

Teachers' Understanding of Inclusive Education in One Elementary School in Oslo

Tewelde Tesfay Yeibyo



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Department of Special Needs Education
Faculty of Educational Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was exploring teachers' understanding of the notion of inclusive education. The study was conducted in one elementary school (grade level 1-7) of Oslo City. The emphasis was mainly on teachers because teachers' role in the implementation of a curriculum or certain policy is very visible. It was believed that the success or failure of any policy or curriculum chiefly lies on the shoulder of the teachers. Hence, their understanding or lack of understanding was supposed to have a great bearing.

With the purpose of offering a rich depiction of a single setting with limited informants, qualitative approach as a research paradigm and case study as specific method were found fit to the research goal. At the start, it was planned to select informants based on purposeful maximal variation strategy, but due to an unprecedented factors in the process, the selection strategy was changed to opportunistic type. Accordingly, three consecutive interviews were handled on the 9th, 23rd, and 31st of October, 2012. Qualitative interview with a semi structured form was used as a main instrument of data collection.

The finding showed that informants have an optimistic understanding about inclusive education. However, their optimism seems to be shadowed with the practical and technical challenges. Too much content accompanied by limited time for coverage and the question of money have been among the foremost reasons forwarded. Also, some of the informants still believe that both special and regular schools are needed.

As an implication, the attempt to clarify the intricate concept of understanding through varied indicators in this case study is hoped to inspire others to investigate the issue of inclusive education in a wider scope by including other more stake holders.

Key words: *inclusion, inclusive education, understanding*

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**Dedicated to those teachers, teacher-educators, and
advocates who dream and work to accommodate
diversity and create inclusive culture**

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1 Introduction

This paper deals with inclusion and inclusive education. Teachers, as informants of the study, are the centers of attention. Their visions, practices, successes and challenges are brought to the fore. After all, It has been said that “Inclusion is not a favor school systems do for students who they perceive as ‘disabled’, but a gift to our common humanity- a way of reconceptualizing our schools and our society(Sapon-shevin, 2007:xiii). Therefore, it is with such initial premise that my paper attempts to explore how teachers understand inclusive education.

1.1 Background of the study

Today, it seems very unlikely to fail to see the words ‘inclusion and inclusive education’ in the educational arena. Governments, international organizations, and various advocacy groups are airing their voice towards these terms. Norwich (2007), who seems very conscious of the ‘wind of inclusion and inclusive education’, puts his observation by saying “It’s rare to find argument against inclusion, as it is rare to find arguments against democracy (pp.71). Many writers (for example, Lindsay, 2007; Nutbrown and Clough, 2006; Nind, Rix, Sheehy and Simmons, 2003; Cowne, 2008; Armstrong, Armstrong, and Spandagou, 2011) acknowledge this development in their own ways.

The diversity of students in classrooms is undeniable fact of everyday reality. Language, impairment, disability, culture, sexual orientation, gender, age, religion, politics, ethnicity, economic status are, but few of the dimensions of the diversity to mention; then, a firm understanding of the issues involved in responding to this kind of reality is the big question that inclusive education endeavors (Rieser, 2011; Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Forlin, 2010). Inclusive education is also sought since it focuses not only on creating sense of belonging, increment of participation and contribution of students but also on the structural change of schools (Allan, 2010; Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006; UNESCO, 2000).

If we are to proceed in an era where multifaceted diversity is a reality, then inclusive education may be a necessity for our educational system. If we look into the school practice of inclusion, it is possible to point out numerous factors that influence the implementation on

the ground. School ethos, human resource, material resource, content of curriculum, autonomy of teachers and community participation are only few of the very many impacting components. In other words, the vision of inclusion and inclusive education requires working climate, active agents and implementers to make it happen. And teachers, I believe, should take the lion's share of this huge task.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Very often, no matter how excellent the content of a policy or a curriculum may be, the ultimate responsibility to change the policy into practice lies on the shoulder of the teachers. How teachers interpret, apply, and assess a concept could contribute something to the success and/or failure of a curriculum. Armstrong (2011), for instance, strongly suggests the rigorous investigation of how policies developed at the macro level are understood and practiced at the micro level. The idea of Armstrong may be valuable because the notion of inclusion and inclusive education has been debatable and still continues to be debated. If there is uncertainty on what it means and how it should work, it sounds very vital to study how individual schools and individual teachers understand the notion of inclusive education. Therefore, this is one reason why teachers' understanding is considered the hub of this study.

Norway is one of the countries which adhere to the Salamanca statement that calls for inclusive education. In the current national curriculum, the notion of an inclusive school is formulated as the only option available Moen (2004). More to the point, the Norwegian Core Curriculum insists that the mode of teaching should not only be based on adaptation to subject and content but also to maturity and ability (*pp.23*). This, however, could not be realized without having teachers who own an understanding of the dominant discourse in a curriculum. In other words, this may justify the need of research projects, such as mine, that focus on revealing teachers' understanding of inclusive education.

1.3 Research questions

Main research question: How do teachers understand the concept of inclusive education?

Sub questions:

- What kind of belief do teachers have about inclusive education?

- What knowledge and skill do teachers have about inclusive education?
- How do teachers match their knowledge and skill to various contexts?

1.4 Significance of the study

Primarily, the results obtained from this study may contribute something to the knowledge bank of inclusive education. Secondly, it may inspire teachers in the research setting to revisit their understanding of the notion of inclusive education. It may also help them reflect, revise, and adapt policies and practices in their school. Thirdly and very importantly, it may inspire others who are interested to proceed in same or similar line of study.

1.5 Scope of the study

The study is limited to teachers understanding of inclusion in the elementary school. Because of time and space, other important stakeholders (for example. Voice of parents, say of students, teacher assistants, and other school officials) who could have been very resourceful for the topic are not included. Besides, observation of students' and teachers' milieu in the classroom could have enriched the depth of the data gathered. However, the observation that has been done was not considered as part of the data analysis. The visible language barrier I have has limited me from exploiting the chance. Yet, the observation has given me a glimpse of light about the classroom situation and the teachers' daily challenges.

1.6 Operational definitions

Following Wiggins and McTighe (2005) model of understanding, I take 'the six facets of understanding' as an operational definition of the term 'understanding' in this study. Based on Wiggins and McTighe, a person who has a true understanding of a concept can explain, interpret, apply, empathize, have perspective, and have self-knowledge. The study also follows the working definition of inclusive education forwarded by UNESCO (2000) in the World Education Forum. Thus, inclusive education is considered here as an overall strategy for addressing diversity in education (*pp.11*). Besides, since there could be a shift in understanding of the concept at anytime of the lives of informants, focus is given to the understanding of the concept on the time of interview and before.

1.7 Chapter Outline

The first chapter has been mainly a general overview of the intention, research questions, scope and significance of the study. In the second chapter, four major topics are covered. Primarily, an attempt to the history of inclusive education is traced back through three different subtopics. Secondly, the theories and models on and around of inclusive education are reviewed. Thirdly, the place of teachers in the discussion and practice of inclusive education is argued in detail. Fourthly and most importantly, the context of inclusive education in Norway is shown with the help of various subtopics that deal with the development of inclusive education. Particular national policies, curriculum reforms and numerous empirical evidences are taken into consideration in order to enrich the last component of this chapter. In the third chapter, the compelling reasons in choosing the research approach, the research setting, the informants, and the instrument of data collection are presented to the reader. The tasks done to achieve trustworthiness, the piloting process, and my role as a researcher are other main sections of the chapter. After highlighting how the data for this particular research was organized and analyzed, this chapter concludes by showing the ethical considerations during the research process.

The fourth chapter is dedicated for data presentation and discussion. The chapter begins by illustrating the picture of the school and the informants of the study. This is followed by a comprehensive presentation and discussion of the data. Towards the end, a chapter summary is given briefly. On the fifth chapter, two main sections are offered. The first one summarizes the main findings of the research; and, the second one shows the implications of the study.

2 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Tracing the History of Inclusive Education

This section reviews some of the big developments and stages of inclusive education that have been observed across the globe.

2.1.1 Roots of Inclusive Education

The conception of inclusive education never came out of a blue. Its roots seem to be deep and broadly spread. This goes back as far as 1960s where struggle for civil rights and equity for emancipation was taking place in several countries of the world. Especially, the early attempts for inclusion and inclusive education are believed to have originated in diverse groups who have diverse practices and diverse understandings (Armstrong et al, 2010).

Considerably, the collective effort in critiquing the then existing and emerging issues of education is believed to have helped in shaping the conception of inclusion and inclusive education. Particularly, the critique is said to be noticeable in contexts where mainstreaming and integration were already recognized. The North America, England, Australia, and Newzealand were some of those contexts mentioned. In the process of the critique, teachers, parents, and advocates of students with disabilities are said to have began questioning the barriers to access and participation. The critique's major assumptions, as described by the aforementioned authors, were mainly disputing on three prevailing policies and practices. They disputed:

1. that there is a threshold to the level of education that some students are able to access due to the type and/or severity of their disability.
2. that in order to meet effectively the distinct needs of students identified as having special education needs and disabilities, there must be a complex system of identification and assessment based on the attributes or behavior of the individual child.
3. that special forms of provision for instruction are required, frequently necessitating removal of the child with special educational needs from the regular classroom for a substantial part of their school life (Ibid , pp.27)

The typical turning point for inclusion and inclusive education, however, came to the forth in the 1990s. According to Barton and Armstrong (2007)

The idea which emerged in the 1990s came as a gust of fresh air, breathing life into tired debates and struggles. Inclusive education became – and remains – a flagship idea which has inspired many local education authorities, schools, teachers and communities to engage in projects to transform cultures and practices in schools in celebration of diversity (pp.05).

Yet, discussing the origin and historical phase of inclusive education might be very tricky and complex. This is so because it leads to the exploration of the numerous global movements that have been taking place in different economic, social and historical developments. Notion of inclusion and inclusive education, therefore, should be seen as contingent, geographically and temporally situated concepts, rather than representing universal, shared values (Barton and Armstrong, 2007:02). However, the explicit international developments (for instance, the Jomtien declaration, 1990; the Salamanca Statement, 1994; the Dakar framework, 2000) are indicators of the effort that was growing across the globe in developing these notions. One thing that seems obvious is (at least starting from the 1980s) inclusion has come to supersede ‘integration’ (Thomas et al, 2005:21).

2.1.2 The Meaning of Inclusive Education

Few decades have already passed in searching an answer to the quest of what inclusion and inclusive education are all about. This continuous effort (at times individually and at some other times collectively) by teachers, parents, scholars, domestic and international advocates, governmental and non-governmental organizations has paved a way to the strides and achievements that are seen in significant countries today. This section uncovers some of the attempts so far.

Briggs (2004) sees inclusive education as part of school improvement. For her, inclusive education should focus more on improving schools not only from the vantage point of academic, but also from social point of view. Inclusive education should be concerned on how schools should be ‘more humane and pleasant places to work and learn’ (pp. 05).

Compared to Briggs, Armstrong et al, (2010) seem to have markedly broader and deeper interpretation of inclusive education. They see it as an educational reform program, instead of

looking at it as ‘an advocacy of good school/classroom practice’. The eventual purpose of the reform is supposed to be the reorganization and restructuring of educational system. The authors also point out the need to see the interconnection between inclusive education and the wider variety of issues such as social and economic goal of education.

Lorella Terzi, on the other hand, prefers to see inclusive education as primarily political. Based on Terzi’s argument, the political dimension of inclusive education arises from two major points, namely: from its determination to avoid exclusionary policies and practices; and from its political convergence with the social model of disability and the political struggle and movement of people with disabilities (2008:71). She also asserts that inclusive education could be political because it tries to take care of all citizens in a ‘participatory democracy’.

Barton and Armstrong, in their turn, consider it as a means to an end. For them, it is the fundamental instrument which contributes to the realization of an inclusive society. The demand of inclusion is essentially the issue of human right, equity, social justice, and the fight for non- segregating society. That is why these values and notions are the hubs of inclusive educational policy and practice (2007:11).

There have been also endeavors in framing the meaning of inclusive education in terms of the developed world and the developing world. One such attempt is meaning given by Armstrong et al, (2010). According to these authors, the idea of inclusive education in the developed world was an immediate challenge to the customary view and role of special education. The initiative is said to be pushed substantially by the movement of people with disability in the UK, USA, and other parts of Europe. The movement also questioned the existing norms (policies and practices) that promoted segregation which were rooted from ‘the eugenics movement and social Darwinism’ in late 19th century and first half of 20th century (pp.06). As a substitute, it demanded inclusive education that is immensely associated with wider campaign for social justice and human right.

When it comes to the meanings attached to inclusive education in the context of developing world, as the authors affirm, it seems to be used in various ways. This could at times be in terms of social justice; at other times, it could also be used as Education For All (EFA) (equivalent to UNESCOs project for elementary schools across the globe. That might mean a

policy alternative based on less resource demanding approaches instead of provision of facilities and services for People with Disability (*Ibid*, pp. 06).

