Teacher Perceptions of Covid Policy Impacts
on SNE Student Inclusion
in Norway and the US

Master Thesis in Special Needs Education
Supervisor: Luca Tateo
Credits: 40
Spring, 2022

University of Oslo
Department of Special Needs Education
Faculty of Educational Sciences

Julie Frossmo
Olive Monette Francisco
Spring, 2022
Teacher Perceptions of Covid Policy Impacts
on SNE Student Inclusion in Norway and the US

Teacher Perceptions of Covid Policy Impacts
on SNE Student Inclusion
in Norway and the US

Title:Teacher Perceptions of Covid Policy Impacts
      on SNE Student Inclusion in Norway and the US

https://www.duo.uio.no

Abstract

Since March of 2020, the Covid crisis has altered nearly every aspect of life around the world. Amid the crisis, schools considered the World Health Organization's (WHO) advice concerning mitigation of the Coronavirus. After implementation of Covid policy into schools, studies have since reported a myriad of teacher-and-student struggles. This thesis is an aim to understand teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts as they concern special needs education (SNE) student inclusion, both in Norway and the United States (US).

Johnsen's (2020) Curriculum Relation Model (CRM) is an inclusive-practices model and an innovative tool that provided the theoretical framework of our study. The model offered a valuable means to better-understand teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion. It also served as a practical instrument to structure key themes and subcategories in the presentation of findings and in discussions of the study.

The methods used in the study are qualitative. The researchers conducted conversational interviews with respondents from the US and Norway. The researchers used a flexible, research design for the study, in which data from interviews were gathered and analyzed objectively. The rationale of the qualitative study was based on the comprehensive definition of a qualitative study, set forth by Hammersly and Campbell (2012).

The findings revealed that all teachers, both in Norway and the US, perceived Covid policies did lead to impacts to SNE student inclusion. Teachers in Norway and the US responded quite differently to the often-overnight-changes to curriculum that resulted in lowered participation rates in both countries. In the US, respondents perceived policy as the driver of grave impacts to students' emotional and social development; and to an unprecedented and across-the-board, academic failure rate. Further, during the US-year-of-remote-learning, and the two-year period of ongoing masking and distancing, respondents perceived feeling encumbered by the inability to communicate and to express care.

In contrast, Norway prohibited mask-wearing, implementing a relatively brief, two-month, in-class cohort system following a two-week period of remote learning, a relatively minor Covid response in comparison to the US. Norwegian respondents discovered their model more than sufficiently responded to their pupils' needs for human connection and learning, with no increased Covid-death-count when compared to the US. Still, most Norwegian teachers perceived professional difficulties during their remote learning period, with concerns about whether they had successfully responded to their students' diverse needs without sacrificing their individual learning goals.

According to respondents in both countries, though Covid restrictions did pose serious difficulties for SNE students' inclusion in general education (Gen Ed) classrooms, there was one exception. On the return to in-class schooling after a year of remote learning, US teachers perceived remote learning had elicited one, positive outcome for some of their SNE students: that of greater acceptance of SNE classmates; an outcome believed born of students' lengthy periods of social isolation and their subsequently unmet needs for human connection.

In order to sustain inclusion of SNE students in the Gen Ed classroom, the data suggests to the researchers that Covid policies, such as the extended use of remote learning and ongoing restrictions including anti-social distancing and masking, should be prohibited in schools. Long-term restrictions were deemed counterproductive, given policies bore extraordinary costs to student well-being with inadequate data to substantiate their use, and thus, the policies demand further study before future implementation. Given a wealth of critical information on student wellness and academic readiness, the data further suggests that teachers and parents be consulted before making decisions to implement remote learning, distancing and masking; and that parent and/or caregiver participation, be requisite, if-and-when, remote learning is implemented in the future. Lastly, provision of additional staff to support teachers in their planning efforts would ensure teachers are sufficiently able to support SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom.

Acknowledgements

A big thank you to our advisor, Luca Tateo. This thesis would not be what it is without your wisdom, insights and experience. We are truly grateful for your counsel!

To our respondents, thank you for supporting this project and sharing your experiences and perceptions with us when you were so incredibly busy and challenged by your work demands. This thesis is a testament to your dedication to your profession, and your devotion to your students.

Olive, you are pure sunshine with a boundless spirit of love and generosity. And when I look back on our MA, and writing our thesis, with all my ups and downs, I will first think of your kindnesses, your laughter and your radiant joy. You are SUCH a blessing! I'm so grateful to have you as my most-perfect thesis partner, but more importantly, I'm thankful for you, and our friendship. (Julie)

To my folks, thank you for keeping me propped up, reminding me to eat and for your faith in me and my ability to finish this thesis! And of course, thank you to my girls. Anne, you know I would never be here without you! Margaret, thank you for your pep talks and reminding me to take time to play. And to you both, your love and encouragement got me over the hurdles and to the finish line! Thank you for being the best daughters ever! (Julie)

Julie, I consider you as my ultimate gain in my MA years. I am grateful we had blossomed from being groupmates to a remarkable friendship that will last forever. I could not thank you enough for your encouragement during my statistics struggles. This thesis is a manifestation of how strong our bond is. We could face a great challenge and come up successfully. It was really fun working on our thesis with you, distance and time difference did not matter. (Olive)

To Jack, Pearl, Mom and Dad, thank you for the love and support. This success I shared with all of you. Your endless encouragement brought me where I am today. I love you! (Olive)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction

2.0   Theoretical Framework and Literary Background

3.0 Methodology

4.0 Results

5.0 **Discussion**

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

AKS	Aktivitetsskolen (After School Care in Norway)
CD	Compact Disc
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CIS	Children's International School
CRM	Curriculum Relation Model
ESSA	Every Student Succeed Act
Gen Ed	General Education
IB	International Baccalaureate
IBO	International Baccalaureate Organization
ICT	Integrated Co-Teaching
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ICDP	International Child Development Program
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
IPAD	Internet Pad or Computer Tablet
NO	Norway
NSD	The Norwegian Social Science Data Services
OSPI	Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
PE	Physical Education
SBAC	Washington State Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
SNE	Special Needs Education
SPED	Special Education
TA	Teacher Assistant
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organization
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a background of the study and our motivation for the project, including specification of the goal and objective of the study, are described below. The research question and thesis objective are also detailed with all key terms defined.

1.1   Background and Motivation of the Study

The United Nations' (UN) Salamanca statement released in 1994, recognises the rights of all children to attend school and to receive an equal and quality education. The US and Norway, two countries that have adapted this statement, seek achievement of the goal by ensuring inclusive and equitable education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. Regrettably, the pandemic had a major impact on the education of both countries, with the closure of schools beginning in March, 2020. Remote learning, interruption to classes and the cancellation or postponement of assessments and examinations had detrimental consequences to children's well-being and academic progress.

The global suspension of in-person classes, an effort to curb viral transmission, undermined the role schools play in promoting children's social, emotional and mental development. In addition to promoting students, schools have long-provided protection for children in need: playing a necessary and vital role in providing safe spaces that shelter students from risk factors, including abuse and violence, hunger, homelessness, teen pregnancy and crime, among many others (UNESCO, 2020).

Teachers in Norway and the US were shocked by a seismic shift in education. They were assigned new roles in which they were required to quickly adapt Covid policy. Would they be able to maintain special needs education (SNE) student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom during Covid policy implementation? Though teachers in Norway felt partially prepared for remote learning, many still faced difficulties in its implementation (Sætre, 2021). Teachers perceived the most difficult challenges around teaching/learning involved the maintenance of inclusion for all students during remote learning. Norway implemented minor Covid restrictions, though briefly,

in order to minimize the policy impacts on student well-being and inclusion. After a short, two-week period, they returned to regular, in-person classes, dispensing with all existing Covid policies (Godoy et al., 2022). In contrast, the US implemented extensive restrictions, including more than a year of remote learning and two-years of distancing and masking. Further, many US states opted to prolong Covid policies despite state emergency restrictions being lifted in March 2022 (Samuelson et al., 2022).

The differences in implementation of Covid policy in Norway and the US motivated our research question regarding teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion. In addition, the study addressed a gap in Covid research and Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion: no research was found regarding teachers' perception of school Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion, nor were we able to identify a difference of such data from countries that had distinctly different policies, such as duration of remote learning, masking, and anti-social distancing among students in school.

Furthermore, the researchers aimed to answer the question: What were teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion with the Curricular Relation Model (CRM) (Johnsen, 2020) as the theoretical framework of the study, focusing on its eight key aspects of the classroom: pupils, assessment, intentions, content, methods and organization, care, communication and context. The researchers chose the CRM given its curricular adaptations for greater inclusion, which provided both depth and breadth for our studies. Ultimately, the CRM laid-out the ideal framework for the best-understanding of teacher perceptions of SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom.

Given their direct contact with the learners, teachers have an overview of the ways in which students are impacted by changes and adaptations in educational curriculum and instruction (Kaden, 2020). Teacher perceptions amid pandemic challenges can serve to elevate inclusion practices. Understanding the situation from the perspective of teachers could lead to possible solutions without sacrificing learners' right to inclusion.

The research goal was to gain knowledge from the perspectives of teachers in Norway and the US, who played a vital role in securing the rights of education for all students during the Covid crises. We hope that information and knowledge constructed throughout this study will help future policy makers ensure that rules and restrictions during a crisis preclude negative impacts on SNE student inclusion. This information is intended to support Gen Ed teachers, SNE teachers, school administrators, politicians and researchers to improve opportunities for SNE students in the midst of change.

1.2   Research Questions and Objectives of the Studies

In this chapter the researchers present the study of teacher perceptions of SNE student inclusion during the Covid crisis. It was designed, planned, conducted and written to answer the research question, below:

What were teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom in the US and Norway; and with regards to the following eight CRM themes:

- Pupils
- Assessment
- Intentions
- Content
- Methods and Organization
- Care
- Communication
- Context

Teacher perceptions from the US and Norway will provide an important contribution to understanding the impact of future policy changes during unpredictable situations. Their perceptions hold the potential to better-support SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom.

1.3   Definition of Terms

Below, the researchers present central terms used in the study and their definitions. The central terms in this study are the following:

Perceptions of Teachers

Perceptions, according to Webster dictionary, (2012) is a noun that pertains to the ability of an individual to view a topic, concept or an object according to his feelings, thoughts and opinions. Perception is personal observation and the way in which someone gives awareness, regards, understands and interprets something.

In this research, the word, 'perception', refers to the intuitive insight and understanding of teachers as it relates to Covid policy implemented in school, and its impact on SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom.

School Covid Policies

According to the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 'school Covid policies' refers to recommendations, rules and guidelines that local governments implement within their educational sectors in their effort to manage the Covid crisis. Furthermore, it entails all restrictions and Covid rules which any school adopts to mitigate the Coronavirus (2021).

School Covid policies are as follows:

Social Distancing

Social distance is separation from other people. It is commonly considered to be a distance of two meters between students, teachers, faculty, school administrators and any school personnel, whenever a person is in the vicinity of a school.

Masking

Wearing of a mask to cover the nose and mouth by students, school teachers, faculty, school leaders and school personnel with guidelines on proper adherence.

Remote Learning

The shift in curriculum when in-person instruction ceased and was altered to digital, online learning. Usually remote learning took place at a student's home. In our research, remote learning pertains to learning content which SNE teachers adapted digitally.

Inclusion

Berit H. Johnsen defines inclusion as the ability of an educational institution to include all types of learners, coming from different backgrounds, including marginalized sectors, such as learners with disabilities, indigenous people, minority, and immigrants (2014). Further, Nielsen (2020) defined inclusion as being hand-in-hand with diversity and equity. He argues, when SNE students are treated with equity and inclusiveness, especially in diverse cultures, inclusion prospers.

Inclusion was addressed in the Salamanca statement, a document which maintained that all countries should adapt education for all. Schools should include every single child and celebrate children's individual and unique differences by responding to a child's individual needs (UNESCO, 1994). If children's needs aren't adequately responded to, as we seek to understand better through interviews with teachers, participation rates would be expected to decline, thereby breaking with international agreements to support students' individual needs.

In our research, inclusion references the perceptions of teachers: how they perceive inclusion during Covid policies. Did Covid policy affect teachers' ability to respond to the needs of all individual learners?

1.4   Outline of the Thesis

This research consists of five chapters. The first chapter introduces the thesis, the background and motivation of the research, the research questions and research objectives, as well as the definitions of central terms used in the study. The second chapter is an introduction and justification of the theoretical framework. It includes the literary background of the study that supports the chosen framework for our study. The third chapter of the study concerns methodology. Here, researchers detail the study design and methods for data collection, research context, recruitment of participants, description of the participants, conduct of interview, transcription and analysis of data, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness and limitations of the study. The fourth part of our study is the presentation of the results. Herein, the researchers outline teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion in Norway and the US, in terms of the CRM themes: pupils, assessment, intention, content, methods and organization, communication, care and context. The fifth and final chapter in the thesis presents a discussion of the data findings in chapter four, our conclusions and reflections, as well as the researchers' recommendations.

1.5   Conclusion

Next, the researchers describe the theoretical framework and literary background relevant to the research question. Here we introduce a curricular approach designed specifically to address inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom. This approach details eight aspects of an inclusive curriculum approach. These eight elements include key themes and subcategories from which we will view our research question.

2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERARY BACKGROUND

In this chapter the researchers presented the theoretical framework of the study. The introduction justifies the choice of using Berit H. Johnson's (2020) Curriculum Relation Model (CRM) as the theoretical framework of the research. Each of the model's eight curricular themes are presented along with related theory.

2.1   Introduction to the Curriculum Relation Model

The CRM is an extension of the traditional, educational curriculum model, adding the elements of care, communication and context to better respond to the needs of the *whole* child. It serves as a more comprehensive understanding of the teaching-learning process than traditional models. Based on the principle of inclusion education, it fosters learning-teaching situations that advance the special needs of all students in the Gen Ed classroom.

According to Berit H. Johnsen, (2020) developer of the CRM, the answer to the question of how to successfully implement inclusion lies in the discovery of what classroom 'tools' are available for planning, practicing, assessing and reviewing the teaching-learning processes in the classroom; and in determining the *degree* to which schools adopt critical knowledge of the process into their school credo. Ultimately, Johnsen argues, the extent to which schools aim towards these expectations, determines whether they can successfully develop inclusive practices (Johnsen, 2020).

2.2 Justification of The Curriculum Relation Model for Educational Research

The seven main areas serve as focal points of the classroom's inner activity; and are the categories which are most conducive to research in the educational sector. However, all eight primary categories of classroom processes are important factors of teaching-learning activities. By highlighting the teaching-learning processes, these eight areas are able to be prioritized, and

fully explored, analyzed and described, thus leading to research with both breadth and depth (Johnsen, 2020).

2.3   The Curriculum Relation Model for Educational Research

The CRM offers a collaborative, constructive 'tool' to assist Gen Ed and SNE teachers in implementing a meaningful, individually adapted and detailed curriculum for all pupils inside their collective. It is an innovative and flexible framework allowing teachers and their teams to design curricula that responds to pupils' needs for challenge and support; while in accordance with students' unique abilities and with flexibility in teaching within a Gen Ed classroom (Johnsen, 2014).

For schools with intentions toward inclusion education, the CRM responds to the challenges of implementation, offering a more dynamic model that addresses the unique characteristics, interests and abilities of all students. Given the basis of inclusive practice focuses on implementing and revising individual curricula in conjunction with the class curriculum, it is especially beneficial to SNE students, who have been long-excluded from the Gen Ed classroom of their peers (Johnsen, 2014).

Initially, we considered incorporating 'meaningful teaching' theory by Erling Lars Dale as a framework for analyzing sub-categories of the classroom curriculum (1999). This model consists of three valuable attributes of the teaching-learning relationship, which include teachers' perspectives, aspects needed for teachers to plan and conduct meaningful teaching and the three K's: K1-teaching situations, K2-planning time, and K3-teachers' knowledge and education. Instead, the researchers chose the CRM approach since its design specifically targets inclusion and provides greater breadth for our studies with its eight main aspects, namely: pupil, assessment, intentions, content, methods and organization, communication, care and context. Ultimately, the CRM laid-out the ideal framework for best-understanding teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts to SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom.

The CRM responds to these challenges of the classroom. It simplifies the complexity of curriculum design; prioritizing aspects of greatest import, and eliminating or diminishing areas of less consequence. It is a guide, and a critical outline of the most-important processes related to teaching-learning (Johnsen, 2014). The model also functions as an excellent framework for short-term and long-term teacher planning; knowledge building; and evaluation of teaching-learning relationships, for individuals as well as the entire class.

The key areas of importance within the model include eight, interrelated, central elements, seven of which concern the school's inner activity: the pupil; assessment; intentions; content; methods and organization; communication, and care (Figure 2.1). Context, the eighth aspect, envelopes the seven, micro-level foci, illuminating the innermost relationships of teaching-learning; between the individual and the classroom curriculum, as well as external elements, such as policy and economics; factors existing on the macro-level (Johnsen, 2020; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Figure 2.1: The Curriculum Relation Model
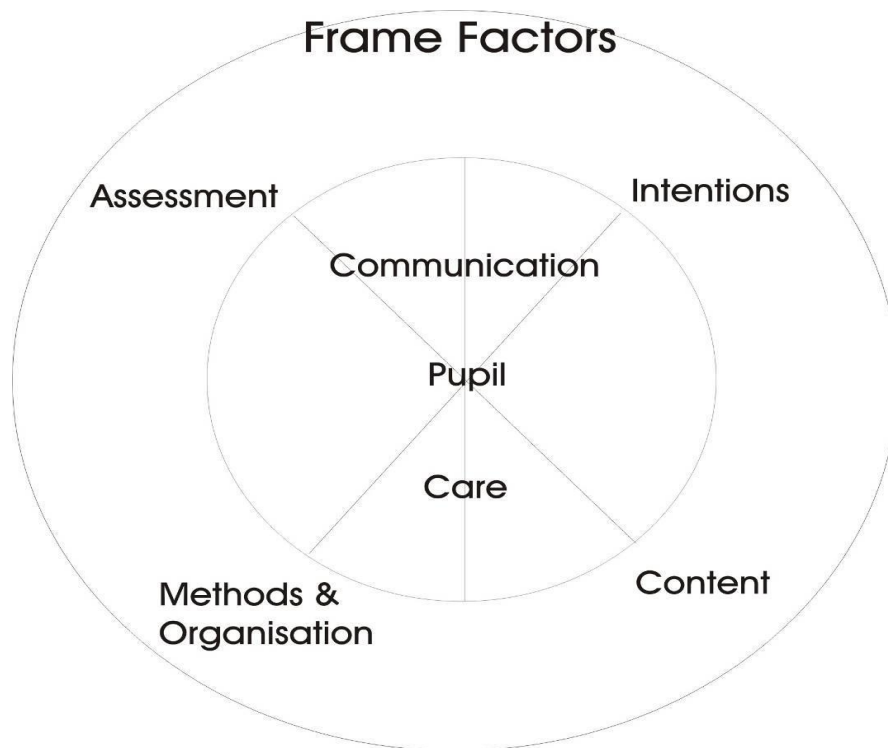
(Source: Berit H. Johnsen, 2014)

2.3.1 The Pupil

As opposed to a narrow, discipline-centered tradition, with a focus on content and norm-assessment of learning results, in a child-centered model of an inclusive school, the pupil and group of pupils, and the knowledge of how children learn, are the primary concerns in planning and implementing teaching/learning. Different ideas, traditions and theories, culturally and historically determined, influence understanding of the pupil. Nonetheless, teachers' outlooks are understood to change how they will perceive and interpret their students' behavior (Johnsen, 2001). For this reason, it behooves teachers to practice awareness and sensitivity of their own views; and to articulate their ideas on childhood and the nature of learning when reflecting on their understanding of the pupil (*Ibid*, 1998). Regardless of teachers' personal and unique standpoints, a professional educational understanding of every pupil should always be based on the following criteria: general knowledge about learning and development; learning strategies; the barriers to overcoming difficulties and impairments; and individual ways of communicating (Johnsen, 2014).

Getting to know the interests, motivations, and perspectives of each child is vital in developing meaningful and individually adapted curricula (Johnsen, 2014). Key informants contribute to the knowledge-building process and include: the pupil foremost; and usually, parents or caregivers; regular classroom teachers, subject teachers, SNE teachers and assistants; as well as any persons who have a valuable and/or relevant connection with the pupil (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978; Srouffe, 1990). This, for example, could include other experts, friends, and extended family members.

2.3.2 Assessment

The purpose of evaluation in education is to monitor educational activities toward their stated goals. To achieve this, traditional assessment has used norm-referenced, marking scales in which achievement of students is measured in comparison with peers: at the bottom of such norm scales, SNE students were typically found. Instead, in an individually adapted approach, the teachers' awareness of their student's *potential*, their 'mastery of tomorrow', is most-critical,

rather than a child's static performance, or what they've *already* learned (Johnsen, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) argued in his seminal work, *Mind in Society*, that in order to achieve optimal development, attention should lie with functions that exist in an 'embryonic state', rather than on functions that have matured.

Vygotsky termed this space of possibility and potential as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); describing it as the distance between what a child can do alone; and what he can achieve through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in a collaboration with more-capable peers (Vygotsky 1978). Key in an inclusive classroom, is discovering what pupils are able to do with the assistance of another; to discover their *potential* for developing. A pupil-centered, inclusive practice provides suitable support and challenge aligning with individual pupil ability. Regarding inclusive practices, Johnson states, teachers consider interests and communication strategies, fit various approaches with mediated strategies, in the ways that best benefit each child (2014).

According to Vygotsky, the mediated, dynamic, teaching-learning relationships between adult, guides and peers in the ZPD were *not only preconditional* to optimal learning (1978); he argued, the cognitive, internal processes awakened in development, could *only* occur when in interaction with people in one's environment. Accordingly, the ongoing communication between teachers and students is vital, with teachers informally and formally assessing student's learning in cooperative and interactive ways. This deeper understanding of learning and development consequently, requires an extended concept of assessment; the assessment of learning potentials, now known as dynamic assessment (Johnsen, 2014).

Here, Vygotsky's ideas on progression and/or assessment are visible. The social transformation within society has led to a renewed focus on 'what can be done *together*' (Daniels, 2018). This dynamic and interactive approach emphasizes the importance of *process* in learning. Tappan accentuates this idea, stating, process, not content, are the principal outcomes in all learning experiences (1998). He asserts that a child's ability to care for another is increased once they enter the ZPD, suggesting that in essence, sociocultural historical theory is a 'pedagogy of care' and a moral process, without which optimal learning would not occur.

Johnsen (2014) points out that in this cultural-historical model, assessment is adapted with flexibility to the individual needs of the pupil, allowing for a more contextual evaluation of the quality of a pupil's individually adapted education. She explains, assessment is continual, responding to all eight areas of teaching-learning process seen in the CRM, including even, revision of the class, school, local and national curriculums. Further, it involves evaluation of teaching as well as learning. For SNE students in particular, assessment targets a student's specific possibilities and barriers; adaptations concerning teaching and learning environments; and processes and results (Johnsen, 2014). The evaluation process is both ongoing and a series of long-term assessments. Individual assessments may include: interviews and conversations, self-evaluations, questionnaires and specific ability, mastery and/or achievement tests. Checklists, pupil work, portfolios, logbooks, and screening tests are a few of the additional methods that can be helpful assessment tools (*Ibid*, 2014).

2.3.3 Educational Intentions

Educational intentions consist of several aspects of importance in planning. They include training of skills; bringing about certain types of knowledge; the possibility to develop attitudes; and ensuring access to learning experiences (Johnsen, 2014). Educational intentions will include planning for a student's present, short-term, and future aims, such as vocational goals. Pupils' future considerations are also critical, especially when a child has long-term, functional limitations. Intentions are also stated in national acts, representing the needs of society, at large. These aims reflect cultural shifts from old traditions to new generational goals, and the creation of new knowledge and development. Balancing equally important policy goals with pupils' personal intentions is the oft-challenging, professional task of the teacher. It demands evaluation and harmonization of both the student's level of mastery and educational possibilities, interests and needs for support; alongside a student's potentials and barriers to education, as set through laws, policy goals and external and internal factors (*Ibid*, 2014).

Possible challenges to successfully balancing these priorities include: inflexible national, curricular intentions; lack of resources for educational needs; and not the least, whether or not teachers have sufficient knowledge of individualization and inclusion as well as the necessary

sensitivity to discern and discover pupil's special educational needs (Johnsen, 2014). Regarding the challenge and conflict of blending policy and individual student intentions, Nel Noddings (2003) argues that a general, worldwide intention of fierce competition has been encouraged in schools, impeding what she considers a far greater goal of global cooperation. She contends the competitive spirit further undermines basic educational aims that students develop moral and happy lives with concern for the welfare of others; and to find out what one is 'fitted to do', occupationally. Both Johnsen and Noddings therefore, stress the need to enlarge the net of intentions, in order that they might be meaningfully and individually adapted to the unique needs, interests and possibilities of all students.

For SNE students, it is important that individual intentions be woven into all educational subjects, not simply where barriers exist. When a focus rests on limitations of a SNE student, it can risk amplifying barriers in the student's mind, transferring to greater insecurity in other learning areas (Johnsen, 2014). By creating intentions, teachers offer their students with intellectual disabilities opportunities to set goals; that may not only improve student self-confidence, but may further reduce existing self-doubt related to their academic abilities.

The theory of multiple intelligences is beneficial in this respect, as it encourages an extended focus on musical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, personal and social intelligence, rather than a narrow perspective directed toward linguistic and math intelligence, and the traditional, subject-bound knowledge, long-prevalent in modern education (Gardner, 1993). This expanded view of intelligence and abilities, aligns seamlessly with the progressive, educational emphasis on individual curricula directed toward developing student well-being; and greater positive self-esteem; communication, solidarity and care in the CRM approach.

