

Global Knowledge Project

Title: The practice and implementation of inclusive education in the two selected schools in Sogndal county.

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1.INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the view of special education has changed in western cultures. Rather than segregating children with special needs in separate classes and schools, the ideology of inclusive education has taken hold. Inclusive education is about fitting schools to meet the needs of all pupils. This means that the educational system is now responsible for including a large diversity of pupils and for providing a differentiated and appropriate education for everyone. None the less, the transformation of the ideology of inclusion into practice appears to be a major challenge in many countries (Hughes et al., 1996; Clark et al., 1997; Haug et al., 1999; Flem & Keller, 2000). Hence research on how teachers and schools cope with the diversity of students is needed. As special education has been influenced by various ideologies, there are many ways of understanding how teaching should be realized: to understand the changes taking place it is important to look at special education as a social/cultural phenomenon. The educational system is influenced by the knowledge traditions, values and attitudes in society. Rather than focusing on the individual child, the trend is now towards a more comprehensive and contextual approach. Traditionally, children

with special needs were considered to have individual functional disorders. Now, the tendency is to look upon children with special needs as having a mismatch between cultural expectations and the child's ability to communicate and meet those expectations (White Paper No. 23, 1997–8). In other words, the cultural expectations create the problems for the child. If inclusive education is to succeed, then we will need re-education, reorganization and value change (Stangvik, 1998). New approaches to research in the special needs field are necessary. To help us understand how schools can respond to diversity and support the learning of all their students, we can turn to detailed classroom research, which is a relevant methodological approach. Investigating how schools in practice cope with the diversity of students is challenging because classrooms are complex places and the contexts and people are unique (Ainscow, 1998). However, studies on how teachers and schools are coping with inclusive education have interest and may lead to a deeper understanding of the processes involved in including children with special needs in ordinary classrooms (e.g. Udvari-Solner & Thousand, 1995; Ware, 1995; Clark et al., 1997; Ainscow, 1998). Our aim is therefore to focus on a learning context that, in our view, has succeeded in including children with special needs in an ordinary classroom context.

2. Background

The UN at a summit in 2000 set up eight goals which were to be achieved by 2015 and among the goals was universal primary education. The second goal in the United Nations Millennium Development Goal is to achieve Universal Primary Education, more specifically, to “ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.” Currently, there are more than 100 million children around the world of primary school age who are not in school. The majority of these children are in regions of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia and within these countries, girls are at the greatest disadvantage in receiving access to education at the primary school age. Since the Millennium Development Goals were launched, many developing countries, such as China, Chile, Cuba, Singapore and Sri Lanka, have successfully completed a campaign towards universal primary education.

Setting goals is something else while attaining these goals is another. The desire to achieve this goal is hindered by challenges such as poverty, schools, civil wars, diseases and disability. In this research our focus is on disability and a hindrance to achieving universal

primary education. However this can only be a hindrance if the schools are not ready to handle such cases.

5. Research Questions

What are the prerequisites and challenges to inclusive education a case of two schools?

6. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Title: The inclusive education practices in the two school. The title is chosen because these schools are practicing inclusive education in Sogndal. Determine the realization of inclusive education and examine the challenges the system is faced with.

7. Significance of the Study

Nature doesn't give a guarantee to live without disability throughout peoples' life span.

Disability or defect in physical ability can happen at any time because of natural calamities like earthquake and flooding, or manmade calamities like car accidents, air plane crash or other.

These accidents are unconditional and happen without criteria as rich/poor, educated/illiterate, or others. Thus, any kind of service provision needs to consider disability. Among the services education is one, and primary level education is the focal point of this project. And conducting a research in this area may have the following significance.

- The finding will clearly indicate the challenges and opportunities for the provision of inclusive education in two schools under research in Sogndal county.
- It will bring to light the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education.

Therefore, the study may serve as something pushing to realize inclusive education by identifying the existing challenges and opportunities.

8. Objective of the study

Assessing the practical challenges and opportunities for the provision of inclusive education in selected primary schools was the general objective of this study. The research will have the following specific objectives, to:

- Check the implementation of inclusive education in the schools.

- Identify the practical opportunities for the provision of inclusive education in the schools.
- Identify the practical challenges to apply inclusive educational system in these schools.
- To suggest possible solutions by comparing the opportunities and challenges for the provision of inclusive education in these schools.

9. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter issues regarding inclusive education (IE) will be presented and discussed. Firstly, international initiatives and development of inclusive education are discussed, followed by a discussion of the core essence and principles of inclusive education. With regards to the essence and principles of inclusive education, some selected theories on teaching and learning may serve as underlying philosophies to these principles; as underlying philosophies for the pedagogical implementation needed to reach the goals of inclusive education. These are the constructivist and socio-constructivist theories. Thereafter, some policy, school and cultural factors that may affect practical implementations of inclusive are highlighted. Finally, some selected researches previously conducted on the topic from the field in Norway are presented.

9.1 International initiatives and development of inclusive education

Children's rights to education was first stated in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 - more specifically, in the declarations article number 26. In this article it is stated that everyone shall have the right to education, that education at elementary levels shall be free and compulsory, and that education shall be directed towards the full development of the human personality (United Nations 2015-02-13).

9.2. Educational access and quality

For inclusion rather than integration in education to take place, the area of quality is essential. The participation of the children in this regard is central. All conventions and declarations emphasize that education should aim at the development of every individuals' fullest and personal potential. To secure the quality of education this entails that schools must be able to accommodate all children – they must fit the needs of all pupils UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994). This implies that children with no (visible) disadvantages should also be taken into account. Through the concept of inclusive education, this means that every mainstream school must be able to accommodate all pupils, including those with disabilities and other

disadvantages. With such a view, inclusive education not only ensures children's rights to education, it also ensures their rights in education. Furthermore, it does not only guarantee their right to access an educational institution, it also guarantees their rights to participate and learn – their rights to receive classroom instruction that benefit their needs.

The concept of inclusion is itself as much about social justice and the respect and accepts of diversity and difference as it is about mainstream (regular) educational and learning difficulties. Inclusion in education should therefore focus on all children, and not only children with specific learning difficulties (Thomas and Loxley 2007). This implies that all factors of educational marginalization need to be addressed; be it gender, ethnicity or socio-economic background. Further, it implies inclusion in education to call for “broader understanding of learning, teaching and administration of education and its relation to social development” (Dei 2004:19). Such educational inclusion may thus serve as a platform for children's inclusion in society as a whole; one's inclusion in the mainstream school may lead to one's inclusion in the mainstream society.

For education institutions to be able to adapt inclusive approaches, their cultures, policies and practices need to be changed. Such changes, however, do not only involve the school itself; it involves all teachers, parents, local communities and governments. In other words, inclusive education cannot be met unless teachers and other school staff, pupils, parents, the community and the government support and commit themselves to it (Mittler 2000, UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994). In this regard, inclusive education is referred to as a never-ending (societal) process rather than a single event (Ainscow 2005).

9.3 Accessibility, availability, acceptability and adaptability

In relation to national governments' obligations to meet international goals on education, Tomasevski has put together a 4-A's scheme. According to this 4-A's scheme (accessibility, availability, acceptability and adaptability), governments are obliged to make education accessible, available, acceptable and adaptable (Tomasevski 2003).

Educational accessibility and availability support that every child should access an educational institution that is free, compulsory and available. This implies non-discrimination and all barriers to be removed (ibid). However, it does not imply that every educational institution should be able to accommodate all children, no matter their abilities, needs and interests.

9.4 Constructivist and socio-constructivist theories on teaching and learning

For successful school and classroom implementation of the principle of quality inclusive education, the theories of constructivism and socio-constructivism can be seen as necessary underlying philosophies. These are theories on children's learning and make necessary fundamental for pedagogical practice that support quality inclusive education.

Constructivism basically refers to the belief that children or adults construct their knowledge based on personal experiences. Socio-constructivism adds to this the impact social and cultural factors have on that knowledge construction. They are middle range theories (Bryman 2008) on teaching and learning that to varying degrees can be linked to the practical implementation of quality inclusive education.