2.1.3 The Difference and Similarity of Inclusion and Integration

Besides exploring the meaning and interpretation of the notion of inclusive education, it could be worth investigating some of the key concepts that have been linked with inclusive education. One such is the term integration. Identifying the similarity and distinction is very vital because both terms are related with educational policy, educational structure, and school practice.

Integration (as a term) has been in use for significant number of years, and still continues to be in use. Based on Thomas et al (2005) observation, integration describes the process of transfer of pupils from special to mainstream schools. The process was making students to ‘fit in’ to the classroom or school structure in general. Hence, the end result was assimilation (Barton, 2003). Integration was also focusing only on those concepts and practices associated with students who were labeled as having special educational needs (Armstrong, 2011).

Contrary to integration, the coming of Inclusive education has focused and encouraged the process of change to be on transformation of deeply seated structural obstacles than assimilation. This move included an alteration of prevailing definitions of ‘success’, ‘failure’, ‘ability’, etc.(Barton, 2003). Further to the point, inclusive education implied a transformation in the social, cultural, and pedagogic life of the schools as well as their organization (Armstrong, 2011:08).

2.2 Theories and Models of Inclusive Education

There have been, and there are still, many attempts in finding a good model to answer the issues of inclusive education. The moral model, the medical model, and the social model are only some of them. However, it is very essential not to forget here that a model for the social scientists is only meant a heuristic device or an aid to understanding (Barnes, 2003; Levin, 2003). In the section to follow a brief overview of four models that have great bearing in the practice of inclusive education will be discussed.

2.2.1 The Moral, Medical, Social, and Bio-Psycho-Social Models

The moral model was the dominant model for much of recorded history (Mackelprang, 2010). According to Mackelprang, this model explained disability as a manifestation of sin, God's wrath, test for non-disabled people, a chance for non-disabled people to get salvation by serving PWD, and an anomaly in nature's harmony. Hence, charity and ostracization are typically utilized to support and monitor people with disabilities.

The medical model, in its part, came into being with the arrival of renaissance and development of scientific explanation. This model rejects the justification provided by moral model though it still keeps PWD as dependent on the society for charity and care (*Ibid*, 88). Professionals are assigned to heal problems. Professionals are decision makers and patients are decision receivers. Hence, the role of PWD is downgraded.

In both models, PWD depend on charity. It was based on these models that the third model (social model) of disability appeared. Its basic premise lies in the belief that the main causes for disability comes from culture and the environment out there. However, this model did not give the complete picture of disability and its causes. That is why a better model has been sought in recent times.

Both the social and medical models are meant to empower disabled people. However, the way they interpret the source of the disability is very different. The medical looks the origin of the disability from within the disabled (impairment) and the social model looks the origin of the disability from outside (society and environment). For the earlier, it is the disabling attitude, disabling physical and organizational structure that causes disability. For the latter, it is the physical and sensory disabilities or those with communication and interaction difficulties (Mittler, 2009; Söder, 2009).

For example, diagnosis is part of the continuous assessment of students that is made by teachers, teacher-assistants or other professionals in schools. From the medical model perspective, diagnosis is important because early identification of strength, weakness, disability, special preference, or any other physical and behavioral manifestation is believed to be helpful for timely intervention. On the other hand, the social model perspective, the diagnosis is assumed as a process that problematizes the child. While the medical side proposes the freeing of individuals from biological dysfunctions to alleviate suffering from

disability, the social side recommends the freeing of disabled people from stigmatization and exclusion (Silvers, 2010; Cowne, 2008). Yet, the provision of specific treatment than holistic support, reactive measure than preventative measure could be another sharp contrast between them (Clough and Corbett, 2000).

However, regardless of the criticisms towards the process of diagnosis which is greatly associated with the medical model, still it is believed to be helpful in risk assessment and addressing of students needs. The need for specialist expertise to some exceptional group of children is one implication that the medical model renders (Rayner, 2007). Similarly, the social model is functional in the identification of political strategy, namely barrier removal (Oliver, 2004).

Even though the ICF and scholars in the field accept the partial validity of each, neither of them is believed to be adequate enough. This is due to the fact that disability could be complex phenomena. On one hand, it could be a case arising from the person's body. On the other hand, it could be a case arising primarily from the environment. It is often an interaction between the features of the person and features of the overall context in which the person lives (WHO, 2002). However, some aspects of disability might be exclusively internal to the person; yet, some other aspects could be completely external. In this regard, both (the medical and the social) models are appropriate to the problem associated with disability. That is why either of them is not rejected totally (*Ibid*).

As an attempt to such endeavor is the model suggested by ICF (the bio-psycho-social model). As it is convincingly said in (WHO, 2002) "A better model of disability is one that synthesizes what is true in the moral, medical, and social models, without making the mistake each makes in reducing the whole, complex notion of disability to one of its aspects." pp 09.

The argument in this sub section hints the unsettled debate over the conceptualization and theorization of model of disabilities and the continuation of the controversy among professionals and writers. For me, the controversy has a repercussion on the practice and understanding of teachers. Our curriculum, our teaching methods, our educational policies and school ethos are all reflections of such influential models. Therefore, our teachers will be molded/shaped with the resources and paradigms of such models. The influence, I should strongly say, is very visible. For instance, a teacher whose perspective is shaped with social

model might have a possibility of viewing the disability issues as if they are arising only from the society. Similarly, a teacher who inclines him/her self to medical model might judge pupils to be sources of problems and may decide to fix the problem in the child than adapting the content and pedagogy.

2.2.2 What could Teachers benefit from the Discussion of Theories and Models?

I am aware that it is not only the four models discussed in this thesis that have an impact on teachers' conceptualization and practice of inclusive education. I do not dare say these models are exhaustive. More to the point, all models dominantly focus on disability. However, inclusion and inclusive education are not about disability alone. I would take inclusion as an umbrella term that encompasses so many strands, one of which is disability. With all these considerations, however, it sounds to me that both models have a lot to contribute to the teachers practice in the schools.

For example, Teachers may benefit from the social model the need to identify barriers. This model usually advocates the environmental and social impact on disability (Swain et al, 2003). Hence, teachers could simplify the burden of assessment and identification of such matters as a result of their collaborative action with others.

Equally speaking, teachers could benefit from the individual model. If medication could enhance the health of students who have been reducing their attendance to school, then this model is contributing something to the development of inclusion; if there is a pill or related medication given for pupils with intellectual disabilities to make sense of the world or to enhance cognitive development, still the medical model is tallying some input to inclusion; if therapy is prescribed from the medical model to lessen the disability of physical challenge, yet it is playing a part. However, the medical model's contribution is only one piece. If we try to solve all problems using the medical model, then that is where the problem begins. There is no one solution to the problems that our world faces, and so does the challenge for inclusion. Medical model may not work all the time and may not work for all types of problems.

It is also worth highlighting some of the key concepts drawn from the models and various theories that may influence teachers' understanding of inclusive education.

The notion of Differentiation

Tomlinson (1999) defines differentiation as the “planning for the unpredictable classroom.” The implicit message in the definition of Tomlinson seems that Teachers should expect diversity of learners in the school and even at the level of specific classroom as an inescapable and unavoidable facet of reality. Planning ahead to respond to such challenges is what is expected from differentiation. The content of the subject matter, the alpha and omega of the process, and the resulting product are all component of differentiation teachers might constantly bear in mind. For me, what Tomlinson calls ‘planning for unpredictability of the classroom’ could not be an expectation of extraordinary happenings in the classroom or the school yard, but an emphasis to the teacher’s attitudinal and professional readiness to recognize difference that leads to diversity; and ultimately the creativity and power of adaptability to accommodate challenging circumstance that arise as a result of the presence of diversity.

The use of language and Labeling

Names usually serve as identity markers. Everything in this world seems to have a name. Where ever there are people, there are names that the people give to their family members, objects, animals, staffs, etc. At times, even people give names to things that are far beyond their control as well. For instance, the names dedicated to celestial bodies, gods, etc. One thing that is associated with naming and labeling is the power that comes with the labeling. For instance, in almost every country children are given family names and those names are the name of the males. In some way, I believe, this shows the hierarchy and power structure of our human system. Even though many governments and countries in the world claim to be creating the sense of equality, the century we are in still seems dominated by patriarchal system.

The use of labeling in schools is seen in different ways Norwich (2002). For some, it is a signal that helps pupils to be identified and followed with the kind of challenge they are facing, no matter what the type of challenge is. They understand the difference and similarity of human beings as a beauty and resource, labeling is nothing but identifier of who is who. For instance, I am an Erasmus Mundus student; I am an African; I am Ethiopian; I am black; I am male; I am single, I am Christian etc. all these indicators say something about me. Some of them are tentative indicators and they may be changed to other status labels (for example,

my status of religion, marriage, student hood, etc). However some of the labels are going to stay with me forever and hence they are permanent (for instance, my identity of color, gender, etc).

For those who understand the difference and similarity of human beings otherwise, labeling reminds whether you are going to be included or excluded, whether you are going to be privileged or not, whether you are going to be participant or non-participant, whether you are going to be accessing something or not, whether you are going to be belonging to a group or not, etc. Thus, the power relationship, the economic status, the sense of belongingness, the question of access, the nature and type of participation, the type and extent of contribution are all but few indicators and outcomes that labeling bring into being. People in this category think that this is a process that creates the way to exclusion. If pupils are labeled, they may be teased, bullied, and excluded. Thus, the overall naming and labeling is taken as offending and demeaning to the pupils and their wellbeing.

“A major factor in the labeling process is that labels are usually bestowed by those who have power and authority ‘experts’ upon those who do not (Swain et al; 2003:12).” These authors are mentioning here whose authority and power might be when it comes to labeling. However, I disagree with their thought because the idea they forwarded does not show the whole picture. Their argumentation shows only the labels that come from one side. What about the labels that comes from otherwise? I contend that both sides have their own judgment and label to the group they hypothetically classify as ‘them’ and ‘us’. For example, rich people may have expectations and perceptions for those whose economic status is below their own group. That is true. Equally speaking, however, the economically deprived people have their own labels and judgments for those whose economic status is above them. This works in other aspects of life as well (Politics, education, health, sports, etc). Labeling is about conception and interpretation of identity markers. That is why I say the authors claim is only part of the whole picture, not complete in itself.

People also may label themselves with different brands. Individuals, group of people, Political parties, organizations, etc may identify themselves with various tags or names. These labels basically might give pride to the specific group members or individuals when they are called with the labels. In this case labeling is serving as source pride and honor. At the same time, there are labels that individuals or group of people do not favor at all. In such circumstances,

the use of labels might create havoc and grievance on the individuals or group members. Hence, refraining from the usage of such names might be the alternative. Therefore, teachers need to know the culture of the school, the tradition of the surrounding community, what is considered defamatory and what is considered complimentary.

2.3 The Place of Teachers in Inclusive Education

Teaching is said to be one of the most challenging professions in the world. Very often, teachers are called upon to solve all societal ills through the educational process (Gause, 2011:03). The expectation varies from teaching of students of various and sometimes difficult background to closing achievement gaps between students from within (for example, one locality, one country, one region) and from out (for example, another locality, another country, another region).

The challenge in working with diverse students in learning institutions seems less debatable. Teachers might be needed to have extensive knowledge and skills as one identity by current school system. They might be also needed to have an in-depth (specific) knowledge about the specific dimension of diversity (Cherrington and Green, 2010:322).

The subsequent sections, therefore, chronicle the place of teachers in the discussion of inclusive education. Answers to major questions such as the following will be sought.

- What should be the role and responsibility of teachers in inclusive education?
- How does professional development help teachers to improve their inclusive practice?

2.3.1 Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities

The development of inclusive practice and inclusive culture is not and should not be the task of teachers only. Nevertheless, the role and responsibility teachers are given by parents, community and government is immensely irreplaceable. Considering this enormous feature of teachers, Florian and Rouse (2010), have argued that issues of how well teachers are prepared and the share they can contribute to inclusive education remain unexplored.

Similarly, (Giangreco et al, 2010), underscore the importance of the classroom teachers to the advancement of inclusive education. Based on the assertion of these authors, teachers might

be the only typical credentialed professionals who could be primary role models for students during the entire day. Moreover, as implementers of the curriculum, teachers' role might be the cornerstone to guarantee the change aspired by legislation and curriculum as a vision.

