Togetherness in Play and Learning

Special Needs Education in Mainstream Settings

Siv Hillesøy, Eli Marie Killi, Ann-Elise Kristoffersen (editor)

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Preface

The objective of this anthology is to convey knowledge regarding inclusive communities in kindergartens and schools. Creating inclusive communities is one of the fundamental principles in our education system. Diverse children and young people should be able to learn and develop in a community of practice, and good adaptation is a prerequisite for the accomplishment thereof.

From a sociocultural perspective, learning occurs through participation in social communities, where community with peers is of particular importance. Children's participation in learning communities with other children, or facilitation of such participation, is a recurring theme in this anthology. The contributors to this anthology are advisers at Statped with experience from a variety of fields. They account for various approaches founded on experienced-based and research-based knowledge. What they all have in common is that they, through their adviser roles, have worked closely with the field of practice. This anthology shares the experiences from collaborations with kindergartens and schools in the efforts to develop a knowledge-based practice.

The introductory chapter places the concept of inclusion in a historical and practical perspective and forms the overarching theoretical framework for the other chapters. The other contributions will then be presented under four thematic headings. The first theme is change work in kindergartens and schools, the second is adaptation for participation and learning, the third is support for participation, and the fourth theme is inclusive learning activities. Each main section is introduced with a brief introductory text and overview of the individual chapters therein. The anthology is primarily directed at students and professionals who work in kindergartens and schools but may also be of interest to others.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our colleagues who have contributed with their experiences and knowledge to this anthology. We would also like to thank Anne Grethe Hellerud, Sidsel Holiman and Marit Solvoll for their contributions in the work on this anthology.
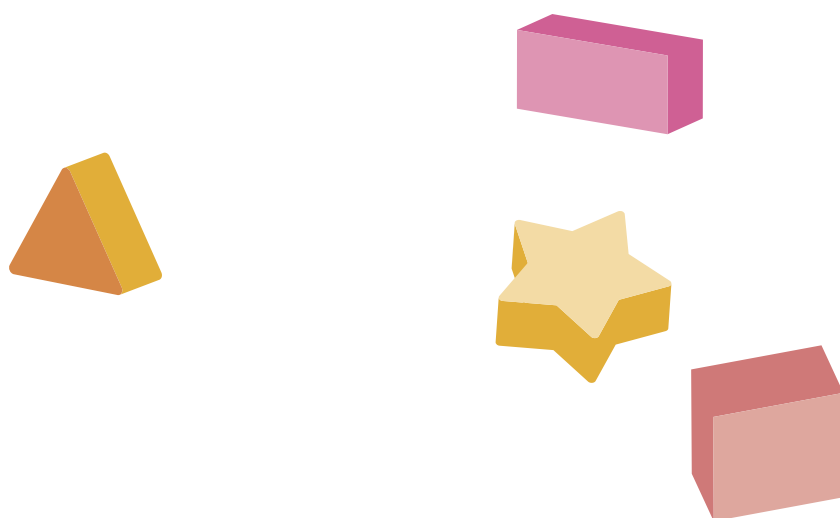
Sincerely,
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Content

Inclusion from a historical and practical perspective

An inclusive community is the theme of the anthology in which this chapter appears. Considering the context, it can be appropriate to examine the definition of an inclusive community from both an historical and practical perspective. This is the main theme of this chapter.

Mirjam Harkestad Olsen

Two main points are presented: competencies and learning outcomes. These are inextricably linked. An inclusive learning community that provides all children and young people with appropriate learning outcomes requires a high level of general education and special education expertise.

Both the 'Framework Plan for Kindergartens' (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017) and the 'Core curriculum – values and principles for primary and secondary education' (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019) have the status of a regulation. The principle of an inclusive community is the primary focus of the framework plan and, consequently, an important component of the work carried out by kindergartens.

Children attending a kindergarten[1] must have the opportunity to participate in play and to play an active role in both individual and group learning, they are to experience motivation and a sense of achievement based on their own needs and prerequisites, and they are to be included in social interactions. The 'Core curriculum' took effect in 2020 and focuses on the values and principles for primary and secondary education.

Part three in particular – 'Principles for school practice' – promotes an inclusive community. The core curriculum links an inclusive community to diversity. It emphasises that the school must offer an inclusive and inspiring learning environment in which diversity is recognised as a resource for the school. The school must also be a professional community. In this type of community, school staff members must reflect on their common values and work to develop the school's practice.Facilitating an inclusive community can therefore be viewed as a mutual boost for the school.

In other words, the principle of an inclusive kindergarten and school stands strong in Norway. The Norwegian authorities have signed several international agreements to ensure the implementation of an inclusive learning community for children and young people. The question addressed in this chapter is how the intention to create an inclusive learning community is reflected historically and in practice. The next section presents and discusses this. The main emphasis of this chapter originates from research related to issues in schools but is also highly relevant for kindergartens.

1   Kindergartens in Norway are pedagogical institution providing education and care for children aged 0-5 years.

Inclusion from an historical perspective

Inclusion as a phenomenon became particularly relevant in the mid-1990s when Norway signed the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). The statement addresses the principles for educating persons with special needs. It laid a foundation for shifting the focus from individual special needs to the school's ability to meet the different needs and prerequisites of all children. Among the principles presented in the statement were access to a regular school, child-centred education, and inclusive practices. A few years prior, Norway signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, 2003). This convention promotes, among other things, the right of all children to participate in education and in society as a whole.

Norway's education arenas were ready to some extent to incorporate the goals of inclusion into their school policies based on political actions carried out prior to the statement. Historically, Norwegian school policies have evolved from promoting a school for some to integration in today's schools, by which inclusion is considered a premise (Olsen, 2013). The Norwegian authorities decided several decades ago to close down special needs schools (Simonsen & Johnsen, 2007). All pupils are to be offered an education at a local school (The Education Act, 1998, Section 8-1). Consequently, every individual pupil is to experience being part of a larger learning community. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Bachmann, Haug and Nordahl (2016), there is still a way to go until the principle of an inclusive school is implemented fully in practice.

In recent years, alternative learning arenas in the form of special needs education units or bases have increased considerably (Jelstad & Holterman, 2019). This has taken place parallel to decreasing numbers of Norwegian teachers with special needs education expertise and increasing numbers of special education learners being taught by inexperienced or unqualified teachers (Bachmann et al., 2016; Ombudsperson for Children, 2017; Nordahl et al., 2018). Ström and Hannus-Gullmets (2015) discuss a concern in response to the fact that the government encourages inclusion, while the implementation of the intentions of inclusion results in exclusiveness. Persson and Persson (2012) refer to a study conducted by Allan in Scotland in which both the headmasters and teachers express a positive opinion on inclusion as a principle, but the teachers experience that they do not have enough expertise to carry out or implement this principle sufficiently. This is also the case in Norway. Buli-Holmberg, Nilsen and Skogen (2015), for example, found that teachers with at least one year of special needs education training are better able to adapt the teaching than other teachers.

In recent years, inclusion has also become highly relevant in the field of early childhood education. We are continuously increasing our knowledge about how properly organised learning environments in kindergartens help young children experience a sense of community and forge good social relationships to a greater degree (Korsvold, 2010; Arnesen, 2017).

Different understandings of inclusion

There are different ways to understand the concept of inclusion. In this respect, Kiuppis (2014) described that the understanding of inclusion has evolved from a focus on children and young people with disabilities and their physical placement to the school's ability to cope with diversity. In his historic study, Kiuppis (2014) shows how UNESCO established programmes for 'Education for all' (in 1990) and 'Inclusive education'

(in 1994). These were related to regular education and learners with a learning or other disability, respectively. His main point was that when concepts have become intertwined over time, the original focus on disabled learners is lost.

Haug (2017a, page 15) is also concerned about this dimension. He writes that the notion of inclusion is a response to what he calls "the lost implementation revolution". He makes reference to an international trend in the 1970s in which the integration of pupils with special needs became a guiding principle. In Norway, integration was defined as the inclusion of pupils in a social community that enabled them to also enjoy the benefits of that community and share responsibility for it. This understanding has gradually changed in practice, with integration primarily revolving around placement (Haug, 2017a). There is therefore a risk that the concepts of integration and inclusion are understood as synonyms.

Complexity of the concept
To better understand the content of the concept of inclusion, an analysis is carried out from three perspectives: political-social (why we should include), substantive (what inclusion is) and technical-professional (how we pursue the goal of inclusion) (Olsen, 2013). This is illustrated in figure 1.

In the discussion of *what*, Strømstad, Nes and Skogen (2004) opted for a three-part approach to the concept: social, academic, and cultural. Solli (2010) expanded this to include belonging on the professional, academic, and cultural levels. The child or young person must experience a sense of belonging in a group, an academic adaptation to his or her abilities and prerequisites and that his or her cultural identity is accommodated and maintained. Cultural inclusion can also be understood as an inclusive school culture in which the staff is willing and able to facilitate inclusion. Olsen, Mathisen and Sjøblom (2016) have added an organisational perspective as an overall premise for these three aspects.

Figure 1: Analyzing a team – After Curriculum Inquiry by Goodlad,1979.
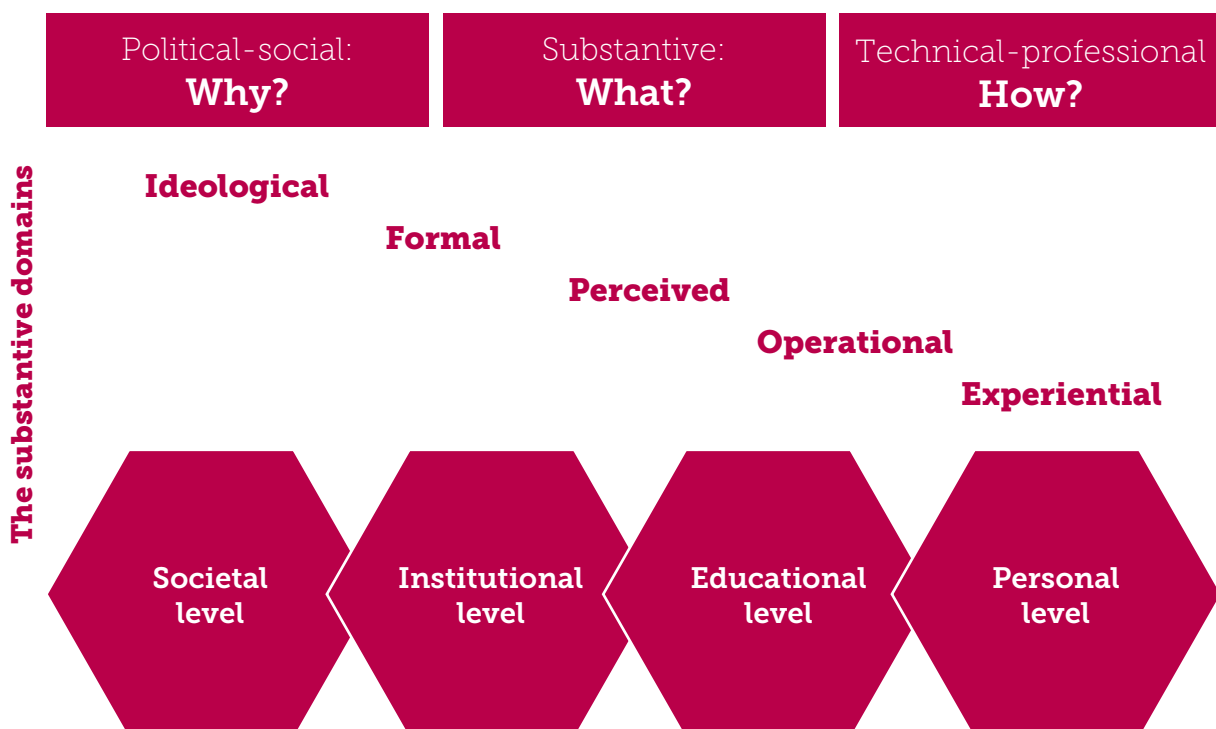
This means that the various frameworks for the education must be facilitated, including the ideological, physical, and administrative components. These must stem from a common understanding of inclusion as both a process and goal. Assessing the context in which the concept is used is incorporated into the examination of the *why* of inclusion. This context can be, for example, historical or political. *How* the concept is implemented in the teaching is preferably left to the individual educator to determine (Olsen, 2013). In this regard, Florian (2014, p. 291) points out two key factors: the educator's confidence in his or her own qualifications and the continuous improvement and development of the educator. She claims that one of the challenges to achieving this is "[c]hanging thinking about inclusion from 'most' and 'some' to everybody". In other words, an understanding must be established that the premise of an inclusive kindergarten and school applies to all children and young people, not only specific groups.

The actors involved in the debate on inclusion are active on different levels. These inclusion actors are found on the societal, institutional, educational, and personal levels. On all of these levels, it is the actors involved that define the limits for implementing and evaluating inclusion (Olsen, 2013). The level of commitment to inclusion may differ depending on the level represented by the party concerned. On the societal level, for example, parliamentary and other reports are produced and there is both political engagement and a general public debate on inclusion. By comparison, the personal level entails such parties as parents, teachers, and pupils. Their understanding of how the inclusion ideology is to be translated into practice is linked to both their understanding of inclusion and the scope of action they believe they have been given.

Apart from the parties being on different levels, the responsibility for an inclusive learning environment and an inclusive community also lies on several levels. This is described by Mitchell (2008) and others. Mitchell conducted a meta-study of international research in this area. The findings led him to conclude that there are ten elements that characterise an inclusive school: vision, placement, adapted plan, adapted assessment, adapted curriculum, acceptance, access, support, resources, and leadership. All of these factors determine whether or not a learning community is inclusive. This multi-level perspective also reveals that inclusion depends on the concrete actions of the kindergarten or school and successful inclusion requires a shared vision and positive attitude on the part of all parties, including management. Inclusion pertains to the entire kindergarten or school as a system. Administrative support and a committed management team are a prerequisite for success.

According to Haug (2017b), there are two ways to understand inclusion. With a one-dimensional understanding, inclusion is a question of the physical placement of the individual. In this case, the child or young person either receives special needs education in a segregated setting or together with the regular group/classroom of children. This type of understanding has been met with criticism and perceived as narrow-minded. For example, Wendelborg and Tøssebro (2011) write that physical placement in a regular class does not guarantee a good and inclusive learning community. A characteristic of the second type of understanding inclusion is that it pertains to establishing a high-quality learning community in order to ensure good academic results (Haug, 2017b). Examples of this are a high level of pupil engagement and good social relationships, which Hattie (2009) considers key indicators of a good learning environment.

Dimensions of inclusion

Haug (2005; 2014) writes about four dimensions of inclusion: enhanced community, enhanced participation, enhanced contribution, and enhanced benefits. This translates into taking part in social activities and experiencing a sense
of belonging. The learners should have the opportunity to contribute to their own learning process
and benefit both academically and socially. A comparable approach is reported by Farrel (2004), who describes key inclusion factors: physical presence in the classroom, acceptance and recognition by the institution's staff and other children, active participation in community activities and the opportunity for positive self-development. Both Haug's four dimensions and Farrel's factors refer
to conditions outside of the influence of the child or young person. This signalises that the responsibility for inclusion lies with the staff of the kindergarten or school.

Both Haug and Farrel use the word 'participation' as a key factor for inclusion. Participation can be understood in two ways: subjective, perceived participation and objective participation, observable by a third person. Experiencing participation requires acceptance, engagement, and autonomy. What can be observed by another person is whether the individual belongs to a group, whether the activities are accessible and whether interaction takes place.

It is because people become excluded that we need to talk about inclusion (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006). Inclusion is not something that has a start and finish, but a continuous process. Booth and Ainscow (2001) write about the importance of an inclusive school culture, inclusive strategies, and inclusive practices. Again, we see how inclusion is raised to a responsibility on several levels. If we specifically examine inclusive practices, a study conducted in Iceland shows that teachers consider it good luck or bad luck

when it comes to whether or not they have pupils with special needs in their class (Gunnþórsdóttir & Jóhannesson, 2014). Another Icelandic study (Gunnþórsdóttir & Bjarnason, 2014) reveals that teachers did not have a clear understanding of the ideological aspects of inclusion. The teachers had very few reflective discussions.

Inclusion from a practical perspective

If we are to understand inclusion according to Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) as values that must be translated into practical actions, it is important to also shed light on the practical aspects of inclusion.

Slightly over 90 percent of children ages one to five years attends a kindergarten (Statistics Norway, 2019). This percentage increases in correlation with age. Children have the right to attend kindergarten from the age of one. This right, as well as the right to an education, is closely linked to the principles established by the Norwegian authorities of an inclusive, adapted, and equal education (Olsen, 2013). Securing the right to attend kindergarten and school also secures a learning environment adapted to the child or young person. The Education Act (1998, § 1-3) maintains the principle of adapted learning, which is the obligation of the school and which applies to all learners, regardless of whether they are enrolled in special needs education or not.

It can be challenging for kindergartens and schools to safeguard the considerable diversity of children and young people who are to be part of the learning community. Unfortunately, the number of pupils enrolled in separate units or special schools has steadily increased in recent years (GSI). At the same time, GSI figures show that the percentage of learners receiving special needs education in the regular classroom in smaller groups is also increasing. This can signify a trend in Norwegian schools in which special needs education is integrated into the classroom (Danielsen & Olsen, 2020).

Special needs assistance and special education

Pre-schoolers have the right to special needs assistance if circumstances require this (The Kindergarten Act 2005 Section 19a). This right is individual and unrelated to whether or not the child is enrolled in kindergarten. Learners who cannot or will not benefit from a regular education have the right to special need education (The Education Act 1998 Section 5-1). Around eight percent of Norwegian pupils receive special need education services. Haug (2016) points out that the percentage of learners struggling at schools is much higher. He estimates that this concerns 25 percent of all pupils in schools. He bases this figure on, among other things, how many pupils score below the critical value in PISA studies and how many do not graduate from upper secondary school.

A report by the Norwegian Ombudsperson for Children (2017) revealed that the quality of special needs education services in many cases is inadequate. The following year, a government-appointed committee of experts arrived at the same conclusion (Nordahl et al., 2018).

The quality of special needs education services was also addressed in a parliamentary report published in the autumn of 2019 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). The theme of the report was early intervention. The concept is understood in two ways: offering a good general education from preschool age and quickly establishing measures when problems arise. The first interpretation entails a preventive perspective. A good and inclusive learning community can help reduce skewed development in children and help prevent any learning difficulties from increasing.

The same report (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019) has the additional provision that the quality of the school must be enhanced. One of the measures proposed is to require special qualifications for those offering the special needs assistance and special need education. Another measure is to consider special needs education services.

Special needs education expertise

Special education teacher is not a protected title. Yet it is often used for individuals who teach children and young people as part of special needs assistance or special need education. A stricter definition of the term 'special education teacher' refers to teaching staff with a degree in special needs education.

In 2020, there is no special requirement to have a degree in special needs education in order to teach learners with special needs, but the government has announced a possible change to this (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019).

Many students with an individual plan for special education are taught by assistants. In many cases, these are competent professionals, but the question still remains as to the kind of learning support the pupil receives when the assistant has neither pedagogical nor special needs education training.

Spotlight on an inclusive community

Several large-scale projects have been carried out to help create an inclusive community in kindergartens and schools. Examples are the projects *Vi sprenger grenser [We're pushing beyond the boundaries]*, *Inkludering på alvor [Taking inclusion seriously]* and *All Aboard*. Below is a brief presentation to illustrate the projects that have proven to challenge attitudes and knowledge effectively in practice. At the same time, these projects highlight a few key obstacles to achieving an inclusive community throughout society. *We're pushing beyond the boundaries* was a project aimed at raising the quality of the education for learners with general learning difficulties, developmental disabilities, or complex functional disabilities.

Statped was given the responsibility to carry out the process. The four Statped regions launched various projects in partnership with the owners of kindergartens and schools. Follow-up research shows that it is possible to achieve a positive development, but the researchers pointed out that expanding these efforts would require political support and clear management goals (Kittelsaa & Tøssebro, 2015).

Inkludering på alvor [*Taking inclusion seriously*] was an initiative by the Ministry of Education and Research launched in 2017. The goal was to develop collaboration models that would help children and young people with special needs to experience a sense of inclusion in kindergartens and schools. Another goal was to identify factors that would promote inclusion in kindergartens and schools. A total of five sub-projects were launched in Agder and Trøndelag. The sub-report from May 2019 demonstrates, among other things, that the participants have different understandings of the concept inclusion (Caspersen, Buland, Valenta & Tøssebro, 2019). This project also involved discussions on how these efforts could be expanded.

All Aboard is an Erasmus[2] project that was completed in 2019. The goal was to 'develop and strengthen competencies relating to inclusive learning environments for children, young people and adults with special needs' (Statped, 2020). The project was a partnership between Norway, Great Britain, Belgium and Finland, the goal of which was to develop good inclusive practices that could be shared nationally and internationally. The project included the development of a website and modules for online seminars and inclusive practices.

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine how the intention of inclusion plays out in practice. Norwegian kindergartens and schools are to be an inclusive learning arena. Nevertheless, there appears to be a significant discrepancy between the ideology and the experiences of children and young people with regard to feeling included (Olsen, 2013).

Many pupils experience that their physical, psychological, and academic needs are not sufficiently met at school (Ombudsperson for Children, 2017). In that context, there are two questions in particular that are worth discussing: the question of competence and the question of learning outcome.

Question of competence

Teacher education in Norway does not require training in special needs education apart from three themes for which no guidelines are provided in terms of quantity and extent (reading and writing difficulties, mathematical difficulties and social/emotional difficulties). The government's intention to ensure an inclusive education is expressed in policy guidelines for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. It is not followed up with regulations for kindergartens and teacher training, which would largely safeguard special needs education competence in kindergartens and schools. We have good research evidence about the significance of special needs education competence for effective facilitation, including self-reports from the teachers themselves (see, for example, Buli-Holmberg et al., 2015).

If special needs education-related subjects are not a mandatory part of preschool teacher training and teacher education, kindergartens and schools run the risk of not having staff members with competence in this field. This will most likely affect the education offered to children and young people, including those without an individual plan for special need education. This is clear from, among others, a study conducted by Buli-Holmberg et al (2015), which found that special needs

education training provides teachers with the confidence to use tools to adapt the education. This also implies that special needs education competence is important to meet the requirements of The Kindergarten Act and The Education Act with regard to offering adapted education.

Although many employees of kindergartens and school lack a formal education in special needs education, many have also acquired relevant knowledge and skills through many years of experience with working with children and young people with special needs. And this kind of knowledge takes time to accumulate. Many municipalities and a few schools have a special needs education team that assists educators and assistants. This kind of mentor programme is an important form of support for teachers, but it does not replace special needs education training.

One of the obstacles to the creation of an inclusive learning community is the problem of attitude on various levels in schools. This may be due to perception of 'good luck' or 'bad luck' (according to Gunnþórsdóttir & Jóhannesson, 2014b) or the willingness or reluctance to accept learners with special needs. More and more municipalities are establishing special needs education unit or small bases located in schools. This type of organisation gives teachers in regular schools the possibility to exclude pupils who are not wanted.

There are several reasons why teachers are reluctant to embrace learners in their classes who have significant special needs. One of them may be that they do not have the competence needed to create an inclusive learning community. In their handbook, Booth and Ainscow (2001) point out that an inclusive school culture is a key factor for achieving inclusion. The character-istics of an inclusive kindergarten or school culture can be traced back to the ten characteristics of an inclusive school defined by Mitchell (2008). A common vision can be established in which inclusion is a basic premise. Children and young people must be provided access to the community and experience acceptance for the diversity they represent. Both the learning plan and learning challenges must be adapted to the child's abilities and prerequisites. This does not specifically pertain to individuals with a learning or functional disability but are principles that concern all children and young people. The lack of joint discussions among staff makes it difficult to achieve a school culture with positive attitudes towards including all children and young people in the community.

Question of learning outcome

Several of the sub-projects in *We're pushing beyond the boundaries* project reported an increased learning outcome for learners when the teacher focused on inclusion and inclusive practices. Gunnþórsdóttir and Bjarnason (2014) write that teachers have vague ideas about inclusion and spent insufficient time on reflection. The sub-report from the project *Inkludering på alvor* [*Taking inclusion seriously*] also pointed out that the participants had different understandings of inclusion. They continue to speak of 'the child who is included'. As such, it is an 'us and them' relationship (Olsen, 2016), in which there is a distinction between the regular group and those who appear to be different. As long as we speak of *including* someone, this means that children and young people continue to be *excluded*, claims Ainscow et al. (2006).

Many teachers consider special needs education schools or a special needs education unit at kindergartens and schools as positive and believe this approach should be expanded – despite the fact that this type of organisation contributes to the exclusion of many learners from the regular community. Perhaps it can be argued that this is *because of* the problems.

They experience a significant distinction between 'their' pupils and the other ones. This pertains to both personal interests and academic performance. They see a need to focus on belonging for learners based on ability rather than age. Consequently, the curriculum can be adapted to the individual to a greater degree.

At the same time, it is important to reflect on the learning outcome achieved by learners with special needs. Reports in recent years (see, for example, Ombudsperson for Children, 2017; Wendelborg, Kittelsaa & Kaspersen, 2017) have revealed that the learning expectations of pupils with disabilities are lower. Teachers appear to be more concerned with the social aspects than the academic inclusion of these learners. Experiences with different types of people is an important social skill for everyone. At the same time, it is important that kindergartens and schools also focus on the academic side of an inclusive community.

Children and young people need to be challenged – regardless of the learning challenges they bring with them into the classroom. A flexible organisation and differentiation of the content, pace and method can facilitate a learning environment that promotes social and academic belonging for all of our learners.

Summary

Both national and international projects have been launched in Norway with a focus on the inclusion of those with special needs. These projects have demonstrated the importance of competence development and embedding the efforts on the management level in local and county municipalities. At the same time, these efforts have shown that the knowledge and understanding established through these projects are insufficiently shared with other kindergartens and schools. Projects like *Vi sprenger grenser* [*We're pushing beyond the boundaries*]

Inkludering på alvor [*Taking inclusion seriously*] are important for conveying knowledge about inclusive processes. The challenges that are pointed out in the various reports accompanying the projects suggest that the question of competence must have a stronger and more distinct political dimension. The parliamentary report *Tett på – tidlig innsats og inkluderende fellesskap i barnehage, skole og SFO [Early intervention and inclusive education in kindergartens, schools and out-of-school-hours care]* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019) proposes establishing special qualifications for those who teach children and young people with special needs. This will involve a major change and may also affect how special needs education is offered as part of preschool education and teacher training.

In the long term, increased diversity creates a broader and more inclusive society. Perhaps it cannot be expected that children with a significant mental age difference will perceive one another as equals in a purely academic sense, but we can expect them to show each other respect. This is a good practice regardless of age. In addition, we should be able to expect that those offering special need education assistance have the competence required to provide learners with academic challenges based on their individual abilities and skills.

The ideology of inclusion must be moved beyond the individual level in order to enable the community to accommodate diversity. Kiuppis (2014) believes that awareness about functional disabilities is reduced when the notions of 'education for all' and 'inclusive education' converge. This is absolutely a risk. At the same time, we must progress in that direction if the community in regular kindergartens and schools is to be dimensioned to embrace the entire diversity of children and young people. In this case, 'inclusive education' must be a natural and integral part of 'education for all'.

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Change work in kindergartens and schools

Developing an inclusive community that provides all children and young people with opportunities to express themselves, participate and learn based on their own prerequisites in community with others, is an important task for kindergartens and schools. This requires good learning environments that contribute to learning and development — not only for children and pupils, but also for educators and managers.

To achieve this, scientific literature indicates that kindergartens and schools must have a collective learning culture and base their educational practice on updated research. The three chapters that follow each in their own way demonstrate what this may entail in practice.

Anita Sande:
Leadership in inclusion processes
Anita bases her chapter on a pupil case study and describes how development of inclusive communities is a process that requires efforts in several different areas. The chapter centres around the importance of leadership and the role of the principal.

Sonja Bjørnbak:
'The most important measure was to close down the special needs unit'
Sonja's discussion is based on interviews regarding the importance of knowledge, support, and engagement to change the facilitation of special needs education, from a traditional practice to a practice that ensures an inclusive community for all children in the kindergarten.

Ann Therese Stamnesfet and Tove Theie:
Creating an inclusive community throughout the entire organisation
Ann Therese and Tove use a case study to describe how you can work systematically on changes throughout the entire organisation to develop more inclusive communities in kindergartens and schools.

Leadership in inclusion processes

Since the 1990s, inclusion has been a central principle in national governing documents and is embodied in international conventions to which Norway is party. However, research shows that inclusiveness can be difficult to achieve in practice.

Anita Sande

In this chapter, we follow Viktor and his school in their efforts to develop an inclusive learning community. Our goal is to show that the development of an inclusive community is a process that entails awareness and effort in a wide range of areas and that requires focused leadership.

Victor is a sixth grader at Fjelltoppen School, a primary school with around 250 pupils. In the class roster, he is assigned to 6B, but has not been part of that class since halfway through second grade. Viktor has been diagnosed with a moderate developmental disability. He has considerable language problems, but also a great deal of factual knowledge about several topics that interest him. He is in the process of cracking the reading code.

At Viktor's school, there are seven other pupils in learning programmes that differ significantly from the regular curriculum. In terms of age, they are distributed over most grade levels and have different diagnoses, including multifunctional disability, childhood autism and mild intellectual disability. The school has always provided education for these pupils in a separate group, as one-to-one teaching or in pairs. But the school is experiencing challenges in teaching these pupils due to their very different needs, and school management would like to take a different approach to special needs education.

Based on David Mitchell's factors for inclusiveness and his emphasis on seven important leadership roles, we discuss the school's opportunities to develop inclusive learning environments that respond to the needs of all pupils. We wish to especially emphasise the importance of management in achieving this goal.

We pose the following questions:
- How can management work towards promoting an inclusive community that accommodates all pupils?
- What role must management play in ensuring that the staff succeeds in creating an inclusive learning community?

Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness is all about adapting the learning environment to the diversity of children and pupils and providing a genuine opportunity to participate in the academic and social community. An inclusive school values diversity, which research has shown to be an essential prerequisite to creating an inclusive learning environment. In an inclusive learning environment, everyone belongs without discrimination and no one is designated as 'included'.

Inclusive teaching is embedded in international conventions, Norwegian law and other governing documents.

Inclusiveness as a process

Inclusiveness can be described as a continuous process. This means that we cannot characterise a school as inclusive or non-inclusive, but inclusive to a certain degree. In the process of developing an inclusive learning community, the school needs to reflect on the factors that affect its practice. David Mitchell has studied several thousand research articles that address inclusiveness (Mitchell, 2014; Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020) In summary, Mitchell finds ten factors he claims are necessary to successfully create an inclusive learning environment. Together, these factors constitute his mega-strategy or multi-component strategy. Mitchell's mega-strategy emphasises that inclusiveness requires effort on the organisational level.

Mitchell's ten factors for an inclusive learning environment

In this chapter, we use Mitchell's (2014) ten factors to show that the process of developing an inclusive learning community at Viktor's school requires an effort in all areas described. All the same, we focus most on the factor of leadership, as we consider this fundamental to making the switch. We start by briefly describing each of the ten factors in order to provide an understanding of how the factors are mutually dependent:

Inclusiveness requires a *commitment to a vision* that everyone belongs to the community and that this is reflected in the attitude and practices of all employees.

In an inclusive learning environment, everyone has access to peers in their local environment *(placement)*. The content of the curriculum for each individual pupil is quality-assured through *adapted curricula* that links up well with the regular curriculum. *Adapted teaching* offers the greatest possible variation in the working methods within the framework of the regular education, while *adapted assessment* promotes learning, supports good learning strategies and functions as a theme in the learning process of each individual. An inclusive learning community means that staff, fellow pupils and parent groups show *acceptance* of the fact that everyone has his or her own natural place in the community. All pupils have access to the school and the outdoor areas of the school in order to take part in joint instruction and activities. The school staff experiences *support* from management, colleagues, parents and external support services in their efforts to create an inclusive learning environment. The school has access to sufficient *resources* in the form of personnel, expertise, time, technology and materials. The school's *leadership* works to implement the school's vision on inclusiveness and is a driving force behind the development of an inclusive culture.

The role of leadership in the development of an inclusive learning environment

Leadership is considered a central factor in the development of an inclusive learning community. *"Developing a positive school culture for learners with special educational needs requires the exercise of leadership"* (Mitchell, 2014, p. 345). Seven important leadership roles are also described that must be fulfilled at a school that is to develop an inclusive culture (Heller &

Firestone, 1995; Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999 as cited in Mitchell, 2014; Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020):

1. Provide and sell a vision
2. Provide encouragement and recognition
3. Obtain resources
4. Adapt standard operating procedures
5. Monitor improvement
6. Handle staff disturbances/resistance
7. Exercising leadership that creates learning climates free of disruption, a system of clear teaching objectives and expecting teachers to set high objectives for themselves and their pupils

All of these roles are necessary to transition from intentions and visions to an inclusive approach that is supported and promoted by all staff members. Taking a closer look at these roles, we see that several of them cannot or should not be addressed by anyone other than management. At Fjelltoppen School, not all leadership roles were equally as central in the transition efforts, which is why some of them are attached greater importance, while others are not discussed in this article.

Although school management plays the most decisive role at the school, the school culture can be represented by many different persons who can assume a leadership role that supports an inclusive learning environment (Mitchell, 2014; Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). But if management does not take responsibility for these roles, they can be performed by informal leaders in the staff (Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999), who may just as easily lead the school towards becoming less inclusive.

Mitchell's ten factors show that the process of developing an inclusive school culture includes numerous themes that require reflection, practical steps that must be taken and new expertise that must be acquired. The process must involve the entire school and be led by management that knows what direction it wants to be headed and how to reach its desired destination. The seven leadership roles demonstrate important strategies that management can or should pursue in leading the process forward in a way that provides staff with support and leads to the desired results. Awareness of the ten factors, as well as the seven leadership roles, can help management succeed in this process.

The path towards an inclusive learning environment

Despite our best efforts, we can't seem to make it work!

Hilde is the headmaster of Viktor's school and she and the other members of the management team are focusing efforts on the school developing an inclusive learning environment. They want to change the school's approach to special needs education, by which pupils are removed from the classroom by either a special needs education teacher or assistant.

Hilde is striving to change the established approach at the school. She is aware that the staff members have different opinions about this. Some would like a more inclusive approach, while others believe that the current approach is the best one. During meetings in which inclusiveness is discussed, she is often unable to answer questions about how challenges are to be addressed in practice.

She understands that it is demanding for staff to teach pupils like Viktor together with the rest of the class. Initial efforts have been made to facilitate special needs education in the classroom, but the majority of experiences have been of failure, resulting in a return to the established practice.

School management knows where it wants to go but is not entirely certain about how to get there. Hilde feels that management needs to be supported in its efforts to change attitudes and practices and believes that the staff also needs support, which it does not currently receive. So, she contacts the Educational Psychological Counselling Service (PPT) with a request for pedagogical counselling. The PPT contacts Statped for assistance.

Developing an inclusive learning environment is an organisational matter that requires effort on many levels (Mitchell, 2014; Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). However, when good intentions do not lead to changed practices, this is often because the responsibility for inclusive practices is placed with a few individuals who do not have the framework or mandate needed to succeed.

The management of Fjelltoppen School wanted to develop an inclusive practice and was aware that there were several staff members who did not share this desire. This was an important starting point to begin changing practices throughout the entire school. Several of the leadership roles were used. In the beginning, it was important to formulate and implement the vision of an inclusive learning community (leadership role 1). In addition, management realised that it was responsible for much of what was needed to follow up on such change activities, such as obtaining resources (leadership role 3) and monitoring improvements (leadership role 4) through close contact with employees and by prioritising allocated time together and focal areas. Most importantly, they recognised the importance of supporting and acknowledging the staff in their work (leadership role 2).

What are our strengths, and what do we need to work on?
The headmaster establishes a resource group consisting of employees in different positions: two special needs education teachers, two contact teachers, one social worker and management. The group is to work together with the PPT and Statped. She selects those who are already favourably disposed to improving the school's inclusive-ness practices. Viktor's contact teacher and special needs education teacher are on the team. The group is tasked with assessing the school's current inclusiveness practices: "What are our strengths, and what do we need to work on?" They use Mitchell's ten factors in their analysis.

The analysis showed that the school has a vision that contains inclusive values, but the entire staff were unable to agree on what this meant for the school's efforts pertaining to an inclusive learning environment in practice. Much of the special needs education activities took place outside of the classroom community and the placement of developmentally disabled learners in groups worked unsatisfactorily. There was no general acceptance among teachers that all pupils should primarily learn together in the same classroom community.

School accessibility was good, both indoors and outdoors. All teachers and special needs education teachers who worked with pupils with major complex challenges felt that competence was lacking with regard to adapted plans, adapted assessment and adapted teaching. There was insufficient cooperation among the contact teachers and those responsible for special needs education, making it difficult to provide special needs education in the classroom. Several staff members experienced a lack of sufficient support on a daily basis and that they were very much alone in their work with the pupil. The school lacked good collaboration structures, and they experienced that the assistance received from the PPT was inadequate. Several were also uncertain about who was responsible for what. In spite of tight finances on both the municipal and school level, the school had the resource that several of the contact teachers and special needs education teachers were interested in developing a more inclusive practice. The resource-related challenges were primarily that the staff felt that they did not have enough expertise to prepare a curriculum and teach pupils with severe learning disabilities in the classroom community. School management had a strong desire to develop an inclusive school culture.

A review of the school's practice using Mitchell's factors revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the organisational aspects. This helped management determine which focal areas were important to address in making changes. The use of Mitchell's mega-strategy made clear to both management and staff that the practice in the classroom is only one aspect that must be considered in developing the school's inclusive practices. The resource group recommended working further on the *vision, accept, adapted plans, adapted curriculum, support* and *resources.*

The school continued to work on all of the recommended improvement activities, but this chapter only highlights what the analysis revealed in terms of *vision, support* and *resources* and discusses which leadership roles were assumed by the management of Fjelltoppen School in working on these three factors.

Management had closely considered the composition of the resource group in terms of attitude, occupational group, roles and professional standing. This can be viewed within the context of the leadership role that focuses on obtaining resources (leadership role 3). They used the personal resources (expertise) already possessed by the staff members, which ensured that they could start working on the tasks right away. Shared attitudes towards inclusiveness enabled the resource group to do their work without internal resistance. A drawback to this group composition might be that those who oppose the change process experienced that their views were not heard during the initial phases and that resistance could grow when the entire staff was to be involved in the work.

Management›s choice of group members is supported by many implementation theorists. To ensure sufficient support for and a proliferation of the intervention, it can be strategically wise to direct efforts towards groups or individuals in the organisation who can help influence others in a positive way (Sørlie, Ogden, Solholm & Olseth, 2010). Management's use of the resource group to 'pave the way' for the rest of the organisation was an indirect way to handle resistance among some of the staff (leadership role 5). This enabled them to prevent the process from being slowed down or stopped before it got going. This proved to be a good strategy that led to good progress in the process.

Working towards a common understanding of inclusive education

Following the resource group's analysis and prioritisation, the headmaster wants a period of intensive effort with a strong focus on inclusion among all staff. This means that other themes that are also important must be put on hold. Initially, management decides to schedule a monthly three-hour staff meeting for the next three months that is also to be attended by the PPT and Statped. The school is in charge of the process between the meetings and after-wards. During these staff meetings, the school starts working to create a common understanding of the term 'inclusiveness', addresses problems and discusses future practice. To ensure a common knowledge base, enabling them to discuss the school's inclusive practice, Hilde asks the PPT and Statped to provide professional input during the staff meetings.

Providing and selling a vision is one of the seven leadership functions that are needed to successfully create an inclusive learning community. At Fjelltoppen School, it was essential that management put this on the agenda and set aside time to work on the vision of an inclusive school. Although the school had a vision that contained an inclusive mindset, not all of the school staff interpreted the concepts in the same way because a systematic approach was not taken towards a common understanding. Different understandings resulted in different practices. When the headmaster prioritised allocated time for working together on a shared understanding of the inclusiveness concept, she initiated the process of creating a new practice.

School management devised a strategy for how the approaches taken during the staff meetings would advance the process. Personally, they believed they lacked the experience and legitimacy to provide professional input. That is why they asked the PPT and Statped to contribute. The external contributors had both professional standing and experience with other schools that had succeeded in creating an inclusive school culture. Sørlie et al. (2010) point out the importance of ensuring that those who support the transition efforts have practical experience with this type of interventions. Together with communication skills adapted to both the intervention and audience, this contributes to legitimacy and credibility (Sørlie et al. 2010). This kind of strategy can be viewed within the context of leadership role 5 and aimed to reduce the risk of resistance. The professional input alternated with theory and reflection on problems and cases. Reflection took place in individual groups and was shared with the entire staff. Some of the group work entailed randomly comprised groups, while other groups were put together carefully by management. The goal was to combine positive and negative feedback. In this way, management was able to utilise the resources among staff, which also helped *deal with resistance and monitor improvements* (leadership roles 3, 5 and 6). Viewpoints and experiences from the group work was shared with the group and written on a flip chart sheet as provided. The work on a case in particular proved to be an effective method that resulted in particularly good reflections. The case work provided both proximity and distance to the problems, while the individual group and overall staff discussions were less dominated by a discussion and focused more on problem solving.

What does a vision on an inclusive learning community look like in practice? At Fjelltoppen School, the three meetings were followed by efforts aimed at operation-alising the vision on an inclusive learning environment into visible indicators, such as: *"At Fjelltoppen School, special needs education takes place in the classroom insofar as pedagogically justifiable"*.

The resource group formulated the indicators before discussing them with staff. This was an important part of providing and selling a vision (leadership role 1). School management expressed clear expectations of a changed practice (leadership role 7), while at the same time trying to facilitate the staff in experiencing a sense of mastery in their work.

Utilising the school's own resources

Teachers and special needs education teachers interested in creating an inclusive learning community are excellent resources for both the school and management. At Viktor's school, management used these resources in a targeted fashion. Parallel to the work initiated by the resource group to assess the school's practice, they also began working to incorporate Viktor in the classroom community. This meant that the team had experiences that could be shared with the rest of the staff when discussing inclusiveness. Knowledge about different methodologies and ICT also became an important asset. Management was also concerned about bringing other relevant competencies to the forefront. Teachers who were not initially the strongest supports of the new inclusive practices had knowledge of digital aspects that were important in an inclusive classroom. This approach enabled management to recognise and acknowledge existing competencies and was an effective measure to *reduce resistance.* Management's search for existing competencies among staff paved the way for a more extensive knowledge-sharing culture than in the past. Experience sharing and discussion arenas were important for several contact teachers to open up for more inclusive practices.

Handling staff resistance

According to Mitchell, an important leadership role involves dealing with resistance. The management of Fjelltoppen School made little effort in terms of counter-argumentation but was more focused on highlighting good experiences and offering support. All processes that involve a change in practice are met with resistance (Skogen, 2004; Sørlie et al., 2010). At the school, resistance was expressed during staff meetings, nonverbally through multitasking on computers and other body language, as well as verbally through the expression of views that problematised having learners with severe and complex learning disabilities in the regular classroom. Some of the teachers did not teach classes that included pupils with severe and complex disabilities, so the perceived level of relevance varied.

Management organised discussions in smaller groups, which helped to articulate the views to a greater extent. This made it more difficult to withdraw from the discussions. Resistance was allowed to materialise and was taken seriously during the group discussions, while management monitored the amount of attention devoted to this. Participants of the resource group were deliberately dispersed among the various groups to enable them to contribute their positive attitudes and experiences with an inclusive classroom. When problems or proposals were presented, management took these into consideration and attempted to make changes and adaptations.

Management's facilitation of staff success in inclusiveness efforts

Per is the 6B contact teacher for Viktor's class at Fjelltoppen School. Gry is Viktor's special needs education teacher. Viktor also has two assistants who know him well. Viktor's entire team is positive about Viktor participating in the learning community together with the rest of the class to a larger

degree, but none of the team members has much experience with adapting the classroom teaching to pupils whose learning programme differs so significantly from the regular curriculum.

Viktor's reintroduction to the classroom community did not mean that he would be together with the other pupils all the time. During certain parts of the day, he would receive instruction one-to-one or together with a few of the pupils from the class. The school was in the process of arriving at agreement on the details of the school's inclusive practices, developing and establishing new routines, increasing the competency of the teachers, finding teacher strategies and practicing them.

Although the staff supported the intention underlying inclusiveness, lots of new procedures, routines, competencies and practices needed to be developed and applied by the staff if they were to succeed in practice. Against the background of the resource group 's analysis of the situation at the school, there were numerous aspects that the school had to address in order to progress in the process. The headmaster realised that, even if there was a willingness to let Viktor be a natural member of the class, the school had a long way to go to succeed in facilitating this in practice. The leadership roles *'creating encouragement and recognition'* and 'procuring resources' were important tools in these efforts.

Clear division of responsibilities
"Who is responsible for the content of teaching in classes with pupils who have a special needs education assistant?" asks special needs education teacher Gry. "I manage to plan my daily lessons and sometimes even a bit more, but not all lessons for the entire school week."

The headmaster realised that there was not enough clarification here. She understood that many of the contact teachers already had a packed schedule and few considered pupils with severe and complex learning disabilities as their responsibility. She also saw special needs education teachers doing far more work than could be expected of them. She realised that the non-professionals were given much too much responsibility and felt uncomfortable in the classroom because they did not know what they were supposed to do there or felt like they were in the way. School management decided to prepare an overview of responsibilities for the various tasks involved in an inclusive teaching environment.

