dimension of inclusion – belonging, which is expressed in Hall’s definition of social inclusion: “Being a full member of an age-appropriate class in your local school doing the same lessons as the other pupils and it mattering if you are not there. In addition, you have friends who spend time with you outside the school” (Hall 1996 and Florian 2005”). Martin (2008) also used the term belonging in defining inclusion.

Inclusive education in practice

“Inclusion is about minimising all barriers in education for all students” (Booth and Ainscow 2002). In practice, inclusion starts with the realisation that there are differences between children and that consequently children are faced with different barriers to inclusion in the school system. Therefore, the first task is to recognise these barriers and determine how to overcome them.

According to Booth and Ainscow (2002, 5) “barriers may be found in all aspects of the school, as well as within communities, and in local and national policies. Barriers also arise in the interaction between students and what and how they are taught”. Solutions for removing barriers cannot be found merely in raising monetary assets they are also visible - similar to barriers – in all aspects of the school environment: students, parents/guardians, communities, and teachers. All aforementioned agents already operate with certain knowledge on how to increase teacher participation – the problem is that this knowledge is rarely fully exploited and used (Booth and Ainscow 2002).

We can identify barriers using indicators developed by various researchers such as for example Index for inclusion (Booth and Ainscow 2002) and EASP-Barometer of Inclusive Education in Selected European Countries (Schädler and Dorrance 2012). Among the most recent one is Florian’s and Spratt’s interesting idea on how to evaluate inclusive pedagogy, which is described in their article “Enacting inclusion: a framework for interrogating inclusive practice” (Florian and Spratt 2013). According to the authors, we can observe the inclusive way of teaching by considering three core themes: understanding learning, understanding social justice and becoming an active professional. The link between inclusive education and understanding learning regards the following issues: The teacher: a) rejects deterministic ways of learning, accepts that differences are part of human condition, rejects the idea that the presence of some will hold back the progress of others, and believes that all children can make progress (if conditions are right). The link between inclusive education and social justice regards the teacher’s commitment to the support of all learners and believes in their own capacity to promote learning for all children. The link between inclusive education and becoming active professional regards the teachers willingness to work (creatively) with and through others (Florian and Spratt 2013, 124).

Chosen indicators can serve as guide on where to start building inclusion. They represent a tool, which helps to identify bad practices; that is, barriers for achieving inclusive educational environment. On the other hand, they can be used to also recognise examples of good practices that we may not have known existed before; by localising them we can also upgrade and improve them. The use of indicators also enables a comparison with others – on the micro level (local environment, regions), as in mezzo (national aspect) and macro level (international level). The comparative overview shows us where we are in comparison with others and who we can use as example, whereby it needs to be emphasised that different environments are not entirely comparable. This applies especially for the macro level due to different cultural, political, economic conditions and characteristics of different countries.

Conclusion

Inclusion is an ideal to aim at. Inclusion is a dynamic process as to bear in mind what is best for students; we have to constantly upgrade, change and monitor the school environment. As said by Booth and Ainscow (2002, 3): “An inclusive school is one that is on the move”.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Universal design refers to broad-spectrum ideas meant to produce buildings, products and environments that are inherently accessible to older people, people without disabilities, and people with disabilities. Mace et al. (1996) characterise “Universal design” generally by seven principles:

1. Equitable use: the design must be useful to people with diverse abilities (e.g. when developing online materials on a website it should be designed in such a way so as it is accessible to everyone, including students who have visual impairments and are using text-to-speech software to read the material).
2. Flexibility in Use: the design must accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities (e.g. the written online materials may be supplemented by both audio and video Podcasts to allow the learner to choose the most appropriate mode of communication for them).
3. Simple and Intuitive: the design must be easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level (e.g. when adding directions and buttons to various links on the online materials, they need to be clear and intuitive).
4. Perceptible Information: the design must communicate all necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities (e.g. when multimedia is being used with the online materials and is being listened to by students in a noisy academic environment, it is important that it includes captioning).
5. Tolerance for Error: the design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions (e.g. the online materials must provide guidance when the student makes an inappropriate selection).
6. Low Physical Effort: the design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue (e.g. the online materials must not require that the student have to undertake an excessive amount of mouse clicking and typing to access the relevant information).

7. Size and Space for Approach and Use: the design should ensure that the appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

The international definition of the UN-Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2006) presents the following definition of Universal design:

Universal design means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Universal design shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.” (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006:4)

An important dimension in the definition is the explicit formulation; “not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons”. This clarification is very important in the INVESTT project, because of the importance of individual accommodations within the educational programmes. The analyses of the educational situations in Austria, Belgium, Norway, and Slovenia show us the differences in the countries of the project.