When it comes to the responsibility, teachers are always demanded to know how to respond to different needs with a range of alternatives (styles of learning). Matching individual learning style with various activities of daily lesson, constructing and linking aims from lower to higher stages are only some of the daily duties they are demanded to accomplish. Briggs (2004) suggests the creation of favorable learning environment, the planning of appropriate activities, the usage of range of teaching strategies, the usage of appropriate assessment approaches, and the setting of suitable targets for learning. More to the point, Savage (2010) proposes five important tasks that teachers should consider. These are:

1. Recognizing *of one's own ethnocentrism*, or recognizing that we see the world from the perspective of our own culture.
2. *Knowing of students' cultural backgrounds*. Knowledge is necessary in order to develop the skills for cross-cultural interaction.
3. Developing an *understanding of the broader social, economic, and political context* in order for teachers to understand the pursuit of social justice and the need for culturally responsive classrooms.
4. Using *culturally appropriate management strategies*. Teachers need to become familiar with culturally specific behavioral norms and implement culturally responsive strategies.
5. Commitment to *building caring classrooms* is the fifth component.

Nonetheless, reflection on one's own practice and sharing of professional practice with colleagues is believed to deepen good practices and review personal beliefs, values and characteristics that might be otherwise (O'Hanlon, 2003). For example, O'hanlon exemplifies the ethical challenges that teachers might face in attending more to one pupil than others. 'Should this practice be continued or reduced?' this is one instance that shows the everyday challenging role and responsibility of teachers in the school yards.

2.3.2 Teachers' Professional Development

Regardless of the various attempts and searches that have been done for ages, still it remains unclear of what constitutes a competent teacher and what the necessary teacher skills,

competencies for meeting diversity should be (Kaikkonen, 2010). Like any other fluid concepts in many disciplines, professional development (in the field of education) remains debatable. As (Howes et al, 2009:26) pointed out, the attempt to explore the nature of teachers' professional development might be confronted by challenging questions, such as: "what does it mean to be professional as a teacher? And, what does it mean to develop that professionalism?" (Gause, 2011), in his part, argues that theorizing about inclusive community could be much easier than putting the educational theory or philosophy into practice. Therefore, there seems no list of agreed qualities of what constitutes someone to be a 'professional' and some others otherwise.

However, the lack of agreement among scholars on what constitutes a 'professional' does not mean that there are no fundamental qualities that need to be considered in the discussion of professional development. For instance, (Wolger, 2003) articulates that the realization of inclusive education depends on the ability to respond to diversity; and, one of the options to build that capacity is through professional development. The Staff development could be influential in the thinking and practice of everyday schooling if it is linked to school development. Teachers with such development might develop more knowledge, wider perspective in curriculum development, teaching and learning, classroom organization, behavior management, adaptation of strategies. The cumulative effect is assumed to aid the implementation of inclusive practices.

2.4 Inclusive Education in Norway

This section will have four major parts. It starts by reviewing the development of inclusive education in Norwegian context. It then proceeds to the exploration of the political documents. The core curriculum will come as a third sub-section. The last sub-section will be the examination of some relevant empirical studies.

2.4.1 Development of Inclusive Education in Norwegian Context

The notion of integration and inclusive education in the Norwegian context could be traced back to the beginning of 1960s. However, the development of reforms and changes from highly segregated school to the 'school for all' or 'the inclusive school' takes us back even farther to the 18th century (Haug, 1999). It seems worth mentioning that the discussion of

integration and inclusive education should be understood in the context of a wider historical and social welfare state (Helgeland, 1992; Flem & Keller, 2000; Anderson, 2001). The second half the 20th century was a time where discourses such as social justice, democracy, equality for all, improvement of legal and civil rights were prevailing across the western world. Especially, a distinctive focus began to be given to the needs of and rights of handicapped people. For instance, one of the key notions in was the principle of Normalization (Flem & Keller, 2000). The proponents of the concept of normalization were demanding the access of same rights and social resources for all people with all types of handicap; and this disquiet was not solely focusing to the sphere of education, but other aspects of the handicapped people as well.

Helgeland (1992) illustrates the long tradition of compulsory education and the statutory right of adapted education in Norway since 1959. He states that adapted education was one of the pivotal principles in a compulsory school. Every student has the right to education in accordance with his/her aptitudes and abilities. The author also indicates the specialist model (which later was renovated with the principle of normalization) and practice of exclusion which was confining pupils in residential schools, special schools, and special classes.

Flem & Keller (2000), in their part, elucidate the implementation of Integration Act in 1975. This Act incorporated the act of 1951 relating to special school into ordinary Education Act of 1969 'Grunnskoleloven'. Hence, the special legislation and special system of administration of special education were abolished (pp.191). Historically, there was a historical dissection between people with intellectual challenge (by then known as person who are mentally retarded) on hand and persons with other types of disabilities (for instance, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, etc.) on the other. However, regardless of this dissection, it was specified that municipalities have the duty and responsibility of educating all children in their local regular school (Helgeland, 1992).

Another important milestone in the development of inclusive education in Norway was the extensive debates on the issue of centralization versus decentralization in the political affairs during the late 1970s and 80s (Germeten, 1998). Local council in the heart of each community got a vital power in decision making of local affairs. Such is the Community Act of 1986. This act was fundamentally intended to give more authority to local authorities (such as

committee, boards, etc.) which are linked to local institutions (for example, schools). In other words, this process was a reflection of the democratic principle of decentralization. The right to participate on every aspect that people are part of could, then, be taken as the early path to the latter reforms concerning education and upbringing in Norway (*Ibid*).

In line to this, there was a fierce struggle between the advocates of segregated education (teachers, some groups of parents, and politicians from non-labour parties who resisted the change to inclusion) and those promoters of inclusion (labour party, small number of teachers, researchers, interested citizens). The cumulative effect resulted in the explicit usage of the terms inclusive education and a school for all in government's national document and reform plan of 1996. In fact, the expression seem not be clearly delimited from each other; and their interpretation widely differ (Flem & Keller, 2000). Finally, this led to the development of the new national curriculum in 1997 which formulated inclusive as the only available option (Haug, 1999).

The national report on the development of education from 1991 to 2000 lists some of the major achievements (in relation to inclusive education) of the last decade of the 20th century. The reforms of primary and lower secondary education, a reform of higher education, a reform of compulsory education, a reform targeting the adult population in and outside the labor market, the closure of the last special school are only some of them. The observation of (Flem and Keller, 2000) also strengthens the bold development of the 1990s. For instance, the proposition of several white papers that demand reorganization of the state special schools have resulted in the development of competence centers (at national and regional level). There is a great expectation that these centers will contribute to the development of inclusive education by arranging courses, giving guidance and counseling, supporting the assessment of students with special needs, and assisting the efforts of local support services in districts and schools.

2.4.2 National Policies, legislations, and educational Acts

While reviewing the national policies, and documents, I knew the presence of many valuable documents. In fact, it might be space and time consuming to review all national policies and educational documents at this level. Yet, I have made much effort in collecting some of the important national documents. To my wonder, most of the documents were available in

English language version which soothed my great concern of language barrier at the start. Considering this, I would like to remind my audience that only some selected documents that I found in English version are included here. I would like also to mention that I am aware of the gap that might be created on the usage of terminologies such as integration and inclusive education in Norwegian context and in English context.

To begin with, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2007) states that primary and lower secondary education is based on the fundamental principle of equity and adapted education for all pupils with the same curriculum in the school system. This is assumed to enable children to share a common foundation of knowledge, culture and values (pp. 07). The recent Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training official document (2011) also speaks the same language.

The Educational Act (act of 17 July no.61,) section 1-3 (under the subtopic adapted education) clearly unveils what the fundamental principle of education in the Norwegian context should look like. Here follows the verbatim of this act ‘Education shall be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupil, apprentice and training candidate.’ This act was from July 1998, but later on added by act of 20 June 2008 no.62. Hence, the previous section (1-3) became (1-5).

The second chapter of the educational act on its eighth subsection (for primary and lower secondary school) and the third chapter on its twelfth subsection (for Upper secondary education and training in enterprises) also spots the inalienable right of students from language minorities (for students whose mother tongue is not Norwegian or Sami) to get adapted language education. These sections also guarantee the entitlement of pupils for bilingual subject teaching or mother tongue instruction when a need arises. Another full chapter (chapter five of the educational act) has been dedicated to ‘the right to special education at primary and lower secondary level’. The right to special education (5-1), the need for expert assessment (5-3), the administrative procedures related to decision on special education (5-4), content of special education and exceptional cases (5-5), the provision of educational and psychological counseling service (5-6), the provision of educational assistance (5-7), and the duty of the state to provide and ensure the availability of teaching aids for special education are all reflections of the focus given in Norwegian context.

Equally speaking, chapter nine of the educational act (9A-the pupils' school environment) includes mainly aspects such as the physical and psychological environment of the school, the systematic efforts that could be made to promote health and environment issues of pupils. The next chapter of the education act (chapter ten), in its turn, discusses what and how the school staffing should be. The Qualification requirements for teaching (10-1) and competence enhancements (10-8) are among the many aspects which could be relevant to the discussion of this paper. Other parts of the education Act that might need worth consideration also include chapter eleven (school bodies for user and participation). In this specific chapter, due consideration is given to parents as major actors in the school activities through the school parent committee involvement. Pupils' representation (voice of students) is also further major element of this chapter.

2.4.3 The Core Curriculum

As the core curriculum in Norwegian educational system favors individually adapted education, it is of paramount importance to know about how teachers conceptualize differentiation and how they differentiate the curriculum and instruction. Content might be either reduced or added; different expectation and different work might be set to different groups/individuals at different stages of the subject matter and occasion. Pedagogical approach might be frequently altered.

Basically, the Core Curriculum of Norwegian educational system seems to follow the social constructive approach which focuses on scaffolding. It adheres to an approach that goes from near to distant, from the known to the unknown, and from the concrete to the abstract. It is imperative to quote a part of the curriculum in order to have a clearer picture of how the Norwegian educational system favors differentiation as a driving notion.

The mode of teaching must not only be adapted to subject and content, but also to age and maturity, the individual learner and the mixed abilities of the entire class. The pedagogical design must be pliable enough to permit the teacher to meet the pupils' differences in ability and rhythm of development with kindness and ease. (pp.21)

The above quote might be immensely helpful to the nature and extent of teachers' understanding and practice of inclusion. This is primarily because adapted education, as it is called in the core curriculum, demands an understanding of students' background (be it

personal, cultural, economic, educational, regional or/and national influence) by the teacher. The quote also strongly reminds the need to flexible teaching mode that suits to the diverse group-need and the individual students need in terms of their style of learning, personal preference, level of thinking, and so on. So it appears possible to deduce that the core curriculum is mainly based on two premises. First, the assertion that teachers adapt curriculum and instruction; and, secondly, scaffolding as a hub of differentiation. Thus, the success or failure, at least partly, may lie on a good understanding of the notion of differentiation by teachers.

2.4.4 Empirical Studies

The need to understand and examine the journey of inclusive education from various vantage points in order get better understanding and make better decisions is underscored by many authors (for example, Helgeland, 1992; Haug, 2000; Moen, 2004; Kvalsund, 2004 are but to name a few). The focus and scope of the studies that have been done in Norwegian context (I am referring to studies that have been done on and around inclusive education) seems wide and diverse.

For example, Germeten (1998) and Nilsen (2010) studied the educational reforms and stages of reforms related to inclusive education in Norway; Flem & Keller (2000) explored the factors that hamper or support the development of inclusive education; (Haug, 1999), (Haug, 2000) as well as (Stephens et al, 2004) have dealt with policy and curriculum formulation versus realization; Braathe, (2010) examined the dilemmas of streaming in the new curricula (*Kunnskapsløftet*); Ertsås and Irgens (2007) assessed the extent to which school teachers and managers tend to spend their time on individual or collective focus activities and programs; Moen (2004) as well as (Flem et al, 2004) studied how individual teachers implement the notion of inclusive education in the classroom; Myklebust (2002) looked at the transition of students with special needs from lower secondary school to upper secondary school.

yet, some have observed at the kind of support demanded if inclusive education should really progress forward; and some others have been researching the contribution of leadership and management in building inclusive schools.

3 Research Design

Research design is the logic that links data to be collected during the study and the conclusion to be drawn after a systematic analysis (Yin, 1994). Having the guidance of Yin in mind, I have chosen qualitative type as a basic research approach and single case study as fundamental method. The details follow here under.

3.1 Why Case Study?

Since the intent of this research is exploration of peoples' understanding within a small scale parameter, case study has been prioritized. Whenever the aim of certain research is particularization (i.e. if the purpose is presenting a rich depiction of a single setting with the assumption of informing practice and establishing the value of case or add knowledge of a specific topic), case study could be one of the foremost choices (Simons, 2009). Case study, as Chadderton and Torrance (2011) state it, assumes that things may not be as they seem, and privileges in-depth enquiry over coverage: understanding 'the case' rather than generalizing to a population at large. When the case study researcher has to make a decision about depth versus coverage, the recommended choice should be always depth (pp.54). Yin (1994), in his part, advises case study as a preferable method if the focus of the research is 'why and how' of things.

