PART THREE

INTERNATIONAL CLASSROOM STUDIES OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICES
COMPARING TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESSES

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1 Introduction

How does school teach in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process (resourses, barriers and dilemmas)?

This is the primary research question in *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion* (WB 04/06, 2006)[42]. The joint research topic deals with development towards an inclusive school. The principle of inclusion is described as follows in the joint research plan (Johnsen, 2013a: 228):

> Inclusion is the global policy prescribing development towards a local regular school that welcomes all children with their unique individual characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs; all children with and without special needs and disabilities; a school combating discriminatory attitudes, and offering meaningful and individually adapted education to every pupil within the community of the class (Frederickson & Cline, 2002; Johnsen, 2000; UNESCO, 1994).

Research teams from seven universities in six European countries participate in the joint research, including the universities of Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb and Oslo. Focus is on selected ordinary schools' and educational teams' activities and interaction with individual pupils as well as the collective basis of the class; also called *the master-apprenticeship relation* (Dennen & Burner, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990). The classes in focus of the studies contain a diversity of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. The primary research question or issue directs the attention to the phenomenon's complexity. Subsequently, this research report contains a joint comprehensive presentation of findings that contribute to answer the primary research question: How does school meet the educational needs of every pupil in a diverse class? The concepts "school" and "educational team" refer to regular teachers and special needs educators as well as school administrators and assistants – in other words, the staff members who work together adapting and implementing the teaching process to the educational needs of the individual learners within the class community[43].

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42 The title *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion* (WB 04/06, 2006) is hereafter shortened to *Inclusive Practices* in the main text.

43 In addition to the concepts of "school" and "educational team", two other concepts are frequently used in this presentation, namely "teacher" and "special needs educator". In schools organised with classroom teachers and special needs educators, these are most often the staff who are in the best position to have thorough knowledge about and are in close contact with individual pupils and the class as a whole. They therefore often represent "school" in this presentation.

Before presenting research findings, the seven participating studies that comprise this research project are presented summarily. The titles of their research plans give an indication of the diverse research focal points:

- University of Belgrade: A Study of the Implementation of a Legal Framework for Supporting Children with Disabilities in Regular School (Rapaić, Nedović, Stojković & Ilić, 2013)
- University of Ljubljana: A Study of the Process towards Inclusion Related to Slovenian Pupils with Hard of Hearing or Functional Deafness (Kogovšek, Košir & Ozbič, 2013)
- University of Oslo: A Classroom Study of Inclusive Practices (Johnsen, 2013b)
- University of Sarajevo: Supporting Pupils with Language and Speech Difficulties in Regular Primary Schools (Zečić, Džemidžić Kristiansen, Hadžić & Čehić, 2013)
- Ss. Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje: A Case Study of a Child with Cochlea Implants within the Inclusive Classroom (Jachova, 2013)
- University of Tuzla: Provision of Education and Rehabilitation Support of Children with Special Needs in Regular Classrooms (Salihović, Dizdarević & Smajić, 2013)
- University of Zagreb: Supporting Inclusion of Children with Special Needs. A Study of Classroom Assistants and Mobile Team of Special Needs Educators in Regular Schools (Igrić & Cvitković, 2013)

The studies' methodological approaches are predominantly qualitative as described in the following (Johnsen, 2014a):

Methodological approaches

- Case study: 5
  - Single-case study: 4
  - Multiple-case study: 1
- Longitudinal study: 2
- Pilot study: 1
- Action research: 3
- Qualitative approach: 3
- Mixed methods approach: 3

Methods

- Questionnaire: 2
- Interview: 5

- Observations: 6
  - Non-participative observation: 1
  - Participative observation: 3
- Document analysis: 3
- Analysis of school documents, teaching material and pupil work: 3

However, the diversity in research foci and methodology is embedded within the joint research issue and common didactic-curricular[44] basis of this international comparative research project, as discussed in the joint research plan (Johnsen, 2013a) and further reflections in this report.

The findings presented here are obtained from selected project schools on the so-called internal micro dimension or level, as described by Robin Alexander (2000) in his major work, *Culture and Pedagogy – International Comparisons in Primary Education* (*Five Cultures*), and further writings (Alexander, 2009). Thus, the joint focus is on school's internal micro dimension, also called inner activity (Johnsen, 2014a), and the ability to develop inclusive practices. The main issue or question mentioned above concerns how to construct a bridge between the principle of inclusion and practices related to individual pupils as partners in the joint class or group. The question challenges practitioners as well as researchers to consider a) what "professional tools" are available for planning, practicing, assessing and revising a teaching process based on pupils' diverse mastery and capability levels – and that are meaningful to their learning process, and b) to embed the teaching-learning process within the classroom community. The extent to which schools aim towards these expectations determines if they are arenas for developing inclusive practices, as argued in Johnsen (2014a). What are these "professional tools" or arenas? How can they be described in researchable terms? In this research project, a common set of didactic-curricular categories represents key aspects or main arenas of the teaching-learning situation and process. They are interrelated with the intended tool users, the practitioners working in school as well as researchers exploring school's practices. The main areas are:

- pupil/s
- assessment
- educational intentions

44 The concept of "didactic-curricular" is used to connect the application of the term "curriculum" in Anglo-American educational terminology and Continental-European use of the term didactic. Similar to the terms "pedagogy" and "education", they tend to be used interchangeably (Johnsen, 2014b).

- educational content
- methods and organisation
- communication
- care

  +
- context / frame factors

These didactic-curricular main aspects or categories are theoretically reflected upon and developed in advance of the empirical studies. They are discussed in some detail in an article in the second of the three project anthologies (Johnsen, 2014b). They have also been tried out in practice and innovation – in particular in a longstanding innovation project between the universities of Oslo and Tuzla/ Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina in collaboration with selected project schools (Johnsen, 2007). Applying the mentioned didactic-curricular main aspects is therefore familiar to these researchers at the start of the international comparative classroom study (O, S, T), as well as introduced to the other participants (B, L, MS, Z). A similar procedure for applying a set of predetermined categories directing the study focus as well as analysis of findings is also discussed and used in Alexander's international comparative studies, where each category is selected through a line of reasoning. When taken together, the categories constitute what he calls a general framework of internal micro dimension as a generic model of teaching (Alexander, 2000: 325; 2004; 2009). But, the choices of main categories in the two different research projects only partly overlap since they are developed in accordance with different main research issues.

This research project is based on three pillars

1) The mutual interrelations between the didactic-curricular main aspects are illustrated in the figure below. They function both as research focal point and as main categories in analysis of findings. Hence, this applied comprehensive didactic-curricular approach represents one of the main pillars in the joint research project (Johnsen, 2014b).
2) The second pillar is Lev Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach to the process of teaching-learning-developing, which is summarily illustrated by his a) focus on the Russian concept of "obuchenie" – meaning *teaching and learning*, but which, unfortunately, is often translated solely with *learning* in Anglo-American inspired texts; and b) introduction of the concept *zone of proximal development* (Alexander, 2009; Chaiklin, 2003; Daniels, 2014a;

Ivić, 2014; Johnsen, 2014c; Vygotsky, 1978; 1987; Wertsch, 1984; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992).

3) The third pillar consists of the resource-based interactive approach between caregiver and child developed by Rye (2001; 2005) and Hundeide (2010). In this research project focus is on examining and categorising if and how teachers' and special needs educators' communication and mediation with single pupils and the whole class is based on the pupils' mastery and learning capability in the zone of proximal development.

Together, the three pillars set the perspective for exploring practices of individually adapted education in the community of the class. The didactic-curricular approach contributes to clarify important arenas or aspects of the teaching-learning process – "obuchenie" – in a resource-based, caring perspective towards inclusion. Thus, the eight main aspects function as focal points or arenas in the field studies as well as in analysis and results. They are bridges between the principle of inclusion, the theories of teaching, learning and development and the concrete studies of inclusive practices (Johnsen, 2014b).

Based on the three pillars briefly described above, the subsequent presentation of findings is structured in accordance with each of the eight main aspects. The practitioners are mainly, but not solely, ordinary classroom teachers and special needs educators. Their activities related to the eight didactic-curricular aspects are thus explored, analysed and described[45].

What kind of empirical findings are presented? The investigation focuses on how school develops and practices educational inclusion. Good practices, dilemmas and challenges are reported. Statistical comparisons are scarce; they are largely applied as part of the backdrop. The main findings are qualitative and based on observations and interviews. The different research teams focus on different aspects represented in the curriculum relation approach and model; some teams focus on all aspects while others examine selected aspects. Thus, all the seven studies are in accordance with the specific research topic of each team

45 References to the seven studies are given with the following abbreviations:
B: University of Belgrade
L: University of Ljubljana
O: University of Oslo
S: University of Sarajevo
SM: Saints Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje
T: University of Tuzla
Z: University of Zagreb
Not all findings are referred to the particular study for reasons of anonymity.

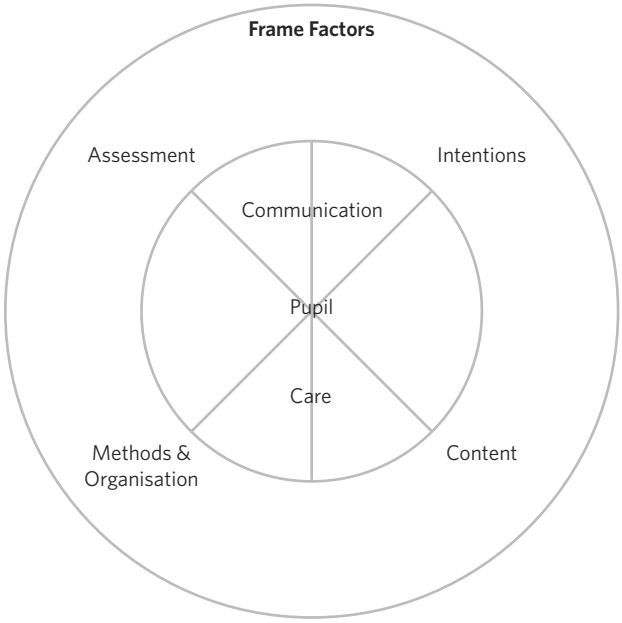

Figure 1. *The Curriculum Relation Model* revised in Johnsen (2007)

and at the same time based on the joint research issue and approach as a basis for the cooperation, as indicated (Igrić & Cvitković, 2013; Jachova, 2013; Johnsen, 2013a; Kogovšek, Košir & Ozbič, 2013; Rapaić, Nedović, Stojković & Ilić, 2013; Salihović, Dizdarević & Smajić, 2013; Zečić, S., Čehić, Džemidžić Kristiansen & Hadžić, 2013).

Upon considering the different contexts and flexible use of the joint curriculum relation approach and accompanying focus areas of the seven participating studies, the question arises: What is being compared? Using a classical metaphor, the question is whether they are "apples and oranges or different kinds of apples". The above account clarifies that the findings are categorised as "different kinds of apples", or empirical phenomena with similarities and differences, each within different contexts. This research report is constructed through a series of joint compilations and revisions conducted by all research teams. Questions regarding the findings' validity or truthfulness and authenticity are discussed in detail in the chapter on methodological considerations.

The report is divided into 16 chapters with sub-chapters, as described in the introduction.

2 The pupil in the community of the class

The pupil in the community of the class is the topic of the first chapter presenting findings. This topic lies symbolically in the centre of the curriculum relation model, demonstrating that the relationship between teacher and pupil – characterised as pupil centred teaching – is of primary concern in inclusive education. Accordingly, a key aspect of inclusion is that schools focus on the pupil as an individual within the classroom community.

What kind of knowledge about pupils is in focus? What kind of information do teachers, special needs educators and educational teams gather and present? How does this knowledge support individual adaptation and flexibility in the teaching-learning process? These are main questions guiding studies of schools' knowledge about single pupils in the community of the class. How is this arena explored? The most widely used methods are observations and/or open or semi-structured interviews. In addition to studying the schools' knowledge about their pupils, several of the teams implement assessments of focus pupils' levels of mastery in a pre-post design in order to measure increased skills and knowledge. In the following presentation, several types of information are gathered from the seven studies and categorised under relevant sub-questions. The development of categories and presentation of findings concerning knowledge about the pupil/s is open or "grounded" in the sense that it is derived from the empirical data. Accordingly, the chapter is divided along the following questions:

- Who has knowledge about the pupil/s?
- Who are the pupils in focus?
- What kind of knowledge is in focus?
- Dilemmas
- Summary

Who has knowledge about the pupil/s?

In the majority of the seven studies, the teacher is the main actor who knows most about the individual pupil. The teacher's main informant is the individual pupil. Teachers gather information about different aspects of pupils' life in school and outside, not only their schoolwork and test results, but through everyday observations and conversations. Similarly, knowledge is gathered through dia-

logue with parents. Classmates may also have extensive personal knowledge about their peers, as described below (O, S). Some of the schools have educational teams where all members cooperate in gathering and sorting knowledge for further planning of the teaching-learning process. In addition, several of the participating schools cooperate with external counsellors, such as educational-psychological services, resource centres, medical professions and other available professionals. Alongside teachers, special needs educators play a prominent role in pupils' schooling. Thus, in five of the participating teams, special needs educators help teachers focus on relevant information. However, none of the participating special needs educators belongs to the individual school's permanent staff; rather, they are employed either at special schools or on behalf of a project university. In one case, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) contributes with salaries for external special needs educators who contribute to the project (Z).

Principals in all research schools have received information and approved the studies. They also supply answers for information requests. In one of the project schools, the principal has a particularly active role in its teamwork (T). The Croatian study is extraordinary because in addition to the external special needs educator acting as advisor to the class, they engage an assistant to support and relieve the classroom teacher (Z).

The role of the teacher differs in accordance with traditions and mentality in the participating countries; consequently, the different roles create various possibilities to gather information. Thus, concerning the amount of time a teacher has to get to know his/her pupils, two of the participating countries seem to belong at opposite ends of a continuum. In the Norwegian school, the same classroom teacher teaches all or most subjects during the first four school years. In contrast, the Macedonian school has eleven teachers who each teach a specific subject at each grade level throughout the school year (SM). Consequently, the Norwegian teacher has considerably more time to acquire in-depth, comprehensive knowledge of each pupil than the Macedonian teachers do, and different strategies may be used to collect information. Since the Norwegian study is longitudinal and lasts over a period of almost six years, three classroom teachers have participated in the study (O).

Who are the pupils in focus?

The majority of the seven studies focus on 1) pupils with different special educational needs within regular classes, 2) their relationships with their classmates and 3) their individual educational needs. The pupils in focus are the following:

B: The University of Belgrade: Pupils with different special educational needs in regular classes
L: The University of Ljubljana: Adolescent pupils who are functionally deaf or hard of hearing in regular and special classes
O: The University of Oslo: All the pupils in an ordinary class with and without special educational needs.
S: The University of Sarajevo: Pupils with speech and language challenges in regular classes
SM: The University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje: One pupil with cochlea implant in a regular class
T: The University of Tuzla: Pupils with different special educational needs in regular classes
Z: The University of Zagreb: One pupil with psychosocial difficulties in a regular class

What kind of knowledge is in focus?

There are two high-priority areas: 1) academic level and progress, and 2) psychosocial wellbeing and mastery. 1) In six of the studies where one or several pupils with special educational needs are in focus, their level of knowledge and skills, including mastery of school subjects, are assessed more or less in detail. For some of these pupils, this is the first time they receive a systematic and detailed special needs educational baseline assessment with accompanying recommendations for teaching and learning. An important part of the special educational knowledge tradition consists of finding ways to overcome learning difficulties by "going around the challenge", and there are reports about successes, but also worries whether or not recommended teaching procedures will prove successful.

2) Pupils' psychosocial relationship and functioning is another topic of great attention. Questions concerning relationships with peers both in and outside of class are examined for pupils in general and specifically for those with hearing disabilities. There is focus on learning about peer relationships for pupils with psychosocial and behavioural challenges as well as for those having language and communication challenges. In addition to these areas, a variety of different personal and contextual aspects are investigated, including personal history, interests and characteristics, family relationships and important environmental influences.

Reports show concerns expressed by teachers, special needs educators and parents with respect to pupils' social acceptance and academic mastery. However,

mixed in with concerns there is hope of developing classes where all pupils are included and have a common sense of ownership.

What do the schools recommend as relevant and necessary information about individual pupils in order to teach according to their different levels of mastery and proximal learning capabilities? The above-mentioned findings provide examples indicating answers to this crucial question. Following this summary, a reported example offers a coherent illustration based on information is gathered from a series of observations together with open interviews focusing on each pupil over a period of three years. The informant is a classroom teacher who has been responsible for the case class throughout its first four years at school. The class consists of thirty pupils, a number that fluctuates, as there are incoming and outgoing pupils whose families have moved to or from other school districts. Asking what is most important to know about each of her pupils, she replies:

> I emphasize wellbeing … that the child is thriving. If I discover that a pupil is not flourishing, I try to do something about it … that everyone has someone to play with, that no one should be allowed to say no when someone asks them to play (O).

When it comes to academic levels of mastery, she points out that since she has been their teacher for several years already … "I suppose I know where each of my pupils can perform a bit more" (O). How does she acquire this knowledge? Through talks with individual pupils, informal and formal assessments, school- and homework, observation of pupils' activities and interaction both in the classroom and outside during breaks, she tells. She regularly reviews each pupil's workbooks in all school subjects. One important and consistent source of information is the weekly learning plan – or class/individual curriculum – that displays every subject taught. The pupils also have their own "intermissionbook" where they write all kinds of things about themselves. These notebooks tell the teacher a lot about her pupils' interests, likes and dislikes. In addition, the teacher has her own "pupil book"; a kind of logbook where she notes information observed during the school days. She reviews these books before every meeting with the pupils' parents, who in turn provide important information and expectations concerning their child.

This teacher's stance is similar to that of educational philosopher Nel Noddings (1992; 2003), who argues that pupils are not merely pupils; rather, they are comprehensive and multifaceted human beings. In a typical local Norwegian school, pupils are familiar with their classmates' other qualities beyond

the academic. This awareness is highlighted in the Howard Gardner- inspired practice-oriented *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* (Armstrong, 2003 in Norwegian translation by M. K. Ofstad). There all classmates have a weekly assignment to select the number one area of "cleverness" or "intelligence" for each classmate, one at a time. Consequently, the pupils are "labelled" with what they are considered to perform best at, whether it is dancing, football, skiing, chess, etc. Only positive characteristics are presented and discussed, and the teacher learns a lot about her pupils through their classmates.

The Norwegian case school cooperates with several external services and professions, including 1) medical services if a pupil has a chronic disease that affects his or her schooling and development; 2) local educational-psychological service and possibly national resource centre in case of special needs and disabilities; 3) local child welfare authorities and other relevant institutions. All are important sources of information, knowledge exchange and cooperation. Subsequently, both internal and – in some cases – external information create a holistic impression of each individual pupil (O).

Providing more concrete in-depth information from the single-case study, the teacher describes the knowledge she has about each of her pupils and her relationship with them. It turns out that she has deep academic and psychosocial knowledge of each of her pupils. She knows a lot about their interests and challenges both in school and in their home environments.

On the question if any dilemmas or challenges ever arise after having acquired such detailed information about each pupil. She replies that not all information is relevant; indeed, there is gossip about pupils and their near surroundings:

> "You have to sort out what may be relevant from what is not".

However, sometimes what has seemed unimportant suddenly sheds light on problems a pupil is facing – or vice versa. What does the teacher focus on; the individual pupils or the diversity of the class? In her view, each single child relates to the class' diversity in their own specific way. The different class-plans or weekly curricula may serve as an illustration of this educational diversity. All but one pupil has the same curriculum. However, on the one hand three pupils have shorter and more concrete reading assignments since they are still learning to recognise a few letters' sound-sign relationship as well as break down long words. On the other hand, three pupils have additional and more challenging arithmetic assignments than the rest of the class due to their high level of interest and mastery. Another of the pupils has an individually designed weekly

plan comprised of the same school subjects and much of the same content as the rest of the class; yet this pupil also has shorter and – at times – different assignments. These are examples of differentiated weekly workloads related to the teaching-learning classroom community. Class observations support the information provided by the teacher. This multifaceted knowledge of the pupils (O) resembles descriptions from other teams, more specifically from Sarajevo (S) and Tuzla (T).

Dilemmas

Three kinds of dilemmas related to gathering knowledge about individual pupils are reported. 1) Teachers and special needs educators get information about pupils and their relationships that are irrelevant for both the school and teaching-learning relationship. Some of the information flow may be gossip and "should be forgotten". In some cases, it is difficult to distinguish between unnecessary and important knowledge. 2) Sometimes it is difficult to spot important information about serious difficulties hidden in small talk. Perhaps it is the pupil him-/herself who tries to ask for the teacher's help against bullying, abuse or other psychosocial and academic problems. In the Norwegian case, interviews with teachers and principals reveal that the case school has a practice concerning dilemmas and challenges like these: The teacher contacts the principal about problematic information and they discuss the matter – in some cases with the entire administration – before they decide whether to act according to the information or to set it aside (O). 3) Much of the information gathered about pupils – specifically about pupils with special needs – is strictly private, pertaining only to pupils and their families. It is therefore crucial to follow ethical standards safeguarding sensitive private information and share all necessary information about the teaching-learning process with parents, as reported by some of the research teams (O, S, SM, T).

Summary

This chapter focuses on the attention – the human-professional capacity for holistic and empathetic observation of the single pupil in his or her context. Summing up, according to information from the research teams, gathering knowledge about individual pupils either a) focus on pupils with some

kind of special educational needs, or b) on all individual pupils in the class, including those who have special needs. While cooperation between ordinary teachers and special needs educators is central, it varies. In the majority of studies, special needs educators have the role of advisors or counsellors, even though the proximity of their contact with teachers as well as parents varies (B, L, O, S, SM, T, Z). In some of the studies special needs educators also teach pupils with special needs (S, T). In the Ljubljana case in particular, special needs educators are expected to teach special classes for young people who are functionally deaf or hard of hearing, whereas they are advisors in ordinary classes where pupils with the same special needs are in the class (L[46]). One assumption from the study is that focusing on getting to know a pupil depends upon a school's – that is, teachers', school administrators' and special needs educators' – attitudes, attention and assessment as well as having sufficient time to do it. How does this many-faceted knowledge support making individually adapted and meaningful teaching and learning in the community of the class? This question is followed up in the presentation of the six other didactic-curricular aspects of schools' internal activities. As reported, assessment is fundamentally important for gathering knowledge about a pupil's level of mastery and need for further support in the learning process. Together with teachers, special needs educators play an important role in this task. Educational assessment is one of the main components of the educational and special needs educational professions. The next chapter describes the reported findings on assessment.

3 Assessment

What is assessment in an educational context? This study applies the following preconception:

> To assess and evaluate is to gather, interpret and reflect on a variety of information in order to adjust the direction towards a future goal. Educational assessment and evaluation consist of considerations and judgements about teaching and learning environments, processes and results, and about their contextual relations. Special

46 The situation of pre-lingual deaf children has radically changed due to the development of cochlea implants. Accordingly, the education of special needs educators for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing has also changed in the years after the study presented here, as the Ljubljana team report. Similar developments have taken place in other participating countries.

> needs educational assessment and evaluation draw attention to specific possibilities, barriers and adaptations concerning teaching and learning environments, processes and results, and their contextual relations (Johnsen, 2014b).

Accordingly, assessment focuses on the learning process, level of mastery and need for educational support of every single pupil as well as the whole class. Similarly, it focuses on whether and how educational intentions, content, methods, class organisation, communication and care as well as contextual factors contribute to meaningful learning – or function as barriers to the learning processes. It may also identify and describe possible dilemmas between special needs educational practices and traditionally applied practices. Hence, this report concerning different kinds of assessment is structured in accordance with a set of preconceived aspects of assessment as part of educational inclusion as well as traditions, ideas and research about teaching-learning processes (Daniels, 2014a; 2014b; Ivić, 2014; Johnsen, 2007; 2013; 2014 a; 2014b; Vygotsky, 1978).

The professional knowledge bank of ordinary- and special needs education stores a multitude of assessment approaches and -tools. Some of these are assumed to promote individually adapted teaching and learning, others not. Accordingly, the focus of this international comparative research project is to describe assessment practices and their relation to the policy of inclusion. Who and what are assessed? Who assesses? What kinds of assessment approaches and methods are used – how are they used and why? Concrete tests and other assessment tools are documented in individual articles from the research teams. In this article, the descriptions are limited to findings on more general level, based on the information found, analysed and presented by the research groups. In some of the research groups, teams directly implement assessments, mainly related to selected learners as part of action research implementation, while other research groups limit the study to information gathering. Unlike the grounded or open exploration of schools' knowledge about their pupils, the inquiry of assessment is based on the following predetermined categories:

- Examples of assessment approaches and tools applied individually
- Examples of approaches and tools applied in class- and group assessment
- Who assesses?
- Who is assessed?
- What is assessed and how is it applied?
- Assessment of curricula
- Dilemmas
- Summary

Examples of assessment approaches and tools applied individually

The Zagreb team argues:

> The most important thing for a good assessment is to develop an individual approach to teaching and supporting children. The educational intention should focus on every child's achievements based on acceptance and support of diversity in accordance with contextual factors (Z).

Concerning direct information gathering about individual pupils' level of mastery in different areas and school subjects, *speaking with the individual pupil* is reported to be a frequently used approach – from everyday talks to more focused and systematic dialogues and interviews. In all cases, single pupils' *schoolwork* is examined. *Portfolios* of learning tasks are systematically gathered and assessed (SM). *Weekly curricula* are examined either for all individual pupils (O) or only those with special needs. Some teams find that schools perform *self-evaluation* as part of the overall assessment. Specific *achievement tests and ability tests* are applied and followed up by some research teams[47]. These are, as a rule, based on diagnostic tests of specific impairments and often implemented by external interdisciplinary expert teams. As documented in the individual team presentations, the research groups in Sarajevo, Tuzla and Zagreb implement and follow up pupils with specific challenges, disabilities and special needs with comprehensive and targeted ability tests. The research groups also focus on *teachers' self-evaluation*. Questions are asked about assessing individual pupils, reasons for different kinds of assessments and how they are related to further educational support. In the cases where teachers use *logbooks*, as they do in Norway and Macedonia, they are interviewed about how they are used for assessment purposes and followed up in observations. Thus, assessment of individual pupils and of how and why teachers and special needs educators select their assessment tools are in focus. So are issues regarding how assessment is related to developing further educational goals in the individual pupil's teaching-learning process.

47 Detailed information about the use of individual tests and other assessments are found in the research teams' articles in Johnsen (2013; 2014) and in this anthology.

Examples of approaches and tools applied in class- and group assessment

Tests are typical class assessment tools; *class tests* in all kinds of subjects, *school tests*, *national* and *international tests*. The great majority of tests are informal and frequently repeated, such as the English glossary tests given every Friday in grade six (O). In some cases school beginning tests are used in order to screen pupils' level of mastery in certain subjects at the beginning of autumn semester (O, S), for example arithmetic. Formalised screening tests are used for school beginners for information about their wellbeing at school (O). However,tests are not the only assessment tools. Similar to individual assessment, *checklists*, *observations*, *drawings*, *pupils' works*, and *logbooks* or diaries are also used in the assessment of entire classes or groups. As may be seen, the types of assessment tools used for classes and individual pupils contain many similarities. Class tests are often graded using scales that are usually norm referenced, that is, where the single pupil's results are compared with those of the class. A grade gives only a superficial impression of mastery. However, a teacher may look beyond the grade to what has actually been mastered and where the learning barriers are – and consequently, what kind of support the pupil needs in order to take a step further in the learning process (Johnsen, 2014b). In practice, a lot of detailed information about a pupil's concrete level of mastery comes from their answers on class assessments.

Who assess?

Class- or subject teachers administer class- and subject assessments. However, other professions both inside and outside of the school also administer and interpret assessments. Thus, 1) one of the case schools has special needs educators employed during the project period (S); 2) another case consists of regular and special classes that have employed special needs educators either as teachers or advisers (L); 3) the class teacher has additional education in aspects of special needs education (O); 4) the case school, being a regular school, is supported by a school with several years' experience in special needs education and inclusion (B); 5) the school has special needs educational support (Z). In all seven cases, special needs educators and -researchers have participated in the study, and, as mentioned above, they take a direct part in assessment in some of the schools (S, SM, T, Z).

External special needs educators and expert teams assess special educational needs and disabilities in all participating countries on either the municipal-, district- or national level. This has consisted of either a mainly educational-psychological counselling centre (EPC) (O) or more cross-professional teams, including medical professions (B, L, O, S, SM, T, Z). Other external institutions also offer special needs educational support. In some of the countries, special schools or centres are authorised supporters. In other countries, such as Norway, there is a network of national and regional resource centres – Statped (http://www.statped.no/) – specialising in different kinds of disabilities and special educational needs. Their task is to support schools and educational-psychological service with updated knowledge. Research within different areas of special needs education and inclusion takes place at universities in all participating countries – sometimes as cross-disciplinary studies, such as special needs education and medicine, or as special needs- and ordinary education, etc. Thus, assessment and evaluation take place on all these levels; school level, external special-needs educational level and research level. Still, the local school and class teacher seem to be the most central stakeholders when it comes to assessment within the participating studies. Cooperation between regular teachers, special needs educators and researchers take place, either with externally employed special needs educators or internal special needs educators employed on a temporary project basis. During the research period, none of the case schools has sustainable internal employment of certified special educators.

Who are assessed?

So far, the class and individual pupils have been at the centre of the assessment discussions.

However, according to the main research question, a) how does school teach in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process (recourses, barriers and dilemmas)? And b) the description of assessment above; attention turns towards the teaching-learning participants at school: Do teachers assess their own teaching in other ways than through pupil assessments? It seems that in the seven studies, teaching plan revisions are mainly based on pupil assessments. Individual assessments are mainly focused on pupils with different special educational needs; they are versatile, thorough and comprehensive. However, the Macedonian research team reports:

> We also assessed the level of success in the instruction performed by the different teachers. Initial assessments of the teaching process informed us that regular mainstream teachers lacked knowledge regarding the educational process of a child with a cochlear implant. As this was an action research project, we had two workshops with teachers during which we suggested strategies for working with this pupil. Our next video observations showed us that the teachers implemented these instructions in their everyday work and increased their level of success during the teaching process. In this way, they managed to meet the pupil's level of mastery (SM).

This is an example of active assessment of teachers' knowledge and ability to teach in accordance with a pupil's individual educational needs. In this research project, teachers' work is evaluated in all classroom studies in accordance with the main research question. Thus, teaching is described in relation to the a) curriculum or teaching plan; b) variety and relevance of assessment procedures; c) pupils' process of learning and mastery; d) ability to focus on the single pupil's learning process and need for educational support; and e) ability to create and maintain a psychosocial and educational inclusive class celebrating diversity. As mentioned, six of the studies focus on pupils with special needs, whereas the Norwegian study focuses on how all the pupils in a case study class are assessed on both an individual and class basis (O).

What is assessed and how is it applied?

Assessment has already been divided into whether it focuses on individual pupils or classes and groups. As mentioned, when it comes to class assessment, there is a long tradition for using so-called norm-referenced assessment or tests of all kinds, from class tests in different school subjects to standardized national and international tests. These tests' common denominator is that they are designed to compare and rank pupils in relation to others. As also indicated, this kind of ranking is not sufficient when it comes to following up single pupils' learning progress as an important part of individually adapted education in diverse pupil groups. Does this mean that these assessment traditions and tests should be abolished and new assessment procedures invented? What about all the classroom tests? It may well be that some tests would be better avoided. However, a provisional answer may be that it depends upon how the teacher and special needs educator together apply the results of a class test. Do they only look at the grades? Or, do they, as mentioned, analyse details of the pupil's answers in order to find more exact indicators about level of mastery, next probable learning steps and overall need for support? Do the seven studies provide answers to these questions?

The summary of class assessments above suggests variation in use, where some of the class assessments are expected to serve as screening tests – possibly followed up by individual assessments.

While a main purpose of assessment is to follow up the concrete teaching-learning process, it may also serve as documentation and argumentation for providing necessary extra resources to a class. This is formalised in the Norwegian system, as indicated in the following example from the longitudinal study.

> One of the pupils has reading difficulties. In cooperation with parents, the school applies for additional resources in order to be able to give him more efficient support. The application procedure is as follows: 1) The school prepares a holistic assessment of the pupil's level of mastery, showing high level mastery in arithmetic and other subjects and slow progression in reading acquisition, indicating dyslectic problems. The application is delivered to the municipality's educational-psychological service office (EPC). 2) This is followed up by further assessments and concludes by recommending additional special needs educational resources to the municipality education office. 3) The education office then allocates additional resources (O).

In this process all assessment approaches are used, including information from the teacher's logbook, analysis of weekly plans and the pupil's school work as well as relevant class tests, talks with the pupil and – what is mandatory – dialogue with parents along with their written consent to apply for support from EPC. Thus, in this case, the traditional process of assessment of the teaching-learning situation for a pupil with possible special educational needs is followed. Does this combination of internal and external assessment contribute to increased possibilities for individually adapted support and inclusive practices? In this case, it is fair to say that it did. However, the majority of special units and -schools in several Norwegian municipalities indicate that assessment procedures such as these lead in many cases to pupils' segregation instead of participation in an inclusive class (O).

Another example is taken from the report of the Zagreb team, where a group of professionals develops a proposal for a teaching model based on pedagogical and special needs educational assessment. The assessment results in a) an accommodated programme with decreased content and special needs educational approach; b) individualisation of activities with an emphasis on the importance of adapting methods, means and actions; and c) a special programme for children with multiple difficulties. The Zagreb team also notes that during the transition from preschool, assessment material is handed over from their special professional team to the school (Z).

Assessment of curricula

As indicated above, when teachers are assessed or assess their work, their curriculum plan and -implementation are usually important topics that receive attention. This research project focuses on the relationship between 1) the curriculum and 2) pupils' individual teaching-learning process 3) in the community of the class, since this threefold relationship constitutes main aspects of educational inclusion. More specifically, attention is paid to whether and how educational intentions, content, methods, class organisation, communication and care as well as contextual factors – or some of these aspects either contribute to meaningful learning or are barriers in the learning processes. What kind of curriculum plan and practice is at stake here? The starting point is the school's curricula from the short-term and everyday perspective. According to some of the research teams, weekly and even daily plans are revised and practiced (O, SM, Z). The Macedonian team, which follows up the teachers' curriculum revision in detail, finds that "… only very small adaptations from the regular class curriculum are necessary for their case pupil. These are mainly related to task differentiation and increased use of written messages in order to clarify communication of instructions …" (SM). Generally, it seems that adaptations and revisions of curricula for individual pupils are mostly based on informal observations and other assessments through examining the pupil's assignments and presentations during direct individual support of this pupil. The teacher may decide that there is a need for further repetition, going back one step or using other means of explanation. The teacher may also decide that the time has come to move faster forward in the teaching-learning process. These adaptations probably take place in a combination of systematic professional considerations based on the abovementioned assessments, often in combination with personal-professional intuition and tacit responses on behalf of the teacher or special needs educator. In long-term revisions of class- and individual curricula, teachers and special needs educators make use of their entire range of class- and individual assessments of the teaching-learning process; this revision is presented and discussed with the pupils' parents (O, S, T, SM, Z). The seven studies indicate that the case schools' everyday revisions, assessment of individual- and class curricula and even long-term curricula are directed towards individual adaptation of teaching and learning processes within the community of the class. How, then, is the described assessment practices internally in the schools related to national curriculum in the participating countries? The question is addressed in the next chapter, which discusses educational intentions.

Dilemmas

Assessment and evaluation may reveal dilemmas between special needs educational practices, inclusive practices and traditionally applied practices. Likewise, assessment of assessment (meta-studies) may reveal dilemmas and barriers within actual assessment practices. Are such dilemmas discovered and discussed in the seven studies of this research project? Several dilemmas are discussed in the following, some of them with reference to findings, others with only vague connections to this research project. The following topics are addressed; a) the dilemma between local school curricula and national curricula; b) the classical dilemma between assessments and the danger of negative labelling; c) dilemmas related to choice of perspective or direction with respect to assessment tools and -cultures; d) and the problem of whether and how the organisation of assessments affects the way schools teach.

Dilemma A. Several of the participating teams draw attention to a possible dilemma between individual curricula, local school curricula, national curricula and international tests. The Sarajevo team articulates this in following:

> National curriculum is followed, being mandatory in a 70% share while the remaining 30% allows for teachers' flexibility. Observations show that while teachers in both schools (participating in the study) stick to the national curriculum and plan using the traditional approach in separate subjects, in daily planning they make individual plans for children with special needs based on their potential and challenges … (S)

Along with comments from other research teams, this description indicates a possible dilemma between teaching demands in national curricula and adaptation of the teaching-learning process to the level of mastery of every pupil in diverse classrooms. Internationally, obligatory national curricula having narrow and strict content represent a serious challenge to being able to adapt a curriculum for individual pupils, whether this is due to pupils having either an exceptionally high level of mastery or problems meeting the requirements in some or all areas. The Nordic national curricula, such as found in Norway, are flexible, since they are constructed as framework plans that allow variations as well as exceptions to general annual mastery norms. As a result, no Norwegian pupil repeats a grade, and everybody has the right to move from the lower secondary to upper secondary level (Education Act, 1999). Still, this does not mean that all inequalities have been abolished in the Norwegian educational system. In spite of the rights of all pupils to education in accordance with their

individual level of mastery and capabilities throughout elementary-, lower- and upper secondary school, a gap between official rights and actual practice has been revealed in several studies (Johnsen, 2014d). Consequently, there is reason to believe that a number of pupils move up the school system with hidden difficulties because not enough attention has been paid to assessing their individual educational needs (O).

The participating teams report that the principle of inclusion has been incorporated in their educational laws and policy papers. However, changes in other paragraphs needed in order to carry out inclusive practices may not have been made. Nonetheless, the Zagreb team reports that the new Primary School Act (2008) creates the possibility for acknowledging pupils with special educational needs by defining Croatian national educational standards for assessment, individualisation and adaptation in accordance with children's special needs (Z).

Since public interest in inclusion and disability rights peaked in the 1990s, there has been an international trend towards competition with regard to pupils' achievements during recent decades, with a strong emphasis on assessment programmes such as the *Programme for International Student Assessment* (http://www.pisa.no/) and a number of similar international competitions. The media have a great responsibility for the growing mind-set surrounding "Educational Olympics". Meanwhile, inclusion is fading into the shadow of this new educational discourse. For example, in Norwegian teacher education, courses in education and special needs education have been decreased in favour of increased time for the so-called main subjects of mathematics, first language and English.

Dilemma B is a classical dilemma related to the importance of thoroughly assessing pupils' level of mastery and need for educational support; specifically, this concerns pupils with special educational needs and disabilities – and the danger of negatively labelling these same pupils. Being labelled and categorised into a difficulty- or disability group may have negative effects on both the pupil's self-esteem and other pupils' attitudes towards them (Johnsen, 2014b). All the research teams have been aware of this dilemma. In the Norwegian case the class teacher raises this concern and also recognises this concern among parents. The concern is echoed in other studies; thus, sensitive planning for every pupil in all contexts is required (B, L, O, S, SM, T, Z).

Dilemma C relates to the choice of perspective and use of specific assessment tools or approaches as well as the overall assessment culture. Is there too much

or too little emphasis on assessment? Is too much time spent on assessing and consequently less time on teaching? What is the aim of assessing a pupil with special needs: a) is it in order to consider placement in a special unit or special school? or b) Is it to facilitate high-quality education within the framework of a regular school and class? In this cooperative research project, three of the research teams implement extensive assessments of focus pupils with special needs in their action research studies. However, their goals are to establish levels of mastery, specific educational needs and levels of educational progress as well as success rates of inclusion. Their extensive assessments are proportional to the educational measures taken and the results found and are thus helpful in facilitating increased quality of education within the framework of the selected regular schools and classes (S, SM, T).

Dilemma D. Does the way assessment is organised affect how schools teach? For example, do schools and classes plan their teaching in order to get high scores on national or international tests such as PISA? This is a hotly debated topic. Or, does the principle of inclusion stated in laws and policies direct assessment policies in schools and classes? In this research cooperation project the principle of inclusion has guided the organisation of assessment – especially in the action research studies, whereas it has guided critical explorations in the remaining studies (B, L, O, S, SM, T, Z). This is so, even in the study that has critically examined whether pupils with hearing disabilities felt more included in regular classes or in special classes (L).

Summary

Assessment of mastery levels and proximal developmental steps is a prerequisite for relevant teaching. This is of specific importance for pupils who have special educational needs, since what is special is often implicit, hidden or unexplored. Consequently, systematic development of sophisticated assessment tools is an important part of special educational research. However, it is important not to "get lost in assessments"; on the contrary, the primary task of special needs education is to examine the set of learning strategies that function for a pupil in order to find matching teaching approaches. Hence, a number of informal assessment procedures along with more systematic tests are of great importance. Findings concerning the following aspects of assessment are therefore gathered from the seven studies' reports:

Assessment approaches and tools applied for individual pupils:

- formal and informal talks with the pupil
- examination of school work
- examination of portfolios of learning tasks
- examination of the pupils' weekly curriculum
- individual achievement and ability tests
- the pupil's self-evaluation
- talks with the parents and other teachers
- teacher's self-evaluation
- special needs educators' evaluation of individual curriculum and the pupil's progress

Assessment approaches and tools applied in class- and group assessment:

- Class tests – school tests – national tests – international tests
- Check lists
- Observations
- Pupil assignments
- Pupils' logbooks
- Teacher's logbook and class curriculum

Who assesses?

- Class teacher
- Subject teacher
- Special needs educator
- Educational-psychological service and other external services

Who is assessed?

- All pupils in the class or classes in the same age group
- Individual pupils with special educational needs
- Class teachers' work and the learning progress of pupils with special educational needs

Four dilemmas or challenges are discussed, whereof some refer to the question of what is assessed. The four dilemmas are:

a) dilemma between individual curricula, local school curricula, national curricula and international tests
b) dilemma between assessments and the danger of negative labelling

c) dilemma related to choice of perspective or direction when it comes to assessment tools and -cultures
d) the problem of whether and how the organisation of assessments affects the way schools teach.

Assessment is possibly the one element of special needs education that is the most criticised. Much of the criticism concerns negative labelling, discussed as dilemma B above. Another type of criticism is that assessment, more specifically special educational assessment, takes up a great deal of time in professional practice, possibly at the expense of the time and skills necessary for special needs educational teaching together with ordinary teaching and, consequently, on developing inclusion. When it comes to this cooperative research project, overall, it seems that the assessment procedures explored and implemented in the seven studies, even though different, aim at increasing inclusive practices. This is not surprising, since educational inclusion is a main topic, and consequently, emphasis on exploring the development of inclusion in the selection of participating schools as well as research design – which is either action research or "good cases". The question about how assessment is applied is a recurring theme in this report. Accordingly, the question leading to the next chapter is on how schools gather information – informally as well as through assessment procedures – about single pupils in the community of the class – are connected to the continuous "spiral process" of developing individual educational intentions for the diversity of educational needs in the class for all.

