

Suvi Lakkala & Outi Kyrö-Ämmälä May 2018

# Finnish basic education and teacher education – perspectives on inclusive education



LAPIN YLIOPISTO  
UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND  
For the North – For the World



# Finnish basic education through indexes of inclusive education 1/2

## Quantitative measures

- Problem: inclusive education is often described by quantitative figures

Country	SEN	Students in basic ed.	SEN %
Finland	38943	535 891	7.3
Austria	30672	680 352	7.3
Sweden	10211	963 888	1.1
Lithuania	37909	281 382	13.5
UK	191410	6 919 913	2.8
Poland	113416	3 301 999	3.4

**(Basic education = primary school and lower secondary school)**

Table 1 Students with SEN and all students in basic education in some European countries from 2014–2015 (European Agency, no date)

- Inclusive education is not about placing SEN pupils to mainstream classes instead of special classes



## through indexes of inclusive education 2/2

### Qualitative measures

- The goal of inclusive education, by a wide definition, is to promote learning and wellbeing for all vulnerable groups (eg. Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006),
- or by its widest, it is seen as a continuous process that combats all types of stigmatisation and discrimination, and concerns society as a whole (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2010; Slee, 2014)
- The definitions are abstract → there is a danger of oversimplifying the differences between various facets of diversity (Norwich, 2013)
- In inclusive education, when students are nurtured towards wellbeing at school, one must not look at the concept of wellbeing as a capability to be employed and to be a good citizen. Rather, it means equipping diverse students so that they have possibilities, freedom to make choices they value (cf. Spratt, 2017)
- Inclusive education should be measured by qualitative indexes, e.g.
  - **Collaboration among adults**
  - **The quality of relationships in school**



## Qualitative measures of inclusive education

- Teachers play a major role as coordinators of the network that supports students' learning and wellbeing → everything should start from collaboration with parents
- The number of co-teaching teachers in basic education, co-teaching at least once a week, (N=2136) (Saloviita, 2017)
  - ✓ Class teachers 50 %
  - ✓ Subject teachers 19 %
  - ✓ Special education teachers 62 %
- The most needed things for teachers to realize co-teaching (N=434) : (Saloviita & Takala, 2010)
  - ✓ time for planning (41%),
  - ✓ need for additional training and resources (29%),
  - ✓ more knowledge of the models of co-teaching (6%),
  - ✓ a need for a cultural change in schools (6%)
- The new Finnish Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2014) the developing of collaborative school culture



## Qualitative measures of inclusive education

- Teachers' competence to work in a multi-professional team becomes crucial in inclusive education
- In a pilot study student teachers and social work students practiced together at school. Their collaboration succeeded in the end, but during the process they experienced confusion and inferiority. They needed the support of their supervisors. They discovered many new sides of their peers' profession.



(Lakkala, Turunen et al. 2017)

# Classroom interaction

- The quality of the interaction
  - Structural factors
  - Process factors
- Unique and contextual process;  
cf. Vygotsky - The Zone of Proximal Development
- Different needs → Different support (Connor et al. 2009)
- The elements of the favorable interaction (Pianta, Laparo, Hamre 2008)
  - Emotional support
  - Classroom organization
  - Instructional support



# Finnish teacher education through indexes of inclusive education

## Inclusive Teacher Education – Dream or Reality?

- Teachers' readiesses for inclusive classrooms?
  - The teachers do not have enough time or necessarily knowing to take into account the needs of each pupil in large education groups (YLE 17.5.2018)
  - The educational rights of the pupils do not apply equally throughout the country (OAJ, 2018)
  - Teachers' socio-emotional competence (Virtanen 2013)

