

Actions for success in schools in Europe



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Executive summary

The scene

In today's knowledge society, education can serve as a powerful resource to achieve the Lisbon objective of Europe becoming "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion."¹ However, at present, most school systems are failing as shown by the fact that many European citizens, and their communities, are being excluded, both educationally and socially, from the benefits that should be available to all. This situation can be reversed, and recent studies are providing key elements for schools to inform this process.

Taking that research as its starting point, and creating new knowledge over the course of five years of rigorous work, the research project *INCLUD-ED Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education (2006-2011)*² aims to identify successful actions that contribute to school success and social inclusion at the level of compulsory education (pre-primary, primary, and secondary education, including vocational and special education programmes within regular schools) with a particular focus on five vulnerable groups (women, youth, migrants, cultural groups and people with disabilities).

Methodology

All research work in INCLUD-ED is being conducted in close collaboration with a diverse group of stakeholders and policy makers. This procedure relates to the critical communicative research methodology used in the INCLUD-ED project, grounded in a continuous dialogue between researchers and social agents. Social agents participate in the research contributing their interpretations, reflections and theories based on their own experiences. These interpretations are contrasted with the theories and findings that the researchers provide. This approach has been used in previous studies and it has led to important social transformations. For example, conclusions of prior studies have been approved by the European Parliament and other Member State parliaments.

This publication contains the main findings of the first year of work for the INCLUD-ED project. That work included:

- a) a review of research on successful educational actions that reduce school failure and social exclusion;
- b) an analysis of twenty-six EU Member States³ educational systems and recent reforms;
- c) an examination of the data on educational outcomes provided by international datasets (e.g. PISA, TIMMS, and PIRLS).

This publication's main purpose is to provide the results of those scientific analyses to policy makers, education professionals, families and other stakeholders with the ultimate aim of encouraging the implementation of the actions that best contribute to school success for all and to social cohesion.

The literature review and the analysis of educational systems and outcomes led to the identification of two main components of successful educational actions. The first component is related to the way in which students are grouped and the use of human resources. The second component refers to the education and participation of families and communities in schools.

Ways of grouping students and school success

Segregation practices are one of the main exclusionary elements found in European educational systems that lead to social and educational exclusion. A clear example is **tracking**, in which students are separated into different schools depending on their ability (often involving a separation between academic and vocational tracks). Tracking greatly affects students' academic achievement and later employment opportunities. The earlier the tracking starts, the greater the inequalities between students on different tracks are. Therefore, tracking should be postponed, and early tracking (before age 13)

avoided. Mid-tracking, which occurs between ages 13 and 16, also contributes to inequalities in educational systems. By providing lower quality instruction to students in the lower tracks, educational systems increase the possibility of postponed exclusion and reduce future employment opportunities. Therefore, when school systems postpone tracking, they help reduce the inequalities between schools and between students, and promote lifelong inclusion. This is particularly important for the case of students from vulnerable groups with low socio-economic levels, who are overrepresented in the lower tracks.

Streaming⁴ is another common exclusionary practice in Europe. This practice takes on different forms across Europe and has arisen as the most common response to mixed classrooms. In the **mixture** modality of grouping, most classrooms only have one adult (teacher) who teaches a large group of students with diverse cultural backgrounds and abilities. In today's schools, teachers find it too hard to respond through mixture to the diversity among students. Streaming practices respond to such situation adapting the curriculum, creating ability groups, and often using additional human resources. Researchers have found a negative relationship between streaming and academic results; streaming does increase the disparity between students' performance and reduces learning opportunities for low-achieving students and students from vulnerable groups. There is more than one way of streaming in European educational systems. A classification of **four types of streaming** is provided in this publication: *organisation of classroom activities according to ability levels, remedial groups and support segregated from the regular classroom, exclusionary individualised curriculum, and exclusionary choice.*

Differently, **inclusion actions** overcome mixture and streaming, leading schools to improve their results both with regards to academic learning and living together. Unlike streaming, in inclusion all students are included in the same classroom and in the same heterogeneous groups; no one is segregated. However, despite research has shown that children in heterogeneous groups usually achieve better results than those in streamed groups, the different types of heterogeneous grouping have not been adequately defined and categorized so far. This has led to confusion both in international datasets and in the policies that arise from those research findings. This publication differentiates between two kinds of heterogeneous groups: those which lead to school success (inclusion), and those which lead to school failure (mixture).

Unlike mixture, in inclusion all students actively follow the learning process with the help of the teacher and other human and material resources; no child is left behind. The inclusion approach not only provides equal opportunity but is deeply oriented toward equality of results for all students. **Five main types of inclusion** have been found: *heterogeneous ability classrooms with reallocated resources, inclusive split classes, extending learning time, inclusive individualised curriculum, and inclusive choice.*

Family and community participation for raising achievement

The second set of successful educational actions identified in this publication relates to the participation of families and communities. **Family and community participation** in schools is another transformative strategy that enhances students' achievement because it improves coordination between the home and the school, and increases the resources available in the school. It is particularly beneficial for the academic achievement of minority students and students with disabilities. Besides, family and community involvement helps transform interactions in the school, promoting alternative understandings of gender roles; which favours the overcoming of inequalities in academic results and the achievement of more egalitarian relationships between girls and boys.

Previous theories and research had already demonstrated that the promotion of cultural and educational interactions between students and social agents, and more particularly with family members, enhance students' achievement. Later, some international surveys have translated this contribution into some indicators such as parents' academic degrees or the number of books at home. This reduction has led to the mistake of taking these indicators as the only ones, thus, dismissing other important ones like whether families are participating in any kind of educational provision or not. From this perspective, it has been argued that we should wait until there would be parents with upper academic degrees in order to have school success with their children. Nonetheless, the evidence presented in this publication moves us beyond that determinism. For instance, certain family education and community engagement programmes that promote educational and cultural interactions have led students whose families have only a few books at home or low academic degrees to obtain excellent results in their academic achievement.

Grounded on these evidences, educational policies that increase academic success of all children through the promotion of this kind of family education and community engagement have been developed. Along these lines, the INCLUD-ED project has identified **five types of family and community participation** in schools (*informative, consultative, decisive, evaluative and educative*) with different grades of influence in children's academic success. Besides, the direct participation of both family and community members in school activities, during the day or after school hours, is a particularly valuable resource to ensure that all children succeed in school and to strengthen social cohesion in Europe.

Recommendations

Based on the results presented in this publication in relation to ways of grouping students and family and community participation, and their connection to school success, the last section provides recommendations for successful actions in these areas. These recommendations are specifically aimed at three target groups: policymakers, teachers and principals, and families and communities.

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Project at a glance

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INCLUD-ED analyses educational strategies that contribute to overcome inequalities and promote social cohesion, and educational strategies that generate social exclusion, particularly focusing on vulnerable and marginalised groups. Europe needs to identify these strategies that will in turn be used by policy makers, education managers, teachers, students and families, and contribute to shape new policies to meet the Lisbon goals. To this end, INCLUD-ED will 1) Analyse the characteristics of the school systems and the educational reforms that are generating low rates of educational and social exclusion and those that are generating high rates; 2) Analyse components from educational practices that are decreasing the rates of school failure and those practices that are increasing them; 3) Study how educational exclusion affects diverse areas of society (i.e. employment,

housing, health, political participation) and what kind of educational provision contributes to overcome it; 4) Investigate how the educational exclusion affects diverse sectors of society, particularly the more vulnerable groups (i.e. women, youth, migrants, cultural groups and people with disabilities), and what kind of educational provision contributes to overcome their respective discrimination; 5) Analyse the mixed interventions between educational policy and other areas of social policies and identify which are making steps forward to overcome social exclusion and build social cohesion in Europe; and 6) Study communities involved in learning projects that have developed the integration of social and educational interventions that contribute to reduce inequalities and marginalisation, and to foster social inclusion and empowerment.

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Introduction

School success and social inclusion for all

Laura was an 8 year-old girl who did not know how to read and write. She lived in an excluded neighbourhood, and at the school, frequently, other girls and boys called her idiot and daughter of a bitch. They said that she had no father and that she was the child of a prostitute. When three years ago the school she attends initiated a project of transformation based on the involvement of the whole community, and started doing interactive groups (heterogeneous grouping in the classroom with community members), dialogic literary circles for children and adults, and opened the school library more hours, among other actions, things started to change. Laura found in the tutored library and in other spaces of the school a very intellectually stimulating and familiar climate. She felt very good and learned to read and write in six months. The cognitive and emotional gains made her much more self-confident in her peer group and in the school and community environments. There was no adaptation to Laura's socio-cultural context. Contrarily, it was a series of successful educational actions that transformed the context which allowed Laura to make an enormous advance in her learning and development, in the exercise of her rights as a child, and in her happiness.

Because Laura's experience of moving from exclusion to inclusion, from failure to success, must be available to every child in Europe, **this publication presents the educational actions that contribute to school success for all.** This publication is the result of the first year of INCLUD-ED. *Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education* project (2006-2011). The main findings that are presented here derive from an exhaustive analysis of research, educational reforms, and data from international surveys.

The European Commission defined *educational success* as a decrease in dropout rates, completion of upper secondary education and participation in tertiary education.¹ Educational success is related to *social inclusion*² and access to all areas of society, including employment, housing, health, politics, and the access to resources. It is crucial to develop high-quality educational systems that help guarantee full social inclusion for everyone, and contribute to the

development of a competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy. This would in turn contribute to achieve greater *social cohesion*, which “builds on the social ties established through economic, cultural, political and civil institutions, and organisations”.³

In front of that need, the main objective of the *INCLUD-ED* project is **to analyse educational strategies that contribute to social cohesion and educational strategies that lead to social exclusion, in the context of the European knowledge based society, providing key elements and action lines to improve educational and social policy.** *INCLUD-ED* is divided into six projects, each with its own objective contributing to the overall aim. This publication includes the results of Project 1 (European educational systems: connecting theories, reforms, and outcomes), which was conducted during the first year of *INCLUD-ED*.

The first project of *INCLUD-ED* implied the analysis of the academic literature on educational reforms, theories and policy developments in Europe, the study of the educational reforms of twenty-six Member States, and the secondary analysis of international datasets for an examination of the main educational outcomes in Europe. This publication gathers the results of all those analyses. It presents the actions which help increase educational opportunities and results, especially for students belonging to specific vulnerable groups. Five different social groups were targeted due to their special condition of being socially vulnerable.

Women: the *INCLUD-ED* project takes the inequalities affecting women in the central areas of the project (education, employment, health, housing, and political participation) into account through the intersectional dimension of inequality.

Youth: young people at risk, taking into consideration the different dimensions involved in social vulnerability, their age, the process of school failure, segregation in schools, and educational exclusion.

Migrants and cultural groups: successful actions identified by the research are oriented towards reducing the levels of poverty and social exclusion of migrants and cultural groups such as Roma people. In order to do so, the objective is to increase school success and social inclusion in different areas of society (employment, health, housing and political participation) for these vulnerable groups to the same level as the majority population.

People with disabilities: the *INCLUD-ED* project is focused on studying how it is possible to transform the educational experience of people with disabilities, improving their educational attainment and their educational process, in order to increase their opportunities for inclusion into the labour market and participation in other spheres of life, such as health, politics or housing.

Therefore it shows what helps all students (also those belonging to vulnerable groups) perform better in schools and be more fully

included into both school and society. Far from providing an exhaustive description of educational actions in the different European countries, or making a comparative analysis, **this publication presents the strategies that help identify exclusionary or inclusive processes in European educational systems, paying special attention to the strategies that lead to inclusion.**

This publication has **three main chapters**:

- The first one focuses on what we already knew about student grouping and academic success: tracking, streaming and heterogeneous groups. It also defines and classifies the types of streaming.
- Chapter two provides a new classification of three ways of student grouping: **mixture, streaming and inclusion**, and how resources are used in each of them. A classification of types of inclusion is also presented.
- Chapter three includes two main themes. The first one focuses on the relationship between student achievement and **the education of all social agents** (teachers, families, and other community members). The second theme deepens in the relationship between different **types of family and community participation** in schools and their respective influence on student achievement.