4 Educational intentions

Institutionalised education in schools is, as a rule, built on intentions described in education acts and other policy documents. An important part of educators' professional work is to transfer general intentions into concrete and manageable goals through adapting them to pupils' capacity and needs for teaching support. Society has a need to hand over traditions to new generations, helping them to become responsible adult citizens and develop new knowledge and skills for the future. Educational aims and goals in national acts reflect this need. However, pupils have their own more or less clear-cut personal aims and preferences, distant future dreams and concrete, immediate objectives. In the intersection between societal and individual interests, educational intentions may be characterised as the educational what and why – sharing this char-

acteristic with teaching-learning content. Selecting teaching-learning goals and objectives in an individual curriculum is therefore reasonably based on three components:

- Aims and goals stated in education acts and other official documents
- Individual aims and goals
- Assessment of the learner's knowledge, skills and learning potential (in accordance with Lev Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" discussed in Chaiklin, 2003; Davydov, 1995; Hedegaard, 2005; Ivić, 2014; Johnsen, 2014b; 2014c; Wertsch, 1984; Wertsch & Tulviste, 2005).

In view of the above, the question about how the schools in this research project are able to develop concrete inclusive teaching- and learning goals may be rephrased as follows: How does a school's knowledge about official aims together with the single pupil's learning potential and goals contribute to the development of concrete, manageable, individual teaching-learning goals in the community of the class?

The participating research teams focus on describing and explaining connections and differences between short- and long-term goals, including even goals from a lifelong perspective. The Zagreb team points out that individualisation as an educational approach is defined by their country's National Strategy (2007), National Plan (2006), Law on Primary and Secondary School Education (2008) and Croatian National Educational Standards (2007), (Z). As pointed out above, all research teams state that the principle of inclusion is affirmed in national policy papers and educational acts, although in different ways and levels of thoroughness, it would seem. Based on this situation, the follow-up question is whether and how this principle is realised in school practice. The Sarajevo team describes its findings in the following way:

> While general goals for education and socialization are determined annually, weekly objectives exist only for pupils with special needs. These short-term objectives do not have any official form, but are merely found in teachers' internal notes … (S).

Focusing on their case pupil, the Skopje team members report that the individual goals for the pupil with cochlear implant are within the frames of the national curriculum. Although these have certain modifications, they have been adapted to his individual needs. The team also describes the general relationship between inclusion, individual educational plans and the development of educational goals in Macedonia:

> The concept of inclusion means education for all. This underlines the making of an IEP [… individual educational plan …] in the framework of the national curriculum. In our country, this is defined in the Handbook for Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Regular Schools in the Republic of Macedonia. This Handbook is used as basic literature for ordinary teachers in all schools moving towards inclusion, but is not recognized as an official document directly connected to educational acts (SM).

The long-term IEP contains the following parts: i) the nature of the problem, and ii) school activities (resources, specific activities, *goals*, parental support, need for medical assistance and all previous reports on the pupil). Long-term goals are specified according to impairment and special educational need. Thus, while the Macedonian "case pupil's" daily planning includes multifaceted teaching strategies, it is within the frameworks of the regular curriculum and according to the pupil's abilities. Educational goals – from annual- and semester- to short-term goals are continuously revised in dialogue with the pupil. His communication is an important factor in establishing social interaction. Since he is talented in maths and art, his future aims are oriented towards architecture as a lifelong goal (SM).

Another example is from the Norwegian case school. How do class teachers manage to coordinate official principles and individual educational needs – the top-down and bottom-up perspectives? From a top-down perspective, all major revisions of national official documents are carefully implemented at local schools. In the case school's district, this is done by appointing groups of teachers across neighbouring schools in order to adapt each school subject to the local schools. Thus, during the research period teachers from the case school participate in incorporating and adapting the latest revised national curriculum for school subjects, the so-called *Knowledge Promotion* document (Kunnskapsløftet, 2006) From a bottom-up perspective teachers supporting individual pupils may have very concrete long-term and short-term goals written in weekly plans in addition to daily goals. Two cases may exemplify their practice: a) For one pupil a concrete main goal has been a step-by-step process to help develop his concentration and increase his persistence with regard to learning tasks. b) a small group receiving special support with additional reading acquisition has as a concrete goal to teach one of the pupils to i) divide compound words, ii) find out which words they are constructed of, iii) understand the logic of compound words and iv) learn a strategy to read them (O). How are these bottom-up goals connected to the top-down national framework curriculum? The two examples are situated well within the national curriculum, which is

characterised as a frame curriculum at the same time as additional special needs educational resources are required. Thus, the two examples meet conditions for individually adapted special needs education. However, whether they may also be seen as inclusive depends upon how the goals are realised within the context of the class and school.

Educational intentions are traditionally related to developing *knowledge*, *skills* and *attitudes*. In addition, the category entitled *access to experiences* is also central to special education and inclusion (Johnsen, 2014b), as it is an important aspect of education towards achieving a democratic and inclusive society. A class may serve as a melting pot when pupils get opportunities to share their experiences and interests. When the Norwegian case class works with the multiple intelligences mentioned above, pupils have the opportunity to tell the class about themselves and their mates. Some are interested in horses; others play drums in a band or sing in a choir. They appreciate each other and learn (O). However, some experiences may be unrealizable for pupils with specific impairments unless special measures are taken to ensure access. For instance, touchable art has been developed for people with visual impairment, music is played so that people with hearing impairments may feel its vibrations, and mobility is required in art centres, theatres and athletic stadiums. Creating access to experiences is an important goal for the inclusive school. Findings in the seven studies add a fifth category, namely *psychosocial wellbeing and development*. Whether explicitly or implicitly, studies point to the importance of being aware of pupils' wellbeing – specifically pupils with special educational needs (B, L, O, MS, S, T, Z). In the Norwegian study psychosocial wellbeing is highlighted as the most important and fundamental area of intention: "Without a focus on wellbeing, focus on academic areas such as knowledge and skills may be wasted" (O). This great emphasis manifests the importance of the aspects of communication and care found in the Curricular Relation Approach and applied in this cooperative research project.

As referred to above, educational intentions or goals may be divided into concrete short-term and more general long-term goals, including even goals from a lifelong perspective, as briefly mentioned by the Skopje team. The Belgrade team also points at life-long intentions and results, and they attach great importance to children's psychosocial development. Thus, even though they have doubts when it comes to academic success for all children in an inclusive class having currently available resources, their findings are positive when it comes to psychosocial development of all pupils in classes with diversity among

pupils, as is the case in inclusive classes. According to teachers and principals, inclusive classes better enable pupils with special educational needs to develop social and communicative skills than special education provisions. They also point out that nondisabled pupils' socio-emotional development is positively affected, promoting their tendency to embrace empathic responses and altruistic values. In their words: "Children learn to respect differences and that every human being is of equal worth" (B). Psychosocial wellbeing and development is thus an important area for educational intentions.

Dilemmas and barriers

A main dilemma when it comes to developing educational intentions on all levels has already been touched upon; namely, possible contradictions between national policies and local – especially individual – teaching-learning goals. For pupils with special educational needs – whether due to performance far above or below or parallel to academic requirements – the possibility of offering individually adapted curricula depends on a number of factors; a) strictness or flexibility of national intentions and curriculum; b) additional resources in order to realise specific educational measures; c) whether teachers have a sufficient sensitivity to discover special educational needs and d) if teachers and special needs educators have a sufficient overview of the interrelationship between assessment procedures and results and educational intentions, content, methods and organisation and other key aspects that need to be addressed in order to create individually adapted teaching-learning processes in inclusive classes. Thus, dilemmas concerning the development of individual educational goals are interrelated with similar dilemmas encountered for assessments.

When it comes to individual and special needs educational goals, they may, however, prove to be inefficient as educational tools. A common mistake is to formulate all too general goals without breaking them down in a step-by-step development of concrete and realistic objectives. This is because having too general objectives may prove to be barriers instead of educational tools, as has been observed in a number of Norwegian individual plans. Since this pitfall has not been found in the seven participating studies, the reason may be that the research teams have focused on so-called "good cases" and that in many of the cases, special needs researchers with sufficient skills participate in action research cases.

Summary

Summing up with a question: How does a school's knowledge about official aims together with the single pupil's learning potential and goals contribute to the continuous development of concrete, manageable, individual teaching-learning goals in the community of the class? Findings indicate that the special educational needs of pupils participating in the case schools are found via detailed assessments and followed up by relevant educational objectives. However, the relationship between aims and goals in official curricula and concrete step-by-step goals in educational practice is not clear in all cases. The following aspects leading to possible dilemmas or challenges are pointed out:

a) strictness or flexibility of the national intentions and curriculum
b) additional resources in order to realise specific educational measures
c) whether teachers and special needs educators have enough professional knowledge and skills related to individualisation and inclusion
d) whether they have a sufficient sensitivity to discover special educational needs
e) if teachers and special needs educators have a sufficient overview of the interrelationship between assessment procedures and results and educational intentions, content, methods, class organisation and other didactic-curricular main areas.

5 Educational content

As indicated above, there is a close relationship between educational intentions and content. When taken together, these two key aspects are expected to answer questions concerning **what** a particular education or teaching-learning process is about. Educational content may be understood as substance and values that are supposed to form the pupil into an educated person. The German concept of *Bildung* is also used in English texts in order to cover this classical foundation of education. What is meant by 'an educated person', and how does this relate to educational content? The German scholar, Wolfgang Klafki (1999:148), answers these questions in the following way:

> … , that a double relativity constitutes the very essence of contents of education, in other words their substance and values. What constitutes content of education, or wherein its substance and values lie, can, first, be ascertained only with reference to the particular children and adolescents who are to be educated and, second, with a particular human, historical situation in mind, with its attendant past and the anticipated future.

In what has become a classical didactic text in Norway, scholars Bjørndal and Lieberg (1978) also emphasize the relational nature of educational content when they highlight socio-cultural and pupil-centred as well as qualitative and quantitative dimensions as the four main criteria for selecting educational content. Similarities and differences between cultures is likewise a central question in Alexander's cross-continental comparative pedagogic study (2000: chapter 11). The abovementioned texts explore how contextual aspects contribute to selection of educational content from different angles, and is in line with the perspective drawn up in this project. But, who are "the particular children and adolescents" when it comes to deciding educational content? The educational texts mentioned above seem to expand the focus on "pupil-centeredness" to groups of pupils, such as classes and age levels (Johnsen, 2014b). Is this focus sufficient to develop inclusive educational practices? Inclusion is based on schools' ability to meet the diversity of individual educational needs in the classroom, whereas, as indicated above, ordinary educational traditions have mainly focused on the school-class as one entity. Hence, special needs education with its regard for the individual pupil is a necessary contributor to developing inclusive practices. Special needs educational tradition moving towards inclusion increases the basis for selection of educational content to apply to each single pupil in the community of the class, as indicated in the didactic-curricular relation approach. There is a huge – almost infinite – amount of possible content that may be used in the teaching-learning process in order to represent "the very essence of contents of education, in other words their substance and values" (Klafki, 1999:148), from the tiniest details to the largest programmes. However, only a few examples are presented here as illustrations of educational content, thus dividing the chapter as follows:

- Examples from the studies
- Dilemmas and challenges
- Summary

Examples from the seven studies

Having the diversity of pupils in mind, how do schools select educational content so that all pupils are able to participate in a meaningful teaching-learning process? The Belgrade team askes participating teachers what kinds of adjustments to the curriculum they practice. Concerning educational

content, they focus on two kinds; a) development and implementation of individualised curriculum in cooperation with school psychologists and special educators from a supporting special school; b) reduced demands when it comes to educational content in certain subjects in accordance with pupils' abilities (B).

The Sarajevo team argues that the level of achievement of the pupils involved in the project is different depending on their mental and physical difficulties. The pupils that are specifically focused on in this study have speech and language impairments. Some of them also have extensive difficulties with respect to reading and writing comprehension. Hence their teachers apply additional didactic material and approaches for their appropriation of these subjects. For example, they mention specific material such as picture books, puzzles and jigsaw puzzles. Specific approaches are implemented in accordance with individual special needs, including speech fluency, dyslexia, bilingualism and dysgraphia. There is a direct relationship between the kind of additional didactic material used and assessment of the individual pupil (S).

The Tuzla team supports teachers with additional material and approaches based on detailed assessments of mastery levels for pupils with different learning difficulties (T)

As mentioned, educational content may be understood as substance and values. Values may appear as attitudes, for instance attitudes to inclusion, respect for diversity, tolerance and acceptance – also acceptance of children with psychosocial difficulties, as in the case of the Zagreb study. Cooperation between teacher, assistant and consulting special needs educator results in introduction of content that supports values, attitudes and communication skills that are added and further developed in order to increase mutual respect and positive attitudes between pupil and class (Z).

The Macedonian national curriculum allows three levels of educational content selection within its framework; one level for gifted pupils, another for average pupils and a third level for pupils with disabilities. As mentioned, the case pupil of the Skopje team benefits from some individually adapted additional material in his first language and communication approaches due to his hard of hearing. Otherwise, he is expected to learn in accordance with the same educational content as the entire class with one exception:

> In this particular case, the pupil gets individually applied material with math tasks on a higher level than the rest of the class because of his extraordinaire knowledge in the field of the math subject (SM).

Similarly, the Norwegian case class provides additional content in mathematics for three of the pupils who show an excellent understanding of and eagerness for arithmetic. Additional material from the grade above is added to the obligatory class tasks. On the other hand, the class teacher is aware of a girl that "… does not like arithmetic and does not believe that she can do it, but is good in all other subjects (O). The class teacher perceives this challenge as a psychosocial task combined with the need to follow up the arithmetic content. She is also aware of other pupils who need psychosocial support for different and – in some cases – serious reasons. Psychosocial support, regulation and development therefore have a high priority in planning and implementing teaching (O). This priority directs her work towards the following aspects; a) the classroom as a holistic society in miniature b) relationship between academic and psychosocial content c) the relationship and cooperation with her colleagues, specifically cooperation with the principal d) communication with parents, and e) her and the school's information exchange and cooperation with other institutions such as educational-psychological service (EPC), child welfare service, Regional Centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (http://www.r-bup.no/pages/about-rbup), the national service for special needs education (http://www.statped.no) or other partners (O).

Are the schools able to select and make use of educational content that meets a variety of different levels of mastery and, at the same time, contributes to a holistic teaching and learning process? This is a question about inclusion related to psychosocial and academic sensitivity when selecting subject content. Two examples may serve as illustrations of efforts made in this area.

Morning activities. Two kinds of morning activities are observed in a case class. The first one is related to the class teacher's intention to calm the pupils down after weekends, which are often full of activities and late evenings. Therefore, after shaking hands with every pupil and exchanging words of greeting, the teacher plays a quiet piece of music. The pupils may lie down on their desk or look at a book of their own choosing. Those who prefer to have something to read choose texts at their own level of mastery. Every single pupil relaxes. Nobody talks or tries to sabotage this quiet time. Everybody does something of their own choosing during this relaxing fellowship.

As years go by, new class teachers adopt this morning activity. The first activity of the day is now that the pupils find their seat, pick up reading material of their own choosing and read silently for ten minutes. When the teacher and researcher enter the classroom, everybody is reading. There is silence in the classroom.

Choices of texts vary from "Donald Duck" to homework to adult-level novels. The content of this morning activity now relates to reading practice. These morning activities accompany the class throughout their time at elementary school.

Reading acquisition is a main topic in all participating schools. Pupils start their schooling with different reading skills – some read fluently at school start, while others hardly recognise the first letter of their name; still other pupils learn to read in a new language. How do schools handle these different skill levels? Teaching reading acquisition is a combination of obligatory and individual tasks. Schools apply a selected set of ABCs and other beginning books. Individual letter symbols and sounds are taught and practiced along with other reading acquisition techniques. This instruction is obligatory. Thus, all pupils work with the same subject – reading acquisition and practice – using a combination of obligatory and individually adapted materials as well as approaches. It seems to be common practice in the participating schools to have a stock of additional reading and writing acquisition material; thus, teachers as well as special needs educators use a considerable amount of additional time in "hand crafting" individually adapted learning material.

Summing up, all participating studies describe the use of additional and alternative content in curricular adaptation for individual pupils and groups in the form of material or approaches related to substance and/or values, as pointed out by Klafki (1999).

Dilemmas and challenges

One of the most typical dilemmas when it comes to adapting educational content to the level of individual pupil mastery is the abovementioned dependence on the national curriculum in each country. This dilemma is similar, but not necessarily the same as between national curricula and educational intentions. The degree of freedom and flexibility differs among the participating countries. The Sarajevo team describes this dependency in the following way:

> The national educational plan is directly connected with local school curriculum. The local curriculum must include 70% of the national curriculum in its content. Compliance with this rule is observed in both schools involved in this project (S).

The Macedonian national curriculum operates with the three previously mentioned levels of flexibility, including a specific level for pupils with special educational needs (SM). The Croatian National Strategy and -Plan defines individu-

alisation as an educational approach (Z). In Norway, the principle of the school for all and the right for all children to get a meaningful education adapted to their own levels of mastery and capability was established by the Educational Act in 1975 and followed up in national curricula. The national curricula are therefore characterised as rather open and flexible when it comes to alternative educational content. Still, the flexibility does not incorporate all necessary aspects. It has therefore been necessary to operate with exceptions from the national curriculum in cases where a pupil has special educational needs documented by the EPS. Another exception concerns grading, since all pupils accompany their own age group and nobody gets a "failing" grade or is made to repeat a year. In order to solve the accompanying grading dilemma, pupils with documented special educational needs are offered a written statement of their level of mastery instead of grading. Over the years, the national curricula are repeatedly constricted, especially as regards educational content. Increasingly, more content at higher levels of mastery is obligatory; consequently, exceptions have to be made for increasing parts of educational content (O).

Why is Norwegian national curricula being constricted? Why do Bosnian teachers have to accept 70% of the content of the Bosnian national curriculum? Could it be because so-called national curricula for the school for all and inclusion are based on earlier regular school traditions, and that the principle of inclusion has not been fully incorporated? (Johnsen, 2015).

As mentioned, educational content described by Klafki (1999) as substance and values is supposed to form the pupil into an educated individual. Seen from an inclusive perspective, forming a person, or *Bildung*, contains more than traditional school subject content prescribed for each grade. What might the word "more" contain? It may be learning tasks, including basic language comprehension and -use through communication programmes with simple icons. In the video *Et samfunn for alle* (A Society for All; Bolsø, 1989), there is a boy who is attacked by a progressively degenerative disease that slowly deprives him of his physical and mental functions. In the movie he is profoundly hard of hearing and almost functionally blind, has problems with balance and is about to lose his short-term and long-term memory. So why is he still attending his regular class? The principal explains that the aim of his schooling is to meet with his peers in his school's secure and caring environment. The academic content focuses on: a) repeating skills he still masters in order to preserve them as long as possible, b) care and being together with his mates (Meland/NFPU, 1987). Likewise, in his article *From the Exceptional to the Universal*, French professor of anthropol-

ogy Charles Gardou (2014) argues for inclusion through showing glimpses of profoundly and multiple disabled children and youth and their communication with their caregivers and friends. Together they demonstrate a strong and universal desire for life. Gardou argues that their needs are universal in the exceptionality caused by their disability – and the excluding mechanisms caused by their surrounding society. He also portrays their exceptionally formed or acquired universal *Bildung* to become educated persons. The abovementioned examples show "a possibly more than 70% need" for individually adapted special educational content in order to succeed with the individually adapted education for these individuals. Are regular schools and classes ready to take on this educational responsibility? There is an increasing number of good examples of this happening – at the same time as there are countless (some of them documented) examples of the opposite: ignorance and exclusion (Johnsen, 2014c).

Summary

Do the findings in the seven studies and other referred literature point to "*the what*", in other words, to examples of applied individually adapted content? While all the studies describe individually adapted content components, the examples used are different, indicating pupil as well as content diversity as regards substance and values, or academic and psychosocial aspects. The examples concern the following aspects:

- Development and use of material related to the training of specific skills or overcoming certain challenges
- Development and use of additional material for pupils a) needing repetition, or b) in need of additional challenges
- Focus on academic content or issues
- Focus on psychosocial issues
- Focus on combinations of academic and psychosocial issues

Several dilemmas and challenges related to material and approaches or substance and values are pointed out, such as a lack of suitable content and lack of upgraded, new approaches. As mentioned, all participating countries have signed the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) on inclusion. This raises the question: Are regular schools and classes on the micro level ready to take on this educational responsibility? The question may be expanded upon and apply to other participants from micro to macro levels, including international discourse and action.

6 Educational methods and organisation

Similar to educational content, the choice of teaching methods and class organisation are also interrelated with educational intentions as well as with the study's other didactic-curricular main aspects. Within didactic and curricular theories, educational methods and class organisation are frequently characterised as the educational **how** (Gundem, 1991; Johnsen, 2014b). It is a theoretical didactic question whether methods and organisation should represent one or two main aspects. The reason why they are merged in this report is that there are exceptionally many grey zones between the two – a method may be realised in a certain kind of organisation. Similar comments may be made about grey zones between content and method. The loose borders between main aspects or -areas show the interrelatedness between different categories when using a holistic didactic-curricular approach. They also indicate that there is no one way of constructing the different main areas. This is in accordance with the combination of interrelatedness and flexibility that characterises the didactic-curricular relation approach; it mirrors in the use of the model. Methods and organisation are presented as two sub-categories as follows:

Methods
a) Educational methods in general
b) Methods for the plurality of educational needs
c) Step-by-step methodology
d) Differentiation
e) Differentiation and individual adaptation hand-in-hand

Dilemmas and challenges

Organisation
a) Time perspective
b) Organising group size
c) Educational scenes or places
d) Educational resources

Dilemmas and challenges
Summary

Methods

How can educational methods or approaches support individually adapted education and inclusion? How can the phenomenon of educational method be described? In Vygotskyan terms it may be considered as mediating tools in the teaching-learning process, adapting the pupil's apprenticeship within the zone of proximal development (Cole, 1996; Johnsen, 2014c; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 2007). In order to support individually adapted education, teaching methods need to be based on knowledge about the pupil's level of mastery and zone of proximal development. They must also be based on preferred learning strategies – and in order to support inclusion, a variety of methods need to be considered in view of all pupils' learning strategies in a class. It goes without saying that a teachers' tasks in the inclusive school are fundamentally changed and expanded upon compared to traditional homogenous classroom teaching. What kinds of methods are found in the seven studies of this research project? They are reported in the following categories: a) educational methods in general, b) methods for the plurality of educational needs, c) differentiation, d) individual adaptation, e) between differentiation and individual adaptation, and f) findings related to dilemmas and barriers.

a: Educational methods in general

The research teams find that teachers use different teaching methods in accordance with the content of the curriculum or syllabus in different subjects. However, teaching often consists of a single teaching method and is directed towards the whole class – some call it class teaching or *Ex cathedra* teaching. They find that current teaching methods are mainly oral in the form of lectures. Yet they may in addition consist of i) illustrations and ii) explanations or iii) demonstrations, iv) inductive methods with focus on discovering, v) analysis, vi) or combined with writing on a black board (white board, lap top). Teachers generally expect pupils to take initiative in the learning process by listening and/or writing notes and making drawings. However, the Sarajevo team argues: "It is quite obvious that using a single teaching method is outdated, so a combination of different methods is used during the teaching-learning process" (S). The teams also report active use of dialogue in different variations as well as using role-play as an active part of the teaching-learning process. The term "scaffolding", taken from the culture-historical tradition (Rogoff, 1990; Sharpe, 2006; Shvarts & Bakker, 2019), is used in order to explain teaching-learning interaction (O, S,

SM, Z). Didactic-curricular traditions as well as current theories and research contribute to extending and deepening knowledge and reflections on the role of methods and organisation as parts of schools' mediation capacity (Johnsen, 2014c; Kozulin & Gindis, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978; 1987).

b: Methods for the plurality of educational needs

The abovementioned methods are not only found applied in traditional whole class teaching, but also in teaching-learning interaction with smaller groups, pairs and individuals. Mediating and scaffolding that focus on the individual child go hand-in-hand with flexible use of methods and approaches. As mentioned in the chapter above, in some of the schools teachers, special needs educators and assistants create alternative teaching learning materials – not only for pupils who need more explanation and repetition than the majority of the class, but also for those who need extra challenges. When it comes to longitudinal studies, use of different methods as well as material and media observed to change over time. During the five years of the Norwegian case study, the teachers move from centering written messages and teaching around the blackboard to using laptops with a whiteboard and internet connection. Obligatory material as well as a lot of additional material is now available online. However, the electronic addition does not leave the handmade materials unused, but rather adds to the diversity of mediating tools (O). The Sarajevo team reports that systematic scaffolding is adapted to pupils' different levels of understanding according to Bloom's et al classical taxonomies (1956). New methods are tried out and applied, for instance those related to critical thinking and cooperative learning (S). How do teachers assess the daily level of mastery for each pupil? Based on a thorough long-term assessment of every pupil, class teachers use a combination of teaching and systematic assessment of the pupil's achievements. This is called "appraising teaching" (some call it "diagnostic teaching") (O, S). Furthermore, appraising teaching combined with systematic long-term assessment is applied by special needs educators, teachers and guided assistants in the teaching-learning process of pupils with special educational needs. The pupils with special needs that are receiving special focus in the studies benefit from all of this (S, SM, T, Z). The teams describe a flexible use of material and approaches adapted to specific support of single pupils in ordinary classes. Thus, for a pupil with hard of hearing illustrations and written texts are prioritised in a total communication approach. New approaches to

interaction are successfully tried out for pupils who struggle to pay attention and work with persistence. Educational methods combining different sensory abilities such as touch, vision and hearing are applied to pupils with attention difficulties (S, SM, Z). These examples illustrate the methodological diversity that is recognized in the seven studies.

c: Step-by-step methodology

Step-by-step methodology is used in ordinary as well as special needs teaching. Special needs education has developed methods of breaking down learning tasks into small steps, systematic repetition and example variation. This is a didactic area where special needs education has made important contributions to providing ordinary and inclusive education. There are several examples of step-by-step teaching used by the participating schools.

The two concepts, differentiation and individual adaptation, are suitable for displaying two frequently discussed perspectives of ordinary- and special needs education and inclusion: namely, a top-down and a bottom-up perspective. Findings related to the two concepts are discussed separately in the following section.

d: Differentiation

Differentiation may be seen to have *a top-down perspective* using whole class teaching as a starting point and differentiation for one or some pupils or groups. Differentiation deals with assigning different learning tasks to pupils with different proximal learning possibilities. To provide variation in learning content, assignments and the length of time spent on solving learning tasks are traditional ways of differentiating used in many ordinary schools. An example of this approach is to divide a class assignment into various length adapted to pupils' abilities. The term differentiation is also used about educational content, organisation and intentions. This illustrates how curricular phenomena overlap in several areas to form a coherent educational whole. It is not imperative under which main aspect the concept of differentiation is placed, but it is important that it gains a distinct place within the didactic-curricular approach.

Is differentiation described and discussed in the seven studies? The research teams have found differentiation described in a variety of connections: Differentiation of:

- learning tasks (B, Z, O, S)
- length of time to conclude a learning task (Z, O)
- extent of learning content (Z, O, SN
- of methods – different methods (SN, O)
- group organisation and variation in learning tasks (O, SN, S)
- learning methods (O, S)
- alternative learning tasks (O, Z)
- level of expected mastery of content/learning tasks (O, B)
- suitably selected learning tasks from the general curriculum (O, B)

The different types of differentiations indicate how schools facilitate learning content and methods using multiple methodological practices based on traditional classroom teaching.

e: Individual adaptation

Individual adaptation or facilitation also concerns all aspects of the curriculum. While this is similar to differentiation, it has a bottom-up perspective moving from the individual pupil to the teaching-learning community of the class. This is in accordance with the principle of individually and suitably adapted education, which is a main pillar of inclusion. It relates to all pupils and calls for more or less detailed individual educational plans or curricula for each pupil along with teaching flexibility – which in turn calls for extra resources in addition to regular teaching resources, according to policies related to some, but not quite all, of the seven research teams. Inclusive practices are based on developing, implementing and continuously revising individual educational curricula, particularly for pupils with special educational needs, in a connection as close as possible to the class curriculum. It has the single pupil and human being as its point of departure (Johnsen, 2014b).

How do the research teams describe and discuss findings related to individually adapted methods? The Macedonian team describes how they adapt communication methods and media to the special needs of their pupil (SM). The Zagreb and Sarajevo teams make individual plans for their focus pupils, who all have different special needs. In Sarajevo there is a special focus on how teachers observe, guide and introduce material and activities adapted to the learning opportunities of the selected pupils. The approach may be seen as a variation of the abovementioned appraising teaching (S, Z). The Belgrade study sums up examples of observational findings related to individual adaptation:

> Special needs educators are active in providing adaptations to pupils with disabilities: They often clarify to them the information given by the class teacher. They support their concentration on the task at hand. They monitor task realization by single pupils and provide support for task accomplishment when needed. Special educators are engaged predominantly when pupils with disabilities are involved in the same tasks as other pupils, i.e. in tasks related to the general curriculum. The data show that the level of pupils' engagement in tasks is the highest possible (100%) when special educators' support is provided to them (B).

The following important aspects for the plurality of different educational needs (Johnsen, 2014b) are found in the cooperating research teams:

- Continuous acquisition of new methods and approaches
- Overview of different methods and approaches
- Flexible application of methods and approaches
- Multiple uses of methods and approaches in joint classroom settings

f: Differentiation and individual adaptation

As the examples related to educational methods illustrate, reported findings do not distinguish clearly between differentiation and individual adaptation; indeed, in some cases the same examples are used to illustrate both perspectives. This may indicate that in practice individual adaptation takes place more "along the way" than in any systematic and deliberate advanced planning. The weekly curriculum or plan in the Norwegian case class may serve as an example of alignment between differentiation and individual adaptation: Every Monday the class is introduced to a weekly plan for learning tasks and i) the great majority of the class has the same plan; ii) two pupils have only a short part of the ordinary reading lesson added by a certain number of pages for silent reading in an easy-reading book; iii) three pupils with excellent arithmetic mastery have some extra challenging assignments in addition to their ordinary class tasks. These two examples may be characterised as differentiations. iv) one pupil has an individually adapted plan related to his level of mastery, but closely connected to the topics of the class plan. In this way individual adaptation and differentiation may be said to go hand-in-hand with the general class plan (O). Darlene Perner and her project group (UNESCO, 2004: 14) describe differentiation in the following way:

> Curriculum education, then, is the process of modifying or adapting the curriculum according to the different ability levels of the students in one class. Teachers can adapt or differentiate the curriculum by changing: the content, methods for teaching and

learning content (sometimes referred to as the process), and, the methods of assessment (sometimes referred to as the products).

This understanding is in line with the abovementioned right of all pupils to receive meaningful and individually adapted education. Thus, Perner's broad definition of differentiation is compatible with the use of individual curricula when these are planned and implemented within the joint framework of all pupils in a class. It is an educational and special needs educational craft and art to make teaching-learning plans and practice them in ways that are meaningful to each pupil, yet also function for the whole class. The metaphor "concerted actions" is a beautiful illustration of the combination of individual adaptation and differentiation in order to create meaningful learning processes for all in a diverse class or group (Booth et.al, 2000). The metaphor views the class as an orchestra where, although pupils have different roles, together they create a holistic learning performance, similar to what musicians do in a symphony orchestra (Johnsen, 2014b).

Dilemmas and challenges

Severely limited knowledge about special needs educational methods among ordinary teachers is most frequently mentioned as a serious challenge to the development of inclusion. As documented, several of the research teams add special education professional know-how to the projects during the project period (B, S, SM, T, Z). This may not come as a surprise in countries where the principle of educational inclusion has been rather recently introduced. Ordinary and special needs educational traditions differ from one another, even though they also have many similarities. Among the differences is a diversity of methods within special needs education as well as a more developed tutorial tradition, while catheter teaching is still criticised as a prototype of an ordinary teaching method. It is, however, problematic that in Norway, as an example, where the principle of a school for all and inclusion was adopted in the Educational Act in 1975, research indicates that a large number of Norwegian schools lack the professional skills necessary to give pupils with special educational needs sufficient support (Johnsen, 2014d). So for inclusion to be realised, ordinary teachers need sustainable support to extend their professional knowledge and skills radically in order to increase their reservoir of methods as well as other didactic aspects. At the same time as pupils with special educational needs are transferred from special schools and institu-

tions to ordinary schools, it is necessary to establish permanent positions for professional special needs educators in schools. This necessity applies to all the participating countries.

As mentioned, methodological considerations strongly affect choices of materials and equipment, such as literature, paper and pencils, computers and programmes, videos, materials for painting, drawing, sewing and cooking and equipment for physical education. Some pupils need special learning materials and equipment. Thus, pupils who are functionally blind need machines for printing in Braille and, when possible, access to computerised Braille transcription technology. Pupils with cerebral palsy may need access to BLISS symbol language and, if possible, to computerised communication programmes. Pupils with reading difficulties need special books, books on CD and other training materials. Pupils with developmental impairments need concrete learning materials and situations. However, as Vygotsky (1978) points out, they first and foremost need pedagogical guidance and support to transfer what they have learned into higher mental functions.

Organisation

Along with method, organisation is part of the educational **how**. Methods and organisation are means through which teaching and learning content is intended to be mediated – similar to content, they are mediating tools. How can classroom- or class organisation contribute to individually adapted education and inclusion? Alexander (2000:185; 393) describes his findings regarding classroom organisation as either unitary or multiple. They are unitary when a teacher focuses on the whole class rather than groups or individuals. The term multiple is used when the teacher, in addition to paying attention to the whole class, also focuses on several sub-groups, different kinds of relationships within and between groups as well as on their relationship with individual pupils. Compared to these two categories, educational inclusion depends mainly upon a multiple focus. This is in line with similar discussions of methods listed above. The continuous relationship between educational considerations regarding the whole class and the plurality of pupils with different educational needs is at stake (Johnsen, 2007; 2014b). When examined in more detail, there are several aspects and levels of multiple organisations in an inclusive perspective, such as organising a) different time perspectives, b) group size, c) educational scenes or places, and d) use of educational resources.

a: The time perspective

Schooling is a complex activity, requiring organisation along a time axis, from the long-term to the most detailed short time planning and practice. Organisation on all levels may promote or inhibit inclusion. Therefore, all stakeholders of educational organisation in ordinary schools need to be aware of the principle of inclusion, since they have joint responsibility for implementing it.

Long-term organisation. The school administration play an important role when it comes to the overall organisation of the frame of educational activities at school – in cooperation with the school staff and dependence upon traditions and attitudes. Long-term planning may involve planning for a lifespan, such as when parents and schools together make a plan about how to organise the education of a child with special needs focusing on their future career and independent living situation. Some schools make "five-year plans" about how to realise new educational principles such as inclusive practices, to take another tentative example.

School year and semester organisation are also seen as long-term projects that concern sectioning and coordination of main aspects of the teaching-learning process in a long-term school curriculum. Depending upon the size of the school, several teachers ideally participate in this organisation together with the school administration and in accordance with national and local curricula. In order to lay the foundation for inclusive practices, it is crucial that all pupils – and specifically pupils with special educational needs – have advocates in this long-term organisation. There is reason to believe that schools with special needs educators take on the role of "inclusion advocates" in cooperation with teachers. The relationship between the two kinds of long-term curricula, class- and individual curricula, form a necessary foundation for further inclusive practices.

How is long-term organisation practiced in the project schools? Are educational frames organised in order to support inclusive practices? Of the seven research teams, five report (B, S, SM, T, Z) making agreements with their participating schools regarding organisational frames, enabling cooperation in trying out inclusive practices for one year or more depending upon how long a time they plan to carry out their field work. Such agreements are particularly prominent in the action research studies. Thus, in these studies essential aspects of long-term planning contain agreements where participating universities and in

some cases other stake holders add resources in the form of professional special needs educators acting as advisers, and also educators (Igrić & Cvitković, 2013; Jachova, 2013; Rapaić, Nedović, Stojković, & Ilić, 2013; Salihović, Dizdarević, & Smajić, 2013; Zečić, Čehić, Džemidžić Kristiansen, & Hadžić, 2013). Although these agreements are required to execute major innovations, they also raise an important question of sustainability; or whether and in what way agreed project organisation will continue, when the research collaboration is completed. Two of the universities (L, O) limit their studies to exploring the schools as they are. (Johnsen, 2013b; Kogovšek, Košir & Ozbič, 2013).

Do the cooperating schools make long-term plans? As an example, the Norwegian case school, they have a twofold annual long-term plan 1) an overall joint plan for the whole school and 2) organisation of the teaching of each school subject on each grade level. 1) The overall plan, called the activity plan, is developed by the staff for one school year at a time and delivered in printed form to each family having pupils at school. It consists of a) an educational vision, b) educational aims, c) priority areas, d) the school model concerning content and organisation, e) educational main approaches, and f) prioritised activities on each grade level. The document is 20-30 pages long and contains additional information about persons in charge for various key activities and all the classes. How is the principle of educational inclusion dealt with in the annual plans selected for this review? The principle of a school for all and inclusion is not mentioned explicitly. However, the following goals suitable for promoting inclusive practices are highlighted:

- To ensure that pupils feel safe, are cared for and thriving and that they are motivated for a variety of different learning tasks
- To use screening tests in order to identify pupils who need more training in reading acquisition and beginning arithmetic
- To facilitate adapted education related to individual pupils and groups through tutorial courses, and to hold these training courses across grade levels for pupils who need more support in literacy acquisition and arithmetic
- To give pupils the opportunity to learn through independent learning tasks, peer cooperation and differentiated assignments.

Four school years later the annual plan contains the following additional goals:

- All pupils should experience the joy of success academically and socially, individually and in groups on a regular basis

- Develop a diversified learning environment through using a variety of teaching methods so that pupils can acquire knowledge and skills in accordance with their own abilities and strengths (O).

The two types of long-term curricula mentioned, class and individual teaching-learning plans, interrelate and form a necessary basis for detailed inclusive practices. The concrete teaching-learning curriculum is understandably extensive and complex. Multiple and inclusive teaching practices require that a teacher have broader and more diversified knowledge and skills than those require in traditional class teaching (Alexander, 2000; Johnsen, 2014b).

Organising the school week is usually the responsibility of the teacher or teachers working on the same age level. In some of the studies special needs educators who join the teachers in the ordinary school. The making of weekly plans is mentioned specifically in two of the cases. In the Norwegian case-school weekly learning tasks are collected in miniature "week curricula" adapted to individual learning needs and handed to pupils, as described above (O). In Macedonia each subject teacher makes a weekly plan for the class adapted to the pupil with special needs (SM).

Organising the school day and the lesson. It is assumed that the individual teacher or cooperating teaching couple or teams organise the school day and lesson. In the Norwegian case information about classroom activities, including organisation, methods and other didactic-curricular aspects are acquired from open in-depth interviews and classroom observations. During the years of the longitudinal study, the classroom observations become steadily more detailed and "fine-masked", down to reporting at five-minute intervals (O). The study shows multiple ways of organising in line with the multiple teaching practices described by Alexander (2000): A day – or part of a day – may begin with the teacher focusing on the whole class, proceeding with individual or group cooperation with individually chosen learning tasks, and concluding with plenary dialogue between pupils and teacher (O). Different organisational means may be carried out by one or more educators, and all teachers may pay attention to every pupil's individual educational needs – including when they are telling a story, explaining something or giving information in plenary. A good storyteller giving an interesting story manages to convey diverse content aspects at multiple levels of comprehension and empathetic mastery (Ole Vig, 1852-53, on "the living word; živa riječ" in Johnsen, 2000). Thus, a single lesson is often organised into several parts. In the case of pupils with special educational needs, it may be

"everything from series of repetitions to a fine-meshed set of different teaching-learning tasks tailored in accordance with the learner's endurance span" – or the pupil follows the same instruction as the rest of the class – possibly with extra support. In schools where special needs educators or assistants participate in the teaching-learning process, the school day is organised in accordance with when more than one educator is available during the day.

While not all teams focus on explicit information about organisation of the long-/short-term teaching-learning process, the Sarajevo and Oslo teams describe the organisation of a typical school year, -week and -day (O, S). Other research teams have implicit information about internal organisation of schooling along the time axis in the two former anthologies (Johnsen, Ed.,2013; 2014) and in current anthology (Igrić, Cvitković & Lisak, 2019; Jachova, Angeloska-Galevska, & Karovska, 2019; Johnsen, 2019b; Kogovšek, Košir & Ozbič, 2019; Rapaić, Nedović, Stojković & Ilić, 2019; Salihović & Dizdarević,2019; Zečić, Čehić, Džemidžić Kristiansen & Hadžić, 2019). The Sarajevo and Norwegian cases are described as schools using multiple organisational means suitable for inclusive educational practices. In both cases collaboration between pupils is encouraged, and peers support each other (O, S).

Extra educational support from ordinary teachers, special needs educators or assistants is provided in the majority of participating schools and organised either out of the ordinary classroom or inside (B, O, S, T, Z). In the Slovenian classes, which are either organised as special classes for pupils with hearing impairment or mixed classes of pupils with and without hearing impairment, pupils are asked to report on their experiences. Findings indicate that communication occurs more easily in special classes than in mixed classes, where it seems to be mostly on the premises of hearing pupils (L). Thus, the Ljubljana study sheds light on a widespread problem for pupils with hearing impairment "from Norwegian to Ethiopian mixed classes"; to indicate this problem's wide international prevalence.

b: Organising group size

A fundamental criterion for inclusion is that all pupils belong to an ordinary class or group. In the Nordic context, this means that all pupils of the same age are organised together in classes. Age is thus the overall criterion for placement, as it usually is in the other participating schools. Although belonging to a class in an ordinary school is a fundamental principle underly-

ing the idea of inclusion, it does not mean that the classroom as an organisational entity is an absolute. Thus, while the class is important as a main organisational entity as pupils' "educational home", the following arrangements are also considered:

- Organising into large classes (two or more classes together)
- Organising into groups
- Individual or dyadic teaching

Along with whole-class structure, these organisational entities are arenas where a variety of possible approaches to teaching and learning are applied. An often-used example is that individual learning is arranged as either independent learning or a dyad between a pupil and either a teacher or special needs educator (or possibly an assistant). Dyadic teaching might create excellent possibilities for various high-quality teaching-learning approaches, from effective training to creative dialogue. However, it also has serious pitfalls. For example, extended use of teacher-pupil dyads as well as small group teaching might be a way to avoid making radical changes in traditional classroom management. The consequence may be that pupils with special needs are separated from the rest of the class activities for a considerable part of the school day. Pupils thereby lose important opportunities to be in the company of their classmates and learn how to take part in general peer socialisation (Johnsen, 2007; 2014b).

Is a flexible use of different group sizes practiced in the seven studies? Who is offered individual and small group teaching? Do pupils with special needs have a sense of belonging to an ordinary class? How does use of organisation in different group sizes contribute to inclusive practices? Ordinary classes and classrooms are at the centre of this research cooperation project. Pupils with special needs of any kind spend most of their school day in their home-classroom. This is self-evident, since the main focus of the research project is to examine the ability to develop inclusive practices in ordinary schools (B, O, S, SM, T, Z). As mentioned, several of the research teams have made agreements with schools to implement innovative work in their action research, where the special educational support provided by the research team is an important aspect of efforts to try out inclusive practices.