Inclusiveness in practice requires clear roles and tasks. The responsibility clarification form created by Fjelltoppen School contains columns for management, special needs education teachers, contact/subject teachers and non-teaching staff (childcare and youth worker, social worker and assistant). It clarified responsibilities for individual subject curricula (IOP), period plans, work plans, collaboration, meeting attendance, coordination, information procurement, contact with parents, and so on. By initiating this clarification of responsibilities, management demonstrated educational leadership (leadership role 7), thereby eliminating uncertainties, concerns and conflicts associated with the distribution of tasks. Through this clarification, management showed that all teachers were responsible for the academic content for all pupils in their classes. The clarification showed that the entire team around the pupil was expected to be involved in the pupil's education and to contribute to the academic and social benefits of the education. For many of the contact teachers, this meant that they had to assume responsibility for tasks that they had previously delegated to the special needs education teachers and

assistants. The clarification of responsibilities also defined management tasks, making it easier for the staff to receive support from management when challenges arose, or things did not work as planned.

Resources – time

Viktor's team spent little time together. It was a practical challenge to get the entire team together, as one of them needed to be with Viktor during the time of the meeting. The other teams faced the same challenges.

"How much time do the teams need together to ensure an inclusive education for all pupils?" Hilde asks the resource group. How can we schedule collaboration meetings so that staff members who do not have time for planning can also attend?

Collaboration in a team assigned to children with severe learning disabilities is essential for the success of an inclusive education, which Michell mentions under the 'resource' factor (Mitchell, 2014; Mitchell & Sutherland 2020). The educational objectives and teaching methods must be planned in order for every pupil to benefit, but also to enable the deployment of staff in the best and most effective way. If staff who do not have time set aside for planning and collaboration are to participate in meetings and academic guidance, management must both recognise the need and have the resources available to facilitate this. At Fjelltoppen School, this problem was resolved by having management facilitate a meeting every sixth week to be attended by the contact teacher, special needs education teacher and social worker in order to prepare a six-week plan for Viktor. This plan was coordinated with the plans for the rest of the class and was so detailed that information and guidance could be provided to the non-teaching staff during brief weekly meetings. Management reallocated resources to enable the teams for

special needs education pupils to meet. They expressed an understanding of the challenges entailed in changing practice but showed through this reallocation that they wished to facilitate staff in overcoming the challenges involved in the new practice. Resource procurement is absolutely an important part of the leadership role in creating an inclusive learning community. The headmaster was concerned about the quality of the meetings and that they were assigned a clear theme and fixed structure. Management occasionally took part in the team meetings, enabling them to perform several of the seven leadership functions. By devoting attention to and prioritising time to take part in the meetings, they recognised the work that was done, while at the same time contributing to and ensuring that the content of the meetings promoted the progress of the process. Consequently, they demonstrated educational leadership (leadership role 7), which contributed to the quality of the process. Management gained insight into the problems faced by staff and their experiences in practice. This made it possible to monitor and quality assure the process. It also enabled them to assess the need for competencies and resources and, equally as important, to determine which competencies are possessed by the staff, such as the ability to facilitate inclusive learning.

Resources – competencies

Hilde is in a meeting with Viktor's team. They are summarising their experiences – both positive and negative – during the first few months that Viktor has received instruction together with the class. "I find it very demanding to include Viktor in the academic material," says Per. "The class curriculum is too difficult for him to follow." Hilde understands that this is a real issue. Both Per, who is the contact teacher, and Gry, the special needs education teacher,

explain to Hilde that they lack the expertise to assess Viktor's learning possibilities and especially how to organise the instruction to be inclusive.

Viktor's return to the classroom exceeded all expectations. He enjoyed being in the class and appeared much happier and less frustrated than in the past. But a number of questions arose: What was a 'good education' for Viktor? What was he to learn? And how was his team to organise the instruction in the classroom? Hilde understood that the need for competencies in Viktor's team, as well as the teams for the other children with severe and complex learning disabilities, revolved around a few aspects that activated the need for both expertise and support:

1. *How can we teach in ways that encompasses all learners in the classroom?*
2. *How can we understand Viktor's challenges and potential? What is realistic – and important – for him to learn?*

Supporting the development of new teaching methods

In an inclusive learning environment, the educational programme/teaching is adapted with the widest possible variety of working methods within the framework of the regular education. Individual adaptations are based on or associated with the class/department.

Initially, Viktor's teachers were more concerned with placement and organisation and less with the academic content. The change in practice began in the middle of the school year and the plans for the class and Viktor's individual subject curriculum (IOP) were anything but coordinated. Management included the collaboration activities in the lesson plan, making it possible to coordinate the class plan and Viktor's plans and providing a point of departure for planning learning activities that included Viktor. The success of an inclusive education demands a high degree of planning and information flow between various adults in the classroom.

An argument such as *"He or she does not understand what is being taught in the class"* was often expressed when Viktor's school discussed inclusiveness. The school staff required expertise in how to facilitate an inclusive education in practice. This primarily concerned learning practical skills and teaching strategies. School management responded to this need in several ways. They devoted time during staff meetings to familiarise themselves with the teaching methods of 'peer tutoring' and 'cooperative learning'. These are two ways to organise the education that research has shown to be effective, both for learners with severe learning disabilities and learners within the normal variation range. The teachers were challenged and required to some extent to try these teaching methods and share their experiences during the staff meetings. Management also used the internet, municipal network and personal contacts to find literature, courses and schools where the staff could visit. They listened actively to the staff's competence needs and obtained tips and advice from the PPT and Statped. These measures can be viewed within the context of the leadership role of resource procurement. Knowledge and competence are basic resources in an inclusive learning community.

Expectations for the new practice can result in teachers experiencing less mastery or uncertainty initially. Competence in inclusive teaching methods is essential for staff to succeed with physical, academic and social inclusion. The headmaster made every effort to provide every team with enough internal and external support and assistance to succeed. She was aware that if the vision were to create change, the teachers needed to experience a sense of mastery. It was important that not only a few of the staff members experienced a sense of

mastery, but the entire school. *Personal mastery* is one of the five disciplines necessary for a *learning organisation*, in addition to a *shared vision, mental models, team learning and systems thinking* (Senge, 1999). The combination of shared vision and personal mastery makes us *work towards common goals* (Senge, 1999), which is an important aspect of going from re-creation to innovation. A lack of mastery increases the risk of reverting back to old habits and a halt to the implementation process.

School management was very important during this phase. The headmaster and deputy headmaster facilitated the success of the process. They provided awareness, *encouragement and recognition* of the work carried out by the staff, as well as making demands of the staff to develop their inclusive practices. The level of resistance among the sceptics diminished as it become clear that the experiences of Viktor's team and their own personal experiences were positive. As the school made progress with the new organisation of special needs education, they discovered that the time and resources they used to plan the inclusive education also provided them with resources in the form of flexibility in that there were always at least two adults in the classroom. The goal developed to 'become the best school at inclusiveness in the municipality'. As the school developed its practice, it was challenged by the PPT and the municipal authorities to share its experiences with other schools. This created a sense of pride among the staff that increased their motivation to make further improvements.

Management scheduled time for staff to receive guidance from the PPT and Statped. The PPT had limited experience with the inclusive teaching of learners with severe learning disabilities, but was an important collaborative partner, nonetheless. Frequent observations in the classroom made the PPT an important reflection partner. They contributed not only expertise in facilitating the inclusion of individual pupils in the classroom community, but also observations of and reflections on the situation as a whole. Management's prioritisation of guidance during this phase made it possible to address many of the challenges and frustrations experienced during the guidance meetings, instead of them being expressed in anger and resistance during staff meetings (leadership role 6). This was also a way to provide support (Mitchell, 2014) and it gave the staff the feeling that their challenges were taken seriously.

Support in facilitating individual pupils
The learners with severe and complex learning disabilities or who required special needs education were quite different. The challenges associated with adaptation were equally as varied. Management realised early on that the teams needed support and additional competence in order to feel a sense of mastery. It is not enough to simply 'push a vision onto' the staff without helping them to resolve the challenges this brings with it. Management ensured that staff members had the opportunity to discuss their challenges with the PPT and anonymously with Statped. They expressed the desire to have the PPT more closely involved and took issue about both more mapping of the learners and guidance on how the school could improve at adapted assessments. The entire team was expected to take part in such guidance.

Management's need for support in organisational development

"If we were to have done this alone, it would have taken us many years to reach where we are today," concludes Hilde after around six months of intensive efforts to create an inclusive learning environment. In retrospect, they admit that it was resource-intensive to implement these changes, but they thought it was worth it.

Hilde had wanted to make these changes for a long time, as mentioned above, but struggled to get into a position to do so. In many instances, it can be both useful and necessary to receive external support. The PPT has a mandate to work with system-oriented services, making it an important partner in the development of an inclusive learning environment. The PPT has both the system-oriented competence and expertise on pupils who require special needs education adaptation to succeed with inclusive learning. It is precisely the combination of this expertise that makes the PPT an important partner in such matters. At Fjelltoppen School, Statped was involved in the efforts, but this is often not necessary.

The process at Fjelltoppen School shares similarities with the model referred to as the *problem-solving strategy* (P-S) (Skogen, 2004). This model is based on the *need* for change experienced by those working in an organisation. Phase 1 is to define the need, after which the need is defined as a *problem* (phase 2). Phase 3 entails finding *resources,* such as relevant experiences, ideas, information and knowledge. Phase 4 involves the search for solutions and phase 5, the implementation phase, entails putting the solutions into daily practice (Skogen, 2004).

Skogen (2004) highlights the need for access to external expertise in innovation efforts. That external expertise should entail experience with similar problems or change efforts and should first and foremost contribute by informing, proposing and participating in dialogue on the regular participants› terms.

"An expansion of the model in this way can enhance the learning effect and, consequently, enable the development efforts to function as part of the internal qualification to an even greater extent" (Skogen, 2004, p. 55). As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, the advantages of external expertise are also supported by Sørlie et al. (2010).

For the management of Fjelltoppen School, external support was an important part of the process. All the same, according to the P-S model, the school remained the primary owner of the process. They owned both the needs description, problem definitions, majority of resources and reflections. The headmaster's decision to bring in external assistance can be viewed within the context of the leadership role of *'resource procurement'*. The external support was a resource in that it supported management in the process, contributed a number of tasks to be performed and gave management legitimacy in its own efforts.

Conclusion

This is a success story inspired by real-life experiences. It is the story of a school that developed an inclusive school culture through targeted management. The development of an inclusive learning environment is a process. By carrying out an analysis based on Mitchell's ten factors for an inclusive learning environment, a foundation can be created for prioritising. Focusing attention on the seven leadership roles will help management drive the process forward effectively. Several of the factors and the leadership roles can be the responsibility of management since, after all, an entire organisation culture is to be changed.

Management promotes an inclusive community by formulating and implementing a vision on this. It is also important to follow up on staff by procuring resources, especially those related to time and expertise.

At Fjelltoppen School, management managed a process that expected change, while listening to staff and providing the necessary support. Management's well-thought-out approach, positive involvement, support and procurement of resources helped reduce resistance within the organisation. Support from management, colleagues and external support from, for example, the PPT, is important for staff. Management in an organisation may also need support. Employees can be important source of support, but it may also be necessary to obtain support through external expertise.

The Fjelltoppen School example shows that school management is of vital importance in the process of developing an inclusive school culture.
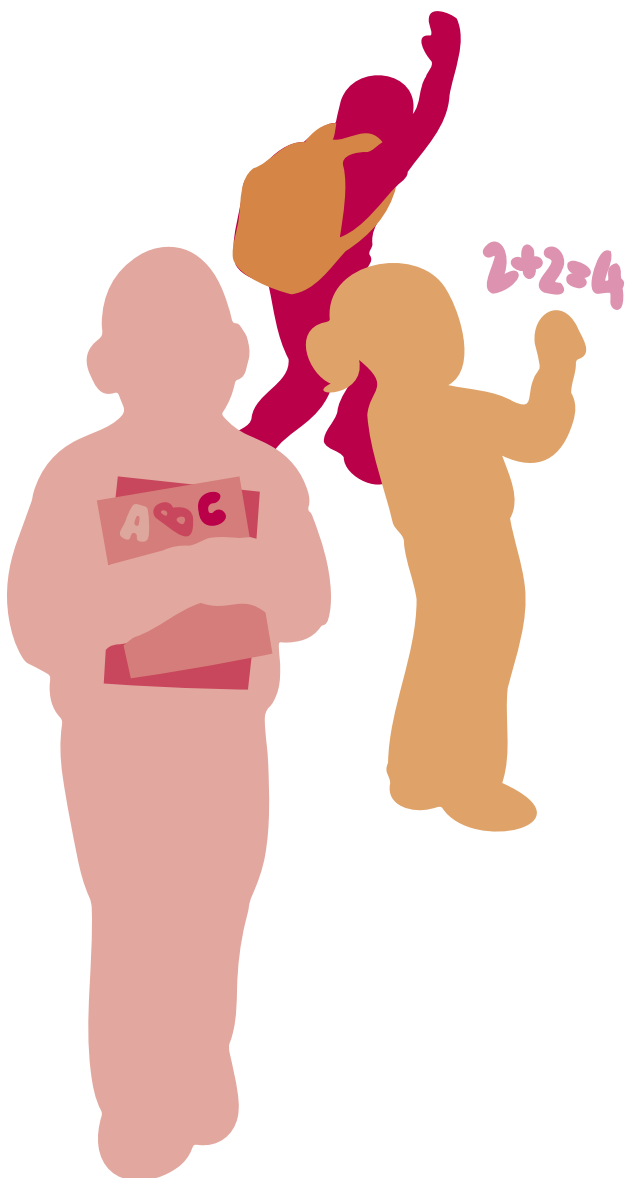
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"The most important measure was to close down the special needs unit"

This chapter discusses how knowledge, support and engagement can help change the organisation of special needs education, from a tradition-bound practice to a practice that ensures an inclusive community for all children at a day-care facility.

Sonja Bjørnbak

A tradition-bound special needs education practice strongly emphasises an individual-based approach, with a focus on diagnoses and treatment (Allan, 2017; Simonsen & Kristoffersen, 2017). In recent years, this view has been challenged by a practice that emphasizes more on play and learning in the community, inclusive practices, universal solutions and system-oriented approaches (Arnesen, 2017; Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; Lundh, Hjelmbrekke & Skogdal, 2014; Sjøvik, 2014b).

To find out how a traditional approach could be changed, I interviewed individuals in various positions in a municipality that had changed the organisation of its special needs education for children who require special adaptation. I chose this topic because it underscores the need to shift the focus from an individual-based to a more system-based approach. It shows that, as a society, we are responsible for ensuring that all children can participate in an inclusive community. In other words, it is not the characteristics of the individual child that are to be a barrier for participation (Arnesen, Kolle & Solli, 2017).

For many years, the day-care centres in the municipality took a traditional approach to special needs education. This meant that the majority of children who required special adaptation were offered a spot at a kindergarten with a special needs education unit. The municipality has carried out a reorganisation in recent years, so that all children are now enrolled in the regular units. It is therefore natural to ask the following questions:

- What was the background for the desire for change and what made it possible to change this practice?
- What kinds of experiences do the municipality and kindergarten now have after this turnaround?
- How can this reorganisation inspire other municipalities and kindergarten that would like to achieve greater inclusiveness?

A committee of ten individuals on both the municipal and kindergarten levels was established to explore these questions based on their views, experiences and knowledge. Interviews were held around three years after the start of the reorganisation after they had been working with the new routines and system for around a year

and a half. The committee comprised the head of the municipal kindergarten director, a counsellor from the Educational and Psychological Counselling Service (PPT), an administrator, three administrator assistants, two educational supervisors and two special education teachers, all of whom provided consent in accordance with the Personal Data Act. In the description below, the municipal kindergarten director, PPT counsellor, administrator and administrator assistants are referred to as managers or management, while the educational supervisors and special education teachers are referred to as educators. All of the kindergarten staff members worked at a kindergarten with a special needs education unit in the past and all of the informants had in common that they had been critical of the municipality's approach to special needs education and desired a change. The informants were selected by having the management of the kindergarten ask relevant individuals whether they would be interested in participating and informing them that the intention was to reveal the positive sides of the change.

The kindergarten as an inclusive community

Kindergartens must help ensure that everyone is part of a community (Arnesen, 2017; Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; Mørland, 2008; Sjøvik, 2014b). Many children who require special adaptation do not receive the help to which they are entitled because, for example, they are removed from the group community, the adults lack the relevant competence, they are met with low expectations or receive help too late (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Some children are enrolled in special needs education units and may experience a greater sense of social belonging here than in the regular units, but it is an explicit goal that these children also should be included

in the regular community (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, 2019). If kindergartens are well-organised for everyone, this will reduce the need for individual solutions (Sjøvik, 2014a). It is an important principle that all children are included in the community, not only one of the children or a specifically defined group (Sjøvik, 2014a).

These special needs education services are organised differently by each municipality and some still have special needs education units in their day-care centres (Solli, 2017). The services are sometimes experienced as fragmented and with little connection to the other activities at the kindergarten (Moe & Valseth, 2014). For children to experience a coherent and safe daily routine at the day-care centre, closer collaboration and a comprehensive approach within the community of children is needed in kindergartens (Hillesøy, 2019; Moe & Valseth, 2014; Solli 2017). The collaboration between the educational supervisor, special education teacher and other staff members is key to a successful implementation in practice (Mørland, 2008; Simonsen & Kristoffersen, 2017). We often see little to no collaboration between the educational supervisor and the special needs education teacher in the unit. This may be due in part to lack of resources but is also often the result of traditional organisation models and insufficient knowledge (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019; Moe & Valseth, 2014).

The Framework Plan for Kindergartens states that inclusiveness is about facilitating social participation and that the most important arena for this is play (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). Play is a lifestyle for children, with its own intrinsic value and of fundamental value (Sundsdal & Øksnes, 2017; Wolf, 2017). It is through play that children experience values that are of increasing saliency in today's society, as well as teamwork, creativity and imagination (Hoven & Mørland, 2014). In kindergarten,

inclusion efforts can help children experience a sense of community, of being 'seen' by others, of being useful to others and of together contributing to the community. All of this is important for a person to experience good quality of life and health (Antonovsky, 2012; Sjøvik, 2014a). By way of extension, efforts to create an inclusive community at a day-care centre can be viewed within a larger framework in which it is clear that this equips children to face adversity and stress later in life. Shared experiences, including play and experiencing joy together with others, help make life worth living. Parent-school cooperation and the cooperation of the child in his or her everyday routine are regarded as important contributions to determining what is needed for the children to thrive at the day-care centre and to facilitate a good playing and learning environment (Franck & Glaser, 2014; Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; Moe & Valseth, 2014; Mørland 2008; Nytrø, 2014).

Kindergarten is to serve a health-promoting and preventive function in which well-being, a sense of achievement and the joy of living are among the goals (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; Moe & Valseth, 2014). Health-promoting efforts in kindergartens are regarded as increasingly important in terms of system-oriented measures to enhance the quality of life and health of the general population (Green, Tones, Cross & Woodall, 2019). The possibility for children to contribute in kindergarten through their presence and participation in the community, together with the adults and their peers, has a profound impact on them (Franck & Glaser, 2014). Children who require special assistance from the staff can be extra vulnerable to adult control and experience a lower degree of participation (Hoven & Mørland, 2014).

Background for change in special needs education practices

Traditional organisation

In the municipality, special needs education practices primarily entailed enrolling children who required special adaptation in a separate special needs education unit in kindergarten. This unit went by different names, such as a reinforced unit, special unit, base, special needs education group, and so on. In this chapter, I use the term special needs education unit.

It refers to the increased use of special needs education units in schools and kindergartens, although the majority of children who require special adaptaion attend regular units (Solli, 2017). The interview subjects stated that they reacted to the fact that the children in the special needs education unit were not regarded in the same way as the children in the regular groups. They said that the children spent much time alone in the group room with an adult, working on different programmes or methods. Some of the children were also enrolled in the regular units in kindergarten to some degree, but staff members were specifically assigned to the special needs education unit. The special needs education units had several small group rooms and an activity room where the children had 'one-on-one instruction' with an adult at some point in the day. Insofar as they also took part in the regular group, the informants experienced that the special needs education children often received either close individual supervision by the staff or were left unsupervised. The educational supervisor for the regular units had little to no knowledge about the child's challenges and the needs for which adaptation was required in order for the child to be a part of the community in a regular group.

The special needs education unit had separate meetings and sessions, as well as

individual supervision and training from other support services. Part of the support was provided to assistants and specialists, who were responsible for applying the methods in practice in kindergarten. At times, much of the training took place in the group room with one adult and one child. However, the informants pointed out that these children were attended to by caring adults with an understanding of the individual assessments, follow-up and adaptation. In their opinion, the challenge was the degree to which consideration was given to how the children learn, play and express themselves together with other children.

Segregation measures

Excluding children from the regular community of children by removing them from the group and placing them in a separate unit is an example of a segregation measure. These children are not given the same opportunity to play and learn in a community, develop different friendships and contribute and experience joy in play with others. Play is meaningful, and children should be actors in their own lives, not an object for learning (Mørland, 2008). Play is universal, and, for most children, play and friendship are extremely important (Hoven & Mørland, 2014; Moe & Valseth, 2014). Play and friendship can be regarded as a mastery strategy for understanding themselves and, consequently, can help give children a sense of coherence in life. The emphasis of the Framework Plan for Kindergartens is on the child's right to participation (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). This may mean that, by implementing segregation measures, we deprive the children of their right to participate in both informal and formal participatory processes like play and group activities. Measures or arrangements that are perceived as stigmatising or demeaning for some children should be changed or removed entirely (Sjøvik, 2014a).

The educational supervisors in the regular units stated that they had had too little knowledge about special needs education and felt that they fell short. They gradually began to question the overall vision on learning with regard to children who require special adaptation. They began to ask questions about why these children were not also a natural part of the regular community and wondered how the system could be changed to achieve this in practice. Asking questions is an important inclusiveness tool (Sandmel, 2014). The reason is, among other things, that questions allow for reflection and a critical examination of one's own practice and can contribute to greater openness and a common understanding (Allan, 2017).

Desire for change

Some managers and educators stated that they initially felt that because they had insufficient knowledge about special needs education, they did not dare discuss it or have an opinion on it. One of them expressed this as follows: "Without knowledge, it's difficult to engage in a discussion." Another mentioned wondering: "What am I supposed to think? What's right? The only thing I can trust is research, since everything else is merely opinion." They started asking questions like: "Why are things done like this?" Management experienced that several staff members desired a change and understood that there were other ways to organise special needs education. Some members of management started reading up on the concept of inclusiveness and gradually launched processes in the staff group to bring about change. Management said that they requested system guidance from the PPT and that this support was vital. One of the educators stressed this by saying the following: "Collaboration with the PPT has been essential. And very productive.

It's easier when there are several people with the same views." Collaboration with other organisations is decisive for achieving an inclusive community (Kolle, 2017; Mørland, 2014). Some management members said that they had considered discontinuing the special needs education units in the past, but it was not until the educators themselves proposed change that they saw the opportunity to do this.

"They were missing out"
One of the educational supervisors said that she also looked back on the special needs education unit with fondness: "There were many positive aspects about it; it wasn't like the kids were not taken care of well, quite the contrary. But they were missing out." She said that it was easy to see the progress in the children when they practiced in the private room with adults, who crossed off a checklist as they worked. I asked how this compared to the individual-oriented approach in the past and she responded: "I saw the same progress, the same joy at seeing children uttering long sentences after not being able to say a word when they first started, unable to stop. So, I did not have negative thoughts about this." I think they are many who can identify with this. We can easily see individual progress, but perhaps do not dare to challenge ourselves to try this out in the group. The educational supervisor also expressed the following: "It's nice to have all the registrations, forms and programmes. It's a nice way for us to work. It's also positive that we are monitored closely. The system reinforces itself."

Another one of the educators said that when she worked in the special needs education unit, she began taking more children on a walk in the woods to see if progress could be achieved there. Her experience was that this was possible, but required that progress was viewed a bit differently, perhaps without using the form in the same way as when working on an individual basis. Another educator stated that he always thought about how the individual goals could be achieved in different ways than in the past. He said that they used small groups more often, which offered new possibilities. Now that extra staff, such as a special needs education teacher and/or assistant, have been added to the unit, it is possible to divide the children into flexible small groups more often. He commented: "Having prior knowledge before the joint meeting can be important, but you don't need to do everything alone. There's a lot that can be done to help children feel like part of the group. We need to consider the big picture." When a child experiences being an equal member of the community, he or she has a greater experience of a coherent everyday life.

The child may experience being dependent on an adult to manage in life. When the child always has a familiar adult nearby, situations can easily arise in which that adult helps a little extra with other things as well (Moe & Valseth, 2014).

For example, there may be a child who struggles to comprehend communication around him or her and therefore requires a little more support. The adult may also remind the child to put on socks when barefoot or to tidy up before leaving somewhere, without pointing this out to the other children who are also there. If this happens repeatedly, the child may have the feeling that he or she is unable to cope with life without the adult. These kinds of situations will also affect the children's understanding of each other and who needs extra help, even when they can deal with this on their own in principle. An educator commented: "I thought that we needed to do things differently here. Obviously, I can't grab hold of him all the time since this may send the wrong signal to the other children." Another one commented: "The child should not be followed by an employee at all times. I think that's the worst approach. We need to secure the system, not the child."

Change and a difference of opinion

Change activities and reorganisations are often demanding processes, especially for management (Bøe & Thoresen, 2017). In addition to enhancing their expertise on inclusiveness, management also increased its competence with regard to managing a kindergarten undergoing a change process. One of the managers said that she had developed a new view of disagreement and explained it as follows: "Disagreement is good for change. Having a difference of opinion forces us to find something on which we can agree." She was particularly concerned that the special needs education field seemed to be difficult to change and that perhaps we would not be able to find a solution right away. The change processes that this kindergarten had undergone were demanding on the staff. Disagreement can arise on the best direction to follow. In some change processes, the price that needs to be paid by one individual may be considered too high to continue the process. If individuals do not experience a sense of coherence and meaning in what they are going through, they may end up in a dilemma in which they have to decide whether or not to continue. This is exactly what happened in this process.

Diversity as a resource for everyone

One of the educators expressed the benefits of challenging the kindergarten staff to use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). The educator saw how this benefited several of the children and also emphasised that the entire kindergarten now worked with the same method. If a child needed AAC, it was the responsibility of the entire kindergarten to make sure that this child was understood and could communicate with others, children and adults alike. It is important that everyone considers this their responsibility (Mørland, 2008). All children should feel that they are a resource for the group, that they have

qualities that the group needs and that everyone has the right and obligation to contribute to the community (Moe & Valseth, 2014; Nytrø, 2014; Skogdal, 2014). This also helps the children experience everyday life as coherent and meaningful in that the children's needs are met by everyone and concurrently. The educators pointed out that, in the past, AAC was used by only a few, select adults and in a fragmented manner throughout the day, sometimes only together with one child.

One of them stated that being different offers opportunities for everyone to be more open-hearted and understanding in the unit:

We all have different needs. Some, for example, have to eat more often and we can respond to this by saying: "I know that you're also hungry, but you're going to have to wait a little while. Line needs to eat right now." This teaches acceptance of differences and of the fact that we all have different needs. All children can go through periods when they need a little extra something or other, and this approach facilitates that. The children become more generous and open-hearted as a result.

Turning point

After several years in this field, I have seen practices that can be perceived as segregating. Although they are based on the best intentions, they can lead to further difficulties for the children we want to help. There is reason to assume that these practices are still encountered in various places. An example of a traditional approach may be that we say things like: "Who's got him today?" "She needs a break now." "It's no big deal since she doesn't understand anyway." "The other children need to be protected from that child." Other examples are removing a child from play to work on a specific part of a programme (without considering how this could have been done

in the group), that a child with uncontrolled movements eats alone with an adult because the child needs peace and quiet or that the physical therapist takes a child to a private room for motor skills training, while the rest of the group takes a walk in the woods. We also often see that assistants and specialists are assigned knowledge-intensive tasks, such as the continuous observation of individual children in terms of both special needs education measures and adaptation (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019).

An educator mentioned that the moment she understood that something needed to be done was when a special needs child looked at her and asked: "Who's got me today?" In this case, the child clearly had an understanding of being different and needing a special adult in order to function together with others. All children need adults, but most children have more alternatives from which to choose and access to more adults. One of the managers said: "The child should not be followed by one employee at all times... I think that's the worst approach." In the example above, the child is incapacitated to some extent because she is not given a say in the choice of adults she can reach out to in the unit. It was therefore important for the staff to explore other ways to facilitate special needs education. Several of the managers and educators talked about situations that bothered them and that they gradually began to question. These are experiences that can be defined within the traditional view that entails a child not participating in outdoor play at the same time as the others, who has an adult as his or her most important playmate – in some cases the child's only friend – or that methods and training arrangements 'outweigh' joint activities.

Measures implemented
The interviews show that a series of measures were implemented. Two of the managers said that they searched for a theme that all kindergarten staff agreed was worth pursuing. This turned out to be the importance of play at the day-care centre and the inclusiveness perspective. Other important measures were that the educational supervisor was given primary responsibility for all children in the unit. Collaboration among the staff in the unit was strengthened through joint meetings and joint responsibility for all children. Giving the educational supervisor primary responsibility for all children proved to be one of the most important measures implemented (Moe & Valseth, 2014). The educational supervisor in the unit still has this responsibility and works closely with the assistants, specialists, early education teachers and special needs education teachers in the unit. It is the unit as a whole that is to meet the different needs of all children.

The kindergarten staff began reflecting on terms that we encounter in everyday life in which views on teaching in particular were the subject of discussion. Other measures were also implemented, such as changes to the description of tasks for specific positions in the municipality and wording of measures, educators were enrolled in courses on inclusiveness, the financial frameworks were changed, and the educators were provided with guidance from assistance organisations.

How is the municipal special needs education system now organised?

In kindergarten, they have now spent a year and a half working according to the new model in which the entire unit is responsible for all children. The motto for the kindergarten is that all children are to participate in play and that the staff is to prioritise this in the daily routine. There is no longer any special training for individual children, but children and adults are often organised in smaller groups. Some said that a group can be as small as only two children. Two of the educators reflected a bit on the individual approach. They were concerned about there still being the opportunity to raise questions about the individual approach in discussion and reflections. In units with children with an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), this plan is jointly prepared by the educator and special needs education teacher. The unit staff also works together in preparing joint plans for the unit (weekly plan, monthly plan and annual plan), so that individual needs can be met as best as possible as part of a whole. Achieving a balance between individual considerations and the group is a classic dilemma in kindergartens, and how we define this may affect our actions and reflections (Franck & Glaser, 2014).

The day-care centre staff also reflected on how traditional views were in the process of changing. One mentioned that their work approach affects those who are assigned to work individually with children. An example of this was the physical therapists, who sometimes brought individual children with them to the activity rooms in the past. One manager commented: "How easy is it to take a child with them who is used to participating in the community together with the other children? This might perhaps be easier if done in connection with the activity already taking place." She also said: "And that requires a different approach." One of the educators added that the collaboration with other organisations had changed in that discussed more thoroughly and wondered about how the goals could be achieved without removing the children from the day-care centre community.

Collaboration with the PPT is mentioned as an important contribution, both in the process already completed and, equally as important, in the current collaboration work. They have developed good routines for collaboration in recent years. The PPT visits the kindergarten regularly, offering the possibility to provide advice and guidance, first and foremost on the system level. One of the managers stated that vulnerability is reduced due to more adults in the unit who are familiar with the children. If one of them is on sick leave, there are still several other adults who know the needs of the individual child, which is a significant change from past practice.

Both the educators and managers referred to inclusiveness as a process. They were concerned about not having achieved their goals yet. They reflected on the question of whether this actually is a process with a start and finish or whether it is a theme that will always be of relevance. This is also reflected in the research literature, which describes it as a continuous process, by which successful inclusiveness renders the concept redundant (Skogdal, 2014).

Sense of coherence

In conclusion, in light of the theory chosen, I would like to attempt to shed light on what may have contributed to the joint success of management and the staff members in this demanding change process to develop a more inclusive practice. Health-promoting perspectives are important within all areas of society and theories and research can contribute to greater insight into what it takes for us to master challenges (Green, Tones, Cross & Woodall, 2019). What does it take for people to find solutions for the challenges

they face and experience a sense of mastery and meaning in everyday life?

The theory of salutogenesis aims to provide a better understanding of what promotes good health, life mastery and well-being. The Israeli-American sociologist Aaron Antonovsky developed the theory of salutogenesis as a contrast to pathogenesis (Antonovsky, 2012). The salutogenic model regards health as a continuum and stress as potentially health-promoting. A pathogenic approach, on the other hand, emphasises stress as disease-promoting and focuses on diagnosis and whether the person is healthy or ill (Antonovsky, 2012). The two understandings are not opposites but can be understood as equal and complementary. Antonovsky discovered that our sense of coherence (SOC) helps determine how we handle stress. He points out three components – comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 2012). During change processes, we experience events to varying degrees as comprehensible, i.e., the extent to which we understand what is happening to us. The same applies to manageability, which refers to the resources we have available (on both the individual and system level), and for meaningfulness, which deals with our level of engagement and experience of our actions being meaningful. Every person experience meaningfulness differently and this can entail social relationships, friendship, cultural experiences, spiritual experiences and being a resource for others (Antonovsky, 2012). Experiencing a meaning in events is said to be the most important of the three components and decisive for experiencing that life is coherent. Experiencing a situation as meaningful does not mean that we find meaning in every situation in the concrete events taking place, but that we find a calling or motivation to cope with the stress that it brings.

Knowledge, support and engagement

Management and the educators realised at the start of the reorganisation process that if they were to be in a position to achieve change, they would require knowledge about the following: What inclusiveness really means, the research-based knowledge available and the consequences this would have for their practice. Some management members expressed amazement at how clear the research really was. Among other things, the framework plan's themed booklet on children with disabilities became an important inspiration.

(Mørland, 2008). They gradually realised that, with the knowledge that they had acquired, there was no turning back. Change was necessary and they believed that this was clearly expressed in the mandate for kindergarten. This ranged from everything from human rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, laws and frameworks to parliamentary and research reports. When individuals become more knowledgeable, this can help set in motion processes that provide the necessary strength to achieve change and development. The knowledge they acquired therefore contributed to a better understanding and, consequently, comprehensibility, as one of the SOC (sense of coherence) components in Antonovsky's theory (2012).

Experiencing collaboration and social support from colleagues creates a sense of safety, trust and motivation (Bøe & Thoresen, 2017; Moe & Valseth, 2014). It may seem that those who experience social support are more inclined to experience a sense of coherence in life (Antonovsky, 2012). The manageability component can be linked in this coherence to the experience of support from colleagues, a resource for maintaining and managing the changes.

When faced with conflict, change and concerns over time, a need arises to find meaning in the work they do, but, as mentioned above, not everyone defines 'meaningful' in the same way (Antonovsky, 2012). The various interview subjects talked about their commitment to facing the challenges that arise. This commitment, or engagement, has a common denominator, namely the belief that an inclusive community is in the best interest of all children. The central factors of the meaningfulness component are motivation and engagement (Antonovsky, 2012). Experiencing that the work that is being done is important and worth pursuing is a strong motivation factor. One aspect that particularly engaged the interview subjects was how the word 'special needs education' can create a sense of distance: "What is so special about it?" They were highly motivated to change the field of special needs education and the following comment illustrates their drive to achieve a change: "Why can't we change the field of special needs education? Everything is to simply stay the same. That is unfair – especially to the children"

Inclusive community gives personal meaning

What is it that engaged management and the educators to implement and pursue change over time? If a change is to be made, it must feel meaningful enough to foster engagement. The managers and educators said that they found meaning by seeing and experiencing what this meant for the children in practice. They experienced that the children who previously had been assigned to the special needs education unit were part of an inclusive community in a different way than in the past. They were a natural part of the community and there was no longer a distinction. In spite of the educators experiencing that they had greater responsibility and more tasks, they experienced both meaning and joy on seeing the results.

One of the educators expressed this as follows:

It is extremely important that we have a diverse society. It is both exciting and important and enables people to relax and not always feel the need to perform. Everyone has something to contribute to the group. If you are able to learn in a more relaxed setting and have fun, you will also learn more.
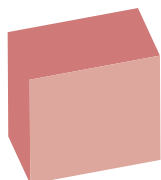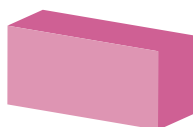
Those who wanted to change the special needs educational approach experienced a sense of coherence by strengthening their own knowledge – which helped make the change efforts more comprehensible and they experienced social and professional support through the work – which in turn made the change process manageable and, last but not least, they experienced an inner drive and sense of engagement – which in turn gave meaning. Motivation and meaningfulness in the commitment to the processes appeared to largely relate to the significance this will have for the group of children.

Summary

Three main themes emerged during the interviews: knowledge, support and engagement. The informants recognised the need to strengthen their knowledge of inclusiveness and the views on learning that underlie the choice or organisation of special needs education in kindergarten. Management and several of the educators eventually requested support from each other and the PPT, which laid the foundation for a closer collaboration between professionals. Joint reflection sessions provided many with a better understanding of both what needed to be changed and how they could achieve this. The motivation and level of engagement among both management and the educators appeared to be linked to a belief that a reorganisation would help create a more inclusive community for all children in kindergarten.

The most important steps taken by this kindergarten to change its special needs education practices and the most important driving forces behind the change are summarised below:

- Collaboration with the PPT on the system level
- Positive attitude towards the change on the part of the kindergarten management team
- Clear managers with knowledge of change processes
- Questions from staff members
- Greater knowledge about inclusiveness among all staff
- Collaboration and support among colleagues
- A change to the educational supervisor's role: responsibility for all children in the group
- Collaboration among assistants, specialists, special education teachers and educators on the best interest of all children
- Guidance from other organisations of educators
- Reflection on individual understandings of different views on learning
- Finally, the closing of the special needs education unit

Concluding reflections

In Norway today, there continue to be children, young people and adults who are not part of the community. We are missing out on resources, both human and financial, if we continue to organise the special needs education field in the same way, by which we are more concerned about diagnoses and treatment than the collective knowledge we can develop jointly as a society. Can methods, activities and exercises be implemented in the community of practice in kindergarten? Have attempts been made to make changes, but to no avail? But are there other ways to approach this?

The conclusion is that changes on the system level demand a unified and coordinated effort in which each individual experience having the knowledge that is needed to make changes that are comprehensible, manageable, and consequently, meaningful. Inclusiveness is both a goal and a continuous process. If we are to succeed at making changes, we must dare to test out the inclusiveness perspectives in practice and not give up if the efforts are not fruitful after the first attempt.

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Creating an inclusive community throughout the entire organisation

In this chapter, we show how we used a working model to structure meetings to enable us to take a systematic approach throughout the entire organisation as much as possible. In this context, we refers to two Statped advisers

Tove Theie and Ann Therese Stamnesfet

The meeting structure we show here can be used by anyone entrusted with the management of a change process. We found our inspiration for this approach in numerous models and programmes, including School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (SW-PBIS), The Incredible Years, the LP-model, pedagogical analysis, International Child Development Programme (ICDP) and systematic family therapy.[1] After several decades of working together with the Educational and Psychological Counselling Service (PPT), kindergartens and schools, we have developed an approach that our partners have found to be effective. The feedback we received indicates that kindergartens and schools achieve greater effectiveness than in the past in promoting an inclusive practice.

Our experience suggests that it is necessary to be familiar with the practices at a specific organisation before changes can be implemented. Roald (2012) points out that complex challenges are most often associated with situational social, cultural and economic conditions. Consequently, each organisation must perform its own

analyses and find its own solutions. During joint meetings, participants must be willing to explore such dimensions as values, structures, relationships, strategies and the setting. By exploring these dimensions together, the PPT, Statped, the kindergarten/school management and staff can create a solid basis for a joint understanding. To achieve collective competence development and change in a day-care centre or school, an analysis must be performed, and development processes initiated that activate the staff.

During the process of jointly examining the practice and obtaining research-based theory and empirical evidence, the staff is activated and given the opportunity to determine which factors prevent or promote inclusiveness.

Prerequisites for an inclusive community

Nordahl and Overland (2015) suggest that a mastery-oriented learning culture is most effective at promoting the positive development of self-perception, motivation and learning for children and young people in

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1   SW-PBIS, The Incredible Years by C.W. Stratton, the LP-model, Pedagogisk analyse [Pedagogical analysis] by Nordahl and Overland, ICDP and systematic family therapy

kindergartens and schools. If we are to succeed in creating inclusive communities in practice, the organisation as a whole must be willing and able to consider all members (children, youth and employees) as equals. This means that there must be willingness, ability and knowledge to organise and facilitate routines and tasks in a manner that includes everyone in the organisation in an effective, appropriate and equal way. This is what we call a universal learning environment, which translates into possibilities and measures that encompass all individuals in the organisation. At kindergartens and schools, this means that the better and more extensive the possibilities and facilities for all children/pupils, the fewer the children/pupils who require special arrangements outside of or in addition to the regular facilities and options (Nordahl & Overland, 2015).

Apart from directing attention to the learning environment, we must have knowledge about change processes. What enables some organisations to succeed in their change efforts, while others use a great deal of time and effort on change activities that do not lead to change in practice? To answer these questions, we need to examine the differences underlying mastery-oriented and performance-driven cultures. An organisation characterised by a performance-driven culture is often the greatest obstacle to the development of talent, ability and the joy of mastery. This type of culture emphasises monitoring, ranking and evaluation, and performing better than others is rewarded (Johansen, 2019). Studies show that children who demonstrate a natural joy of mastery by drawing lose interest in drawing and show a reduced quality in their drawings when their work is monitored, evaluated and ranked.

In performance-driven cultures, a fear of mastery is developed that in turn interferes with creativity and the joy of mastery (Johansen, 2019). The individual-focused performance and ranking culture is destructive for natural human curiosity, creativity and the ability to learn. But, at the same time, it is precisely a curiosity for knowledge, creativity and having the ability to learn that are the most important success factors in the knowledge society, making them the most important factors within an organisation (Johansen, 2019). Nordahl and Overland (2015) point out that Norwegian schools are traditionally characterised by a *performance-driven learning culture.*

Planning and initiating change

When a kindergarten or school expresses the desire to work towards a greater degree of inclusiveness, management at kindergartens or school should establish a working group to assist with planning and implementation. The staff members selected for the group can make or break the success of the change efforts. The administrator or headmaster and head of the department or grade level should always be included in the group. Our experience has been that it can be useful to have a good combination of group members who are resistant to the change and who positively support and are loyal to the change efforts, in addition to the PPT if possible. The working group should always represent management and the educational and assistance group in the workplace.

To illustrate how exactly change is facilitated and how the working model can prove helpful in achieving systematic change, we present a case here[2].

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2   This case description was written from the viewpoint of the staff on how they experienced the situatio and the actual results of various mapping methods.

Of the entire student body, 30 percent are enrolled in the PPT and 37 percent of pupils score at Level 1 in reading, i.e., have critically low reading skills. In general, there is considerable unrest in all classroom. The fifth-grade class is particularly restless as a result of two pupils with an ADHD diagnosis who are constantly in conflict with others and many of the other pupils 'jumping on the bandwagon'. Several of the pupils are so anxious that they no longer want to go to school. The school has provided resources in the form of more adults, but without achieving a change. Several teachers are on sick leave due to the situation, others state that the two 'ADHD pupils' should be removed from the school and institutionalised. The point-of-view analysis shows little faith in school management and little shared pedagogical practices.

The head of the kindergarten/school is highly familiar with the organisation when the development/change efforts are to be initiated. The point-of-view analysis provides background information on how the staff experience the organisational culture, management, and various aspects of the pedagogical practice. Together with management's desire for a change, this is a good starting point for creating a joint understanding and laying the foundation for change activities in the working group and throughout the entire staff. In our case, management's desire for a change was based on the poor academic results in reading over time and repeated reports of unrest and challenges in the psychosocial learning environment. Management provides the group with the information gathered in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the situation. This overview is then used to prepare a work plan for the change process.

What is important for management and advisers in a change process?

The approach taken to process guidance and change activities is important. The type of working model used is less important, as long as it is appropriate for systemising the work and contributes to identifying the factors in the organisation that inhibit and promote the desired development.

The reflections that emerge during meetings with the relevant parties are a decisive element in changing practice. When we reflect together, we also share knowledge. Asking questions that create joint knowledge contributes to development, knowledge building and a change in practice. It is rarely a shortage of knowledge about the current problems that prevents the organisation from achieving the change it desires. An important aspect of our work is to activate the staff, so that they have the opportunity to share the knowledge they already possess and, consequently, become more aware of the knowledge available throughout the organisation.