Generally, the publication pays **special attention to vulnerable groups**, in particular: **women, young people, migrants, cultural minorities, and people with disabilities**. They are more likely to be affected by exclusionary actions and, often, the educational provisions developed to address their disadvantages actually lead to their educational exclusion and failure at school. Finally, the recommendations chapter highlights key messages from scientific research that are crucial for policy makers and other social agents to engage in actions for the success of all students.



Chapter 1

What we already knew about student grouping and academic results

The *grouping of students*, whether or not students are separated according to their ability, and the *use of resources* are two central topics discussed in this chapter. Our review of the literature, the examination of recent European educational reforms, and an analysis of existing international datasets have all pointed to these two aspects as crucial points related to academic success.

The first two sections of this chapter focus on the distinction between two different forms of segregation: tracking, which involves separating students into different schools based on their ability (1.1.); and streaming, which involves separating students by ability within a given school (1.2.). Next, we provide a classification of different types of streaming (1.3). After reviewing the literature, we present the effects of educating students in heterogeneous groups (1.4).

1.1. Tracking. Different schools leading to unequal opportunities

In Europe, tracking¹ involves separating students into different schools. Specifically, the European Commission defines *early tracking* as “the segregation of children into separate schools based on ability before the age of 13. While this does not necessarily involve a division into academic/general and vocational tracks, in practice this tends to be the case”.² It is also pointed out that early tracking, between the ages of

ten and twelve is common in various school systems. Several studies have focused on analysing the effects not only of early tracking, but also of tracking before the age of 16. They have found that **tracking before the age of 16 generates inequalities** and that **the earlier the tracking starts, the greater these inequalities are**. This is because the students placed on the lower tracks are provided with lower levels of education and limited options for retraining and reintegration into educational systems. In other words, the education that they do get often leads them into dead ends.³

Indeed, it has been since several decades ago that studies in the social sciences have shown that tracking produces inequalities.⁴ Today, international surveys provide data that support these earlier findings. These quantitative findings show that differences in performance between students become larger in those educational systems which implement tracking at an early age. An example was found through an analysis of the effects of tracking before the age of 16 carried out by a study⁵ which compared the *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS)⁶ test scores of 9-year-olds on reading literacy, and those of 15-year olds in the section on reading performance in the *Program for International Student Assessment* (PISA).⁷ In 9 out of 10 countries that track children under the age of 16-Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, and the Slovak Republic- the differences in performance scores between students at age 9 (when PIRLS takes place) became greater at age 15 (when the PISA assessment takes place). In the interval between these two surveys students in these countries are placed on different tracks.

The same study demonstrated that the opposite pattern occurs in those countries which provide a comprehensive education system until students reach the age of 16. Only in Latvia an increase in the inequalities between the two evaluations occurred. In the rest of the countries, inequalities decreased during that period. Thus, through this comparison, it was demonstrated that **tracking before the age of 16 is associated with increased inequality in student performance**.

The analysis conducted within the *INCLUD-ED* project revealed the need to complement the European Commission's definition of early tracking with the concepts of *mid-tracking* and *late tracking*. We define mid-tracking as the segregation of children into separate schools based on ability after age 13 and before age 16. Any kind of separation by abilities in secondary education between ages 16 and 18 will be referred to as *late tracking*.⁸

In addition, **early tracking has a clear impact on the educational attainment⁹ of students from disadvantaged backgrounds**. The European Commission¹⁰ stresses that **early tracking has an especially negative effect on children from families with low socio-economic status**. Various studies highlight the effects of tracking on these students before they are 16, pointing out that the earlier the tracking starts, the more the inequalities between students from different socio-economic backgrounds are.

It has been found¹¹ that while early tracking increases benefits for students who have highly educated parents, late tracking reduces the relative advantage of these children, and therefore facilitates the educational mobility of students from families with a low level of education. That is, late tracking makes children's educational achievement being less dependent on their parents' level of education. Sweden in the 1950s and Finland in the 1980s carried out educational reforms in which tracking was delayed until students were 16. The curriculum was also unified. All these actions led to an improvement in educational attainment in these countries.¹²

These contributions from social and educational science research in regard to the effects of tracking on inequalities have been subsequently corroborated by data from international assessments. PISA 2006,¹³ for example, provides evidence that higher inequalities between schools¹⁴ tend to occur in countries where students are grouped into separate schools by ability (tracking). It also indicates that tracking increases the inequalities between students from different socio-economic backgrounds. International data¹⁵ also shows that in countries with less variation between schools, a higher proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds are involved in higher education.

Two groups of students – cultural minorities and immigrant populations – can be particularly vulnerable to educational and social exclusion, since students in these groups usually experience practices that result in their segregation. Indeed, **a greater proportion of minority and low-income students has been found on lower tracks.**¹⁶ For example, Romani children are overrepresented in special education programmes¹⁷ in several central and eastern European countries.¹⁸ It has been demonstrated that students who spent their elementary years in segregated minority schools were less likely to be placed on a college-bound track,¹⁹ and experienced significantly higher dropout levels and poor preparation for higher education.²⁰

In Europe, a review²¹ of recent research in ten²² Western European countries on the educational and labour market outcomes of second-generation minorities found that some minorities are particularly disadvantaged in their education, and in their access to the labour market and occupational attainment. Along these lines, the European Commission's Green Paper entitled *Migration and mobility: Challenges and opportunities for the EU education system*²³ stresses that **at the secondary education level, immigrant pupils are over-represented in vocationally oriented schools that typically do not lead to higher education.** Recent data collected in international surveys support these findings. For example, Eurostat data show that the 2005 rate of school leavers was 30.1% for non-native students and only 13% for native students.²⁴ PISA data corroborate this, indicating that students with an immigrant background score lower on reading, mathematics and science in comparison to native students.²⁵

Tracking can also affect certain students' later access to higher education. For example, some vocational training programmes²⁶ promote further training through specialisation, reducing the impact of

parental background. In these cases, vocational training programmes provide education to people with low education levels and facilitate their inclusion into the labour market and society more generally. However, such programmes can also have negative consequences when students' choice reduces their educational and social opportunities further.

Additionally, **tracking reinforces the influence of family background not only on educational attainment but also on labour market outcomes.**²⁷ Tracking influences the probability of being employed, unemployed or out of the workforce, as well as the earnings. In the low tracks, the educational level that students achieve is lower, and it has been evidenced that **the level of education is clearly connected to long-term opportunities to be included into the labour market.** The impact the educational level has on employment has been widely reported by economists of education.²⁸ For example, it is known that young people with lower levels of education (especially those who do not complete upper secondary education) have greater economic uncertainty in their working life and are likely to spend more time in unemployment than people with higher levels of education.²⁹ Compared to those with more education, those who have less are more vulnerable to labour market instability, and are more likely to have non-standard employment contracts.³⁰ On average, in the OECD countries the percentage of people aged between 25 and 29 who are unemployed and not in education is 2,5 times higher for those who have less than upper secondary education, compared to people with tertiary education. This percentage is almost twice as high as for people who have upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.³¹

Therefore, higher levels of education are connected to further employment opportunities. This, in turn, means that **placing students on educational tracks that will prevent them from further continuing their secondary studies can lead to being excluded from the workforce throughout life.** In addition, those young people with few qualifications are the ones who less often take part in training during their working lives and who have fewer opportunities to update their skills.³²

The effect of educational level on labour opportunities is reflected not only by employment rates but also by the quality of the employment obtained, shown, for example, on job stability, wages and earnings. There is a relationship between dropping out and having less access to work or earning low wages³³.

OECD data³⁴ supports these arguments. People with less than upper secondary education have substantially lower earnings than those with upper secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary and tertiary education. In 17 out of 25 countries³⁵, more than 65% of people with less than upper secondary education are at or below the median level of earnings. This percentage decreases as the level of education rises. On the other hand, in 19 out of 25 countries³⁶, more than 70% of those with tertiary education (especially type A³⁷ and advanced research

programmes) earn above the median level. The earning advantage of people who have gained more education as compared to those with less education can be observed within various age groups.³⁸

In addition, **tracking does not answer the needs of the labour market.** In the past, tracking met social and economic needs, providing, on the one hand, academically proficient students to pursue further education and careers and, on the other hand, non-academically oriented students who were prepared to enter the labour force. At that time, the economy had a need for both groups. However, that distinction no longer holds in today's knowledge societies.³⁹ Therefore, tracking does not prepare all students (mainly those in the lower tracks) to meet the long-term requirements of the labour market.

In conclusion, **tracking prevents many students from reaching their full educational potential and hinders later employability and mobility in the labour market.** However, as evidence shows, **when educational systems postpone tracking, they reduce the inequalities between students and schools.** In addition, avoiding mid-tracking can often help guarantee that educational systems provide individuals with the skills and tools that can help them find work, in the long term if they wish. Ending with mid-tracking can also help young people continue their education if they want. Such measures would give all students more opportunities to respond to the needs of the labour market throughout their adult lives; this is, these measures will facilitate *lifelong inclusion*, so that students will have more possibilities to fully enjoy potential social opportunities, overcoming inequalities and avoiding postponed exclusion.

Tracking deeply affects students' academic achievement and their subsequent employment opportunities. The earlier tracking starts, the greater the inequalities between students on different tracks are.

1.2. Streaming. Different teaching for diverse students: increasing inequalities within schools

As defined by the European Commission, streaming⁴⁰ consists of "tailoring the curriculum to different groups of children based on ability within one school".⁴¹

The effects of streaming on student achievement are identified in four areas: 1) student learning; 2) student expectations and self-esteem; 3) the peer effect; 4) mobility; and 5) the characteristics of students who are more affected by streaming. Table 1 summarises the main conclusions drawn from the literature review regarding the effects of streaming.

TABLE 1: Effects of Streaming

1. EFFECTS ON LEARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streaming does not increase, but may in fact reduce, the overall performance of all students in schools where it is implemented.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streaming increases the differences between students' performance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Either high achievers benefit or their attainment is unaffected by streaming.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streaming diminishes learning and achievement in low achievers by watering down the materials and content, and reducing the time spent on instructional activities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streaming contributes to a higher likelihood of students dropping out.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streaming diminishes students' learning opportunities and achievement by reducing the quality and pace of instruction.
2. EFFECTS ON EXPECTATIONS AND SELF-ESTEEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streaming lowers the expectations of lower ability groups.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streaming reduces students' academic self-esteem and feelings of competence.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streaming contributes to segregation, categorisation, stigmatisation and social stratification.
3. EFFECTS ON PEER EFFECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streaming diminishes students' learning opportunities and achievement by reducing the peer effect that high-ability students have on low-ability students.
4. EFFECTS ON MOBILITY BETWEEN STREAMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streaming reduces the possibilities of upward mobility between streams and decreases satisfaction with the stream placement.
5. WHO IS THE MOST EFFECTED?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of vulnerable groups are more likely to be assigned to low-achieving groups.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Segregation of children with disabilities does not improve their learning, but learning is reduced in segregated groups.

Source: INCLUD-ED

In what follows, these main findings are described.

1) Effects on learning: Streaming damages low-achieving students because students in low ability groups are provided poorer learning opportunities.⁴² The low ability groups tend to spend more time on non-instructional activities, have fewer opportunities to choose reading materials, and are less often encouraged to think critically.⁴³ In general, students in low-ability groups are exposed to substantially less material, are given lower quality instruction, and are expected to achieve a lower level of basic skills compared to students in middle- or high-ability groups.⁴⁴ Also, the pace of instruction is slower in these streams.

