



equal opportunities 4 all

inclusion



DISSEMINATION PAPER 01/12/2012 – 30/11/2015



01 INCLUSIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SPECIALISED TAILOR-MADE TRAINING

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All children and adults with disabilities are given the same right to inclusive education as everyone else.

01

INTRODUCTION



Research has been done with regard to two main theories:

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Since the **Salamanca Statement** of 1994 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008) were set forth, there has been a political aim within the EU countries **that all children and adults with disabilities are given the same right to inclusive education as everyone else.**

Although there have been many efforts to accomplish this goal, we still have a long way ahead of us before we can claim to have created a society in which equal opportunities are guaranteed for all. In many schools and training centres there continues to be much uncertainty and a general lack of knowledge pertaining to providing for persons with disabilities can be seen. For that reason, in 2009 the Comenius network '**Pathways to Inclusion**' (P2i) was developed.

While the focus in P2i was mainly on the compulsory education system in general, we now want to shift our focus towards the vocational education system. **In four schools in Austria, Belgium, Norway and Slovenia we have developed and plan to implement inclusive school programmes in the field of vocational educational training.**

IN ORDER TO EVALUATE OUR APPROACH, WE DEVELOP, DESIGN AND PLAN OUR RESEARCH USING A FOUR PHASED APPROACH

→ 01

RESEARCH,
DESIGN &
PLANNING
PHASE

→ 02

EXPERIENCE-
BASED
DEVELOPMENT
PHASE

→ 03

FOLLOW-UP
AND
OPTIMIZATION
PHASE

→ 04

EVALUATION
& REPORTING
PHASE

- '**Universal Design**' (UD) and
- '**Reasonable Accommodation**' (RA)

Research has been done with regard to two main theories: 'Universal Design' and 'Reasonable Accommodation'. This research helped us to develop an overall strategy on the design of an inclusive learning environment in each school. In September of 2013 the schools partnered together with the service providers and started to implement the concrete teaching programmes.

After the programs began to be implemented, the experience-based development phase started. There are two aims of this phase. On the one hand we wish to evaluate the teaching programmes for 'Universal Design' on a continuous basis, in order to ensure high quality teaching programmes at local level and a high quality strategy at the European level by the end of the project. On the other hand we want to identify new approaches and ideas for an inclusive education in VET (generating new hypotheses).



A strategy at the EU level for implementing a 'Universal Design' for learning and innovative actions in the regular vocational education and training system.

02

PROJECT INVESTT

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THE PROJECT INVESTT – INCLUSIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SPECIALISED TAILOR-MADE TRAINING

The European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EAS-PD) and 13 other European partners are developing INVESTT – a strategy at the EU level for implementing a 'Universal Design' for learning and innovative actions in the regular vocational education and training system (VET).

FOUR VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS IN EUROPE – AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, NORWAY AND SLOVENIA – ARE PILOTING A NEW APPROACH IN INCLUSIVE VET PROGRAMMES TOGETHER WITH LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AND RESEARCHERS

Four vocational schools in Europe – Austria, Belgium, Norway and Slovenia

- **IN BELGIUM:** the focus will be on 17-21 year old pupils learning a labour oriented profession as part of their compulsory secondary education. Eg. central heating and gardening.
- **IN AUSTRIA:** the focus will be on 18-28 year old students learning a labour oriented profession in the field of social work.
- **IN NORWAY:** the focus will be on 16-19 year old pupils who receive special needs education in upper secondary vocational education and training.
- **IN SLOVENIA:** the focus will be on 16-18 year old pupils learning a labour oriented profession as part of their compulsory secondary education.

INVESTT'S SPECIFIC AND OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- **THE STRATEGY:** will be developed at the European level to help professionals in their own VET context. Strategy based on existing policy documents and research results of EU projects:
 - 3-year project on VET initiated by the EU Agency for Development of Special Needs Education
 - Focus on 2 key principles of 'Reasonable Accommodation' and 'Universal Design'. (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006).
- **INNOVATIVE TEACHING PROGRAMMES:** will be implemented in 1 school in each partner country. This will help practitioners to create a 'Universal Design' in their concrete learning environment, and to include a follow-up with students with disabilities into the regular VET system:
 - Continuously evaluated according to a cyclic process of research and action
 - Public target: 16-21 year old students learning a labour oriented profession or social work ...
- **BETTER COOPERATION WITHIN EUROPE:** To improve the quality and enhance the cooperation between institutions or organisations providing learning opportunities, enterprises, and social partners ... throughout Europe.