Inclusion and “Universal design”

A concept aligned with inclusive education is universal design, as both are targeted at reducing exclusion and facilitate participation. One of the shared characteristics of both ideas is the view that it is possible to design educational systems and pedagogical strategies to create more positive mainstream learning environments for students with special educational needs and, as a consequence for all students. “Increasing participation for everyone involves developing education systems and settings so that they are responsive to diversity in ways that value everyone equally.” (Booth & Ainscow 2011, 20).

The philosophy of inclusion implies changes to the barriers coming from the curricula, teacher's approaches and methods of assessment and organisational arrangements. Inclusive education practices emphasise active learning and differentiated instructional approaches. It is about recognising the diverse learning styles and needs in every group of learners.

In order to facilitate classroom teaching to the ideas of universal design, Burgstahler and Chang (2009) have developed a set of criteria for evaluating universal design for learning. They have identified eight important factors to consider when planning classroom activities for students:

1. Class climate: Provide high values with respect to both diversity and inclusiveness.
2. Interaction: Encourage effective communication and interaction among all people (students, teacher, instructor, provide different communication methods.
3. Physical environment and products: Ensure that facilities, activities, materials, and equipment are accessible and usable by all students.
4. Instructional standards: Maintain high expectations for all learners, and support them to reach these standards and goals.
5. Delivery methods: Provide multiple and individualised methods that are accessible to all students.
6. Information resources and technology: Provide materials, notes, and other information sources that are flexible and that are accessible to all learners.

7. Feedback: Ensure that all students get formative specific feedback on a regular basis.
8. Assessment: Assess student progress regularly, using multiple accessible methods and tools and adjust the design of the lesson accordingly.

Conclusion

All four countries in the INVESTT project are very diverse in terms of inclusion and „Universal design” in education. Coming from the theory of “Universal design” the partners have to translate the ideas to a „Universal design” into the field of education. This can only be done with a direct connection to the national school system in general and the national VET system specifically. For this purpose you can find national interpretations of “Universal design” and Reasonable accommodation related to the situation in the four participating countries in our paper: Inclusion, Universal design and Reasonable accommodation from the national perspective of the VET systems in Austria, Belgium, Norway and Slovenia”.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

The rationale for reasonable accommodation is based on the idea that an inclusive society respects and adapts to diversity and meets the possibilities and needs of all citizens, including those with a disability. In 2001, the Council of Europe accepted resolution ResAP (2001), stimulating the introduction of the principle of Universal design in all domains of social sciences. In 2007, the Council voted a new resolution to improve the full participation of people with a disability in society.

Students with disabilities have the right to reasonable accommodation. This obligation applies to all levels of education, including adult education. In the INVESTT project, a discourse about reasonable accommodation makes sense, since schools can evolve towards Universal design: when schools comply with the obligation to provide reasonable accommodation they can discover which of these individual accommodations mean a benefit for all and thus can be part of a universal way of teaching. Indeed, it is in practicing reasonable accommodation that a blueprint of the Universal design becomes clear. As such, the obligation to provide for reasonable accommodation can be an important step towards „Universal design”. At this point, it is important to stress that the Universal design concept does not avoid individual accommodations when needed.

Definitions

The international definition of the UN-Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2006) presents the following definition of Reasonable accommodation:

Reasonable accommodations mean necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, art. 2 par. 4).

These accommodations have the objective to take away barriers for learning (physical barriers and barriers for information etc.) and make a full participation possible (GRIP 2013). Reasonable accommodations are tailor made. This implies that some students have a right to a particular accommodation for participation. Accommodations are necessary in order to guarantee equal opportunities and to reduce impediment from handicaps.

In education, there is a large variety in reasonable accommodation: They can be material or immaterial, pedagogical or organisational. Accommodation will be provided, based on the needs of the student with the purpose of full access to education with equal opportunities and to reduce exclusion. A reasonable accommodation can be very subtle; therefore an important factor is the commitment of the teacher to have an open mind and attitude towards diversity.

A reasonable accommodation has to meet the following criteria:

- Based on the individual needs of the student
- Effectiveness: accommodations that give no result have to be adapted or withdrawn
- Equal use: accommodations have to provide equal access to as many activities as possible
- Independent use has to be possible: the accommodation has to allow independent classroom activities or school movements
- No direct threats for health or safety for others
- A guarantee for dignity

Requirements

Successful reasonable accommodation needs different requirements. We have to differ between procedural and content conditions:

Procedural conditions

1. The process to provide reasonable accommodation has to be individualised and concrete.
2. There has to be interactivity by mutual agreement and openness of roles: the applicant knows best what is needed; the provider knows best what is feasible.