The fact that in the lower streams there is an impoverished learning environment and poor quality of interaction deeply affects the academic achievement of low achievers. Indeed, when streamed and non-streamed schools are compared, it is found that low achievers in the streamed schools are exposed to less and lower levels of academic material compared to students with an equivalent level of achievement placed in non-streamed schools. In the latter schools, the presence of low achievers in heterogeneous classes does not cause teachers to slow down the curriculum. Instead, this appears to allow low achievers to benefit from the same richer and more quickly-paced curriculum offered to the upper stream. Therefore, the stream in which a given student is placed makes a great difference to their performance, compared to the school they attend. However, students and families have little influence on the decision about the stream they or their children are assigned to.

In addition, it has been found that whereas teachers overestimate the abilities of students in the top streams, and are very demanding of those students, teachers underestimate the capability of students in the low streams. Moreover, working-class students are more likely to be placed in lower streams than middle-class students. Finally, the schools in which the differences between students are smaller are those in which streaming is delayed.

Therefore, curriculum differentiation has distinct effects for high- and low-achieving students.⁴⁵ While high-achieving students (assigned to the upper streams) tend to benefit from a system involving streaming, low-achieving students (assigned to the lower streams) achieve better results in some heterogeneous classes, as will be later explained.

Overall, streaming practices do not accelerate learning for at-risk students, but slow it down, perpetuating the inequalities between students placed in different streams.

2) Effects on students' self-esteem and on teachers' expectations: Lower academic self-esteem, feelings of inferiority, shame, anger, and having an external locus of control are commonly expressed in students assigned to the lower streams as compared to their counterparts in mixed-ability classes.⁴⁶

Students do not like to be in the lowest stream. Contrarily, they prefer to be in the highest ability group because it is connected to status and feelings of superiority.⁴⁷ In addition, those in the highest group are more satisfied with their classroom activities in contrast with those in the lowest group who seem to have the most negative attitudes.

Besides, the majority of students are aware of the grouping structures in their school and of their position within the different streams.⁴⁸ Students mainly accept the rationale behind the way they are grouped but ability grouping makes the students being more aware of their differences, legitimates distinct treatment for students, and facilitates the establishment of their place in the social hierarchy. Ability grouping has also been found to be related to teasing and stigmatisation.

Streaming also influences teachers' expectations,⁴⁹ which can affect teachers' own attitudes and behaviour towards particular students, affecting their learning and achievement. In this regard, the teaching in high streams tends to be faster and more challenging, while that for low streams tends to be slower and less demanding. More structured work, more repetition and fewer opportunities for discussion are also found in the high streams.

3) Impact on the peer effect: Streaming diminishes low and average-ability students' opportunities from benefiting of the peer effect which results from interacting with high-ability students. In other words, because of the separation by abilities, students of low and average ability are prevented from experiencing the positive impact that high-ability students may have on their achievement.⁵⁰

4) Effects on mobility between streams: While there can be considerable mobility between ability groups,⁵¹ there are some characteristics of students that are linked to the probability of moving to a higher or a lower stream. A change of stream and dropping out have been found to be associated with being female and older, and having low income. For students who are already at a greater risk, these factors increase the chances of moving into lower streams or dropping out.

It is also important to consider here the students' dissatisfaction with their stream placement and the opportunities for mobility.⁵² Research indicates that a substantial proportion of students say that they would like to change their stream. For example, one study showed that in mathematics, which had the highest level of ability grouping, 38% of students were unhappy with their placement. In most cases, the students said they would like to move upward, mainly because they were currently being given an inappropriate level of work, which students perceived as too easy (sometimes as too difficult). This issue could be resolved if students could move freely between ability groups. However, schools rarely help students to do so.

5) Who is the most affected? Regarding the social characteristics of students,⁵³ ethnicity, students' prior achievement, and socioeconomic background are positively associated with the implementation of

streaming in high schools.⁵⁴ Ability grouping creates low ability classes that contain a disproportionate number of students from cultural and ethnic minorities and students from working-class and low socioeconomic backgrounds.⁵⁵ For the case of cultural minorities, the effects of ability grouping on learning opportunities are especially damaging.

In conclusion, **some groups of students are more likely to be affected by streaming practices than others.** Those groups are immigrants, cultural minorities and students with disabilities. Streaming practices have been formally intended – or at least justified – to address these students’ disadvantages. However, the effectiveness of streaming in doing so is quite open to question. Indeed, the negative effects of streaming are accentuated among these students, in terms of both school success and social inclusion. **Streaming blocks the development of positive relationships across ethnic groups, and affects the opportunities to develop interethnic friendships.** Without such relationships it is hard to achieve interracial understanding and tolerance, and to address racist perceptions.⁵⁶

By contrast, there are other programmes that have specifically focused on immigrant students to help them integrate into schools and society.⁵⁷ Immigrant students and those from cultural and ethnic minorities need to learn the official language quickly so they can do as well in school as native students, and become fully integrated. Therefore, educational support can be provided for immigrant children who are not proficient in the language of the host country, so they are not at disadvantage in comparison to native children.⁵⁸

However, some programmes that aim to help these students overcome their academic disadvantage, or to maintain their culture and language, can lead to more segregation or block these students’ integration into the mainstream educational system.⁵⁹ Our review of educational systems demonstrates that, even unintentionally, not only ability grouping, but also other streaming measures, such as remedial groups or segregated support outside the regular classroom, are applied to minority students. Nonetheless, these practices could be re-oriented so that they avoid segregation and respond to minority students’ needs while ensuring that these students learn as much as students from mainstream groups.

Overall, **streaming does not improve the academic results of low-achievers.** It leads to poorer results for specific vulnerable groups of students, including immigrants, members of cultural minorities, and students with disabilities. Moreover, **streaming makes it harder to achieve equity and democracy in educational practice,** as those terms mean not only the right to be educated in a non-segregated environment, but also the right to achieve equity in learning opportunities in order to be socially included in the future. Therefore, **reducing streaming may increase the opportunities for all students to be included in society.**

Summary:

Streaming does not improve, or even worsens, the **overall performance** of low-achievers. Streaming also **increases the differences between students'** performance: it reduces the performance of low-achieving students, while high-achievers either benefit from streaming or their attainment is unaffected. **Vulnerable groups are particularly affected by streaming**, both with regards to learning opportunities and inter-group relations.

1.3. Types of Streaming in Europe

Four types of Streaming have been defined in order to facilitate a more accurate analysis of the use of these actions, as well as to better understand their impact on student's academic achievement. The following table presents the four types of streaming and their description:

TABLE 2: Types of Streaming

TYPES OF STREAMING	DESCRIPTION
<p>1. Organisation of classroom activities according to ability levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching should be adapted to the different needs and paces of students. ▪ Higher and lower performing students are grouped separately within the same classroom or in different ones. ▪ Ability groups are usually implemented to teach instrumental subjects. They are most often used in secondary education and they usually precede further tracking. ▪ This grouping can have a negative impact on students' educational success and social inclusion. ▪ They are often based on the individual teachers' or schools' decisions. ▪ Members of vulnerable groups are often assigned to low-achieving groups.
<p>2. Remedial groups and support segregated from the regular classroom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Created for children with particular learning needs or those at risk of social exclusion. ▪ Students are segregated from the regular classroom during school hours to give them additional support. ▪ This action is most often used for students in special education, along with immigrant students, members of cultural minority groups, and those who do not master the language of instruction. ▪ Ends up labelling students and reducing instruction.
<p>3. Exclusionary individualised curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The official curriculum is adapted to the level of competence of a particular student (or group of students), involving lowering its level. ▪ This approach is often used for specific groups of students: those assigned to special education, immigrants, and language learners.
<p>4. Exclusionary choice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Choosing a subject or a group of subjects leads to unequal academic and social opportunities for the future. ▪ When this happens, the choice of subjects or "streams" is often strongly associated with the social and economic status of the family and the teacher's expectations.

Source: INCLUD-ED

1.4. Heterogeneous Groups. Effects of educating diverse students together

Research has identified a series of effects related to heterogeneous groups that allow for dialogue, interaction, and cooperation. Table 2 shows a summary of those effects, differentiating between effects on achievement and other effects. In chapter 2 we will clarify which heterogeneous groups lead to these effects and which do not.

TABLE 3: Effects of heterogeneous groups

1. EFFECTS ON ACHIEVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperative and dialogic learning, potential ways to organize heterogeneous classrooms, have a positive impact on learning achievement, for both high and low achievers.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low achievers benefit from the pace of instruction of high-ability groups.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the classroom and the resources are appropriately organised, students with disabilities do better academically and develop a better self-concept in the regular classroom than in segregated rooms.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inclusion of students with disabilities has no negative effects on their peers' performance, and provides new learning opportunities for all.
2. OTHER EFFECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer interactions facilitate mutual respect, solidarity, acceptance of diversity (in terms of disability, culture, gender and attainment level) and collaboration.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperative and dialogic learning promote better behaviour, cooperativeness and altruism.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In heterogeneous groups, students with disabilities have more opportunities to interact, receive more support, develop better social skills and relationships, and are better prepared to be independent in the future.

Source: INCLUD-ED

1) The effects of heterogeneous grouping on achievement: Cooperative and dialogic learning⁶⁰ improve academic achievement and coexistence in heterogeneous classrooms. In cooperative learning, students work in heterogeneous learning groups, maintaining both group goals and individual accountability. This practice also has positive effects on achievement and self-esteem.⁶¹

Despite sometimes teachers or parents worry that cooperation between students with different levels of attainment will hold high achievers back, there is no support from research for such claim. Indeed, high achievers gain from cooperation (relative to high achievers in traditional classes) just as much as low and average achievers do.⁶²

Dialogic and cooperative learning also succeed in including students with disabilities in mixed groups to work with non-disabled peers. Cooperation and dialogue between disabled children and their non-disabled peers increases academic achievement and self-esteem for all students. Non-disabled students are less likely to reject their mainstream classmates, and there are significant improvements in relationships between mainstreamed academically disabled students and their non-disabled peers.

For slower learners, cooperative learning benefits are also superior to the ones obtained in competitive learning situations because in the latter is harder for students with a slower pace to compete successfully.⁶³ The cooperative and dialogic models are based on positive interdependence within a group of students.⁶⁴ They aim to organise the classroom so that students become a valuable resource. Thus, students who need help can rely on support and feedback from their peers. This structure helps to accommodate students with diverse abilities and produces more meaningful interactions between students as well as a sense of positive interdependence, which also contributes to better peer relations.

2) Other effects: Heterogeneous groups may increase students' self-esteem and help create positive peer relationships. This is especially important in classrooms with students from different backgrounds.

In that sense, a relationship has been found between students helping each other in heterogeneous groups and students feeling control over their own fate in school, and also with being cooperative and altruistic.⁶⁵ Moreover, when working dialogically and cooperatively students from families with low socioeconomic status and who were at greater risk of suffering social inequalities have better attendance and behaviour.

Diverse interactions also help students develop positive values and attitudes. In a study on the effects of collaborative interactions in relation to achieving more inclusive settings, it was found that those interactions not only promoted mathematical learning in small groups, but also mutual respect, solidarity and the acceptance of diversity.⁶⁶

Summary:

*In some **Heterogeneous classrooms** it is possible to achieve **positive results**, both for high and low achievers, and to **reduce differences** in attainment between students. In addition, **interaction, cooperation and dialogue between students** with different performance levels have a positive impact on inter-group relations, behaviour, and the development of social skills.*

Main contributions from Chapter 1

WHAT WE ALREADY KNEW ABOUT STUDENT GROUPING AND ACADEMIC RESULTS

- 🌐 Tracking consists on students being separated into different schools depending on their ability, which deeply affects their academic achievement and their subsequent employment opportunities. The earlier tracking starts, the greater the inequalities between students on different tracks are.
- 🌐 Streaming consists on adapting the curriculum to different groups of children based on their ability levels. This happens within the school and it is often implemented through ability grouping. Streaming does not improve, indeed can decrease, the performance of low achievers, and increases the differences between students' performance.
- 🌐 Four types of Streaming have been defined:
 - Organisation of classroom activities according to ability levels
 - Remedial groups and support segregated from the regular classroom
 - Exclusionary individualised curriculum
 - Exclusionary choice
- 🌐 Vulnerable groups are particularly affected by streaming, both with regards to learning opportunities and inter-group relationships.
- 🌐 In some heterogeneous classrooms, students with different levels of ability can increase their achievement. At the same time, interaction and cooperation among high and low achievers facilitates the development of social skills and can improve inter-group relations.

