

Inclusion of disabled students in higher education

- Learning perspective approach developed and practiced at Aarhus University
- Present and future challenges of inclusion

Seminar – University of Kuopio – 10 November 2009



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- A new, larger University of Aarhus takes shape



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AU Organization

- University Board
- Rector
- 9 Faculties and other main areas
 - Faculty of Humanities
 - Faculty of Health Sciences
 - Faculty of Social Sciences
 - Faculty of Theology
 - Faculty of Science
 - Faculty of Agricultural Science
 - Aarhus School of Business
 - The Danish School of Education
 - Danish National Environmental Research



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AU – National University

Aarhus Universitets lokationer



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AU – National University

- 14.758 Bachelor students
 - 14.002 Master students
 - 1.439 PhD students
 - 6.636 Part-time students (incl. Master)
 - 222 Other students
 - 37.047 Total
-
- 5.829 Academic staff
 - 4.323 Technical and administrative staff
 - 700 million EUR turnover



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- Productivity and quality
- 1000 students
- 800 with an individual grant



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Staff	2007	2009
director	1,0	1,0
Adm. staff	4,5	6,0
Counsellor(s) assoc/ass prof	6,0	7,0
IT experts	3,0	4,0
Dyslexia assoc/ass prof	15,0	16,0
Research staff		3,0



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- Target group:
 - Students with specific educational difficulties i.e. students with disability (incl. Dyslexia and psychosocial difficulties)
- Promoting:
 - Integration and inclusion through high quality educational assistance and counselling



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- Local function = University of Aarhus
- Regional function
 - Students with dyslexia
 - Students with psychological difficulties
- research centre



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Challenges for education

- Higher productivity – more candidates
- Quality focus - Bologna process
- Inclusion
- Diversity



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Challenges for teachers and staff

- Student diversity
- Disabled students = students
- Potentialities



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UN CONVENTION 1

- Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:
- Article 24 (conf. section 1 a, b):
 - “inclusive education at all levels shall ensure the development of persons with disabilitiesto their fullest potential”
 - “reasonable accommodation of the individual’s requirements is provided” (section 2c)



UN CONVENTION 2

- And further it is in section 5 stated
- that states shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access tertiary education (i.e. further education)
- and lifelong learning.



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Objectives and ends in education

- General good in its own right
- Competences for labor market
- Employability!!



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Bologna Process

- Standards and guidelines for quality assurance
- Specific skills development
- Employability!!



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- Models of Disability:
- the medical model
- the social model
- the anti-discriminating model
- the ICF model



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Inclusion in higher education

- No special curricularas
- Obtaining the required competences
- Evaluation documented



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DISABILITY APPROCHES

- The medical model
- Disability is a problem of the individual (disease, injury ie.)
(medical) care:
treatment and rehabilitation
unable to function as normal (will never be normal)



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- The social model
- Disability is a social construct
- Not ascribed to the individual, but
- Created by social environment and need social change (universal design)



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- The anti-discriminating model
- Persons with disabilities is oppressed minorities and should therefore have special rights (minority rights)



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- The ICF (International Classification of functioning, WHO)
- “biopsychosocial” model =
- Synthesis of bio, individual and social
- “health conditions
- (“static” model)



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- "Possibility" model
- Sen: Capabilities = practical opportunity
- Nussbaum: Sen + cultural barriers



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AU APPROACH

- Possibilities approach
- Nature of impairment
- Available resources
- Enviroment
- Barriers
- Individual side of above



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- Consequences:
- Students potentials is
- the **option** of realizing their potential (cf. Heidegger, Hartmann) to complete a first, second and third level education
- If they live up to general and specific requirements (academic skills i.e.)



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Vision statement for AU

- "Equal educational environment"
- "*option of realizing potential*"

BUT

Students must live up to general and specific quality requirements of courses and study programs



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General Staff practice of inclusion

Potentialities and Difficulties

“Spot and contact experts”



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Counselling and Educational Practice at the CENTER

- aims at establishing a framework for integration and inclusion in the educational system by
- creating compensating options in relation to educational difficulties
- the practice involves a **comparison of the achievements and results** of students who receive educational assistance and the achievements of the other students at the educational institution.



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General framework

- The counseling and educational effort must be based on the development of inter-disciplinary *knowledge regarding the specific educational difficulties* and those institutional, individual, social and cultural relations within which the difficulties must be understood.



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Vision og quality objectives

Support must be:

- taking all relevant aspects in account
- professionally well-founded
- coordinated with modules and courses learning outcomes

" Best practice "



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Educational Support Concepts

Support concepts focused at Learning and study

- "Special" counselling sessions
- Academic practice learning
- Study support for dyslexic students



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Dyslexia

- A topic for universities?
- What is dyslexia?
- Support for students with dyslexia
 - - technological support
 - - educational support



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Diagnostic procedures

- „ First meeting with the centre: A counsellor provides an assessment, including whether it is relevant to test for dyslexia.
- The student is contacted by an assistant professor who initiates the diagnostic testing.