There is also rarely a shortage of commitment or visions. The PPT, kindergarten and school management are very familiar with Mitchell, Nordahl, etc.[3] But it is often difficult to see this knowledge expressed in practice. There appears to be a gap between the theoretic knowledge possessed by the organisation and the expertise expressed in the actual practice at the organisation. Many years of experience with change and development processes in kindergartens and schools has taught us that the reason for this is first and foremost that the organisation has not set aside time to use or develop good working models that enable them to work systematically with their theory-based knowledge. It is not enough to learn theory about how things are connected; they also need to learn how the theory can be 'translated' into practice within the

3   See examples of literature in References.

organisation. This requires knowledge about methods, forms of communication and testing in practice.
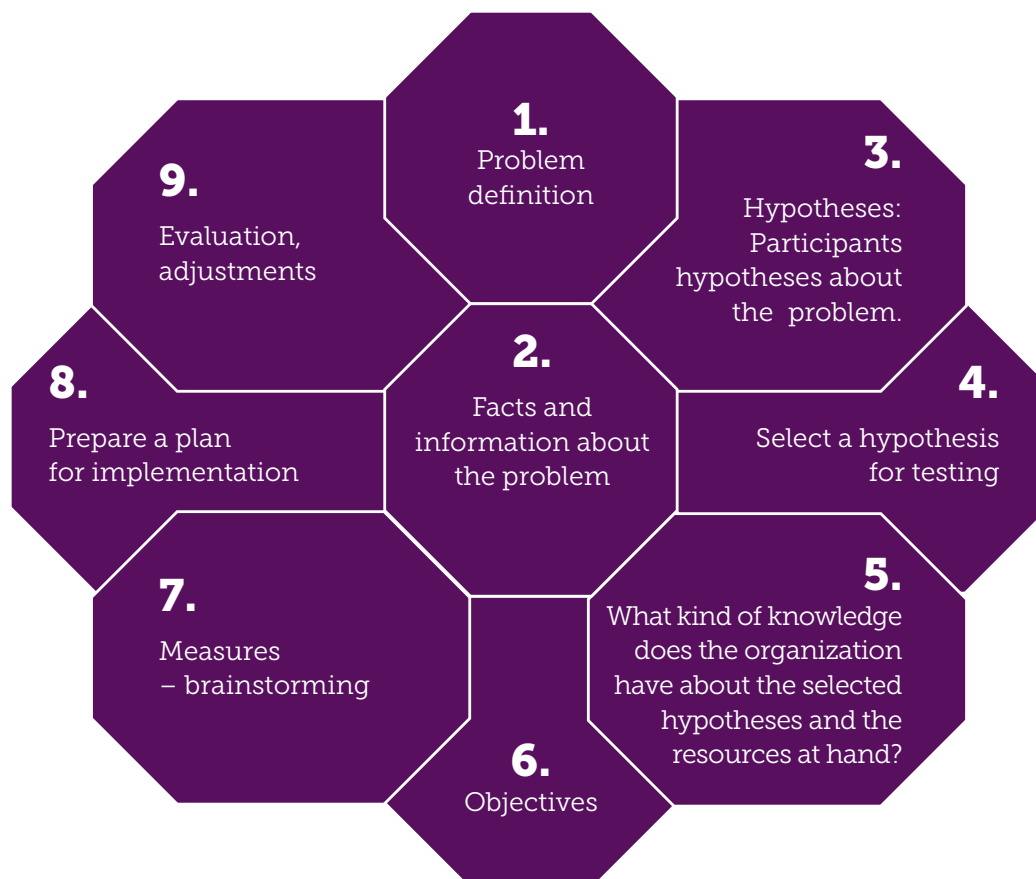
There is also a need for knowledge about how to use the organisation's own data. By data here we mean that organisation's own basic material, such as a point-of-view analysis, assessment tests, pupil survey, national tests, parent survey, the number of day-care centre/school children/pupils enrolled in the PPT, the circumstances of each individual child that must be considered during planning and so on. What does the fact-based information tell us? How can we understand the kindergarten/school based on these facts? This data is necessary to be able to analyse and determine whether the organisation has developed a knowledge-based practice and the kinds of measures that may be needed to change the current practice. By knowledge-based practice, we mean practice based on user participation, professional knowledge and research knowledge.

When meetings are held to analyse and reflect on this information, the dialogue must have a structure. Many meetings are insufficiently action-oriented because they do not have a clear structure. Those participating in the meeting do not have a shared perception of how to work together during the meeting. It is this shared perception of teamwork that is our focus. Our experience is that a working model in which all meeting participants are aware of the current stage of the process at all times strengthens the opportunity to find effective measures or solutions in each individual case, for a larger group or an internal matter for that aspect.

We will now present the working model in its entirety. We will then examine each of the steps in the model and explain how they can be used during process guidance to promote inclusiveness in a day-care centre or school.

Presentation of our working model

1. Problem definition

2. Facts and information about the problem

3. Hypotheses: Participants hypotheses about the problem.

4. Select a hypothesis for testing

5. What kind of knowledge does the organization have about the selected hypotheses and the resources at hand?

6. Objectives

7. Measures – brainstorming

8. Prepare a plan for implementation

9. Evaluation, adjustments

Our objective in developing this working model has been to help view pupils/the group within context and reveal important attitudes and practices that should be considered and incorporated into the efforts. Another objective has been to help our partners experience insight into each other's competencies to a greater degree and, last but not least, to demonstrate the importance of a systematic approach.

A considerable challenge in our work is to get the organisation to translate the theory and discussions into practical actions that will contribute to changing practice. One way of doing this is to link the activities to one or more concrete situations or cases, such as one individual case that is used as an example or a larger situation or case that involves all staff. What is most important is to continuously reveal and work on the actual attitudes and knowledge possessed by staff members involved in the case or situation. This is often the key to achieving change, as the attitude and knowledge of each individual regarding children and learning affects their ability or willingness to follow up on measures as intended. According to Nordahl and Overland (2015), the learning outcome of pupils depends on what the teacher actually does and does not do. This is why it is extremely important to assess the adults' understanding of the problem. To this end, it is helpful to choose a working model that enables reflection on various hypotheses/understandings – precisely in order to reveal the individual's level of understanding.

The entire working group should be trained in the working model selected and be responsible for using it in their own teams and meetings outside the working group. This makes it possible to disperse the work that is done and practiced in the working group to the rest of the staff. This means that the working group serves as both a planning group and group for practicing

and modelling how the organisation is to approach and discuss matters during other meetings. This enables the process supervisor to provide staff with sufficient practice opportunities in using the working model in order to help systemise the efforts, while revealing attitudes, knowledge and measures.

Initial meeting – clarification of roles and expectations

During the first meeting with the working group, the head of the group, referred to here as the process supervisor, clarifies the expectations of the group's work and the participants' expectations of each other. Our experience has been that it is necessary to have fixed and stable groups and meetings. To establish the necessary frameworks, it is essential to ensure that the participants have a joint understanding of the mandate and limitations of the working group: This means determining how much time is to be devoted to the meetings, who is to participate in them, the responsibilities of each participant in the work and during the meetings, and so on. Any uncertainties can quickly cause the change process to derail before it has even begun.

Inner and outer structure

Both inner and outer structures must be in place before the work can commence. The outer structure indicates the meeting participants, where and when the meetings are to be held, a theme plan for the meetings, and the equipment required at the location (computer, flip chart, smartboard, markers, etc.). This creates a sense of assurance and predictability for both the group participants and other staff. A fixed interval between each meeting is recommended, as this provides predictability and enough time to follow up on tasks between meetings.

The inner structure pertains to the relationships between the participants and current processes in the meetings. A sense of trust within the group is important. It is also important to talk about how trust is demonstrated and established within the group.

The inner structure also involves clarifying how and which forms of communication contribute to thinking in terms of solutions. The group participants represent different cultures, have different experiences in life and different attitudes and values. By using a working model like the one shown here, communication in the group can be managed, while at the same time teaching the group participants to listen to one another. The model also helps the participants establish their progress in the various phases of the discussion. In our case, some participants were concerned about finding the cause of the problem, while others began working on measures in response. The model structure and prompts help the process supervisor to visualise this and unite the entire group during the same phase of the discussion. The different phases also provide ample opportunity to explore the various statements and understandings that emerge. We will return to this when discussing the various steps of the model.

As the process supervisor, you collect data (through the point-of-view analysis, assessment tests, national tests, etc.). You rely on theory and refer to research results. You gather knowledge, making it possible to provide staff with a sense of security. You must personally believe that the job you are to perform will help promote a good learning culture and a good learning environment. Together with the working group, you reflect on why staff is to devote time and energy to this. You discuss the role you are to perform and the working models available. Other working models may be preferable. What is important here is that the process supervisor has a plan for systemising all of the available facts and all of the information that emerges in a case. What is the best way to arrive at a systematic approach?

By reflecting on these themes, you gain a sense of security, which in turn helps you to straighten out your inner structure. In this way, you can avoid being upset by resistance. It is important that we show respect to those who oppose change. However, we cannot accept practices that prevent children from experiencing a sense of mastery or rob them of the possibility of participation and co-determination.

Explanation of model steps using the case presented

1. Problem definition
Based on the data collected and analysed, as well as professional knowledge and research findings, it became clear to management in our case that the school needed to make changes on the individual level (learner level), group level (class level) and system level (entire school as an organisation).

In this case, the staff had a wide range of ideas about the cause of the poor learning environment at the school. Consequently, opinions varied on the joint problem definition. Some wanted to talk about a lack of resources, poor cooperation between the school and home, frequent changes to which staff members were to be present in the different contexts and other causes. Some wanted to start determining measures, while others wanted to talk about how things were done at the school ten years ago, and still others wanted to be done with the meeting and continue in 'their' classroom without having to worry about what was happening in 'other' classrooms.

It is challenging to define a problem that everyone considers worth exploring. It is important to use different techniques during the dialogue in order to activate the group, such as IGP (individual, group and plenary reflections), keywords on sticky notes and circular questions. Circular questions are based on the notion that information is found in differences, such as between experiences or understandings, and that our understanding of such things as behaviour or incidents is based on the context in which they exist (Gjems,1995). Using circular questions enables the group to focus less on who is to blame and instead on attempting to understand the interaction between various elements in a situation or incident.

Every group will have members that are more active than others. To capture the thoughts of all participants about current problems, dynamic dialogue is essential. Circular questions can help achieve this.

Encouraging staff to tie their thoughts and perceptions to theory helps to 'elevate' the understanding of everyday issues. Regardless of whether the school prefers the theories of example Fullan or Nordahl, the process supervisor should link the school's problems to either Fullan or Nordahl's theory. What does Fullan/Nordahl say about class management, about inspection/supervision, about a school with a focus on mastery and one that is focused on performance? How is this knowledge expressed in practice?

In the case described above, two problems were defined:

- Problem 1: Too much unrest creates insecure and unmotivated learners.
- Problem 2: In general, the school has poor academic results and too many learners struggle with reading.

It takes time for all meeting participants to arrive at agreement on a problem. This requires that they debate, share knowledge and acknowledge each other's views. Setting aside time for such 'sessions', which provide the possibility to reflect as a group on how the problem manifests itself, will enable those present to become aware of the values and attitudes of every individual. Agreeing on the problem is an important prerequisite for succeeding in achieving the objectives set. The Core Curriculum emphasises the development of a professional community (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). To start with a focus on arriving at agreement on a problem based on staff knowledge has proven to be a good first step towards creating a professional community.

2. Facts

The fact box is used to visualise the facts that are important and relevant for the problem/case. These facts may be the number of children in a group, the number of adult educators/assistants, the number of children/classes with an individual plan outside/inside the group, special diagnoses or circumstances in the group that must be considered in various activities and other special information that we believe may affect the situation. The important thing here is that the information is fact-based, not assumptions or 'opinions'. Nor do we consider facts that are not currently relevant for the problem.

Here is an example of facts described by the staff in the above-mentioned case:

- 37% of pupils score at Level 1 in reading.
- 30% of the school's pupils are enrolled in the PPT – primarily due to a suspicion of dyslexia, a learning disability or behavioural disorder.
- 21% of pupils have an individual plan for special education.
- ADHD, reading/writing disability, general learning disability, behavioural disorders
- The classes are characterised in general by noisiness, unrest, ugly exchanges of words and little work being done in class.
- The fifth-grade class in particular has major challenges.
- Several staff members are on sick leave due to the working conditions.
- Several of the pupils do not want to go to school or are fearful of other pupils, refuse to go to school or do not want to be with others during recess.

We use the fact box during all of the subsequent steps. We review this box continuously to check the facts, remind ourselves about what needs to be considered, what we know about these things, what we believe is the reason that '37% of pupils demonstrate critically weak reading skills', and so on. This information is used to correct and challenge the group's hypotheses and knowledge about the problem.

3. Hypotheses

We would now like to highlight participant hypotheses about the problem. Why do they believe this problem arose? In the case presented, the process supervisor asked, "Why do you believe that as many as 40% of your pupils scored at Level 1 in reading?" Some responded that they had many pupils with dyslexia, while others pointed out that they had many 'weak learners' or "It's always been like that". Several said that the school had not been effective enough at teaching reading to first and second graders. Others responded that the parents did not help the learners practice their reading skills.

The hypotheses discussed reveal a great deal about the attitudes of staff, including management. It is precisely because hypotheses develop from individual preconceptions that, based on our experience,

is an important way to reveal the actual attitudes that management must address. This is an important foundation on which the subsequent work is to be based, as the achievement of the goals established depends entirely on arriving at a mutual understanding of what is needed to achieve change. If a meeting participant believes that a pupil has poor reading skills because both the learner's siblings and parents also struggled with reading, this offers an insufficient basis to inspire the teacher to change the teaching strategies for this child. This is one of the aspects that must be addressed thoroughly in process guidance. Revealing the hypotheses of individuals and their understanding is essential to this. When a teacher in the case presented claims that pupils disrupt the class and break the rules due to poor parenting, it is difficult to get this teacher to consider his or her own classroom management. The teacher is of the belief that the problem is due to external factors over which he or she has little to no influence. When working with hypotheses, it is therefore extremely important to uncover different hypotheses and to dare to reflect in order to establish what these represent. In cases where the only hypotheses established are those that explain the problem based on conditions outside the

'reach' of the day-care centre or school, it is important that the process supervisor establish alternative hypotheses. What is most important is to uncover at least one hypothesis that the kindergarten/school can actually develop further. In cases in which all hypotheses deal with poor/difficult home situations or biological conditions relating to the child, the process supervisor must be extremely concrete and challenge participants to determine how they can contribute to overcoming the challenges faced. In the case presented here, the PPT presented a hypothesis that weak reading skills led to restless pupils. The PPT challenged the group to determine what staff can do personally to change the conditions that affect the child in order to enable the child to succeed both academically and socially.

Hypotheses presented by the group in our case:
- Poor parenting
- Culture of poor language use in the local environment
- Weak reading skills lead to restless pupils
- Unclear class management
- Many pupils with dyslexia

4. Select a hypothesis for testing

Once the group has submitted a few hypotheses, they (primarily the one(s) who presented the problem/case) select one hypothesis to test. The fifth-grade contact teacher chose the hypothesis about unclear class management. Her initial hypothesis was that the most restless pupils had free rein at home and were never required to receive and follow instructions, formulated here as absent/poor parenting. After the group reflected on the various hypotheses, she wanted to test the hypothesis on unclear class management because she considered this an opportunity to develop and make changes that could affect the class climate.

It is important to choose a hypothesis that the staff feel is worth testing, but this in itself can be challenging. The process supervisor must therefore be able to handle resistance. We must dare to challenge both the group and individuals during the reflections and guide the process towards hypotheses that justify working to change the existing practice. According to Fasting (2018), change must originate from a desire to improve practice and provide the opportunity to try new approaches and solutions. It is important that there is respect for the views expressed during the discussions. This means that we cannot rush things, while at the same time ensuring progress in the discussions. This may sometimes mean that we do not progress beyond the hypotheses of the first meeting. In this case, the process supervisor must be willing to pick up where they left off the next time they meet. As a rule, the participants will also have had time to give some thought to the views of others and will be more willing to consider alternative approaches to the problem. It is also helpful to give the participants assignments in the form of literature or films to read/watch before the next meeting in order to prepare them for the discussion topics to be addressed.

Once a hypothesis is chosen, it is written clearly on a flip chart sheet, smartboard or other display. The other hypotheses are set aside, though it may be relevant to return to them later on.

In our case, the group chose the hypothesis of unclear class management. This hypothesis is to be tested and form the basis for the other activities in the model.

5. What kind of knowledge does the organisation have about the hypothesis selected in light of the problem and fact box?

The fact box and problem definition are easily visible by everyone and attention is directed towards them. A relevant question at this point might be:

"What are your thoughts on this problem in relation to the information in the fact box and in light of your knowledge about the hypothesis chosen?"

In our case, the focus was on class management and the staff members' understanding of class management. Thoughts about performance-driven versus mastery-oriented learning culture were once again a theme. Through reflection, the participants arrived at the conclusion that the school was primarily characterised by a performance-driven learning culture and, consequently, many good ideas were expressed for measures that the individual teachers could implement to promote a mastery-oriented learning culture and class management. The group also pointed out aspects that management should address in order to promote this, such as a shared culture throughout the entire school.

In the case presented, various important elements for good class management emerged:

- Build relationships
- Establish clear expectations for and model the desired behaviour and communication in the classroom
- Be on time and be prepared for class
- Never start the class by turning your back to the class to write on the board
- Give assignments that promote mastery
- Be clear in communication and instructions
- Provide positive recognition of work efforts rather than performance

When the group works on this step in the model, the most important role of the process supervisor is to identify the knowledge already found within the organisation. The more knowledge and competencies that can be identified, the easier it will be to determine effective measures once we arrive at this stage of the process. When the staff starts discussing questions such as "What causes unrest in a classroom?" or "How can we prevent unrest in a classroom?", participants provide good feedback that can also be translated into actions. All important information and actions expressed are written down as keywords. This gradually leads to a long list of possible measures that can be used later on during step 7.

6. Goal

It is now time to formulate a goal for the work to be done. The problem definition, facts and choice of hypothesis are now in place. We have also identified knowledge about the problem within the organisation. This gives us a basis for determining a concrete goal for the work to be carried out. We work towards defining a common goal in the same way as we worked towards a common problem definition. Once suggestions have been provided, it can be helpful to ask the working group a number of questions:

- How likely do you think it is that we will achieve our goal?
- How interested are you in achieving this goal?
- Do you believe we can achieve the goal?

To ensure effective reflection, the questions we ask play an important role. When defining objectives, it is therefore important that we involve several levels: the individual level, the group/class level and the system level. We have experienced that certain types of questions can help activate staff:

- How will you benefit from achieving the goal?
- How will everyone else here benefit from achieving this goal?
- To what degree have we already achieved the goal?
- What kinds of similar goals have we achieved in the past?
- What kinds of experiences, abilities and qualities can help us achieve the goal?
- What has already been done towards achieving the goal?
- Who can we thank for achieving so much progress in this case?

By encouraging dialogue, we demonstrate faith in each other and asking these questions can make it more desirable to work towards the goal and strengthen us in our confidence that we can in fact achieve it. We also want to engage in dialogue that creates a greater sense of commitment. In the discussion that arises when the group takes a position on the questions, the participants will have to ask themselves whether they can trust each other. In kindergartens and schools where children/pupils are referred to as 'mine and yours' instead of 'our' children/pupils, this will be a factor that can make it more difficult to achieve the goal set. Management often discovers that it needs to address attitudes that are prevalent among staff and these efforts will reveal which attitudes inhibit or promote progress towards the goal.

In the case presented, the goal was formulated as follows: *All of our pupils should experience a learning environment that promotes a sense of security, classroom order and the pupils' sense of achievement.*

Through its discussions, the working group managed to establish a common goal that encompassed both of the problems described above.

After a goal is formulated, the next step is often to have staff determine the attributes of the goal being pursued. In the case presented here, it was appropriate for the organisation to establish the attributes of a sense of security, classroom order, and a sense of achievement. How will pupils, parents, and staff experience or recognise these? An overview of attributes of important concepts is essential for later determining the extent to which the established goal has been achieved.

7a. Measures
During this step, the goal is to determine and systemise measures. The staff at kindergartens and schools are good at determining measures. The challenge is to determine measures that are realistic and feasible within the organisation's available frameworks. During the step, measures will often be proposed that require additional financial resources or external support in the form of desired competencies or the desire to relocate a pupil to an external facility. In most cases, the measures are not feasible or are neither effective nor inclusive for the child/pupil concerned. It sometimes becomes clear when working on this aspect that there is much work to be done with a few of the adults' actual attitudes towards the children/pupils with whom they work. This is often reflected in that the measures they consider effective entail involving other adults to deal with the child/pupil, so that they can deal with the rest of the class or relocating the child/pupil outside of the

regular group, either internally or externally. In these cases, we need to return to the hypothesis and knowledge we have focused on in order to more clearly define the kinds of measures that are relevant for the teacher/assistant/management based on the hypothesis selected and knowledge identified and that promote inclusive practices.

An important role for the process supervisor is to challenge the group to consider what is needed to be able to implement the measure, who can do this, how and where this can be done, and so on:

- What kind of support does the pupil need to master the skills the adults expect him or her to master?
- What does the class need in terms of assistance in order to develop a good learning environment?
- What kinds of measures are feasible for the educator to implement?
- What kind of support does the educator need from management to implement the measures chosen?

In our case, after having discussed and examined past practice in similar cases, the staff decided that they wanted to test out the following measures:[4]

- The teacher is in the classroom when the bell rings.
- The teacher is well prepared for the class.
- The teacher establishes and presents clear expectations for the pupils' behaviour and communication in the classroom.
- The teacher prepares new class rules together with the pupils.
- Two 'ADHD pupils' are moved out of the class and offered an alternative education at a farm.
- All adults recognise the desired behaviour in pupils.

It is important that each individual recognise his or her own words and formulations. It is only in this way that we can explore what, for example, it means for pupils to be educated at a farm or that the pupils are referred to as 'ADHD pupils' or how the organisation wishes to visually demonstrate a culture of recognition.

7a. Select a few measures

When the time comes to select measures, the process supervisor must keep in mind that, once again, it is important to emphasise feeling a sense of achievement. Consequently, it is important to challenge the group to express what measures they believe have the greatest chance of success and can be implemented quickly. In our work, we have started asking the following: *Which of these measures can be implemented this week?*

It is important that only a few measures are implemented at a time. If too many are implemented simultaneously, it will be difficult to evaluate which measures are effective and which ones do not have the desired effect. It will also be difficult to follow up on several measures daily in a systematic way and over time. Our experience has been that up to three measures at a time is feasible. This gives those who are implementing the measures time to follow up on, incorporate and 'automate' these measures, and to evaluate their effect before new measures are tried out.

Write down the measures selected in a 'measure bubble'.

4   It is important to write down all measures proposed in the staff member's own words, including measures we do not desire. Measures are discussed during this process and, in the next step, measures that enable progress towards the goal and inclusiveness are selected.

The measures that were chosen in the case presented here:

- The teacher is in the classroom when the bell rings.
- The teacher establishes and presents clear expectations regarding the pupils' behaviour and communication in the classroom.
- All adults recognise the desired behaviour in pupils.

8. Prepare a plan for trying out the measure

This is a practical aspect, during which we provide a summary of

- when various measures are to be initiated
- where (in which situations) measures are to be tested out
- how measures are to be implemented and followed up on
- who is to implement them
- how long they are to be tested out

In our case, the plan was as follows:

- Start on Wednesday 23.02.2020.
- Implement measures in Norwegian and English lessons.
- The contact teacher and English teacher are responsible for the measures in the class.
- The headmaster is responsible for providing other staff members with information.
- Evaluate at the end of April 2020.

9. Evaluate

It is important for both formative assessments and final assessment to have grounds for saying whether something should be adjusted along the way and to document what works and what does not in terms of the intention.

Measures are often terminated too quickly. Based on experience, measures should always be carried out systematically for at least three weeks before determining whether they have the desired effect. Some measures must be tried out over a much longer period of time, but three weeks is the minimum.

A date must be set in the action plan for evaluation.

Conclusion

To achieve a systematic change in kindergarten or school, those who are to drive the efforts forward should have access to working models that promote systematic practices. Having everyone involved in the change efforts be familiar with the same working model instils confidence in each of them. A sense of security and confidence are decisive for the success of an organisation in development and change efforts. In the same way as many educational researchers emphasise a mastery-oriented learning culture, we must dare to assert that this type of culture is also beneficial when adults are to work together to create effective measures for children and pupils. We have attempted to present a method for working together with the kindergarten or school that involves the entire organisation. We wish to conclude by stating that the type of model or method used is not decisive, but that those in charge of development efforts are comfortable with the model or method used and that the process supervisor believes in the approach and works to develop a professional community that determine whether an inclusive culture can be successfully created.

If we are to succeed in fostering an inclusive learning environment for all children and pupils, we need the entire organisation to both desire this and to actually work systematically over time towards implementing attitudes and competences in staff that promote such a learning environment. It is not enough to only work to include children one by one in a larger community. This will improve the situation for a few children but will mean that many other children will continue to be excluded from the community. It is only when the organisation succeeds in promoting a culture that values joint learning and a sense of achievement in which both the organisation and staff goals, values and attitudes are in harmony and reflected in practice that the organisation will succeed in inclusiveness for all. This presumes a learning community in which reflection and dialogue form the basis for creating new patterns of behaviour and changing the work approach (Fasting, 2018).

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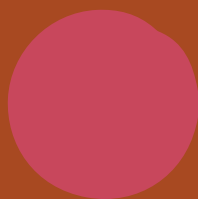
Adaptation for participation and learning

The objective is for all children and young people who require special adaptation in kindergartens and schools to receive the support they need in order to take part in the learning community. An important premise for this work is the child's right to be heard. Inclusive communities are contingent on structures, cooperative relations and professionals in kindergartens and schools who are able to safeguard the child's physical, academic, social and psychological needs. The following four chapters demonstrate in different ways how adaptation for participation and learning can occur in practice.

Grete Stabæk and Hilde Kolstad Danielsen:

Pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties in lower secondary school — success factors for an inclusive practice

Grete and Hilde base their discussion on interviews in lower secondary schools to determine what factors have been important in order for the schools to succeed in creating an inclusive learning environment for all pupils.

Beate Heide and Margrethe Sylthe:

The convention of the rights of the child, applied in the work of expert assessment

Beate and Margrethe use a practical case study to highlight how Article 3 on the best interests of the child and Article 12 on the right to be heard in the Convention on the Rights of the Child can form the basis for work on expert evaluations.

Gro Narten Markestad:

Contact teachers and special needs teachers working as a team to promote pupil participation

Gro presents and employs three success factors to show how contact teachers and special needs teachers can cooperate regarding individual subject curriculum (ISC) as a strategic document to strengthen pupils' participation and learning.

Helene Fulland and May-Britt Monsrud:

Inclusive learning — for newly arrived second language learners in upper secondary schools with and without special needs

Pupils who enter upper secondary school as recent immigrants or after having attended only a few years of Norwegian primary and lower secondary school, face complex challenges. Helene and May-Britt describe what implications this may have for the work of adapting for participation in learning communities.

Pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties at lower secondary school
– success factors for an inclusive practice

This chapter is aimed at anyone who is a teacher or head teacher, or who will encounter pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties at lower secondary school. We have been working as speech and language therapists and advisers to schools who have pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties.

Grete Stabæk and Hilde Kolstad Danielsen

Our experiences show that it is challenging to create an inclusive learning environment in which this pupil group can feel belonging, with the result that many of the pupils have been excluded from the classroom community and instead received various forms of group teaching.

We therefore wanted to perform a more systematic study of the following problem: *What factors could help to support schools' work on developing an inclusive learning environment?* We have interviewed head teachers and teachers at two schools on topics that, on the basis of our experiences and existing theory, are relevant in this context.

In this chapter, we will highlight factors that, according to our interview study, have helped the schools to successfully create inclusive learning environments for all pupils. In particular, it is the success factors that are connected to the organisational and academic aspects of inclusion that can help pupils with learning difficulties to feel that they are included and able to participate in the classroom community. These are 1) the transition from primary to lower secondary school, 2) collaboration in the teaching team, 3) adaptation of the teaching and 4)

evaluation of the learning outcome. We will show that inclusion is largely about facilitating to ensure a diversity of pupils by developing the general educational provision at schools.

Background

The target group for our chapter are teachers working with pupils who have severe and complex learning difficulties. This pupil group is a low-frequency group of children and young people who need special educational measures from an early age. They tend to have severe, complex and multiple barriers to learning (Tøssebro & Kittelsaa, 2015). The *Learning together* Report to the Storting, no. 18 (2010–2011) (Ministry of Education and Research, 2010), discussed children, young people, and adults with special needs for adapted teaching. The objective of this report was to draw attention to the task of improving the academic and social outcome for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties. It expressed concern that these pupils are encountering excessively low expectations, and that the educational conditions for learning and development in schools are not good enough. The pupils tend to have difficulty

mastering the subject matter in the classroom. The teaching is often at an early stage in terms of developing the fundamental skills mentioned in the reform called *Kunnskapsløftet* [*Knowledge Promotion*]. Our experience has been that when this pupil group is taught at a basic level in lower secondary school, the subject matter is often taken from beginner-level teaching or the particular pupil's own areas of interest.

The background behind our choosing this issue was that in 2013, Statped was commissioned by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training to carry out the pilot project *Vi sprenger grenser* [*We're pushing beyond the boundaries*]. The aim of this project was to increase the expectations and awareness of, and expertise in the educational provision for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties. The pilot project carried out by Statped North examined the transition from primary school to secondary school for a pupil with a developmental disorder. We saw in this project that it was important to adopt the core curriculum of the Knowledge Promotion. Both before this project and in the years since then, we have emphasized facilitating learning in an inclusive environment. We have found that in many cases, the intentions have been good, but that it has been difficult to put them into practice. The result has been that education for pupils with special needs has been fragmented and not been part of a rounded educational provision. In this chapter, we will take a closer look at the organisational and academic aspects of inclusion.

The theory of inclusive practice and learning environment

Wendelborg (2014) points out that going to school can be a trajectory out of one's community of peers. Figures clearly show that the number of pupils subject to segregation increases from primary school to lower secondary school. Research also shows that expectations of pupils with severe learning difficulties are set too low, and that the course of education can gradually become a transition to more care-oriented measures with little emphasis on learning. In the project *We're pushing beyond the boundaries*, we have looked at why the transition to secondary school can be particularly critical. This project emphasises that lower secondary school is a different kind of school, where there is a wide and complex environment with which pupils must cope. Many lower secondary schools also have separate groups for these pupils.

Haug (2017) points out that there is a lack of coherence between general education and special education. He refers to Section 5-1 of the Education Act, which says that the educational provision must have a content with this coherence, and that the education as a whole must be able to give the pupil adequate benefit from the instruction. Achieving good coherence between special education and general education is a challenge and vital in terms of fulfilling the right to learning. The book "*Faglig inkludert?*" ["*Academically included?*"] (Olsen, Mathisen & Sjøblom, 2016) describes four aspects of inclusion: academic, cultural, social, and organisational. *Academic inclusion* means that the school in general and the teacher in particular have implemented measures to adapt the learning environment to ensure that as far as possible, every pupil can maximise their potential for learning. These measures include planning, implementing and evaluating the teaching. *Social inclusion* means that the learning environment gives pupils a sense of social belonging and security. *Cultural inclusion* means that pupils can identify with the learning environment, that it safeguards diversity and that it has a culture of learning.
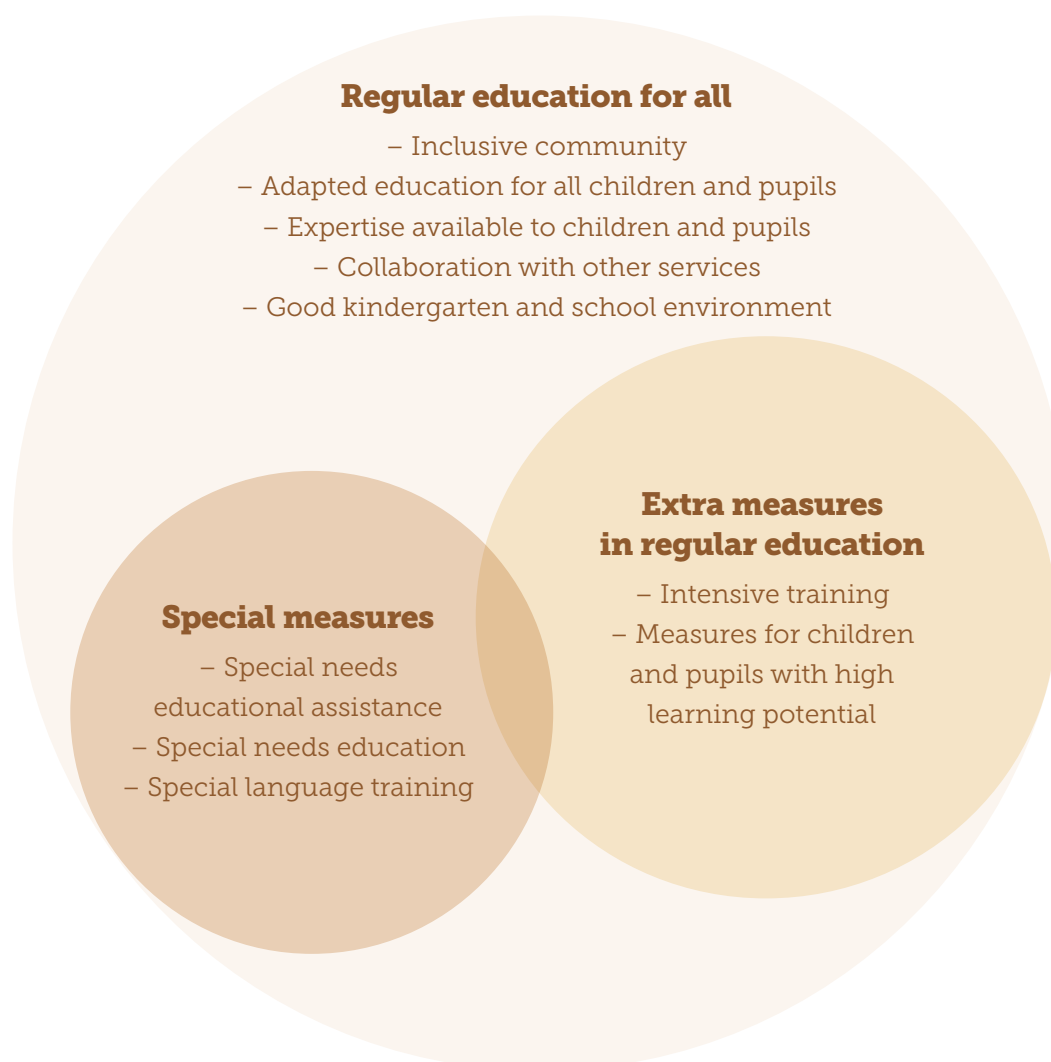
Organisational inclusion provides a framework to ensure that these four factors can work well together. In the interviews, we have highlighted the academic and organisational aspects of inclusion.

Inclusion has been and continues to be a dominant principle in Norwegian education policy. In our advisory work, it has been important for us to work to ensure that everyone participates in the kindergarten's or school's learning community. In the Reports to the Storting "*Lærelyst – tidlig innsats og kvalitet i skolen"* ["*The desire to learn – early intervention and quality in schools*"], "*Tett på – tidlig innsats og inkluderende fellesskap i barnehage, skole og SFO*" ["*Staying close – early intervention and the inclusive community in kindergartens, schools and after-school clubs*" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017 and 2019), and in the general section of the Curriculum Reform (2020), inclusion is highlighted and made a clearer overarching principle in schools. In this connection, the Report to the Storting presented a model that clearly and unambiguously refers to inclusion as an overarching concept. The model points out how inclusion covers the general educational provision for all pupils and is based on the principle of adapted instruction. Within this overarching framework, there are some children receiving support via extra measures within the *general educational provision.*

Figure 1. Inclusive community in kindergartens and schools (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 49).

Regular education for all

– Inclusive community
– Adapted education for all children and pupils
– Expertise available to children and pupils
– Collaboration with other services
– Good kindergarten and school environment

Extra measures in regular education

– Intensive training
– Measures for children and pupils with high learning potential

Special measures

– Special needs educational assistance
– Special needs education
– Special language training

These are pupils who receive extra support for short or long periods. Other pupils need *special measures* such as special education teaching and special Norwegian language teaching. These are pupils who do not benefit from the general education provided. Our chapter deals primarily with the group of pupils receiving special education in accordance with Section 5-1 of the Education Act.

Historically, inclusion has been particularly associated with pupils receiving special education. This model shows that inclusion is more than special education, and that it is about developing the entire school in order to facilitate a diversity of pupils. The model shows how special measures and the general education provided to all pupils are interrelated. As part of the school Curriculum Reform, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training published the *Overordnet del – verdier og prinsipper for grunnopplæringen* [*General section – values and principles for primary education*] (2019). In this section, we also see that the core curriculum for schools highlights inclusion as a fundamental value and as the first of several principles of education. It also emphasises that inclusion is not synonymous with pupils are receiving special education, but that the special measures needed by some pupils are part of an inclusive community. With an understanding of inclusion as an overarching principle that includes the whole class and not individual pupils, talking about "the included pupil" becomes meaningless. Inclusion is a principle that concerns all of the pupils in a school.

How the study was performed

In our study, we wanted to expand knowledge about factors that could help to support schools' developing an inclusive learning environment. We did this by interviewing teachers and head teachers about their experiences with inclusion in lower secondary schools. The method was informant interviews using a semi-structured form as the method (Jacobsen, 2015).

We prepared an interview guide with four topic-based questions designed to lead us into areas about which we wanted more information. The interviews contained the same questions to all the informants and dealt with

1. the concept of inclusion
2. collaboration in the teaching team
3. inclusive practice with an impact on learning outcome
4. impact on teaching for the whole class.

We contacted the management of two schools that we knew from our previous work and asked for informants among teachers and head teachers. We thus gained access to a group of teachers at each school and conducted the interviews at those schools. We used digital recordings, transcribed the interviews and anonymized and subsequently destroyed the recordings. The informants consented to our using the responses they gave in the interviews in our study.

The four questions in the interview guide formed the basis for our analysis and comparison of the responses.

Presentation of the schools

The one school is a purely lower secondary school with 350 pupils between Grade 8 to 10. The school receives pupils from three different primary schools. The municipality has created a fixed plan for the transition from primary to secondary school. This describes when the collaboration between schools begins, transition procedures and when teachers must be in place. The school has a special education team with its own coordinator and teachers who mainly work with special need education. We interviewed three contact teachers from the same year

group and who collaborated on subject teaching and contact teacher duties. One teacher told us that she was the contact teacher responsible for 11 pupils. She was responsible for adapting the teaching in various subjects, planning the special need education, and writing Individual Learning Plans (ILP) in collaboration with the parents.

The other school is a municipal primary and lower secondary school with 480 pupils between Grade 1 to 10. The school receives pupils from several primary schools. This school has no plan in place for the transition between primary and lower secondary school. Nor does the school have a special education team or teachers who exclusively work with special need education, but it has some teachers who are qualified in special need education. One teacher was the contact teacher for the entire class, and the class also had several subject teachers as well as an educator who was responsible for the special need education of one pupil, and who worked with the contact teacher and parents to prepare an ILP.

Presentation of the results and discussion

We reviewed and analysed the interviews and reached the conclusion that the following success factors have formed a good basis for teachers and head teachers in the work of facilitating inclusive education:
1. the transition from primary to lower secondary school
2. collaboration in the teaching team
3. adaptation of the teaching
4. evaluation of the learning outcome.

1. The transition from primary to lower secondary school

Schools have a statutory duty pursuant to the Education Act to collaborate with kindergartens to ensure that children's transition from kindergartens to primary school is as smooth as possible (Section 13-5 of the Education Act). However, there are no equivalent rules for the transition from primary to lower secondary school. In Report to the Storting no. 6 (2019–2020) (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019) it states that the transition to lower secondary school involves a change of school, new teachers, and the introduction of grades. This therefore requires good planning, good leadership, a good transfer of information and good cooperation across levels and subjects. Our study confirmed that a good transition from primary to lower secondary school was considered to be a significant success factor.

In the interviews, head teachers and teachers describe experiences of the transition from primary to lower secondary school for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties. All emphasised that it was important to make an early start on the planning. The key to this planning work was for the head teacher to make an early decision on who the contact teacher would be, and who would be responsible for the special need education. The head teacher at one of the schools made it clear that this preparation should be made one year before the pupil would start at the lower secondary school. There is a good tradition for pupil in their last year at primary school to get the chance to visit the lower secondary school in order to become familiar with it. This can help make the pupils feel more secure about starting at the lower secondary school and give them a kind of "familiarity" about what they will face. Naturally, it is important to give the pupils a sense of confidence about what they will face, but a visit like this is not in itself sufficient to ensure that there are good arrangements in place for all the factors when the pupil is to start at the school.

We also believe that the transfer of knowledge from the primary to the lower secondary school is very important.

One way of achieving this is for teachers from the lower secondary school to visit the primary school. This enables them to obtain knowledge of the organisation, working methods, the pupil in the learning situation and the pupil's way of learning. Such a visit to the primary school can thus help to improve the knowledge of the teachers at the secondary school. The head teacher's responsibility is to organise and make the arrangements for achieving this. The head teacher must also make an early decision on which teachers will teach the pupil at the lower secondary school. Information from the primary school is also very significant in terms of the head teacher's planning.

2. Collaboration in the teaching team

In the *We're pushing beyond the boundaries* project, it was clear that collaboration between contact teachers, subject teachers, special education teachers and assistants was vital for the success of an inclusive practice. In the follow-up evaluation of this project (Kittelsaa & Tøssebro, 2015) it emerged that the staff at the school had different roles and expertise, and that clarifying roles is of absolute importance. The follow-up evaluation showed that many schools think that the contact teacher is responsible for general matters, while the special educator teacher is responsible for tasks based on their expertise. A lack of collaboration can result in a pupil receiving less benefit from their schooling. The evaluation therefore showed that time should also be set aside for collaboration. It is the head teacher's responsibility to put arrangements in place to ensure that such collaboration is incorporated into schedules.

The interviews in the survey showed that time for collaboration was set aside in the schedules at both schools. This proved to be easier to implement at the school where the special educator teacher was also the contact teacher for the class. The teacher

thereby focused on teaching in the class at the same time as the time she had set aside for special teaching. With this structure, it was easier to adapt academic topics around the pupil's needs.

The head teacher at one of the schools explained that time for collaboration had gradually become an essential part of implementing a more inclusive education. When the pupil started at the lower secondary school, the roles of special education teacher and assistants were allocated, but not the role of contact teacher. Nor had time been specifically set aside for collaboration. When the contact teacher joined the collaboration with the special education teacher and assistant, they had a good basis for adapting the teaching around the class's academic topics. This collaboration team also became important for the preparation of an ILP. Neither the contact teacher nor the special education teacher had experience of designing an ILP. When they were able to collaborate on this, it became a mutual learning process.

At the one school, they did not elaborate on this topic, other than to say that the time set aside for collaboration has been vital. At the other school, they were more specific about the content of the collaboration meeting. They have meetings once a week. They talk about what happened in the last week, and what will happen in the next week. They also plan activities that are further ahead, such as video presentations, plays, excursions, etc. The special education teacher said that when they started in 8th grade, he had to do all the planning and adaptation alone. In the current situation, he prepares a separate weekly plan at the collaboration meeting, based on the weekly plan for the rest of the class. Now they jointly set the topics that will be included in the plan, as well as the pupil's learning goals. They stress that it is also important for the assistant to take part in this collaboration

meeting. The assistant says that he gains knowledge about what the other pupils in the class are working with. This helps to make the special need education part of a greater whole. The special education teacher put it like this:

In the collaboration meeting, we talk about what has happened in the last week, and what will happen next. That is worth its weight in gold, compared to the way we used to do things. Back then, I was left to plan the teaching on my own, and I had to ask other teachers about what the class was doing. Now I make the weekly plan after we have had the meeting and base it around the class's weekly plan. The activity for my pupil is a result of joint planning. Before, we each decided on what we would do, but now we decide on things together. We plan what my pupil will be doing, and what he will learn.

One element that makes lower secondary schools different to primary schools is that the pupils must deal with more teachers. It is important to clarify what roles each of these has. In our work, we have seen that assistants often play a more important role in the teaching of pupils with severe learning difficulties. They are often given tasks that are beyond their qualifications and responsibilities. It is for this reason that we believe it is essential for the roles of contact teacher, special education teacher, subject teacher, and assistant to be clarified. The interviews showed that head teachers and teachers at lower secondary schools believe that collaboration is vital for successful inclusion. Our study shows that when contact teachers, subject teachers, special education teachers and assistants collaborate to plan the content of and to organise the teaching, this contributes to a greater degree of academic and organisational inclusion.

3. Adaptation of the teaching

The community is the basis of social and academic inclusion. Everyone needs to feel that they have achieved to the level of their ability, and to see each other in a learning situation. Everyone also needs to have something to strive towards and to have good models as motivators. In the interviews we asked head teachers and teachers at the schools whether working on inclusive practice has resulted in changes in teaching in the classroom.

The head teacher at the one school pointed out that in the school system in general, a process has been started that puts a greater focus on knowledge of new types of learning, such as the use of digital tools like iPads. It is clear that digital tools have changed working methods through the use of different ways of presenting information.

The teachers at one of the schools use digital aids widely. It then becomes important for everyone to have the same equipment, and for it to become a natural part of the teaching for everyone – including the pupil who needs special education. Teachers turn digital aids into a shared focal point by using smartboards and get pupils to use them to develop talks and presentations for each other. The pupils are good at helping each other when they have to develop presentations.

