

Conditions supporting the Inclusion of Children and Teenagers with Physical Disabilities

Reinhard Lelgemann, Philipp Singer, Christian Walter-Klose & Jelena Lübbecke (2012)

Abstract:

The article presents the main results of a 2 year research project on appropriate conditions for the inclusion of physically and multiple disabled pupils in German schools. The research project consists of three parts: A synthesis of all national and international empirical studies published during the last 40 years (Walter-Klose, 2012), 84 interviews with teachers, parents and students with experiences in inclusive settings and a survey of the experiences, opinions and attitudes of more than 4000 students, parents and teachers, involved in education in inclusive, special and general schools. The results of the studies stress the importance of the perception of the individual needs of students with physical and complex disabilities and the necessity for schools to adapt education and school organisation when inclusive schooling should succeed.

Key Words:

Inclusion, research project, students with physical or multiple disabilities

Annotations:

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The research project was commissioned by the Landschaftsverband Rheinland, which is entitled “*Conditions to succeed in elaborating joint classes (academic inclusion) and ensuring the best possible education (Art. 24,2e of the UN-Convention) of pupils with physical disabilities.*” (project duration 6/2010-07/2012).

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The discussion about inclusion in mainstream schooling of people with disabilities in Germany is based mainly on empirical studies referring to students with learning disabilities. National investigations of integrated pupils with physical or multiple disabilities are seldom. The reported research project closes this gap. It consists of three parts: A synthesis of all national and international empirical studies, published during the last 40 years (Walter-Klose 2012), 84 interviews with teachers, parents and students with experiences in inclusive settings and a survey of the experiences, opinions and attitudes of more than 4000 pupils, parents and teachers, involved in education in inclusive, special and general schools are elements of the research project. The results of the studies stress the importance of the perception of individual needs of students with physical and complex disabilities and the necessity for schools to adapt education and school organisation when inclusive schooling should succeed.

Since March 2009, Article 24 of the UN-Convention on the rights of people with disabilities in the Federal Republic of Germany has been enforced, to secure the rights for a best possible inclusive learning situation for all children and teenagers with disabilities and to demand appropriate measures to be taken. However, there are only few secured scientific findings on pupils with physical and motor disabilities (LELGEMANN 2010). For this BERGEEST, BOENISCH and DAUT (2011, 231f.) speak of a research and orientation deficiency in this area.

1. Question of Research

To close this research gap and determine the conditions which ensure the best possible situation for pupils with physical or multiple disabilities in school, a research project was commissioned by the Landschaftsverband Rheinland (LVR). Additionally, recommendations were to be developed on how the LVR, as a operator of special schools, can support inclusion.

2. Research Approach and Methodology

To answer this question, three scientific methods were combined. With the help of a comprehensive *analysis of literature*, national and international databases of education and psychology relevant to the question were systematically searched for studies carried out in the last 40 years on mainstreaming with children and teenagers with physical disabilities. These results were carried out by WALTER-KLOSE (2012) and published separately.

Based on this analysis of literature and existing specialized and experienced knowledge, each of these empirical papers was conceived. With help of a *qualitative interview study* the experiences of pupils with physical disabilities, their parents and teachers in integrative/inclusive classes were collected. Following the concept of *theoretical sampling* (HUSSY, SCHREIER & ECHTERHOFF 2010), pupils with disabilities were to be chosen from those

who are currently involved in joint classes, and children and teenagers who changed from joint lessons in regular schools over into special schools. The questioning of both random sample groups seemed especially promising with regard to determining conditions for successful joint learning. The interviews were held between October 2010 and February 2011 in special and integrative/inclusive schools mainly in the Rhineland area and were analysed with the help of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Following these surveys in the summer of 2011, a *quantitative questionnaire survey* was conducted, in which over 4000 pupils, parents and teachers participated. Using this survey, the findings of the qualitative survey were to be checked and verified in detail. In addition to this, through the participation of 19 schools of all types, the different perspectives of parents and teachers who so far knew only little or nothing on the topic of academic inclusion were gathered. For the first time in such a study, pupils with physical disabilities were questioned directly.

3. The Studies Spot Check Distribution

Qualitative Study

84 people took part in the qualitative study, including pupils with physical disabilities as well as their parents, teachers and head teachers at special schools and integrative/inclusive schools. In selecting the pupils, special attention was paid to ensure that both male and female pupils, pupils with an immigration background and pupils from different social backgrounds were included in the questioning.

Quantitative Study

The random sample distribution and the quantitative studies return rate is visualized in Table 1. The group of pupils questioned from special schools were children and teenagers attending school year 8 or higher, who were able to answer the questionnaire by themselves or with assistance. At integrative/inclusive schools, a joint learning class from every year was chosen together with a parallel class from the same year without joint learning classes. Out of the 604 pupils attending integrative/inclusive schools, 8.7% had a physical disability or a chronic illness. 4.4% of the pupils attending integrative/inclusive schools stated that they had a different disability than being physically disabled.