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Testing procedures

- Preliminary interview
- Testing material: obligatory and supplementary tests within the fields of spelling, decoding, visual recognition and working memory, writing and vocabulary.
- Diagnostic report



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IT-equipment

- Interview and diagnostic rapport
- IT instruction and adaptive guidance
- Educational support



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IT-equipment "starting package"

- lab top computer
- "All-in-one" station: print/scan/copy
- Scanning software (FineReader)
- Scanning pen (C-pen 20)
- Dictaphone
- Compensating software: ViTal (synthetic speech program), ViseOrd (spelling assistance program).
- Encyclopedic dictionary



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Employing the provided equipment

- The students are instructed in the use of the IT-equipment and provided with a
- series of adaptive sessions by a specialised assistant professor (approximately 6 hours).



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Combining IT-equipment and educational principles

- ensure that each item of the IT-package has been adapted to the individual so that he or she can use it
- incorporated into students personal academic work and how IT can function as compensating measures for their specific reading and writing difficulties.



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Evaluation and continuous assistance

- At the end of the starting package adaptive program, the usefulness of each item must be evaluated in a written report.
- Assessment of the student's further need for educational assistance.
- Typically, the student will benefit from working thoroughly with some of those techniques which have been briefly introduced during the starting package sessions.



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Educational Assistance

- Individual assistance: 9 - 12 sessions per semester, usually 1 session a week.
- Supplementary educational courses: 5 week courses (10 sessions).
 - 1 course is offered to the student each semester.
 - App. 4-6 students in each class.



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Individual assistance: main principles

- Academic material: The material studied or employed in the academic assistance is a part of the curriculum
- Cooperative effort: The educational assistance is a process which is based on co-operation and progression. Consequently, the progress must be evaluated and the techniques and methods possibly be reconsidered.
- Teaching material: the methods and teaching material employed have been developed for and adapted to the specific needs of dyslexic students at institutions of further and higher



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Key aspects of educational assistance

- Notes: lecture notes and notes from books.
- Reading techniques: active reading and reading purposes.
- Written assignments: preparatory stages, coherence, cohesion, syntax, spelling.
- Time management: planning and scheduling at various levels.
- Presentations: structuring the content and practicing the oral performance.



Evaluation

- At the end of each semester, the content and effect of the educational assistance is evaluated in a written report.
- In the report, the assistant professor in cooperation with the student evaluates the effect of the assistance on the student's study habits and furthermore assesses the student's need for further assistance the following semester.



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Psycho-social “illness” in learning perspective

- The specific academic counseling and support in order to compensate for their specific difficulties
 - it also has to focus on:
- Facilitating there process of identity formation as students



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Target group: students with specific study related difficulties

Learning difficulties:

- concentration difficulties
- tendency to postpone, change of program, etc.
- Lack of overview, difficulties in organizing and planning
- difficulties with interaction with other students -
isolation, loneliness
- lack of motivation and energy
- low vulnerability and stress level



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A special educational practice

Compensation for the learning difficulties
(not a therapeutic practice in order to make them
'healthy')

A special pedagogical practices – aim:

- to provide a special educational assistance
- to meet their special needs
- to make their learning more effective
- To ensure the quality of their education.
- The optimal result of the counseling and support is that the students gradually
- learn to regulate their own learning processes



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It integrates and includes students with mental illness in the educational system on the basis of equal opportunity

- A holistic approach - coordinated with teaching subjects
- Based on their specific study-related problems (not their illness)
 - Facilitates the individual learning process
- Maintained in their identity as a student
- They become active players in the Danish society



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Future 1

- The counseling and educational effort must be planned as a *co-ordinate* effort with clear, prioritized goals and directions



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Future 2

- The counseling and educational effort must be *focused on results* by adapting the effort to the individual student's specific difficulties and to his or her academic subject and level. The aim is to compensate for the difficulties to the extent that the students can meet the general and specific academic requirements for quality



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Future 3

- The counseling and educational effort must rest on research-based knowledge of the *relations between effort and effect* which is sensitive to specific and individual relations and subsequently can support the concrete practice.



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Future 4

- The counseling and educational effort must be structured around learning, development, and communication of *quality-assured methods* which are adequate according to the students' specific difficulties and needs.



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Evidence based methods

- aims at establishing a framework for integration and inclusion in the educational system by
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Research and Development

- Counseling, educational assistance, and technological aids for students with specific educational difficulties are knowledge-based functions with a clear, results-oriented aim
- Consequently, quality and development in the counseling and educational practice presuppose a valid basis of research and evidence



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Thank you

- Thank you for your attention - and patience!!
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