In fact, precise definitions about case study might be difficult because of the disparity in use by diverse writers and scientists (Berg, 2007; Simons, 2009). However, it is possible to give some of the attempts. Hence, precaution is needed. The case study method, as a kind of research, concentrates on one thing, looking at it in detail, not seeking to generalize from it (Thomas, 2011:03). Parallel to Berg and Simons, Thomas uses the word "thing" because he recognizes that the "thing" may be a person, group, a classroom, an institution, a programme, a policy system, a country, an event, a period in time, or whatever.

Sometimes, cases are chosen not because they are special or unusual in some way, but because they give a chance to clarify things in depth; and they inform professional practice and civil community action (Ragin, 1994; stake, 2008; Simons, 2009).

Simons also identifies three compelling grounds why individuals within a case could be central. Primarily, the necessity to understand certain policy or program could be done via the

perspective of the people who enact them. Policies are formulated by people and executed by people. In this research, these individuals are teachers. Hence, as Simons rightly put it, they are the protagonists in and around of the school yard. Though the common standard is inclusive education for everyone in the schools, teachers interpret, subvert, and adapt the policy of inclusive education in relation to their own experience, beliefs, and resource available. Secondly, case study is said to be an interactive social process. Hence, a 'lived experience' of individuals (in my case, teachers) could be documented. Thirdly, exploring individual's belief and experience of a programme (in my case, inclusive education) might help not only to understand how social-political aspects influence the actions of teachers, but also the impact of the teachers on the phenomenon itself.

Even though I purposefully chose case study as the method of my study, I am aware of the fact that the method I chose (like any other method in different disciplines) has its advantage and disadvantage. I am also aware of the variation that could be observed in the form that the case research takes. According to (Gomm et al, 2008), this might be in the number of cases studied, the role of comparison, the size of the case, the context of the research, etc.

3.2 Selection of Research Setting and Informants

3.2.1 Selection of Research setting

Taking the advice of graduates from previous cohorts here in the University of Oslo, the first thing I did was consulting one of our professors about my topic and on how I could gain access to the nearby schools in Oslo City. The professor was so supportive that she, whole heartedly, dedicated time and energy for me throughout the process of my study. She was able to communicate and persuade individual teachers informally to be participants of my study. Even though things did not go according to plan, this was how I met my pilot interviewee.

After the initial contact with the first interviewee, an overview of the research project that gives a short description of who I am, the objective of my research, the data type I want from my informants, the tentative time schedule of the research, and the possible use of the result of the study have been sent to the school. However, meeting school authorities has been very challenging by my own. The repeated telephone calls made by our program convener to the school office in order to gain formal access was not responded with 'yes' or 'no' answer for

long time. In brief, the road to find a school for my study has been very bumpy. It did not only consume my time, it also took away my inspiration. Even, I was forced to change my plans three times.

Finally, however, I managed to get the school permission and two informants with the help of my program convener. Following that, I conducted the consecutive interviews in 23rd of October 2012 and 31st of October, 2012. This was preceded by the pilot interview that I had on the 9th of October, 2012. The pilot interview was handled in a small café that the interviewee chose; whereas; the remaining interviews were done in the school yard that the teachers were working. The interview time and place were set based on informants' personal preference; and the average time for the recording was one hour and five minutes (65 minutes).

3.2.2 Selection of informants

The number of my informants is limited to three. At the start of the process, I planned to select my informants based on maximal variation strategy. This was a purposeful selection approach in which the researcher chooses individuals that differ on some characteristics or traits (for example, different age, different religion, different language, different experience, etc) (Creswell, 2012; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2005).

Unfortunately, the school where I intended to collect the data did not respond to my queries for months. Hence, I was obliged to take whoever is willing to my research purpose (opportunistic approach). Even though I planned to conduct four interviews with out including one pilot interview, I was able to get two informants and one pilot interviewee because of the unanticipated situations during the process. Yet, relentless effort has been made to locate additional resourceful informants through snow ball strategy in order to enrich the data. However, the search for resourceful persons ended up in a hope that could not be grasped.

3.3 Instrument of Data Collection

This section uncovers the instrumentation of my data collection including the contents and themes of the guiding questions that have been used in the field.

3.3.1 Qualitative Interview as main data source

The ultimate target of my research was exploring teachers' understanding of inclusive education. Such objective, I believe, can be done via qualitative interview. Qualitative Interview is believed to be not only a curious kind of navigation that allows seeing the world of mine, world of yours, world of ours, world of theirs, but also the chance that paves a way to hearing the accounts, opinions, arguments, and dreams of informants (Schostak, 2006). The form of the qualitative interview I chose is semi structured. This enabled me to stick to the thematic areas of the topic, but still remained flexible to listen to the experience, vision, good and bad encounter, success stories and challenges, the hopes and fears of the informants.

Kvale and Brinkmann are some of the authors who have written extensively on how to prepare qualitative interview. In the preparation of my qualitative interview, I have been consulting their book again and again in order to enrich the content and the procedure. The advice about interviewing participants from across cultures is worth mentioning at this juncture.

When doing cross-cultural interviewing, it is difficult to become aware of the multitude of cultural factors that affect the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. In a foreign culture, an interviewer needs time to establish familiarity with the new culture and learn some of the many verbal and non-verbal factors that may cause interviewers in a foreign culture to go amiss. For example, the simple 'yes' is in some cultures heard as an agreement, whereas in other cultures it is a response just confirming that the question has been heard (2009:144).

Since I conducted my research in a country where all my informants have different culture from mine, the advice of these authors has been very supportive. It enabled me to consider every utterance and gesture with great care rather than at face value. I have also tried to exert as much effort as I could so as to produce the knowledge from the formal and informal interaction I had with my informants. After all, Kvale and Brinkmann sustain that the production of data in a qualitative interview should go beyond a mechanical following of rules. Quality and enriched data might be obtained only through the interviewer's skills and situated personal judgment in raising questions during the interaction of the interview process.

3.3.2 Contents and Themes of the Interview Guide

The parameter of the interview revolves around four major themes. These are:

- (1) Theme one- Issues of teachers' belief on inclusive education
- (2) Theme two- Issues of Professional development
- (3) Theme three- Issues of teaching methods and practices, and
- (4) Theme four- Issues of personal and cultural aspect

The themes highlighted above had detailed questions as indicators under each theme. Besides, there is an accompanying section at the start (background questions) which tries to capture the background information of the interviewees. For an ease of management, in the discussion and analysis chapter to come, the questions under each theme are systematically set to explore participants understanding (how teachers: explain, interpret, apply, develop empathy, have perspective, and have self-knowledge,).

The first theme (Issues of teachers' belief on inclusive education) of the interview aimed at looking into the connection between the teachers' belief of inclusive education and the different needs (be it individual need or group need) of students, as diversity of students is unavoidable reality for every teacher. Here I wanted to explore how my participants conceptualize inclusive education and how they respond to the various needs in and out of classroom. This theme also dug out the internal and external factors that teachers regard as helpful and/or obstructive in the process of inclusive education.

The second theme (issues of Professional development) intended to find out how teachers, as participants of the study, view professional development in the journey of inclusive education. This theme tried to understand the knowledge and skill of teachers about inclusive education by focusing on how, where and when they got it. On top of that, the type of training or specific knowledge they wish to have, the kind of support they get and they wish to get from school authorities and from others stakeholders are all subsumed details of this theme.

The third theme (Issues of teaching methods and practices) aimed at examining broadly how teaching activities were organized in the classroom. The theme also looked into how learning style, differentiation, adaptation, and teaching method in the classroom were considered by teachers. Beyond this, the theme investigated the collaboration of various teams (for example, between team of teachers in the special unit and ordinary classroom) how social aspects of

inclusive education (for example, bullying, prejudice and discrimination) were dealt with by teachers in the outdoor activities of the school.

The fourth theme (issues of personal and cultural aspect) focused on investigating the link between teachers' personal life and professional life. It tried to navigate how the professional life influenced the private life or the other way round. In the same vein, it searched how teachers' cultural upbringing impacted their teaching practice. This helped to know how teachers reflect on their own ethnocentrism and the possible coping mechanisms they employ.

Towards the end-section of the interview guide, there was another complementary section (concluding thoughts) which explored three things. One, it searched if there is a difference between teachers' understanding of inclusive education years back and today. Two, it cross-examined whether there was a difference between what teachers believe in and what they practice. Three, it considered if there were challenges in the implementation of inclusive education (see appendix one).

3.4 Piloting

To ensure the quality of both substantive and methodological issues, piloting is advisable (Yin, 1994). Accordingly, piloting has been used not only to assess the content of the interview guide, but also to test how clear my language (in terms of wording, accent, appropriateness, etc) was. The piloting also helped me in testing whether my approach was friendly to the interviewee or not. More to the point, it gave me a lesson on time management and quality of recorded data in the actual data collection.

3.5 My Role in the Research

Simons (2009) challenges researchers by saying “what right do we have to study others if we don't also study ourselves? (pp.80)” The observation of Simons exemplifies the unavoidable presence of myself and the role I play in the case study. I am playing a chief role in setting agendas, designing questions, gathering the data, and interacting with the subjects of the study as well.

Thus, I am aware that my world view, my educational background, and the culture I am brought up might have an impact in the research. However, even though it is possible to minimize the personal impact (and I firmly worked to do so) on the case study research, I believe that eliminating the influence and hence detach oneself from it is completely impossible. No matter how researchers may try to detach themselves from the research, I believe that humans will take part either in interpreting, designing, questioning, or any other activity in the process of the research. This kind of task, for me could not be done without an exposure to other peoples' views and philosophies; and that is where the influence might begin to infiltrate.

3.6 Establishing Trustworthiness

Validity and reliability are the core elements that are widely used to establish trustworthiness in the research realm. Even though the debates on the usage of *validity* and *reliability* in qualitative research in general is still not settled, I have preferred to include them as main components in establishing the credibility of my research process. For instance, Silverman (2001) defends the appropriateness of validity and reliability irrespective of one's orientation to the different research paradigms. On the contrary, Thomas (2011:63) claims that the notions of reliability and validity have been imported from particular kinds of research (psychometrics) and hence their meaning and importance is far less clear in a case study.

However, by putting the debates aside, validation is taken here as “the quality of the researcher's craftsmanship throughout an investigation, on continually checking, questioning and theoretically interpreting the findings” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:249). Similarly, reliability is taken here as the need to be “a consistent, thorough, careful and honest in carrying out the research process” (Robson, 2002:176).

Therefore, the attempt to achieve validity has been done using the following strategies.

- **Prolonged involvement:** the transcription of data was easier to give to audio typist in order to get it done quickly; nevertheless, taking the advice of (Silverman, 2001), I chose to transcribe it by my own by taking much time and much energy in order to enhance reliability.
- **Peer debriefing:** the questions in the interview guide have been repeatedly assessed with the help of peer group members, advisor, and program convener in order to lift

the quality one step up. During the process of revisiting and rechecking, the content, language and the order in which questions appear have been under scrutiny.

- **The use of constant comparative method:** was also another important means that I employed to validate the process. I asked for an extension to the program board so as to get ample time to make sure that the data is interpreted and discussed from various vantage points.

The threats to reliability of my research were also minimized by the following strategies.

- **Audit trial:** the data from interviewees was listened over and over again in case there is a difference between the transcribed version and the audio version. The printed version of the data analysis and discussion was also crosschecked with the interview of each informant carefully to keep away from misinterpretation.
- **Usage of long data extracts:** In the fourth chapter (data presentation and discussion), long extracts of data from interviewees were deliberately used throughout the chapter. This has been preceded by the specific question that provoked the answer. This was done deliberately in order to give a chance the audience a better chance of grasping the informants' world view. That, I guess is one way of adding credibility to the research.
- **Field notes have been used to develop reflections after each interview session.** The reflections helped to record and analyze incidents that have happened before, during and immediately after the interview sessions. My fear, accomplishment, time usage and plans that are related to the research project were also sent as parts of the reflections to my advisor and my program convener. This, for me, was one way in which I could assure my honesty.

3.7 Organization and Analysis of the Data

So far, there seems no convincing answer as to what constitutes a correct and valid transcription. Conventionally, however, scholars suggest raising the question 'what is useful transcription for my research purpose?' (kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). The authors also affirm that there might not be a perfect and objective transformation from oral to written mode.

The recorded series of interviews were transcribed and turned into textual material (transcripts). This was the fundamental data for the subsequent analysis and discussion. In order to prevent potential loss of both the recorded data and the transcribed data, back-up

copies have been made available in separate location. This has enabled me to do my task on the working document without much anxiety.