Table 1: Number of questioned Parents, Pupils, Teachers and Employees and the response rate of the questionnaires in parentheses

	Special Schools for Physically Disabled Children	Int./ Incl. Schools	General Schools	Total
Parents	704 (50 %)	584 (56 %)	778 (42 %)	2066 (49 %)
Pupils	388 ¹	604 (95 %)	-	992
Teachers	328 (70 %)	133 (47 %)	370 (43 %)	831 (53 %)
Employees	122 (67 %)	-	-	122 (67 %)
Total	1542 (62 %)	1321 (67 %)	1148 (43 %)	4011 (57 %)

The general schools were selected by the special schools. The special schools were asked to name all types of schools locally, with whom cooperation had already taken place or was thought to be possible in the future. Alongside eight of the LVR's regional special schools for physically disabled children and three integrative/inclusive schools, 19 general schools of all kinds took part in these standardized studies (9 primary schools and 10 secondary² schools of different types). When interpreting the quantitative study's findings, special attention is to be paid towards the fact that the children and teenagers attending a special school for physically disabled children required more support and therapy than the children and teenagers attending integrative/inclusive schools.

4. Results

4.1 Findings of the Literature Analysis

Within the scope of the literature analysis, WALTER-KLOSE (2012) found 81 studies from 13 countries in which joint learning of children and teenagers with physical disabilities was examined. The studies were evaluated from a qualitative related perspective and the findings combined, so that concluding recommendations for school progress could be derived.

The results of this synthesis clearly illustrate that joint classes with children and teenagers with physical disabilities are possible and welcomed by many pupils, parents and teachers.

¹ The responder rates for the pupils in special schools can only be estimated because teachers were asked to administer the questionnaires to pupils being able to fill them out. So it was impossible for the investigators to calculate an exact responder quote. It was at least 62%.

² Here: pupils of various types of secondary schools: secondary modern, grammar and comprehensive schools.

Pupils with physical disabilities (and no additional learning disability) develop better on average in joint classes, than similarly talented pupils in special schools. Simultaneously there is a great risk of children not being able to develop their full potential in joint classes, as learning standards have not been adequately adapted to the pupils' abilities and additional problems (e.g. social exclusion) have to be coped with. In particular, neglecting social and health related requirements can often lead to problems. On the school's part, a great number of adaptations within the schools general administration and organisation in classes are necessary, for example the use of adjusted teaching and learning aids, the cooperation with therapists or employment of school paraprofessionals.

4.2 Summary Description of the Study Results

Within the scope of the interviews and the survey, the level of satisfaction with their school and class situation was questioned and characteristics which affect the success of joint learning. The willingness of all participants to take part in joint learning was also raised. The results are summarized in the following and are completed by findings from the literature analysis.

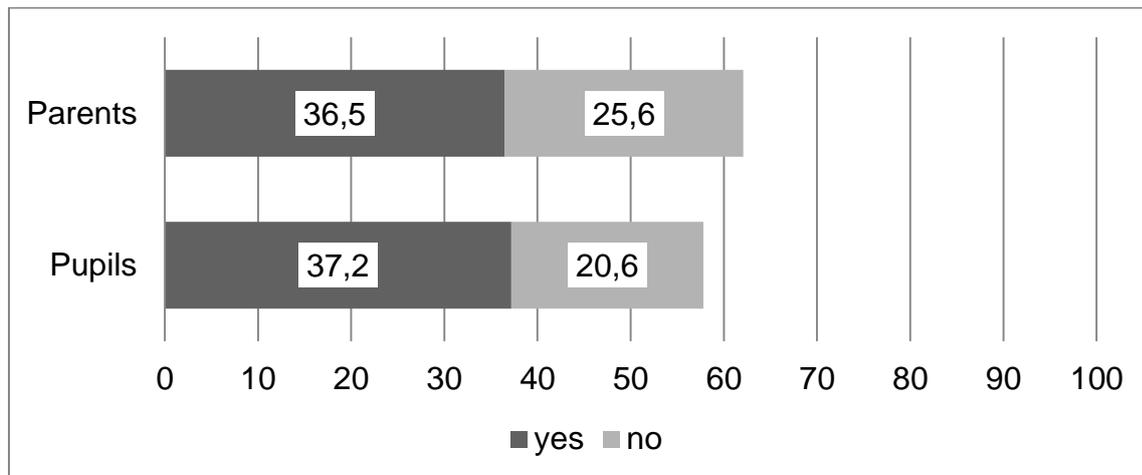
4.2.1 Satisfaction at School and Willingness to Change

The willingness to select an integrative/inclusive school or to change from a special school to a general school for pupils with physical and multiple disabilities has until now not been evaluated - even though a positive attitude towards joint learning is expected (KLEMM & PREUSS-LAUSITZ 2008).

