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Teachers in Disarray: Clashes Between Inclusive Policy and Practice in a German School¹

ABSTRACT: Upon ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2009), Germany shifted from a school system segregated on the basis of disability toward an inclusive classroom policy. Teachers must now put these changes into practice, but they must also change the way they think about children with disabilities in the mainstream classroom. Against an outline of current theoretical concepts of disability, this paper explores and theorizes interviews with practitioners who only recently started teaching inclusively. Teachers express their views on questions of changing teacher identities, constructions of the child with a disability, and frustrations with the current challenges. My ethnographic research reveals how teachers are responding to new policy changes with great uncertainty and on a trial-and-error basis, which unfortunately often proves detrimental to children with disabilities, leading to stigmatization rather than inclusion.

KEYWORDS: inclusion, disability, teacher education, intersectionality, disability studies, UN-CRPD.

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Jak cytować:	Wagner, J. (2016). Teachers in Disarray: Clashes Between Inclusive Policy and Practice in a German School. <i>Forum Oświatowe</i> , 28(2), 65–82. Pobrano z: http://forumoswiatowe.pl/index.php/czasopismo/article/view/464
How to cite:	Wagner, J. (2016). Teachers in Disarray: Clashes Between Inclusive Policy and Practice in a German School. <i>Forum Oświatowe</i> , 28(2), 65–82. Retrieved from http://forumoswiatowe.pl/index.php/czasopismo/article/view/464



The paper is part of a project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement number 676452.



INTRODUCTION

In 2007, the Federal Republic of Germany signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UN-CRPD) (Bundesgesetzblatt, 2008, pp. 1419–1457). A year later, both of the country's legislative chambers, the Bundestag and the Bundesrat, took the necessary steps to integrate the convention into German federal law. When the convention was finally ratified in 2009, Germany was legally bound to grant people with disabilities their rights under UN-CRPD, including equal access to all branches of the educational system. Also in 2009, the European Council adopted the UN-CRPD, which meant that Germany was now also obligated under European Union law to adhere to the framework that promoted, protected and monitored implementation of the Convention in matters of EU competence, EU legislation and policy (European Commission, n.d.). The new legal framework signaled major transformations in the public education system and created the necessary impetus to turn the country's educational system into one with a clear inclusive agenda. Before adopting these standards, Germany ranked second in the European Union (after Belgium) in the degree of segregation that existed in public schools (Gebauer and Simon, 2012, p. 2). In the Federal Republic, 89 percent of children with disabilities study in special schools (Klemm, 2015, p. 11). Consequently, German policymakers had to come up with a new vision for how to include children with disabilities in the mainstream educational system. However, the access afforded to that system by the law did not ensure automatic inclusion in the classroom. On the contrary, beyond the structural changes that brought children with disabilities physically into the

classroom, the new program did not adequately prepare teachers for the challenges resulting from this expanded inclusion. My research shows that teachers, frustrated by their inadequacies and ill-preparedness to deal with children with disabilities, no longer feel equipped to handle the changes. In this article, I argue that under the new law, teachers perceive that they have been stripped of their agency. Having been placed in a position in which they are obligated to realize the political aims of inclusion, they feel they lack the capacity to respond adequately to the new classroom reality on the basis of their knowledge, training and experience. In addition, the inclusive classroom is squeezed into the traditional pre-inclusive curricula and measurement practices, and teachers often predict that inclusion as an educational policy to fail for that reason. While teachers innately understand the complexities behind the changes, in their powerlessness the focus for their lack of success becomes the inclusion policies themselves. This, I argue, leads to the shunning of the policies' supposed beneficiaries, the disabled children themselves.

To understand how I came to analyse the failed dynamics in the mixed classrooms, I will first present a brief overview of the changes in international and German law as a necessary backdrop to considering the topic of inclusive education as practiced in Germany. I examine the policy changes' impact on the work of teachers on the frontline of these changes in the classrooms. I then draw on the scholarship of disability studies, which offers an interdisciplinary research approach when informed by sociology and cultural studies, which have traditionally neglected the topic of disability as a social phenomenon (Waldschmidt & Schneider, 2007, p. 14). My research is also grounded in intersectionality studies, as theorized by Kimberlé Crenshaw (2016), which I see as an alternative avenue for thinking about disability and ability in that her works address the way that "structures make certain identities the consequence of and the vehicle for vulnerability." Crenshaw focuses on political intersectionality and "the policies and institutional structures that play a role in the exclusions of some and not others." Since I want to investigate in the social factors that often times contribute to creating disability in schools, intersectionality offers me a way to analyze overlying constituents of difference and their effects on the individual in school.

