



KATHOLISCHE UNIVERSITÄT
EICHSTÄTT-INGOLSTADT

Joint Project

Inclusive Living and Learning at School

Transfer Project

The „Perfect“ Inclusive School from the Pupils‘ Perspective

Published: August 2020

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DIE PERFEKTE INKLUSIVE SCHULE AUS PERSPEKTIVE DER SCHÜLER*INNEN EINE EMPIRISCH QUALITATIVE STUDIE

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Project Rationale

In order for school education to be successful, it is essential to be aware of the subjective wishes and experiences of school pupils (Nölle 1995). The rationale for studying the relationship between the pupil perspective and the quality of the school and teaching is derived from three factors: 1) school pupils are the direct recipients of school education and teaching. 2) School pupils participate in lessons through their subjective perceptions, their personalities and world views; in this way, they constitute a context in school life, without which educational practice would not be possible. 3) School pupils help to shape educational processes; they actively shape educational contexts. Therefore, quality in educational matters cannot be achieved if the perspective of pupils is not taken into account and if their views are not considered to be as potentially, equally valuable as others'. Particularly in the context of inclusive school development, it appears profitable to ascertain the views of school pupils in fundamental areas of school education and teaching and to make them the subject of discussion.

Research Status and Objectives

In general, there is a wide consensus in empirical research that there is no reason to attribute a lower significance to the statements made by school pupils than to observer data (2002). On the contrary, it is acknowledged that it is important to empirically capture the perspective of the main participants in school education and teaching, in order to contribute to further development in this area. The state of research on pupils' perspectives towards school education and teaching has proved to be complex and varied. In particular, a review of quantitative

and qualitative studies on pupil perspectives reveals the following complex themes:

- (Specialized) lessons (e.g. Ditton 2002, Baumert et al. 2004)
- Teaching quality (e.g. Grewe et al. 2007, Klieme & Rakoczy 2003)
- Teacher behaviour (e.g. Hofer 1981, König 2008)
- School pupils' opinions of school (e.g. Czerwenka et al 1990)
- The school's social environment (e.g. Holtappels 2003)
- Characteristics of a good teacher (e.g. König 2007)
- Reconstructing school (e.g. Petillon 1987)
- Positive peer culture (e.g. Ott 2015)
- Spatial perception, interior design, (classroom) equipment and use of space in schools (e.g. Gislason 2011, Rittelmeyer 2007)

It is noteworthy that in previous studies the perception of school pupils is mainly focused on the current situation. Suggestions to improve school education and teaching are mostly based on the results of studies from the adult perspective. Most of the studies also relate to individual aspects of school education and teaching and not to the comprehensive research field of school education. Therefore, it seems advantageous to place the research focus on the individual facets of school education and teaching and to ask pupils how both can be improved from their point of view. For this reason, the following research questions were pursued: 1) What kind of educational environment characterises a 'perfect' inclusive school from a pupil's point of view 2) What features characterise teaching in a 'perfect' inclusive school from the point of view of pupils? 3) What is school life like in a 'perfect' inclusive school from the point of view of pupils? In answering these questions, the project objective will be pursued to determine in which school-related contexts the main participants themselves see a need for further development and what specific ideas for improvement they come up with. In this way, it is possible to enable the views of pupils to influence the discussions on school development. Furthermore, based on the results an attempt will be made to derive implications to identify priority subjects in teacher training courses. Therefore, the study also aims to make a contribution to the further development of teacher training.

Study Design

In the context of the study, it was assumed that the research question could be solved using the paradigm of qualitative social research, because a quantitative approach, which is particularly concerned with the testing of hypotheses, could not adequately satisfy the requirement of capturing individual pupil perspectives. Qualitative research focuses on the perceptions of the subjects and the meaning of these perceptions linked to experiences and events, and the meaning of objects, actions and events forms the basis of a significant part of qualitative research (Flick 2007).

Research Scope and Subject Sample

The group of subjects comprises school pupils of both genders, aged 9-18, from different types of school and consists of the following:

- 16 pupils from 8 Mittelschulen or lower secondary schools (2 rural, 6 urban; 13 girls and 3 boys from the 7th-10th grades, 9 of whom have an immigration background)
- 17 pupils from 8 primary schools (1 rural, 7 urban; 13 girls and 4 boys from the 3rd-4th grades, 4 of whom have an immigration background)
- 4 pupils from 2 Realschulen or intermediate secondary schools (all urban, 4 girls from the 5th-10th grades, 3 of whom have an immigration background)
- 2 pupils from 1 Gymnasium or grammar school (urban; 2 girls from the 11th grade, 1 of whom has an immigration background)

The schools were contacted in writing to ask if they would participate in the study; 19 schools agreed. Data capture took place at the schools. Only the primary school pupils were interviewed at the university. Their parents were informed in writing about the study and asked to give consent to their child's participation. All of the pupils participated in the study for whom parental consent was given.

Data Capture and Evaluation Methods

The focused interview appeared to be a suitable method for the study, because "it is an interview technique that should help to shed light on certain aspects of the common experiences of respondents as comprehensively, thematically focused and in as much detail as possible,

including the emotional aspects“ (Friebertshäuser 1997, p. 378). According to Lamnek (1995, p. 79 et seq.), this form of interview is very close to quantitative methodology, despite its fundamentally qualitative and interpretative orientation and, with partial standardization, also enables comparability and consequently a quantifiability of statements. At the same time, it was also important that the pupils could freely describe their views of the “perfect school“. The episodic interview by Friebertshäuser (1997) provides a method of implementation because it combines the interest in these narratives with the interest in the knowledge base, providing a project scope. A combination of episodic and focused interview techniques that allow for free narrative, as well as a structured conversation with defined questions about the views and opinions of the school pupils regarding the prerequisites and ideal conditions for a “perfect school“, supports the research aim. The interviews will be evaluated in accordance with Kuckartz (2016), using qualitative content analysis. In this context, a content structuring approach will be applied, in order to systematically describe selected aspects of content from the research material. These aspects additionally form the structure of the categorial framework, whereby the different themes are made explicit as categories within the categorial framework. In the first stage, codes will be defined on the basis of the main categories, which correspond to the main areas of content-related focus. Subsequently, the categories will be further developed and further defined in the form of sub-categories, derived from the research material.

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[For the results documentation of the transfer project \(poster and resultsdocumentation in German and English\)](#)