What other organisational measures are reported? One of the research teams reports organising *large class* through merging two classes into one and at the same time teaching two subjects, such as biology and geography. In this way, two teachers are available for pupils (SM). Two teams report their use of teaching

in small groups in addition to ordinary class organisation (O, S). What is the purpose of using small groups? As mentioned above, *small groups* are used for brief workshops – usually twice a week during a four- to six-week period – to support pupils who need help overcoming specific barriers in their reading or arithmetic acquisition (O). These workshops are held during a part of the school day when the class is occupied with individual tasks or internal group work. In this way, pupils do not miss any subject teaching or joint information. According to observations, pupils walk quietly out of the classroom to the workshop. When interviewed, the class teacher reports that at first, it is very popular in the workshops, and classmates ask to participate with the pupils needing extra help. However, as the workshop arrangement becomes more systematic and the same pupils enrol in them – those who need extra education – they become reluctant to leave the classroom (O). This is one example of small group teaching organised outside the classroom. However, group work is also organised inside the classroom (O, S). The Sarajevo team describes small groups called "circles of friends" that are heterogeneous and consist of pupils having different mastery levels. One of the goals for this peer cooperation is that the more able pupils help those who need extra support (S). Several of the research teams have organised *individual or dyadic teaching*, specifically for pupils who have been found to need special support after having an in-depth assessment made of them (Igrić & Cvitković, 2013; Jachova, 2013; Rapaić, Nedović, Stojković, & Ilić, 2013; Salihović, Dizdarević, & Smajić, 2013; Zečić, Čehić, Džemidžić, & Hadžić, 2013). In the Norwegian study there are two very different cases of individual teaching based on different learning needs. 1) A pupil from an immigrant family is allocated extra resources to cover one daily hour of instruction in Norwegian language. More resources would be given for a group of newcomers. 2) Resources for two daily teaching hours are allocated for one pupil due to special needs. They are used differently between school years: One year they are used for individual teaching out of the classroom combined with co-teaching in the classroom. The next school year the pupil is in the classroom together with support teacher (O). In the Sarajevo case schools' dyadic teaching is used to train specific speech difficulties (S) and followed up in the joint class. Thus, teaching is reported in dyads and small groups both inside and outside of the classroom. The different kinds of organisation as well as frequency and proportion of the school day may contribute positively or negatively to inclusion for the class and the individual pupil alike. This is a dilemma that needs to be treated carefully and in cooperation with parents.

c: Educational scenes or places

As indicated, in addition to the traditional classroom, there are other arenas that may be suited to organising teaching-learning sequences, for instance smaller rooms for group- and dyadic teaching. Some school buildings are organised with group rooms connected to traditional classrooms. Large-class teaching is possible in schools with one or more large rooms, including a traditional gymnasium, auditorium or buildings with opportunities to open doors between two (or even more) traditional classrooms. However, class- and group rooms are not the only places suitable for teaching-learning scenes. What kind of environments could be appropriate for organising "outside classroom education"? Several outdoor arenas are used in different countries and local schools. The schoolyard and school neighbourhood may be used provided they are safe and do not interrupt the school day for others. Study trips and -visits to cultural events, workplaces and natural landmarks are arranged during each semester. An out-of-school day has gained a permanent place on the monthly schedule in several schools, with the local woods used as an arena for teaching-learning activities (O). There are at least two main arguments for applying out-of-classroom and out-of-school activities. 1) Sitting quietly at their desk in a crowded classroom is not a healthy environment for any child. Pupils need space in order to thrive, learn and develop. Even the most pleasant classroom is too small in a physical sense to be an ideal permanent learning environment. 2) When it comes to inclusive organisation, it depends upon a number of factors related to the classroom and how it is possible to create flexible solutions and a friendly and welcoming learning environment for everyone. One possible addition to the classroom is the school library. It may have the potential to become "the heart of the school" depending upon its content and resources, especially when it comes to having a professional library staff as well as a teacher- and special needs educational staff. A resource-based aspect of inclusive organisation is to use the classroom as a base combined with different activities outside of it for all pupils. Individual pupils and groups may be assigned tasks where they go elsewhere to solve them; for instance, to the school library in order to search for handbooks or to another room in order to interview a pupil or assist a group. They might be asked to go out and measure the circumference of trees or go shopping at the local grocery store. Currently, pupils with special needs are the ones who most often leave the classroom; consequently, they often feel negatively labelled. The inclusive school needs to be open to "inside and outside classroom activities" to a great extent. Ideally, moving between educational scenes should be natural for all pupils. Accordingly, flexibility and openness when

it comes to making use of the existing variety of educational scenes contributes to enrich the learning environment for all. Additionally, it allows the possibility of providing specific studies and support services adapted to the diversity of pupil interests and levels of comprehension (Johnsen, 2014b).

What kinds of *educational arenas* are available and made use of in the seven studies? All participating project schools have rooms to work with pupil groups regardless if the school buildings are old or new. In the Norwegian case, the school moves into a brand new building during the longitudinal research period. The new building is richly equipped with shared use of extra group rooms and other rooms in different sizes, including an auditorium, and thus provides excellent conditions for the flexible use of a variety of rooms. However, the old school building, of which the oldest part is from the latter part of the nineteenth century, also has several rooms in different sizes for flexible use, even though they are not as up to date (O). The long-term organisation of available rooms is an administrative question to be answered in cooperation with the teaching staff. Out-of-school teaching, or "teaching in the woods", one day a month has become common in Norwegian elementary schools (O).

Whether all participating schools have rooms suited to small group- and individual teaching on a permanent basis has not been fully reported. Generally speaking, having rooms for group work as well as a room for regularly visiting professional colleagues, such as the educational psychological service or other external services and unforeseen immediate needs, may be problematic in some schools, especially if they are overcrowded. In these cases, there may be a lack of physical, structural frame factors for organising small group- and individual teaching outside the classroom. The school library is also mentioned above as a possible important areana for inclusive education. Most of the participating schools have a school library or book collection. If they do not have libraries, many of the schools have made corners and other parts of the building into social meeting places where pupils can relax – often with flowers and decorations that include maps, historical books and pictures. Even though some of the participating schools have school libraries or books to lend, none of them is fully equipped with librarians or has developed libraries that deserve to be called "the heart of the school".

d: Educational resources

Flexible organisation of schooling depends upon flexible access to resources, especially human resources. School and local communities have to take into consideration many kinds of resources, which are described below in the chap-

ter on context and frame factors. This section focuses on human resources, for instance ordinary- and special needs educators as well as assistants on occasion. One ordinary teacher can do a lot, but teaching divided between two or more teachers and, ideally, special needs educators (Johnsen, 2014b; Igrić & Cvitković, 2013), allows for quite a number of other organisational options, such as co-teaching, where more than one educator works in the classroom. Co-teaching, however, presupposes that educators are willing to change their professional attitude and teaching style from the traditional self-sufficient and independent responsibility of an entire class. Teaching with one or more colleagues requires (again: ideally) division of tasks and cooperation when lessons are prepared, practiced and assessed so that the capacity of all educators is effectively utilised and nobody is passive while one of the teachers assumes traditional responsibility for the entire class. This also means that preparatory work and teaching tasks are divided among colleagues during the planning process. (Bigge & Stump, 1998; Dalen, 1982; Dixon-Krauss, 1996; Hjelmbrekke, 2014; Johnsen, 2014b; Mittler, 2000; Booth et. al., 2000). Co-teaching thereby encourages flexible organisation. It also encourages collaborative learning, where pupils divide tasks among themselves, discussing, assisting and drawing conclusions with support from educators. Organising pupils into face-to-face promotive interaction in small groups for cooperating learning is applied to a variety of learning tasks. It takes into account Vygotsky's (1978) focus on having peer support in the learning process, as demonstrated in practice (Dzemidzic, 2007; Kristiansen et al. 2019). How do the schools in the seven studies organise their use of human resources? The following discussions about use of educational resources are related to the organisational aspects mentioned above: whole class scenario – large class -, group-, and dyadic organisation- in addition to inside and outside classroom teaching.

The human resources in whole class teaching – whether it is in the form of unitary or multiple organisation (Alexander, 2000), are usually based on one teacher working alone. According to the Belgrade study, observational data indicate that 70 % of teaching is whole class teaching (B). The studies have detailed information about different kinds of teacher-pupil relations within whole class settings that are based on a variety of human resources. The Sarajevo team describes a situation where the teacher gives the whole class information, feedback or instruction either in the form of one-way communication from teacher to class or as two-way interaction between teacher and individual pupils or groups (S). A variety of interaction patterns are described by the teams,

including storytelling, pupil presentations with discussions and feedback. In the Norwegian case, the teacher is observed applying the following ways of adapting the teaching to individual pupils; i) explaining a phenomenon in different ways; ii) repeating; iii) giving varied examples; iv) approaching individual pupils and groups directly; v) combining the previously mentioned kinds of communication with handing out worksheets to every pupil – having written messages on the blackboard ahead of the lesson – giving the same message orally. With the computer technology introduced in the Norwegian case school, the teachers have even more possibilities for meeting individual and group needs within the whole class. As the laptop has taken over the function of the blackboard in the final academic years of the longitudinal study, a number of new additional resources have become available through having an internet connection in every classroom (O). The internet currently offers vast opportunities to enrich individually adapted education with an increasing collection of educational illustrations, examples and tasks aiming at different levels of mastery as well as support for several disabilities. Upgrading teachers and special needs educators contributes to the development towards inclusion, of which the action research and pre-post classroom studies are examples. With the introduction of the internet as a teaching-learning media, it is also crucial that teachers are trained to critically use information. The Ljubljana team directs attention towards communication between teacher and class and among pupils in general. As mentioned, their findings strongly indicate that pupils with hearing impairments perceive communication in their ordinary class as unclear, whereas pupils in a special class for the functionally deaf and hard of hearing pupils are more satisfied (L). This exemplifies in a concrete way the very important challenges of fulfilling the diversity of communicative abilities that is a necessary part of inclusion. It also raises the question whether educational resources are too sparse. Pupils with sensory disabilities clearly need alternative or additional ways of communication, as do many other pupils in a typical class. Moreover, several pupils may have less obvious difficulties understanding what is communicated.

Educational resources in large classes (two or more classes together): Merging two classes is specifically mentioned as a way of organising teaching in the Macedonia-, Sarajevo and Oslo cases. It is used in order to realise so-called "active teaching and cooperative learning" (SM, S). In the Oslo case, the class woodwork with tools requires two teachers, who have developed co-teaching in different subjects through the years, and specialised in creative teaching-learning processes (O).

Educational resources in groups are common within the classroom. They are also divided between classrooms and other available rooms. The Belgrade observations indicate that barely 6 % of instruction is organised as group work (B). An important goal of group work is to develop collaborative learning arranged in connection with specific learning tasks or projects for shorter or longer periods. "The circle of friends", described above is developed to encourage academic and social peer support across levels of mastery, including pupils with special needs (S). The teacher often initiates group work, but pupils also do. Thus, in the Norwegian study, when pupils work on specific tasks, some prefer to work individually while others sit in pairs or groups. Some pupils get help to barricade themselves from visual and auditory impressions that disturb their concentration – all these organisational forms are used in the same classroom with one teacher (O).

Group work also takes place outside the classroom. As described, special needs teachers either are in the classroom or have their own "workshops" – often in smaller rooms with a lot of alternative materials suited small groups and individuals, such as in one of the Sarajevo case schools. Several of the research teams report on special needs educators working with individuals or groups in alternative rooms (B, O, S, SM, T, Z). Norwegian schools receive a certain amount of funding to arrange flexible teaching-learning conditions, such as the abovementioned workshops (O).

Educational resources in individual teaching: Part of the school day in the participating schools is intended for individual school work. The Belgrade observations indicate that approximately 21, 5% of the lessons in their case school are spent on individual schoolwork with individual guidance from the teachers. What impact does participation in a regular class have on pupils with challenges or disabilities? The Belgrade observations show that "… the teachers devote a large proportion of their time to giving individually adapted guidance to pupils with disabilities" (B). The rest of the class gets approximately the same amount of individual guidance as the pupil with disabilities. However, their observations also indicate that pupils with disabilities "…take an active role in the classroom" (B). The Macedonian team presents an illustrative example of how the class teacher pays individual attention to a pupil with special needs in the larger class setting in accordance with advice from special needs educators:

> "… the teachers … are instructed, to try to give more elaborate instructions and directions individually to the pupil with a cochlear implant" after they give general directions to the entire class, (SM).

While individual guidance is generally given to all pupils, some pupils need more support than regular flexibility covers, as indicated. Some of the case schools have added extra staff members – first of all with special needs educational competence – during their field study. Systematic teacher upgrading takes place, most notably in the action research studies. In some of the schools, researchers who are special educators also teach and train selected pupils with disabilities or challenges. Two of the empirical studies have no interventions (L, O). However, in the Ljubljana study special needs educators teach in the special classes for pupils who are functionally deaf and hard of hearing. As regards the Norwegian case school, it has the same statutory rights as all Norwegian schools to apply for extra resources for pupils "… who either do not or are unable to benefit satisfactorily from ordinary tuition …" (Education Act, Section 5-1). It is granted when the need is documented and accepted a) by the educational-psychological service and b) the municipality's educational office. The case class obtains extra resources for special needs education of three pupils during the longitudinal study (O).

Educational resources outside the classroom and school: The situation of having special needs education taking place partly outside the classroom, either in groups or in educator-pupil dyads, is described already. Dyadic special education is characterised as systematically planned and related to the specific needs of the pupil. The dyad provides an excellent opportunity for dialogue with the pupil, something that may be difficult in the open classroom environment. Educational resources are also organised in out-of-school activities, such as "teaching in the forest", excursions and cultural events. "Teaching in the forest" is arranged by an individual class teacher or in groups of two or more classes (O). Several activities require more than one adult. Therefore two or more classes arrange the event and, correspondingly, with two or more teachers together and even assistants or special educators. In some cases parents are invited to participate as volunteers. When these events occur, the educational content often consists of one or more cross-disciplinary tasks or projects that need planning, cooperation and task division. This kind of arrangement encourages an explicit awareness of every pupil's level of ability and needs. The same may be said about project teaching inside the school buildings themselves that may have many of the same characteristics. The Norwegian case school contributes with a good example of this, where the two previously mentioned class teachers work together with their classes in a cross-disciplinary project lasting one school year. During this time, one of the pupils – who participated in a special needs group in lower grades – starts to flourish. She produces interesting results, show-

ing that she has in-depth understanding and great interest in the project and, at the same time, demonstrates substantial progress in reading, writing texts and arithmetic. Her progress and well-being in the project is a good example of educational inclusion (O). However, the mentioned organisational alternatives and access to educational resources does not in itself guarantee inclusive education. They represent a possibility. What about dyadic and group teaching outside the classroom? When they are used only for pupils with special needs – and to a great extent, as has been documented from a large number of schools in Norway (Johnsen, 2014c) – it is segregation.

Dilemmas and challenges

Organising is an important aspect that can enable or prevent development of educational inclusion, as indicated in the presentations above. In the following the two most typical aspects containing dilemmas and challenges are discussed: 1) organisation of teaching staff and 2) organisation in one or multiple teaching-learning arenas.

1: Organising teaching staff. As indicated in the reported findings, individual support is organised in different ways. The description of the Belgrade team above seems, however, to be more or less characteristic for most of the teams, even though there are important exceptions during the period of this research project. As pointed out, support of individual pupils within the joint classroom most often happens with an individual classroom teacher. The role of this teacher bearing the sole responsibility for creating an inclusive class is described in a recent Swedish PhD dissertation (Kotte, 2017). The main findings observed and expressed by the teachers are:

- The majority of teachers have a positive attitude to the idea of inclusive education
- They are interested in learning more about inclusive education
- They strive to plan and implement inclusive lessons in their classrooms
- Mediating knowledge is regarded as important, but difficult
- They feel that they teach a large number of pupils in need of support
- They feel that there is a dilemma balancing their teaching between individual pupils' needs and the interest of the class as a whole
- They worry about not seeing the needs of all pupils sufficiently
- They express that they need further educational or special needs educational teaching support

The dilemmas and challenges referred to here are recognised in the seven studies of this research project. However, as pointed out in Kotte (2017), class teaching with an individual teacher does not necessarily consist of pure "one-way lecturing", as also documented in the Norwegian classroom observations (O). Storytelling, dialogue teaching and apprising teaching are three of several teaching methods that may contribute to acquiring knowledge about pupils' level of mastery and, hence, to adapted teaching.

As reported in the seven studies, individual support within the classroom also takes place with more than one educator. More detailed or in-depth special educational support is given in several of the studies, either by special needs educators (S, T) or assistants or two regular teachers (O, Z). An example of this is logopedic support and teaching pupils in two case schools (S). The most common special needs educational support is provided as guidance to teachers and assistants (B, S, SM, T, Z). As also mentioned, the professional special needs educational support in these cases is either provided as part of the projects or financed by external organisations. The individual additional special needs resources in the Norwegian case are used a) inside the classroom as co-teaching, b) in workshops outside the classroom or c) as individual support combined both outside- and inside the classroom (O). The findings in the Swedish research supports the view expressed here that organising classroom teaching with only one teacher raises a serious challenge to educational inclusion (Kotte, 2017).

2: Organisation in one or multiple teaching-learning arenas. Is the idea about the inclusive school and class tantamount to having all pupils in the same classroom at all times? Some people would probably answer yes. As this chapter and the seven articles from each of the research teams in this anthology indicate, several organisational options are presented as possible options for the inclusive school. However, there are several dilemmas, challenges and limitations – and creative possibilities – concerning in which way, how much and for what pupils different teaching arenas can be used as aspects of inclusion, such as the following:

1. Placing some of the pupils in their local school in special educational units is on the wrong side of educational inclusion
2. Individual and group teaching of pupils with special educational needs organised outside the classroom large parts of the school day (Ytterhus & Tøssebro, 2005) contributes to retaining traditional "pre-inclusive" teaching and prevents their development of a sense of belonging to the class and thus to inclusion

3. Using out-of-class workshops only for pupils with special educational needs raises a serious challenge to inclusion
4. Organising relevant parts of the school day with out-of-class workshops and activities for a variety of teaching-learning activities for different individual pupils and groups across levels of mastery represents a creative extension of traditional classroom teaching with possibilities to develop educational inclusion
5. Organising most of the school day and -week for all pupils belonging to the same class with the class teacher co-teaching with a special needs teacher provides opportunities for developing a common sense of belonging and inclusion

According to the findings of the seven studies, a number of methods and organisational measures are successfully tried out. However, several dilemmas, challenges and limits remain obstacles on the way towards developing inclusive schools for all participating schools.

Summary

While educational methods and organisation are presented in a joint chapter due to the many overlaps between these important didactic-curricular areas, they are divided into two main sections.

Starting with methods, descriptions and discussions are based on the question: How can educational methods or approaches support individually adapted education and inclusion? The main findings are summarised in the following:

- The lecturing method is observed to be combined with i) illustrations, ii) explanations, iii) demonstrations, iv) inductive methods that focus on discovering, v) analysis, vi) writing on the black board, white board, "flip over", vii) use of laptop and internet.
- Flexible use of alternative teaching & learning material, individually adapted development and use of alternative methods and material, systematic scaffolding adapted to the diversity of pupils' levels of mastery, appraising or diagnostic teaching, and individually adapted step-by-step methodology; these may all serve as contributions to inclusion.
- Differentiation – a curricular top-down perspective – examples: Differentiation of learning methods, learning tasks, alternative learning tasks: timing,

extent of learning task, methods, group organisation, level of expected task mastery, suitably selected learning tasks from the general curriculum
- Individual adaptation – A curricular bottom-up perspective: Continuous acquisition of new methods and approaches, overview of different methods and approaches, flexible application of methods and approaches, multiple uses of methods and approaches in joint classroom settings
- Differentiation and individual adaptation hand in hand – individual adaptation "along the road", in differentiated weekly plans, class plans & group plans & individual plans, meaningful teaching-learning processes for all, teacher and special needs educator cooperation, "concerted actions" in the class

Dilemmas and challenges:

- Teaching too often consists of the typical teaching method of lecturing that is directed towards the whole class; also called class teaching or catheter teaching
- Severely limited knowledge about special needs educational methods among ordinary teachers

Organisation is, along with method, the educational *how*; they are means through which teaching and learning content is intended to be mediated; like content, they are mediating tools. The main question directing studies of organisation is: How can classroom or class organisation contribute to individually adapted education and inclusion? The main findings can be summarized as follows: Of the two characterisations, unitary or multiple organising, ordinary education is criticised for being too often unitary, in the sense that a teacher instructs the whole class as if all pupils are on the same level of mastery.

There are several dimensions of organising the teaching-learning process, such as:

- The time perspective in organising
  - Some schools make "five-year plans" for how to realise educational principles such as inclusive practices
  - School year and semester curriculum in cooperation between school administration and teachers
  - Joint semester curriculum for all classes on the same age level or cohort
  - Individual semester, short-term (one week) and daily curricula

- Organising group size
  - All participating schools place the pupils in classes of between 20 and 30 pupils as the main organisational form. In addition the pupils are occasionally and systematically organised into:
    - large classes (two or more classes together)
    - groups
    - individual or dyadic teaching
- Organising in educational scenes or places: classrooms – smaller rooms for group- and individual teaching – out-of-classroom and out-of-school teaching arenas
- Educational resources and organisation
  - One teacher in the classroom is the most common organisational form in all participating schools
  - Special needs educator in the classroom or in group- or individual teaching
  - Assistants in the classroom with the class teacher
  - Special needs educator in the classroom with the class teacher
  - Two or more teachers with large classes
  - Class teacher/s and volunteering parents in out-of-class events

Generally, special needs educators take on the role of counselling the school and parents. They may take part in making individual plans (S, SM, T, Z). In some of the studies, they also teach pupils with special educational needs (S, SM, T). In two cases, experienced special schools share their knowledge and skills with case schools (B, S). There are cases where the classroom teachers have an assistant with them (Z), or the teaching is organised in a combination of workshops and co-teaching with assistant (O). However, the class teacher most often has the sole responsibility for the whole class. In all seven cases the researchers are special needs educators (B, L, O, S, SM, T, Z).

Organising education for inclusion is confronted with several challenges and dilemmas. The two most usual dilemmas are related to a) 1) organising teaching staff and b) organising in one or multiple teaching-learning arenas.

The argument made at the beginning of this chapter for placing educational methods and organisation together is that there are many grey zones between the two; a teaching method may be realised through organisation. Something similar can be said about grey zones between content, method and organisation. An example may illustrate this point: Klafki (1999) argues that educational content consists of substance and values. On a more general

level, Alexander (2015) argues that pedagogically speaking, teaching encompasses values and beliefs. But how are values taught? Literature may certainly contribute to this end, and so may relevant methods, organisational forms and content. Thus, all three may be used interactively. For instance, one way of teaching about cooperation is to place pupils in small cooperative learning groups in face-to-face promotive interaction (Demidzic, 2007; Demidzic Kristiansen et al, 2019). In this way, the content and method of cooperation interacts with the organisation of groups. We could therefore say that they are interacting "in the grey zone".

The chapters presented so far have focused on pupil/s, assessment, educational intentions, educational content as well as methods and classroom organisation. They represent classical educational categories that hearken back to Plato and ancient Greek traditions. They are commonplace categories and parts of a joint European educational heritage (Johnsen, 2000). The next three chapters focusing on communication care and context or frame factors represent an extension of the curriculum field. Two of them, communication and care, arise out of current humanistic special needs education discourse with links to regular education, psychology and other related research disciplines. (Befring, 1997; Johnsen, 2000; 2007; 2019a; Noddings, 1992; 2003). The focus on context or frame factors is based on a cultural-historical approach and the related discourse on educational ecology based on the classical works published in the same year of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Goodlad (1979). Contextual explorations highlight the important connection between the inner activity of schools – the micro level – represented by the seven didactic-curricular main aspects – and schools' macro contexts; the eighth embracing area. Examining the contextual aspect is also crucial for establishing the trustworthiness and authenticity of this comparative research project.

7 Communication

Without communication there will be no education, no matter how qualified and relevant facilitation of content, methods and organisation seems to be (Johnsen, 2001a).

Communication has not been a major aspect of mainstream didactic or curricular tradition. Neither was it a main area of the initial curricular rela-

tion approach, but was presented as an important sub-category of educational method. In modern learning theories such as Piaget's and western mainstream biological-logical theories, the focus has been almost entirely on individual cognitive development and the learner's ability to solve problems. However, Lev Vygotsky and the cultural-historical school of education turn our attention towards the living context in the teaching-learning-development process. This marks a focal shift where attention on individual problem solving is understood within cultural-historical context, at least by large parts of the community of educational researchers. The bridge between cultural context and the pupil is communication, and it is certainly at the core of interaction and mediation as argued by Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1996), Rogoff (2008); Rommetveit (1972; 2014), Rye (2001; 2005), Trevarthen (2014) and Wertsch (1985). They direct attention to the following factors:

- Pupils learn through interaction with their fellow human beings and their environments
- Language and communication are essential tools in learning and cognitive development
- Teachers, parents and peers may function as mediators and discourse partners in joint teaching and learning processes

Cultural-historical tradition and practical experience strongly indicate the importance of communication and mediation for the learning and developmental process. Consequently, it is promoted from a sub-category of methods to a main aspect of didactic-curricular activities (Johnsen, 2014c). Good discussions with international Master-level students in special needs education support this choice (Johnsen, 2007).

A similar emphasis on communication is evident in the participating research teams, as the following contributions show: a) communication with pupils who are functionally deaf or hard of hearing (L, SM); b) exploration of the role of communication as a contribution to inclusion (B, O); and c) special needs education of pupils with communication impairments and challenges (S,SM,T). The Zagreb team points out that "communication is very important for sharing information and knowledge, and it can be a motivating factor for good teacher-pupil collaboration" (Z). In line with their point of view, communication in an educational context is divided into the two sub-categories, communication technology and communication as human relation or relational psychology (Johnsen, 2007).

Communication technology

Communication technological concerns are highlighted in the following questions:

- Can we hear and see each other (levels of light and noise in the classroom)?
- Does anyone need hearing aids?
- Do we need special communication media such as sign language, signed speech, BLISS-signs, icons, computer communication programmes or other augmentative devices?
- Do we need systematic step-by-step support when learning to understand and apply language?

Currently, the concept of communication technology focuses on designing, constructing and maintaining communication systems in digital and other forms. In educational and special needs educational context the meaning of the term extends to applying different means of communication. It covers the use of communication programmes and -technology as well as use of different "languages" in a broad sense.

As mentioned, facilitating communication for pupils with functional deafness and hard of hearing is a main topic in two of the studies (L, SM). Alternative communication means are in focus, such as in combinations of oral method with lip reading and total communication, sign language and facilitation of communication for pupils with cochlea implants. Moreover, in order to meet the variety of pupils' various comprehension – whether related to hearing or other impairments – communication technologies and even combinations of different communication means are important aspects of special needs education and inclusion. Communicating through more than one sense is a classical way of adapting teaching to pupils' different preferred channels of perception. Different kinds of so-called multi-sensory communication means are described in several of the research reports;

a) Adapting to an open, but acceptable level of "working noise" in the classroom (O, S)
b) Maintaining appropriate light in the classroom by having sufficient lighting as well as dimming strong sunlight in order to adapt light conditions that meet everyone's needs (S)
c) Using pictures and illustrations, including flashcards: A great deal of handmade educational material with combinations of pictures and written assignments has been made and stored for the elementary grades. Posters

are also placed strategically in classrooms. The Sarajevo schools have a multicultural and multilingual pupil population; therefore, they write keywords in Bosnian, Romano and English. The Bosnian case schools have pupils from a number of linguistic minorities, including Serbian and Albanian as first languages. This means that some of the pupils who have learned to read in their first language may also have to deal with two alphabets, since Cyrillic, Balkan-Romano and Albanian alphabets are either completely or partly different from the Latin alphabet that forms the linguistic basis for pupils enrolled in the participating Bosnian schools. They point out that for these pupils "… language barriers and difficulties during the learning of the "official" Bosnian language requires more time, individual support and language material …". It is likely that some of the other case schools also have pupils with different oral and written first languages, as also occurs in the Norwegian case school (O, S, T).

d) During the project period, computer programmes and the internet have been increasingly used. This new technology greatly enriches multi-sensory communication support and teaching-learning content, as mentioned above. Learning programmes in pupils' first language, English and mathematics are adopted; thematic flashcards are downloaded; teachers start making illustrations and summarising PowerPoint presentations; films, video snippets and music are used. The new technology offers a wealth of new possibilities for teachers to implement a teaching-learning process adapted to individual variations within the community of the class. However, it also requires that teachers make greater efforts than before to verify if the increasing amount of information is correct as well as take full advantage of the new opportunities for individual adaptation (O, S, SM, T). Compared to using blackboards as the main media for writing notes and examples, there is a great advantage in moving to laptop computers, namely that the teacher can face the class rather than turning his/her back on them. This provides greater opportunities for dialogue, observations and feedback. It does not mean that the black- or whiteboard is outdated, but that its role and importance have changed.

e) As mentioned, communication with pupils with hearing impairments is in focus (L, SM).

In other research projects there are pupils who need specially adapted communication technologies for other reasons. The Sarajevo team reports that logopeds use special speech devices when working with pupils who have speech chal-

lenges: "This is external support from a special institution in Sarajevo. Pupils either go to the institution that has this special equipment, or the speech therapist comes to the school from time to time" (S).

The seven studies in the research project do not cover all of the rapidly increasing communication technology (http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/ AAC/). However, several programmes are used in schools for pupils with speech organ disabilities, intellectual challenges and other disabilities or challenges where alternative communication contribute to dialogue as well as language and speech development – with or without a computer connection. Combination of (hand-) signing to speech is widely used in Norwegian kindergarten groups, since almost every group has one or more children who applies this approach as their primary communication form. Several children use this as a means to acquire oral language, and all children use it in their first language acquisition. Among other alternatives are a) the Bliss-sign system (a visual communication system of language symbols with logical pictures instead of letters) and b) simplified icons in picture exchange communication systems (http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/ebip/). A limitation of this multinational comparative research is therefore that no examples of augmentative and alternative communication programmes are represented, since they are practiced in several ordinary schools and are particularly well-suited for studies of inclusive practices. This is one of many aspects that deserve attention in future studies. The Belgrade team draws our attention to the schools' experience of the time spent on pupils with special educational needs in ordinary classes (B). This indicates the obvious fact that for schools to be able to adapt to pupils' individual special needs, human resources and upgrading in relevant communication approaches must be channelled into the classroom. Emphasizing both variation and the facilitation of communication means is not only helpful for all pupils in the inclusive class but also completely necessary for some of these pupils.

Dilemmas and challenges. Should the choice be made between having a homogenous class of functionally deaf pupils or a mixed class of deaf and hearing pupils? The choice is obvious if little or nothing done to improve the communication between pupils and teachers in mixed classes (L). Parents may be confronted with these kinds of dilemmas. As regards the development of inclusive schools, this raises a challenge. It is also challenging that ordinary teachers do not have the necessary awareness, knowledge and skills to use alternative communication means.

Communication as human relations

While communication technological issues relate to questions about whether we see and hear each other properly or understand the language/s being used, the human relation aspect of communication is about the ability to be aware of every single fellow human being; to create and maintain a human relationship. This is also called relational pedagogy. According to Rye, research and theory-building during recent decades indicates the following traits in human nature in general and children's development in particular:

- The child has an innate social nature and potential to develop communication and social interaction
- The child has a fundamental need to establish reciprocal social relationships in order to survive, develop physically and socially, and learn to understand and relate to the physical and social world
- The child – particularly in the early years – learns through social interaction with caregivers, who become the child's important mediators and supporters in the process of socialisation and mastery of their relationship to the surrounding world (Rye, 2001; 2005).
- Human relations are based on being seen, listened to and taken seriously (Johnsen, 2014b:164).

This interactive understanding of the child as a communicative being is in contrast to Piaget's developmental theory. While Piaget (1896-1980) argues that a child develops into a social being, his contemporary, Vygotsky (1896-1934), argues that a child is social and communicative from birth onwards, developing because of this trait. With his lifelong studies of the interaction between infant and primary caregivers, Trevarthen (2014) supports Vygotsky's stand and adds research findings about new-borns' innate ability to initiate communication and their need for responsive awareness from their caregiver. Children's need to be heard and seen, as well as to receive, initiate and participate in chats, conversations and dialogue, is expected to be more or less present at school age. Why "more or less"`? There may be many reasons why a child's expectations fade when attempting to initiate contact with others. One important reason may be the consequences of long-term neglect. It may also be that teachers and other adults as well as schoolmates fail to notice a child's desire for contact. When a child has problems with attracting attention due to difficulties with the usual oral communication, it is not unusual that a special "language" develops within the child's family (Gardou, 2014). If so, it is crucial for the school and class to

be informed about this. The two previously mentioned reasons, social neglect and communication disabilities, are examples of communicative challenges that may be difficult to reveal. The introverted, silent pupil is often overlooked during the busy school day, even though the school is responsible for making sure that no child experiences being invisible. This is a fundamental inclusive practice. How does the human relation aspect of communication appear in the seven studies? Are schools conscious about the problem of awareness – or that some pupils may be "invisible"?

As a partial answer to the latter question, information is obtained from an innovation project in cooperation with the universities of Tuzla, Sarajevo and Oslo and their project schools, which took place from 2003 to 2005 at the forefront of the current cooperative research project (SØE 06/02, 2002). The project consisted of a series of meetings comprised of a combination of lectures and discussions of practical educational assignments in the participating schools. The cooperation between practitioners and researchers is reported on in Johnsen (2007). One of the assignments was to make a simple screening map for the class and tick for each communication with the pupil. The assumption that one or more of the pupils would get few if any ticks was debated and even contradicted by conscientious teachers. However, at the next meeting, one of the participating teachers wanted to eagerly admit that she had revealed her own misconception:

> She told us that she had started (…) the assignment (…) expecting to find that she gave all her pupils more or less the same amount of attention with the exception of a few pupils who got much more of her time. As she was filling out the checklist at the end of each school day according to what she could remember, she discovered that there were 2-3 pupils who got very little attention in her class as well. "It was a shocking discovery", she told us. But it was also an "a-ha" experience showing her how easily a simple written checklist could help her improve her communication with the whole class (Johnsen, 2007: 274).

How does the human relation aspect of communication appear in the seven studies? Examples of relational aspects of communication between educators and pupils are summarized in the following categories:

- Showing acceptance and appreciation of every individual pupil and the whole class
- Giving ample time in conversation with the pupil
- Waiting for the pupil's reaction
- Appreciating return information

- Trying to resolve misunderstandings
- Using verbal and nonverbal communication in general and especially with facial expressions
- Striving for insight
- Recognising and accepting the pupil's feelings, needs and individual learning strategies
- Repeating and clarifying instruction in accordance with assumed individual needs
- Giving positive feedback and praise in oral and written form
- Mediating dialogue in the class in order to support the understanding of pupils with hearing impairments and other disabilities (B, L, O, S, SM, T, Z).

The relational aspect also concerns communication between educators at school and external professionals; school administration, special needs educators, teachers and in some cases assistants; resource teams as well as the research teams, not to mention the very important communication between schools and parents. In most of the studies, communication between the adult population is described as close and positive. The Belgrade team has established cooperation with a renowned special school having many years of experience. The school shares their professional knowledge and skills with the ordinary project school. In Sarajevo a special school and resource centre offers logopedic training for some of the focus pupils in the study. In the Tuzla and Sarajevo studies members of the research teams are active educators in the innovation projects within their case schools. Thus, there is a kind of unifying characteristic of the communication as being close and positive among research teams and schools, parents and external competence institutions (B, L, O, S, SM, T, Z). However, it is appropriate to provide two possible modifications of these one-sided positive characteristics.

a) The great innovative efforts of research teams along with extra project resources add increased opportunities for pupils, parents and schools. This may be one reason for the close and positive relationships. Accordingly, it may indicate an element of funding- or sponsor bias, meaning that these schools may be particularly positive due to their extra resources. This kind of bias has not been discussed seriously within the field of educational research, but is gaining increasing attention within medicine (Krimsky, 2012).
b) The second modification relates to the process of finding case schools that are willing to participate in classroom studies, which are rather intimate for teachers, pupils and parents. It may be complicated for schools to accept that

their everyday practices are evaluated in detail. Possibly due to this, some teams describe the search for case schools as "incredibly difficult". For example, it took two years to find a so-called "good school" that was willing to participate in the classroom study (O). Indeed, for other teams it has been necessary to switch schools. The process of finding research schools may therefore contribute to explaining why research teams perceive their relations with their cooperating schools as close and positive (B, O, S, SM, T, Z).

As stated above, the main focus arena of relational communication is within the class. In the following, they are described in three different contexts; as communication with a) the whole class, b) groups and c) individual pupils. As mentioned, the educational staffs consist of ordinary teachers, special needs educators and/or educational assistants.

a) The Sarajevo team gives the following description of relational communication in the class:

> "The teacher communication is practiced in order that each pupil will be seen and heard. The teacher's dialogue with the whole class takes place in a supportive socio-emotional atmosphere based on the discipline of listening and following rules of communication, where the teacher gives positive feedback and praise through verbal and nonverbal communication" (S).

Other stated characteristics or prerequisites for relational aspects of communication are "clear communication with the entire class"; a multiple focus on the pupils in the class – also in collaboration with teaching assistants; and that it is important for the teacher to "communicate in front of all pupils". It is emphasized that encouragement is a vital part of relational communication. (S, SM, Z).

b) Peer cooperation is particularly emphasized by the Sarajevo team. Teachers are encouraged to mediate how to take active part in joint group assignments, share opinions, experiences and knowledge and take responsibility for their part of the group work. Educators remind pupils of group rules, and they contribute to a positive pupil environment. Other teams also describe collaboration between pupils with and without special educational needs, both the diversity of joint activities and relational challenges (B, L, O, S, SM, T, Z).

c) Most research teams direct the attention specifically on relational communication with individual pupils with special needs (B, L, S, SM, T, Z). How is the relational communication with individual pupils described? Examples

are mainly sought from communication between teacher and single pupil, but also between special needs educators or assistants and individual pupils. Co-teaching and turn taking between teacher and assistant or special needs educator and individual pupils are also described.

Possible effects of relational communication for single pupils in general are pointed out, such as better understanding of the class conversation, more pupil initiative, participation in discussions and learning tasks, increased tolerance of peers and more sincere cooperation. The Belgrade team concludes in the following way:

> "The data obtained concerning how pupils with disabilities communicate with teachers and other pupils show a picture of positive relationships and acceptance. In their communication with teachers, pupils with disabilities take an active role: they often initiate conversation, ask their teacher to help them and check whether they have completed tasks correctly. Teachers frequently praise pupils with disabilities for their achievements and verbally encourage them to work on tasks. Furthermore … they devote a great deal of time to individual guiding these pupils. (…) Along with teachers, other pupils often praise their classmates with disabilities following their presentations. Interaction unrelated to learning is also present among pupils (e.g. chatting). No instances of negative relations, such as quarrels or put-downs, have been noted by the observers (B).

Some teams apply the concept of resource based- or positive communication in their description of relational communication. These are possibly terms inspired from Rye (2001; 2005). Thus, the Sarajevo team reports positive communication based on the attention paid by the teacher to different pupils' emotional states, specifically focusing on moods and feelings. Through observation, teachers sense when to create opportunities for pupils to express their feelings and thinking and participate in dialogue (S). In their action research the Skopje team presents the following suggestions for positive communication in the teaching-learning process within the classroom, focusing on supporting an individual pupil with cochlea implants:

- Reduce sources of competing noise in the classroom. A sound field amplification system is an excellent tool to address background noise
- Gain the pupil's auditory attention. Do not tap or wave to get attention
- Write key words, dates and homework assignments on the chalkboard
- Repeat the pupil's answers to teacher-directed questions
- Preferential seating arrangement

- Ask the pupil to repeat a misunderstood word or phrase
- Prepare lists of vocabulary from subject areas to learn at home
- Highlight new words in each lesson
- Ask the pupil to substitute new words for old – expand vocabulary use in different contexts
- Try to keep your book down when reading aloud. Making eye contact is important for all children
- Try to stand fairly still when talking
- If necessary, institute a buddy system (SM)

The teachers' positive relational communication with single pupils and the whole class in the Norwegian case school is a recurring theme throughout the five years of the longitudinal study. It is identified in classroom observations and discussed with the teachers in open interviews or dialogues. Four categories of positive relational communication stand out in particular; 1) multisensory communication, 2) active listening, 3) dialogue and 4) resource based or positive communication, since a variety of the observed traits may fall under these categories (O).

1) While multisensory communication is best characterized as a communication technological aspect, it also has relational aspects. The teachers are repeatedly observed make use of both hearing and sight in their presentation. They present knowledge and messages both orally and in writing, delivering printed information on papers and referring to written texts and pictures. Communicating in a multisensory fashion takes into account the individuals' preferences. Therefore, multisensory communication reaches larger numbers of pupils better depending on teachers' levels of knowledge and sensitivity towards each individual pupil.
2) Active listening contributes to creating relationships. It invites pupils to take part in the class conversation. A listening teacher is a model for how pupils learn to listen. This is in accordance with Carla Rinaldi and the Italian Reggio Emilia view on the role of listening in communication:

> ….any theorization, from the simplest to the most refined, needs to be expressed, to be communicated, and thus to be listened to, in order to exist. It is here we recognize the values and foundations of the "pedagogy of listening" (Rinaldi, 2001:80).

Teachers are repeatedly observed breaking up their teaching by asking questions and looking at whichever pupil is speaking. They are continuously

observed walking around the classroom, talking and listening to individual pupils and groups while the class is working on assignments. Their pupils seem comfortable in contact with them.

3) The dialogue is characterised by reciprocity between listening and participating in conversation. It is generally understood as a) a conversation between two or more persons, and b) an exchange of ideas, opinions, particular issues – as a school subject – or concrete, practical topics; with the assumed intention of reaching an amicable agreement or settlement. The educational dialogue mirrors the master-apprentice relationship in the teaching-learning process described by Barbara Rogoff in her early work (1990). The classroom dialogue functions as an important tool for inclusion since it invites pupils on different levels of mastery to demonstrate their problem-solving abilities and at the same time learn from each other. The dialogue is of specific importance for solving psychosocial challenges.
4) Resource-based communication focuses on pupils' mastery and proximal zone of development in Vygotskyan terminology (1978; 1987). Rye (2001; 2005), and Hundeide (2010) have outlined eight themes for resource-based communication and mediation. Addressing educators, they recommend the following:
    1. To express positive feelings towards the class and individual pupils
    2. To base the dialogue with the pupils on their mastery and interests
    3. To talk with the pupils
    4. To praise and acknowledge the pupils
    5. To help the pupils to focus the attention
    6. To give meaning to the pupils' experience
    7. To explain further details in the pupils' experience
    8. To help the pupils to develop self-regulation and social competence

How do these themes correspond to the practice of the three class teachers (O)? All themes are recognised in observations of the continuous communication between teachers and pupils. The first teacher sums up what communication means to her as follows:

- To understand the pupil
- To be aware that not all pupils have a good time in their class and school environment
- To communicate on the pupil's level

- To try and see all pupils equally well
- To communicate academically, one must be individually adapted (O).

