

Eliza Avdiu, Edita Bekteshi, Brikena Xhaferi. (2022). Game-Based Learning in Inclusive Classrooms: A Case Study in Upper Austria. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education (INT-JECSE)*, 14(1): 762-770. DOI: 10.9756/INT-JECSE/V14I1.221089

Received: 08.10.2021 Accepted: 22.12.2021

Eliza Avdiu¹
Edita Bekteshi^{2*}
Brikena Xhaferi³

Game-based Learning in Inclusive Classrooms: A Case Study in Upper Austria

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to ensure a better understanding of learning and teaching opportunities when applying play-based learning activities with children in Special Needs Education (SNE) and their interaction with other children. Special Needs Education includes students with disabilities and it is carried out in various forms using different methods and teaching materials.

The study is based on classroom observations and teachers' experiences in inclusive classes in Upper Austria. It was conducted in four different schools and it included 12 teachers. Based on the teachers' experiences and SNE, the findings show the application of different play-based learning activities, the application of Montessori methods, as well as the application of games that develop motor skills, social games, communication games, concentration games, games for encouragement, video games, memory games, games for calculation, and /or role play. The interviews revealed that teachers faced challenges working with children with SN when there is no willingness to cooperate with the teachers. Therefore, the teacher is the most important factor who should use appropriate teaching methods in order to involve, convince and make the children with Special Needs (SN) active participants in learning.

Keywords: Inclusive Classrooms, Game Based Learning, Upper Austria, Montessori Method.

Introduction

The 21st century society encompasses more open-minded people that embrace freely and easily social varieties whether with various cognitive features, or various physical features. And this is possible due to innovative education of all-inclusiveness.

Inclusive education means that learners with and without disabilities learn together in class. It requires the use of varied strategies and techniques to ensure equal participation of all students in school society, and to advance their development. This advancement can be achieved through play-based and/or game-based activities. Due to its nature and qualities,

play activates a child's full dynamics; it forms part of flexible, child-centered and participatory / experiential educational strategies for celebrating diversity in education (Lenakakis, Howard, & Felekidou, 2018). Specifically, inclusive games aim to be all-inclusive and enable all children of differing abilities to engage in sports and games together. Likewise, they also aim to enable persons with special needs to engage in activities that they may otherwise face challenges in (NCSS & SDSC, 2015). Through play children learn about social rules and relationships models which help them construct a concept to promote social and communication skills (Lee, Odom & Loftin, 2007).

Eliza Avdiu¹, University "Isa Boletini" in Mitrovica, Republic of Kosovo.

Email: eliza.avdiu@umib.net

Edita Bekteshi^{2*}, University "Isa Boletini" in Mitrovica, Republic of Kosovo.

Email: edita.bekteshi@umib.net

Brikena Xhaferi³, South East European University, North Macedonia.

Email: b.xhaferi@seeu.edu.mk

Some games need modifications to make them more disability-friendly. Some modifications are slight, while others more significant (NCSS & SDSC, 2015) and through modified and inclusive games, children will be able to develop mutual understanding and respect for their peers, without reservations or inhibitions.

Following this modification, it is necessary to help children have fun, be encouraged in case they are not able to do things in the same way as other children, and allow everyone to participate (Dominika, 2019). One of these activities where children can adapt and change roles is Cooperative Play. It is the most developed form where children take various roles and are dependent on each other for achieving the goals of the play (Salen, 2008). As such, games can be used to differentiate learning experiences, teach empathy and collaborative learning as these are the foundations of inclusive practice. Precisely, children move from solitary play into parallel play, associative play, and then cooperative play, to show how it functions and develops as a complex, adaptive system as children grow older. Gee (2007) articulates excellently how gaming helps students to take a new identity and explore the world from that identity's perspective.

Additionally, the 21st century's games have definitely offered other different games. While traditional gaming experiences may be compromising for children with disabilities, this century's digital games allow these children to overcome their disabilities and engage in cooperative play creating a collaborative and inclusive learning environment (Salen, 2008). However, combination of games, multi-player games allow students to improve their communication skills, cooperation and help build relationships (Germanotta, 2017).