Content conditions

1. The understanding on disability has to have a context perspective as opposed to a medical defect paradigm. Disability is the result of an interaction between individual elements and context factors and the environment can be hindering or facilitating. This means that there cannot be uniform adaptations for groups, for instance based on a standardised “accommodations list” for a certain disability. A reasonable accommodation is always made to fit the whole and individual person.
2. Accommodations without limits would lead to unreasonable results, so here enters the concept of disproportionality with the following considerations:
 - a. Efficiency: in case of different possible efficient accommodations, the least disadvantageous to others needs to be chosen.
 - b. Cost-benefit considerations: should be used with caution. Advantages do not have to meet the costs. The balance costs/benefits is only intended to avoid flagrant disproportions. Advantages are to be interpreted very broadly, as an individual advantage can become generic (cfr. universal design).
 - c. Proportion between costs and means: Capacity limits very often refer to these concerns. However, there is a chance that capacity limit considerations are a masquerade for the fact that in reality no thoughtful consideration has been made. All elements that can lead to a disproportionate burden always need to be identified. A vague referral to capacity issues can, under no conditions, justify a refusal of reasonable accommodation and are consequently

considered to be an infringement of the right to reasonable accommodation. Costs are more than only financial costs(e.g. also refer to safety issues). Referrals to feelings of others are not considered to be relevant. Furthermore, if there are any benefits for others now or later, cost considerations cannot be used in an individual case, but must be distributed over all estimated potential beneficiaries. Finally, in the appreciation of the financial possibilities of the supposed supplier of reasonable accommodations, the dimension of the whole organisation has to be considered, for instance a reasonable accommodation in a department of a college has to be weighed against the financial possibilities of the entire college.

- d. The continuum: if an accommodation is evaluated as unreasonable, the obligation persists to find an accommodation that is as efficient as possible to remove barriers, but that does not lead to an unreasonable burden. This reasonable accommodation has to be re-evaluated over time, because the situation of the applicant could be changed and the needs could be different, for instance for reasons of amelioration of health conditions. Finally, as a principle, times of economic crisis are not considered as an argument for refusal.

Refusing reasonable accommodation to a student with a disability is considered a serious violation of the law. However, stipulation of what is reasonable and what is unreasonable is very factual and dependent on evolving case law. Circumstances can change with the consequence that the accommodation needs to be changed (D'Espallier, 2010a, 2010b).

Conclusion

The issue of inclusion is very much a discourse in connection with reasonable accommodation and arguments about disproportionality. Therefore, the concept of reasonable accommodation will be applied differently across regions and countries.

Recommendation and Conclusions

The findings in the INVESTT project are presented on different levels: a *macro* level (defined as the political level with influence on the development of the curricula), a *meso* level (defined as a regional level with focus on the school as a system) and a *micro* level (defined as the classroom, the students and the teacher).

MACRO LEVEL (political level, curriculum)

Austria

Curriculum adjustments (Macro level)

- In the first step, we designed a curriculum for our Introductory-Course-students (IC-students), which is a sector of the full curriculum for the inclusive course (IBB) that started in September 2014.
 - The IC-students participated in regular courses for a few subjects with focus „Behindertenbegleitung“ for employed persons.
 - The subjects are General Basics (German), Basic knowledge in nursing, Immersion/Deepening teaching and a practical training for 200 hours.
- In the second step, we developed a curriculum for training that is based on a regular „Statut“ which can be used in all SOB-Schools in Austria.

In order to meet the criteria of the NQF (knowledge, skills and competence), both curricula were adjusted to cover all subjects specified by the framework. This means that:

- We defined educational goals (e.g. "I learn to write down things I have experienced" or "I learn to speak about problems");
- We defined the skills the students should obtain. ("I can describe, what a group is" or "I learn to work correctly and hygienically") and
- We described the competences the students will acquire ("I am responsible for the proper washing of my hands" or "I recognise when people want something or need something").

Belgium

Curriculum adjustments:

- Explore possibilities in the curriculum;
- Consider each question for RA as a possibility for UD;
- Provide service-providers with the necessary perspectives (see above);
- Ensure good collaboration between school and work;
- Provide quality internships through better collaboration, based on the principles of UD and RA.

We conclude the list of suggestions with two points. Firstly, according to our experiences within the project, the above listed examples will prove to be good practices only in case of the awareness of target groups. Awareness is therefore a precondition for inclusive education, since it affects the perception of the topic's relevance and the motivation of school management and teachers for introducing changes in this area. Secondly, it is necessary to strengthen the awareness of the authors of the teaching programme, founded in the concept of UDL, that introducing changes is a long-term process, demanding permanent improvement and a reflective approach to new elements set in the learning environment. We suggest that in the beginning, they introduce small changes and gradually develop the obtained knowledge to spread it throughout the entire institution.

The provision of reasonable accommodation is a right for all students. The new M-decree is an important step towards inclusion, but a lot of work still needs to be done. Reasonable accommodation should be an incentive to explore universal design. In other words, providing reasonable accommodation should be considered as an opportunity to expand towards universal design.

The concept of reasonable accommodation is expected to become more publicly recognised thanks to the adoption of new legislation. As a result, Belgium (Flandres) can expect more legal action enforcing this right.

Meanwhile the right to reasonable accommodation should be seen as a leverage to more inclusion.

The process of change towards universal design is only possible through a review of our national standards. In Belgium (Flandres), curriculum goals differ depending on different school organisations (state schools, Catholic schools, community schools). This makes the change process very difficult.