After laying out the theoretical foundations of my analysis, I will give insights into the methodological approach taken in this study. I will present my ethnographic data to provide a window into the current practice of inclusion in the German public education system, as exemplified by the experience of teachers in one school. By analyzing social and discursive practices voiced by the teachers, I position my research as an alternative to the paradigm for assessing the disabled's work and progress in the classroom offered by disciplines of rehabilitation sciences and the medical field, which have traditionally dominated German academia's consideration of disability (Waldschmidt & Schneider, 2007, p. 9). In analyzing my research, I draw heavily on the works of social critics, such as Michel Foucault, who have read governmental power as a force in producing subjects of favorable or unfavourable function to society. Inspired by Foucault and Althusser, I analyze my data through the prism of the

school as a state apparatus that constructs *able-* and *dis-abled-* bodied subjects. The discourse that interests me centers on the moments when teachers reveal articulatory practices that constitute the picture of what it means to be an able or disabled participant in the classroom and, as such, reveals the actual practices of exclusion in what are supposed to be inclusive classrooms under the new legislation.

UNIVERSAL VALUES, FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND IMPACT ON THE GERMAN CLASSROOM

When CRPD was ratified by the UN on Dec. 13, 2006, the international community took a very clear stance on disability. Governments that signed the convention obligated themselves to ensure that “persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live” (Article 24. 2). In this way, UN-CRPD clearly regards disability as a social construct and seeks to overcome conditions that “create” disabilities by focusing chiefly on biological limitations rather than viewing disability as an isolating problem of the individual caused by impairments.

The United Nations (through UNESCO) had pushed for this development since 1994, when, with the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, the international community as a whole reaffirmed its “commitment to Education for All, recognizing the necessity and urgency of providing education for children, youth and adults with special educational needs within the regular education system” (UNESCO, 1994, p. viii). After this conference, Germany amended its constitution in 1994 and added the following sentence to Article 3.3: “Nobody may be disadvantaged because of their disability” (Gesetze im Internet, n.d.). However, this constitutional change followed an earlier, contradictory recommendation by the Standing Conference on the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (the Federal States) in the Federal Republic of Germany (in German short: KMK). As an advisory body on education, the KMK suggests guidelines on public education for the states. However, under Germany’s federal system, states maintain autonomy in shaping and implementing educational policy within their borders. In a recommendation issued in May 1994 (six months before the constitutional change), the KMK defined special-needs education as being suitable for children and youths “who are so impaired in their educational, developmental and learning possibilities that they cannot be adequately supported in the lessons of regular schools without special assistance” (KMK, 1994, p. 5). What this meant then is that disability was deemed a matter of private concern of the individual afflicted and not one for the system to deal with. Although on the federal level Germany aspired to adhere to the standards of the Salamanca Statement, in actuality the KMK had provided a loophole whereby children with disabilities could remain segregated in the system on a state level. It is important, then, to emphasize that in the mid-1990s exceptions already existed in the interpretation of inclusivity based on the understanding of disability as a biological rather than social phenomenon.

After the legal changes of 2009, Germany's educational system found itself accountable to two transnational bodies: the European Union and the United Nations. Once again, however, the country's federal structure proved an obstacle to implementing the changes. While the federal government can provide resources and guidelines for states, it cannot dictate how laws are implemented in every school and classroom. This responsibility clearly remains the purview of the individual states. As a result, inclusion has progressed at different speeds and according to varying strategies across the German states (National Action Plan, 2016, p. 263; Klemm, 2015, p. 7). This leaves us, on the one hand, with the constitutional foundations for an inclusive society on the federal level (as intended by UN-CRPD) and, on the other hand, with a constitutional reality that only vaguely puts these efforts into action, in this way, undermining, in effect, the overall commitment to and the ability to realize the inclusive agenda.