2.3.4 Content

Content answers the question of *what* an education will concern. In an inclusive classroom, there should be a flexible adaptation of content for the class. How the school selects this content, points to whether it is inclusive. With the emphasis on the inner workings of a class, three main elements of the planning of content are of key importance. They include: flexibly used content;

access to extensive quantities of teaching-learning materials that respond to differing interests and levels of mastery; and an inclusive and cooperative mentality between the teachers (Johnsen, 2020). For students with special needs, one way content can be inclusive is by integrating a systematic common theme, in which all subjects are merged in order that tasks are differentiated to the learning potentials of each student (Daniels, 2014; Johnsen, 2020).

Decisions about content will take place on both the macro and the micro level; with macro content being stated in policy, and based on societal aims. In selecting content, teachers must adroitly balance policy with the educational needs of individual pupils in the classroom, adapting the national curriculum to the variety of individual needs (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Johnsen, 2014; Vygotsky; 1978).

However, the ways in which macro-content is prescribed will vary considerably. In some countries, national curricula specify broad flexibility to educators such as in Norway, while other macro curricula describe detailed directions on how content should be applied as is most often the case in the US. Regardless, SNE educators should try to connect official curriculum requirements for content, with individual learning needs in their classroom.

Another important question teachers should consider, according to Johnsen, (2014) includes how to create a learning environment, plan learning, and acquire materials that are suitable for the individual in a way that is coordinated with the *entire* class so students can cooperate together, with learning differentiated via individual tasks. Using common themes or subject areas responds well to this content challenge (Daniels, 2020).

According to Johnsen, educational content is similar and even overlaps with educational intentions. Educational intentions regard the phenomena, substance and values that form a pupil into an educated person (2014). Regarding what is meant by 'an educated person', and what substance and values should be chosen for such educational purposes, German scholar, Wolfgang Klafki, stresses,

"What constitutes the content of education or wherein its substance and values lie, can first be ascertained *only* with reference to the particular children and adolescents who are to be educated, and second, with a particular human, historical situation in mind, with its attendant past and anticipated future" (1999, p. 148).

Bjørndal and Lieberg (1978) extend this principle, emphasizing the importance of relevance in educational content. They underscore four main criteria for choosing content: socio-cultural and pupil-centered dimensions; alongside qualitative and quantitative elements. However, Klafki limits the relationships between these aspects solely to content and *different* groups of pupils; rather than to matters regarding the individual pupil in the plurality of the classroom; a central criterion in an inclusive educational model, such as the CRM.

What phenomena and values are chosen as content with which to 'educate' pupils, assumes specific qualities characteristic to the school community. These values and phenomena, the substance of educational concerns that make up learning content in a particular school, accordingly, become suggestions for the definition of a child's *Educational Self*; ideas with which a pupil must continually negotiate and comprehend (Marisco and Tateo, 2018). The student listens and adds their own voice, 'actively internalizing a polyphony of voices, which is not necessarily a harmony, but can be a cacophony' (Marsico & Tateo, 2018, p. 1). Marisco and Tateo state, some ideas will be rejected; others accepted, modified or ignored completely; yet all these voices represent potential directions toward the Self's development.

Even while mediators meaningfully and sensitively adapt content for their students, the Self evolves, enacted as it is in the context of prescribed educational goals (Zittoun et al., 2013). Consequently, any educational interventions and adaptations for the individual, even when adapted for their unique needs, still produce tension within the child, whenever the child is *required* to move toward established expectations, theories and values of what is considered '*normal*' development. "A child's sense of self is a complex negotiation, rife with contradictory suggestions about what she *is* and what she is *not*; and *what she should become* or not *become*" (Marisco and Tateo, 2018, p. 3). Regarding "folk pedagogies", a term Bruner coined to describe these ideas regarding children's 'regular' development, he states, "these expectations are neither

good nor bad, but they simply echo community practices" (1996, p. 134). Consequently, inclusive teachers should be mindful that in choosing content, they reflect toward their pupil, a view of the child's future self, one framed through a normative concept of development and potential, as has been defined by their own, specific, cultural values.

Nonetheless, cultural values are applied in schools. When implementing any content, Bjørndal and Lieberg (1978, pp. 116-118) offer standards for learning activities. They include:

- Consistency with the entire teaching program
- Compatibility with goals
- Variety and multiplicity
- Adaptation to individual students and groups
- Balanced and cumulative
- Relevant and meaningful
- Open to optimal integration with other learning activities
- Open to pupils' choices

2.3.5 Teaching Methods and Organization

A diversity of methods, also known as teaching-learning strategies, are foundational in an inclusive practice. Methods are another mediating tool in the teaching-learning process; and an aspect of the student's interactions in the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). Different students learn and develop using different learning techniques: the types of strategies, activities, materials and methods (Taba, 1962). Today, this diversity of strategies is better understood with the idea of 'learning styles' receiving more attention, including for example: individual strategies of communicating; focusing; memorizing; problem-solving; learning and developing (Johnsen, 2014).

In traditional pedagogy, methods include four approaches, each one emphasizing a different level of interaction between the teacher and learner (Brammer, 1838). They include:

- The Prescribing Method: Traditional lectures as well as dictation and demonstration
- The Achromatic Method: The uninterrupted lecture
- The Dialogic Method: Conversation with questions and answers
- The Heuristic Method: Teachers question and students answer, while students engage in independent learning activities

An emphasis on dialog is most evident in classical methods, however, dialog has seen renewed interest in the cultural-historical theories of the 20th century. According to Johnsen, "The educational intention of dialog may be to construct a joint intersubjective understanding, which simply means the apprentice (in the ZPD) is in the process of becoming a master" (2014, p. 159). Modern understanding of dialog is advanced through contemporary research involving communication, mediation and attachment theories. Norway's Professor Emeritus, Henning Rye (2001) applied these theories when developing his International Child Development Program (ICDP). The program's eight key principles include: demonstrating positive feelings; adapting to the pupil; talking with the pupils; helping the pupil focus; assistance in giving meaning to the pupil's experience; giving relevant praise and acknowledgement; explaining and elaborating; and finally, helping the pupil to achieve self-discipline.

Differentiation

Using differing approaches in teaching is referred to as differentiation. While differentiating, teachers vary their styles and methods to individuals and groups of learners. In this way, they respond to the variety of learners' needs by creating meaningful learning experiences that address students' individual needs for support and challenge (Norwich, 2007). Differentiation is not the same as individualized learning or assigning different tasks to students with difficulties. Individualized instruction refers to the pace at which students respond to common goals. Whereas with differentiated learning, students adopt different strategies that help them understand new knowledge regardless of competency (Grant, 2014).

In order that teachers may respond to the interests and learning developmental needs of a diverse group of students, Tomlinson (2020) describes four ways teachers can differentiate for the pupils

in their classroom: with their content, activities, culminating projects, and lastly, in their environment. All four areas should be based on students' interests, aptitudes and learning profiles. Differentiation should involve the *consistent* use of approaches that modify *all* four areas (Tomlinson, 1995).

Further, regarding differentiation, Tomlinson emphasizes the importance of responding to the uniqueness of pupils and embracing active participation of students, including empowering them in their decision-making (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; *Ibid*, 1995). Ongoing assessment and adaptive student groups are also considered key aspects of successful differentiation. Research indicates when teachers differentiate learning strategies, such as flexible grouping; choice of task; increased self-selected reading time; and availability of assorted reading resources, student reading improves. (Baumgartner et al., 2003).

Scaffolding

Introduced first by Jerome Bruner in the 1950s, the term, 'scaffolding' is drawn from a construction metaphor to refer to adult guidance. By definition, educational scaffolding is structured and systematic assistance through social interaction in the ZPD (Wood et al., 1976). Sometimes referred to as guided participation, it is, in its essence, a collaboration in the ZPD: to provide timely assistance between children and more experienced others that support skills and knowledge-building during the learning process (Rogoff, 2003). Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development stressed the importance of learning through guidance by teachers and peers (1978). This idea, based in the cultural historical approach, anchors the CRM; the premise being that humans are *fundamentally* social, interacting collectively and learning cooperatively (Ivic, 2014). Under-scoring this point, the research on scaffolded instruction with learning disabled children by Stone & Wertsch (1984), saw students monitor their actions when they were guided by their teachers or another adult. Likewise, they found scaffolded instruction with learning-disabled children revealed, over time, a progression in self-regulation and advances in communication patterns, suggesting these guiding behaviors by adults or peers, model independence and knowledge acquisition (*Ibid*, 1984).

Further, Holton and Clarke highlight the importance of supportive learning activities based on scaffolded questions, and identified three main approaches: expert-scaffolding, is an approach in which one person has a responsibility to provide support; secondly is, reciprocal-scaffolding, involving two people who bring their different skills while offering assistance to one another; and lastly, self-scaffolding, where individuals scaffold autonomously, dependent solely upon their own prior understanding and knowledge (2006).

In the field of special needs education, a number of methodological aspects are standard, including breaking learning into steps, repetition and variation in the use of examples. However, according to Johnsen, with inclusive practices, methods should also involve:

● The continuous attainment of new methods and approaches
● An overview of different methods and approaches
● The flexible application of methods and approaches
● Multiple uses of methods and approaches in classroom settings

Though no one method is comprehensive enough to suit all students, it remains the professional responsibility of educators to create different methods to plan, design and implement curricula for individual students and classes in an inclusive classroom setting (Johnsen, 2014).

Organizational pluralism is also applied in a flexible manner as it relates to the following aspects: time; the combination of class, group and individual focus; the educational location; and, educational resources (Johnsen, 2020).

Teaching Organization: Environment

Organizing the classroom is critical when developing an inclusive setting. In order to create an inclusive classroom context, it must be a space that is welcoming to all students, including those with special learning needs. Classrooms should reflect the diversity of mastery levels and learning potentials of all students. In Norway and the US, as in many countries, groups are typically configured by age. And though, traditionally students have been grouped together

inside a classroom, Johnsen (2014) reminds educators that it was not unusual in the near past that students often met outside, in marketplaces, homes and churches; students were of varying ages, forming into large or small groups, or singly. Further, learners were instructed by private tutors, scholars, teachers, religious clergy and parents. Today, it is still very possible to organize learning environments that break from same-age groupings and a central, indoor mono-space.

Although age groups, and the classroom are still centrally important, further ways of improving flexibility and openness in organizing the classroom should be contemplated in inclusive schools (Johnsen, 2014). One important organizational strategy might include an improved natural flow of activity from both inside-and-outside of the classroom. This plurality of educational context for children serves all children, who benefit from the additional flexibility and variety, while reducing the stigma of SNE students, who frequently leave their Gen Ed classroom for individual support from SNE educators.

Also considered in organizing spaces is the inclusion of a variety of technological considerations such as light and level-of-noise in order that students can hear and see each other properly. For students with sensory impairment or emotional trauma, it is possible that noise could be abated, with carpets and other sound-buffering possibilities; or some students might require a hearing aid.

Teaching Organization: Pupils

Organizing two-or-more classes together in larger classes; single classes into smaller groups and into individual teaching dyads creates flexibility and openness that supports individual learning needs in the inclusive classroom. Such collaborative groups encourage care and solidarity, with students working cooperatively together to reach learning goals that help them to develop skills in democracy and problem-solving. The idea of group work aligns fluidly with Vygotsky's (1978) theory regarding peer support in the ZPD.

Dzemidzic's research shows that during group work, students typically share tasks by dividing the work by consensus, then discussing and helping one another to arrive at conclusions (2007).

He found group work led to more effective learning processes, emphasizing encouragement and negotiation rather than competition, as is the case in most traditional classrooms. Collaborative teaching-learning also operationalizes the different ZPD's in the classroom, contributing positively to the learning processes of SNE students (Vygotsky, 1978; Friend, et al, 2010). While collaborating, students help each other, with a child with developed skills or experience, helping less-advanced pupils. Further, students internalize their learning, when sharing their understanding of joint projects (Daniels, 2020; Rogoff; 1990).

Organization: Resources

Methods and organization also relate to the choice of resources and equipment used in-and-out of the classroom. These often include: literature; paper, pen and pencil; computer programs; videos; and a wide variety of resources for use in painting, drawing, sewing, cooking, outdoor activities, and sports.

An important part of adapting to individual and joint possibilities is using a plurality of teaching strategies by providing access to special equipment and resources to meet special learning needs (Johnsen, 2020). For students with special communication needs, resources should be easily accessible, including: sign language; signed speech; Braille printing machines for students who are functionally blind; Bliss symbols for students with cerebral palsy; icons (simple drawings of words); and computer programs or other augmentative devices. For pupils with reading challenges there is a need for special reading books and materials, and books on CD. Technological considerations also might involve the practical and systematic support around learning to understand language (Johnsen, 2014).

2.3.6 Communication

Johnsen (2020) asserts, "There can be no education without communication, no matter how qualified and relevant the adaptations of intentions, content, methods and organization seems to be" (p. 209). For this important reason, communication has been added to the traditional

curricular elements, to serve as a direct link between the pupil and instruction. Communication, according to Vygotsky (1978), is a pre-eminent, mediating tool: with children learning from interactions with their peers in their environments. As teachers, it is critical to create opportunities for children to communicate their thoughts and their emotions, in a comfortable and safe classroom environment that promotes learning and encourages students (Johnsen, 2020).

According to Rye, (2001, 2005) both research and theory find the following traits common to children's development and generalizable in people: one, that children are innately social by nature with a wired ability to communicate and develop socially; two, that children have an essential need to create relationships in order to survive, develop, and learn to know and understand the world; and finally, all children have been shown to learn through vitally important social interactions with mediators in their developmental process of becoming fully socialized. These important people are typically, peers, parents and family members, teachers and more capable adults with whom a child interacts regularly (Johnsen, 2020).

Communication is an essential concept for growth of democratic societies; as well as inter-subjective meaning-making, argumentation and discourse practices (Englund, 1986). Paulo Freire's ideas about educational empowerment, further highlight the importance of communication for joint experiences and reflection (1972). Freire states, "Dialogue is established as the seal of the epistemological relationship between subjects in the knowing process" (Freire, 1972, p. 173). In Freire's education of liberation theory, the educator never possesses total knowledge. Freire's utopic and hopeful ideology, designates the teacher and learner as joint subjects in the knowledge-building processes.

According to Bruner, communication is central to interaction and mediation (1996). Contemporary research surrounding mediation and communication has led to a deeper understanding of the importance of communication for the teaching-learning process, with broad agreement on several principles, including: the idea that children learn through interaction with people in their environment; that communication is a critical tool in learning and development; and that teachers and students, as well as parents and peers, act as mediators in the cooperative

process of teaching-learning (Bruner, 1996; Rye, 2001, Vygotsky, 1978). This knowledge of communication highlights the more concrete processes of planning including intentions, content, and methods and organization. In an inclusive classroom these areas are adapted to the pupil based on their learning challenges and potentials.

Pupils' special communication needs and challenges may involve cognitive, linguistic, cultural, physical and technical aspects. But generally, communication can be divisible into two categories: human relational and technological (Johnsen, 2014). Some students may have communication difficulties and delays especially if required to learn to read in their second language, or if they may belong to a language minority. Students with physical communication challenges, such as those with cerebral palsy, need special equipment and online communication media, such as the Bliss signs, mentioned earlier. Deaf/hard-of-hearing students may need hearing aids to communicate successfully. It should be stated that communication is known to include speech and signed words but it also encompasses non-verbal communication. For SNE students, technological tools such as these mentioned, are critical to the social and academic progress of the classroom collective (Johnsen, 2014).

Relational communication, the second category of communication, is similar to care in the CRM but rather it emphasizes children's intrinsic social needs as human beings: to be seen, heard and understood (Trevarthen, 2014). A lack of inter-subjective communication is linked to a decrease of positive relationships; relationships that are presuppositional to inclusion (Ivic, 2014). On the topic of inclusion and communication Martin Buber states, "A relation between persons that is characterized, in more or less degree, by the element of inclusion may be termed a dialogical relation" (1947, p. 125). According to Johnsen, without relational communication, learning is in danger of losing its purpose. She argues, "Seeing and being seen are fundamental elements of human relationships and communication." (Johnsen, 2014, p. 165). These key qualities remain essential to successfully implementing an inclusive classroom.

2.3.7 Care

Similar to communication, care is another main element of the CRM that extends the model beyond traditional curricular approaches. Care is an essential element throughout the entire process of education. It is also considered a fundamental quality of an inclusive classroom; focusing as it does on a child's individual needs. According to Henning Rye, positive learning depends on the satisfaction of one's basic human needs for belonging, love and acceptance (2005). For SNE students in particular, these are also vital aspects of their sense of belongingness in the collective classroom. Norwegian, Edvard Befring (1996) further asserts that care and learning are complementary functions, intertwined in the developmental processes of the classroom. Ultimately, care is supporting individuals' uniqueness, their learning needs and their opportunities within the collective.

Noddings, asserts that care is a form of relationship between the carer and the cared for, based on responsiveness, receptivity and relatedness (2015). She emphasizes the importance of sensitivity of the cared-for's point of view. She argues that the academically able are not the only students whose basic needs must be met. Further, she challenges teachers to radically change both their curriculum and teaching approaches in order to provide for the needs of all students' (1992; 2003). Foremost, students need to know that they are cared for by their teachers. In her discussion of care-ethics, Noddings also argues that teachers must be attentive and responsive to the *expressed* needs of the pupils (the cared-for); not simply the *assumed* needs of the school: the requirements it prescribes and its arranged curriculum (2012). For these reasons, it's critical that teachers actively express care to their pupils. They can do so by showing a caring attitude and concrete actions, such as, making eye contact, offering encouraging words to students, and praising student work (Johnsen, 2014).

Webster-Stratton highlight several additional ways teachers can show care in the classroom, some of which include: listening; participating in activities with pupils; sharing one's own life and experiences; showing students trust; supporting students so that they may develop coping strategies; promoting confidence through positive self-talk and empowering strategies; as well as by creating opportunities for expression, such as with dialog, drawing, role-play, literature or writing (1999).

Rogoff emphasizes the importance of children's caring relationships when she discusses its impact on child development. She describes development as a process of people participating together collaboratively in their communities, and refers to guided participation and scaffolding, as an 'apprenticeship' (Rogoff, 1990). Regarding this apprenticeship she states,

> Children's learning through observation of activities in everyday life, resembles the structure of learning and assisting of mastery in apprenticeship…Learning by osmosis (blending of two chemical bodies), picking up values, skills and mannerisms, in an incidental fashion through close involvement with a socializing agent (Rogoff, 2003, p. 323).

In an effort to support and encourage caring social interactions, Henning Rye has created a low-threshold early intervention approach, the ICDP previously discussed, in which both teachers and parents at home and in school, can seek to increase sensitivity to children's needs; as a means to discover novel ways to share positive qualities; and to become more conscious of their interaction patterns. Based on socio-cultural theory, eight guiding principles of the ICDP were identified by Rye as encompassing interaction. They are meant to encourage self-observation, exploration and development:

Eight Themes of the International Child Development Program

Theme 1. Demonstrate positive feelings

Theme 2. Adapt to the pupils

Theme 3. Talk to the pupils

Theme 4. Give praise and acknowledgment to the pupils

Theme 5. Help the pupils focus their attention

Theme 6. Give meaning to the pupils' experiences

Theme 7. Elaborate and explain to the pupils

Theme 8. Help the pupils achieve self-discipline

Rye emphasizes that a child's development is affected by the total context of a child's social experiences, arguing that the key mediating process in childhood *is* socialization (Rye; 2005). Based on theories of attachment, communication and mediation, with his program, Rye has created a practical and systematic approach to guide teachers and parents, and all caregivers, toward greater social competence in order that they might function better in their relationships. A key aspect of the ICDP is how a child is perceived, whether as a person, or as an object. This perception of object versus person varies considerably based on the cultural viewpoint (Rogoff, 2003). According to Vetlesen (1993), to perceive a child as a person requires that we first recognize the child as having the same needs as adults have: to be loved, included, respected, and understood. This humanistic idea is found at the heart of the ICDP approach.

Pupil support systems are vital for positive development, but Ivan Ivic points out that deformative effects on development also occur, resulting from a *lack* of social and cultural support. These adverse processes he termed, 'The Reversed Vygotsky', referencing Vygotsky's widely known theories concerning the social and cultural processes of children's growth and development (2014). Ivic points out that macro-level problems such as war or poverty, directly impact the micro-and-meso-level-systems of schools and families, but in reverse, creating negative, rather than positive, interpsychological interactions, leading to dysfunctional developmental outcomes.

These negative effects have serious impacts on the inclusive classroom, contingent as it is, on the positive, social interactions of individuals in the *community* of the classroom. Regardless of whether the negative influences impacting students are related to macro systems or their own individual functional challenges, negative effects to students should be remediated quickly, once discovered, in order to restore factors that have long-been correlated with student and community well-being.

2.3.8 Context

Regarding educational context, there is a long-tradition of students learning in classrooms and school buildings. The classroom and school are the contextual background for the pupils'

learning community, yet the classroom is also situated within a larger group, both locally and nationally. The school exists within a framework of physical, social and cultural factors as well as factors that are political, financial and human-resource related. The school depends upon these various social and curricular factors, that together, can set both limits and/or provide opportunities for the learner (Johnsen, 2014). According to Johnsen, frame factors are very important, no less so than the micro-level viewpoints of the teaching team, having long-term impacts on the educational outcomes of all pupils (2014).

Legislation and Policy Frame Factors

Legislation and policy are macro-level goals contained in documents that describe official educational rights, duties and a nation's general intentions. Based on national and international principles, policy acts for educational aims are created with varied goals; goals that often do not align on a micro-level, as a result of compromises between differing interest groups (Englund & Naylor, 1986). Therefore, legislative intentions should go through a process of adaptation and interpretation when incorporated into individual and class curricula in order to better meet the educational reality of individuals and the collective in the school (M, 1987).

Economic factors are also macro-level, and are considered defining aspects as they influence political policy with the parsing of resources dependent on the separate priorities of local schools. Financial factors have massive impacts on SNE and general education alike, as they set concrete limits on the ways in which local school may or may not develop, which therefore impose great influences on learning, especially onto the physical requirements of school buildings and the need for learning tools such as lighting, universal designs and new technologies, required for individuals with disabilities or special learning needs.

Human Resources Frame Factors: The Educator

SNE teachers and Gen Ed teachers are the students' main mediating tool (Bronfenbrenner, 1978). The most vital frame factor for inclusion is thus, the need for qualified teachers. It is important

therefore, that the educators of teachers, prepare professionals of the future who will be capable of developing inclusive schools. Johnsen (2014) highlights one critical aspect of moving towards inclusive schools: the prevalence of teachers who've received a quality education in which inclusion principles have been incorporated. She argues for strong professional advocacy; the craftsmanship of teaching; and creativity and flexibility in the art of teaching; asserting that these elements are key issues when developing teachers capable of advancing global goals of inclusion for all children for both those who do, and do not, have special needs (2014).

Physical Frame Factors: The Classroom and the School

Impacted largely by financial frame factors, but also by infrastructure factors, the physical frame factors that involve the school building significantly impact the ability of students to receive an individually adapted and inclusive education. Access to computer technology is a primary factor leading to an expectedly increasing gap between western schools and schools in the global south (Johnsen, 2014). Physical frame factors also vary greatly within countries, with different priorities of local politicians, parents and educators resulting in diverse levels of concern regarding the condition and available resources of school buildings, which in turn, affects a school's possibilities for developing inclusive settings.

Materials and equipment of the school are also frame factors. Desks, chairs, or hallways may be too small for all students, especially for students with wheelchairs. Yet, often with only small changes, school buildings and classrooms can become much more inclusive. For example, schools can provide more lighting for students to better read by, or teachers can move a hard-of-hearing student into a quiet area, or nearer to the teacher in order to better see the teacher's mouth while she is speaking (*Ibid*, 2014).

New Technology is one type of equipment that has opened up potential for teachers to adapt content for SNE students. As an example, the use of Bliss tactile symbols for children with oral speech dysfunction and other augmentative devices have greatly removed barriers to SNE students and improved their inclusion in the collective of the classroom.

Social and Cultural Frame Factors

According to Urie Bronfenbrenner, (1979) every aspect of a child's environment affects their development. Indeed, social and cultural frame factors have great influence on the activities happening within the classroom. In his ecological systems theory, he emphasized systems nested within each other. The innermost system, the microsystem, would contain the people with which a child would interact most often, for example, one's family. Next, he described a mesosystem, a system in which the child's caregivers take active roles in the different aspects of a child's microsystems, such as that of a school. Within a mesosystem, Bronfenbrenner emphasized the importance of the economic system and employment as well as social structures and the natural environment. Next, societal impacts onto a child, from local and national communities, he referred to as the macrosystem. Lastly, included in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory was the exosystem, including any individual the child would not directly interact with.

Meaningful and adapted education also includes contextual factors, such as the integration of centralized and local curriculums (Johnsen, 2014). Social and cultural factors of a nation may not always suit the needs of a smaller, local community. Legislation in Norway has been reformed over the last few decades to better-adapt national and local needs following the case of a small fishing town in Norway, in which the cultural and social biases of the national curriculum in Norway's capital city, led to serious dilemmas for the local peoples (Høgmo, 1983; M, 1987).

Other common social and cultural factors that influence schools and therefore pupil learning possibilities, include but are not limited to: bilingualism, as children in school often learn in a language other than their first language; illiteracy of parents; attitudes; prejudices; and changing priorities (Johnsen, 2014).

On the importance of the setting and atmosphere of the school, Befring states, "The social context is both the means to the end and the end itself (1990, p. 184). This approach to SNE advocates for individuals to socialize in their environment, while also creating an atmosphere and context that will foster such important interactions. This thinking surrounding social contexts

in schools, is known in Norway as the Enrichment Perspective. It contends that societies which respond to the needs of people with differing abilities enrich all (Befring, 1990, p. 184).