Despite the fact that inclusion becoming an increasingly established concept, this unfortunately does not mean that it has been realized in practice. In most countries there are two prevailing systems – inclusive and segregated.

03

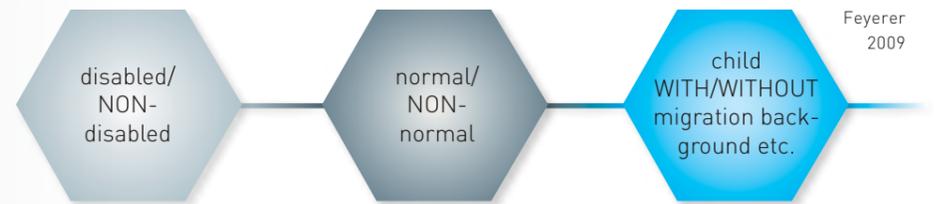
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education is a culture and context specific concept. In order to understand it best, let us first take a look at its opposite – exclusion and segregation, and its predecessor – integration. **Segregated education equates to isolation** (Falvey & Givner 2005) and it is based on the categorisation of the child (Thomas et al. 2005). The dominating medical model of identifying disabilities in children lead to the belief that special schools are the most suitable as they can best fulfil the needs of the children enrolled in these schools (Thomas et al. 2005). Children who attend such specialized schools are not only physically separated from their peers in mainstream schools, but are also deprived when it comes to outcomes as they do not have access to the same curriculum as their peers.

One important characteristic of integration is the **‘Two-group-theory’**, the fundamental dichotic classification in



03.1

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Despite the fact that inclusion becoming an increasingly established concept, this unfortunately does not mean that it has been realized in practice.

Unlike segregation, integration means including children with disabilities into regular education institutes. This form relies solely on the physical presence and not truly on the full inclusion of children into the education process (Globočnik 2012).

In most countries there are two prevailing systems – inclusive and segregated. These systems persist because of the belief that a certain percentage of children, such as those with more difficult forms of disabilities, cannot be included into the regular forms of schooling (Evans and Lunt 2005). This is exactly why our redefinition of true inclusion is so relevant. There is no unified definition of inclusive education. There are various determinations of the concept which depend on perspective and teaching context. The common factor to all definitions of inclusion is that they stem from the principles in human rights literature (UNESCO 2001; UNESCO 2003) and are therefore defined broadly in relation to social inclusion.

There is a way of placing conditions within inclusive education programs which would enable participation and access for all children. This definition of inclusion leads to another important dimension – ‘belonging’. This concept of belonging is expressed by Hall as: **“Being a full member of an age-appropriate class in your local school doing the same lessons as the other pupils and it mattering if you are not there. Plus you have friends who spend time with you outside the school”** (Hall 1996 in Florian 2005).

In practice inclusion starts with the realisation that there are differences between children, and that consequently children are faced with different barriers to inclusion in the school system.

Therefore, the first task is to recognise these barriers and determine how to overcome them. According to Booth and Ainscow (2002, 5) **“barriers may be found in all aspects of the school, as well as within communities, and in local and national policies. Barriers also arise in the interaction between students and what and how they are taught”**. Solutions for removing barriers cannot be found by merely raising available monetary assets, but there are also physical actors – similar to barriers – in all aspects of the school environment: other students, parents/guardians, communities, and teachers. All of the aforementioned agents already operate with certain knowledge on how to increase teacher participation – the problem is that this knowledge is rarely fully exploited and used (Booth & Ainscow 2002).

