

Exclusive Inclusion – Side Effects of Implementing Competence-Oriented Assessment-Concepts

L'inclusione esclusiva – Effetti collaterali della realizzazione di concetti sulla valutazione orientata alle competenze

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Discourses on inclusion within the educational sciences have raised various challenges and controversial issues over the past 20 years (Goodin, 1996; Vobruba, 2000). In school development, the discussion focuses on difficulties in transforming concepts caused by structural obstacles, such as the clash of educational goal and economic aims (cf. Barton and Slee, 1999). Pühr & Geldner (2017) stated that the principle of equal opportunities in education and competence-oriented teaching and learning contains ambivalent demands that provide chances for participation as well as exclusion as a side effect in everyday school life. On this basis, they refer to Stichweh (2009) who describes the 'exclusive inclusion effect' and points out that in schools with inclusive lessons exclusion is often an accompanying factor at the level of organization management. This contribution points out dissonances in developing participation in schools and exclusion as a connected feature. There was a scientific interest in the phenomenon of inherent exclusion within different dimensions of school development processes. Based on the secondary analysis of semi-structured interviews about implementing competence assessment concepts, it can be demonstrated that the claim of doing equitable assessment to all pupils requires incidental exclusionary actions to drive change management.

Key-words: inclusion, micro-exclusion, equal opportunities, competence-oriented assessments.

abstract

Esiti di ricerca e riflessione sulle pratiche

(A. ricerca qualitativa e quantitativa; B. progetti e buone pratiche; C. strumenti e metodologie)

The named authors conceived this contribution collaboratively. Paragraph 1 can be attributed to Ulrike Stadler-Altman, the paragraphs 2, 3, 4 can be accredited to Susanne Schumacher.



1. Exclusive Inclusion – Side Effects of Implementing Competence-Oriented Assessment-Concepts

Initially fundamental theoretical considerations about the terms inclusion and exclusion (Loos and Schäffer, 2013, p. 53) are outlined briefly as well as their meaning within the context of educational systems. The first section of the second paragraph presents sample and methodology for a primary research collecting basic data on school development in implementing competence-oriented assessments concepts. In a second clause, indicators detecting micro-exclusive proceedings for the secondary analysis are specified. Findings are presented in the third paragraph. The contribution is concluded with further considerations concerning the phenomenon of structural paradoxes.

1.1 Understanding (the term of) inclusion

Since the UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* came into force (UN CRPD, 2006), the issue of inclusion has become a crucial topic of both the public and the professional discourse. In the field of school development, evidence-based concepts are mostly discussed, concerning successful factors for inclusion and activities resp. structures to be improved (Good, 2008; Feuser, 2008; Tews, L. & Lupart, J., 2008; Keller-Margulis, 2012; Melzer, C., Hillenbrand, C. & Sprenger, D., 2015). Besides specific engagement concerning the issue of inclusion, other pedagogical aspects are appointed to ensure access to quality education for all students like competence-oriented assessment concepts. According to Saldern & Paulsen (2004) the use of competence models enables the consistent adaptation of learning goals to the heterogeneous learning situations of students. These pedagogical models designed to promote equal educational opportunities reach their limits as part of a system, namely the hidden normative directives. In order to shed light on the limitations the approach to the initial meaning term inclusion from a systems theory perspective is helpful.

Social systems such as societies, institutions or families organize themselves by participating recursively in the constant re-creation of this very network and thereby defining its unity (see Luhmann, 1986). The environment is a prerequisite for the identity of the system, since identity is only possible through difference. Hence, crime, illness or deviating behaviour are functionally necessary to ensure compliance, health or conformity and thus to be able to observe phenomena empirically. In the light of this consideration, the relation between inclusion and exclusion is described as a correlative form as well.

Currently, inclusion is the basic normative principle upon which lies the demand for the unrestricted participation of every person in society irrespective of diversity characteristics. Individuals, communities or institutions can behave reciprocally to this commitment. This means people recognize inclusion as a principle of order and normality. However, people with disabilities are considered to be fundamentally not, or only partially, reciprocal in most cases (Dziabel, 2017, p. 10). On a general basis, it is assumed that people with physical and cognitive impairments are able to make a productive contribution to social cooperation and social prosperity only if social institutions and structures are designed in a way that they are given the opportunity to do so (Quong, 2007, p. 90). In companies, for example, participation



is enabled within the frame of a socially special status of discriminatory deficit attributions. In other words, positive stigmatization is required as a precondition for participation. The theoretical construct outlined above is now applied to schools as work units of educational systems.

