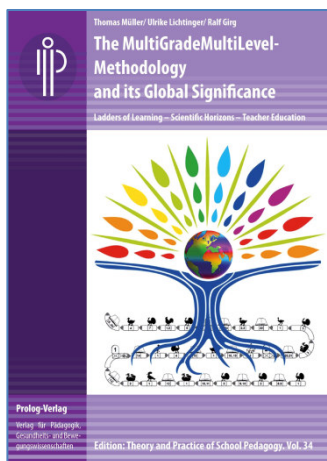


BOOK REVIEW:



Müller, Thomas, Ulrike Lichtinger & Ralf Girg (2015)
The MultiGradeMultiLevel-Methodology and its Global Significance
Ladders of Learning - Scientific Horizons - Teacher Education (Theory and Practice of School Pedagogics Book 34) Publisher: Prolog-Verlag Immenhausen,
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What if children loved going to school? What if they enjoyed learning according to their lives and interests? What if their learning processes were supported in a way that they corresponded to their abilities and needs? What if they learned in their own rhythm and pace? What if teachers were able to support such learning through an individualized arrangement of learning materials and

showed an attitude of appreciation? What if schools were maintained mostly by the students themselves and were surrounded by flowering gardens full of herbs and vegetables and fruit? If schools taught students how to live their lives in a sustainable way? Is that utopian? A non-existent paradise of learning? Does that sound like an exclusively perfect world that can only be found in upper class schools and would never be affordable for anybody else?

Thomas Müller, Ulrike Lichtinger and Ralf Girg of the universities of Regensburg and Würzburg describe such a learning and teaching culture, that has been practiced for thirty years in rural South India at Rishi Valley, in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The authors convey vividly an exemplary modern, inclusive, community-based and environmentally sustainable school culture, we, in many places in the so-called western world, are far away from. Each child there, so the book plausibly emphasizes, is respected in its uniqueness. And it is encouraged and educated to cooperate responsibly with a sense for the whole community. At the same time the children show high learning performances.

The Rishi Valley approach has been developed by Padmanabha Rao, Anumula Rama and their team since the 1980s, inspired by the ideas of the philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895 – 1986). The so-called MultiGradeMultiLevel-methodology (MGML) has won many national and international prizes for education, sustainability and social entrepreneurship. Today this approach can be found in more than 250,000 primary schools in India and in more than 10,000,000 children benefit from it. It has also been spreading out to many countries in the world and is thereby one of most innovative and effective developments in school education worldwide.

The authors of the book, who - for many years - have been cooperating with their Indian partners at Rishi Valley, step by step reveal the secrets of this success to the reader. Their book of 200 pages is deeply exciting because it reminds the reader of his own educational ideals. The secret of the MGML-Methodology evidently can be found in the individualized student centered learning in mixed age groups with the help of highly structured pathways, the so-called “ladders of learning”, through prepared material collections, and accompanied by teachers, whose interactions are inspired by deep appreciation and mindfulness.

In the last part of the book the authors give examples of successful adaptations in German and international primary, secondary, higher and special needs education. Thomas Müller, Ulrike Lichtinger and Ralf Girg themselves have been using and evaluating this approach in their own teachings at the educational faculties in Regensburg and Würzburg for a decade now. Both the methodology and the attitude may serve as models for a truly modern education, because individual differences and needs in learning speed are globally becoming more and more acknowledged. The MGML-approach allows for teaching formats that take these differences into account and at the same time foster children's ability to support each other in learning groups. This book is an inspiration to all, who want to strengthen schools as spaces of learning and teaching that truly meet the needs and challenges of the 21st century.

Nils Altner,

PhD, researches, teaches and publishes on education, mindfulness, health and personal development at the University of Duisburg-Essen. www.achtsamkeit.com