

Conference Agenda

Session

04 SES 09 C: Creating Social And Educational Opportunities For Inclusion

Time: Wednesday, 08/Sept/2021: 9:00am - 10:30am

Session Chair: Mabel Giraldo

Paper Session

Presentations

04. Inclusive Education

Paper

Educational Opportunities and Academic Performance Development of Pupils with Integrative School Measures

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An inclusive school system aims to provide equal opportunities for education and satisfaction of individual learning needs to all pupils. Like in other cantons in Switzerland and in many other countries, the education system in the canton of Bern provides integrative measures in regular schools for children and adolescents with special educational needs. Compensation for disadvantages (CFD) and reduced individual learning objectives (RILO) are such measures intended to support learners with disabilities in mainstream classes and to promote equality of opportunities. While the target group of RILO are pupils with generally low cognitive abilities who are not able to achieve the regular learning objectives, the target group of CFD are pupils with an at least average cognitive ability but with a specific disadvantage (e.g. Dyslexia or ADHD) which is compensated by special aids (e.g. spell checker program, extra time at exams) to enable them to achieve the regular learning objectives. Approximately 2 to 5 % of all learners receive one of these two measures in the canton of Bern (Sahli Lozano & Ganz, 2018).

While CFD and RILO aim to support pupils with special educational needs, these measures also bear the risk to reproduce or enhance educational inequalities, for example when the likelihood of receiving certain measures also depends on student characteristics other than cognitive ability or academic performance. So far, there are no theories that explain inequalities in the allocation of integrative school measures. We therefore transfer studies and theories that explain external differentiation mechanisms to the allocation of integrative measures. It is well known that characteristics such as having a migration background or a low socioeconomic status influence the allocation to certain tracks and educational success (Becker & Beck, 2012; Ditton & Krüsken, 2009; Kronig, 2003; 2007; Reisel, 2011; Stocké, 2007). This can be justified by labeling effects (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Greber et al., 2017) and sociological theories that address the influence of social status on educational success (Boudon, 1974; Bourdieu, 1983). Similar mechanisms may be expected when it comes to the allocation of less (reducing learning objectives) or more (compensating disadvantages) favorable integrative measures. Indeed, in an early study (SECABS) investigating the allocation mechanisms of integrative measures at the end of primary school in the canton of Bern, it was found that pupils with a higher socioeconomic status were more likely to receive a CFD than pupils with a low socioeconomic background, even when controlling for ability and academic performance (Sahli Lozano et al., 2018). It was further demonstrated that receiving RILO introduces a negative labeling bias (Fox & Stinnett, 1996): teacher's expectancy of cognitive ability (prediction of IQ) of children receiving this measure was negatively biased in that IQ-scores of the children were systematically underestimated (Greber et al., 2017). Therefore, different measures may have different consequences for educational success in the long term.

In the present follow-up study (CHARISMA), allocation biases at secondary school level and long-term academic outcomes of pupils receiving CFD and RILO were investigated.

Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used

Our analytic data come from a longitudinal study which has been running since 2015 and aims to describe the characteristics of pupils receiving RILO or CFD. It will also be investigated how learners with integrative school measures develop over the course of their schooling. For the present contribution data was collected of 2228 pupils in 116 secondary school classes from 53 schools in the canton of Bern, Switzerland (mean age: 15.5 years). 581 of these pupils already took part in the SECABS study three years earlier in primary school. As in the SECABS study before, pupils again completed standardized tests in math and language (German) to assess academic performance level, as well as a general intelligence test (Culture Fair Intelligence Test 20-R). Pupil and teacher questionnaires were used to collect further information about individual integrative measures (RILO, CFD, others or no measures) of each pupil and their socioeconomic background (highest international socioeconomic index of occupational status (HISEI); Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996). Of the total sample of 2228 pupils, 64 were identified as receiving RILO and 52 as receiving CFD.

With separate multilevel logistic regressions and propensity score matching, we a) tested whether pupils' background characteristics (migration background, socioeconomic status, parents' education) predicted the allocation of the measures RILO and CFD even when controlling for cognitive ability and academic performance and b) compared academic performance development of pupils having received RILO or CFD in primary school to a matched control group of pupils which never received such measures. The control groups were matched using the following variables: Grade (6th), sex (female), age, migration background, socioeconomic status, integrative support, IQ, math performance, language performance.

Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings

Preliminary results at the primary school level indicate that pupil's socioeconomic background related to the allocation of the measure CFD, even under control of cognitive ability and academic performance. This was not the case for RILO (Sahli Lozano et al., 2018). At the secondary school level, there is no (longer a) significant correlation between a pupil's socioeconomic background and the allocation of the measures CFD and RILO. However, pupils with migration background have a significantly lower chance to receive a CFD at this school level. The results further show a high clustering of the measures in classes. While some classes had several pupils with CFD or RILO, others had none at all. Thus, class membership may make a difference (Sahli Lozano et al., 2020).

Further, analyses of academic achievement found that having received RILO in math in primary school led to a detrimental outcome three years later: pupils with RILO performed significantly worse than the matched controls without RILO in the standardized math performance test at secondary school.

In view of the increasing integration of pupils with disabilities in regular school classes, supportive integrative measures are very important. One risk here is that such measures can give rise to new mechanisms for educational inequalities. School policy should ensure that pupils from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds have equal chances to receive a CFD, that pupils, teachers and parents are well informed about potential risks of measures like RILO and that teachers give care to avoid stigmatization and lowered achievement expectancy of pupils receiving RILO in one or more subject areas. How to best ensure fair allocation of such measures will be interesting and relevant for an international audience, as similar measures exist in other countries as well.

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04. Inclusive Education

Paper

Disability and Curriculum: Building Social and Civic Skills Towards Disability at School

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In 1977, anticipating other countries, the Italian legislation legitimized students with and without disabilities to live side by side in the school by undertaking an inclusive process aimed at fostering relationships, learning and promoting attitudes of positive reciprocity between subjects involved. Thanks to this interaction, a path of awareness, understanding and acceptance can take place (Prater, 2006) suited to accompanying the recognition of the identity of each one (Canevaro et al., 2011) within relationships that are able to welcome every difference, especially those defined as 'special' (lanes, 2006).

Forty years after the start of this process, the Italians, as reported by the data provided by the Serono-CENSIS Foundation Survey (2010), relating to the knowledge and attitudes towards disability, have declared that they know issues associated to disability in an inadequate way. It is also highlighted how, for many, there are still difficulties in interacting effectively with persons with disabilities and the belief that disability is a cause of strong social discrimination and discomfort in interpersonal relationships.

What remains to the Italians of these forty years of inclusive experience lived in the school? Is it possible to assert that the school has missed a fundamental educational goal also regarding the investments in terms of economic, human, and training resources?

The core is not the questioning of the inclusive paradigm, but the reflection on how this can achieve greater implementation. It is a call for the educational and planning professionalism of teachers in inclusive schools. Indeed, these, which represent the most effective means of dealing with discriminatory attitudes (UNESCO, 1994), are today urged to think about the issue of disability in a strategic way, as promoting greater knowledge and understanding of disability among all students involves benefits for society in general (Disability Right Commission, 2005), creating a full inclusion that must also respond to the need for education in knowledge and awareness of disability for all (Leicester, 2001). Therefore, schools can play a strategic role in promoting positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities: after all, it is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) that gives schools a central part in strengthening positive attitudes from early age, promoting training programs to raise awareness of persons with disabilities and their rights.

Avoiding a reflection aimed at enhancing disability would mean depriving, in whole or in part, future Italian citizens of social and civic skills representing the most relevant ones without which no other can be built (Da Re, 2015).

The direction to follow could be outlined by those educational paths related to democratic citizenship and education of human rights aimed at building social and civic skills recognized by the European Union (2006) and Italian Constitution as fundamental for every citizen. However, it is necessary to note that these paths lack an essential visibility in order to be concretely realized, remaining confined to the sole intentions of the legislator, as overwhelmed by the curricula of the individual disciplines (Disability Right Commission, 2005).

In relation of the above considerations, the aims of the presented research are: 1) the design of a model composed by a curriculum, involving the topic of disability into the disciplines, and specific teaching proposals for the high school; 2) the evaluation of the effectiveness (follow up) of the model in modifying students' attitudes towards disability.

The project, began in September 2019, is still ongoing and this paper is focused on the first objective.

Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used

The research design is an action-research and has taken on a collaborative and participatory connotation since its inception on the basis of methods specific to action research (Colucci, 2005). The research-action approach has made it possible to combine expectations and objectives of scientific knowledge and institutional change (Bartels, Wittmayer, 2014; Stringer, 2014), enhancing scientific skills and knowledge on the one hand and experts and professionals on the one hand. other in integrated paths. Within the course, the conditions of self-reflection were promoted and supported by accompanying processes of self-organization and organizational learning (Coghlan, Brannick, 2014) and favoring greater proximity to phenomena. The research project is made up of a coordination and an operational group. The coordination group (5 persons) has the aim of outlining the purposes and phases of the project, overseeing the implementation times, and identifying the participants of the research-action. The operational group is made up of 10 teachers, selected based on territorial representativeness criteria, and has design and experimentation tasks. The phases in which the first part of the project relating to objective 1 is divided are as follows:

I phase

Critical analysis of existing training proposals regarding the subject in question

Phase II

Development of the model (alpha version), curriculum and specific teaching proposals.

III phase

Experimentation of the designs in the classes of the teachers involved in the operational group.

IV phase

Revision of the alpha version model, both of the curriculum and of the designs, in light of the results of phase III and elaboration of the beta version.

V phase

Experimentation of designs in classes other than those previously involved.

VI phase

Development of the model in its final version

Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings

This paper presents the results of the first part of a research: will be illustrated in detail a curriculum involving the topic of disability into the disciplines developed by the operating group.

This curriculum represents the first attempt to introduce, in high school, a curriculum involving the topic of disability into the disciplines to support teachers, with a valuable framework, in designing didactical proposals in order to help students to develop positive attitudes towards disability. Inserting in the mainstream subjects the perspective of disability may allow students to develop both skills of each discipline involved and also those related to the social and civic area that represent the most relevant ones especially in this time characterized by a strong wave of criticism and questioning of the inclusive paradigm.

In this way, the inclusive paradigm of the Italian school could find a new way through which can be further realized: after the access of students with disabilities into the mainstream education, after the actions that have arisen on a methodological and didactic level, the topic of disability could find a further legitimacy so to contribute to create a community able to build a school community that recognizes, welcomes and values differences and from which a future truly inclusive society originates.

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04. Inclusive Education

Paper

The Role of Socio-educational Practices in Inclusive Education: Perspectives from Program Local Coordinators

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In the last two decades (2000-2020) there has been a growth in educational policies in Europe countries, including Portugal, aiming the reversal of school failure and dropout (Lima, Afonso & Gomes, 2019). This issue has become increasingly important in the European political agenda and in national education policies (Estevão & Álvares, 2013). Therefore, the theme has gained prominence in the definition of educational, social, and economic development policies, as well as the civic, social, and economic consequences, including unemployment, social exclusion and poverty, which is strongly related to the high incidence of school dropout (Eurydice, 2014).

Scientific writings suggest multidimensional causal factors in the processes of school failure and dropout (Araújo, Macedo, Santos & Doroftei 2019). These studies indicate several practices, programs and policies developed to overcome these processes (Raffo, Dyson & Kerr, 2014). Thus, pointing out some strategies on successful socio-educational practices to overcome this problematic (Antunes & Lúcio, 2019). In Portugal, despite the success in combat school failure and social exclusion, the quality of learning provided to students have been questioned by some studies, due to certain curricular and political measures implemented to reduce the school failure and dropout (Costa, Loureiro, Silva & Araújo, 2013).

This presentation is part of a PhD project, granted by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (SFRH/BD/143386/2019), framed in the EDUPLACES project (PTDC/MHC-CED/3775/2014), focuses on the study of inclusive socio-educational practices. For that, a multiple-case study is being developed in two observation units, in one Portuguese municipality. One of the research questions that this project aims to answer is: *From the point-of-view of program local coordinators, which processes and factors contribute to build practices of inclusive education?*

The first outcomes of this PhD project, based on a triangulation of sources (i.e., documental data analysis and semi-structured interviews to program local coordinators), have allowed the identification of two inclusive practices. The analyses of the selected practices led to a typology of inclusive practices described as "study support" and "ability grouping".

Therefore, this study focuses on the practices of study support and ability grouping, addressing the conceptual evolution and the way of structuring these types of practices, as well as the description of the specificities of each of the practices studied (i.e., target group of students, organization, strategies, processes, and resources).

