International Course
in Linköping

Handbook of Studies
Introduction to Special Education
in a Swedish Context

Termin: vt 2019
Kurskoder: 913G09
Introduction to Special Education in a Swedish Context
This is a single subject course with a duration of 10 weeks (7.5 ECTS credits) halftime studies. The main aim of the course is to give an introduction to special needs education, in particular how it is organised in Swedish schools, and the concepts that are related to special needs and inclusive education. The course is given in English.

Special Education - Special Needs Education - Inclusive Education
For the sake of simplicity we have decided to use the words ‘special education’ in the name of this course, although very well aware of the fact that it is debatable. There are several ways to define the concepts related to special education, and every country has its own ideas about how to deal with children who are in need of special attention or support in educational settings. In this course we will study and discuss different perspectives as regards special (needs) education and related concepts. Although focus will be on the Swedish situation, we will make comparisons with the situation in other countries, particularly those represented in the group. We will also study international conventions and currently available official documents that could be of interest in this context.

Educational policies in Sweden are, in principle, based on the idea of inclusion, i.e., every child has the right to education, and functional disability of any kind should not be an obstacle. The Swedish society is therefore responsible for providing support to children with special educational needs so as to compensate for any disadvantages that these children may encounter at school. The same principles apply to adults, at all levels of the educational system, including higher education.

Concepts and phenomena that will be studied and discussed throughout the course include:

Deficiencies, disabilities, handicap
Diagnosis
Diversity – individual differences
Dysfunctions
Dyslexia/Reading and writing disabilities
Educational challenges
Education For All
Effective practice
Inclusion – inclusive education
Individual Development Plan
Integration – segregation
International conventions and agreements
Learning disabilities
Neuro-psychiatric conditions
Normality – deviation – variation
Social relations – bullying, harassment
Special educational needs
Special needs education/special education
Streaming – differentiation

(NB. The concepts are in alphabetical order, not in order of priority!)
Course arrangements

Working procedures: Lectures, seminars, small group discussions, group assignment, literature studies, study visits.

The course contents will be covered through a number of lectures, seminars, small group discussions, and literature studies. The participants will be divided into small groups that will work together throughout the course. It is recommended that, after each lecture, the participants reflect on the content in the small groups. Study visits to some schools and institutions will be arranged. The focus of these study visits will be on special needs education. In connection with the study visits the students are required to do a minor assignment in the small groups. This group assignment is part of the course examination. It is to be delivered in writing and will also be presented orally at a seminar. It is therefore essential that the participants take part in group-discussions and other small group arrangements as much as possible. The course will conclude with an individual examination.

Further information about administrative matters can be found in the course curriculum.

Rules Regarding Examinations at Linköping University
As the consequences of not following the rules are very serious, it is important that you read the information http://www.student.liu.se/tenta/regler?l=en and follow the rules regarding examinations.

Staff and lecturers
Åsa Järnvall, IBL, course leader asa.jarnvall@liu.se
Elisabeth Augustsson, course administrator, IBL elisabeth.augustsson@liu.se
Rickard Östergren, IBL rickard.ostergren@liu.se
Lotta Holme, IBL lotta.holme@liu.se
Robert Thornberg, IBL robert.thornberg@liu.se
Margaretha Grahn, IBL margaretha.grahn@liu.se
Elisabeth Eriksson, IBL elisabeth.eriksson@liu.se
Tove Mattsson, IBL tove.mattsson@liu.se
Henrik Lindqvist, IBL henrik.lindqvist@liu.se

Examinations

Group assignment - Oral presentation (Power Point presentation) in week 12.

Reflections about study visits in a small group, based on study visits to schools and institutions with a focus on special needs education.

Questions to consider:
- what are your impressions?
- what kind of special needs have your observed among the children?
- what type of special needs education have you observed (inclusive, small group, individual, personal assistant, special needs teacher)?
- how do your observations relate to the reports, articles, books you have read about the situation in some Swedish schools as regards special needs education?
- compare with conditions in your respective countries!

Individual written paper, week 13 and 14

Free choice of topic, for example:
- inclusive education – ideals and reality
- special educational needs – how to define them and how to deal with them
- children with learning disabilities and their specific needs – how can they be met?
• multicultural education – Is it desirable? Is it possible?

**Format**: maximum 4 pages (A4), Times New Roman 12 p (or similar), spacing 1 ½.

Your preliminary paper will be presented and discussed in **week 13**. You will be divided into groups of 3-4 who will read each other’s papers and give comments. After that you will have time to make changes and amendments before you hand in your paper on Lisam. **Deadline** has been postponed to **Friday 5th April, 1 pm (13.00)**.

**Compulsory literature**


*Other relevant texts that could be of interest*


**Policy Documents**

https://www.skolverket.se/publikationer?id=2975


Useful web addresses

Education in Sweden https://sweden.se/society/education-in-sweden/
European Agency for Development of Special Needs Education: https://www.european-agency.org/
European Literacy Policy Network (ELINET): http://www.eli-net.eu
Global Education Network Europe: http://www.gene.eu/
International Dyslexia Society: http://www.interdys.org/
International Literacy Association: http://www.literacyworldwide.org
National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (Specialpedagogiska Skolmyndigheten): http://www.spsm.se/sv/Om-webbplatsen/English/
Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket): http://www.skolverket.se/om-skolverket/andra-sprak-och-lattlast/in-english
The Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen): http://www.skolinspektionen.se/en/About-Skolinspektionen/About-the-Swedish-Schools-Inspectorate/