Most importantly, whatever form of play is applied in the classroom, it should provide learning. This is best expressed by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2019), which emphasized that first of all, learners should acquire knowledge in a playful way, learn from each other and work together. Whereas, regarding dramatic play, it would be an important step for schools to adopt dramatic play as part of the curriculum so that all children have the opportunity to make these experiences within their peer groups (Federal Ministry Education, Science and Research, 2018). Nevertheless, as there are no restrictions, these studies suggest to adapt methods from dramatic play for different subjects. For example, in mathematics, chemistry or physics lessons, concentration games can be very useful for activating students. Or, in subjects like German, English, or religious studies, role play is a

frequently used method. Moreover, improvisation play can be very helpful in language learning. As mentioned above, there are, by now, many collections of games.

Based on the literature review, there is a need for pedagogues and schools that are ready to implement new teaching methods needed not solely in the context of dramatic performance but also in inclusive education. Play should also take on a more important role in teacher education, because "Performing Arts" is not only an artistic subject, it also encourages and promotes what humans need for optimal development - it helps to build relationships (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, 2018).

Based on the upper mentioned facts regarding different games and children with SN, this research aims to identify and discuss play-based learning activities applied to the children with SN in Upper Austria. As well as, to what extent do these kinds of games support the children with SN in order to interact with other children in all-inclusive classes observed by the teachers' practices. As such, it poses these research questions:

- What game-based learning activities do teachers in Upper Austria apply to children with Special Needs?
- What is the level of children's interaction with other children while conducting all-inclusive activities?

As the article discusses for all-inclusiveness that involves child-led activities in classrooms with children of varying ages and teachers who encourage independence among their pupils (Meinke 2019, para.3), hopefully it will present the most appropriate applicable approaches and help the children with SN to learn more and become more acceptable and suitable within the overall society knowledge and its daily activities.

Research Methodology

This research was conducted in October 2019 during the study visit at the University of Education "Padagogische Hochschule" in Linz, Austria. The approach of conducting this research was qualitative involving Semi-structured interviews in focus groups and classroom observations. In order to answer the research questions, a careful sample was chosen. It was represented by a total of 12 teachers from 4 different schools. One of the selected schools was from a rural area and 3 were urban schools. Three teachers of each school were interviewed. More precisely, the rural area school had changed from a special education system only, into an all inclusive school and has a larger number of young

children with special needs in every class, compared to the other three schools in the city. Additionally, one of the urban schools involved in the research included multigrade teaching (preschool class, first grade and second grade).

In view of interviewing the teachers, teachers from the rural school were interviewed during the third week, while urban teachers were interviewed during the last week of the month. Prior to the interview, the interview questions were reviewed by a field expert from "Padagogische Hochschule" and it included first and second grades of primary education, aged 5-7.

Furthermore, the Focus group interview was chosen in order to encourage the interviewee for active discussion. Three phases had been prepared for conducting semi-structured interviews: 1) the introductory phase included information for the purposes of the study - to create a suitable friendly environment, 2) the interviewees' permission to use the data for research purposes, and 3) at the end, the interviewees had the opportunity to provide additional perceptions that could be useful to our research.

A significant point to mention is that teachers' qualification, their training to work with children with special needs, and teachers who have been working with children within SEN for more than five years, were considered as this study's criteria. Teachers were also asked about the children's problems in their classes. Their working experience differed: one teacher had 40 years of teaching experience, 4 had 32 years of experience, 3 had 15 years of experience, 1 teacher had 6 years of teaching experience and 3 teachers had 7 years of experience. Two teachers from the rural school had completed master's degrees in inclusive education, while other teachers had finished their Bachelor level at the Faculty of Education. However, they had attended additional Education Training for children with SEN.

Regarding the number of children with special needs (SN) in rural school classes was: 6, 5 and 4 students per class. While in the city schools there were one or two children with SN in each classroom. Children in these classes had different special needs: Autism, physical disorders, Down syndrome, language and communication difficulties, visual impairment and mental retardation.