The findings of this study show high parental satisfaction in their current school situation. Both 92.7% of parents with children and teenagers in integrative/inclusive schools and 81.7% of parents with children and teenagers in special schools would enrol their children at same schools again. Only 5.6% of the parents at special schools and 2.6% of the parents with disabled children at integrative/inclusive schools would not do the same again. All other parents were undecided.

At the same time, 37% of both the parents at special schools and the questioned pupils showed a great interest in joint classes with non-handicapped schoolmates (picture 1).

Picture 1: The Parents' and Pupils' Answers, in percentages, to the Question: Would you like to learn together with non-handicapped pupils (Appropriate Formulation for Parents)?



These answers show that more than a third of those questioned in special schools wish for more social participation at general schools, however the required conditions are not yet taken as given. This result shows that the development of inclusive learning and living conditions has to be a serious mission, also for special schools for the physically disabled. At the same time the brief results shown here prove that one cannot speak of a general dissatisfaction with what is offered by special schools for the physically disabled.

4.2.2 Factors influencing the Inclusion from the Pupils' and their Parents' point of view

The qualitative and quantitative studies concluded that the parents, the pupils' personality and his or her current aid requirements all have great influence on the success of the integration/inclusion.

Great Personal Commitment and Extensive Knowledge Required by Parents

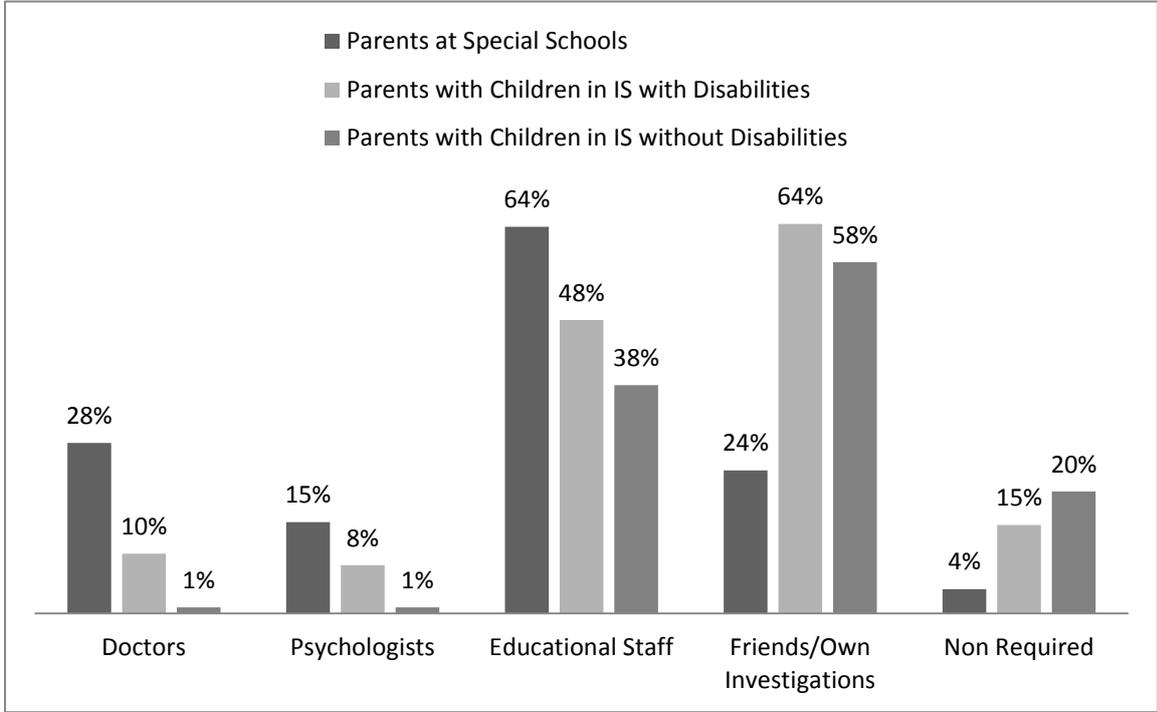
Parents of children with disabilities often talk of a "hard time" and of a high personal, financial and time-consuming effort to ensure joint learning for their child. They had hurdles to overcome with officials, schools and authorities and some parents even chose the judicial path to avoid the "recommended" attending of a special school for physically disabled children and enable the child to attend an inclusive school.

The search for an appropriate school is often time-consuming and lengthy.

The answer to the question as to who advised the parents in their choice of school, underpins the theory taken from the interviews, that parents themselves have to be highly active in order to find a place in joint classes for their children: Picture 2 clearly shows, that the advice given to the parents of children with disabilities selecting a school with joint lessons was mostly received through friends or through their own thorough investigations. Doctors, psychologists and educational staff played a comparatively small role. The

percentage of professional advice was considerably higher for parents of pupils attending a special school, probably because there the children and teenagers had a higher aid requirement.

Picture 2: Advice given by... (Multiple answering possible, IS= integrative/inclusive schools)



The examples from the qualitative interviews also prove the high commitment of many parents, when trying to uphold the inclusive schools situation. In conclusion long journeys between homes and schools have to be coped with. Parents reported on their own supporting measures during school time and lessons and are also actively involved in school life – a finding also clearly seen in the literature analysis. The results clearly indicate that successful academic integration/inclusion (still) often requires time and financial resources together with certain social cultural means on the part of the parents.