Chapter 2

How can we group students and use the available resources to achieve academic success for everyone? The classification of Mixture, Streaming and Inclusion

2.1 Heterogeneous groups which lead to failure, and heterogeneous groups which lead to success

In today's knowledge society, European school systems are facing new challenges. Therefore they need new approaches to help students achieve more and become more included, while using the available resources. Addressing this need, INCLUD-ED provides a new classification of three different types of student grouping: mixture, streaming, and inclusion. This is a key contribution in order to better understand how all students' needs are met through different kinds of classroom arrangements and the results associated with them. This classification also sheds light on the different results that heterogeneous groups can achieve, showing that not all heterogeneous groups are successful.

Mixture is the option of continuing a traditional classroom set-up, with students of the same age, but without addressing the increasing diversity of needs found among the student body. Traditional classrooms had, for example, one teacher working with 24 students who were very culturally homogenous. Today, many classrooms are maintaining that same setting but with students who are very diverse in their cultures and abilities. This frequently ends up with the teacher attending the students who do well and leaving the others behind until they become school leavers or drop out.

As a response to such traditional classrooms, some countries have developed different forms of **streaming**. For instance, in a regular classroom with 24 students, in some subjects, the teacher will work with the 17 "easier" students while another teacher works with the seven "difficult" ones, who are usually either immigrants, members of minority groups, or children from disadvantaged background. Another possibility within the streaming approach is to permanently group

students based on their ability in all subjects. If a school has two classrooms of 24 students of the same age, the 24 with higher abilities will be placed in one classroom and the other 24 will be placed in the other one.

Moving beyond mixture and streaming, an increasing number of schools are implementing **inclusion**. Instead of separating the 24 children by ability (the 17 “best” students with one teacher and the seven struggling students with another teacher), the two teachers can collaborate in the same classroom and group the 24 children into four heterogeneous groups in which students work collaboratively. Other adults, family members or other volunteers can participate in the classroom and provide extra support to the students. This is, for example, the structure of Interactive Groups, which research has found to be a very successful way of heterogeneous grouping.

Inclusion classrooms arrangements are succeeding, since they enhance instrumental learning (in all subjects) and also help students with learning values and in their emotional development. They also go beyond cooperative learning, restricted to students, and move towards **dialogic learning**¹, which engages family members and the whole community in the entire learning process, including the regular classroom activities.

FIGURE 4: Mixture, Streaming and Inclusion

	MIXTURE	STREAMING	INCLUSION	
Basis	Equal opportunity	Difference	Equality of results / Equality of differences	
Student Grouping	Heterogeneous	Homogeneous	Heterogeneous	
Human resources	1 teacher	More than 1 teacher	More than 1 teacher	
All together or separated?	Together	Separate	Together	Separate
	1) Mixed ability classrooms	1) Classroom activities are organised according to ability level. a. ability groups in different classrooms b. ability groups in the same classroom	1) Heterogeneous ability classrooms with reallocation of resources	2) Inclusive split classes with mixed-ability students
		2) Remedial groups and support are segregated from the regular classroom.		

Source: INCLUD-ED

Inclusionary actions are those that provide the necessary support to all students through maintaining a common learning environment and reorganising the existing resources. The importance on this latter aspect relies on the idea of a better use of existing resources instead of claiming for additional ones.

The scientific literature has identified different actions as supporting inclusion. One of these involves providing extra assistance for low achievers, using peer tutors, voluntary tutors or teachers. Another action is extending the learning time for low achievers and providing pre-teaching or remedial classes linked to the regular classroom work, to help students meet the requirements of the curriculum. Other strategies are putting students to work in heterogeneous groups and promoting interaction between students with different abilities.²

Besides, in order to narrow the achievement gap in non-streamed heterogeneous groups and to build equitable classrooms, teachers need to work towards equal status, promoting balanced interaction between students and creating small learning groups. To produce equal-status interactions in the classroom is necessary to encourage self-responsibility amongst students and ensure that they are engaged in their peers' learning.

Importantly, **non-segregated or heterogeneous groups can be implemented in different ways.** More specifically, **in INCLUD-ED two very different forms of heterogeneous groups have been identified and defined: mixture and inclusion.** Each form has different consequences for students. The first form, mixture, refers to traditional heterogeneous classrooms where all students are together with often one adult, the teacher. These groups constitute non-segregated settings, but in them students can experience low self-esteem about their competence and low academic performance because the teacher in charge cannot attend all of them. This has been specifically proven in relation to students with disabilities.³ Therefore, **in a non-segregated and heterogeneous classroom certain students can be in vulnerable positions if they do not have enough support.** The second form, inclusion, refers to actions **which involve two main characteristics: the education of students in heterogeneous groups and the reallocation of human resources in those groups. These resources are the already available ones in the school to attend diversity but, in inclusion, they are used in the regular classroom for the benefit of all students.**

The inclusion in heterogeneous classrooms of more human resources multiplies the interactions in the classrooms, which is in line with what contemporary learning theories indicate as the main tool for learning. Both streaming and mixture are based on other conceptions of learning that were developed during the industrial era. In those conceptions it was understood that, primarily, learning depends on the relationship between students and the classroom teacher. Therefore, actions based on those theories did not include other human resources in the classrooms, such as parents and community members. Differently, **today's conceptions of learning, such as that of dialogic learning emphasize the fact that students learn through interaction and dialogue with all the educational agents with whom they relate in the school and beyond.**⁴ These contemporary understandings of learning also take into account the role that teachers and professionals play in helping students learn, but they emphasize the importance of interactions with many other adults and peers for children's cognitive development.⁵ Actions based on the dialogic learning approach look for increasing the interactions with a wide diversity of agents around learning activities.

Heterogeneous classrooms which include reallocated human resources can engage a diverse range of professionals, volunteers, and families in the room supporting the students' learning. Interactions among all these educational agents and students benefit all students' learning (from literacy to mathematics) and also help students and families

from different cultures to live together. The diverse cultural backgrounds of the adults involved in the classrooms exposes students to new experiences and knowledge. This enriches the learning of all children, and has a positive impact on the identity of minority students, and on their academic expectations⁶.

The benefits of reallocated human resources in the classrooms become very clear in the case of students with disabilities. The addition of special education teachers in the regular classroom, providing extra instruction and support to students with disabilities⁷ and also supporting the regular class teacher are actions that have been proved to inform success.⁸

Inclusive actions also involve having all children taking part of the same learning activities. Although the ordinary curriculum cannot respond to the needs of some children, such as those with disabilities, these children can achieve the general learning objectives in different ways. For this to happen, it may be useful to tailor the curriculum so students with disabilities can access it more easily. However, to ensure inclusion, teachers should maintain a shared framework as much as possible. Three potential strategies to do this include flexible learning objectives (adapting specific objectives to some learners based on a shared curriculum), activity adaptation (modifying how objectives are achieved instead of modifying the objectives themselves), and multiple adaptations (a combination of both).⁹

An inclusive approach also means placing all support and resources in regular settings, and using those resources in the most effective manner, rather than creating special schools with those same resources and which may lead to segregation.¹⁰ Precisely, this is something that students with disabilities claim for: the same educational opportunities but with the necessary support to meet their needs. At the European Hearing¹¹ organised by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, young students with disabilities claimed that they wanted to have the opportunity to study at the university and not be separated from those without disabilities because, they said, "everyone in society needs to be aware of, understand and respect our rights" (p.1). For that inclusion to happen, they asked for personal assistants in the regular classrooms and access to adapted material, among other adaptations.

Also, including students with disabilities in the classroom does not have negative effects on their peers' performance. On the contrary, it provides students without disabilities with new learning opportunities, since teachers introduce in the regular classroom a wider range of teaching strategies and resources. Also, as a result of such inclusion, all students have the opportunity to experience the principles of justice and equal treatment and they all have the chance to take on new roles and responsibilities, and to develop positive attitudes by helping their peers with disabilities.¹²

Other specific benefits arise from heterogeneous groups for students with disabilities. Their self-concept, self-confidence and academic performance improve.¹³ Also, in inclusive classrooms, students with disabilities demonstrate higher levels of social interaction, receive more social support, develop better social skills and relationships, and prepare to be more independent in the future.¹⁴ On the contrary, when students with special educational needs are segregated, they miss the awareness and knowledge they can gain by being amongst non-disabled students, who can also learn about the situation of their peers with disabilities. Overall, there is an association¹⁵ between an ordinary placement (that is, not in special education) and better performance.

2.2 The confusion between Mixture and Inclusion in the surveys

Studies by the international academic community have produced a large amount of useful information on education and inclusion/exclusion. Years later, international surveys such as PIRLS, TIMSS and PISA have integrated some of this knowledge, and have supported with statistical evidence what had been already shown by research. For example, PIRLS 2001 and PIRLS 2006 ask teachers if they use same-ability groups (streaming), mixed-ability groups or they teach reading as a whole-class activity¹⁶. PISA 2006, PISA 2003, TIMSS 2003 and TIMSS 1999 included another type of question on this issue, and school principals were asked whether separate classes at the same level studied material at different levels of difficulty (on either the same or different topics), and if students were grouped by ability within the same classrooms or not¹⁷.

However, these **international surveys compare streaming with both mixture and inclusion as if these two options were the same**. For example, the PISA survey asks teachers whether they group students by ability into different groups or if they do so within the same classroom. When teachers answer affirmatively, it is concluded that they are using streaming. Teachers who use either mixture or inclusion actions would respond negatively to that question, and therefore mixture and inclusion are considered the same thing. Nonetheless, mixture and inclusion lead to very different educational situations and results. Thus, one of the main challenges in collecting data on inclusion involves clarifying whether heterogeneous grouping involves reallocated resources (inclusion) or not (mixture).

A differentiation between mixture and inclusion is therefore necessary, and it can also help in the comparison of those two options to streaming.

To deepen in the differentiation between mixture and inclusion and, in turn, of those two options from streaming, we turn into the discussion on **the role and use of resources** in schools and classrooms.

Three decades of intensive research have shown that variations in the resources devoted to schooling were not a primary factor in determining student performance. The availability of resources is important but it does not automatically improve educational attainment. **In other words, what is relevant is not how much is spent but how the money is spent.**¹⁸ International quantitative data has reiterated this, showing that countries with similar levels of investment per student have different educational results. Conversely, countries with similar scores in international evaluations spend very different amounts in education.¹⁹ Additionally, the comparison of student performance to the ratio of students to teaching staff in secondary education also shows that countries with a similar ratio have very different levels of student performance.²⁰ Overall, resources (measured as investment in education) can explain only about 19% of student performance.²¹ Therefore, if there is no systematic relationship between the amount of resources spent (e.g. class size or per-student spending) and the skills that students acquire, **schools will probably not improve their students' performance significantly only by means of increasing their expenditure; they must change how their expenditure is organized in the school.**²²

This indicates that in analysing the relationship between student performance and the students' grouping, it is important to consider not only placement based on ability, but also the way in which resources are used. In this regard, some streaming practices imply the use of extra resources (e.g. support teachers) to help low performing students, but those are allocated in ability groups or in segregated classrooms. Differently, certain **inclusionary actions include in the regular classroom and for all students the human resources that are used in segregated classrooms and only for low-achieving students.** Whereas the use of resources in streaming does not improve the achievement of all students, but indeed increases the differences in achievement between high and low achievers, the reallocation of resources in inclusion raises the achievement of all students.