9.5 Vygotsky's psychological tools, internalization, mediation and zone of proximal development

Vygotsky's sociocultural and socio-constructivist theories support Piaget's theory on knowledge construction. However, Vygotsky believes that children construct their knowledge through social interaction within culturally determined realities. His theories on learning are thus based on the notion that cognition and development are socially and culturally rather than individually situated and determined. Through this notion, educationists are introduced to a way of viewing the individual child; a view that brings the child and his or her perception closer to the social and cultural reality in which they take place (Kozulin 1998, Wertsch 1985).

Vygotsky's theories have four main components that are frequently used in issues concerning education; these are the components of psychological tools, internalization, mediation and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Kozulin 2003:15-38, Wertsch 1985). With psychological tools, Vygotsky refers to the human constructed symbols that are used to better master one's own thoughts, perceptions, memories etc. These symbols consist of, among others, signs, texts and formulas that serve as prerequisites of individual cognition. The development of psychological tools can thus be seen as paramount for learning, and additionally, learning can be seen as paramount for the further development of such tools. Such development leads to the development of higher mental functions or skills. In this regard, Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of the social and cultural contexts in which the psychological tools are constructed and used. He emphasizes that individual cognitive

development, assisted by the use of psychological tools, is dependent on the social and cultural context in which they take place. In other words, learning and development is not separated from context, but guided by context (Kozulin 1998, Wertsch 1985).

Vygotsky argues that the learning of these tools, and thus the development of higher mental skills, takes place through the process of internalization. This is the process in which the knowledge or skill moves from the external to the internal; it is the process in which the child develops its own personal experience of the knowledge or skill and makes its own meaning of it (Lantolf 2003:349-370) Closely linked to the development of psychological tools is also the notion of mediation. Vygotsky himself referred to mediation primarily in terms of symbolic tools-mediators appropriated by the child within a context specific activity. However, his idea of mediation has been further elaborated and developed by others to include the notion of human mediation. In order to fully develop a useful set of psychological tools, the child has to be assisted by a human mediator. This human mediator, for example a teacher, is to help and guide children within their learning activities. Without such a mediator, a child's independent exploration may often lead to insufficient and immature concepts and skills, and hinder the development of higher mental skills. With this, the role of the teacher as a mediator is highly important in a child's acquisition of knowledge and skills (Kozulin 1998, Kozulin 2003:15-38, Wertsch 1985).

The forth component of Vygotskian theory is the notion of zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD refers to children's individual learning potential - it refers to the stage in children's development that is situated between what they manage to do independently and what they do not manage independently. Hence, it is closely linked to the notion of mediation, and emphasizes the use of a human mediator in the guidance of children's path towards further independent exploration (Kozulin 2003:15-38, Wertsch 1985).

9.6 Bruner's scaffolding

Another supporter of constructivism is Jerome Bruner. As Vygotsky, Bruner also emphasizes the importance of cultural influence in a child's learning; the constructed knowledge and reality is culturally situated (Bruner 1996). One of his many contributions to the field of education is his notion of scaffolding. Scaffolding refers to the use of external cognitive support in children's performance or understanding of specific tasks – in children's learning. With this, scaffolding is closely linked to Vygotsky's notions of mediation and zone of proximal development (ZPD). Scaffolding is at its best when used in children's zone of

proximal development (ZPD). For the teacher, this implies that he or she is able to give the appropriate support and guidance to pupils in accordance to their ZPD (Mercer 1994:92-110, Kozulin 2003:15-38, Wood, Bruner & Ross 1976).

Inclusive education emphasizes the learning and participation of all children in mainstream classrooms. This implies classrooms to accommodate children with different learning abilities, needs and interests; according to the theories, children with different life experiences, zone of proximal developments (ZPDs), and social and cultural family backgrounds. This has impact on classroom pedagogy.

9.7 Inclusive education pedagogy

To meet the principle of quality inclusive education, some classroom practices can be pointed out as essential. In this section, we refer to these practices as inclusive education pedagogy. First, we will point out and discuss what specific methods the constructivist and socio-constructivist theories support and how these link to inclusive education pedagogy. Thereafter, turn to the notion of instructional differentiation.

9.8 The theories' impact on inclusive education pedagogy

As mentioned earlier, inclusion in education concerns all pupils and not only those with learning difficulties. In this regard, inclusive education should focus on instruction that should give all children the possibility to learn in accordance with their individual abilities, needs and interests. These abilities, needs and interests are affected by the life circumstances these learners are exposed to at an early stage in life. Examples of such life circumstances are living in a rural or an urban area, having a mother tongue different from the language used for instruction, or having illiterate parents (Thomas & Loxley 2007).

As mentioned, the constructivist and socio-constructivist theories support learning environments that focus on the exploration of the individual child's learning potentials. When applying the theories to classroom practices, subjects have to be presented in different ways and with the use of different methods and materials to accommodate the potentials of the children. This is necessary because pupils may not belong within the same zone of proximal development (ZPD) or may not make the same experiences in life (Tomlinson et al. 2003). Absolute truth or absolute knowledge is non-existent, and traditional instruction based on the transmission and reception of information is therefore considered an inadequate teaching strategy. Constructivism and socio-constructivism support the use of different pedagogical

methods that ensure the construction and internalization of diverse knowledge rather than the memorization and transmission of standardized knowledge. In other words, learning should not be directed from the outside, it should develop from the inside. Methods like group work, problem-solving, peer-tutoring, field trips, projects and discussion sessions can support knowledge construction and internalization (Larochelle & Bednarz 1998:3-20, von Glaserfeld 1989, Terhart 2003, Wood, Bruner & Ross 1976).

Through these methods, pupils are given the opportunities to collaborate, guide and learn from each other, be creative in finding solutions to different problems, be able to link what is learnt to the practical field, and to immerse in specific topics of interest. Through the focus of individual experiences, ZPDs and personal interests, these methods have greater chance of making learning more meaningful and the environment more stimulating (Terhart 2003, Tomlinson et al. 2003, UNESCO 2009). Also, according to UNESCO (2009), learning is more likely to occur in classrooms where active learning and support is practiced (UNESCO 2009). The use of such pedagogical practices makes implications for the role of the teacher.

9.9 Teachers' roles

The theories do not only make a fundamental for what Inclusive education pedagogy should be used, they also make a fundamental for what role the teacher should take. For teachers to successfully practice the mentioned teaching methods pedagogy, it is implied that they are to help and guide the pupils in their own exploration and internalization of new knowledge, and to facilitate learning

2.4.2 Instructional differentiation

For teachers to be able to practice any of the above mentioned teaching methods and strategies for the purpose they present – to the benefit of pupils learning - they need to apply instructional differentiation. This implies a differentiated use of the teaching strategies and the application of different teaching and learning materials (Heacox 2002). Even though many classes are characterized as homogeneous, most pupils differ from each other in several ways; economic and social background, life experiences, interests, level of motivation etc. These differences are most likely to make an impact on their learning; be it their preferred learning activities, paces or school subjects. Due to this, differentiated instruction does not only benefit those with learning difficulties, it also benefits pupils with no signs of having or developing a learning difficulty. Therefore differentiation is an essential strategy to make sure that every child gets the possibility to learn in school and in turn, eliminate marginalization or segregation from access to learning. However, this implies that the teacher is able to assess

and evaluate every pupil's abilities, needs and interests to the extent necessary (Tomlinson et al. 2003, UNESCO 1993).

The most popular ways of differentiating instruction are related to content, process, teaching aids and products (Heacox 2002, Tomlinson 2001). Content differentiation refers to teachers providing pupils with content goals related to their individual abilities. This can be done by giving pupils different materials, levels and/or quantity of content (Heacox 2002, Tomlinson 2001). Process differentiation refers to the use of a variety of teaching programs that can meet the preferred learning activities and conditions of all pupils, such as group work, individual work, projects, or different time schedules (Heacox 2002, Tomlinson 2001). In terms of product differentiation, the way in which teachers choose to assess or test their pupils is essential (Tomlinson 2001). Lastly, differentiation of teaching aids can be met by using different textbooks, audiovisual materials such as pictures and videos, information and communication technologies (ICT) etc. With this form of differentiation, pupils get the opportunity to be introduced to topics and contents in different ways (Heacox 2002).

