An Educational Concept between Sign Language and Inclusion

Ein Schulkonzept im Wandel zwischen Gebärde und Inklusion
Educational concepts come from developments

A core objective of education for hearing-impaired children is:
Communication skills
Spoken-Language Skills

A predominant goal in Germany for decades

- Holistic
- Systematic
- Structuralistic
- Reflective mother-tongue method...
Constantly in search of the “right” method

Sign language

Spoken language

Bilingual
Hamburg in the 1990s

**Choice**

- Bilingual
- Hearing-oriented/spoken language

- School for the deaf
- School for the hard of hearing
Students

Then

Deaf

Hard of Hearing

Now
Wishes of Parents and Families

- Learning together
- Proximity to school
- Maintain personal environment in home, daycare and school

Qualities of teaching for the hearing-impaired
Societal Changes

Integration

Inclusion

“Normalization pressure”
Alternative Forms of Schooling

Trend

Segregated schooling

Partially segregated schooling

Integrated schooling

Inclusive schooling

Searching for suitable platforms for shared experiences
Schooling mostly “individually inclusive”
Experiences with this Inclusion Model

Positive
- Pleasingly high rate of **successful integration**

Negative
- Often feels like **exclusion**
- Disintegrating experiences
Aims of Teaching for the Hearing-Impaired

Society

Teaching of the hearing-impaired

Affected individuals

Self-determined lifestyle
Communication skills
Personality and identity development
Perceived self-sufficiency
Positive self-image
It’s about **quality of life**

- Happiness
- Life satisfaction
- Mental health
- Well-being
- Self-esteem
- Perceived self-efficacy
Aims from the point of view of professionally successful adults

- Self-confidence
- Independence
- Motivation
- Optimism
- Perseverance
- Empathy
- Teamwork skills
Systems must be suited to the child

Primary desires and needs of the child in the spotlight!
“One-size-fits-all concept” unsuitable as inclusion model

Great diversity/heterogeneity: Develop differentiated participation models

HINTERMAIR AND ELBSCHULE TEAM
Important Findings from Many Years Ago

- Development of identity is a process
  - School: Provide conditions for a tangible process of self-discovery in an open rather than restrictive manner!
  - Overprotectiveness leads to imaginary worlds
  - Imaginary worlds can produce one-dimensional identities

HINTERMAIR, VON HENTIG
Conclusions

Provide an experience platform for processes of discovery among hard of hearing, deaf and hearing children.

Establish new learning and social networks.

VON HENTIG:
School as a space for experiencing and living.

HINTERMAIR:
Make school true-to-life.

For children and adolescents with and without hearing impairment.
In other words ...

More than ever before we need to find a **balance** between

- Protecting and challenging
- Encouraging and providing freedom
- Speaking and signing
- Showing and letting them experience things
- A **balance** between staged “dry runs” and real-life experiences and adventures

_u.a. HINTERMAIR/VOIT/VON HENTIG_
On our current path, we risk missing the above-mentioned targets.
Consequence: marked shift away from focus on shortfalls!

- Take **strengths** into account!
- Set their self-discovery and encouragement as the goal
- Foundations: **empowerment**- and **resource-oriented** development philosophy

TSIRIGOTIS et al.
Marked shift away from focus on shortfalls
VISIONARY PROPOSAL

LIVING AND LEARNING TOGETHER
ON A NEW PATH

OPENING OF SCHOOL FOR HEARING-IMPAIRED
TO HEARING CHILDREN AS WELL
Disruption

Disruptive idea: New development with entirely new approaches
Disruption through Triple Jump

Hop—Step—Jump
Learning together on a new path

Hop
Organizational merging of both schools

Step
Local merging—everyone brought together under a new roof

Jump
Opening for hearing children—establishment of inclusive classes at the Elbschule
School Trial Inclusive Classes

Agreements between Elbschule and school authorities

Teaching hearing-impaired and hearing children together

Class

Elbschule
School Trial – Inclusive Classes
An Inclusion Model for the Whole School

Core lessons according to curriculum

| deaf students | hard of hearing and hearing students |

All-day courses
Halls
Recess
School trips
Lunch
Projects and excursions

Hard of Hearing
Deaf Hearing
### Inclusive Classes at the Elbschule

Gradual introduction of inclusive classes (see yellow boxes)

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2016—Start of inclusive classes

- At a glance: **Overall personalities and all development areas** of the children and adolescents involved
- Everyday real encounters
- Inclusive learning: **Interaction** and **dialog** between the hearing and the hearing-impaired
- All participants: **Peer groups**
Elbschule Hamburg

Either... or...

Both... and...

Participation-oriented model
Program: Bilingualism
Monolingual – Bilingual

Monolingual

SpL and WL
SpL with SSpL/ SSS and WL

Bilingual

SpL dominant
SpL with SSpL and WL

SL dominant
SpL with SSpL and WL

Monolingual

SpL : Spoken language
WL : Written language
SL : Sign Language
SSpL : Signed spoken language
SSS : Sign-supported speech
Language models
Examples spoken language class 1

- After vacation: “I’ve brought in a picture by Rembrandt. He is an important artist. Could we talk about it?”
- “I used to hate recess, but now I just don’t like it anymore”
FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND EXPERIENCES

INCLUSIVE MODEL IN HIGH DEMAND!
First Impressions and Experiences

Students of the inclusive class 5 and 6/7

Overwhelmingly positive feedback, but some critical observations
Students of the Inclusive Class 6/7

Sense of community
Growing empathy
Sense of belonging
Lasting friendships

Often still “categorized”
We feel like guinea pigs!
It was just better before!
You’re annoying!
Students of the Inclusive Class 6/7
First Impressions and Experiences

Parents

Many extremely pleasing responses

- “Happy child”
- “Real inclusion”
- “Good academic performance”
First Impressions and Experiences

Teachers Involved

- Exciting
- Very gratifying
- Challenging
SCIENTIFIC MONITORING OF THE SCHOOL TRIAL

University of Hamburg
Prof. Dr. Barbara Hänel-Faulhaber
Department for Schools and Vocational Training (BSB)
Elbschule—involved

In the spotlight
- Communicative participation
- Social and emotional integration
- Peer groups
“Live-cell therapy” for the entire school

Long-lost sense of optimism

Inclusive Classes at the Elbschule
Clear statements from students

Reasonable level of uncertainty among us

Inclusion is ...
when we stop thinking in categories.

Inclusive Classes at the Elbschule
INCLUSIVE CLASSES AT THE ELBSCHULE—THE MAGIC FORMULA?

NO, BUT A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION!
Don’t wait too long!
Make the right take-off!
Risk landing on your stomach!
Trust yourself!
Elbschule Hamburg is on course

from separate specialist schools to an inclusive education center
Thank you for your attention!