2.4   Conclusion

In this chapter the researchers have presented the theoretical framework of our study. We justified the choice of Berit H. Johnson's (2018) CRM as a framework and model for the study and presented the CRM and its eight curricular themes. We then described the literary background that supports the CRM before describing why we adopted its eight aspects to develop and organize the data of our study into key themes and subcategories. In the following chapter, we present the analysis of our data.

3   METHODOLOGY

To best evaluate the replicability and validity of our results, the methods section will be described clearly; detailing the reasons for our methodological choices and features of our research design, so that readers can fairly judge the validity and replicability of our study. We believe this was essential, given that methods are *a critical* aspect of a research study (Azevedo et al., 2011). In Section 2.1 and 2.2 we provide rationale for the decision to conduct a qualitative comparable case study, and we defend this design. In Section 2.3 we will justify why we performed interviews, including how we made the choice of interview method as well as explaining the preliminary activities taken before the interview; the interview method itself; and how we analyzed the data once interviews were completed. Lastly, issues related to ethics are considered, alongside overall implications of our research. Finally, we argue why conducting interviews was essential in responding to our research question: Teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion in Norway and the US.

3.1   Conducting a Qualitative Case Study

We used a flexible, qualitative research design for our study in which data from interviews could be gathered and analyzed objectively; both verbal and paraverbal analysis, rather than a statistical form. The rationale of our qualitative study was based on the most comprehensive definition of a qualitative study:

> A form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of analysis (Hammersley and Campbell 2012, p. 25).

Though there will be studies that will not be fitted to this perspective of qualitative research, a vast amount of qualitative research does fall into these general categories (Hammersley and Campbell 2012, p. 16). With our research we found strong commonalities within this definition.

Firstly, we used a data driven approach. With our research, we were more interested in developing narratives and finding explanations than we were in answering a hypothesis determined prior to our research question being developed. Secondly, we were interested in carefully observing and understanding the most relevant aspects of the observations and interviews. And to this effort we recognized the importance of a somewhat unstructured approach to constructing data; allowing the respondents to talk freely about what was meaningfully relevant to our research question, rather than to formally measure, rank or count as is indicative of most quantitative designs.

Thirdly, we recognized that as human beings, we are innately subjective. Our inferences about our data are affected by our own social and cultural qualities; we accept the existence of subjectivity with its potential for beneficial insights as well as possible limitations, using reflexivity to reduce potential threats to validity. Fourthly, we studied only a few cases. This allowed us more time for construction and analysis of data which we hoped would lead to deeper and more-meaningful knowledge.

Lastly, we utilized verbal analysis of data. We were more interested in understanding through analysis of verbal interviews which factors were consequential to inclusion of SNE students in the collective and in comparing these cases in Norway and the USA in order to determine which of these aspects were more significant. Statistical analysis of our data was less critical. Thus, all together, we concluded that the study we conducted was qualitative, according to the aforementioned qualities recognized by Hammersley and Campbell (2012).

We also decided to construct a qualitative study in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the research question about perceptions of teachers regarding Covid policy impacts to inclusion of SNE students. As mentioned earlier, we were less interested in studying what the problem represented statistically, but rather, we were interested in "the deepening of understanding of a given problem" (Queirós et al., 2017 p. 369). This desire aligns with Creswell's definition of qualitative case study aims:

The goal of a case study is a comprehensive, in-depth description and analysis of the case. Or as it is also put, the account of the case should be rich, intensive, and holistic, i.e., to provide an understanding of the case as a whole (Cresswell, 2007).

Case study should emphasize investigations that are both "intensive" and "in-depth" (Powers and Knapp 1990, p. 17). Since our desire was to *fully* understand the experience of teachers; their history and relations to students during this time; and to hear their voices, and their unique, individual, human experiences; we felt that the qualitative method was critical, indeed indispensable, and therefore, particularly well-suited to our study.

By definition the qualitative case study is, "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when boundaries between the phenomena and the context are not clearly evident" and "in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Appleton, 2002, p. 84). It is suitable then, that our study question not only involved multiple sources of evidence, it was also, unstudied: in fact, very little was yet-known about the impacts to inclusion during the Covid crisis, due largely to the unprecedented nature of our phenomenon. Never had this experience occurred in all of human history (*Ibid*, p. 87).

Of the three different types of qualitative case study design, we chose a collective case design, since we planned to study an expanded number of instrumental cases, in order to compare the phenomenon in our two selected countries. This allowed us to explore our research question more fully (Stake et al., 1994). Instrumental cases by definition are suited to studying a particular case in order to examine it for insight into an issue or refinement of a theory. Accordingly, we felt it well-suited to our question (*Ibid*, p. 86).

Though case studies can be difficult to define, they do have distinctive qualities in common with each other (Ylikoski & Zahle, 2019). The first element that makes them unique, includes the number of cases in a study; either a single case or several cases. Typically, there are from one to five cases per study. Ours is a comparative case study: We have three cases. A second aspect concerns cases occurring naturally. Our cases were in no way constructed. Thirdly, is the intensity of the case. As was the situation for us, we constructed a large amount of data rather

than data that was specific. Another element of case study is using multiple methods. In our instance, this included both observations and interviews, giving us a higher-level of intensiveness. Lastly, according to Ylikoski & Zahle, case study should include an aim to create a holistic and in-depth overview in narrative form (2019). For us, constructing an in-depth understanding was crucial to answering our research question regarding teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts to SNE student inclusion. Thus, we determined our question aligned well to the use of a comparative case study.

According to Darke et al., case study is an excellent choice of method when phenomena are of high interest, when a phenomenon is not mature or well-known, and when real-life context is highly relevant (1998). Given the temporal, unprecedented and global nature of our study regarding teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts to SNE student inclusion, the three parameters of case study listed herein, have been met.

A few critiques of case study research methods exist. Some argue it is not plausible to generalize with only one, or even multiple cases; that they amount to too-few cases (Simons, 2014). In order to respond to this concern, we selected multiple cases at three schools: we were eager to see whether varied and different perspectives would emerge on the topic of Covid policy impacts to SNE student inclusion between countries with differing approaches. Nonetheless, we observed only three cases. To resolve the issues of low case numbers, we sought out representative cross-cases in order that we might better extrapolate from our findings (Creswell, 2007).

Simons argues that multiple sites in cross-cases, allows for generalizations to be made if and when common elements, or interconnecting themes between cases, surface (2014). Essentially, insights from theory, that provide sufficient levels of agreement, can project to other contexts (Robson, 2002). According to Yin, when two or more cases show support for the same theory, analytic generalizations can be made (2011). Simons argues that collective case studies offer a degree of abstraction and the possibility for theorizing (2014). This quality is highly valued, particularly by commissioners of research, who often seek stronger rationale for policy implementation than can be found within single case study designs (Simons, 2014, p. 466).

Regardless, Mack et al. argue that the "complex understanding of a specific social context or phenomenon typically takes precedence over eliciting data that can be generalized to other geographical areas or populations" (2005, p. 23). In our research, regardless of the extent of the generalizability from our data, we feel the broad and in-depth descriptions of complex experiences provided in our collective case research was of primary virtue (Baškarada, 2014; Gerring, 2004). As Baškarada highlights, case studies are "particularly well-suited to naturalistic generalizations that are based on experiential transformation of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge" (2014, p. 4).

Another criticism of the qualitative method concerns whether data may be skewed by individual opinions (Hammersley, 2005). Hammersley argues that qualitative case study research shouldn't be relied on, given it depends on respondents' perspectives; and ergo, their viewpoints are restricted. For this reason he argues qualitative case study research cannot be truly representative (2005). Triangulation responds to this concern; a method which may generate more valid and reliable data (Sale et al., 2002). By combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, it's proposed, the weaknesses of one method, compensates for the strengths of the other, and vice versa, allowing for greater insights as well as more rigor and possibly, more acceptance within the research community (Thomas and Harden, 2008).

However, Buchanan argues that the quality of research need not be proven by a statistical procedure, rather "its quality lies in the power of its language to display a picture of the world in which people discover something about themselves" (1992, p. 119). In providing data that is detailed, rich, and valid, the qualitative method is a strength (Chowdry, 2014). To this argument we endeavored to demonstrate credibility, not through the combining of qualitative with the quantitative methods, but rather, we sought to establish credibility and trustworthiness through the transparency, contextualizing, generalizing and reflexivity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Through ongoing decisions made throughout the entire research process, we pursued both credibility, and the desire that our interpretations would be worthy of trust. Below are strategies suggested by Lincoln and Guba (Morse, 2015):

Credibility (internal validity): Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, member checks.

Generalizability (external validity): To transmit findings from context to context it is key to use a thick description.

Dependability (reliability): To establish credibility, the use of triangulation, splitting data and duplicating the analysis, use of an inquiry audit.

Confirmability (Objectivity): Triangulation strategies.

In addition to the above strategies, we will use a reflexive journal in order to document our trustworthiness (Morse, 2015). We determined to adopt two or more strategies for our qualitative case study in order to triangulate and thus, increase rigor, or trustworthiness (Creswell, 2007, p. 253). Triangulation, derived from multiple sources of data, will help us to build trustworthiness of the inferences. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). According to Morse, prolonged engagement and ongoing observation often leads to improving levels of participant trust resulting in thicker, richer descriptions (Morse, 2015).

To this aim, we allot ample time with our participants in order to build an intimate connection that would build trust, with the hope that more would be revealed, and thus, more credible, or valid data as a result. Given our unstructured interview method, setting time aside for our respondents to become intimately acquainted with us prior to the interview was critical to the process of data construction in order that respondents would be able to focus on their own perceptions and thus be participating in the construction of rich data (Corbyn & Morse, 2003). Therefore, we made multiple visits and had several interviews, meeting respondents in-person in their school contexts, at a coffee shop or new location as requested; or by Zoom call, or telephone, if online and/or phone was more convenient.

3.2   Case Selection

Firstly, it is important to have a clear focus of the research topic, conceptualized in such a way as to be capable of being researched (Simons, 2014). We conducted literature reviews to study this phenomenon and further, studied relevant theory before settling on our question of teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts to SNE student inclusion. We chose to study this question using some school cases in each country: several cases in the Oslo-municipality and in three of the Seattle-metropolitan-area's neighboring districts: Kirkland (Mark Twain Elementary), Ballard (Adams Elementary) and Vashon Island (Chautauqua Elementary). We chose these few schools in each of the two countries as we were intent to create a comparative case study in order to better determine how different countries' Covid policies impacted the SNE student inclusion.

Though using an emergent design that was fluid by nature, after determining the initial research questions, it is helpful to delineate what was and was not an element of our case; where the boundaries laid, from the outset, in order to help us focus our data construction from the beginning of our study (*Ibid*, p. 684). We thus remained open to the boundaries of our case changing naturally, until the end of our study. For this reason, we limited our case to these three districts, and to Kindergarten through fifth grade SNE students in public schools.

We chose to limit the number of cases, in order to more fully delve into the complexity of the cases with depth and breadth (Yin, 2012, p. 4). This constraint of cases, we felt, could lend to more depth of research per case, with added time and attention given to each case.

At schools in Norway and in the US, we decided to limit the number of teachers we would interview in each grade level. We determined firstly to interview only SNE teachers, but in little time realized the need to interview Kindergarten through Fourth Grade Gen Ed teachers as well. We found this was an important boundary after learning from our respondents in our initial interviews that significantly different impacts were felt between older and younger students, beginning around 5th grade.

Initially, we had determined to interview only SNE teachers, but we recognized early-on that we would need to speak directly with Gen Ed teachers to understand more fully the impacts to SNE students in the collective, through the lens of Gen Ed teachers. This was also relevant, as we discovered most students spent the majority of their time in their Gen Ed community, though this varied, depending on school district policy. Some students would be pulled-out at different times during the day. Where teachers in a different district would push-in to the classroom, to support SNE students inside their classroom.

We enlisted seasoned, public-school educators only, ones who had taught no less than five-years. This was done in order to establish educators' professional perspective, prior to the shift to newly-established, Covid educational policies. We interviewed public school teachers, excluding private schools, to better replicate policies from school-to-school. We interviewed nine teachers in Seattle and seven in Norway. In the US, three were SNE teachers and six were Gen Ed teachers; and in Norway, there were three SNE teachers and four Gen Ed teachers. Participants were either male or female though no male respondents volunteered in the US.

Interviews were generally held in teachers' classrooms in an attempt to help busy teachers by providing them a convenient interview location. We also felt teacher classrooms might create a familiar setting and a more comfortable and restful space to interview our teachers. However, many interviews, or second interviews were adapted to Zoom.

3.2.1 Schools in the US

We recruited three socioeconomically-and-culturally diverse schools in the Northwest region of Washington state, in the US. We chose cases from different regions in the Seattle-metropolitan area: Mark Twain Elementary school, chosen from a primarily upper-middle-class, bedroom-community east of Seattle; Chautauqua Elementary, part of Vashon Island School District, a school centered on a semi-rural, ferryboat-traffic-only island southwest of Seattle; and lastly, we selected one school from a culturally-and-economically diverse, inner-city school within the boundary City of Seattle: Adams Elementary. Selecting multiple diverse districts added contextuality to our study, and thus increased our rigor.

Vashon Island School District is a rural school system. Though racially homogenous, enrolling mostly white students, it is nonetheless culturally diverse, as the success and popularity of its schools, has led to large numbers of children willing to incur the time and expense to travel by ferry from Seattle to one of the three, quiet island schools: an elementary school, middle school and high school. Islanders, some 10,000 full-time residents, have differing opinions regarding the overall benefits of welcoming so many children from outside its unique community boundary, an issue with adaptation of two distinctly different social and cultural values. Nonetheless, over the past 15 years, the intense merging of cultures has led to vast and rapid cultural change, both positive and negative, to locals and Seattle residents.

The island has also incurred steep increases in residential property valuations, considered in-part, linked to new, mobile-work solutions, post-Covid. These cost-of-living raises have reduced socio-economic diversity on the island with higher percentages of new residents now upper-middle-class, thus leading to detrimental, secondary impacts to many students' families who find they must leave the island they had come to know and love, due to its growing lack of affordability.

The island is a lush, green semi-rural place, quite rare so-near to the large metropolis of Seattle, a short 15-minute-ferry-ride-away. It is not suburban. Homes are built on larger properties, lending to a more natural setting. The island school mirrors the islander's values based on a long-history of sustainability and equality, a school boasting a community garden, tiled artwork and an expansive forest and fields. The island celebration of individualism, originality and art is evidenced throughout the school. With the socio-economic changes of the last 10-20 years and economic shifts over the last 5-10 years, islander values remain important, though the passion with which they were championed in the past has declined.

Further diversity exists in the island's varied options for schooling. Family Link for younger students, and Student link, for older students, are alternative schooling options; formal paths to homeschooling inside the district; a hybrid of homeschool and school district course offerings. Students in the Family Link and Student Link program study primarily at home, but with classes also offered on-campus yet outside the main school building. Lastly, Running Start, is a popular

option for high school students who are interested in an early entry to community college off-island.

John Adams Elementary is an inner-city school. It is a culturally diverse school, with a minority population of 30 percent with ten percent of students being from more than two races. The majority, 71 percent of students, are white, a slightly increasing trend (OSPI, 2021). Only ten students are in the low-income bracket but it enrolls a higher percentage of students with disabilities than that at Chautauqua, standing at 19 percent for entering kindergarteners. Those considered economically disadvantaged are only 11 percent of enrollment. The school is considered a relatively small school in Seattle, with almost 400 students and a teacher to student ratio of 20 to one. The Washington State Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) assessment scores are somewhat higher at Adams Elementary than at Chautauqua Elementary, for English, 71% percent versus 61%; and math 61% versus 47%, respectively (OSPI, 2021).

Adams is located in Seattle's rapidly growing and greatly-gentrified Ballard neighborhood. It is a beautifully designed, stately brick schoolhouse, built in 1862: a rare, old building in the relatively young city of Seattle. Its exterior comprises a large, chain-fenced and outdoor dirt field, surrounded by playground equipment and grassy areas for children to play. School aims include providing strong foundational academic skills as well as an arts-integrated curriculum, meant to inspire creative and critical thought, collaboration, and problem-solving skills in students. Adams has a strong tradition of active involvement from inside the school and the community-at-large.

Mark Twain Elementary is a large public school in Kirkland, a city located to the east of Seattle in the Lake Washington School District, a rapidly growing and increasingly dense technology hub that includes the Microsoft, Google and Amazon headquarters nearby. It boasts the highest SBAC scores of all three schools: 74% for English and 68% for math as of Fall of 2021 (OSPI, 2021). Student-to-teacher ratio at this school is slightly higher standing at 23:1. Perhaps this school might be considered the most diverse, with more than 30 percent of its students of Asian descent, a population almost completely missing from the other two US schools and a white student population of 41%. It is the only school with two percent of the students choosing not to

identify as male or female (OSPI, 2021). What has been surprising for this historically wealthy Seattle suburb, is that negative, socio-economic changes are occurring, a fact highlighted in Mark Twain's kindergarten readiness data, detailing a total of ten percent of entering kindergarten students considered low-income including ten homeless students. At Mark Twain, ten students entered kindergarten identified as having a disability (OSPI, 2021).

Mark Twain teachers use a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) curriculum in their schools, which entails seven major principles one of which includes 'flexibility in use', or when instruction is designed to accommodate a wide-range of student needs and abilities (King-Sears, 2009).

3.2.2 Schools in Norway

The schools in Norway involved in this study are schools with students from diverse areas inside the Viken state and Oslo area. The researchers chose the schools with careful regards to gain perceptions of SNE and Gen Ed teachers that come from schools that cater to its varied students coming from different social ethnicities, economic statuses and geographical demographics.

Children's International School (CIS) is a private school in Norway founded 10 years ago with its inaugural school in Fredrikstad, Norway. Now boasting three more schools distributed across the Viken region namely, CIS Ullensaker, CIS Sarpsborg and CIS Moss. An International Baccalaureate (IB) program, it promotes a student-centered environment wherein learning is determined by students, with teachers acting as facilitators of learning. It consists of grade-one to grade-ten classes and is authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) with an extension of art program and educational technology.

CIS schools have a combined population of 631 students. The students generally come from diplomat families and immigrants. The schools have large buildings with complete facilities that cater to the individual needs of each student. The teacher-to-student ratio is 1:20, ideal with some classes having a 1:11 ratio. Most of the teachers in CIS come from the international community and work in Norway on working visas. The schools give an air of tranquility as the classrooms

are built to replicate study hangouts for the students, in an effort to put an emphasis on student-led learning goals.

Firnanda Nissen Skole is a public elementary school in Oslo, the capital city of Norway. It is a large school located in an industrial and residential area of the city and just opened in 2016. Though the school is relatively new the school staff are seasoned teachers with many years of experience. It is a modern school with warm, spacious and light classrooms. The school is a three-story building and has many new learning facilities like the gymnasium and auditorium. It caters to diverse students from grades one to seven with a population of nearly 500 students. The students come from different backgrounds; working class, wealthy as well as marginalized sectors of society like immigrants, ethnic and religious groups.

Collaborative and active learning are key words for students and staff at Fernanda Nissen Skole. The school has a theme-based curriculum and uses learning boards, books, pencils and paper, concretization materials. They encourage physical activity and play. Teachers ensure the facilitation of students' involvement and active participation regarding their own and other's learning. They focus on giving students a relevant school day, built on a harmonious classroom environment. The mantra of the school is "We Learn Together." The after-school activity (AKS) in Norway follows these same objectives aiming to have positive school experiences for students characterized by creativity, cooperation and well-being.

Tåsen Skole is a public Elementary School in Oslo, Norway that caters to a population of almost 700 students with around 100 employees. It is located in pricy Nordre Aker district in Oslo Norway. Though located in an upscale area with most students coming from higher socio-economic class families, there is a mixture of poor and wealthy students. This gap is not apparent as all students are given equal opportunities. Tåsen school was built in 1916 and was reopened after rehabilitation in 2011. It promotes a student-friendly form of learning and adapts new educational ideas such as digital learning through computers and the use of IPAD learning boards.

Lønnebakken Kanvas Barnehage is a private kindergarten in Oslo Norway located at St. Haushagen. It is a branch of one of the leading private kindergartens in the whole of Norway. The school is located near the Ulleval Sykehus, Norway's largest hospital. For this reason, students of the Lænebakken kindergarten are mostly children of health personnel working in the hospital. The kindergarten, like many kindergartens in Norway, is built with beautiful rooms and big playgrounds in which children freely roam and learn happily. The school has an excellent student-staff ratio with four adults in a group of 18 students.

Bjølsen Barnehagen is a public-school kindergarten run by the city of Oslo. It is a state-run kindergarten and located in a residential area west of the city, far from working industry. Most of the people living in the neighborhood are small families of working class, living in apartments. The school has 44 students enrolled with one adult supervising for every six students. They have a 'Yes' culture that aims to promote the school as a place of play and learning.

Table: 3.1 List of Schools

LIST OF SCHOOLS	
NORWAY	**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**
Lønnebakken Kanvas Privat Barnehage, Oslo Fernanda Nissen Skole Public Elementary School, Oslo Bjølsen Public Barnehage, Oslo Children's International School Sarpsborg, Sarpsborg Tåsen Skole Public Elementary School, Oslo Children's International School-Fredrikstad Fredrikstad Children's International School-Ullensaker Jessheim	Chautauqua Elementary Mark Twain Elementary Adams Elementary Lake Washington School

3.3   The Methodology Behind the Interviews

In this study, we conducted interviews in an effort to gain insight into SNE teachers' perceptions on Covid policy impacts on SNE student participation in Norway and US. We conducted our interviews in units of three: trust-building, communication and interpretation. By doing this, we planned to construct data and develop new knowledge about inclusion of SNE students in the Gen Ed classroom. The interviews were a key instrument within our methodological process, directed at development of a discourse from which our data was created (Jalali, 2013). The interviews, we believed, would give us information that could not be found through observation, or website analysis. Interviews would provide in-depth information which we felt would help us, ultimately, to answer the research questions we posed. The interviews would give us details, and key themes that had the potential to inform our research question regarding SNE student inclusion.

The methodology behind the interviews consisted of three parts: preparation, execution, and analysis (Gaspers, 2020). The interviews gave us valuable and meaningful, in-depth information which assisted us in better-understanding our research question. The interviews provided us with new knowledge about how school districts and teachers in two countries perceived inclusion of SNE students in the Gen Ed classroom during the Covid crisis.

Figure 3.1: Methodology Behind Interview
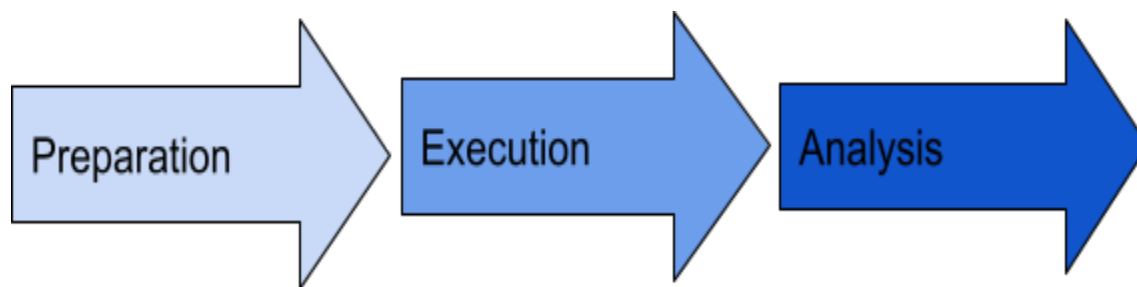
Preparation

3.4   Development of Interview Questions

Our findings from document and website research helped us structure our interview questions. During the process of interviewing and making observations, our interview questions evolved as we developed new perspectives, or when new issues and meaning surfaced (Crist, 1997). Initially, we began interviews with semi-structured questions, but we soon discovered that teachers were better-able to impart their experiences to us when the interview style was open-ended, conversational, naturalistic and unstructured.

Essentially, we attempted to model a conversation, but one in which we were active listeners (Braillon & Taiebi, 2020). Despite being primarily a one-way conversation, our interviews were nonetheless social occasions, just ones in which we were facilitating the respondent's unimpeded discourse. Our desire was to construct new knowledge, and to this aim, we hoped to elicit responses and enable our respondents to share what they felt was most sensitive, relevant and significant to them as it related or responded to the research question. We believed this role also empowered teachers, an important ethical aspect of our research, as we aimed to practice sensitivity around our power position as researchers.

3.5 Participants

To develop a list of potential respondents for interviews, we obtained principal names, contact numbers and emails at selected case schools with a website search of the school. We contacted school administrators by phone to inquire whether they would be willing to provide teacher contact information for potential interview participants in our study. Usually, on our first attempt, we left a voicemail message and waited for a return call from the principal. After several, back-and-forth calls, and the sharing of project information by email with these principals, they typically shared with us the name and number of one SNE teacher as a potential contact. We then contacted these teachers, with the direct phone numbers that we were given. Usually, this took

the form of texting. We then shared a Zoom link or the location of the interview location, as well as the date and time of our interviews. We were successful in scheduling first interviews with all referred SNE and Gen Ed teachers (Table 3.1).

We further identified interview participants utilizing the 'snowballing' method, a non-random sampling technique. With this technique, an initial teacher referral would direct us to other teachers who they thought might be interested (Castree, Kitchin, & Rogers, 2013). Snowballing in the US, became an essential strategy for participant recruitment, as even principals of school districts were under enormous time constraints and general performance pressures.