The Inclusive teachers are able to support their students **individually** by

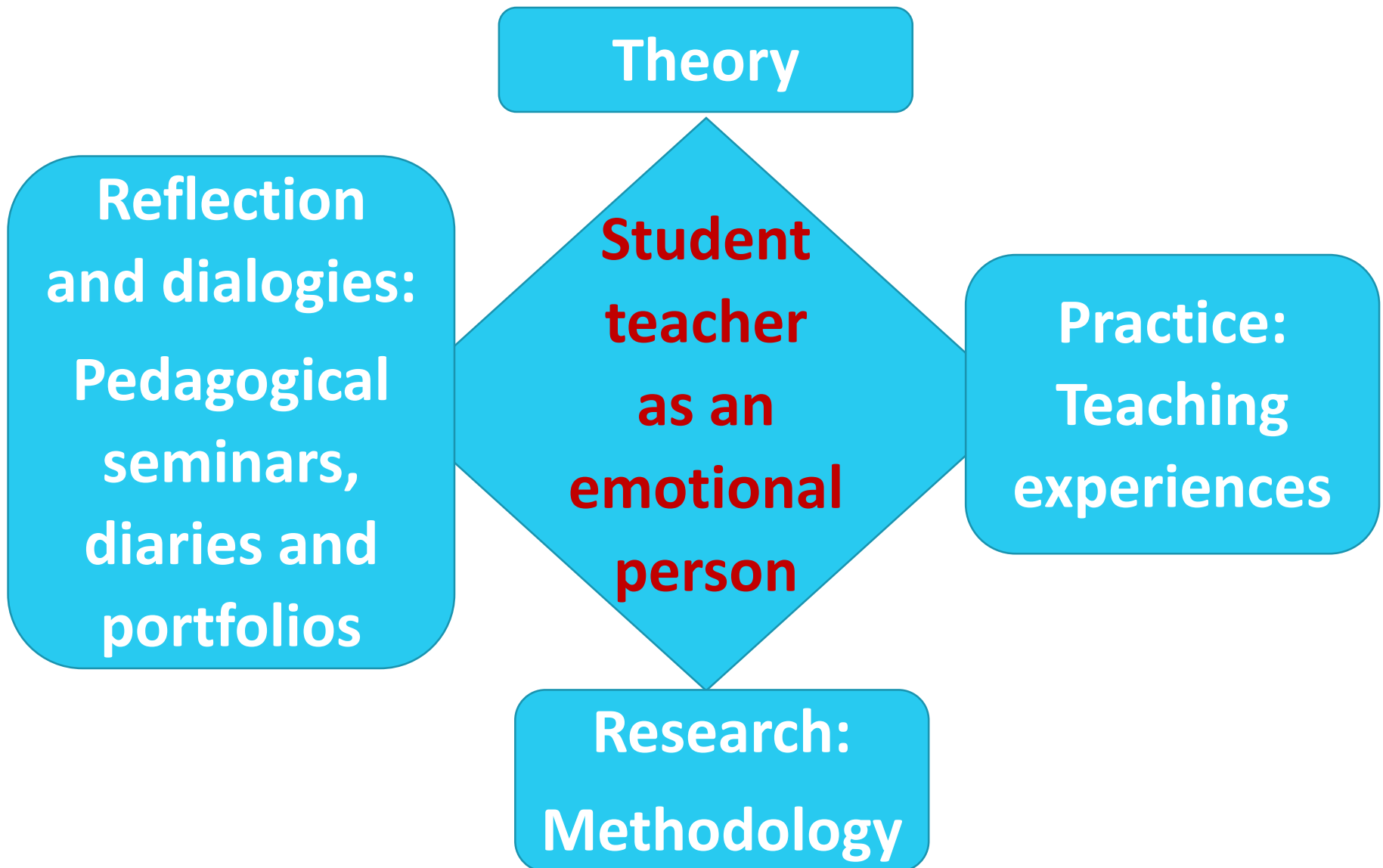
- encouraging
- socially engaging
- encountering sensitively
- being an approachable teacher