Conclusions: a vision that underlines the value of UDL in moving towards inclusion is of imperative importance. Good leadership should be empowered. A full change process to universal design can be possible only through a review of our national standards.

Norway

Curriculum adjustments

In Norway, vocational education and training is a two-part collaboration between the school and the labour market, often termed the 2+2 system, indicating that the VET comprises two years in school and two years as apprentice in an (public or private) enterprise.

The White paper launched in March 2013 by the Ministry of Education and Research (Meld. St. 20, 2012-13), identified the high percentage of school dropout in vocational education and training as a major problem. In order to enhance the general school completeness, the government is discussing the appropriateness of the 2+2 model in VET. It has been suggested that this model does not fit the needs of all students and classes.

Therefore, “(...) the ministry proposes that there is a potential for increasing students’ motivation and competence attainment through closer connection in the workplace. The present qualification requirements are maintained, but the education and training shall be more adapted to students’ choices, local needs and preconditions” (own translation, page 126).

As a result, the ministry has introduced the term ‘Exchange model’ [no: vekslingsmodell]. This model is supposed to integrate education in schools and workplaces in other ways than the 2+2 model. A key issue is that the government will maintain the qualification level. Therefore, it is emphasised that the subject content, competence objectives, the total number of years in school and workplaces, and the relation between common subjects and programme subjects, are the same as for the present 2+2 model.

It seems clear that the introduction of these new policies will influence the context where the Norwegian INVESTT-project is concerned. The Exchange model as proposed in the report to the Parliament, presents a framework for new ways of organising adapted vocational education and training. The main idea is to give counties and schools possibilities for making education more adapted to pupils’ choices, local needs and (students’) preconditions.

While the “Extended workplace practice” (EWP) is developed within the framework of special needs education, the Exchange model is adapted education within the framework of regular education. There are many similarities between the exchange model and the principles of universal design and reasonable accommodation. From an INVESTT perspective, the exchange model is an example on how education can transfer elements from reasonable accommodation into universal design. Initiatives made by the schools in the course of the INVESTT project are in line with the exchange model (strengthening the interaction between school-based and workplace education and training, flexible use of the 2+2 model, and possibilities for earning grades in school subjects). In his way, the aim of the INVESTT project fits well with the national policies.

Slovenia

Our project activities mainly focused on changes in the micro and partly in the meso environment. They did not cover the macro environment. Therefore, we only note suggestions and observations stated at the national conference of the project:

- Financial support is insufficient, which is an especially burning issue, e.g. with providing necessary equipment.
- Access to various forms of help and support should be provided for students with SEN also at a later stage when they enter the labour market or continue education. Currently, students with SEN are entitled to most support structures only until the end of secondary school education. . At the university, students do not have a right to an attendant).
- A thorough study is necessary to identify obstacles that prevent students with SEN from entering the labour market.

MESO LEVEL (local level, structural/organisational measures)

Austria

Structural/organisational measures (Meso level)

- Several informative meetings for interested people (students with SEN, their parents or guardians, employers, mentors in the practical field);
- Additional value-units for team teaching;
- Organisation of an additional room for the immersions (deepening lessons);
- Acquisition of various teaching aids (books, software and so on);
- Creation of a timetable for IC-students in the regular timetable of the course in the first year;
- Creation of a timetable for the IBB-class in the second year;
- Regular meetings of the teachers from the teams (Class-conferences);
- Weekly meetings of the project-team;
- Creation of a selection assessment;
- Building networks with potential employers;
- Finding partners and mentors for the internships;
- Providing training for the teachers in „Easy language.“

Recommendations on UD and RA

- Build a network with potential employers (Meso level);
- Make sure, that all objectives of the internship are sufficiently determined and explained (Meso level);
- Make a roadshow or information events at school (Meso level);
- Take your time! (Macro, Meso, Micro level).

Belgium

Structural/organisational measures:

- Organise for collaborative work;
- Establish a mind shift concerning UD and RA on school and class level;
- Consider reasonable accommodation in the specific context of the whole school environment;
- Consider reasonable accommodation in the specific context of the whole work environment;
- Work on a clear vision and mission statement;
- Make sure all levels of staff work with the shared vision and mission statement;
- Make sure all stakeholders, such as parents and employers work with the shared vision and mission statement;
- Establish good leadership;
- Establish good working relations with the labour market.

Recommendations on UD and RA:

- Invest in awareness raising with the whole school and stakeholders;
- Inform each teacher about UD and UDL and RA;
- Inform parents about UD and UDL;
- Invest in learning activities about the foundations of UD and UDL. This is a necessary condition for change;
- Organise collaborative work on UD and UDL.

Traditionally, teaching in Belgium (Flandres) often takes place in isolation (one teacher, one classroom). The concepts of universal design and reasonable accommodation should be seen on school and class level. All considerations of reasonable accommodation should be made in the context of the entire school (or work) environment. All staff should be included in these discussions.