03.2

UNIVERSAL
DESIGNUNIVERSAL
DESIGN

'Universal Design' pertains to the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal Design should not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed." (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, 4

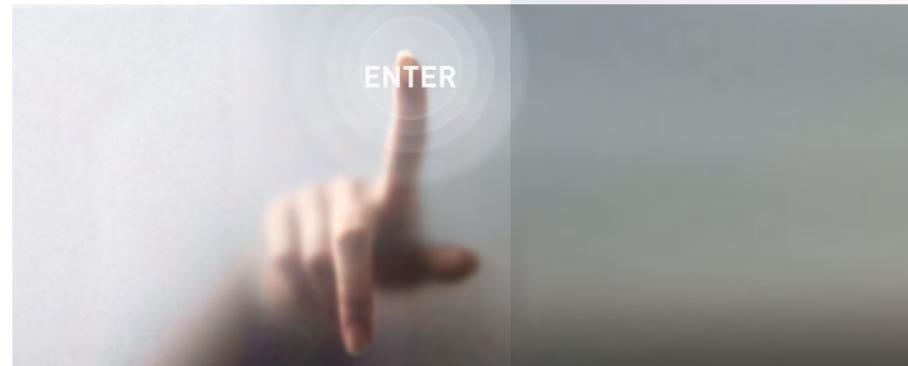
A theory very much aligned with the principles of 'Universal Design' is that of inclusion. One of the shared characteristics of both of these ideas is the view that it is possible to design educational systems and pedagogical methods to create more positive mainstream learning environments for students with special educational needs and, as a consequence for all other students as well. "Increasing participation for everyone involves developing education systems and settings so that they are responsive to diversity in ways that value everyone equally." (Booth & Ainscow 2011, 20).

The philosophy of inclusion implies changing the existing barriers that result from old curricula, teacher's approaches, and outdated methods of assessment. Inclusive education practices emphasise active learning and differentiated instructional approaches. It is about recognising the diverse learning styles of all students and providing for the needs of each type of learner. →

ALL FOUR PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES IN THE PROJECT ARE VERY DIVERSE IN TERMS OF INCLUSION AND THEIR APPLICATIONS OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN EDUCATION.

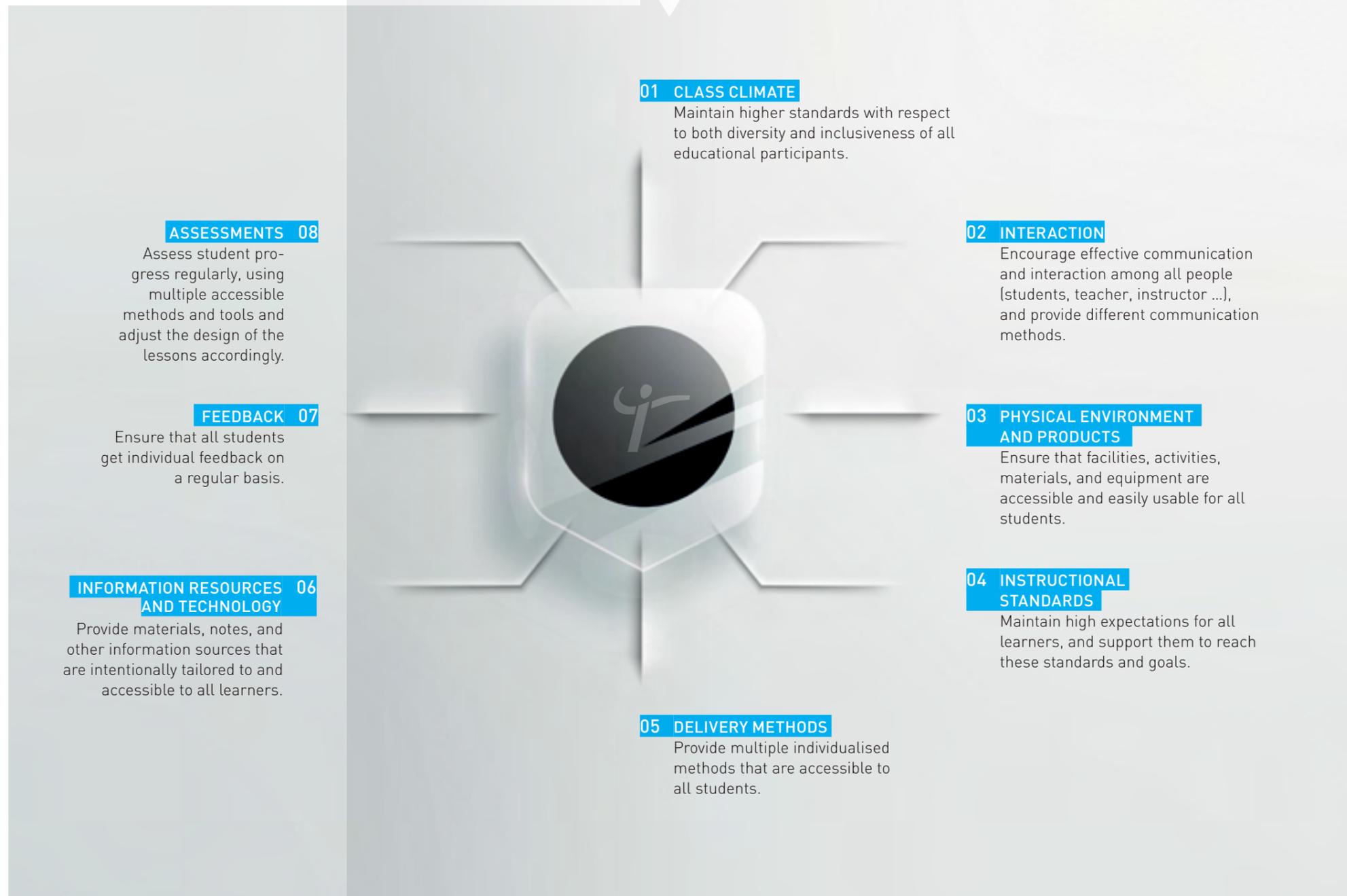
Seeing as their situations are so varied, we must clearly translate 'Universal Design' from being just theory into actual practice within the field of education. This can be done only with a direct connection to the national school system in general and the national VET system.