A contact teacher at one of the schools thinks that her teaching methods have changed now that she has adopted a more inclusive practice. Among other things, the teacher conveys clearer information about the start and conclusion of the lesson, what the learning objective is, how they will perform the work and how they will conclude. This started as a means of ensuring that the pupil was included, but she found that it was also good for the other pupils. The teacher explained that they have lowered the requirements for the pupil with

special needs in order to ensure that they experience a sense of achievement. The teacher also highlights the importance of consciously choosing topics and feels that they do not have to go into absolutely every topic within a subject. They filter out certain topics and spend more time working on the remaining topics using writing, reading and digital tools.

At both schools, it gradually became the practice to view the subjects in a more rounded way. One teacher had found that the teaching could be perceived as fragmented when they adapted goals in individual subjects, and that it was difficult to motivate the pupil. Some topics in individual subjects had difficult learning goals, while other goals were easier to adapt. At the start of a semester, this teacher started looking at the goals of each of the subjects, selecting a few goals and putting them together in the form of a topic or project.

The teacher explains:
Enthusiasm and motivation are important. It can be difficult getting him motivated to do some things. You have to be creative. He must have 2–3 hours on each topic, and it is important for him to feel that he is working on the same topic as the rest of the class.

Another teacher explained that they worked on that kind of project over a long period, and that the emphasis of the working method was on reading, writing, and using digital tools. In that kind of topic-based work or project, there was a structure with a start, middle and end, resulting in either the production of a book or a presentation. This allowed the pupils to feel that the education was meaningful and motivating. We will now go on to present inclusion based on the curriculum and the particular factors on which the teachers focused. This includes what they believe constitutes good adaptation and good working methods, what results in good learning outcomes, and how these can be evaluated. This is the pedagogic side of inclusion.

One teacher gave the example of a particular learning activity in which all the pupils were to give different presentations. The teacher designed the goals and assessment criteria so that they could be used for all of the pupils. This resulted in good adaptation for each pupil, and for the rest of the class.

We show an example of this below.

The topic of the class was Norwegian and interpretive reading. It was based on various texts from Knut Hamsun's "Victoria". These texts were to be interpreted and presented in the class. The pupils sat in groups of two with various extracts of the text and prepared to read them aloud.

The evaluation criteria for the class as a whole were as follows:
- does not hide their face
- talks loudly and clearly
- gets into the text and the mood of the text
- shows enthusiasm
- does not fool around or laugh

The teacher described a learning situation around "Victoria" by Knut Hamsun. The goal of the pupil who needed adaptation was to talk a little about the author, when he lived, the title of the book and who the main characters in the novel were. Preparations for this took place in several work sessions with the teacher, on the basis of a digital mind map program. The teacher described that in the presentation, the pupil brought up their mind map on the smartboard and presented to the class with assistance from the teacher. The pupil was careful not to hide his face, he talked loudly and supported his unclear speech with signs and gestures, showed enthusiasm and he did not fool around. The pupil thereby got to show that he met all the assessment criteria.

In the study, we have seen that when the academic adaptation involves more thematic teaching, it is easier for pupils with complex learning difficulties to see connections in their education. A particular topic could involve competence objectives from different subjects. The teaching is therefore perceived to be more meaningful and motivating, and the pupil achieves a greater learning outcome.

A specific example of this is work on the written language by reading adapted texts, the content of which is taken from subjects and topics that are relevant in the class (Danielsen & Stabæk, 2019). Danielsen and Stabæk describe how a topic from the curriculum in natural science forms the basis of a text which is the subject of work in Norwegian lessons. Oral subjects in particular can be a good starting point for adaptation. Using this way of working, reading becomes both a skill in itself and a tool for learning. It can also make a good contribution to academic inclusion.

The informants in the interviews highlighted thematic teaching as an important prerequisite towards achieving academic inclusion. The teachers gave us good examples of thematic teaching and how this practice can help to turn the special need education into part of the general education provision for the rest of the class.

4. Evaluating the learning outcome

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training specifies four principles that are key to evaluating in a way that promotes learning in education. These four principles are research-based and are part of the Regulations to the Education Act. They apply to all pupils.

1. The pupils must understand what they will be learning, and what is expected of them.
2. The pupils must receive feedback that tells them about the quality of their work or performance.
3. The pupils must receive advice on how they can improve.
4. The pupils must be involved in their own learning work, for example by assessing their own work and development.

The interviews showed that it was difficult for the head teachers to answer questions about evaluating the learning outcome. They have little overview of the details of the curricula and the pupils' learning objectives. However, both expressed that they believe that when the pupil participates in the class-room community and feels that he is participating in the class's learning activity, this will naturally result in a greater learning outcome. One head teacher emphasised that the requirement for the pupil to achieve a learning outcome is adapted teaching in which the pupil is in his "learning zone".

One of the teachers highlighted the motivation factor. When the pupil participates in an academic community in the class, this helps to boost motivation. The pupils see that everyone is working on an element of

the same topic, and this means that the pupil picks up on what the others are working with. When teachers show that he is interested, through interaction with the rest of the class, the pupils feel that they are getting recognition for their work. At this school, they also pointed out that the learning outcome applies to all pupils. They learn tolerance and also find out that many pupils need different types of adaptation. The adaptation also involves the use of learning partners in the classroom, in which everyone participates. The pupils then learn to listen to each other, to be considerate and to explain things to each other. They do this both by explaining and by demonstrating/showing.

All the pupils have a clear understanding that they must look after each other and help each other with work.

A teacher at one of the schools explained that it is a challenge for the school to balance the requirements of the various pupils. It can be difficult to know whether the requirements they set are too high or too low for the pupil's prerequisites. Achievement and motivation for the pupil are closely linked to realistic requirements. It must be clear to the pupils what the objectives of an activity are, and whether these objectives have been achieved. The teacher told us a good example, in which the goals of the pupil receiving special need education were so specific that they could be ticked off as they were achieved.

The whole class worked on the topic of comparing different countries and regions in Asia. The learning objectives set for the pupil we were observing were as follows:

- I have found a country in Asia.
- I have found the capital.
- I can say two things about the country.
- I have incorporated two pictures in the presentation.

This was simple and easy to follow and had a good connection to the class topic. He was often able to build on these learning objectives and extend them, because he had learned more than the set learning objectives.

The teacher explained that when the learning objectives were that specific, evaluating them became similarly specific. The pupil felt that he received direct feedback on the tasks as he did them. He also received an overall assessment at the end of each term, with a summary of what he had been working with and what he had learned.

One teacher explained that if the class was having a test in a subject, then a test would also be prepared for the pupil receiving special education. An example of this was a mathematics test, with exercises that the pupil had been working on beforehand. His answers were marked,

and he was given a percentage grade and written feedback, which the pupil then had to take home for his parents to sign, in the same way as the rest of the class. One teacher referred to what a mother said about this: "*You should be setting requirements – because look how proud he was when he came home with the test and showed us what he was able to achieve!*"

Our study shows that if a school wants to have an inclusive practice, the teachers at the lower secondary school need to adapt goals and evaluation according to the pupil's needs. This is described in the Regulations to the Education Act, and the Norwegian

Directorate for Education and Training (2011) has also created its own guide to evaluating teaching. Our study suggests that an inclusive practice can be closely connected to the evaluation of pupils' learning outcome, and that this is thereby a right that can have a positive effect on inclusion for pupils with complex learning difficulties. The informants emphasise that separate objectives should be regarded in context with the topics and objectives set for the rest of the class. Assessing pupils with complex learning difficulties according to the same objectives as the other pupils in the class also seems to play a major role in whether the pupils receiving special need education feel that they are receiving inclusive teaching on the same lines as the other pupils.

Summary

In this chapter, we have highlighted how the organisational and academic aspects of inclusion must have coherence if schools are to succeed in their work of developing an inclusive learning environment for all pupils. Through our practice, we have seen many examples of how lower secondary schools find it challenging when pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties start at the school. As a result, planning and adaptation have tended mainly to involve organisational issues, and to a lesser degree the academic content of the teaching.

In our study, we have described four success factors based on interviews with teachers and head teachers. We have found that having good transition schemes in place is an important success factor. Collaboration to ensure that the transition between primary school and lower secondary school is satisfactory is not a statutory obligation, and there is a great risk that this transition is not accomplished satisfactorily. Valuable time can be lost in the work of developing good adaptation for the pupils. We have also seen that time set aside in schedules for collaboration between teachers is an important prerequisite for ensuring that the teaching is well rounded and has coherence. Adaptation based on the subject material being studied by the rest of the class, with the particular adaptations required by the pupil in question, can ensure that all the pupils experience an inclusive learning environment. Finally, the study shows that objectives and the evaluation of learning outcomes are an important part of this coherent provision. Overall, the study shows that these four success factors – transition, collaboration, adaptation and evaluation – are closely linked to the work of creating an inclusive learning environment.

By looking at the results of the survey in the context of the model (Figure 1) presented in Report to the Storting no. 6 (2019–2020), we have achieved a better appreciation that everything that happens in schools must be seen within the framework of an inclusive community. The model provides a good framework for understanding the connection between special measures and the general educational provision for all pupils. The study we have performed provides the results from two lower secondary schools. On the basis of this, we cannot generalise the findings to apply to all schools, but we can point out some tendencies. We hope that our study can provide teachers with a good basis and inspiration to provide adaptation for inclusive teaching, also for pupils with major and complex learning difficulties at lower secondary.

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The convention of the rights of the child, applied in the work of expert assessment

Children have rights, by virtue of the fact that the nation of Norway has signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Norway has thereby pledged to comply with this. In 2019, the Convention on the Rights of the Child celebrated its 30th anniversary.

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The Convention on the Rights of the Child belongs in the field of law and is couched in distinctive and rather inaccessible language. It was incorporated into the Norwegian Constitution in 2004.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is based on four main principles:

- Article 3.1 – the principle of the best interests of the child
- Article 2 – the principle of no discrimination
- Article 6 – the right to survival and development
- Article 12 – the principle of the child's right to be heard on any matters affecting them

(Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, 1989)

In this article, we will touch on two of the four main principles: Article 3, the principle of the best interests of the child, and Article 12, the right to be heard. The Convention on the Rights of the Child does not currently have a visible presence in kindergartens and schools. In order to demonstrate how the Convention on the Rights of the Child can be applied, we therefore believe that we need specific examples. This will make it easier to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child into pedagogical practices. Our objective in this chapter is to show where the Convention on the Rights of the Child fits into the work of expert assessment.

We will follow an imaginary pupil – Siv – from the concerns of the parents and school to the Educational Psychological Service's (PPT) report and measures. Siv's teacher, Mari, and educational psychology counsellor (PPT counsellor), Mette, play significant roles in the process and are therefore central figures in this chapter. Using the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a basis, we show how Mari and Mette safeguard Siv's right to be heard in their assessment of the best interests of the child. Current theories help to justify our choices.

There is little available literature on research into the use of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Our contribution highlights two of the articles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3 on the best interests of the child and Article 12 on the right to be heard, and illustrates how they can be used as arguments in special education practice.

Expert assessment by the Educational Psychological Service (PPT) generates documentation that is used as a basis for making decisions regarding special education (Act relating to Primary and Secondary Education and Training (2019), Section 5-3).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child as an argument

Using the Convention on the Rights of the Child as an argument in an expert assessment will highlight the perspective of children's rights. Recognising that children and young people have certain rights means respecting and protecting the dignity and integrity of children and young people. These can easily become mere words in after-dinner speeches if they do not find their way into pedagogical practice and illustrate how and why children can achieve their human rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is about human rights for children, and any breach of this is thereby also a breach of human rights (Skarstad, 2019).

A total of 195 countries have pledged to work to highlight children's rights, and all of these countries are involved in the consultations held by the Committee on the Rights of the Child every five years. Norway's work with the Convention on the Rights of the Child is therefore part of efforts in an international context (Köhler-Olsen, 2019). In 2018, Norway was recommended to establish clear guidelines on performing assessments of the best interests of the child, to be used by all public officials making decisions that affect children (Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, 2018). In the official study for the new Education Act (NOU 2019:23), the committee made an exemplary effort to include children in work on the new text of the Act and to allow children's voices to be heard clearly throughout the study. The committee itself says that working with children has prompted them to add a new

chapter to the Act, in which the best interests of the child is a guiding principle. If the bill is passed, it is a major step towards fulfilling the main principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The ordinary course of education

Schools are essentially designed to suit the average pupil in terms of curricula, regulations and legislation, syllabus, educational resources and teaching plans, and in practical arrangements in the classroom. The ordinary course of education suits most pupils and imparts skills that are described in competence objectives and graded using assessments and marks. With adaptation, many pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities follow a similar course in the same schools as the average pupil (Heide & Holiman, 2019).

NOU 2019:23 uses the term *universal education*. This principle is defined as follows in Section 10-1 of the bill:

> *The municipality and county authority shall provide universal education, which means that education must be satisfactory for as many pupils as possible without individual adaptation (NOU 2019:23, p. 31).*

This means that they envisage education in which more people will be able to participate without extra adaptation, if the act is passed in its current form.

When a pupil needs more

Even if a school makes every endeavour to accommodate everyone, some pupils will still need something extra in order to achieve a satisfactory benefit from their education. The right to special education in schools is triggered by the PPT through an expert assessment (Act relating to Primary and Secondary Education and Training). Taking the children's constitution as our basis

– the Convention on the Rights of the Child – we will illustrate how schools can incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child into their work with these same pupils. In particular, we will emphasise that the need for an assessment of what is in the best interests of the child, in which the child is heard by an expert in this assessment, increases in proportion to the difference from a school's ordinary course of education. The greater the difference from the methods or content of the ordinary course of education, the more important it is to work on the basis of knowledge. Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the right to assess the best interests of the child, rests heavily on Article 12, on the child's right to be heard on matters that concern them. However, the Ombudsperson for Children 2017 report *Uten mål og mening* ['Without goals and meaning'] shows that children receiving special education are not being heard in matters when their educational provision is being assessed and planned (Ombudsperson for Children, 2017).

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has prepared a guide to the use of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in case processing. This is intended to act as a support to the county governors in terms of *consulting the child* and *assessing the child's best interests* (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017).

The guide points out that when a case is processed, every agency, including the school, shall assess the specific best interests of each child individually, based on the child's situation and needs, irrespective of finances. The guide states that the best interests of the child constitute a *rule of case processing.* For example, long case processing times can conflict with the best interests of the child.

Finding out what the child thinks about an issue is an essential element of assessing the best interests of the child.

Since the best interests of the child are self-executing, this means that a case has not been processed correctly if the best interests of the child have not been assessed (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). The phrase 'self-executing' is described as follows:

A convention or other article is self-executing when its content makes it suitable to be employed as an independent legal basis in disputes before courts or other authorities. (Smith, 2008)

In practice, this means that if we do not assess the best interests of the child, the parents would win an appeal case.

The assessment must take into account the fact that the best interests of the child are flexible, which makes it possible to adapt the content to the individual child's situation and to the community around the child.

It is also a requirement for the assessment of the best interests of the child to be based on knowledge and to be performed by multiple experts. Based on knowledge means that it is based on knowledge-based practice. This means: *"(...) making expert decisions based on systematically obtained, research-based knowledge, experience-based knowledge and the user's wishes and needs in a given situation"* (Norwegian Electronic Health Library, 2020). In some cases, there is no research on the specific subject that an expert wishes to illustrate. Common practice in such situations is to refer to related research fields in order to have something to lean on in the work of achieving the best interests of the child (UN general comments no. 14).

At present, it is difficult to pick out assessments of the best interests of the child in reports and expert assessments (Ombudsperson for Children, 2017).

Article 12 gives children the right to express themselves on all matters that concern them (Pedersen, 2019).

When a case is processed, the child's view must be examined, and their viewpoints given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. The child does not necessarily need to have opinions about a solution for the case in order to express themselves. It is enough for the child to have an opinion about some aspects of a case. The Convention on the Rights of the Child also states that the child has a right to be heard, but not an obligation. We can encourage children to allow themselves to be heard, but we must also respect their desire not to use this right.

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a case shall be processed in an efficient, child-friendly, and accessible way. It points out that children do not have an obligation to express themselves, but that they must be given an opportunity to express themselves. Arrangements must ensure that the consultation is not perceived as a burden. The child must therefore receive the information they need in order to make a decision on whether or not they wish to be heard, what the matter is about, and why and how the consultation will take place (Sandberg, 2016).

Case

This case will be about how we can more specifically assess the best interests of the child by listening to the child's voice. This is illustrated through examples in a case and through relevant theory

1. in the dialogue between the pupil in question, their parents and teacher prior to the meeting with the PPT, and
2. in the PPT's partnership with the child in its work of designing an expert assessment.

First of all, however, we will introduce Siv, her teacher Mari and PPT counsellor Mette.

Siv, 10 years old

Siv is in the fifth grade. She is not progressing as expected in her subjects. Her parents and the school have therefore been concerned for some time, and the situation is regularly on the agenda in the home-school relationship and contact. Siv finds the subjects of mathematics and Norwegian particularly difficult (both reading and writing). At playtime, Siv tends to play with children from lower year groups (from year two). Siv is good at making up and telling stories orally, and she enjoys art and crafts. Her favourite subject is gymnastics, and she is particularly interested in and good at playing football. After being advised by the school, the parents have consulted an ophthalmologist and optician, and the public health nurse has arranged an extra hearing test. Everything turns out to be normal in terms of vision and hearing.

Mari, teacher

Teacher Mari thinks that children are not able to see the whole picture in a situation, and therefore rely on having good, sensible adults around them. At the same time, adults can easily overlook the child's perspective in conversations. Mari has studied the Convention on the Rights of the Child at college. It is very important for her to build good relationships with her pupils. Establishing close contact with her pupils enables her to gain insight into the pupil perspective. This gives her a basis for implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in her work.

In current practice, adults have a tendency to adopt an expert role without listening to the child (Strandkleiv, 2017). This also applies in schools and in expert assessments by the PPT. The child's perspective thereby disappears in the child-adult relationship. Realistically, if children are to be heard, adults need to change their attitudes, and children's voices must be given more space (Gamst, 2017). However, we would like to emphasise that the fact that children should be heard does not mean that they should make the decisions.

It means that their voices must be given space when a decision is to be made (Heide & Nicolaisen, 2019).

Mari and counsellor Mette are both concerned with what is in the best interests of the child, and want the child to be heard in this process. Now we see a little more about what happened before the PPT was contacted.

Work prior to the application

Before sending a referral to the PPT, the work tends to start with a meeting.

The children's rights perspective

Having studied the Convention on the Rights of the Child at college, teacher Mari is in a special position in terms of using what she hears from the pupils as a basis for assessing what is in the best interests of the pupils. Since she qualified, she has given lectures to her colleagues, which means that everyone at her school is familiar with children's rights. The children's rights perspective can be overlooked and not taken seriously if the adults do not understand that the child's rights are an obligation applying to their education and teaching (Skarstad, 2019). Working in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child gives schools the opportunity to teach pupils about 'democracy and citizenship', and this is a topic that will be included in the new curricula that will be implemented from autumn 2020 onward (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). Alongside the topics of 'public health and life skills' and 'sustainable development', the aim is for these three topics to be integrated into every subject at every age level, and to be topics with which the school will work throughout the course of education (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). In addition, the school as an organisation is aware that providing good education is a complex matter, and that many factors and types of skills need to come together in order to achieve what is in the best interest of the child – such as how teachers view children and learning, and didactic relationship skills. The staff are familiar with such reflections because they are aware of the pedagogic opportunities presented by working towards common goals. They have therefore developed their own pedagogic platform. The head-teacher actively participates in the work, fully aware that a managerial connection with development work is a critical success factor.

Teacher Mari is up to date on the new guidelines for new programme descriptions, so she and her colleagues have started looking at the proposals that have been made regarding the curricular planning work. The school has therefore put the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the agenda for this academic year. She will prepare pupils for what is to come. Every day, teacher Mari practices the principle of Article 12 with her class, that children shall be heard. She thinks that the pupils have a lot of clever ideas about teaching, which they try out together. When she got a copy of the proposal for the new Education Act, she drew a heart in the margin in Chapter 2 (NOU 2019:23, page 24). Finally, she thinks, there is a place for her school's ideas about participation. Pupil democracy and school rules are also a topic in this chapter.

New Education Act

in her teaching team, teacher Mari initiates discussions about pupils, and the team have productive discussions about the best interests of the individual child in relation to the best interests of the entire class. Teacher Mari is happy that she is conversant with specialist articles about the subject, and that she can act as a resource for the other teachers, who continually have ideas and reflections on how they could be working. Kipperberg (2019) problematizes how the best interests of the individual child must be seen in relation to the best interests of the entire group of children. Sandberg (2016) also does this. She says that in some cases, the best interests of one child can be in opposition to the best interests of the class, and that schools should avoid getting into dilemmas in which interests are pitted against each other but should focus on finding other solutions.

Children's sense of fairness

We would like to point out that UNICEF has set up schools all over the world in which work is performed in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and where children sit on a Rights Respecting School Council. The results in the two schools of this kind that have been set up in Norway show that when children are allowed to make decisions, they look at the rights of all the children in the school. At one of the schools, they discussed a desire for all the children to learn sign language, so that they could communicate with the pupils in the sign language class. At the other school, the pupils wanted a ramp, so that pupils in wheelchairs would be able to use the same entrance to the sports centre as the other pupils (Sandøe, 2019).

Examples like this warm our hearts and show that children have a much stronger sense of fairness than we realise, and that they tend to go further than adults do. It also tells us something about how the child's perspective could develop schools and kindergartens in different directions than if only adults contribute with their perspectives. The child's perspective challenges and enriches us. But that is enough theory for now. How was Siv's first meeting with the PPT?

PPT assessment

After a few weeks, PPT counsellor Mette arrives. Siv and teacher Mari meet her together. First, they go through the application. Then teacher Mari talks about how they have looked at the subjects of maths, Norwegian and English. Siv and teacher Mari have talked about all the subjects and given them colour coding. They have talked about red subjects, which are the subjects that Siv really enjoys, blue subjects, which are those that she enjoys less, and green subjects, which are subjects that Siv thinks are difficult.

They talk about how Siv finds school, and what she herself thinks she is good at. Siv explains that she is good at playing, and that she often makes up stories for the girls she plays with. PPT counsellor Mette writes this down.
PPT counsellor Mette explains that she would like to come on a visit to the classroom and see how Siv manages, both in the subjects that she likes and the subjects that she struggles with. They look at the timetable together and agree on two classroom visits. "Then we will do some tests and find out what you are really good at, and what you are struggling with," says counsellor Mette. Teacher Mari adds: "We will find out how we can improve things as much as possible for you at school." Siv says that this is fine.

The child's view

Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the right to assess the best interests of the child, is inextricably linked to Article 12, on the child's right to be heard on matters that concern them (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). The adults that should hear the child must be properly prepared and skilled in talking to children. In other words, a prerequisite for assessing what is in the best interests of the child is identifying what the child's view is. Let us look what happened at the meeting between the PPT, Mari and Siv after testing and observation.

After the classroom visits, sitting tests and submitting forms completed by the school, Siv and her parents, PPT counsellor Mette has a meeting with Siv and her parents. In this meeting, Mette summarises the work: "I can see that you are polite, kind to your fellow pupils and that you do as well as you can in every subject," she tells Siv. "The tests show that mathematics is difficult for you, and that you may have lost some of the basics of this subject. In Norwegian and English, you struggle with the grammar, and reading and writing tests is difficult for you. You are better at speaking. I think that telling all the stories to your friends has helped you with that. But you take a long time to get started on exercises, Siv, and I would like to explore that with you. I think that it would be good for you to be in a smaller group for mathematics, where you will get thorough explanations and exercises that you understand. What do you think about that?" Siv twists a little in her seat. "I don't want to be in a small group for every maths lesson, and not for the whole lesson. I would like to be part of the class and listen when the teacher introduces new material, and then go into the group room with the others." Counsellor Mette nods, and says that she has made a note of this, and that it sounds like a sensible idea.

How to get the child's voice across

Children can often have opinions on how they learn best. In order to obtain the child's opinion, the adults must ensure that the interviews held are dialogical. Such interviews are based on dialogical principles, like the child interview based on Dialogical Communication Methodology (DCM) (Gamst, 2019). Its main principle is that the adult must keep their assumptions out of the interview, and in that way give the child space to present their own ideas. The adult presents the topics they wish to talk about and encourages the child to speak as freely as possible. The adult should ask as few questions as possible, as the method instead involves encouraging the child to talk more, and then makes use of summarisation to ensure that the child has been understood correctly. The aim of the method is to get the child to speak freely, and the term used to clarify the adult's role is as a *listening funnel*. The model is associated with Kari Gamst (2018) and is about focusing one's attention on the child's statements. The adult confirms what the child says about a topic through nods (I hear what you are saying) and small words such as '*mm*'. When there is a pause, the adult may say "*tell me more about that*" in order to show interest and prompt the child to give more complete answers. Children will often need a little time in order to marshal their thoughts.

Pauses in the interview are natural and explained by the fact that the child needs time to gather their thoughts, because they have discovered that thoughts are connected. The adult must therefore tolerate silence and pauses without filling them with questions.

Presence and common understanding

Being present in the interview and being present together are also difficult for both parties in the interview. When the adult summarises the interview, they can ensure that they have a common understanding by then asking the child whether they have included everything, whether there is anything that they have forgotten, and whether the child wants to add anything. Using these principles can have a very good effect. We would like to emphasise that this is a method that one must practise using.

Let us look at how PPT counsellor Mette ensures that in her interview with Siv, she achieves a dialogue based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Convention on the Rights of the Child as an approach

Counsellor Mette from the PPT wants to talk to Siv about how she finds school assignments. Teacher Mari has explained that Siv likes to play and tell stories. Counsellor Mette also thinks that her meetings with Siv have given her a relatively good relationship with Siv, so it is likely that Siv will participate in the interview as truthfully as she can. She also knows that Siv is a child who may wish to please adults, so she thinks carefully about how she should present topics, right down to the level of choice of words. Counsellor Mette knows that it is important for Siv to have a structured framework, so she will limit the interview to 30 minutes (Gamst, 2019).

In order to find out whether Siv can express herself in a free narrative, i.e. with several statements in a row, counsellor Mette will start with this, and she will use the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the introduction to the interview. When Siv arrives, counsellor Mette has put out some cuddly toys and a ball, in case Siv wants to hold something during the interview (Gamst, 2019).

“Thank you for meeting me, Siv, and for talking about what you think about school assignments. Remember that I have to write a report with recommendations on how the school can best organise the way it teaches you”. Siv nods in confirmation. “Remember that we talked about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and about the fact that you have the right to give your opinions?” Siv nods again. “Only you know how things are for you, and only you can say something about how you learn best. So I would like to hear about that. We will talk for around 30 minutes. If you need a break, just tell me. Is that alright?” Siv nods again. “When we begin, I will ask you to speak as freely as you can, and after you have talked for a while, I will summarise what you have said, so that I can be sure that I have understood you. Does that sound alright? Siv nods. “Are you ready to begin?” asks counsellor Mette. Then the interview starts.

Counsellor Mette tells Siv that is not certain that things will be arranged exactly the way Siv wants, but that Mette would then explain why. They then talk a little more about the child's right to be heard when age and maturity permit. "Siv, you are both old enough and you know how you learn. I am impressed at the insight you have about what works in the various subjects. Things are a little different in Norwegian and English. I suggest that you work with different assignments than the class for a while, but that you stay with the others in the class for the lessons. An extra teacher will then come into the class who will be able to help all of the pupils, including you. What do you think about that suggestion?" Counsellor sees that Siv is hesitating. "You can think about it until tomorrow and then phone me when you have decided. Is that a good solution?" Siv nods.

Child friendly

This practice example demonstrates how formal meetings can be designed to be more child-friendly, which makes it easier for children to allow their voice to be heard. However, we must remember that we lose an important perspective if we cannot manage to motivate children to talk about their own situation. After all, the most important participant is the child themselves. By working systematically to listen to children, children will gradually expect to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Only then will we have user participation in practice (Kvello, 2019).

Using the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a concept for hearing children and making assessments about the best interests of the child will make it clear to parents and pupils what we are referring to. The child's perspective will then come across more clearly on the issues we are working with – also in an adult perspective. In this way, every educator will be able to work with human rights from a micro-perspective.

On the child's terms

It can be difficult to hear children in 'interview situations' that are constructed by adults. Children must be heard on their own terms, and that means that we adults may have to lie on the floor and play, because it is in that way that the child can be heard (Olsen, 2019). Knowledge of each child is therefore an essential prerequisite for hearing the child. For small children without verbal language, we can 'hear' them through participatory observation and discussions with people who are close to them.

Young people can be heard through an activity in which the attention is directed at something outside themselves. For example, going for a drive can provide a framework for a good interview, since the driver and the young person both have their attention on the road. The only thing that limits how children can use their right to be heard is our imagination.

Children's right to be heard must not be confused with allowing children to decide. Co-determination is about giving the child's view attention on the same terms as other considerations in the matter. The most important thing is to inform the child that the outcome on issues about which they have spoken will either be what they want, a compromise or a decision that goes against the child's wishes.

Result of the process

We will give some examples of PPT counsellor Mette's reports that illustrate and confirm Siv's right to be heard. Example 1 shows how the PPT counsellor assesses that the child is of both an age and maturity that indicate that they should be heard, and with reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Example 2 shows what counsellor Mette's summarisation could look like.

Example 1

Siv is 10 years old, and in my view, she is of both an age and maturity to be heard on matters that affect her, as shown in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Example 2

Siv explains that she likes Norwegian. She thinks that it is fine to ask for help when she needs it, but she would prefer to find the answers herself. Siv's strength is storytelling. The PPT recommends that this is taken into consideration, so that she gets to demonstrate her strength in the class situation. Siv enjoys being able to answer questions in class, and she enjoys presenting what she has been working on, also in English, particularly in oral activities. The PPT suggests increasing teacher density in Norwegian and English, which will allow differentiated teaching to take place in the classroom. Siv understands that she will be given different assignments to the rest of the class. It is important for Siv not to stand out from the rest of the class. The adaptation must therefore happen behind the scenes, and in a way that ensures the other pupils do not see that she has different assignments. For example, this could involve making sure that workbooks have the same front page for all pupils.

In mathematics, she has agreed to go into a small group after new subject matter has been presented in the class. She does not want to be in a separate group for all the mathematics lessons. The PPT recommends that Siv's request regarding adaptation be heard.

When asked "What is the most important thing that would help you to be happy at school?" she replies that the most important thing is to have someone to be with.

Summary

In this article, we have pointed out the pedagogic consequences of using the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a tool to be used by experts in their work. We have seen that this requires competence in the field of child law, and in how to elicit the child's perspective in interviews with children. We have also pointed out that the child interview provides the basis for assessing the best interests of the child.

We have pointed out elements that must be taken into consideration when eliciting the child's perspective in the child interview.

The most important work is summarising the child's statements, thereby giving them clear rights in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The manner in which the PPT counsellor obtains this perspective depends on the PPT counsellor's relationship with the child and ability to concretize the opinions that the child has expressed. We are optimistic on behalf of Norwegian children who need special adaptation. In a future model for more inclusive learning communities, they could be heard to a greater degree, and what they say will be taken seriously.

This is the moral obligation inherent in inclusion (Heide & Holiman, 2019). We are pleased that children can say something about how they learn best, and that this is put down in writing, and that children learn both participation and democracy.

If the new bill for the Act relating to Primary and Secondary Education and Training (NOU 23: 2019) is passed, it could give children a clearer legal right to an assessment of the best interests of the child based on interviews with children, parents and professionals. This concretization of what has already been enshrined in the Constitution could now become part of teaching practice.

Finally, we must remember that incorporating the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the work of expert assessments is an adult responsibility. Children do not get more rights than adults are willing to allow in practical teaching work!

Helpful resources for this work

For interested readers, we would like to highlight three resources that could help to put the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the agenda. The first is the County Governors' Office's *Sjumilssteget* ['The Giant Leap'], which shows how we can work with the Convention on the Rights of the Child at municipal level. You can find the resource here: sjumilssteget.no/

The second resource is Statped's online resource about the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which focuses on how children can be heard, enabling us to make assessments of the best interests of the child. The resource is searchable on Statped's website statped.no. Here is a link to the online resource: Barnekonvensjonen | www.statped.no

The third resource is the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training's *Veiledning til bruk av barnekonvensjonen i saksbehandlingen [*Guide to the use of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in case processing]. You can find it here: udir. no/globalassets/filer/regelverk/rundskriv/ veiledning-til-bruk-av-barnekonvensjonen.pdf

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Contact teachers and special needs education teachers working as a team to promote pupil participation

In this chapter, I will argue that teamwork between contact teachers and special needs education teachers is an essential part of promoting participation at school for pupils receiving special needs education.

Gro Narten Markestad

What does working as a team mean? How do we facilitate collaboration between contact teachers and special needs education teachers in key areas in order to promote a pupil's participation in a learning community? What do we need in order to succeed? There is no set answer to these questions. However, there are mind tools that could be of assistance in this work. I will present and apply two tables that highlight how contact teachers and special needs education teachers can work together on Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) as strategic documents for promoting inclusive special needs edu-cation in schools. I will also present and apply three success factors for good collaboration.

Working as a team is important

Collaboration in schools can be difficult for a number of reasons. A Norwegian study performed by Gillespie (2016) claims that there is no culture of collaboration between educators in different roles in schools, despite the fact that the educators them-selves would like this. There are some exceptions, with contact teachers and special needs education teachers having taken the initiative and made time for

collaboration. In this chapter, I am hoping to inspire schools to establish a system of collaboration between contact teachers and special needs education teachers, with follow-up by external guides from the PPT (Educational and Psychological Counselling Service), BUP (Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Out-patient Clinic), Statped (The Norwegian Support System for Special Needs Education) and other support services who meet both contact teachers and special needs education teachers when schools are discussing pedagogic problems.

One of the aims of working as a team is to facilitate social and academic participation for all pupils. Participation is about a pupil's contribution and right to be heard. For example, pupils shall participate in the planning, implementation and assessment of their educational provision. Participation is also about giving pupils an educational provision that is based on their requirements and that helps them to maximise their full potential. The educational provision shall be adapted around the best interests of the pupil. The same rights apply to all pupils. It would be very demanding for one contact teacher to facilitate participation for all the pupils in a year group. At times, this will be

a more demanding process than one person can achieve alone. Sometimes adaptation requires specialist skills that are beyond general teaching skills. Beside expertise, it is often necessary to think creatively and spot opportunities. That needs teamwork!

What is teamwork in practical terms?
In teamwork, the contact teacher and special needs education teacher will be equal partners with complementary skills that can support and complement each other. They will also have different roles and areas of responsibility. And it is this that differentiates teamwork from collaborating as a group: you have different roles and areas of responsibility and complement each other professionally. The contact teacher has a primary responsibility for *all* their pupils, both academically and socially, and acts as a link between home and school. By contrast, the special needs education teacher is an expert in pupils' learning difficulties and is familiar with methods in special needs education that do not form part of a general education teacher's areas of expertise. As well as the contact teacher and special needs education teacher, other professionals may be part of the team around the pupils, often in the form of assistants.

We will take a closer look at what contact teachers and special needs education teachers can collaborate on in order to promote participation for pupils receiving special needs education.

What can contact teachers and special needs education teachers collaborate on?
The study by Gillespie (2016), which has studied the experiences of special needs education teachers and subject teachers collaborating on pupils receiving special needs education in mathematics, identifies several contextual and cultural aspects that affect the educators' opportunity to collaborate satisfactorily. Special needs education teachers and subject teachers experience that they collaborate to a small degree and that pupils do not achieve their learning goals. The study also shows that it is more common to describe measures for social participation and safe limits than measures for academic progression in the pupil's learning plan. The result of this is that the educators' perception is that they feel inadequate, that the pupils do not get the educational provision that they are entitled to. Gillespie (2016) refers to several studies when she argues that good collaboration between special needs education teachers and general education teachers can help pupils receiving special needs education to develop their academic and social potential.

Gillespie (2016) differentiates between short-term and long-term collaboration. *Short-term collaboration* is about practical matters such as preparing timetables, exchanging work plans with each other and clarifying the division of rooms and groups. This interaction about practical matters requires little time or resources. Short-term cooperation is necessary but is still not sufficient to facilitate a pupil's participation. *Long-term collaboration* involves planning the pupils' long-term learning goals. Gillespie (2016) refers to several other studies arguing that long-term collaboration between general education teachers and special needs education teachers is vital for promoting a pupil's learning outcome and participation at school. Long-term collaboration requires more time and resources than short-term because its focus is on specialist discussions of educational activities. Examples of tasks requiring specialist discussions from a general education and special needs education perspective are the planning of the grade's annual plan in various subjects and the preparation of the ILP.

The tables below are based on Hausstätter's tables (2012, pp. 136–137) that describe how a school can use an ILP as a strategic document to promote a pupil's participation in a rounded educational provision. One of Hausstätter's tables (2012, p 136) shows the significance of the teacher's and pupil's collaboration on the ILP, while the other table (Hausstätter, 2012, p. 137) shows the significance of the general education teacher's and special needs education teacher's collaboration on an ILP. The tables as they appear here have been adapted for use as mind tools for making decisions on responsibility, areas of collaboration, methods of collaboration and coherence between general education and special needs education adaptation and benefits for a pupil when the collaboration works.

Table 1 shows that general education teachers and special needs education teachers can have different starting points in terms of analysing and developing an ILP. The first column shows examples of what a general education teacher can bring to a collaboration on an ILP, while the third column shows a little of what a special needs education teacher can bring to the collaboration. The middle column describes relevant areas of collaboration between the general education teacher and special needs education teacher and shows how the school's educational activities could become more rounded by bringing the fields of practice of general education and special needs education together. The table provides an illustration of the different perspectives that come into play in the collaboration on a pupil's educational provision.

Table 1 Collaboration between educators on ILP (adapted from Hausstätter, 2012, p. 137)

	General education teacher	Areas of collaboration	Special needs education teacher
Focus	has an overview of the subject material for the year group and course of education	overview of each other's challenges	has knowledge of the pupil's development, resources, challenges and needs
	adapts the subject matter	coordinates subject matter and methods	adapts methods for learning and development
	develops ILP on the basis of simplifying the subject matter; looks at how the subject matter can be adapted	discusses what could be realistic learning goals and how the school can work to achieve these	develops ILP on the basis of the pupil's learning potential

Table 2 shows the results after such a collaboration if the collaboration works as it should. The middle column describes how teamwork between the general education teacher and special needs education teacher can help the school to develop a rounded strategy for teaching in a "school for everyone". The results show that both pupils and teachers benefit from this teamwork.

The first column shows that the pupils are able to maximise their learning potential after the school adapts academic goals and is able to achieve good progression in their work. The third column shows that the pupils are able to maximise their learning potential through adapted methods of achieving academic goals.

Table 2 Results when the collaboration works (adapted from Hausstätter, 2012, pp. 136–137)

	General education teacher	Areas of collaboration	Special needs education teacher
Result when the collaboration works	The pupil is able to maximise their learning potential through adapted academic goals and achieves the right progression in their learning work.	The school and teachers are jointly responsible for the ILP and general education.	The pupil is able to maximise their learning potential through adapted methods of achieving academic goals.
	Contact teacher prioritises spending time on adapting teaching for the pupil with special needs education needs, because it helps to ensure their active participation in the learning and development process of all the pupils.	The total challenges associated with a "school for everyone" are highlighted, and shared decisions can be made.	Special needs education teacher prioritises spending time on adapting strategies that promote the pupil's participation in their own learning and development process.

I will also look at how teamwork on an Individual Learning Plan can be achieved in practice. I will do this by presenting a case that I illustrate and discuss on the basis of elements from Table 1 and Table 2 and success factors for good collaboration.

What is required of Marte as the contact teacher and Hanna as the special needs education teacher to succeed in their collaboration on an educational provision that accommodates the intention that Kaja should develop her full potential in an academic and social learning community? In order to answer this question, I will apply elements from the table above and discuss the problem in light of three factors that are needed in order for the collaboration to be successful.

Success factors for good collaboration
In her study, Gillespie (2016) identifies three factors that are important for achieving good collaboration in a school:

1. the external framework, i.e., time for planning, allocating responsibility and receiving guidelines from the school's management
2. a culture of collaboration, which includes established collaboration routines at the school in question and the degree to which the teachers themselves take the initiative to collaborate on a pupil's educational provision
3. the perception that the collaboration is expedient, appropriate and useful

The external framework must be in place
Gillespie (2016) found in her study that there was no established culture of collaboration on pedagogic adaptation at the school, despite the fact that the educators wanted the school's practice to include collaboration routines. One of the reasons why collaboration on pedagogic adaptation is so rare is that there is a lack of an established framework for collaboration between contact teachers and special needs education teachers. Nor is this collaboration prioritised as part of the school's practice.

Each school must define for itself the most appropriate way of facilitating collaboration. The school's management has a key role to play in clarifying the framework for collaboration on pedagogic adaptation, since they have an overview of the school's resources, options, needs and challenges. They can identify where collaboration is needed, they know what can realistically be achieved, and they can ensure that time is allocated in the schedule for collaborating on pupils' educational provisions. At Kaja's school, the head teacher made an individual decision for the special needs education provision to include scheduled time for collaboration, including what the collaboration will be about, and how the staff should

collaborate in order to achieve the pupil's goals. Marte and Hanna have an hour a week set aside in their schedules for collaboration. The school has also chosen to set up a working team around Kaja, comprising the contact teacher, special needs education teacher and two assistants. This team meets for 30 minutes every week. Time set aside in the schedule for planning is a requirement for facilitating collaboration. Marte and Hanna also need to know what kind of role and what tasks they have in the planning, implementation and evaluation of Kaja's educational provision.

The school's management has the important task of clarifying which are the roles and responsibilities of each person in the team around a pupil. Clear guidelines are needed about what is involved in being a contact teacher and special needs education teacher for a pupil receiving special needs education (Gillespie, 2016). In the same way, the school will benefit from clear guidelines on how internal collaboration will help to promote coherence between general education and special needs education. Hausstätter (2012) argues that it is important for contact teachers and special needs education teachers to be aware of each other's challenges.

Table 1 shows that it is expedient for contact teachers and special needs education teachers to be aware of the challenges that they are facing. For example, Marte as the contact teacher for Year 4 faces different challenges than Hanna as the special needs education teacher for Kaja and other pupils receiving special needs education. The dialogue concerning the challenges they face is vital for allowing the practices of general education and special needs education to come together, rather than being two separate educational provisions. Through this dialogue, they develop an understanding of each other's many challenges and gain a perception of each

other's responsibility for adaptation to ensure the pupil's participation in an academic and social learning community.

As already mentioned, Gillespie (2016) differentiates between *short-term* and *long-term planning*, and argues that both kinds are necessary, but that it is the long-term planning that has the greatest significance in terms of pedagogic practice. Findings from Gillespie's (2016) study show that the short-term planning, which deals with practical matters, often takes place immediately prior to teaching. It is mainly the contact teacher on their own who does the short-term planning regarding the general educational provision. The special needs education teacher only gets involved when the short-term planning concerns the special needs education. What Gillespie (2016) found was that the collaboration tended to consist of the contact teacher informing the special needs education teacher of the content of the teaching. The study points out the lack of a culture of collaboration between contact teachers and special needs education teachers on pedagogic practice in schools. On the basis of this, it is natural to draw a conclusion that there needs to be a cultural change in schools.

So, what is involved in a culture of collaboration on pedagogic adaptation to promote a pupil's academic and social participation?

Culture of collaboration

A culture of collaboration is about what routines for collaboration have been established at a school, and how these can affect planning, implementing and evaluating a pupil's educational provision. The established guidelines for collaboration must ensure that there is coherence between the general education and special needs education fields of practice. It is also important for the guidelines to include allowing the pupil's voice to be heard (Hausstätter, 2012).

Gillespie (2016) found in her study that each school had its own culture of collaboration. Among other things, there was variation in terms of the collaboration routines that were established at each school. There was also variation in the degree to which each teacher took the initiative to collaborate with others. At Marte and Hanna's school, routines have been established that ensure there is collaboration between the contact teacher and special needs education teacher on Kaja's educational provision. The school has clear guidelines on how the staff collaborate in order to create a rounded educational provision, in which the pupil participates in an academic and social learning community. In order for Marte and Hanna to feel that the collaboration is meaningful, it is important for the time allotted to them to be used constructively. Gillespie (2016) emphasises the importance of establishing good collaboration routines, in which each teacher feels that they are using their skills in planning, implementing and evaluating the pupil's educational provision. Hausstätter (2012) emphasises that the school has to look at the general education and special needs education in the same context, rather than as two separate services. In a collaboration, Marte and Hanna have different skills and knowledge of different areas, as can be seen in Table 1. Marte is acquainted with the current plans for the school and year group, competence objectives, and with the school's and year's working methods. Hanna knows about Kaja's resources, challenges and needs. Gillespie (2016) and Hausstätter (2012) emphasise that it is only when their competences are expressed through pedagogic adaptation that they contribute to learning and development through active participation with others. It is therefore extremely important for schools to have a culture of collaboration that addresses this criterion.

