

Teachers' pedagogical diagnostic in the context of transition from primary to secondary school of children with special educational needs

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In Germany children transition from primary to secondary school at the end of grade four. This transition is an important milestone in a student's educational biography. Especially for children with special educational needs this transition is not only the decision for a secondary school type (e.g. AO-GS NRW, §8). It also implies the choice between an inclusive and a special school (e.g. SchulG NRW, §20). Even though the UN-CRPD establishes the educational policy goal of joint learning, many pupils with SEN still attend special schools (KMK, 2024). However, the choice of a special instead of an inclusive school is concomitant with reduced career opportunities (Klemm et al., 2023).

Although in North Rhine Westphalia (NRW) parents make the final choice when it comes to the placement of their children at the end of grade four, teachers play an important role in this context. They have to advise parents on the further educational path (AO-GS NRW, § 8) and make a recommendation on the choice of a secondary school (SchulG NRW, § 11). As Klicpera and Gasteiger-Klicpera (2004) show, parents are guided by teacher's recommendations. The recommendations should therefore rely on high-quality diagnostics. Quality characteristics of the pedagogical diagnostic can be derived from the four-component model (Lintorf et al., 2023). One component is the collection of information using a variety of diagnostic methods.

In our presentation we take this as a starting point to investigate the pedagogical diagnostic of teachers in the context of transition from primary to secondary school from children with SEN in the areas learning (LE) and emotional and social development (ESD) at inclusive primary schools in NRW. The data basis consists of 31 guided interviews with regular and special education teachers from the DFG project "Schulformempfehlungen nach dem Gemeinsamen Lernen". The participating teachers stem from 15 different inclusive primary schools in eight different cities in NRW and form 16 pairs (one regular and one special education teacher). The teachers of one pair reported separately from each other on the diagnostic process in the context of transition to secondary school of one jointly accompanied student with SEN in the areas LE or/and ESD.

Using a content analysis (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2024) the presentation aims to provide answers to the question of which diagnostic methods teacher base their recommendation for the best possible further educational path on. The data was analyzed both across cases and by comparing cases. According to our analyses, informal diagnostics play an overriding role for the recommendation. Across all cases this primarily includes non-standardized observations. In contrast standardized methods are clearly in the minority in the coded segments. As the most common method in the context of standardized methods observations are being replaced in favor of tests. Yet throughout the cases a diversity of methods foreshadows.

These results are critically discussed against the background of possible reasons for the design of the diagnostic processes such as the teachers' understanding of diagnostic or the question of quality standards. This is supplemented by further research and evaluation perspectives.

Key words: *qualitative methods – inclusive education – special education – primary education*

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