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→ Educators translated these ideas and have developed a set of new criteria for evaluating 'Universal Design' for learning (Burgstahler & Chang 2009).

They have identified different eight important factors to consider when planning classroom activities for students:



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REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

'Reasonable Accommodation' relates to the necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments, without imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case. These modifications are required in order to ensure that persons with disabilities have the ability to enjoy and/or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, art. 2 par. 4).

'Reasonable Accommodations' are tailor-made. This implies that some students have a right to a particular accommodation while others don't, for the simple reason that some persons need an accommodation in order to be properly included. Accommodations are necessary in order to guarantee equal opportunities and to reduce impediment from certain handicaps.

In education, there is a large variety of 'Reasonable Accommodations': they can be material or immaterial, pedagogical or organisational. Accommodations are provided based on the needs of the student, with the purpose of full access to education with equal opportunities.

Students with disabilities have the right to 'Reasonable Accommodations'. This obligation applies to all levels of education, including adult education. In the author's opinion, a discourse about 'Reasonable Accommodations' is necessary for schools to evolve towards 'Universal Design'. When schools comply with the obligation to provide 'Reasonable Accommodations' they discover that these seemingly individual accommodations result in a benefit for all, and thus can be part of a universal way of teaching. Indeed, it is in practicing 'Reasonable Accommodations' that a blueprint of the 'Universal Design' becomes clear. As such, the obligation to provide for 'Reasonable Accommodations' can be an important step towards 'Universal Design'. It is important to stress that the 'Universal Design' concept does not avoid individual accommodations when needed.

A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION HAS TO MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA

- The accommodation must be based on the individual needs of the student
- Effectiveness: accommodations that give no result have to be adapted or withdrawn
- Equal use: accommodations have to provide equal access to as many activities as possible
- Independent use has to be possible: the accommodation has to allow independent classroom activities or school movements
- The accommodation must pose no direct threats to the health or safety for others
- The accommodation must be a guarantee for dignity

The issue of inclusion is very much in connection with the discourse on 'Reasonable Accommodations' and arguments about disproportionality. In countries where there is no special education, this concept has a totally different dimension. In countries with a lot of segregation, the concept of 'Reasonable Accommodations' takes a very prominent place in evolution towards inclusion.

Accommodations are provided based on the needs of the student, with the purpose of full access to education with equal opportunities.

03.3

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMME

In the following part of this paper, each participating country gives their recommendations based upon their individual research and evaluations of the first version of the school programmes.

