

Subjective Constructions of Social Hierarchy in Physical Education Classes among students with Visual Impairments in Germany

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Regardless of controversial educational policy debates around Article 24 (2a) of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on co-education or segregation of students with and without disabilities, there is widespread agreement that inclusion cannot be determined by whether someone is present in certain activities or spaces, but by whether feelings of appreciation, acceptance, and belonging occur (Haegele, 2019). In this sense, the conceptualization of inclusion as a subjective “feeling of being valued” is emphasized (Stainback&Stainback, 1996, Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000). Therefore the voices of students with disabilities need to be investigated to better understand subjective experiences in inclusive settings (Giese 2016).

The aim of this study was to reconstruct subjective experiences in PE and feelings of being valued within PE classes in Germany by students with visual impairment (VI). 4 students (average age: 19,25 years) participated in the study from the upper level secondary school. For the reconstruction of experiences of feeling valued, episodic interviews with a semi-structured interview guide were used. Based on a qualitative oriented qualitative text analysis (Ruin, 2019) and in search of a deeper understanding of positive feelings of being valued and experiences of bullying, we identified social hierarchy as an underlying structure determining the students' perceived positioning within the social context and thus directing their feelings of being (de-)valued. The analyses show how complexly social hierarchy manifests itself, integrated into social, (school) structural, location- and group-specific as well as personal circumstances. Within schools, there is always a social hierarchy, and the students interviewed felt they were at the bottom of that hierarchy. Hence, it is not the setting per se that determined social hierarchy, but it is more about the concrete and complex manifestation of social hierarchy.

Literature:

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Arbeitskreis

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