I then began initial reading of the transcribed data (raw data). I immersed myself to this process because I believed that the initial reading might provide me the necessary platform for the coding (indexing) and categorization which in turn is pivotal to the stage of discussion and interpretation. Many scholars see ‘coding’ or ‘indexing’ as a key process in case study researches(for example, Berg, 2007; kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Denscombe, 2007; Simons, 2009) since it serves to organize and conceptualize the abundant transcripts that have been collected (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). This approach is often known as ‘data driven coding’ (Denscombe, 2007; Berg, 2007). Same authors have also enlightened me to look into another possibility of coding which is often known as ‘concept driven coding.’ The second type of coding gave me a chance to consult existing literature in the inclusive education to start with. Thus, it is after all these considerations that data was organized, analyzed and interpreted.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

After the approval of my research proposal by the board of examiners, a formal letter of request for a permit to data collection has been sent to the NSD (Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services). This national office has assessed the possible procedures of my research project including the less sensitive issues that it has and the presence of almost zero risk on the research setting and potential informants. As a result of that, I got a letter of confirmation (see appendix three) to collect the data from volunteer teachers in an elementary school.

For the sake of clarity and trust worthiness, an informed consent letter that explains about the main goal of the study, confidentiality, permission, and duration of participation has been prepared (see appendix two). The letter also included brief description about the minimal risks and indirect benefits of the study to the participants. There were two driving motives behind the need for signed informed consent slips. Primarily, I wanted to ensure that my informants are participating in my research project being aware of the research protocol. Secondly, the informed consent slips were also intended to monitor the voluntary participation of my informants. It is only after reading and understanding this letter that informants were asked to sign for their voluntary participation. One signed copy of the ethical issues has been handed over to participants.

4 Data presentation and Discussion

In this chapter, the data that has been collected from informants is presented and discussed. Primarily, a brief introduction (in the form of description) of the research setting and the informants will be provided. This will be followed by detailed presentation of findings with comprehensive discussion. Both parts are intended to address the main research question “how do teachers understand the concept of inclusive education?” and the three succeeding sub-questions that have been stated in the first chapter (section 1.3).

4.1 Creating the Picture of the School and the Informants

In this section, the school that has been chosen as a setting of the research and the informants of the study are introduced to the reader. The description, though so concise, is assumed to shed some light on some instances of what the school has and who the participants are. For the sake of confidentiality, however, the name of the school and the name of the teachers are made anonymous. Hence, the teachers who served as informants to this study will be mentioned as teacher-one (T1), teacher-two (T2) and teacher-three (T3). The order in numbering of the teachers, however, is not reflecting the order of the interview. The order has been mixed purposefully in order to minimize possible clue of the identity of informants.

4.1.1 The School

The school has been in place since the second half of the 20thc. It is a 1-7 grade level school with nearly 600 hundred students and 40 teachers. In terms of diversity of students, it has students of various ability, disability, aptitude and cultures. However, compared to the huge number of students in the school, the cultural diversity of students could be taken as homogenous. The school has a program called ‘Olweus Program’. This program is targeted against bullying and anti-social behavior. Olweus program is believed by the school to be helpful not only in getting new knowledge about bullying, but also in developing initiatives that enhance social skills.

The school has also a special class (D-Class) that accommodates children with various special needs. Pupils’ age, in this city-wide group, range from 6 to 13 years. Presently, the group has

four girls and three boys. These children are organized based on the interest of working together rather than by age. Still some of the children with special needs are said to have an affinity class in the mainstream school. The school has assigned three teachers and three assistants to this special class. Based on the school principle, pedagogues are responsible for two or three children each.

During the data collection, I got a chance of seeing one of the organized programs that takes place every Wednesday for half an hour. This program is a reading session. Students from upper classes such as grade seven and grade six take turns each week to read books, magazines, fliers or any other material that the children in the special class inspires.

4.1.2 The Informants

Teacher-one is a woman in her fifties. She has been teaching for more than 24 years. She has taught in full-time and part-time situations since 1989. She began her job by teaching in special school for children with disability. After three years of stay in the special school, she moved to elementary school for another three years. As a result of the changes of reforms in Norway, she has taken many pedagogical courses. However, it is more than a decade since she studied the special pedagogy. She has been a sixth-grade teacher, a fifth grade teacher, and a seventh-grade teacher. Now, she is teaching in the fourth-grade. In the special classes and ordinary classes she had so far, she has also taught many subjects such as English, mathematics, Norwegian, and special needs. In her family, teacher-one was the younger of the two sisters. Teacher-one still have a fresh memory of her older sister's situation (almost four decades ago since then) who was told in the school all the time that that she was not good for anything. With this special experience at home and many other experiences at school, she shares to me her beliefs about inclusive education, the challenges in the practice of inclusion as a daily routine, and the good and bad memories of personal and professional life from the early days up to now.

Teacher-two is currently 35 years old. He has been serving for 13 years as special needs teacher. On the time of the interview he was already moving from the school he was working for years to another school. His entire professional career so far is limited to teaching in the elementary school. In the dozen plus years he stayed in teaching, he has been working with various children with special needs. He has a vast experience in managing children with autistic cases. More to the point, he has completed his study on special needs. As a result of

that, currently, he is taking care of students in the autistic spectrum. However, side by side to that, he has been teaching almost everything- math, Norwegian, science, and religion (only to name a few). Even though he is not Norwegian, he speaks Norwegian more fluently than English. He loves living and working in Norway. Since his arrival in Norway many years back, he has a Norwegian wife. He is also a father of two kids.

Teacher-three has been a teacher for three decades. She has been teaching from first grade up to seventh grade. But she spent more time teaching on the fifth grade. She has a vast experience with pupils who have challenges of acting out (ADHD). Currently, she is teaching the first grade. She has been teaching Norwegian as a subject at most. But since she is teaching smaller kids now, math, art and craft, social skills are all components of her daily routines. Before she joined the teaching profession, she has been working in the newspaper. She also had a chance of working for some time in kindergarten. However, her long-time desire was to work with children and in a school. That is why she, finally, ended up in a school. Teacher-three has got two daughters as well.

4.2 Possible Facets of Understanding

The results of this study have been categorized in six facets. These facets or aspects are assumed to illuminate the informants' response in an organized manner. The fundamental logic and procedure for coding and categorizing that led to this stage of presentation and discussion has been stated in the methodology section (see chapter three, section 3.7). It is also worth mentioning that some of the quotes I use in my discussion have been partly modified structurally in order to fit the written grammatical mode. This has been done with great care and without affecting the heart of the content.

4.2.1 Facet One: Teachers' Explanations

In this aspect or facet, teachers' response was explored to see if teachers could explain not only what they know, but also to comprehend the possible justifications in support of what they know about the notion of inclusive education. In other words, this facet is knowledge of why and how. So having in mind the second research sub-question of the study, the specific questions that have been built and diffused subtly in the interview guide are revisited here.

One such question was “what would help teachers to respond to the different needs of children in and out of the classroom?” the explanation forwarded by **T2** might be relevant here. **T2** puts it in the following way;

You have to understand them. You have to feel what they are and what they can do, what they manage to do with help and without help; and if there are several problems, may be you have read about them, and study about them first, have a close relation to the parents, and sometimes you have to talk to other students around them. About their tradition, and hopefully it will help them understand how to be together.

T2's words seem to arise from performances and familiarity of the challenges that he has experienced through the years. Explanation as a facet, here, is evidently revealed when **T2** enlightens how inclusive education works, what it entails, where and with whom to cooperate, why and how challenges may come to the fore. **T2** mentioned six important points at a time. The necessity of knowing what each students could potentially do and could not do, the level and extent of support that teachers may provide, the need to consult books and other supporting materials, the multidisciplinary approach for better result and better future of students, the need to embrace peer students as problem solvers, and the necessity to get familiar with students background culture & custom are all the key issues that **T2** emphasized.

On the other hand, **T3** and **T1** seem to share similar stand to the same question that I asked earlier. Both prioritize the presence of more teachers and more adults in order to accommodate the diversity of students in the classroom.

*You have to have other adults and educated people; we do not have those. We have more than five hundred pupils. A lot of them need to have special care. We need more educated people to take care of all these differences because I am teacher on a normal circumstance. But there are a lot of pupils who need special care. We don't have time, we don't have the ambition, and we don't have rules.**T3***

T3's opinion appears to suggest the lack of ambition by teachers and absence of rules in the school. However, it seems a bit hard to take all she mentioned because in terms of rules all schools are supposed to be led by the core curriculum which gives a room for adaptation and which prescribes inclusion as a fundamental principle. In fact, it is not wrong to say that

inclusive education is workable with the presence of many adults and many teachers; rather, this conveys simplistic view as opposed to qualified supported conception.

Similarly, the verbatim of **T1** follows:

*Well, I believe in teachers. There should be more teachers. There are too many children to see, help and give care. So in a teaching situation it is very important that you have enough time for each child because if it is too difficult, as a teacher I need to know that this child would have a fair chance to reach this goal. So I have to adapt what I think is important; also I have to guide each child through what they went through and what they can achieve. **T1***

These teachers (**T1&T3**) have been teaching for many years. Their verbatim seem to focus on how inclusive education operates less if there is a limited human resource and time-bound. It also shows what consequences follow from the time-bound and limited human resource, and what causes it. Hence, to understand in this sense might be taken as seeing inclusive education in its relations to other things (time, personnel, education, etc).

Surprisingly, these challenges have been mentioned and discussed as main findings of Haug's study thirteen years ago. Haug (2000) illustrated the lack of development of pedagogy, organization of the school, architecture of school environment, preparation of teachers in the teachers' education, etc as the main hurdles of implementation of inclusive education. Since Hague's work appeared long before the development of Competence Reform and other government measures, I was hoping to hear stories different from the context he described more than a decade ago. Unfortunately, similar reasons appear to be forwarded by the informants of this study. In other words, what he observed (on the time) still seem to roll on and on as a reflection of the current moves and realities of the school. In fact, it could be possible to raise the question of validity particularly, when he said:

'Individually adapted teaching had to be developed within an institution with hundreds of years of tradition of collective teaching and where all the fundamental structures have been constructed to serve the collective teaching. Therefore, I think it is almost impossible to develop the individually-orientated teaching under these circumstances and in these contexts. (Haug, 2000, pp. 300).'

I do raise the question of validity because it seems not clear why a school has to wait hundreds of years in order to develop adapted teaching. As long as the structural, organizational, attitudinal, and professional competence changes are taking place, there seems no reason to wait for centuries to realize the vision of individually adapted teaching that the government documents aspire.

Apart from that, in the review literature of the second chapter (see section 2.2) it has been argued how some key notions of some models are relevant to teachers understanding of inclusive education in the schools. Notions such as disability, differentiation, diagnosis, need, use of language and labeling are among the major ones that have got emphasis.

Accordingly, explanation as a facet of understanding might demand two core points. First, the need for teachers to be aware of the ongoing debate on and around inclusive education: teachers might be advantageous if they are conscious of the debatable issues which are raised in the conceptualization, theorization, implementation and evaluation of inclusive education (Oliver, 2004). That is one way of having a true understanding of certain concept. Second, The need for teachers to contemplate beyond the controversies: teachers should not be confused by the massive flooding of arguments from a specific model or theory. As long as each theory or model is meant for the betterment of the students and the schools, teachers should be aware that there is no single way to achieve that. That means there might not be a model which answers all the challenges that the teachers (such as **T1** and **T3**) are facing in the implementation of inclusive education. Teachers should take only useful lessons from each model that might be helpful based on the circumstance they are in. Therefore, teachers might find it good if they could learn some if not all of the fundamental issues raised in each model. This may strengthen their roles and responsibilities and ultimately develop professional competence.

In view of this, what **T2** and **T1** have been suggesting (in the earlier quotes) could be taken as one way of making inferences, connections, and associations. Then, prevailing or dominant and insightful practices might give birth to theories and models as a result of this facet of understanding. Their explanations have been assessed to see the extent of matching with the literature that has been discussed extensively about differentiation, learning styles, ordinary need and special need.

4.2.2 Facet Two: Teachers' Interpretations

This second aspect/facet accentuates the fundamental fact that there are often as many meanings as there are thoughtful interpreters (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). In this category, the first sub question of the research is the prime focus.

When my informants were asked what inclusion might mean to them. They gave me wide ranging answers. For example, for **T1**,

*“It is that you accept a child as it is and teach it from his/her own ability.
And then get the best abilities from them.”*

In **T1**'s answer, the interpretation of inclusive education could be drawn from the key words and phrases that say ‘*accept a child as it is*’, ‘*teach from its own ability*’, and ‘*get the best abilities from them*’.

The first key phrase appears to hint the inalienable right of every child to schooling. Hence, full recognition seems to be reflected. It also hints the enormous responsibility that a teacher, a school and authorities have. This is because, by default, if someone has a ‘right’, it means that there is someone else who has the responsibility to protect, respect and accomplish that ‘right’.