The practices of the study support type, aim the development of personal and social skills, often oriented to students from socio-economically disadvantaged contexts and with school trajectories marked by the risk or retention and thus, the risk of school dropout. This type of practice organizes additional resources to sustain learning processes that reinforce weak academic performances and bet on a pedagogical model based on individualized learning, by direct and personalized study support (Antunes, 2017; Calado, 2014).

The literature points out to several conceptions and different definitions of the ability grouping practices (Loveless, 2013). The diversification of configurations and meanings of the expression ability grouping, materializes in an important problem in the debate about this educational practice. Kulik (1992), based on programs and practices rehearsed over more than one hundred years, identifies five modalities of student grouping: i) XYZ classes; ii) interclass grouping; iii) intraclass grouping; iv) fast-paced classes for gifted students; v) enriched curriculum classes for gifted students. Ability grouping practices seek to achieve a certain relative homogeneity in academic performance, which is expected to facilitate and enhance the effectiveness of teaching/learning work.

In this presentation we share some results about the perspectives of program local coordinators, about ability grouping and study support practices.

Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used

The option for the qualitative approach in this study is justified by the search to particularize and understand the subjects and the phenomena in their complexity and singularity, trying to capture the social phenomena from the perspectives of the participants directly involved in the contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2006). In this way, it aims to cover the plurality of rationalities and meanings based on the knowledge and contexts under analysis (Amado, 2014; Seale, 2004). The study design intends to study two national programs aiming to overcome school underachievement and dropout by means of a multiple-case study (Yin, 1989) of two observation units in one Portuguese municipality, focused on two national intervention programs.

In the first phase of this project, inclusive and successful practices (case practices) were characterized in two observation units through the triangulation of information: relevant documents, statistical data analysis and semi-structured interviews with program local coordinators.

In the second phase, youngsters will be interviewed with the objective of collecting data that aim understanding the transformation processes that occur (that is, biographical, institutional and contextual) in the construction of their successful academic pathways; young people who integrate or integrated the analyzed practices. The analysis of each case is expanded through the broad collection of information on the perspectives and voices of relevant actors directly involved, through focus group, aimed at young people, families, teachers and other professionals.

In the third phase, the analysis will explore, in two case studies, the relationships and dimensions of building broad collective and collaborative educational and learning processes suggested, among others, by the 'learning community' and 'community of practice' categories. Individual interviews and focus group will be conducted with teachers and other professional directly involved in the practices in study.

Overall, the research aims to study the existing relationship between participation in inclusive socio-educational practices and transformation processes in: (i) pathways of overcoming school failure and dropout, and (ii) the construction and sharing of knowledge and professional learning. The objective is to build portraits of profiles of young people with atypical academic pathways and capture transforming processes that professionals involved in the practices under study go through.

Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings

Regarding the perspectives of program local coordinator of the study support practice, the data analyzed suggests that the practice develops improvements (variables) in the participants' results (i.e., learning, social behaviors, integration and autonomy); promotes the construction of a strong and continuous relationship with significant adults and promotes the completion of compulsory education. In this sense, this category of practices seems to unfold into two sub-categories: one more strictly academic, focused on support for homework, test preparation and accompanied study, and the other more based on non-formal education strategies, focused on the development of social and personal skills and the promotion of normative behaviors (Calado, 2014).

From the perspective of the coordinator of the practice of ability grouping, the main advantages of this practice are reflected in the: improvement of collaborative work, interinstitutional articulation and professional development of teachers; importance of curricular and organizational flexibility and the improvement in student results, in terms of autonomy, integration or learning. The analysis of the data seems to meet Kulik's (1992) position and the perspective of the program local coordinator, pointing out that this practice allows teachers to work closely with students, adapting the rhythm and curriculum to their needs, contributing in various ways to the improvement of students' results.

One of the emerging issues that we intend to deepen in both practices, is related to the quality of success and whether this "normative success" reflects the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes corresponding to the level of education that these students attend. We are interested in knowing whether, under the pretext of inclusion, it may be depriving the recipients of the practices under analysis of access to "powerful knowledge" (Young & Muller, 2010), corresponding to the profile of the student at the end of compulsory education.

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