Gillespie (2016) also found that the educators in schools felt that the general education was being planned for the average pupil, with the national curriculum as the guiding document, while special needs education was being planned on the basis of expert assessments and Individual Learning Plans. Several teachers expressed that they struggled to find the balance between individual adaptation and the need for the whole community to achieve goals. If Kaja is to receive a rounded and satisfactory educational provision, it is absolutely essential for Hanne and Marte to collaborate on it. It should be part of the school's established collaboration routines for Hanne and Marte to discuss pedagogic problems in order to encourage participation for all their pupils. The right for pupils to participate in the planning, implementation and assessment of their own educational provision is one of the fundamental principles of Norwegian schooling (Education Act, 1998). Kaja has a rich and varied language and is able to participate and have a voice in the planning and adaptation carried out for her. Both Hanne and Marte can thereby have a dialogue with Kaja on learning goals, about which adaptations are most suitable for her, and which working methods she considers to be good for her.

Gillespie's (2016) study suggests that the culture of short-term collaboration is far more established than the culture of long-term collaboration in schools. She found that both general education teachers and special needs education teachers expressed that they felt there was a lack of pedagogic discussions, which were preferable to one-sided collaboration on practical matters (Gillespie, 2016). Time was set aside in the schedule for collaboration between Hanne and Marte, so both were anxious that the meetings should only focus on practical clarifications and swapping plans with each other. They were sceptical

about spending so much time together, but quickly found that it made sense to collaborate on teaching practice. Gillespie (2016) also found that the general education teachers felt that it was difficult to provide adaptation for pupils needing special needs education, and that they needed to collaborate with colleagues with special needs education skills. As the contact teacher, Marte is familiar with the feeling of inadequacy: she is aware that she does not have the skills to accommodate the adaptation needs of both Kaja and several other pupils. She has a fundamental desire and target for Kaja to develop her potential. Through her meetings with Hanna, she has become more aware of her own skills and what she herself can contribute to in this kind of collaboration. She also became aware of how much she was developing her own skills by discussing the pedagogic problems involved in matters concerning Kaja. As Table 1 shows, there is a need to bring the general education teacher's perspective and skills into the collaboration for a rounded educational provision for pupils receiving special needs education. As we can see in Table 2, a pupil gets to maximise their learning potential when the contact teacher adapts goals and progression in the pupil's learning work. Gillespie (2016) found that many special needs education teachers expressed that they did not feel part of the staff, because they were not involved in planning general education and general school planning. This is also what Hanna experienced. It was only when she and Marte sat down and discussed the learning goal for the year group and for Kaja and talked about adapting the subject matter and working methods that she felt a sense of belonging to the staff. The work that she and Marte did as a team resulted in a more rounded educational provision for many more of the pupils.

As described earlier, there is a clear connection between the long-term collaboration practised by the general education teacher and special needs education teacher and the pupil's learning outcome (Gillespie, 2016). The long-term collaboration covers the pupil's long-term learning goals and requires pedagogic discussions of the school's approach to ensuring that the pupil will develop their academic and social potential. We can also see this in tables 1 and 2: we need both the general education teacher's and special needs education teacher's skills to ensure that the pupil develops their potential in an academic and social learning community (Hausstätter, 2012).

The fact that contact teachers and special needs education teachers collaborated neither on the general educational provision nor the special needs education (Gillespie, 2016) could suggest that the general education provision is the contact teacher's domain in terms of planning, implementation and assessment. In the same way as the contact teacher or subject teacher designs year plans, it is the special needs education teacher who develops ILPs. Gillespie's (2016) study shows that the year group's year plan is designed on the basis of competence objectives from national curricula, while ILPs are designed on the basis of individual decisions on special needs education. The educators in the study expressed the opinion that there was so little coherence between the content of the ILP and the year plan for the rest of the year group that it was difficult to develop adaptation for a practice that combined the content of the plans. There is therefore reason to claim that if schools are to be successful in their adaptation for an inclusive community, the general education and special needs education fields of practice must come together through collaboration (Hausstätter, 2012).

As shown in Table 1, the teachers can contribute to the collaboration on the basis of their own starting points. In the discussions about Kaja's educational provision, Marte made her starting point the competence objectives from national plans and the year group's year plan, while Hanna's starting points were the expert assessments and individual decisions on special needs education. They discussed how they could modify the year plan, which included methods, to allow the general educational provision to accommodate Kaja's needs to a greater degree. They also discovered that there were several other pupils who were benefiting from this adaptation of subject matter and working methods.

Gillespie (2016) argues that it is important to be aware of resistance and barriers that may be encountered in the process of developing and establishing guidelines for collaboration between contact teachers and special needs education teachers. As an example, she mentions how difficult it can be to go from being "the private-practising teacher" to being the teacher who is part of a collective. This can result in both schools and pupils losing talented teachers, because the transition to a completely different way of working can be too taxing. Hanna's perception was that her work was being threatened when she had to collaborate with Marte. Hanna had been Kaja's special needs education teacher since she attended a day-care centre, and she felt that she knew what was best for her. She had no desire to be an auxiliary teacher for the rest of the year group. She wanted to be a special needs education teacher. Marte, on the other hand, had found a good way of teaching the year group. She was tired of constant changes and thought that the system in which the special teacher took responsibility for Kaja was working well. The school's head teacher decided to start a process among the staff of creating a shared

attitude, that they should work together to achieve a more rounded provision at the school. Gillespie (2016) points out that a school's management should facilitate new working methods and work to establish a culture of collaboration that promotes pupils' academic and social participation. It is important for teachers to play a part in a transition process, ensuring that everyone agrees on good collaboration routines, in preference to teachers feeling that collaboration has been forced upon them. As shown in Table 1, it is important for teachers to talk about each other's challenges. From Marte's point of view, the fact that Hanna listened to her challenges had a positive effect on her attitude to the collaboration. Similarly, Hanna seemed to understand that Marte was facing a number of challenges in terms of providing adaptation for a diversity of pupils for whom she was the contact teacher. Hanna appreciated being able to say that she felt an outsider among the staff and was afraid that all the skills she had would be ignored.

In their busy working days at school, Marte and Hanna would like the meetings they hold to be perceived as useful in terms of the job they must do in order to facilitate the pupils' participation in an academic learning community. This is in line with the third factor that must be accommodated, according to Gillespie's (2016) findings: The collaboration must be perceived as expedient, appropriate and useful. What is needed for Marte and Hanna to feel that their collaboration inside and outside the classroom is time spent productively?

The collaboration must be perceived as expedient, appropriate and useful
Hausstätter (2014) points out that it is the causal factors, or *factors that can be changed*, at which it is expedient to aim any measures. It will not lead to good results if one chooses to spend one's energy on

factors that simply cannot be changed. For example, for Marte, who is a contact teacher for Year 4, it is not very expedient to spend too much time thinking about the pupil group's composition, because she cannot do anything about that. In the same way, it is not very expedient for Marte and Hanna to be separately focusing on what Kaja cannot manage. It is only when they direct their attention at the factors that can be changed, that the collaboration can be perceived as expedient (Hausstätter, 2014). Examples of factors that can be changed are *goals, subject matter, working methods and the assessment practice.*

For Marte and Hanna, the ILP could be something that they can collaborate on developing, implementing and evaluating. This is because the ILP describes goals, content, structure and working methods that are aimed at ensuring that Kaja benefits satisfactorily from the teaching. This way of collaborating on the ILP will also be in accordance with governing documents that provide guidelines on special needs education. Guidelines for special needs education (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2014) recommend collaborating on the development of ILPs in order to ensure that there is coherence between the general education provision and the special needs education.

When Marte and Hanna prepare the *ILP*, they need to use national plans in addition to the school's and year group's plans, expert assessments and individual decisions on special needs education. *Goals* and criteria for achieving those goals will be one of the topics that Marte and Hanna will discuss in their work on the ILP. As Table 1 shows, the contact teacher knows which goals the general education aims to achieve, and which criteria will be used as a basis for achieving those goals. The special needs education teacher knows which goals will be realistic for the pupil in the various subjects.

When Marte and Hanna discuss *goals* and criteria for achieving those goals, it is thus important for them to attach importance to academic development as well as social development. Gillespie (2016) points out that there is an imbalance in favour of social goals rather than academic goals in Individual Learning Plans for pupils receiving special needs education. Kaja may express her opinion about what she feels are realistic learning goals for her, including short-term and more long-term goals.

The school should assess what practical educational progression may be achieved, and how the ILP's goals can be considered in context with the goals in the general education plan (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2014). The individual learning objectives must be based on the individual decision and considered in context with the core curriculum and year group's goals. They must be realistic and based on the pupil's resources and opportunities for development (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2014).

The goals must be formulated to show the competence that the school wants the pupil to build up in the subjects in question (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2014). The dialogue between Hanna and Marte plays a key role in this assessment. It is the year group's goals and skills that must be used as the basis, also for Kaja who is receiving special needs education. The Individual Learning Plan must describe which special measures need to be introduced in order to allow the school to help the pupil to achieve their competence objectives on a par with their fellow pupils. When Kaja herself gets to be part of putting her own learning goals into words, she will become more familiar with the goals and able to work more consciously towards them. It is therefore important for Hanna and Marte to be in dialogue with Kaja on long-term and short-term learning goals.

The choice of content is another factor that can be changed in the educational provision. The content must correspond with the individual decision's assessment of the pupil's needs, abilities and requirements, description of learning goals, scope and any deviations from the core curriculum and Education Act (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 1998).

As Table 1 shows, the contact teacher and special needs education teacher will bring different perspectives to a discussion of the content of the teaching. Marte will have an overview of the subject material for the year and course of education. This overview allows Marte to suggest how the subject matter could be adapted. She may also have ideas on how this can be wholly or partly facilitated in the general teaching. In the discussion, Hanna as the special needs education teacher may provide input about how the content could be adapted in lessons. For example, Kaja is capable of following the academic progression of a subject in lessons. What she needs are adaptations that allow her to participate actively in the learning community. Hanna has expertise in what kind of adaptation works best for Kaja in terms of her visual impairment. This is also something about which Kaja herself can provide a great deal of information. For example, what works best in terms of where Kaja sits in order to see what Marte presents on the board? What do illustrations in books need to be like for Kaja to get as much as possible out of them? How can mathematical problems best be set up to allow Kaja to perform addition? How does Kaja feel that the adaptations made by the school are working? Is there anything that needs to be changed? As a special needs education teacher, Hanna knows which working methods work well for Kaja, both because she has observed Kaja and talked to her, and because she has expert knowledge of her visual impairment.

It is important for both Marte and Hanna to take on board Kaja's views in the dialogue about which adaptations are best in terms of allowing Kaja to be an active participant in her own learning and development process.

Working methods are a third factor that can be changed. It is extremely important for Marte and Hanna to discuss what practical working methods may be used. Table 1 shows that this will provide an opportunity to coordinate subject matter and methods. It also provides an opportunity to discuss whether the method by which Kaja works could also be used as a method in the general education. Is it possible that there could be more pupils who would benefit from the same working methods? For example, Kaja will need pictures that do not have too many details. Sometimes it may be an advantage for audiobooks to be the format. Markestad (2012) mentioned that working methods are rarely described or evaluated in ILPs. This could be because the ILP template does not ask for a description of that field of approach. When the pupil does not achieve a goal that has been set, it then becomes important for the special needs education teacher and contact teacher to discuss what they could do differently. Is it the goal that is not realistic, the content that was not adapted to the pupil's requirements, or is it the working method that is not appropriate? Kaja can provide Marte and Hanna with valuable information about working methods that work best when she is working alone, in small groups and with the whole class.

The school's assessment practice also constitutes a factor that can be changed. The contact teacher and special needs education teacher can collaborate to achieve a good assessment practice for the pupil and for the school in terms of its practice. Pupils receiving special needs education, like Kaja, have the same right to assessment as all other pupils. When Marte and Hanna have to assess the pupil's educational provision and school's practice, a dialogue discussing Kaja's own assessments could help to promote participation in an academic and social learning community.

When teamwork has results
By far the greatest benefit from teamwork is that the pupil becomes an active participant and maximises their learning potential. Hausstätter (2012) points out that general education and special needs education skills must both be present in the classroom, allowing the teachers to utilise and develop their professional expertise and help to support the pupils in their development. As can be seen in Table 1, the contact teacher's participation in the collaboration on the ILP helps to ensure that the pupil maximises their learning potential through adapted academic goals and progression in their learning work. The special needs education teacher's participation in the collaboration will help to ensure that the pupil gets to maximise their learning potential through adapted methods for academic development. By working together as a team, the school and teachers together will be able to plan, implement and assess processes around the special needs education and general education.

A contact teacher who prioritises spending time on adapting teaching for a pupil with special needs will continue to do so, because it promotes participation in an academic and social learning community for the other pupils. When Hanna, as the special needs education teacher, prioritises adapting strategies that promote Kaja's participation in her own learning and development process, Kaja feels that she is developing her learning potential. As shown in Table 2, teamwork helps to illustrate the complex set of challenges a school is facing when it needs to provide adaptation in order to assure that all its pupils participate in "a school for everyone". Consequently, this allows a school to make common choices and help to promote inclusive strategies in the school.

Teamwork can bring the general education and special needs education fields of practice closer together. The teachers form a complementary relationship, in which they support and complement each other in planning, implementing and evaluating the teaching. This in turn will develop the skills of the individual teachers.
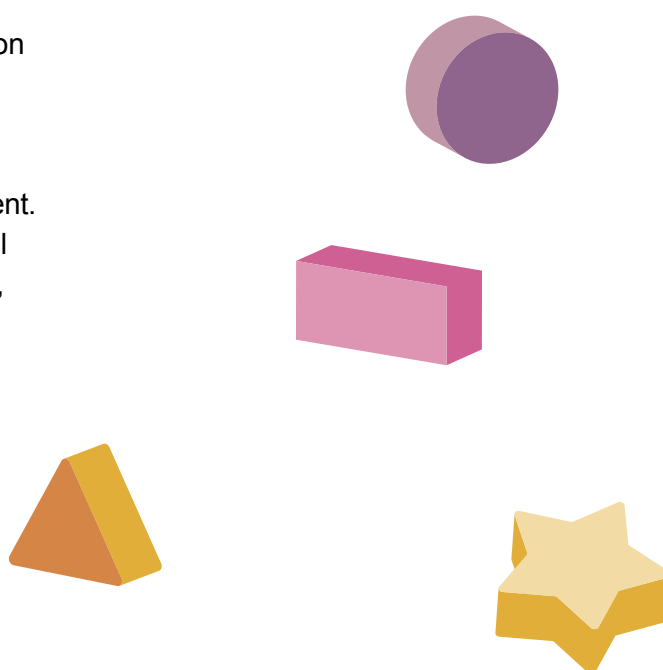
Summary

In this chapter, I have illustrated and discussed the significance of the contact teacher's and special needs education teacher's collaboration in order to promote participation in an academic and social learning community for pupils receiving special needs education. There are three factors that must be present if the collaboration between the teachers in the school is to work well: the external framework must be in place, a culture of long-term as well as short-term collaboration should be established, and the collaboration must be perceived as expedient, appropriate and useful. It is only when the general education and special needs education fields of practice come together and complement each other that a pupil's participation in an academic and social learning community becomes possible. Working as a team is worth it!

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Inclusive learning

– for newly arrived second language learners in upper secondary schools with and without special needs

Participation and learning when the second language has not been fully acquired.

Helene Fulland and May-Britt Monsrud

Introduction

Second language learners (SLLs) who have recently arrived in Norway, or who are starting secondary school after a few years in Norwegian primary and lower secondary school, make creating an inclusive environment more complex. One issue is that several SSLs experience difficult life situations and have different or limited experiences with school. A second issue is that the conditions for learning and participation change when the Norwegian language is not sufficient for communication and teaching. A third issue is that some of the students will also have special needs and require special education. Potential special needs have not always been identified before the students enter secondary school, and this raises the question of what additional adaptation the students may need.

Many newly arrived students will need more adaptation than just a few hours of adapted language education[1] in order to be able to participate and learn. One of the main responsibilities of a school is to identify and provide adaptation for these needs. Second language teaching and special education combined are important in inclusive learning, because such support may provide an opportunity for participation and learning and prevent learning difficulties from escalating. In this chapter, we will investigate some implications for teaching newly arrived SLLs.

Complex conditions

Life – and love – await

Newly arrived students entitled to upper secondary education in accordance with the statutory rights for young people are aged between 16 and 24. Thus, some are youths, and some are young adults. Many feel that too much time has already passed for them as young people. Life with income, family life and responsibilities, is waiting. Some have already spent an excessive time on their education, compared with their peers in Norway or with young people in the environment from which they have come, while some have put years of their life on hold in a refugee camp. Others are still living in an asylum reception centre and do not know what the future will bring. Some feel too old to be going to secondary school. Some think that going to school is too challenging compared to the life they were living before,

1 § 3.12 Norwegian Education Act

while others are impatient to get started on higher education. Life outside school is also waiting, during and after school hours. There may be a parent who needs an interpreter at the doctor's, which means that the student misses lessons. They may have a great many worries. Often friends, a girlfriend and a soccer game feel more important than putting in extra academic work in their leisure time.

The complex life circumstances of these students are an important backdrop to which adaptations a school may manage to implement. A student's home life outside school affects their physical attendance at school, their attentiveness towards learning activities and their motivation to complete their upper secondary education. Even though students may be entitled to adapted language education, this service has proved difficult to implement, since the programmes are perceived to be out of step with what the students themselves regard as important (Rambøll, 2016). At the same time, many will want the teaching and structure that lead to a final qualification as quickly as possible. Thus, in order to provide adaptation for participation in learning, a dialogue with the students is crucial.

Being a student when both the language of instruction and subjects are unfamiliar

Students who have immigrated into Norway are overrepresented among young people who apply for and start but do not complete secondary education (Markussen, 2010; Reegård & Rogstad, 2016). There could be many reasons for this. One explanation could be that it is difficult to participate in education that essentially assumes that the students have already completed 10 years of Norwegian education and have the relevant background knowledge (Solbue, 2013; Thorshaug & Svendsen, 2014). The subject curricula have been developed on the

assumption that students already possess basic competence. This applies both to basic skills in Norwegian as a language of instruction, the compulsory subject of English as a foreign language and a knowledge of subjects and concepts that the students must acquire in the upper secondary course of education. Solbue writes:

When teaching has been adapted to an academic level based on the targets of the Knowledge Promotion reform (Kunnskapsløftet), it is the students who must adapt to the level of teaching, and not the other way around. This means that they must have a certain academic and linguistic competence in order to acquire knowledge, and consequently a number of students do not have equal access to this level of education. (Solbue, 2013, p. 75, our translation)

There is enormous variation in the student group in the length of time and amount of support that students have been given to learn Norwegian before they start secondary school. The same variation also applies to the students' proficiency in their first language and also to their proficiency in and experience with the English language (Burner & Carlsen, 2017; Ryen, 2018). The students' previous school experiences also vary, in length, scope, content and quality. Thus, newly arrived students bring with them varying degrees of language proficiency in their first language, in Norwegian and in English, as well as varying degrees of other school-related knowledge when they start secondary school. In inclusive learning, we would like every student to have the opportunity to participate and learn based on their linguistic and academic qualifications: for everyone to have equal access to education.

Do the students also have special needs?
Some newly arrived students will also have vulnerabilities associated with language and learning due to various types of learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, developmental language disorder (DSD), dyscalculia, cognitive problems or neuropsychological developmental disorders (Egeberg, 2012; Geva & Wiener, 2014; Øzerk, Handorff & Øzerk, 2011). Difficulties with learning may also be connected to traumatic experiences from a student's earlier or current life circum-stances. These traumas may be expressed in the classroom as behavioural difficulties or psychosocial difficulties. In order to understand the students and identify their adaptation needs, schools may need assistance.

When assessing whether a student has special education needs, the Educational Psychological Service (EPS) is the school's most important partner. An expert assessment by the EPS will examine a student's linguistic, cognitive, social, emotional and motivational capacities for learning, which requires an individual assessment. However, this assessment is not just about a student's individual capacity for learning. Although special education is a right that can be activated by the student's individual capacities for learning, the right to special education can also be activated by inadequate adaptation or a lack of available qualified teachers. EPS's work will therefore also be about obtaining information about the teaching that the student has received. An expert assessment will consider the school's overall competence, teaching skills, teaching methods and learning environment. The aim is to be able to evaluate the connection between the learning environment and individual capacities, as well as how the learning environment is structured in terms of allowing the student to participate and obtain a learning outcome. This means that schools are responsible for ensuring that the educational provision offered to newly arrived students does not cause or exacerbate learning difficulties or special needs.

The feeling of falling short – a feeling shared by teachers and students[2]
Teachers encounter a diversity of students in their everyday work. A study conducted in Sweden investigated teachers' experiences with newly arrived students in ordinary classes (Juvonen, 2015). On this matter, the Swedish teachers thought that for inclusion and learning to succeed, students must have basic second language skills, and that the school must be equipped to address their needs through good enough adaptation (see Holum, 2019 for elaboration). Acquiring academic knowledge may be more challeng-ing with limited second language vocabulary skills. Several teachers confirm this challenge, as illustrated in the following statement:

So, when the students come to us, should we be able to expect a certain level of Norwegian skills? How are we supposed to do our job if we constantly have to explain what words mean? After all, they should know what a set of scales is? Surely it is not our job to teach students that?

It is easy to understand that if teachers are to successfully take care of the students, they consider it essential for students to have basic language skills in the language of instruction – particularly at secondary school. The extract from Solbue's study of the communities of practice encountered by

2   References to teachers' statements other than in Solbue (2013) are based on comments made by teachers we have met through our work as advisers in Statped. We would particularly like to thank the staff at secondary schools in what used to be Vest Agder county authority for informative collaboration on the project *Inkludering på alvor* [*Taking inclusion seriously*]. The quotations are our own representations of the content of the discussions, and we have used them to highlight important topics from the teacher's perspective.

young immigrants when they come to secondary school illustrates the complexity involved in becoming a participant in a community – both as a student and as a teacher – when the verbal language as a communication tool is inadequate:

Ishmael has to do some turning work on a big machine. The teacher has explained the procedure, but he is obviously doing something wrong. Ishmael tries, the teacher stands on the other side and says: "Lift there, stop there". Ishmael chooses the wrong lever, and the teacher shouts: "NO, no, not like that! THAT lever there!" The teacher demonstrates one more time, slowly while explaining. Ishmael watches what he is doing, but he cannot see his hands. Then he tries again and gets it wrong once more. The teacher then places himself behind the boy, takes hold of his hands, and physically goes through the process. With slow and steady movements, they perform the operation. Then Ishmael nods, yes, now he can do it. And repeats the process several times on his own. Observation of a lesson in Industrial Machinery (Solbue, 2013, p. 73, our translation)

The examples illustrate that the teacher's attempt to "explain the procedure" of how to perform turning on the big machine was not sufficient for Ishmael. Instructions such as "lift there!" and "stop there!" did not provide specific enough guidance for Ishmael to be able to perform the operations on his own. The teacher gradually starts to slow things down and demonstrate the procedure, but Ishmael is unable to see what the teacher is doing. Finally, the teacher physically guides Ishmael through the process, and then he manages it on his own. This episode shows both the shortcomings of language-based instruction and the attempt to find solutions. It illustrates the student who needs guidance

in order to understand, and the teacher who does not succeed at first, but who finds a way and adapts.

Other teachers report the importance of communicating with their students like this:

One of the first things the students must learn in the machinery workshop is health and safety. That is absolutely vital. Because it could be fatal if the students push the wrong button! It is no use shouting from the other side of the workshop when they do not understand what we are saying. I would think we have the law on our side, but we are the ones who would have to live with ourselves for the rest of our lives if something happened to one of our students.

This description shows the potentially serious implications of the situation for teachers and students. The responsibility for students' health becomes even clearer when teachers cannot easily protect the students through verbal instructions or written guidance material. The schools must therefore find solutions that help the teachers to address the safety of their students. In terms of critical functions, the necessary adaptation could be to give the teacher or one of their colleagues the opportunity to perform individual reviews, in which they demonstrate, model and physically guide the students.

Safety is an important topic on many vocational training programmes. For example, we can imagine the significance of understanding basic safety for ourselves and others in the subjects of health and upbringing or restaurant and food studies. However, it is not only teachers on vocational training programmes who describe that they feel as if they are falling short in communication with students.

A common core subject teacher says:

Sometimes, when I stand there trying to explain something, and notice that a student has not understood a word of what I am saying, it feels almost like an assault. It hurts that this is what I have to offer. And even teachers know what it is like not to understand. So finally we give up and pretend, or carry on. It is exactly what we do not want the students to do. It is frustrating.

The teacher's statement highlights something fundamental: It is unpleasant not to understand or be understood when we talk. Teacher and student both give up, without quite knowing what the outcome of the conversation was. The frustration remains, and can accumulate over time.

Our focus is often whether newly arrived students are "sufficiently proficient in Norwegian" to be able to benefit from ordinary education (Education Act, 1998). However, "sufficiently proficient" also involves an emotional component, which relates to the experience of not being adequate in communication. Skowronski describes young people's insecurity in ordinary classes as academic insecurity and a feeling of language as a limiting factor (Skowronski, 2013). The examples above also show the teacher's insecurity. Several studies have shown that teachers experience insecurity when they encounter linguistic diversity (Hilt, 2017; Iversen, 2019). In other words, feeling inadequate in communication is a feeling shared by both students and teachers. Within the shared experience is a pedagogic opportunity to adapt expectations, make linguistic variation and linguistic shortcomings harmless, find solutions and acknowledge how long it takes to understand and to make oneself understood. It must be acknowledged that both teachers and students have different conditions for participation and communi-

cation in an inclusive learning environment.

For teachers, this is also about professionalism. About how they will provide teaching and participation when the Norwegian language is not sufficient in their interaction with students. We will now further investigate the teachers' pedagogic opportunities.

Pedagogic opportunities in an inclusive learning environment

In the following section, we present four approaches to adaptation of teaching that can address the complex set of challenges we have outlined. The approaches are based on a social constructivist view of teaching and on the connection between students' experiences, their language skills, participation and learning. The approaches target newly arrived students, both with and without special needs, in that they provide a structure for considering participation and learning in students with differing conditions for learning.

Systematic assessment

The first approach is about assessment. When teachers suspect learning disabilities, they try out various forms of adaption in their teaching and consider the need for assessment of the students (Education Act, 1998). This expectation is inherent in the Norwegian Education Act and indicates that every teacher who teaches a student should have knowledge of that student's need for adaptation in the subject that they are teaching. This applies to measures in ordinary teaching, adapted language education and special education. For example, a natural science teacher needs to know whether a student has good enough Norwegian language and reading skills to acquire knowledge from Norwegian language academic texts.

The practice of assessing students is not necessarily well enough incorporated in

schools, even for newly arrived students (Rambøll, 2016). It therefore becomes important for schools to ask themselves what they need to know about the students, and how they can embed this information in their system in a meaningful way.

Building relationships through dialogue

Many teachers highlight the initial dialogue with students as important. Here, the teachers receive valuable information about the students, and get to know them better. In the initial dialogue, teachers have the opportunity to communicate that they are interested in getting to know the students, and to acknowledge the students' self-presentations. The dialogue can give the teacher an initial insight into the life that the student has lived so far. The teacher learns about the student's educational background, areas of interest, motivation and wishes. The student's skills in their first language and other languages can be highlighted, and the teacher can guide the student in how these skills could be useful in the student's education. It is also important to get a sense of how the student perceives themselves as a student, which subjects the student feels they are good at, and what the student is dreading or is unsure of.

This information is important in terms of allowing teachers to adapt teaching (Ryen & Palm, 2019). For example, a student with several years of schooling and good written language skills in their first language has different adaptation needs compared to a student with fewer years of schooling (Geva & Wiener, 2014). In the same way, a student who so far feels comfortable with Norwegian schooling may feel better equipped for further education than a student who has so far been struggling. Every school should have a system in place for dialogues like this, which are based on a caring interest in who the student is and how education can

best be further adapted. There are also different ways of facilitating these dialogues, such as using bilingual teachers and interpreters (Ryen & Palm, 2019).

An initial dialogue is just the start of a continuous dialogue with the student. The teachers' observations of the student and exchanges during the school day are also important. It is also enshrined in the Education Act that every student shall be allocated a contact teacher who has special responsibility for the practical, administrative and social educational tasks concerning the student (Education Act, 1998). The role of the contact teacher is described by teachers in upper secondary schools as involving close collaboration with multiple parties in and outside the school community (Oldervik, Saur, & Ulleberg, 2020). One teacher describes this responsibility as like being "the student's immediate supervisor" (Oldervik, Saur & Ulleberg, 2020, p. 153). For newly arrived students in particular, the contact teacher can potentially be a kind of social guide: the contact teacher is part social worker, part public health nurse and part Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund adviser. The contact teacher is therefore a key person over time in terms of building up knowledge about how the education should be adapted in order to ensure that the individual student is learning.

Use of assessment tools

In addition to dialogues and observations, assessing students can involve procedures including both standardised tests and more informal assessments (Sattler, 2008). Assessment tests and test material must have good psychometric properties in order to be reliable and valid tools. This requires the tests to be linguistically and/or culturally adapted to the student group being assessed, and that the material has been standardised for the student group on whom the test will be used (Sattler, 2008).

The assessment tools currently available to the EPS and schools for assessing newly arrived students, have not been satisfactorily adapted to SLLs (Arnesen, Braeken, Ogden, & Melby-Lervåg, 2019; Rambøll, 2016). Interpreting test results and converting them into pedagogic adaptation therefore requires a high degree of expertise, both from schools and the EPS (Aagaard, 2011; Bøyesen, 2017). Because using Norwegian test tools with newly arrived students introduces potential sources of error, the need for adapted language education and special education should not be based on the test results alone but also be supplemented by qualitative assessments and other information.

Given the challenges involved in assessment procedures for newly arrived students, elements of dynamic assessment from socio-cultural learning theory are often recommended (Wertsch & Wertsch, 2009). The aim of dynamic assessment is to investigate what support the student needs in order to master a particular task. This kind of assessment is closely related to education in which the teacher consciously assesses what support and adaptation would help to give a student the opportunity to participate and learn.

A system perspective on assessment
Since most newly arrived students will receive most of their education within the setting of the classroom, the contact teacher and a cooperating teacher team play a key role in assessing the need for adapted language education. For the results of the assessment to be meaningful, the student themselves and all the student's teachers should be informed of the results and work together to establish relevant adaptation. Gathering information from multiple sources will enable teachers to understand how much and what type of support the student will need, for example when the student

needs to familiarise themselves with safety procedures, learn practical manual skills, read a text or work in a group in order to put together a presentation of a topic.

However, the prerequisites for a particular teacher to build up extensive knowledge of a student's learning capacities vary. In the upper secondary school system, some teachers teach large numbers of students in a week, giving them fewer hours with each student. Other teachers have fewer students and encounter each one of them more often. It is therefore important to have good systems for building up a partnership in order to provide adaptation for classes and individual students. This kind of partnership can be established through a team at the school made up of subject teachers, Norwegian teachers, as well as special education teachers and the EPS, who all build up expertise in implementing, interpreting and using assessment as a basis for adaptation. It may also be beneficial to incorporate the results of assessments and follow-up work on adaptation implemented for newly arrived students in annual plans, ensuring that these become regular topics on planning days, subject team meetings, class teacher councils and tripartite meetings.

Incorporating students' linguistic background and experiences into teaching
The second approach we would like to highlight involves incorporating students' resources in terms of language and experience into language teaching and classroom dialogue (Egeberg, 2012; Egeberg & Fulland, 2019; Gibbons, 2016). Newly arrived students come to Norway with skills in at least one language. We want to emphasise that their vocabulary skills obviously do not just consist of their vocabulary in their second language Norwegian, but also consist of vocabulary in their first language,

and often a third language such as English or French (Monsrud, Rydland, Geva, Thurmann-Moe, & Halaas Lyster, 2019). Similarly, newly arrived students will have experienced the world in contexts that are different to those of students who have grown up in Norway. Some newly arrived students will be the only ones at their school to have their particular first language or frame of references, while others will share their language and frame of reference with a few or many fellow students. This provides a range of opportunities for teaching and interaction in their school.

The students' first language and previous language of instruction are important, in terms both of learning a new language and establishing new knowledge, because all learning should be based on students' existing skills (Gibbons, 2016). The content of the curriculum should therefore always be based around an individual student's experience with the subject matter to be learned. The students might know very well what a set of scales is, it is just that they do not know the Norwegian word for it. Or the student may never have seen a set of scales, and therefore needs to acquire specific experience with how scales are used in the kitchen, while also acquiring the language for this experience. Subject and language learning thereby interact reciprocally. Øzerk (2016) describes the relationship between linguistic development, experience-based development and academic development as *the substantial hypothesis*. The basis of the hypothesis is that in order to develop linguistically, the student must also have some content to talk about. The subject matter consists of knowledge, academic terms, words, expressions, phrases, approaches, skills and attitudes, and is the substance of the subject (Øzerk, 2016).

On the basis of such an understanding, linguistic development is as much a result

of as a requirement for the newly arrived student's academic development. By working with the term *scales*, a student will both learn the language needed to talk about scales and weighing, and also obtain knowledge of how and why we must measure weight in various contexts. In a learning situation, the student will also be able to support their understanding of the academic content by using their first language, which in turn will support their ability to use the Norwegian language to communicate on the subject (Egeberg, 2012). In practice, this can involve teachers providing adaptation to ensure that students prepare for a topic in their strongest language and use their first language when they make notes and work, before presenting something in Norwegian, reflecting with other students with the same first language, using multilingual reference material or systematically using digital translation functions. For example, see resources on the Tema Morsmål website: https://morsmal.no/no/matematikk/ matematikkvideoer-pa-flere-sprak.

Interdisciplinary vocabulary learning
A third approach emphasise systematic and interdisciplinary work with vocabulary. A large and nuanced vocabulary is highly significant in terms of learning outcome and reading comprehension. A large group of newly arrived students starting at secondary school have a Norwegian language vocabulary that is not yet well developed. This applies both to the words of which they have knowledge (broad vocabulary), and to the words of which they have a good understanding (in-depth vocabulary). Broad and in-depth vocabulary are both important in terms of learning outcome and reading comprehension, and if the vocabulary does not develop well enough, this can lead to persistent difficulties in following and participating in education (Lyster, 2019).

When it comes to strengthening the Norwegian language, it is the same factors that facilitates adequate development of monolingual skills, that facilitate the adequate development of a second language. The National Reading Panel in the USA summarised studies of the effect of measures to strengthen vocabulary development (2000). They concluded that vocabulary teaching must be systematic and long-term in order to be effective. The effect also depends on explicit and thorough teaching. The conclusions across the studies indicate that vocabulary should be learned both directly and indirectly using a range of methods and approaches. Engaging and differentiated texts, a range of contexts and numerous repetitions help to strengthen vocabulary (National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority & Youth, 2006).

An example of a research-based programme that has been developed to help teachers integrate work with vocabulary into practical teaching is "Word Generation" (Lawrence, Capotosto, Branum-Martin, White, & Snow, 2012). The programme emphasises vocabulary that generates new knowledge and an understanding beyond the immediate use of the word. The programme is therefore not based on typical subject-specific words, but on academic words, such as *reflect* and *argue*. The thinking behind the programme is that understanding academic vocabulary will also help to achieve a better understanding of new words, because students learn to think about vocabulary in a more nuanced way and acquire strategies to use when they encounter words that they do not understand (Frost, Ottem, Hagtvet, & Snow, 2016; Monsrud, 2013). This programme also involves a clear component of collaboration. Turning the systematic and thorough learning of words into a joint endeavour for all students helps to create inclusive learning.

It is important to have an organisational model for groups of newly arrived students that ensures coherence between the various educational provisions (Holum, 2019). There has been a focus here on the coherence between the adapted language education and the ordinary teaching received by the student. Curriculum planning work is regarded by many people as a way to collaborate in order to create inclusive education. It allows the teachers to jointly reflect about the adaptations within their subject areas and across curricula through the entire academic year. We also highlight the opportunities that lie in the fact that collaboration does not necessarily involve being in the same place at the same time. Digital collaboration platforms make it possible to collaboratively write and contribute to the same document, but at different times. This would enable teachers to plan their teaching together, even if their schedules are different.

Visual support, modelling and alternative forms of expression

A fourth and final approach is recognising visual support, modelling and alternative forms of expression in teaching.

In the earlier example about Ishmael, we saw how the teacher adapted his linguistic expression by slowing the pace and then modelling the procedure and physically guiding the student. Modelling is an important pedagogic principle in all teaching. It can involve the teacher showing a finished product, demonstrating how an experiment is to be done, holding a presentation for students in the same way as the students are expected to make a presentation, or allowing the students to see a finished text. Systematic modelling involves gradually making the student independent through a number of phases (Refsahl, 2012): first modelling the learning goal of the student, then carrying out a new strategy together

with the student, then guiding the student when he or she tries the procedure themselves, and finally facilitating in order to allow the student to independently practise and use what they have learned (Refsahl, 2012).

Another question is how teachers can assess what the students know in a subject, when what they know cannot be identified through monolingual expressions of competence.

One teacher puts it like this:

Students know so much more than they get to demonstrate! We know that they know something, but they are not able to explain that to us or write it in Norwegian. But we know that they know! We just know it.

These teachers feel that students know so much more than what they are able to express in the Norwegian language, and this leads us to the question of how the students can demonstrate what they know. We believe that it is important for teachers to explore how they can gain insight into students' skills. Is it through observations of the student's behaviour in the classroom? When the student uses their first language and their communication appears to have a different flow? When the student demonstrates, draws or builds something?

Through their interest and the questions that the student tries to ask? By exploring students' competencies beyond the second language only, teachers can convert assumptions into pedagogic and inclusive adaptation. For example, we could see students getting to demonstrate their competencies by filming or photographing procedures instead of writing a log. Or by using mind maps instead of writing a coherent text.

Together on inclusive learning

In this chapter, we investigated the implications that the complex background of newly arrived students with and without special needs could have on teaching adaptation. We have highlighted some aspects of the teacher's role as a facilitator of participation and learning for newly arrived students. We have looked at how creating inclusive learning requires knowledge both of a student's learning conditions and of the adaptation options generally available in the school.

Our experience is that teachers in upper secondary schools are highly committed on behalf of a composite group of students. Every upper secondary school is a unique organisation, but many of them have the same challenges and find different solutions within their school systems. Inclusive learning for students with varying language skills and conditions for learning requires cooperation between teachers representing different subject areas with respect to teaching content. Adapted teaching and special adaptation in order to develop an inclusive community also requires cooperation between players at different levels and between parties with different competencies.

Our meetings with teachers at upper secondary schools have taught us a great deal about good practice that preferably could be shared internally between teaching communities and between schools to a greater extent, in order to further develop inclusive learning for all students.

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Support for participation

From a sociocultural perspective, children's learning and development occurs through building relationships and interaction with others, both adults and peers. Vygotsky uses the term 'zone of proximal development' to describe what the child can master with the help from a more 'competent' individuals, which could be other children or adults in kindergartens and schools. The following five chapters provide examples of practice that adapts in order for children with special needs to be able to participate in inclusive learning communities with their peers.

Anne-Merete Kleppenes:

Communities in different arenas

Based on a discussion of Imanuel, aged 14, and some of his communication partners, Anne-Merethe highlights why it is so important that individuals who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) have the opportunity to communicate with different individuals in different arenas.

Bente Corneliussen:

Blind children's participation in the natural flow of play

Bente writes about children with blindness and their participation in play. She directs attention to how adults in kindergartens can support and adapt for equality and inclusion so that the child becomes a natural part of the children's community.

Karine Bekkely:

Adults' dialogue skills to support children's participation in the community

Based on practice cases, Karine highlights how adults in kindergartens and schools can support and adapt so that children, irrespective of challenges, can participate in play and interaction with peers. The opportunity to participate in play and experience belonging to the children's community is a core component of an inclusive community.

Nadja Akinshina:

Inclusive practices in kindergarten for toddlers with a cochlear implant

Nadja argues the importance of language development in natural situations for children with a cochlear implant (CI). She calls attention to the relational dimension and opportunities educators have to adapt for inclusion and participation in toddler departments of kindergartens.

Ena Caterina Heimdahl and Helene Fulland:

Small projects at a snail's pace — small for whom?

Ena and Helene describe an approach to building inclusive communities where children with multiple disabilities are part of the group of children. They underscore the importance of shared reflections by the adults regarding experienced inclusion dilemmas that may expand horizons for inclusion and strengthen them in their work of adapting for inclusive communities.

Communication in different arenas

In this chapter, I will demonstrate why it is important that individuals who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) have the opportunity to communicate with different people in different arenas.

Anne-Merete Kleppenes

To elucidate this position, I will base the following discussion on 14-year-old Imanuel and some of his communication partners from three different arenas. I have become acquainted with Imanuel through my work at Statped, where I have worked as an adviser in the field of AAC for a number of years. Imanuel is largely unable to communicate using spoken language. He is able to voice a few sounds and words, e.g., he is able to say 'yes', 'no', 'mama' and some letter sounds. He shouts when he is happy. He also knows some hand signals and has a well-developed body language. The problem is that he is largely unable to convey what he has done or is thinking about through body language. Three years ago, he received a means of communication, a Minspeak speech generating device, and with the aid of this device he is able to express himself more accurately.

A few months after Imanuel received his means of communication, he attended a check-up at the hospital. He had been to the doctor in question many times, but they had never before had a conversation. This was now possible, and the doctor enquired, among other things, about what Imanuel enjoys and what he would be doing later.

At the end of the check-up, the doctor eagerly stated: "Imanuel, this is fantastic! You can speak with me! You know, I'm a doctor and a professor, and I have students, many students. They must meet you. Would you accompany me to a lecture so that you can speak with them?" Imanuel pressed his speech generating device, followed by: "No thank you!"

To me, this is what inclusive community is about. That Imanuel, or others, are able to set their own boundaries, be heard and belong, regardless of who they are with. To participate and influence, irrespective of arena. Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of Child enshrines that all children should have the opportunity to express their views and be heard. This includes at school with teachers and classmates or at home with parents and siblings. It also includes during leisure time and the activities in which the children participate. Even if children do not always get their way, they should be allowed to express themselves (Norwegian Government, 2003).

I have spoken with some of the people with whom Imanuel enjoys communicating, and who enjoy communicating with him. They are two friends and an social worker

at the school, a doctor and a barber. I have been put in touch with these communication partners through Imanuel's mother. Both they and Imanuel are aware that the time I have spent with them, the interviews, and the conversations we have had, are used as a basis for the content in this chapter. The informants and Imanuel's family have been offered the chance to read this chapter and have been given the opportunity to provide input to the text.

This chapter consist of two parts. The first is a theory section which clarifies the meaning of AAC, and elucidates how communication, language and language environment and communication partners are important for development, learning and participation. Thereafter, I will introduce Imanuel and discuss what I have done to obtain information which will be presented toward the end. Extracts from the interviews have been included to highlight the potential significance of being able to participate in various arenas for individuals who use AAC.

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)

Individuals like Imanuel, who are without functional speech, require access to, and training in, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), in order to be able to express their views, thoughts and feelings. Some individuals will require AAC across their lifespan, while others will need it for a limited period of time or in specific situations. Common to all those who require AAC is that spoken language is insufficient during face-to-face communication (Tetzchner & Martinsen, 2002). Most individuals who use AAC under-stand Norwegian but are dependent on having an alternative way of expressing themselves. Alternatives to spoken language include hand signals, graphic symbols or writing. Individuals who require AAC should be given access to it as early as possible after the need has been identified (Eberhart et al., 2017).

Both the individual who requires AAC and the community around them require training in the use of AAC. How such training should be implemented depends on both individual and environmental circumstances. The objective is to make it possible for the individual to have a means of contacting others, and for the individual to be able to express what he or she wants. Communication is important for autonomy, social participation, learning and development, education and employment and for inclusion purposes (Vartun, 2018). Inclusion is not merely an ideological goal. It is also a tool to promote development. This is based on a belief that participation in different social and cultural activities promotes language development (Dahl Rasmussen, 2015).

Language is a key to learning. Through language, we gain access to knowledge and are able to show what we are capable of. We strengthen social relations and develop both socially and psychologically through the use of language. Participation in daily activities and interactions with peers, on the playground, during recess or in the classroom, provides access to language but also linguistic models and opportunities to practice communication (Vartun, 2018). Communication with the aid of AAC and training in the use is a task assigned to the schools (Norwegian Education Act, 1998, Section 2-16). However, it is also a task for other arenas. We learn language in all natural settings and learning in different arenas has been shown to be key to good development (Lund & Light, 2007, Eberhart et al., 2017, Sennot et al., 2016).

Communication using AAC

When assessing how we can support an individual who uses AAC as their form of expression, we must always emphasise finding forms of expression which to the greatest extent support the individual's current communication but also provides

the individual with an opportunity for continuing development. This is important as language is essential to interaction, learning and participation in all arenas (www.regjeringen. no). Individuals with significant communication disabilities are characterised by their communication being difficult to recognise and that it is unfamiliar to others (Blackstone & Berg, 2003). Use of alternative means of communication alters the flow, slows the pace, and influences the dynamics of the interaction (Beukelman & Mirenda, 2013).

Many individuals with communication disabilities and limited speech rarely initiate conversations, may struggle to respond to initiatives from others and rarely pose questions (de Bortoli et al., 2010). Therefore, it is not easy to be the person speaking with individuals who require an alternative means of expressing themselves. Low expectations harboured by conversation partners cause many to become communicative under-achievers (Tetzchner & Martinsen, 2002). The most common pitfalls are either avoiding contact and communication or becoming overly dominant in the conversation. This can be avoided through knowledge and competence (Bottegaard Næss, 2015). Bottegaard Næss describes a good communication partner as someone who is patient, motivated and interested. Patience is a particularly important skill; it takes time to communicate with the aid of AAC.