Because of the nature of the crisis in the US, when we discovered that teachers were extremely restricted with their time, having lost all breaks typically used for planning, meal time and personal breaks, it was immensely important that Julie (Frossmo) was sensitive to their added stresses when scheduling locations and times for her interviews as well as being sensitive to the teachers' schedules and personal affect, when conducting the interviews.

Initially, we considered the use of video-diary as a method, believing that it would provide greater privacy and anonymity to teachers, in our efforts to encourage more authentic and personal sharing of interviewees' emotions, perspectives and beliefs. However, due to the time constraints and personal strains imposed on teachers during the crisis, we chose to focus solely on the interview method to construct our data. We also felt video recording would offer an important temporal quality that would be less burdensome to teachers during this period of duress. We hoped it would provide teachers with the ability to enlist video as a tool to record feelings and improve recall immediately after remote learning or in-class activities. However, after receiving feedback from teachers regarding their concerns with privacy, we felt it was best to use audio recorded interviews only.

Table 3.1: Table of Interview Participants

Name Initials	Code	Position	Specialization	Age	Years of Teaching	School	Gender	Country
KR	NGE1	Kindergarten Teacher	General Education	56	16	Lønnebakken Kanvas Privat Barnehage, Oslo	Female	Norway
HA	NSNE2	Special Needs Teacher for Elementary	Special Needs Education	60	15	Childrens International School-Moss, Moss	Female	Norway
KA	NSNE3	Special Needs Teacher for Elementary	Special Needs Education	34	9	Fernanda Nissen Skole Public Elementary School, Oslo	Female	Norway
MH	NGE4	Kindergarten Teacher	General Education Education	32	10	Bjølsen Public Barnehage, Oslo	Male	Norway
GL	NGE5	Grade Three Teacher	General Education	29	5	Tåsen Skole Public Elementary School, Oslo	Female	Norway
IB	NSNE6	Special Needs Teacher Elementary	Special Needs Education	44	18	Children's International School-Fredrikstad Fredrikstad	Female	Norway
NH	NGE7	Grade One Teacher	General Education	38	7	Children's International School-Ullensaker, Jessheim	Female	Norway
AL	USGE1	Kindergarten Teacher	General Education	33	7	Chautauqua Elementary	Female	United States
KF	USGE2	Kindergarten Teacher	General Education	53	23	Mark Twain Elementary	Female	United States
KFR	USGE3	Grade One Teacher	General Education	31	5	Chautauqua Elementary	Female	United States
KH	USSNE4	Kindergarten through Sixth Grade	Special Needs Education	62	24	Chautauqua Elementary	Female	United States
MW	USSNE5	Kindergarten through Fifth Grade	Special Needs Education	54	25	Adams Elementary	Female	United States
SS	USSNE6	Kindergarten through Sixth Grade	Special Needs Education	50	4	Adams Elementary	Female	United States
AP	USSNE7	Kindergarten through Sixth Grade	Special Needs Education	42	17	Mark Twain Elementary	Female	United States
GB	USGE8	First through Third Grade	General Education	61	25	Chautauqua Elementary	Female	United States
BM	USSNE9	First through Sixth Grade	Special Needs Education	38	18	Mark Twain Elementary	Female	United States

Legend: Norway Special Needs Education: (NSNE#)
　　　　　Norway General Education: (NGE#)
　　　　　United States Special Needs Education: (USSNE#)
　　　　　United States General Education: (USGE#)

Execution

3.6   Conduct of The Interview

As mentioned earlier, we initially planned to conduct in-person, semi-structured interviews with the logic that this method would provide both structure and flexibility. We developed pre-planned, and open-ended questions that would give interviewees the opportunity to elaborate, without inhibiting the interviewee from providing texture and depth to their answers (Alsaawi, 2014, 151). After conducting several interviews, we decided to change our strategy and deployed a more naturalistic-style of interview in order to best capture the emotional, complex and intimate feedback that teachers were sharing.

We assisted respondents' meaning-making, to ensure that we interpreted in the way they intended, so that we might improve our response accuracy with standardized meaning. This was important to us especially when any mapping between the wording of a question and the respondent's circumstances, was unclear or ambiguous (Conrad, 2015, p.173). In our roles as interviewers, we worked to build trust in an effort to establish an exchange-relationship, from which we negotiated access and exit. We took a professional, but caring attitude with teachers. We desired to express support to them, with paralanguage, proxemics and gestures. With positive non-verbal signs such as an attentive gaze, leaning in to show we were eager to listen, or understanding smiles or cocking our head to show comfort, we hoped would help express genuine care. Ultimately, we hoped to build rapport knowing that positive relationships link rapport, trust and communication (Vallano et al., 2015).

We conducted in-person interviews whenever feasible, as online interviews could be unable to accomplish similar levels of depth as is possible during in-person interviews (Hewson 2014, 427). Because teachers were extremely busy, we kept interviews confined to no more than 30-45 minutes in length. To honor our respondents' time constraints and still construct meaning-making, we held a series of interviews, thus keeping the interview less than an hour in length, while still providing ample opportunity to establish deeper relationships with respondents; to ask important follow-up questions that developed after reviewing the data; to

check for interpretation of the respondent's meaning; to clarify meaning when it was not clear; and finally, to ask new questions on topics that arose after the previous interview.

In our case this latter rationale for the use of an interview series was particularly valuable, given US-Covid policy restrictions were changed shortly after a first round of interviews. This provided an excellent opportunity to inquire with our interviewees about Covid policy impacts post-policy, or on a path to normalcy. Did teacher perceptions of conditions post-policy change in the US? And if so, how were they altered post-Covid policy? These questions were able to be asked as part of our series of interviews.

We audio-recorded our interviews, in order to retain data for transcription and to avoid note-taking, which we felt would be a detraction from our ability to actively listen. We believed *video* recordings would allow us to retain important paralanguage, including gaze, proxemics and gestures, etc. Some US teachers expressed distrust of video recording, despite our strict privacy protocols. In an effort to support their wishes, we chose to use audio recording devices only. By utilizing audio recordings, we hoped to prevent the possible loss of important interview content that could result from note-taking alone. It also provided us with valuable verbatim data. Having a recording gave us all the information, some of which may not have seemed significant until after the interview, and thus, may not have been entered as a written record, if we had only taken written notes.

Unfortunately, and somewhat ironically, we were unable to satisfactorily construct data from respondents when interviewing them in-person only, as all the US participants were required to wear a face mask and distance themselves from the researchers during the initial round of interviews. However, we still felt meeting US respondents in-person was an ideal method as it provided so much information about the context and the respondent. We chose not to let this barrier prevent us from gaining valuable data on-site and in-person. We made site visits separately before follow-up interviews with unmasked interviewees on Zoom calls after the initial in-person meetings.

These supplemental Zoom calls were an excellent method in which we would circle-back for continual interpretation of our observations after in-person interviews (Crist & Tanner, 2003; Tan & Tan, 2006). Because hermeneutic phenomenology is not linear, but rather a forward arc, we always attempted to examine emerging interpretation in interviews with a keen eye for observation, sensitivity and objectivity; and with respect for our respondents' story, while aware that emerging interpretations and our dialogue would be appraised simultaneously (Crist & Tanner, 2003). See Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.2: Arc of Interviews
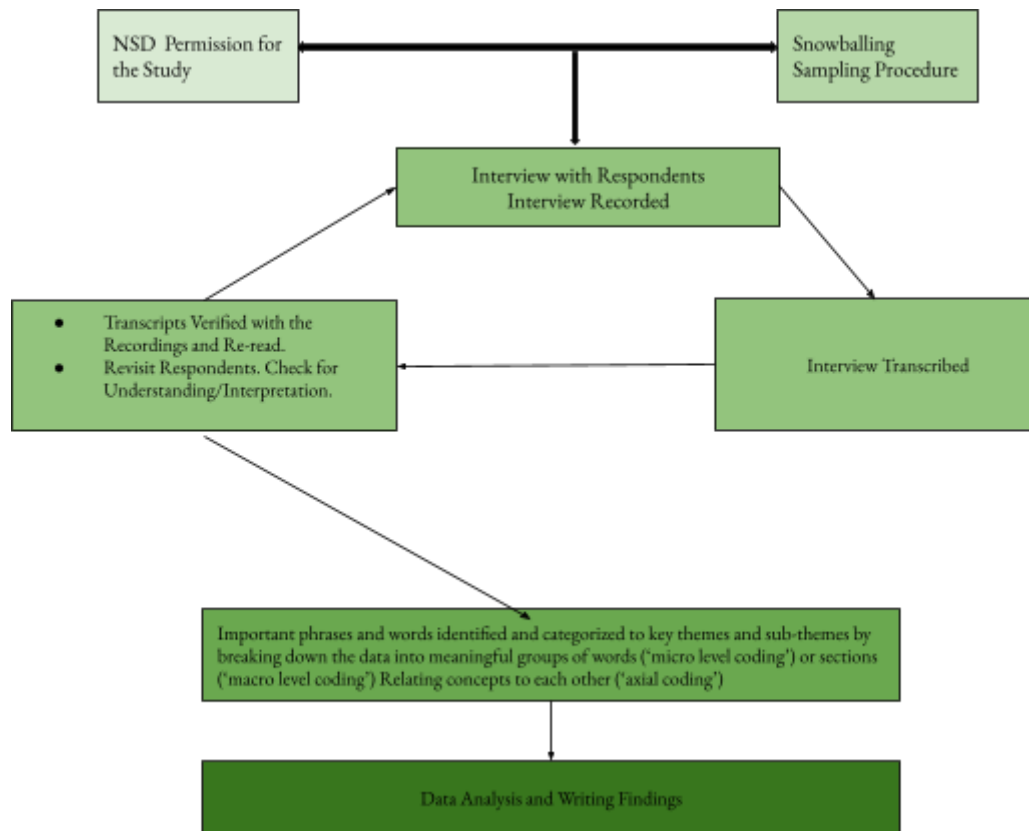
On commencing interviews, we first provided interviewees with the description of our research question and then asked them for their signed confidentiality releases. Next, we confirmed with respondents whether a voice recording of the interview was acceptable, before beginning to record. Due to technical problems, Julie was required to use her phone to record. Julie's interviews were not backed-up to her cloud, in order to safeguard that those interviews could be easily deleted. Similarly, Olive recorded on her phone as UiO's Nettskjema app download was lagging. Olive will also not back her data up to her cloud in order to ensure the interviews could be deleted easily.

Notes were *not* taken during the interviews, in an effort to avoid distraction or interruption of the conversation between researcher and respondent. However, according to Saldana (2014), it *is* important to take notes *following* the interview. Thus at the end of interviews, we made immediate notations in our thesis diaries regarding any questions which we desired to address at additional interviews. These logs included our general feelings and impressions of the interview, the respondent and the context.

Analysis

3.7 Methods of Transcribing and Analysis

Conversational analyses allowed us to construct meaning in the moment at which meaning was emerging. We analyzed what was *really* happening in the interaction. We looked for meaning *beyond* verbal dialogue. Conversational analysis methods allowed us to record not only what was said, but *how* things were said. The unit of observation in our case was the conversational turn. We performed a micro-genetic analysis of the conversation with line-by-line numbering employed to easily locate reported data needed to validate our interpretations. Details of our transcriptions included, but were not limited to: silence, pauses, laughter, pitch inflections, volume changes, interruptions, repairs and restorations.

We started our analysis with full length transcription, in order that we might code our data. Though there isn't an exact method in which to transcribe, we describe our process in an effort to be explicit (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). In order to translate from oral to written language, we have made minor alterations as editors (Kvale, 2008). To this effect we have punctuated with the following symbols:

- –   The dash represented missing pieces of information
- [ ]   Square brackets denote words that have been added into a quote
- …   Ellipses symbols indicated a leap in thought, or range or pause in speech

Analysis of transcriptions employed the Jeffersonian transcription method. Our full interview transcription incorporated steps proposed by Saldaña (2014, p. 583-587). Transcripts were used in combination with our observations of the surroundings, and an in-depth conversational analysis.

To begin this analysis, we organized our transcripts; first saving them to folders on our computers, then printing each document. We felt having hard copies of our transcripts gave us greater access to the data making analysis easier. Next, we began reading and re-reading through our transcripts, intensively and thoroughly. After this process of intimate familiarization, we constructed new knowledge, insights and understanding. At this time, we felt capable of teasing-out key themes and patterns in the data, which we chose to highlight with different colors. Saldaña describes the coding process we followed as an effort to "cluster similar or comparable codes into groups for pattern construction and further analysis" (2014, p. 587).

Color-coded data was then given a specific label. For instance, teacher burn-out, truancy, or emotional behaviors were given descriptive codes and categorized as such. For example, the quotation below, provided in response to whether the interviewee would consider leaving the teaching field as a result of Covid impacts, was coded as, 'teacher burn-out'.

I don't have a choice. I'm a single mom, so I don't really have a choice. But, yah. If a job came along, I would consider it. It's been so stressful. If I had an equal or better opportunity, I'd be super tempted. (USSNE7)

Once this process of coding was completed, we analyzed the data again. We made comparisons across interviews, relating similar statements. Often, we created sub-categories as analysis continued. For instance, some teachers who experienced burn-out were desirous to leave because of a lack of adequate compensation, where others were burned-out from general burdens resulting from Covid policies. In this way, sub-categories were created.

Next, we considered how our data reflected inclusion of SNE students in the Gen Ed classroom through the lens of the CRM. Lastly, we began to summarize and synthesize our findings onto paper. According to Saldaña, there isn't one standard method to analyze data with qualitative methods (2008). Nonetheless, literature regarding qualitative methods remained foundational in grounding our data analysis process (*Ibid*, 2008).

Lastly, we address a few specific criticisms of the interview method. For example, concerns regarding respondent bias exist, such as the possibility that interviewees may be influenced by researcher's opinions. For this reason, we made deliberate efforts to ask questions with neutrality (Chowdhury, 2014). We also asked follow-up questions based on respondents' behavior, taking note of both the paralanguage and verbal tone of our interviewees. According to Chowdry, a researchers' awareness and interpretation of the respondent will be critical information, useful when examining a research question (2014). Additionally, we continually sought feedback from our respondent's regarding our interpretations of their responses, given knowledge that people's perceptions are *not* an objective representation of the world (Chowdry, 2014). We persistently pursued sensitivity and reflexivity in our desire to authentically interpret our respondent's meaning (Jalali, 2013).

 Regardless of existing criticism of the interview method as part of qualitative research, interviews are proven to produce valid data, both rich and complex (Mack et al., 2005). In our study case, interview data offered us deep insight and understanding into how teachers in

Norway and the US perceived SNE student levels of inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom during the period during Covid policy implementation.

3.8 Ethical Issues in our Methodology

Because many of our interviews were held at elementary schools, we followed all ethical procedures (Felzmann, 2009). Teachers signed consent forms provided to them by the researchers and all data that was constructed as a result of interviews, was kept private. The researchers reviewed the consent form with respondents, prior to all interviews. Before we began the interview, we first asked if the participants had questions about their privacy. When sensitive topics surfaced, researchers allowed space to encourage the participants that their data was confidential. To ensure teacher and school anonymity, names in this study have been anonymized, since there exists a very small chance that teachers or principals inside their school or in respondents' schools, could be recognized.

Informed consent documents were provided to respondents as well as an overview of our study design and methodology, so that our participants would be fully-informed. Any respondents were voluntary. Anonymity and confidentiality of our participants was strictly adhered to. Avoiding epistemic injustice was an essential consideration at all times.

Our study was registered with the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD). No equivalent approvals were required for the US. This project was registered with NSD and received notification from NSD when it was approved, and before we conducted interviews. An NSD release form, notified participants of their rights and outlined how their data would be used. All voice recordings and any other personal data will be deleted on delivery of our thesis.

3.8.1 Positionality

As researchers, we acknowledge our positionality. Julie (Frossmo) is inherently tied to the communities she studied: the Eastside, where she was raised and attended lower and secondary

schools; Seattle, where she was born and attended university; and Vashon Island, where she raised her children in-and-outside of the Vashon Island School System. Olive (Francisco) was raised, educated and began her teaching career in the Philippines, but has an intimate understanding of her adopted-country, Norway, having lived and worked in Oslo for the past five years. During our field study, Olive taught primary school in an international school outside of Oslo. As experienced, Gen Ed and SNE teachers, we consider ourselves allies of the cases and communities we studied, and though neither of us were ever ourselves SNE students when we were young, together we leveraged our privilege stemming from our positions as educators and academics in the field of SNE education, in a desire to support SNE students' inclusion in their collective classrooms.

3.9   Implications & Contributions to Knowledge

Armed with important information about their students, teachers dialogue with parents and other key members of teaching staff will support the individual needs of children in their classrooms. If and when teacher input is ignored, knowledge of children's academic progress and well-being is also diminished.

The current dearth of research regarding SNE teachers' perceptions of Covid policies and their impacts on SNE student inclusion, suggests to us, that despite now-growing evidence regarding children's poor academic and developmental progress during the Covid policy, the magnitude and understanding of children's participation rates, and their correlated levels of well-being, is as yet, insufficiently addressed, as a result of teachers' silenced voices (Buonsenso, et al., 2021; Schwartz et al., 2021).

Indeed, in the event that Covid policy was discovered to limit participation levels, because it could not effectively respond to all students' individual needs with policies such as distance learning, social distancing and mask-wearing, schools would be flouting international agreements on a global level, and failing to honor the human rights of countless of the world's children as agreed upon in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). With our research

question, we hope to contribute deeper knowledge and understanding on this topic, with the end-goal to inform parents, and the greater community of student inclusion and well-being, in order to best support educational inclusion of all children within the community of their peers, and to thereby, simultaneously, improve children's overall well-being.

It is also important to seek teacher perceptions of student inclusion levels, as correlates to children's varied, socioeconomic, historically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Disparity, when it exists among children, could be exacerbated during Covid-style policy.

For example, in the case of remote learning during school closure, how do children without the technological interest, access (computers, internet, physical space) participate inclusively? Similarly, children on subsidized food programs, or children in vulnerable homes, where abuse and neglect exists: How are they coping, and how do teachers feel policy is impacting *their* full inclusion in the learning process (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020)?

These two examples illustrate just two implications of Covid policies and their effects on student's inclusion levels in the learning process. Measures meant to mitigate the spread of Covid without balancing academic, health, and economic consequences may increase the negative impacts of Covid policies (Christensen & Lægreid, 2020). Teacher feedback has long-been important, and teachers' voices during an emergency can and should continue to contribute insightful and critical thought to the decision-making educational processes during this era.

Teacher burn-out and resignations, were they to increase, could lead to a national teacher shortage, with a subsequent and detrimental loss of experience, skills and knowledge (Beames et al., 2021; Pressley, 2021). We are already seeing administration burn out, with the resignation of one of our US case school principals in March (2022). It is imperative that administration and policy makers approach and dialogue with teachers in an attempt to avoid such detrimental fall-out with its clear implications to student well-being and inclusion.

3.10 Limitations

The potential existed that new Covid policy mandates in the future might have barred us from interviewing SNE teachers in-person. This would have been unfortunate as qualitative interviews are critical to the meaning-making process and to building relations of trust with our participants'. If this were to have occured, we would have planned to lean heavily on the use of video diary, as well as recorded, phone or Zoom video interviews. Fortunately for us this was not the case. In fact, restrictions from policies in both countries were removed or lessened.

3.11   Conclusion

As has been discussed above, the methods section of this study is essential in order to judge the validity and replicability of our research (Azevedo et al., 2011). We have described the ways in which we constructed and analyzed our data. Most importantly, our methodological choices described herein, demonstrate to the reader that the choices made are supported in theory.

4   RESULTS

In-depth information on important themes was provided by interviewing respondents. This chapter presents the findings of our study. The results are presented qualitatively within the framework of the Curricular Relations Model (CRM). As displayed in Table 4.1, data was constructed by the researchers into key themes and subcategories and then organized by the eight, main curricular aspects of the CRM.

Do teachers perceive that Covid policy impacts SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom in Norway and the US? The interviews illuminated that SNE student inclusion was being impacted by policy. We divided data first into key themes, then subcategories before finally organizing these aspects into curricular elements of the CRM. These eight elements include: pupil, assessment, intentions, content, methods and organization, communication, care and context. We begin sharing our results with themes that focus on the pupil.

Figure 4.1:   Key Themes and Sub-Themes
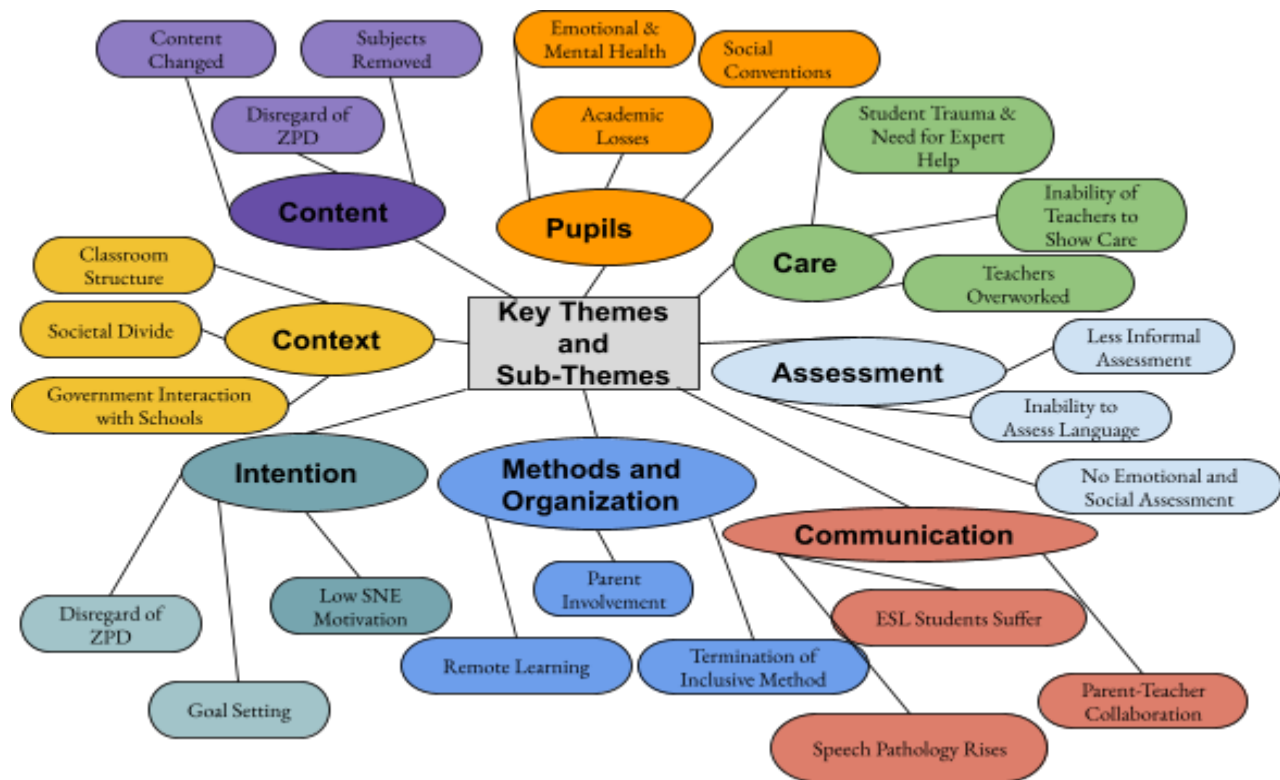
4. 1 PUPIL

Most commonly reported perceptions that teachers shared, concerned noticeable changes to their students' emotional and mental health states, as well as changes to student behavior, with impacts far greater in the US, where policy was more restrictive and remained in place for a longer period.

Pupil Behaviors: Social Protocols Disrupted

Pupil behavior changed in the US and Norway and included fidgety, restless, unfocused behavior; and being more physical with other students, including wrestling and fighting. In the US, distinct reductions in student understanding and use of basic social protocols such as common courtesies like sharing, was highly problematic.

Regarding US students' decreasing awareness of social protocols, one teacher commented:

> Behavior, um, you know, the basics that you'd expect a child to be able to do. You know, sit at a seat, raise their hand – they just can't do it! Just knowing what to do within the school, how to act. That's something my school psychologist and my social worker both picked up on. They're doing different interventions grade-wise now to help with the kids, with like – "How do you say, 'Hello?'" (USSNE5)

SNE teachers in the US regret that some students are suffering harmful impacts from a lack of in-class cooperative and interactive learning. A US teacher remarks how worsening social skills are thwarting SNE student inclusion:

> A lot of basic social skills are regressed. They [SNE students] haven't developed skills as a result of the pandemic: a lack of skills and social anxiety. That's preventing them from interacting. Just being restricted from that for so long, it takes a lot to build them back up so that they can go into classrooms. I have a couple of students who just refuse to do any inclusion – because of the anxiety. (USSNE6)

Pupil Behaviors: Physicality on the Rise

In both Norway and the US, teachers commented that students were generally more physical whether alone or together. Fighting and roughhousing throughout the day was especially noticeable in Norway where distancing was not required.

> In my kindergarten – they are fighting more. Like they are trying to get the attention of each other. (NGE1)

Despite distancing that generally prevented interactions with others, teachers noticed that US schoolchildren showed signs of disrupted behavioral development.