Behaviour and Aid Requirements as a Further Influence

The results also indicate that the success of academic integration/inclusion still seems to be connected to the pupils’ behaviour and aid requirement. Parents and teachers describe the behaviour of most of the pupils who changed from a general school to a special school for physically disabled children (“changers”), either as quiet, shy and secluded or as severely maladjusted. Most of these “changers” had also required differentiated instruction at their previous schools, which wasn’t available. On the other hand, children in successful integrative/inclusive situations were described as self-confident and they described themselves as assertive and could be taught equally without the adaptation of learning goals when in secondary school. Furthermore the comparison of the two groups of pupils revealed a significantly higher aid requirement coming from the “changers” in the practicalities of life

and during lessons. If a pupil requires a high level of care, it currently reduces his or her chances to attend joint classes.

The analysis of the sample of pupils reveals, that none of the “changers” or the pupils at integrative/inclusive schools had a high requirement of therapy. This strongly indicates that pupils with higher requirements can rarely find access to inclusive learning. This is also stressed by the integrative/inclusive schools’ teachers, who can’t see pupils with heightened requirements being admitted in view of missing spatial requirements and corresponding offers.

The results show the importance of adaptive structures of inclusive schools to meet pupils challenging behaviour, their heightened supporting needs, therapy and caring requirement. For this an inclusive school requires structures and practices to be developed, which don’t make the success of an integrative/inclusive learning dependent on the previously mentioned and still relevant influencing variables.

4.3 Reasons for Changing Schools

The investigation revealed that a change from a general school to a school for physically disabled children always took place when pressure was too high regarding the social situation in class or the learning demands. This pressure leads to emotional strain. In particular cases pupils and their parents reported exclusion through teachers, for example because of lack of adaptation to lessons, or of problems in participation in extracurricular activities such as class trips or excursions. Many pupils also described teasing by classmates, which extended to bullying. In this context pupils criticised their exposed position, for example the fact being the only handicapped pupil at the school. Occasionally this was itself a cause of teasing and many parents claimed that schools did not have a sensible, positive attitude towards handicapped pupils. Noticeably, those pupils who were said to be either secluded or maladjusted described these incriminating social situations more often. The pupils in successful integrative/inclusive school situations reported that it was important to be self-confident when social problems were perceived. Additionally all teaching staff at these schools were sensitive for socially integrative processes.

Reasons were also found in learning and performance areas, which negatively affected the pupils’ personal-emotional situation, often adding to their social problems. The instruction was described as too fast and overall overtaxing. Differentiated adaptations to pupils’ learning preconditions were often missing in methods, content and material. Furthermore pupils and their parents reported on the handling of disadvantage compensation, which led to the pupils’ class mates perceiving them to be favoured, leading to jealous reactions. Out of ignorance, teachers often did not allow any disadvantage compensation at all. Likewise handicapped pupils were denied necessary recovery periods or the chance to go to the toilet during lessons or a lack of empathy when pupils had long absences caused by necessary operations or illnesses.

Many pupils and their parents would have found smaller learning groups for more individual consideration helpful. In addition, the absence of a second teacher in classes and an expert contact partner for all handicap relevant questions would have been a necessary support factor, according to parents. Furthermore parents described insufficient cooperation and information management with their previous schools.

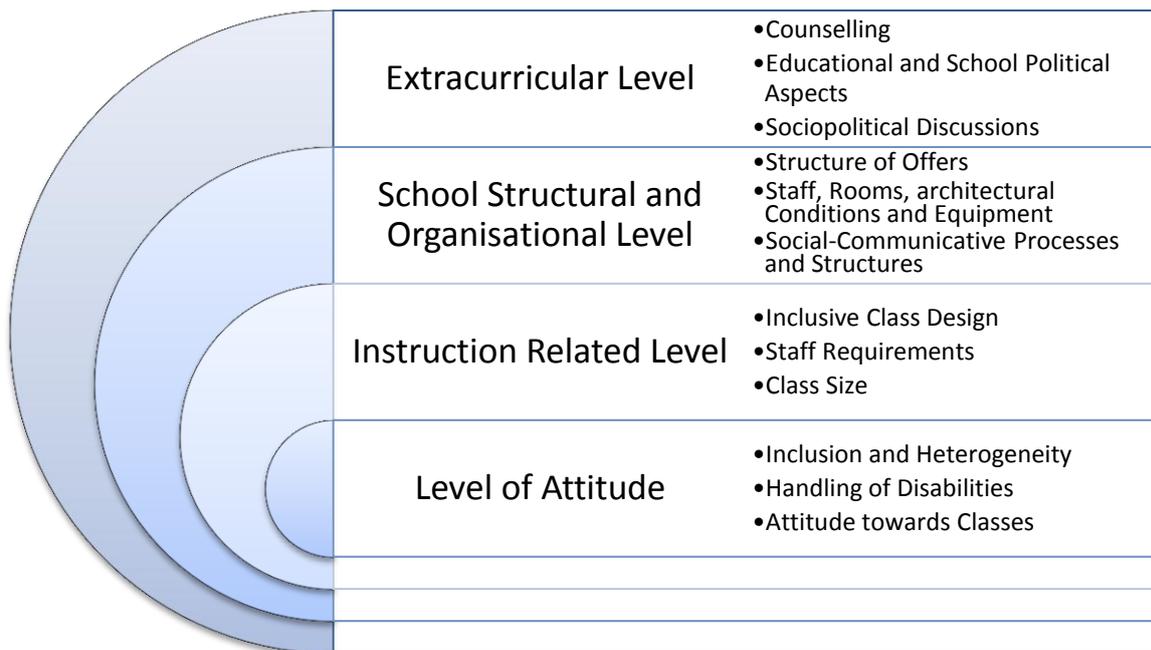
Many parents described the dropping out of their integrative school situation as being "swept out" (quote from a parent) and were left completely alone in the search for an alternative. This was especially a problem, when pupils changing from primary to secondary school because integrative secondary schools were missing.