Language environment should provide opportunities for communication

The language environment should provide experience in communicating, access to new words and new ways of using them. A good language environment stimulates linguistic activity and is important for everyone (Østvik, 2008).

Østvik has developed a model with multiple components in a language environment that must be present in order for an individual to be able to learn and develop their communication using AAC. Language development is entirely dependent on those close to the individual having positive attitudes toward AAC, and that they understand and recognise that the individual achieves a higher quality of life and greater independence by using AAC. This requires a belief in that the individual has something he or she wants to say. A good language environment also emphasises the physical surroundings, having interesting and exciting topics of conversation and having ways of discussing them.

Even if an individual receives a suitable alternative means of communication, he or she will require specific training and practice in using this form of expression over an extended period of time in order for the communication to function. Often, access to an alternative form of expression arrives too late, entailing that the individual may have gone years without sufficient communication training and practice. It has been documented that children with typical language development at 18 months of age have been exposed to spoken language for 4380 hours (Korsten, 2011). Research has shown that children with a typical language development hear 125,000 words a week of spoken language. In comparison, children who require AAC see or hear 24,000 words a week (Sennot et al., 2016). This tells us that we communicate less with children who require AAC, both in terms of spoken language and their alternative form of expression. One of the reasons for this is that children who use AAC encounter fewer people and are present in fewer arenas.

Communication partners

Communication partners is a particularly important component of the overall language environment. The individual attitudes and skills of communication partners are key in order for the individual who uses AAC to have the opportunity to communicate, participate and show who they are. Regarding communicating with the use of AAC, it is said that this is not an intuitive skill. Rather, it is something we must learn (The Norwegian Directorate for Learning and Training, 2020). Attitudes are expressed through the ways we think, act and feel. Attitudes are easy to discuss but may be difficult to concretise in skills. Østvik (2008) writes the following regarding working with AAC:

Attitudes can be a double-edged sword; they open for possibilities while at the same time they may prevent development. Our attitudes toward how an individual communicates and what aspects are important in an individual's communication will be decisive for the development of a good language environment.

My experience is that the combination of positive attitudes and practical skills form a good foundation in individuals I consider to be good communication partners.

Different arenas and communication experiences

We discuss, and are interested in, different topics in different situations. We also experience different requirements, both in terms of the input we are expected to contribute and how we express ourselves. Therefore, all arenas contribute in different ways. Different arenas and different communication partners provide us with a varied base of experiences, topics, encounters, words and ways of communicating. To an extent, we speak in different ways with different people. Those who interact with Imanuel, or others who express themselves with the aid of AAC and are tasked with getting him or others to speak, have to be good communication partners. They must also provide access to a language environment in which Imanuel and others receive support to express what they want or receive answers to their enquiries. The Speech-Language & Audiology Association of Canada (SAC) states that individuals who use AAC have a considerable potential for language development if they have positive experiences of using their form of expression. Thereby, they will be able to communicate more, develop a more complex language and learn more communicative strategies. In turn, this will increase the likelihood of more experiences and contribute to them becoming better users of AAC (SAC, 2014).

If an individual is approached as someone with abilities, it will result in greater social acceptance and inclusion, improved self-confidence, and greater motivation to participate (SAC, 2014). Expecting competence is not a matter of believing that the individual knows everything immediately but instead that he or she is capable of learning (Davison-Hoult & Ward, 2018). It is common for those close to and who work with individuals who use AAC to set the bar low in terms of expectations for both participation and learning. "When we know that many individuals with communication disabilities have little belief in their own abilities, and if they also view themselves with the same low expectations others have of them, this naturally affects their self-image." (Vartun, 2018)

Social competence

Everyone has a need to develop their social competence. For an individual who uses AAC, this can be challenging. This is because social competence is closely related to language skills. Language development only occurs when we use language together with other people. Communicative competence is the ability to communicate functionally in natural settings and in daily activities and the ability to meet daily communication needs (Light & McNaugthon, 2014). Most are able to do this. For individuals who express themselves through AAC, this requires access to a form of expression with a vocabulary that can be utilised in different arenas, receiving training in the use thereof and an environment that has both time and ambitions to contribute to this development.

For most people, small talk is important in social interaction. We shoot the breeze, discussing various topics that interest us. This is not always particularly informative but plays an important role in terms of establishing and maintaining social interactions, and thereby provides us with more language experiences. Adults who use AAC report that social situations are challenging for them and they especially find that a lack of experience with small talk is significant. It is challenging to engage in small talk (Beukelman & Mirenda, 2013). The optimal outcome of interactions in which a communication device is utilised is not the use of symbols or the device itself. Rather, it is the ability to exchange opinions and be an active participant in various life situations (ASHA, 2004).

Considering that individuals who use AAC receive fewer communicative challenges, I am making a point in this chapter of speaking with communication partners who interact with Imanuel in arenas other than school. Visibility is important in terms of inclusion and participation. Through encounters with different people in different arenas, such as the school. hospital and barbershop, Imanuel receives different and varied experiences with words and the use thereof in different types of conversations. He also gains experience with different communicative intentions, such as highlighting thoughts, ideas and desires, and he is able to describe, enquire, quarrel and joke. This contributes to communicative and language development and thereby academic and social development. I will discuss this in greater detail. First, however, I will introduce Imanuel.

Imanuel

Imanuel communicates in an alternative manner, because what he is able to say through speech is insufficient to express the language skills he possesses in his mind. He needs to express himself in a different manner.

When Imanuel was 11 years old, his application to the NAV (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) Assistive Technology Centre was granted and he was able to borrow a communication device; a Minspeak speech generating device. This device is a small computer with speech synthesis. Icons or symbols are combined in various ways on the monitor and read aloud using speech synthesis (Statped, 2020). With the Minspeak, Imanuel is able to express himself using both standalone words and sentences. Imanuel can also use it to write. Tetzchner and Martinsen (2002) categorise individuals who require AAC into three functional main groups: the expressive language group, the supportive language group, and the alternative language group. It is important to determine what functional main group an individual belongs to in terms of facilitation and requirements of communication partners. I would place Imanuel in the expressive language group. Imanuel understands considerably more than he is able to express with the use of spoken language. This means that when he is to learn something, you can

explain it to him, and he will largely understand. A few individuals close to him are responsible for giving Imanuel access to words and teaching him how to retrieve them, technically, on the speech generating device. Thus, as his communication partner, you can speak normally to him. In order for us to understand Imanuel, he needs to use the speech generating device. Individuals in the alternative language group require AAC both in order to understand and to be able to express themselves. For such individuals, it is especially important that communication partners use AAC in the same manner as them. Imanuel does not need this, since he belongs to the expressive language group.

When Imanuel received the speech generating device and learned how to use it, he was able to demonstrate that he knew and understood a lot more than those close to him believed. For instance, it was revealed that his reading skills were much better than both the school and family were aware.

Since receiving training, he is also able to express himself using long sentences with various types of content. Here are some examples from conversations between Imanuel and his mother: "*I can decide the music in the car myself, Iron Man*", and "*I'm not going to church today. No thank you, Mamma*". He is able to convey experiences he has had, such as the following: "*I and Mamma and Pappa, and Elise travelled to London during the Christmas holidays*". Imanuel also has a delightful sense of humour, which he demonstrated when his sister asked him the following: "*What do you think I should wear to the party tomorrow, Imanuel?*" He answered: "*No clothes!*" Everyone had a good laugh and then Imanuel added: "*Just kidding!*"

The first time I met Imanuel, he had only recently received his speech generating device. Imanuel was a bit shy and was unable to tell me how he wanted me to spend time with him. Therefore, I had to draw upon my previous experiences from encounters with others who use AAC. After greeting each other, we sat down together. Imanuel quickly pressed his device and said: "*Today is 7 September and the time is 14:52*." This is not a traditional conversation starter, but it provided quite a bit of information. This was something I perceived as being important and exciting for Imanuel to talk about. Therefore, I thought I should follow-up this topic in order for us to establish good contact. I was fortunate with the date and could respond: "*You know, 7 September is my mother's birthday. She turned 78 years old today.*" We were able to establish a good conversation around this topic. Dates, birthdays and time. He told me about what he had done and what he would be doing later that week. "*Tomorrow, I'm going to visit Grandpa*", he told me, using his speech generating device. Then, we looked at pictures and talked about them. I noticed that Imanuel liked me and I think he noticed that I liked him. Through communication, we established a relationship.

At the time of my first encounter with Imanuel, he had only recently started using his speech generating device. This resulted in me, as his communication partner, having to adjust to him. Now that Imanuel has become better at using his Minspeak device, it is natural that the communicative demands of him change and increase. However, it remains challenging for Imanuel to take on too great a responsibility in conversations. He only has three years of experience in using this form of expression, and although he understands most things, he still cannot be expected to communicate optimally. This requires more training and experience.

I will now introduce the informants, before elucidating why we need to facilitate the use of AAC in different arenas, in order to thereby contribute to an inclusive community.

Communicative development in different arenas

In early January, I met with all of my informants. They had received information about the book and this chapter, and they had received an overview of the topics I would be interviewing them about. I made recordings of the interviews and subsequently transcribed them. At the school, I first interviewed two classmates who have known Imanuel for many years, followed by a social worker who has worked with Imanuel in Grade 8th. Then, I accompanied Imanuel and his mother to the barbershop. I interviewed the barber while he gave Imanuel a haircut. Now and then, Imanuel would remark on our conversation. Then, we drove to the hospital together, where we met with his doctor.

The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to an hour.

Arena: School

Imanuel attends Grade 8th. I met with two classmates of his and the social worker, six months into the school year.

Before Imanuel started lower secondary school, staff members received information about the way Imanuel communicates. Some from his primary school, but mostly from his family. Among other things, the school received a film which his mother and older sister had made. As a school, they learned a lot from this film, the social worker explained. The social worker continued the work of sharing information with the team that works most closely with Imanuel and also with other personnel. The social worker stated that, for her, it is important to show respect in relation to both Imanuel and his family by seeking to familiarise herself with Imanuel's situation. As an example of this, she stated that she has emphasised and worked on showing that Imanuel's speech generating device is his voice. She stated as follows:

Minspeak is a part of Imanuel. In fact, it is his voice. I would not interrupt you if you struggled to complete your thoughts. Occasionally, I hear "Let's just continue, and you can speak when you are ready". What kind of signal does this send?

She emphasised that those in his language environment need different follow-up depending on what role they have in relation to Imanuel. Some require more knowledge than others, but they all need to know enough to understand. They have been concerned both with how they themselves speak and interact with Imanuel and others, and also how Imanuel communicates and behaves.

The importance of understanding Imanuel is also something his two friends have experienced. They have known Imanuel for many years and are together with him a lot in their leisure time. In early autumn, they gave a presentation to their class. They spoke about Imanuel, what he likes and how he communicates. Imanuel did not attend the presentation as he felt this would be difficult. They had prepared the content of their presentation in cooperation with Imanuel and his mother. One of his friends stated as follows:

I try to show others what Imanuel is like, for them to be able to understand him. I have brought friends home or to the movies together with him and others. I must say, when you meet new people, he does shout quite a bit, but he shouts for joy, you know? It's odd but also nice, because this is his way of showing he's happy, you know? Nowadays, no one bats an eyelid when he makes those noises.

The experience of his friends and the social worker is that the understanding this generated gave the other pupils courage to speak with Imanuel. In turn, they learned how they

should speak with him. For instance, not using baby language. "The others just need to know that he's just like everyone else, both brilliant and ordinary, the only thing is that he can't speak! If you speak with him, speak normally and don't use baby language."

This information was important for the acceptance and involvement of Imanuel in the class. These perspectives regarding learning outcomes and development are shared by several parties. It is not only Imanuel who benefits from this, the social worker informed. Imanuel's classmates, both the two classmates I interviewed, and the rest of the class, and, according to the social worker, the entire school, has learned a lot about communication this semester. The value of being able to express yourself clearly. Both as individuals and for the school as a community. This has resulted in greater social acceptance and Imanuel is actively participating at the school and in class. His self-confidence has improved, and he interacts with the world differently than before. This is the experience of both his friends and the social worker. He is given greater opportunities to stand up for himself, influence and participate. Through accessing language, Imanuel is able to actively take part in the community.

In addition to receiving information, the class is also involved in the continuing development of Imanuel's Minspeak content. Among other things, his classmates have been tasked with creating a list of teen slang he should have on his speech generating device. Examples of words entered into Imanuel's speech generating device are 'snitch' (tattling), 'chilling' (relaxing, taking it easy), and 'irr' (irritating). These are important words, socially. Moreover, it is important that the school contributes with a vocabulary that enables Imanuel to participate in academic conversations.

The social worker expressed that 'respect', in her opinion, is interrelated with 'familiarising yourself with the other's situation'. Imanuel's class has tried various types of role play. They have learned hand signals, communicated by pointing and using communication boards, and have had conversations two by two together, where only one of them was allowed to answer 'yes' or 'no'. One comment from the class was: "Imanuel is incredibly good at this!!" Through the experience with the class, and subsequent conversations, the social worker found that it generated greater understanding and respect for Imanuel: "It's easy to underestimate him, so it's important to show what he's capable of. This earns him respect." One experience that arose in the class discussions was the importance of taking time and waiting until the other person has expressed themselves. As everyone became better acquainted, staff members at the school discovered that Imanuel in fact did not stand out so much from the other teenagers. He enjoys rock music, exciting movies, cool clothes and hairstyles, and he enjoys being challenged in terms of learning. Therefore, others see him as a person.

For Imanuel, it is not particularly important that many in his language environment are able to use his specific means of communication, since he belongs to the expressive language group (Tetzchner & Martinsen, 2002). However, being skilled in forms of communication other than speech is useful for everyone. This allows you to experience how long time it takes to express yourself using the device, and what you are able to say. Many will experience that they reduce the scope of what they say, because the experience of occupying others' time is so impactful. It may contribute to illuminating skills such as displaying patience, waiting and listening (Beukelman & Mirenda, 2013). The understanding of individuals who use AAC may be enhanced.

The fact that classmates are involved in Imanuel's communication is especially important for the class environment, the social worker expressed: She conveyed this as follows: "Teenagers value and have a natural relationship with differentness. It is acceptable to be different, or unlike others."

There is a body of research documenting that this is not always the case, and there are varying degrees of acceptance and recognition. In any case, the experiences of the three representatives from the school are positive. The social worker also highlighted a key issue by stating:

I think there is a fear of not approaching this appropriately and many are apprehensive. But you must dare to ask questions! Personally, I think this is great fun. This is my experience, but we're all different, after all. Not everyone will say: "I love AAC!"

The social worker stated that she has become more aware of her own communication after getting to know Imanuel. "What I say has to correspond with my actions." She explained that she now consciously uses gestures, body language and mimicry. "I show that I'm interested, through my body language, by leaning forward toward the person I'm with. Through deliberately showing interest and enthusiasm, I'm reinforcing what is happening between us."

At school, Imanuel encounters various communication partners who have varying degrees of knowledge about him and the manner in which he communicates. This can potentially provide him with both social and educational development. This requires that the school takes responsibility, as the linguistic, social and academic learning arena for Imanuel and the other pupils. The benefits for the participating parties at the school can to a lesser extent than in the other arenas be based on chance. This requires deliberate and purposeful efforts in terms of communication, language and participation from the school.

Arena: Hospital

Imanuel's doctor knew him before he received the Minspeak device. He has met many individuals who communicate in alternative ways, and has found that the focus in encounters with this group has changed in recent years to emphasise how the words is used in communication:

In the past, we were concerned with learning words, but you have to be able to communicate. And to do that, you must use what you have. After all, communication is everything. Communication comes first. It won't help possessing the words if you can't use them.

In our conversation, the doctor highlighted an attitude we should have when encountering others, and especially in his role as a doctor in relation to patients: "If you are wondering whether a person you are speaking with has a reduced intellectual capacity, you should assume that they don't. Approach them on this basis. Assume that their competence is good." The doctor stated that he experiences that some patients are shocked when they encounter expectations. Furthermore, he noted: "This is extremely important! Especially for good language comprehension, it is extremely important to facilitate the possibility to express yourself." We also discussed how you should avoid picking easier topics or believing that the person you are speaking with does not understand you. This spoils the interaction, because the other person 'exposes' you. If your assumptions were incorrect and you approached the other person with too high expectations, this can easily be addressed. The doctor expressed that something happens if you approach others with low expectations, as he or she may think: 'Yet another person who doesn't see me.'

Underestimating results in low self-confidence and a lack of interest in communicating with others (Vartun, 2018). Being approached as someone with abilities, however, will result in greater social acceptance and inclusion, improved self-confidence and greater motivation to participate (SAC, 2014). Expecting competence is not a matter of believing that the individual knows everything immediately but instead that he or she is capable of learning (Davison-Hoult & Ward, 2018). An important basic attitude you can adopt in conversations with individuals who require AAC, can therefore be an expectation that he or she has the ability to communicate and learn (Østvik, 2008).

The doctor supported his claims regarding expectations as follows: "I am completely irreverent in the sense that I am not afraid of making a fool of myself!" Knowing the appropriate level of expectation is often difficult when the person you encounter does not display their competence through speech, nor perhaps through their actions. It is common for those close to and who work with individuals who use AAC to set the bar far too low in terms of expectations for both participation and learning (Tetzchner & Martinsen, 2002, Vartun, 2018).

During the encounter in the hospital, especially with this doctor, Imanuel was challenged in other types of conversations than at school. He was required to speak about how he is doing, whether anything special has happened since the last consultation, and he was challenged to influence his own treatment. In order to participate in this type of conversation, he requires other types of words and expressions than he requires at school. In the interaction, the doctor contributed by expecting that Imanuel could contribute and gave him time and opportunity to respond.

One year after Imanuel first declined accompanying the doctor to a lecture with 120 medical students, he accepted the invitation. After the lecture, the doctor stated: "It is so impressive how he could express what he wanted at lightning speed!"

I have asked Imanuel why he changed his mind but have not received an answer. My theory is that Imanuel's self-image had improved considerably. He had gained an additional year of experience, and correspondingly positive feedback from his community. Consider how important it was that the doctor understood the value of this and asked again, and that Imanuel, this time, dared to accept the invitation. The doctor summarised why he wanted the medical students to meet Imanuel as follows:

The students learned a great deal from meeting Imanuel. They will never forget their encounter with him and have understood a lot. Where to set the bar, and the importance of communication, and the level of external pressure on being able to communicate. That it should not be assumed that everyone can communicate using speech. The importance of making oneself understood is enormous!

Arena: Barbershop

Imanuel's hair is thick and grows fast. Therefore, he is often at the barbershop, and they know each other quite well. They have a relationship that has developed over time. Barbers are known for being skilled at small talk. This is also the case with Imanuel's barber. He has not received training in the use of the means of communication, but he has received an explanation from Imanuel's mother regarding how Imanuel communicates and how he, as a communication partner, can best interact with Imanuel.

The barber enthusiastically explained how he draws upon his experiences from all conversation in new encounters, including those he has had with Imanuel. This is important to the barber: "Being interested in the person you are speaking with. I have to be interested in the person sitting in this chair! Interest and expectation are perhaps two sides of the same coin?" The barber applies the same ideas in relation to all his customers: "I like it when my customers leave shaking their heads thinking 'what an odd experience'!"

I experienced this when I spent time with Imanuel and his barber. Their interaction was characterised by reciprocal interest, creativity, and tomfoolery, at the same time as the respect between them was obvious. The barber also noted the following:

I have so much self-confidence that I'm not afraid of trying. Few things are risky. That is the way it is with everyone I encounter. And things have gone 'well' so many times that I build on it. I dare to challenge myself further.

What I also observed was that the conversations between Imanuel and his barber have a different type of content than at the school and the hospital. Here, Imanuel would again use the word 'chilling', even though I did not observe this. At the barbershop, it is all about small talk and simple topics such as Imanuel's cats or the barber's dogs. Or their tastes in music. Imanuel's barber likes opera but Imanuel does not. Small talk is challenging for individuals who use AAC (Beukelman & Mirenda, 2013, SAC, 2014). At the same time, we know that small talk is of great value for everyone in terms of establishing and maintaining social relationships. Therefore, perhaps it is the linguistic competence Imanuel gains from the barbershop that can take him the furthest in terms of coping with life and participation?

Summary

We learn language through experience. When a child learns to speak, this is a process that occurs through being seen, heard, and communicated with. When an individual requires AAC and is to communicate in an alternative manner, he or she is completely dependent on having access to communication partners who dare to see, listen and communicate with him or her. Experiences with communication and use of language are important. Imanuel has received a speech generating device, but these are merely his words. For Imanuel to 'become skilled' he needs to have someone with whom he can communicate.

It is you, me and us he needs to communicate with. Imanuel and his communication partners display this in practice. Imanuel is seen and heard. Through alternative communication, Imanuel has gained access to new ways of acquiring and displaying knowledge. Through being active in different language environments, he has gained experiences with different types of conversations. Because Imanuel encounters interested communication partners with positive attitudes, such as openness, time, patience and expectations, and skills including daring, waiting and listening, this allows both Imanuel and his communication partners to develop.

Thank you, Imanuel and the people in your life, for allowing me to tell this story!

Get to know Imanuel better

You can become better acquainted with Imanuel through Statped's e-learning here: https://statped.instructure.com/courses/3/pages/9-dot-1-avsluttende-tekst?module_item_id=877, or in this article from Statpedmagasinet https://www.statped.no/globalassets/statpedmagasinet/dokumenter/statpedmagasinet_2_2017_dobbeltsider.pdf pp. 48–50.

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Blind children's participation in the natural flow of play

Play is children's way of being. Children play everywhere, recognise, and invite or ask to join each other's games or pretended play. They can play without having learned spoken language or having the same first language. In many cases is it enough that they can see each other and how the environment creates possibilities for them to play.

Bente Corneliussen

Play is universal, but also cultural, and varies from country to country and from kindergarten to kindergarten. Play may be based on what the child sees, perceives, and experiences, specific actions or attractive play equipment. Vision is unique and has an immense impact on a child's language, social and motor development. Blind children do not have the opportunity to take part in play with peers on the same terms without any compensatory measures for their loss of vision. As with all other methods for blind children, one has to demonstrate the play to the child through hand-guiding and by allowing the child to experience and execute play.

In this chapter, I will discuss how adults in kindergartens can support blind children and facilitate equality and inclusion so that the child can become a natural part of the community of peers. The meaning of equality in this context refers to the peers of the blind child perceiving the child as an individual with specific needs adaptations, but otherwise as a child in the same situation as themselves and part of the community of peers (Frønes, 2002).

The fact that adults closely follow up individual children can be challenging.

My own experiences show, however, that if the adult is aware and sees all the children and is humble and clear over their own role and how it impacts children's play, blind children can take part in play with peers, have friends and be an equal participator in the community of peers.

I would also like to present some problems that blind children encounter when playing with peers in the kindergarten. The importance of the child taking part in play with peers, and the problems that arise when adults closely follow up individual children and take part in children's play, will be highlighted through practice cases involving Lego, role play and cycling. Kindergarten adaptation measures are also presented.

Firstly, a glossary of terms is necessary. Some children have impairments that are described as 'serious visual impairments' or 'blindness', which cause some challenges in contact with sighted children and adults. Like Ingsholt (2017), I choose to use the terms 'sighted children' and 'blind children' as overarching terms for the children referred to in the chapter. Although this may contribute to underlining the difference between the two groups, it is also important to highlight the similarities between them:

Even though the child may need special educational support, he or she is first and foremost a child with the same needs that all children have for taking part in everyday life and playing with peers.

I would also like to point out that even though the staff at kindergarten are made up of pre-school teachers, special teachers, qualified assistants, and other adults, all of whom are involved in the children's daily lives, the terms 'adults' and 'the adults' are used collectively for all these professional groups.

Adult support during play

"The world seeks infants who can see, but infants who cannot see must learn to seek the world", (Foulke & Hatlen, 1992, p. 47). Or in other words: To enable blind children to become active and equal participants in children's play activity, we need to show them the world, their peers and the play. This pinpoints how essential adults are during infancy to help and provide the child with tools to live in a sighted world and take part in it.

Blind children must experience what play is to understand what playing all is about. They need support from adults, who can specify, describe, and demonstrate what play is and therewith learn how to play with peers. A blind child cannot understand the sound of children banging cups on a table in a kindergarten until she has taken part in the play activity herself – not just once, but several times. The adults must show her what the peers are doing and help her to take part in the activity.

The adults at kindergarten possess a considerable amount of knowledge about children, their needs, interaction, and peer play. Blind children have exactly the same needs as sighted children but require special adaptation to compensate for their blindness. There is a shortage of adults in the kindergartens, and where there is an adult, children will often flock (Wolf, 2014). Blind children are often accompanied by an adult, which provides a golden opportunity for interaction and contact between children.

In such meetings, it is important that sighted children are also met, seen, and validated by an adult, and that the adults concern themselves with introducing the children to each other. This can be done by physical proximity to each other, saying the children's names and validating everyone. The adult is responsible for facilitating dialogue, conversations, and the building of relationships between the children. A blind child depends on the adults at the kindergarten taking care of and making adaptations so the child can take part in interaction and play with sighted peers. The way in which this is done also impacts how the child is included in the children's group and whether she becomes an equal playmate in the community of children. Once the blind child is able to play and knows what it means to play with peers (and has a small repertoire of play activities), she will be able to take part in, or initiate, play with sighted peers.

Children who cannot see other children, toys, or other things in their environments, need information about the outside world through adult visual language interpreters.

How to compensate for the child's blindness

Visual language interpreters describe visual information and context, like the individuals present, what is happening, the surroundings, the children's position in the room and location of toys. This involves the description of events, actions, body language and non-verbal information. When doing this, the visual language interpreter must consider the child's age.

Sighted children can follow the game, decide when to ask if they can join in or bring props for the game that the players

accept, after which, they let the child join in (Wolf, 2014). If the blind child has any experience with the game, adult visual language interpreters can say what the children are playing, tell the child when they can ask to join the game or, they can suggest that the child brings something for the game.

Here is an example of children playing a game: *The adult says, "Lukas, Knut and Anne are playing buses, all the chairs are in a row under the window. Knut is the bus driver and Anne is a passenger. She's waving to you."* This information will allow Lukas to find the 'bus' and ask for permission to get on the bus. He will also know who is playing the game. It is important that the adult do not become a 'commentator' who talks all the time, but someone who can consider which information the child needs interpreted to understand the situation. They must be discreet and help the child in an invisible and inaudible way so they do not disturb the game. From my experience, when a comment does not have a particular 'addressee', i.e., the adult does not mention a name, but speaks into the plenum, all the children seem to consider it general information. One example of such a message: "*The Lego box has been moved to the mat*." The sighted children can see it and the blind child will be able to find the Lego box in the same way as peers. Visual language interpreting will in that moment compensate for the child's visual impairment.

Hand-guiding and the 'hand-over-hand' technique are also used for blind children to demonstrate various actions, for example, pouring a cup of milk. Together with an adult, the child opens the milk carton, holds it and pours the milk into the cup that has been made ready. Sighted children have seen this numerous times, but also need assistance when they start doing it themselves. With the hand-over-hand technique, the child is offered the adult's hand to hold, but

determines how much he or she wants to feel what the adult is touching or doing. When the adult gives a detailed verbal description of what they are doing at the same time, it sparks curiosity and motivation for them to do it themselves. The hands are the blind child's 'eyes' and it is important to ensure that the child has as many opportunities as possible to have enjoyable experiences when she 'looks' at toys or something else with an adult. Through hand-guiding and the 'hand-over-hand' technique, it is ensured that the blind child and adult are jointly focusing on something.

Blind children and their challenges

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2012) states in its guide "Barns trivsel – voksnes ansvar " [Children's Wellbeing - Adult's Responsibility], that kindergartens shall provide opportunities for children to play, and that play is fundamental for children's learning and development. During play, children relax and let themselves go with fun, enjoyment and engagement. They experience the world of play and build equal relationships with peers by playing together.

Sighted children can immediately see all the opportunities that a play area in a kindergarten offers. They see the game that is unfolding with a toy fire engine and can tune in to what they want to play, because they see what is being played and who they can approach. Blind children do not have the same possibilities to visually orientate themselves. Supported by an adult, they must touch every detail of the fire engine, and learn what the ladder and siren button are used for to become familiar with the toy fire engine. In order to play with peers, they have to understand what the play equipment symbolises and how to play with it.

Blind children should be able to master age-appropriate games that sighted children play. The adults must help the blind child to take part in play arising spontaneous between children. They must be given the

same opportunities as other children to experience the children's community and the enjoyment such games/play give the whole children's group.

To have the same opportunities as peers, blind children need more support from adults at the kindergarten. Ingsholt (2017) writes:

In general, visual impairment and the different behaviour and consequences that a visual impairment can have for blind children's social relationships with other children means that they, despite being children like all other children, have a greater need for support and pedagogical guidance than sighted children. (p. 9)

Blind children do not see and learn from modelling or imitation learning. They have no visual images of the outside world but absorb it through tactile auditive references and interpret the world through other senses. The sounds of play do not replace vision. When rootle around in the Lego box with her hands making rustling noises, the blind child may believe that she is playing with Lego when the adult confirms the sound. Peers will have a different perception of playing with Lego. Furthermore, they may have experienced being stopped from rummaging around in the Lego box. If blind children are allowed to do things that peers cannot, it may create distance between the children. The blind child may be perceived as different if she is allowed to do something that other children are not allowed to do. In which case, she will not be part of the community of peers and the adults will have made sighted peers aware of this by not giving her the same rules as them.

The blind child must be shown and taught how to build with Lego bricks. To manage this, the adults must compensate for the loss of vision through a visual language interpreter for the child, use hand-guiding and gradually make the child independent based on her age and ability.

Why is it important that blind children play with sighted peers?

Children in several surveys have said that their favourite activity in the kindergarten is play. They describe play as time off and being allowed to choose what they want to do (Wolf, 2017). There is no reason to believe that this does not apply to blind children as well, but as a blind child it is more difficult to master play that one can only hear and not see. There is also a general perspective that play is part of a child's lifestyle and that it has an intrinsic value for those playing. Children learn through play, but the children themselves are just playing, and they do not distinguish between play and learning. Play and learning is one of the same to them (Johansson and Samuelsson, 2009). Children play for the sake of playing (Wolf, 2015).

Participation in play is a fundamental way of learning, and it is necessary for blind children to participate in this play with peers on equal terms and to be part of the children's culture. During play, equality is formed between the children, which Janson (2004) refers to as *a horizontal play culture*. Whilst playing, they exchange roles and the organisation of play, provide input, arguments and reject the input of others. Children give each other direct feedback and smooth things over with each other. Being included in play with peers means that blind children must be able to tolerate that their suggestions being rejected, and to adjust or change them, so they can adapt and continue playing.

Blind children are first and foremost children who need to play with sighted peers. Facilitation, helping the child with interpretations and providing the child with skills to take part in play with peers may, if done correctly, contribute to fulfilment of the right of the child to be heard (Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Being part of an inclusive community

The adults at kindergarten takes care of the children, and they plan, decide and make adaptations for all the attending children. Janson (2004) states that a *vertical care culture* exists between the adults and children, and a *horizontal play culture* between the children. The vertical care culture is irregular and asymmetrical in terms of who decides and has power. During play with a blind child and her peers, the adults must be aware of the influence they have as models for how the sighted children will act in the presence of blind children.

Ingsholt (2017) refers to three interactional patterns taken from Janson's research on school children. In the first group, blind children relied on the sighted children showing willingness and helpfulness for them to join in play. The other group did not take part in play with other children, but remained with the adults and were thus isolated from the children's group. The third group was both included and active in the children's group. None of the children were exclusively in one group but moved between the groups with fluent transitions.

This is easily recognisable in blind children at the kindergarten. Adults at some kindergartens say that the sighted children are extremely good with Per, who is blind: *"They hold his hand and let him sit on the bike when they're cycling."* This is not play, as the relationship between the children is not equal. Janson (2004) refers to the sighted children as *pseudo adults* because they take on an adult role for Per. Equal play between children happens when the blind child takes part in all aspects of play, as demonstrated in the following example:

At one kindergarten, there were squeals of delight from cycling children as they played outside. All the bikes were actively being used on a narrow strip of asphalt. A cycling track had been built between the kindergarten and a wall. It winged out at both ends where the bikes had to turn around. Everyone was cycling in the same direction. The adults were standing at the end were the children had to turn around directing the line of children who wanted to cycle or just wanted to sit and observe. They called the children in after a specific number of rounds.

"We're cycling as fast as we can," shouted Anne, who is blind and had a passenger on the back of the bike. The sighted around her answered and they shouted to each other. Anne had no difficulty taking part in this game. She used the auditory space between the building and wall, and the open areas at both ends to know when she had to turn and straighten up again to drive along a wall. She was also called in to change bikes in the same way as peers.

"Who's first?" said Anne when she sensed someone was in front. A boy said several names and Anne commentated: "That far in front, it takes such a long time." There was some pushing and shoving in the line. Not everyone noticed when someone moved further up in the line. An adult made sure to tell everyone who was first and last in the line as it changed. The children shouted to the cyclists, and there was a lot of excitement.

Anne was fully equal to sighted peers in this play. She was included, with all the advantages and disadvantages this entailed, for example, having to wait in line. This is a social activity where everyone is physically close to each other when waiting. The adults decide who is going to cycle, and they treat the children as equal participants in the game. Visual language interpretation is for everyone, but for Anne, it also provides the opportunity to become oriented and have a place in the play on equal terms with sighted peers.

This horizontal play culture is extremely important for blind children to be a part of (Janson, 2004). Through participating in a game with sighted children, the child experiences a sense of community with peers and together they can achieve a fellowship or a feeling of a common "we".

"*Experiencing a common "we" in a child's lifeworld becomes lived experiences in the child's reservoir of experiences*", (Greve, 2009, p. 95). Together, children create meaning as they play, and the community makes them feel included in a group.

When adults participate in children's play

When a child brings an adult into a play activity it affects how children play: *"The surroundings and other people at kindergarten create prerequisites for children's play based on, for example, intrinsic knowledge about play, play skills and the ability to be playful,"* (Wolf, 2017, p. 21). Wolf says that adult participation may contribute to strengthening and promoting play among children. The ability of adults to be playful varies, and as such the staff should collectively assess their play skills and playfulness when a blind child will be playing with peers.

Adults who play with children, often facilitate mastery and help the child to succeed. One issue associated with this is that if a child frequently plays with adults, the child will control and decide more in the game than what the child would otherwise have done if the child played with peers. Adults take the child into account during play: the child receives praise, and experiences mastery and acceptance of their actions. This is necessary in the beginning; however, the adult and child must gradually exchange roles, as the blind child must not always decide the sequence of the game.

When playing with peers, some roles are more favoured than others, and thus becomes the subject of negotiation. Children must possess play skills, knowledge of what is being played, the ability to argue and to show flexibility during play. Children who play together consider themselves equals and do not accept another child deciding all the time. They give each other direct feedback and through this they learn to argue, accept the input of others, and to relate to what is required for the play to continue. This constitutes a horizontal play culture, which is a child-to-child relationship; however, blind children often need support from the adults.

In a project supported by the Extrastiftelsen (Extra Foundation) called *'Små blinde barn og lek med seende, pedagogens rolle'* [Young Blind Children Playing with the Sighted – the Educator's Role] we examined a play method for facilitating play with sighted peers (Corneliussen & Skjærseth, 2017). Through the project, we experienced that if the adult also took a role in play, she would be able to help the child through her role. However, if she withdrew from the role and instructed the sighted children on how they should relate to the blind child, the play ended, and the sighted children walked away from the activity. The illusion of equality between the children and the adult vanished. An effort must be made for the blind child to be included as part of play and to experience equality and independent participation in the children's community.

Role play is popular in kindergarten and it is also important for the child to participate in such play. In the following we will take a more in-depth look at how adults can facilitate play.

Role play

Role play and pretend play are popular play activities in the kindergarten. Arranged role play often builds on what the children have seen on TV, experienced themselves or a theme the kindergartens introduces to give the children collective knowledge. Children negotiate, test out roles and emotions, and they must adapt to the frameworks of the game, otherwise it will break down. Children use character voices signalling to each other that they are playing – or they say, "*we are just playing*." They develop and adjust the direction by giving each other input through meta-communication. That is, they withdraw from their roles, give instructions, discuss the development of the game or each person's role and contribution to the game. Such play is unpredictable and requires the children to adapt to each other to keep the game going.

In one kindergarten, the staff had decided that all the children would have play groups every Tuesday. Each of the play groups in the department had a different theme: play in the family room, other role play, play with Lego, outdoor play and there was a tour group. The size of the groups varied, but all the children would circulate so they would participate in all the groups through the semester. For the role play, the adults assessed each other's ability to play with the children and focus on their interaction, and how this could be facilitated both physically and organisationally. The blind child was to be a member of the family-room group. This type of play was chosen because it is very familiar at the kindergarten and many children enjoy playing it.

At the time of this observation, the children and the adult had played this play activity several times. At the beginning, the adult guided the child and had a key role in the activity, but gradually they exchanged roles. They played in the family room, but the toys were limited in relation to the number of plates, glasses, cups, and cutlery with five of each. They also had access to simple props such as a pair of women's and men's shoes. The intention was that it should be quick and easy for the blind child to orient himself and find the right play equipment for the game.

The participants in the game delegated the roles before they started playing. Two four-year-old boys are playing together with an adult in the family room. It is a mother, father, and child game. The blind child is the mother, and the other child is the father. The adult has the smallest role as a baby.
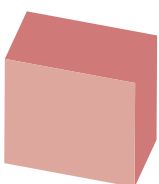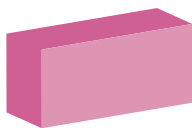
"You can come home now," says the mother from the kitchen where she is putting 'spaghetti' (crayons) in the saucepan, which she then places on the table. She has set the table with glasses, plates, and cutlery. There is also a jug on the table. The father, who is sitting near the door, stands up and takes off his big shoes before heading straight for the table. "Were you busy at work," says the mother with a pretend character voice. The father responds with a deeper voice and helps himself to 'spaghetti' and eats.

Both children are playing, and the father 'pretends' to pour water into the glass, at the same time as he says, "It's nice to have a drink of water." The mother also 'pretends' to pour water in her glass and drinks from it when she hears the father say that it's nice to have a drink of water. In between, some meta-communication takes place on the part of both mother and father regarding where something is or who should do what. "Wah, wah", says the baby. The father stands up, finds a baby's bottle, and gives it to the baby whilst saying, "now now", patting the baby and wrapping it in a blanket. The parents have a dialogue as mother and father before the father says to his wife: "You've got to wash up." in the character's play voice as she clears the table. She puts everything in the toy sink before moving both hands around in the dishwash. Confusion arises, as the father says in a normal voice: "You've got to wash up." " I do", says the mother without using the character's voice as well. The father goes up to the sink and places the washing-up brush in the mother's hand. The mother grasps it and starts washing the dishes.

The children play and carry out the associated actions; however, the father is not satisfied with the way the mother washes up. The mother only possesses auditory experiences related to the concept of washing up in a toy sink and she believes she is doing it correctly. She has not seen other children using the washing-up brush and putting the cups on the drainer at the side of the sink once they have been washed. The blind child has not experienced real-life washing up nor does she understand what a washing-up brush is used for.

The example shows that adults can facilitate play and participation, but the adult cannot always control the game. Play between children is unpredictable. It can be challenging to initiate dialogue between children, provide input that may prolong the game or to consider when children shall learn to play without an adult. The adult can take a more passive role in the game, which in this case as a baby, or she can create a chore by saying she has to do something else for a while yet remain nearby so she can soon join the game if necessary. When this happens, the game between the children must be well established. It is important to say that she is leaving, so the blind child is aware of this. The other children can see her leave.

In pedagogical work, it is important to consider the composition and size of the group based on what you want the children to experience through the activity. If social competence is the criterion, i.e., the children shall get to know each other or a game through playing together, this must be considered and the children's play skills assessed (Ingsholt, 2017). The criteria will vary depending on the group's theme, but it would be useful when playing with a blind child to have children who are adept talkers and with preference to talk about what they are doing. The goal must be that both the blind child and sighted children have many experiences playing with different children and join in the role play that occurs.

In the long-term, they will then be able to choose who they want to play with.

We are now going to look at another form of play: Lego with the preschool group.

Playing with Lego in the preschool group

The kindergarten's staff wanted to bond the preschool group and they wanted Emil, who is blind, to take part in play with sighted peers. They knew that Lego was popular at the before- and after-school program (SFO), and therefore they chose Lego as a theme for the preschool group for a period.

The preschool group started up with two adults and five children. There were regular songs, and the attendance register was taken, which entailed the children answering 'Yes' when their name was called. The adult had brought along Lego base plates for the children and adults, which she shared out at the same time as she said the names of everyone in the group.

"Do you know what we're doing today?" she says, as she rustles in the Lego box, so it rattles. All the children, including Emil shout: "Build with Lego!" "Yes, we are," said the adult. "Each of us is going to build our own house and make a small town." The adult and teacher discuss the elements of a house. "Windows," says Janne, "corners," says Emil, and "walls" says Andreas.

The children sit closely next to each other on the floor. Since the adult handed out the Lego base plates one-by-one and said the children's names, Emil knows where the children are sitting in relation to him. All the children are told to put bricks along the edges of the base plate and put in doors and windows. Emil depends on hand-guiding and the "hand-over-hand' technique to put the bricks correctly along the edge to symbolise the wall of a house. Other children also need help to put bricks and doors into place. All the children are seen, and they are acknowledged for what they are building.

The adults look with the children, ponder over solutions, and actively use language. They visually interpret language simply by asking to feel and touch the various constructions and encouraging the children to show each other. Emil, in contrast to sighted children, does not have a visual image of what a house looks like. Similarly, he is unable to understand the concept of a whole house. He knows some components of a house, which he demonstrated when mentioning the corners. He learned about these via the mobility route, as when he walked along one of the walls of the kindergarten, he felt the corner of the building, as such he can now build a wall for his house. At the same time, he can touch the alternative solutions the other children have chosen.

He receives some input about building his house and is therefore given the opportunity to copy and implement what was said in his own construction. He receives help and becomes part of a community where he can help others when they ask for bricks, windows or enquire about how he has built his house. The adults are relaxed and allow the conversation to flow between the children at the same time as they provide useful input when necessary.

Such play was offered everyday over the course of a few weeks, and all the children became more and more active in the conversation. Gradually, only one adult had the group and her role become more passive. When that happened, she could sit quietly collecting various bricks to offer to

the children when it was natural to do so.

Through this permanent play group, the children became curious about each other's constructions and how they built them. They built cars and used Lego figures in role play. Emil gradually became independent when he played with peers in this way, and he chose to play with Lego when he arrived at the kindergarten in the mornings. The children became more acquainted and it was natural for the sighted children to ask Emil to join in other play both outdoors and indoors.

When Emil started school, there was a permanent Lego table in the before and after school club. This enabled him to have a good start to the day with peers through the autumn as well. The facilitation that Emil received, required pedagogical and organisational facilitation from the adults. I will discuss this in more detail in the next section.

Facilitating play in day-care centres – physically, organisationally and pedagogically

Kindergartens vary in size and have different cultures and educational programmes. Blind children attend all types of kindergartens centres from small one-department centres to large centres with several hundred children and many adults. They are furnished differently, have different educational programmes and cultures. Because a blind child needs to have an overview of the situation to participate in play with sighted peers as equally as possible, pedagogical work also involves ascertaining how this can be facilitated physically, organisationally and pedagogically. This type of organisation may contribute to blind children having a better overview and consequently more opportunity to take part in play, and to choose what and with whom they want to play. It is not only blind children who benefit from such facilitation.

The facilitation of both outdoor and indoor play is commonly done to provide the blind child with the best possible overview of the situation, and to encourage more independence with mobility routes so the child can roam wherever he or she pleases. In the following, I will describe some relevant measures for physical, organisational, and pedagogical facilitation.

Physical facilitation

Newer kindergartens tend to have way-finding lines from the main entrance up to the department/base group, but inside the department the child must learn small mobility routes, so they are able to find their way on their own. walk around independently.

The kindergarten must have clear, defined, and demarcated play areas both indoors and outdoors. Indoor play areas can be symbolised with shelving and mats to show, guide, and shield the play areas. There must be a limited number of toys and permanent places for the toys and inventory. Shelves and play boxes should have tactile labels so a blind child can find necessary toys or play equipments without assistance. Toys must be tidied up and sorted for the child to easily find what she needs for the game.

Outdoors there must be an edge or a special texture underfoot near swings and climbing frames. Paving or small trails with known features could lead up to different apparatus and the sand pit. This allows a blind child to learn the mobility routes and become independent playing outdoors. Things must also be orderly here with permanent places for play equipment and tactile labels so all children can find what they need and put it back in the correct place.

This type of facilitation benefits all adults and children at the day-care centre.

Auditory environment

Blind children use the auditory signals in the room, for example, when the noise in the room changes due to a door being opened or shut. Sounds occur simultaneously. The sighted can see where the sound is coming from and who is talking and, because we can see, the sound or conversation does not disturb us. For blind children, it can be difficult to distinguish between important sounds and where they are coming from, i.e., from a conversation at the table where they are sitting or from the neighbouring table. It is better to avoid background noise, for example, music, if the adult wants the children to converse.

