

Support in learning and school attendance in Finland: New model for all learners and teachers

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Contents of the presentation

- ▶ **STARTING POINT AND THE REALITY OF LEARNING:** In one school class there are many kinds of learners.
- ▶ **HOW TO OPERATE:** In the Finnish new three-level support model the aim is to recognize individual learning styles and identify the needs of support for learning.
- ▶ **ROLE OF TEACHERS:** Key persons in this process are ordinary class teachers and subject teachers. In the first level of the model the teachers should co-operate together and help the student to get individual support for learning. The idea behind this is that "every teacher is a special education teacher as well".
- ▶ **ROLE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND EXPERTS:** In the second and third level the teachers are supported also by special education teachers and other support groups.
- ▶ **THE CHALLENGE:** The challenge of this reform is how to run the teachers into this system and give them expertise to identify all learners' needs for support. This is a great challenge for in-service and pre-service teacher education.

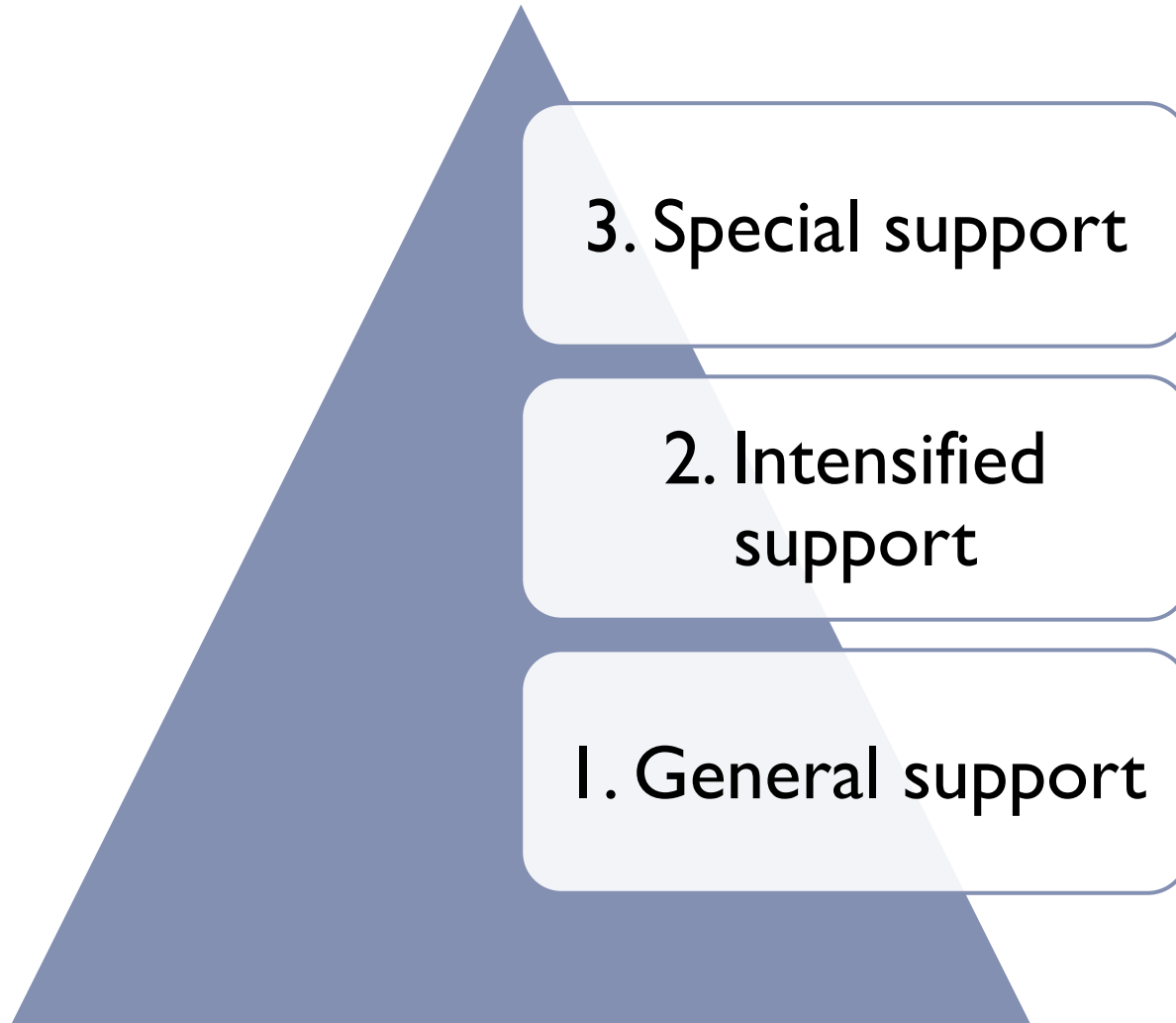
Previous thinking: Picking up students with special needs: "serious cases"