Classroom practices supporting inclusive education thus contrasts sharply from traditional classroom practices. Traditional classroom practices are mainly characterized by the teacher giving instruction on a specific and set topic presented in curriculums or syllabuses, and pupils' performing written assignments in accordance to the instruction (Heacox 2002). Such traditional practices focus on the transmission of knowledge, rather than the internalization of knowledge.

9.10 Factors that can impact implementation of inclusive education

In addition to differentiated instruction or classroom practices, some policy, school and cultural factors can be identified as critical for the development and implementation of inclusive education. These factors concern issues related to national education policies, curriculum and syllabus content, the allocation of materials and facilities, and teachers' attitudes and knowledge. 9.10.1 Policy factors

For inclusive education to successfully reach school levels it needs to be accounted for in national education policies, with clearly outlined goals on children's rights to and in education. However, for inclusion in education to be successful, the notions of inclusion have to be accounted for not only in the field of education. It also needs to be accounted for in other fields regarding economic and social development, such as early childhood care and

education (ECCE), healthcare etc. This is important because inclusion involves all levels of society. Hence, for education to be inclusive, society needs to be inclusive and vice versa (UNESCO 2009, UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994).

Another essential part of IE is the content and structure of curriculums and syllabuses. A typical characteristic of an inclusive curriculum is flexibility. Flexibility gives teachers the possibilities to make adjustments in terms of methods, content and time used, to better fit each pupil; it gives them the possibility to differentiate instruction. The content and structure of curriculums and syllabuses can thus be part of either eliminating or producing (potential) learning difficulties. An inclusive curriculum should also focus on the full development of the child; the cognitive, emotional, creative and social development (Mittler 2000, UNESCO 2009). However, implementation it is up to the individual teacher. Presence of any of the factors mentioned in the next section may further impact the implementation. The curriculum itself can thus not solely cater for successful implementation of inclusive education.

9.11 School factors

Of the main and most obvious school factors that can impact implementation of inclusive education, are those of large class sizes, limited teaching time, lack of resources, insufficient school buildings and teacher's workloads (Pijl, Meijer & Hegarty 1997, Pijl & Meijer 1997:8-13, UNESCO 2009). The level of barriers these factors may impose on teachers' practices can further be influenced by their attitudes towards and knowledge of inclusive education. Several researches show that positive attitudes, previous experiences and knowledge of IE positively influence teachers' inclusive education practices in school (Kuyini & Desai 2007, UNESCO 2009). Closely linked with this is teachers' educational training and qualifications. Teacher education can thus be seen as a prerequisite for practices of quality inclusive education, however, only if teacher education is in line with the goals and principles of inclusive education. If teachers are not trained in line with these, school-level implementation of inclusive education cannot be expected to be met (UNESCO 2009).

9.12 Cultural factors and Bruner's Folk pedagogy

When studying aspects of educational institutions and approaches in a specific culture, it is important to take that culture into account. Bruner (1996) mentions that within the field of education, the cultural context in which the education takes place will determine how teachers, parents and communities view children and learning. This view will again determine

how they go on about educational practices in the classroom; the pedagogy, which Bruner labeled Folk pedagogy. In accordance to this, Bruner (1996) presents four dominant models of people's conceptions about children's minds and the implications they make for classroom pedagogy.

The first model is linked to the idea that children learn through imitation. This model implies that children can learn skills once demonstrated by adults. In school context it means that pupils can learn how to do things by imitating teachers. However, this model is more concerned about children's abilities, skills or talents to imitate, rather than children's knowledge and understanding (Bruner 1996).

The second model contains the assumption that children's minds are tabula-rasa clean slates – that need to be filled up. Knowledge in this model is presented by the facts, principles and rules existing in the society, and that it is through teacher's teaching that pupils fill up their minds with this knowledge. Whether children are successful in filling up their tabula rasa depend on their abilities to absorb and store the information teachers are presenting in class. The measuring of their mental abilities (level of their stored information) is conducted by the use of objective and standardized testing. This can be viewed in contrast to the first model, where the child is rather taught how to do something skillfully. However, this model does not touch upon interpretation or construction. It simply concerns the one-way communication that moves from teachers to pupils (Bruner 1996).

The third model, on the other hand, is concerned about societies where teachers and parents view children as thinkers. In this model, teachers emphasize classroom activities that recognize pupils' perspective in the process of learning. They view their pupils as dialogue partners, and use discussion and collaboration as core activities to foster understanding and learning. Knowledge and understanding is not one-sided, and it is through discussion and collaboration that pupils can be introduced to and better understands its complexity. The pedagogy of this model is pointed in the direction of everyone getting to know each other's ways of thinking through interactive learning and experiencing (Bruner 1996).

The pedagogy of the fourth and last model is explained through the assumption that children are knowledgeable; children are viewed as individuals able to manage justified or objective knowledge. Teaching should therefore not only concentrate on the presentation of facts, principles and rules, as teaching presented in the second model. It should also concentrate on making clear to pupils the distinction between personal (subjective) ideas or knowledge and

justified (objective) knowledge (Bruner 1996). With regards to the mentioned theories on teaching and learning, one can see a close link between these theories and Bruner's third and fourth model of folk pedagogy; for quality inclusive education to take place, the constructivist and socio-constructivist theories serve as valuable underlying philosophies, and through those philosophies follow models three and four in Bruner's Folk pedagogy.

9.13 Significant prior research from Norway

One research that is directly related to the topic of this project is a research conducted by Thomas, 2003. This research focused on the importance of culture in the education system. She stated that, one more noteworthy reason is that in the Norwegian Education Act, culture is referred to as an important objective in education (Education Act. Act relating to Primary and Secondary Education, 1998, p. 5). This allows us to assume that culture including the issues of multiculturalism should be seen across the educational field, including Individualized Education Plans (IEP). Since IEP is important for the development of the children with special needs, it allows us to see the way culture is involved in the development of these children.

9.14 Education system

In order for the readers to fully understand the value of IEP in relation to inclusive education it is vital to be able to see the education system as a whole. The school system in Norway is an inclusive system. In other words all the students irrelevant of the background are allowed to enter the school system. The Norwegian Government states 'Children and young people must have an equal right to education irrespective of where they live, gender and social cultural background or any special needs .' (Ministry of Education and Research,)

For the most part education in Norway is public, the Norwegian state has laws and regulations for education in Norway at primary and lower secondary level. This stage education is compulsory and each municipality is responsible for all compulsory education. "Children and young people are obliged to attend primary and lower secondary education and have the right to pursuant to the Act" Education Act (1998) section 2, 2-1).

This education is called in Norwegian 'Grunnskoler' and in English language it called primary and lower secondary education. Another statement from the Ministry of education and research says that:" Primary and lower secondary education is based on the principle of an equal and adapted school." Ministry of Education and Resaerch)

In other words all children with special needs have a right to adapted education and also that the education they get is meaningful and appropriate. The Education act from 1998, Act section 1 states that “ Pupils who either do not or are unable to benefit satisfactorily from ordinary teaching have the right to special education.. In assessing what kind of instruction shall be provided, particularly emphasis shall be placed in the pupils’ developmental prospects.

