Consulting Formats for Schools on their Ways to Inclusion

A closer look at teachers’ needs in order to ensure an inclusive school environment

We do not have the right to exclude anyone. Our fears are simply an obstacle to overcome. They cannot and must not be a reason to deny any person their rights (by Jack Pearpoint & Marsha Forest, n.y.).

Introduction

Following the hypothesis that teachers are often faced with critical incidences during their interaction with students, which prevent an inclusive handling of situations, the first step of the research project will be an analysis of teachers’ needs in order to offer them a suitable format of consulting. The analysis of this needs includes qualitative (less structured and structured interviews) as well as quantitative methods (standardized questionnaires). This survey will take place at cooperating schools in the federal state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Germany. After the analysis it will be possible to conceptualize need driven consulting formats, that will be evaluated later on.

According to the inclusion strategy plan of the federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of Mecklenburg-Pomerania published in 2016, the school system will go through big changes during the next years. In the next three years the research group at the Department of Inclusive Pedagogy and Special Education Needs could strengthening the federal plan of transforming the school system in to a more inclusive direction by supporting it with a cost neutral designed consulting system, that even will last after the research period. The cost neutrality will be reached through the connection of social community work and school development processes.

Research/Conceptualization Steps and Schedule

First qualitative exploration
July—September 2016

Getting first impressions about:
- the variety of critical incidences and topics for consulting processes
- possible and suitable consulting formats corresponding/matching teachers daily work load and their experienced critical incidences

Further more it is possible to identify possible and necessary school cooperations with institutions and organizations that are active in the field of social community work and even could offer consulting concerning specific issues.

Second/Closer exploration
October—December 2016

Identifying more detailed information about the situation as a teacher (see even first exploration).
The second exploration may even give Items for the standardized questionnaires.
It is an addition to the above mentioned qualitative explorations. In this way the data can be confirmed on a wider level.

Based on the explorations it is more likely to offer teachers suitable consulting formats.
The system of consulting formats should be evaluated regarding at least teachers change in knowledge, interaction and attitude towards an inclusive direction.

Intended Aims/Intention

Measures/Research Methods
- Less structured interviews in informal settings
- single interviews with teachers
- structured interviews (recorded for a qualitative content analysis)
- single, pair and group interviews
- Interviews with students, teachers and social workers at schools
- Think tanks, cooperation, workshops, individual consulting, team consultation etc.
- Appropriate evaluation methods will be found during the different research phases.

Some possible impacts of the results:
- the connection of social community work and school development processes could be a suitable model for school environments in other regions in Germany
- through the research design and approach it is likely to guarantee a cost neutral and stable way of creating a school development towards an inclusive direction.

Sources:
Inklusionsstrategie der Landesregierung im Bildungssystem bis 2023. Schwerin, Germany.

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