This analysis of the reasons which led to a change of schools or successful inclusive teaching, is reflected in the following multiple-level-model of academic inclusion. From the teachers, pupils and parents questioned from integrative/inclusive schools, certain conditions are put into focus, the absence of which led to withdrawal from the integrative school situation. Furthermore through questioning all pupils, parents and teachers at special schools for the physically disabled, conditions for multiple disabled pupils in particular could be taken into account.

4.4 Conditions for Inclusive Education of Pupils with Physical Disabilities

The following multiple-level-model shows the extended conditions for an inclusive educational offer for pupils with physical and multiple disabilities, determined through qualitative interview studies and proven through quantitative questionnaires. It has to be taken into account, that this is merely a systematised diagram. The individual levels' conditions are much more directly woven into each other and alternately entail each other.

Picture 3: Multiple-Level-Model of conditions for inclusive schools for pupils with physical disabilities



Attitude as a Basis for Inclusive Education

A positive attitude towards pupils' inclusion and heterogeneity seems necessary and essential to an adequate consideration of pupils' personality and their handicap and also to creating a positive social climate: *'With regard to the development of this school, which has always been a school which attached importance to the highest possible heterogeneity, and holds this in great esteem, doesn't see this as a problem but more as a chance' (Head of an integrative/inclusive school).*

To support a positive attitude towards inclusive schools, the following two elements based on the qualitative interviews can be perceived as helpful:

- A wide consent of all participants in a school towards an inclusive school development, instead of ordering academic inclusion.
- The inclusion of all participants, also the non educational staff, in the process of school development and school management with the chance to consider insecurities and worries from the beginning.

With regard to the creation of helpful processes of social interaction, the following elements were found to be very important:

- In terms of 'social learning' the pupils treatment of each other is to be organized deliberately and, when necessary, initiated.
- Particular offers by the questioned integrative/inclusive schools were anti-bullying-training, class councils and increased cooperation with parents.
- A conscious attitude of all teachers, 'seeing' where there is teasing or insulting and directly addressing the pupils involved.
- An open and 'relaxed' dealing with pupils' multiple disabilities or chronic illnesses, instead of '*making a secret*' out of their disability.

Further aspects that concern the treatment of pupils with disabilities, and therefore the teachers' attitudes, are:

- A transparent handling of disadvantage compensation, to avoid jealousy and distrust which can evolve from unclear situations.
- The sensitive search and development of a creative approach to resolving problems with the pupils involved.
- Multiple admissions of pupils with disabilities, hereby avoiding stigmatisation and securing a chance for communication between affected pupils on specific topics in a peer group environment.
- The sensitive perception and consideration of physical needs and premises (resting periods; heightened absence periods; classroom activity; special topics).

The necessity of a changing attitude towards lessons (acceptance of heterogeneity, differentiated methods for learning and teamwork) was repeatedly emphasized: *'I think that's the greatest problem, the teachers' attitudes and their own experiences. If in your mind you believe, that you're most successful in your class when you have a homogeneous group, then you can forget inclusion.'* (Head of an integrative/inclusive school).

The importance of a positive attitude towards inclusion was verified by the quantitative study. Pupils themselves, both from special and integrative/inclusive schools, quoted '*good contacts to classmates*' and respectful treatment of each other as most important to successful academic inclusion.

The question of attitude, however, is not only a question of willingness as many of those questioned made clear. Precise conditions are required, that need to be beneficial to all participants. The more adverse the attitudes or the greater the fears and insecurities of all involved parties are, the more it requires the existence or the development of more

favourable conditions in the admitting schools – not only for pupils but especially for the teachers. In the words of a head teacher, it is important to grasp that inclusion *'[is] an advantage for all. And to me that is the headline for inclusion: It's an advantage for all.'* (Head of an integrative/inclusive school).