There were two teachers in each class of this study. In addition, the rural classes provided additional teaching support to each child with SEN, i.e. a teacher assistant. In Austria, a

practice with two teachers working together in an inclusive class is currently favored (Beihammer & Hascher, 2015).

Teachers were asked the following questions:

1. What is the importance of game-based learning in teaching children with special needs?
2. How do teachers help children learn through play?
3. What is the interaction of children with special needs with other children while conducting game-based learning activities?
4. How do teachers adapt the game to students' individual learning?

Based on the Punch & Oancea (2014) who pointed out that interviews are the most used data collection tool in qualitative research, in which this foundation study is positioned, this study's interviews were recorded, transcribed and then analyzed according to the principles of inductive thematic content analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The interviews were recorded with digital recorders and then analyzed. The interview time lasted 20-35 min. The data analysis process involved two stages: initially the collected transcripts were read twice to mark phrases from teachers' perceptions regarding the application of game-based learning for children with SN, and then these phrases were extracted and categorized into two levels: Teachers' practices in using game-based learning for children with SN, and the ratio on children's interaction while conducting game-based learning activities in inclusive classrooms.

Results

In this section the focus is on the interviewees' perceptions shown with examples and the following presents the data that emerged from the interviews with teachers. Each teacher is presented with the initials of their name and surname.

Analyzing the learning practices in inclusive classrooms in this study, show different examples of game-based learning activities that teachers integrate into the learning process for children with special needs and their interaction ratio with other students in such inclusive classrooms (see Table 1).

Table 1.*Teachers' perceptions in the use of learning through play and interaction between students*

	Learning through play	Children's interaction
Urban school teachers	- racing games,	
	- games for concentration,	- cooperation, communication,
	- games for learning to read, write and numbers,	- social, competitive, motivational
	- The label game	
	- games to explore something	
	- games for calculation,	
	- card games,	
Rural school teachers - which used to be a special school	- problem solving games	
	- memory games	- the relationship between social and cognitive development
	- competitive games,	
	- calculation games,	- motivation and learning engagement through play
	- role play,	
	- video games,	- development of communicative skills and interaction
	- puzzles	
- games that enable the development of various skills, as well as social skills		
	- games for improving motor skills	

Based on the teachers' responses, and Table 1 above, it was found that teachers integrate different types of game-based learning activities in their teaching, due to special needs children and their differences. The teachers pointed out that when they started teaching in inclusive classes, initially they relied on Montessori pedagogy and emphasized the importance of using this material, emphasizing that game-based learning activities stimulate the imagination and/or encourage children with SN to work with them.

Another key point the data from this study identified, is that teachers plan individual learning games in class but in separate desks, or in a quiet environment with their classmates.

1. How can Teachers Help Children Learn and Develop through Play

The idea that "children learn through play" has directed early childhood teachers for decades as pointed by Biddle, Nevarez, Henderson & Kerrick (2014). In general, many of the teachers described that most of play activities they use with SN children are individual activities: they play, read, write with different Montessori material. Nonetheless, they also emphasized that they integrate SN children into various all class play-learning activities engaging five senses: seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and enjoying.

Initially, teachers identify which games are appropriate and necessary for each child that depend on the stages of child development. One child can read a sentence, while another one can read only one letter or two. Appropriately, there are so many simple materials that allow children to read according to their needs. That is why every teacher in inclusive classroom needs to apply activities with different materials, to identify what is beneficial for one and what for the other. As teacher M.A claims: *"This is our job. To understand each child and to adapt what each child needs, wants and lacks"*.

To give an illustration, an activity that was observed in the classroom included a play where children were asked to match the illustrated photo with the corresponding card. For example, as teacher MA pointed out: *"I take a tongue drawing photo and I ask the children to find out which photo corresponds with it? They choose the picture with the food in the container. Or, for the picture with an ear, they choose the picture where the bell is drawn; For the picture with the cup of coffee, they choose the picture with tongue. Or, they match the city view picture with the picture where is an eye drawn, and so on."* Moreover, such activities are repeated up to 3-4 months depending on the child's needs.

