

Onderzoeks fiche

General information	
Title	"Inclusive secondary schools"
Researchers	Annet De Vroey and Katrien Roelandts, Leuven University College
Promotor	Lisette Vanhelmont, Leuven University College
Co-promotor	Prof. Dr. Katja Petry, University of Leuven
University & University College	Teacher Education for SEN, Leuven University College Parenting & Special Education Research Unit, University of Leuven
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References	De Vroey, A. & Roelandts, K., (2011) Scholen met ondersteuning. Verslag van het kwalitatief onderzoek naar inclusieve school- en klaspraktijk in middelbare scholen in Vlaanderen. PWO Inclusief de middelbare school 2008-2011. KHLeuven Departement Lerarenopleiding.

Abstract 'Inclusive secondary education' Research project KULeuven-KHLeuven

Inclusive school development

Twelve Flemish secondary schools participated in a qualitative research project in search of good practices of inclusive education at the secondary education level. These schools were selected out of 200 schools having students with special educational needs and support from special schools. The selection represented a sample that reached a high score on an online questionnaire, based on prior research about inclusive school policy and inclusive classroom practice. The results of the study show processes of inclusive school development, that strongly rely on shared values, positive relationships and cooperating teams with key figures or 'anchors'. Each of these 'anchors' starts a process that leads to a growing integration of special support-practice into a wider school based support system: into the daily classroom diversity policy and practice of the school. Inclusive practice supported by special services becomes embedded in existing school procedures, adopts or improves procedures that are school based. The increase of students with special needs and consequently the increase of support teachers in secondary education, has led to effective support strategies that are not merely looking for specific and individual solutions, but take a more universal and shared approach. Classmates play an important role in the shift towards more inclusion. In classroom practice, teachers show much sensitivity in their approach of ordinary as well as more special questions of young people, and find a good balance in the instruction time and classroom management in heterogeneous groups. School teams take the full responsibility for the pupils with a special support-attestation. Students with an intellectual disability contribute to changes in school culture. However, the increased support for these pupils does not always have a bigger impact on the team; much is taken out of the hands of the teacher when a larger support team is in place. Finally, the researchers point out some challenges in this school development: reflection in the school team and the supporting teams does not necessarily coincide; the place of IEP's as an invitation to permanent evaluation and the role of special support services for adolescents.

Inclusive classroom practice

As a part of the qualitative 'Inclusive Secondary Education' Research Project (PWO 2008-2011, KHLeuven & KULeuven), classroom practice in inclusive settings was studied across twelve schools, 25 different classrooms and 15 subject matters, representing all age groups and streams of secondary schools in Belgium (Flemish Community Education). The aim of the study was to construct a map of classroom activities, relations and instructions in secondary schools that can be perceived as representative for classroom practice in a heterogeneous group of students from 12-18

years, including students with a disability. 55 lesson observations were written down in a framework, based on the Classroom Assessment Scale (La Paro, Pianta & Stuhlman, 2002) and research on inclusive classroom practice (Murray & Pianta, 2006; McDougall, 2004), each lesson being simultaneously followed by two trained observers. This framework supported the observers in selecting and classifying any activity, event or interaction at first sight, while describing and illustrating in detail what was happening in the classroom. At the same time, it served as a hypothesis for a final map of inclusive classroom practice. Consequently, the observations were coded in order to capture the main characteristics of classroom practice in groups where students with a disability are included. The results led to two principal conclusions: in inclusive classrooms, teacher practice and interactions are largely similar to practice in typical secondary classrooms; teacher practice starts from good management skills, arrangements and instruction quality, mostly without adding special techniques, materials, or co-teacher support. However, looking deeper into the actions and interactions in the classroom, the student-teacher relationship shows a high degree of sensitivity, peer interactions are cooperative, and teachers and classmates respond to the need for self-determination of the student with a disability. Teachers and peers seem to be well aware of the needs of students with a disability, and are able to deal with these special needs in a subtle, balanced way. Teachers show a simultaneous attention and responsiveness for group and individual needs. These observations confirm the theory that inclusive classroom practice mirrors high quality education. Finally, an adapted framework based on these findings was designed as an instrument for student teacher practice. A small group of ten student teachers was asked to make use of the framework as a reflection instrument during a teacher practice semester. Their reflections confirmed a first use of the instrument as a framework for professional development on teacher practice in heterogeneous classrooms.

References

Annet De Vroey, Katrien Roelandts, Elke Struyf & Katja Petry, Inclusive classroom practices in secondary schools. Towards a universal teaching approach. Accepted for peer reviewed Isatt Conference Book at Gringko Press, 2015.

Annet De Vroey en Katrien Roelandts (2011), Scholen in beweging. Eindrapport/Final report PWO Inclusief de middelbare school. KHLeuven interne rapportering.

Conference 'Secondary schools' inclusion', February 29, 2012, Leuven University College

Key words

Inclusive education, secondary education, special educational needs