Based on a number of rather striking results on the questionnaires viewed in the UDL-framework, we have concluded that we will direct our attention of the first actions in the first phase on the sensibilisation process of teachers and parents and on the engagement-principle for the students.

Based on a study (see article "Effects of Training in Universal Design for Learning on Lesson Plan Development", Spooner et al), with the following conclusion "... a simple introduction to UDL can help teachers to design a lesson plan accessible for all students ..." the Belgian partners decided that our first action would be this introduction. We developed a two-hour session on UDL for the staff of the involved class groups. This session was presented in October 2013

After the sensibilisation phase (action1) and proposals from the staff, a more extensive and detailed timeline will be developed. Subsequently, all further actions will be based on a diversity-blueprint and inventory of actual accommodations (see figure 1) and will be developed in the following way:

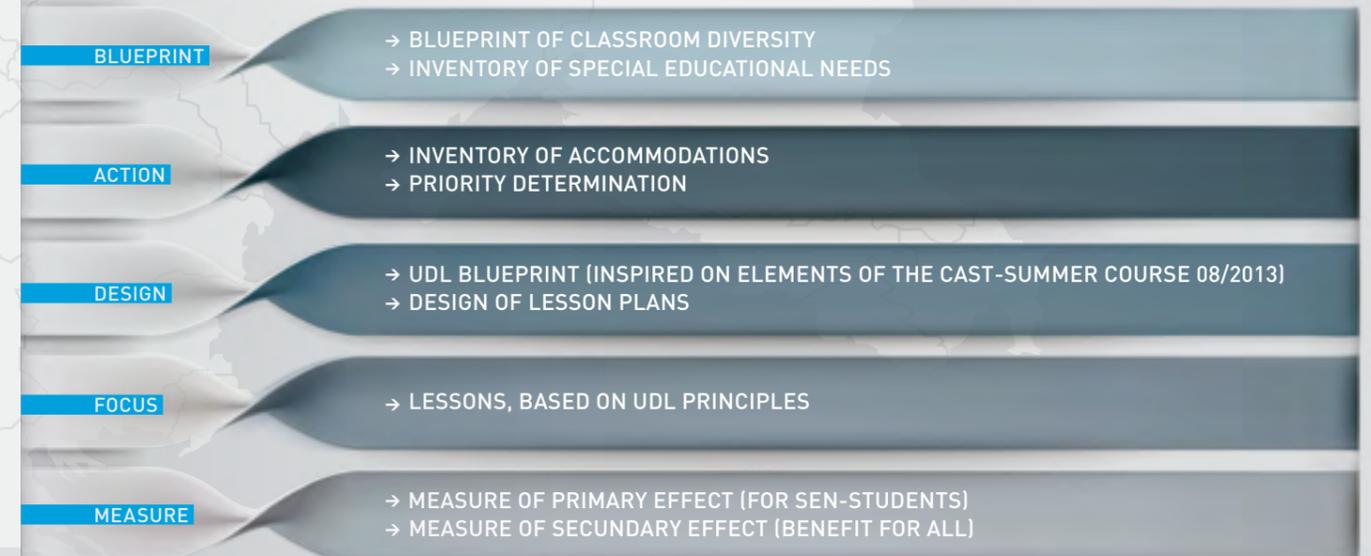
RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on careful conclusions, drawn from the questionnaires, we would recommend an important phase of sensibilisation. Teachers need to be consciously aware of the diversity in their classroom and the challenge and opportunities that it can offer. **The opinions about inclusion are very often diverse and a lot of this has to do with fear: fear of change, fear of the unknown, and so on. Understanding the framework of 'Universal Design' and the benefits it offers is a process**, and from the point of view of the daily work of the teacher, it offers a very attainable way of teaching. But as pointed out: this is a process that leads to a new way of thinking about teaching.

Next to this sensibilisation, we highly value an inquiry stance: teachers need to learn to work in an evidence based manner, ranging from learning spontaneously (as an aspect of living) to practitioner research (as a professional learning strategy). That is why we promote the action research design. This way, we will be able to explore the opportunities and benefits of UDL in a structured and evidence based way.

04.1

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BELGIUM



(Figure 1: Development plan)

04.2

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AUSTRIA



The implementation of UD in Austria will take place in two steps. The first year we will have five students with SEN in an Introductory Course. This means that they will be integrated in a full training for 'Fachsozialbetreuung', but they will participate only in certain subjects and do less practical training.