Human relation communication has been given considerable space in this report as an important aspect of inclusive practices. The dialogue between teachers and individual pupils and the whole class is a central part of the teaching-learning process in general, historically documented as a classical educational or didactic method (Brammer, 1838 in Johnsen, 2014b:158). The human relation communication presented here draws our attention to pupils' mastery and abilities. This perspective on the teaching-learning process of pupils with special educational needs is an important factor in the turning of special needs education from focusing what the pupil is not able to do – a "fault finding" and labelling perspective – towards emphasizing the pupil's mastery and opportunities. This turn towards emphasizing the resource-based perspective within special needs education may be seen as a part of the international discourse about the school for all, integration and inclusion.

Challenges for relational communication

Not all human relations are positive. On the contrary, they may also be negative, as confirmed in the history of education and special education (Johnsen, 2000). In this presentation human relations, or relational communication, that contributes to inclusion is in focus – a kind of relational communication that encompasses the plurality of all pupils' communicative and educational capacities and needs. It concerns the mastery and abilities of every individual pupil in the community of the class, and thus it is based on their resources in interaction with educators. There is a complex set of challenges concerning communication between educators and pupils. The challenges reported are divided in accordance with three characteristics in the presentation below; a) monologue teaching b) error focused communication and c) communication difficulties among educational staff.

a) The term monologue teaching is used in this presentation to accentuate a distinction between teaching *to* the audience, in other words as one-way communication, and teaching in dialogue with the audience (This is a narrow application of the term, since it is more often used generally about lecturing). Thus, monologue teaching is described here as lecturing without interacting with pupils. It is reported that the term "… monologue is often

used for the traditional way of teaching the whole class or individuals while standing at the catheter". For example, teachers are observed explaining procedures to pupils either orally or by writing them on the blackboard without any kind of further communication or checking if pupils have understood the assignment (S, Z).

b) Error-focused communication deals with focusing on what pupils cannot manage and, accordingly, negative messages about faulty performance to either the whole class, groups or individuals. Examples of reported observations of error-focused communication are when a teacher's attention focuses solely on pupils' disruptive behaviour. This occurs in cases of negative discipline in the classroom and when class rules are made that all start with "no" or "do not" (S). Since special needs education is often about giving pupils who have different levels of mastery than the majority in the class specially adapted professional support, it is very important to be aware of not focusing attention on what these pupils are not able to, but rather help them "compete with themselves" and be aware of their personal progress. This is a difficult "line dance" requiring a high degree of sensitivity in order to avoid the pitfalls of error-focused communication. Frequent communication of pupils' lack of knowledge instead of their mastery and opportunities can have serious consequences for pupils' self-esteem and thereby general readiness to learn, contributing to their experiencing exclusion instead of inclusion. This error in communication has accompanied education and special needs education throughout history, and, even though not discussed explicitly in the joint report, the participating teams are aware of this fact.

c) Cooperation- and communication difficulties among a school's educational staff may contribute to challenges such as misunderstandings, delays and poor communication. This may in turn create difficulties for the teaching-learning process in general; it is especially serious for pupils with special educational needs. A frequently occurring difficulty concerns communication between special needs educators or teachers with assistants as well as parents. One reason for this miscommunication may be that assistants do not have sufficient knowledge to fully understand professional educational recommendations. It may also be that these recommendations have not been sufficiently explained. Examples of this are reported; however, once these challenges have been addressed, new knowledge and skills are conveyed to partners involved (S, SM, Z).

Summary

Communication has gains attention through at the cultural-historical turn towards learning in society, focusing on the following factors:

- Pupils learn through interaction with their fellow human beings and environments
- Language and communication are essential tools in learning and cognitive development
- Teachers, parents and peers may function as mediators and discourse partners in joint teaching and learning processes

Emphasis on communication is evident in the participating research teams, such as:

- Communication with pupils who are functionally deaf or hard of hearing (L, SM)
- Exploration of the role of communication as a contribution to inclusion (B, O)
- Action research concerning pupils with communication impairments (S,SM,T)

Communication in an educational context is divided into the two sub-categories of communication technology and communication as human relation (Johnsen, 2007).

Communication technology concerns the following:

- To hear and see each other
- Need for hearing or vision aids
- Need for special and alternative communication media
- Need for systematic support in learning to understand and apply a language

Focus on communicational means in the research reports:

- Adapting to an acceptable level of "working noise" in the classroom
- Maintaining appropriate light in the classroom
- Using hearing and visual adapted aids
- Using multisensory means in communication
- Increasing use of computer-based communication programmes

Communication as human relations, also called relational communication, is about the ability to be aware of every single fellow human being as well as create and maintain a human relationship. Examples from the seven studies of

relational communication between educators and pupils are summarized in the following categories:

- Showing acceptance and appreciation of every individual pupil and the whole class
- Giving ample time in conversation with the pupil
- Waiting for the pupil's reaction
- Appreciating return information
- Trying to resolve misunderstandings
- Using verbal and nonverbal communication in general and especially with facial expressions
- Striving for insight
- Recognise and accept the pupil's feelings, needs and individual learning strategies
- Repeating and clarifying instruction in accordance with assumed individual needs
- Giving positive feedback and praise in oral and written form
- Mediating the dialogue in the class in order to support the understanding of pupils with hearing impairment and other disabilities (B, L, O, S, SM, T, Z).

Four categories of *positive relational* communication stand out in particular since a variety of the observed traits may fall under these categories:

1) multisensory communication
2) active listening
3) dialogue
4) resource based or positive communication

Challenges: There is a complex set of challenges concerning communication between educators and pupils:

a) monologue teaching; teaching *to* the pupils
b) error-focused communication
c) communication difficulties among educational staff

As discussed in this chapter, relational communication is a general professional educational aspect that is highly relevant to interaction with all pupils, and it is of special importance in interacting with pupils who have difficulties and disabilities.

It is fair to say that positive relational communication is comprised of care. Hence, the question arises: Why establish care as another main aspect or area within the curricular relation approach? The next chapter on care begins with a discussion of the concept of care and an argument for its importance to special needs education and inclusion.

8 Care

Does communication involve care? The discussion of relational communication and resource-based communication above indicates a connection between communication and care. Why, then, establish care as another main aspect or area of the curricular relation approach? Before arguing for this point, an introductory clarification of the concept of care may be helpful.

In the anthology *Images of Modern Care* (Moderne omsorgsbilder), the editor distinguishes between two forms of care; a) private and informal, and b) public and formal. She characterizes private care as close, warm and empathetic, whereas professionalism, alienation and coldness are described as the hallmarks of public care (Jensen, 1990). What lies behind this unpleasant description of public care? Could it be that this description is associated with only everyday physical and medical care? In the Norwegian context, public care tends to be associated with institutional care of medical patients and elderly. Is this understanding in line with how the term is applied in other countries? The International Council of Nurses' description of nursing reveals the following clarification:

> Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people (International Council of Nurses, 2017).

Similarly, Mitchell and Soule (2008) link care to patient safety and quality care (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK2681/). The stated characterizations of care within nursing seem to support the above suggestion that institutional care is mainly associated with practical aspects of medical professions. Is the term care discussed when it comes to institutionalized education or schooling – and, if so, how is it described? A literature search reveals a description of the role of care pronounced in the School Policy & Advisory Guide of Victoria State Government, Australia. A chapter in the document is entitled, "Duty of Care in the School Policy & Advisory Guide". Here, the duty of care is described

as: "… to avoid injury of any kind or the absence of negligence that may lead to injury" (Victoria State Government, 2015). The purpose of this focus on care in the educational policy document is declared as being: "To explain the nature of the legal duties owed by teachers and school staff towards students". Here, the term care seems to have a preventive role. Overall, care seems to relate to formal and professional duties; to contribute to the prevention of neglect and fostering of high quality work of relevant professions within health care and education. Accordingly, compared to the dichotomy of the communication discussed in the chapter above, it seems that the term care may also be divided into similar aspects, whereof the formal aspect documented above in this chapter may be labelled "care technology" in line with communication technology.

In her article on educational concern about care in school, Lauvdal (1990) confirms the idea that the term care is used almost synonymously with caring work; thus, it is understood as a term consisting generally of safeguarding the needs of weak groups – almost synonymous with helping. This conceptual description also reminds us of the construction "care technology". It is fair to point out that in current Norwegian discourse, the distinction between public care as alienating and cold and private care as close and warm is about to disappear. Currently, Norwegian political parties talk about the need for more "warm hands" in public care. In this way the current perception of public care work is not only limited to society's formal obligation of taking care of someone, but also involves explicit positive relational aspects. Turning our attention to inclusive practices, the didactic of individual adaptation of teaching-learning processes in the community of the class may be seen as a professional handicraft containing "care technology" as well as human relational care. In her 1990 article Lauvdal turns from her critical discussion to an introduction of American scholar Nel Noddings and her reflections on the relational perspective of care that is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

What qualities of care justify it as a main aspect and -area of the curricular relation approach? Similar to communication, care represents an extended professional understanding compared to traditional narrow discipline- or knowledge-related education. It emphasises that positive learning depends on the satisfaction of basic human needs (Rye, 2005), including acceptance, belongingness, love, recognition and respect. Therefore, we need to be aware of not only the pupil but also the whole child and adolescent within their own social and cultural context. We also need to be aware of the joint cultural heritage and conditions that we share with our pupils with its potential for joy as well as

barriers and traumas. Having knowledge of and caring for pupils' personal lives and the whole range of their developmental potentials and needs is a challenge for educators. Therefore, taking one of the examples of the seven studies, it is impressive to witness the extensive knowledge an elementary class teacher has of every child in her class and how carefully she handles this sensitive information (Johnsen, 2019b). Our pupils need to be aware that we care about them. It shows in our attitudes, small informal talks, eye contact or a light touch on the shoulder, or saying something nice about their homework as well as telling them about our concerns. Care is reflected in how we plan, implement and evaluate all aspects of the Curricular Relation Approach (Johnsen, 2014b). The main content of care is the relationship between educator and pupil or the educator's resource-based awareness of the pupil. Care is from this perspective a relational phenomenon; as mentioned above, it clearly connects with relational communication, but contains more than communication, namely a positive human mentality, professional perspective and practice permeating all educational actions and reflections. The caring perspective of education includes a) relational communication b) recognition of our joint human vulnerability (Johnsen, 2014d; Kristeva, 2010) and c) Danish scholar Tetler's (2000) "didactics of generosity". Hence, care is a key aspect of inclusion. Concurrently with the introduction of care as a main aspect of the curricular relation approach, a growing interest in care is taking place internationally, referring to humanistic educational philosopher Martin Buber's (1947) texts and with Nel Noddings as a leading scholar; a discourse that is accounted for in more detail in the article *Care and Sensitivity in Upbringing and Education* (Johnsen, 2019a[48]) in this anthology.

How is care manifested and discussed in the seven studies? Findings from interviews and observations indicate that "care has many faces"; it has many expressions and occurs in many different situations and connections. The following presentation starts with findings concerning relations between care and the educational professions, proceeding with characteristics of caring relations: a) focus on the whole child and youth; b) belongingness c) recognition d) supporting pupils' experience of mastery e) supporting expression of feelings f) sharing personal experiences g) encouraging peer cooperation and care h) awareness of the pupil inside and outside the classroom and school, and i) participation in development of coping and mastering strategies. The presentation

48 For a more detailed discussion of the concepts of care and sensitivity, see the article *Care and Sensitivity in Resource-Based Interaction Traditions within Education and Upbringing* (Johnsen, 2019a) in this anthology.

is followed up with a summary of examples of 1) caring relations with individual pupils, and 2) "classroom care". Statements about connections between care and worries are discussed before dilemmas and challenges connected to care are presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the question: What is the role of care as "an inclusive practice"?

Care and the educational professions

How do teachers and special needs educators perceive the importance of caring for their pupils individually as well as in a whole class context? One teacher explains: "It is not for nothing teaching is called a 'caring' profession" (O). Another argues: "Care is a natural main principle teachers have – also when you've been working for many years. My priority for the class is my pupils' well-being. When I find out that a pupil is feeling rejected, I do something about it" (O). Is care an educator's duty? One teacher argues that, yes, it is educators' duty to take the trouble to thoroughly examine a pupil's relationships both inside and outside school (O). These reflections are in accordance with the informants' observed practices, which are characterised by their detailed knowledge about each pupil inside and outside their classroom, a knowledge that is updated in cooperation with colleagues, parents and, in some cases, other sources. In the Norwegian case school cooperating about care between teachers is mostly informal and part of their daily routine. It clearly takes place at the beginning of the school day and shows in the teachers' attitudes when approaching their pupils. It is also regularly observed during breaks when teachers are meeting with colleagues and exchanging information concerning individual pupils' needs. Most research teams report that they have observed caring relations, and teachers and special needs educators in the projects confirm the idea that care is an important aspect of their professional identity.

"Not only a pupil, but a complete child"

An overarching characteristic of the care that teachers and special needs educators' show their pupils indicates a holistic attention to the pupil as an individual human being, member of the class and local society. This is in line with Noddings' (1992) arguments in one of her early books. She supports the view that pupils are different and that they have different abilities within different areas and live under different conditions. Gardner's (1993) previously mentioned

postulates about a diversity of "intelligences" also supports this view, as does Befring's (2001) discussion of the enrichment perspective in his celebration of pupils' diversity.

What aspects concerning pupils' life world trigger educators' caring attention? The Zagreb team points out that teachers' attention on the single pupil and class goes beyond educational content and academic mastery (Z). Rather, care is about child-centred education, or an extended focus on the child in the context of school and local society. Does this involve all pupils – including pupils with challenges and disabilities? The Belgrade team finds that there is acceptance of pupils with disabilities within regular schools, even though their policy on inclusion is rather new (B). The attitudes of schoolteachers and other school staff towards inclusive education is an important factor influencing the efficacy of the inclusion process and well-being of the children involved (B). In their interview study the Belgrade team asks teachers and principals to describe the attitudes of their fellow teachers and school staff towards inclusive education. Their findings indicate that attitudes vary, usually being most positive among teachers who teach in the lower grades (one to four). They suggest that this difference in attitudes may be related to greater achievement demands in the higher grades. One school principal suggests that "… teachers who have negative attitudes probably need experience in working with pupils with special needs to realize that academic achievement is not the only aim of inclusive education" (B). Teachers and principals are also asked about the attitudes of classmates to pupils with special needs. The majority of informants (20) state that these pupils are well accepted among their peers. They report that other pupils often help them and give them praise and encouragement (B). In the Norwegian case-school, a class teacher is asked: "What kind of knowledge about pupils is important to you?" the answer is: "I focus my attention on whether a child is thriving at school – their overall well-being". The informant also points out that parents are generally very open and tell the school when their child experiences something is difficult. Another teacher in the same school says that in first grade all the pupils answer a questionnaire called "How do you like being at school?" This is a kind of screening for their sense of well-being (O). After these general descriptions of educators' overall caring attitude for their pupils, focus turns to more specific aspects.

Belongingness in the class and school is about being accepted and appreciated. There are countless stories from literature and real life about excited and happy children going to their first day at school. But, do they develop a sense of belonging in the long run? How does school contribute to this? How does it

avoid having pupils feel rejected? And does it manage to rebuild the perception of belongingness when it is broken? These are broad questions that lend themselves to further research. The issue here is whether the seven studies contribute concrete examples of practices supporting belongingness. Developing all pupils' tolerance and sense of belonging in a class and special focus on one pupil with disabilities is the main goal of an action research study (Z). Organising pupils into small cooperative working groups is also an approach to strengthening pupils' sense of belonging (S).

Observations in the Norwegian case school show many examples of class teachers' acceptance and appreciation in their positive interaction with pupils, such as: a) standing in the doorway, the class teacher shakes hands and makes small talk with every single pupil on Monday mornings b) the teacher takes care of each pupil's practical as well as relational problems when anything comes up; c) the teacher strives for and succeeds in arousing the interest of pupils with learning difficulties in a complex long-term learning task, and d) the teacher stays in the classroom during the breaks chatting with pupils. These are a few of a series of interactions with the intention of strengthening pupils' feeling of belongingness, acceptance and appreciation.

> A case example of belongingness within diversity: Along with traditional school subjects, the Norwegian case school applies Armstrong's (2003) theory of multiple intelligences in the classroom during primary school, which is based on Gardner's (1993) ground-breaking theory. This approach produces several positive learning outcomes that contribute to developing belongingness within the class early on in pupils' schooling, specifically its focus on the diversity of pupils' individual mastery levels and abilities as mapped out by fellow classmates. Among the constructed intelligences are 1) musical-rhythmic and harmonic modality, 2) visual-spatial, 3) verbal-linguistic, 4) logical-mathematical, 5) bodily-kinaesthetic, 6) interpersonal 7) intrapersonal, 8) naturalistic and existential modality. Each pupil is described as having two "intelligences" reported as "the most predominant" by each classmate, followed by discussions between them and concluding with the two modalities that were named most often. Observations show that the process is carried out in positive interaction between peers while focusing on one specific classmate, demonstrating interest, acceptance and appreciation and in this way contributing greatly to pupils' feeling of belongingness (O).

Recognition includes being seen, heard, respected and trusted. These are key features of relational care and relate to belongingness. The Sarajevo team states that teachers' attitudes towards and trust in pupils' successfully completing their

assignments is crucial when selecting educational methods and strategies (S). They report that teachers participating in continuous professional skills training seem to consider openness, flexibility, care and trust in their pupils of basic importance. However, they also point out that a teacher's personality as well as the context of their school seem to influence their attitudes towards inclusion (S). Are the pupils seen and heard in the participating schools? According to observations made by the Sarajevo team, teachers pay attention to each pupil and listen to what they are talking about, and vice versa. They listen actively and give pupils the necessary time to express themselves. Teachers and special needs educators point out that this is especially important for pupils with language difficulties, since they may need more time, giving several examples of this (S).

Participating schools in former and current Tuzla projects attach great importance to supporting the recognition of each pupil, focusing on those who experience difficulties and have disabilities. Extensive cooperation between researchers and special needs educators, class teachers, parents and school administration are means to securing recognition and belongingness. A former project school in the Tuzla region pays special attention to applying systematic methods to ensure and check that all pupils in the class are seen and heard (T). In the Norwegian case school the dominant teaching-learning method is based on dialogue that focuses on school topics. Does this mean focusing on listening to the pupil or the whole child? Similar to the two Bosnian cases, the explicit goal in the Norwegian case school is to see and listen to the whole child. Securing every young person's well-being is a basic principle. It may, however, be a long way between principles and practice. In what way do schools bridge this gap? The following example shows the step-by-step connection from a "top-down" perspective 1) from the Educational Act; 2) through the school's local curriculum 3) to practice in the classroom:

> Step 1) According to the educational Act and National Curriculum, the school for all is obliged to practice individually adapted education and inclusion; care, well-being and belongingness (L 1997; Opplæringslova, 1998).
>
> Step 2) The case school develops annual school curricula with selected priorities within the frames of the national curriculum and sends to all parents. The school clarifies principles of policy papers and provides detailed elaborations, describing how the school intends to practice in accordance with these documents. For example, the school's guide for 2005-06 describes the community of the school as follows: A safe, social community is created through collaboration – shared experiences – care – "to be seen" – focusing on pupils' well-being – secure frames – good routines – tolerance – recognition – and pleasant localities.

> Step 3) How do teachers practice these intentions, such as recognising, seeing and hearing the whole child? Several situations and activities are observed and some explained in further detail in interviews. Two of the class teachers are repeatedly observed practicing walking around guiding the pupils while they are working on tasks individually, in couples or groups. Some pupils actively seek help from the teachers – others scarcely. Teachers often bend down in order to establish eye contact with the pupil sitting at their desk (O). These examples are recognised by the participating schools. Other examples are presented in individual presentations of the seven studies (B, L, S, SM, T, Z).

Supporting pupils' experience of mastery – promoting self-confidence. Care appears in positive, resource-based interaction with pupils (Rye, 2001; 2005). It is visible when a teacher creates a positive teaching-learning atmosphere by developing a feeling of acceptance and safety (Z). Upbringing and education about human rights are important aspects of care and may well be connected to nurturing pupils' positive self-esteem, a sense of group belonging and developing tolerance and acceptance for differences; in other words, placing the child at the centre of the educational process. In the Zagreb case the teacher encourages pupils to express themselves and present assignments in front of the class, concluding by approving the pupil's efforts in front of the other pupils (Z). Pupils' self-confidence is supported through acknowledgement. The Sarajevo team points to examples such as using applause, oral acknowledgement and a pat on the shoulder. This supports pupils' faith in themselves and affirms their feelings of success. Creative educational activities are organised in order to support pupils' social skills development and strengthen their self-esteem and self-confidence (S). These examples are recognised by other research teams (O, SM, T, Z). A number of educational activities aiding pupil's development of independence are applied in the participating schools, aiming at both short-term and long-term results. Short-term results indicate increased independent learning, while long-term results focus on developing learning tools such as skills and abilities that contribute to self-affirmation. Teachers notice that pupils with special needs learn better if they cooperate and are supported by peers. This interaction promotes their feelings of belonging, which in turn increases their self-confidence. Turning our attention towards communication with pupils with speech difficulties, as the above example shows, it is very important to give these pupils extra time and not rush them in dialogue. In this way, teachers also act as good communication models for fellow pupils (S).

Creating opportunities to express and talk about feelings. A common criticism of schools is that they are too focused on so-called academic teaching, learning and development taking place through school subjects only. Some would say that this is what school is all about. However, relational care is sensitive to psychosocial learning and development in addition to creating opportunities to express feelings. Within the field of special needs education, it is argued that psychosocial development is an important aspect of human development, depending as it does upon mediation and learning. The level of awareness of psychosocial phenomena depends on the sensitivity and relational care of all caregivers in a child's immediate surroundings, whereof their educators are important key persons. They are models for pupils. Reports from the seven studies confirm that talking about feelings takes place as part of several school subjects related to a variety of activities. A number of traditional school activities are open to encourage this, such as creative activities like drawing, painting, drama and role-play, literature presentation and discussions. Likewise, writing logbooks, autobiographical stories, dialogue books and essays are activities that create opportunities for pupils to express and talk about their feelings both directly and indirectly. The same applies to play, which in many ways is a training ground for psychosocial learning, where children meet friendship and respect as well as sides of human relations such as confrontations, bullying and invisibility. Interviews and observations point to different times of the school day when feelings may be an issue. Thus, the Zagreb team reports that the class teacher encourages pupils to express their feelings and resolve conflicts at the beginning of the school day or after breaks (Z). The Sarajevo team describes how a teacher places all pupils on pillows in a half circle to discuss issues from literary texts or events from their school day. While discussing these topics, the teacher observes the pupils and encourages them to express their thoughts and feelings (S).

Sharing personal experiences with a single pupil and class may serve to illustrate educational content as well as encourage talks about feelings in positive as well as negative situations. Throughout the history of schooling and up to today, some teachers have been exceptionally good storytellers. The Zagreb team reports that the class teacher shares her personal life experiences with her pupils (Z). In the Sarajevo team's two case schools, teachers are also observed telling anecdotes from their personal experiences in order to create a supportive socio-emotional atmosphere. They share personal feelings of satisfaction with pupils' work and interest in what pupils write (S). In the Norwegian case school, one

of the teachers is observed using personal experiences in order to make school topics come alive as well as signal her personal feelings related to psychosocial matters. She expresses recognition of individual pupils and the class several times each day – all in a calm, clear and low voice. In order to signal disappointment, she uses so-called "I"-messages, such as: "It made me sad to observe that you made your classmate unhappy. Can we fix this situation? …" (O).

Encouraging peer cooperation and care. Fellow pupils may be of central importance as mediators in the learning process – both academically and psychosocially, as Vygotsky (1978) points out in his famous statement about the proximal zone of development. In one of the Sarajevo team's case schools, systematic development of peer cooperation has been described and discussed in a Master's thesis (Dzemidzic, 2007) and developed further. Thus, in their action research the Sarajevo team draws our attention to the role of educators as monitors of peer cooperation organised as group work across academic levels of mastery (S). Focus is on peer cooperation between pupils with and without special educational needs. Monitoring consists of three parallel teaching-learning processes:

a) Speech therapists give special needs education to pupils with different kinds of speech impairments that consists of speech training and development of self-confidence through their success in solving learning tasks. For example, a pupil who stutters is guided and encouraged to present an assignment in front of the class. The presentation is followed by acknowledgement from both the teacher and classmates.
b) Educators act as conversational models, showing how to wait and give extra time in the conversational turn taking. In this way, the whole class observes how to take part in dialogue with peers who are stuttering or have other of speech challenges.
c) Educators monitor peer cooperation across academic levels where school tasks are jointly solved within groups. Thus, pupils with special needs and their peers take part in joint activities and share responsibilities for assignments and thematic study projects (S).

The longitudinal observation and interview study also reveals examples of peer collaboration and care. This does not mean that quarrelling, teasing and even fighting do not take place, especially outside the classroom. However, "teasers and fighters" are also given care (O).

How do pupils show that they care for each other? A few of the observed examples follow here:

- When a boy enters the classroom in the middle of a teaching session distressed because he has missed the bus to his swimming lesson, the teacher takes a break from the teaching to solve his problem – and the whole class follows up and asks him later how things went.
- When one of the pupils is hospitalized yet again due to a chronic illness, the whole class supports her in different ways.
- When classmates apply for and succeed at getting a fellow pupil to participate in a television programme.
- A pupil needs more time and help in the learning process than the majority of the class. She is a bit introverted but eager to learn. One of the popular girls in the class invites her to sit beside her in a permanent seat at her group table.

The last example above illustrates pupil-driven peer collaboration. Interviews and observations confirm organisation of the class is applied to facilitate peer collaboration (O, S).

Encouragement and participation inside and outside the classroom. Care for pupils also takes place outside the classroom. Thus, the Sarajevo schools initiate to contact their local community in order to facilitate the development of social programmes for pupils and their families. Local authorities are also made aware of the positive results of inclusion efforts (S). Similarly, the Croatian case school engages voluntary organisations to cooperate with the school, especially organisations for pupils with disabilities (Z). In Norway, teachers or other staff members go out and inspect the schoolyard during recess, two at a time. In the case school two teachers keep a constant lookout in all corners of the large schoolyard. They have reflector vests so that pupils may easily find them. Their task is to be visibly present; to help if someone gets hurt, to solve problems and conflicts between pupils and prevent bullying. Pairs or small groups of pupils are usually observed accompanying these teachers on their inspection rounds. Sometimes the teachers accept pupils' challenge and start to play with them. Thus, it seems that a good deal of relationship building takes place in the schoolyard (O)."Outside the school" is a concept reaching further than to the schoolyard. As reported above, class teachers have in-depth academic and psychosocial knowledge about each of their pupils. They are also aware of pupils' activities outside of school, their interests and concerns, and about conditions at home. They have a close and positive relationship with pupils' parents. When interviewed about their

knowledge, one of the teachers reports that her overall knowledge helps her relate to each one of her pupils (O). Cooperating with parents and sharing information about a pupil's illness, disability or difficulty is also the case in several of the other studies (S, SM, T, Z).

Supporting pupils to develop positive coping strategies. Children represent a diversity that implies not only their experience, knowledge, skills and attitudes, their different mastery level and abilities, interests and mentoring needs, but also their worries, fears and traumas (Johnsen, 2014b; 2014d; 2019a). How do educators show care and support for pupils who have experienced disappointment, traumatic events and loss? The Croatian team reports that the class teacher supports and helps pupils who are bothered and offended by disruptive classmates (Z). The Sarajevo team reports that different social programmes and projects supported by local municipalities and NGOs are collaborating with schools in order to support pupils from low-income families as well as pupils who have experienced violence, abuse and what they characterise as socio-pathological behaviour by members of their family or neighbourhood. These programmes include teachers who are educated to provide support for children living in such circumstances (S). The Belgrade team refers to interviews indicating acceptance and care for pupils with disabilities within the regular class and school (B). The three class teachers in the Norwegian case school express knowledge about problems their pupils have inside and outside school in different ways; they demonstrate involvement in their pupils' problems and "walk the extra mile" in order to try out academic and psychosocial solutions for them – and they often succeed (O).

Care is crucial when it comes to trauma and resilience. A trauma may occur when a child perceives being or is seriously threatened; a condition that usually is accompanied by stress, fear and a sense of helplessness. A trauma may be triggered by serious personal or familiar events or by collective events caused by nature or fellow human beings. A pupil's experience of failure, bullying or isolation over a long period may cause trauma. Bell, Limberg and Robinson (2013) warn that schools may be the only thing that can discover when a pupil is traumatized. They have therefore systematised guidelines for recognising trauma in the classroom. Resilience is the ability to recover from setbacks and keep going despite adversity. Children may be said to have resilience when they continue their socioemotional growth in one way or another in spite of difficult and traumatic circumstances. Their "in spite of" trait is also described with the nickname "dandelion children" or the description "developing on rocky ground".

Scholars discuss possible causes for resilience. Do some become "dandelion children" due to inherited traits or triggers in their immediate surroundings? This classical question about "nature or nurture" is not answered here. However, there are numerous stories about one or more persons in the immediate surroundings of a traumatised child that have played a key role in their resilience and development of positive coping strategies. This person has often been a teacher who sees the child. Care is a fundamental factor, as many colleagues in this cooperative project have experienced. What can schools do in order to nurture resilience? Berson and Baggerly (2009) point to three helpful strategies:

- Creating a culture of support in the classroom
- Facilitating expression of feelings
- Building bridges to the community

These recommendations are reminiscent of caring aspects reported by the research teams above. Focusing on children who have lost a parent or sibling, Stokes (2009: 10) points to the importance of the child having a "… secure attachment and positive relationship with at least one competent adult". She argues that the traumatised child can be helped to develop a resilient mindset through introducing mental tools in order to construct a meaning in their new life situation after loss. School can take on an important role as a safe haven against individual and collective traumas, as a healer of wounds, redirector of negative coping strategies, victimisation and enemy images, and as a promotor of socio-emotional well-being, understanding and creativity (Johnsen, 2005). Care for an individual pupil may certainly be experienced as care for the whole class, thereby contributing to "an atmosphere of care". However, care for the individual pupil and care for the class may also be seen as two different kinds or aspects of caring, and they may even be based on different goals. The following preliminary summary of examples reported from the research groups is therefore divided in accordance with the two complementary aspects of caring.

Examples of caring interaction with individual pupils

- Care for the single pupil permeates the work with individual educational plans where teachers and special needs educators gather relevant information inside and outside school about the pupil and carry out an as individu-

ally adapted and meaningful high quality educational process as possible. In the case schools detailed individual process assessment and education are carried out in interaction with pupils with special educational needs and their parents (B, O, S, SM, T, Z). This practice may be characterised as academic as well as psychosocial care for the pupil and the whole child.

- Being seen is a fundamental human need. To see, hear and give the individual pupil attention is a caring enterprise. The participating research teams point to how educators take notice of and appreciate the single pupil and demonstrate sensitive and relevant interaction – specifically when it comes to pupils with special needs. Through acting as models while interacting with pupils with special needs, teachers and special needs educators also show fellow pupils in the classroom relevant communication and thus contribute to inclusive interaction in the entire class. "To see" and give pupils attention may be done in different ways:
  - Greeting every single pupil by shaking their hand at the beginning of the school day affirms a personal relationship
  - All birthdays are briefly celebrated with singing and congratulations
  - Responding quickly and appropriately when a pupil suddenly needs extraordinary help is care. Several of the examples are reported in more detail (O, S, SM, T, Z).

Examples of classroom care:

- As happens especially in the lower grades, some pupils may forget their pencil case or books at home. When the class teacher has a reserve of pencils and books that pupils may borrow when needed, this signifies care.
- Class teachers and special needs educators maintain good contact with parents concerning their children's well-being at school
- Teachers follow up and make sure that classmates do not ignore or hurt their fellow pupils, especially not vulnerable pupils, including those with disabilities and special educational needs (B, L, O, S, SM, T, Z)

Care and worry: Educators' care and dedication for pupils may turn into worry. Their concern relates to academic progress as well as psychosocial and, in some cases, medical conditions – all three concerns that are found in these studies. When it comes to academic progress, worries are reported connected to the lack of or long waiting lists for professional support within specific expert fields, be it educational or psychological, medical or social fields. Schools usually share these concerns with parents. No attempt has been

made in this report to rank concerns in accordance with severity. However, a possible distinction may be made between worries that are experienced as part of professional concern and more serious long-term concerns that go beyond regular professionalism to occupational burnout, which is something that tends to accompany people employed in caregiving professions. As may be recognised, several of the concerns are connected to traumatic conditions. The whole spectre of concerns is found in this comparative study, as indicated in the following examples:

- Educators report that they are aware of large socio-economic differences between pupils in a class and of families that may be in a socio-economic border zone
- Educators report their concerns to the school administration when they suspect that a pupil is suffering from neglect, abuse, or other serious difficulties within their family or neighbourhood. After joint reflections the school administrator may forward the concern to official child welfare services for further contact, investigations and support
- School administrators and educators participate with child welfare services and other childcare institutions in order to create and maintain a safe and sound environment of support for pupils who live in difficult circumstances
- Educators worry about home conditions for specific pupils: For example, a teacher exclaims: "When I learned how many difficulties she had at home, it seemed to me a miracle that she managed so well at school"
- An educator tells about helping a pupil who is isolating himself from school and other activities due to his experiencing difficult conditions over a long period of time
- Educators report having many sleepless nights because of their concerns about individual pupils
- School administrators and educators worry about the sustainability of special needs educational resources when action research projects are concluded.

Dilemmas and challenges

"It is not for nothing that teaching is called a caring profession, but care and neutrality do not go comfortably together. Professionalism lies in striving to balance care evenly" (O). Repeated feedback and open in-depth interviews with class teacher followed up by further questions over a long period

together with systematic longitudinal observations of classroom interactions strongly indicate that teachers seek and acquire thorough and continuous information about and relation building with each pupil in the class – concerning pupils' academic and socioemotional mastery and possibilities as well as contextual conditions. The study confirms that every pupil in the class is seen in a variety of ways. The dilemma pointed out by the teacher regarding how to reach all pupils "even-handedly" is, however, classical and most probably "everlasting". It is a dilemma between educators' time and priorities and considerations for individual pupils. The Zagreb team has seen the consequence of this dilemma when adding resources in the form of classroom assistants along with special needs educational advisers (Z). Similarly, the Tuzla and Sarajevo teams provide special needs educational resources to the case schools (S, T). Consequently, there is reason to believe that the ordinary teachers have more time to give other pupils attention and care during the project period.

Are all pupils with special educational needs welcomed in the ordinary school? The Belgrade team reports about workshops designed in cooperation with special needs educators aiming to promote acceptance for children with special needs among other children. This is of specific importance, since their inclusion-policy is rather new and ordinary schools have only recently opened up to these pupils. The workshops are mainly reported to be successful. However, one principal and two teachers in one of the participating schools report that although the majority of pupils accept children with special needs, a small number of pupils reject these pupils and express hostility towards them (B). Rejection is the opposite of care. It is a challenge to both pupil's well-being and the development of inclusion.

The Belgrade team documents a challenge that has attracted attention alongside the development of the school for all and inclusion in all participating countries. It is stated in the media, human rights organisations and unofficial local contexts. The challenge is that the negative mentality towards people with disabilities may be found among teachers, parents and the local community. Julia Kristeva (Johnsen, 2014d; Kristeva, 2010) explains this negative and marginalising mentality in the meeting – or confrontation – between a disabled and "non-disabled", when the latter spontaneously recognises his or her anxiety of their own vulnerability. Is it possible to "cure" this anxiety and accompanying negative reaction towards disabilities? This is a challenge. However, the Belgrade team indicates that these negative attitudes seem to be more common among

people who are not used to mingling and living with disabled people. Those who have members of the family with disabilities are generally positive – in fact, they love them (Gardou, 2014) – but are often exhausted due to lack of support (Kristeva, 2010).

Summary

Similar to communication, care represents an extended professional understanding compared to traditionally narrow discipline- or knowledge-related education. It emphasises that positive learning depends on satisfying basic human needs like belongingness, love, acceptance and recognition (Rye, 2005).

> Care shows in our attitudes, small informal talks, eye contact or a light touch on the shoulder; in some nice words about what was good about a pupil's homework as well as our concerns. Care is reflected in how we plan, implement and evaluate all aspects in the holistic teaching-learning-development process carried out through the Curricular Relation Approach (Johnsen, 2014b).

Care is a professional and personal relational quality shared in educational and special needs educational traditions focusing on the individual pupil and the class. Nel Noddings' (1992) principle statement acts as a guide for the findings about caring attitudes and actions: "Not only a pupil, but a complete child". Aspects of caring relations are:

a) belongingness
b) recognition
c) supporting pupils' experience of mastery – promoting self-confidence
d) supporting expression of feelings
e) sharing personal experiences
f) encouraging peer cooperation and care
g) awareness of the pupil inside and outside the classroom
h) supporting pupils to develop positive coping strategies
i) caring interactions with individual pupils
j) examples of classroom care
k) care and worry

Dilemmas and challenges are discussed, including the questions:
Is it possible to "cure" anxiety and negative reactions to disabilities? How can care be evenly balanced?

9 Context

As pointed out in the introduction, this international comparative research project is based on eight curricular-didactic arenas or aspects, also described as seven + one aspects. The seven interrelated aspects described and discussed in the chapters above concern: knowledge about the pupil/s – assessment – educational intentions – educational content – methods and classroom organisation – communication – care. Studies of these areas contribute to shedding light on examples of inclusive practices within schools' inner activity, also called internal micro dimensions (Alexander, 2009; Johnsen, 2013a). The eighth aspect – context – is different. What is meant by context in this research project? What does this main aspect contribute to the study? The contextual aspect embraces the inner activity of schooling, connecting teaching-learning activities to larger socio-cultural and recent historical perspectives. It serves to place findings from the educational micro level within the cultural-historical context of the participating communities. In this way, the contextual focus takes the research project beyond former traditions within inclusion studies, where focus has tended to be on either policies and societal factors or isolated classroom studies, as briefly discussed in the joint research plan (Johnsen, 2013a).

How do contextual aspects function as a bridge between schools' inner activity and surrounding conditions on the macro level? Scholars have discussed this connection and suggested ways of systematising this "bridge". Three classical theoretical stands with somewhat different perspectives may contribute to illuminating this connection. Two of them present mainly two-dimensional perspectives in their attempt to imply connections between micro and macro levels through different ecological educational dimensions, whereas the third is explicitly three-dimensional. The two-dimensional theories are presented and discussed in two classical texts published the same year, namely Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework for human development and Goodlad's (1979) ecological curricular inquiry. Bronfenbrenner develops a systematic construction through dividing impact factors into the following levels or "systems": microsystem, exosystem, mesosystem and macrosystem and additionally – in later texts he adds a third historical level called the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). While Bronfenbrenner has developed societal categories in a broad sense in order to create a system for understanding an individual's development, Goodlad (1979) focuses attention on school. He constructs an ecological curricular terminology with different domains:

- The personal or experiential domain of the pupils together with parents
- The instructional domain of educators; in the context of this research project, concerns teachers and special educators
- The institutional domain contains political-societal and technical-professional activities
- The societal domain covers the formal decision-making institutions from the national to local educational political level.

These domains may be used to describe and discuss 1) educational processes and 2) products. However, "… process and product are so entwined that they can be separated only for conceptual or heuristic purposes; both are domains of praxis" (Goodlad, 1979: 45). Bronfenbrenner and Goodlad's theories may help portray the findings of inclusive micro practices in a wider societal and macro-curricular context. However, according to a three-dimensional perspective, the same inclusive micro activities are also embedded in cultural-historical "dimensions of opportunities", as argued by Vygotsky (1935/1978). The metaphor "three-dimensional" is used here in order to focus on the three contiguous dimensions; 1) schools' present inner activities or practices as illustrated by research findings; 2) societal conditions, and 3) cultural-historical embeddedness. In his main work, *Cultural Psychology – A Once and Future Discipline* (1996), Cole thoroughly develops a line of arguments where he relates Vygotsky's theories to former and current researchers such as Rogoff (1990; 2003) and other post-Vygotskyan scholars. According to Rogoff (1990), Vygotsky emphasises that development is a process of learning to use the intellectual tools provided through social history. Thus, so-called 'scaffolding' (Rogoff, 1990; Shvarts & Bakker, 2019), a term frequently used by socio-cultural scholars, consists of finding and adapting the intellectual tools available at any time, be they the pen and inkwell of yesterday or apps (application software) of tomorrow. There is, however, a question whether the concept of scaffolding sufficiently grasps the inner activity of a school in its complexity, and, more specifically, its innovative project towards becoming an inclusive school. Ideas about scaffolding related to tutoring (Shvarts & Bakker, 2019; Wood & Wood, 1996) need to be extended to all interrelated details and aspects in the comprehensive teaching-learning-developmental process. Throughout history, the classical and deeply rooted traditions of didactics and curriculum have contributed to developing, discussing and constructing main aspects that are crucial in order to grasp this extended interrelationship within ordinary educational-, special needs educational and inclusive practices, from where the main aspects of this research

cooperation have been taken. The three classical theoretical stands in Goodlad's, Bronfenbrenner's, and Vygotsky's texts help illustrate the interdependence between different yet compatible perspectives of the seven contextual main aspects of the teaching-learning process on a micro level that are presented by the seven international research teams. Other scholars have shed light on the important role played by educational context. The conceptual and contextual roots of educational activities in the selected scholars' writings originate from several traditions within education and curriculum studies.

- The Bronfenbrenner-Vygotsky traditions may be seen as further developments of Russian pedagogy closely related to European and American traditions
- Goodlad's curricular ecology may be seen as a further development of Dewey's educational thoughts. Instead of following the argument of Dewey's pupil, Hilda Taba's ground-breaking work, *Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice* (1962), he follows her colleague, Ralph Tyler's (1949) more educational-technological argument. Taba and Tyler developed theory and research in the field of curriculum, and Goodlad may be said to have taken the curriculum discourse to a new level through his ecological focus.

