



UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

ORGANISATORISKT LÄRANDE

och särskiljande (special)pedagogiska verksamheter

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som med vederbörligt tillstånd av Rektor vid Umeå universitet för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen framläggs till offentligt försvar i HUM.D.210, Humanisthuset, Petrus Laestadius väg, fredagen den 13 september, kl. 10:00.

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Organisational learning and segregated (special) education units

Abstract

Segregated special education units (SEUs), designated for pupils diagnosed with ADHD and autism, exist in several compulsory schools in Sweden. Previous research has identified several challenges associated with these settings, such as ambiguity in the objectives of SEUs, and exclusionary effects of such placements. Additionally, prior research emphasises the neuropsychiatric influence on schools' decision-making processes regarding the support requirements of diagnosed pupils. Despite the intentions of educational staff to develop inclusive learning environments such endeavours may be hindered by a lack of conditions conducive to organisational learning. Factors impeding organisational learning can manifest as divergent understandings of the purpose of SEUs among educational staff. This is problematic when diagnoses such as ADHD and autism serve as explanatory models for support needs, leading to placements in SEUs with exclusionary consequences. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate and understand organisational learning in relation to SEUs designated for pupils diagnosed with ADHD and/or autism. Additionally, the thesis aims to problematise and critically examine how SEUs are understood by educational team members and school leaders. The thesis comprises four studies based on empirical data from educational staff from three SEUs. The empirical data includes semi-structured interviews (N=26), analysed using qualitative content and critical discourse analysis, framed by pragmatism and critical pragmatism. Additionally, models of organisational learning were utilised. The results indicate that unclear definitions of the SEUs, including their purpose and goals, inhibit organisational learning and complicate a shared understanding of the units. The findings underscore the importance of contextually understanding the obstacles and prerequisites for organisational learning. The diagnoses of ADHD and autism, framed within a neuropsychiatric paradigm, can be seen as an overarching influencing factor. These factors have implications for the development of a holistic perspective and thus impact organisational learning.

Keywords

organisational learning; special education; ADHD; autism; segregated special education units; neuropsychiatric paradigm

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