This disjuncture in the system became clearly evident with the issuing of the first monitoring report of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities in March 2015. Charged with assessing progress in implementing the ideals of the UN-CRPD, the UN concluded that development of disability action plans had been uneven on the state levels. Therefore, five years after the convention became part of German law, the UN committee found that Germany still "has an education system where the majority of students with disabilities attend segregated special-needs schools" (2015, 8). In its report, the UN recommended the development of an action plan that would "provide access to a high quality inclusive education system across all Länder including the required financial resources and personnel at all levels" (2015, p. 8). In short, the report proposed 60 measures Germany will have to take to ensure the complete implementation of the UN-CRPD (National Action Plan 2.0, 2016). In reaction to the poor report card from the UN, the federal government of Germany released National Action Plan 2.0 in 2016, which set out a vision for the bold reduction of special-needs schools and strong support for an inclusive education system (Deutscher Bundestag, 2016). The plan also recognized that teacher education had to be revised and developed further, especially in terms of inclusive pedagogy with respect to the challenges that heterogeneity and inclusion pose in the new school settings. But the action plan is yet another recommendation on paper, and it remains to be seen how committed individual states will be to the national policy and its expressed aspiration to achieve inclusiveness of schools.

This recounting of the legislative process is important in understanding how the larger policy context is central to shaping consciousness and subjectivity of key actors directly affected by systemic changes brought on by changes in the law (Mills & Morton, 2013). This lack of a unanimous take on the inclusive agenda across the states creates an instability that is reflected on the ground in the classroom and reflected in my ethnographic data. This confusion plays out in the teachers' abilities to grasp disability beyond biological limitations. This tension is also inherent in the writings of disability theorists. Before turning to my ethnographic data, in the following section I consider the potential of the social model for reconceiving the place of

the disabled in an inclusive classroom. My ideas are informed by critical scholarship in disability studies, critical race theory and feminism studies.

DISABILITY DISCOURSE AND THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

The KMK's recommendations from 1994 quoted above reflect, I believe, an approach to disability consistent with the "medical" or the "individual" model of disability as defined by Terzi and others (Barnes and Mercer, 1997; Terzi, 2010). These scholars build their definition of the medical or the individual model of disability on the specific understanding of the terms "impairment" and "disability" put forward by the World Health Organization's manual on the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (1980). "Impairment" ("any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function" p. 74), as well as "disability" ("any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being," p. 143) were both regarded as phenomena caused and endured solely by the individual who "suffered" his or her difference from the norm. As Terzi puts it, the individual model "establish[es] a natural cause related to disability and the associated disadvantage" (2010, p. 43). In this vein, we can understand how the KMK report assigned disability to the individual, thus providing a basis for exclusion of individuals with disabilities from regular schools. According to this worldview, the responsibility for exclusion is placed in the domain of the individual with impairment.

Around the same time the medical/individual model was established, the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation and the Disability Alliance formulated a very different and powerful approach (Oliver, 1999) to understanding disability. The Union, an organization run by and for people with disabilities that seeks to empower individuals with impairments through research and public awareness, sees disabilities as a "situation, caused by social conditions" (p. 4). This is in contrast to "impairment," a situation in which an individual lacks "part of or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body." Disability is understood as "the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organization which takes no or little account of people with who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities" (p. 14).

In similar tendency, Michael Oliver (1999), emeritus professor of disability studies at the University of Greenwich, defines disabled people as follows: "(i) they have an impairment, (ii) they experience oppression as a consequence, (iii) they identify themselves as a disabled person" (p. 2). The political philosopher Shelly Tremain, who focuses on disability, feminist philosophy and the work of Michel Foucault, also rejects the medical/individual approach to disability. She draws on Foucault's concept of bio-politics to conclude that "impairment is an historical artefact of the regime of 'bio-power'" (Tremain, 2001, p. 618). In so doing, Tremain (2001) criticizes the way disability studies places the term "impairment" within the framework of

the social model. By accepting the descriptor of “impairment,” she argues, disability studies scholars are feeding into the existence of an “objective, trans-historical and transcultural entity of which modern bio-medicine has acquired knowledge and understanding and which it can accurately represent” (p. 617). Because “impairment” is not yet critically questioned in disability studies, she argues that it remains inextricably tied to “what Foucault has termed a ‘juridico-discursive’ notion of power” (p. 620). As long as the social model promotes impairment as a natural condition, it loses its core ability to critique the social conditions that contribute to the constitution of disability. With respect to Oliver’s view on disability, Tremain (2001) warns against the approach that sees disability as being “identity-based”. Drawing from insights of feminist studies, she warns against making the same mistake in the context of the disability movement:

[...] a disabled people’s movement that grounds its claims to entitlement in the identity of the subject of its subject (“people with impairments”) can expect to face similar criticisms from an ever-increasing number of constituencies that feel excluded from and refuse to identify with those demands for rights and recognition; in addition, minorities internal to the movement will predictably pose challenges to it, the upshot of which are that those hegemonic descriptions eclipse their respective particularities (Tremain, 2001, p. 635).