Whether or not this can be achieved is therefore a question of educational-political resources. For this reason the following illustration focuses initially on conditions which an inclusive class urgently requires, for pupils with and without physical or multiple disabilities. Thereafter further conditions for academic inclusion of these pupils are given on school-structural, organisational and extracurricular levels.

Conditions for Inclusive Classes

All of those questioned agreed that a change in the style of teaching is required, if a pupil with physical or multiple disabilities attends school: *'learning in heterogeneous groups has to be possible'* (Head of a special school).

The more complex the disability, the more an inclusive lesson must entail the principles of (inner) differentiation in content and methods, respect individualisation and structuring and just as specifically deal with topics relevant to pupils with physical disabilities.

However, until now most classes, especially at secondary schools are not differentiated in goals of learning. This leads to the fact that attending integrative schools does not come into question for many pupils, as they require differentiated targeted instruction.

Such an (inclusive) class mostly requires particular conditions in personnel areas:

- Almost all participating integrative/inclusive schools show that they consistently have **two teachers per class** with one general schools teacher and one qualified remedial teacher. According to the questioned special schools, this pre-condition is, together with the aspect of attitude, one of the most important conditions to ensure academic inclusion. This requires cooperative teamwork among the teachers.
- According to integrative/inclusive schools, remedial teachers should be **clearly assigned** to a school and class and hold the **collective responsibility** for a whole class or all pupils. Assignment to individual pupils with disabilities is therefore rejected, as it can easily lead to stigmatising situations. Furthermore all pupils profit from a qualified remedial teacher.
- However, international studies show that for some students with disabilities **individual integration** can be a good form of mainstreaming, when organisational, architectural, personal, instructional structures and equipment are adjusted to meet the individual needs of the student in a good way (cf. WALTER-KLOSE 2012).
- In addition to enabling smaller learning groups, an essential **advantage** of having two teachers per class - one of them being a professionally trained remedial teacher - is the specific adaptation of classes to handicapped pupils' pre-conditions for learning. Through specific expertise it is possible to give qualified counselling to general school

teachers, parents and pupils. Apart from that, qualification of remedial teachers in inclusion provides for a responsible carrying out of specific duties (e.g. preparation of assessments, appropriate execution of intelligence tests, responsibility for all teaching aids). Not least of all, a certain number of permanently employed remedial teachers in schools heightens the awareness for handicapped pupils among the entire staff and improves the building of pupils' relations with one another. This important inclusive work could not be done by a teacher for special needs who has only a few hours per week at any one school. The assignment of class assistants and advanced training for general school teachers can help, but a permanent coverage of essential duties would be neither warranted nor maintainable (to the role of class assistants see also Walter-Klose 2012, 344ff.).

- In addition to these conditions for staff, the **formation of smaller learning groups** of maximum 24 pupils has to take place to ensure the success of inclusive classes.

Conditions for School Structure and Organisation

Offered structures

All of those questioned agreed that inclusive education, which also includes pupils with multiple disabilities, has to offer **care** and **therapy** (physio-, occupational and speech therapy). In addition more than half of the questioned pupils at special schools clearly refuse offers of therapy in the afternoons after school for various reasons. Educational supervision, close fusions of therapies with classes and the specific expertise of therapists are seen as the main advantages to offering therapy directly within schools.

As a further necessary structural facility, full-time schools are often mentioned, which could serve as a relief to parents and also as a possibility for providing socially-integrative learning processes and be used for therapy sessions. A **social-educational** and **school-psychological facility**, with direct access is an essential instrument to support inclusive processes. In addition, in inclusive schools there should be **preparation for the choice of a future occupation**, taking the special situation of pupils with physical and multiple disabilities into account.

External determining factors

These structures require **appropriate staff** (therapists, nursing staff, social workers, school psychologists, educators) and existing **special accommodation conditions** (therapy/caring rooms, quiet/retreat rooms, rooms for the differentiation and allowance of disadvantage compensation, adapted sanitary rooms). A **barrier-free design** of the building and schools premises is seen as a vital condition, so pupils with physical disabilities can attend school (ramps, door openers, sufficient space, functioning lifts). Also certain **technical aids and equipments** are seen as necessary, when pupils with physical disabilities attend school

(general aids such as desks, laptops etc., aid materials for class and the appropriate financial budget, which seems particularly necessary at the beginning of inclusion).

Communicative and Cooperative Processes and Structures

Throughout all the questioned groups it emerges that academic inclusion requires additional accord and organisation. Therefore, it is crucial to have communicative and cooperative processes and structures, which support the flow of information to avoid pupils with disabilities having trouble in explaining problems. To ensure this, it is essential that the teams function and cooperate well interdisciplinarily, which can be supported by further internal and external training. Furthermore, an altered and temporally intensified cooperation with parents, who are to be considered experts with regard to their children and need to be taken seriously, is essential and proven by examples of “changers”.