Another example explained by M.S: "We ask the children with disabilities to take a string (not thin one) and place two white and one black beads in it. This activity is guided by another child who starts to put the beads in the string

while the child with SN will follow his classmate's movements".

As evidence, when learning to count, they use wooden forms with different numbers. An example of learning to count up to number 6, teacher A.T revealed *"We get a wooden box which has a hole in the middle and inside the box is a color separation (red and blue). Children take 6 balls which they put in the hole. When they fall into it, they separate: some on the red side and some on the other side (the blue one) and the children count how many balls are on one side and how many are on the other. Then the children collect them and repeat this activity several times"*.

Teachers prefer to use different materials when explaining something. One such example is the label game, when they learn a word (eg. ball). The child must read it from the label, but definitely must have in hand the model or object that is related to the word. Or as the teachers said, *"If they do not possess the object, they should definitely have a photo of it, as the children with SN require relation of physical approach (doing something) and emotional approach (feeling it)"*.

Additionally, our observations in the classroom noticed many clay dough activities. The children form figures from the clay dough according to the card they have. This activity helps them improve hand and finger movements. The teachers explained that the goal is to enable the children to understand what they need to learn. When children begin learning mathematics (addition) they need to be engaged not only in seeing the numbers, but also to understand the result e.g. As S.U. explained *"We take 2 eggs and put them in the egg box, and ask them to put two more. They take two more in their hands and put them next to the other two eggs in the egg box. They say "Oh I did something", and that means a lot for the deficits they have"*. The teacher said that she often applies suitable problem solving games, as well as video games to these children.

Importantly, in Austrian schools, Montessori materials are used in play-based learning activities. This is specifically applied for basic learning, such as learning letters and numbers, and in other plays. Such games aim to help the children with SN develop executive functioning skills. As teacher T.H. explained: *"Different shapes and colors are used for good visual perceptual skills development. The children are asked to place the shapes and colors in appropriate empty boxes according to the shape, or color they have"*.

Another example of visual and motor skill development was explained by teacher M.V.: They take a carton hedgehog and the children have to place the clips all over this carton and make a hedgehog toy according to the picture.

Additionally, she mentioned the use of communication games, memory games and role-playing games that include all group include other children in the class.

2. The Relationship between Cognitive and Social Development of Children during Play-based Learning Activities

Teachers /participants of this study indicated that the issues of social development and cognitive development are not always the same. Some children are more agile cognitively but have many deficits in social terms. Therefore, the use of play-based learning activities in classroom allow them to improve those shortcomings, for the reason that many games are played together with other children, and almost all games require a partner to play with.

Regarding this issue, teacher S.U. said that the children initially should be asked if they want to play the specific game. When children play together they get better at socializing; because they have opportunities to compete, and compare. Asking a question, discussing about a problem and trying to solve a problem are all ways to engage the children.

Overall, based on the interviews responses, it is seen that when teachers work with the children it is more cognitive development. However, when children cooperate with other children, and they work better in groups; that is, social development. As A.S. said *"Last week, during the lesson I distributed a letter with a message to each child to do an activity. Nonetheless, I noticed that a girl with special needs was not doing the activity alone, but she was cooperating with a classmate. They were talking together"*. The teacher showed her satisfaction of seeing that her pupils cooperate and collaborate with each other.

It should be noted that based on the teachers' experiences, social interaction is more important for both, teachers and children. As teacher M.S.said: *"Sometimes when we ask the child to do something, he says "Ooo I do not want to do it!". But when one of his friends invites him to play together (for example puzzle), he says "Oooyes!". And they play together concentrating and talking to other friends and make great efforts to finish the game"*. For this reason, if the teacher is the only leader in class, it is not so motivating.

Also, The data of this study report that one child's interaction with other children is not the same. Teacher M.V. mentioned that children who have trouble understanding new things are quite sociable with other children: *"Sometimes children with a higher intelligence have a social problem. In my case, a child who has a reading problem is very sociable"*. Therefore, it depends

on the child and it is very personal. In most cases, children with SEN choose their partner to work with.