The second phrase seems to be equivalent with the notion of differentiation which is a central to the implementation of inclusive education. Differentiation, as a notion, has an eclectic nature-it takes a selective feature of the social and the medical models (see **chapter 2, section2.2**). In Differentiation, the basic assumption is that every learner is educable regardless of the type of challenges and problems. Difference in style of learning, in ability, in economic status, in culture, and many more types of dissimilarities are considered as fundamentals for planning. The identification (diagnosis), recognition (belongingness) and adapting instruction and curriculum to these needs (individually adapted education) are all various strands that we might possibly find in both models. For that reason, **T1**'s meaning making appears to remind us that teaching might not be simply the transferring of what the books say is important of something except as a prelude to navigate interpretation and hence better understanding of possibilities of inclusive education.

The third phrase seems to focus on the conscious effort that is needed to develop students' explicit and implicit potential for their life. This typical point has been emphasized in **T1**'s

answers in other parts of the interview as well. This is due to the fact that **T1**'s experience with pupils who need special care is much; and, the complexity of the task varies from child to child. However, she said that she was always in dialogue with the children who needed her constant follow up. If what has been planned did not work, she had to stop it and then begin all over again with another plan and another approach. She often does this to search the best out of them and expand that in different ways.

In this second facet (interpretation), unlike the first facet (explanation), it appears to be highly likely that different understandings of the same fundamental principle, curriculum, and vision would be proposed. An example to the case in point comes from **T2**. In the meaning making of **T2**, inclusive education is a very big concept that has a power in transforming a society from the disappointing and denigrating practices and norms that existed for ages to a new era that values citizens as they are. Here follows the rest of **T2**'s diction.

For me, when I think about it, the most important thing is that it is the basic kind of concept to accept for differences and similarities. It is also a concept for difference in children and development, but they would take same part and they are doing all together even though there are differences."

Unlike **T1 and T2**, **T3**'s interpretation of inclusive education seems to focus on placement. In her answer to my query that says 'what does inclusion mean to you?' The importance of creating an opportunity is clearly visible in the language she uses. However, towards the end of the statement, she comes up with an 'if' expression that erodes the sense of the remaining idea.

*it is like they are being in the class following the program like the other pupil...it is important to give them an opportunity to learn if you/we know they cope up.***T3**

The 'if' expression invited me to raise the question of 'how.' The question, in turn, brings us back to the discussion of diagnosis, ordinary need and special need (see section 2.2.1 & 2.2.2). The issue of 'need', I strongly believe, is one of the focal aspects in schools. It is obvious that every learner comes from a diversified background; and the diversity of the students will require schools to fulfill the students' need. Then, partly, the task to fulfill the needs of students goes to the shoulder of teachers. The challenge starts when the teacher begins to define the concept 'need'- What does 'need' mean? When do we say a pupil has a need?

To put my argument in another form, what constitutes a need? The challenge also becomes tougher when the adjective ‘special’ is added to the concept ‘need.’ When does a need become a special need? How easy or difficult is it to identify and assess the need of pupils who come from various backgrounds? What about the perception of the assessor/teacher? Is not it possible to be perceived differently if different teachers are assessing a student for what is called a need and special need? How do we control that? These are only some of the puzzling questions that may demand critical consciousness of teachers.

In this regard, T3’s interpretation seems to deviate from the other two. Meaning, of course, as it is often said could be in the eye of the beholder. Same issue, same event and same law could have dissimilar bearing to different teachers. In other words, the interpretation might be bound by the personal, communal, historical, cultural and economic milieu in which they occur. That could be probably why a prepackaged meaning of notions such as inclusive education should not be handed to teachers. The attempt to do so might be futile.

4.2.3 Facet Three: Teachers’ Applications

In the third facet of understanding, the third sub-question of the research is under scrutiny. The core premise in this facet is ‘to understand is to use the knowledge and skill someone has.’ Accordingly, my informants in this section portray how they match their knowledge and skill into the context they are working.

One way of analyzing to the third sub-question was approaching the informants how they organize their classes, their lessons, and activities. An exploration has also been made in order to see the specific or particular methodologies they stick to. The results seem the following.

At this time, T2 is working with autistic cases. As a matter of fact, the pupils with such cases are no children any more. In terms of age, they are teenagers- varying from 18 to 21. So he prepares a plan which is different from student to student; the nature of the plan also varies from day to day. Of course, he mentioned the immense effort he exerts (as long as it is possible) not be too far away from the main curriculum. The quote here under tells more about his practice of inclusive education.

But, of course, when you have several impairments and big impairments, you have to look the reality. I try to teach them and write down first what they really need in

*real life. I try to imagine working with other colleagues and with family. What do we wish for these particular children in their future? And the way I work is I basically write down the target they basically need to know and should reach. I try to find from books or the web what kind of information could help me to do my job.***T2**

Inclusive education is described as about fitting schools to meet the social and educational needs of all pupils (Flem, Moen & Gudmundsdottir, 2004). This shows that the system of education has the foremost responsibility to include a big diversity of students and to offer a differentiated education to everyone. Then, **T2**'s zeal and endeavor, no matter how challenging and time consuming the process might be, could be seen as encouraging practice of adapted education and differentiation.

When it comes to **T1**'s practice and experience, she prefers to see the question of organization and usage of different methods in the classroom from two distinct ways- from the side of the ordinary students and from the side of those who have special need in the ordinary classroom, as she has three pupils who have different challenges. Two of them have a challenge in reading and the third one has more difficulty in math.

From the side of the latter group, often, she chooses to do things with simple things, but differently. For instance, she takes these kids to the kitchen and uses the recipe as a resource. The kids benefit two things at a time-one, they practice and improve their readings (directly associated with the Norwegian and English); second, they get better with their potential in using numbers and calculations (directly associated with Math). **T1** stresses the need to make pupils aware that they have to make effort; and, they have to know that it helps them. In doing so, she asks them how it worked for them, whether they have learnt something or not, if it was good for them or not, and so on. However, she does not hide the huge problem in realizing her ambition. **T1** states the problem in her own words.

In different occasions, these kids come (individually) to me and say 'why do you think you are coming to me?' 'Why are you here? Why am I doing the class?' Then, I try to make them conscious of why they are there and the special challenge they have. I don't want to lie to them. I tell them by saying I am here to help you, but you have to do the job. I know you can make it. You are going to succeed if you can make this and that. In that way, I try to build their self-esteem.

From the side of the ordinary group, **T1** cites what she does in English lessons. Here, she divides her activities in two levels- what everyone has to do and for those who want more challenging tasks. The level also applies in how much to do because **T1** takes into consideration that some can work quicker (hence, they can do more) and some others need more time (hence, they can do less). Even in writing at sentence level. The top students will have to write long sentences and the others have to write shorter and simpler sentences. Her teaching seems to fit what (Briggs, 2004) has recommended (**see, section 2.3.1**).

Following **T1**'s elucidation of her application of organization and different methods, I asked her to tell me the skill and knowledge she needs to teach inclusively and her answer was

Basic skills of course! You have to do things more often. But, the most important thing is you have to find out which way is it best to teach this child. What the strong side of the child is. How can I reach into him/her and make this child believe in himself/herself and have own motivation for learning. That is the key thing for a special teacher.

On the other hand, **T3** seems hesitant to talk about classroom organization and application of methods. Instead, she spotlights the need to have rules-do and don'ts-because she says that the children are very small and many (28 in number). **T3**'s worries and reservation to the focal point could be traced from part of her talk:

*At the beginning, it is very important to have rules. It has to be safe and good; and every day the same. So they can feel that they know what is going to be done today or want to do tomorrow that is what matters because they are small. I would like to have smaller groups because you have to be in love and share things. You have to do both things. It would work a lot if we had smaller groups. Sometimes, I take smaller groups outside the class and do something else.***T3**

My exploration to search 'how and where' teachers use their knowledge and skill in new and realistic situations continued when I heard about the outdoor activities of the school (the research setting of the study). I made inquiries to all my informants how they view the outdoor activities and if there was any contribution it makes to inclusion. Coincidentally, the results I found from all appears to reflect the positive side of it. The only difference among them lies on the challenges they faced. This is because **T1** has fourth graders (mixed group in

one class) while **T2** has pupils who are all in the special unit; and **T3** has small children at grade-one. The diversity of the challenges is offered, partly, at this point.

*Sometimes it is important that you have to make them understand the social understanding of each other. It is challenging for several children with multiple impairments to understand why you have to wait a turn when you play or how you say things. The minimal things, the things we don't think, you have to teach them.***T2**

The experience **T2** shared has been accentuated by (Gause, 2011). Teachers are often called to solve every single problem that students face in and out of the school yard. The diversity of students has frequently been and will be the foremost challenge to teachers.

*There can be many problems as well. But, then, that is the way to learn. We try to have different learning areas. It is like we have different tastes that we learn a lot. Not just a classroom. Some teachers are very good at it while others tend to stay in the classroom. We are also different -from teacher to teacher.***T1**

The opinion of **T1** reminds us to revisit the discussion that has been dealt in the assessment of political documents (see 2.4.2 & 2.4.3). The educational act (9A) recommends the provision of physical and psychological environments for students to enhance their social, physical, and educational future. Hence, the outdoor activities, the alternative ways to the customary classroom chores might also be related to these subscribed features. **T1**'s verbatim might also show the wide-ranging of interest that might possibly be observed in students and teachers. The very presence of different pupils in a class itself could be a challenge for management. Hence, competence of teachers to foresee and minimize threats seems an implicit message of **T1**.

*I don't think they know how to do it. They are small children. They don't know what they should do when the pupils with special need act differently. For example, they may cry, scream, or get angry. However, at other times, when they are together, they get this confidence before these kids. I can see that they have all good time. So, we have to be honest. We have to be able to tell them what is wrong and how we should act, and feel; if we could do that, I think the others would understand a lot more. They would also be able to integrate them. Therefore, they should be told early that they have a child with special need.***T3**

T3, in the extract, looks to convey the indispensable role of honest communication with children of all ages. Partly the challenge with the small kids could be the level of maturity to comprehend and partly due to the dilemma of teachers whether to tell everything about the pupils with special need to everyone or not.

In brief, the discussion in the third manifestation of understanding has shown how the informants thinking and action is used, adapted and customized in the outdoor activities (games, visits, etc.). It also showed how they, regularly, negotiate different constraints in diverse situations with different skills.

4.2.4 Facet Four: Teachers' Perspectives

In the fourth facet of understanding, the first sub-question is again re-examined by different questions. The nucleus of this facet lies in addressing the extent to which teachers' are able to keep the 'critical distance' in their profession. This might involve the discipline of asking questions such as 'from whose point of view? From which vantage point? What is assumed or tacit that needs to be made explicit and considered? Is there adequate evidence? Is it reasonable? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the idea? Is it plausible? What are its limits?' (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005: 95).

Among the many questions that could show the nature and extent of perspective of teachers in the interview guide, only three are exemplified here. Assuming the age maturity and experience accumulation, the first one describes how the informants view their understanding of inclusive education years back and today; the second question specifically seeks out if there is a difference between what the informants believe and what they practice; and the third questions combines the two questions above by asking informants if they have developed certain perspective through the years.

When **T1** began her career a quarter century ago, all the special schools were being closed as a result of the new law in Norway. She recounts the situations of the time in a flashback.

When I started to teach, they closed all special schools because they said that they have this new law. Children should stay in the ordinary school. We are going to adapt the teaching so that they can stay and have a good school. I don't believe in that anymore because we don't do that much in a way. We have bigger classes; we have more curriculums which we shall go through that is too much pressed

and more stressed on getting that all student/children should learn for a year. And, I see that these children [pupils with special needs], they feel like losers all the time because we don't manage. Therefore, I think we need both. We need special schools.

T1's explication seems to give an indication of the development of perspective across the years. She aspires to see both types of schools for a range of reasons. On one hand, she says that some children will be luckier to be in the special schools because they not only can feel secure but also some parents that she met in some occasions tell her that their children have started to be happier in special schools. She also mentions the research articles that are being published in the teachers' union magazine in which parents are said to be reflecting similar opinion about the special schools. On the other hand, she wants to see the inclusion of some children in the main stream school or regular school because that might be far better for them than the special school. So **T1** wants to see the balance of what is good for each student and what is less advantageous about the regular and the special school. She believes that there is no one right answer to the question of 'best place' for children to teach.

Equally speaking, **T3**'s account illustrates the point of view she earned for more than three decades. Her insight seems to prompt a fresh look over the familiar agenda of 'inclusive education process' that has been going on for decades in Norway. She has a firm stand that much remains undone compared to what has been done in inclusive education. Her stance also seems to show that the extent of knowledge and education that many people have about inclusive education is very limited.

