

Exploring Inclusive Practices

Examples from Schools within European Cultural Diversity

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Introduction

This book is the third and concluding book in the series *Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion*. The three anthologies are linked to the international research cooperation project WB 04/06: *Development towards the Inclusive School: Practices – Research – Capacity Building: Universities of Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb & Oslo*. Anthology no 1 dealt with how to prepare and formulate research projects. Anthology no 2 drew attention to the research process, focusing on theoretical, methodological and ethical considerations. Both anthologies contain jointly written texts and individual articles representing each research group at the seven universities, as well as articles from visiting researchers and other particularly relevant scholars.

The aim of this anthology is to present and discuss research findings. As in the two former anthologies, each research group presents articles about their studies in Part Two of this book. Part Three consists of the joint research report. It contains a comprehensive presentation of findings answering the primary research question: How does school teach in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process (resources, barriers and dilemmas)? This report is the main part of the anthology, covering two thirds of the book.

“Qualitative Research – Does it Work?” Currently, quantitative research has a privileged position amongst many researchers and even more non-professionals. Concurrently, qualitative research is increasing within several sciences. Accordingly, participation in the methodological discourse is indispensable, since the joint international research project is qualitative and comparative. Two arti-

cles address this discourse, discussing the abovementioned question as well as international comparative qualitative methodology in Part One. Two other important aspects are discussed in more detail; one is a conceptual discussion of care and sensitivity and the other is about innovation challenges.

Contributors

Twenty-two authors have contributed to this anthology. They are briefly presented in this book. An even larger number of researchers have participated in the process of compilation findings and in repeated rounds of reviewing the joint research report in Part Three. A large number of pupils and school classes have participated in the studies with the consent of and cooperation with parents, teachers and special needs educators as well as school principals. Several other professions and authorities have participated in providing permission for and information about the studies. The seven participating universities are key institutions in this cooperative project. The main incentive for the launching of the research cooperation was the financing of the WB 04/06 research grant for the project *Development towards the Inclusive School: Practices – Research – Capacity Building: Universities of Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb & Oslo* (2006), which was partly financed by the Norwegian Cooperation Program on Research and Higher Education with the Countries on the Western Balkans (CPWB). Additional funding for the three anthologies was granted from the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Oslo. Researchers' work efforts are “funded” through their academic positions and personal efforts.

The working language was English, which prevented some of the participants from taking part in dialogue. Mr. Goran Đapić was therefore appointed project interpreter from the very beginning. He was well known to many of the participants from a former research and innovation project (SØE 06/02, 2002). Mr. Đapić interpreted consecutively singlehandedly and simultaneously along with a local interpreter. Since 2007, he has interpreted together with Ms. Vera Đapić. Mr. Đapić' interpreting has made the cooperation possible, and his fast, smooth and professional interpretation has played a key role in creating efficient seminars. As mentioned in Anthology no 2, Mr. Đapić has also translated articles from French and Serbian into English. Goran Đapić passed away in May 2015 after a period of illness.

All articles have been peer reviewed by project colleagues, internal colleagues at the University of Oslo and researchers from other universities and countries. The joint comparative report of the international classroom studies in Part Three has been the subject of an extraordinary number of internal peer reviews or member checking, as described in the report. All reviews have been important contributors to improving the quality of the texts. The close cooperation with publishing house proofreader Karin Lee has once again significantly increased the clarity and readability of our articles due to her conscientious and detailed work.

While there are several reasons, why the writing and editing process of this book took considerably longer time than expected two reasons stand out: 1) Heavy workloads regarding lecturing and other student-related activities. 2) Due to the abovementioned privileged status of quantitative research as the only applicable methodology, the editor has undertaken a time-consuming study of the history and current development in refining comparative and qualitative methodology, including the question of evidence. Consequently, several methods or tools are used to examine the quality and “truth value” of this qualitative international comparative research project – its strengths and limitations.

The cooperation with the generous and patient editor, Bjørn Olav Aas Hansen at the publishing house Cappelen Damm Akademisk has been highly appreciated throughout the process of creating this concluding anthology.

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