Tremain paves the way for imagining yet another approach to disability that would break with the idea put forward by Oliver that skin color, socio-economic background, sex and/or sexual orientation, ethnic origins, etc., cannot be considered impairments even though they may prove disadvantageous and therefore disabling to individuals in the social and political structures in which they move.

A TENTATIVE THIRD ROAD

While within the social model the debate is centered on – how to define impairment – intersectionality studies prove fruitful in describing the discriminatory moment that can evolve when several categories of inequality meet. Conceptualized first by the American law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in her article “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color” (1991), she theorizes intersectionality as a framework that helps analyze “the various interactions of race and gender in the context of violence against women of color” (p. 1296). While Crenshaw (1991) herself focuses on the intersection of race and gender, she extends the field of potential application by pointing out that “intersectionality might be more broadly useful as a way of mediating between assertions of multiple identities and the ongoing necessity of group politics” (p. 1296). However, her focus on identity-constituting categories meets strong critique from postmodernists, who regard categories as “socially constructed in a linguistic economy of difference”

(p. 1296). Although she acknowledges these critiques, she warns of falling into rhetorical debate of the “chicken or egg” variety. She writes that if all categories are socially constructed, then what prevents us from saying that “there is no such thing as, say, Blacks or women, and thus it makes no sense to continue producing those categories by organizing around them” (p. 1296). Such a practice would essentially neglect the experience of inequality that individuals exhibiting certain characteristics share. Therefore, Crenshaw argues, it is not the existence of categories that is problematic but “[...] rather the particular values attached to them [categories] and the way those values foster and create social hierarchies” (p. 1297). Where Tremain argues for leaving identity politics behind, Crenshaw sees value in describing individuals within the realms of the categories that oppress them. Crenshaw recognizes the problem of desiring to deconstruct descriptors that leave groups like the disabled vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion. However, instead of debating the nature of the category itself, she recommends analyzing the interplay of categories to recognize which structural injustices individuals are caught in that, ultimately, deny them access to the resources society offers. Crenshaw reaches a very intriguing alternative approach and argues for reclaiming descriptors to reimagine a new political agenda. If you cannot brush off the category ascribed to you, she says, embrace it. She writes: “The most critical resistance strategy for disempowered groups is to occupy and defend a politics of social location rather than to vacate and destroy it” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1297).

While Crenshaw as a scholar is not focused on disability, her theoretical framework can be applied to disabilities studies. While not explicitly building on intersectionality, in the article *Educating Unruly Bodies* (2000) Nirmala Erevelles (2000) sees disability as not an isolated phenomenon, but one interlinked with other social issues. She writes: “The World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 reported that disabled people now constitute one of the world’s largest minority groups facing poverty, unemployment, and social and cultural isolation” (p. 29). However, Erevelles resists reducing her analyses to the camp of either the postmodernists or the intersectionalists. Her focus is on the question “how to (re)configure[ing] ‘human agency’ in the face of real physiological differences” (2000, p. 32). Erevelles, together with her colleague Ivan Watts (2004), approaches intersectionality by drawing on critical race theory and disability studies to analyze the following situation:

even though the percentages of African American and Latino/a students in U.S. public schools are 17% and 11% respectively, the percentages of African American and Latino/ students in classrooms for students with mental retardation are 34% and 12% [...], in classrooms for students with emotional disturbances are 28% and 9% (p. 275).

Although the authors do not explicitly refer to Crenshaw’s framework of intersectionality, they stress the existence of “an intimate relationship between race, class,

gender, disability and colonization” (Everelles & Watts, 2004, p. 281), thereby hinting at the interplay these categories may enter.

Before turning to the methodological considerations of my study and the interpretation of the ethnographic data, I would like to conclude by pointing out the way intersectionality may offer insights into a detection of the challenges inherent in the implementation of the principles promoted by the UN-CRPD. I would argue that the inclusive measures established by UN-CRPD focus on a concept of disability that recognizes not only impairment as constituting disability, but also the social structures people with disabilities face and the policies they are subjected to. By introducing intersectionality into the debate, I seek to offer a way to analyze these very social structures that add to “impairment” the verdict of “disability.”

REVEALING ARTICULATORY PRACTICES IN THE “INCLUSIVE” CLASSROOM

For this study, I take an ethnographic approach to illuminate how teachers in a specific German secondary school perceive that their concepts of teaching and learning are being challenged in the face of policy changes mandating the inclusive schooling of children with disabilities and special needs in mainstream institutions. In an effort to bring teachers’ voices into the discussion about the implementation of an inclusive curriculum at their school, I have been inspired by the special education scholar Ellen Brantlinger’s definition of qualitative research (2005, p. 195).

