



PROPOSED ISSUES TO BE RAISED BY THE DANISH MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND EDUCATION AT THE CONFERENCE, RAISING ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL LEARNERS, ODENSE 13-15 JUNE 2012

Too many students have been seen as ‘special’ and outside standards and therefore transferred to special needs education and we do not know much about the outcome of these efforts.

An increasing number of students have been the concern of special needs specialists and as a result have been segregated in special classes and special schools that do not provide them with a clear educational outcome in terms of their later chances in the job market. This is very problematic for both students and society - from a humanistic and economical point of view. Denmark now uses 30% of all school expenditures for special needs education.

Current pedagogical approaches concerning values and information about inclusive education do not appear to be working

We have been very active in making changes that try to introduce the idea and values of inclusive education and since the beginning of the 1990's there have been many pedagogical initiatives - through teacher education and through development programmes. The result is that everybody agrees with the values of an inclusive approach. But this strategy has failed to change the actual trends and there are an increasing number of students segregated in special education.

Schools see inclusive education as a part of special needs education. They also see inclusive education as being dependant upon more resources to special needs education and not to mainstream education. The difference between special needs education and inclusive education has been unclear. Special needs education has developed as a very broad concept resulting in too many resources and too much effort and responsibility in the field of separate special needs education provision.

All students need the experience of success in learning and having clear achievements as a result of their schooling. Therefore we want a more professional and strong school with high achievement for all children. We want to strengthen and invest in a better education based upon better mainstream teaching ensuring higher participation and engagement of more students.

New strategies and legislation

The parliament has therefore approved new legislation to switch the focus of capacity development building. This includes:

Restriction of the concept for special needs education. Special needs education will be in the future only for students with a need for segregated education in special classes and special schools, or with a need of individual support in the local school in at least half of school time.



Inclusive education is an obligation and responsibility for all schools. Mainstream schools will be obliged to offer education according to a student's individual conditions and needs. Head-teachers are responsible for the establishment of structures and differentiated education to include students in mainstream education.

Implementation of the new legislation

A number of steps are being taken:

- Initiatives together with the Ministry of Integration and Social Affairs to establish a task force for the development of an inclusive and interdisciplinary approach in institutions and schools for children across day care, schooling and leisure activities. This task force will support local schools and ensure the development of teacher education in inclusive strategies and methods.
- the establishment of a national resource centre for special needs education and inclusion. The centre will collect good examples and research results and distribute knowledge about effects and evidence of inclusive approaches in education. Head-teachers and teachers need input to develop competent teaching and support to all students.
- The establishment of a fund to develop the use of new technology in teaching students with special needs.
- Information about the new legislation will be disseminated to and through organisations for Parents and Schools and through organisations of disabled people to ensure an understanding of the intentions and principles for the new legislation.
- A new partnership between the Minister for Children and Education and the Teachers' Union to support teachers dealing with the challenges and possibilities from the new legislation.