Summary:

*There is a **need to differentiate** not only between Streaming and Heterogeneous groups, but also **between Mixture** (heterogeneous traditional classrooms) **and Inclusion** (heterogeneous groups with reallocation of resources).*

*The classification of mixture, streaming and inclusion implies the analysis of **how resources are best used**: either through Streaming (separating students by ability) or through Inclusion.*

*In **Inclusion, vulnerable groups** have more opportunities to learn and experience positive relationships.*

2.3 Types of Inclusion in Europe. A description of existing actions

INCLUD-ED has identified and defined **five types of inclusion** to facilitate a more accurate analysis of inclusion, as well as to better understand its impact on student's academic achievement. The first two types of inclusion refer to student grouping.

TABLE 5: Types of Inclusion

TYPES OF INCLUSION	DESCRIPTION
<p>1. Heterogeneous ability classrooms with reallocation of human resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consists of providing more support through reallocated resources in regular classrooms containing diverse students. Most often is the teaching staff who provides this support, although family and community members can help in the classroom as well. ▪ Interactive Groups have been found to be a very useful form of heterogeneous ability classrooms with reallocation of human resources. In Interactive Groups the heterogeneous classroom is organized into small and heterogeneous groups of students, each with an adult (teacher and/or volunteer) who promotes supportive interactions among students. The classroom teacher takes care of the management of the classroom and provides extra support when necessary. ▪ In most cases, the reallocated support is provided for specific groups of students, such as those who are considered to require special education, immigrant students, members of minority groups, and those with language-related difficulties. This support enables them to remain in the regular classroom.
<p>2. Inclusive split classes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Different teachers are in charge of different heterogeneous groups of students. An inclusive split classroom would involve, for instance, two heterogeneous groups of students containing 12 students each. ▪ This is often done for specific subjects (e.g. languages and mathematics), allows organizing the classroom differently, and reduces the student-teacher ratio.
<p>3. Extending the learning time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The provision of more learning time or extra academic activities is more common for students who live in socially disadvantaged areas or have a minority background. ▪ This can be translated, for example, into having a longer school day, students and families receiving help through family support or private lessons at school or at home, and offering educational activities during holiday periods and after regular school hours throughout the school year.

4. Inclusive individualised curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The inclusive individualised curriculum is not oriented towards reducing the learning that a student is to acquire. Instead, the teaching methods are adapted to facilitate the student's learning.
5. Inclusive choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ It is not based on students' abilities but on their preferences, and it does not lead to a dead end.▪ It does not reduce students' later educational and social opportunities, but equal opportunities are guaranteed after making this choice.

Source: INCLUD-ED

Main contributions from Chapter 2

GROUPING OF STUDENTS AND USE OF THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR ALL

 The differentiation between two ways of heterogeneous grouping: mixture (heterogeneous traditional classrooms) and inclusion (heterogeneous groups with reallocation of resources) has been provided. Each way has different effects on achievement. While mixture leads to school failure, inclusion leads to school success.

 The differentiation between mixture and inclusion implies the analysis of how resources are best used: either through streaming (using resources to separate students) or through inclusion (using resources to include all students).

 A new classification of three different ways of student grouping that lead to different results in academic achievement has been developed: mixture, streaming and inclusion.

 Five types of Inclusion have been identified in order to facilitate a more accurate analysis of these actions and their impact on student success:

- Heterogeneous ability classrooms with reallocation of human resources
- Inclusive split classes
- Extending the learning time
- Inclusive individualised curriculum
- Inclusive choice

 Through inclusion students from vulnerable groups can have more learning opportunities and results, and positive relationships.



Chapter 3

Education and the participation of social agents: Promoting academic success with the community

Student learning and performance are considerably influenced by the interactions students have with all the social agents involved in their education: teachers, families, community members and peers. In this chapter, first, we will look at the role played by education and participation of social agents in promoting school success. Numerous theories and studies have proven the major influence that educational and cultural interactions have on student performance.

Thus, research shows the importance of promoting these kinds of interactions between students and family members, and how family education programmes are already contributing to enhance school success for all children. The second section of the chapter presents a classification of five types of family and community participation in schools, and points out which of them can better contribute to increase students' achievement. Community participation in decision-making processes, in the evaluation of students and the school, and in learning activities are the three types of family and community participation that research is indicating that best guarantee school success for all.

3.1 The role of Family Education in overcoming social exclusion

Considered as key agents for social change, teachers have been the ones who have received most training. While the focus on these professionals might have contributed to improve teaching practice, families and community members have not participated in these educational provisions. International surveys are also mainly focused on teachers' training, not recognizing the importance of educating family and community members. **The extension of all the educational provision to all social agents (including family and community members) that interact with the students constitute a crucial and necessary step, if school and home are to be better aligned and more cultural and educational interactions with students are promoted at this setting.**

Since the 1970, social reproduction researchers¹ have been studying the relationship between student achievement and the educational level of family members. These analyses helped to explain how the social capital inherited by children from their families and their social context determine their academic performance. However, they ignored many other aspects that have also great influence and through which this relationship can be reversed. **By focusing only on the family educational level, social reproduction researchers have legitimated this reality and disregarded any possibility of transforming it.** Social reproduction analyses have rarely been translated into research efforts focused on strategies to overcome or change such situation.

This perspective has been also included in international surveys. Studies such as PIRLS 2006 and PISA 2006 collect data on the number of books children have at home or the number of hours families and children spend reading. Though these indicators may be useful to provide information about educational resources available in the households, they do not shed light on strategies for improving school performance. If we analyse the connection between parents' educational level and student performance only using data such as the number of books at home, we risk concluding that children's educational achievement will rise if they have more books at home. If we use data on families' educational level, the risk will be that no solution would be available until society would increase the levels of education of all families. As a consequence, **it is clear that other crucial aspects through which room for transformation do exist. Being one of them the idea that children's performance improves as they are exposed to more cultural and educational interactions with social agents, and particularly with family members.**

A possible indicator would be the number of courses family members engage in, and how this promotes these kinds of interactions and enhance students' achievement. Along these lines, PIRLS 2006 includes an item on family education. When tested in reading, students in the 4th year of primary education are asked "Are any of the following programs and services available at your school site for the children and families in your school?" The following are the possible answers: "Adult literacy programs for native language speakers, Adult literacy programs for non-native language speakers, and Education programs for parents (including programmes such as classes on child development and education on being a parent)".

Such questions, and especially the information associated with the first and second answers, refer to programmes to raise families' level of education. However, the PIRLS report does not provide data about the existing relationship between students' academic performance and their family's participation in these programmes.

The theory of social reproduction is partial. Scholars using this theory have made a significant contribution by analysing the socio-economic factors and educational systems and actions that reproduce exclusion. However, as many initiatives have shown, schools can also play a

central role in reversing the cycle of social reproduction. **Now it is up to researchers, politicians, administrators, teachers, families, and communities to go beyond those analyses by learning about other actions that enhance social inclusion.**

Contemporary social scientists offer many analyses that describe society as an interaction between systems and agents, pointing out that the latter can counteract society's tendency to reproduce the class structures that exclude too many students. For instance, schools are understood as places in which cultural responses to material conditions are played out.² It is from these responses, effective actions for social change can emerge. We have seen how democratic schools in the U.S.³ hold a significant potential to become places in which people can overcome social inequalities. Furthermore, it has been argued⁴ that the field of education needs to recognise the role of teachers as intellectuals, as catalysts for change, as well as the need for educators to dialogue with others and adopt civic courage in order to change unjust situations in schools.⁵ Subsequently, **both social actors and social structures reproduce existing social stratification though they can also overcome them.**

This dual perspective –agents and social structures- is also currently the most representative one in research on learning. In the 1960s, the symbolic thinking or information-processing approach to learning led educators to focus on what happens cognitively to students when they solve problems individually, and all its principles for instruction aimed to change individual cognitive structures. Since the 1980's this view of thinking and learning has been seen as misleading, and socio-cultural accounts of learning⁶ have acquired more significance. Contrary to the reproductionist theorists, psychologists from the socio-cultural tradition⁷ argue that by **acting on and transforming the socio-cultural context of learning it is possible to improve children's learning processes and their higher-order thinking abilities. The interactions these children have with all the people around them, including teachers, relatives, and peers are key for such socio-cultural transformation.** Specifically, socio-cultural psychology stresses that **children only reach higher levels of cognitive development when they interact with adults, not only with their teachers, and with more skilled peers.**

Intervention on the socio-cultural context of learning is essential in order to improve the internal psychological processes. Instead of focusing on students' cognitive structures, socio-cultural theories stress how important interactions are to learning. According to them, **educators should focus on designing learning environments that increase effective learning interactions,** being the role the community can play also a key factor in schools⁸.

If interactions with community members are key to learning, children's learning will benefit from investment in the education of all the adults with whom they interact. **Therefore, research should go beyond the already identified correlation between parental educational level and their children's performance by finding strategies that promote interactions between students and family members**

and consequently open up learning opportunities for students and all social agents. Such strategies will enrich students' socio-cultural learning environments and thus their academic performance. Other perspectives have already looked at the possibility to reverse this reality by promoting cultural and educational spaces for families, communities and students to interact.⁹

Education initiatives for mothers, for example, are important because they are the ones most involved in monitoring and providing a model for their children's education.¹⁰ Accordingly, actions such as dialogic literary gatherings,¹¹ in which family members read and discuss literary classics, contribute to creating new educational expectations that have a direct impact on the family learning environment. When non-academic families participate in these literacy activities, they create new reading practices, cultural roles and models for interaction¹² that influence their children's learning and thus their academic performance.

In addition, specific actions and programmes are based on the principle that family education has an impact on children's school performance, improving learning results for all students. Examples are the Learning Communities¹³ in Spain and the Lifelong Learning Centres¹⁴ in Malta. These programmes use the idea that **it is possible to overcome social inequalities by promoting education for family members showing that family environment can also be transformed.**

The Learning Communities project provides spaces where families – adults and children- can learn together. For instance, in tutored computer rooms and libraries, volunteers from the community including former students, teachers and other community members, work with families on a wide range of activities. They may offer workshops on how to use the internet or word processors, or help families find information on the internet that students need for their classes. Similarly, the tutored libraries offer shared reading, and instruction in language and literacy for immigrant families, amongst other activities. These spaces promote students' education and family members' education at the same time, they both learning together. These activities for families are important not only for the instrumental learning taking place in these intergenerational learning spaces, but also because it means a great deal to students, particularly minority and disadvantaged students, to share learning activities with their families in the school setting.

In Malta, Lifelong Learning Centres (LLLC) have been the catalyst for developing this kind of activities within primary schools and in collaboration with other local community organisations. The LLLCs offer non-formal learning to adults within the community. They also offer specific initiatives, such as programmes implemented by the Foundation for Educational Services¹⁵ which help to raise children's literacy levels by working with their parents. From the Maltese experience, it is found that very often family members' requests for education do not coincide with the kind of activities programmed for them. Family members are also interested in learning challenging

material, including literacy, second languages, foreign languages, information technology, and literary circles.¹⁶ They prefer this type of education because they see a relationship between receiving this education and being able to help their children learn.

Finally, **family education can also help immigrant and minority children make more progress in school.** In our analysis many examples were identified.¹⁷ For instance, in Italy, Cyprus and Ireland, for example, tuition in the language of instruction is offered to the parents and families of immigrant students, mostly within adult education programmes. Specifically, in Cyprus, in order to involve immigrant parents in their children's education, the Ministry of Education offers evening conversation classes in Greek or other foreign languages. In Italy, classes in Italian were offered for immigrant families with support from the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with local organisations. These programmes provide free language tuition to parents who have a foreign mother tongue. In other cases schools publish brochures in the families' native languages and interpreters are provided for parents to help them enrol their children and monitor their progress at school. These initiatives encourage the inclusion of families who would otherwise be excluded from schools.