Another experience is shown by teacher A.E. regarding a child who could not speak, but later there were noticed speaking skills improvements. This was due to the child's interaction with other children. It is evident that the child's social skills have impacted the child's communicative skills. In addition to this, if other children offered to play with the child with SEN especially in the morning, this teacher considered this as a huge step forward.

While D.N. suggested encouragement games, and emphasized the importance of interaction and cognitive aspects of children's verbal interaction. As D.N. pointed out: *"In class we have children with language delays in speaking and understanding. When they play a game that includes speech development, they try to use the newly learnt words"*. According to the teacher, he noticed that the child with SEN remembers his classmates' words and sentences. Then this child repeats them, too.

Finally, all teachers of this study mentioned that children are free to choose their own games. Some of the games are easy and all children can be involved.

3. Adapting Play to Individual Learners

When children with disabilities enter the classroom, the teacher should be aware that these children might require more time, instruction, or help to be included in the classroom. It is important and helpful for the teacher to be well informed about the specific disability of a child and how to adapt play appropriately Biddle, Nevarez, Henderson & Kerrick (2014).

Based on the teachers' responses, the progress of the children's learning depends on their willingness to collaborate. There are times when teachers want to repeat the activities but realize that children cannot do it. Then the teachers have to think of 'Plan B', i.e. another way of teaching.

As teacher D.N. pointed out: "I never know how long it takes the children to understand what I am teaching, because sometimes the activity takes a longer time and there is little progress, but sometimes it works very well, and I am surprised how it went. Still, we have to go step by step".

An interesting experience was shown by teacher A.E. who had a child with communication disorder in her class. She reported that at the beginning, she could not understand what the child was saying, but within two months this child could say what he needed. He could count up to 10, or do some simple

math operations up to number 10. All this improvement was due to game-based learning activities. Similarly to Biddle, Nevarez, Henderson & Kerrick (2014), who point out that children with communication problems can become more skilled at using signs in their play, and they improve their ability to communicate in increasingly complex ways. Play enhances the developmental process by providing situations to practice symbols that result in language.

Another key factor to remember is a balance and finding a balance considered important for teachers. As teacher S.U. said: "If the child is involved in activities, then it improves the child's development because our goal is to include learning through play, if possible. In this case the game is fun, motivating and they just play and do not think they are learning". This teacher pays a lot of attention in balancing activities that refer to both mental and physical activities.

Significantly, this study also identified that first grade children's games (children included in SEN) are simple and include the whole group. Later, these children are separated into groups according to their needs. They continue learning music, physical education, drawing, but not other subjects. Because of the lessons that the children with SN cannot learn together with other children, these children are placed in another classroom but close to the other class and work individually. Sometimes they take part in a common classroom but they are given tasks according to their needs. More precisely, children with SN do not learn together with other children the whole time. They need time and dedication for their individual learning process. One of the multigrade teaching teachers mentioned that she kept her calendar of work regarding the child with SN as it was important to cooperate with the other person according to the needs of the child. As in her case regarding the child with language and communication difficulties, she always made an agreement with the speech therapist. The teacher is not the only person that can help this child.

Naturally, parents' cooperation i.e. when the child revises and does his/her homework and parents are interested in their child's progress is significant, as mentioned by the teachers. Parents' attention, psychologist, therapist and other influential people have important impact and facilitate each child with SN. Regarding the extra help, except the teachers in class, the study identified a rehabilitation center where the children with SN received medical treatments two hours per day located near the rural school, unlike the schools in urban areas which lacked such center.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study provided teachers' experiences working with children with SN, game-based learning activities in inclusive classrooms, as well as, the impact of interaction of children with SN with other children in class. Mostly, these children were with autism, physical disabilities, Down syndrome, language and communication difficulties, Visual impairment and mental retardation were identified in schools that were included in our study.