*I think we have not been able to do what we were actually meant to do in action. I see that many of the institutions are doing something; and we have done a lot of good things in the society, but I think we have a long way to go to do this in a better way in the school. People should know more about it.***T3**

T2, in his part, elucidates the journey he passed through in developing the perspective he has now. During the 80s, he was a little kid going to school with a bunch of other kids among which one was a bit different from **T2**'s group. **T2** and his peers never understood what was wrong with the kid who was staying in the sideways all the time. The teachers were not making much effort to include the child. The rest of them (students of the time) were not told

what was going on and what they could do. Even in his birthday party, though it was customary to go and celebrate with many others, nobody went to this kid's birthday party. **T2** says that it was a bit scary because that kid was not doing with them any activities; he was not part of the friendship. Now, after weighing the journey he went through and the practices he accomplished, however, **T2** reveals his point of view which is built from various vantage points.

*Now I am working with autistic cases. I don't know how much they understand me and how much they want to be. If the child does not want to be included or he/she wants to be alone, you have to understand that and you have to respect that as well.***T2**

Informants' Perspective as a fourth facet of understanding was also assessed by a second question that has been highlighted earlier in this section. I invited my informants to explain to me whether there is any difference between what they believe and what they practice. The range of answers I received appear to demonstrate the multifaceted factors and challenges that create the gap between belief and practice. In order to show the vantage points from which the informants talk, the following quotes are extracted from their individual interviews.

*I can speak with very much words, but then when it comes to practice, I really often I cannot make it. Sometimes, it does not work; and sometimes I get very tired. The patience is not as good as it should be. I have really my bad days when I say 'Oh, why did I do this? Why am I a teacher? I am not good at all. But, still, I think that I can decide in my head and in my heart. This is the way I wanted to be a teacher. That will help me through those days that I am not very good because I develop them in the stay every day.***T1**

As observed in the extract, **T1** critiques herself by bringing the struggles she makes while accomplishing her daily routine. Sometimes, what she read and what she knew helps her perform things as planned; at some other times, things seem to go otherwise. However, she appears to love the challenge and seems to take the tougher situations as means of learning to her professional life. **T2** speaks next.

"I think it is the question of time and loyalty. Sometimes, you plan, but things have been there for many years and the people working there are used to that. Then you have to change things. But you cannot change everything in one day. Maybe, there are five things you want to change. But you can't change four out of

five. May be, you should choose the change--one thing that you think is more important in that particular period. In that manner, you go on changing the second, the third, etc.” T2

For **T2**, the gap between belief and practice could be resolved as time elapses. He also suggests the need to be selective in the type of change and the size of change. The type of resistance that might be faced by teachers because of old habits is another particular setback **T2** has highlighted. Selective approach to change and endurance to trying times have been underlined as some of the ways to the implementation of inclusive education. The extract from the voice of **T3** follows.

“Because of the big variety of the conditions, we are not able to see the differences between the needs of one side and another on the other. And I am not educated to it. None of us are. We do a lot of thinking; we do a lot talking, but we don’t get anywhere. We have to think and we have to do it over again. Or we have to think and we have to stop. We have so many lonely people with special care. Especially, when they get forward, when the differences get bigger from the others, it is a big social problem for us; and, that is not good. You can’t just put a principle or a rule and say this could be fine. It is not like that.”T3

The extract of **T3**, on the other hand, seems to reflect a mixture of many things at a time. On the first few lines, the stress that results from big number of students and diverse needs seems to dominate. Next to that, the lack of professional development and special training seems to create sense of frustration and lack of confidence on what she does. This casts doubt over the proper execution of the education Act chapter Nine section 10-8(competence enhancement for staff members).Then, even though she does not say exactly why, she seems to point out the availability of mounting difference in children’s development. The lower achievers get lower and lower; and the high achievers keep higher and higher. Towards the end, **T3** seems to show her discontent by stating the uneasy nature of practice unlike oration.

4.2.5 Facet Five: Teachers’ Empathy

The fifth facet concentrates, predominantly, on the results of the first and third sub-questions of the research, but it also touches to some extent the second sub question in the form of consolidation. Empathy, as an aspect of understanding, tries to explore whether my

informants are able to get inside other people's feelings and worldviews. The particular interest here is on teachers' empathy towards pupils and colleagues. The assumption is that teachers who have empathy to their colleagues and to their students might overcome basic challenges such as egocentrism and ethnocentrism in their day to day activities and professional lives. The procedures and trends in the process of diagnosis and labeling could be good examples where teachers could show their empathy.

The fifth feature of understanding (empathy) should be seen distinctly from the fourth feature (perspective). Empathy, here, is taken as embracing and engaging oneself in order to know and understand what it feels and what it looks from the vantage point of others. Hence, it is looking things as an insider. Perspective, on the other hand, was regarded as earlier as keeping the critical distance by detaching oneself to see things objectively. In other words, empathy could be seen as warm (attachment) while perspective could be considered as cold (detachment).

In one way or the other, all my informants have been and still are in a context where answering the diverse needs of students is part of their professional life. So I raised what the necessity of the special unit could be (both for the children with special need and for the rest of the children in the school). **T1** wishes to see it from a broader angle. For **T1**,

“the most important thing is how you look upon human being; and what your values are. I think, for a teacher, it is very important what kind of values you have, what kind of attitudes you have towards children. So they should have the same chance to get what is best for them.”

In **T1**'s eyes, teachers need to have enthusiasm, love, affection, and respect for the kids more than anything else. She does not believe in special methods at all. Instead, she insists that teachers should believe in what they teach and how they teach. If they do so, she thinks they could manage. If teachers give love and care for the children, all children could learn. To **T1**, the service that teachers provide should be professional. For her to be a professional is to care. **T1**'s view could be seen in relation to the argument of Briggs (2004). Briggs contends that inclusive education should emphasize not only academic aspect, but also the social aspect. That might make the school environment more humane and more attractive to learn and work.

T1 also sees the benefit that the rest of children could get as a result of the presence of pupils with diverse needs. As an instance, she conveys what her current class is benefiting from

having a child with Down syndrome. She says that it gives the kids a chance to think how to live with people who are different from us and how to help each other.

Similarly, **T2** comments the following in relation to the advantage of having special unit in their school.

*“You teach ordinary children to take care out of school and to understand some other properties. Then, that makes them to have sympathy and empathy. If you understand the pupils’ perspective, this is going to help the students, so much, later as a grown up. It helps them on how they look at people and how they look at the society. It will enable them not be so rigid when they see and face differences between persons including schools in a big a society”**T2***

For me, beyond the affective response of sympathy, the cultivation of diversity accommodation in pupils’ mind is worth noting from **T2**’s comment. The conscious effort to see and feel what other people from different culture, language, ethnicity or various disability types tend to see and feel is far important. Whenever teachers and students tend to be open minded, it might lead not only to respect others’ views, but also to breakdown the wall of ignorance to understanding. Evidently, **T2**’s citation could be translated to what Barton and Armstrong (2007) call ‘the means to an end.’ This includes the cultivating of students’ mind through teachers which ultimately could help see the progress of inclusive society.

T3, on the other hand, seems not quite sure if the rest of the children are benefiting as a result of the presence of pupils with special needs. **T3**’s hesitation and indifference partly comes from her experience in the classroom. She says she has one kid with special need in her class. This kid usually is said to act differently. She describes him as very quite, but at times very angry and frustrated. When the rest of children observe this kid while acting differently, they ask her what is wrong with him. However, the parents of that kid do not want their child to be the center of attention; they do not share any information to anyone else, even to the teacher (**T3**). As a result of that, **T3** chooses not to have a say about the kid to the rest of the class.

But when I asked her a follow up question by saying “what about the kid, do you think he is benefiting something as a result of his mere presence with many others” **T3** came up with rather different stand.

“I think it is a better way to integrate him in the school because it is realistic. I think it is better for his life because such children (with special needs) require a lot of resources and teachers.”T3

T3 appears to contradict herself. If the child’s needs and interest are not known properly, how is it possible to make the child beneficiary? On what ground is it better to the child she was mentioning if the kid’s teacher and the school has not sufficient background information? Most of all, how could this child be labeled as having special need if he is not diagnosed continuously (as it is done customarily for others)?

Therefore, as has been argued in chapter two (section 2.2.3), teachers who cannot make sense of what label or name damages student’s feeling and what name creates sense of confidence and pride may lack empathy. It is my conviction that teachers should not only explain the pros and cons of labeling if they want to minimize the potential danger certain tag may possibly create when they are teaching; instead, it could also be useful if teachers could give attention to how something looks from the point of view of others so as to intervene when students face bullying and teasing.

4.2.6 Facet Six: Teachers’ Self-Knowledge

The sixth facet of understanding (self-knowledge) is founded on the assumption/premise that it might be better to understand oneself before trying to understand others. In relation to self-knowledge, (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005) propose the need to search answers for series of questions such as “how does who I am shape my views? What are the limits of my understanding? What are my blind spots? What am I prone to misunderstand because of prejudice, habit, or culture?” (pp, 100)

The first and the second sub-questions of the study are under the microscope in the sixth facet of understanding. The explicit questions from the interview guide have been recapped in this point to observe the self-reflection of teachers. T2’s view will be the first to be considered here.

“I don’t know if I know myself very well. I believe that it affects my teaching. At the same time I am not so reflective to see myself in this way or that way. I just try my best, but maybe they will understand my values even though I don’t tell them.”T2

The honest self-reflection of **T2** alludes the wisdom to know one's ignorance. He could have prioritized listing the number of courses, the knowledge and skill he got on and off university campuses, or the rich experience he accumulated for more than a decade and half. Instead, he acknowledges openly what self-knowledge demands. **T2** also reveals the constant effort he exerts no matter what the end result may be. Partly this could be the reason why (Moen, 2004) has suggested the exploration of teachers' self-assessment and self-reflection on their own knowledge, skill and practice.

Part of my effort to know the relationship between how teachers teach and their private life comes from the response of **T3**. Beyond her motherhood, **T3** is the most experienced teacher compared to the other informants. More to the point, she had a nephew who, according to her account, spent most of his time in loneliness when he joined the ordinary school. The efforts of his teachers and the school (the adapted education) in the ordinary school, as she judges it, did not help him much. The special class was more comfortable for him and for his mom, so he had to go to that again. This is a living memory for **T3**. After reminding me this personal information, she portrays the influence of cultural background on her teaching in the following manner.

*I think I take most of my values with me to the class. Of course, I have to be careful, but my value is important to me; and I think I make that. I think so. However, I try to do it in a professional way.***T3**

Some of the influential factors in the teachers' 'self' and self-knowledge have been discussed in the literature part (section 2.3.1 and 2.3.2). Teachers' sense of 'self' is said to be influenced by professional activities. Equally speaking, professional activities are said to be influenced by private life that might be a cumulative result of nearby (immediate) surroundings, culture, specific norms, religion, educational background, and many others. Values, attitudes, and ideas are said to be hardly easy to detach from professional practice.

The powerful relationship between a teacher's personal life experiences and beliefs and how one teaches is also pronounced by *Savage* (2010). *Savage* argues that private life, ethnic and socio-economics background, gender, geographic location, religious upbringing and life decisions highly affect not only how the teacher teaches but also how s/he manages the classroom in a culturally responsive manner.

Practically speaking, therefore, an emphasis on self-knowledge might imply better readiness and better attentiveness of teachers as a reflection of good understanding. After all, as Howes, Davies and Fox (2009) rightly stated it, teachers control the main access to curriculum; and this might enable them to infiltrate their own postulations, anticipations, and anxieties on their practice. Unless the discourse of inclusive education impacts the way teachers see themselves and their role in the practice of inclusive education, what we talk and preach as inclusive practice might not be viewed more than a mere surface level accommodation.

4.3 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, understanding of informants has been presented in six features. These manifestations of understanding are considerably different from each other though highly interlinked. I have chosen to clarify the intricate concept of understanding through varied indicators. I am aware that the indicators might not be complete and exhaustive.

However, I believe that the manifestations of understanding that I considered might give a chance to look under standing as a concept that is composed of many attainments. For instance, it is customary to hear that good essay is composed of prose with three key manifestations. These facets, as many essay writing books disclose, are the persuasive content matter, coherence, and unity. These elements are usually demanded in the discussion of good essay or otherwise. Each element is different and slightly independent but still very much related to the rest. The essay might be coherent though not persuasive; it could also have powerful ideas, but with illogical flow (incoherence); yet the essay might be good in terms of content and coherence which still lacks unity of ideas.

I think this analogy could work in the discussion of the concept of understanding. Someone might have a fair explanation of an issue, but might fail in practicing what he/she believes. A teacher might also view things from a critical distance (presence of perspective) but still could lack empathy. Yet, others might have the self-knowledge that may not be accompanied by the presence of interpretation (lacks meaning making). Therefore, it is with such foundation that this chapter has tried to illustrate how the multifaceted sides of understanding are manifested in the informants.