Furthermore the ministry of Education states,” Education in schools is to be adapted to the individual pupil’s abilities and capabilities. Pupils who do not or cannot achieve a satisfactory learning yield from the ordinary teaching, has a right to special needs education. special needs education is as far as possible to be planned in collaboration with the pupil and parents(Ministry of Education and research)

Children with special needs in Norway are firstly acknowledged as special needs by the people closest to them or identified at birth. Usually the person closest to them is their parents or the teachers in the schools that they are attending. Thereafter sometime of observation by the teacher a discussion with the parents to get their experience. If the teacher is convinced that the child needs further help and the parents agree to that, then the education psychological services (EPS) is called for assessment. If the results are in line with the observations of the parents and the teacher, individual decisions are made concerning the content and extent of special educational measures.” (Johnsen, 2001 p 162)

However , before the EPS does its assessment, parents must agree that their child can be assessed as well as the child her/himself. The acknowledgement by the EPS that the pupil has special needs, according to the education Act will be followed by, “the special education that is provided shall be planned in collaboration with the pupil and the parents and considerable emphasis shall be placed on their views.”(Education Act, Act relating to primary and secondary education 1998, section 4-5)

Since the children with special needs are to be treated equally to their fellow non special needs children, then that includes the curriculum. It is thus necessary and according to the law, to create what is generally called an individual education plan (IEP). The concept of individualism is very phenomena post modernity. Giddens,(1996) wrote,” We might, of simply say that the search for self-identity is a modern and it originates in Western individualism. The idea that each person has a unique character and special potentialities that may or may be fulfilled is alien to pre modern culture. In the medieval Europe lineage,

gender, social status and other attributes relevant to identity were all relatively fixed.”: the individual in the some sense never existed and it is still the case in traditional society where individuality is not prized (Giddens, 1996). Norway is able to create policies which promote individualized

9.15 Discussion: current challenges and the future

First, it is important to underscore that the properties of education, special education and inclusion have complex and tensional relationships, and it would be wrong to consider the terms as separated as well as converted phenomena. Still, there are several common denominators. The processes that pushed the Norwegian education reforms in the 60th and 70th were based on the ideas of reconstruction and equality through equal access to education. One fundamental goal was to bring up unrealized talents and abilities in the people by using education as a tool for social and economic growth and development. Education should give all citizens opportunities to become productive and wellbeing humans. The latest step in the chain to free unrealized talent and to promote equity is the “Knowledge Promotion”. To fulfil the project, pupils and students have to respond with sufficient academic competency in a variety of subjects within international standards. The understanding can be summarised by a heading taken from a current report analyzing Norwegian education: “Quality development and learning outcomes on the agenda” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2008 p. 4).

9.16 Reconstruction and unification through education

The curriculum pointed out specific learning objects to be achieved by all pupils at given grades. At the same time, the individuals’ learning process was given attention by stating that the teaching should be given in accordance with the pupils’ abilities and aptitudes, and that all pupils should be trained in independent learning; ideas that can be traced back to the mid-20th progressive education inspired by Dewey. The introduction of specific learning objects, however, challenged the variety of pupil, and it prepared the way for the legislation of state-run special schools (1951). Some years later (1955), in an amendment

to the Public School Act, the municipalities were ordered to provide remedial instruction for pupils who did not fulfil the demands of the curriculum. These initiatives paved the way for a “two-track” education system (Pijl & Meijer, 1991); a public school system combined with

state and municipal driven special schools and remedial classes (Befring, Thousand & Nevin, 2000).

During the 1960's several education reforms were tried out, and gradually a nine year compulsory school took precedence (a six year elementary school followed by a three year lower secondary). At that time in the western society, there was an increased emphasis on democracy,

indicating participation, social justice and equality for all (Befring, Thousand & Nevin, 2000). The focus was not only restricted to education, but covered all areas of life implying that all people should have access to the same resources and given the same rights. The debate fuelled the discussions about how to facilitate education for pupils who did not manage to cope with the

demands in the curriculum, and a white paper released in 1967 committed a breach with the "two-track" education system. The White Paper emphasised that people with impairments and disabilities were unalienable parts of the society (Ministry of Social Affairs, 1967), and forced the way for an abolition of the special-school legislation of 1951/ 1955. The socially separating of children into special institutions and schools was to be the exception rather the rule. The change of focus fostered a debate in how to integrate (or include) pupils with SEN in the public schools that is still present. From segregation to integration The principle of nine year compulsory education and the integration of pupils with SEN in public schools were put in force in the 1975 amendment to the Education Act. The term integration referred to the reforming of special education through the facilitation of regular classrooms for pupils with SEN by the means of pedagogical and environmental adaptations (Haug, 1996; Dyson & Millward, 1997). At the same time, a revised curriculum (M-1974) underscored that all children, regardless abilities, social class or special needs were to be governed by the same regulations and attend their local class during the compulsory schooling. The fundamental principle stated that every child should have equal opportunities to be part of their local community and to live and grow up with their families. The curriculum focused pedagogical differentiation within the classroom as the tool to accommodate the education for the individual. All pupils were to take part in a professional and social community of learning, regardless skills, ethnic, social or emotional conditions; all current prerequisites for inclusive education. The revised understanding of a "school for all", focusing the educators'

responsibility to facilitate learning for the variety of pupils, were confirmed in the later curriculum revisions of 1987 and 1997. In addition, the inclusive perspectives in the Salamanca declaration (Unesco, 1994) inspired the following curriculum and policy revisions.

Although both the curriculum and Education Act emphasized integration, the implementation of the policy in school took time. An evaluation report in the early 1980th showed that the ideology of pedagogical differentiation slightly had been implemented in educational practise, In spite of the state policy, Norwegian education was still organised in a “two-track way” (Pijl & Meijer, 1991), a public school system combined with a system of special schools and remedial classes for pupils with SEN. A White Paper, named “Some aspects of special education and the educational psychology service” (Ministry of Church and Education, 1984-1985), was a driving force in the abolition of the remaining special schools. Since the early 1990th, about 0.5% of the pupils have been given education in special classes or special schools (Pijl, Meijer & Hegarty, 1997; Skårbrevik, 2005; GSI, 2009-10), mainly pupils with severe impairment and disabilities. To support the process of integration and differentiation, the municipality authorities were instructed to provide an Educational and Psychological Counselling service (EPC) involving various professionals (i. e. educational psychologists, specialized teachers and pre-school teachers and social welfare workers). The EPC service should support kindergartens and schools

by providing competency in diagnostic assessment of pupils with SEN, and support the development and execution of the individual pupils’ educational plan and program. In addition, the EPC-service was assigned the responsibility for the assignment of extra recourses to schools with pupils in the right of special education. A unique Norwegian approach in the implementation of inclusive education is ideological principle of adapted education. The term, frequently used in Norwegian school policy documents since the 1980th, was given significant attention in the curriculum revision of 1987, 1997 and 2006. The principle was promoted as an ideological guideline for school policy as well as a standard for all teaching with a particular reference to the variety of pupils in need of additional support. On the school level, adapted education included local curriculum programs adapted to the school’s culture, neighborhood and community. On the individual level, the revision stated that adapted education should support the variety of pupils’ with appropriate and individual adapted challenges, included the challenges immigrants as cultural and linguistic minorities encounter in school. Schools and teachers were told to accommodate both the physical and social learning conditions as well as the learning content to the pupils’ ability, skills and needs

– not the other way around (Ministry of church and Education, 1987). The introduction of adapted education in the curriculum can be seen as a characteristic of the postmodernism in putting the learner at the centre through participant management, differentiated instruction and individually designed and tailored teaching (Krejsler, 2004). The following revision, Curriculum 1997 (L-97) challenged the school policy in several ways. The revision introduced a curriculum framework in two parts: A general part, the “Core Curriculum for primary, secondary and adult education in Norway” (Ministry of Education Research and Church affairs, 1996b), promoting a pupil-centred ideology through diverse and productive learning conditions in inclusive communities. The second part of the curriculum included the subjects curricula (Ministry of Education Research and Church affairs, 1996a), focusing specific learning content and classroom activities to use in school. In contrast to the earlier curricula, the new subject curricula gave a greater priority to theoretical leaning and knowledge. In addition, the revision lowered children’s entrance to school to the age of six, leading to an extensive demand for new teachers, and the provision for pre-school teachers to work in the primary school first years. Finally, inspired by the Salamanca declaration (UNESCO, 1994), the L-97 revision introduced the term inclusion in to the framework.