Goodlads' clarification of "the many faces of curriculum" serves to enrich cultural-historical perspectives, although he does not refer to Vygotsky's works in his contributions to the anthology *Curricular Inquiry* (1979). Bronfenbrenner and Goodlad pay particular attention to the local school's societal and curricular context, including its opportunities and barriers, called 'frame factors' in the sociology of education. Thus, they argue that school as an institution depends upon and operates within contexts consisting of a number of different factors. Frame factors provide opportunities and directions in addition to setting limits. Therefore, as indicated, context is one of the main areas in the curriculum relation approach, embracing the inner activity of schooling. This is illustrated by placing context as a second circle around the other main areas in the Curricular Relation Model (Johnsen, 2014b). The culture-historical approach and the focus on context are pointed out as a theoretical and research-based main pillar of the joint research plan (Johnsen, 2013a). A fourth scholar plays a key role in this work when it comes to the relationship between the micro and macro level in education. Robin Alexander's works are repeatedly referred to from the beginning of this project in the joint research plan (Johnsen, 2013a) and in several chapters of the report. What character-

ises his contributions to this report? And, how is he situated compared to the three educational traditions mentioned above? To answer the second question first: Alexander's texts show a thorough and far-reaching knowledge of a wide spectre of educational traditions. He demonstrates knowledge of American education and curriculum traditions, referring to Dewey, Taba and Tyler (Alexander, 2000). He seems not to be aware of Goodlad's further development of curriculum theories, but makes use of Bronfenbrenner, Vygotsky and current American scholars within post-Vygotskyan discourse such as Michael Cole, Jerome Bruner and James Wertsch. Another scholar of importance in Alexander's writings is British sociologist Basil Bernstein and his writings on the sociology of education (Alexander, 2000). Alexander is noted in the primary school discourse where he draws attention to the lack of emphasis on pedagogy or the knowledge and skills of the act of teaching. He criticises the prominent position of curriculum – meaning national curriculum – in international as well as British discourse at the expense of pedagogy, asking rhetorically "Still no pedagogy?" in one of his articles (Alexander, 2000; 2004). Alexander's texts in the years after his considerable international comparative work, *Culture and Pedagogy*, (2000), is becoming increasingly more explicit, clear and detailed in its discussions of the inner activity of schooling, meaning teaching-learning-development (2004; 2015; 2018). Nevertheless, he is fully aware of the importance of the context that has contributed to school conditions. In *Culture and Pedagogy*, context, structure and control, including an overview of history and national educational structure, are accounted for in each of the six participating countries. He also lends a critical voice to current educational policies internationally and in Brittain (2015), strongly indicating the power of context over school for good and bad. Hence, Alexander's texts make important contributions visualising the bridge between the micro level of the internal teaching-learning processes at school and the contextual factors on the macro level. They are also important in the discussion of validity or truthfulness and authenticity of this qualitative international comparative research project, as shown below.

The presentation and discussion of contextual aspects in this text do not follow the same structure as in Alexander's *Culture and Pedagogy*. Contextual aspects are many and complex, and only a few are selected in the following discussions; 1) factors that focus on in the seven participating studies; 2) central factors that contribute to shedding light on similarities and differences between the participating teams. The following aspects are discussed: Common

international principles – European welfare states with different current history – Legislative and political frame factors – Financial resources – Physical frame factors – Human resources and higher education of teachers and special needs educators – Social and cultural aspects.

Common international principles

The seven universities cooperating in this study share a number of international conventions and principles that are expected to serve as guidelines for national policies and legislation in the six participating countries. The most central of these are UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006) and UNESCO *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* (1994). Of these, the UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006) was signed and ratified by the participating countries:

Bosnia and Herzegovina:	Signed 2007. Ratified 2010
Croatia:	Signed 2007. Ratified 2007
Macedonia:	Signed 2007. Ratified 2011
Norway:	Signed 2006. Ratified 2013
Serbia:	Signed 2007. Ratified 2009
Slovenia:	Signed 2007. Ratified 2008

As an example, the Zagreb team describes how the convention was received and treated.

> Croatia is a participant in all major international human rights conventions, which include the rights of people with disabilities and other minority groups. During the pre-accession period (… for membership of the European Union …) Croatia has made steps towards harmonizing its laws and regulations with international and EU standards, leading to some progress in promoting an active policy towards people with disabilities and other minority groups (Z).

The research team argues that the concept of human rights is fundamental for creating an inclusive society (Z). In addition to UN and UN related documents, all participating countries have signed and ratified the Council of Europe's *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (1950):

Bosnia and Herzegovina:	Signed 2002. Ratified 2002
Croatia:	Signed 1996. Ratified 1997
Macedonia:	Signed 1995. Ratified 1997
Norway:	Signed 1950. Ratified 1952
Serbia:	Signed 2003. Ratified 2004
Slovenia:	Signed 1993. Ratified 1994

These are amongst the conventions and principles forming a common framework as participants in the European and global community and focusing on inclusion. The way international principles are realized nationally in the participating countries is followed up in the sequence on legislative and political frame factors. However, before that, historical dimensions showing what may be called "a gap of opportunities between the northwestern and southeastern outskirts of Europe" (Johnsen, 2013a) are addressed.

European welfare states with different recent history

History leaves marks on every nation. Historical events may be indicative of national directions. What characterizes European development in recent times? Are there any common features as well as significant differences between the European countries of relevance in this joint research project? In the post-second world war era, Europe went through a fairly rapid development of its economy, infrastructure, official institutions and welfare systems. This was also the case in the north western and south eastern outskirts of Europe in the Nordic countries and former Yugoslavia. The two areas participated in the welfare state development, each in their own way. Since the 1980s, recent history is significantly different. While Norway and other Nordic countries have experienced a peak of prosperity, the other countries participating in this project – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia – have lived through dissolution and wars, resulting in serious setbacks to their economy and capacity to provide citizens with welfare services. However, division leads to building national institutions, as seen in the former regions of Yugoslavia, which are now transformed into nation-states. In spite of economic difficulties and a high degree of unemployment, national institutions are developed. The expansion

and development of higher education institutions is of specific relevance for this cooperation. The renewal of former and establishment of new national and local institutions is at the same time inspired by the framework of European and other international principles. Thus, the European Bologna process (The Bologna Declaration, 1999) inspires the rapidly increasing higher education rate. Teacher education has expanded, and special needs education departments and faculties are established, as described in Johnsen, Rapaić, Wagner & Cvitković (2013). When it comes to European cooperation concerning the principles of the school for all and inclusion, the countries with south eastern research teams in this project are among a number of European countries that have been asked to participate in projects related to higher education and research, as possible candidate countries and current members of the European Union (EU) or other forms of cooperative agreements.

Why do countries that have recently been exposed to hostile acts, engage in research cooperation such as this project? This research cooperation (WB 04/06) is a continuation of a previous project comprised of participants from the two Bosnian universities of Sarajevo and Tuzla together with the University of Oslo (SØE 06/02). During this former project, researchers from the two Bosnian universities asked if there was any possibility to finance participation of colleagues from the universities of Zagreb, Belgrade, Ljubljana and Skopje at joint seminars and conferences. The University of Oslo and local Norwegian embassies financed the initial cooperation across the Balkan borders during the previous project. This led to a joint application for the current research project (WB 04/06). During this project, participants have visited their former universities at ambulating workshops on behalf of the research project as well as in other conferences. The two universities in Zagreb and Belgrade have had leading roles in the research and education of special needs educators – or defectologists, as they have been called[49]. Several colleagues from the participating universities have their higher education from either of the two universities and are now participating in creating similar fields of research and education. From an outsider's point of view, when visiting these two universities together with colleagues from all of the research teams, the impression is that there is an

49 The term Defectology was borrowed from German curative pedagogy and applied in the name of the so-called Defectology Section, established in 1926 at the Pedagogical Faculty, Moscow State University II. Vygotsky was appointed associate director of the faculty from its beginning (Knox & Stevens, 1993). The name Defectology became widespread as several similar institutes and faculties were established throughout eastern European countries.

undercurrent of collegial respect and desire to continue the previous year's academic cooperation and research. This cooperation project (WB 04/06) is thus an opportunity to focus on "regional- internal" comparative analysis between countries in the Western Balkan region with its history of having the same educational policy and governance. It is, however, also of interest to conduct a second comparative analysis between the two outskirts of Europe – the northwest and the southeast – as they have both different recent history and social welfare societies within the European community (Johnsen, 2013a).

Legislative and political frames

How do the legislative frames for educational inclusion in the participating countries appear? How are they related to common UN- and European principles? There is reason to believe that there are differences as well as similarities between the regional-internal policies in former parts of Yugoslavia and the Nordic countries, more specifically Norway, as a part of this cooperative project.

Starting with the Balkan countries, based on common Yugoslavian laws, regulations and practices related to disabilities, the countries in the Western Balkan region have revised and upgraded their legislation on education for children and youth with special educational needs. The Ljubljana research group points out that following UN and UNESCO principles of human rights, the school system in Slovenia has changed significantly, and pupils with different special needs are integrated in a uniform school system in accordance with Slovenia's new educational laws (Zakon, 2002; 2004). As an example, in 2019 a proposal is presented in favour of incorporating the right to use Slovenian sign language into the Slovenian constitution (L). Development of inclusive school practices in Croatia is advanced with a new law on education in primary and secondary schools (2008) accompanied by a new Pedagogic Standard (2008), (Z). In Serbia the 2009 *Law on the Foundations of the System of Education of the Republic of Serbia* (LFSES), (Zakon o osnovama sistema obrazovanja i vaspitanja, 2009) has brought a range of formal opportunities for opening regular schools for children with disabilities. It has been followed in 2010 and 2013 with laws on preschool, primary and secondary education (B). The two Bosnian teams describe how the right to access in regular schools for children with special needs is regulated by the *Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education* (2003). The general objective of the law prescribes optimum development of the individual pupil, including those with special needs, according to age, abilities as well as mental

and physical capabilities – in this way ensuring equal opportunities at all levels of education. Accordingly, the law presupposes development of individual programmes for pupils with special educational needs based on assessment of their level of mastery in development and speech (Article 2, 3, 4, 5 & 19). It is fair to say that the national educational Framework Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina has incorporated educational rights stated in UN, UNESCO and the Counsel of Europe's principles. However, the teams perceive several challenges when it comes to realising what the principle lays out in the Framework Law. A serious challenge concerns the country's having been divided into fourteen cantonal legal systems, each with its own legal system interpreting the Framework Law differently (S, T). The Tuzla team argues that this "… entails legal uncertainty, lack of equal protection of users of all types of assistance, lack of adequate records and criteria for various policies, including policies concerning children with special needs (T). Their view is supported by the Sarajevo team's argument:

> The educational system in Bosnia and Herzegovina, apart from being extremely fragmented and expensive, continues to nurture predominant practices that reinforce prejudice, intolerance and isolation of minority groups (S).

As described above, international principles regarding disability rights and development of inclusive education are integrated in educational laws that have been developed in the declared sovereign states of six of the participating research teams. They have common laws and policies of Yugoslavia as their starting point. The new laws were enacted between 2002 and 2013. They seem to support development of special needs education in regular schools and inclusive practices. However, the teams question in different ways whether the relatively general statements are sufficient for guaranteeing development of individually adapted education and corresponding educational inclusion. The Tuzla research team points to several challenges and tasks that need to be addressed in order to bridge the gap between the principles and practice of inclusion. In the following their arguments are sorted according to whether they concern 1) social-political challenges; or 2) topics challenging research and innovation.

1: Arguments for social-political challenges:
   - Commissions composed of only pedagogues and teachers represent a barrier to access to regular school for pupils with special educational needs due to the lack of knowledge and skills of special needs educators
   - In order to implement inclusion, it is necessary to develop monitoring teams consisting of professionals from ordinary schooling, such as

pedagogues and teachers, and special needs educational professionals such as educators-rehabilitators, speech therapists, experts for hearing impairments and social pedagogues
- There is a need for similar professional teams in on ministry levels
- In order for inclusion to take place, schools must be allowed to employ professional special needs educators
- It is important to increase parents' access and participation in the processes of evaluation, decision-making and making recommendations about their children's schooling.

2: Arguments that challenge research and innovation:
- Uniform and reliable criteria and instruments for assessment are missing. As examples, children with minor socio-cultural difficulties or neglected children are incorrectly classified as children with developmental difficulties
- There is a lack of sufficient knowledge and skills about individual adapted education
- There is scarce or no adaptation of school programmes, housing and schooling for children with special needs in ordinary schools.

As an overall argument the Tuzla team points out that according to contemporary opinion, individualisation of instruction is seen as the most important innovative force in the development and modernisation of teaching, or as an imperative of the time in which we live. The essence of individualised instruction consists of a variety of didactic-methodical procedures aimed at meeting the individual needs of each pupil in order to achieve maximum impact on his or her learning and development (T). Other participating teams say that they have also experienced several of the challenges and tasks pointed out by the Tuzla team. The common arguments are a) that there is a serious gap between acceptance of the principle of educational inclusion and practice in all participating countries, b) that further development is in the hands of politicians, and c) that there is a need for research and innovation in order to realise inclusive schools. These challenges also apply to Norway.

What do the legislative frames for educational inclusion in Norway and the Nordic countries look like? It is fair to say that Norway and other Nordic countries were change-makers that led an international movement turning away from segregated schools toward principles of the school for all and inclusion? A turn of mentality took place in many societal areas simultaneously. Parents of children with disabilities were against the segregated schools and institu-

tions for their children. As discussed in Johnsen (2014f), the pioneers, Niels Bank-Mikkelsen from Denmark and Bengt Nirje from Sweden presented a new organisational principle using the notion of normalisation. After their visit to North America, normalisation soon became an international principle. Wolf Wolfensberger at Syracuse University, supported their views and took part in publishing arguments for the idea of normalisation in English language (Bank-Mikkelsen, 1980; Nirje, 1980; Wolfensberger, 1980). Nirje describes the principle in the following way:

> Normalization means sharing a normal rhythm of the day, with privacy, activities, and mutual responsibilities; a normal rhythm of the week, with a home to live in, a school or work to go to, and leisure time with a modicum of social interaction; a normal rhythm of the year, with the changing modes and ways of life and of family and community customs as experienced in the different seasons of the year" (1980:32-33).

The formulation of this principle may be seen as a turning point from a segregation ideology towards the principles of integration and inclusion. Norway follows the Nordic trend towards normalisation with regulations about transferring inhabitants from institutions to their home municipalities. When it comes to education, Norway is the Nordic pioneer due to the White Paper (KUF, 1970), where the concept of integration is described by these three principles:

1. Belongingness in a social community
2. Participation in the benefits of the community
3. Joint responsibility for tasks and obligations

It took five years from the publication of the White Paper until the special school act was abolished and all rights for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities were integrated in the *Educational Act* of 1969 (amended in 1975). Thus, the new main principle is that educational matters concerning all children is covered by the same educational act without exception (Act of 1969/75). Currently, the principle applies to kindergarten, elementary, lower- and upper secondary school and to adults who have not completed the lower secondary school level. The terms school for all, integration and – as it is introduced internationally – inclusion are signal words for the principle of all pupils' rights to receive individually adapted education in the community of the class – and, vice versa, that all children are entitled to a school and class that practice inclusion. What does this actually mean? Three main aspects in Norwegian legislation answer this question:

- All children have the right to start their schooling in their local ordinary school
- All children have the right to equally and adapted education in accordance with their individual educational needs in the community of the class
- Special needs education is to be made available to pupils who need specific support in areas beyond the ordinary teachers' competence

Almost fifty years have passed since the publication of the White Paper and the first steps in turning from segregation to a school for all and inclusion. Has the Norwegian school managed to put this change into practice? A fair answer would be that a lot has happened in the move towards inclusion, especially at the kindergarten and elementary school level. Still, there is a serious gap between principles and practice. Another challenge is that except for individual cases that now and then stir up a media debate, the eagerness to create an inclusive society and school seems to fade in official discourse in competition with other agendas.

Financial resources

Financial resources are the frame factors that get the most attention and complaints. How is the financial situation in the participating countries? Economic resources for additional special needs teaching hours and other flexible measures may (but do not necessarily) contribute to develop inclusive practices. How are the economic resources for special needs education? Statistical figures from the Norwegian school are available to indicate an answer this question. How many pupils receive extra resources due to their documented special educational needs? According to statistics for the school year 2016-2017 from The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2016), 7,8% of the pupil population receive additional teaching hours. On average, these pupils receive 790 additional teaching hours distributed over the school year. Additionally, 37 % of all special needs teaching takes place in ordinary classrooms – meaning that 63 % are organised outside the classroom. In addition to guaranteeing documented special education for individual pupils, each school has extra resources for flexible and individually adapted educational measures, such as the reading acquisition courses described in the Norwegian case school. The statistics do not provide further information about how these resources are used. Additional questions are therefore of interest, even though they are not addressed here. How is this additional teaching organised? Who

provides it? What is the relationship between special needs teaching, regular teaching and inclusion like? A general measurement indicating national capacities for financing education and other social welfare services is countries' gross domestic product (GDP). How are the participating countries ranked? According to Eurostat statistics (2016), out of the thirty-eight countries listed, our countries rank as follows:

Norway: No 4
Slovenia: No 20
Croatia: No 31
Macedonia: No 35
Serbia: No 36
Bosnia and Herzegovina: No 37

(Eurostat, 2016)

The ranking shows that Norway is amongst the European countries with the highest GDP. The two EU member countries, Slovenia and Croatia, have a rising GDP. While Slovenia has a European average GDP, Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina belong for the time being to the European countries with the lowest GDP. What can a country's GDP tell us about the economic frame factors for educational inclusion? Not very much. This is because although GDP may be seen as a general factor of a country's economic and social progress, it does not indicate how benefits are distributed either privately or socially, which is a political issue. However, countries with a high GDP may be expected to spend relatively more financial resources on education.

Physical frame factors

Physical frame factors may promote or inhibit inclusion. What are physical frame factors? The school building, its surroundings and neighbourhood may be categorised as physical frame factors, or context. The physical framework of schools varies within and between countries. Classrooms may be dark and cold, having doors too narrow for a wheelchair to pass through. The schoolyard may be small and dirty, surrounded by streets with heavy traffic. Buildings may be small and located in safe surroundings, with trees, grass and beautiful flowers as well as ample opportunity for children to play and learn. They may be clean and nice, having rooms of different sizes, tables and chairs adapted to pupils' changing physical sizes, modern teaching equipment and a safe environment.

In some places, the school building functions as the heart of the community; it is a site of education and the area's cultural centre. Caring for the school and providing suitably adapted education for all pupils are highly prioritised by some local politicians, educators and parents. In other places, the opposite may be the situation. Minor changes made to the physical surroundings may decrease or eliminate barriers to learning. For example, a dark classroom may be given more light so that it becomes easier for pupils to read their textbooks and the blackboard. Or, a pupil who is hard of hearing may get a seat so that she or he is able to see the teacher's mouth and facial expressions. New technology developed during recent decades has radically increased schools' possibilities to create flexible and suitably adapted individual curricula in the classroom setting (Johnsen, 2014b). The term universal design is used synonymously with design for all, accessibility for all and inclusive design. It is an important contribution to normalisation as described by Nirje (1980) above. *The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, describes it as follows:

> "Universal design" means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal design" shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed (UN, 2006).

The Norwegian architect Karin J. Buvik has extensive experience in developing universal design of school buildings. Discussing new trends in the physical design of schools, she focuses attention on pupils who need special solutions:

> Reduced functional capacity is relative to the environment. It is partly the result of a society that is not adapted to all; a society that creates barriers for some groups of the population. Ideologically, the idea of "a universally designed society" is rooted in political goals. Education is a right and a duty for everyone.
>
> The school needs to be a learning environment that captures everybody. Some have physical impairments that require more space. Some need access to retreat. However, it is no longer seen as desirable to take single pupils out of their home areas. It must therefore be possible to organise the teaching-learning area in accordance with different learning tasks and educational methods at the same time – both quiet and noisy activities. Switching between practical and theoretical tasks should be easy to implement. In each main area there should be at least one work area designed for pupils with special needs for physical adaptation (Buvik, 2005: 110. Translated from Norwegian by B. H. Johnsen).

When the first generation Norwegian universal design standards for buildings were introduced, they centred on the following themes (Standard Norge, 2009):

- motion
- sight
- hearing
- cognitive ability
- environment / hypersensitivity

Adapting a physical context for a pupil with special needs may be a complex task depending upon interdisciplinary collaboration, such as the one between the school administration, class teacher, special needs educator with a specialisation in augmentative communication and data technology, physical doctor and physiotherapist, parents, and – first and foremost – the pupil. Individual adaptation of physical frames may consist of building a ramp for wheelchairs or organising a possibility for an individual pupil to retreat to a part of the classroom or a suitable adjoining room.

Physical context and frame factors have not gotten a great deal of attention in this research project, as school's educational activities in the teaching-learning process have been mainly in focus. The Norwegian case may serve as an illustration of physical frames in changing times, since during the five-year longitudinal study, the participating school has changed buildings. Teachers and pupils have moved from a late nineteenth-century building with extension from the 1960s to a brand new building fulfilling the physical design recommended by Buvik (2005). Does the new school building function better for pupils with special needs, for instance the pupil with attention deficit disorder? Not necessarily. This is because even though it was not up to date, the old school provided enough space for this pupil when he needed to be shielded from interferences. However, the combination of a spacious classroom having several group rooms in different sizes and with transparent glass walls promotes more organisational flexibility. As examples, a) the class teacher has an overview of all pupils even when some of them move to smaller rooms for group work, b) a second-language pupil may go to Norwegian language instruction in one of the group rooms near the classroom, c) a group may rehearse a song presentation without disturbing other working groups. The examples illustrate Buvik's (2005) recommendation quoted above of creating possibilities to switch tasks that are quiet and noisy at the same time for different groups or individuals. It is also an important point that these activities take place in different rooms

without disturbing pupils' sense of belonging to the class. The new building is designed for mobility for wheelchair and other physical and technical adaptations. However, the longitudinal study shows that the organisational needs of the case class are also taken care of in the old school building. The Norwegian case school probably contains both the oldest and newest of the project's participating school buildings, even though no concrete comparison is done. From school visits arranged during the ambulating research seminars, the impression is that although the school buildings representing the research teams are traditional, somewhat similar and not quite new, challenges related to meeting any necessary physical conditions are solved. School administrators, teachers and special needs educators are necessary partners when new school buildings are constructed as professional guardians of the buildings' psychosocial, educational and inclusive functions. Disability organisations are important collaborators here, as are parent organisations.

Personal and professional human resources

Several social groups have initiated and developed principles and practices of inclusion. Parent organisations and politicians are amongst them. In the Norwegian context, newly established parent organisations (NGOs) in the nineteen sixties and seventies were joined by an increasing number of politicians and journalists (!) in public debates about providing adequate conditions for children with disabilities. It was an anti-centralisation debate, arguing for downsizing central institutions and increase local service for their children – including a local school for all. Teachers and special needs educators were, however, divided in their views. Laws and national curricula guaranteed a school for all, individually adapted education and inclusion, as briefly described in Johnsen (2014d). There is, however, still a gap between principles and practice. Today several parents are so disappointed with the lack of public support that some even question the idea about normalisation and a society for all. But, when it comes to practical solutions, parents have been and are pioneers in NGOs and the private world of the families (O). The number of NGOs supporting disability groups has increased greatly in all the cooperating countries and members take part in voluntary work with enthusiasm.

Professional quality is a key element in the development towards an inclusive school. The prevalence of qualified teachers and special needs educators as well as the quality and perspective of their education are important frame

factors. The process of moving from the principle to reality of an inclusive school needs strong professional advocacy and solid skills, flexibility and creativity in the craft and art of educating. Consequently, educators of regular teachers and special needs educators have a great responsibility when it comes to preparing future professionals for adapting schools and classes for all children – with and without special needs. The same is the case for research and research policy (Johnsen, 2014b). Teachers and special needs educators are the most important professional groups in the development of educational inclusion. Johnsen, Rapaić, Wagner & Cvitković (2013) describe and discuss the establishing and development the higher education of teachers and defectologists or special needs educators as well as doctoral studies. The focus of this article is on the regional-internal development of the participating universities in the Western Balkan countries, whereof five universities are represented with special needs education and one with teacher education. The following section presents a summary of this article. In addition, there is a brief account of teacher- and special needs education in Norway with a discussion of the role of special needs education and individually adapted education in the school for all.

How and when has special needs education been established as a discipline for study and research in the participating Western Balkan countries? It may be divided into two periods; 1) in the Yugoslavian era, and 2) after the country's division into several states with a simultaneously rapid increase in global interaction, including participating in UN-, Council of Europe and other international organisations. 1) The first education in special education, or defectology, was established in 1926 and developed into a faculty at the University of Belgrade. In 1962 the same field was established at the University of Zagreb. With the division of Yugoslavia into independent states, there was a need to develop higher education systems in several disciplines, including special needs education. Thus, the University of Belgrade supported Ss. Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje, whereas the University of Zagreb supported the University in Ljubljana and Tuzla. Hence, several special needs educators and founders of the new faculties are educated at the universities of Belgrade and Zagreb. The participating teacher education is located at the University of Sarajevo. Building on early roots, the establishment of Akademija Pedagoška in 1946 marked the significance of schooling, as it was one of the first modern educational institutions in Sarajevo. It has developed into to a four-year study programme that provides students with the opportunity to pursue specialised studies and merged with

the University of Sarajevo into the Faculty of Education. The history of Norwegian teacher education has several similarities with its Bosnian partner. As the roots of the Bosnian elementary school are found in religion, so it is in Norway. When the elementary school "for all and everybody" was established by Royal Decree in 1739, the responsibility for it was given to the church; thus, clerics were responsible for children's schooling, including hiring schoolmasters with a sufficient level of academic knowledge. Regular formal teacher education was not established until 1826. Through the years the number of so-called "teacher seminars" increased until these seminars were extended to four years in length and upgraded to the level of higher education in 1975. An overview of 1983-1984 school year documents that there were 20 teacher education institutions at that time. Out of these, 14 institutions offered a one-year study programme in special education, either on campus or off (Statistical overview in Johnsen, 1985:19). The first "act on the education of abnormal children", as it was called at that time (Indst., 1881) pointed out that educating teachers for children with special educational needs was to be based on teacher education, which was fulfilled with the establishment of a study programme in 1961. Similar to comparable Western Balkan study programmes, the Norwegian programme covered all main areas of disabilities and special educational needs – from reading difficulties to profound intellectual challenges. The Postgraduate College of Special Education, as it was called, was observed by the Organisation of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) and characterised as follows:

> The status of those who conduct the course is high. It would be difficult to find an establishment comparable with the Norwegian Postgraduate College of Special Education Baerum, with a staff and facilities regarded as of university standing (OECD, 1985).

As a pioneer, the Postgraduate College supported the previously mentioned teacher education institutions in their development of special education programmes around the country. It also provided staff development courses and established the first Norwegian doctoral degree in the field of education, a Dr. Scient in special needs education. Currently, it has merged with the University of Oslo as the Department of Special Education (Johnsen, 2001b; 2013c). Why did special education become so central, as the number of additional programmes in connection with the teacher education institutions show? As mentioned above, the movement in the 1970s represents a turn from from the traditional segregation of people with disabilities towards an increasing awareness of the need for all Norwegian citizens to be included in the normalised

society and school for all. The need for educated professionals was apparent, and this resulted in the fast-growing higher education programmes in special education. Following UNESCO's Salamanca Declaration (1994) the concept of special needs education was adopted for the field.

Quantity in education is necessary but not sufficient. How does the quality of education correspond with the aims of normalization and integration of all citizens – later consolidated with the principle of social and educational inclusion (UNESCO, 1994)? Since schools' ability to provide individually adapted education and inclusion depends on cooperation between ordinary teachers and special needs educators, the question is whether educational inclusion has a central role in the education of both teachers and special needs educators. Following the Norwegian example, the curriculum of the teacher education institutions has a common frame or plan according to which individual adaptation of teaching is understood as a matter of didactics and consequently expected to be taught as part of each school subject. Has this goal been realized and become a tradition? Two evaluations of the efficiency of this principle (Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), 2002; 2006) indicate strongly that the principle has only been practiced to a minor degree. The later evaluation states "… knowledge and trying out relevant models of adapted education in primary school should be a comprehensive subject of general teacher education to a far greater extent than today" (NOKUT, 2006:15). It seems that the same challenge concerning individually adapted education – and consequently inclusive education – is pinpointed in the NOKUT reports in 2006, as happened in 2002. It is therefore reasonable to ask how the subject didactics in teacher education is organised. Do lecturers in the different subjects have sufficient knowledge and skills to convey professional knowledge about development of individual curricula within their school subject to future teachers? And do they have the professional interest necessary to teach this didactic aspect of their subject – or are they more occupied with teaching about the school subject only? These questions reflect crucial dilemmas in how teacher education is organised in Norway – and possibly also in other countries (?) How, then, does the special needs education research community relate to the role of individually adapted education and inclusion in the teacher? The Research Council of Norway recently published an expert report; *Education and Research in Special Needs Education – the Way Forward* (2014); commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Research. The report contains an evaluation of and recommendations about how the future higher education of teachers and special needs

educators should be organised in Norway. A number of recommendations are presented that focus on all levels of teacher education. They seem to support the concerns stated in the 2006 evaluation (NOKUT, 2006). The following statement is characteristic of these recommendations:

> School subjects, subject didactics and special needs education topics should be integrated to a greater degree than they are today so that the connection between the different themes becomes clearer (The Research Council of Norway, 2014:14).

When it comes to the Bachelor level in special needs education, the following two dimensions recommended by the expert group focus on individually adapted education and inclusion, namely that the education should:

- … contain the topics of prevention, individually adapted education, inclusion and early intervention, providing a broad field of competence.
- … provide competence in assessment and clarification from an individual- and system perspective, as well as insight into the development of individual curricula and individual plans (The Research Council of Norway 2014:15).

In-depth knowledge in developing individual curricula and inclusion is not mentioned in recommendations for Master-level education in general or related to the topics of special needs education. This brief review of education in individual curriculum work points to serious shortcomings in higher education of special needs educators in Norway. It seems obvious to follow up these evaluations, and it would be interesting and relevant to implement similar evaluation studies in other countries for international comparison.

Social and cultural aspects

There is a whole range of social and cultural frame factors, or contextual aspects, influencing a school's inner activity. Some of them are already mentioned. Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1994) lays the theoretical foundation for an overview of social and economic structures in the local community, with its employment situation and natural environment as important influential factors for learning. His ecological systems theory links the single person to family and local community with its diversity of internal connections as well as connections to the wider society, the state, country, or even international society and, in more current texts, to the historical dimension as well. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory had a major influence on Norwegian national curriculum in the 1980s, when it

was highly criticised by spokesmen from decentralized areas, fishing- and agricultural communities, as being biased in favour of urban communities (Johnsen, 2014b). The criticism was heard. The national curriculum of 1987 (M 1987) requires that each local community adapts the national framework curriculum to local conditions, such as the Norwegian case school does in its annual "school curriculum" that is based on teachers' joint discussions, and distributed to all families. These requirements represent a breakthrough in official Norwegian curriculum development, paving the way for acceptance of the principle of meaningful and suitably adapted individual curricula.

While Bronfenbrenner's (1979; 1994) ecological approach might sum up a broad picture of social and cultural aspects, a smaller picture or pictures may be characterised as aspects of mentalities related to educational inclusion. Attitudes and mentalities are important "drivers" of social and cultural processes for better or worse. Ethnographic studies of attitudes towards inclusion have not been a focus of this research project, but may be an important contribution to deepen our understanding of these processes. The main content of this international comparative research report is about good examples of inclusive practices, and less good, but also about their dilemmas and challenges, as discussed below. It shows research teams, schools, parents and pupils who enthusiastically participate in the studies and developments towards this rather new international principle of educational inclusion. This is a recognisable enthusiasm that usually accompanies new ideas perceived as being fair and important by many citizens; especially parents and individuals with special educational needs and disabilities (Gardou, 2014). It creates a wave of positive mentality. Since these studies focus on good examples of inclusive practices, the selection of cases is biased in the sense that having a deliberate and positive attitude towards development of inclusion is a prerequisite. Therefore, even though the studies are critical and reveal dilemmas and challenges, several challenges are expected to be excluded in the process of purposeful selection of cases. However, the selection process itself may reveal alternative views to inclusion. There is also a mentality denying social and educational inclusion – and a mentality of ignorance of the idea, as discussed by Julia Kristeva (in Johnsen, 2014d). What kinds of dilemmas and challenges appears in connection with the preparation of this study?

Some of the participating teams have experienced avoidance to participate in this study of inclusive practices from either school authorities or – when they are positive – from school administrators, teachers or parents. There are several reasons given or perceived for avoidance, such as research

overload in a school, sudden and serious economic cutbacks, teachers who are afraid of having researchers closely following their work, worries about disrupting the teaching-learning process or parents who resist research in their children's class and school – or a combination of these and other reasons. These are often understandable reasons for not participating by what are, generally speaking, good schools. It may also be that the research teams have not adequately prepared their invitation. However, when schools avoid participating, this may indicate that developing inclusive practices is not a high priority for them.

Mentality towards social and educational inclusion may contain not only ignorance or denial, but also insecurity. One reason that a school may withdraw from participating may be a lack of knowledge about a country's laws and regulations or insecurity concerning how to implement the principle. While this is understandable in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia where the legislation may still be characterised as rather new, it is more difficult to accept in Norway, where the turn towards creating a school for all and inclusion took place around fifty years ago. Mentalities of ignorance and insecurity may, however, also arise when a school or municipality are caught up in superficial traditions that prevent their making fundamental changes in order to move forward towards educational inclusion, as some examples indicate in Norway (yet another theme for further research). Insecurity may also arise if and when otherwise influential parents resist and complain about their child having to share a classroom with a pupil with special educational needs "taking a lot of time away from educating their own child". This argument is also reported by other of the research teams. The principle of inclusion may collide with traditional attitudes related to what education is for – in society at large as well as among parents and teachers (Skogen, 2001; 2019) The Tuzla team argues:

> We can say that society places too high criteria and tasks which are too demanding on the child; which are never in accordance with the child's abilities and capabilities. Therefore, the difficulties facing the child cannot be seen in isolation from the context in which they occur (T).

However, within the multitude of different attitudes there are single persons, parents of disabled children, adults with disabilities, professionals such as teachers, special needs educators and others, who urge development of educational inclusion within an inclusive society, as the research projects document. In addition to

researchers and professionals, a large number and variety of non-governmental organisations are active in Europe and in all the countries participating in this research project. Thus, governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) demonstrate a positive belief in the principles of inclusion and actively debate, support and work towards development in this direction. As one of the examples from this cooperative research, the Zagreb team's research provides an example of cooperation between researchers, school and NGOs.

Only some of the many intertwined contextual factors influencing school in general and the development of inclusive educational practices in particular are mentioned here. The review may be regarded as a sketch that outlines macro-level frame factors. Contextual aspects that promote as well as inhibit inclusive practices are mentioned; actually, the focus has been more on challenges than in previous chapters. The following topics are discussed; common international principles – the participating countries' embeddedness as European welfare states with different recent history – financial resources or frame factors – physical frame factors – personal and professional human resources – social and cultural aspects. Thus, without going far back in history, some current historical conditions are presented that indicate a certain number of similarities and distinct differences related to opportunities to develop inclusive practices. Sharing international and European principles of a school for all and inclusion is the joint starting point for all six participating countries and the foundation for this research project. Some general financial, professional-educational, human and cultural aspects and reflections of importance for educational inclusion are outlined, partly discussed and related to opportunities and obstacles in what Goodlad (1979) calls the domains of practice, which is the process and product of education.

Summary

"The scholarly roots" to the discussions of micro-macro perspectives and contextual frame factors as bridges between principles and practice in this text are Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner, Goodlad and Alexander. The following main aspects are highlighted:

Common international principles. All main UN and UNESCO conventions and statements of specific importance for the principle of individually adapted and inclusive education are signed and ratified by all participating countries, including the most resent UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006).

European welfare states with different recent history:

- Historically, the post-World-War Nordic countries and Yugoslavia participated in welfare state development, each in its own way
- While the Nordic countries have experienced a peak of prosperity, the former Yugoslavian countries in the research project have lived through dissolution and wars. As a result, they have suffered not only serious setbacks to their economy and capacity to provide their citizens with welfare services, but also a subsequent renewal of former establishments and new national and local institutions inspired by common European networks
- This cooperative research project (WB 04/06) is an opportunity to build on collegial respect and a desire to continue the previous year's academic cooperation and research in a "regional- internal" comparative analysis between countries in the Western Balkan region, maintaining a view of them and Norway as being joint participants in the community of Europe.

Legislative and political frame factors: All participating countries currently have legislation that either requires or allows for children with challenges and disabilities to attend ordinary schools. The first steps towards realising inclusion have been taken. According to participants, there is need for further clarification of laws and policies. Even where the legislation and national curriculum are explicit, there are gaps between official rights and the actual practice of inclusion.

Financial resources: A general factor indicating national capacities to finance education and welfare services is a country's gross domestic product (GDP), as indicated in this section.

Physical frame factors may promote or inhibit inclusion at school. The term universal design is used synonymously with design for all, accessibility for all and inclusive design. *The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* describes inclusive or universal design (UN, 2006) as follows:

> "Universal design" means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal design" shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed (UN, 2006).

The first generation of Norwegian universal design standards for buildings is edited around the following aspects (Standard Norge, 2009): motion –

sight – hearing – cognitive ability – environment / hypersensitivity. Systematic information about universal design in all participating schools has not been gathered, but a certain amount of information is used as illustrative examples.

Human resources and higher education of teachers and special needs educators: This section contains the following aspects:

- Contribution of parents to the school for all and inclusion
- Contribution of NGOs in several countries to the school for all and inclusion
- The central role of international organisations such as UN and UNESCO for the introduction and ratification of the principle of inclusion
- The central role of higher education for teachers and special needs educators in inclusive practices
- The important role of research on inclusive practices
- Establishing and upgrading towards providing higher education for teachers and defectologists/special needs educators: See Johnsen, Rapaić, Wagner & Cvitković (2013)
- Gap between policies and practice of inclusion in all participating countries
- An example: Norwegian evaluation studies of teacher education on the topic of individually adapted teaching
- Need for further similar evaluation studies in Norway – and in other European countries?

Social and cultural aspects: Vygotsky's culture-historical theory, Goodlad's curricular ecology and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory all emphasise the influence of social and cultural aspects on policies and national curricula – and their theories may contribute to official debate leading to changes, as the example from Norway in the 1980s.

Negative and positive mentalities towards the inclusive school:
Negative attitudes/mentalities:

- Could certain schools' avoidance of participating in studies of inclusion indicate that development of inclusive practices is not a high priority?
- Mentalities of ignorance and insecurity may also arise when a school or municipality are caught up in superficial traditions that prevent their making fundamental changes in order to move forward towards educational inclusion

Positive attitudes/mentalities:

- Within the multitude of different attitudes there are single persons, parents of disabled children, adults with disabilities, professionals such as teachers, special needs educators and others who urge the development of educational inclusion within an inclusive society
- Governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) demonstrate positive beliefs in the principles of inclusion and actively debate, support and work towards development in this direction

These brief descriptions and examples indicate that socio-cultural contexts consist of many vague as well as clear and concrete aspects. Some are even quantifiable, such as economic factors or the number of qualified educators. Other are more diffuse and difficult to detect, while several aspects remain undiscovered as hidden frame factors. Some factors are subjected to official debate on the macro level and may influence changes in policies and priorities – and may in turn have actual consequences for the single school and educational team in the planning, practice and further development of local and individual curricula.

Without going far back in history, conditions are presented in this chapter that indicate similarities as well as distinct differences related to opportunities to develop inclusive practices in the participating countries. Sharing international and European principles of a school for all and inclusion is the joint starting point and foundation for this international comparative research project. Some general financial, professional educational, human and cultural aspects and reflections of importance for educational inclusion are highlighted for discussions and related to opportunities and obstacles in what Goodlad (1979) calls the domains of practice, which are the process and product of education.

10 Summary of jointly reported findings

The reported findings are rightfully called empirical examples. All in all, the seven studies contain a considerable number of findings in fine-masked details. The findings are gathered through classroom observation and interviews, action research as well as pre-post studies. They are selected, categorised, discussed and presented in this report by each of the seven research teams and revised

in a series of collective reviews as described in the chapter on methodological considerations below. The joint research question or -issue is:

> How does school teach in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process (recourses, barriers and dilemmas)?

This summary of findings is divided in accordance the eight didactic-curricular areas and follow in the same order as the chapters above, starting with a summary of findings related to the educators knowledge about their pupils.

Knowledge about the individual pupil and pupils

The focus on relevant and thorough knowledge about each individual pupil in the community of the class concerns schools' attention and the human-professional capacity for holistic and empathetic observation of and interaction with each pupil and the class as a whole.

Who are the pupils in focus in these studies? According to information from the research teams, gathering knowledge about individual pupils a) either focuses on pupils with some kind of special educational needs, b) or on all pupils in the class and their individual level of mastery, contextual conditions and needs for educational and other support.

Who seeks and has knowledge about the pupil/s? Cooperation between ordinary teachers and special needs educators is found to be central but varying. In the majority of the studies, special needs educators have the role of external advisors or counsellors, and the proximity of their contact with teachers and parents varies. An assumption from the study is that schools focus differently on getting to know a pupil, as this process depends on a) the attitudes their teachers, school administrators and special needs educators have, and b) the amount of attention and time they have to complete this process. There are examples of teachers who show a great willingness to learn about all relevant aspects of all pupils' psychosocial- and learning opportunities.

What kind of knowledge is in focus? "I emphasize wellbeing … that the child thrives" (O). Psychosocial opportunities and challenges are generally found to be the focus of teachers' attention. Having knowledge about pupils who need learning tasks that are above ordinary teaching on their grade level is also reported. When it comes to pupils, who need specific support related

to some or all of their school subjects, teachers' knowledge about their level of mastery and concrete mediating support is emphasised. In addition to diverse knowledge gathered by teachers, often in cooperation with parents, in-depth specialised assessments are administered, most often by external special needs educators. Assessment represents a more systematic type of information gathering.

Assessment

What is assessment in an educational context? This study applies the following preconception:

> To assess and evaluate is to gather, interpret and reflect on a variety of information in order to adjust the direction towards a future goal. Educational assessment and evaluation consist of considerations and judgements about teaching and learning environments, processes and results, and about their contextual relations. Special needs educational assessment and evaluation draw attention to specific possibilities, barriers and adaptations concerning teaching and learning environments, processes and results, and their contextual relations (Johnsen, 2014b: 146).

In line with this description, it is important to have thorough information about the single pupil and all pupils in the community of the class as well as knowledge about the interrelation with other didactic-curricular aspects of the teaching-learning process. In this international comparative research, assessment practices are described in their relation to inclusive educational practice, as indicated by the Zagreb team:

> The most important thing for a good assessment is to develop an individual approach in teaching and supporting children. The focus of educational intentions should be on the achievement of every child based on acceptance and support of diversities in accordance with contextual factors (Z).

Who assesses? The large majority of assessments are done by teachers, both class- and individual assessments. However, as mentioned, other professionals inside and outside of the school also administer and interpret assessments. Different countries have different institutions administering their assessment of special needs. Thus, in this study assessment and evaluation take place on the school level and external special needs education level. However, in some of these studies, special needs educators on behalf of the study administer thorough assessments of pupils with specific needs as part of "pre-post" and action

research studies. Other studies are delimited to empirical studies of applied practice. Cooperation takes place between regular teachers, internal and external special needs educators and, in some cases, other professionals and supporting institutions.

Who is assessed? The individual pupil with special needs is at the centre of assessment in several of the studies. Some of the assessments also focus on how classmates perceive fellow classmates with special needs, such as in a case with a pupil whose behavioural challenges are in focus. In the Ljubljana study attention is given to the perception of a pupil with hearing impairment regarding his interaction with hearing fellow pupils (L). Other studies focus on schools' assessment of all pupils in the class, including cooperating with different external services in accordance with the needs of individual pupils.

What kinds of assessment are applied to individual pupils? There is considerable variation between the research teams when it comes to their assessment tools and approaches. The following types are found: a) direct information gathering about single pupils' level of mastery in different areas and school subjects; b) everyday talks with individual pupils; c) systematic dialogues and interviews with pupils, parents and/or co-teachers; d) examination of the pupil's school work; e) portfolios of learning tasks; e) mastery of weekly curricula or plans and programmes; f) the pupil's self-evaluation; g) specific achievement tests and ability tests; h) diagnostic tests administered by special needs educators related to specific functions and needs; i) teachers' and special needs educators' evaluation of connections between plans and practices through the use of logbooks and reports.