> It's funny… it's like there's electricity running through them, cause they're just like [teacher bobs and dances around, waving her arms] – and they just like have no respect for anyone around them. They're just like [teacher flails her arms around]. Every kid is moving! It's strange to me. I mean kindergarteners move around a lot; it's true – but this year, it does seem like they have some sort of uncontrollable energy. (USGE1)

> I think there's going to have to be a lot of teaching, because you'll see kids – when they do get near each other, they get kind of rough. (USGE1)

Pupil Emotions: Depression, Anxiety and Anger Increase During Covid Policy

In the US, teachers perceived a steep incline of depressed behavior in students,

> There is depression, you know? I sat in a meeting where a second grader just didn't want to get out of bed to go to school. And this was a kid, you wouldn't think would have that problem. (USSNE5)

Regarding the emergence of anxiety in students, one US teacher summed up what most US teachers felt, commenting:

A lot of kids have anxiety. I would say that the majority of them, on some level, up to fourth grade. (USGE2)

They were scared that they were going to bring it home to their parents… You know, the anxiety, like, 'Oh my God, is my mom gonna die from Covid?' Yah, you're just like, 'Ahh!' (USSNE5)

I noticed when we came back a lot of anxiety in the kids. Like obsessive hand-washing, asking to go to the bathroom more often and spending a long time in there, I think because they were spending so much time washing their hands. I noticed their stress levels to be very high. (USGE2)

There've been more outbursts. And we also have more 'runners.' Running out of the room. They'll run out of the room! I think it's panic, definitely. And one little girl, the teacher, just asked her to draw a circle on her paper! Something she can completely do. It's nuts! (USGE8)

We've been keeping students separated. So, their anxiety is high about interacting with other students. They're very nervous… They go to the playground but they self-isolate and feel anxious. (USSNE6)

Fortunately, nearly all teachers observed some level of nearly immediate improvements in overall behavior as masks were repealed.

They're more relaxed… They are more relaxed. They can come in and um – it's more relaxed. There isn't that tension that there was with their being masked and doing the social distancing. (USSNE5)

Many teachers felt the traumatic experience of Covid and its related policy caused students' anxiety and depression that provoked a greater need for time at home with parents. Regarding students' emotional longing for parents, one US teacher explained:

I have way more kids this year than I've ever had saying, 'I want to go home. I miss my mom.' There is an overabundance of kids, that I can tell, – they don't want to be here. When kids have problems, or can't solve a problem – their first thing is, 'I want to go home.' (USGE1)

Pupil Emotions: Anger and Fear

When one teacher was questioned about what her SNE students thought about remote learning, her students voiced anger about being required to learn remotely. She reported,

They told me they hated it… They're expressing non-verbally to me too, that they *don't* want to be online with you. (USSNE6)

Contrary to US students, who were generally fearful of Covid, Norwegian students, rather, expressed frustration and anger directly toward Covid and its related policy. The continued disruption of many aspects of school, for which students most looked forward to, such as time to play and interact together had become a burden.

They started to get more like, 'Oh, we are so tired of this Corona! They started to say, 'Oh, we *hate* Corona!' (NGE1)

In the US, students were more fearful than angry. The US-narrative that masks helped 'keep them safe' paradoxically, led to an external dependency on masking for their well-being, and that of their family and friends. According to one teacher,

I have a twelve-year-old – and he said, if people stop wearing masks, he wants to go remote, even though remote, it is really hard for him. But he just does not feel safe – if people aren't wearing masks. (USSNE7)

Pupil Academics: Special Needs Interventions on a Sharp Rise in US

On the topic of the sharp rise in US SNE students, post-policy implementation:

> Sometimes I feel like all my students are SPED students now. And every single kid needs a specialized plan. I'm like, 'Should I make a special plan? This kid gets to sit in a special chair? And then, it's like, Ahh! I don't have time for that!' (USGE1)

> We're seeing a higher number of students that need tier-two intervention this year. My prediction is that there's going to be a huge push for more interventions. I mean – even number sense. I mean… You look at the child, and go, 'Ok, ok, sweetheart.' You know? And this kid doesn't even have an IEP! (USGE1)

Of the more than 1.1 million students in Washington state (United States), 71% of students failed standardized, national, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) testing at the end of the 2021-school-year. A US SNE teacher reflects on SNE student learning after 1.5 years of Covid policy,

> We gotta a lot of work to do. They [the students] lost. By 1ˢᵗ grade, around half need intervention. By 3ʳᵈ grade around 1/3 need some sort of intervention before we go with the IEP… I'm sorry but kids that were borderline, you know, the kids from even up to like, the 50ᵗʰ percentile - those are the kids, down to the single digits, that suffered so much during Covid. They're getting it, but they *aren't really* getting it. And it was a frickin' year-and-a-half! (USSNE5)

4.2 ASSESSMENT

When it came to assessment, mask wearing, distancing and remote learning led to interesting differences between Norway and the US. One was the difficulty of assessing reading ability and another, the reduced opportunities for language acquisition and assessment. Further perceptions from teachers included the feeling that academic assessments were prioritized at the expense of

students' ZPD. Finally, teachers felt that natural assessment methods were also significantly impacted.

Academic Assessment Prioritized in the US

In the US, academic performance of pupils and school ratings were both top priorities; academic performance being the sole student measure at the expense of much-needed testing for mental and emotional health. Regardless of student readiness, teachers adopted top-down, academic dictates from principals, bypassing individualized SNE student learning goals as a necessary loss, following their students' year-long, remote-learning experiences. Surprisingly, many SNE teachers expressed agreement with their school's administrative, across-the-board initiatives; and what they accepted as an unavoidable need to accelerate student learning, in hopes to better prepare their students for the impending benchmarks expected in year-end standardized state tests.

> It's not like we stop and go back and re-teach, because they're going to be given this year's SBAC [standardized state test]. So, it's like – nope! Let's go ahead! We try to keep them at grade-level. Because, that's the only way to kind-of – keep it going. Or else you really *will* get it derailed. (USSNE7)

For many teachers, upcoming assessments meant challenging students beyond their emotional comfort level.

> And right now, we're seeing a high number of kids that are crying and [saying], "It's too hard!" Because you know, we're pushing through. Like teachers *have* to push-through the curriculum and the content. (USSNE9)

Though in the minority, a few US teachers resisted administrative pressure to hit the academic targets that had come-and-then-gone during the window of remote learning. One SNE teacher reported,

So, I'm adapting the curriculum to meet them where they're at. I have no other choice. That's what we have to do… I'm going to be flexible and stuff. I don't really have any expectations for next year. Because I can't. I think that's okay. (USSNE6)

Referrals for Special Needs on the Rise

Significant differences between countries regarding academic achievement were notable. With expected levels of student achievement, Norway did *not* need to reconsider its assessment approach. But, in Washington state, where 71% of students failed, teachers were confronted with how to address low math, reading and writing skills, especially with students entering school as Kindergarteners. Remarking on the marked increase in assessment requests by parents, one teacher stated,

> We have a lot of referrals for special education – for parents' concerns. I'm guessing at least 25 % or more [of parents], but it's only a guess. Their child's behind. Because a lot of kids who entered Kindergarten during Covid – they're in second grade now, and can't read and write. There are certain skills where there are deficits, just because they never, – I mean, they haven't had to write for the last year-and-a-half! (USSNE7)

Speech and Language: Assessment Impaired in the US

All teachers queried felt masking prevented them from properly teaching and assessing their students' speech and language ability.

> *There's* concern about five-year olds with speech issues now! Because they're not watching people. Like they can't mimic people's voices or watch people's lips when they're talking. So, are sounds being correctly used? (USSNE9)

And with masks removed mid-March (2022) teachers were again able again to properly address reading, speech and language acquisition.

It's so fabulous to have the masks off! It is *so* refreshing to see their faces. I mean we are *working* on reading; we're *working* on phonics; we're *working* on decoding! (USSNE5)

Less Informal Assessment Occurred during Remote Learning

Another difference in terms of types of assessment during the year of remote learning in the US was a lack or lessening in the use of *informal* assessment throughout the day. This was perceived as true in Norway, as well, during their own two-month window of remote learning. One US teacher reflected on these changes to informal assessment with remote learning.

Um? Well, I guess there's less of it. I mean, I look at the children's work, I'm calling on the children. I'm working with them in small groups. So, some of the same ways; there's just way less opportunity to do natural assessments. (USGE2)

Some SNE teachers felt there wasn't *any* assessment happening, informal or otherwise. In response to being asked about her ability to assess while online, one SNE teacher states,

There was pretty much no assessment. Just to get the participation [was hard] and you know, – to get them engaged. (USSNE9)

In Norway, teachers weren't clear about what work students produced while remote learning at home, but regardless, they were relaxed and unworried about the need to assess students informally or otherwise.

Yeah, so you know… I took basically everything with a grain of salt… It was really hard to say what was the *student's* work and what was the *parents'* work. But I did do things like have the students send me videos of them reading or, you know, have them send me videos of them writing. But otherwise… There were really no assessments. And I think, in Norway we're kind-of blessed in that way, because of course, we take card grades as proof at that age. (NGE1)

4. 3 INTENTIONS

Goal Setting Altered:

Learning objectives and goals were affected by the implementation of Covid policies, thereby impacting levels of SNE student inclusion. Teachers needed to abandon long-term goals to focus instead on short-term objectives in an effort to maintain student motivation in school. Some teachers pushed forward with goal setting, passing over unmet goals while others worked on meeting students where they were in their current skills. A teacher in the US stated that to set goals for her new students in grade one she had to pull small groups and work on their level and set goals from there.

> I revised all the IEPs for the coming year. You know some kids have not met their goals from last year, and we've had to just reset them, keeping the same goals or reducing the goals; cause they need to, you know, they just need to do that work. We're not making progress on some of them. But some kids have done well, and thrived, and those are the kids that have support at home. (USSNE6)

> I pull small groups, based on their ability levels and where they are and kind of gear what I'm doing to meet their needs. (USGE3)

In Norway one of the teachers described that learning goals should be set as easily as they could so the students that are working on them at home during remote learning would have the motivation to do tasks that were easy to follow through.

> When it comes to doing a distance learning plan the principal would remind us to set simple goals for students and parents that were easy to follow. (NSNE6)

Learner´s Low Motivation and ZPD Neglected

US and Norwegian teachers also said during remote learning students lacked motivation to work and set their own goals for the day. It had a positive impact for students that work independently but students who could not act without supervision tended to fall behind in achieving learning goals. Teachers worried that the child's ZPD was not promoted and students only focused on pleasurable things such as playing with apps and video gaming, rather than challenging themselves to uncover their potential and master new skills.

> I think when the children were home, I think it was a lot of iPads. And that they could play. I think they did more interesting things or maybe they didn't need to focus on learning. (NGE1)

In the US, teachers stated that when it came to long-term goals and achieving the short-term goal for each of the lessons during Covid, whether remote learning or in-class, it depended on the students' self-resilience.

> It comes down to resiliency, that the kids who have been successful and have been able to meld into this current Covid culture, those might be the ones who can look back at it, [and say] 'But then we went back to school!' But for those who don't have that same kind of resiliency – I think, you know… It's going to be a very negative thing for them. (USSNE4)

> So preferences. Yeah, it narrows down to the preference of the kids and their individual capability of the parent to, to follow through and the capability of the student themselves, because maybe some students are more independent, and they don't need any parents support. (NSNE6)

Teacher Planning

Teachers developed an individually adapted plan for SNE students. Plans were designed with differing goals depending on whether learning was remote or in-class: with the help of their teacher when at school and with the support of parents at home. During Covid teachers in

Norway said they had to make extra adapted plans to ensure that individual needs of all students were met. Plans were prepared with little notice with policies changing often.

> Sometimes we had days of warning to prepare. So, you know, you would come into school and it was okay, well in two days, we're going to red-level, get everything ready. Get the home learning ready… The SNE students – they get a special, special plan. So it's like, okay, yes, we are going to special plans, but remember teachers that these students get this special, special plan. (NSNE6)

In the US teachers stated that after the year of remote learning, specialized plans were necessary to elevate students' skills which had not developed during the year outside the classroom. In the US, some students had to relearn their social protocols from scratch after the year-long absence from in-class learning. Administration demanded academic priorities in the US; though teachers believed that social protocols should be addressed first rather than immediately engaging students into curriculum learning goals.

> So, they were either remote all of last year; they were either remote until mid-February and then came in person four days a week on shortened days; or they went to a private school, and were in-person. It's taken a long time for them to get what it even means to be in school. And what it means to be, like… Even like with sharing and everything like that… We've done a lot of work this year on social-emotional stuff. (USGE3)

The study of intentions according to the teacher's perceptions of Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion is clearly manifested with the realigning of the learning goals. Teachers stated that following through with long-term goals of the curriculum was difficult because learners were mostly at a loss on where they were, and if they had positive home support they achieved but if none were given student learning goals were not met. Teachers had to develop learning plans that were simple and diverse according to the needs of the students as well as simple for easy follow-up from parents during remote learning.

4.4   CONTENT

Content refers to the curriculum implemented by the schools from the legislation passed by the government. Content and intention work go hand in hand in order to give learners the capacity to apply what they have learned in their everyday lives. An inclusive education content curriculum comprises concepts, subject areas, knowledge and skills that benefit each student. The subjects/learning areas of the content curriculum are interrelated and interlinked to meet learners' individual needs. In the US and Norway, during the Covid pandemic, teachers perceived that the shift in curriculum failed to uphold inclusion because of subjects removal, government mandated remote learning, staff swapping, and teachers differentiated approach to the shift in curriculum content.

Subjects Removed

Local school covid policies implemented during the pandemic presented a change in curriculum and adjustment to syllabus schools administered in the school year. According to the teachers, policies on distancing resulted in the removal of some subjects. Subjects that elicited crowd gathering and close contacts were canceled. Gym classes, sports, and music concerts were postponed or were done online. Learning areas like music, P.E., and afternoon activities for clubs were removed in order to adhere to the restrictions on distancing and number of people gathering in an event. Teachers argued that this greatly affects students' inclusion. Some students have a huge interest in sports and music. This gives them a sense of belongingness in the school. Removal, cancelation, and postponement of these subjects took a toll on student motivation to continue to be in school.

> The students felt really bad when they learned they cannot do a concert this year. They were looking forward to it. (NGE1)

Another teacher in the US reflected on subjects that were not taught due to limited staffing.

Um, everyone's stressed. Everyone is just trying to survive through the end of the day. I cringe every time I look at the email in the morning to see who's out. One time it was like 13! And I'm like – [laughing] we only have thirteen staff! Teachers and TA's!
We can't get subs! I mean who'd want to come?! So students go without supplemental classes. There's nobody there to teach! (USSNE5)

Government Legislation Influence on Change in Curriculum

In the US schools that were funded by the government have to follow the change in curriculum and schools that were not could decide for their own. This pertains to the public school and private school. Most of the public schools followed the mandated school closure and shifted to remote learning. Private schools remained open and conducted classes at schools. Teachers stated that this affects inclusion as students with no financial resource had to stay at home while students that are financially stable continue to attend schools. Learning at school and learning from home poses a big difference in terms of meeting learners' needs. In the US, this widened the gap between the poor and the rich families. One teacher stated that,

> Hillsdale doesn't get any Federal funding, so they can do their own thing [big laughter]. So, now, they're the school where everyone wants to go because they're up and running. The rich will get educated. The poor will not. And the gap is going to get bigger. (USSNE5)

It is supported by another teacher as it happened in her class:

> But I had two kids pulled for private school at the beginning of last school year, so 2020, about a month into school. And both of their families said it had nothing to do with me, but they wanted their kids to be in-person. (USGE3)

In Norway, the government issued school local covid policies. All types of schools (private and public) from kindergarten to the universities adopted and adhered to it. The government had

devised the stop light traffic policies of red, yellow and green levels of restrictions schools should implement. These levels were based on corona cases the community had. Red was the highest level. School closure was implemented and remote learning materialized. In yellow level schools would remain open where the cohort system (students were divided into small groups) was devised. Lastly, Green level where all restrictions were dropped, school routines continued as normal. Teachers had apprehensions, but they followed.

> I am skeptical about it, but I followed it because I believed it was necessary. The situation is hard but it's a learning process for all. We need to adapt and pick ourselves up through trial and error and do what is best. It is fortunate that school in Norway did not close for a long time. (NSNE2)

Reassigning of Teachers to Cope with Staff Shortages

With staff getting sick and quarantined for a long time, schools in the US and Norway faced the dilemma of being understaffed. General education teachers were being pulled out from their designated classes to facilitate different classes. Changes in the learning syllabus were done as teachers needed to adapt with the plan of absent teachers. Content system approaches were disrupted by constant substitution of teachers. Reassignment of teachers to solve shortages of staff increased the workload of teachers which had affected the curriculum children followed in their reading, math, english and science. Teachers bombarded with tasks and plans had little time to address childrens behind skills in literacy.

Most of my students are behind. The remedial classes done for falling behind students cannot be done during this time as teachers have little to enough time to address all of the plans needed to be ready for remote learning. (USGE3)

And it is supported by another teacher from the US.

> Yah… I get really worried about kids with phonemic awareness. It has to happen in those foundation years. So, the kids who haven't had that, I really do worry about the long-term effects of it. (USGE2)

Teachers acknowledged that the change in the curriculum exposed the underlying problems schools have prior to covid. The teachers complained about lack of support and they were burnt out from overwork and stress from planning and taking charge of everything. This greatly impacted the students.

> It's more obvious, the lack of support, partially because there is a staffing shortage right now. So, it's exposing issues that teachers have always had. Like, teachers losing all of their planning time because we don't have people to teach specialists. They're pulling other teachers out of, like, P.E. to teach another class and then the teachers to get a break. So, we're pulling to teach another class and those teachers don't get a break. (USGE3)

This is also apparent in Norway as one teacher stated that,

> I think teachers are very worn out in general. It affects the environment of the school teachers, I feel they're more tired. And of course, it's going to impact the students. (NGE7)

Disagreement on How to Handle Content

Teachers were handling learners on extremely different levels with different approaches. They have a disagreement on how to deliver the content to each learner. Some teachers met learners on their current skills regardless of grade level. Others addressed their learners with the content appropriate to the grade level they were in regardless if they are having the skills or not. This was a contradicting approach that gave teachers confusion.

> This is a self-contained classroom, so I'm creating a lot of the things we're doing in here. So, I'm adapting the curriculum to meet them where they're at. I have no other choice. That's what we have to do. (USSNE5)

> But with the kids, straight up, it was very detrimental. We were, like, we're winging it. (NGE7)

Teachers in the US asserted that they had wanted to meet learners on the level where they were but had problems with support from school administrations. Administrations pushed teachers to approach learners based on the content level pupils should have in order to succeed in the year end assessment that determined school performance. Higher score in assessment received higher assessed level and good funding.

> Students are behind in skills,but we need to push them through in order to perform well and receive higher scores on the standardized assessment at the end of school year. (USSNE4)

It was perceived by the teachers that the changing of curriculum to remote learning impacted students' inclusion. Teachers experienced burning out because of the heavy workload of constant planning and taking extra classes to cope up with shortage of staff. These manifested the prime problems of schools that were always being overlooked. School administrators influenced in the application of content created confusion among teachers on how to handle the crisis in shifted curriculum. Furthermore, the change in content brought upon by covid policies widened the gap between rich and poor families which in turn dented the inclusion practices schools endorsed. Teachers thought that the changes in the content of the curriculum had an effect on the learners as they were behind on learned skills. Being restricted with their actions and subjects reduced hours or completely eliminated, students had lost the chance to interlink learning areas that they could apply to their daily lives. Thus, resulting in low motivation to learn in school.

4.5   METHODS & ORGANIZATION

Teachers in both Norway and the US needed to drastically alter their teaching methods especially during distancing and remote learning periods. However, the two countries had near opposite responses to distancing; with the US choosing to completely halt small-group learning, and Norway choosing instead to adopt it. Teachers in both countries attempted to replicate classroom methods for online learning as best as they were able with little support or training from the

schools' administration, and little time to learn and prepare for the leap to remote classroom methods.

Classroom Methods: Going Remote

Teachers generally felt that there wasn't an adequate replication of being together as a collective, nonetheless, teachers made their best efforts:

> I couldn't create an entire world for them to be in. (USSNE6)

> I think there were a lot of IPADS when the children went home. (NGE1)

> It wasn't successful. I'm not satisfied. What are the costs? (USSNE6)

> So, we were prepared with plans…We called students that needed a little check-in and said, 'Hi, Johnny, how are you doing? Do you need some help? Let's meet at this time for math class and so on.' But if there wasn't a person on the other side to help them, you know, connect and follow the schedule, and that sort-of-thing, there was nothing we could do. (NSNE6)

> I spent a week during spring break building IEP boxes that would replicate what the classroom ones looked like, so we could send them home and have them dropped off at people's doors. (USSNE9)

New Methods on Returning to the Classroom

Teachers in the US, generally perceive distancing measures in-person as counterproductive. They especially bemoaned the loss of small groups, and carpet-time.

> This time of year, I should be teaching kids how to read in small groups. I should be able to have the kids doing an activity at their tables and pull kids to the side to like, count

or… manipulate pieces. But I can't do that. It's physically and mentally impossible. (USGE1)

Last year, everybody had to learn to do school differently. (USSNE7)

The kids are more spread out so it's not as easy to say, 'Ok, everybody come in we're going to look at these little pattern blocks. I'm going to do this and then you're going to go back and do the pattern blocks.' It's not like that anymore. (USGE1)

What's going to happen with these children? Because they aren't going to get it doing this. They need to be in front of me! We need to have that interaction. We need to have that tactile. We need to have the different sensory things going on with them to *learn*. I mean all the research supports that. (USSNE5)

Small groups were used as an alternative solution to distancing in Norway, and many teachers enjoyed the closer connections that formed from more time with fewer students.

It was very easy to collect the group or to be with them and to be closer to them. So, I think it's in one way, a better time for you and the children. (NGE1)

It was not distancing, but more like, the kids were put into small groups. The groups couldn't be together. So, we split it. It was a very small kindergarten, no? We were very, very much open at the school, with only shortened hours. (NGE4)

This is a self-contained classroom, so I'm creating a lot of the things we're doing in here. I have no other choice. That's what we have to do. We're building right now. (NSNE6)

No Training in the Move to Remote Learning

I had only a few hours to pivot to remote learning, and so I couldn't create an entire world for them to be in, if I was remote the entire time, and I had the planning time to

build that… cause, it takes work to build a creative, engaging, remote world… And so, to ask us to just flip a switch and just – do everything we do in the classroom online – in just hours… It doesn't work. It's just a waste of time. (USSNE6)

We were suddenly having to push-out tests electronically, like everything was electronic versus worksheet, right? So, you had stressed out teachers and technology issues… So kids were always being able to access everything. So, it was just very stressful. (USSNE7)

I was forced to learn something like that so quickly. It was a lot to learn. Luckily, I had some people, young people, to rely on. Yah, a whole lot. Um, and the systems were not necessarily there, in place to go out to get the support you needed. Because the tech people were not responsible to answer those millions of little questions that arise in a day. (USGE8)

Inconsistency in Methods

With US school attendance at all-time lows, methods needed to address absent students who were missing from in-class instruction following a year of remote learning. Respondents innovated to resolve the revolving door of ongoing, student absenteeism caused in large part by lengthy, quarantine requirements and disengagement after a year-long loss of in-class learning. One way US teachers supported student learning during periods of low attendance was by offering hybrid instruction, where teachers simultaneously taught online and in-class lessons. Absent learners could choose to attend lectures virtually or view them at a later time.

Until yesterday, I rarely had a full class this year. Attendance has been spotty throughout the school year. It has made it a challenge to continue with lesson plans if six students are out. It's one more way teachers have had to be flexible this year. Some have filmed themselves while teaching to accommodate, and others send home supplemental work. (USGE8)

Despite this added option to re-engage with students through virtual lessons, teachers perceived the inconsistency in methods further weakened social protocols and student motivation, fueling the already problematic truancy rates. US respondents agreed that after a year of remote learning, social protocols, and emotional and behavioral deficits were a priority over academics, and needed to be addressed, before in-class learning could realistically take place. One SNE teacher expressed the importance of consistent attendance in regard to successful learning:

> Routine, attention, participation. Those were the main things you had to deal with first before you could address the skill deficits. (USSNE4)

4.6   COMMUNICATION

Student Communication Improves in Norway

Teachers in Norway not only saw student preferences change, they saw students communicate their needs and interests more effectively during their brief distancing period. Students were assigned non-distanced relations in specially assigned small groups. Within these small groups, teachers in Norway discovered that quieter and/or shy students communicated more.

> It was actually very positive… That we had small groups, it was easier for some of the shy kids, some of the kids that don't really speak up as much. They had an easier time raising their voice and being included, when there were smaller groups. (NGE4)

For a two-month period, Norway reduced attendance to lower the number of students in class at any one time. This further reduced noise in classrooms having a similar impact to distancing measures; that of empowering shy students to better vocalize their needs. Another Norwegian teacher reflects on changes resulting from quieter, smaller classrooms:

> Students are more vocal about, you know, 'I need a quiet space to work. Can I go to a quiet space?' Yeah. So, I have more students asking for that. Before it was as they got

older. Now I have younger students asking to go to a quiet space. So, I think there's an awareness. 'Okay, sometimes I don't want to work with people.' And that's okay. Yah, so that may be a positive for inclusion; to feel that you can be vocal about your needs, and that then they [your needs] will be met. So, that's maybe a positive (NSNE6).

Different Approaches Lead to Difference Results with Language and Speech Ability

In Norway, attention was paid to the potential side effects from student masking. Norway chose to reduce these risks to communication and language development by going mask-free.

> And we were not allowed to use masks as teachers, okay. Because they said that we would not want to slow down the development or the language of the child if we had this protection of the mask. (NGE1)

In the US, all teachers' and students' communication was hindered, as masked teachers failed to invite their students' attention in traditional ways.

> This is the first year that I've started clapping, you know, to get attention… I have to do something that is… So jolting… It gets you to just – realize, 'Oh, I'm in the room!' (USGE1)

> It greatly affects how I interact with my students, because I can't see their face and they can't see mine… It was truly a barrier. (USSNE5)

Being queried about communication once Covid masking ended, one US teacher described improved conditions during mask-free teaching/learning.