As for most value-loaded concepts, the term was implemented without any prior discussion or conceptual clarification. The term was used in contextual settings, for example regarding the acceptance of diversity of cultures, values and beliefs, or the acceptance of pupils in need of different kinds of support. On the basis of L-97 revision, the principle of inclusion can be summarized in the following aspects:

- Inclusion concerns participation in a community of learning where every pupils are given responsibilities and opportunities to achieve one's learning potential. The principle requires adaptation of the teaching and learning conditions with regard to issues such as aims, learning content and material, working methods, and evaluation.
- Inclusion concerns the participation in social and cultural communities. Inclusion requires cooperation and democracy, where the pupils take part in common learning activities, and where diversity is understood as enrichment. The principle applies to pupils as well as staff and parents.
- Inclusion concerns the entire school, not just a particular pupil or groups of pupils, where everybody have the right to be a part of the local academic, social and cultural community of learning, as well as provided responsibility to the community. The L-97s’ use of the term

inclusion is an extension of the ideology given in the 1967 White Paper emphasising that all people are unalienable parts of the society (c.f. Ministry of Social Affairs, 1967). The use of the term is also close to the simple understanding stated by Meijer et al. (1997): “The term inclusive education stands for an educational system that includes a large diversity of pupils and which differentiates education for this diversity” (p. 1). The elaborated understanding of the unitary-school, expressed in L-97, attaches the importance to the promotion of equity and democracy, learning and wellbeing for all that “...inspire individuals to realize their potential in ways that serve the common good; to nurture humanity in a society in development (Ministry of Education Research and Church affairs, 1996b,p. 40)

9.17 The promotion of knowledge in the light of inclusive education

As a key factor in the latest curriculum revision, The “Knowledge promotion” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2006), international research comparing pupils learning outcome has to be added. In 2001 the results from the PISA (2000) study was published, and the Norwegian results attracted some attention. In spite of the Norwegian unitary-school system and the total of resources spent on education, the overall result was considerably lower than the neighboring countries – more precisely at the OECD average.

Further analysis showed low between-school variance, and that the distribution of the pupils’ skills was due to differences within schools (Turmo & Hopfenbeck, 2006). A characteristic in the Norwegian results was the spread in the left tail of the distribution, indicating a disproportionately high number of pupils showing low advantage of the teaching regarding subject learning and the acquisition of basic skills. On the other hand, surveys regarding the students’ wellbeing indicated that the majority of pupils enjoyed being at school (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2007). The reports showed that the Norwegian “one-track” education system had to some degree supported pupils’ wellbeing at school, but the ideological principle of adapted education had not succeeded in providing sufficient knowledge for the variety of pupils as intended in the curriculum and in school policy documents.

As a consequence of the worrisome indicators, a government appointed committee, the “Quality Committee” (2001), was given mandate to work out proposals for the improvement of the compulsory school and secondary education. The committees’ suggestions and the following international studies (PIRLS 2001; TIMSS 2003 and PISA 2003), cleared the way

for the current reform, the “Knowledge promotion”, summarized in the following characteristics:

- The promotion of basic skills (i. e. reading, writing, mathematics, English as a foreign language and the use of I.C.T.) as the prerequisites for learning in all grades within all subjects
- New subject curricula, initiating a shift from in detail pointing out specific content and classroom activities, to focus learning objects and goals, combined with local responsibility for pupils’ learning outcome and the quality of school.
- A system of national tests and transparency, providing information on whether the pupils' basic skills and subject learning satisfy the aims and goals in the curricula.

The revision introduced explicit standards for the pupils learning with a specific focus on basic skills learning, including screening of pupils’ progress from the early years. In addition, the reform introduced national tests and the principle of transparency to monitor the effects of the measures. The Core Curriculum (implemented in 1996), emphasizing a pupil-centred educational ideology, was taken further in the Knowledge Promotion. At the same time, the principle of adapted education was given a revised understanding. Until the 2006 revision, adapted education was mainly understood as measures taken to promote learning in pupils who did not respond satisfactorily at the ordinary teaching.

The Knowledge Promotion introduced a revised understanding of the term, stating that adapted

education should be applied to optimize the opportunities for all pupils to realize every pupils academic potential (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998; 2006). By the measures, the reform signalled a shift in terms of what learning involves, how learning shall take place and how learning outcome are to be measured. From an inclusive perspective, an important issue is the consequences of the policy for pupils who experience difficulties to fulfil the demands of the curriculum; pupils in need of special support.

The purpose of education is to challenge the child’s knowledge, skills and emotions by constructing expectations and standards in reach of the individual. To support the process of learning, education employs mechanism to cope with the given challenges, academically and

socially. The support shows up as a variety of educational measures; for some pupils as special education. Emanuelsson (2001) pinpoint the mechanism in force by the discrepancy between what is expected and what the individual pupil is able to handle: Once children are identified as 'different' ... they become problematic to mainstream schools and teachers. From within the categorical perspective the process of labelling children as 'having difficulties', has the effect of investing the source of any difficulty or problem within the child. Once this process is complete, then it becomes easier to transfer the responsibility to 'specialists' trained to deal with the 'problems' exhibited by the child. (ibid., p. 135)

This discrepancy, often seen in school as learning or behavioral problems, is often perceived from a categorical perspective and attributed individuals' characteristics, and some teachers tend to explain pupils' responses on teaching solely by home environment and genetic causes. On the other hand, a lot of the learning related problems pupils experience in school is an interplay between individuals' characteristics (Kirk, 1962), the given task psychological significance (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978), contextual factors related to the processes of teaching (Emanuelsson, 2001) and social expectations (Vehmas & Makela, 2008). The terms and categories used to describe the pupils' in question, do to some degree mirror how schools and educational systems deals with those who fall outside the "standards" of normality.

To handle the variety of learning related problems, schools most often uses combinations of individual training-based models and tolerance response based models. Training-based models are focusing treatment of the individuals' dysfunctions, and the prevention of educational failure, by optimizing the environment and the learning methods, for example by using individual or peer-group lessons. Specific knowledge regarding dysfunctions and disabilities are used to facilitate the learning process to cope with obstacles in school and society. Tolerance-based models, on the other hand, indicate that difficulties might be attributed to environmental, cultural, socio-economic or familial factors. From this perspective, at least two approaches are available.

On one hand, the focus can be turned towards the development of a broader acceptance for human variations and differences, promoting with SEN to become integral parts of school and classes; acknowledged and accepted for what they are. Andrews et al. (2000) pinpoint this postmodernism perspective by saying "disability resides more in the minds of the beholders than in the bodies of the beheld" (p. 259). On the other hand, measures may be taken to change and adopt the environment to fit the variety of individuals; to give pupils with SEN

the support and assistance they need to experience meaningful and social interactions with classmates (Persson, 2006). Some professionals in the field, however, may have overstated the prospect of a change-oriented or accepting tolerance-based model, and been inclined to rule out individual variables in the name of normalization. Obviously, there are limits to what can be accomplished by focusing environmental adaptations for people with for example severe cognitive impairments or specific learning problems.

In the light of these perspectives, Norwegian educators are on one side taught to be more tolerant of children's disabilities as well as to become more skilled in meeting these pupils' instructional needs. The pedagogical approaches most often used are interventions to enable the individual to achieve an acceptable level of performance in respect of post-school expectations. These measures often include temporal segregation of pupils with learning disabilities; however, the measures taken do not necessarily advance the inclusion of pupils who vary from the school-standard of normality. Reports have shown that the dividends do not always pay off the effort, and that some of the measures have been directly counterproductive in terms of pupils' cognitive and social learning (Haug, Tøssebro & Dalen, 1999). In addition, individual training-based models has been criticized to promote ulterior motives, for example, teachers' epistemic authority in the domain of learning disabilities, or even to maintain jobs and positions for the staff. These kinds of controversies have contributed to less individual oriented focuses and greater emphasis on schools as inclusive communities that can facilitate learning for the diversity of pupils.