I have chosen to write an ethnographic account because it allows me to combine my first hand observations as a teacher trainee in this school with the data from interviews with my colleagues. My teacher training and the interviews all took place in the immediate aftermath of the changes in the German law. As such, this ethnographic approach gave me the opportunity to shed light on how a specific group of teachers perceived these changes in the educational system at a key moment of their introduction, and what reality the new laws created for my colleagues. In presenting the data, I have looked through the positional lens of disability studies in education (Brantlinger, 2005) to draw conclusions by applying the measure of thick, detailed descriptions using sufficient quotations to provide evidence for interpretations and conclusions (Brantlinger, 2005).

The empirical data² for this paper come from interviews and daily interactions with seven teachers with whom I worked for two years in an inner-city secondary school that employs about 100 teachers and has more than 1000 pupils. Children start their education in the seventh grade and may go on to achieve their Abitur (A level examination) in seven years. Other high school diplomas may be obtained here as well – for example, a diploma known as the MSA after the tenth grade. While I was on staff at the school in 2015, the headmaster announced that the next academic year would bring some changes, the most prominent one concerning the inclusion of four or five children with special educational needs in each of the six seventh-grade classrooms. Inclusion that had already been practiced in some classes would now, according to the headmaster, become a diligently enforced school policy. To prepare

for these changes, the school's social workers announced that they would visit the primary schools currently attended by the children with special needs to assess their needs and how they could be met at our school in the following.

The announcement of the social workers' strategy met with a round of applause. Teachers were relieved that some preparation would be done to facilitate the huge change this broader inclusion initiative would bring. However, beyond the fervor and relief that someone – in this case, the social workers who had taken charge of the changes – what struck me was that no additional time was spent during the conference on sharing questions or concerns on how, beyond the social workers' assessment, we as teachers would implement these broad changes. Because of the lack of information on the implications of this overarching mission of inclusion, I was interested in finding out how my colleagues understood the implications of these policy changes in their classrooms. I wanted to know how they planned to realize this goal, especially given that in the new school year we would have roughly 30 new pupils with various attested needs. After a few informal conversations, during which teachers shared personal and moving accounts about the extent to which they struggled with both the concepts behind and the reality of inclusion, I moved to formalize the ethnographic research process. I came up with a set of questions whose answers, I anticipated, would provide comparable data from which I could draw conclusions.

In presenting the results of these conversations, I would like to comment on the approach to analyzing the interview material. For such a small survey, I decided to focus on reappearing themes and problems touched on by multiple interviewees. As such, I have chosen not to quote what the teachers said in its entirety and in a chronological fashion. Instead, I take advantage of discourse analysis (1972) as proposed by Michel Foucault. I follow Foucault in his key approach of asking not whether a situation or a concept exists, but rather how the interlocutors put it into existence (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984, p. 4). This approach allows for the reconstruction of concepts, the analysis of narratives and the exposure of phenomena that emerge in the interviewees' stories told to me. For this paper, I have identified three themes that illuminate moments of recurrent conflict in terms of the meaning of the concept of inclusion and how it plays out in the classrooms of teachers in a school on the brink of expanding its inclusion program.

CAUGHT UP IN HOSTILE SETTINGS

When I began my interviews, I was first and foremost interested in how teachers filled the concept of inclusion with meaning. I wanted to encourage teachers to define inclusion through the prism of their classroom experiences. This train of questions in the interviews stirred emotional or sour responses. When I asked how they defined inclusion, I received responses that I would characterize as polemical or even judgmental of the government's inclusion policies. Teachers saw inclusion as something being imposed from above, lacking commitment from educational authorities on the state level. Responses varied from "[Inclusion] is an unacceptable political

demand, a human rights violation” to “Inclusion is the integration of the weak at the cost of the strong.” Some teachers, however, did attempt to describe the educational principle behind the term. One teacher defined inclusion as follows: “It is the attempt of society to create fair chances for everyone in the sense of belonging and education,” while another saw it as a way for children to learn together. That teacher explained her definition as follows: “[Children with disabilities] are not pushed off into other schools, but that does not mean that everyone has to achieve the same diploma.”