The next step which will take place during the second year will be **the implementation of the inclusive training 'Fach-Sozialhelfer/in' and 'Heimhelfer/in'**. This step will begin in September 2014 and include up to 16 students with SEN or other disabilities.

INCLUSIVE TEACHING METHODS

- Team-teaching
- Students working in small groups
- 'Klassenrat', a method to discuss the actual situation at school
- Special learning situations
- Offer different ways of learning
- Excursions
- Communication-days at the beginning of the winter-semester

CURRICULUM ADJUSTMENTS

In the first step we designed a curriculum for our Introductory-Course students. This is a section of the full curriculum for the inclusive course (IBB plus), which will start in September 2014. The Introductory-Course students will participate in a few subjects within regular courses which focus on 'Behindertenbegleitung' for employed persons. The subjects are General Basics (German), Basic knowledge on nursing, Immersion/Deepening teaching and a practical training for 200 hours.

For each of these subjects we defined learning targets as, e.g., "I learned to write down things that I have experienced" or "I am learning to speak about problems". Secondly we defined the skills that each students should acquire. ("I can describe, what a group is" or "I am learning to work correctly and hygienically")

And third we described the competences, that the students will develop ("I am responsible for the proper washing of my hands" or "I recognise when people want something or need something").

STRUCTURAL/ ORGANISATIONAL MEASURES

- Informative meeting in the spring for interested parties (students with SEN, their parents or guardians, employers, mentors in the practical field)
- Additional value-units for team teaching
- Organisation of an additional room for the immersions (deepening teaching)
- Acquisition of various teaching aids (books, software, etc.)
- Creation of a timetable for Introductory-Course students in the regular timetable of the course
- Regularly meetings of the teachers from the teams
- Weekly meetings of the project-team

A REVISION OF THE EVALUATION METHODS

- 'Pensenbuch' (After a self-assessment on learning in general, in this 'Pensenbuch' the targets, skills, and competences that the students can reach are described; instead of tests and certification the students achievements are described in four categories ('yes' / 'no' / 'with this support' / 'we did not talk about at school')
- Ongoing oral evaluation
- Electronic evaluation once per term on a platform called 'Qibb'

A LIST OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION MEASURES

- Immersions (indepth teaching) on the theory once a week with a teacher from school.
- Teaching aids are a 'BIGtrack' (a special computer mouse and special computer keyboard).
- Easy-to-read worksheets.
- Constant mentoring during the internship.
- The students get regular visits from their accompanying teacher during the internship.
- Supervision for the students by the internship accompanying teacher.

04.3

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM NORWAY



INCLUSIVE TEACHING METHODS

- Use of study workshop, where regular and project pupils are studying and learning in a common learning arrangement.
- Taking point of departure in what all of the pupils is a part of within the regular education. This implies:
- Strategies for enhancing pupils' participation in school community.

This paper summarised the recommendations for the project based on the principles of 'Universal Design' and 'Reasonable Accommodation'.

- Implementing basic competences .
- Use the 2+2 structure (2 years in school and 2 years as apprentice)
- Use core subjects, vocational orientation and relevance
- Vary number of pupils in groups

STRUCTURAL/ ORGANISATIONAL MEASURES

- Parents meeting at the beginning of the school year, informing the parents about the INVESTT project.
- A meeting every week in the project team at Gand School
- The pupils will be divided into different year groups and subject groups according to what subjects they are to take according to their IEP.
- As many as possible qualify for training agreement in the course of year two (the first project year).
- As many as possible into Training candidature system or apprentice contract in year three (project year two).
- The Practice coordinator

CURRICULUM ADJUSTMENTS

All of the pupils in the extended workplace classes have an IEP in all subjects when they enter upper secondary school (in fact this is a requirement for entrance in these classes).

A key issue in the project is to improve the pupils' possibilities for qualification for training contract. This implies that they need teaching and grades in a number of school subjects (both core subjects and programme subjects).