Summary:

Student success is influenced by the interaction students have with all the social agents involved in their education; therefore not only teacher training is necessary, but also Family and community members education. Social reproduction theories have placed major emphasis on families' educational level to explain school failure, and from this standpoint no possibilities are left to reverse this reality. Beyond this partial analysis of reality, theories, research and ongoing actions are already demonstrating that there are other major factors which have an influence on students' achievement, like the actual participation of families and communities in educational provisions. This participation promotes cultural and educational interactions with students that enhance their success.

3.2 Five types of Family and Community Participation in schools and their impact on educational and social inclusion

The importance of community involvement in schools

Family and community involvement in schools enhances student achievement.¹⁸ Evidence suggests that when families become more involved in schools, children's literacy levels improve.¹⁹ Differently, when families are not deeply involved, a literacy performance gap arises between children depending on the level of education of their parents. When family involvement is high, this gap disappears.

Programmes in the U.S., including the School Development Program,²⁰ Accelerated Schools,²¹ and Success for All²² promote the participation of the family and the whole community in the school to enhance students' school success. Different ways and levels of community involvement have been found to be important in strengthening the home/school connection and in supporting students' learning.²³

Also, the benefits of involving family and community members in schools are even greater among members of minority cultures, as such involvement leads to better coordination between activities carried out at home and in school.

A clear case is the Roma people one. Research shows the positive impact of family participation on students' school success.²⁴ Programmes such as Education of Roma in Greece promote parental participation in schools in order "to strengthen the ties between the Roma and the school community as a whole".²⁵ The Step-by-Step programme, a project of the Open Society Institute which operates in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, provides training and support for teachers while involving parents in the classroom. As part of this programme, parents are involved at all levels of education: in the classroom as teachers' aides, working in parent-teacher associations, and in regular parent-teacher interaction. The programme has been functioning successfully with Romani communities.²⁶ In Finland, the Romano Missio's *Aina ammattiin asti* programme also involves the families of Romani children in order to ensure that they are integrated into the educational system.

Family participation in school activities is also a significant source of motivation and creates meaning for cultural minority groups, such as Romani students.²⁷ Parental involvement has also been found to improve school experiences for other minority groups such as the Muslim community in Belgium, where predominantly Muslim schools are highly stigmatised.²⁸ And in Denmark, the Role Models Project promotes parental involvement; parents from minority ethnic

backgrounds travel all over the country visiting schools, describing their experiences and explaining how they succeeded at school and in their careers. These descriptions give the children self-confidence and show them that it is possible to succeed in Danish society being a member of a minority ethnic group.²⁹

Including adults from different cultural backgrounds (family members and other adults as well as teachers) **in classrooms creates a role model for children who identify themselves with these adults.** By involving these social agents in classrooms and in various school activities society benefits as a whole, because these activities can help overcome stereotypes and prejudices about minority groups. Besides, these groups and their identities are then recognised in positive ways.

Accordingly, **democratic participation of family and community in decision-making processes can promote cultural recognition and better educational outcomes for children from cultural minorities.**

Family and community participation is essential because the curricula for instrumental subject areas seldom reflect the existing cultural plurality. The existence of an ethnocentric perspective within a school has serious consequences for students from cultural minorities. One prerequisite for students succeeding at school is the school's response to diversity. It should be taken into account that intercultural education "is not so much a matter of teaching something different, but more of teaching differently with the existing curricula".³⁰ For example, teachers in multicultural classrooms need to consider the different ways of solving mathematics problems in different cultures so they can avoid stigmatising minority students.³¹ In any case, to overcome inequalities in school achievement, the curriculum must recognise cultural differences in the instrumental dimensions of learning, and one way for this to happen is for families and community members to participate in decision-making processes.

By participating in decision-making and also in school learning activities, family members can help create culturally relevant pedagogy, including culturally sensitive curricula.³²

Community participation in schools also plays a significant role in helping overcome gender inequalities in education, especially by involving female relatives and other women from the community.

Gender differences on children's inclusion/exclusion in school and society are significant in many distinct ways. First, in recent years, and because the early feminist movements demanded the access of all girls and women to quality education, girls have obtained much better academic results, sometimes even better ones than their male classmates.³³ However, as international surveys show, when young women reach the labour market they are still at a disadvantage in comparison to men. For instance, the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 with less than upper secondary education and who are not in the workforce surpass the percentage found among young men. Young women with low levels of education are three times more likely not to

be in the workforce compared to young men with the same level of education.³⁴

Second, despite girls have obtained better results than boys, this has not happened in certain subjects yet. Some theorists connect this phenomenon to a hidden curriculum in schools which reproduces certain values and models³⁵ and leads both girls and boys to internalise the tendency to aspire to careers that have traditionally been considered to be feminine or masculine, respectively. These associations are also linked to the persistence of values related to the hegemonic model of masculinity, which support a particular understanding of gender in educational actions.³⁶

Third, parallel to girls' recent marked progress in education, there seems to be an overrepresentation of males amongst school dropouts.³⁷ This shift has also been described through the lens of studies on new masculinities. According to this perspective, the values of the hegemonic model of masculinity have an impact on academic results: a boy's choice to drop out of school is shaped by his sense of masculinity.³⁸ Other studies provide more detail on this phenomenon: students may see school success as a feminised experience, a perception that shapes the construction of male identity and thus influences boy's experiences at school.³⁹ In that context, expected male behaviour, such as inattention, hyperactivity, and disruptive behaviour, also leads to poor academic results for boys.⁴⁰ Also, research indicates that boys' reasons for leaving school before age 16 are more often related to discipline than to employment.⁴¹

Last, but not least, certain forms related to the hegemonic model of masculinity negatively affect school performance and can also influence gender relationships and lead to gender violence. In regard to this last aspect, gender violence in schools does exist and is a major issue that should not be dismissed.⁴²

Among other effects, ignoring gender violence in schools has a negative impact on students' learning processes.⁴³ Research studies have shown that adolescents often link attractiveness to violence⁴⁴, which is a characteristic of the hegemonic model of masculinity. Due to this, groups of adolescents often value "laddish" or disrespectful behaviour or engage in it in order to attract girls.⁴⁵ Research studies are exploring how to overcome this situation, and some are pointing to having teachers and other adults in the school, including young women, old women, women from different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, who in their interactions make violence non attractive and instead make attractive those models of masculinity which are not violent.⁴⁶

These studies are working on the language of ethics and the language of desire, and claim that the separation between the language of desire and the language of ethics perpetuates this relationship between attractiveness and the hegemonic model of masculinity. Thus, these studies point out that in order to overcome gender violence in schools the people who participate in the school should not talk about it using only the language of ethics, but also with the language of desire,

demonstrating through their behaviour and interactions that what is attractive is what is not violent.⁴⁷

Transforming the interactions in the school helps create more egalitarian relationships, alternative gender roles, overcoming inequalities and further improving academic results.⁴⁸ The importance of the participation of the whole community (students, teachers, administration, and family members) has been stressed by research, as community involvement increases opportunities to detect, prevent and intervene in violent relationships.⁴⁹ Along the same lines, the Dialogic Model for Conflict Prevention,⁵⁰ an intervention model for schools, involves the whole community in creating and implementing school regulations to help students address the various difficulties they encounter in school. This model incorporates the recent dialogic turn in feminism. Dialogic feminism emphasises the importance of integrating all women into spaces where they can participate in society. This means that not only “academic” women but also non-academic women (“the other women”)⁵¹ can get involved in schools: mothers, sisters, volunteers, cleaners, etc. This participation helps transform gender interactions in schools. Given the value of these processes, we need ways to encourage all women to become involved in educational spaces.⁵²

Finally, family participation in the school has been identified as playing an essential role in the education of children with disabilities.⁵³ In the case of these children, family participation has a decisive impact, ensuring that these students obtain the same results as other children. However, such participation entails some difficulties, like the tension between these children’s specific needs, as their families see them, and the need to provide efficient education for the majority of the students.⁵⁴ Teachers are usually the ones who make the decisions about these children’s education and they may not entirely understand the families’ culture and behaviour. These barriers can be overcome by involving families in making decisions related to their children’s education. For example, families can be involved in deciding placements are most suitable for their children.⁵⁵ This occurs in Finland, where moving a student into a special needs placement requires a consultation with their parents or other guardians; if a placement is made against their wishes, the parent or guardian can appeal.⁵⁶

Types of community participation

Starting from the importance of community involvement for students’ school success, INCLUD-ED has studied the various types of community participation and their influences on learning and achievement. Concretely, through the analysis of educational systems, INCLUD-ED researchers have defined five types of community participation according to level and area of involvement: Informative, Consultative, Decisive, Evaluative, and Educative. Table 6 shows this classification.

TABLE 6: Types of community participation

<p>1. INFORMATIVE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents are informed about the school activities, school functioning, and the decisions which have already been made. ▪ Parents do not take part in those school decisions. ▪ Parents’ meetings consist of informing families about these decisions.
<p>2. CONSULTATIVE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents have a limited impact on decision making. ▪ Participation is based on consultation with families. ▪ They participate through the school’s statutory bodies.
<p>3. DECISIVE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community members participate in decision-making processes by becoming representatives in decision-making bodies. ▪ Family and community members monitor the school’s accountability in relation to its educational results.
<p>4. EVALUATIVE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family and community members participate in students’ learning processes through helping evaluate children’s school progress. ▪ Family and community members participate in the general school evaluation.
<p>5. EDUCATIVE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family and community members participate in students’ learning activities, both during regular school hours and after school. ▪ Family and community members participate in educational programmes which respond to their needs.

Source: INCLUD-ED

1) Informative participation:

Information is transmitted from the school to the families, usually in meetings or in other school activities. Parents are required to attend one or more of these parent/teacher gatherings during the school year. In these meetings, parents can monitor the development and functioning of the school without having real decision-making powers. They are seen as clients or outsiders who are informed about the school’s main activities and decisions once the experts have made the decisions, but are not allowed to participate in them.

2) Consultative participation:

Parents take part in the school's statutory bodies. The majority of European educational systems have one or more central bodies which include families amongst other participants. However, family participation is limited to a consultative role and families rarely have the room to provide much input about students' learning issues. In addition, some researchers have pointed out that these participatory avenues are very often only accessed by parents with certain levels of education, not being really open to all families.

3) Decisive participation:

Community members participate in decision-making bodies or in new bodies created for the purpose of promoting this type of participation. In these bodies, families, community members, and teachers make key decisions together. EU member states vary in the areas of the school in which community members can make decisions. Various surveys provide data supporting these findings.⁵⁷ According to them, parents tend to make more decisions related to areas of instructional content and assessment practices and fewer related to school budgets or staff policy. PISA surveys also indicate that parental influence in decision making processes varies from one national context to another. However, in the OECD countries in general, parent groups seem to have little direct influence on the different areas of decision making.

When community members participate in decision-making, they can also monitor the school's actions and hold the school accountable for its educational results. This is important, since school autonomy in educational decisions must be accompanied by a system of accountability which ensures that the school's actions lead to good results for their students. According to the European Commission, accountability systems must be "designed in such a way that equality in the access, treatment and outcomes for students is measured and promoted".⁵⁸ Therefore, it is important that school management bodies consider and support the decisions made by the educational community, since they play a significant role in children's learning processes. **Family and community participation in decision-making and evaluation processes allows schools to ensure that high expectations and high-quality learning are at the heart of the school's mission.**

4) Evaluative participation:

Another way to involve families in the learning processes is to invite them to participate in evaluating students. Although this action is not widespread, different examples have been found in our analysis. In Cyprus, for example, Law 113(1)99 for Special Education recognises the right of parents to be present for their children's evaluations. In Estonia, parents are present for student evaluation processes at every school level.⁵⁹ This is a decisive area in which family participation makes it possible to exchange viewpoints about evaluation practices and students' progress. Family and community members participate also in the general school evaluation.