Not only the combination of the single conditions but also in terms of a well-conceived design of inclusive processes, a clear concept for academic inclusion is required, in which the schools conditions, structures, processes and targets are firmly anchored. Previous to admitting pupils with disabilities it is essential, to achieve a conceptual agreement which is to be continuously developed. In this process the respective headmasters have a particular responsibility.

Schools and parents alone cannot realize these processes in the best possible way. The support of extracurricular structures is important, which are named on the last level and fall in the area of educational policy.

Extracurricular Conditions

Many parents were highly unsatisfied with the existing counselling structures and also with their contents. The results show that a neutral, independent and localized counselling system, especially on questions regarding school location choice, is to be established.

It was noted by many questioned, that a lack of inclusive secondary schools illustrates a deplorable truth, which has made a free choice of school location for pupils with physical disabilities harder, or, in the last few years, even impossible.

Just as critically, it is pointed out that in a general school teacher’s training, until now in spite of varied advice, one is not obliged to deal with questions regarding disability and adequately modified teaching methods. According to many questioned the addition of such contents in teacher training represents an essential condition for academic inclusion. However, the specialist requirements for teachers of children with special needs within joint lessons must be taken into consideration.

In this context, structural involvement of supporting teachers at general schools has to be clarified. The current situation of special schools delegating remedial teachers is highly unsatisfactory, doesn’t motivate teachers to work in an inclusive school and overall doesn’t

create a positive basis for cooperative work between integrative/inclusive schools and special schools.

It is repeatedly mentioned that the current ambiguous educational political situation is causing insecurity to all involved and schools are enrolling, or having to enrol, pupils with special needs without being able to be fully prepared. In this context many of the questioned and interviewed address their concerns that an academic inclusion which is unstructured, prescribed, non-expert and not financially secured could lead to loss of quality and with that the creation of an educational situation which is neither pedagogical nor definable as best possible according to the terms of the UN-Convention.

In addition to this international experience, evaluated during analysis of literature, indicates that necessary technical aids could not be purchased if it was unclear whether the educational or health system were to meet the costs (Walter-Klose 2012, 366f.). Distinct regulations seem necessary so that if there is doubt as to who is responsible for meeting costs in order to ensure that a pupil receives the necessary aids immediately and permanently.

4.5 Perspectives of Implementing Inclusive Classes

Based on the results of the qualitative studies, it was not only generally asked, whether the questioned teachers in general schools could imagine admitting pupils with physical disabilities. Rather they were asked about their willingness to teach different groups of pupils. The questionnaires entailed three constructed groups of pupils:

- Pupil A: *Requires a wheelchair and has no further disabilities.*
- Pupil B: *Also requires a wheelchair and additionally has a heightened need for care (when going to the toilet, speech is hard to understand, uses a speech computer).*
- Pupil C: *Requires a wheelchair and additionally has a mental disability*

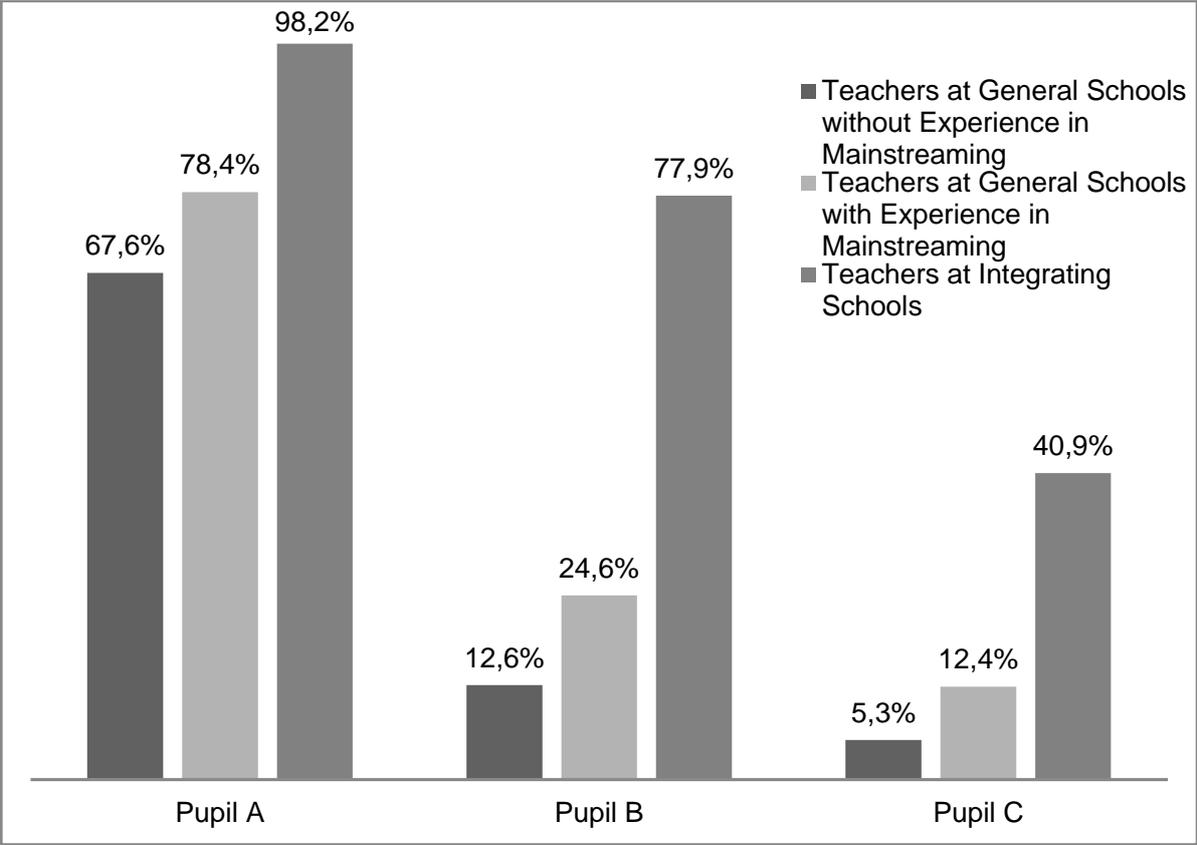
This construction provides an aid, as people have different ideas about individual disabilities, on the other hand within this study the pupils' heterogeneity should be illustrated through basic means. In group C pupils with more complex disabilities should be described.