A REVISION OF THE EVALUATION METHODS

- Each term the pupils are evaluated through a report written by the contact teacher. The report says something about how and if the pupil has reached the goals/competences set up for them in the IEP.
- Use of Learning book
- The Individual Education Plan (IEP) is supplemented with a new ICT log system developed by the school owner (the school authorities in the county)

A LIST OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION MEASURES

- A focus on basic competences in the various curricula subjects
- Use of learning book and the use of European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the Norwegian Qualification Framework (NQF).
- Use of learning agreement
- Organisational work related to time schedule and collaboration
- Progression in subjects and learning
- Enhanced focus on IEP
- Use of Practice coordinator
- Making plans for teaching and learning in core subjects
- Operationalization of curricula aims for individual pupils
- Making a system for registering absence and behavior
- Close school-home collaboration
- Making a system and routines for key concepts: emotional support, learning support and organisational support.

BASED ON OUR CURRENT EXPERIENCES, WE ARE OFFERING THE FOLLOWING PROPOSALS TO AID IN THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAMME IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE GOALS OF THE INVESTT PROJECT

- Before starting the programme design, familiarisation with the current situation is necessary to see which problems the students with SEN are facing and how they connect with other agents. It is recommended to use the case study method, as the current situation can be studied more precisely in order to gain insight into how the various agents are connected to each other and how they affect one another. It is recommended to consider as large of a circle of agents around the students with SEN as possible; their parents, teachers, classmates, employers, and social providers, as we have done in the framework of our project.
- In planning the programme we do not necessarily have to start with radical changes in the existing programme as smaller changes and adjustments can suffice. For example, teachers throughout their years of working with students with special needs/SEN have subconsciously developed and adjusted their teaching methods without realizing it. With the support of a specialist or within the framework of education they can become aware of such previously made adjustments and expand and transform them to benefit all of the other students in their classes. For example, the last part of the school hour when the students with SEN lose concentration should be spent performing more dynamic activities such as working in groups and more practical tasks, etc., which would also benefit other students in the class seeing as they become tired come the end of the class as well.
- Teachers have a very important role in the process of the programme design. That is why it is of extreme importance that teachers receive the required attention in the sense of education and training for work within the mentioned target group. This is especially important in cases such as in our national school system where the school faculty does not get informed about contents in this field during their training for this profession. To start, it would be recommended to implement various training and workshops for teachers run by competent and qualified specialists.
- All other agents in this field should be trained as well. Other students in the class, parents, and employers should also be educated on the importance of inclusive education along with teachers. It is recommended to produce some sort of guidance materials or manuals for all of the listed target groups that would be available in an easy to read version.

IN ORDER TO COME AS CLOSE TO UNIVERSAL DESIGN AS POSSIBLE WE PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING

- Explaining learning material should be performed in a way that is understandable for students with SEN as well as other students
- Teachers should use various teaching methods in their work and these should be available for all students (eg: enable students to choose between different ways of learning; motivating and encouraging students with: lectures, online communication, studying in groups, etc.)
- Teachers should also incorporate work in groups into their teaching, where managing different skills and roles are important and where students offer support to one another. This is especially important for countries that have a school system similar to Slovenia, where – as evaluated by teachers – norms for lowering the number of students in the class are inadequate. With a larger number of students in a classroom, lessons can usually run more easily if students are divided into smaller groups
- Teachers should evaluate individual achievements of students as well as their work in groups
- Teachers should make sure that methods of communication for laying down teaching material accessible to all students
- Teachers should make sure that the physical environment and material is accessible to all students (eg: activities, learning material and equipment)
- Teachers should make sure that information sources and technology are interesting, adjustable and accessible to all students (eg: learning material, notes and other information sources)

IN ORDER FOR STUDENTS WITH SEN TO BE INCLUDED INTO THE REGULAR EDUCATION SYSTEM CERTAIN ADDITIONAL ADJUSTMENTS ARE REQUIRED (RA). IN ACCORDANCE WITH PRACTICES EXISTING IN THE SLOVENIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM, WE PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING

- Adjustments in the curriculum
- Adjustments in the method for knowledge evaluation and assessment
- Adjustments in advancement
- Adjustments in time arrangement of classes
- Adjustments of school equipment
- Providing additional expert assistance for SEN



05

PARTNERS

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This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein



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SLOVENIA	www.center-db.si 	www.irssv.si 	www.esceleje.si 	

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