5) Educative participation:

Family and community members participate in educational activities in two different ways: in children's learning and in their own learning. On the one hand, they contribute to students' learning either in the classroom or in other educational spaces (such as the library or the computer room), during school hours or after school time. **When community members participate in the school collaborating in students' learning activities, schools gain in human resources to support student learning.** Such gain makes possible to develop and implement the kind of inclusion actions presented in chapter 2. For example, in some schools in Spain **family and community members enter the classroom in heterogeneous classes or groups. This is a successful action**, because having more adults in the classroom increases interactions and this can benefit the learning of all students. At the same time, these adults become positive role models in the students' social groups inside the school. Overall, family and community participation in school activities should be promoted because it improves educational and social inclusion and helps make school more meaningful for students.⁶⁰

On the other hand, educative participation also involves family education. Family and community members participate in educational programs which respond to their needs. Creating educational and cultural spaces where family and community members can actively learn reinforces particular interactions that have been showed to favour student's success.

Among the five types of family and community participation that have been identified (Informative, Consultative, Decisive, Evaluative, and Educative), research is indicating that **the types of family and community participation that best guarantee school success for all are the Decisive, Evaluative, and Educative.** In these types of participation families are involved in the school at a higher degree and have a greater influence on school decisions.

Summary:

Family and community involvement in schools enhance student achievement.

It contributes to a better coordination between the home and the school, especially in the case of **minority students**, and also helps improve the academic achievement of **children with disabilities**.

Family and community involvement also contributes to **transform the interactions** in the school, promotes **alternative gender roles** which help to overcome inequalities in **academic results** and enhances the achievement of more egalitarian **inter-gender relationships**.

Five types of family and community participation have been identified: informative, consultative, decisive, evaluative and educative. Decisive, Evaluative and Educative forms of participation are more likely to have a positive impact on students' learning.

Main contributions from Chapter 3

THE INVOLVEMENT OF SOCIAL AGENTS. ELEMENTS TO PROMOTE SOCIAL COHESION FROM EDUCATION

- 🌍 Family and community involvement in schools helps enhance student achievement. It improves the coordination between the home and the school, especially in the case of minority students, and helps improve the academic achievement of children with disabilities.
- 🌍 The interactions students have with all the social agents involved in their education influence their learning and performance. Consequently, not only teacher training is important, but also family education.
- 🌍 Family and community involvement also benefits the transformation of the interactions in the school, promoting alternative gender roles which facilitate the overcoming of inequalities in the academic results and more egalitarian inter-gender relations.
- 🌍 Five types of family and community participation have been classified and described: informative, consultative, decisive, evaluative, and educative. Those types implying a greater degree of participation (decisive, evaluative, and educative) are the types that are more likely to have a positive impact on students' learning and the ones that best guarantee school success for all.



Conclusions

This publication collects important findings in relation to ways of grouping students and family and community participation. In particular, INCLUD-ED researchers have identified which actions in each of those areas enhance school success for every student and which ones reproduce school failure. In what follows, the main conclusions of the analyses presented in this publication are presented.

Grouping of students and school success

- **Tracking generates inequalities within educational systems**, and the earlier it starts, the greater these inequalities are. The negative impact of tracking is much higher for students from disadvantaged social backgrounds. When those students are placed in the lower tracks, they receive lower quality education, which hinders subsequent access to higher education and reduces social opportunities in the long term. The inequalities between students and schools can be reduced by educational systems postponing tracking.
- **Streaming is a common practice of student grouping in Europe**. When doing streaming, schools group students by level of ability and develop different curricula depending on those levels. Streaming also implies the use of additional resources for purposes of separation of students. Empirical research has already shown that **streaming reduces low achievers' academic performance and increases inequalities in achievement between students**. To facilitate further analysis, a classification of four types of streaming was developed, along with the characteristics that define them. Those four identified types of streaming are: Organisation of classroom activities according to ability levels, Remedial groups and support segregated from the regular classroom, Exclusionary individualised curriculum, and Exclusionary choice.
- **Mixture** is the traditional classroom organisation, which keeps all students in the same heterogeneous classroom but the teacher in charge cannot attend all of them. Teachers using **mixture cannot adequately respond to a group of students whose needs are highly diverse, which leaves behind mostly minority and disadvantaged students. Streaming comes out as a response to this situation.**

- **Inclusion keeps all students in the heterogeneous classroom and reallocates existing human resources in the classroom in an effective manner.** Those human resources can be the same ones that were previously dedicated to streaming and, in addition, volunteers from the community. This allows supporting all students' needs. **Inclusion raises the achievement of all students, providing equal opportunities for success and social inclusion.**
- **The exclusion caused by streaming and mixture can be overcome through inclusion.**
- Research has identified **Interactive Groups as a very successful form of inclusion. In Interactive Groups classrooms are organized in small and** mixed-ability groups of students who collaborate through dialogic interactions to solve learning activities. There are adults in each small group. These adults are most of the time volunteers from the community. The classroom teacher is in charge of managing the classroom dynamics and provides extra support when necessary. **Interactive Groups improve academic achievement and solidarity among students.**
- **Five types of inclusion** have been classified and their characteristics defined. The types of inclusion are: **heterogeneous groups with reallocated resources, inclusive split classes, inclusive individualised curriculum, and inclusionary choice.**
- A new **classification of mixture, streaming, and inclusion** has been developed. This classification facilitates the analysis of the alternatives to streaming that can improve educational outcomes, **differentiating between heterogeneous groups that lead to school failure and heterogeneous groups that lead to school success.**
- **Students from vulnerable groups** (e.g., migrants, cultural minorities, and people with disabilities) **are at a higher risk of experiencing educational segregation,** such as tracking and streaming. However, the successful inclusive actions identified offer them more opportunities for academic achievement.
- Current studies and **surveys** are not able to clarify the different effects of streaming and inclusion because they **do not identify significant differences between the actions associated with mixture and inclusion.** This needs to be clarified because schools implementing heterogeneous grouping can achieve different results depending on how they allocate their resources. The evidence demonstrates that simply granting more resources does not necessarily lead to an improvement in students' academic achievement.

Family and community participation that best enhance students' achievement

- **The cultural and educational interactions students have with all social agents**, and more particularly with family members, **enhance their learning and achievement**.
- **Some international surveys have translated this idea into some indicators such as parents' academic degrees** or the number of books at home. This reduction has dismissed other important indicators, such as if families are participating in any kind of educational provision or not. **From this perspective, it can be understood that we should wait until parents from low socioeconomic status and low educational levels would have upper academic degrees in order for their children to have school success**. Nonetheless, **we have already moved beyond that determinism**. There are evidences that certain family education and community engagement programmes have led students whose families have low academic degrees to obtain excellent results in their academic achievement.
- **The participation of family and community members in family education programmes improves students' learning and achievement, particularly when families decide about those programs**.
- Despite family education improves students' learning and achievement, **much attention has been paid to teachers' education in comparison to family education programmes**.
- **When family and community members participate in education programmes and in the school organisation, they help overcome the inequalities, prejudices and stereotypes affecting vulnerable groups**. This participation also improves the coordination between home and school, which in turn facilitates the creation of school actions that better respond to the needs of the different students and communities.
- Five **types of family and community participation** have been differentiated: **Informative, Consultative, Decisive, Evaluative, and Educative**. **The Decisive, Evaluative, and Educative types**, which involve participation of families in decision making, students' and school evaluation and educational activities, **are the ones that research identifies as best guaranteeing school success**.
- Community participation also has an impact on gender related issues. **When all women**, this is, female teachers but also mothers, female relatives, students, and other women from the community with very diverse levels of education, **participate in schools, they help in making gender roles and interactions more egalitarian**.

- Further research is needed to understand how the most successful types of community participation take place in European schools and how schools can encourage such participation.



Recommendations

In the previous chapters, the main actions that contribute to school success in Europe were presented. Based on those findings, this last chapter provides recommendations to orient the actions of different agents involved in education: policy makers who work at the European, state, regional, and local levels, school principals and teachers, and family and community members.

All recommendations pretend to contribute to the ultimate aim of school success for all children and youth in Europe.

STUDENT GROUPING POLICIES FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

1. Tracking should be avoided, and when this is not possible, it should be postponed. Research has shown that tracking (the segregation of students in different schools depending on their abilities and levels of attainment) reproduces or even increases educational and social inequalities. Inequalities between students in different tracks can be reduced if tracking is postponed until the age of 16.

2. Being placed in a vocational track should not block later access to academic education. It is necessary to ensure that vocational tracks will prepare students in a way that gives them the opportunity of later entrance to academic education.

3. Inclusion actions should be promoted, especially for students from vulnerable groups in order to increase the school achievement of all students and improve inter-group relations in classrooms and schools. **There are different inclusion actions that have proved to be successful: heterogeneous groups with reallocated resources, inclusive split classes, extension of the learning time (during school time and after school time), inclusive individualised curriculums, and inclusive choice.** Research has found Interactive Groups to be a very successful form of heterogeneous groups with reallocated resources.

4. Streaming (the separation of students through ability grouping within schools) reproduces or lowers the achievement of low performing students. Streaming **should be avoided and substituted for inclusive ways of grouping students: heterogeneous classrooms with reallocated resources and/or inclusive split classes**, which raise the academic achievement of all students.

Classroom ability grouping in special needs units, language support units, compensatory groups, and other forms of streaming, reduces the achievement of both average students and low achievers and worsens intercultural relations. Streaming can be replaced for the heterogeneous grouping of students in which the same resources that were used for streaming are reallocated in the regular classroom. These groupings can also include volunteers from the community. One example is the Interactive Groups, which not only improve all students' learning but also inter-group relations.

5. Mixture, the way of organizing heterogeneous classrooms (where all students are together with the same teacher), **needs to be overcome. In its place, the inclusion actions that are most successful in current informational era have to be promoted.**

Mixture does not ensure attention to every student in a heterogeneous classroom, among other reasons, because it was not designed for a highly diverse society. Therefore, students with some learning difficulties,

immigrant students, ethnic minorities, language learners, and other at risk students are rather abandoned and ignored in a mainstream mixture classroom. This exclusion can be overcome through inclusion actions.

- 6. Inclusion actions should be promoted, especially for students from vulnerable groups** in order to increase the school achievement of all students and improve inter-group relations in classrooms and schools. **There are different inclusion actions that have proved to be successful: heterogeneous groups with reallocated resources, inclusive split classes, extension of the learning time (during school time and after school time), inclusive individualised curriculums, and inclusive choice.** Research has found Interactive Groups to be a very successful form of heterogeneous groups with reallocated resources.

THE TYPES OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION THAT BEST GUARANTEE SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR ALL

- 7. Policies should be developed to create and/or increase the participation of families and communities in learning activities (with students or for themselves), curriculum development and evaluation, and school decision-making.** There are research evidences indicating that those types of participation have greater influence in students' learning than when they just participate in festivals or to be informed.

- 8. Participation of families from vulnerable groups** (migrants, cultural minorities, and of students with disabilities) **should be particularly encouraged as it relates to their children's academic success.**

- 9. Policies should be developed to promote family education programmes in schools.**

These policies should be grounded on evidences of family education programmes that have led students from families with low socioeconomic status and low academic degrees to obtain excellent academic achievement.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICIES BASED ON SUCCESSFUL ACTIONS

- 10. Educational reforms and policies based on successful actions increase school success.** Health policies are based on the attempt to guarantee the implementation of treatments that the scientific community has found to be successful. Likewise, the educational policies that have been oriented to the implementation of the successful actions found by scientific research increase significantly the achievement of all students.

STUDENT GROUPING FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

- 1. Schools should avoid orienting students to segregated tracks, particularly those from disadvantaged groups** (migrants, ethnic minorities, students from families with low socioeconomic status, etc). **Instead inclusion actions have to be implemented for all students to help them achieve in regular classrooms and schools.**

Research has shown that tracking has a greater negative impact on the academic attainment of students from disadvantaged groups, preventing them from further continuing education and increasing the chances of being excluded from the workforce throughout life. Inclusion actions are successful in ensuring that all students reach high levels of attainment in regular classrooms and educational centres.

