Journey to Inclusive School: Description of Crucial Sensitive Concepts in the Context of Situational Analysis

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Abstract : Academic sources as well as international agreements and national documents define inclusion in terms of several criteria: equal opportunities, fulfilling individual needs, development of human resources, community participation. In order for these criteria to be met, the community must be cohesive. Community cohesion, which is a relatively new concept, is not determined by homogeneity, but by the acceptance of diversity among the community members and utilisation of its positive potential. This brings us to a central category of inclusion - appreciating diversity and using it to a positive effect. However, school diversity is a real phenomenon, which schools need to tackle more and more often. This is also indicated by the number of publications focused on diversity in schools. These sources present recent analyses of using identity as a tool of coping with the demands of a diversified society. The aim of this study is to identify and describe in detail the processes taking place in selected schools, which contribute to their pro-inclusive character. The research is designed around a multiple case study of three pro-inclusive schools. Paradigmatically speaking, the research is rooted in situational epistemology. This is also related to the overall framework of interpretation, for which we are going to use innovative methods of situational analysis. In terms of specific research outcomes this will manifest itself in replacing the idea of "objective theory" by the idea of "detailed cartography of a social world". The cartographic approach directs both the logic of data collection and the choice of methods of their analysis and interpretation. The research results include detection of the following sensitive concepts: Key persons. All participants can contribute to promoting an inclusion-friendly environment; however, some do so with greater motivation than others. These could include school management, teachers with a strong vision of equality, or school counsellors. They have a significant effect on the transformation of the school, and are themselves deeply convinced that inclusion is necessary. Accordingly, they select suitable co-workers; they also inspire some of the other co-workers to make changes, leading by example. Employees with strongly opposing views gradually leave the school, and new members of staff are introduced to the concept of inclusion and openness from the beginning. Manifestations of school openness in working with diversity on all important levels. By this we mean positive manipulation with diversity both in the relationships between "traditional" school participants (directors, teachers, pupils) and school-parent relationships, or relationships between schools and the broader community, in terms of teaching methods as well as ways how the school culture affects the school environment. Other important detected concepts significantly helping to form a pro-inclusive environment in the school are individual and parallel classes; freedom and responsibility of both pupils and teachers, manifested on the didactic level by tendencies towards an open curriculum; ways of asserting discipline in the school environment.

Keywords : inclusion, diversity, education, sensitive concept, situational analysis