85% of 778 parents from general schools could imagine that pupil A could attend the class of their own child, for pupil B it was 52% and for pupil C it was still 25%. However, 75% of the parents questioned rejected this last option.

Teachers at general and integrative schools were also asked which of the three described groups of pupils they could imagine in their own classes. Hereby it was differentiated between teachers from a general school who have had experience in joint lessons or teachers without.

The following diagram shows the distribution:

Picture 4: Percentage of 370 Teachers', who welcome an Admittance of Pupils A, B, C in their Classes



Here it is to be pointed out, that the willingness of admittance or the positive assessment of a possibility for inclusive classes turns out to be considerably more positive, the more positive experiences in inclusive learning situations were gathered. This especially applies to teachers from the integrative/inclusive schools taking part. Although they tend to be more experienced and secure in creating inclusive teaching and living conditions, teachers at integrative/inclusive schools also tend to be more sceptical regarding pupil group C. This evaluation is additionally affirmed, as 46% of teachers from integrative/inclusive schools were pro keeping special schools, as they are momentarily 'important to some pupils'.

Finally all participants were asked how rapidly the process of academic inclusion should be proceeded with. It clearly shows that hardly any questioned group desired an instant realisation (apart from 17.5% of parents from integrative/inclusive schools and 13.1% from special schools), larger groups agree to not making any rash decisions and 28% of parents from general schools together with 29% of parents from integrative/inclusive schools wish for an implementation over the next two to three years. 39% of teachers for children with special needs and 24% of employees at special schools would welcome a time span of ten years. Overall, teachers and parents from integrative/inclusive schools desire a more rapid

development of inclusive school structures than parents and teachers from general schools and in particular parents, teachers and employees from special schools.

Independent of the question of time frame, all the groups questioned, without exception, linked the willingness to develop inclusive school structures to concrete, nameable conditions, which were illustrated in this summary. Here the example of integrative/inclusive schools proves that it requires these conditions to make academic inclusion more of a life-enhancing experience to all participants. Within the scope of the research project short-, middle- and long-term options and recommendations were developed for creating inclusive school development processes which are illustrated in detail in the research report.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This study allows differentiated statements towards the inclusion of pupils with physical and multiple disabilities which, until now, weren't possible due to lack of empirical findings. On the one hand it becomes clear, that high quality inclusive learning conditions are also desired for multiply disabled pupils, in which necessary, complex conditions are illustrated in this article. On the other hand, it also becomes clear that the conditions need to be continually newly organised and reflected on. The endeavours for inclusion should be seen in this context as a dynamic process. Furthermore in our studies, it becomes clear that within the scope of inclusive classes the specification of the children and teenagers' specific needs is necessary, if high-quality inclusion is to be realised. It is to be assumed, that this also counts for other groups of pupils who require specific aid conditions for learning and participation. In conclusion the contents of this study show that the work of special schools for physically disabled children is highly appreciated by the parents, simultaneously, however, they are very interested in moving inclusive school structures forward which can also benefit pupils with multiple disabilities.

6. Literature

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Information:

A differentiated illustration of the results can be accessed in the research project, which can be found as a pdf-file on the homepages of the Landschaftsverband Rheinland and the University of Würzburg's chair of special needs education II/education for the physically disabled. Here you can also find the results for the evaluation for inclusions allowance by the Landschaftsverband Rheinland, together with the recommendations from the research team for developing inclusive school structures for teaching physically disabled children and teenagers. A further text in plain language can also be ordered at the LVR, Schools Department, or downloaded from the homepages mentioned above.

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