As outlined in the previous, the promotion of adapted education is a part of the Norwegian approach to implement inclusive education. Haug and Bachmann (2003; 2006) have outlined two

different views of adapted education; a broad and a narrow understanding. The broad understanding is tied to the basic values of inclusion, promoting participation and equality in an inclusive community of learning; basic principles that embraces the social aspects of education in general. This view includes the craftsmanlike processes of fruit full teaching and learning in groups of individuals'. From a narrow viewpoint, adapted education is understood as individual differentiation and optimization through individualized learning programs and individualized education – an understanding close to what usually is associated with education for pupils with special needs. A balanced “tolerance-response” based – “individual-

training” based approach accentuates the relations between individual characteristics’ and environmental factors.

Accordingly, the pedagogical focuses are to be widened beyond the individual's limitations to comprise the educational settings in which all pupils belong. In this context, the schools’ and teachers’ classroom practice are the cornerstones to facilitate and optimize learning conditions for all pupils.

9.18 Inclusion - a prerequisite for adapted education

The properties of inclusion can be seen as a project resting upon humanistic values such as equality, solidarity and man’s inviolability (Persson, 2006), and the principle’s ideological foundation can be traced back to the civil rights movement in the USA in the late 1980th. Inclusion to be considered as a process rather than a state, by which institutions attempts to respond to all humans as individuals. In a school context, inclusion comprises the norms, the standards and the measures that influence school policy at all levels (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996). The process of making complex institutions as school in to a inclusive and cooperate environment, involves the totality of the school, where the staff, the pupils and the parents are involved, and where the processes in facilitating pupil interaction and learning are in focus (Unesco, 1994; Meijer, Pijl & Hegarty, 1997; Unesco, 2000).

One challenge in the implementation of inclusive education is the current focus towards pupils learning across countries, aiming to raise school efficiency and quality. The political education debate in some countries seems captured by conceptions embedded within the Thatcher- / Hirsch-inspired, English/ American systems of assessment and accountability; solely focusing academic performance. Rarely alternative standards are introduced, and from some special educators, the idea of standards focusing learning outcome is often rejected. On the other hand, educational measures involving pupils with special needs have to be assessed and validated to ensure that the measures provides the pupils with skills and knowledge as intended. The challenging question is what kind of assessment procedures and standards can be regarded as valid in the assessment of learning in pupils with SEN?

From an individual perspective, inclusion can be seen as the “special eye” for educational needs to raise participation in class and school activities, focusing the pupils’ interaction and learning within the classroom. From this perspective, pupil' expectations, valued as significant by teacher, the parents and the pupil themselves, are relevant to use as standards.

In this context it is noteworthy to emphasize that the chief use of standards is to focus pupils learning and individual goals as uttered by Cohen: "...it is student work that we want to improve, not standards or scholars' ideas about standards" (Cohen, 1995, p. 155). The assessment of pupils with SEN has to include these kinds of individualistic standards, and use these together with group related academic expectations as indicators for individuals with SEN learning.

From the school perspective, values related to equality are fundamental to facilitate educational settings. Viewed from this perspective, inclusion denotes a process to change schools into educational environments that embraces all, regardless of intelligence, mobility, or learning ability. The process implies the recognition of heterogeneously composed schools, classes and groups, and thereby counteract organizational solutions such as ability grouping, tracking or streaming (Persson, 2006) – standards that are significant for the idea of changing schools into

institutions.

In this context it is appropriate to refer to research showing no adverse effects on pupils learning by including pupils with special needs in public schools and classes (for a review Kalambouka et al., 2007; Nordahl & Hausstätter, 2009; Hattie, 2009) In the previous we have tried to point out that the process of inclusion includes individual and context-oriented perspectives, respectively.

An inclusive school is obliged to develop a relativistic view of what it means for pupils to experience learning related difficulties, and act by intervention and measures so the pupil can cope with their difficulties. Consequently, the pupils' learning problem must be recognized interactively – that is, as a condition caused by an interplay between individual-specific characteristics and environmental factors. In the extension of this notion, inclusion is a premise for adapted education based on a mutual platform of values and culture, focusing both the processes on the policy level, at the school-class level as well as the teacher – pupil interaction.

In addition, inclusive and adapted education comprises challenges to the individual, where responsibility and obligations are balanced according to the pupils' capacity and potential.

10. RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

10.1 The qualitative approach

Our standpoint in social research is subjective. It is based on the belief that social phenomena are socially constructed by participant individuals (Bryman 2004). This research tries to explore the meanings of inclusive education as adopted in the Norwegian context. We have therefore chosen to use the qualitative research approach.

Research based on the qualitative approach focuses on the meanings and is presented in thick descriptions of contexts, cases and/or concepts. It tries to explore and explain specific topics in specific contexts. Close and deep investigation of one or a few cases bears a greater concern in qualitative research than the possibility to generalize. In qualitative research, the participant is expected to give detailed rather than general information on the features of the specific case under investigation (Bray et al. 2007, Bryman 2008, Creswell 2003).

Another purpose of qualitative research is to offer new or broaden already existing theory. This means that one is not necessarily using theory as a major guideline for the research, but using the data collected to make new or expand existing theories. This is referred to as induction (Bray et al. 2007, Bryman 2008). We are using existing literature, theory and research to guide this research paper. However, the purpose is not to fit our findings into these, but to have our findings contribute to new information that may expand them or create new ones.

Interviews with teachers strengthened what we saw during observations. Likewise, what people told us about inclusive education was strengthened with what we saw during observations. This was specifically helpful and necessary after conducting observations; it was helpful to ask participants about the nature of the observations we had made. With this, they explained in more detail how inclusive education functions in Norway, commented on the gaps between policies and practices, and rejected or confirmed conclusions we had drawn from the observations. At the same time, our observations rejected and confirmed aspects of information we collected from interviews beforehand.

10.1 Observations

The observations conducted in this research were semi-structured. They were 1) guided by a list of objectives related to inclusive education practices and consisted of note-taking of how

classes were carried through and how teacher-pupil interactions were. The observation guide was based on theories on teaching and learning, as discussed in previous chapters. With the use of such a guideline we were able to focus our observations. The observations were not randomly focusing on different aspects of classroom practices; they were focused on aspects of classroom practices that support the aims of the research (Patton 2002). Through the observation guide, aspects of teaching practices that support quality inclusive education were under focus. This gave a little structure to our observations, and made it easier to eliminate other aspects of classroom practices. Also, by using an observation guide, comparing the two schools were based on concrete and comparable data.

The observations were conducted in the different classes and grades since the interest was to see the pedagogy teachers used to realize inclusive education. We were furthermore interested in seeing the interactions of the pupil to pupil, and teacher to pupil. The other area of interest was note the opportunities created by the approach and identify traits of exclusion. During our observations we never tried to disturb the routine of the learning process. After an observation there was a follow up meeting with the class teacher, where we discussed areas of concern and clarity was given.

However, no learner was invited in the discussion for we could not get permission from parents to engage the learners. Additionally ten observations were conducted. The teachers observed were both may and female meaning all genders were taken care of. The learners also comprised of all the genders. The teachers were all qualified in pedagogy but were in most cases not trained in special needs. They had long experience of service in teaching and that was a selection tool. The observations were conducted in a normal classroom in most cases although during physical education, arts and crafts, and outdoor learning it was not in a conversational classroom. Lastly all the observed teachers taught in English in order to facilitate us.

The selection of respondents was done without biasness. The gender was taken into account on the selection of the participants. Although, the schools have got very few male teachers we managed to interview and observe two male teachers one at each school. The teaching experience of the participants, ranged from four to twenty years of active teaching. .The participants had informed consent, they were not enticed in any way, and thus we believe they responded accordingly.

10.3 Semi-structured interviews

Further, we have conducted semi-structured interviews. This refers to interviews that are planned and set, but at the same time flexible (Kvale & Brinkman 2009). For this research, we have used an interview guide with a list of objectives or topics under concern for each interview conducted. This gave the participants flexibility with regards to expressing their views on the topics. At the same time, it ensured us answers that were relevant .