What kinds of assessment are applied to classes and groups? Many class assessment tools are "classical" and used with some variations in all schools participating in the joint study, such as a) class tests in different school subjects b) school- and grade tests c) national and international tests d) informal and frequently repeated tests e) assessment based on observation, and f) pupils' works. Less frequently, some of the participating schools use g) assessments of pupils' logbooks or diaries h) checklists i) screening tests of abilities and tests of mastery and teaching needs related to specific school subjects such as "school beginning tests" in arithmetic after summer holidays.

Assessment of curricula. As indicated above, when teachers assess their own work, their curriculum plan and implementation is an important topic. In this

research project there is focus on the relationship between 1) learning progress related to a curriculum, such as a general teaching-learning plan for one week at a time, and long-term plans for one or several pupils 2) teaching practice assessed with regard to pupils' individual learning processes 3) teaching in the community of the class assessed or with regard to the overall learning process of the class. This threefold relationship constitutes main assessment aspects of educational inclusion. However, not all research teams find that the three aspects of assessment are reported or observed, as mentioned above, and there is reason to believe that some of the aspects are tacitly, rather than explicitly and systematically evaluated.

What is assessed and how is it applied? One provisional answer may be that it depends upon how the teacher and special needs educator apply the results of their assessments together. Do they, for example, only look at the grades from class tests? Or do they analyse details of an individual pupil's results in order to find exact indications about their level of mastery, probable next learning steps and mediational needs? Do the seven studies provide answers to these questions? Are all relevant types of assessment used, such as the ones mentioned above? Does the combination of internal and external assessment contribute to increased possibilities for individually adapted support and inclusive practices? In the cases described in this report, this has usually been the case. However, there are examples indicating that the waiting time for appointments for external support has been so long that the school and pupil have managed to meet the special educational need on their own before the external experts arrive on the scene.

Dilemmas and challenges. Assessment is possibly the most vulnerable and most criticised aspect of special needs education, as it contains several dilemmas:

- A main challenge for educational inclusion relates to the traditionally close connection between assessment and assigning grades. Does the teacher accept that a certain pupil will receive a poor grade "as usual", or does he or she investigate in detail what the pupil has mastered and what the expected next step in the learning process may be in order to teach in accordance with the pupil's immediate learning opportunities?
- Similarly, special needs education is criticised for paying too much attention to assessment and too little to educational support. It focuses too much on error detection, diagnosing and labelling, and too little on special needs education. The problem of labelling relates to low self-esteem and bullying.

Thus, assessment practices may reveal dilemmas between special needs educational practices, inclusive practices and ordinary teaching practices. Likewise, an assessment of assessment (meta-studies) may reveal dilemmas and barriers within actual assessment practices. Are such dilemmas discovered and discussed in the seven studies of this research project? Several dilemmas are discussed; some of them with reference to findings, others with only wage connections to this research project. The following topics are addressed: a) the dilemma between assessment and danger of negative labelling b) dilemmas related to choice of perspective or direction concerning assessment tools and -cultures c) the problem whether and how organisation of assessments affect teaching and d) dilemmas between local school curricula and national curricula. This last dilemma is addressed in connection with educational intentions.

Educational intentions

An important part of educators' professional work is to transfer general intentions into concrete and manageable goals through adapting them to pupils' educational needs and capabilities. In order to do so, thorough knowledge about pupils' well-being and learning potential based on formal and informal assessment is crucial. How does school's knowledge about official aims in combination with the class and single pupil's learning potentials contribute to the continuous development of concrete, manageable, individual teaching-learning goals? All research teams state that while the principle of inclusion is affirmed in national policy papers and educational acts in different ways. However, inclusion is one of many and contradictory principles and traditions. The research teams focus on describing and explaining relations and differences between short-term and long-term goals, and even goals in a lifelong perspective. They also point out that contradictions between national and local policies and in particular, individual teaching-learning goals create difficult dilemmas. A general view is that there is a gap between the principle of inclusion stated in educational policies and financial and other opportunities to practice inclusion. The same applies to sign language users (L).

A more concrete dilemma concerns the ability of schools to design educationally appropriate and reachable objectives for individual pupils. The argument is that cooperation with special needs educators and professional upgrading of teachers might solve this problem.

A third dilemma concerns the concrete connection between individual objectives for pupils with special educational needs and joint goals for the community of the class. This dilemma – or challenge – is not easy to solve due to several aspects of traditional ordinary schooling from political and economic to attitudes and traditions in the educational professions, from school administrators to special needs educators and teachers. In this matter, teachers are expected to be the leading profession when it comes to having skills, knowledge and reflections on class management – which in itself may be a serious challenge. What about inviting professional special needs educators to cooperate with teachers?

Educational content

Educational content is in close connection with educational intentions. When taken together, the two main aspects are expected to answer questions concerning *what* a certain education or teaching-learning process is about. Educational content may be understood as substance and values that are supposed to form the pupil into an educated person (*bildung*); an aspect that has too often been forgotten when pupils with special needs are trained instead of educated. There is therefore reason to recall Vygotsky's (1978) argument that of all pupils, those who have intellectual challenges are in most need of an educator that is able to support the transfer of learning to development.

How do schools select educational content so that all pupils are able to participate in a meaningful teaching-learning process within the community of the class? Each team reports the steps they have taken towards inclusion in view of relevant special educational needs as well as context and possibilities. Thus, the Belgrade team focuses on two measures; a) development and implementation of individualised curriculum in cooperation with school psychologists and special educators from a supporting special school; and b) reduced demands on educational content in certain subjects in accordance with pupils' abilities (B).

Focusing on developing adapted education in ordinary classes for pupils with speech and language impairments, the Sarajevo team of speech therapists provide language- and speech education while the teachers apply additional didactic material and approaches for pupils' acquisition of reading and writing skills (S).

The Tuzla team supports teachers with additional material and approaches based on detailed assessments of levels of mastery for pupils with various types of learning difficulties (T).

In Zagreb the teacher, assistant and consulting special needs educator combine their efforts to strengthen classmates' attitudes to inclusion, respect for diversity, tolerance and acceptance. In order to accomplish this, they apply teaching- and learning content related to communication skills in order to increase mutual respect and positive attitudes between a pupil with psychosocial difficulties and the class (Z). The case pupil of the Skopje team benefits from some individually adapted additional material in his first language and communication approaches due to his hearing impairment. He also gets additional learning material in mathematics, which he masters on an exceptionally high level (MS). Similarly, the Norwegian case class offers additional content in arithmetic combined with the ordinary class content for three of the pupils who show an excellent understanding of and eagerness for the subject. The learning content for pupils with special needs in the class are regulated a) in adapted weekly plans as well as b) extra resources allotted to learning courses for pupils who need additional teaching in order to fully acquire a topic, and c) extra resources allotted to individual teacher support and adaptation of content for one of the pupils in the class on daily basis (O). These are selected examples of individual content adaptation that are mainly applied in ordinary classes.

What dilemmas are connected to adaptation of content? Internationally, the most typical dilemma concerns content that is on too high a level of mastery for some (and sometimes the majority) of individual pupils. This may be due to schools' dependence on a strict national curriculum in the form of a predetermined syllabus – as seems to be the case in some of the participating countries. Another dilemma concerns whether to assign grades or not related to individually adapted content. Is one possible reason for the dilemmas the fact that national curricula for the inclusive school are based on traditions from the ordinary school, while special needs education traditions have not been fully incorporated here?

Educational methods and organisation

Educational methods and organisation – the educational *how* – are interrelated with intentions and content as well as the other didactic-curricular main aspects. How can educational methods contribute to individually adapted education and inclusion? Methods need to be based on knowledge

and assessment of the pupil's preferred learning strategies. Hence, in order to support inclusion, a variety of methods need to be considered. What kinds of methods are criticised, discussed and practiced in the seven studies of this research project?

Critique and possibilities in methodological practice: Teaching too often consists of a single teaching method directed towards the whole class, as if all pupils have the same level of mastery. This is called classroom teaching or catheter teaching, even podium teaching. It is argued that in its strictly limited practice without dialogue with the pupils, it is outdated in the multifaceted classroom. Hence, it is recommended to apply a variation of relevant overlapping teaching methods in order to meet the diverse learning methods of the pupil population. Some methodological main areas of special importance in the inclusive class are mentioned and discussed in detail in the methods chapter above:

- Methods for the plurality of educational needs
- Development and use of additional material for pupils i) that need repetition ii) need alternative material, and iii) need additional challenges due to their high level of mastery
- Development and use of material related to training specific difficulties or overcoming certain challenges
- Step-by-step methodology
- Differentiation of methods and material
- Individual adaptation of methods and material
- Both differentiation and individual adaptation hand in hand

Among the barriers to developing inclusive methodological practices, perhaps the most serious challenge is the lack of knowledge and skills regarding the diversity of methods and their relation to different educational needs. Close cooperation between class teachers, subject teachers and special needs educators is expected to develop and continuously extend a joint arsenal of methods and materials, due to educators' different knowledge and skills along with professional experience from the teacher-pupil relationship with which every school is enriched. Extensive sharing of methods and materials between special needs educators and teachers as well as between teacher colleagues is reported from the studies.

Organisation and methods are means through which learning is intended to take place; they are mediating tools. The continuous interrelationship between

educational considerations regarding the whole class and the plurality of pupils with different educational needs demands multiple organisation as described by Alexander (2000), and which is found through observations and interviews in the seven studies. There are several aspects and levels of multiple organisation or organisation for inclusion, whereof findings from the following are reported and/or discussed:

- Organising in different time perspectives: Long-term organisation – school year and semester organisation – organising the school week – organising the school day and the lesson
- Multiple group sizes: Organising into large classes (two or more classes together) – into groups – individual teaching
- Different educational scenes or places: auditorium or large spaces – classrooms – group rooms – rooms for dyadic teaching – out of school building teaching – in "the heart of the school" (such as an extended library permanently staffed with library-teacher/s, regular teacher/s and special needs educators)
- Use of educational resources: one class one teacher – collaborative teaching, where more than one educator work in the classroom with the pupils – flexible use of educational staff in large classes, combination of class, group and individual teaching, teacher and special needs educator, teacher and assistant – educational resources in individual teaching – educational resources outside the classroom and school

The most typical areas confronted with dilemmas and challenges are:

1) Organising teaching staff, where a main challenge is the typical one-teacher-in-the-class organisation, and where the expectations are that one professional handles teaching all pupils with their different educational needs.
2) Organisation in one or multiple teaching-learning arena: A main dilemma is whether pupils with special educational needs should be part of the classroom for all or placed in separate rooms for special teaching, and if so, for how long part of the school day. Segregation of groups and individuals is an obvious barrier to inclusion that are actively dealt with in the "pre-post" and "action research" studies.

These possibilities for organising are not exhaustive. Schooling is a complex activity requiring organisation in accordance with varying aspects and different levels of learning, all of which may promote or inhibit inclusion.

Communication

Communication between teacher and special needs educator and – first and foremost – between school and pupil in cooperation with parents is a key prerequisite for inclusion. Therefore, communication is introduced in this curricular relation approach as an important main aspect that must be planned, practiced and continually revised in a similar manner to other curricular main aspects. In this research cooperation attention to pupil's individual problem-solving is subordinated or understood within a cultural-historical context or as an integrated process of teaching, learning and development. Communication constitutes the bridge between a) the cultural-historical context at any time and in any culture, b) educators and c) pupil. Thus, the Zagreb team points out that "… communication is very important for sharing information and knowledge, and it can be a motivation for good teacher-pupil collaboration" (Z). Communication and mediation approaches are appropriate for guiding individual- and class curriculum activities. They are therefore of great importance when we are preparing concrete educational intentions, content, methods and organisation based on assessment of individual learning possibilities and need for support (Johnsen, 2014c). Communication is a multi-faceted phenomenon. It may be divided into communication technological and human relational aspects, even though there is a large grey zone, or overlap, between the two. The following questions deal with **communication technological aspects**:

- Do we hear and see each other (levels of light and noise in the classroom, etc.)?
- Does anyone need visual or hearing aids?
- Do we need special communication media such as sign language, signed speech, icons, digital communication programmes or other augmentative devices?
- Do we need systematic step-by- step support in learning to understand and apply a language?

Combining different languages and modes of communication, as those mentioned above, are examples of communication technological matters. In this study, several good examples of facilitating are described, whereas the lack of communication and support is also discussed (L, SM). Several supplementary measures are reported, use of flashcards, posters and other illustrations, securing good lighting in the classroom and securing an open but acceptable level of "working noise" in order to facilitate communication and cooperation among pupils. In addition, the use of computer programmes and the internet has increased during the project period (O, S, SM). Communication technological

matters relate to questions about whether or not we can properly see, hear or understand each other.

Relational communication or human relation aspects of communication focus on human attention or the ability to be aware of every single pupil and base subsequent communication on the pupil's level of mastery and capabilities. Thus, relational communication focuses on pupils being seen, listened to and taken seriously (Johnsen, 2014b). How does relational communication appear in the seven studies? The following examples represent reported characteristics of relational communication and dialogue: Showing acceptance and appreciation of every individual pupil and the whole class – giving ample time to converse with the pupil – waiting for the pupil's reaction – appreciating feedback – trying to resolve misunderstandings – using verbal and nonverbal communication in general and facial expressions in particular – striving for insight – recognising and accepting the pupil's feelings, needs and individual communication and learning strategies – repeating and clarifying instruction in accordance with individual needs – giving positive feedback and praise in oral and written form – mediating the dialogue in the class in order to support the understanding of pupils with hearing-, speech and other difficulties (B, L, O S, SM, T, Z).

There are, however, also several challenges concerning communication in the classroom. Thus, communication barriers or negative communication, reported by the research teams are so-called "less helpful teaching traditions" that may be divided into the following three categories; a) monologue teaching, b) error-focused communication, and c) communication and collaboration difficulties – between teacher and single pupils or the class, among educational staff members and between school and parents.

Care

Care is a relational phenomenon; while it clearly connects with relational communication, it contains more than communication, namely an explicit and generally positive human mentality permeating professional perspectives and practices in all educational reflections and actions – including the eight didactic-curricular main aspects. Thus, there is a grey zone, or a common zone, between care and other main aspects of the curricular relation approach. Care is also related to philosophical-ethical reflections, as found in Kristeva's recogni-

tion of our joint human vulnerability (Johnsen, 2014c; Kristeva, 2010) and other didactic stands such as Danish scholar Susan Tetler's (2000) "didactics of generosity". Why situate care as a main aspect in the curricular relation approach? Through history, undoubtedly a large number of teachers and special needs educators have cared deeply for their pupils. It is, however, important to raise the human-professional awareness of why and how care is a fundamental part of the development of inclusion. The caring approach represents a special needs education extension of traditional discipline- or knowledge- and skills focused classroom education; an extended approach benefitting all pupils in the class. Care is essential, since positive learning depends on satisfying basic human needs, including a sense of belongingness and acceptance, recognition and dignity (Befring, 2014; Johnsen, 2014b; 2019a; Rye, 2005). Accordingly, it is crucial to be aware of – not only the learner – but the whole child and young person within her or his social and cultural context with his or her personal history (Johnsen, 2014b; Noddings, 1992; 2002; 2003). Consciousness about the joint cultural heritage and conditions shared by school and pupils is important with its potential joys as well as barriers and possible traumatic conditions[50]. Sensitivity towards personal conditions and the whole range of developmental potential and needs is an important and often difficult challenge for teachers and special needs educators. Pupils need to perceive care, which reveals itself in attitudes, in small informal talks, in eye contact or a light touch on the shoulder, in some nice words about what was good in the homework as well as in concern. Care and sensitivity manifest themselves in human-professional planning, practice and evaluation of all aspects of the wellbeing and education of each single pupil and the whole class (Johnsen, 2019a).

How is care described and discussed in the seven studies? The findings indicate that care is expressed in a variety of ways and connected to different conditions and situations. The following categories are examples of the many aspects of care that are presented and discussed:

50 Currently, consciousness about how to welcome and create an accepting and resource-based companionship between pupils with different and often new cultural backgrounds compared to a former more or less homogeneous school has become one of the main topics of concern for developing inclusion. This is a joint challenge for all participating schools, even though there may be differences in appearances. These kinds of challenges have not been a focus of this research cooperation. However, the development of inclusion between members of different cultures is gaining an increasing amount of attention in social and educational research. Research in which "the population of diversities" is analysed in relation to the development of social and educational inclusion is very important.

a) care and the educational professions
b) characteristics of caring relations: focus on the whole child and youth – belongingness – recognition – supporting pupils' experience of mastery – supporting expressions of feelings – sharing personal experiences – encouraging peer collaboration and care – awareness of pupil inside and outside the classroom – supporting coping strategies
c) caring relations with individual pupils
d) "classroom care"

The role of care as inclusive practice plays a prominent role in the chapter on care. For a more detailed conceptual discussion of care and the closely related term sensitivity, it is referred to the chapter *Care and sensitivity in upbringing and education – An introduction to related core concepts in selected resource-based interaction traditions* (Johnsen, 2020a) in this anthology.

Are there any dilemmas connected to care in the classroom? As one teacher points out:

> "It is not for nothing that teaching is called a caring profession, but care and neutrality do not go comfortably together. Professionalism lies in striving to care even-handedly" (O).

There may be a fine line between care and exhaustion and burnout symptoms, and there is certainly a connection between care and concerns or worries about pupils and their conditions inside or outside school. There are several challenges for pupils with special needs when starting ordinary school. Are they welcomed in the class? Or are they rejected – by pupils, by some parents, and even by some teachers? Rejection is the opposite of care. Negative attitudes towards people with disabilities may be found among teachers, parents and the local community. It is a challenge to pupil's well-being and the development of inclusion – and consequently, to teachers' striving towards inclusion. These dilemmas and challenges are discussed in the studies.

Context

Contextual aspects embrace the inner activity of schooling, connecting it to a larger cultural-historical perspective. A series of frame factors serve to situate findings from the educational micro level within the cultural-historical contexts of the participating communities. In this way the contextual focus takes this research project beyond former traditional inclusion studies where

the focus has tended to be either on politics and societal factors or isolated classroom studies, as briefly discussed in the joint research plan and other texts (Johnsen, 2013a; 2015). During the post-World War II period, Europe, including Yugoslavia and Norway, participated in the growing welfare state development, each in its own way. However, since the 1980ies history has been significantly different. While Norway and the Nordic countries has experienced a peak of prosperity, the other participating countries have lived through dissolution and wars with accompanying serious setbacks in their economies and capacity to provide citizens with welfare services. However, the division and new state building also leads to building of new national institutions. Expansion and development of higher education institutions is relevant to this cooperation, especially when it comes to higher education of teachers and special needs educators.

In what way do contextual aspects function as a bridge between the schools' inner activity and surrounding conditions? Frame factors are described and discussed in the seven studies. They tend to explain the state of affairs, or as arguments for challenges to the development of special needs education and inclusion. Several contextual aspects are highlighted in the joint research report that give indications of similarities and differences between the participating countries. Among common international frame factors are the ratifications of international conventions that all participating countries have signed, even though the countries with a history as parts of Yugoslavia, for obvious reasons, only recently ratified former UN conventions such as *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (1950). When it comes to physical frame factors such as classrooms, school buildings, schoolyards and local environments, the buildings are rather similar and not quite new. Some have been renovated after war; the Norwegian case school was the oldest until it was replaced with a new building fulfilling the criteria of universal design. However, the studies in all participating schools, including the old Norwegian school, show how educators manage to adapt physical environments to the needs of all pupils despite limitations of universal solutions. All countries have incorporated special needs education and inclusion in their ordinary school policies. When it comes to financial capacity, Norway is amongst the most privileged countries in Europe, spending a considerable amount of resources on special needs education measures. The other participating countries' gross domestic products (GDP) are average or below this on the European scale. The research teams express serious concern about the gap between the agreed upon principles and

lack of resources for special education and inclusive measures. There is a whole range of social and cultural frame factors influencing the inner activity at school. When it comes to attitudes and mentalities it is, however, difficult to estimate differences since the research is not based on thorough anthropological studies. Teachers, special needs educators and school administration, parents and pupils, politicians, officials and media – in short; everyone – mirror explicitly or indirectly attitudes towards social and educational inclusion. The mentality may vary from ignorance or denial and insecurity to positivity and hope. As an example of a reluctant attitude, a reason for withdrawing from participating in a study of inclusion may be lack of knowledge about a country's policy or insecurity about how to implement the principle. This is understandable in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia, where the legislation is rather new. Similar reluctance may be difficult to accept in Norway, where the turn towards a school for all and inclusion took place around fifty years ago. However, all research teams have engaged schools willing to take part in the study and established close and positive relations in their search for good examples as well as dilemmas and challenges in the development towards educational inclusion.

11 Further reflections

Following presentations and discussions of empirical findings within the eight didactic-curricular main arenas, relevant joint findings are selected and discussed in light of the following perspectives:

- What are inclusive practices?
- Similarities and differences of findings from the seven studies
- Dilemmas, barriers and challenges in the schools' development of inclusive practices

What are inclusive practices?

There are many descriptions and "definitions" of the principle of inclusion. This international comparative research cooperation is based on the following description, which was applied to the joint research plan (Johnsen, 2013a: 228) and is also on the first page of this report:

> Inclusion is the global policy prescribing development towards a local regular school that welcomes all children with their unique individual characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs; all children with and without special needs and disabilities; a school combating discriminatory attitudes, and offering meaningful and individually adapted education to every pupil within the community of the class (Frederickson & Cline, 2002; Johnsen, 1998/2000; UNESCO, 1994).

One of the recurring challenges pointed to in the previous chapters is the gap between principles and practice. The underlying intention of this research is to search for inclusive practices through exploring the inner activities at school, as the title signifies*: International Comparative Classroom Studies of Inclusive Practices*. The starting point in the construction of the research project is the main issue:

> How does the school teach in accordance with the pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process (resources, barriers and dilemmas)?

It concerns how to construct a bridge between the principle of inclusion and practices related to individual pupils as partners in the joint class or group. The question challenges practitioners as well as researchers to consider a) what "professional tools" are available in order to plan, practice, assess and revise a teaching process based on the diversity of pupils' levels of mastery and capabilities and, consequently, are meaningful in their learning process; and furthermore b) how to embed the teaching-learning process within the community of the class. To the extent schools aim towards these expectations, they are arenas in the development of inclusive practices, as argued in Johnsen (2014b). A joint set of didactic-curricular categories represent main aspects of the teaching-learning situation and process. Each main category contains in principle an infinite number of subcategories. They are interrelated as well as related with the intended users of the tools, in other words the practitioners who work in schools and researchers who explore schools' practices. These didactic-curricular main aspects, or categories, are theoretically reflected and developed in advance of the empirical studies, as discussed in the introduction chapter. They are thus essential in the construction of the research project and applied as main categories of findings, as shown in the eight previous chapters.

Politicians, professionals and researchers have written about inclusive practices. However, descriptions of the phenomenon are usually limited to general phrases, such as: "Inclusive practice is an approach to teaching that recognises the diversity of students, enabling all students to access course content, fully participate in learning activities and demonstrate their knowledge and strengths

at assessment" (*Equality and diversity for academics*, 2013). The seven cooperating studies in this research move one step further from general formulations as quoted above, to exploringe concrete empirical examples of inclusive practices found within one or more of the seven main aspects in accordance with the didactic-curricular relation approach. It is important to keep in mind that the seven didactic-curricular aspects represent the inner activity of schooling – the teaching practice – or internal micro dimension, as Alexander (2000) calls it. The question is whether categorising a teaching phenomenon within one of the seven main aspects is sufficient for being described as an inclusive practice (as has been done in the categorising chapters). Or, are relations to all of the seven main aspects necessary to cover a complete and comprehensive set of interrelated actions? These two alternatives seem to be extremes on a continuum.

> The position in this work is that a teaching practice or activity classified within one or more of the main categories interacting with a pupil's level of mastery, proximal zone of development and need for mediational support in the community of the class, meets the criterion as an inclusive practice.

As repeatedly pointed out, many of the reported practices may be placed within two or more of the categories, or to the so-called "grey zone" between two or more categories. This research project delimits the analysis to the categorisation of inclusive teaching phenomena within the seven main aspects representing the inner activity of schooling. However, the findings may be viewed as inclusive details or components that have potential for further analysis as elements in holistic composite inclusive practices.

Similarities and differences of the findings from the seven studies

The compilation of results from all the research teams provides an interesting insight into how many similar findings are reported. One reason for this may be that there is joint attention paid to the seven didactic-curricular areas of the inner activities at school. However, as pointed out, there are an "infinite" number of topics that may be mentioned within each of the main categories. Furthermore, the variations in research designs and focus as well as different contexts of the seven studies also give reason to expect differences. What are the main similarities in the answers to the research question of how schools teach in accordance with the pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for

support in the learning process in the community of the class? What inclusive practices may be characterised as similar? In the following, findings that may be characterised as similar are presented from the different didactic-curricular areas. However, there are also a number of findings representing one or a few of the seven studies; some of these are rare and unique, or different and surprising. Some may contribute to shedding new light on the phenomenon of inclusion. Thus, after the similar findings, single and rare findings of inclusive practices are presented.

Similarities

The overall findings show that class teachers are in focus in all seven studies. They are described as main actors concerning knowledge about individual pupils in the majority of the studies. All research teams explicitly or implicitly point to **the importance of being aware of pupils' wellbeing** – more specifically, pupils with special educational needs. Thus, pupils' psychosocial functioning and relationships in the class combined with academic performance are the two prioritised aspects, even though specific focuses vary.

Thorough knowledge and assessment of pupils' level of mastery and mediational needs is a prerequisite for individually adapted education. The professional knowledge bank from ordinary and special needs education stores a multitude of assessment approaches and tools; these are both formal and informal. Accordingly, the point of this international comparative research project is to describe assessment practices and their relation to the policy of inclusion. The following questions frame the descriptions: a) Who and what are assessed b) who assesses c) what kinds of assessment approaches and tools are used d) how are they used, and why? The findings indicate several similarities in the seven studies' assessment practices. Most class and individual assessments are informal. Thus, more or less "homemade" tests are typical class assessment tools in all school subjects. In some subjects, tests are frequently repeated, such as weekly English glossary tests. In some cases school starting tests are used in order to screen pupils' level of mastery in certain subjects at the beginning of autumn semester, for example in arithmetic. In addition to tests, checklists, observations, pupils' work and logbooks or diaries are also used. Class assessments are likewise central to information gathering related to individual pupils. In addition, talks with individual pupils, from everyday conversations to systematic dialogues and interviews, are reported to give important information.

Some research teams report that the school arranges self-evaluation for the pupils as part of the overall assessment. There is, however, a question how thoroughly the informal assessments are used to analyse the concrete level of mastery and need to support of the individual pupil. Pupils with some kind of special need are usually assessed systematically by class or subject teacher. In all studies, there is access to special needs educators or other specialists. In four of the studies, systematic and repeated special needs educational assessment is part of the research project as elements in action research studies or other research designs.

Educational intentions. All the research teams state that while the principle of educational inclusion is affirmed in national policy papers and educational acts in different ways and levels of completion. However, they also point to a gap between the official acceptance of the principle of educational inclusion and facilitation of human and other resources in order to realise the principle. What kinds of goals are reported? Almost everyone's intention is to develop and support pupils' psychosocial and academic participation in the classroom. The exception is the critical studies of communication between hearing and hearing impaired pupils in mixed classes, where the intentions are, rightly so, to encourage inclusion of the two groups, but the perceived results are class communication on the premises of the hearing pupils (L). Several of the studies focus on educational intentions supporting pupils with specific disabilities or difficulties, such as speech intelligibility and different kinds of alternative communication. Most teams describe goals related to psychosocial well-being, communication, knowledge, skills and awareness raising of attitudes. They also describe and explain goal setting in relation to different time perspectives of individual curriculum making from short-term and long-term goals to goals in a lifelong perspective.

Describing and discussing **educational content** may be divided between a) content differentiation for pupils with minor specific needs that are planned and implemented by teachers and b) developing individually adapted content for pupils with major special education needs. Even though some of these pupils are partly educated or trained either individually or in small groups, the goals are to prepare them for activities in their ordinary classroom. An extensive use of specifically made and adapted communication and learning material is reported; much of which has been created by teachers and special needs educators. Most research teams find traditional class teaching or lecturing to be a **main teaching method**; however, this is used together with a number of additional methods.

Thus, in several cases traditional lecturing is observed used together with disability specific approaches, such as sign and speech and oral lecturing in combination with blackboard teaching. Combined methods are usually attached to flexible use of materials, as mentioned above, and approaches adapted to specific needs for single pupils in ordinary classes. Step-by-step methodology is observed being used in dyads and ordinary classrooms. Most teams report an active use of dialogue in different variations. Some research teams apply the concept scaffolding in order to explain teaching-learning interactions. Another commonly reported finding concerns so-called appraising teaching or diagnostic teaching in the class, in groups and in dyadic teaching. When it comes to **organisation of the teaching-learning process**, most research teams, five out of seven, have made agreements with their participating school or schools regarding multiple organisational frames, contributing to developing and trying out inclusive practices. As indicated above, all participating schools are reported to have out-of-class teaching in groups or individually in addition to the main organisation in a whole-class structure. Some of the schools organise the pupils in collaborating groups across levels of mastery. Several of the research teams work with individual pupils, specifically those who have special educational needs. All participating project schools have found rooms to work with individual pupils, and several schools are reported to have rooms for group work as well as dyadic teaching. Most of the participating schools have had access to special needs educators during the project period, all of whom provide special needs assessment and education in dyads and small groups. The most common special needs education support is provided as guidance to teachers and assistants as well as parents.

As discussed above, **communication** has two main aspects, namely a technological side and a human relational side. All research teams consider communication technological aspects to be important for educational inclusion; indeed, two of the teams focus mainly on communication. The use of sign language, sign to speech and stuttering therapy are amongst the communication technological aspects in focus. These require supervision and collaboration between special needs educators and ordinary teachers. All research teams point to the importance of positive relational communication with all pupils and the whole class, and specifically with individual pupils with special educational needs. Communication is also emphasised in the collaboration between researchers and case schools, which is characterised as close and positive. This may be seen in light of the complicated process of finding research schools where some of the teams

tried repeatedly before succeeding to find a partner school. Consequently, it is fair to characterise the participating schools as "more than average" interested in developing educational inclusion.

When it comes to **care**, there are several similar findings between the different studies. An overarching characteristic of the care that teachers and special educators show indicates a holistic attention to the pupil as an individual human being and member of the class. All research teams point to the importance of creating an atmosphere of recognition and contribute a variety of examples showing how to secure pupils' perception of being seen, heard, respected and trusted. Many different examples are reported about teachers and special needs educators who encourage pupils to talk about their feelings, share personal experiences with the class, encourage and facilitate peer collaboration in diverse pupil groups, and who discover and support children who may be experiencing difficulties and traumas. However, care also tends to be accompanied by concerns and worries. Teachers' and special educators' worries concerning different kinds and severity of problematic conditions – inside and outside school – are visible in the studies, as indicated in the reported examples. Findings from most research teams indicate that teachers and special needs educators are among the caring professions.

From the point of view of didactic-curricular relation approach, it is particularly noticed that **all participating teams have given considerable attention to two main aspects, namely communication and care**. As described, the two aspects represent extensions of former, more classical "academic" didactic-curricular aspects. In addition to focusing on the didactic-curricular aspects in the teaching-learning processes, **several findings focus on the mediating actors – from teachers and special needs educators to principals** and external partners – their activities and cooperation. In all case schools, headmasters have a central role. It is argued that they have important roles in developing tolerance and care for pupils with special educational needs. Collaboration between different partners is pointed out, such as between teachers and internal or external special needs educators, in the development of individually adapted content. Contact between school and parents is highlighted in all cases.

Robin Alexander states in his cross-continental comparative studiy *Culture and Pedagogy* (2000), that everyday schooling in the five different countries and cultures he and his team studied are seemingly similar in many ways. He wonders whether several structures and even practices are generally accepted as prototypes of schooling. Similar indications may apply to this study as well, even though this research cooperation focuses in more detail

on the two specific didactic activities; a) practicing special needs education knowledge and skills within the ordinary school; and b) aiming towards educational inclusion. However, the findings in this research project raise the question of whether it is timely to change the traditional structure of mainstream schooling.

Differences

Turning the attention to differences, the question is reformulated as follows: What are the main differences in the answers to the research question of how schools teach in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support of the learning process in the community of the class? What inclusive practices may be characterised as rare, unique, or different from the majority of findings – or even surprising? Rare and unique practices are found in each of the seven didactic areas of schools' inner activity. Some of these are highlighted in the following.

Special needs educators may be in a good position to acquire thorough knowledge of single pupils, since they often teach in small groups or in dyads. When it comes to regular class teachers, there is, however, an outstanding example of a teacher where long-term observations and interviews reveal that she has thorough empathetic and holistic knowledge of every single pupil in the class, including the pupils' context and conditions. This knowledge is reflected in the teacher's communication with each pupil and knowledge about the pupil's level of mastery, interests, relationship with peers and persons inside and outside of school as well as their educational needs, as observed in her teacher-pupil interaction and confirmed in interviews. Thus, even though most pupils work in accordance with the same academic weekly plan, some pupils have less, different or more challenging tasks. It is in this way that the circle of interrelated didactical details results in individually adapted education. How does she manage what may be characterised as the craft and art of inclusion? Of the many factors observed, three are mentioned specifically here: 1) her many years of teaching experience; 2) her steady professional skills training through having taken a number of higher education courses in related educational fields, whereof two relate to special education needs; 3) her open professional relationship with headmaster and colleagues. It needs to be pointed out that this teacher was recommended as a participant in this study when the researcher requested "a good example" due to

her renowned practice. However, this leads to the question of what hinders otherwise good teachers from doing the same? The reasons may be many. One reason may, however, be a contributing factor: This school is located in a town having around 10 similar schools; in other words, not a very large community. In big cities, large distances between where teachers live and their school may challenge their insight and understanding of the pupils' and class' local context, thus complicating their opportunity to get to know pupils' conditions. This is a barrier.

As mentioned, special needs educators participate in all the seven studies; in some of them providing **assessment** and advice to teachers, parents and pupils, in other cases working with assessment, special needs education and research. The Tuzla team applies a thorough assessment procedure that may be interesting. They describe their use of three international scales for assessment of the teaching-learning process in their action research study, and how the scales support their goal setting in the following way:

> The investigation of the six case studies has a short-term goal of focusing on the increasing levels of the children's functional status and annual goal of achieving good results in comprehending the teaching curriculum and teaching social communication in the teachers' collective, the family, and in the immediate and extended community (Salihović & Dizdarević, 2014: 310).

The Tuzla quotation above illustrates the connection between assessment and **development of educational intentions or goals**. The impression from the seven studies is that practices of developing and revising educational intentions are rather similar when it comes to a) facilitating goals based on formative assessments for pupils with different special educational needs b) applying long-term, short-term and step-by-step goals, and b) directing goals on learning arenas focusing on knowledge, skills and attitudes. However, little if any attention is paid to setting goals concerning creating access to experiences, which is of specific importance for several disability groups. Another focus area has emerged and is reported by almost all participating research teams, namely formulating **educational intentions for psychosocial wellbeing and development. Educational content** differs between countries, as expected, but the principles used to provide for the diversity of the different pupils' educational needs are similar. However, facilitating learning content is not only about pupils who experience difficulties. In two of the studies, teachers are reported to offer additional high-level learning tasks in order to meaningfully challenge pupils with exceptionally high performance levels. **Educational methods and**

organisation may, similar to educational content, be characterised as consisting of a diversity of different measures. Summed up, they may be based on common main aspects such as diversity of methods, focus on pupils who need more or different educational support and diversity when it comes to full-class, small-group or dyadic teaching-learning organisation. Three different reported findings that may contribute to a broader repertoire of inclusive practices are mentioned in the following:

1. Most schools inform parents and other co-workers about their programmes every school year and welcome them to meetings, information exchange and collaboration. The collaboration between schools and parents is usually greater when a pupil has a disease or a disability. Being aware of the importance of information between families and school, one of the case schools distributes their annual school curriculum to every family. It consists of an overall joint plan for the whole school with a specific theme that will be in focus the coming year, of organisation of teaching in each school subject on each grade level as well as contact information to school leadership and class teachers (O)
2. Systematic collaboration between consulting special needs educator, class teacher and assistance in the classroom is practiced in the Croatian case school (Z). This is similar to the direct cooperation with teachers in Tuzla, Sarajevo and Macedonia (MS, S, T).
3. Out-of-school teaching is gaining increasing importance in Norwegian schools and is also practiced in the Norwegian case school, merging several school subjects in project work "teaching in the forest" (O).

Communication is the main area in the Ljubljana study because it specifically focuses on the Slovenian population of pupils with deafness or hard of hearing (L). They report from an outstanding study that differs from other studies in its focus on communication, psycho-social wellbeing and inclusion of this group of pupils. The study is a combination of classroom observations and interviews with pupils and teachers, keeping the pupils' voice at the centre of the study. What do these pupils tell us? The research questions concern if and how the academic and relational communication between pupils, their peers and teachers is mutual. Or is it one-sided, favouring the hearing people at school? How are these pupils welcomed in the regular school? A main conclusion in this triangular study is that: a) some schools are ready to accept deaf and hard of hearing pupils and others not b) teachers

in mainstream schools are well educated for mainstream curricula, but less competent in the field of deafness and related communication strategies, and c) sometimes schools are not able to recognise and provide sufficient communicational means for deaf and hard of hearing pupils (Kogovšek, Ozbič & Košir, 2014; 2018). This study "listens" to schools in many countries pointing the finger at several special needs education challenges and, at the same time, indicating a number of innovative tasks that need to be dealt with. Care and socio-emotional wellbeing are amongst the curricular relation aspects in focus of the Ljubljana team, who discuss risk factors related to the well-being of pupils who are deaf or hard of hearing (L). Similar to communication, **care** has a prominent place in all the seven studies, and different dimensions of care are found in every study.

- Thus, the Zagreb team points out that care means child-centred education (Z)
- The Belgrade team highlights that seeking collaboration by more experienced schools and special needs educators' shows care for the pupils with special educational needs as newcomers in the regular school (B)
- Arranging and following up peer cooperation groups across levels of mastery helps create caring relationships among pupils (S)
- The classmates search for "the best qualities" of every fellow pupil in accordance with Gardner (1993) and Armstrong's (2003) multiple intelligences has proven to contribute to their caring and accepting one another since they started in first grade on (O)
- The close follow-up in cooperation between special needs educators, teachers and parents to facilitate the learning process for pupils with special educational needs in regular schools show joint care (SM, S,T)

A number of examples of inclusive practices are reported in each of the seven studies. They indicate being based on joint ideas about educational inclusion shared by the participating schools and research teams. The examples mentioned above are perceived as outstanding in ways that either indicate relations to different educational traditions and contextual conditions, or they are examples that are expected to awaken professional curiosity.

Dilemmas, barriers and challenges in schools' development of inclusive practices:

Are they generally recognisable, or do they seem to depend on specific circumstances? Exploring, describing and discussing good examples of inclusive practices are in the foreground of this research project. However, there is ample

reason to critically explore and analyse dilemmas, challenges and barriers, as documented in Bagga-Gupta's (2017) introduction to the anthology *Marginalization Processes across Different Settings: Going beyond the Mainstream*. The turn towards the inclusive school is evidently a turning away from traditional mentalities, principles, attitudes and practices; it is actually a major innovation project. Changing practices often leads to resistance, as pointed out in innovation literature (Skogen, 2001; 2019). Challenges must therefore be expected for these reasons as well as due to ongoing pitfalls, dilemmas and contextual conditions, as accounted for in each didactic-curricular area. In this research project, several issues concerning challenges and barriers to inclusion are found and discussed, even though they remain further in the background than inclusive practices. Thus, dilemmas and barriers are not only discussed in the chapter on context, but they also occur in chapters related to the inner activity of schooling. In the following, a summary of dilemmas and challenges is presented and discussed within each of the didactic-curricular areas, focusing on the questions:

- Do the findings indicate similar dilemmas and challenges in the seven studies, or are they more location specific?
- Are there connections between the challenges found within each of the seven aspects?

In-depth knowledge about the pupil and the whole child is important in the seven studies. However, sorting out what information is relevant and what is not may be a dilemma – and sometimes a challenge – as the following examples illustrate: a) A "cry for help" may be hidden in a pupil's small talk. b) Information may be too intimate and interfere with the pupil and family's privacy without being relevant for the well-being and learning. c) It is a serious challenge that some so-called information about pupil and family relations may be directly incorrect. d) Some information is "need to know" for those who have responsibility for the pupil during the day, such as if the pupil tends to get epileptic seizures, about which all caregivers – at home and in school – need to be informed about and trained to react correctly. However, e) some information should only be shared when necessary. All research teams have accounted for the importance of sensitivity regarding information seeking and sharing in view of privacy principles as part of research ethics. One of the case schools provides detailed information about how the school carries out the responsibility of being their pupils' advocate in case of concerns:

- If it is assumed that a pupil might need additional support and help due to academic, psychosocial or other factors, the class teacher contacts the headmaster and gives a detailed account for the cause of concern. Thus, the headmaster and class teacher asume joint responsibility for acting in accordance with the concerns.
- A next step would be to contact the parents or legal guardians for a meeting. If caregivers share the concerns, the school might help them to contact external agencies, such as educational-psychological service, social service, child and adolescent psychiatry service or child welfare service. The school's contact with external services can only happen with the caregivers' written consent.
- In case there is a suspicion of neglect or abuse, the class teacher and headmaster follow the same procedure, thoroughly discussing their suspicions until they reach a conclusion concerning further steps
- If necessary, the headmaster and class teacher report their concerns to the local municipality's child welfare service.

When interviewed, headmaster states that cases of serious concerns due to different factors are as a rule sensitive, complex and difficult to handle. Many dilemmas and challenges need discussion. Consequently, a single teacher should never handle such matters alone; on the contrary, it is the school's joint responsibility. The headmaster points out that parents usually initiate meetings with the school because their child either has an illness or a visible or hidden disability or other problems, and the first meetings are usually a starting point for close cooperation. She also points out that the number of matters of concern has increased rapidly over the past few years. Accordingly, the contact between school and other services has increased from a few scattered cases until the current situation where different services have started to meet regularly for coordination and cooperation.