1.2 Educational Systems and In/Exclusion

Schools are “artificial” social environments (Dewey 1964, p. 207). Ever since the cultural institutionalisation of schools and nationalisation of the education systems, various types of schools have been functional differentiations of an intentionally self-produced social environment. The phenomenon of inherent exclusion is very prominent within education systems like the German and British as well. Whereas the school system in Italy receives special recognition in the scientific community as a successful example of inclusion. Law №517/77 enables to proceed with the abolition of differential classes for disadvantaged pupils. Individual support of all pupils -with or without impairment- is a legal requirement for all teaching staff, without stressing Inclusion as a special topic.

To fulfill integration¹ the federal state governance of the autonomous province of Bolzano permits school development attempts, consisting in paper-based or personal support and adaptable arrangements of instructing and teaching activities. In elementary and secondary schools, a 5-stage assessment sheet substitutes grades. Every school has the didactical sovereignty to write individual curricula or rather learning plans and record pupil’s achievements within factual or specialized knowledge, cognitive or practical skills as well as responsibility and autonomy of work. Moreover, schools have the autonomy to decide to inform parents about their children’s achievements using a digital class register. The aim of competence-oriented teaching and grading is to concentrate upon the learner’s strengths and not to focus on their mistakes. This way of thinking and acting is driven by the culture of support instead of selection or stigmatization.

2. Sample and Methodology

The basic data are given by a primary research on school development processes within the context of introduction and establishment of competence-oriented performance assessments in various types of schools in South Tyrol. In a first step, the context of the primary research is described as well as the instruments to conduct a qualitative evaluation (see 2.1). In a second step the indicators for the secondary data analysis are mapped out (see 2.2).

2.1 Context and Instruments of the Primary Research

Within the Educational Governance at the Province of Bolzano, the inspectorate of elementary and secondary school is responsible for educational management and quality assurance (federal state law 1998, № 3; law 2004, № 59). The faculty of

1 Legal term is cited



education at the Free University of Bolzano projects evaluations, surveys and researches as a member of the planning group. Partially structured interviews have been conducted in six schools in order to determine their particular experiences in dealing with innovation of the new school culture and teaching culture. There was plain access to 19 interview partners in six schools. Besides the steering group, the school principal took part in other four schools as well (see tab. 1).

	Type of School	Primary Research		Secondary Data Analysis
1	Secondary school	5 teachers	1 principal	comparable type of School
2	Upper secondary school	1	0	no comparable type
3	Secondary school	2	0	comparable type
4	Elementary School	2	1	comparable type
5	Elementary School	1	1	comparable type
6	Vocational school	4	1	no comparable type

Tab. 1 Sample for Primary Research and Secondary Data Analysis

The interview guideline has a thematically open structure and inquires process and experience-knowledge, interpretation-knowledge and technical knowledge.

- Reason and initial idea for the introduction of a competence-oriented assessment;
- Implementation planning and support system;
- Response of the social actors;
- Changes in School-culture and teaching-culture.

Anonymity is guaranteed by the compliance of the transcription guidelines (cf. Bohnsack et al., 2001; Loos and Schäffer, 2001). All participants are assigned by one letter independently of first or last name. This letter is added by an “f” for female respectively an “m” correspondingly to their confirmed gender. An (L) always marks the interviewer.

2.2 Specify Indicators of Exclusion for the Secondary Analysis

Federal state law №. 14/2016 (3) has given schools in South Tyrol the opportunity to take greater account of pupils’ individual learning by establishing assessments based on competences instead of output. Competence-oriented assessments do not assert to practice special education policies, even though it aims to foster equal learning opportunities as well. On the way of reforming and optimizing school and learning culture, hierarchical orders were maintained moreover, inequality and micro-exclusion (cf. Migliarini et al, 2018) were manufactured as a side effect. To derivate indicators of exclusion, the values taken from Index for Inclusion (cf. Booth, 2011) had to be recoded to illustrate their negative connoted exaggerations as well as their opposites.



The *Index for Inclusion* is a tool that comprises indicators that allow a detailed examination of the inclusive quality of school improvement, school culture, policies and practices. Each of the three dimension contains up to eleven indicators summarized below with bullet points (ibid. pp. 39-85).

Dimension A creates inclusive cultures.

- Building Community (6): Everyone is made to feel welcome, students help each other, staff collaborate with each other, staff and students treat one another with respect, there is a partnership between staff and parents/carers, staff and governors work well together, local communities are involved in the school
- Establishing inclusive values (6): there are high expectations for all students, staff/ governors/students and parents/carers share a philosophy of inclusion, students are equally valued, [...]

Dimension B makes sure that inclusion permeates every plan. Policies encourage the participation of students and staff. Support is considered in all activities that increase the capacity of a school to respond to diversity.

