

new perspectives in special education: a six-country study of integration

Cor J.W. Meijer, Sip Jan Pijl and Seamus Hegarty, editors

London and New York: Routledge, 1994. xiv + 159 pp.

We can learn from each other. This is the message of this useful compendium of experiences from six western countries on the art of integration in educational practice. The countries studied are Italy, Denmark, Sweden, the USA, England and Wales, and The Netherlands. After an introductory chapter explaining the conceptual framework of the study (integration as social and curricular integration) and the data-gathering procedures, different authors outline their respective situations, and the book is rounded off with three chapters giving quantitative and qualitative summaries of the findings, a discussion of the factors that are critical to integration (from a teacher perspective), and a discussion of the aims and limits of integration. Inevitably, this final chapter makes the point that the vagueness and multiplicity of integration concepts and goals makes it difficult to arrive at any clear measure of the effects of integration practices. However, the description of the diversity is itself a valuable contribution to awareness in this domain, and the stress on the need for systematic evaluation of integration methods is timely.