Assessment and evaluation may reveal dilemmas between special needs education practices, inclusive practices and traditionally applied practices. Likewise, assessment of assessment (meta-studies) may reveal dilemmas and barriers within actual assessment practices. Are such dilemmas discovered and discussed in the seven studies?

a) The classical dilemma between assessment and the danger of negative labelling is discussed. Being labelled and categorised into a disability group may have negative effects on pupils' self-concept and other pupils' attitudes. All research teams are aware of this dilemma.

b) Dilemmas may be related to the choice of perspective or direction when it comes to selecting and interpreting assessment tools. For example, the intention behind assessment may be to place pupils in specific groups or classes, or it may be to monitor their learning progress within the regular school and class, as in the action research studies. Assessment for placement of pupils in special units does not occur in these studies.
c) One kind of dilemma, or problem, is related to whether and how selection, organisation and interpretation of assessment affect the way schools teach. Are schools sensitive to this? The principle of inclusion has guided the organisation of assessment in the research project, especially in the action research studies, whereas it has guided critical explorations in the remaining studies. All in all, it seems that the assessment procedures explored and implemented in the seven studies, even though different, aim at increasing inclusive practices in accordance with the joint research issue. However, in the Norwegian context there is an awareness that international tests such as the PISA test have serious effect on teaching activities in some schools – an effect that may seem to compete with the national curriculum, where inclusion is a principle (O)

Educational intentions: There may be possible contradictions between national and local policies and between general teaching-learning goals and goals for individual pupils; whether this is due to performance far above or below or alongside the academic requirements of school subjects. This is a challenge. How do the participating schools' knowledge about official aims and the single pupil's learning potential contribute to a continuous development of concrete, manageable, individual teaching-learning goals in the community of the class? This is a significant question at the centre of inclusive educational intentions. The findings indicate that the special educational needs of pupils participating in the case schools are found via detailed assessments and followed up by relevant educational objectives. Still, the relationship between aims and goals in official curricula and concrete step-by-step objectives in educational practice is not clear in all cases, and are perceived as a dilemma, as pointed out by several participants. A common way to solve this dilemma is by making exceptions to ordinary learning requirements (O). A common mistake is to formulate too general goals without breaking them down in a step-by-step development of actual realistic topics and tasks. As a rule, this proves to be a barrier instead of an educational tool. It may also be an attempt to avoid certain educational requirements. These problems are especially common for pupils with special educational needs.

The most typical dilemma pointed out when it comes to **adapting educational content, methods and organisation to the level of mastery** of individual pupils is – again – the dependence on national policies and curricula, which differ somewhat between countries. That is, even though exceptions are allowed in some countries, what is expected to be "within the normal range of the age level" divides the class into a large number of pupils in and a small number outside nationally expected learning content. Referring to the video *One Society for All* (Bolsø, 1989) and the article *From the Exceptional to the Universal* (Gardou, 2014), this curricular dilemma is challenged by examples of the daily lives of profoundly impaired pupils at school and home. Limited knowledge about special needs education methods amongst ordinary teachers is most frequently mentioned as a serious challenge to the development of inclusive practices. Methodological considerations strongly affect choice of content such as materials and equipment, literature, paper and pencils, computers and software programmes, videos etc. Having a special educational need as a rule means that content, methods and teaching organisation need special adaptation on behalf of the school in order to meet the pupil's individual learning strategies. Challenges have also been reported concerning different organisational measures. Findings in the Ljubljana study document that in mixed classes with hearing and hard of hearing pupils, communication seems to be based mostly on the premises of hearing pupils (L). Thus, the study sheds light on a widespread problem for both pupils with hearing impairments and pupils who need other alternative communication and educational means. Organising small groups and teaching on an individual basis also have pitfalls. Extended use of teacher-pupil dyads as well as small group teaching might be a way to avoid making radical changes in the traditional classroom. The kind of organisation inside or outside the classroom contributes positively or negatively to inclusion for the class and the single pupil. This is a dilemma that needs to be treated seriously. The individual teacher in the classroom is perceived as having the classic role of the regular teacher. This organisational model does not require additional economic resources even though diversity has increased in "the school for all". The focus on the class teacher bearing the sole responsibility for creating an inclusive class is described as a serious challenge in a recent Swedish PhD dissertation (Kotte, 2017). This is the most typical organisation in all the participating schools in the seven studies – and this is a reason why several of the research teams have added additional special needs education – and assistant staff in their projects. Therefore, there remains a question of what will happen to pupils, classes and schools when these research projects are concluded.

The communication aspect is divided into communication technology and relational communication. Inclusive communication technology concerns whether or not all pupils in a class are able to participate in mutual communication. In practice, it raises the question whether schools are able to meet this need when there are pupils who use different communication means, such as sign language, foreign first language or other kinds of alternative communication means. The Ljubljana study exemplifies the dilemma between choosing either a special class for pupils with hearing impairments or a mixed class, as long as the communication in the mixed class is disadvantageous for the pupils with hearing impairments. Relational communication challenges reported from the seven studies are summarised in three categories, namely a) too extensive use of one-sided monologue teaching or unitary teaching, as Alexander (2000) calls it; b) error-focused communication; and c) communication difficulties between educational staff and parents.

Care for pupils is challenged by the view that "schools should focus on academic education only and less on pupils' psycho-social well-being". This critical view of schools' psychosocial responsibility is not, however, shared by the participating research teams and schools in this study. On the contrary, schools' caring responsibility is seen as a necessary aspect of inclusion. Consequently, attention is directed to pupils' individual psychosocial needs for support as well as their academic needs. A dilemma is indicated in the quotation: "Professionalism lies in striving to care even-handedly" (O), pointing to a double challenge:

1) The dilemma between educators' time and priorities and considerations for all the single pupils may be due to a lack of human resources.
2) To care even-handedly challenges the ability to interact positively with *all* pupils.

Kristeva (2010; Johnsen, 2014d) argues that persons with disabilities may provoke unease and anxiety; they may be perceived as strangers. She points out that confronting persons with profound disabilities – specifically if they are mentally impaired – provoke unconscious and unresolved feelings of anxiety about one's own vulnerability, awaking emotional defence mechanisms. This may happen in the meeting between teacher and a disabled pupil, especially if the teacher is not used to working with children with disabilities and has not been trained to interact with them. Likewise, Henning Rye (2001; 2005) points out that it is easy to interact positively with persons when we recognise their behaviour and way of being. However, when we perceive their behaviour and

communication as strange to us, we may become uncomfortable; our ability to interact positively is challenged. Accordingly, we need to reflect carefully in order to interact positively. However, these kinds of meetings or "confrontations" are the ones that we learn and develop from; as teachers and human beings (Rye, 2007; Kristeva, 2010; Johnsen, 2014d; 2020a). The Belgrade study reveals negative attitudes by some teachers, parents and pupils towards opening regular schools to pupils who have traditionally been in special schools and institutions. This negative attitude is partly explained by the fact that the principle of inclusion is rather new in Serbia, as it is in several of the other participating countries. How, then, is the opinion towards the inclusive school in Norway, where the special school and regular school acts were merged in 1975, almost fifty years ago? Debates about pros and cons of the inclusive school appear in the media on a regular basis, indicating that the idea of an inclusive school is still not perceived as an obvious principle. All participating countries seem to have this challenge.

As pointed out by the seven teams, schools' caring responsibility is a necessary aspect of inclusion. All teams strive to reveal or even develop this aspect through exploratory studies and action research, showing great and nuanced efforts in their caring. They also indicate that educators' care and dedication for pupils may turn into concerns. A number of concrete reasons for such concerns are presented in the studies. Why? The main reasons for worries are a) the gap between international and national intentions of inclusion and concrete opportunities to practice inclusion b) lack of human resources and c) lack of financial resources.

Summing up, in spite of different local conditions and variations in research designs, some dilemmas, challenges and barriers seem to occur in most or all of the seven studies. These include a) labelling b) negative attitudes towards pupils with special needs in ordinary schools and classes c) the gap between national educational principles and actual conditions for practice d) the lack of resources to enable inclusion e) limited knowledge and skills in teaching pupils with special educational needs in the ordinary school f) little if any focus on preparing future teachers for practicing inclusion as well as upgrading for practicing teachers g) too little research and innovation concerning inclusive didactics and curriculum: the problem of sustainability:

a) The problem of labelling is mainly discussed related to tests, grades and special needs educational assessment, and also when it comes to other aspects of individual curricula that contribute to isolating single pupils – learning

content, teaching methods and organisational means – and hence contribute to educational segregation.[51]

b) The research teams agree that negative attitudes towards pupils with special educational needs in ordinary classes occur in some teachers, parents and pupils. Few surveys have been implemented in order to give indications about the prevalence of this negativity, but the Belgrade team refers to a small-scale questionnaire where the occurrence of negative attitudes is reported.

c) The gap between national educational principles and practical conditions in favour of educational inclusion is pointed out by all research teams.

d) There is a lack of different kinds of resources enabling inclusive practices. One of the most urgent is the lack of special needs educators in schools and classrooms and limited opportunities for co-teaching in the classroom.

e) The ordinary teachers participating in the seven studies demonstrate a high level of devotion towards developing inclusive practices. In several – but not all – of the studies, they are professionally guided and supported by special needs educators. Still, the general impression of most research teams is that there is an apparent lack of necessary knowledge and practical experience by ordinary teachers concerning teaching pupils with different special educational needs. Accordingly, ordinary teachers are insecure and reluctant to take on this task. An imperative question lurks in the background. How well are teachers prepared in their basic and further education to develop individual curricula and inclusive education; formally and practically?

f) Research and innovation within the field of educational inclusion needs to increase.

g) This joint research project demonstrates a number of inclusive practices. However, as pointed out, extra resources are used in order to secure special needs education cooperation, and in several cases special needs education. Important first steps have been taken in the direction towards inclusive education. Will the participating schools be able to maintain and continue this process in the continuation of the project? This is a question concerning sustainability.

51 Educational segregation occurs in the classroom due to a lack of relationship between individual and class curricula, while organisational segregation concerns physical isolation from the class or school.

Two Urgent Important questions

An overarching question arises that applies to all participating studies and, consequently, to the participating countries: **What became of the competences of the special schools in the school for all**? Is the school for all just "allowing" pupils who have "different" psychosocial and educational needs to take part in the former regular schools? For an equitable fusion of special- and regular schools to be realised, special needs and regular educational competence need to merge. Higher education and research within special needs education takes place in all the countries participating in this comparative research cooperation. The participating teams represent either the field of special needs education (B, L, O, SM, T, Z) or regular education (S). Why, then, are permanent positions for special needs educators in every school for all not legally required?

Another urgent question arises from these studies of inclusive educational practices: **How is the negative mentality – this apparent "companion" to the opening of the society for all – addressed**? In order to give a brief contextual suggestion to some major efforts made toward solving this challenge, a few milestones from current history are mentioned in the following, mainly referring to international discourse and important steps regarding human rights.

Thus, the 1960s may be seen as a turning point towards societal awareness of the poor conditions for people with disabilities. It took place on two levels, first as a turning from institutionalisation towards normalisation (Bank-Mikkelsen, 1980; Johnsen, 2014f; Nirje, 1980; Wolfensberger, 1980[52]); then as a turn from segregation to a school for all and inclusion. This was a door opener for the participation of disabled people in society. The trend may be seen locally, nationally and internationally, but at different times in different countries – and not in steady progress, but as waves of "ups and downs". The Norwegian turn within education, as mentioned, dates back to 1970 (KUF, 1970) and 1975 (Education Act, 1969 with amendments) when the special school law was abolished and ordinary schools were opened up to all children, includ-

52 Since the concept of social normalisation is rarely used in current discourse – sadly, because there is still a large gap between principle and practice – there is reason to clarify it here with Nirje's words: Normalization means sharing a normal rhythm of the day, with privacy, activities, and mutual responsibilities; a normal rhythm of the week, with a home to live in, a school or work to go to, and leisure time with a modicum of social interaction; a normal rhythm of the year, with the changing modes and ways of life and of family and community customs as experienced in the different seasons of the year (Nirje,1980).

ing children with disabilities. Internationally, UNESCO's World Conference in Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 (UNESCO, 1991) is characterized as "a game changer for education in the world" (Dacca Retrospective post 2015). It was followed by a number of conferences, whereof the Salamanca conference introduced the principle of educational inclusion with the following statement:

> More than 300 participants representing 92 governments and 25 international organizations met in Salamanca, Spain, from 7 to 10 June 1994 to further the objective of Education for All by considering the fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of inclusive education, namely enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs (UNESCO, 1994:iv).

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) further strengthens the principle of inclusion. As documented, all countries participating in this international comparative research project have ratified the right to education of persons with disabilities and the principle of educational inclusion. Thus, the principle is established in laws and policies of all the six countries, as repeatedly pointed out.

But what about practice? All participating teams register that there is a gap between principle and practice. A main motivation for this international comparative research project is to explore this gap; to examine schools' mastery and opportunities to "fill the gap" with inclusive practices. However, different aspects of negative mentalities towards inclusion are, as reported, amongst the challenges to developing inclusive practices.

Negative attitudes are reported from teams in the countries where the development of inclusive practices is in the beginning phase, as well as from Norway, where the development has been underway over the past five decades. Uncertainty and scepticism were also noticed in the previous innovation project at the universities of Tuzla, Sarajevo and Oslo (SØE 06/02). In the context of the former project, the concept "school as a socio-emotional safe haven" was developed as one way of addressing this challenge. The metaphor referred to the UN safe havens established during the war (1992-1995), reminding participants in the school innovation that the principle of inclusion is a self-evident ideal, but vulnerable in practice. The content of the metaphor focuses attention on the need to create a socio-emotional secure educational arena for every pupil in the class, as a foundation upon which all other inclusive practices are based – the school should be a second home for all pupils without exception – an arena that protects

every pupil from socio-emotional attacks and traumas (Johnsen, 2007). Unfortunately, there is ample reason to believe that schools function contrary to being a safe haven for several pupils in different situations, as discussed in both the former school innovation project (2007) and this comparative research project.

Developing a school into becoming a socio-emotional safe-haven may serve as an aim in every society in every country. All too many children need a safe haven from negative socio-emotional conditions, however peaceful a country might appear. And, the essence of such a safe haven is care and sensitivity, as referred to above from several of the research teams. However, as discussed in the 2007 report, there is ample reason to believe that several schools cannot fulfil this ideal. Hence, the project report was given the subtitle "Good Examples and Difficult Dilemmas" (Johnsen, 2007). As mentioned, this international comparative study is inspired by the experiences described and discussed in the 2007-report.

What lessons are drawn from the former innovation project in this comparative research project? How is the problem of negative mentality – this apparent "companion" to opening of the school for all – addressed here? Several findings address this challenge, as indicated in the following:

a) Research teams that are confronted with reluctance and negative mentality in the preparation phase of their study find alternatives. Thus, some of the teams have used considerable time and efforts in selecting willing partner schools.
b) Findings within all the seven areas of the schools' inner activity address challenges related to the development of inclusive practices. Some of the challenges seem to stem from negative attitudes.
c) The problem is also addressed through a strong emphasis on the importance of holistic knowledge of individual pupils, on relational communication, care and sensitivity, indicating specific attention given to activities that may contribute to decreasing insecurity and scepticism and increasing knowledge, with accompanying positive attitudes towards the inclusive class.

There is great diversity and different degrees of severity of phenomena that are perceived as negative or obstacles to the development of inclusive practices by the research teams. A severe lack of resources to develop and realise educational inclusion is evident in all participating countries. The third, and no less problematic, obstacle is the lack of awareness for making necessary changes to the traditional structure of the ordinary schools in the direction of an inclusive school.

12 International classroom studies of inclusive practices in light of pedagogical traditions and ideas

As documented in the joint research plan (Johnsen, 2013a), this international comparative study is based on selected theoretical traditions and studies within a) ordinary- and special needs education fields of specific relevance in classroom and inclusion discourse as well as b) relevant research methodology. Robin Alexander's major comparative work, *Culture and Pedagogy* (2000), and his further discussions of content, structure and research methodology in international comparative pedagogical research (2004; 2009) are of particular importance and support for this work, as briefly mentioned in the introduction chapter. Accordingly, his theory as well as his international comparative classroom studies are further discussed in light of this study in the article *Comparing Classroom Activities* (Johnsen, 2020d).

Alexander elaborates on an approach which he calls international comparative pedagogy (not education), pointing out his interest in studies of the many aspects of teaching-learning processes. Studies of activities taking place on the micro level – within schools and classrooms – are his point of departure and prioritized research area. However, in order to situate findings on the micro level within different cultures and avoid naïve borrowing, Alexander (2009) develops a framework dealing with three aspects: a) the previously mentioned teaching-learning activities on the micro level b) pedagogical ideas, values and beliefs, and c) curriculum from the macro to micro level with intermediate levels in a broad sense. He argues that each of the three levels may need different methodological tools. How does Alexander apply these ideas in *Culture and Pedagogy* (2000)? Starting with an account of the contexts of the selected schools, he and his team describe educational systems, policy and history separately for each country, France, Russia, India, the United States of America and England. However, in the larger part of the study, when describing and discussing classroom activities, they apply another structure. Here, findings from all the five countries are discussed in a cross-cultural comparison (Alexander, 2000: 265). The discussions are structured in accordance with a model or set of predetermined main aspects based on Alexander's urge to develop a holistic yet multifaceted construction of teaching-learning processes found in the schools of the five countries. Alexander's (2000: 325; 2004; 2009) general or generic model of teaching consists of

the following main categories or aspects with sub-aspects: Frame – Form – Act. Each aspect is selected through a line of reasoning. However, Alexander (2009) is open towards a variety of ways to apply the aspects in research. He states that it is a matter of choice:

a) what research questions to formulate or what to explore
b) how to analyse each of them
c) what kind of sub-aspects to construct if any
d) what research methodologies are relevant
e) what kind of research tools are useful in order to answer the selected questions

Thus, Alexander's framework for comparative pedagogy is a flexible framework, or construction, suitable for being applied to a variety of relevant research issues. Several of the aspects he discusses support the construction of this joint comparative research project. Therefore, his texts are highlighted (Johnsen, 2020d). However, Alexander's texts are not the only ones inspiring and supporting this study as documented in the research plan (Johnsen, 2013a) and in this report. *Inclusive Practices* is also discussed in light of the following aspects:

- The role of pedagogical ideas, values and beliefs in international comparative pedagogy
- On what traditions is the study based?
- How are the traditions accounted for?
- What role are they given in the study?

The role of pedagogical ideas, values and beliefs in international comparative pedagogy

One of the three aspects Alexander (2009) develops in order to situate findings on the micro level within different cultures concerns pedagogical ideas, values and beliefs (Johnsen, 2019d). Which research fields and traditions form the basis for this study? Firstly, this study is placed on the crossroads between the two research fields, special needs education and ordinary education as well as international inclusion discourse. Each of these three fields are found in several traditions; as do most research fields. The following questions concerning this study are therefore: a) on what traditions is this study based b) are they explicitly accounted for, and c) what role are they given in the study?

On what traditions is the study based? Three main pillars constitute the basis for this study, as accounted for the joint research plan (Johnsen, 2013a). They are a) Vygotsky's cultural-historical school b) resource-based approach to communication and mediation, and c) a didactic-curricular relation approach to educational and special needs educational practice and research.

How are the traditions accounted for? The joint research plan (Johnsen, 2013a) establishes that this is a study of interaction between regular and special needs education in the development of inclusive practices at school. Educational inclusion requires cooperation between the teacher and special needs educator in order to focus on mastery, abilities and need for support of all individual pupils, in turn enabling the class to function as a common learning arena for the diversity of its pupils. Vygotsky and post-Vygotskyan scholars' cultural-historical theories and studies hold a holistic view of the interaction between teaching, learning and development within different diachronic or historical and synchronous or simultaneous cultural frames. The cultural-historical school therefore emphasizes in particular the importance of analysing schools' inner activity in view of different cultural traits. Another core property of the cultural-historical theory is that it does not isolate learning and development to a matter between the individual pupil and learning tasks, but focuses on the teacher's and special needs educator's responsibility as mediators in the process of learning and development. This is briefly discussed in this presentation and discussion of findings above.

Communication is focused in the cultural-historical school. It is also a main aspect in the emerging resource-based approach to communication and mediation. This approach, which is also called relational pedagogy (or -psychology, by psychologists) is currently gaining increasing interest. The approach is briefly mentioned in the joint research plan as part of Post-Vygotskyan theory. Along with the cultural-historical emphasis on communication, the approach is also based on attachment theory, humanistic theory and pedagogy of care. Hence, the resource-based approach to communication and mediation contributes to the relational communicative and caring aspects of inclusive education, which are discussed in detail in the article *Care and sensitivity in upbringing and education – An introduction to related core concepts in selected resource-based interaction traditions* in this anthology (Johnsen, 2020a). Thus, resource-based relational pedagogy is closely connected to care and relational communication; it is also interrelated with the other didactic-curricular main aspects.

The third pedagogical pillar, didactic-curricular relation approach to educational and special educational practice and research, is given considerable space in the joint research plan (Johnsen, 2013a). The approach has been "piloted" in a former joint innovation project between the universities of Sarajevo, Tuzla and Oslo (SØE 06/02, 2002). Details regarding lectures, school innovation activities, joint reporting and discussions between teachers, special needs educators and researchers are described and discussed in the innovation report *Razred u pravcu inkluzije – The Classroom towards Inclusion – Good Examples and Difficult Dilemmas* (Johnsen, 2007). An article explaining and discussing the didactic-curricular approach is published in Johnsen (2014b). The approach permeates the entire report concerning both structure and content.

What role are the three pedagogical pillars given in the study?

Cultural-historical theory may be seen as a counterpart to mainstream theory on development and learning. Mainstream developmental theory, with Piaget as the outstanding theorist, focuses on the relationship between learner and learning task. It also postulates, "Development comes first", namely that the ability to learn depends on the developmental stage of the learner (Ginsburg & Opper, 1969). One of Vygotsky's core concepts is the Russian term *obuchenie*, which has been incorrectly translated to "learning" in popular English translations. However, Russian scholars point out that *obuchenie* means "teaching and learning". Thus, Vygotsky describes the learning process as an interaction process between teacher and learner. In his line of argument, learning relates to the collective society through the pupil's communication with teacher, caregiver and more knowledgeable peers – and through other mediating means. He also argues that development stems from learning of higher mental functions and points to language or arithmetic as examples. Another important point in his theory construction concerns what he calls the "learning of yesterday", which are learning tasks that are already internalised and automatically in use, and the "learning of tomorrow", which are meaningful new learning tasks. He argues that mediation should focus on the learning of tomorrow or, as he calls it, the "zone of proximal development". Vygotsky worked with children on different levels of mastery, including specific disabilities such as hearing impairment and intellectual challenges. He was therefore well aware of the diversity of different individual levels of mastery (Daniels, 2014a; Johnsen, 2014c). And he argues that

of all the children who need teachers or mediators to support their learning and development, children with disabilities – especially those who have intellectual challenges – need most help from the teacher for their developmental process. Most children, he points out, manage to transform learning to development. However, children with intellectual challenges are in dire need of a teacher who has the specific knowledge that is needed to support them in this transformation (Vygotsky, 1978:89). Vygotsky's perspective on teaching, learning and development thus forms a common foundation for observations, descriptions and discussions in this international comparative study with emphasis on the following main aspects:

- The teacher's responsibility as a mediator is established with the central concept of *obuchenie* – teaching and learning.
- The importance of special educational knowledge in order to be able to support pupils with special educational needs is highlighted. Vygotsky applied the term "defectology", which was a widely accepted term for impairment and special educational needs in his time.
- Development of credible explanations of a) the relationship between learning and development; b) the diversity of individual differences in level of mastery; and c) the importance of exploring the individual pupil's proximal zone of development.
- The importance of peer collaboration in the community of the class

These aspects are all central parts of individually adapted education. They have been and are being followed up and developed further by current scholars within the cultural-historical tradition.

Resource-based approach to communication and mediation is closely related to the cultural-historical school and applies its emphasis on communication and mediation in a specific direction that is also grounded in two additional related approaches: a) The increasing focus on attachment studies between caregiver and child from birth and onwards during the last decades demonstrates the child's urge for interaction with caregiver and documents the importance of these communication processes, as shown by Trevarthen (2014) and other scholars within this rather new and multidisciplinary research field. b) Similarly, the pioneer scholars, Martin Buber (1878-1965) and Carl Rogers (1902-1987) have laid the foundations for a humanistic pedagogy and therapeutic philosophy focusing on dialogue and relation building. The two closely related approaches direct the attention towards positive commu-

nication and mediation, based on the child's mastery level and possibilities or resources. The resource-based approach to communication and mediation based on the abovementioned theories is applied in dialogue groups of parents and other caregivers, for instance teachers and special needs educators, in the *International Child Development Programme*, developed by Hundeide (2010) and Rye (2001; 2005; 2007). They situate their resource-based approach to communication and mediation within relational pedagogy. The approach is embodied in care and relational communication. As discussed in Johnsen (2020a), there is currently rising interest for care within pedagogical traditions. Nel Noddings is a pioneer within this discourse, challenging the school to care (1992; 2002; 2003). The resource-based approach to communication and mediation is thus amongst contributing approaches to the important role of care and relational communication in this research project. They represent a special needs didactical contribution towards inclusion and are thus given central positions already in the planning phase (Johnsen, 2013a). One of the surprising findings of this international comparative research project is the massive focus on relational communication and care reported by all participating teams, as documented above.

The didactic-curricular relation approach to educational and special needs educational practice and research is by far the most central of the three main pillars of these classroom studies of inclusive practices; Indeed, it is a main contributor to the construction of the studies. Before the role of the didactic-curricular relation approach is described in more details, the term "didactic-curricular relations" should be shortly clarified. While the term "curriculum" tends to be associated with national regulations in Nordic countries, American curricular theory has a more dynamic tradition, using the term on different levels from national to individual usage. Didactics is seldom used in English discourse and, when used, often with negative connotations. However, in the continental European tradition, including the Nordic, the term "didactic" is used in relation to individual and classroom practice and theory. Hence, in this international comparative study the two concepts, curriculum and didactic, are used similarly, even though they are applied with somewhat different starting points and used unevenly in different contexts (Johnsen, 2001a; 2014b).

The didactic-curricular relation approach deals with practice, theory and research on practice, focusing on internal practices at school. First of all, the approach is a practical tool for teachers and special needs educators:

- as a guide to long-term as well as short-term curricular or didactic planning
- as a framework for systematic work in planning, implementing, assessing and revising the relationship between teaching and learning for individual pupils as well as for groups and whole classes

It is also a research approach serving as a tool to operationalise research issues through deciding, clarifying, delimiting and interrelating main aspects of focus in classroom studies. This is how the approach is applied in these international comparative studies. The didactic-curricular relation approach is illustrated by the model consisting of seven + one didactic main areas or aspects, as shown in the introductory chapter:

> The pupil/s – assessment – educational intentions – educational content – educational methods and class organisation – communication – care + context or frame factors

Seven of the areas belong to schools' inner activity or micro level (cf. Alexander, 2000; Johnsen, 2014b). Thus, they constitute the main areas in the exploration of teachers' and special needs educators' planning, practicing, assessing and revising of the teaching-learning processes for individual pupils and the community of the class. Hence, in this research on practice, the main areas function as focal points for exploration and as main categorisations of findings. The category context represents the macro level (See Alexander, 2000; Johnsen, 2014b).

The didactic-curricular concepts representing the areas and the connection between them have changed in the development of the approach throughout the years. Interestingly, as a result of dialogue with Master-level students in special needs education, the concept of pupil/s was moved from the didactic circle to the midpoint of the model, placing the pupil/s at the centre of the teaching-learning relation, inspired by Deweys' account of child-centred education (Johnsen, 2007). How did John and Evelyn Dewey account for this educational principle?

> Dewey saw the child as the centre of the educational process in the sense that it is he for whom education is intended. He becomes the basis for the selection and timing of subject matter and experiences. He is not the curriculum, nor does he intentionally and actively determine it, but it is planned in reference to him instead of to factors, which are extraneous and unrelated to him (Dewey & Dewey, 2015, in Gallant, 1973: 412).

Deweys' description of the pupil at the centre of curricular planning that is performed by the educator, supports the logic of exploration in this study: In the didactic-curricular relation approach, the model is a working tool for the

educator. This logic is also in accordance with Vygotsky's arguments for the educator's responsibility to facilitate teaching in accordance with the pupil/s' readiness to learn, as pointed out.

The five topics or aspects – pupil/s, assessment, educational intentions, educational content, methods and classroom organisation – are classical categories with roots going back to Plato and ancient Greek tutorial tradition. They are also commonplace categories embedded in a shared European educational heritage (Johnsen, 2000).

Two new topics, communication and care, have been awarded the same attention as the classical concepts in an effort to investigate their role in planning and implementing teaching in accordance with the diversity of all pupils' individual and education needs (Befring, 2001; Johnsen, 2001a; Noddings, 1992; 2003). They are placed between the circle of the classical didactic-curricular aspects and the pupil/s in order to illustrate the relational nature of individually adapted teaching or pupil-centred teaching. Findings related to all seven aspects of schools' inner activity are described and discussed in the chapters above.

The seven aspects relate to the eighth main aspect, namely context or frame factors, which directs the attention to relations between individual and class curricula on the micro level and contextual aspects on the local, national and even international level as well as in comparison between different countries and cultures, as in this study. Contextual frame factors are seen as elements creating opportunities and barriers for teaching and learning. This eighth topic was introduced to the field by scholars in educational ecology, such as Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Goodlad (1979), as discussed in the above chapter on context. The contextual aspect is also of importance in Alexander's (2009), international comparative pedagogy as the third of three levels – from the activities on micro level; through pedagogical ideas, to the macro level. He calls this structure "curriculum from micro to macro level with intermediate levels" in a broad sense. In his comparative study (2000), he describes educational systems, policy and history separately for each country, while in *Inclusive Practice*; information from all participating countries is gathered, described and discussed in the chapter on context. The information about each of the participating countries and the universities of Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb and Oslo are further categorised in the following aspects:

- Common international principles
- European welfare states with different current history

- Legislative and political frame factors
- Financial resources
- Physical frame factors
- Human resources
- Higher education within education and special needs education

While the seven contextual accounts do not give a full description of contextual similarities and differences, they do contribute to indications. They give the reader a possibility to compare the reported findings within the seven main areas of the inner activity of the class in view of these contextual aspects. Moreover, they serve as a reminder not to compare details from reported findings within the schools' inner activity directly or naïvely. This said, the many similarities between the seven studies have come as a surprise given the considerable contextual diversity.

Inclusion debates related to ordinary and special needs education

The idea of educational inclusion is emerging at a time with segregated school systems divided into so-called ordinary schools for the vast majority of pupils and special schools and institutions for small and diverse minorities; pointing towards major changes in both types of schools. Hence, among the participants in the inclusion discourse, we find representatives of both ordinary and special schools as well as of other fields. Looking back a few decades, the turn towards inclusion may be described as a slow-speed turning operation starting with the normalisation principle (Bank-Mikkelsen, 1980; Johnsen, 2014f; Nirje, 1980; Wolfensberger, 1980) followed by the modern construction of 'the school for all' and integration (Johnsen, 2014f; KUF, 1970; Education Act, 1969 with amendments, 1975), and affirming the turn with the introduction of the principle of inclusion (UNESCO, 1994) as described above. However, the gap between the somewhat general principle of inclusion and actual practice has been and still is considerable. Several different and even contradictory arguments circulate in the debate on both principle and practice. These focus mainly on a) international and national policies on macro level; b) psychosocial inclusion; c) academic inclusion; or d) too seldom (?) a combination of these. In many cases, the arguments are based on an understanding of ordinary schools; and yet, they are also put forward

from the field of special needs education. Thus, Booth (1998) argues that special education is a barrier to inclusion. On the other hand, Kotte (2017) documents in her PhD research that teaching all pupils in a diverse classroom causes serious challenges for the individual classroom teacher. In a similar way Allan (2008) elaborates on teachers' confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion over classrooms having too great a distance between pupils' psychosocial and academic needs, and who, due to "untenable diversity", do not manage singlehandedly to create a meaningful teaching-learning process for all. These are examples of discussions about incomplete attempts at inclusion where either of the two closely related fields – ordinary- or special needs education – are made invisible, rejected, missed or highlighted. In her 2010 article, Allan considers the uncertainties surrounding inclusion and the questions coming from researchers, teachers, parents and children of why "it is so difficult to *do* inclusion" (Allan, 2010: 200). The following are among her objections:

- teachers' uncertainty and lack of knowledge about teaching "the new pupils in the inclusive class"
- the focus in the inclusion debate tends to be one-sidedly on the pupils with educational difficulties and disabilities – not the whole class
- special needs education and defectology use "deficit-oriented language"
- the capacity of the education system – and the teachers within it – do not seem to be able to 'deliver' inclusion

Allan's criticism indicates some of the worries pointed out in this joint research project such as a) the occurrence of negative mentality towards inclusion, or the confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion of researchers, teachers, parents and children, as she points out; and b) the dilemmas related to assessing pupils' level of mastery and the danger of negative labelling.

However, the position of this research project is that:

- educational inclusion embraces all individual pupils in the community of the class with or without special educational needs
- special needs educational knowledge and skills are necessary in order to achieve inclusion in "the school for all"
- educational inclusion needs to be based on cooperation between ordinary teachers and special needs educators
- this joint research and findings are based on Vygotsky's and the culture-historic school's focus on the teaching-learning-developmental process

(Chaiklin, 2003; Cole, 1996; Ivic, 2014; Johnsen, 2014c; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978; 1987; Wertsch, 1984), resource based communication and mediation (Johnsen, 2014b; Rye, 2001; 2005) and care (Johnsen, 2020a; Noddings, 1992; 2002; 2003).

Together with Slee, Allan (2001: 180) argues for the necessity of "daring to think otherwise". Educational inclusion can neither function as an extension of ordinary classroom pedagogy nor of special needs education; therefore, deconstructing traditions in the two fields is necessary. As indicated above, this joint research project acts as a contribution to doing so. Deconstructing traditions concerns special needs education and defectology, ordinary education and – first and last – traditional organising of ordinary schools with their "one class with one teacher"-construction. Similar to Julia Allan, the focus of *Inclusive Practices* is on the gap between the international principle of inclusion and practice. The multifaceted findings of the seven different studies within the joint didactic-curricular frames represent steps towards reconstructing inclusion (Johnsen, 2014d; Kristeva, 2010); away from educational inclusion as an addition to traditional ordinary schooling and towards a new construction of a school for all that practices inclusion. A new pedagogy must emerge in the revision of ordinary and special pedagogical knowledge through alternative research approaches. Likewise, Barbara A. Coles' (2005) practice analysis also concludes that a complete reversal of "taken-for-granted truths" is needed to develop inclusive practice in school. She points out that educators need to keep "all roads open" and have professional humility to make the individual child's needs central. In Narayan's (2011) case study, the intentions are to create a community of practice of equality and care; a diverse student community with mutual involvement and common activities and repertoire in line with cultural-historical tradition and relational pedagogy. There is general agreement that inclusive pedagogy is about both social and educational inclusion, even though in Narayan's example, the consideration of these two aspects appears to overshadow each other at the expense of the school education. Her problematisation is supported by Cole, who concludes her practice study as follows (2005: 341): "Inclusion was a multifaceted and difficult process, which, although it can be defined in political rhetoric, was much more difficult to define in reality". Although differing slightly, Slee and Allan (2001), Cole (2006), Narayan (2011) and this international comparative classroom research project have common reasons for exploring the complexities of inclusive classroom practice.

13 Methodological considerations

The overall intention of *International Classroom Studies of Inclusive Practices* is to provide a body of descriptive and explanatory data that demonstrates various practices related to the development of educational inclusion in the participating cultures. The principle of educational inclusion was introduced officially in the Salamanca Statement (1994) and is accepted by all participating countries. Inclusion is thus at the centre of this research project, which has been planned and implemented by seven teams from six European countries, all having similarities and diversities to one another. This research cooperation is at the same time a challenge and vital element of international comparative educational research (Johnsen, 2013a; Phillips, 1999). A number of methodological considerations have been made from the beginning and throughout the research process. Considerations in the planning process are presented and discussed in the first of three anthologies connected to the common research process; *Research Project Preparation within Education and Special Needs Education* (Johnsen, ed., 2013). Joint decisions and reflections are presented and discussed in the research plan (Johnsen, 2013a). In addition, each of the seven research teams present their research plans in individual articles (Igrić & Cvitković, 2013; Jachova, 2013; Johnsen, 2013b; Kogovšek, Košir & Ozbič, 2013; Rapaić, Nedović, Stojković & Ilić, 2013; Salihović, Dizdarević, & Smajić, 2013; Zečić, Čehić, Kristiansen, & Hadžić, 2013). The methodological considerations in the research plans may be characterised as outlined expectations. Now, retrospective of field studies and joint summary of findings, it is timely to examine whether and, if so, how methodological expectations are satisfied. This applies to the quality of research. Two key aspects of this international comparative classroom research need specific attention, namely the questions of evidence and comparing qualitative studies. In the following four main aspects are discussed:

- Joint research issue and structure
- Choice of design and methods
- The question of evidence
- The problem of comparing qualitative studies

Joint research issue and structure

There is one joint main issue in this common research project, stated as the question: How do schools teach in accordance with their pupils' different lev-

els of mastery and needs for support in their learning process (resourses, barriers and dilemmas)? Focus is directed towards the inner activity of schools and on teachers' activities in the teaching-learning interactions with every pupil in the class. There is a common understanding that by "teacher" is meant the individual classroom teacher and – if available – co-teachers, special needs educators and assistants in the class in addition to schools' internal resource teams. This issue, when combined with abovementioned eight main areas or aspects, constructs a joint framework for description, comparative analysis and discussions of the participating classroom studies. The areas are the pupil(s) – assessment – educational intentions – educational content – class organisation and teaching methods – communication – care – contextual factors. They represent a holistic didactic-curricular approach to classroom practice and -research, and have been selected as joint main categories for information gathering in order to explore, describe, analyse and discuss the issue. Within this framework there is flexibility concerning choices the research groups take in the process of operationalising and delimiting their concrete studies, such as:

- number of pupils participating in the study
- type of special need/disability/vulnerability of pupils in focus
- which of the eight topics to study in depth and which ones treated as background factors

Accordingly, the main issue and the eight didactic-curricular main areas construct the structure of the joint presentation of the seven participating classroom studies' findings. Thus, eight of the chapters in this report represent one of the didactic-curricular areas each.

During the planning process, it was expected that some of the areas of exploration would be main topics in several or all of the seven studies, whereas others would remain in the background. Hence, it was foreseen that hearing impairment and other aspects related to communication would be at the forefront of several studies. This has turned out to be the case. However, it has come as a surprise that all the seven aspects related to schools' inner activity are covered and reported on by all research teams with one exception. Care is a rather new main aspect within the didactic-curricular approach, and thus, it has been difficult to predict how much attention it would get. However, care is in the foreground of all the seven studies. This strongly indicates that care is a necessary and important requisite in inclusive schools.

Choice of design and methods

Case study design is the main approach utilised in this research project. Case studies have a strong tradition within classroom studies, and qualitative research methodology in general is widely used in special needs education. During the planning process, a selection of relevant studies focusing on classroom practices were examined with regard to methodological aspects (Hjulstad, Kristoffersen & Simonsen, 2002; Klette, 2003; Moen, Nilssen & Postholm, 2005; Sehic, Karlsdóttir & Guðmundsdóttir, 2005).

This joint classroom research project primarily focuses on good examples, more specifically a) on investigating schools' available resources and ability to develop inclusive practices and b) on analysing them related to the dilemmas and challenges encountered in their socio-cultural settings. The participating university teams have purposefully selected "good" schools. Thus, within the abovementioned framework, each university specified further research questions, operationalised research topics, and selected relevant methods, instruments and informants as well as the relevant documents involved. The applied methodological approaches and methods are summarised in Johnsen (2014a) and in the introduction to this report. The presentations show a diversity of related methodological approaches and designs; single and multiple case studies, action research and a pilot study, mixed methods and longitudinal studies. The most widely used methods are interviews and observations, often in combination. In addition, document analysis and analysis of other texts and materials are used.

The question of evidence

The question of evidence belongs to methodological disagreements in educational and related sciences. It appears that the privileged understanding of "what works" or standards of evidence are limited to the following type of research in public debate as well as in some research groups:

> "… favouring those (…) that have been evaluated to a very high standard using the most robust evaluation methods, such as randomised controlled trials or quasi-experimental techniques, and ideally summarised in systematic reviews"
>
> *(Allen, 2011: 69)*

This conceptual description delimits the understanding of research evidence to natural-science inspired quantitative methodology. Where does that leave research based on qualitative methodology? Within the scientific commu-

nity, there is also another tradition for assessing research quality that stems from the mid-1970s – at a similar point in time as the development of criteria for evidence within quantitative methodology took place (Johnsen, 2020c). Rich (1975:329) argues that "… the prevailing model, which we call "scientific behavioural" thinking, is not entirely appropriate for fruitful thinking and research in education". He offers an alternative approach to studies of educational practices that is an idiographic holistic approach focusing – not on "uniformities and regularities of a whole class of objects", as quantitative research does – but on understanding the individual pupil "as a unique being, rather than a specimen of a class" (Rich, 1975: 330). Rich's methodological approach draws attention to an understanding of educational practice that is based on Martin Buber's (1947) humanistic "I-Thou" philosophy, and his quest for an inclusive relationship and apprehension of the pupil as a holistic and complex individual within a cultural context (Johnsen, 2014b; Rich, 1975). Thus, Rich carries forward the idiographic, or qualitative research tradition, one that has been growing in recent decades. Several scholars have discussed and refined methodological aspects of qualitative research, such as Stake (1995), Denzin (2009) and Creswell (2007), to mention three outstanding scholars. Inspired by Stake (1995), Simons (2015: 176) argues that an in-depth case study is well qualified to catch idiographic evidence:

> The case will be richly described and evidence-based, in the form of observations and perspectives of stakeholders and participants, significant incidents, narratives and critical analysis of any relevant documents.

Currently, the increasing use of qualitative studies is accompanied by an urge to develop "the quality of qualitative research". This is important within educational sciences (Creswell, 2007; Northcote, 2012; Tracy, 2010) as well as other fields such as medical sciences (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008), where quantitative methodology traditionally has a very strong position. Accordingly, there is also an increasing focus on qualitative validation procedures. Refining qualitative methodology is thus a topic of growing interest. This includes the question of evidence. McBrien (2008) points to four techniques that contribute to the validity of qualitative studies, namely member checking, peer debriefing, audit trial and reflectivity. He argues that these validation techniques contribute to enhancing credibility, trustworthiness and rigour of the research process as well as its outcome, and therefore are well fit as criteria for evidence-based qualitative research. Different scholars within qualitative methodology emphasise slightly

different criteria of evidence. However, it seems that most of these criteria may be seen as aspects of the two complementary main concepts, *trustworthiness* and *authenticity*. Guba (1981) describes the main traits or criteria for trustworthiness as a) credibility, b) confirmability, c) dependability, and d) transferability, while the main characteristics of authenticity are i) fairness, ii) ontological authenticity, iii) educative authenticity, iv) catalytic authenticity, and v) tactical authenticity (Johnsen, 2020c; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Schwandt, 2007). Therefore, the question of evidence in the joint research project has been attempted to be answered through examining the trustworthiness and authenticity of the findings in this research report.

Trustworthiness. How is trustworthiness accounted? Does *Inclusive Practices*[53] meet the hallmarks of a valid, holistic and nuanced presentation of the phenomena in focus of this research? Do the research purpose, construction and findings of the project deserve trust? In the following the four aspects of trustworthiness – credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability – are considered one by one, starting with a short description of the focus of each of the four criteria and moving on to consider the three research phases: planning, implementing and presentation of findings in *Inclusive Practices* (Guba, 1981; Johnsen, 2020c).