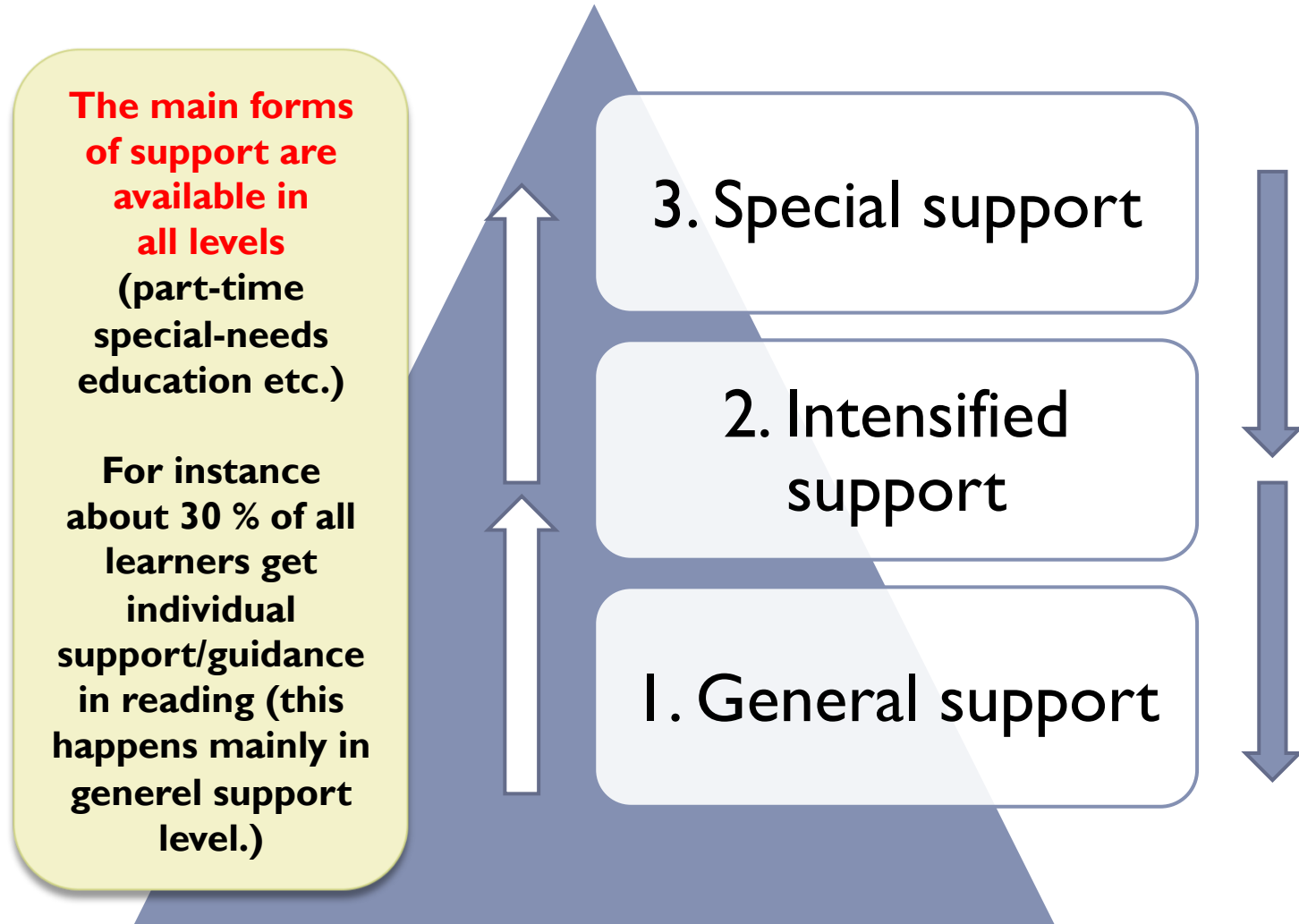
New thinking: Many kinds of learners with their individual needs