Considerations of reasonable accommodation are very specific to a particular school or work context. This implies that the whole organisation has to work with the same clear vision and mission statements.

Working towards a more universal way of teaching is not a task that only concerns the school. Instead, all stakeholders should be involved. Parents should be informed and made aware of the advantages of universal design. Teachers need to make a mind shift. This is, however, only possible with good leadership, informed stakeholders and good working relations with the labour market.

Conclusions: The sustainability of inclusive classrooms and the implementation of UDL depend on the support at school level. Good leadership as well as a collaborative culture plays an important role in this process.. The UDL framework should be taken into account in the design of curricula, assessments, technology and infrastructure. Leadership should provide and facilitate collaboration among teachers. Professional development should be encouraged and resources, such as material mapping, should be provided. Stakeholders should be actively involved.

Norway

Structural and organisational measures

This section concerns the interpretations made at regional and local school levels as well as the local labour market. Two topics are discussed: the structure of special needs education in upper secondary schools and the education and training in private and public enterprises.

The national policy delegates the governance of the educational provision in upper secondary education and training to the educational authorities at county level. With regard to the context of the INVESTTT project, this comprises the organisation of special needs education in general and the extent and framework for the particular educational provision "Special needs education in small groups; extended workplace practice" (EWP).

Every year, county authorities decide on the number of EWP classes within different educational programmes and their localisation at school level. Thereafter, the Educational

Psychological Service (EPS) at county level, in collaboration with student advisors in lower secondary schools, supervise and guide actual students from the lower secondary level into EWP classes.

At the county level, policy documents emphasise that the design of the EWP classes should take a point of departure in strategies that increase students' motivation and competence attainment through closer connection to the workplace. In addition, the EWP classes allow for students' choices, local needs and preconditions. In this way, it reflects some of the principles connected to the exchange model. However, experiences from the INVESTT project indicate that the EWP classes are vulnerable with regard to curricula objectives and the connection with regular classes, both at the interactional level and the educational level. One way of explaining this lack of connection, is the overall framing of the EWP classes within the special education tradition. When students have an individual decision on special needs education, they also have an individual education plan, and the EWP classes use separate educational locations.

This makes the connection between the use of exchange model and the extended workplace classes (EWP) an important issue for policy making at the local county. A possible strategy at the county level could be to initiate a discussion on whether or to what degree the exchange model might be a more productive strategy for the schools' work on constructing adapted vocational education and training compared to a continued use of EWP classes framed within the special needs education (cf. Slee 2011, Nevøy, et al. 2014).

The school decides how to organise the special needs education at the school level. For the classes termed "extended workplace practice" (EWP), this concerns the degree of autonomy with regard to administration (segregated or integrated models), collaboration and co-teaching between regular- and EWP classes, the use of human (teachers) and physical resources (classrooms and workshops).

The challenge for the school authorities at county level and the schools is to explore the possibilities and latitude within the exchange model as proposed in the report to the Parliament. However, as long as the number of EWP classes and their funding is decided at the county level, and the students are recruited through a SEN assessment at county level, there will be constraints for developing alternative strategies in line with the principles of universal design. Therefore, based on the experiences from the local INVESTT project, this report recommends that the county reconsiders its policy of special needs education in upper secondary education, and assesses to what extent is the policy in line with national guidelines and how the policy supports (or constrains) the EWP classes work on developing universal strategies.

The organisation of workplace training in private and public enterprises is a collaboration among schools, enterprises, the apprenticeship-training agency [opplæringskontor] and the vocational training board [no: fagopplæringskontor]. The 2+2 system implies that learning objectives at Vg3 level are integrated in the apprenticeship at the work place.

Differences within the local labour market play a significant role with regard to the possibilities for signing training contracts for students in EWP-classes. When 'Building and construction' (BC) is qualifying workers for private enterprises, 'Healthcare, childhood and youth development' (HC) primarily qualifies students for work in public institutions (e.g. childcare and houses for elderly people). Experiences from the INVESTT project document that the threshold for signing a Training contract with a public institution is significantly higher compared to a private enterprise. In fact, in many municipalities, the owners of institutions for childcare and elderly people seems to have a policy on not signing training

contracts. The argument is twofold: training contracts do not qualify for the required competence for employment in the public institutions, and the pupils do not contribute to the institution's value creation. Despite the fact that training contracts are a legal part of the National curricula and that for some students they are the first step towards trade qualifications, local municipalities refuse to sign them with pupils from Health care. This practice deprives some students from a possibility to achieve qualifications for work through the regular school system.

The chapter on the school programme accounts for an important initiative from the Gand upper secondary school in changing the present policy within the municipalities. Through a dialogue between the school and the municipal authorities, the municipality will revisit present policies and make training contracts an option for students from the Healthcare, childhood and youth development programme. From the perspective of the INVESTT project, the initiative from the school is an important step towards realising the principles of universal design. The report recommends that other schools offer EWP classes and that the county authorities follow up on these significant initiatives made by the Gand upper secondary school with regard to the use of training contracts in public institutions.