After initial venting, teachers began to open up about the challenges of teaching in mixed classrooms and even proposed potential solutions, which were revealing about the extent to which policy changes from above had not been followed with deeper structural changes in schools. Teachers recognized that they did have ideas about how to implement inclusive teaching meaningfully and successfully but that static structures and continuing administrative tasks did not allow for their realization. Teachers mentioned that, faced with having to prepare students to pass standardized tests, they lacked independence in designing lessons. In addition, they named administered lesson plans and curriculum decisions that did not allow for flexibility and experimentation in the inclusive classroom with children of varying abilities. One teacher stressed the importance of more project-related work and interdisciplinary learning, which cannot happen when schools focus on the strong division of disciplines into languages, sciences and humanities. Another colleague criticized the situation in which children with disabilities were thrown into an achievement-oriented meritocracy that denied them the special attention they needed. Grading children with disabilities also became a frustrating process, one teacher contended that teachers struggled with how to value individual progress of students, which goes against the grain of assigning comparable grades. In the face of assigning the common denominators through grades, individual progress becomes of secondary importance or even vanishes from the radar screen of teachers and students alike. By sticking to grades, teachers remarked, they had to abandon a portfolio of possible response methods that might allow learning in the inclusive classroom to take place for students of all abilities. As one teacher noted, “We need learning concepts that allow children to participate effectively in school.”

My conversations with teachers suggest that the educational sphere is a highly static and regulated entity that enjoys neither the freedom of granting decision-making responsibilities to its employees nor fluid response mechanisms needed to respect teachers’ suggestions and students’ demands. These themes echo Oliver’s critique of the market economy and how it places people with disability on the margins, unable to participate fully in a society geared toward interpersonal competition and the performance within a norm of the individual. Henry Giroux (2003) picks up on this notion, framing the challenges teachers face as “efforts to disempower [them] through the proliferation of standardized testing schemes, management by objectives designs, and bureaucratic forms of accountability” (p. 9). Loic Wacquant (2012) sees this drastic overregulation and overmanagement of the schools as an example of what happens to groups on the margins of society, who in the context of neoliberal

system do not enjoy benefits of the principles of “laissez faire” and “laissez passer,” but instead are restricted in their actions “through the combined mesh of supervisory workfare and judicial oversight” (p. 74). In the case of the necessity to implement broadened inclusion in the classrooms, teachers find themselves required to implement drastic policies without being allowed to make drastic changes. They are not empowered with the trust and capacity of making independent didactical and pedagogical decisions. Instead, they are being disciplined through rigid rules and regulations without the possibility of deploying their own expertise.

FROM TEACHERS TO CARETAKERS: PROFESSIONALISM UNDER THREAT

The inclusive classroom has changed the teacher’s job description and disturbed the teacher’s own concepts of a good teacher. During the interviews, teachers repeatedly spoke about the way their work environment has affected the notion of teacher professionals. Only one person interviewed framed her experience in a positive light. She said she appreciated the challenge of finding new ways to teach and to engage a very heterogeneous classroom in activities. While this teacher said she had gained an enormous amount of competence and professionalism in terms of pedagogy, others said they had lost more and more chances to teach in a way they considered a professional fashion: “I am not a subject teacher anymore. The wish to teach children something has become secondary to me. I discipline and train concentration.” Another teacher referred directly to the changing profile of the teaching profession caused by inclusion. She considered herself no longer responsible for teaching subjects; rather, she complained about the need to take care of “everything else” in the classroom. This teacher’s observations suggest that her work is now dominated by training routines, discipline and care work rather than didactic work. Similarly, in being responsible for everything, another teacher lamented the loss of an elite status, now considering the work to be more in line with the multitasking required of a babysitter, not a docent. We also see the watering-down of the teachers’ sense of their own professionalism in the way they describe the difficulties of juggling the task of teaching children with a disability in a mixed classroom. It is important to note that the disabled children are not always the chief source of concern, especially since the school does not lack in weaker-performing and challenged children. To ensure everyone’s security, teachers noted that they sought to engage pupils in activities that would keep them busy, but not really teach them anything.

This falling to the wayside of didactics in favor of caretaking, attributed by teachers to the inflow of new types of students, is consistent with the findings of the scholar Alan Hodkinson in his analyses of the implementation of inclusive policies in the British school context. He identified the classroom tendency in which “social presence cloaks educational absence” (Hodkinson, 2012, p. 255). It is thus clear that the presence of children with disabilities has triggered agitation among teachers, as it is made out to be the source of a reduced sense of self-efficacy. Instead of calling for a reassessment of competencies of the teacher’s job in a way that would ensure the

integrity of professionalism, the new policy implementations yield a displacement of anger that can be observed as being placed onto the most vulnerable within this complex – the pupils with disabilities. What we have in effect is a return to the pre-UN-CRPD concept of disability as an individual matter and places the vulnerable body at the core of the problem. My ethnographic data clearly suggest that disability is perceived as a threat to classroom management even though the child labelled disabled might not even be the cause of the disarray. Still, as the teachers identify classroom problems with the onset of the new inclusion policies, they reject inclusion as a viable educational concept.

CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE “I-KIND”

The final point I want to discuss deals with the emergence of the somewhat pejorative label “I-Kind,” a colloquial term that has emerged as a descriptor by teachers referring to the presence of children with disability in the mainstream classroom. However, my ethnographic research indicates that the term has become detached from its mere descriptive quality of a child with a disability. Instead, it increasingly expresses the differences between pupils with abilities and those with disabilities.

I first contemplated the hidden cultural and ideological assumptions inherent in the inclusive classroom when I began noticing how teachers referred to children with disabilities as the “I-Kind.” A common response to questions about the dynamics of the mixed classroom elicited highly generalized comments such as “the I-Kind cannot follow the lesson,” “the presence of the I-Kind in the class creates turmoil” or “the I-Kind cannot read, which is why the whole class is slowed down.” The constant references to the I-Kind prompted me to explore more deeply in my interviews the assumptions behind the use of the term. My questions elicited the following range of replies. One respondent described the I-Kind as a child with special needs, with a short attention span and a low IQ – a child who did not meet the norm but had the same rights as everyone else. Another teacher refused to answer this question because he said there was no typical “I-Kind.” One colleague, however, had quite a lot to say on the matter, and her responses are revealing of deeper systemic problems. In general, she depicted the “I-Kind” as being introverted, extremely loud and the types of students that “tended to fall off chairs.” This teacher stressed that she did not place the blame on the government for what she perceived as failed efforts to ensure inclusion. On the contrary, she maintained that the government had done more than enough in providing proper assistance for these children. In failing to take into account the possible role of the government or political decision-making processes in perpetuating disadvantageous conditions, this teacher is silently placing the responsibility for the classroom’s malfunctioning on the pupils with disability – the I-Kind. In this way she is following the line of thinking inherent in the biological model of disability, attributing failures of the I-Kind to their status as disabled.

In using the term “I-Kind” the teacher also explicitly tied the category to pupils who had a migrant background, those who came from educationally alienated

homes and whose families were second-generation benefits-claimers. While there is indeed a correlation between the number of children with disabilities and race, gender and socio-economic status, this teacher fails to take into consideration the interplay of structural discrimination inherent in the system as a factor for this overrepresentation of marginalized groups. Seen through the spectrum of Crenshaw's intersectionality theory, this teacher's comments illustrate how categories of migration, gender and socio-economic background can indeed contribute to the constitution of disability. In a study titled "Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced and Underprotected," Crenshaw (2015) argues that injustice can be made visible only by taking into consideration both race and gender when trying to mirror the experience of actual discrimination faced by African-American girls in the U.S. Crenshaw (2015) shows that as categories of race, gender and disability intersect, severe discrimination may materialize in students "receiving [...] punitive, zero-tolerance policies" and being subjected to "violence, arrest, suspension and/or expulsion" (p. 5). In particular, she mentions the case of Jmiyha Rickman, an 8-year-old African-American girl with special needs. Because of a temper tantrum in school that was a factor of her disability and not an inherent danger through malicious intent, her parents found her in police custody with "hands and feet [...] handcuffed and [...] a belt around her waist" (Kaplan, 2013).

Foucault's notion of the "docile body" helps us understand the extent to which the I-Kind descriptor, tied as it is to issues of migration, race and socio-economic status, is contributing to the ultimate ostracizing of children with disabilities in the inclusive classroom. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979) sees the docile body as having been a construction created by disciplinary measures exercised by state control, manifested in sites such as the military, schools and hospitals where bodies "may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved" (p. 136). In these institutions the identity of the soldier, the pupil and the sick is established or shaped by the state. "Docility" describes a condition in which, according to Foucault (1979), "the analyzable body [is joined] to the manipulable body" (p. 136). What Foucault is getting at is that a person who can be "analyzed" by state institutions can receive identity-shaping descriptors and placed in foreseeable categories that have nothing to do with the differing abilities. In other words, the child's body clearly becomes analyzable and thereby manipulable to fit the standards of an invisible category of *able=bodiedness* that is not defined but instead constituted against the deficient. Through the application of the notion of the docile body to the "I-Kinder" descriptor commonly used by teachers, we see how the German education system is analyzing students of multiple abilities and shaping them into manageable statuses of disability. (The German system has elaborated eight features of disability, which after assessment defines the student's disability status.) As children are labeled "I-Kind," they become objects of various intervention plans that are subsidized by the government and turn "I-Kinder" into a valuable commodity for school budgets and financial planning. Labelling allows therapeutic measures to be introduced, and a whole industry of care and intervention follows suit. However, this brings about a dangerous side-effect. Along with labelling comes