10.3.1 Table : Summary of the research methods used below:

Units of analysis	Sampling and method used	Topics investigated
primary section	Purposive sampling Semi structured observations	1) The use of: - Examples and explanations - Assistive devices and resources - Creative and thinking - Group work, individual work and projects - Practical applications to real life situations

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance and help <p>2) The hidden curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interaction between teachers and pupils
Lower secondary section	<p>Purposive sampling</p> <p>Semi structured observations</p>	<p>1) The use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examples and explanations - Assistive devices and resources - Creative and thinking - Group work, individual work and projects - Practical applications to real life situations - Guidance and help <p>2) The hidden curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interaction between teachers and pupils
Class teachers	<p>Random sampling</p> <p>Semi observation and interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inclusive education at the school; features and challenges - Teaching methods, differentiated instruction and assistive devices - Learning difficulties and disabilities
Special needs teacher	<p>Purposive sampling</p> <p>Method observation and interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inclusive education at the school; features and challenges - Learning difficulties and disabilities

10.4 Population and sample

The selection and identification of the two schools under observation was done by the university college. However, we wrote to the schools to ask for permission to conduct the interviews and observations. We were granted permission to carry out interviews and observations in the two schools. A total of six teachers were interviewed and they comprised of four females and two males. Balancing the gender was a challenge because they are very few male teachers in all the two schools. Furthermore ten observations were carried out in the period of one month.

10.5 Ethical considerations

An ethical consideration in social research basically implies the notions of informed consent and confidentiality. Informed consent entails the researcher to give accurate information about the aims of the research to the participants (Bryman2008, Patton 2002). In this research, we informed the participants about the topic and purpose, and why we were interested in interviewing them. Further, we asked all participants whether we could interview them or not, and whether the interviews could be recorded or not. Confidentiality, on the other hand, has to do with level of anonymity (Bryman 2008, Patton 2002). In this regard, names and locations of the schools, teachers and other participants are not published. This is especially important with regards to the schools and teachers, so that teachers' classroom practices and personal expressions and experiences of and towards inclusive education cannot be tracked to Norway. We further received a letter of authorization, allowing us to conduct observations and interviewing teachers at the two selected schools.

Our preconceived knowledge and cultural difference may influence our framing of the questions. The fact that Zambia is more of a traditional society, on other hand Norway is a postmodern society the context may have the traditional inclination or the Zambian context of inclusive education may have a bearing. In order to avoid this were tried to make our questions as clear as possible that our culture does not influence the research.

11. Presentation of data

11.1 Inclusive school

Our role was to determine the extent of inclusiveness in the two schools under survey. The results reviewed that the schools practiced the principle of equality. Learners of diverse ethnic and social background were embraced in these schools. There were no signs of segregation and learners were allowed to freely mix. Both schools had floors which are wheelchair friendly. Although they never had lifts they all had bays for wheelchair use on the first floors. At the time we conducted the survey there were no signs or traces of stigmatization of the learners with special educational needs. The culture is so good that you never notice these learners for they are part of the large school community.

11.2 Teachers/special needs teachers

The teachers were at the center of developing a culture of equality and were seen engaging in researching new pedagogical methods which would promote inclusiveness in the school. They were further involved in the adaptive curriculum. The teachers reviewed that the search for new methods is an ongoing process, in the desire of creating a more inclusive school.

11.3 Teaching strategies

'They say no one is a hub of knowledge' the schools practice the cooperative teaching approach. We were informed that cooperative teaching is designed to increase effectiveness in service delivery. Teachers are given a chance to specialize in comfort zones. The schools have a philosophy that there is richness in diversity. The practical aspect of this is that teachers teach and at times subjects of interest. There is a promotion of team work which is done in the weekly departmental meetings where professional issues are discussed.88c

11.4 Classroom management

The participants disclosed that the classroom played a very important role in fostering an inclusive culture. The elements are illustrated in the diagram below.

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11.5 Individualized educational plan

It is a school policy in all the schools that each individual learner receives a weekly work plan based on their ability. The respondents stated that they endeavor to meet the learners at their point of need and this is attained by means of adaptive curriculum.

Without employing the technique of adapting the content for each learner inclusive education cannot materialize this reviewed. The participants furthermore revealed that this approach was the backbone of inclusive education. The backbone, because it creates a conducive environment for the learners that none is left out in the learning process. Learners at the same level will do different tasks based on their abilities. The concept was not just a policy but an item practiced in all the schools.

the adaptive practice does not end with the curriculum but it is extended to the teaching. Teachers believe in the learning theory of multiple intelligences. It is from this background that teachers treat each learner differently and use a pedagogical ideal for that individual learner.

11.6 Equality/Accessibility

One the striking value of the Norwegians is that of equality. The Norwegian societies are equalizing in many aspects. This value is seen in many areas of this society. This could be the value behind the principle of inclusive education. The schools display real equality and it is seen from the way teachers interact with the administrators and teacher pupil interaction is one thing which signifies equality. It is hard to notice a difference between a male teacher and those who are assigned with administration duties.

11.7 Assessment and placement

The assessment starts with the subject teachers who would make recommendation for further tests. The involved parent is informed before the tests are done and they have to give consent. Thereafter it was revealed that the tests are done at higher level and wait for results. When the feedback is in the application for extra funding is made. The participants disclose that the bureaucracy hinders early intervention, for it may take two to six years for the whole process to be completed. They say perfection is ideal and hard to achieve. In the same manner the practice of inclusive education has its own challenges. The main challenge mentioned was the failure to have early intervention due the painstakingly slow bureaucracy. The participants disclosed that this delay impacts negatively the provision of education. The other highlighted impediment were the parents who do not permit teachers in some case to give special

education to their children citing fear of stigma. These were mainly the most pronounced challenges in all the schools. However, there is a new challenge of the children immigrants who join these schools without any knowledge of Norwegian language. It was further revealed that some of these children come from war torn areas that they might have never had any chance of being in school.

11.8 Common Disorders

The spectrum of disabilities in the two schools was similar and there was at least one learner with a condition of dyslexia and rarely a case of autism.

11.9 Education Act and policy

The participants explained that the school policy has to be in the with Education act they further stated that education was a human right in which must be met no matter the cost. The local municipality has the responsibility of providing compulsory education in an inclusive school. It was further stated that failure to provide a school place for a learner, the parents are free to sue the local municipal.

12 Discussion and conclusion

In the next part we intend to discuss: What are the prerequisites to inclusive education and challenges a case of two schools in Sogndal county Norway? In order to development the discussion well the areas of interest will be discussed based on our observations and interviews.

12.1 School

The regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective implies doing away with discriminatory attitudes, creating a welcoming community, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Furthermore these schools should provide an effective education to the majority of the children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994). To a large extent the two schools fit this described school by the Salamanca conference. The schools had the necessary infrastructure and the assistive devices since Norway is highly modernized the walls had acoustic insulation.

However, the two schools did not have lifts for the floors above the first floor and leading to the ground floor. This would pose a challenge to wheelchair bound learners, in other words the schools still have infrastructure for the able bodied learners.

The other observation was that at one of the schools a learner openly exposed the dislike of the people of color. This is an area of great concern and it goes against the concept of equality and inclusive education. The fact that Norway is becoming multicultural due to number of immigrants and migrant who are joining, such attitudes should not be promoted. In order to make inclusive education a reality the barriers should not have room in an inclusive school.

12.2 Teachers

Smaller classes are often perceived as allowing teachers to focus more on the needs of individual students and reducing the amount of class time needed to deal with disruptions. There is some evidence that smaller classes may benefit specific groups of students such as those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Krueger, 2002). Fortunately the two schools had an excellent teacher pupil ratio which is in the range of 4 to 25 pupils against one teacher. Nevertheless, there is still some issues which need attention. One of the schools had more than half the teaching staff not trained in the pedagogy; this made us wonder how these teachers would apply inclusiveness in their classes. We believe the realization of inclusive education requires qualified teachers who will be able to employ a wide range of pedagogical approach in the quest of realization of inclusive education. The objectives and characteristics of general teacher education states in part, (www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Teacher-Training-in-Norway.Pdf (downloaded, 12:00, 12-05-2015) “The purpose of general teacher education is to provide qualified teachers for the primary and lower secondary school and to further the personal development of the students.”