> The fact that we can see each other's faces and that you can communicate, makes a huge difference. They can see my *entire* face! And I can see theirs! And there's a connection there that you couldn't have with a mask. (USSNE5)

Communication During Remote Learning

US teachers remote learning was lengthy, remaining in place for more than a year and radically impacting learning and communication. Less communication occurred even when students did attend. However, in Norway, alongside help from parents, teachers felt they were able to adequately maintain communication with their students during their brief window of remote learning.

> You know, during the time that we were closed? Teachers would still do video calls and communicate with them [students] at home, I would do… Fairy tales with puppets and film it at home and send it to them. So, we kept communicating. I was able to do it with the help of their parents. And when the school was open, everyone – we were really happy to be back! (NGE4)

Communication and Language Acquisition

Regarding lost learning opportunities for English language learners during the long-term period of remote learning, a US teacher reflects,

> My English language learners, they don't have as much opportunity to overhear conversations between peers. So, they're not learning [to communicate] because of that. The main voice they're hearing is mine and they're not hearing peers talk to one another… Sitting down eating lunch together and having those natural conversations. They're not playing at recess together and working out their natural difficulties. They're just not – there's so much interaction that they're *not* having. (USGE2)

> In the long run, we'll see what a significant problem it is [mask wearing]. Whether it would be that child's emotional well-being or that child doing the right pronunciations of his phonemic awareness. I mean, it's all over the place. Uh! (USSNE5)

Communicating Exclusion

Teachers expressed concern about negative messaging regarding inclusion and healthy relationships during masking, and distancing. Yet, some teachers and students were found to promote exclusionary measures patrolling each other with one-size fits all measures like that of masking

> The relationship between my kids and I is… The *most* important thing. And, we have to model the relationships we want the kids to have with each other, like a warm, friendly attitude. Instead, it's like, 'I can't be near you! You're sick!' Or, 'You might get me sick!'-kind-of-thing. (USGE1)

> They [teacher] put plexiglass in front of a kid that can't wear a mask! (USSNE9)

> They [students] police each other on masking and washing their hands and distancing. Which is a really cool thing! They're like, 'Nope! You need to put your mask on.' (USGE2)

4.7 CARE

Teachers in Norway and the US expressed care differently during the crisis. US teachers found it difficult to properly express their care and concern for children when masked and distanced. Norwegian teachers took deliberate and intentional efforts to express care while online. In both countries, teachers were concerned for their own health resulting in a lack or reduction of caring behaviors.

Norway and the US: Children and Care Received

In Norway, children were better able to show signs of affection without demands to distance from fellow pupils or wear masks that prevented signs of care. One teacher describes how distancing worked in small groups during the two-month distancing phase:

I think within the same group, they could hug, they can play like normal, whatever, a smaller group. I think for some reason, it was okay to be in a smaller group. Because in this little group, it was – everything was, like normal, they could go to the same toilet, they could sit next to each other. (NGE1)

The care is there. So, they're allowed to play together, they're allowed to do whatever. And they can hug *anybody* if they want to. So, there's no more Corona restrictions at all. Oh, it's really back to normal. Normal, regular, class. We're back. (NGE4)

Teachers in Norway and the US: How Care Was Expressed

In the US, SNE students were allowed in-class lessons with their SNE teachers. However they were also given supplemental class instruction in the remote Ged Ed classrooms. Most teachers in the US felt their SNE students gained little from their remote sessions.

The kids that were online, especially the younger ones, sometimes the best you could do was to be that person that interacted with them every day, but really nothing more than that. (USSNE4)

I don't have any SNE students online. Our special needs students were brought back into the classroom first. One reason was their families just needed a break… But, there's just no way I could be 'special needs' over a computer. There's no way I could do it. (USGE2)

Teachers in Norway said they made deliberate efforts to make meaningful connections and express caring behavior over the screen:

The students were able to feel the warmness of their teachers in the video. Teachers always asked, 'How are you? And how did your day go?' And by accepting them and

listening to them: what they want and what the challenges were that they were experiencing; during those days during this pandemic. (NGE7)

We made some videos that we sent to the children with experiments and games. So, they could try them at home. And we gave them tasks for Easter last year. We made a small package with things that we brought from door-to-door so they could have something to do during Easter holiday. So, every week we made something they'd like and we had lots of ideas. (NECE1)

Distancing Reduced Care

In the US, some teachers felt the demand to distance led to less care, as a result of constantly needing to point-out whenever students didn't properly adhere to distancing rules. Teachers reflected on the costs of managing students during distancing:

The young kids need an adult they can go to! To just love them – and not be reprimanding them all the time! (USSNE7)

Distancing is bad. Maybe that's another reason why there's this rift between my students and me. Because I always have to be, like, 'Give him space!' (USGE1)

As a teacher, and I know my other two kindergarten teachers are the same way, I feel like I have to be – just, so mean! It's hard to be warm and caring when you're just telling a kid to move away from somebody. It's not happening. (USGE1)

One of the hardest things I struggle with, is a big problem; kids keeping their hands off each other. They're just wanting to be next to each other and hugging each other all the time. (USGE8)

US teachers noticed students struggled with a lack of intimate and caring relations within their classroom that led to many students missing their parents and wanting to return home.

So, usually in kindergarten there is hand-holding and hugs. I do have some kids in my class, and their parents have told me; they really need hugs when they're upset. And I haven't been doing that. (USGE1)

As a teacher I felt insecure because I couldn't wear the mask. And I couldn't protect myself and that made me keep this distance from the children. I didn't want them to come too close to my face… I think that was maybe the worst [part of Corona] for the children. (NGE1)

Teachers in the US felt distancing reduced students' sense of community and inclusiveness with each other.

It feels like the kids and I – we're all separate. I'm always saying, we're a community, but then, we can't help each other do things, so… (USGE1)

Relieved as Policies End: The Effects

Near the end of the two-year distancing policy, there were some positive side effects, with students becoming more aware of their needs for empathetic and caring interactions with each other. This awareness led to more inclusiveness in the Gen Ed classroom.

I've been surprised at how inclusive their (SNE students) peers have been with them. I think they're more empathetic. I really do. (USSNE5)

For the SNE students who did take advantage of online learning opportunities, and for whom developed academically as a result of the one-on-one attention, improved confidence helped them to integrate more fully into the Gen Ed classroom.

The added confidence has rolled over into a higher level of inclusion in the Gen Ed class. Their confidence was built by their achievement one-on-one while online. (USSNE4)

Policies Impeded Relations of Care

Regarding policies, one teacher reflected on how they affected the ability for teachers and students or for pupils with their fellow pupils, to be in caring relations.

> Having a mask is a barrier, like an intimacy barrier, you what I mean? (USSNE7)

> Last year we didn't hug. We didn't do anything like that. I did it on the last day of school. It was still very separated. But this year, I am; I do hug them. Like if they ask for a hug or come up to hug me – like, I don't have a problem with that… I don't know if it is technically acceptable. (USGE3)

> There are teachers at school that are so afraid of getting Covid, that they're just like, you know – expressing to students their fears in a bodily way. It is like a repulsion to the students. (USGE1)

> Like behaviorally, there were certain students, for example, who would refuse to do work and would throw fits. And it was because we couldn't get too close to them. Because people were so distanced. There were a lot of behavioral things going on. In all classrooms, like in the same area. So, I saw a lot… And you just didn't poke the bear. They're in their safe bubble. That's fine. It felt like babysitting in some rooms. (USGE3)

A teacher in the US, spoke about her pupils' new awareness of their need for relationships after remote learning for a year. She stated,

> I think they were so starved for connection, that they were willing to take whatever they could get! So, for some of these kids, that were not staying with anybody, being back… They really were willing to take whatever [connections they could]. (USSNE6)

Norwegian teachers also perceived children's renewed enthusiasm to interact with their peers after their period of isolation from schoolmates.

I think they missed their friends. So, they went back to the kindergarten; and they were like, 'Yah! I am with friends!' (NGE1)

4.8   CONTEXT

Space and Materials

Teachers in the US felt the adaptations to their classrooms were damaging and counterproductive to successful teaching/learning. Teachers were required to remove items other than single-student-desks to make enough space to separate students, in order to meet the required six-foot distancing rules. In the US this meant eliminating all: art materials, libraries, carpets, rocking chairs, upholstered chairs, sofas, bookshelves, furniture used for imaginary play and circle-time, like kitchen or workshop items, as well as quiet reading items, such as pillows and cushions on which students informally sit to read, rest or play.

US teachers separated student desks by six feet and teacher desks were box-bounded, with tape applied to carpets in an effort to alert students of the teacher's prohibited area. These changes were bemoaned by US teachers for their resulting loss of vital and essential teaching materials, as well as for the resulting limits to free movement and available space, key to the teachers' access to their students.

> Yeah, distancing, it's hard. I feel like there's no space in my classroom, because everything is spread apart. There's literally, like, you run into something everywhere! I would love to have them (the students) back in their normal groups without them being six-feet-apart. (USGE3)

According to one US teacher,

> Yah, I mean we had to remove *everything*. It was a pretty bare classroom. It was very different from normal. (USGE3)

In Norway during the relatively short, two-month distancing rule, seating arrangements in classrooms were also shifted and time at one's desk was increased, in order to better separate students; a change that for some teachers, led to quieter classrooms and a more suitable learning environment for certain students. A Norwegian teacher reflects on this positive outcome from their temporary distancing measure.

> So, something that I saw that may have impacted inclusion was when we were in the red level. And students had to space chairs, everybody had to be at their desk, you know? Yeah, basically, everybody had to be at their desk. And they would like, talk to the person in front of them, or who was next to them. And that was pretty much it. But having those quiet classes for some kids that struggle with structure and routine, that seemed to be a positive. Because they didn't feel that they had to be interacting all the time, or that they had to say something all the time. You know, it was, I think, positive for them, it was a positive. Actually, quite a few students did say that they really enjoyed the red level. (NSNE6)

Group Work during Distancing Measures

US teachers found the loss of circle-time learning detrimental. Teachers and students were no longer able to sit together on a carpet, where they could be physically close to one another and study lessons materials up close. New, separated desk assignments also prevented teachers from individually adapting student needs by allowing them to group by ability as they normally would, a process often helpful in direct-reading instruction. Further, the lack of reflexivity prevented the grouping of students based on varied talents and abilities, an innovative and inclusive method, often used in theme-based group learning.

One frustrated US teacher describes how learning only at one's desk was often developmentally inappropriate and/or ineffective,

> First, I have to get the kids all to look at the screen from their seats. Then I have to use the document camera on the screen if I want them to see something and you know,

they're not college students! They don't know how to look at the screen and do what I did. The kids in the back, they're not even looking, they're like, picking at something on their shoe! Whereas, if I had them all on the carpet, and I'm like, 'look at this! And I was like, here, you try something, you put this here…' Then, it would work. (USGE1)

Another teacher from the US expressed her frustration at the loss of small group learning.

I should be teaching kids how to read in small groups. I should be able to have the kids doing an activity at their tables and pull kids to the side to like, count or… manipulate pieces. But I can't do that. It's physically and mentally impossible. (USSNE4)

The requirement to trace illnesses from person-to-person in the US required separation and also record keeping of people who had contact with others who may have been positive. This demand to trace students, served to enforce the regulation to maintain distance of six feet at all times, with ongoing impacts to small group learning, that are so vital to SNE students' inclusion.

Yah, so we weren't doing it [small group learning] cause of contract tracing. It was such a mess. So, we didn't do any of that last school year. (USGE3)

Where US policy exempted students from participating in small-group instruction, Norwegian policy found solutions through *more* small-group learning. In Norway, schools created small groups of four-to-five students to provide close contact cohorts to imitate a family group, during the required two-month-period of distancing, thereby reducing broader contacts with the entire class population. This addressed infection control yet still allowed students opportunities to play together, share affection and enjoy friendships. Teachers noticed these friendly and familial-like groups led to less competition than normally seen amongst students.

When they are in small groups, it's more like, if the grown-up introduces some activity, that they [students] change their focus from competing with each other, to what they're going to do. This is what I've said all the time. If there are conflicts, do something. If you can put the focus on an activity, then that will make the children equal. (USGE1)

During this distancing period, Norwegian teachers felt the intimate groups led to a greater sense of normality. One teacher reflects on this strategy:

> I think within the same group, they could hug, they can play like normal, whatever… a smaller group. I think for some reason, it was okay to be in a smaller group. Because in this little group, it was like everything was normal. They could go to the same toilet; they could sit next to each other. (USGE2)

The Q-Room Excludes

Students who tested positive in the US were sent to the Q-room, the quarantine room where they would wait alone until they could be picked up. Teachers reported that students likely felt estranged and excluded in the Q-room.

> Yah, I can imagine they [students who test positive] might feel kind-of-badly about being cast-out of the classroom. (USGE3)

Teacher Morale and Context Changes

US teachers were exhausted by a drastic loss of planning time, quiet breaks and privacy in their rooms, as well as a lack of movement throughout the school. In the US, specialist lessons outside the main classroom, such as art and music, were typically unavailable as the specialists regularly received urgent calls to teach in the Gen Ed classroom, due to a lack of available substitutes.

> It is *painful* for me to be in a room with kids *all* day long. Like, I know it's painful for them, [students] too. But it is really hard… to be in a room all day long with no change. And you have to remember a lot of our kids are eating in the classroom; like we're not eating in the cafeteria. So, like, they're in the room a lot! It's like, one scenery. (USGE2)

Norwegian teachers also suffered as a result the contextual shift from classroom to remote learning. However, Norway only required remote learning for two weeks. This challenge was therefore more manageable than in the US, where remote, home learning continued for more than a year. Nonetheless, one Norwegian teacher reflects on the difficulty of this time period:

> It is fortunate that school in Norway did not close for a long time, at most two weeks. But it was still a very difficult time for teachers, students and parents. (NSNE2)

The Context Changes: Online Learning at Home

The context of learning-at-school ceased when US students were suddenly barred from in-class learning, with more than a year learning in a remote context. Fortunately for SNE students however, teachers and students were permitted three hours of in-person instruction. Despite this privilege, many students chose *not* to participate. But for those that did, some US SNE teachers saw greater academic gains than would be normally expected, gains they believed resulted from more focused and individualized attention in the learning process.

> The kids that did show up, in some ways… It was a wonderful, great-thing, because it was just us. It was one-on-one. So, for the kids who were participating, they actually made good progress. But that was maybe only three kids. It was a low number. I kind of actually enjoyed that. A couple of kids took-off! (USSNE4)

However, even for SNE students who *did* participate in the three allotted hours of in-person instruction permitted to them, there remained a serious difficulty engaging and motivating these same students during supplemental online instruction offered at-home. For the students that didn't take advantage of in-class or online instruction during the year of remote learning in the US, teachers saw extensive learning losses and limited participation in academic subjects. According to teachers' perceptions, little, if any, academic gains were made online.

I mean, just to get the participation, and you know, with the younger students and getting them engaged. I can't tell you how many pets I met, and siblings in their underwear. Um, yes, in that regard, the learning was pretty much, *not* happening online. (USSNE4)

Truancy and drop-outs rates increased in both countries. Many US students weren't motivated to participate in online-school, opting instead for online entertainment.

Because of the way online school was, it was pretty much that the kids were, could do, pretty much, you know, whatever they wanted and, you know, there's a good and bad side to that. I mean, if a kid could learn better at three o'clock in the afternoon, great! But, if they're playing video games, which was often the case, from nine-to-six, you know, that really set up an expectation for… that that's the way life is! This is the way my days go! (USSNE4)

Despite a relatively brief, two-month period of remote, online learning in Norway, Norwegian teachers also saw student attrition upon the return to in-class instruction.

Those two months that we were out, were like I said, hard for some [students]. And some I think have not fully come back to school, yet they found an option that works better for them. Not at this particular school, I'm talking about most kids that some that I know that just haven't fully come back. (NSNE6)

Norwegian teachers were concerned about meeting the needs of all students during the shift to online learning, but both Gen Ed and SNE teachers expressed greater concern for SNE students.

The learners that have special needs and need extra attention and focus in school, it will be a big challenge for them at home. I find it would be hard for everyone. (NSNE2)

One notable exception to teacher concerns about online learning came from SNE teachers regarding SNE students who were diagnosed with anxiety *prior* to Covid policy introduction. Some teachers acknowledged that a few of their students showed academic growth when *not* learning in-class, where they too-often felt excluded.

Kids that you know, in some way their Gen Ed experience was curtailed by feeling people were judging them, looking at them, or thinking negative things about them… So when you took that aspect away, that also resulted in achievement. (USSNE4)

Many US teachers saw greater inclusion after the conclusion of remote instruction. One SNE teacher states:

Mostly a majority of the kids are being *more* a part of the Gen Ed classes than they were before remote learning. What I'm trying to say is that for those kids that participated online… That their confidence was built by their achievement one-on-one, and addressing their needs in the moment, and that the added confidence has rolled over into a higher level of inclusion in the Gen Ed class. (USSNE4)

Teachers also surmised that the social deprivation children experienced likely has increased their appreciation for one another, differences and all. Regarding the appreciation and acceptance of SNE students after the return to the Gen Ed classroom, and the total removal of distancing and masking rules, one teacher states,

Oh, definitely! Most definitely! The human connection is more valued. I would definitely say, they are being accepted at greater levels! (USSNE5)

Parent Support was Key with Remote Learning

At-home learning was impacted by varying degrees of parental involvement, with teachers in the US unaware of whether parents were physically present when the student was home and many parents occupied with their mobile work demands and unable to assist their children. In both Norway and the US, many parents were overwhelmed and/or incapable of supporting their children with school work. Perceptions of US teachers include:

Pretty much the kids that weren't showing up, there was very little parental contact. It was perfectly acceptable and legitimate for kids *not* to participate. (USSNE4)

The kids that were online, especially the younger ones, sometimes the best you could do was to be that person that interacted with them every day, but really nothing more than that. (USSNE4)

You can definitely tell the families, you know… mom and dad were involved. And then the ones that just put the kids on Zoom. (USSNE5)

Many Norwegian teachers also reported feeling uncomfortable knowing that students went without parental support during online learning at home. A Norwegian teachers states,

I am very insecure about this, because I know the parents were working at home; so, I think they did their job more than helping their kids, or they were busy also with their tasks. (NGE1)

Another Norwegian teacher speaks about the lack of parental support during online learning at home.

Oh, it was difficult, very difficult. Because if you have the support at home, the children did the work. But if there is none, or less support, the [student] work is not done. (NSNE2)

One Norwegian teacher felt a few students, her own children included, preferred online learning at home. Yet, she acknowledges that individual differences in regard to the need for parent support during remote learning.

Some students are more independent, and they don't need parents' support. And yeah, just, you know, they [the students] have the energy to focus and do this. And others

cannot focus and do school unless there's a parent to say, 'Okay, Susie, did you finish this?' (NGE4)

During online learning, teachers saw greater distinctions regarding the issue of differing socio-economic impacts between students.

You had parents that were just struggling and trying to keep their head above water. Um, and then you had families that went to their house in Jackson [affluent community in the US]. And so, the kid Zoomed via outside Jackson! (USSNE5)

Exclusionary Measures Occurred in Class

In one US school, teachers introduced exclusionary methods at the beginning of in-person schooling, an idea antithetical to inclusion. One example of this was when Gen Ed teachers created physical boundaries for mask-exempted SNE students. One US teacher critiqued the practice of constructing barriers, yet nonetheless, acknowledged certain conditions for inclusion such as in this case, the proper use of adaptive skills.

So instead of including them and just saying, we're just going to teach them to stay six-feet-apart, they put up plexiglass and they build actual, physical barriers, which is really absurd to think, because we know that's not going to stop the spread of Covid and you know, as long as you're teaching the adaptive skills, I think that inclusion can still work. (USSNE9)

4.9   Conclusion

Do teachers in Norway and the US perceive that Covid policy is impacting SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom? Yes, our data showed the majority of teachers in both countries perceived that Covid policy impacted SNE student inclusion. Most teachers felt impacts led to developmental dysregulation, affecting mental and emotional health as well as academic progress. However, on a positive note, they also felt that the student loneliness and

isolation from one's peers resulting from masking, distancing and remote learning contributed to a greater acceptance of peers for some SNE students, on the return to in-class instruction after a year of remote learning. For some SNE students, in some classes, this led to a more-positive, and unexpected improvement in participation rates and overall inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom.

5   DISCUSSION

Chapter five comprises four parts. The first part is relevant to CRM, the theoritical framework of the study. The second part presents the major discussion on the findings and is sectioned into the eight aspects of the CRM, while the third part contains conclusions and reflections of the researchers. Lastly, are reccomendations for possible actions for future research and relevant stakeholders of schools and community. These recommendations were made in the light of the findings and conclusions of the present study.

The Curriculum Relation Model designed by Johnsen (2020) is a theoretical model that serves as the framework of this study. The eight main aspects of this model give focus to the inner activity of the classroom. These categories are important in achieving conducive and successful teaching-learning processes. In turn it prioritizes the individual needs of learners and promotes inclusion. Teacher perceptions of Covid policies impacts on SNE student inclusion in Norway and the US was fully explored, analyzed and described in the following findings that focuses on each of the following aspects.

5.1 Pupil

Teachers in Norway and the US shared the perception that the most concerning changes to the Covid policy and its impacts on SNE students' inclusion was seen regarding pupils' emotional behavior. It was mostly observed in the US where policy was more restrictive and implemented for a longer period. The pupils showed behavioral changes and it was a product of stressed mental state, disturbed emotion and uncertainty of unpredictable situations partnered with trial and error solutions of the education sector to maintain quality education despite the sudden shift in curriculum. This is in line with the theory of Dewey (1997) that pupils were the center of the fundamental educational principle. Pupils' worries and fears needed to be seen as interlinked to their education where they were integral. The importance of taking into consideration not only that students' individual needs should be kept in mind but it also matters that each pupil was part of a diverse class that also needed to be taken as a part, holistic group in order for inclusion to be fully achieved Johnsen (2018).

In the US respondents perceived that because of a year of remote learning, and ongoing masking and distancing policies there was a change of behavior among students. These resulted in low school performance, absenteism and dropping out of school. The report of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington DC by Garcia and Weiss (2020) showed that student failure was at its highest rate of 40% to 70% in Math and English. This is not apparent in Norway as schools opted out of restrictive measures of masking and distancing. Remote learning was only done for a short period of time (Sætre, 2020). This had maintained learners' interest in going back to school and achieving relatively good school performance. Lehman et al. (2021) supported that 42.6% of children in Norway said that they were not affected by the schools being closed. Over 60% of the youth had stated that it had little impact on them as some parts of their daily life had some improvement with the short school closure.

Kristeva (2014) discussed that pupils were at risk of developing vulnerability, a concept of something that was once familiar and easy to do becomes hard and unfamiliar because of sudden change in the environment. This literature was presented in the perception of the teachers that due to pupils' being subjected to Covid policies like distancing, masking and remote learning for a long period had led to social protocols disruptions (Santibanez & Guarino, 2021). They don't even know how to do common courtesy like sharing, staying in line and sticking to basic classroom routines. They were more involved with fighting and physicality as observed both in the US and Norway. This worsening social skills stand in the way of inclusion of SNE students in a general education classroom.

Pupils' emotions run turmoil as they develop anxiety, anger, fear and depression. Teachers perceived that the unpredictability of what happens next had a heavy toll on pupils' confidence. Children grew tired of second guessing whether they could come to school or not, if they needed to maintain distance, had remote learning or not be able to see their teacher's expression due to masking (Dunton et al., 2020). The prevention of free interaction heightened disrupted behavioral development. This was much more apparent in the US as pupils developed the culture of fear that if you would not use a mask and not keep your distance you could bring illness to your family and someone important to you would die (Orlov et al, 2021).

In Norway students get tired and develop hate towards the system as they want certainty and predictability. It was hard for the learners on and off of restrictions of being able to go to school with less restrictions only to wake up tomorrow and be in school with all restrictions up again (Godøy et al, 2022). Vygotsky (1979) argued that moral functioning is a higher psychological process that helps the learner. Wells and Claxton (2002) agreed that to achieve moral functioning for pupils they should be exposed to an agent that would help them mitigate the process of learning, in this case teachers as mediators at school should work hand in hand with parents as mediators at home to develop pupils high moral and help them develop positive, emotional behavior and reinforced their fear and anxiety with positive aspects to maintain inclusion and developmental learning.

5.2 Assessment

Teachers in the US have to prioritize assessment with reference to the Every Student Succeed Act, ESSA (Hess et al., 2021) rather than the ZPD of each learner despite the Covid restrictions that have pulled setbacks on students' learning and emotional state in favor of a good performance rating for the school at the end of school year. Teachers perceived that their school administration and school board were pushing through the assessment of SNE students as well as Gen Ed students to fulfill acceleration in learning and maintain the grade level to maintain the performance level of the school and receive funding (Dietrich et al, 2020).

In Norway, teachers believed assessment on academic achievements of students were not as vital compared with their needs of socialization. Parents in Norway supported this; they are more concerned about their children losing the opportunity to be social with other kids their age. Learners in Norway had complained that due to assessment being mostly individual work they missed collaboration with their peers and that their social learning was greatly affected as they were often left alone to work on their school work (Sandvik et al., 2021). This was supported by Vygotsky and Cole (1978) as they stated that in order for a child to achieve development in learning through ZPD, there should be interaction within people's environment. Students should be together and have good communication with their teachers as well as their peers. Rogoff (2003) further suggested that in order for people to develop cooperation and coordination, it was

essential to have shared experiences. This emphasizes mutual involvement of the learners in their learning process.