Slovenia

To achieve UDL, we suggest:

- **Strengthening the awareness of local community actors** about the importance of inclusive teaching, empathy and understanding of difficulties faced by students with SEN and other students who have problems with inclusion in school environment (we approached this issue, for example, by organising a national conference where we presented the purpose and the goals of the INVESTT project).

To introduce RA, we suggest:

- **Establishing the connection between schools and the labour market** (in Slovenia, the connection between schools and the labour market is established through practical training that students need to take to successfully conclude their education; this is not sufficient for the improvement of their employability. Through interviews with ex-students, conducted in their home environment, a team of teachers who participated in the project realised that they often live isolated from the outer environment, rather embedded in primary sphere. They do not enter the labour market because they fear of losing (in case of getting a job) invalidity allowances, to which they are entitled if they have a status according to the Act Concerning Social Care of Mentally and Physically Handicapped Persons¹. By extending the time spent at home, however, the possibility of their inclusion in the labour market is decreasing. Considering this, a close connection between schools and the labour market is very important because it communicates to students with SEN that after they finish school they are not alone and have a formally established network of help they can turn to. Within the project, we established a connection

¹ Act Concerning Social Care of Mentally and Physically Handicapped Persons (Uradni list SRS, št. 41/83, Uradni list RS, št. 114/06 – ZUTPG, 122/07 – odl. US, 61/10 – ZSVarPre in 40/11 – ZSVarPre-A).

between a school and the Racio employment service, which operates in the same community as the school and deals with the employment of people at a disadvantage in the labour market).

MICRO LEVEL (school and classroom level)

Austria

Inclusive teaching methods (Micro level)

- Team teaching in all subjects;
- Immersion (deepening lessons) for all our IBB-students (Contents depend on the students' needs);
- "Klassenrat", a method to discuss the current situation at school;
- Excursions;
- Communication-days at the beginning of the winter-semester;
- Formative assessment (Pensenbuch);
- Summative assessment (oral and written);
- Scripts in easy language;
- Special learning situations;

A revision of the evaluation methods (Micro level)

- "Pensenbuch" (After a self-assessment on learning in general, „Pensenbuch“ is used for describing the goals, skills and competences the students can acquire; instead of tests and certification, the students' achievements are described in four categories („yes“, „no“, „with this support“, „we didn't talk about this at school“);
- Ongoing oral evaluation;
- Electronic evaluation once per semester on a platform called "QIBB" (www.qibb.at);
- Questionnaires from our project partner (University of Salzburg).

A list of reasonable accommodation measures (Micro level)

First year:

- Immersions (deepening teaching) on the theory once a week with a teacher from school;
- Teaching aids as a "BIGtrack" (a special computer mouse) and special computer keyboard;
- Easy-to-read worksheets;
- Constant mentoring during the internship;
- Supervision for the students by the teacher accompanying the internship.

Second year:

- Constant mentoring during the internship by a teacher from school and special guidance/mentoring in the training place.

Recommendations on UD and RA

- Implement team-teaching (Micro level);
- Attend courses on “easy language” (Micro level);
- Provide papers that are easy to read (Micro level);
- Provide several means of assessment, e.g. not only written ones (Micro level);
- Implement deepening lessons for all students: 2 hours a week (possibility to repeat the content of the lessons, training and preparing for tests, often in smaller groups, explaining words they don't understand, ...) (Micro level);
- Involve the mentors/coaches from the internships as soon as possible (Micro level);
- Make a good selection assessment before you start the training (Micro level).

Belgium

Inclusive teaching methods:

- The use of roadmaps (visual instruction plans). Making this a “one size fits all” is an important pitfall to avoid;
- The 3 principles of UDL: engagement, representation, action & expression;
- The UDL-guidelines as a tool for lesson designs.
 - Working with visual and specific learning goals and referring to them during the lesson;
 - Subtitles for the whole class, keeping the lesson goal in mind;
 - More time for exams. If provided for all students, negative effects for others can be avoided;
 - Solution keys on a learning platform;
 - A digital agenda;

Evaluation methods:

- Different ways to evaluate the learning of the student. This can only be done under the condition of co-teaching or support.
- Self-evaluation on a meta level.

Reasonable accommodations:

- Dispensation of certain classes (if not necessary for specialised vocational training). This is a curriculum adjustment that can be part of reasonable accommodation;
- Individual roadmaps;
- Individual subtitles;
- Dyslexia and dyscalculia measures;
- Compensating measures;
- Remediating measures;

- Dyslexia software.

Recommendations on UD:

- Collaboration among students, peer learning: this has a very high impact on learning;
- Pedagogical use of technology;
- Intermediate steps to reach the goals;
- Process and product evaluation (formative and summative);
- Collaboration with other teachers in a learning group; preparing lessons together; reflecting on lessons together; action research;
- Involvement of GON teachers (integration teachers);
- Collaboration with parents, employers and other stakeholders.