Furthermore traditional instruction based on the transmission is considered an inadequate teaching strategy (Thomas and Loxley, 2007) Tomlinson et al, (2003) stated that it is necessary to employ differentiated strategies because pupils may not belong to the same zone of proximal development (ZPD) or may not have had the same experience in life. Therefore the constructivism and socio constructivism approach would support the different pedagogical methods that ensure the construction and internalization of diverse knowledge (Tomlinson et al, 2003).

12.3 Special needs teachers

The schools had special teachers as earlier reported who served as resource teachers for the entire school. Per school there was one teacher who was trained in special needs putting quite a heavy workload on these teachers. The role of a resource teacher is very important for they are pillars of the realization of inclusive education since they are involved in cooperative teaching in these schools. If only the number of such teachers can be increased it will go a long way to make inclusive education a reality.

12.4 Teaching strategies

The inclusive approach of including teaching with children with special needs in regular classrooms challenges teachers and schools to re-examine the traditional beliefs and practices traditions and beliefs to determine which are consistent with the intent of inclusive education (Glasser, 2006). Teachers should at all cost avoid teaching methods which would turn the learners into an empty container waiting to be filled. As Freire (1986) states, “Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor.”

In the concerned schools teachers were able to prepare individualized educational plans for all the learners. However, just preparing an adapted curriculum is not the ultimate in itself, there is more to it than mere preparation of individualized education plan (IEP). Striking in one school in as much as the IEP was prepared the teaching strategies were not considerate of the diversity of the learners. In one class there was a learner who could hardly speak or write Norwegian; surprisingly the teacher never took measures to help this learner. The learner in question could neither speak nor write English language or Norwegian language to our understanding inclusive education this learner was not part of the class. In real sense the teacher never communicated to the learner because the language barrier, which naturally excluded this learner.

Related to this, is the presence of untrained teachers who be having limitations in the area of pedagogy since they have no formal teacher training. If the aspirations of inclusive education are to be realized these impediments must be addressed before the dream of an inclusive school are practiced in reality.

12.5 History

In the 1960s the famous Norwegian film-director and journalist Arne Skouen characterized special education with words like ‘a market of compassion’, ‘the marsh, misery of the past’,

‘waiting lists for those who expect to become human’, ‘a line of demarcation between the worthy and unworthy’. He judged education for students with special needs to be disgraceful, immoral and shameful (Skouen, 1966). Fortunately words like these can no longer be used in a general description of special education. The change in perception, without doubt, is as a result of the compulsory school. It is a general view that special education has changed and has in many respects become much more common, human, just and fair now than 30 years ago. This view is held by much other previous research work. To a larger extent the inclusive school has been realized since the schools under survey showed a sign of embracing adapted curricula and prepared individualized education plan. The individualized education plan is very important tool in the realization of inclusive education. In our view although the normalized environment is not fully achieved the schools have basically a friendly atmosphere for learners to meet their needs. The practice of adapted curricula attests that the schools are committed to cause.

The teachers show believe in all the learners and learners are given chance to discover their talent and strengths, this defines how far these school have gone in adapting the curricula. The preparation of an IEP involves all stakeholders, learner, parent and teacher. Not surprisingly in practice the meaning of equal educational opportunity still corresponds to the first two levels of interpretation of social justice: equal formal access and segregated compensation.

12.6 Challenges

By and large implemented reforms aimed at changing what teachers routinely do, changes in instructional practices and it also implies that the architecture structures of the schools be adapted to suit all learners. In our view there is a lot to be done in this area since most schools had no lifts for wheel bound learners. Although, there were no learners with visual impairment the school environment seemed not ready to handle such a condition.

Clear and consistent objectives enhance successful implementation processes surprisingly Norway has continually subjected policy to change during the last 30–40 years. The changes are mainly influenced, political dominance, arena, actor and time. Actual policy then becomes difficult to define, it is diffuse and antagonistic, it varies a lot, it has no clear and unambiguous direction and there has been a lot of disagreement between the different political parties in Parliament. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Commission from 1984 commented upon this (OECD, 1984)

The preparedness of the teachers is an area of concern it seems the school system is flood with untrained teachers. These teachers in my view have limitations pedagogy later alone to handle a class of learners with multiple abilities. The problem was and still is that the development of pedagogy for this transformation and change of code has not taken place. The ideology changed, but the basic structures were as before. Special education had to be adjusted to general education, without changing the basic structures of education. For instance, the organization of the schools, their architecture, the teachers or the teacher education were not prepared for and were not sufficiently reformed to accommodate a dramatic shift like this. Individually adapted teaching had to be developed within an institution with hundreds of years of tradition of collective teaching and where all the fundamental structures have been constructed to serve the collective teaching.

The other area which needs attention is the bureaucratic process involved in the identification and assessment the delays in approval the service is an impediment. The lesson we learnt is that there is too much emphasis on the cost of providing extra lessons than the right of the learner. There is time loss in the system and hinders early intervention. The role of a parent should be redefined too in order to bring efficiency in the system.

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15. Appendix

15.1 Questionnaire

1. Do you have children with special educational needs?
2. How do you ensure such learners benefit from the education for all?
3. What measures have you put in place to identify them?
4. After that realization that the children have special needs what services do you provide?
5. Why do you think this is the best approach in providing education to children with special educational needs?
6. As a teacher do you receive any special training to handle these learners?
7. If the answer is no how do you manage to bring in inclusiveness?
8. Why do you use this method?
9. What kind of curriculum do children with special educational needs follow?

10. Do they write the same tests and examinations as other learners who do not have special needs?
11. How would you rate the approach in terms of effectiveness?
12. What are the strengths of this approach and what the challenges of using this method based on your experience?
13. Are children with special educational needs assessed?
14. Do these children get any preferential treatment taking into consideration of their condition during examination and marking? (such as extra time given to them)
15. What has sustained this approach to children with special educational needs?

Communications

Sogn Og Fjordane University College

Box 6856

Sogndal

The principle

Kvale skule

Sogndal

Dear Sir,

RE: Request to conduct interviews

We seek permission to interviews some of your teachers for our research project.

Kindly consider us to conduct the interviews the first week of April as we will be on teaching placement from 16th of March, 2015 to 27th March,2015 in Solund.

Attached are questionnaires to use during the interview.

Your positive response will be highly appreciated

-----Prisca Songolo <sepoprisca@gmail.com> skrev: -----

Til: silje.husum@sogndal.kommune.no

Fra: Prisca Songolo <sepoprisca@gmail.com>

Dato: 30.03.2015 17:10

Emne: Re: Fwd: Request to conduct interviews at your school

Hi silje. Thank you for the message, we would like to know which dates we are supposed to meet because its not clearly stated in the mail.

Prisca Songolo <sepoprisca@gmail.com>

May 10 (3 days ago)

to me

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <silje.husum@sogndal.kommune.no>

Date: 27 March 2015 at 13:34

Subject: Re: Fwd: Request to conduct interviews at your school

To: Prisca Songolo <sepoprisca@gmail.com>

This are the appointmentst I know so far: Hanna Petra wednesday at 12.15 and Ivar Erlend at 14.50

I will let you know about the two next ones as soon as I know

Silje

-----Prisca Songolo <sepoprisca@gmail.com> skrev: -----

Til: silje.husum@sogndal.kommune.no

Fra: Prisca Songolo <sepoprisca@gmail.com>

Dato: 24.03.2015 11:50

Emne: Re: Fwd: Request to conduct interviews at your school

Hi sorry for late response it fine,we would love to know which day and time would be suitable for this special day

Prisca Songolo (sepoprisca@gmail.com)