Organisational and pedagogical facilitation

Permanent play groups are both an organisational and pedagogical way to facilitate children's play in kindergarten. For blind children, it is difficult to play whilst maintaining an overview of the children in a large group playing in a department or base group. Noise from playing children makes this extra difficult, but this can also be learned through building it up step-by-step according to the child's age and needs.

This could be done, for example, by having permanent play groups at set times or days with a particular theme for all children over time to enable the children to become acquainted in playing together. The group sizes are adjusted in accordance with the children's needs. As the blind child gradually copes with play, more children can be added to the group or the adult can take part in, and support the blind child when playing in a slightly larger play group. The play theme could be something that the children already play or are focused on.

Adults have large bodies and must therefore avoid physically shadowing the contact between the children. The adults must place themselves behind or at the side of the child – or preferably slightly further away when a blind child is with peers. It must also be assured that the dialogue flows between the children and that they address each other when talking, so the adult does not answer on behalf of the blind child.

The goal for the blind child is that she will be able to take part in play in approximately the same way as peers. To achieve this, she must receive extra adult support to understand and take part in play with sighted peers (Ingsholt, 2017).

Conclusion

Facilitation is important and necessary to enable blind children to take part in play with sighted peers. In this chapter, I have shown the importance of the adult role in this context. Blind children must learn to play with sighted peers through physical, organisational, and pedagogical facilitation arranged by the kindergarten's staff.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2012) states in its guide "Barns trivsel – voksnes ansvar" [Children's Wellbeing – Adult's Responsibility], that kindergartens shall promote a good childhood for children. A good childhood for all children involves the possibility to play with peers, regardless of whether they are blind or not. The adults at kindergartens can facilitate the possibility of children 'seeing' and noticing each other and give them the opportunity to interact and support them in their common play activities.

Through this, a blind child can actively participate in the natural flow of play.

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Adults' dialogue skills to support children's participation in the community

Based on case histories, this chapter will highlight how adults in kindergartens and schools can support and facilitate participation in play and interaction with peers, regardless of the difficulties children may have.

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The opportunity to participate in play and experience togetherness in the children's community is important to each child, and at the same time these are key components of an inclusive community (Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018). Where the community provides possibilities for some, it may be limiting for others. An inclusive community is not a final goal, but a daily process that is continually changing owing to "the way the community practices being a community" (Solli, 2010, s. 40). Based on this understanding of inclusiveness, we do not look at the challenges that children may face in various arenas as traits of the child. Instead, we look at the challenges caused by insufficient facilitation in their surroundings. This way of understanding inclusiveness implies that the child is seen as a 'child *experiencing* difficulties' not a 'child *with* difficulties' (Solli, 2010, s. 36). This gives adults greater and broader responsibility. Thus, to manage such responsibility for facilitation, the adult must be competent. Competence in this chapter is understood as knowledge and skills, in addition to attitudes and values (OECD, 2005). The term 'competence' is delimited in this chapter to mean the dialogue skills of adults, and their understanding of where and how children learn.

This chapter is based on case histories about Iris and Frida to highlight how an adult can use their competence to support and facilitate children experiencing difficulties, so they can take part in play and interaction. Both Iris and Frida are six years old, but the chapter is relevant to adults in both day-care centres and schools. Therefore, the adults in the examples from the practice are referred to as 'the adults' without further describing which arena it concerns. Iris and Frida are described through the eyes of the adults, and the challenges they may face in interactional situations are characterised by the adults and the way they understand Iris and Frida. This chapter will highlight the dialogue skills of the adults recognised as skills that help a child to connect with their own emotions and thoughts. According to Bae, (2004) this is fundamental in order for children to be active participants in a community. First, we present a short account of how dialogue should be understood in this context, after which, the chapter shows how adults can use their competence in practice.

What characterises the dialogue?

Bae (2004) has investigated dialogues between adults and children in kindergartens. She wanted to find characteristics in daily

interaction between adults and children that may play an important role in child development. In this regard, she found that dialogues filled with reciprocity and equality, and a basic attitude of appreciation, help validate a child's own experiences and opinions. Bae (2004) claims that this is significant to the development of among others a child's self-esteem and the ability to form social relationships with others. She makes reference to the fact that an appreciative basic attitude is expressed through, for example, listening, understanding, tolerating and directing attention towards the child. Similarly, Bae stresses (2004) that it is the adult's responsibility to uphold equality and reciprocity in the asymmetrical relationship between the adult and child. She describes the dialogue between them as a continuous process that the adult should strive for

Therefore, the dialogue skills of the adults are extremely important in helping to create possibilities for children to take part in an inclusive community. Alternatively, adults can create barriers to children's participation. The chapter will also highlight how poor dialogue skills can contribute to this.

Challenging behaviour as a participation barrier — problematisation of the adults' descriptions

Our attitudes towards and views on children greatly influence how we respond to what we observe. On several occasions when giving guidance, I have met adults who talk of children who challenge the community in various ways. For example, they may say that the child "does not wait for their turn", "does not follow game rules" or "always wants to decide". Let us call the child Frida, even if she represents multiple children. The adults say that she does not like losing and therefore cheats or leaves before the game is over. She says nasty things to both children and adults if she gets angry, which she often

does. I have also met adults, who say that Frida "is mean or terrorises the other children." At this point, the reader should be reminded that these descriptions of Frida are founded on the opinions of adults. The adults describe the *difficulties* that appear when Frida interacts with other children.

Rarely have I met an adult who describes Frida *experiencing* difficulties, i.e., they describe how Frida may face difficulties during different types of interaction with other children because the surroundings have not been adequately facilitated.

When the adults look upon Frida as a child *with* difficulties, it affects the way they address her and facilitate any support. If Frida owns her difficulties, she is also largely responsible for how they can be avoided. For example, there will be fewer conflicts when playing with others if she stops cheating or saying nasty things. Such an understanding of Frida, as a person who owns her own difficulties, is also consistent with the adults' descriptions of Frida when they say, "The other children won't play with her anymore" or "We know she can do it if she wants to."

Is it true that the child "is mean and terrorises others" in the way the adults portray? Furthermore, is it Frida's responsibility if "the other children won't play with her anymore?" If one believes that the answer to these questions is "No", how does it affect Frida if the adults describe her this way? Can the characteristics of dialogue, such as listening, tolerance and understanding be maintained around Frida if the adult already looks upon Frida as a nasty child? Isn't such an understanding of Frida exactly the opposite of listening and understanding?

The appreciative basic attitude that forms the basis for dialogue, in the way Bae (2004) describes, builds on a principle of equality between those in the relationship. The problem for Frida is that there is no concept of equality in the way she is treated.

This has consequences in terms of how the adults take responsibility for the situation and how they facilitate support. When the adults do not listen, understand or show tolerance, it will probably contribute to the creation of barriers that prevent Frida from participating in the community. In many of my meetings with Frida and the adults around her, the adults have questioned whether there is anything else they can do for Frida. They have told her that she must not behave in the way she does, and they have worked on how to be a good friend.

Despite this, the relationship between Frida and other children and adults has not changed.

Nevertheless, changes may occur. With increased knowledge and understanding of the importance of dialogue when faced with children experiencing difficulties, the adults can adopt a more inclusive approach aimed at accommodating all children in the community. The following practice case will try to demonstrate the importance of the adults' dialogue skills for enabling Frida to participate in the community based on her ability and needs.

Frida playing a board game

Three different games and activities have been put out and Frida is looking at the table with snakes and ladders on it (a board game where you throw dice and climb up or fall down ladders on the way to the goal). She walks up confidently to the children who have sat at the table and says angrily: "I always win, because I'm best." She then stands looking at them seriously.

The children look confused. Some are just about to say something and others are about to turn around dismissively. At this point, an adult says: "It's nice that you've come up to us, Frida. Would you like to join in?" Frida doesn't answer, but another child says: "But she always wants to decide." The adult looks at the children, smiles at them and says: "Everyone can join in here, can't they?" The children nod gently, but affirmingly. He continues: "Good. Frida you can sit here and we'll go through the rules before we start." One-by-one the children explain the game rules. The adult says: "I always get upset when I fall down the ladder, do you?" One of the children says they get a bit upset, but that they try not to mind it. Thereafter another child looks at Frida and asks: "Will it be hard for you to play since you never lose?" Frida replies: "Huh? Then I'm not going to play anyway." The children, somewhat surprised, look at the adult who says: "Frida, what would you like the others to do if you fall down the ladder, so you can still play?" Frida waits a while and answers: "They've not to laugh." The adult looks at the children and says: "We'll remember that." Does anyone else have any good ideas for when someone is unhappy about not leading the game?" The children come up with various suggestions, such as you can always win next time or you should tell an adult if someone just leaves the game. Frida replies: "You can leave the game." The adult nods affirmingly and smiles: "I think everyone's been given a lot of good tips, so perhaps no one will need to leave?" Frida nods somewhat affirmingly and looks at the other children, who are also nodding. The adult ends the conversation by saying: "It might be a good idea to remember that it helps to comfort someone if they get upset or angry."

The game is about to start and Frida says: "I'm going first." The surprised children look at the adult, who smiles at the children and gently says to Frida: "Have you forgotten that the person who throws the highest number on the dice starts the game? Everyone can forget. You can throw first Frida and then we'll see who gets the highest number to start."

Listening involves more than just words

In order for the adult to support Frida's participation in the game, the adult has to use his dialogue skills, among other things, direct attention towards a range of things, not just the uttered words. This maintains reciprocity in the dialogue. Dialogue as a process is important in order to understand children in different situations and this will also enable adults to continually develop their skills. Consistent with Bae's (2004) comprehension of dialogue, children's experiences are acknowledged by listening to, for example, both body language and tone of voice. At the same time, an attempt is made to understand what children want and the type of support they need through their body language and expressions. In the practice case, the adult listened to more than just Frida's utterances about always winning and being the best. He also listened to her angry body language or tone of voice by trying to understand: Is Frida angry, or is there something else behind it? The adult acknowledged the body language of the other children by, for example, confirming their surprise that Frida wanted to start the game. They turned to the adult, who used dialogue to confirm their experience, at the same time as it was used to help the children start the game in a different way. Since the adult was conscious of his own, and the body language and emotions of others, and acknowledged them, it helped to promote each participant as a subject. In the practice case, we saw that the adult smiled and was friendly, and that Frida and the other children shared experiences and tips about falling down the ladder or not being the leader. Forgetting or making a mistake in the

community does not prevent emphasis on the children and their contribution as individual subjects. On the contrary, dialogue is used to clarify the experiences of each participant. This helps to acknowledge the children's own experiences as valid. It is safe to assume that such appreciation of Frida changed her body language as the game progressed. She was less stubborn, and at the same time she was encouraged to take part. The appreciation that the adult created through facilitating dialogue with and between the children contributed to an inclusive practice.

Sharing experiences and emotions with others

As one of the characteristics for an appreciative basic attitude, Bae highlights (2004) tolerance for the different experiences and emotions of others. This implies that adults can create equality between children through enabling them to see, hear and understand their dissimilarities. In the case of Frida, the individual child shared experiences and emotions before the game started. In addition, Frida was asked how she could be helped if she wasn't the leader. The adult's practices encourage the children to share experiences, thereby promoting tolerance for dissimilarities. By sharing and listening to others, Frida is also helped to distinguish between her own emotions and the experiences of others. The adult initiates the exchange of experiences and tells of his own emotions when he falls down a ladder and the children thereafter follow suit. So again, we see that the adult's dialogue skills help to present the children and adult as individual subjects and subjects for each other.

Emphasising that everyone can forget or make a mistake

Through dialogue skills, the adult can create participation and the exchange of experiences in the community by helping to put into words misunderstandings along the way, for example, by discovering that children understand the rules differently. Some might believe that they have to have exactly the same number on the dice to reach the goal, whilst others may not. Or by putting it into words when someone forgets something, for example, the way Frida was allowed to start the round by throwing the dice to decide who would start the game. Frida did not follow the rules, but the adult used dialogue to convey that she was still an equal participant. At the same time, the experience of the other children was acknowledged in that the adult confirmed their surprise and said that the rules had to be followed. This is consistent with Bae (2004), who shows that equality and appreciation in dialogue can also be expressed by creating space for participants to show tolerance for different perceptions of reality. Since the adult encouraged both Frida and the other children to put into words misunderstandings or their perception of the situation, the participants also appear as subjects in the community here as well.

It may be useful for children to help each other to agree on what they should do if someone forgets the rules or if someone struggles if they are not leading or don't win. In this way, the adult's practice has prepared the community for the possibility that misunderstandings and forgetfulness may arise. Or the adult's practice can prevent this by preparing the children in advance. The adult contributed to the creation of a practice where the children themselves, or with the help of an adult, handle forgetfulness, misunderstandings or disagreements during the game as they arise. Consequently, the adult's practice has helped Frida to participate with the others on equal terms.

What impact does the adult's dialogue skills have on Frida?

If an adult does not have an appreciative basic attitude and associated dialogue skills, Frida might not receive the support she needs. If the adults are unable to see Frida as a child *with* difficulties, a comment from Frida saying she" can't be bothered to play if she doesn't win" would be met with "we don't say things like that." This could be intended as feedback on how children should or should not behave towards each other in the community. However, it may also contribute towards children avoiding Frida, because it confirms that Frida has said unpleasant things. In this way, the adult's practice contributes to the creation of barriers against Frida's participation in the community. Since the adult does not have an appreciative basic attitude during dialogue, we find that such feedback indicates inequality between the participants, and at the same time no room for understanding or listening to what Frida is expressing. Through the case histories, we see that dialogue is a prosses where the adult must continually strive to be consistent with what is being expressed. By listening to more than words alone and sharing experiences of others collectively, we find that equality and appreciation between the participants flourishes. At the same time, Frida can learn more appropriate ways to respond by taking part in the community, for example, by saying in advance that it is allowed to leave the game. As such a response may in some situations be more appropriate instead of getting angry or saying nasty words if the child does not win. In the next case history, we are going to look at how the adult's dialogue skills can create opportunities and barriers for Iris, who in contrast to Frida, withdraws from the community.

When a child withdraws from the community. Problematisation of the adult's descriptions

When meeting adults in different arenas, I have also met those who talk of children who withdraw from the community. The adults describe Iris as a child *with* difficulties. They say that Iris "can't" or "won't" play with the other children. She often plays slightly further away from the other children and frequently says "No" if they ask her to play with them despite the fact that the adults have told Iris and the other children several times that everyone can join in. The other children are starting to get tired of asking Iris and the adults are not sure what else they can do. They say that Iris likes being on her own the best. "Shouldn't she just be allowed to play on her own?" the adults ask. Iris' parents say that she often plays actively with the other children in the street and that they don't recognise the way the adults describe her. The adults interpret the parents' descriptions to mean that Iris "can if she wants to."

Is Iris able to join in if she wants to and does she like being on her own the best? One of the problems of accepting such statements is that the adults describe Iris as a child *with* difficulties. Therefore, the solution to Iris' difficulties is, for example,

that she takes part in the community when she chooses to do so herself. Even though there should be room for individual differences and the child's voice should be heard, such an interpretation is inconsistent with an inclusive practice. The parents first and foremost say that she chooses to be with other children and not alone. That is, they do not see Iris *with* difficulties at home. In other words, she *experiences* difficulties in surroundings that are not adequately adapted. If we use the chapter's framework for understanding, the adults are responsible for adapting the surroundings to make it possible for Iris to take part in the community in various arenas. Only then can the adults assess in more detail whether Iris still needs or wishes to be alone or to withdraw with fewer children. An inclusive practice is also missing if Iris is not acknowledged and understood as a child *experiencing* difficulties. In my meetings with various adults, I have found that many find it difficult to facilitate children who withdraw from the community. The continuation of this chapter will therefore highlight how adults may use their competence to create possibilities for Iris to take part in the community and emerge as a subject on equal terms with the other children.

Iris in the sand pit

Iris is sat digging with a spade in the sand looking at other children, who are digging a short distance away from her. The children are also looking at Iris. An adult sits down between Iris and the other children and starts digging. She then looks at Iris and says: "Will you help me to build a house, and we can decorate it with flowers?" One of the other children answers spontaneously: "I can decorate it with flowers as well." "Great," says the adult, who looks at the child and Iris, and says with a smile: "Maybe you could go over there (pointing) and pick some together?" The other girls nods and stands up.

She stands still waiting and looking at Iris. Iris looks down, but releases the spade. The adult says: "How nice of you to wait for Iris before going to get the flowers." Iris gets up cautiously and the children walk off together. Whilst they're picking the flowers, the adult sees another child looking at them. The adult looks at Iris and the other child, and says with a smile and slightly high-toned voice: "Maybe they'll pick a lot of flowers so they can share them with you?" When returning with the flowers, one of the children asks Iris if she can have one. Iris stands still for a few seconds without answering. Then she bends down, takes one of the flowers and gives it to the girl, who says "thank you". The adult smiles to both children. The adult then asks: "Is it nice to share at any other times?" One child tells of when she shared popcorn at the cinema, another said she has to share with her little brother. The adult also asks how it makes them feel when they share. One of the children laughs and says: "It makes me so happy that it makes my tummy tickle." "Have you ever felt your tummy tickle, Iris, asks the adult. She looks up slightly and says cautiously with a smile, that she and the girl next door once jumped on her trampoline the whole day. They continue playing after the conversation, and both Iris and the other children pick more flowers.

Drawing attention to more than just words

To help Iris join the game, the adult must focus on what and how Iris expresses herself in different situations and try to interpret her expressions. Appreciation is not primarily about praising external actions such as when Iris took the initiative to pick flowers. Nor about solely listening to her words about liking her own company either. Appreciation as a basic attitude is linked to trying to understand how Iris experiences the interaction with others and validating her experience. In order to grasp Iris' experience and thereafter acknowledge it, the adult must pay attention towards among others the non-verbal expressions of the other children. What did Iris and the other children actually convey when they looked at each other? Or when Iris looked at the ground whilst the other child waited? And how did she feel when she told the story about jumping on the trampoline with the girl next door? The adult must draw attention to these expressions so they can acknowledge and validate them immediately afterwards. It may be the case that Iris is not the type of girl who will take up a lot of space now or later in social situations. At the same time, her parents describe a different type of child. Even though Iris may not talk much in various situations, the dialogue with and around her varies considerably. Iris shows variation in her expressions and behaviour in each community. At the same time, both adults' and children's use of dialogue with Iris and each other takes place in different ways. To understand Iris and to take care of reciprocity and equality in the dialogue at the same time, the adult must therefore listen to more than just words. Earlier we saw examples of the adult drawing attention to the children's body language, but attention can also be aimed at the dialogue with the parents and with Iris. This enables the adult to gain a better understanding of why Iris plays more actively at home and acknowledge her experiences there. This would be consistent with reciprocity and equality in the dialogue, in contrast to understanding the parents' descriptions as confirmation that she "can do it if she wants to". We also saw that the adult listened to more than just words when the adult recognised how the other children looked at and approached Iris, and thereafter helped her join the game or when the adult smiled to Iris when she shared her flowers. The adults must notice

Iris' and the other children's expressions in the community in order to understand what they are conveying. This acknowledges the children's experiences and adult facilitation also helps the children to acknowledge each other as well. In this way, opportunities are created for Iris to take part in the various communities.

What impact does the adult's dialogue skills have on Iris?

If the adult's starting point is that Iris "can do it if she wants to", it will be more difficult and less necessary to use dialogue as a tool. It will be more difficult because the adult listens to the words only and less necessary because Iris' expressions have already been understood and clarified. In other words, such an understanding would case the adult to have and take as little responsibility for helping Iris to join the community. If the adults believe that they "have done what they can", their lack of facilitation could also contribute towards the other children viewing her as a less attractive playmate. This gives less dialogue variation with and around Iris, and the perception of Iris as a child *with* difficulties is confirmed. The surroundings neither listen to or understand Iris and she does not emerge as a subject in the community. In other words, we find that the adult's lack of facilitation results in Iris losing the opportunity to take part and develop in the community.

The adult must understand their own responsibility to give support and competence to facilitate the support. At the same time, the other children can also create opportunities for Iris to take part in the community. We observed this when they were active picking and sharing flowers, and when they shared experiences and emotions linked to sharing. This is consistent with the sociocultural learning theory where learning and development take place during interaction with others, because children are supported in active participation (Vygotsky, 2001).

When everyone is included and contributes to the community, children change and develop, sometimes with the adult's support. For example, after playing in the sand pit, the adult could have taken the initiative to talk to the children about when they were waiting for each other and sharing experiences and emotions.

Another option is for the adult to start other small or long spontaneous or planned conversations adapted to the children's age. By listening and observing the body language and actions of other children, the children may become aware of their own body language and actions. It is reasonable to assume that when the adult facilitated the exchange of sharing experiences, it helped Iris to tell of her day on the trampoline. Exchanging experiences in this way contributes to equality between the children and they appear as subjects to each other with their own feelings and their own experiences. Through their own dialogue skills, the adult creates space for children to understand and tolerate each other.

By using the community in this way, the adult can observe the situations in which each child needs support from both the adult and other children so they can master the situation. Such support can be viewed in light of what Vygotsky (2001) refers to as *scaffolding* that takes place within the child's zone of proximal development. When the adult supports the child in such a manner, the adult contributes to helping the child to cope independently later. This is one of the key principles of Vygotsky's (2001) sociocultural learning theory, where learning takes place during social interaction with others. Relationships and dialogue created in the community thus become essential to the child's development. We have now seen that Iris and Frida received support to participate in the community and to emerge as subjects even though they express themselves differently.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that it is the competence and dialogue skills of the adult that in various ways help children to participate in the community. Using their competence to create opportunities for participation and togetherness is a continuous process over which the adult must constantly reflect. In the community, different forms of the dialogue process take place between children, and between adults and children. In these processes both learning, and development take place, and the child experiences participation and togetherness in the community through interaction with others. By using their dialogue skills in various types of interaction with and between children, the adult contributes to appreciation of each individual's experiences. At the same time, both the children and adults emerge as subjects for each other. Thereby the participants are given space to listen, tolerate and understand each other, which results in an inclusive practice.

This chapter has also demonstrated that the adult's competence is clearly related to attitudes, their view of the child and reflection over their practices. If the adults are unaware of this or lack competence in the characteristics of dialogue and possibilities, barriers for an inclusive practice may otherwise arise, as highlighted when a child is viewed as a child with difficulties or experiencing difficulties. An inclusive practice does not occur on its own through the good intentions of adults or by the physical presence of children or adults. If this was the case, both Frida and Iris would be at risk of being excluded by the community permanently. The adults must have competence in dialogue as a process and its characteristics so they adopt an appreciative basic attitude. Only then will the adult be able to take responsibility to create and maintain an inclusive practice so that all children can take part in and belong to the community.

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Inclusive practices in kindergarten for toddlers with a cochlear implant

This chapter will highlight the possibilities for teachers to facilitate inclusion and participation for a child with a cochlea implant (CI) in the toddler department in kindergarten.

Nadja Akinshina

Most of the children who are born prelingually deaf in Norway are detected at new-born screening. These children are offered bilateral cochlear implantation at a very young age. Some children with CI choose bimodal bilingualism with sign language and spoken language, others choose spoken language only. This chapter concerns children around the age of two with no additional disabilities, who received a CI at a young age and who primarily develop speech and language through listening. When using the terms *language and communication,* we are referring to spoken language only.

   Based on sociocultural learning theory, the chapter will argue for the importance of speech and language development in natural situations and the relational dimension in inclusive practices for children with CI. For the efforts in the surroundings to have a positive impact on the child's development, professional pedagogical support and targeted measures are crucial for increased participation as early as possible. One important measure for children with a CI is the strengthening of peer relationship in the community.

Relational dimension in inclusive practices

Inclusive practices may seem to vary in different contexts, however, one of the characteristics of inclusive pedagogy is the acknowledgement of diversity among the group of children. The individual circumstances of children, for example, having a cochlear implant, could be considered part of the variation within the group. The aim of inclusive practices is that all children, including those with special needs, shall be part of the community. Inclusive processes can vary and may be understood from different perspectives. Qvortrup and Qvortrup (2018) emphasise, for example, that there may be different levels of inclusiveness. Arnesen (2017) also describes various ways of understanding inclusive processes. The fact that inclusion may be understood as human interaction is especially interesting, since it reflects the dynamic aspect of communication and relationships between human beings. The relational dimension is linked to the actual interaction that takes place in face-to-face communication, which impacts the child's perception of being a participator in the community. Secure and good relationships between children

contribute to the positive development of each child as well as the general learning environment in the kindergarten. Good relationships start with acknowledgement and good communication, which Bae (2011) highlights as conditions for inclusive processes. Children with disabilities can take part in the same learning arenas as peers and play and interact with them. Those who have difficulties related to communication skills, emotional management or problems solving skills may, however, struggle to take part in the community, and they have limited ability to develop relationships and friendships with other children without adequate facilitation (Odom, Zerther & Brown, 2006). The relational dimension of inclusion may be particularly important within a children's group where one or more children need support in the development of language and communication skills. Pedagogical practices in kindergartens, which strengthen the communication competence of children, also create frameworks for the development of secure relationships and friendships (Brown, Odom & Conroy, 2001).

Role of kindergarten for the inclusion of children with a CI in the learning community

During the day there are endless opportunities to support children in their linguistic and social development. Children with a CI need more support than peers in early language development due to fewer experiences with spoken language. The most important prerequisite for the child to benefit from the pedagogical support provided is safe relationships with the closest adults and peers in adapted everyday settings Since early childhood care is mentioned in the Salamanca Statement, as a prerequisite and important instrument for schooling, kindergartens have a special responsibility for facilitating adequate development and school maturity for all children.

For children with a CI, this implies additional linguistic and social development support.

Sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky, 2005) forms the basis for pedagogical practices in most kindergartens in Norway. That is, children shall receive support so they feel that they master situations they would not otherwise have handled. Examples of support in various situations are when a three-year-old helps a friend to put on his/her rain boot or a four-year-old explains the rules of a playground game to a three-year-old, or when a teacher explains what the second Billy Goat Gruff is. Vygotsky (2005) emphasises that children, who receive support from a more competent person (an adult or another child), can carry out tasks at a much higher level than what they would manage on their own. Vygotsky calls the distance between what a child can master independently and what a child can master with a partner the *proximal zone or zone of proximal development.* It is important that the person giving the support has more knowledge and skills than the person who needs the support. Older children, or children who have progressed more in their development, may have an important role in supporting and guiding others, as the examples above indicate. For toddlers with a CI to perceive help and support as a natural part of interaction with peers or the teacher, it is essential for them to experience good and secure interpersonal relationships. By using relationship building as a foundation, kindergarten can promote learning and development based on the principles of sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky, 2005).

Early language development of children with a cochlear implant

Children who receive a CI early have access to sounds, and therefore the possibility to develop spoken language and be active participants in children's groups. A cochlear implant is a high-technology device that is surgically implanted into the inner ear. Electrodes in the inner ear capture signals from a device that is magnetically attached behind the outer ear. Cochlear implants convert magnetic energy from sound waves to electrical signals, which stimulate the auditory nervous system allowing the brain to register and learn spoken language. If the child does not have other any disabilities other than hearing loss, and the technology and surroundings are adapted for the child to satisfactorily hear at all times, the child should generally develop and socialise in the same way as children with normal hearing (Cole & Flexer, 2010).

Cochlear implants do not normally give normal hearing, but a CI will make it possible for most children to develop spoken language by listening. In all likelihood children will learn spoken language after receiving a cochlear implant. The language comprehension of many children, who were born deaf and received a CI before 12 months age, is within the normal range for their age (Fulcher, Purcell, Baker & Munro, 2012; Wie, Falkenberg, Tvete, Bunne & Osnes, 2011; Duchesne, Sutton & Bergeron, 2009).

Concurrently, many studies show large variation between the language skills of children with a CI. The child's hearing history before implantation, age upon implantation, pedagogical monitoring and habilitation may explain some of the variation. Several studies show that both implantation at an early age and educational monitoring correlate to language development (Boons et al., 2012; Percy-Smith et al., 2012; Niparko et al., 2010). The implantation age for children is getting lower and lower, and many deaf children in Norway receive a CI during infancy at around ten months old.

We know that humans register sounds as early as in the foetal stage. Children who start hearing when they are, for example, nine to ten months old, will require more monitoring and language development support than children born with normal hearing. It is also reasonable to assume that even when a child receives a cochlear implant as early as possible, a one or two-year-old will not have the same prerequisites for taking part in social interaction in kindergarten whilst their brain is still getting used to digital hearing. Individual facilitation in an inclusive learning environment is therefore necessary for optimum language development.

Many meaningful listening experiences are essential for toddlers with a CI in order to stimulate auditory processing and language training through listening (Musiek, 2009). When a child has had limited experiences with sounds from the foetal stage, the brain may need ten times as many meaningful linguistic experiences during the course of a day compared to peers born with normal hearing. In order for an early childhood teacher to give the child the right support in different situations, it is crucial that he or she is adequately qualified in early language development supplemented by individual guidance on listening and the development of spoken language for the deaf and hard of hearing. Pedagogical facilitation for active participation in natural situations enables children with a CI to develop and strengthen relationships with others through spoken communication in an inclusive learning community.

Importance of relationships among toddlers

Children with special needs in language development may have difficulty perceiving and understanding nuances in conversations and social structures, which may prevent them from taking part in the learning community (Ytterhus, 2012). We know that adeptness in establishing and maintaining interhuman relationships is an important part of linguistic and social development. The interpersonal competence we use during interaction with others to cooperate, to be flexible, to show empathy and to adapt to new contexts already begins in kindergarten. As early as at the age of two and three, children show a preference for who they want to play with, and round the age of five or six more than half of the children have stable and permanent friendships with peers (Lindsey, 2002).
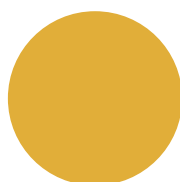
In order to develop relationships with others, children with special needs require extra support in the form of mediation and *scaffolding* through dialogue and interaction with others (Vygotsky, 2005; Hartshorne, 2003). A more competent person, who models behaviour and language in different play situations, helps build the linguistic and social skills the child gradually learns to master. This has an intrinsic value for children with a CI due to delayed language development; however, it has been proven that scaffolding is also an important factor in other inclusive processes where one or more children in a group have special needs. Krampac-Grljusic & Kolak (2018) emphasises friendships among children as one of the important factors in an inclusive community. In their study, they show that friendships have a positive effect on children's social, intellectual and emotional development as well.

To understand relationships that are formed among children, it might be important to differentiate between acceptance of others in a group and friendships that are maintained over time. In this context, acceptance of other children means that the child is liked by another group of children, whilst a friendship is a mutual relationship between two individuals. Ladd's (1990) study shows that early friendships impact the positive development of children. Increased participation also occurs in a children's group when a child with special needs can rely on another child that he or she feels safe with (Ottoson & Bengtson, 2002). A best friend may be an important support for a child with a CI during play when the child experiences unnecessary broken communication after misunderstanding what has been said. Facilitating the development of secure friendships for a child with a CI may also be crucial to the development of listening, language and communication skills, and for intellectual and emotional development.

Leo and Simen

To highlight how a teacher can facilitate relationship building and the development of communication in a children's group where one of the children has a CI, reference is made to an example of a conversation observed during a guidance session.

Supporting children's communication development through participation

Spoken face-to-face human interaction is essential in pedagogical practices, as it creates space for the zone of proximal development and allows relationships to be built. For children like Leo, it is crucial to have a more competent person giving support through explanations, repetition, new learning and essential auditory experiences to promote speech and language development.

Kristin reads a book to Leo and his best friend and knows that they are mutually interested in farms. She follows Leo's eyes and starts talking about the apples which captures his attention. In this way, Kristin builds a scaffold of words and terms that support what each child understands and connects language to what they are looking at. We see several attempts at scaffolding along the way, which strengthens various aspects of language development. She builds up the children's comprehension of volume by illustrating what 'many' means. In addition, she continually focuses on the same topic thereby expanding the auditory attentiveness of the children. Kristin chooses a new word for the children to learn, i.e., høste ["harvest"], which is easy for the hearing sense to register, the vowels are slightly longer than the consonants, and with two open syllables, it is easy for Leo to register the sounds. For a child to be motivated by learning, he or she must receive the necessary support and experience mastery (Vygotsky, 2005). Kristin facilitates this in that she simplifies the syntactic structure and repeats the last sentence with three words, "Delicious, sweet apples", which Leo immediately picks up and answers with "(f)all down". She also uses the situation to build up understanding of a new term, harvest, with known terms, such as pick, fall down and ready. In this way, she expands the children's comprehension of language.

When it starts getting noisy outside, Kristin draws the children's attention to a sound in the field. Even though Leo is two years old, it is still important to stimulate the interpretation of sounds in his surroundings rapidly and effectively for the best possible

auditory processing. At the same time, Kristin knows that the importance of social relationships and play with other children increases with age. As soon as Simen starts talking to Leo about the tractor, Kristin stops reading and allows the children to communicate with each other. She also creates opportunities for Leo to take part in the conversation, for example, by repeating "again and again" with a rhythmic tone of voice. When words and phrases are sung, it makes it easier for children with a CI to register sounds, and Leo eventually said the word "again" after Kristin and Simen.

If children with a CI are to develop relationships with other children in natural situations, they will generally need a lot of support and guidance, for example, when many people are talking at the same time or when there is distractive background noise. For people with hearing impairment, background noise can be a major obstacle for picking up spoken language. In a toddler's department in kindergarten, the most minor distraction in the background may prevent a child with a CI from fully picking up a word with the correct phonetic form, which can lead to mislearning and a lot of broken communication during the course of a day. Kristin repeats the phrase about the tractor with a rhythmic tone of voice and keeps the children's attention on the same topic, thereby preventing broken communication.

For Leo and other children with CI to communicate and establish friendships with other children, it is important to focus on the ability they have to understand each other through spoken language. Both the children, Leo and Simen, in the above example from the case history have the ability to understand and exchange thoughts with each other. Both use language actively when they talk about the tractor in the field, and even contribute to self-inclusion during the conversation and play. At the same time, a child with a CI is more dependent on the

surrounding frameworks in order to take part in conversations with others, especially in relation to good listening conditions. By reading with two children, the teacher helps to ensure that the frameworks for learning, participation and relationship building are good for both children, especially Leo, who relies on good sound quality and close proximity to the person who is talking.

Facilitating relationship building between children

Once a good trusting relationship has been established, the child will find it natural to seek support and guidance during play or a conversation. Guided participation builds on an interpretation of Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory emphasising the role of adults in the mediation of social activities and helping with the mastery of new cultural skills (Rogoff, 2003). Toddlers with a CI require many repetitions and experiences with language and social interaction. In this regard, the teacher's guidance and support are crucial to learning outcomes, participation and further development of language and communication skills (Cole & Flexer, 2010). Pedagogical support during play and conversations between a child with a CI and a peer are adjusted along the way; more help is given when the child is struggling but is gradually withdrawn once the child manages to communicate independently in the situation. In the conversation about the tractor, Kristin gives the necessary support by using language correctly, "Yes, the green tractor has come back," and then withdraws when Leo and Simen connect and start using language independently. The kind of support that should be given in each situation depends on the possibilities the community provides for increased participation and learning (Robson, 2012).

A good relationship between Leo and Simen helps the wellbeing of both children and gives them the perception of being

included in the learning community created between them when they talk about the tractor. Kristin actively engages Simen in the conversation with Leo, and she supports the relationship and social interaction between the boys. It is a well-known fact that friendships have a positive impact on child development, especially for children with disabilities (Krampac-Grljusic & Kolak, 2018; Ladd, 1990). Simen and Leo live in the same neighbourhood, therefore Kristin pays particular attention to situations that allow the boys to further develop a good relationship and friendship. By facilitating relationship building, the teacher can simultaneously contribute to better conditions for the child's social, emotional and intellectual development in learning community. Leo registers and understands a lot, and even though there is still a long way to go before his spoken language reaches the same level as peers, he can adequately participate in play with others, and he masters both turn-taking and simple conflict resolution strategies. It may be a fine balancing act for the teacher trying to ensure that children learn to communicate with each other and develop secure relationships on their own accord. Kristin supports Leo in his communication with Simen, whilst at the same time helping him to be understood without intervening too much.

For a child like Leo, who has a CI and is slightly cautious, it may push his limits somewhat to take part in conversations and to pronounce words that are perhaps not immediately understood. Kristin gives Leo the security he needs to take part in communication with his best friend and other children. She can give explanations and guidance where necessary, but she can also withdraw when she observes interactional situations that allow the children to learn social rules and skills from each other. The fine balance between giving and withdrawing support in linguistic and social situations is particularly challenging for teachers who work with CI children. It can be difficult to notice that a child with a CI has not registered a familiar word, and that this interruption causes broken communication or the play to stop. A good and secure relationship can help ensure that guided participation is perceived as useful and natural for both the child and teacher. In Leo's kindergarten, moments of guided participation and pedagogical support are like small pieces of a jigsaw puzzle during the inclusion process. If we want to finish the jigsaw puzzle, he needs many of these experiences every single day with adapted support that upholds language development and relationships between children in as many natural situations as possible.

Summary

The prognosis for the development of spoken language for children who receive a CI early is good, yet it requires supportive measures from both adults and children. At the same time, it is crucial to their learning that they are content, have secure human relationships and are active participants in the learning community. Daily life in kindergartens offers many opportunities for new learning. Much of the potential for a child with CI and his/her development lies within the pedagogical practices around the child, especially during linguistic interaction with their surroundings. Successful guided participation and peda-gogical support can be highly demanding know-how processes that require continuous adaptation to both the child's individual development goals and inclusive learning community. By facilitating language develop-ment and guided participation based on sociocultural learning theory, the teacher can contribute to adequate language develop-ment in children with a CI and strengthen the inclusive practices in the group the children are part of.

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Small projects at a snail's pace – small for whom?

Inclusion of all children is one of the most important goals of kindergartens. Kindergartens shall ensure that children receiving special education support are included in the children's group and general educational service (Norwegian Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 40).

Ena Caterina Heimdahl and Helene Fulland

Solli and Andresen (2017) explain that the staff at kindergartens support the fundamental values of inclusion and that their work aimed at contributing to inclusive processes applies to all children. All children may need some help in taking part in a peer community, but children with multiple disabilities have special needs for support (Heimdahl & Fulland, 2019, Lund et al., 2014). Their needs may be considered so complex that we hear of caregivers and professionals asking whether inclusion is at all possible.

In this chapter, we will look more closely at what the adults' insecurities consist of, and how we can understand and build inclusive communities where children with multiple disabilities are part of the children's group. This contribution is inspired by a kindergarten project where, during the course of the cooperation, we became more enlightened about the possibilities for inclusion (Heimdahl & Fulland, 2019). We will start by describing the children we are concentrating on and present Oleane – a fictive child with multiple disabilities (Point 1). Thereafter, we highlight some specific dilemmas attached to inclusion, which staff at kindergartens and special needs educators have presented to us in various contexts related to children like Oleane (Point 2). Moreover, we describe why we believe that collective reflection over experienced dilemmas, and how one can understand inclusion, is a good starting point for inclusive practices. Exemplification is provided in the form of stories from the field of practice and assessment logs as a starting point for conversations on inclusion (Point 3). To conclude, we highlight three dimensions of inclusion that show the small and subtle elements that inclusion may contain (Point 4). This type of approach to working with inclusion as a theme could broaden the focus of adults on inclusion and thus encourage them to facilitate an inclusive community.

A fictive story to illustrate the children we are talking about

The following story intends to illustrate the children this chapter concerns. The children's severe health issues necessitate adaptation of both the physical and pedagogical environment. The story also illustrates how the question of inclusion emerges in the daily lives of highly challenged children. We have called the story 'Cauliflower Soup':

Cauliflower Soup

It is nearly lunch time. The children storm in passing Oleane's wheelchair, as they go to the sink to wash their hands. They do this quickly and find their seats waiting for the mealtime song at the table. Cauliflower soup is being served today.

Oleane does not necessarily need to wash her hands. They are clean, since they have mainly been on her lap.

Oleane is ushered into a playroom that is now vacant. Oleane's lunch box contains a syringe and colourless mixture. A PEG button on her stomach, a syringe, a jug of water and a little blueberry jam to put on the pink gripper from Talk Tools makes Oleane's mealtime very different. Oleane hears the lunch sounds. She hears glasses being filled and spoons falling on the floor or being banged on the table. She hears the voices of the other children in the neighbouring room.

When Oleane is finally wheeled to the dining table, most of the children have gone. Only the slow-eaters are still at the table. Oleane is on a special needs upright stander. She has to look down from her high position to see all the mess left on the table and the slow-eater sitting next to her. The slow-eater reaches out his hand and grabs Oleane's hand. The adult sees the tiny outreaching hand and says: "Oleane tastes the cauliflower soup? She likes it. Did you like it?"

Many thoughts may come to mind after reading the story. The story shows that Oleane is included, but also that she is ignored, and that mealtimes are different for her compared to the other children. Most of the time, Oleane sits on an adult's lap or is in her wheelchair or lying down on a mat. Her hands are rarely in contact with sand and sloppy mud. Washing hands with the other children can easily be considered superfluous. Eating through a feeding tube, the collection of specially adapted food, flushing procedures, special needs upright stander with straps and strap tightening – the many procedures that take up space, time, and equipment. She hears noises from the communal mealtime in the neighbouring room. Is Oleane living a parallel life at the kindergarten? After a while, Oleane is wheeled into the common area. Luckily one of the children is a slow-eater and he and Oleane exchange a moment of togetherness. Nevertheless, must inclusion of children like Oleane be left to such coincidences?

The parallelism and randomness may both be unavoidable and understandable. Shielding and changes may be sufficiently grounded, but they do not need to form the pattern for everyday planning. In this chapter we look at the possibilities for creating an inclusive community where children like Oleane are participants. For example, creating possibilities through participation in hand washing and sitting at the table at the start of the meal. Possibilities emerge through the attitudes and competence of the adults. A prerequisite for children like Oleane to take part in the children's community is that the adults are continually attentive through the day. In order to be a participant, Oleane needs lifelong assistance. Who is Oleane as an agent in her own life?

A starting point for considering inclusion for children like Oleane is the understanding that the adult will always function as an extension of the child. The adult will represent the child, which inherently carries great responsibility. Conscious decisions require reflection and knowledge.

The responsibility for accomplishing this may cause insecurity, a guilty conscience, and feelings of inadequacy (Heimdahl & Fulland, 2019). In the next part, we will highlight dilemmas of inclusion that the staff at kindergartens and special needs advisers have presented to us in various contexts.

The dilemmas of adults in relation to inclusion

We chose to categorise the challenges that are often highlighted in connection with inclusion of children like Oleane into four dilemmas. These issues are presented as dilemmas of inclusion because the adults in charge find that the dilemmas hinder inclusion.

Child's great need for care

One of the experienced dilemmas is related to Oleane's *great need for care* and assistance during most of her activities at the kindergarten. It takes time to move, dress and wash her, and to facilitate eating and sleeping. Assistive devices must be adapted by an occupational therapist and her muscles must be trained by a physiotherapist. The necessary health-promoting routines are linked to care which takes up a lot of time. Adults can perceive this as an obstacle for inclusion. In relation to the rest of the children's group, she has an asymmetrical life.

Adult's need to protect the child

Another dilemma concerns *the need to protect* Oleane. Oleane needs peace and quiet. She may vomit or make loud noises and abrupt movements. This can be perceived as unpleasant. It is easy to think that Oleane needs shielding so she will eat or rest better.

However, this considerate way of thinking may contribute to exclusion. The voices and touches of the other children vanish from her world and the outreaching child's hand is lost.

Maintaining children's interest over time

Children's groups are naturally characterised as being highly mobile. Some leave and others come in; the community is constructed and deconstructed. It may be difficult to 'hold on to' the interest of the other children over time. How can Oleane join in when she is 'stuck in a wheelchair'? Must there always be a 'fun' aspect each time to make it interesting for everyone? Or is it fine to just be together? What creates a community in changeable group compositions? And what is considered a suitable duration of interaction to say that Oleane joined in?

Many adults around the child

A fourth dilemma is the *number of adults* around Oleane. Because there are many special tasks, there is more staff around her. Responsibility for Oleane can be delegated to those with special responsibility for her, for example, user-controlled personal assistant (BPA) or special needs educator. It is reassuring that those who know Oleane well are very good with her. The staff, however, might also gradually live parallel lives and in the next moment feel like intruders. Can we say "hello" to Oleane or will we disturb her? Can we suggest something or is it the wrong time right now? How many questions can we ask? Increased staffing around children with a great need for support can make other staff feel insecure, which may be perceived as an obstacle for spontaneous contact.

Consequences of all the dilemmas

In combination these dilemmas can help create insecurities in relation to who Oleane could be in the wider children's community. It is important that the staff and team around the child take the dilemmas seriously and

look at them as joint challenges rather than individual problems. The dilemmas must be seen in light of the fundamental value that the work of kindergartens around inclusive processes applies to all children (Solli & Andresen, 2017). Collective reflection may be a way to address the dilemmas. Collective reflection is ingrained locally. The staff can therefore understand and reinterpret the dilemmas in a specific context. In the next section, we will look more closely at collective reflection as support for achieving good inclusive practices.

Collective reflection as a starting point for good inclusive practices

In this section we further explain the value of collective reflection and suggest two starting points for reflection that we have used when supervising kindergartens in inclusion: stories from the field of practice and observation tools.