Each teacher should be informed about universal design (for learning) and reasonable accommodation. Providing the necessary professional development in these concepts is a necessary condition for change. The INVESTT-staff gave evidence for this statement.

By means of different surveys at different evaluation points and after evaluating with the service provider, the following advises can be retained as valuable:

Inclusive teaching methods:

- The use of roadmaps (visual instruction plans). Making this a “one size fits all” is an important pitfall to avoid;
- The 3 principles of UDL: engagement, representation, action & expression;
- The UDL-guidelines as a tool for lesson designs;
- Working with visual and specific learning goals and referring to them during the lesson;
- Subtitles for the whole class, keeping the lesson goal in mind;
- More time for exams. If provided for all students, negative effects for others can be avoided;
- Solution keys on a learning platform;
- A digital agenda.

Evaluation methods:

- Different ways to evaluate the learning of the student. This can only be done under the condition of co-teaching or support;
- Self-evaluation on a meta level.

Reasonable accommodation:

- Dispensation of certain classes (if not necessary for specialised vocational training). This is a curriculum adjustment that can be part of reasonable accommodation;

- Individual roadmaps;
- Individual subtitles;
- Dyslexia and dyscalculia measures;
- Compensating measures;
- Remediating measures;
- Dyslexia software.

Time-investment is justified by long-term learning profits.

The following items are considered as “good teaching”, but are at the same time conditions for a universal design:

- Collaboration among students, peer learning: this has a very high impact on learning;
- Pedagogical use of technology;
- Intermediate steps to reach the goals;
- Process and product evaluation (formative and summative);
- Collaboration with other teachers in a learning group; preparing lessons together; reflecting on lessons together; action research;
- Involvement of GON teachers (integration teachers);
- Collaboration with parents, employers and other stakeholders.

Conclusions: Teachers who work in inclusive classrooms cannot do the job alone. Responsibility for ALL learners is possible through a universal design of the learning environment and curriculum. Different from other top-down educational models, teachers who implement UDL should receive the necessary support in the following way: each teacher should be informed about universal design (for learning) and reasonable accommodation. Providing the necessary professional development in these concepts is a necessary condition for change. The INVESTTT-staff gave evidence for this statement.

Norway

Inclusive teaching strategies

At the Gand upper secondary school, the two EWP classes in the INVESTTT project, Building and construction (BC) and Health care and childhood and youth development (HC), represent two different strategies with regard to organisational models and strategies for inclusive education.² Building and construction organises the education and training in groups working with practical tasks, both within and outside the school. In addition, the teachers have all of their workload in the EWP classes. In this way, the EWP classes have few activities together with regular classes within the same educational programme. Collaborative activities together with students from regular classes are limited to smaller courses focusing on “health, environment and safety” and on how to use particular tools

² In the first year of the INVESTTT project, three educational programmes were involved. After the first year, the school decided to close the EWP class at the Technical and industrial production programme.

etc.

The EWP classes at Healthcare, childhood and youth development (HC) present a somewhat different picture. A few years ago, these classes were organised in a relatively separate manner from the regular classes within the same programme area. Today, the EWP classes at Healthcare are located in the same physical area as the regular classes, the amount of co-teaching and common activities is increasing and teachers are working across the regular and EWP classes.

These differences between the two EWP classes can be explained with regard to local cultures and traditions within the EWP classes as well as the nature of the educational programme and the local labour market they are qualifying students for.

The recommendations presented here are largely based on the information from the analysis of the questionnaires and the group interviews.

Participation in a community of learners

In the student's questionnaires at the onset of the project, almost all of the students stated that they were more satisfied with the education in EWP classes compared to their earlier experiences in primary and lower secondary education. In the EWP classes, students participate with other students in a community of learners, they maintain good relations with the teachers and the daily activities are predictable. For many of the students, this is a new experience. Instead of being marginalised and excluded to individual or small group activities (in lower secondary school), they now experienced friendship and a feeling of mastering (cf. Bruin and Ohna 2013). With regard to the focus of this section, it is important to be aware of this situation. Any recommendations must take into considerations the students' previous school experiences. There are significant limitations in what is possible to do by the teachers themselves. The upper secondary education cannot in three to four years repair the consequence of ten years' school experiences. Therefore, the situation calls for a systemic approach to educational change involving both the policy and the administrative level as well as the pedagogies in the everyday practices in upper secondary education (Ferguson 2008).

Increasing students' qualifications

In order to enhance the students' qualification, it is important to continue and further develop the strategies related to the implementation of the digital IEP-log and to strengthen the connection between the students' Individual education plan (IEP) and the National curricula. This includes the communication of predictable learning aims and progression. A stronger connection to the National curricula will also strengthen the students' possibilities with regard to signing of a Training- or Apprentice contract in the second part of the vocational education.