Credibility concerns "the truth value" of a phenomenon or if a study is perceived as "true" or valid of researchers as well as practitioners, who in the case of *Inclusive Practices* are not only the seven research teams and educational staff, pupils and parents of the schools that have been selected for the studies, but also peer researches, politicians and others who can make use of it (Guba, 1981; Moon et.al., 2016). Credibility spans planning, implementing and research report and is the most extensive of the four aspects of trustworthiness.

Preparation and planning phase. The question of credibility of planning concerns whether the intended research purpose and construction of the joint research project is perceived as meaningful to all participants (Moon et. al., 2016). This includes what Tracy (2010) points to as a worthy topic, namely if it is perceived as relevant, timely, significant, interesting and – first and foremost – useful

53 Examination of trustworthiness in this report is delimited to the joint research activities and decisions documented in the common research plan and the process of gathering, structuring and presenting findings in the compilation of the report. The underlying level in this research cooperation consisting of the seven single studies is accounted for in separate articles.

(Johnsen, 2020c) to researchers as well as practitioners. In the case of this joint international research project, it emerged as a possibility in the continuation of a several years' preparatory phase, where key participants became professionally and scientifically familiar with each other during a school innovation project aiming at developing individually adapted and inclusive practices in the joint classroom – the same phenomenon that is studied in this research project. Hence, the former project contributed strongly to a joint perception of meaning and commitment, and was in this way part of the preparation for the current research project. The following aspects contributed to the research plan: i) the abovementioned long-time preparation in the former project; ii) research planning; iii) developing theoretical foundation; and iv) joint flexible methodological approach.

- Preparation over several years: Preparatory innovation project towards inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SØE O6/02)
  - Trying out, discussing and developing together the curricular relation approach with focus on developing individually adapted education in the community of the class
  - Bosnian researchers and innovators invite colleagues from Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia to conferences and seminars on behalf of the SØE 06/02 project together with additional funding
  - An innovation report in the Bosnian and English languages, *Razred u pravcu inkluzije – The Classroom towards Inclusion – Good Examples and Difficult Dilemmas. Report from a series of workshops in Bosnian schools* (Johnsen et al, 2007), describing the innovation process, is delivered to colleagues from each of the universities that were invited to participate in the current research project, offering insight in the didactic-curricular approach and -model that is later used in the joint research project
- Planning the international comparative classroom study towards inclusion takes place in the application period for inter-European cooperation (Johnsen, 2013a; WB 04/06, 2006). As mentioned, the project plan contains the joint research question and structure of the joint research based on seven didactic-curricular main aspects that constitute a common umbrella or frame for studies, comparative analysis and discussions of the inner activity of schooling, or the internal micro dimension, as Alexander (2000) calls it:
  - Joint main issue or -question: How do schools teach in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process (recourses, barriers and dilemmas)?

- Joint structure based on the seven didactic-curricular main areas for information gathering and categorisation in order to describe, analyse and discuss the issue. The areas are: The pupil/s – assessment – educational intentions – educational content – class organisation & teaching methods – communication – care – and in addition the eighth area, context, embracing the seven areas of the inner activity of schooling.

  Within this frame there is flexibility concerning the research teams' individual choice of focal areas in the study of teachers' activities related to a) number of pupil/s in focus; b) kind of special need/disability/vulnerability in focus and c) which one/s of the eight topics to study in depth (in the foreground of attention), and which ones to remain background aspects (Johnsen, 2013a; 2014b)

- Theoretical foundation: An eclectic selection of the following related theory- and research traditions make up a common framework as described in the joint research plan (Johnsen, 2013a):
  - Study of interaction between regular and special education in the development of inclusive practices in schools
  - "Cultural-historical" approach to teaching, learning and development in context
  - Inclusive practices from a didactic-curricular perspective
- Joint, flexible methodological approach:
  - As mentioned, case studies have a strong tradition within classroom studies. In this joint research project case studies are the most applied methodology, but with variations between ethnographically inspired qualitative methodology, mixed methods and action research approaches (Johnsen, 2013a; 2014a)
  - Qualitative international comparative studies focusing on preventing educational borrowing through applying contextual descriptions and discussions related to the seven classroom studies (Johnsen, 2013a; 2014a)

The joint research plan has been adapted by each of the seven research teams to their own plans in accordance with the common frames and flexibility of the plan, as described above. This indicates that the joint research plan together with the individual adaptation is perceived as meaningful and thus credible to all participating research groups (Igrić & Cvitković, 2013; Jachova, 2013; Johnsen, 2013a; 2013b; Kogovšek, Košir & Ozbič, 2013; Rapaić, Nedović, Stojković & Ilić, 2013; Salihović, Dizdarević & Smajić, 2013; Zečić, Čehić, Džemidžić Kristiansen & Hadžić, 2013). The research teams perceive

the preparation and adaptation phase as meaningful and credible, as a result moving forward in the study.

Implementation phase: Guba (1981) points to a number of procedures that may be used during field studies in order to strengthen the credibility or "truth value" by preserving a holistic presentation of the phenomenon in study. Several later discussants of qualitative methodology follow Guba with detailed descriptions of procedures. Some of the recommended procedures are used in the seven studies, including a) triangulation of methods b) member checks c) prolonged engagement in the field with cases of longitudinal studies d) observations of phenomena in focus as well as in context, leading to: e) thick descriptions of the studied phenomena. The procedures are used to omit biases and strengthen joint perceptions of the truth-value or credibility of the classroom studies by all participants (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba, 1981; Moon et.al, 2016; Northcote, 2012; Tracy, 2010).

Additionally, two joint activities are important contributors to strengthening the perception of common understanding amongst the seven research teams, i) and ii):

i) Rotating conferences and seminars with outstanding international scholars are held. Each scholar has been selected to introduce important theories or research methodological aspects throughout the implementation period:
   - The Sarajevo seminar: Professor Tone Kvernbekk discusses theory of science and writes two articles in Anthology no 1 (Kvernbekk, 2013a; 2013b)
   - The Skopje seminar: Professor Harry Daniels presents and discusses use of methodologies to answer different research questions. He writes two articles in Anthology no 2 (Daniels, 2014a; 2014b).
   - The Tuzla seminar: Professor Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta presents examples of articles in special needs education and writes an article in Anthology no 2 (Bagga-Gupta, 2014).
   - The Beograd seminar: Professor Ivan Ivić and Professor Kirsti Klette. She presents and discusses a systematic didactic categorisation system developed through a series of studies.
   - The Oslo seminar: Professor Ivan Ivić and Professor James Wertsch discuss the Cultur-Historic school of teaching, learning and development. Professor Ivan Ivić (2014) writes an article discussing Vygotsky's and Piaget's theories.

- The Zagreb seminar: Dr Elizabeth McNess presents and discusses examples of international comparative studies in education, and delivers a PowerPoint presentation to participants.

ii) One and the same project interpreter, Mr. Goran Đapić, from Sarajevo, has interpreted between English and Bosnian/Serbo-Croatian languages throughout the two innovation- and research projects (SØE 06/02, 2002; WB 04/06, 2006), occasionally joined by different colleagues in simultaneous interpretation. His permanent participation has contributed greatly to joint understanding, leading to common perception in all phases from preparation to comparative analysis. This has been crucial for the joint perception of meaningfulness, and thus credibility, of the entire research process.

Collecting, analysing and compiling the joint international comparative report. Are the research findings credible? Is the process of gathering, analysing and discussing plausible? Are the findings perceived as real and persuasive (Guba, 1981; Tracy, 2010)? The process of collecting the findings from the seven classroom studies into one common report consists of the following steps.

Step 1: Based on the joint main issue, the seven research teams describe their findings in accordance with the eight didactic-curricular main areas.
Step 2: The reported findings are collected in a joint text by the research coordinator.
Step 3: The first joint draft is sent to the research teams for review and revision.
Step 4: All revisions are gathered into draft number two and returned to the teams.
Step 5: Draft number two is discussed on a seminar in Split, Croatia.
Step 6: Draft number three is developed by the research coordinator in accordance with detailed analyses and revisions on the Split seminar as well as additional comments sent from research teams.
Step 7: Draft number three undergoes a thorough analysis in light of relevant theoretical and methodological texts, amongst them methodological literature that has been distributed to all research teams during the research process.
Step 8: Current draft, draft number four, has been peer or colleague reviewed and upgraded accordingly by the research coordinator.

The eight steps show the *close collaboration* between the participating research teams, which in itself contributes to credibility. So does also the longstanding or *prolonged engagement* in the compilation process towards creating the joint report. From the initial research plan and throughout the implementation and

compilation process, the participants have sought to *establish structural corroboration* through a) relating to the eight areas of the curricular relation approach as a common structure in categorisation and analysis of the studies, and b) the described repeated internal reviews of the content in the joint report.

Several other criteria for credibility are recognizable in the process as well as in the product, which is this completed research report. *Triangulation* or use of two or more methods in order to safeguard the findings has been applied in the majority of the seven studies, as documented (Johnsen, Ed, 2013; 2014; 2019).

In the process of developing the joint research report, Geertz' (1973) classical argument for using a) *thick descriptions* is met by diverse contextual descriptions, more specifically in a thorough chapter describing contextual similarities and differences between the seven studies. In addition the step-by-step development of the report creates an opportunity for b) *multivocality* encouraging different interpretations and viewpoints on the findings, thus contributing to more nuanced descriptions, followed by c) *member reflections* that are debated, specifically in the Split seminar (step 6). Through the eight steps, the joint analysis has been returned to each of the research teams a number of times for verification or revision, testing out the *correspondence* between the single studies and the joint report. Gill, Gill and Roulet (2018) argue that in this way an important criterion of credibility is met. Some *audit trial* has occurred along the road, as different aspects of the research project have been presented and discussed with the outstanding international scholars on the working seminars mentioned above. In the phases of developing the joint report, the project has been presented at international conferences and commented upon. However, systematic *external peer review* of the report has not yet been implemented. The multifaceted search for credibility discussed here, may be compared with internal validity in qualitative methodology, or the truth value, as pointed out above. All in all, this process of strengthening credibility contributes to a more *nuanced and plausible* account of the findings (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; Guba, 1981; Moon et.al, 2016; Northcote, 2012; Tracy, 2010).

> How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are a function solely of the subjects (respondents) and conditions of the inquiry and not of the biases, motivations, interests, perspectives and so on of the inquirer (Guba, 1981: 80)?

Confirmability, the next aspect of Guba's trustworthiness principle concerns whether or not reported findings provide answers to the research issues or are the result of research bias. A criterion for confirmability is therefore that it is

possible to replicate a similar research process and come to similar conclusions – to the extent that this can be realised in qualitative studies. Once again, it must be mentioned that confirmability is important on both levels in this joint research project; 1) the individual studies and 2) the analysis and compilation of the seven studies. However, it is important to repeat that all four main aspects of trustworthiness, including confirmability, are only discussed here for the analysis and compilation of the joint report, and not for the research process of (1): the seven individual studies. Several "control mechanisms" are constructed in order to account for possible biases. They are:

a) Revealing underlying assumptions
b) Ensuring that interpretations and conclusions are grounded in evidence
c) Giving detailed methodological descriptions
d) Internal and external auditing

a) *Revealing underlying assumptions*: To repeat, the issue of this joint research project is formulated with the question How do schools teach in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process (recourses, barriers and dilemmas)? However, as the title of the research project expresses, the question is posed within the context of developing educational inclusion. More specifically, it concerns how to construct a bridge between the principle of inclusion and practices related to individual pupils as partners in the joint class or group (Johnsen, 2014b; WB 04/06, 2006). It is a challenge to considering i) what "professional tools" are available in order to plan, practice, assess and revise in a teaching process based on pupils' mastery level and abilities – and are therefore meaningful in their learning process, and furthermore ii) how to embed the teaching-learning process within the community of the class. The two aspects, which are presented in the introduction of this report, constitute an explicit foundation for the research question and can be examined throughout the research process. They are the underlying assumptions of the explorations in this research project.
b) *Ensuring that interpretations and conclusions are grounded in evidence by focusing on the experiences and preferences of the informants*: The process of collecting, analysing and disseminating the joint findings described in the eight steps in the above discussion of credibility, leads to a joint presentation based on the interpretation of findings or evidence as they are perceived by all participating researchers in the joint research project.

c) *Giving detailed methodological descriptions by securing their defensibility through examining the connection between research issue and -design*: The connection between the research issue, design and use of methods is described in the introductory chapter and followed up throughout the report. It is also discussed in the two published joint anthologies in articles presented by each individual research team as well as in joint articles (Johnsen, Ed, 2013; 2014).
d) *Internal and external auditing*: Systematic internal auditing has taken place throughout the project and specifically during the eight-step process of analysis and compilation leading to this report. External auditing has taken place with presentations on conferences and seminars, but has not been systematic to the same degree as the internal auditing.

The four "control mechanisms" applied above indicate the research project's confirmability and truthfulness in main features. Hence, there is the likelihood that the study's issue and structure is suitable for further replications, which would contribute to extending knowledge about individual adaptation of the teaching, learning and developmental processes of the pupils in the community of the class, and thus development towards inclusion. The control mechanisms are accounted for in the literature on evidence in qualitative studies. Having the analysis and compilation of this joint text in focus, literature about assessing "the goodness" of qualitative textual analysis is useful in addition to the general literature on assessing qualitative research. It is therefore interesting to observe that also Gill, Gill and Roulet's (2018) article *Constructing Trustworthy Historical Narratives: Criteria, Principles and Techniques* take as a point of departure Guba's 1981article containing the four main pillars of assessing qualitative research. Guba (1981) recommends applying "control mechanisms" in order to reveal biases. Other possible control mechanisms, such as those applied here, are discussed and developed in a number of related texts (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Gill, Gill & Roulet, 2018; Guba, 1981; Moon et al., 2016; Northcote, 2012).

Dependability concerns the stability and consistency of findings in qualitative or naturalistic studies. They are not suitable for direct replications of the kind that are expected of controlled quantitative studies, since contexts are crucial aspects of qualitative research. However, logical, consistent and similarly perceived processes and findings are hallmarks of trustworthiness (Gill, Gill & Roulet, 2018; Guba, 1981; Moon et al., 2016). Armstrong (2010), similarly, applies the concept of accuracy in her arguments for steps that should be taken

in order to verify findings and interpretations. Several measures are tried out and discussed to verify dependability in the research process and findings, such as a) triangulation, b) stepwise replications or so-called "dependability audit" c) coding-re-coding strategy; d) peer examination; and e) audit trial (Anney, 2015). How is the quality check of dependability conducted in this study? The steps described for collecting, analysing and disseminating the seven studies based on the common didactic-curricular main aspects illustrate how each step contributes to the process of reaching a common interpretation. The stepwise procedure consists of a series of internal audits, while external audits are not sufficiently systematic, as mentioned above.

Transferability – the fourth and last main criteria of trustworthiness described by Guba (1981) – concerns whether results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts and, hence, the truth-value of replicating a study. How can the question about transferability be judged? Geertz' (1973) urge for thick descriptions is important here, as they are when it comes to judging the credibility of findings. The term "thick descriptions" means that outsiders describe findings in their context in order to avoid misinterpretation. In this way, the use of thick descriptions is a main approach to judging transferability. Taken at their extreme, thick descriptions involve elucidating all parts of the research process, from background data, phenomenon, research questions and choice of methods, situations, informants and data collection, to findings and compilation of the final report. Thus, thick descriptions based on contextual disclosures contribute to transferable truth-value and pave the way for replicating the study in other settings. The transferability of the seven studies of this joint research project is described in an extensive chapter on context as well as in articles describing the seven individual studies. All together, they present thick descriptions (Johnsen, Ed., 2013; 2014). Transferability is also closely connected to another main aspect of trustworthiness, namely confirmability, which is judged in accordance with the possibility of replicating a similar research process and come to similarly logical conclusions. Thus the main criteria of confirmability, mentioned above, also apply to the transferability of this study.

When a number of studies meet the criteria of transferability, they strengthen the possibility that the studies are true and trustworthy. Transferability has been compared to external validity, or the validity of applying the conclusions of a scientific study outside the context of that study. In other words, it concerns the extent to which the results can be generalised to and across other situations, people, stimuli, and times. However, this is not the same as the principle of gen-

eralisability in quantitative studies; while qualitative studies are not based on statistical calculations, their strength is that they can illuminate multiple aspects and details of joint phenomena, as this international comparative research project has done (Anney, 2014; Gill, Gill & Roulet, 2018; Guba, 1981; Johnsen, 2020c; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Moon et al, 2016; Schwandt, 2007; Shenton, 2004).

The authenticity perspective of methodological rigor. The dictionary definition of authenticity is the quality of being real or true (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary /english/authenticity). The authenticity perspective – introduced by Guba and Lincoln (1986) – draws attention to a dimension that is unique for ideographic, qualitative research and is characterized by its "… relativist ontology and an interactive, value-bounded epistemology" (p. 20). The authors claim that while conventional experimental methodologies and methods are based on value neutrality, naturalistic, qualitative methodology is based on value awareness; arguing as follows:

> The axiom concerned with the nature of reality asserts that there is no single reality on which inquiry may converge, but rather there are multiple realities that are socially constructed, and that, when known more fully, tend to produce diverging inquiry. These multiple and constructed realities cannot be studied in pieces (as variables, for example), but only holistically, since the pieces are interrelated in such a way as to influence all other pieces. Moreover, the pieces are themselves sharply influenced by the nature of the immediate context (Lincoln & Guba, 1986: 17).

How, then, is it possible to account for the authentic value position of a qualitative inquiry? Lincoln and Guba (1986) admit that they are still searching to develop ways to assess authenticity. However, they introduce five criteria that their followers are in the process of developing further. These are a) fairness b) ontological authenticity c) educative authenticity d) catalytic authenticity, and e) tactical authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Manning, 1997; Schwandt, 2007; Shannon & Hambacher, 2014). What do Lincoln and Guba and their followers mean by these concepts? How do they suggest that they function as criteria of authenticity? Moreover, accordingly, are features of these criteria found in the joint research project *Inclusive Practices*? In the following, these questions are discussed in relation to each of the criteria.

Fairness is explained in most detail of the five criteria. It is based on the following line of argument: i) that naturalistic, qualitative studies are value-based, ii) that they are constructed in accordance with differing value systems, and iii) that an important part of qualitative research is to account for its value

structures. Consequently, it is fair 1) that the researcher explicitly discusses the value framework of the inquiry and, as Manning (1997) argues, 2) that all participants have a voice in the inquiry. Manning (1997) also presents an extensive list of tools to assess fairness. Several of these also assess trustworthiness. This illustrates the close connection between the quality of trustworthiness and of authenticity. The two aspects are complementary. Are features of these aspects found in this joint research project?

Fairness related to the value framework of *Inclusive Practices* focus on 1a) theoretical considerations; 1b) international human rights principles; and 1c) underlying basic value considerations.

1a) The joint inquiry focuses on research on practice. The theoretical pillars are the "cultural-historical" approach to teaching, learning and development in context, a didactic-curricular perspective on inclusive practices and international comparative classroom studies with the implicit purpose of learning from other situations with the intention of borrowing ideas that might enable development of inclusive practices (Johnsen, 2013a).

1b) The research is based on several UN and UNESCO documents, whereof the Convention of the Rights of the Child (UN, 1991), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) where educational inclusion is introduced, and the subsequent UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

1c) The main intention underlying the inquiry is to make a critical analysis of good examples of educational inclusion. The intention emanates from a realisation that there is little research on inclusive educational practices. Consequently, the research teams have selected what are presumed to be good cases.

2) The second main aspect of *fairness* concerns in what way all participants have a voice in the inquiry. The voice of the researchers in all the seven participating teams is heard throughout the eight-step process described and discussed under the heading of credibility. This process of collecting the findings from the seven classroom studies into one joint report consists of a hermeneutic interpretation process between the single teams' reports and the joint report draft under continuous revisions. The process contributes to fairness through the close collaboration between all participants during the longstanding or prolonged engagement in the compilation, 2a) based on didactic-curricular structural corroboration, 2b) explicit focus on the

contexts of the seven studies that lead to thick descriptions, and 2c) internal peer debriefing and member reflections that encourage discussions of different interpretations and viewpoints concerning the findings.

The four additional aspects; ontological-, educative-, catalytic- and tactical authenticity. Does this joint research project add to the knowledge of the phenomenon in focus? Do researchers and participants as well as related professionals and politicians gain increased useful insight in the field? (Johnson & Rasulove, 2017; Schwandt, 2007; Shannon & Hambacher, 2014). By applying the four authenticities, Lincoln and Guba's (1986) attempt to shed light on nuances of increased understanding, applicability and societal relevance of qualitative studies. Ontology is the philosophical term for what is or exists. Thus, *ontological authenticity* occurs when the participants gain increased experience of the complexity of a phenomenon, such as in *Inclusive Practices* when they experience a) the significance of the interrelations between the seven didactic main areas in practicing individually adapted teaching for all pupils within the community of the class, and b) when they apprehend the important role that contextual factors play in classroom practices. This process may include a reconstruction of the participants' earlier experiences of the phenomenon of teaching practice.

When the participants also gain awareness that the process of the inquiry and cooperation has led to a reconstruction towards their increased understanding of different value systems, they have also acquired *educative authenticity*:

> Constructivist research cannot only be an intellectual exercise, but must be worthwhile to, amongst others, the respondents who shared their knowledge, stakeholders, practitioners, and other researchers (Manning, 1997: 108-109).

Catalytic and tactical authenticity concern the innovative power of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1986) argue that these aspects also characterize high quality. They point out that studies should facilitate and stimulate action, calling this "feedback validity". Assessment of catalytic authenticity focuses on examining if and how the inquiry process stimulates stakeholders' engagement. In *Inclusive Practices* the explicit intention is to study classroom practices. The inquiry is therefore constructed in order to obtain findings related to classroom activities that may be shared between researchers and close stakeholders.

Successful catalytic authentication may thus be characterised as a general indication of a research project that is constructed and shows findings that encourage further activities concerning classroom practices. This is a fair statement about *Inclusive Practices*. However, as mentioned, it only relates to the research teams'

cooperation in the joint analysis and dissemination of the joint research report. As with all the quality criteria, each research team may consider the trustworthiness and authenticity of their studies in relation to all their stakeholders.

Tactical authenticity focuses on all participants in a study, which in this research project relates to pupils, parents, teachers and special needs educators in addition to the research teams. The criterion of tactical authenticity is whether or not the findings lead to empowerment or impoverishment for different participants. Hence, it is important that researchers are aware of the differences in interpretation between themselves and other participants in collaborative research, or the emic-etic dimensions (Geertz, 1973). The differences may concern the research construction as well as findings. When it comes to this research project, the answers to the criterion of tactical authenticity depend on the two questions: a) has there been dialogue throughout the inquiry focusing on empowering the participants in each of the seven research teams? b) Are there plans for further presentations and discussions of the joint research report with participants as well as peer researchers? (Johnsen, 2019b; 2019c; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Manning, 1997; Schwandt, 2007; Shannon & Hambacher, 2014; Simons, 2015).

Trustworthiness, authenticity and evidence – a summary

Guba and Lincoln's (1986) four main criteria for trustworthiness and five aspects of authenticity draw attention to different and partly overlapping aspects of assessing evidence in qualitative studies. Trustworthiness relates to "the truth value" or validity of qualitative research, while authenticity concerns a dimension that is unique for ideographic, qualitative research, namely its "… relativist ontology and an interactive, value-bounded epistemology" (Guba & Lincoln, 1986: 20). The question if it is fair to characterise *Inclusive Practices* as 1) a valid holistic and nuanced presentation of the phenomena in focus of this research; and 2) with explicit value structures voiced by the participating research teams in the inquiries and joint research report, has been answered in some detail. In the following each aspect of the trustworthiness and authenticity check are briefly summarised, leading to a conclusion about the quality of the process and product of findings – the evidence.

Trustworthiness concerns what Denzin (2009) calls "warrantability", and is described as having adequate evidence so that conclusions are justified. In the

case of qualitative studies, this means that they need to be trustworthy, which is assessed using four main criteria:

Credibility concerns "the truth value" of a phenomenon, or if a study is perceived to have internal validity. The judgement of credibility is the most extended of the four aspects of trustworthiness, spanning planning, implementation and the process of compiling a research report. In the case of *Inclusive Practices*, the following parts of the research project are considered; a) preparation and planning phase, including pre-planned didactic-curricular main structure for investigation and analysis, theoretical foundation and joint flexible methodological approach; b) field study or implementation phase with its main focus on the seven studies, and including joint support for selected internationally renowned scholars at ambulating seminars, and important facilitation of the same interpreter all through the project; c) collecting, analysing, and compiling process. Main attention is given to the compilation process, consisting of eight steps of compiling and internal auditing in prolonged close collaboration towards establishing a common perception of evidence and structural corroboration. Thick descriptions, triangulation and multivocality in member reflections are used as instruments in the assessment process. This eight-step procedure is at the centre of assessment of several of the aspects of trustworthiness as and authenticity.

Confirmability assessment concerns whether reported findings are answers to the research issues or the result of research bias. Four so-called control mechanisms are applied: a) revealing underlying assumptions of the research; b) ensuring that interpretations and conclusions are based on evidence by focusing on experiences and preferences – in this case of research colleagues; c) giving detailed methodological descriptions by securing its defensibility through examining the connection between research issue and design; and d) systematic internal auditing that takes place throughout the project and specifically during the described eight steps process of compilation of the joint research project.

While confirmability is about assessing the research process, dependability concerns the stability and consistency of the findings in *Inclusive Practices*. There is general agreement on measures to be taken to verify dependability, such as triangulations, stepwise replications and so-called "dependability audits". Once again, the eight steps process of collecting, analysing and compiling the seven studies based on the joint didactic-curricular main aspects illustrates how each step contributes in the process of reaching a common interpretation. A series of internal audits are applied to assess dependability.

Transferability concerns whether results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts, and hence the truth-value of replicating a study. This may be compared with external validity, or validity of applying conclusions of a scientific study outside the context of that study. It concerns whether the results of the qualitative research are "generalisable" – not like generalisability in quantitative studies – but because the strength of qualitative research such as this is the ability to illuminate multiple aspects and details of joint phenomena across other situations, people, stimuli, and times. Use of thick descriptions, such as the contextual descriptions and discussions in this report, contribute to disclosing differences, in this way paving the way to replicate the study in other settings.

When taken all together, the four aspects of trustworthiness examine the strength of evidence in the research process and findings of *Inclusive Practices*. Explicit assessment of all four aspects safeguards transparency and hence external validity, reliability and confirmability; to use Denzin's (2009) terminology.

The authenticity perspective focuses on another dimension of methodological rigor, which displays the uniqueness of qualitative research, namely the explicit acceptance that 1) there is no single reality, but rather multiple socially constructed realities; 2) socially constructed realities or phenomena cannot be studied in single pieces, but in holistic interrelations; 3) all realities are context bound in time and space, and 4) they are value-bound. Consequently, it is a necessary core quality of qualitative research to account for the construction as well as the contextual- and value embeddedness of the phenomena that are studied. When it comes to fairness, which is the most detailed of the five authenticity aspects in *Inclusive Practices*, the focus on research on practice combined with international human rights, theoretical and methodological main positions are explicitly presented from the research planning and onwards. The seven research teams have flexibility concerning design and field studies within a joint basic structure serving as common ground for comparison. As an international research project, contextual descriptions and discussions are given considerable space. All aspects of Lincoln and Guba's (1986) quest for fairness are explicitly presented, followed up through the research collaboration and strengthened through the eight-step process of compilation of the joint report; in this way the research teams have a voice in all parts of the inquiry. An overview of the seven studies constituting the research program also indicates that the researchers are true to the emic versions of the phenomena in focus and that the voices of informants and participants are considered.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1986), the four remaining aspects of authenticity have not been fully developed. Still, they may serve to focus attention on other possible aspects accompanying a study that have not gained attention in the trustworthiness aspects. Ontological authenticity concerns examining whether individuals or groups have gained experiences leading to changed views, increased knowledge – or to reconstruction of their view on a phenomenon, such as the phenomenon of educational inclusion. Educative authenticity concerns the participants' process of gaining awareness of this new understanding. Hence, ontological and educative authenticity may have an empowering effect on informants and other participants in a research project, including headmasters, teachers and special needs educators, parents and pupils in *Inclusive Practices*.

Catalytic and tactical authenticity – also called "feedback validity" – concerns the innovative power of qualitative research. The criterion for tactical authenticity is whether or not the findings lead to the empowerment or impoverishment of the different participants and groups. Assessment of catalytic authenticity focuses on examining if and how the inquiry process stimulates these same stakeholders' engagement. In *Inclusive Practices* there is an explicit intention to study classroom practices in different countries and contexts in order to learn from each other. Findings related to possibilities, dilemmas and barriers to individually adapted educations in the community of the inclusive class are therefore expected to lead to increased knowledge and awareness of the complexity of this phenomenon. This is in accordance with the intentions of the research project, as stated in the introduction: "The primary research question, or issue, directs the attention to the complexity of the phenomenon" (p. 1). This is expected to empower the participants in the schools to increase activities in favour of further developing their classroom practice.

In view of the above examination of trustworthiness and authenticity, the question remains if *Inclusive Practices* generate evidence-based knowledge about practices in class settings. Several techniques have been used to examine the quality and "truth value" of this qualitative research project – its strengths and limitations in generating evidence. They indicate that of the many quality checks, close collaboration, prolonged engagement along with systematic, repeated internal audit, multivocality and reflections above other findings constitute its strength, while the weakest link seems to be the limited and unsystematic external audits that represent a limitation to the quality check.

The problem of comparing qualitative studies

How is it possible to compare different cases of a joint international qualitative classroom research project such as *Inclusive Practices*? The question of comparing qualitative studies has gained increasing attention in recent decades (Alexander, 1999; 2009; Broadfoot, 1999; Phillips, 1999; 2009; Ragin, 1987). Robin Alexander's (2000) major comparative work *Culture & Pedagogy – International Comparison in Primary Education*, hereafter shortened to *Culture and Pedagogy*, and subsequent articles are main sources of inspiration and knowledge acquisition for *Inclusive Practices*. Hence, in the following, Alexander's and other scholars' stances and arguments are highlighted, as special attention is given to how the question of trustworthiness is solved in *Culture and Pedagogy* and related texts, before the same question is turned to *Inclusive Practices*.

The problem of naïve borrowing

The core of international comparative educational research is a belief that lending and borrowing policies and practices may contribute to educational development; in other words, countries and cultures can learn from each other. However, what characterises countries and cultures are complex networks of contextual differences and power relations. Hence, one of the major problems of trustworthiness and authenticity of comparative research concerns naïve borrowing. Thus, when comparing teaching practices, which is an activity on the societal micro level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the challenge is to avoid naïve borrowing, which means borrowing examples between cultures without taking into consideration their networks of differences, including policy, economy and other relevant factors. Supporting this warning, Phillips (2009) points out that transfer of ideas, practices or policies needs to meet certain conditions, such as the following:

- 'Borrowing' should be seen as a purposive phenomenon, where deliberate attempts are made to learn from the foreign example and to 'import' ideas in the shape of policy and practice into the 'home' system.
- A significant feature of the examination of foreign approaches to educational problems, whether or not they are 'borrowable', is that they help us to better understand problems 'at home'.
- In analysing ways in which borrowing takes place it is essential to tackle the difficult question of context and its appropriateness in terms of accommodating imported policies and practices (Phillips, 2009: 1073).

In a brief review of the history of comparative education from the beginning of the nineteenth century, Phillips (2009) describes how borrowing policies and practices have been both glorified and scandalised. He points out that contextualisation is a key factor in the process of borrowing. Different constructions have been developed such as differentiating analysis between stages (Phillips & Ochs, 2004) or between levels, like national, local and school level as a means to avoid naïve borrowing.

Resent years' rapid technological developments have brought countries and continents closer together into what is characterised as "the global community". Accordingly, educational comparisons have developed into global or regional evaluation programmes and coordination- and cooperation programmes, such as *The Bologna Process* of European Higher Education (https://eua.eu/issues/10:bologna-process.html), which is a coordination program, and *Programme for International Student Assessment* (https://www.pisa.no/), which is a large-scale international comparative evaluation project testing pupils' performance in central school subjects. The emerging large-scale evaluation programmes are implemented in accordance with high standard quantitative methodology, and the results are judged reliable and valid and statistically generalisable – and they are made available to lend countries and local communities their results in the form of "international standards" and "best practices". However, there are growing concerns about the cross-national lending and borrowing strategy within international comparative discourse regarding an array of problems, such as:

a) the tendency to having a one-sided focus on educational politics
b) a one-sided belief in comparative research based on natural-scientific methodology and use of measurable "international standards"
c) a weak emphasis on the importance of contextual factors in comparative borrowing
d) the use of "international standards" and "best practices" as relevant measures for the process of teaching and learning at school

a) The problem of one-sided attention on educational policies has a long tradition from earlier focus on comparing education on macro level, but has been strengthened and made more sophisticated with the cross-national lending and borrowing strategy. Pointing to the eighty articles of the *International Handbook of Comparative Education*, Broadfoot (2009) articulates an optimistic belief of a turn away from the one-sided focus:

> … in place of the previously more typical focus on education systems and policies, national contexts and international surveys, we are increasingly seeing bold

> attempts to reconfigure the epistemology of the field: to apply hitherto untapped theoretical perspectives; to conceive new units of analysis and to widen the range of building blocks that form its focus, such as micro comparative studies of classroom life (Broadfoot, 2009: 1249).

Unfortunately, more recent critics argue that the turn from one-sided comparative macro analyses indicated by Broadfoot does not seem to have reached relevant aspects of "classroom life" as yet, pointing to the introduction of "international standards" and "best practices" for the process of teaching and learning at school.

b) Steiner-Khamsi (2014) and Sutoris (2018) characterise measurable "international standards for best practices" found in large quantitative international comparative studies as "thin descriptions", using Geertz' (1937) qualitative, ethnographic characteristic. They argue that classroom implementation is a complex phenomenon that is not fully grasped by using surveys alone. Rather, in-depth interviews and observations are necessary methods.
c) In accordance with the above arguments, "best practices" of large-scale global and regional programmes have a weak emphasis on contextual factors. Offering them directly indicates to lend naïve or thin descriptions of practices. The other aspect of application – the borrowing of results from such comparative studies, needs to be "translated" from the eventual large-scale study and adapted in accordance with the complex context of the receiving local community. This calls for qualitative studies in order to explore the suitability of the introduced practices to local culture (Alexander, 2012; 2015; 2016; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014; Sutoris, 2018).
d) Do the conceptual landscape developed in the systems of "international standards" and "best practices" meet the everyday practice of the teaching-learning process? Alexander (2015) argues that they do not. Referring to his international, comparative research (2000) and later works, he asks: "Why no pedagogy …" (Alexander, 2015:254)? His answer contains a reflected proposal for a conceptual framework for the teaching-learning process that may indicate empirical possibilities for international comparative classroom studies. They consist of two main pillars:

   Teaching as an act: Planned acts – interactive actions – judgements concerning organisational, curricular, epistemic and temporal elements
   Teaching as ideas: Values, beliefs, theories, evidence, policies and justifications on classroom – system/political – cultural/societal levels

His concluding argument is that teaching as an act identifies the cross-cultural invariants of teaching, while teaching as ideas addresses the cultural aspects of meaning. In this way, his conceptual framework may contribute to adapting a borrowed phenomenon to a local community and school by placing it in the local conceptual landscape – as a local "thick description". Alexander's (2015) proposal concerning developing a practice-near and educational-professional terminology moves in the same direction as in his earlier texts (2000; 2004; 2009). *Inclusive Practices* – this international comparative classroom research project – follows a similar logical path. As accounted for, it is based on a pedagogical construction consisting of seven interrelated didactic-curricular main concepts as a joint frame for the research process and product through field studies, compilation and conclusive discussions. It is a practice-near study of inner activities at school consisting of seven classroom studies, surrounded and embraced by discussions of contextual similarities and differences. Similar to Alexander's construction, *Inclusive Practices*: a) applies a set of pedagogical concepts that are generally understood and accepted within international educational research; and b) accounts for a number of relevant contextual differences and similarities. Thus, findings presented and discussed in the report are situated within common pedagogical conceptual frames and contextual diversity, as pedagogical and "local-international" thick descriptions.

As this section indicates, naïve borrowing is a recurring problem within international comparative studies. It is a problem of research credibility, regardless of whether or not it applies to quantitative or qualitative studies, and there is therefore good reason to strive for preventing and avoiding the problem. The construction, research process, compilation and report on *Inclusive Practices* have focused the attention on avoiding this. Hence, placing findings in their pedagogical and cultural context as thick descriptions is one of a number of research methodical details. However, it is an important detail for the truth-value or credibility of a qualitative international comparative research project such as this one.

14 Conclusion

Issue and essence in the international comparative classroom studies

This is an international comparative study comprised of research teams from the seven universities in Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb

and Oslo. Part 3 is a research report containing a joint comprehensive presentation of findings that contribute to answering the primary research question or issue of how school manages to meet the educational needs of every pupil within the diversity of the class (recourses, barriers and dilemmas). The issue directly addresses the complexity that is characteristic of teaching-learning-developmental processes (Vygotsky, 1978; 1987; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). The presentation of findings are categorised in accordance with seven didactic-curricular main aspects; knowledge about the pupil – assessment – educational intentions – educational content – educational methods and organisation -communication – care (Johnsen, 2014b). The study of internal classroom activities promoting educational inclusion, as well as dilemmas and challenges, is based on three pedagogical pillars; a) the abovementioned didactic-curricular approach (Johnsen, 2013a); b) Vygotsky's and the culture-historical school's basic theories and construction of teaching-learning-developmental processes; and c) the resource-based interaction approach on communication and mediation (Johnsen, 2014b; Rye, 2001; 2005). These are pedagogical concepts that are generally understood and accepted within international educational research. The findings on micro level are embraced with a chapter illustrating contextual differences and similarities concerning a number of relevant aspects on national macro level in the participating countries. All in all, the three pedagogical pillars, structure and content of the findings presented and discussed in the report, are situated within common pedagogical conceptual frames and contextual diversity as pedagogical and "local-international" thick descriptions. Accordingly, the report, with its practice-based and educational-professional terminology, moves in the same direction as Alexander's (2000; 2004; 2009; 2015) line of arguments concerning structuring international comparative classroom studies, whether or not they make use of quantitative or qualitative methodology, such as this.

Educational practices contributing to inclusion

The overall findings show that classroom teachers are the focal point of all seven studies. They are described as being main actors with knowledge about individual pupils in the majority of the studies. They are also responsible for practicing meaningful teaching and learning processes adapted to the diversity of pupils' educational needs in the community of the class – in several of these cases having the professional support of special needs educators. Attention is paid to

the many similar findings of practices leading towards educational inclusion within all the seven didactic-curricular aspects on micro level. Specific attention is paid to the participating teams' strong emphasis on the two aspects communication and care. A cautious conclusion describing the joint research project's results is that some first steps have been taken in what can be a turn towards inclusive practices with the help of special needs education professionals and researchers. Still, all the teams are also aware of negative mentalities towards opening up ordinary schools to all pupils, and they discuss reasons behind the gap between official principles of inclusion and actual practice. A discouraging finding is that similar challenges and negative attitudes may still be found in a Norwegian context despite the fact that almost 50 years have passed since the country turned towards embracing the school for all, and inclusion was enshrined in the Norwegian *Education Act*.

Implications for professional practice, higher education and research

The purpose of qualitative studies, specifically case studies, is to reveal the complexity a phenomenon (Stake, 1995; 2006). This joint research project is about the complexity of planning and practicing individually adapted teaching and learning processes in the community of the class, thereby developing inclusive practices. The findings demonstrate this complexity in a systematic way through categorisation of findings in accordance with and across the seven didactic-curricular main aspects on micro level. The findings invite to replication; both professionally-practically for teachers and special educators as well as in further research.

The findings also point to dilemmas and challenges that lead to a number of questions concerning future developments in all participating countries:

- Does teacher education contain the necessary research-based and practical knowledge and skills about how to practice inclusion, for example by applying all aspects of the Curriculum Relation Approach (CRA) or other relevant approaches?
- Does education of special needs educators contain the necessary research-based and practical knowledge and skills within special needs didactics, construction of individual curricula and development of inclusive practices?

- Do special needs education and teacher education contain the necessary research-based and practical knowledge and skills with respect to cooperation between the two professions?
- Does every school have a special educator who has an overview and responsibility for all pupils with special educational needs and for inclusion of all pupils in the community of the class and school?
- Has every school employed special needs teachers to perform special needs education teaching tasks?
- Have schools managed to change from a regular to an inclusive organisation?

Five of the seven studies conduct systematic innovation concerning educating pupils with special needs in regular schools. They have attracted attention, interest and enthusiasm, especially in disability NGOs. Moreover, they have aroused hope in teachers, parents and pupils with special needs. Researchers and research institutions have used considerable resources on the projects. In light of this, the question about sustainability is important: a) Are those who are financially responsible in their communities ready to take over and proceed in accordance with the results of successful action research- and similar studies? b) Are the schools willing to employ special needs educators in place of the ones participating on behalf of the studies?

This research is comprehensive in its systematic study of main aspects and their interrelations down to concrete details. It focuses on the academic side of meaningful teaching, learning and development as well as on its psychosocial side through relational communication and care. Human rights and socioeconomic conditions and priorities on macro level have also received attention. As an international comparative research project, it offers extended insight into diversity and similarities within the different European countries. The many similarities in educational and special needs educational attitudes and practices in the seven studies attract special attention – not the least when it comes to developing new practices towards educational inclusion. Does this indicate that there is a common international basic understanding of schooling and the importance of creating meaningful processes of teaching, learning and development, as also indicated by Alexander in his international comparative research (2000)? Perhaps, yet this international comparative research is only the first of its kind. More studies are needed in order to reveal deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of inclusive teaching, learning and developmental processes within the community of the class.

The complicated inclusive practice

This international comparative research project has been discussed in view of the inclusive practice studies and debates found mainly in chapter 12. Several texts reflect not only a certain pessimism regarding preliminary implementation attempts – and partly the lack thereof – but also a normative willingness to develop and try out new inclusive practices. Thus, Slee and Allan (2001) argue that educational inclusion cannot function as an extension of ordinary classroom pedagogy. A new pedagogy must emerge from the revision of ordinary and special pedagogical knowledge through alternative research approaches. Cole (2005) argues that a complete reversal of "taken-for-granted truths" is needed to develop inclusive practice at school. She points out that educators need to keep "all roads open" and have a professional humility that makes the child's needs central. In Naraian's (2011) case study, the intentions are to create a practice community of equality and care; a diverse student community with mutual involvement and common activities and repertoire in line with cultural-historical tradition and relational pedagogy. Cole's (2005: 341) conclusion of her practice study illustrates the core of the dilemma between the principle and practice of inclusion: "Inclusion was a multifaceted and difficult process, which, although it can be defined in political rhetoric, was much more difficult to define in reality". Inclusive practice is a complex and nuanced phenomenon challenging "taken-for-granted" educational traditions and structures. There is a dire need for more professional school innovation and studies – replicating already reported studies like these or starting from new perspectives.

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