and also to build the classroom **communality** by

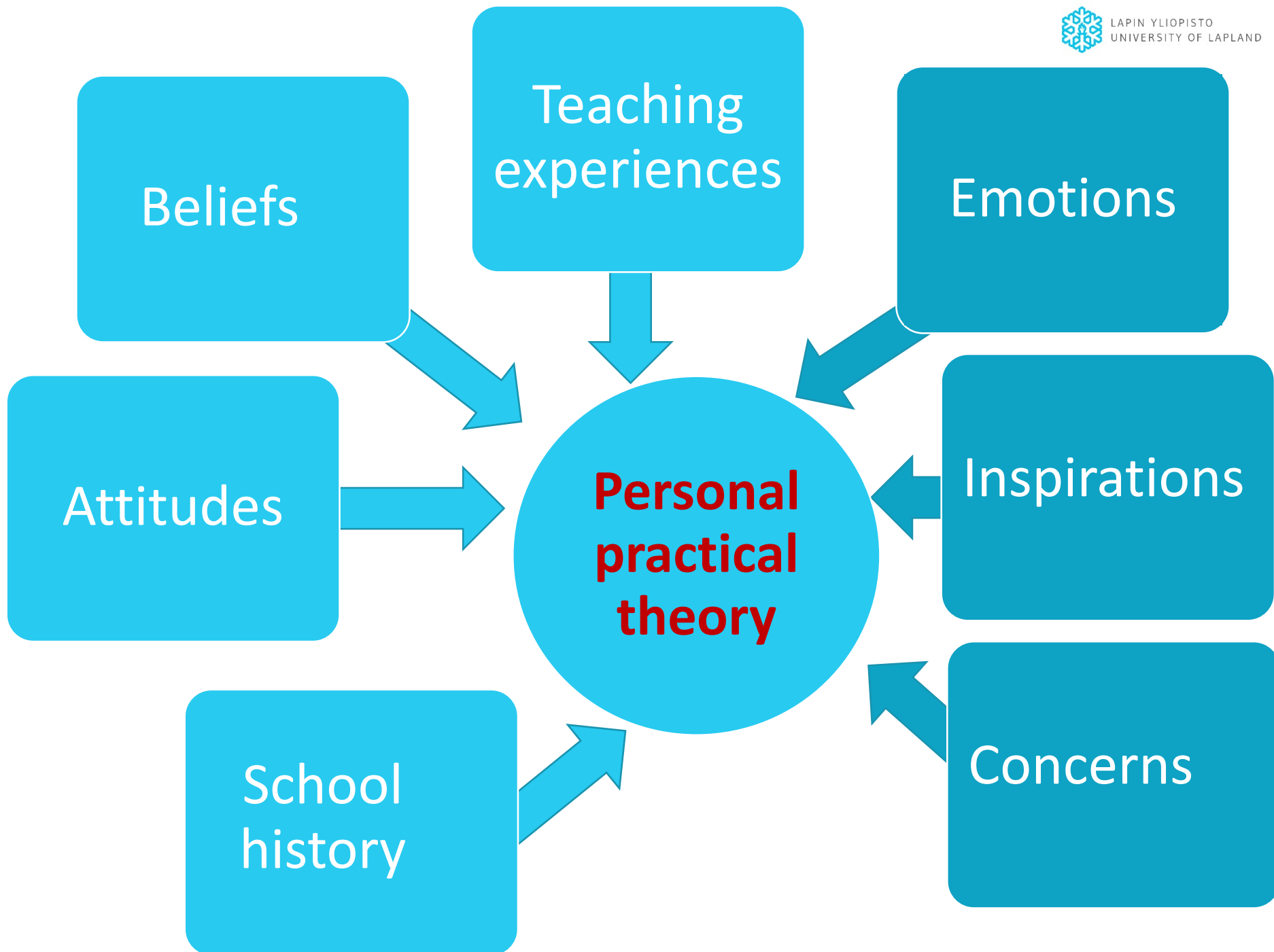
- organising social activities
- enhancing social skills
- using interactive ethical discussions
- appreciating diversity
- empowering children

(Lakkala & Kyrö-Ämmälä 2017)









# References

- Ainscow, M., Booth, T., & Dyson, D.** (2006). *Improving schools, developing inclusion*. London: Routledge.
- Armstrong, D., Armstrong, A. C., & Spandagou, I.** (2010). Inclusion: By choice or by chance? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 15(1), 29-39.
- European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE)**. European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. Retrieved from <https://www.european-agency.org/data>
- Lakkala, S. & Kyrö-Ämmälä, O.** (2017). The Finnish School Case. In A. Galkiene. (Ed.) *Inclusion in Socio-Educational Frames. Inclusive school cases in four European countries*. Vilnius: The publishing house of the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, 267-309.
- Lakkala, S., Turunen, T., Kangas, H., Pulju, M., Autti, H., & Kuukasjärvi, U.** (2017). Learning inter-professional teamwork during university studies: A case study of student teachers and social work students' shared professional experiences. *Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy*, 43(5), 1-13.
- Norwich, B.** (2013). *Addressing tensions and dilemmas in inclusive education. Living with uncertainty*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- OAJ** 2018. Oppimisen tukipilarit. [Trade Union of Education: Pillars of learning]. Retrieved from <http://www.oaj.fi/cs/oaj/Oppimisen%20tukipilarit> (29.5.2018)

# References

- Slee, R.** (2014). Inclusive schooling as an apprenticeship in democracy? In L. Florian (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of special education*, 217-229. London, UK: Sage.
- Saloviita, T.** (2017). How common are inclusive educational practices among Finnish teachers? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*.
- Saloviita, T. & Takala, M.** (2010). Frequency of co-teaching in different teacher categories. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 25:4, 389-396
- Spratt, J.** (2017). Wellbeing, equity and education. A critical analysis of policy discourses of wellbeing in schools. *Inclusive learning and educational equity 1*. Cham: Springer.
- Virtanen, M.** (2013) Teachers Emotional Competency: a Research of Teachers and Students Emotional Intelligence Competencies and its Importance. *Acta Universitatis Tamperensis*; 1823, Dissertation. Tampere University Press, Tampere.
- YLE 17.5.2018** "Lapseni ei neljään vuoteen saanut riittävää tukea" – Ylen kysely paljastaa erityislasten vanhempien karut kokemukset arjesta ["My child did not get enough support for four years" – The Finnish Broadcasting company's survey reveals the parents' harsh experiences of the their special needs children's everyday life]. Retrieved from <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10192280> (29.5.2018)



**Kiitos!**  
**Thank you!**

[suvi.lakkala@ulapland.fi](mailto:suvi.lakkala@ulapland.fi)

[outi.kyro-ammala@ulapland.fi](mailto:outi.kyro-ammala@ulapland.fi)