With the rise of student failure in the Wahingston state in the US with a staggering figure of 71% (Kwakye & Kibort-Crocker, 2021). Teachers perceived that parents are expressing concerns and requesting assessment and referral for special needs. Teachers suggest that there was assessment impaired in the US due to masking that makes them incapable of properly teaching and assessing speech and language ability of pupils. Brandenburg et al. (2020) discussed that learners with disabilities expressed discomfort with talking with their mask on. This adds to their difficulties to articulate well and hinders their ability to orally participate in class discussion. In Norway they had performed less informal assessments during remote learning. The teachers conveyed that they were at a loss as to how to assess their students because they know at this point of time they cannot distinguish if the task was mainly done by parents or the child alone (Gunzenhauser et al., 2021).

In both countries, most of the students were sent individual homework with links that they could open and answers given so they could check their work afterwards. This was far from being effective as students opt to copy and paste homework. Here Vygotsky's(1978) ideology on assessment and progression is not visible. The dynamic of interactive approach in learning emphasizes the importance of process in learning. Johnsen (2014) viewed assessment as a critical process a learner should have the right and needs answered to as it provides flexibility in order to reach inclusion.

5.3 Intentions

Sætre (2021) pointed out that teachers were expected by the government to produce a distance learning plan that would cater the needs of the students during remote learning in Covid times. This was perceived by teachers as overwhelming as a sudden shift in learning intentions happened overnight. Collie (2021) pointed out that teachers have to do two jobs at the same time; facilitating learning in the classroom as well as monitoring online learners during remote learning. The amount of work teachers had to do had led to risk of emotional exhaustion as these

double amounts of work in a limited amount of time brought high levels of stress (Kim & Asbury, 2020).

Learning intentions that had been honed in accordance to the government policy passed down to the school to be implemented did not consider the amount of work and the readiness of the teachers to deliver it. Nielsen (2020) suggested that experience in the field was necessary for educators to be able to address the needs of special needs. Furthermore Sætre (2021) found out that when it came to digital literacy, years of experience in the teaching field were not counted for as the knowledge, implementation and understanding of delivering online learning is still lacking among educators. Blikstad-Balas et al. (2022) added that as the decision relies on each individual teacher's intention as to the amount of digital technology and how to involve it in lessons create unequal opportunities for learners to develop digital literacy.

Teachers perceived that with goal setting they have to change some aspect of it and focus more on short term goals when the kids had to follow the covid policies implementation. This imposes more responsibility on parents to monitor their child at home in order to work hand in hand with teachers in making sure the pupils meet their learning outcomes during the remote learning. Agaton and Cueto (2021) had stated that parents were anxious of the effect on their children as the opportunity to socialize was reduced and if they cannot support their children during the remote learning the opportunity of knowledge acquisition was missed. This was consistent with the research by Bubb and Jones (2020) that parents had to understand the learning goals of the SNE students and to be involved in the IEP process to help their child perform well during the pandemic situation. It was proven to be difficult as parents needed to step up from being co-partner of the teachers; to become special educators themselves to their children.

Children were confined at their home and even when they were back at school with the continued implementation of Covid restrictions, especially in the US, students' positive attitude towards learning diminished, resulting in low motivation to learn. This was concerning for teachers as stated by (Johnsen, 2020) in order for intention to be successfully integrated by the learners positive attitudes towards learning should be established. According to Befring (2014) in curriculum planning, it was important to consider that there were possibilities to develop

attitudes and this was reinforced by ensuring that pupils have access to varied learning. Teachers perceived that their lesson planning during the Covid time was greatly affected as they had to produce a concrete and adaptable plan by students and family, making it as easy as possible. This restrained the teachers to engage the pupils with varied activities that can motivate their learning skills into the highest level possible. The fun in learning was snatched and this was negative for inclusion. Teachers believed that developing acceptable attitudes was extremely important in educational goals and essential in inclusion.

Furthermore, Federici and Vika (2020), suggested that teachers should be given ample time to prepare for IEP in order to secure inclusion of pupils with learning experience that gives best and possible development with the utilization of best resources and methods.

5.4 Content

Dillon (2009) defined curriculum content as a formal state authorized curriculum which provides a predetermined set of educational goals or outcomes. This includes teaching materials and textbooks to be used. The US standardized government approved curriculum has a content-loaded assessment that evaluates teacher's success in teaching, pupils achievement performance, school performance level (Slavin and Storey, 2020). Johnsen (2001) on the other hand argued that curriculum should be individually adapted as well as differently appropriated to meet learners' diverse needs and to practice inclusion.

Teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts to SNE student inclusion in Norway and the US found that the content was highly affected with the shift of curriculum as subjects were removed, with the difference in adaptation of government-issued Covid related curriculum and teachers differentiated approach to individual learning. This was consistent with the research of Kwakye and Kibort-Crocker (2020) that this disruption of subject content had impacted students' inclusion in the US as they have not acquired and learned skills they needed to continue their education from elementary to secondary. They furthermore discussed that due to this learning disruption most of the students in the US started their school year behind their school level. Terwel (2005) explained that school curriculum was based on the national curriculum and class

curriculum was molded through the school curriculum and individual adapted curriculum, though revolving around meeting the individual needs should still work hand in hand to achieve the goals of classroom curricula. Teachers in Norway perceived that this goal was not met anymore as some teachers needed to alter goals and make it easy for pupils and parents to follow when pupils were doing home learning (Bubb & Jones, 2020).

Teachers in US, despite the need to meet students where they were as they failed to develop grade appropriate skills due to interruption of classes, stated that all goals were not altered because they were afraid to fail the assessment that being given at the end of the school year where schools had to have a high percentage of passers to reflect as highly performing school and in turn will received good fundings. Klafki (2006) argued that curriculum should answer the "what", where it would answer what substance and value a content curriculum brings to the learner. Subjects should be interrelated and that through content the learner can navigate, develop, learn and be able to achieve quality of life. It should purely adapt to student needs as well as work with a group as inclusion was not mainly about answering the individual differences but making learners with special needs be able to join the society and perform responsibilty (Petretto et al., 2020).

Teachers presented the perception that lost planning time due to staffing shortages, online curriculum, hybrid learning and onsite learning with distancing and reducing or none mingling curriculum during Covid time both in US and Norway had an effect on students' inclusion and left teachers with feelings of burnout. Sá and Serpa (2020) reported that the constant change in planning and the need of the teachers to produce special special plans and the unpredictability of the content during Covid time left educators as well as parents and learners confused. This posed a threat because as Johnsen (2020) clarified that cooperation among teachers, learners, parents, special educators and other support groups was needed to bridge the gap between official curriculum statements and the actual learning situation. The general quality of content was defined by Bjørndal and Liberg (1978: 116-118) with the criteria of consistency with the teaching program, compatibility of goals, balance, open to pupils choices, adaptive to individual pupils and group, varied, and given relevance and meaning.

5.5 Methods and Organization

Teachers in Norway and the US perceived changes in their methods in teaching as they had adopted Covid policies such as distancing and home learning. Teachers expressed that home learning could not bring the same participation learners manifested in the classroom even though teachers exerted huge effort to bridge this challenge.

Varied learning materials promote good student learning. SNE students will be stimulated and their needs will be met if they were presented with opportunities to choose various books, art materials and games. Removal of these methods could lead to negative impact in the learning opportunities of SNE students. It was in line with the theory of Ivic (2014) that all learners were social individuals and they need to be surrounded by their teachers and peers as well as to be in a conducive teaching-learning environment to be able to learn.

In Norway, they had utilized the use of small groups (cohort system) for children to maintain distance and in order not to miss the fundamental need of socialization in learning (Melnick & Darling-Hammond, 2020). This was a support to the scaffolding theory proposed by Jerome Burner (2006) and ZPD of Vygotsky (1979) that argued that a child learned best when there was systematic assistance from a mentor for a learner to learn and develop their potential. Rye (2001) emphasized that a pupil that was constantly validated with care, love, and acceptance through praises, acknowledgement and giving meaning to his experience were more likely to attain his or her individual objectives in line with the class objectives.

In the US, teachers perceived that distancing learners in school was ineffective and discouraged cooperation and collaborative learning was not manifested. Students could not be put into groups and working together was not allowed as to maintain distance. Teachers were troubled by this as they could not do differentiation learning (Norwich & Lewis, 2007). Differentiation was a teaching method that teachers employed not only to cater to the different learning styles of the students but to respond to diversity in learning with a total aim of collectively achieving a goal. Teachers respond to the interest and learning developmental needs of the pupils by referring to their interests, aptitudes and learning (Grant, 2014).

The hybrid learning or the combination of home learning and being in school was perceived by teachers both in Norway and US as inefficient for inclusion. In order for a SNE learner to be fully integrated and included in a classroom community and experience normalization (Reindal, 2018) a learner has been given the freedom to do work independently by their own choice and follow the rules of the environment where they belong to.

Teachers perceived that the change in method and organization in the teaching-learning process due to the local school Covid policies affected the students' inclusion.

5.6 Communication

Johnsen (2020) asserts, "There can be no education without communication, no matter how qualified and relevant the adaptations of intentions, content, methods and organization seems to be" (p. 209). For this important reason, communication has been added to the traditional curricular elements, to serve as a direct link between the pupil and instruction.

Teachers in Norway and the US expressed that despite distance learning they have to strive in communicating with their students in all ways possible. In Norway it was presented that teachers communicated through videos and emails as well as apps teachers used to communicate with their students (Bond, 2020). It has been successful as teachers and students felt they had maintained their good communication (Baloran & Hernan, 2021). Teachers and students were encouraged not to use masks as experts in Norway believed it would hinder speech development for pupils. Learners need to see the expression of their teachers as well as their peers. Communication, according to Vygotsky (1978), is a pre-eminent, mediating tool: with children learning from interactions with their peers in their environments. As teachers, it is critical to create opportunities for children to communicate their thoughts and their emotions, in a comfortable and safe classroom environment that both promotes learning and encourages pupils (Johnsen, 2020).

The case in the US was different. Teachers perceived that because of prolonged distance learning communication between teachers-student and peers and the rigid masking implementation communication was highly impacted. As a result pupils' attention and motivation as well as feelings of being heard and acknowledged was not established. Unger and Meiran (2021), reported that 75.6% students in the US expressed distress at the rapid change in education and the shift to remote learning leading them to fail in communicating with their teachers. Educators perceived this was highly problematic, as according to Rye, (2001, 2005) both research and theory find that the following traits common to children's development and generalizable in people should be achieved: one, that children are innately social by nature with a wired ability to communicate and develop socially; two, that children have an essential need to create relationships in order to survive, develop, and learn to know and understand the world; and finally, all children have been shown to learn through vitally important social interactions with mediators in their developmental process of becoming fully socialized: these were typically, their peers, parents and family members, and teachers and more capable adults with whom they interact regularly. Failure to have this leads to children no satisfaction of basic needs in communication that would highly impact inclusion (Lestari & Dewi, 2021).

Communication was important and Norway had put emphasis on it by not mandating masking to pupils and teachers. In the US, teachers were concerned that the restrictions of masking, distancing and prolonged remote learning led to communication exclusion rather promoting inclusion. For inclusion to be realized, good communication should be established, where students were heard and understood, (Trevarthen, 2014) and positive relationships were nurtured, (Ivic, 2014) should be successfully conveyed and portrayed.

5.7 Care

Teachers in Norway and the US perceived expressing care to the students will promote inclusion and the absence of care and affection would in contrast, greatly impact learners' inclusion in school and society as a whole. Rye (2005) advocates that care was a fundamental quality of an inclusive classroom. In addition, Befring (1996) stated that care was uplifting individuals on

their uniqueness and understanding their needs through supporting them by creating opportunities within the social collective.

US and Norwegian teachers had different approaches in expressing care during the pandemic. In the US, restrictions such as masking, distancing and home learning were huge hindrances for teachers to properly express affection and care. As a result teachers observed that their students were anxious, depressed, afraid and had low motivation(Reimers et al., 2020). Norway had no masking and distancing but mandated home learning. However the level of these restrictions and duration was not long enough for teachers and students to lose touch of care and affection. Teachers perceive that their students were happy to be back at school and were motivated to learn.

Rogoff (2003) introduced scaffolding and apprenticeship. She expressed that children learn by observing. They follow what they see and pick up values and strive in close contact with significant individuals that influence their sense of self. Norwegian teachers put value on this as they reasoned not to use masks because they perceived that it was important for children to see their expression all the time.

Ivan Iviv coined the term `the reversed Vygotsky´(2014) that explained that children exposed to problems, tension, stress and unpredictable environments develop negative effects that downgrades inclusion. This happens in the US as teachers reported that due to masking where pupils could not see the expression of care from their teachers and peers they develop mistrust and anti-sociality. Teachers in the US found that the demand to keep distance from peers led to less care. Students felt undervalued and which in turn made them indiffent. Rye (2005) pointed out that learners that achieved positive learning had experienced satisfaction of human basic needs of belonging, love and affection.

The ICDP (Rye, 2005) expressed that each child has needs of being respected, included, loved, and understood. The Covid policies implemented during Covid had muddled this and the expression of care towards students if not reduced or eliminated it. Thus inclusion was impossible to implement. On the other hand a positive value of Covid policies on home learning

has been that pupils returning to school had developed a sense of acceptance for their peers. The need to socialize and the desire to be with classmates encouraged the pupils to be more accepting of their peers that have special needs. It is perceived by the teachers that pupils become more accommodating, patient and appreciative of their SNE peers giving way to an inclusive classroom.

5.8 Context

The students' context during Covid was changed. They were uprooted from their classroom and had to be at home for remote learning. Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that human development was extremely influenced by their environment and they were much more highly likely to be involved in activities that would hone their experiences if they were in a familiar setting. Being in a familiar setting of the classroom and in contact with their teacher and classmates, students were more engaged and participated actively. Thus, the shift in the context as perceived by the teachers that students underwent during the implementation of Covid policy had an effect on students' inclusion.

In addition, Sophie Reindal (2010) defined inclusion as expansion of agency. She emphasized that a child's well being and meeting their individual needs was a step towards successful inclusion. It was vital to put this first as an educator rather than the accountability-driven goals of the classroom (Reindal, 2016). With Covid rules, learning was hindered and exclusion was imminent as feared and presented by the SNE teachers.

As described by Vygotsky, mediators and mediating tools were essential to a pupil's learning process (Cole, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Mediators were teachers and special needs educators as well as peers that help pupils achieve their ZPD. Mediating tools were teaching materials, books, classroom learning corners, play area and library. The loss of the classroom setting and the lack of working in groups during the adaptation of Covid policy due to Zoom© lessons had post difficulties in reaching the highest potentiality of pupils to learn. Teachers reported that this led to pupils not participating at all to remote lessons due to lack of motivating factors where a mediator and mediating tools could have engaged.

Ivan Ivic supported this with his didactic interaction in which he explained that the components were the direct interaction of teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil interaction in the classroom and the knowledge-pupil interaction where the pupil acquired and adapted with the context of the existing cognitive knowledge and prior knowledge (Ivic, 2019). Zoom© learning, separation of desk, loss of circle learning, exclusionary measures, impose of Q-rooms and teachers limited to lack of movement in school prevented the goal of the educators to make each pupil's individual needs be answered and catered to. The didactic interactions (Popa et al., 2020) that learners experienced in class was imbalanced and unattained as they were subjected to local school covid policies.

Moreover, Trevarthen (2003) expressed that play-based learning is important to the development of pupils. He emphasized also that self-expression, relationship, and imagination are the key to achievement of high learning development. Thus eliminating art materials, carpets, play areas in the classroom and limiting teacher-pupil interaction as well as peer to peer interaction through three-hour remote instruction does not cater to the individual need of learners and inclusion was not manifested.

5.9 Conclusion and Reflection

The study was designed to build new knowledge regarding teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom. Overall, teachers in both countries perceived that Covid policies negatively impacted SNE student inclusion. In the US, teachers perceived that student participation, performance and motivation were hindered by policies such as; remote learning, hybrid learning, masking and distancing. This in turn brought existing problematic issues to the forefront, leading to even higher levels of teacher dissatisfaction and student dysregulation and academic losses.

In Norway, teachers perceived Covid policy impacted student inclusion, however they experienced positive responses when they adopted a cohort system allowing students to maintain socialization among their peers. Though teachers had digital skills and were familiar with online

learning, they weren't fully prepared to completely embrace digital learning. During remote learning, teachers perceived strongly negative impacts to inclusion as well as frustration regarding the preparation and implementation of remote lessons. Teachers were directed to shift their curriculum nearly overnight with entirely different methods. Regular planning for special lessons to include all the needs of diverse students needed time and effort. The drastic changes in curriculum with the demand of delivering individually adapted curriculum tailored to online learning at a short given notice of time gave intense pressure to teachers.

In the US teachers complained about remote learning as they didn't have the ability to support student learning without the help and support of parents. Learners at home need supervision but due to many remote working parents, learners at home that could not work independently were required to work independently and failed to deliver the work. Motivation to learn dropped and learners failed to come back to school. It is alarming for the education sector that after pupils had to be stated as home learners their basic social skills had gone and needed to be reinforced. Teachers perceived also that due to the rising need of the pupils to have human connection after a long time of not being able to exercise their social context due to being home pupils become more accommodating and welcoming to their SNE classmates upon returning to school. This is a positive as inclusion was encouraged.

COVID in Norway and the US had relatively the same threat. They had faced the same rate of infection and death rate due to the virus. Both countries had resolved to mitigate the spread of the virus and implemented covid policies into their schools. Both had differentiated approaches to the implementation of covid policies of masking, distancing, and remote learning. Norway had proven to have a more efficient and more flexible approach that had little impact on SNE inclusion in general education. Prohibition of use of masks, short remote learning and no distancing through in class cohort systems were far more effective in securing inclusion than US policies of masking to all levels of schools from kindergarten to university, distancing and year long remote learning. Thus, imposing more harm to the teaching-learning process experience of SNE students in the US and their inclusion in the general education was greatly impacted in a negative way.

5.10 Recommendations

Our study discussion and recommendations align with existing foundational theories regarding inclusion. Covid policies that were government mandated and adopted by schools in an effort to adhere to safety protocols forwent inclusion. Key factors, foremost childhood wellbeing, must be elevated and made a priority if inclusion has any chance at prevailing in face of a similar crisis in the future.

We strongly believe, based on the findings of our study, that a prolonged period of remote learning, anti-social distancing and masking led to developmental dysregulation and learning losses of students that led directly to decreased SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom. Therefore, the researchers strongly suggest US-Covid-style policies should not be adopted by schools. Norway demonstrated with its positive developmental and academic outcomes and successful inclusion of SNE students in Ged Ed class, that remote learning, when short-lived; avoidance of masking; and adopting a socially friendly, cohort system in lieu of anti-social distancing methods, could be highly successful: That is to say, without any rise in death rates. This Norwegian-approach is worthy of imitation in future crises. In contrast, the drastic consequences to US-student well-being and academic performance; and subsequently, SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom, suggests that negative ramifications of Covid policy implementation did not justify their use, given policy costs far outweighed any potential upside to the mitigation of Covid deaths when compared to similar death rates in Norway.

Furthermore, we suggest studies be conducted before future implementation of restrictions such as social distancing and masking, findings on long-term restrictions were deemed to interfere with SNE student inclusion. Accordingly, before condoning policies on remote learning, teachers and parents, as well as caregivers' perceptions and opinions should first be considered. These key 'experts' of children know students well, having first-hand information and professional knowledge regarding effective learning strategies and developmental growth.

It should also be taken into consideration if remote learning is reconsidered in the future, that teachers should first confirm whether all students have support of adult supervision before

implementing a remote learning method. This can be accomplished through parent-teacher collaboration to ensure the success of digital learning. Furthermore, schools should consider teachers' and parents' digital literacy educating students in partnership with parents by utilizing integrated co-teaching (ICT) for learning.

Lastly, the researchers feel it is imperative that school leaders be mindful of allocating adequate staff to assist both Gen Ed and SNE teachers during crisis, especially SNE teachers who regularly design time-consuming IEPs. Furthermore, administrators need to ensure sufficient planning time for teachers to support them in finding the best possible solutions for each individual student and the best possible resources and methods to support SNE student inclusion in the Gen Ed classroom. This may require revisiting the ways administrators staff schools. Toward this effort, they would be wise to consider year-round, in-house, substitute teachers.

References

Agaton, C. B., & Cueto, L. J. (2021). Learning at Home: Parents' Lived Experiences on Distance Learning during COVID-19 Pandemic in the Philippines. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, *10*(3), 901-911.

Alsaawi, A. (2014). A critical review of qualitative interviews. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, *3*(4).

Appleton, J. V. (2002). Critiquing approaches to case study design for a constructivist inquiry. *Qualitative Research Journal, 2*(2), 80-97.

Azevedo, Luís & Canário-Almeida, F & Fonseca, João & Costa-Pereira, A & Winck, João & Hespanhol, Venceslau. (2011). How to write a scientific paper-Writing the methods section. Revista portuguesa de pneumologia. 17. 232-8. 10.1016/j.rppneu.2011.06.014.

Baloran, E. T., & Hernan, J. T. (2021). Course satisfaction and student engagement in online learning amid COVID-19 pandemic: A structural equation model. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, *22*(4), 1-12.

Baškarada, S. (2014). Qualitative Case Study Guidelines. *The Qualitative Report*, *19*(40), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1008

Baumgartner, T., Lipowski, M. B., & Rush, C. (2003). *Increasing Reading Achievement of Primary and Middle School Students through Differentiated Instruction.*

Beames, J. R., Christensen, H., & Werner-Seidler, A. (2021). School teachers: the forgotten frontline workers of Covid-19. *Australas Psychiatry, 29*(4), 420-422. doi:10.1177/10398562211006145

Befring, E. (1997). The enrichment perspective: A special educational approach to an inclusive school. *Remedial and Special Education, 18*(3), 182-187.

Bjørndal, B. & Lieberg, S. (1978). *Nye veier i didaktikken?* (New Directions in Didactics?). Oslo. Aschehoug.

Blikstad-Balas, M., Roe, A., Dalland, C. P., & Klette, K. (2022). Homeschooling in Norway During the Pandemic-Digital Learning with Unequal Access to Qualified Help at Home and Unequal Learning Opportunities Provided by the School. In *Primary and Secondary Education During Covid-19* (pp. 177-201). Springer, Cham.

Bond, M. (2020). Schools and emergency remote education during the COVID-19 pandemic: A living rapid systematic review. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, *15*(2), 191-247.

Braillon, A., & Taiebi, F. (2020). Practicing "Reflective listening" is a mandatory prerequisite for empathy. *Patient education and counseling, 103*(9), 1866-1867. doi:10.1016/j.pec.2020.03.024

Brammer, G. (1838). *Lærebog i Didactik og Pædagogik.* (Instructions in Didactics and Pedagogy). Copenhagen:Reizel.

Brandenburg, J. E., Holman, L. K., Apkon, S. D., Houtrow, A. J., Rinaldi, R., & Sholas, M. G. (2020). School reopening during COVID-19 pandemic: Considering students with disabilities. *Journal of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine*, *13*(3), 425-431.

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2018). *Doing interviews* (Vol. 2). Sage.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard university press.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The Bioecological Model of Human Development. In *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development, Vol. 1, 6th ed.* (pp. 793-828). Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Bruner, J. S. (2006). *In search of pedagogy volume I: The selected works of Jerome Bruner, 1957-1978.* Routledge.

Bryman, A. (2008). Why do researchers integrate/combine/mesh/blend/mix/merge/fuse quantitative and qualitative research? *Advances in mixed methods research*, *21*(8), 87-100.

Bubb, S., & Jones, M. A. (2020). Learning from the COVID-19 home-schooling experience: Listening to pupils, parents/carers and teachers. *Improving schools*, *23*(3), 209-222.

Buchanan, D. R. (1992). An uneasy alliance: combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. *Health Education Quarterly*, *19*(1), 117-135.

Buonsenso, D., Roland, D., De Rose, C., Vásquez-Hoyos, P., Ramly, B., Chakakala-Chaziya, J. N., González-Dambrauskas, S. (2021). Schools Closures During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Catastrophic Global Situation. *Pediatr Infect Dis J, 40*(4), e146-e150. doi:10.1097/inf.0000000000003052

Castree, N., Kitchin, R., & Rogers, A. (2013). A dictionary of human geography. Oxford University Press.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC (2020). *Childcare, schools, and youth programs*. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html. Chowdhury, M. F. (2015). Coding, sorting and sifting of qualitative data analysis: Debates and discussion. *Quality & Quantity*, *49*(3), 1135-1143.

Collie, R. J. (2021). COVID-19 and teachers' somatic burden, stress, and emotional exhaustion: examining the role of principal leadership and workplace buoyancy. *Aera Open*, *7*, 2332858420986187.

Conrad, F. G., & Schober, M. F. (2008). New frontiers in standardized survey interviewing. *Handbook of emergent methods*, 173-188.

Corbin, J., & Morse, J. M. (2003). The unstructured interactive interview: Issues of reciprocity and risks when dealing with sensitive topics. *Qualitative inquiry*, *9*(3), 335-354.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches, 2nd ed*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

Crist J. D. (2005). The meaning for elders of receiving family care. *Journal of advanced nursing*, *49*(5), 485–493. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03321.x

Crist, J. D., & Tanner, C. A. (2003). Interpretation/Analysis Methods in Hermeneutic Interpretive Phenomenology. *Nursing Research, 52*(3), 202-205. Retrieved from https://journals.lww.com/nursingresearchonline/Fulltext/2003/05000/Interpretation_Analysis_Methods_in_Hermeneutic.11.aspx

Dale, E. L. (1999). *Utdanning med pedagogisk profesjonalitet*. Ad Notam Gyldendal.

Daniels, H. (2018). Vygotsky: Between Socio-Cultural Relativismand Historical Materialism. From a Psychological to a Pedagogical Perspective. *Cultural-Historical Psychology*, *14*(3), 36-42.