Scrutinise the border between special and regular education

In the Norwegian school system, special needs education is an individual right to additional support. Within the EWP classes, this support is organised as education in small groups outside of regular classes. The aims of the INVESTT project, as well as the experiences in the project, call for a continued investigation of the interaction between special needs education and the regular education. Both EWP classes (BC and HC) have some contact

with the regular classes at the VET programme. Strengthening these initiatives have several advantages. It will make education of all of the students in the VET programme a joint responsibility for all of the teachers at the programme and it will improve the possibilities for meeting the individual needs of all of students within the programme.

Workplace education and training

An interesting feature in EWP classes is the possibility for individual work practice during the first year of upper secondary education, formally organised within a Training agreement [Opplæringsavtale]. This option is in line with the idea of softening the present 2+2 model in upper secondary education, described in the Exchange model proposed by the Norwegian government. Together with new practices regarding the use of the training contract (cf. initiatives made by the school towards the local authorities at the municipality), this gives the teachers more possibilities for facilitating varied learning experiences at ordinary workplaces for students.

Slovenia

Key issues in Slovenian education system regarding inclusion of students with SEN are inappropriate norms, the lack of appropriate teaching materials and the excessive volume of material students are supposed to study within the established curriculum. In recent years, the structure of students in secondary vocational schools has changed. Increasingly more students with SEN enrol in secondary schools with adapted programmes, but teachers are not adequately prepared for this. During their education, teachers do not obtain sufficiently profound training on inclusive methods of teaching, and consequently they are not fully qualified for teaching students with SEN and for adapting the learning environment and the style of teaching to these students' needs. Simultaneously, the level of students' knowledge is decreasing (which holds for students in general, not only for students with SEN), and due to this, teachers are forced to adapt the criteria for the assessment of knowledge). In addition to these, teachers identify as problems low motivation for learning and the frequency of behavioural issues (which, again, holds for students in general, not only for students with SEN, who are, in their teachers' opinion, in this regard less problematic than their peers).

To achieve UDL, we suggest:

- Introduction of activities by which in target groups (students, parents, teachers) we strengthen the awareness of the importance of inclusive teaching, empathy and understanding of difficulties faced by students with SEN and other students who have problems with inclusion in school environment (e.g. with lectures about this topic, "in the other's shoes" workshops, encouraging peer support, etc.);
- The use of innovative and various learning methods and materials and methods of assessment (e.g. different ways of explanation educational materials and giving instructions, the use of various materials (PowerPoint presentations, posters, audio recordings etc.), announced verification of knowledge etc.);
- The transfer of good practices among teachers (e.g. teachers' team meetings, class conferences etc.).

To introduce Reasonable Accommodations (RA), we suggest:

- The possibility of using technical support (in our case, a computer for the blind proved especially useful);
- Encouraging independence in students with SEN (within the project we remodelled the role of the attendant, who is now, unless a student with SEN does not need one, available for other students and teachers. In this context, this is actually a transition from RA to UDL).

General Suggestions and Recommendations

Some general statements based on cross-national experiences in the INVESTT project are presented with regard to the aim of developing more inclusive vocational educational systems in different European countries.

Macro Level

1. Inclusive education needs consistency from elementary to tertiary education. Within the range of vocational education, it is necessary to develop officially accepted curricula for different professions, which are accessible for all learners.
2. A differentiation of goal attainment in upper secondary education. Students in upper secondary VET should be given opportunities for certification at different levels within the trade, based on the criteria in EQF/NQF. The ambition of a “golden standard” for all, journeyman’s certificate/trade certificate in VET or A-level/study competence in academic subjects, constrains the possibilities for low-achieving students to achieve valued qualifications.
3. An inclusive education system should have some guidelines for inspection of how inclusive values are implemented and practiced at regional and local levels. This could be linked to a system of an anti-discrimination legislation, a school inspectorate or a feedback system for parents and students on exclusionary practices.

Meso level

1. Systemic approaches, including a network of stakeholders representing key actors in relation to upper secondary VET. This can include schools (and school owners, service providers, ...), organisations at the labour market or social welfare sector, the local community and other stakeholders of national importance.
2. The development of strategies for educational transitions (progression) in school, including education and training in school and workplaces, and from VET to labour market.

Micro level

1. Every school should have policies and strategies on a common responsibility for all students within the school/education programme, and on rejecting strategies that put responsibility for some students (SEN students) on a particular teacher (SEN teacher). This requires active focus on teachers’ professional development and collaboration between teachers.
2. Inclusive education has consequences for the mind-set among the professionals at school. Therefore, schools that emphasise inclusive education also should introduce understanding on learning that rejects deterministic views on student capabilities and supports transformative understanding on learning.
3. Transformative strategies on learning in VET are connected to strategies that enhance learning in authentic learning arrangements where students can participate in practical work/communities together with experienced and skilled workers.

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