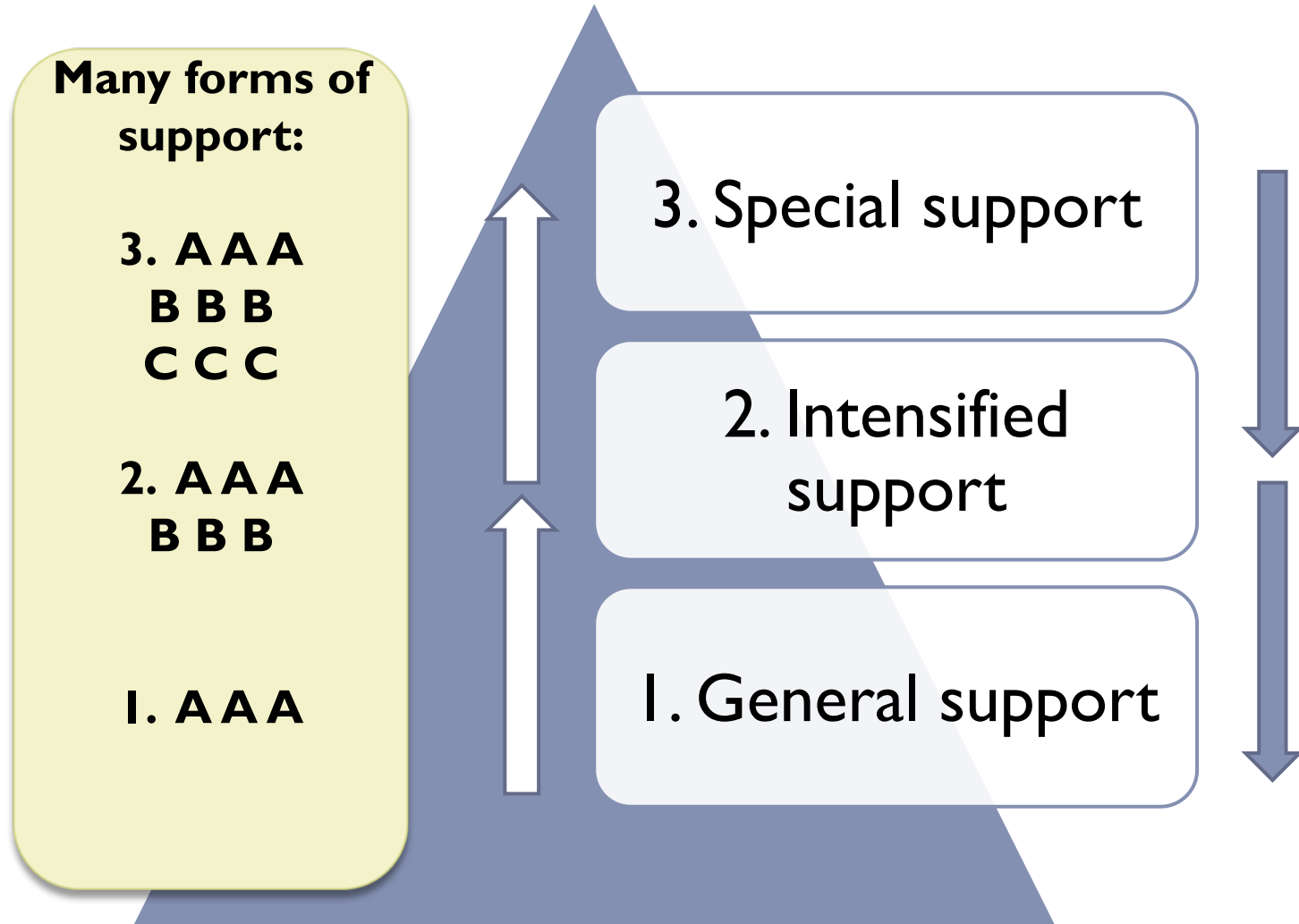
Three-level support in learning and school attendance



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Three-level support in learning and school attendance

I. General support for all learners

- is built on positive school culture
- quality teaching and every teachers' guidance:
"every teacher is a special education teacher"
 - many forms of support
- co-operation between all teachers, and
between teachers and parents

Three-level support in learning and school attendance

2. Intensified support

- decision of intensified support is based on a **pedagogical assessment** made by teachers
 - **individual learning plan**
- many forms of special needs of support: part-time special-needs education, individual guidance counselling and use of flexible teaching groups etc.
 - support is systematic
- student's learning and schooling must be monitored and assessed regularly

Three-level support in learning and school attendance

3. Special support

- consists of various kinds of support and special-needs education
 - decision of special support is made by the officials
- decision is based on a written **pedagogical statement** made by multi-professional group
 - a student get individual **learning programme**
 - discussion with student/parents before the decision
 - special support includes different types of pedagogical arrangements, and assessment of learning environment, student welfare or other arrangements to be made in order to support student

Role of teachers

- ▶ In this model all teachers are active: pre-school teachers, primary school (class) teachers, subject teachers
- ▶ All teachers need skills for high quality education
 - ▶ Skills to observe and notice students' individual learning styles
 - ▶ Skills to operate in different situations and use different kinds of teaching and learning methods
 - ▶ Skills for co-operation with students, other teachers and school personnel, and parents
 - ▶ Skills to do pedagogical assessment

Challenge for teacher education

- ▶ How to provide three-level support skills for in-service teachers and pre-service teacher students? How do we build our TE curriculums? Do our TE students get any practice for operating the three-level model?
- ▶ The role of headmasters and whole school
- ▶ Communicative and co-operational skills
- ▶ It is a question of ideology behind pedagogical thinking:
 - ▶ how do we understand good learning and teaching
 - ▶ how do we understand students' individual needs of education
 - ▶ how do we understand personal growth, difficulties and mistakes
- ▶ It is really not a shame to get support in learning and school attendance. It is a every students' right and possibility!

New thinking: Many kinds of learners with their individual needs



Education for diversities

- ▶ An example of a course in teacher education (Helsinki University, Department of teacher education)
- ▶ Blend of special education, multicultural education, relationship and co-operative skills
- ▶ A joint course for all student teacher programmes (pre-school teachers, class teachers, subject teachers, special education teachers)
- ▶ The students work in mixed groups and deal different kinds of learning/teaching/relationship situations and pedagogical case studies from school -> the aim is to discuss and find solutions

Other perspectives and comments

- ▶ Pirjo Koivula
- ▶ Eija Kauppinen
 - ▶ Finnish National Board of Education