- Developing the school for all (6): Staff appointments and promotions are fair, all new staff are helped to settle in the school, the school seeks to admit all students from its area; the school arranges teaching groups so that all students are valued
- Organizing support for diversity (9): Staff development activities help to respond to diversity, all forms of support are co-ordinated, [...], barriers to attendance are reduced, bullying is minimized.

Dimension C carries out policies. Lessons are responding to student's diversity. Students are encouraged to be actively involved in all aspects of their education, which draws on their knowledge and experience outside school.

- Orchestrate learning (11): Teaching is planned with the learning of all students in mind. Lessons encourage the participation of all students; lessons develop an understanding of difference, students actively involved in their own learning; students learn collaboratively. Assessment contributes to the achievements of all students, classroom discipline is based on mutual respect, teaching assistants support the learning and participation of all students, homework contributes to the learning of all, all students take part in activities outside the classroom.
- Mobilizing resources (5): students' difference is used as a resource for teaching and learning, staff expertise is fully utilized, staff develop resources to support learning and participation, community resources are known and drawn upon, school resources are distributed fairly so that they support inclusion.

The indicators mentioned above build the basis for the next methodological step. Remembering the relation between inclusion and exclusion as a correlative form, the *indicators of exclusion* are now drawn up using the *square of value*. This semantical instrument was established by Aristotle to analyse ethical virtues in a balance between excess and lack. The form depicted here was modified by Nicolai Hartmann in 1926. Following the *square's* assumption, every value (e.g. virtue, guiding principle, human quality) can only unfold its full constructive effect if it is in an enduring tension with a counterpart. Thus, in addition to thriftiness, generosity is needed to avoid becoming a miser and, conversely, a balance with thriftiness prevents the generous from being wasted. The direction of development is found



in the diagonals. For those who exaggerate thriftiness and become misers, their development arrow points to generosity, and complementary it is recommended for the squanderer to develop thriftiness (see fig. 1).

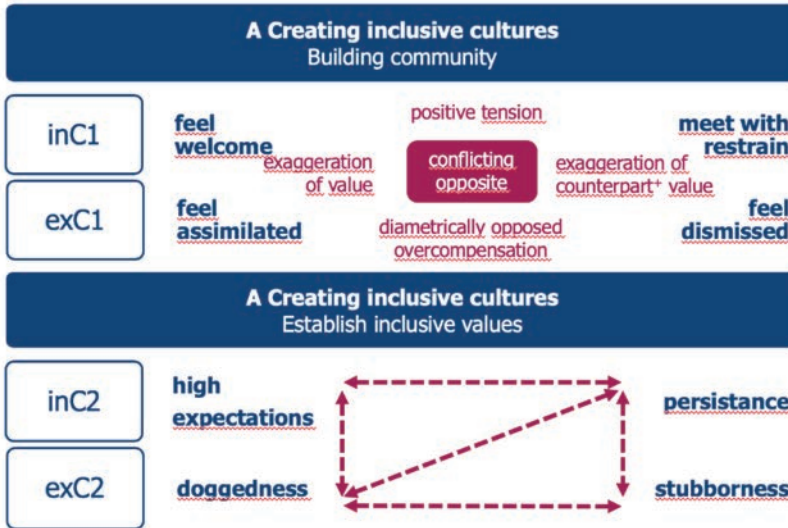


Fig. 1: Creating inclusive/exclusive cultures

This step replaces the structuring content analysis according to Mayring (2010). As an example, quotations are now depicted to show the definition of the values equivalents and exaggerations, resulting in *indicators of exclusion*:

- Creating Exclusive Cultures (cf. fig. 1): Dismissing from community (exC1):” In the 2nd year there are currently some rude and misbehaving students excluded from lessons”.
- Creating Inclusive Cultures (cf. fig. 1): Establish inclusive values (inC2): “students have to keep thinking”, “What did I do well?”, “Where do I have any gaps?”, “Where did I get stuck?” and then they should formulate the next step to take.
- Evolving Exclusive Policies (cf. fig. 2): Deranging learning (exPol1): “we have access criteria. Firstly, there are sports-related ability tests. Secondly, the count of trainers limits the capacity of classes to a maximum of 20 students and thirdly, the buses have restricted number of eight to ten seats.”
- Evolving Inclusive Practices (cf. fig. 3): Mobilizing Resources (inP2): “next school year we are planning cooperative learning, open learning and language sensitive lessons. Thus, we can do competence-oriented assessments.”



