

Students with disabilities need of individual adjustments in high school

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Introduction: To be able to graduate from high school implies difficulties for many students with disabilities. Education is important for the child's learning, development and psychosocial well-being, and crucial for young peoples' opportunities for further studies and work. In this study the student-environment fit, i.e. the fit between demands in the environment and the abilities of the student are described.

Objective: To investigate the need of adjustments for boys and girls with disabilities, with and without diagnoses in regular high school.

Method: Students' perceived need of adjustments were collected with the School Setting Interview (SSI), for 514 students with mainly cognitive difficulties, with no diagnoses (53%), dyslexia/speech impairment (20%) and neuropsychiatric diagnoses (23%) and others (5%). Non-parametric statistics were used to describe and compare the need for environmental adjustment concerning gender, and students' diagnosis.

Results: In the SSI items, Remembering things, Writing, Do homework, Take exams and Reading a range between 87 to 70 percent of all students had need of adjustments in order to participate in regular school activities. Statistically significant differences in need of adjustments were found between boys and girls, and also between students with no diagnosis, dyslexia/speech impairment and those with neuropsychiatric diagnosis.

Conclusion: A large gap in the student-environment fit was found for students with disabilities. Individual needs in girls and boys, students with and without diagnosis with flexible support is important to a diversity, rather than offering fixed solutions under the name of equality.