Generally, teachers who participated in this study pointed out that children with SN learn only if they play. Given different children's deficits, these children learn only if they have fun; and play is the only way to actively engage them in thinking about the game. While children learn, they have fun, they compete and it is not boring. Games are fantastic way to ensure students actively participate, act, contribute and gain knowledge and sense of achievement (NCSS & SDSC, 2015).

Different types of game-based learning activities for children with SN, as well as, games that involve whole group activities should be integrated and applied. There are different types of games such as: Lego, writing learning games, reading and counting, label games, activities that help fine motor skills development, social games, problem solving activities, video games, competitive games, communication games, concentration games, encouragement games, discovery and exploration games, memory games, calculation games, role play etc. Children who have difficulty with learning, memory, or problem solving can gain a great deal through the practice of play (Biddle, Nevarez, Henderson & Kerrick, 2014).

Teachers initially plan which game is suitable for each child with SN, in line with the child's development stage. Teachers need to decide which games could be appropriate to specific learning outcomes and, importantly, how they could use games to manifest specific learning outcomes (Allsop & Jessel, 2015). But more important is that they must use senses for touching, seeing, hearing, tasting and smelling, i.e. children with SN can do or learn something only when they play. Lessons should always be accompanied by an object, model, or in its absence they should be accompanied with pictures, as abstract things are very difficult to these children.

Regarding the teaching material that is used by these teachers, it is evident that they use Montessori materials suitable for game-based learning activities for the child's cognitive development. In most cases these activities for children with SEN are individual activities. The activities aim to practice writing, reading, and to develop the skills they need in order to improve

their deficits; but also they pay great attention to social relationships, as in many games the child can find a partner play with.

On close analysis and appraisal, we could see that at the beginning of the children's education, teachers develop games that are simple and very basic. Initially, formulating a better understanding of children's needs, professional knowledge regarding the stages of child's development, and attitudes toward the child, and skills that are needed to present various games are imperatives while working with children with SN. In these games all children are able to participate as they are easy, but very compelling. On the later stage they are divided depending on the child's special needs. That is, children with SN do not learn together with other children the whole time because they have to have time and dedication for their individual learning process. Teachers can help children learn through the process of play by planning and organizing learning areas (Shibley, 2007).

The study identified another important point that children with SN who attend the rural schools receive medical treatment for 2 hours according to their special needs in the rehabilitation center located near the school. Students in Austria get extra help from visiting special education teachers. On the other hand, teachers pay a lot of attention to collaborative learning, explaining the situations when children with SEN interact in groups. In many cases these children refuse to take part in the activities given. They collaborate with friends, instead. This means that the teacher's teaching is not so motivating, but they need to meet their needs in other ways. Games as part of inclusion give opportunities to practice skills, exercise some socially appropriate behavior, and build positive peer relationships (Webster, 2019).

There are children who cannot sit still, however they need to develop motor skills, move and jump. Therefore teachers attach great importance to movement games, which are often applied in the classroom. This is in line with Lenakiks, et al (2018) who claim that a playful approach makes learning more accessible, inclusive and interesting for students. These findings suggest that teachers must learn about the importance and role of play in education, in child development and in inclusion. The teachers' challenges working with the children with SEN are evidenced when these children oppose taking part in class activities, or have difficulties in conducting the activity.

To conclude, many play-based learning activities are applied in various ways by the teachers in Upper Austria. Their aim was to teach and entertain the children. The schools where this study was conducted is equipped with the so-called laboratories with various tools,

shapes, figures and objects that show that learning through play is practical in the daily teaching work and teachers have many opportunities to design games according to the children's needs, and wishes. However, the most exemplary school is considered the school in the rural area which has a richer infrastructure for children with disabilities compared to other schools in urban areas, due to the fact that this school used to be a special school.

The feasibility and effectiveness of this research has been proven chiefly that it presents multi-play-based learning capabilities implementation to children with SN. It is based on the teachers' responses regarding their teaching the children with SEN, classroom observations of the researcher, the learning environment and tools that are being used in such classes, as well the integration of these children into the society. Taking into account children's cognitive, motoric, and social development while being integrated into all inclusive classes, the schools in Upper Austria support these children to become equal society representatives. In addition, these factors that facilitate these children's development should be used as a role model and should be applied in every school widespread.