The next chapter unfolds the conclusions that are drawn from the overall presentation and discussion briefly.

5 Conclusion and Implications

5.1 Summary of Findings

The principal objective of this study was to explore how teachers understand the notion of inclusive education. For the sake of simplicity and management, three sub-research questions have been set. At this juncture, it could be worth recapping and cross-checking of how these sub-research questions have been answered in the fourth chapter.

The first sub question was “What kind belief do teachers have about inclusive education?” this sub-question has been analyzed in facet two, (see 4.2.2), facet four (see 4.2.4), facet five ((see 4.2.5) and facet six (see 4.2.6). informants interpretation, perspective, empathy and self-knowledge were chiefly the indicators for the sub-question. The indicators, in turn, have been further addressed by many specific questions that have been thematically diffused in the interview guide.

Accordingly,

- **The informants have reflected an optimistic view about inclusive education. However, their optimism seems to be shadowed with the practical and technical challenges.** Similar positive beliefs from teachers have been observed in the study of Nilsen (2010). Equally, the struggle informants demonstrated in this study (when they perform their daily routine) appears to go hand in hand with the studies of Haug (1999); Haug (2000); Stephens et al, (2004). The outcomes of these authors have indicated the visible gap between formulated policy and curriculum versus their realization.
- **Among the informants, some teachers still believe that both special and regular schools are needed.** The inclination to see both types of schools (special school and regular school) side by side has been reflected from teachers who have accumulated skill, knowledge, and experience. The discussion of T1, T2 and T3 exemplifies this. Nonetheless, their preference to see both types of schools does not seem an indication of going back from the era of inclusive education to the era of segregation. Instead, it seems to appear from the vantage point of basic human rights approach (rightist). If inclusion is about acceptance and recognition of basic human rights, then the choice

and preference of students and parents who want the special school should be respected. If some students feel secure in the special schools, it should be open for them; their preference should be respected (no matter how small or big their number may be). To some extent, the belief of informants in this finding seems to fit with the results of Flem and Keller (2000). However, in terms of degree and tone, it is not as much pronounced as the advocates of special schools that Flem and Keller showed.

The second sub-question was aiming at examining ‘what knowledge and skill teachers have about inclusive education?’ This sub-question was broadly presented and discussed in the various aspects of understanding in the fourth chapter. For instance, facet one (see 4.2.1) chiefly addressed this sub-question; the fifth and sixth facets of understanding have also been partly intended to consolidate the discussion and analysis of this sub-question (see 4.2.5&4.2.6).

As a result,

- **The informants’ self-reflection shows that their daily routine is giving them life-long lessons for their profession.** Regardless of the extent of their expertise, all of them aspire to update their knowledge and skill with timely know-how and competence. **T2** hopes to continue and enrich his understanding of inclusive education when his two kids grow a bit; **T1** wishes to learn from her daily routine as she has a firm belief that the challenges she faces with children is the best education; **T3** aspires to study special needs education at university level.
- **Honesty to one’s own limit of knowledge and skill was audaciously revealed in three of the informants.** The readiness to learn on everyday basis for the dynamic situations of school environment and dynamic nature of challenges in the classroom was similarly displayed in all informants’ responses. However, this was much pronounced by the third informant. Florian and Rouse (2010), have advised to deeply inspect issues of teachers’ preparation and competence if inclusive education is to have real impact on the ground.
- **The impact of background culture on one’s own teaching practice was also recognized by all three informants.** The importance of identifying one’s own ethnocentrism has been shown strongly from Savage (2010) (see 2.3.1). Teachers may not have a true sense of inclusive education if they do not own self knowledge about the social barriers such as prejudice, labeling, patronizing comments, bullying,

communication problems, covert or overt use of power. In other words, teachers may not have empathy towards learners if they cannot identify own values, attitudes and principles in relations to culture, economic status, religion, disability, etc. They may even lack perspective if they cannot explain what barriers are, how they appear, and how they should overcome.

The third sub question says: ‘How do teachers match their knowledge and skill to various contexts?’ this sub questions has been analyzed and interpreted in facet three (see 4.2.3) and facet five (see 4.2.5). The findings for this particular research question could be stated briefly in the following manner.

- **Adaptation and flexibility has been observed as a main feature of the informants’ approach to respond to students’ diversity.** Special techniques and special skills were not mentioned in the organization of class room activities and usage of methodologies. Instead, lesser alteration in style of teaching and learning environment were found to be significant as an approach to inclusive education by informants.
- **The conscious attempt of informants to integrate cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills of students was visible in many ways.** Attempts to realize the development of social skills of students were consistently noticed on informants’ consideration of their knowledge and skill to match diverse circumstances. This seems an encouraging move to what the educational act chapter nine in section 9A sub section 1-4 demands.
- **Too much content accompanied by limited time for coverage and the question of money have been among the foremost reasons forwarded for the less realization of inclusive education on the ground.** Such structural threats around schools have been also observed in the findings of the case study that was conducted by Moen (2004). Hence, the findings of my case study seem to confirm the earlier work of Moen.

5.2 Implications of the Study

When it comes to the inclusive agenda and inclusive education, Teachers (in my view) are usually drivers of change. To teach competently might not mean to employ a great set of methods, but to cause understanding with the help of discussions, activities, lectures and

reflections (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). If that is so, the various facets that have been extensively dealt in this paper as multiple checks should then be researched by many more similar case studies. After all, the challenge in inclusive education does not seem to lie in what it reveals in the policies and visions of countries; rather, it appears to lie largely on what the practice of schools and teachers conceal.

As it was made clear in earlier discussion of my paper, there might not be one sole way to have a true understanding. The approach employed in this particular study should be taken as one attempt to it. It is through continuous study researches with the purpose of verifying, rejecting, and supporting earlier or/and current practices that a better way forward could be found.

Six distinct traits or dimensions have been used as analytic indicators in order to show the teachers' understanding of inclusive education in the elementary school. Each of these dimensions has been supported by concrete examples from the informants own thinking and language; these multiple checks (facets), in turn, have been backed up by commentary from literature, empirical studies, and reflection of own view. In that way, it is assumed that readers could get good impression of the topic and the case study.

It is my view that the informants understanding of inclusive education could be developed and co-constructed inductively while they are working with actual world problems in a real life situations and school settings. This is partly because meaning could be only fashioned and uncovered by constant reflection and contemplation than rehearsal and study. I also believe that understanding of inclusive education should be an inference which should be drawn from the practice of teachers such as the ones considered in this particular case study.

The notion of inclusive education which is preached in the books and policies (thesis of inclusive education) should be assessed and weighed against the bumpy road of the practice (analysis); in the course of time, it might be possible to put these two things together (synthesis). Then, It might be very likely to see the progress of inclusive education one more step up. In connection to this, Moen (2004) recommends the integration of experience from practice and the knowledge from theory and principle, as each of them are mutually dependent.

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Appendices

Appendix one: Interview guide

Interview guide

Introduction: Dear interviewee, I would like to thank you for your good will to be participant in my research project. The purpose of this interview is to collect information about how teachers conceptualize inclusive education. The time interval for the interview should not take more 1:00-1:30 hours. Moreover, I would like to give you confirmation of the professional and moral responsibility I have in keeping your opinion confidential.

Direction: For the sake of simplicity, I have tentatively arranged the issues for discussion in four themes. These are issues of teachers' belief of inclusive education, issues of Professional development, Issues of teaching methods and practices, and issues of personal and cultural features. However, you are free to choose in any order you want to talk. Besides, you are not obliged to discuss issues that you do not want to. Finally, I would like to cordially ask you to give me your honest responses to the questions I raise.

Thank you in advance again.

Background questions

- How long have you been teaching?
- When did you start teaching in this school?
- Which subject do you teach?

Theme one: issues of Teachers' Belief of Inclusive Education

- What does inclusion mean to you?
- What do you think is important in inclusive education?
- What would help you as a teacher to respond to the different needs of all children?

Theme two: Issues of Professional Development

- Could you tell me what you know about inclusive education?
- Where did you get the knowledge about inclusive education?

- What skills do you need to teach in inclusive education?
- Could you tell me the kind of support you get (in relation to inclusive education) from the school?
- Do you feel having more knowledge and skill about inclusive education?

Theme three: Issues of teaching methods and practices

- How do you organize the inclusive classroom in your school?
- What kind of method(s) do you use in your classroom?
- Is there any difference when you teach students in the first grade, second grade or later? How does it affect you practice?
- What is the advantage of having special unit (class) in your school?
- How do you explain the collaboration between the teams in the ordinary classroom and the special unit (class)? Who takes the initiative?
- Would there be anything that the outdoor activities in your school contribute to the development of inclusion?

Theme four: issues of personal and cultural aspect

- Is there any relationship between your personal life and how you teach? How does that influence your teaching practice?
- Do you think your cultural background influences your teaching practice? Why? Why not
- Do you have any or particular experience before?

Concluding thoughts

- How would you describe your understanding of inclusive education years back and today?
- Is there any difference between what you believe and what you practice?
- What are your challenges?
- Is there anything you want to say on/around the topic?

Appendix two; Informed Consent Letter

Informed Consent Letter

**Teachers Understanding of Inclusive Education in one
Elementary School in Oslo**

Researcher's Name: Tewelde Tesfay Yeibyo

Address: university of Oslo, Erasmus Mundus Cohort 2011/12

Phone: +4796565133

Email: teweldika@yahoo.com

Background:

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

Purpose of the study: The main objective of this study is to explore how teachers conceptualize inclusive education in the elementary school.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You are free not to answer any question or questions. This will not affect the relationship you have with the researcher.

Duration of participation: 1:00-1:30 hours

Benefits: There will be no direct benefit or any monetary compensation to you for your participation in this study. However, I hope that the information obtained from this study may

help you revisit your understanding of the notion of inclusive education. It may also help you reflect, revise, and adapt policies and practices in your school.

Risks of participation: The study has almost no risk. However, every effort will be made to minimize any unforeseeable risks.

Confidentiality:

For the purposes of this research project your comments will be anonymous. Every possible effort will be made to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Interview transcriptions, and transcribed notes and any other identifying participant information will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher.
- When no longer necessary for research, all materials will be destroyed.
- Information from this research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and any publications that may result from this study
- You have the right to obtain a transcribed copy of your interview. So you could tell the researcher if a copy of the interview is desired.

Consent:

By signing this consent form, I confirm that I have read and understood the information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Name: _____ Signature _____

Date _____

5 samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS

GIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



Harald HSfagres gate 29
N-5007 Bergen
Norway
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17
Fax: +47-55 58 96 50
nsd@nsd.uib.no
www.nsd.uib.no
Org.nr. 985 321 884

Jorunn Buli-Holmberg Institutt
for spesialpedagogikk
Universitetet i Oslo Postboks
1140 Blindern 0318 OSLO

Vardato: 02.08.2012

Varref:31029/3/SSA

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PA MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 07.07.2012. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

31029

Behandlingsansvarlig

Daglig ansvarlig

Student

Teachers' Understanding of Inclusive Education in One Elementary School in Oslo

Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens everste leder Jorunn Buli-Holmberg Tewelde

Tesfaj Yeibyo

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstillter kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomfores i trad med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gj0res oppmerksom pa at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal ogsa gis melding etter tre ar dersom prosjektet fortsatt pagar. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosiektoversikt.jsp>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.12.2012, rette en henvendelse angaende status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

[yigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim t6— V K&WL

Sondre S. Arnesen tlf: 55 58 25 83

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Tewelde Tesfaj Yeibyo, Olav M.Troviks Vei 14, HO511, 0864 OSLO

Sondre S. Arnesen

Avdehngskontorer / District Offices:

OSLO NSD. Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo Tel: +47-22 85 52 11. nsd@uio.no TRONDHBM: NSD.
Norgos teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47-73 59 19 07. kyrresvarva@svt.ntnu.no



Utvalget består av 4 lærere ved en barneskole. Formålet med prosjektet er å undersøke inkludering og opplæring. Data samles inn ved hjelp av personlig intervju.

Førstegangskontakt med Utvalget opprettes av rektor. Ombudet anbefaler at lærere som ønsker å delta tar direkte kontakt med student.

Det forutsettes at det ikke behandles opplysninger som er underlagt taushetsplikt.

Personvernombudet finner informasjonsskrivet tilfredsstillende, så fremt det tilføyes:

- dato for prosjektslutt og anonymisering
- kontaktinformasjon til veileder

Revidert informasjonsskriv bes ettersendes før utvalget kontaktes.

Prosjektet skal avsluttes 31.12.2012 og innsamlede opplysninger skal da anonymiseres og lydopptak slettes. Anonymisering innebærer at direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger som navn/koblingsnummer slettes, og at indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger (sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. yrke, alder, kjønn) fjernes eller endres.