Daniels, H. (2020) Vygotsky and the Education of Children with Severe Learning Difficulties. In B. H. Johnsen (Ed.), Theory and Methodology in International Comparative Classroom Studies (pp.61-70/pp.59-68 in print edition). Cappelen Damm Akademisk. https://doi.org./10.23865/noasp.130

Darke, P., Shanks, G., & Broadbent, M. (1998). Successfully completing case study research: Combining rigor, relevance and pragmatism. *Information Systems Journal*, 8(4), 273-289.

Dewey, J. (1997). *Experience and education*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Dietrich, N., Kentheswaran, K., Ahmadi, A., Teychené, J., Bessière, Y., Alfenore, S., ... & Hébrard, G. (2020). Attempts, successes, and failures of distance learning in the time of COVID-19. *Journal of Chemical Education*, *97*(9), 2448-2457.

Dillon, J. T. (2009). The questions of curriculum. *Journal of curriculum studies*, *41*(3), 343-359.

Dunton, G. F., Do, B., & Wang, S. D. (2020). Early effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical activity and sedentary behavior in children living in the US. *BMC public health*, *20*(1), 1-13.

Dzemidzic, S. (2007). *Cooperation among pupils in the classroom: pupils' voice about cooperative learning in a purposefully selected primary school in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Master's thesis).

Englund, T., & Naylor, M. (1986). *Curriculum as a Political Problem: Changing Educational Conceptions, with Special Reference to Citizenship Education*: Chartwell Learning & Development Limited. NC-ND 4.0

Federici, R., & Vika, K. (2020). Questions to School-Norway: Analysis and results from the Norwegian Directorate of Education's survey of school leaders, school owners and teachers during the corona outbreak in 2020. Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education. https://www.udir.no/contentassets/865c9aebe7af477 0ab520e65598cb474/raport13_2020.pdf

Felzmann, H. (2009). Ethical Issues in School-Based Research. *Research ethics review, 5*(3), 104-109. doi:10.1177/174701610900500304

Ferren, M. (2021). Remote Learning and School Reopenings: What Worked and What Didn't. *Center for American Progress*.

Freire. (1972). Education: domestication or liberation? *Prospects (Paris)*, *2*(2), 173–181. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02195789.

Friend, M., Cook, L., Hurley-Chamberlain, D., & Shamberger, C. (2010). Co-teaching: An illustration of the complexity of collaboration in special education. *Journal of educational and psychological consultation*, *20*(1), 9-27.

García, E., & Weiss, E. (2020). COVID-19 and Student Performance, Equity, and US Education Policy: Lessons from Pre-Pandemic Research to Inform Relief, Recovery, and Rebuilding. *Economic Policy Institute*.

Gardner, H. E. (2011). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. Basic books.

Gaspers, A. (2020). *Examining Erasmus+: An investigation into variation in Erasmus+ traineeship mobility at three Norwegian higher education institutions* (Master's thesis, NTNU).

Gerring, J. (2004). What is a case study and what is it good for? American Political Science Review, 98(2), 341-354.

Godøy, A., Grøtting, M. W., & Hart, R. K. (2022). Re-opening schools in a context of low COVID-19 contagion: Consequences for teachers, students and their parents*. *medRxiv*, 2021.2003.2025.21254219. doi:10.1101/2021.03.25.21254219

Grant, P. (2014). *Personalized Learning: A Guide for Engaging Students with Technology*: International Society for Technology in Education.

Gunzenhauser, C., Enke, S. E., Johann, V. E., Karbach, J., & Saalbach, H. (2021). Parent and Teacher Support of Elementary Students' Remote Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Germany. *AERA Open*, *7*, 23328584211065710.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). Ethnography: Principles in practice. *London & New York: Routledge*.

Hammersley, M., & Campbell, J. L. (2012). What is qualitative research? A&C Black.

Hess, F. M., & Eden, M. (Eds.). (2021). *The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): What it means for schools, systems, and states*. Harvard Education Press.

Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbook of emergent methods*. Guilford Press.

Hewson, C. (2014). Qualitative approaches in Internet-mediated research: Opportunities, issues, possibilities. *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*, *423*, 451.

Høgmo, A. (1983). The situation in primary education in the Saami area: Two cases. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 27*(1), 15–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/0031383830270102

Holland, J., Ramazanoglu, C., Scott, S., & Thomson, R. (1994). *Desire, risk and control: The body as a site of contestation*. Taylor & Francis.

Holton, D., & Clarke, D. (2006). Scaffolding and metacognition. *International journal of mathematical education in science and technology*, *37*(2), 127-143.

Ivic, I. (2014). Vygotsky's theory and some variants of post-Vygotskian theories and their implications for didactic interaction in the inclusive school. In B. H. Johnsen (Ed.), *Theory and methodology in international comparative classroom studies.* (1st ed., pp. 69-81), Cappelen Damm AS.

Ivić, I. (2019). Printed and digital media: Printed and digital textbooks. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*, *9*(3), 25-49.

Jalali R., 2013. "*Qualitative research sampling*". J Qual Res Health Sci.

2013;1(4):310–20

Johnsen, BH 2001, 'Curricula for the Plurality of Individual Learning Needs: Some Thoughts Concerning Practical Innovation Towards an Inclusive Class and Schools' in Johnsen, BH & Skjørten, MD Education - Special Needs Education: An Introduction, Unipub forlag, Oslo, pp. 255 – 304.

Johnsen, BH 2003, Assessment as Part of Curricula for the Plurality of Individual Learning Needs. Lecturing-paper Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Education, Department of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo.

Johnsen, B. H. (2014). A curricular approach to inclusive education. *Theory and methodology in international comparative classroom studies. Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk*.

Johnsen, B. H. (2020). Care and sensitivity in resource.based interaction traditions within education and upbringing- a conceptual discussion. In Johnsen B.H. (2020). *International classroom studies and inclusive practices*. Capellen Damn. Oslo.

Kaden, U. (2020). COVID-19 school closure-related changes to the professional life of a K–12 teacher. *Education Sciences*, *10*(6), 165.

Kim, L. E., & Asbury, K. (2020). 'Like a rug had been pulled from under you': The impact of COVID‑19 on teachers in England during the first six weeks of the UK lockdown. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *90*(4), 1062-1083.

King-Sears, M. (2009). Universal Design for Learning: Technology and Pedagogy. *Learning disability quarterly, 32*(4), 199-201. doi:10.2307/27740372

Klafki, W. (2006). Didaktik analysis as the core of the preparation of instruction. In *Rethinking Schooling* (pp. 126-144). Routledge.

Kristeva, J. (2014). Theory of Vulnerability in Johnsen B. H. *Theory and methodology in international comparative classroom studies*. Oslo Cappelen Damm Akademisk.

Kvale, S. (2008). Qualitative inquiry between scientific evidentialism, ethical subjectivism and the free market. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, *1*(1), 5-18.

Kwakye, I., & Kibort-Crocker, E. (2021). Facing Learning Disruption: Examining the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on K-12 Students. Education Insights. *Washington Student Achievement Council*.

Lehmann, S., Skogen, J. C., Haug, E., Mæland, S., Fadnes, L. T., Sandal, G. M., ... & Bjørknes, R. (2021). Perceived consequences and worries among youth in Norway during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, *49*(7), 755-765.

Lestari, I., Sarifah, I., & Dewi, R. S. (2021). The usefulness of online learning on quality of education during Covid-19 pandemic: Evidence from the department of elementary school teacher education at Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia. *International Journal for Quality Research*, *15*(1), 107.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage.

M 1987. *Mønsterplan for grunnskolen* (Curriculum Guidelines for Compulsory Education in Norway).

Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K.M., Guest, G., Namey, E.: Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide. Family Health International, North Carolina (2005).

Marsico, G., & Tateo, L. (2018). Introduction: The Construct of Educational Self. In G. Marsico, & L. Tateo (Eds.), *The Emergence of Self in Educational Contexts* (pp. 1-14). Springer. Cultural Psychology of Education https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98602-9_1.

Melnick, H., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2020). Reopening Schools in the Context of COVID-19: Health and Safety Guidelines from Other Countries. Policy Brief. *Learning Policy Institute*.

Morse, J. M. (2015). Critical Analysis of Strategies for Determining Rigor in Qualitative Inquiry. *Qualitative Health Research, 25*(9), 1212-1222. doi:10.1177/1049732315588501

Nilsen, S. (2020). Inside but still on the outside? Teachers' experiences with the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in general education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *24*(9), 980-996.

Noddings, N. (2001). The Care Tradition: Beyond äAdd Women and Stirä. *Theory into practice*, *40*(1), 29-34.

Noddings, N. (2003). Happiness and Education. USA:Cambridge Press.

Noddings, N. (2012). The caring relation in teaching. *Oxford review of education, 38*(6), 771-781.

Noddings, N. (2015). *The challenge to care in schools, 2nd Edition*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Norwich, B., & Lewis, A. (2007). How specialized is teaching children with disabilities and difficulties?. *Journal of curriculum studies*, *39*(2), 127-150.

Orlov, G., McKee, D., Berry, J., Boyle, A., DiCiccio, T., Ransom, T., & Stoye, J. (2021). Learning during the COVID-19 pandemic: It is not who you teach, but how you teach. *Economics Letters*, *202*, 109812.

Petretto, D. R., Masala, I., & Masala, C. (2020). Special educational needs, distance learning, inclusion and COVID-19. *Education Sciences*, *10*(6), 154.

Popa, D., Repanovici, A., Lupu, D., Norel, M., & Coman, C. (2020). Using mixed methods to understand teaching and learning in Covid 19 times. *Sustainability*, *12*(20), 8726.

Powers, B.A., & Knapp, T.R. (1990) *A dictionary of nursing theory and research*. California: Sage Publications.

Queirós, A., Faria, D., & Almeida, F. (2017). Strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. *European journal of education studies*.

Ragnar, R. (2014). On Dialogism and scientifically discipline discourse and conversation analysis. In Johnsen, B.H. Theory and methodology in international comparative classroom studies. Oslo. Cappellen Damn Akademisk. (6), pp. 82-98.

Reimers, F., Schleicher, A., Saavedra, J., & Tuominen, S. (2020). Supporting the continuation of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Oecd*, *1*(1), 1-38.

Reindal, S. (2010). What is the purpose? Reflections on inclusion and special education from capability perspective. In European Journal of special education. Routledge. Vol 25 (1), pp. 1-12.

Reindal, S. (2016). Discussing inclusive education: an inquiry into different interpretations and search for ethical aspects of inclusion using capabilities approach. In European journal of special education. Routledge. Vol. 31. (1) pp. 1-12.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context*. Oxford university press.

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford university press.

Rye, H. (2001). Helping children and families with special needs: A resource-oriented approach. *Education–special needs education: An introduction. Oslo: Unipub*.

Rye, H. (2005). The foundation of an optimal psychosocial development. *Socio-emotional growth and development of learning strategies*, 215-228.

Sá, M. J., & Serpa, S. (2020). COVID-19 and the Promotion of Digital Competences in Education. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, *8*(10), 4520-4528.

Sætra, L. J. (2021). *Individualized Education Plans during the Covid-19 school lockdown in Norway. A quantitative study on teachers' self-reported success of online teaching.* (Masters´ Thesis)

Saldaña, J. (2014). Coding and analysis strategies. *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*, 581-605.

Sale, J. E., Lohfeld, L. H., & Brazil, K. (2002). Revisiting the quantitative-qualitative debate: Implications for mixed-methods research. *Quality and quantity*, *36*(1), 43-53.

Samuelsson, I., Wagner, J. T., & Eriksen Ødegaard, E. (2020). The Coronavirus Pandemic and Lessons Learned in Preschools in Norway, Sweden and the United States: OMEP Policy Forum. Int J Early Child, 1-16. doi:10.1007/s13158-020-00267-3

Sandvik, L. V., Smith, K., Strømme, A., Svendsen, B., Aasmundstad Sommervold, O., & Aarønes Angvik, S. (2021). Students' perceptions of assessment practices in upper secondary school during COVID-19. *Teachers and Teaching*, 1-14.

Santibañez, L., & Guarino, C. M. (2021). The effects of absenteeism on academic and social-emotional outcomes: Lessons for COVID-19. *Educational Researcher*, *50*(6), 392-400.

Simons, H. (2014). Case study research: In-depth understanding in context. *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*, 455-470.

Slavin, R. E., & Storey, N. (2020). The US educational response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Best Evid Chin Edu*, *5*(2), 617-633.

Stake, R. E., Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Handbook of qualitative research. *NK Denzin & YS Lincoln (Eds.)*, *244*.

Stone, C. A., & Wertsch, J. V. (1984). A social interactional analysis of learning disabilities remediation. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *17*(4), 194-199.

Tan, S. C., & Tan, A. L. (2006). Conversational analysis as an analytical tool for face‑to‑face and online conversations. *Educational Media International, 43*(4), 347-361. doi:10.1080/09523980600926374

Tappan, M. B. (1998). Sociocultural Psychology and Caring Pedagogy.

Terwel, J. (2005). Curriculum differentiation: Multiple perspectives and developments in education. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *37*(6), 653-670.

Tomlinson, CA 1995, *How to differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classroom*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria.

Tomlinson. (1995). Deciding to Differentiate Instruction in Middle School: One School's Journey. The Gifted Child Quarterly, 39(2), 77–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/001698629503900204

Trevarthen, C. (2010) What's it like to be a person who knows nothing? Defining the active intersubjective mind of a newborn human being. *Infant and Child Development,* 20: 119-135 (2011). DOI: 10.1002/icd.689.

Trevarthen, C. (2014) Born for art and the joyful companionship of fiction. As cited in B. H. Johnsen. (Ed.), *Theory and methodology in international comparative classroom studies.* (1st ed., pp. 99-118), Cappelen Damm AS.

UNESCO (1994). *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. (World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality).

UNESCO (2020). *"Global Education Coalition."*
https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition. [Google Scholar]

Unger, S., & Meiran, W. R. (2020). Student attitudes towards online education during the
COVID-19 viral outbreak of 2020: Distance learning in a time of social distance. *International
Journal of Technology in Education and Science*, *4*(4), 256-266.

Vallano, J. P., Evans, J. R., Schreiber Compo, N., & Kieckhaefer, J. M. (2015). Rapport-Building
During Witness and Suspect Interviews: A Survey of Law Enforcement. *Applied Cognitive
Psychology, 29*(3), 369-380. doi:https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3115

Van Lancker, W., & Parolin, Z. (2020). COVID-19, school closures, and child poverty: a social
crisis in the making. *The Lancet Public Health*, *5*(5), e243-e244.

Vetlesen, A. J. (1993). *Perception, empathy, and judgment: An inquiry into the preconditions of
moral performance*. Penn State Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1979). Consciousness as a problem in the psychology of behavior. *Soviet
psychology*, *17*(4), 3-35.

Vygotsky, L. S., & Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological
processes*. Harvard university press.

Walsh, S., Chowdhury, A., Braithwaite, V., Russell, S., Birch, J. M., Ward, J. L., . . . Viner, R. M.
(2021). Do school closures and school reopenings affect community transmission of COVID-19?
A systematic review of observational studies. *BMJ Open, 11*(8), e053371.

Webster, U. M. (2012). Unabridged Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Webster-Stratton, C. (1999). *How to promote children's social and emotional competence*. Sage.

Welcome to the Washington State Report Card *(2021)*. *The Washington Office of the
Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)*. https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/

Wells, G. E., & Claxton, G. E. (2002). *Learning for life in the 21st century: Sociocultural perspectives on the future of education.* Blackwell Publishing.

Westwood, P 2003, Commonsense Methods for Children with Special Educational Needs: Strategies for the Regular Classroom, 4th edition, Routledge Falmer, Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York.

Westwood, P 2004, Numeracy and Learning Difficulties: Approaches to teaching and assessment, David Fulton Publishers, London.

Wichmann, S. S. (2011). Self‑determination theory: The importance of autonomy to well‑being across cultures. *The Journal of Humanistic Counseling, 50*(1), 16-26.

Wood, D., Bruner, J., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines, 17(2), 89–100.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (Vol. 5). sage.

Yin, R. K. (2011). *Applications of case study research*: sage.

Ylikoski, P., & Zahle, J. (2019). Case study research in the social sciences. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A, 78*, 1-4.

Zittoun, T., Valsiner, J., Gonçalves, M. M., Vedeler, D., Salgado, J., & Ferring, D. (2013). *Human development in the life course: Melodies of living*: Cambridge University Press.

Appendices

Appendix 1: NSD Release Approval

Appendix 2: Information Letter

Appendix 3: Consent Form

Appendix 4: Potential Respondent Request Email Template

Appendix 1: NSD Release Approval

Assessment

Reference number
341294

Project title
Teacher Perceptions of Covid Policy Impacts on SNE Student Inclusion in Norway and the US

Data controller (institution responsible for the project)
Universitetet i Oslo / Det utdanningsvitenskapelige fakultet / Institutt for spesialpedagogikk

Project leader (academic employee/supervisor or PhD candidate)
Professor Luca Tateo, luca.tateo@isp.uio.no, tlf: +4722859462

Type of project
Student project, Master's thesis

Contact information, student
Julie Frossmo, julifr@student.uv.uio.no, tlf: +12065866588

Olive Monette Francisco omfranci@student.uv.uio.no, tlf; +4799864299

Project period
03.01.2022 - 01.07.2023

Assessment (1)

05.02.2022 - Assessed
Data Protection Services has carried out an assessment of the processing of personal data in this project. Our assessment is that the processing will comply with data protection legislation, so long as it is carried out in accordance with what is documented in the Notification Form and attachments, dated 05.02.22, as well as in our message correspondence.

TYPE OF DATA AND DURATION
The project will process general categories of personal data, special categories of personal data about political opinions until 01.07.2023.

LEGAL BASIS

The project will gain consent from data subjects to process their personal data. We find that consent will meet the necessary requirements under art. 4 (11) and 7, in that it will be a freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous statement or action, which will be documented and can be withdrawn.

The legal basis for processing general categories of personal data is therefore consent given by the data subject, cf. the General Data Protection Regulation art. 6.1 a).

PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA

We find that the planned processing of personal data will be in accordance with the principles under the General Data Protection Regulation regarding:

lawfulness, fairness and transparency (art. 5.1 a), in that data subjects will receive sufficient information about the processing and will give their consent

purpose limitation (art. 5.1 b), in that personal data will be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, and will not be processed for new, incompatible purposes

data minimisation (art. 5.1 c), in that only personal data which are adequate, relevant and necessary for the purpose of the project will be processed

storage limitation (art. 5.1 e), in that personal data will not be stored for longer than is necessary to fulfill the project's purpose

THE RIGHTS OF DATA SUBJECTS
We find that the information that will be given to data subjects about the processing of their personal data will meet the legal requirements for form and content, cf. art. 12.1 and art. 13.

Data subjects will have the following rights in this project: access (art. 15), rectification (art. 16), erasure (art. 17), restriction of processing (art. 18), notification (art. 19) and data portability (art. 20). These rights apply so long as the data subject can be identified in the collected data.

We remind you that if a data subject contacts you about their rights, the data controller has a duty to reply within a month.

DUTY OF CONFIDENTIALITY
Through their profession, the sample of teachers have a duty of confidentiality and are not permitted to disclose individual information about their pupils that could identify them to others.

FOLLOW YOUR INSTITUTION'S GUIDELINES
Our assessment presupposes that the project will meet the requirements of accuracy (art. 5.1 d), integrity and confidentiality (art. 5.1 f) and security (art. 32) when processing personal data.

OneDrive is a data processor for the project. Data Protection Services presupposes that the processing of personal data by a data processor meets the requirements under the General Data Protection Regulation arts. 28 and 29.

We presuppose that processing meets the requirements for processing personal data outside the EU under the General Data Protection Regulation Chapter 5.

To ensure that these requirements are met you must follow your institution's internal guidelines and/or consult with your institution.

NOTIFY CHANGES
If you intend to make changes to the processing of personal data in this project it may be necessary to notify us. This is done by updating the information registered in the Notification Form. On our website we explain which changes must be notified. Wait until you receive an answer from us before you carry out the changes.

FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT
We will follow up the progress of the project at the planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded/is being carried out in accordance with what is documented.

Good luck with the project!

Contact person: Anne Marie Try Laundal

Appendix 2: Information Letter

Are you interested in taking part in a research project?

**"Teacher Perceptions of Covid Policy Impacts on SNE Student Inclusion
in Norway and the US"**

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project concerning the perceptions of teachers regarding COVID policy impacts on SNE student inclusion in Norway and the United States (US). In this letter we give you information about the purpose of this project and what your participation would involve.

The purpose of this project.

This project is a dual master's thesis in the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo in Norway. This project will involve a study of teacher perceptions of Covid policy impacts to SNE student Inclusion. Covid policies being addressed include: teacher and student isolation during virtual, online coursework; in-class social distancing of teachers and classmates; mask wearing; as well as any generalized student stressors attributed directly or indirectly to Covid policies. Greater understanding of teacher perceptions regarding student participation could lead to future policy implementation promoting student participation and well-being, goals mandated in long-established global statements.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo is responsible for this project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You are being invited to take part in this research study because of your experience as a Kindergarten through fifth grade teacher with more than five years of teaching experience. You can contribute to an understanding of how teachers perceive Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion in Norway and the US. We will be enlisting five-to-ten participants in each country.

What does participation involve for you?

This research will involve your participation in an in-person interview that will take ten minutes. The interview will include semi-structured questions about your perceptions on Covid policy impacts on SNE student inclusion. Your answers will be audio and video recorded. They will not be recorded in the cloud.

Participation is voluntary.

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without reason. All information about you will be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or should you decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – How we will store and use your personal data.

We'll only use your personal data for the purposes specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act.

The student researchers of this study will have access to your personal data such as your email and name.

- All information collected will be kept strictly confidential. No
  individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the
  study. No one other than researchers named below will be allowed access to the original recordings.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is projected to end approximately June 1, 2022. After the study is completed,
all collected data will be deleted.

Your rights.

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you.
- request that your personal data is deleted.
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected.
- receive a copy of your personal data.
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data.

To exert your right, you can contact the student researchers. Their contact information is provided below.

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent, and in agreement with the Department of Special Needs Education at University of Oslo and the Norwegian Center for Research Data AS (NSD) which determines that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with all Norwegian, data-protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project or want to exercise your rights, you may contact:

- The Department of Special Needs Education at University of Oslo through Julie Frossmo and Olive Monette Francisco: Master's students in the Faculty of Educational Science, University of Oslo, by email: (julifr@student.uv.uio.no) and (omfranci@student.uv.uio.no) or by telephone: +1 206-586-6588 or, +47 998 64 299. Supervisor, Luca Tateo, Professor in the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo, by email (luca.tateo@isp.uio.no) or by telephone: +47 228 59 462.

- Our Data Protection Officer: Roger Markgraf-Bye

- The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours Sincerely,

Julie Frossmo   Olive Monette Francisco
Researcher   Researcher

Consent Form

I have received and understood information about the project *"Teacher Perceptions of Covid Policy Impacts on SNE Student Inclusion in Norway and the US"* and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent:

- I agree to participate in an interview.
- I agree that my department name and organization may be disclosed.
- I understand that this thesis may be published.
- I understand that my personal data may be processed outside the EU, if applicable.
- I agree that information about me may be published in a way in which I might be recognized.
- I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approximately, June 1, 2022.

(Participant Signature)   (Date: Month/Day/Year)

Appendix 4.1: Letter to Potential Respondents Email Letter Template for US Participants

Email Template Letter to Potential Respondents

Hi, [Potential Respondent]!

I am a master's candidate at the University of Oslo's Special Needs Education department. I am currently writing a thesis about *Teacher perceptions of covid policy impacts to inclusion in Norway and the US*.

I'm hoping to interview five to ten teachers, and my research partner will do the same in Norway. Then we want to compare Norwegian and US policy impacts to students. Our hope is to contribute to special education research in order to improve the well-being of special needs students everywhere.

Would you be interested in being interviewed? The short interview should last approximately ten to 15 minutes. We hope to meet interviewees in-person and at your convenience, but we can also schedule a phone call or Zoom conference if that's better for you. My partner is in Norway, but I am currently in Seattle.

I can be reached by email, at juliefrossmo@gmail.com, or by phone, anytime! My number is 206/586-6588.

I attached an informational letter below which we will also be using for consent, that answers basic questions about this project. Please, feel free to reach out by email or by phone if you have any further questions, or to let us know if you are interested in becoming a participant. Otherwise, I will follow-up with you in the next week about whether you are willing to participate.

Thank you for considering participating in our research project!

Kindly,

Julie Frossmo

Appendix 4.2: Letter to Potential Respondents Email Letter Template for Norway Participants

Email Template Letter to Potential Respondents

Hi, [Potential Respondent]!

I am a master's candidate at the University of Oslo's Special Needs Education department. I am currently writing a thesis about *Teacher perceptions of covid policy impacts to inclusion in Norway and the US*.

I'm hoping to interview five to ten teachers, and my research partner will do the same in the US. Then we want to compare Norwegian and US policy impacts to students. Our hope is to contribute to special education research in order to improve the well-being of special needs students everywhere.

Would you be interested in being interviewed? The short interview should last approximately ten to 15 minutes. We hope to meet interviewees in-person and at your convenience, but we can also schedule a phone call or Zoom conference if that's better for you. My partner is in Norway, but I am currently in Seattle.

I can be reached by email, at omfranci@student.uv.uio.no, or by phone, anytime! My number is +4799864299.

I attached an informational letter below which we will also be using for consent, that answers basic questions about this project. Please, feel free to reach out by email or by phone if you have any further questions, or to let us know if you are interested in becoming a participant. Otherwise, I will follow-up with you in the next week about whether you are willing to participate.

Thank you for considering participating in our research project!

Kindly,

Olive Monette Francisco