Authors' Notes

Author Contributions: This research was conducted by authors' cooperation and communication, respecting each others' suggestions and by mutual responsibility.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding: This research is funded by HERAS (Austrian Scholarship Program)

Ethical Approval: The permission from the representatives of Upper Austrian schools was granted prior to conducting this research.

Data Availability Statement: Additional data regarding this research can be provided upon the request.

References

- Allsop, Y., & Jessel, J. (2015). Teachers Experience and Reflections on Game-Based Learning in the Primary Classroom: Views from England and Italy. *International Journal of Game-Based Learning*, 5(1), 1-17. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281924177_Teachers'_experience_and_reflections_on_game-based_learning_in_the_primary_classroom_Views_from_England_and_Italy
- Hyry-Beihammer, E. K., & Hascher, T. (2015). Multi-grade teaching practices in Austrian and Finnish primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 74, 104-113. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0883035515000749>
- Biddle, K.A.G., & Nevarez, A.G., & Henderson, W.J.R., & Kerrick, A.V. (2014). Early Childhood Education. *Becoming a Professional. Play and the Learning Environment*. SAGE: London
- Debenham, L. (2020). Learning Disabilities and the Montessori Method. <http://www.aboutlearningdisabilities.co.uk/learning-disabilities-montessori-method.html>
- Dominika, S.H. (2019). Ideas for Non-Competitive Games for Special Needs Children in the Inclusive Classroom. Inclusion Strategies for Mainstreamed Classrooms. *Bright Hub Education*. <https://www.brighthubeducation.com/special-ed-inclusion-strategies/72725-ideas-for-non-competitive-games-for-special-needs-children-inclusive-classroom/>
- European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, (2019). <https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/austria/systems-of-support-and-specialist-provision>
- Federal Ministry Education, Science and Research, (2018). Inclusion Concrete in Austria. *Institute of International Cooperation and Study Programmes*, ISBN: 978-3-9504316-5-0, 63-68.
- Gee, J.P. (2007). Good video games and good learning: Collected essays on video games, learning and literacy.
- Germanotta, L. (2017). How can Game Based Learning re-engage students with high behavioural issues in the primary English classroom? *Game-Based Learning Compendium* <https://thinkspace.csu.edu.au/gblcompendium/part-1-motivation/how-can-game-based-learning-re-engage-students-with-high-behavioural-issues-in-the-primary-english-classroom/>
- Kvale, S. (2007). Doing interviews. *Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage*.
- Lee, S.H., Odom, S.L., & Loftin, R. (2007). Social engagement with peers and stereotypic behavior of children with autism. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 9(2), 67-79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10983007070090020401>
- Felekidou, K., Howard, J., & Lenakakis, A. (2018). Play and inclusive education: greek teachers' attitudes. *European Journal of Special Education Research*, 3(3), 129-162. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325263190_Play_and_inclusive_education
- NCSS & SDSC. (2015). Let's play together! Let's play together! A fun and simple guide to conduct inclusive games for all, 3-28.

<https://sdsc.org.sg/downloads/lets-play-together.pdf>

Meinke, H. (2019). Exploring the Pros and Cons of Montessori Education. *Rasmussen University*.

https://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/education/blog/pros_cons_montessori_education/

Punch, K.J., & Oancea, A. (2014). *Introduction to Research Methods in Education 2nd Edition*. London: Sage.

Reese, H.W. (2011). The learning-by-doing principle. *Behavioral Development Bulletin*, 17(1), 1-19.

<http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/bdb/17/1/1.pdf>

Salen, K. (2008). E Is for Everyone: The Case for Inclusive Game Design. In *The ecology of games: Connecting youth, games, and learning. The Ecology of Games*, 67-88.

<http://www.issuelab.org/resources/841/841.pdf>

Shipley, D. (2007). *Empowering children: Play-based curriculum for lifelong learning*. Nelson, Canada: Delmar.