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Ladonlahti, Tarja – Naukkarinen, Aimo. 2006. **Inclusive education and the challenges of teacher education.** *The Finnish Journal Education Kasvatus* 37 (4), 343–358. — This article deals with issues related to the realisation of inclusive education in the context of Finnish teacher education for the level of comprehensive school. Special attention is paid to the development of primary school teacher education so that it would support the learning and participation of all pupils. The difference between the concepts ‘integration’ and ‘inclusion’ is described through analysing both the special education system based on the rehabilitation paradigm and the inclusive education system based on the support paradigm. The appearance of the three main elements of inclusive education - neighbourhood school principle, flexible grouping, and collaboration - is discussed in the respective contexts of daily school practices, teacher education, and the relationship between special education and inclusive education. The article also examines the challenges that the promotion of inclusive education poses to Finnish teacher education. Some examples of the practical solutions related to the degree structure reform of teacher education at the University of Jyväskylä are presented. These solutions aim at taking into consideration the needs of everyday school life and the expectations toward the know-how of teachers. The authors also present their views on the development of teacher education.

Descriptors: inclusive education, comprehensive school, teacher education

Teittinen, Antti. 2006. **Inclusive education in Finnish educational policy.** *The Finnish Journal Education Kasvatus* 37 (4), 359–370. — The new ideological thinking went through all educational levels from basic schools to universities during the 1990s in Finland. At the same time the relationship between basic education and special education transformed from the ideology and practices of integration, towards the ideology and practices of inclusion. This article discusses inclusion-based education and its reception and real position in the new ideological turning point of the Finnish education system. First, policy changes of

basic education and a situational change of special education since the 1990s are considered. In the frame of the change in the macro level ethos, the possibilities of inclusive education within municipal education policies is studied in the light of an inclusive development project of the Finnish Association on Mental Retardation. Essential objectives of the project have been practical policy changes, such as improving the collaboration between homes and school, removal of special classes, and a joint school start to everyone, following the principle of neighbourhood school, more inclusive communication of municipal services, improving the design of school districts and regional administration, promotion of cross-sectorial collaboration and building networks across the public, private and civil sectors.

Descriptors: inclusion, development work, educational policy

Saloviita, Timo. 2006. Special education and inclusion. The Finnish Journal Education Kasvatus 37 (4), 326–342. — From the current functionalist viewpoint, special education in the comprehensive school is seen as a rational system working for SEN students' benefit. Empirical research knowledge accumulated during the past few decades has called this notion into question. Many observations match better with a structural-sociological explanation, according to which special education serves, above all, teachers' interests with regard to student selection. Based on this view, one explanation for the growth of special education in Finland can be linked to the increased professional authority of teachers, while the role of policy-makers is more and more often just to legitimate the professional decisions. Obviously the volume of special education has also increased because many other, traditional student selection practices - such as exemption from compulsory education, parallel school system, and streaming - have already been abandoned as contradictory to the equity of students. Special education has avoided this fate because it has been successfully advocated as a means to serve the weakest students. The legitimization of special education is rhetorically based on the medicalization of school failure with unclear and logically circular concepts, such as "special need". The ostensible commitment of school officials to the principles of integration and inclusion has added on the prestige of special education. In the light of the analysis presented, the prospects of an inclusive and accessible school in Finland seem rather modest.

Descriptors: special education, inclusion, integration, sociology of special education

Väyrynen, Sai. 2006. Who is included and what is seen valuable? An example of the relationship of inclusive and non-inclusive school practices in Finland and in South Africa. The Finnish Journal Education Kasvatus 37 (4), 371–385. — This article studies some challenges in developing inclusive schools as illustrated by some examples from practice in a Finnish and a South-African school. By examining learners' experiences and observing daily life in the two schools, I explored how the official policy statements of inclusive education were reflected in children's views about different learners and different ways of learning.

In South Africa the physical and socio-economic environment was one of the most determining factor in exclusion from school. In the Finnish school, the structures of special needs education within ordinary school created a distinction between *us* and *them* among the students.

In both schools, *inclusion* involved normative expectations for certain kind of behaviour or learning. In the Finnish school, the challenges in learning were met through separate special needs education arrangements (pull-out support in a separate space or instruction in special

class). In South Africa, students learned to cope with by the help of their friends. *Coping* was related to the *culture of failure* which puts emphasis on grading, pointing out and correcting errors and mistakes, ranking, *passing* and *failing*. In both schools the norm for coping was determined by the expectations and attitudes of teachers rather than deriving from the curricula.

Both schools had participated in development projects for inclusive education, where the focus had been on various technical interventions. However, the cultures of the schools had remained more or less unchanged. Changing a school culture – values, beliefs and attitudes – would require an adequate understanding of the school context and knowledge about what is actually happening in the school.

Descriptors: inclusive education, school culture, change process, ethnographic research, inclusion, exclusion

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