the need to partition. The example of “I-Kind” shows how a single signifier spanning all eight features of disability fulfils the function of homogenizing difference and in essence contributes to an overall process of Othering (Jensen, 2011, p. 65). In this way, an artificial dichotomy is created between the functional, achieving, able-bodied and the disabled as the collective other. The concept of “I-Kind” makes it possible to categorize a person who uses a wheelchair as having more in common with a person with autism than with his or her classmate without impairment. The *manipulatability* of the body takes over as the defining principle in this equation of able-bodied versus disabled-bodied. This reality, however, stands in clear contradiction to the spirit of UN-CRPD, inherent in which is a call for the questioning of normativity and existing structures to accommodate the needs of everyone in an open society.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper I gave teachers a voice to explain their views on inclusive school practices after the introduction of UN-CRPD through changes in EU laws and the Federal Republic of Germany’s constitution. The results are disheartening and speak to a fundamental failure in the example presented here of the current German educational system to guide teachers in their efforts to realize the very challenging educational objective of inclusion. The antiquated notion of the teacher whose duty is to carry out tasks prescribed from above seems to prevail. However, this mentality will fail teachers themselves and, more important, the children with disabilities in the long run. If we keep in mind that Germany has never before committed to enabling children of all abilities to enter mainstream schools, it must be obvious that a change of attitude and practice cannot happen overnight. For the situation to turn around and for an inclusive agenda to take hold in a meaningful and lasting way, teachers must be given the space to jointly negotiate the terms under which they want or are able to implement a new educational agenda. Moreover, they must be given appropriate training to perform such deep-reaching changes to prevent the othering of students with disabilities so that they can at last find equal footing in the inclusive educational system.

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NAUCZYCIELE W ZAMĘCIE. DYSONANS MIĘDZY POLITYKĄ A PRAKTYKĄ INKLUZJI W SZKOŁACH NIEMIECKICH

ABSTRAKT: Po ratyfikacji Konwencji Praw Osób Niepełnosprawnych ONZ (2009) w niemieckim systemie oświatowym w miejsce modelu szkolnictwa oddzielnego dla osób pełno- i niepełnosprawnych wprowadzono politykę klas inkluzyjnych. Nauczyciele muszą obecnie wprowadzać te przekształcenia w życie, a także zmienić podejście do dzieci z niepełnosprawnościami uczęszczających do szkół powszechnych. W artykule nakreślono współczesne koncepcje teoretyczne niepełnosprawności, a na ich tle przedstawiono i omówiono teoretycznie wywiady z praktykami, którzy nauczanie inkluzyjne rozpoczęli dopiero niedawno. Nauczyciele wyrażają swoje poglądy na takie kwestie, jak zmieniająca się tożsamość nauczyciela, wyobrażenia o dziecku z niepełnosprawnością oraz frustracje wywołane bieżącymi trudnościami. Moje etnograficzne badania ukazują również, że w obliczu ostatnich zmian w polityce edukacyjnej nauczyciele wykazują znaczne poczucie niepewności oraz skłonność do działania na zasadzie prób i błędów, co niestety ma często szkodliwy wpływ na dzieci z niepełnosprawnościami i zamiast do inkluzji prowadzi raczej do stygmatyzacji.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: inkluzja, niepełnosprawność, kształcenie nauczycieli, intersekcjonalność, badania nad niepełnosprawnością, KPON ONZ.

The paper is part of a project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement number 676452.



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1. This article would not exist without the help of Dr. Juliet D. Golden, who has contributed so many hours of her time to helping me find the words to express my thoughts and rebuild my confidence in the process of creating this piece. I am deeply thankful to my Ph.D. supervisor, Prof. Hana Cervinkova, for her guidance and for introducing me to Dr. Golden and encouraging our collaboration.
 2. All ethnographic data were gathered in 2015 and have been translated into English by the author.