- 2. In order to raise the academic achievement of all students, teachers should replace streaming** (ability grouping) **and mixture** (heterogeneous classrooms where some students are abandoned) **for inclusion actions** (heterogeneous grouping with reallocation of resources, extending the learning time, etc).

Research has evidenced that streaming, and the curriculum differentiation that goes along with it, does not improve the achievement of average and low achievers but, in fact, can worsen it. Research has also indicated that students from vulnerable groups are likely to fail or drop out if they do not get enough support. Mixture tends to leave non-mainstream students behind. Inclusion actions provide school success for all. Differently, heterogeneous classrooms which included reallocated resources, such as more adults, can contribute to the school success of all students. Interactive Groups is the most successful way of doing so.

- 3. Schools with diverse student body can implement a number of inclusion actions that have proved to be successful.** Regarding classroom arrangements, research highlights **heterogeneous ability grouping with reallocated resources and/or volunteers**, and **inclusive split classes with mixed- ability students.**

4. Research has identified that Interactive Groups is a very successful way of heterogeneous grouping. In interactive groups, heterogeneous classrooms are organized in small and heterogeneous groups of students who collaborate to solve short tasks with the support of various teachers, family and community volunteers. Usually there is one adult in each group and the classroom teacher is in charge of managing the classroom dynamics and provides extra support. Research data evidences that through interactive groups students accelerate their learning, their achievement improves and solidarity is strengthened.

5. The same resources used in streaming can be reallocated and used in inclusion modes of grouping students. This way, all students receive the necessary support in the regular classroom or during the extension of the learning time, and separation by abilities is avoided. In addition, schools can also draw from additional resources in the community and include family and community volunteers in heterogeneous classrooms and after school hours to support the learning of all students.

6. In heterogeneous classrooms, teachers should purposefully seek and promote supportive interactions among students with different levels of ability, as well as with the diversity of adults when they are present in learning activities.

7. To increase the learning opportunities and raise the achievement of all students, schools, particularly those with a high percentage of disadvantaged students, need to extend the learning time, during school time and after school time. Extra learning activities can take place in multiple spaces of the school, such as the school library or the digital rooms, and they can involve family and community members who learn together with the students and/or support their learning. Schools can also open during holidays, offering these extra learning activities, and volunteers can visit the students' homes to help students with instrumental learning.

THE TYPES OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION THAT BEST GUARANTEE SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR ALL

8. Schools need to create the conditions and develop ways of involvement of families and other community members, placing particular emphasis in raising the participation of family and community members from vulnerable groups (migrants, cultural minorities, and students with disabilities).

9. Schools should develop mechanisms for the participation of families and communities in decision-making and evaluation processes, and in educational activities. Research has shown that these are the types of family and community participation that greatest influence students' learning and achievement. Involvement of family and community members in the classroom, like in Interactive Groups, or after school hours, like in tutored libraries, are forms of participating in the students' learning.

10. Schools should involve female relatives and other women from the community in different activities of the school in order **to help schools overcome gender inequalities.**

11. Schools should offer activities of family education to raise all students' achievement. Families should participate in the decisions about those activities. When this happens, family education programs impact even more upon students' achievement.

Recommendations for Families and Community Members

STUDENT GROUPING FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

- 1. Family and community members from all backgrounds can participate in heterogeneous groupings providing extra support to students' learning.** They are important human resources to help to raise academic achievement.
- 2. In order to increase minority students' achievement, and to contribute to a positive recognition of multiple identities, the participation of family and community members from minority cultural backgrounds becomes essential.** These adults **create a role model for children, thus helping overcome stereotypes and prejudices about minority groups** through their interactions with all students.

THE TYPES OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION THAT BEST GUARANTEE SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR ALL

- 3. Five types of family and community participation have been identified (informative, consultative, decisive, evaluative and educative).** Among those, **the decisive, evaluative and educative types are the ones that research is identifying as best guaranteeing school success for all.** Family and community members can participate in decision-making processes relative to relevant aspects of the school, in the evaluation of the students and the school progress, as well as in the learning activities in which students engage.
- 4. Family and community members can contribute to the general evaluation of the school by being involved in school management bodies** created for this matter and composed of teachers, families, students, other professionals, community members, etc.
- 5. Families and community members can participate in students' learning processes through intervening in the students' learning activities, both during regular school hours and after school time.** This participation can be of different types: they can volunteer in heterogeneous classrooms supporting students' learning, they can manage the school library after school time, they can participate in reading activities in the classroom and in the tutored school library, they can learn together with their children in activities in the tutored computer room, they can teach languages to immigrant students, etc.
- 7. The participation of families in family education programmes in schools is a successful action that raises students' achievement.** Family education and community engagement programmes that promote educational and cultural interactions have led students whose families have only a few books at home or low academic degrees to obtain excellent results in their academic achievement.

8. Family and community members should participate in the decisions about family education programmes in schools. When this happens, family education improves even more students' academic achievement

9. Female relatives and other women from the community can participate in classrooms and other learning spaces of the school, **playing a significant role in helping overcome gender inequalities in education.**

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¹ European Council, *Presidency Conclusions. Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000*, (EC, 2000), p. 2.

² This is an Integrated project funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Research Framework Programme, priority 7. For more information, see <http://www.ub.edu/includ-ed>

³ The study does not include the case of Bulgaria

⁴ Streaming consists of "tailoring the curriculum to different groups of children based on ability within one school" as defined in European Commission. *Commission staff working document. Accompanying document to the Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament. Efficiency and Equity in European education and training systems. SEC (2006)1096*. (Brussels: European Commission, 2006), p. 19.

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¹ European Commission. *European Report on the Quality of School Education. Report based on the work of the working committee on quality indicators. Sixteen quality indicators*. Directorate General for Education and Culture, 2000, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/indic/rapinen.pdf> (accessed May 5, 2009).

² The European Union refers to the definition of Social Inclusion based on the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union as "a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental Rights". In European Commission, *Joint report by the Commission and the Council on social inclusion* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004), p.10.

³ A. Dragana, *People, demography and social exclusion*, (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Press, 2002).

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¹ In other contexts, such as the United States, the term "tracking" is also used to refer to what is understood as "streaming" in Europe.

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³ See P. Bauer and R. T. Riphahn "Timing of school tracking as a determinant of intergenerational transmission of education", *Economics Letters*, 91(1), (2006), 90-97; G. Brunello and D. Checchi, "Does school tracking affect equality of opportunity? New international evidence", *Economic Policy*, 22(52),

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⁴ D. H. Hargreaves, *Social Relations in a Secondary School*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967); J. Rosenbaum, *Making inequality: The hidden curriculum of high school tracking*, (New York: Wiley, 1976); M. D. Wiatrowski, S. Hansell, C.R. Massey, and D.L.Wilson, “Curriculum tracking and delinquency”, *American Sociological Review*, 47, (1982), 151–160.

⁵ Hanushek, Wößmann, “Does educational tracking affect performance.”

⁶ PIRLS stands for Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. This survey is carried out by the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement).

⁷ PISA stands for the Programme for International Student Assessment, carried out by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development).

⁸ The concept of late tracking used by Bauer and Riphahn, “Timing of school tracking as a determinant of intergenerational transmission of education” is interesting for our argument but is not specific enough about the age group. Much social science literature addresses early tracking and mid tracking but little focuses on late tracking.

⁹ Educational attainment is defined as the highest grade completed within the most advanced level attended in the educational system of the country where the education was received. Some countries may also find it useful to present data on educational attainment in terms of the highest grade attended, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Glossary of Statistical Terms*, <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=742>, (accessed September, 22, 2008).

¹⁰ L. Wößmann and G. Schütz, *Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems. Analytical Report for the European Commission prepared by the European Expert Network on Economics of Education*, (Brussels: European Commission, 2006) http://www.eenee.de/portal/page/portal/EEENEContent/_IMPORT_TELECENTRUM/DOCS/SWP%20EENE-Part%20060426.pdf. (accessed September, 2, 2008).

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¹² Brunello, Checchi, “Does school tracking affect.”

¹³ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *PISA 2006 science competencies for tomorrow's world: Results from PISA 2006, No. 1, OECD*, <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/dataoecd/30/17/39703267.pdf> (accessed August, 10, 2009).

¹⁴ These inequalities are measured as between-school variances.

¹⁵ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Education at Glance 2008: OECD Indicators*, OECD, http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_41266761_1_1_1,00.html (accessed September, 22, 2008).

¹⁶ M. T. Hallinan, “Tracking: From Theory to Practice,” *Sociology of Education*, 67(2), (1994), 79–84.

¹⁷ In November 2007, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights ruled that segregating Roma students into special schools is a form of unlawful discrimination that violates fundamental human rights, for more information, see <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=2866>.

¹⁸ European Monitoring Centre on Racism, *Migrants, Minorities and Education. Documenting Discrimination And Integration In 15 Member States of The*

European Union. (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004).

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²⁰ G. Orfield, *Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Civil Rights Project, 2001).

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²² These ten countries are: Austria, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland.

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²⁶ Brunello, Checchi, "Does school tracking affect"

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ L. Wößmann and G. Schütz, *Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems*.

²⁹ P. Descy, "Having a low level of education in Europe: An at-risk situation," *Vocational training: European Journal*, 26, (2002), 58-69.

³⁰ M. R. De Vries and M. H. J. Wolbers, Non-standard employment relations and wages among school leavers in the Netherlands. *Work, employment and society*, 3(19), (2005), 503-525.

³¹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Education at Glance 2008: OECD Indicators*, http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_41266761_1_1_1_1,00.html (accessed September, 22, 2008).

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³⁴ OECD, *Education at Glance 2008: OECD Indicators*.

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³⁶ This data refers to the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and

United Kingdom, out of the 25 OECD countries of which data is provided: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States.

³⁷ ISCED level 5A programmes are tertiary programmes that are largely theoretically based and are intended to provide sufficient qualifications for gaining entry into advanced research programmes and professions with high skills requirements. For more information, see http://www.unesco.org/education/information/nfsunesco/doc/isced_1997.htm.

³⁸ Data shows that people with less than upper secondary education have lower relative earnings and people with tertiary-level education have higher relative earnings. According to the OECD, *relative earnings* from work are the mean annual earnings from employment for individuals with a certain level of educational attainment divided by the mean annual earnings from the employment of individuals whose highest level of education is upper secondary school.

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⁴⁰ This practice has been analysed for many years, and a range of terms have been used to refer to it, among those terms are *streaming*, *curriculum differentiation*, *ability grouping*, and in certain contexts, *tracking* and *setting*. In this publication, we emphasise actions which coincide with the European Commission's definition of streaming. In the UK the term "setting" is used to refer to a form of what in this publication is called "streaming".

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⁴⁷ S. Hallam, J. Ireson, J. Davies, "Primary pupils' experiences of different types of grouping in school," *British Educational Research Journal*, 30(4), (2004), 515-533.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

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⁵⁴ S. Lucas and M. Berends, Sociodemographic Diversity, Correlated Achievement, and De Facto Tracking. *Sociology of Education*, 75(4), (2002), 328-348.

⁵⁵ Braddock, Slavin, *Why ability grouping must end: Achieving Excellence and Equity in American Education*.

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⁵⁷ M. Gomolla, "Tackling Underachievement of Learners from Ethnic Minorities: A Comparison of Recent Policies of School Improvement in Germany, England and Switzerland," *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 9(1), (2006), 46 - 59.

⁵⁸ European Parliament. (2005). *Integrating immigrants in Europe through schools and multilingual education*. Committee on Culture and Education. Procedure number 2004/2267-(INI), <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?jsessionid=1E87BC7E743F0ABEA5DC06F08A0B2455.node1?language=EN&pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2005-0243+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>, (accessed August 11, 2009).

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