B Producing inclusive policies Developing the school for all		
inPol1	arranging teaching/ learning groups	Tutoring on demand
exPol1	decrete teaching/ learning groups	Infrequent teaching/ learning groups

B Producing inclusive policies Organising support for diversity		
inPol2	Staff development activities	Eclactic collection
exPol2	Oversized general reminding	Antiquated Individual knowledge

Fig. 2: Producing inclusive/exclusive policies

Evolving Inclusive Practices Orchestrate learning		
inP1	Students conduct their own learning	Autodidakt
exP1	Self-doubt	Victim to the teaching

Evolving Inclusive Practices Mobilising Resources		
inP2	Staff expertise is fully utilised	Metoring on demand
exP2	Rely solely on external knowledge	Refusal of assistance

Fig. 3: Evolving inclusive/exclusive practices

After determining the *indicators of exclusion*, each paragraph of the transcript was inspected for corresponding elements. Every context unit was assigned to a coding unit, information contained therein was related to the indicators of in/exclusion and finally being counted according to their frequency

3. Findings and Interpretation of Data

In order to illustrate the extend of inclusive and exclusive cultures, policies and practices a radar chart was compiled for secondary schools and primary schools (fig. 4). Is noticeable that both upper secondary schools and primary schools are keen on establishing inclusive values (inC2).

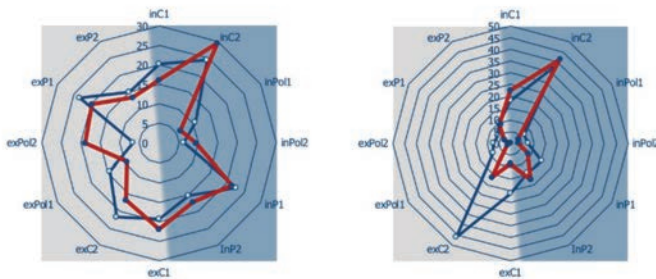


Fig. 4 inclusive and exclusive cultures, policies and practices of upper secondary schools (l) and primary schools (r)

Upper secondary schools are less efficient in orchestrating inclusive practices (exP1). The high value of creating exclusive culture in one primary school (exC2, blue line) is due to the initial difficulties in merging a regular school with a Montessori school. Further obvious is the fact that primary schools only perceive little excluding interactions in everyday practice in comparison to upper secondary schools (exP1, exP2).

Thinking again in terms of system theory, school is a subsystem to fulfil the function of value orientation. Law rules the associated membership. Entry in primary school for instance is permitted at the age of five or six, depending on the



country. Later the proximity of a certain educational institution plays an influential role on choosing secondary school or vocational training and even an academic degree. E.g. in order to become a pastry-cook, students have to attend a vocational school for gastronomy and nutritional professions in the residential area assigned. If there are none applications for a change of school or even a relocation to another town must be considered just in time. As we can see, conditions of inclusion or rather exclusion are based on certain social-cultured related policies of membership. Those, to whom membership is not confirmed, are excluded automatically (cf. Stichweh 2009, p. 32). Consequently, school has handed down standards. Value orientation is passed on even in class or rather in communicative teaching-learning interaction. Following von Saldern (2011), individualization of teaching in response to the heterogeneity of students is more and more important in upper secondary schools. First empirical results suggest that individualized teaching opens up additional learning spaces for the more efficient and self-directed students, while the less efficient ones are limited in their scope of action (Reh & Rabenstein 2013, pp. 252-254). Empirical data on the connection between individualised teaching and the re/production of social inequality is currently still sparse (Reh & Rabenstein 2013, p. 240).-Generally, it can be stated that in all kinds of systems, spaces of opportunity are opened up through social interaction resp. communicative negotiation. The relation between inclusion and exclusion is always seen as a mighty mandate to act in the respective context and not as a norm-free reference horizon (Hummrich, 2019, p. 38).

4. Further considerations about the phenomenon of structural paradoxes

In general, it is important to ask for more details on phenomena's appearance of exclusive inclusion as seemingly contradictory modes. Münch (2011) identifies four key paradoxes in modern societies:

- The paradox of rationalism is related to knowledge. Starting point of every search for knowledge is the knowledge of not knowing. With every rational reasoning, the same number of counterarguments can be cited.
- The paradox of instrumentalism goes along with the more rapid pace of technological innovation. We are taking on greater risks in the sense of side effects of technological solutions to problems for which new solutions are not available in step to prevent them at all.
- The paradox of individualism is connected with knowledge. The more we know, the less free we are, because it becomes more extensive, dense, global and ultimately less pliant for the individual.
- The paradox of universalism is linked to society knowledge. Different levels of educational attainment in turn lead to income inequalities.

Schimank (2011) explores the traps of rationality furthermore, the blockade dynamics that may result. First of all, the organization itself as a corporate actor (e.g. education system, school, class), which no longer produces the services expected in the desired quality. The respective users may find organizational bloc-



kades - if they are associated with performance deficits - unsatisfactory. In pedagogical fields of action, these paradoxical effects cannot be eliminated, but they can be made apparent to enable a more professional handling of antinomies.

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