Qualities of collective reflection

We have used Gulbrandsen, Fallang and Skjær Ulvik (2014) as a basis for drafting an understanding of what it entails to put into practice professional knowledge in kindergartens. This understanding places emphasis on collective reflection as a tool in supervision work. Gulbrandsen et al. (2014) writes that knowledge-based professional practices are *both theoretically reflected and analytically oriented,* and *systematic and flexible* (p. 207). The authors further argue for the perspective of knowledge-based professionalism to be changed from regular procedures to exploratory questions:

Any type of practice or method contains theoretical premises, albeit often inexplicit. However, they are still based on a given view on knowledge. We ask [...] questions about whether any established methods are missing in the fields of practice or whether it merely concerns the development of tools in order to see and understand? We will refer to the latter as theoretical or conceptual knowledge [...], tools to shift the direction of professional focus. (Guldbrandsen et al., p. 207, our translation)

Co-creation

The participants in collective reflection may often be a mixture of employees close to the child from various professions (early childhood education teacher, assistant, user-controlled personal assistant (BPA), special needs educator) and external advisers (the Educational and Psychological Counselling Service (PPT), Statped). Collective reflection incorporates a combination of three elements: 1) the experiences and knowledge around each child and the specific lifeworld the child is a part of, 2) the possibilities to ask exploratory questions—including those which are difficult—and 3) the addition of new knowledge. In combination these elements contribute to broadening the participants' conceptual understanding of inclusion. The participants develop tools to see and understand inclusion. This results in the development of what Gulbrandsen and her colleagues (2014) refer to as co-creation of knowledge and meaning: how to collectively create inclusion for and with the children.

Exploration

Input for reflection over inclusion could involve the challenging dichotomous thinking, for example, looking at children as included or excluded, participants or non-participants, language users or languageless. Moen writes (2018, p. 10) that "when someone is understood as either one or the other, there may soon be little room for nuances, intermediate solutions or both/and perspectives." (our translation). Instead of using an either-or approach, it may be fruitful to explore other forms of inclusion and participation (Heimdahl & Fulland, 2019), for example, the value of the quiet, yet attentive presence or voices of the children that form the daily ambience.

Or the outreaching hand from the slow-eater at the table, which may leave an impression on both Oleane and the boy who stretched out his hand. Do these small moments constitute inclusion? How can care and inclusion go hand in hand? And how is the child a supplier of premises for the community of which she is a part? The term *community* does not represent a given size either. Part of conceptual knowledge of inclusion might involve unfurling the community the child is part of (see chapter 1).

An emotional buffer

Collective reflection may also function as an emotional buffer for those bearing the responsibility for practices. Sharing and unfolding dilemmas, insecurities, and the feeling of not being able to cope during tasks, can help people overcome feelings of inadequacy and relieve a potential guilty conscience of all the things they believe they will not get done. Broader analytical focus may lead to the discovery of new ways to carry out their practices. Likewise, with a broader understanding the person may discover that what they are already doing is good enough and look at their own contri-bution with fresh eyes.

Awareness raising

Reflection meetings may also contribute to the participants looking upon themselves to a larger extent as inclusion agents. We will return to this in Point 4, where we highlight the adult's role as a facilitator for inclusive moments. This concerns the adult entering the child's world and inviting more children into that world. Those who are with Oleane, hear, see and understand the other children's projects. It is therefore important to reflect over what Oleane's world looks like when what she sees, hears, and feels must be structured in order to be meaningful. Reflection meetings may help the adults to become skilled inter-preters of what they see and experience.

Several potential starting points can be used for collective reflection. The analysis of video recordings of interactional situations is particularly suitable for such reflection (the use of videos is comprehensively described by, for example Heimdahl & Serrano, 2020; Heimdahl et al., 2019). Here we describe two approaches targeting the experiences of the adults, which we believe contribute to the analysis of the uniqueness of each child and pedagogical situations: stories from the field of practice and observation tools.

Stories from the field of practice

The kindergarten's own stories from the field of practice have proven to be an exciting starting point for conversations about inclusion (Heimdahl & Fulland, 2019). Telling stories when exchanging experiences is something we do all the time (Lundby, 1998). Nevertheless, during an ongoing conversation between adults, there is often not enough time to dwell on the stories. At least, there is not enough time to write them down. In a report from 2019, we describe how we systematically used stories from the field of practice as a starting point for reflection with the kindergartens we supervised (Heimdahl & Fulland, 2019). The employees wrote down and sent minor events from the kinder-garten that they believed illustrated inclusion.

When staff talk of children like Oleane, the stories are often short. Not much happens with Oleane. She sits, waits, becomes tense and coughs very loudly. She doesn't run off. She doesn't take crayons off other children. An example of a story of inclusion might be: "*When Oleane arrived at the kindergarten, two girls ran up to greet her and gave her a flower.*" During supervision, we can make short (thin) stories larger and richer (thicker) (Lundby, 1998). When we read stories out loud to the group, the stories become communal and the group can expand the stories together.

This is done to draw attention to experiential elements that are important to highlight in the collective consciousness:

Through self-experienced events, one works with inclusion that in a way is similar to a bottom-up process, where the development of knowledge and new professional awareness occurs in close approximation to one's own practices. One event is told and elaborated upon. This results in more events being recognised in daily life, which others can then retell. The staff's stories create knowledge in a field where little literature i s found. (Heimdahl & Fulland, 2019, p. 13, our translation)

Observation tools

Experientially it has proven difficult to observe and systematise observations focusing on inclusion. This could be due to the fact that there is a lot of parallelism, the presence of many children, and there is often high mobility in the children's groups. It could also be the case that it is difficult to know what to look for. Consequently, it might be useful to have an observation aid that helps the adult to take a step back during their own practices and guide their attention.

Based on our experiences, Statped has developed an assessment log for use in this context. This log refers to important main categories in the observation: What is the child you are focusing on doing? What are the other children doing? What are the adults who are present doing? Furthermore, what are the qualities of the activity in which and around the interaction is taking place? (See Heimdahl & Fulland, 2019, for access to the log). A log can be filled in along the way, during a video observation or following an activity. The log can be filled in by one employee or several collectively.

When the log has been filled in, it represents a specific experienced situation that is owned by those who have experienced

it. It can then be used to look at minor everyday events with renewed enthusiasm, to share the experiences with others, and to support a change in practices or team development.

The analysis of video recordings, stories and observation logs are possible ways to highlight practices. As we mentioned earlier, one of the important ingredients in competence enhancement via collective reflection is that the specific and practice-related experiences are supplemented with professional knowledge that can contribute to broader focus on the same experiences. To conclude this chapter, we will therefore highlight three dimensions that are relevant to incorporate into collective reflection with the aim of obtaining a better understanding of what inclusion might be and how we can achieve it.

Three dimensions on the way to inclusive practices

In the following section we explore three dimensions of inclusive practices, which illustrate the professional competence that should be incorporated into the staff's reflection and co-creation sessions. The goal of these sessions is to elaborate upon the small events and strengthen the sense of coping with the work on getting all children to become members of an inclusive community. The three dimensions are: 1) facilitation so the other children can understand Oleane through *learning and teaching her language*, 2) *inclusive positions* that contribute to communication in Oleane's surroundings: proximity and nesting, and 3) the importance of understanding the concept of time that we use as a basis for our practices: *folded time*. We start with a fictive story that takes us into the three dimensions that are fundamental to the understanding of inclusion for children like Oleane. We have titled the story "The Pinecone Boy'.

The Pinecone Boy

Oleane is sitting on the lap of one of the adults. A child comes up to her with a pinecone. "Wow, what a lovely pinecone!," says the adult and helps Oleane open her hand. The Pinecone Boy looks at the adult and then to Oleane. Oleane opens up a little finger and touches the pinecone. The Pinecone Boy smiles and suddenly disappears. He returns with a new and bigger pinecone. "Oh my goodness! What a big pinecone!" says the adult loudly. The adult helps Oleane to touch the pinecone. Oleane stretches, and as she stretches her arm, she makes a noise. "Oleane is really happy now," says the adult. The Pinecone Boy says: "Oleane loves pinecones. I'll go and find some more."

Learning and teaching Oleane's language

Oleane is a child who expresses how she is feeling through her body. We choose to call Oleane's way of expressing herself as her communication form; however, we have also used the term language. This is because we want to give Oleane's bodily expressions the status assigned to conventional expressions. Her language includes a good mixture of vocalisation, facial and bodily expressions, and gestures. We can combine all these components under the term body language. "Body language is a broad church of subtle communication techniques that accompany the big brothers of auditory and visual communication. Non-verbal communication, eye contact, and facial expressions are the most common cues" (Complex Needs and Advanced Training, 2016, module 3.1).

Oleane's bodily expressions do not, however, represent conventional body language. The potential for the expressions to develop into sign language or words is very small. They are difficult to read, as they can significantly deviate from what we usually consider non-verbal language (see the natural ways that toddlers express themselves). This may be due to spasms and other bodily cues, especially pain. Nevertheless, Oleane's non-verbal language must be understood by those around her so she can participate. She relies on communication partners to understand what is going on and to express herself. Oleane's communication partners must know her so well that they are capable of understanding Oleane's different idiosyncratic expressions. The term idiosyncrasy is used in linguistics to refer to a linguistic phenomenon that involves the creation of expressions that are only understood in certain linguistic environments or that are typical for an individual. For example, it is necessary to learn how Oleane smiles to know that she is smiling. It is precisely for these expressions that Oleane needs interpreters.

Furthermore, the communication in Oleane's surroundings is characterised by phatic communication (Everett, 2008). Phatic communication points out the universal need to be socially connected. The children around Oleane use words, such as "hi", "thank you" and "you're welcome." All these are phatic expressions to gain contact with others. Apart from words, this can be achieved through other channels and conventional symbol systems we recognise in language. It could be the exchange of sounds/vocalisations, breathing, whispering, actions, objects, and physical contact. By paying attention to Oleane's communication, her caregivers have a better chance of finding the different ways in which Oleane expresses herself. This is what they need to do to learn and teach Oleane's language, so that Oleane and the other children can gain contact. Oleane's language needs the best interpreters.

When the children approach Oleane, they use social language. They want to communicate with her. Additionally, they use language to give information. They want to show her things they have found and are excited about her response. Children intuitively understand that the tactile-bodily channel is the best way to reach Oleane. If they use the tactile channel, the children get a response. With the help and support of the adult, who is with Oleane, her response will be converted to one of the fundamental elements of dialogue: turn-taking. When objects from the children are placed in Oleane's hand, they become symbols for the desired involvement of Oleane in the group. Objects are turned into words and sentences. They are touched, explained, and recognised. They can be talked about. Oleane's exploration with her hands make her visible to the children's group. The children exaggerate their own body language by being more specific and exaggerating mimicry. They repeat themselves, talk slower, laugh loudly, and wrinkle their foreheads. They speak clearly in a high-toned voice and become overly clear. They simplify and shorten the length of sentences. They believe in Oleane. They keep their eyes on Oleane and the adult, whilst scanning the surroundings to make sure they are on the right track.

Simply put, this is exactly the quality that idiosyncratic language requires: calibration of what we believe we feel/hear/see in an attempt to understand/respond. Children who play with Oleane are sharp observers of the job the adults do. They absorb it and transfer it to their own method – to new contributions and new heights.

Inclusive positions

Everything we do in the world; we do through our bodies. Movements are expressions that drag thoughts and words with them. "Words and reflections are added or as Merleau-Ponty (1994) would have said: They are an extension of the movement that starts in the body" (as cited in Nome, 2019, p. 103, our translation).

Furthermore, the human body is always in different parts of the room: under the table, under a pile of cushions, on a chair or mat, in a wheelchair, at the table, against a wall holding a cup of coffee, on the sofa. The position of human bodies in relation to each other impacts communication. Where the adult positions him or herself in relation to Oleane to help her communicate is therefore important for the inclusion of her. We have chosen to highlight two of the elements of inclusive positions: one is *proximity* and the other is *nesting*.

The term *proximity* has been taken from Complex Needs and Advanced Training, (2016). Proximity "concerns the experiential preconditions required for the Other to function in the role of secure base for exploration" (Nafstad & Rødbroe, 2015, p. 122). The adult needs to position themselves near the child in order to be a secure base and help the child out into the world. Nearness is often considered a sign of caring, but nearness is also part of Oleane's communication. That is, nearness turns a space into a sphere where communication takes place.

Proximity allows the adult to guide, for example, Oleane's hand so she can listen and participate. Ulla (2017) writes that the "Staff (at the kindergarten) also practise their field in the way they move, and the way they relate to the room and individuals around them solely through their bodies" (p. 187, our translation). For Oleane, it is critical that the adults position themselves nearby with a pleasant and friendly attitude in order for her to understand and be understood. This is closely interwoven with the second dimension: nesting.

The term *nesting* has been taken from Ochs et al. (2005). Nesting emphasises conscious positioning of the adult with the

aim of stabilising Oleane's body in order for her to use energy for communication. Because of frequent spasms, Oleane relies on being helped into a good position, so she can remain communicatively present. In the field of combined vision and hearing impairments, this is essential. Lindström (2019) writes "The nested position could support stabilization for the child and enhances the partner's focus on the child's movements or vibrations in the chest" (p. 59).

The adult accompanying Oleane, frequently and unconsciously adjusts their body. These adjustments turn into friendly body positions. This is because it is important to sense/feel each other's bodies to draw Oleane's attention to her surroundings. By doing this, she uses as little energy as possible to adjust her own body when communicating with the children around her.

The adult's position in relation to Oleane invites the other children in in different ways. For example, the face-to-face position can accentuate the dyad formed by Oleane and the adult. This position can exclude interaction with the group if the adult is not sufficiently aware of the signal being sent out. Other positions for communication are at the side of or behind Oleane or with Oleane sitting on the adult's lap. These open up towards the group. All the positions can be consciously used in daily life. Staff juggle between the positions for adaptation to play and activities. The position of the adult could be an important anchor.

The adult's body is the permanent holding point on the floor or around the table that enables the children to repeatedly return to the activity around Oleane.

Folded time

The third dimension is what the title fore-shadows for the reader. Those which may seem like small projects, like micro-goals, are large projects for Oleane. Such projects require a different perception of time.

What seems like a snail's pace to adults, is a pace that gives meaning to Oleane.

Many of Oleane's daily activities visualise the dimension of time. These activities begin, something happens and then they end. Time moves from A to B. This linearity emerges in the way Oleane's activities are structured. This is a key principle in all special and general pedagogical work. The problem with linearity is that it can make us blind to any immediate non-verbal expressions that may have resulted in a different outcome for the event. It is unusual to allow body language to guide what will happen. With a linear perception of time, where the process develops from A to B, there is often no room for uncertainty, stops, interruptions or insecurities. Often, we do not have enough time. Someone is waiting for the child to be finished with nappy changing or eating or washing. And we have to hurry up. There are so many things that HAVE to be done. These are the things we hear during supervision.

Breaking away from the linear perspective can be challenging for the staff at kinder-gartens. The linearity connects us to a way of being together, where we have the outcome in our minds before it happens. This can create stress for the child and us because we always need to get things done. When we break away from such linearity, we become aware of the dialogue and pleasure of being together, and the experience of the here and now becomes significantly more enriched. Perhaps the reader remembers the slow-eater in the cauliflower soup story? A routine-filled daily life may soon overshadow the slow-eater's attempt to make any contact. *The slow-eater stretched out a hand.* Do we see his intentions behind the act? Or do we see that he should finish eating? "*Don't you want to go out to play? The others have finished.*" The adult in the cauliflower soup story paused just enough to say "Oleane tastes the cauliflower soup.

She likes it. Do you like it?" The prerequisite for the linearity is that we are aiming for something, so what perception of time do we need to help us be more present in the here and now?

The latter is difficult to imagine, but we could call it time that *folds* or folded time. Like the folds in a skirt or an accordion that produces new tones as we unfold it. Serres (1995) writes: "Time is paradoxical; it folds or twists; it is as various as the dance of flames in a brazier – here interrupted, there vertical, mobile, and unexpected" (p. 58). Gibson (2015) writes of an understanding of time where the past is interwoven with the present and expectations for the future. In linear time, an orange with its peel is an orange without its peel and is ready to eat. In folded time, an orange is a whole project where squirts of juice from the peel make a child scramble, smile, and perhaps squeal. It was a memory from yesterday but is part of today's project. It is expanded, rested, and becomes new. The peeled peel is brought out again, it is pressed gently, and fingers become trapped between the peel and piece of orange. The body recognises and remembers under the prerequisite that the experience is folded and then unfolded again. In this time perspective, an orange turns into an orange experience, which can be talked about and remembered. Daily routines are designed to recall the previous day today and they point towards tomorrow.

What does this have to do with inclusion? The adults, who are with Oleane, need the opportunity to absorb the importance of folded time. It allows inclusive communities to be built, because the outcome is not the most important thing, it is the road there. On Oleane's territory, all children can learn more, slow down their pace and become immersed in their projects provided that the adult has control, expands the theme, and engages them in a safe and low-key manner. The linear timeline gives security in knowing that something starts and ends. The folded time enriches it. We are in the folds together, present, and attentive. Many children choose to be with Oleane precisely because it feels good to slow down and be in the folds.

The Pinecone Boy story told with a broader focus

In daily life, the various dimensions that the staff must be aware of will be intertwined with each other. We have chosen to separate them for the sake of presentation and to draw attention to the individual nuances that are difficult to recognise in daily life.

The story about the Pinecone Boy that was presented to the reader at the beginning of the section, will now be retold to the reader with formulations that make the story thicker and linked to the competence the kindergarten has now acquired after collective reflection.

The Pinecone Boy retold

Oleane is sitting closely to the adult. Although, she is not merely sitting on the adult's lap. They are nested. She has a safe starting point for receiving the pinecone the child presents. The adult's body language shows in its entirety that Oleane needs time to place a finger on the pinecone, to feel the rough surface and to recall any impression that was received the day before. They are in folded time together, where the impressions from the day before may also reappear today. The child with the pinecone knows that he must wait. The adult interprets Oleane's body language so the Pinecone Boy can be happy that Oleane is happy. The Pinecone Boy disappears and shows up again with a new and larger pinecone. The individuals who make up this meeting are proximate to each other. The entire process happens again with a larger pinecone. Because the pinecone is larger, the adult's voice also becomes louder. The auditory picture becomes 'bigger'. Oleane's attention becomes more pronounced – she opens her eyes and sees more widely. The Pinecone Boy's feeling of mastery is clear by the proud look, and the new activity level that is necessary for collecting more and larger pinecones. It is a golden moment of inclusion for everyone. To summarise, we can say that the adult's competence consists of being a sensitive interpreter of Oleane's idiosyncratic expressions, and facilitator of proximity and nesting with a time perspective that does not aim for a specific outcome.

Conclusion: Is this about Oleane?

No, not really. It's about, as Hjelmbrekke writes, promoting diversity in early childhood. Working with inclusion could also be called the promotion of diversity in early childhood. A contact teacher once expressed it this way: "It appears that diversity is good for us all" (Hjelmbrekke, 2014¨, our translation).

In this chapter, we have used the stories about the cauliflower soup and Pinecone Boy to highlight dilemmas linked to inclusion and have argued that collective reflection is one key for tackling challenges and understanding inclusive practices – especially when there are many dilemmas

and adaptation is greatly needed. By stepping back, and taking time to tell and retell the story, the small projects turn bigger and the snail's pace becomes an oasis in which to step back and take a break. The dynamic, random, unplanned, and contextual nature of inclusion has now emerged. Common behaviour—sitting down, sitting close, adapting, and responding—are highlighted and put into a bigger context. Learning and teaching Oleane's language, and inclusive positions and comprehension of folded time, become important pieces of the jigsaw in an inclusive community.

Our wish? That every kindergarten will have the competence to seize the story, elaborate it, fold and unfold it, knead it and give it back to the storyteller like it was a jewel. That all children can take part in the small, unfinished, slow projects. That the parents of all children will hear about the small projects that have unravelled at a snail's pace during the course of the day and that society will recognise that inclusion in the early childhood years is extremely important for children with complex disabilities:

For CWD (Children with Disabilities), inclusion during the preschool years is critically important at this stage, because children have yet to develop biases about others, minimizing the possibility of rejection, whereas the chance that CWD have interactions with their peers makes it easier for them to be accepted in later years. (Sucuoğlu et al., 2019, p. 77)

Essentially, it is about the type of society and citizens that we would like to constitute the bigger 'we'.

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Inclusive learning activities

Through inclusive learning activities, children and pupils should experience acknowledgement, belonging, learning and a sense of achievement. Therefore, to generate motivation and joy of learning, a broad repertoire of learning activities and resources are required within predictable frameworks. These must be facilitated based on the child's individual prerequisites and the opportunity space that exists in kindergartens and schools. The following two chapters each in their own way show how schools can facilitate this.

Espen L. Wilberg, Maren-Johanne Nordby and Hedda Gjesti Tjäder:
Inclusive learning activities
Espen, Maren-Johanne and Hedda describe how schools can facilitate pupils to feel a sense of achievement in order for more pupils to be able to participate and experience belonging in the social and academic communities. They show how schools can utilise the pupils' interests and build good relationships with an emphasis on structure and predictability.

Tonje Lovang and Knut Slåtta:
Belonging, participation and engagement – development of inclusive group activities for pupils with PMLD
Tonje and Knut address questions regarding what is required to develop well-functioning group activities for pupils with multiple disabilities, and what quality criteria should form the basis in evaluations thereof. They describe strategies for planning such activities and how pupils' engagement can be used as a scale to assess educational quality.

Inclusive learning activities

Espen Langbråten Wilberg, Maren-Johanne Nordby and Hedda Gjesti Tjäder

Children who receive special needs education are at risk of losing access to their social and academic communities (Norwegian Ombuds-person for Children, 2017; Wendelborg, Kittelsaa & Caspersen, 2017). In this chapter we will explore how schools, by facilitating pupils to feel a sense of achievement, utilising pupils' interests, building good relationships and adapting for structure and predictability, can contribute to increased participation and pupils feeling of belonging in the social and academic communities. Our contribution is based on our experiences from advisory work in schools where there are pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders and considerable school absence.

It is important that adults in schools have knowledge and competence regarding pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders, in order for them to make appropriate adaptations. Individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders, including ADHD, Tourette syndrome and autism spectrum disorder, have challenges with their executive functioning and often have generalisation difficulties. Many also have challenges relating to social interaction and communication (Frith, 2005; Hill, 2008; Urnes, 2018). These challenges may result in pupils encountering conflicts and misunderstandings with both classmates and teachers. If the school does not provide adaptation for these pupils, it may become more challenging for them to participate in

a learning community, which, in turn, may result in these pupils experiencing a lack of belonging to the group.

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that these pupils, too, are part of a social and academic community (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020a). In this chapter, we will present three examples demonstrating how this can be implemented in practice. Although the practice examples we discuss relate to a specific group of pupils, we propose that the themes are relevant to a much broader group. We refer to the approach employed in the examples as *inclusive learning activities*. Although this is our own terminology, the methodological principles for this approach are well-recognised in the literature.

Before presenting the practice examples, we would like to clarify how we define inclusive learning activities, associated principles, and their significance for pupils who require special adaptation.

Inclusive learning activities

Facilitating inclusive learning activities that are adapted to individuals, but which are also appropriate for their classmates, may be a path toward creating an inclusive classroom.

An inclusive learning activity is an activity where various pupils are able to contribute by using their strengths in a joint effort. An inclusive learning activity not only involves

academic goals but also social goals where the pupils have the opportunity to test and practice new social skills and strategies. All pupils are different. This entails that learning activities cannot necessarily be replicated in different situations but must instead be adapted to the pupils in question. Therefore, it is important that the teacher has planned the activity based on the pupils' interests, with a good structure and consideration for how to practice social skills and build good relationships between the participating pupils. This is how we can facilitate pupils to feel a sense of achievement.

We have chosen to divide the work on inclusive learning activities into four principles. In the following section, we will present what these principles involve, why they are important for all pupils, and why it is especially important to use these principles as a starting point when working with pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders.

Four principles of inclusive learning activities

In this section of the chapter, we will review the four important principles of inclusive learning activities:

1. mapping
2. pupil's interests
3. relationships and social skills
4. structure and predictability

Mapping

In order for all pupils to be able to learn and develop optimally, it is important that schools make adaptations in order for pupils to experience learning and feel a sense of achievement. Prior to the educator planning the implementation of a learning activity, pupils' interests, strengths, relationships, and stress factors in the learning environmental should be mapped. This can be implemented by way of questionnaires,

observations, pupil interviews and conversations with parents. It is important that the mapping process and assessment of pupils' skills do not become burdensome, resulting in unwanted consequences for the pupils (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020b).

Traditional mapping often involves a test or other formal mapping situation, which may be burdensome for pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders. Possible reasons for this include that they feel unsafe in traditional mapping situations, that they do not understand the questions, or that they do not have a secure relationship with the individual conducting the mapping. Therefore, it may be prudent to employ other methods and approaches. One way to do this is to also utilise pupils' interests as an arena for the mapping. Pupils who spend a lot of time playing video games are often calm and accessible while playing, which can be used as a framework for a mapping interview. Questions can be asked while the game is being played or during breaks. The questions can be asked orally, in writing, or with the aid of pictures, depending on the pupil's needs.

Pupil's interests

Pupils who feel a sense of achievement will be able to explore unfamiliar situations and acquire new skills in a secure, persevering, and independent manner. A sense of achievement also generates motivation, including to work on tasks that are challenging and difficult (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020b). A good way to create an inclusive environment where the pupil feels a sense of achievement, motivation, and learning, is to use the pupils' strengths and interests as a starting point. For pupils who experience ostracism from the community, it may be especially beneficial to use their interests as a starting point, so that they are in a familiar situation that they

master, at the same time as they experience contributing academically.

There are many ways of teaching subjects and learning objectives can be achieved in ways other than traditional instruction. This requires creativity on the part of the teacher. Therefore, it is useful to utilise something the pupil is already involved in as a starting point, and creating learning objectives and social frameworks around this, rather than attempting to adapt the pupil to a teaching situation in which they struggle.

As mentioned, most pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders have generalisation difficulties. This results in many having a strong need to understand the utility value of what they will be learning. Because of the challenges with executive functioning, some also have difficulties with concentrating on matters for which they have no interest. This must be taken into consideration. The pupil's areas of interest may be an arena where they have a low stress level and are accessible to learning. Therefore, it will be beneficial to build a learning activity around the pupil's interests instead of attempting to generate motivation for a more traditional instruction method. If the pupil, e.g., enjoys playing Minecraft, the educator can create a teaching plan within this virtual world.

Relationships and social skills

Social inclusion and friendship are important factors for well-being at school, and good friendships are protective factors that promote self-esteem and well-being. Friendships have a positive impact on the relationship with school, at the same time as many negative relationships are associated with a risk of reduced learning outcomes, mental health problems, and a negative course of development (Nordahl, Flygare & Drugli, 2016).

Hattie (2009) found that out of 138 factors which impact pupils' learning, it is the teacher-pupil relationship that is the most important. In situations where the teacher-pupil relationship is positive, the pupil will be better liked by their classmates and be more active in class (Spurkeland & Lysebo, 2016). However, if the teacher has a negative or dismissive attitude toward the pupil, classmates will often distance themselves from the pupil. Pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders often struggle with social skills, which places them at risk of social exclusion. Here, the teacher's ability to form a relationship will be key to the pupil's academic and social development (Nordahl et al., 2016).

In order to form a good relationship, it is crucial that the pupil is taken seriously. It is important that the teacher takes time to speak with the pupil in order for the pupil to understand. For pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders, it may be especially useful to utilise visual conversation tools. It is also important that the pupil experiences that their needs are accommodated. For instance, some pupils struggle with penmanship, while others have considerable problems with the smell of cucumbers. It is important that the teacher accommodates these issues with respect, and possible measures include allowing the pupil to write on a PC or tablet, or that the pupil may leave the room when someone is eating cucumber.

Good social skills are often a gateway to the school community. Many pupils who experience ostracism have challenges in this area. Schools have an important role in assisting these pupils to develop good social skills, but this should be implemented on the pupils' terms and according to their needs. Many pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders struggle socially. These challenges relate to a general challenge with mentalisation – the ability to perceive themselves externally and interpret others' behaviour on this basis (Martinsen et al., 2006; Martinsen et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important that

schools work specifically on developing pupils' social skills. Some pupils will benefit from practicing taking turns, while others need to practice the difference between white lies and real lies. And others need to practice initiating conversations or how they can maintain or conclude them. It is important that teachers work purposefully on teaching the pupil social skills, but this does not occur in a vacuum. A significant component of learning social skills is to test them out in practice in safe social environments.

Many pupils will more easily be able to develop good relationships and friendships through an activity or situation that they master. Therefore, it is important that the educator chooses an activity that the pupils' feel secure enough doing in order to build these relationships, while at the same time the teacher is there to provide support. Furthermore, it is important that the teacher selects pupils who fit together, both academically and socially.

Structure and predictability
All pupils require structure and predictability in order to be able to learn and thrive in school. Knowing what to expect and what is expected of you, is in many cases decisive as to whether or not you can contribute, be independent and experience participating in a community. The ability of pupils to acquire such information varies. Therefore, the degree of adaptation required to generate structure and predictability must be individually adapted. This must be implemented in all learning activities.

Pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders require clearer structure and predictability in their everyday lives than most others (Urnes, 2018). This is because these pupils have greater difficulties acquiring the information other pupils acquire along the way. Because of these generalisation difficulties, this will also be the case if they have experienced the situation several times before. They may

also have difficulties receiving and interpreting messages and expectations from their teachers and classmates (Martinsen et al., 2006; Martinsen et al., 2016).

Detailed and clear plans are often a prerequisite for pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders to be able to participate in a learning community. They need all learning activities to be structured and they need to know what is expected of them. Furthermore, it is crucial that transitions between activities and within activities are structured and easy to understand (Martinsen et al., 2006). Therefore, these pupils also require specific information based on the following seven questions: *what* the pupils should do, *where* should they be, *why* are they doing it, *with whom* will they be doing it, *how* should they do it, *how* long will they be doing it and *what* will they do after (Statped, 2018). Plans must be detailed, individually adapted and visualised. Some pupils will require a detailed description of all components in the activity with a carefully planned schedule, while others will require written criteria for what is expected of them. Some will require this information in written form, while other need pictures. Some require the information well in advance, while it will be sufficient for others to receive the information at the start of the activity.

Pupils' needs for structure and predictability may also vary over time. For instance, some will have less of a need for written criteria once they become accustomed to the activity and situation. It is important that the educator has a dialogue with the pupils to make this assessment.

When the teacher ensures that the individual pupil has all the necessary information, the pupils spend less energy on determining the frameworks around the instruction, giving them more energy for learning and participation in the community.

For a learning activity to be inclusive for all pupils, it is important that the teacher

uses these four principles as a starting point. It is important to utilise the pupils' interests as a starting point, practice social skills and form social relationships during the activity. It is also crucial to adapt the structure of the activity for the pupils to experience predictability. To do this, it is essential to map the pupils in advance. We will now present three examples demonstrating how this can be implemented in practice.

Practice examples

Below are three examples of inclusive learning activities that we have personally tested, or which we have observed in practice, to create a safe learning community. The examples we have chosen are composed of multiple experiences we have had in our practice. The examples are realistic and correspond well with our own experiences with pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders and school absence. All of the examples involve pupils who have special needs education in all their teaching hours. The pupils in the first example attends a special needs class, while the other two groups attend their local school. The pupils have neurodevelopmental disorders including ADHD, Tourette syndrome and/or autism spectrum disorder. In two of the three examples, employees at the school have upgraded their competence in mapping, social competence, structure and predictability and the importance of relationships prior to the design of the learning activities. All the pupils have good prerequisites for learning but their inclusion in the academic and social communities is limited.

The first practice example involves the use of the role-playing game *Dungeons and Dragons*, the second explores the use of film and creation of crime mysteries, and the third example discusses the use of coding as an inclusive learning activity.

To highlight how the four principles are used in the planning and implementation of the learning activities, we have chosen to write this in the form of a list at the end of each example. We hope that this can be useful for others seeking to draw inspiration from this chapter to work on inclusive learning activities.

Dungeons and Dragons

A special needs group at the lower secondary school level is attended by pupils with autism spectrum disorder. These pupils have a normal level of intellectual ability but have considerable challenges with being present in an ordinary classroom setting and jointly participating in a learning community on equal footing with their peers. Even though the pupils have similar diagnoses, there are major differences in academic level, social skills, interests and needs for structure. Some of the pupils have received considerable instruction in groups, while others have mostly received one-on-one instruction. Some of the pupils also have major challenges with traditional blackboard instruction and often object if there are topics they do not consider relevant or interesting. In some subjects, it has therefore been challenging to find appropriate learning activities that also facilitate the pupils' feeling of belonging to the learning community.

Following careful mapping of the pupils' interests, the teachers in the group developed a teaching plan around the role-playing game Dungeons and Dragons (D&D). Dungeons and Dragons is a role-playing game set in a 'Tolkienian' medieval world of elves, wizards, orcs and dragons. Participants must cooperate on a mission – an adventure – and must handle various challenges along the way. Participants play characters they select themselves, with different skills and special abilities. The game is led by a game organiser, referred to as a 'Dungeon Master' (DM). Success in a mission depends on what choices you and your group make and

the numbers you roll on the dice. You succeed or fail together.

D&D is a time-consuming activity. Therefore, the teachers set aside a whole week for this activity. For each session, they had identified clear learning objectives in subjects like social studies, Christian and other religious and ethical education (CREE), and natural science. One example is that the pupils were to compare various forms of governance and account for differences and similarities. This had been a difficult topic to teach using traditional blackboard instruction. In this mission, however, it was crucial to know what forms of government applied to the various cities they travelled through. Thereby, this became important knowledge for the pupils to acquire – and they were highly motivated as a result.

The teachers also had clear social learning objectives for each session. Examples of this include that the pupils were to wait their turn, listen to others in a conversation, assert themselves and make contact with others in a positive manner. These objectives, together with the game's clear rules was referred to as 'board game etiquette', and, overall, this provided a good structure and clear expectations of the pupils.

1. **The mapping** of the pupils occurred by way of pupil interviews and observations of what the pupils did and discussed during recess and in their leisure time. The pupils were also asked in advance if D&D was something they were interested in trying. The teachers also continued the mapping during the activity and had conversations with the pupils, both in groups and individually, to find out if there was anything they wanted to change, or if they had new or other needs.

2. **The pupils' interests** were accommodated in that many were interested in the fantasy genre of literature, film, or television series, some enjoyed playing board games, while others enjoyed rolling the dice and developed an interest in D&D by watching others play.

3. **Relationships and social skills** were, in principle, the main motivation for using role-playing games. Being part of an adventure and meeting and cooperating on various challenges and planning how the continued mission should be executed, may in itself build relationships. A role-playing game such as D&D allows you to explore social actions and responses in a safe manner, while also allowing you to try out various aspects of a personality. The teachers had shared social goals for the group, at the same time as each pupil had their own goals which they practiced during the game. Only a few pupils were involved in the role-playing activity in the beginning, but the teachers placed the activity centrally in the classroom. This resulted in several pupils displaying interest or being exposed to the activity in a safe manner, which, in the end, resulted in all the pupils in the group participating in their own ways. They also adapted for all pupils to be able to participate in their preferred manner, whether they wanted to be a DM or only wanted to roll the dice, thereby enabling the participation of all pupils.

4. **Structure and predictability** are often ensured in role-playing games, since the frameworks for the game set clear expectations and rules for action. In addition, all the pupils had a personal daily plan based on the seven questions.

For this group, D&D became a highlight of the week and, over time, an important part of their everyday lives. It gave them something to discuss during recess and allowed them to get to know one another. The adventures and missions they cooperated on generated a sense of community and belonging, while at the same time it offered safe frameworks within which the pupils could try out new social skills. For the teachers, D&D became a new arena where they could work creatively on subjects and social skills and to build relationships between the pupils through their shared interests and needs for structure and predictability.

Use of film and creation of crime mysteries

Being present in the classroom has been a challenge for Petter since he started school. Petter's instruction had generally been implemented in group study rooms as individual instruction, and he rarely partici-pated with his classmates. He was assigned a new contact teacher in Grade 4, at which point Statped also became involved. The contact teacher was interested in increasing the pupil's involvement in the class and enhancing his learning outcomes.

Statped recommended that the pupil's interests, strengths, and triggers in the learning environment should be mapped prior to commencing testing of learning activities. The contact teacher conducted such mapping for Petter. This resulted in the pupil and contact teacher developing a book about Petter called 'The Book about Me'. With this book, they created a story about the pupil where they, among other things, included what had been discussed in the mapping interviews. The book was developed for all the adults who worked with Petter to become better acquainted with him and how they could better adapt for learning.

Through the mapping of Petter and conversations with his parents, it emerged that he required considerable adaptation for structure and predictability, to benefit from the learning. Each morning, Petter refused to go to school, and would often arrive late. One measure which the contact teacher implemented to remedy the situation, was to send a personal film to prepare him for the next school day. When the contact teacher started sending preparatory films home with Petter each day, his parents reported that the pupil did not display the same school refusal behaviour. Petter reported that he now knew what he could expect during each school day. His stress level decreased considerably, and he was better prepared for learning together with a group of classmates.

One of the areas of interest that emerged from the mapping was the production of films and crime stories. This was something the teacher wanted to utilise. Petter was assigned the role of director and was tasked with inviting two classmates to be part of a film project. The contact teacher connected the film with the subject English and retrieved competence objectives from the Grade 4 level. The outcome was a crime story in English. Petter and his two classmates wrote a script and began shooting the film. When the film had been completed, it was screened for the class, and Petter was able to be present in the classroom. The film was paused before the class learned the answer to the mystery, and the class was divided into groups to try to find the answer. Petter chaired the summary of the discussion and resumed the film, in order for his classmates to learn the answer to the mystery.

The outcome was that Petter felt a sense of achievement. He had managed to complete a learning activity in cooperation with two other pupils, he had managed to participate in a joint review in the classroom and he had expressed himself academically before the class. Therefore, the contact teacher decided to facilitate more such film projects.

If we consider this example in the context of the four principles of inclusive learning activities, we can summarise the work as follows:

1. **The contact teacher** mapped the pupil's needs in school and what triggered him in the learning environment. This resulted in 'The Book About Me'.

2. **The pupil's interests** were utilised by create crime stories where the pupil served as director. This became an activity that was used in multiple subjects after it generated positive results in English class.

3. **Relationships and social skills** were practiced in that the pupil was assigned a learning activity in cooperation with classmates in a group. The pupil was assigned the role of director. The contact teacher and pupil examined what social rules are necessary to observe when working as a director and leading a group. The pupil also coped with chairing the academic discussion in the classroom.

4. **Structure and predictability** were facilitated in that the pupil received a daily film from his contact teacher regarding what he could expect the following school day. The information presented ensured that the pupil received information based on the seven questions.

This learning activity contributed to inclusion in that the pupil was able to contribute both academically and socially in a group together with classmates and with the rest of the class. Through working with these types of learning activities, Petter has become more connected to the class's academic and social community. Key to this example was that the contact teacher also assumed academic responsibility for Petter when he was outside the classroom.

Coding

'Mathias' had been receiving instruction in a group study room with an assistant since Grade 1. He had displayed aggressive behaviour in relation to classmates and adults at the school.

Shortly before Statped became involved in his case in Grade 7, Mathias had been assigned a new contact teacher. She set as a goal that he would be reintegrated in the classroom. She had worked on her relationship with Mathias and had attempted to map what it was that made it difficult for him to be present in the classroom. Mapping interviews with Mathias were challenging, since he would withdraw from the conversation as soon as a topic that was difficult for the pupil was brought up. Mathias was also being assessed by the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Out-patient Clinic (BUP). In this assessment, it emerged that he was triggered by angry voices and having to deal with expectations of him. He was also sensitive to noise and other strong sensory impressions over which he had not control. This may in part explain why it was challenging for him to perform academically and participate in classroom instruction. This is important information in order to be able to adapt inclusive learning activities for this pupil.

One of several measures was to find out what types of learning activities could interest Mathias. He spent considerable parts of his school day and leisure time playing video games and he was very computer-savvy. Eventually, the contact teacher tried coding, and this piqued Mathias's interest. This was something he both enjoyed and mastered. She included coding in the timetable for the rest of the class, and they used the software Scratch. She did this hoping that Mathias would be able to successfully participate in this instruction and that he would perhaps contribute academically to the rest of the class with his competence. Mathias became curious as to how the coding instruction in class was conducted, and he wanted to try to participate in the sessions together with the rest of the class. The contact teacher had informed Mathias multiple times about how the class was structured. Thereby, she had facilitated a good overview for him. The contact teacher had also instructed Mathias to develop a manual for the rest of the class on how they could execute a specific coding assignment. This resulted in Mathias having good control of what was taking place in the coding lessons. Mathias gradually became more involved in the class during the coding lessons and achieved a high status, as he was the most talented pupil in the subject. In many ways, he acted as an 'auxiliary teacher' in the subject.

Statped was asked if we could trial some exciting new coding tools in this class. We sent a video to the entire class in which we introduced ourselves and explained that we would be holding a full-day event in their class. The information that was provided in the film was based on the seven questions. At the end of the film, we asked four pupils to volunteer to work with us the day before the event, to help us pick what learning activities we would implement, and to act as group leaders when the event was implemented in the class.

Fortunately, Mathias volunteered, together with three other pupils. We brought with us various equipment and proposals for tasks and held a workshop lasting multiple hours with the four pupils. They decided that they wanted to use Microbit, Lego WeDo and Minecraft in class the following day. They also took part in designing what tasks would be implemented utilising the various software. Essentially, this planning day was implemented to prepare Mathias for what would be happening the following day when the rest of the class would be carrying out the teaching plan. This was to adapt in order for him to have control and overview. Furthermore, we emphasised how to function as a good group leader and what this entailed. This also meant that we were able to work on social competence in a small group before trying it out with the whole class the following day.

When the day arrived for the plan to be implemented in the class, we were excited as to whether or not Mathias would be able to be present in the classroom for an entire day. We were all thrilled to see that not only did he manage to be present, but he also assumed an active leadership role, assisted the other pupils and benefitted considerably, both academically and socially.

If we consider this example in the context of the four principles of inclusive learning activities, it can be summarised as follows:

1. **It was challenging to map** what triggered the pupil in the learning environment, because the pupil withdrew as soon as he experienced a conversation as challenging. The pupil was also being assessed by the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Out-patient Clinic (BUP). In this assessment, it emerged that the pupil was triggered by angry voices and having to deal with expectations of him. He was also sensitive to noise and other strong

sensory impressions over which he had not control. This may in part explain why it was challenging for him to perform academically and participate in classroom instruction. This is important information in order to be able to adapt inclusive learning activities for pupils like Mathias.

2. **The pupil's interests** were actively used by the contact teacher. The pupil showed that he was computer-savvy and that gaming, and most computer-related matters, were of interest to the pupil. When the pupil became interested in coding, his contact teacher included this activity in the timetable for the rest of the class, in order to facilitate a lesson where the pupil could participate and show his skills to the rest of the class.

3. **Relationship and social skills** were facilitated in order to build relation-ships with the rest of the class through the learning activity trialled by advisers from Statped. The pupil participated in the preparation day with three other classmates, and they built relation-ships through the activities they trialled. Furthermore, they worked on social skills through learning how to be a good group leader.

4. **Structure and predictability** were ensured in that the entire class received a preparatory film in advance of advisers from Statped arriving to trial the teaching plan. The film was developed with a specific pupil in mind, but it was shown to the entire class. This meant that the pupil did not experience standing out, or that we had made the film specifically for him. Furthermore, the preparation day with the four group leaders was a measure

to create structure and predictability for the pupil. Since he had participated in the planning of the activity, he knew well what would be happening when the learning activity was implemented for the entire class.

These are examples of inclusive learning activities because the contact teacher used the pupil's interests as a starting point when she decided that coding would be included in the class timetable. In addition, the contact teacher had a good relationship with Mathias, and it was she who took responsibility for the pupil receiving training in coding and being able to use these skills in front of the rest of the class. The activities implemented by Statped's advisers built upon the contact teacher's initiatives. Advisers from Statped observed that the pupil took on a good role in the learning activity during the days they were present at the school.

Conclusion

In principle, inclusive learning activities could be anything. There are no set answers as to what can be used and how. However, there are some elements that need to be considered, so that pupils who have challenges with participation in the ordinary instruction may experience participation and feel a sense of achievement, both academically and socially. In the planning of the learning activity, the educator should base the activity on the four principles

1. mapping
2. pupil's interests
3. relationships and social skills and
4. structure and predictability.

A good learning activity will be based on knowledge about the pupil. If the educator has planned the activity carefully according to the four principles, it is more likely that it will be an *inclusive* learning activity and that the pupil will experience belonging and feel a sense of achievement. These elements must be adapted to each individual pupil, allowing them to feel like a valuable member of the community. When the school day is experienced as relevant for the pupils, we will more easily achieve the objective that all pupils should be able to cope with the school day and experience it as meaningful. In turn, this may lead to improved quality of life for pupils with considerable and complex learning difficulties.

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Belonging, participation and engagement

– development of inclusive group activities for pupils with PMLD

Tonje Lovang and Knut Slåtta

Teacher Kathrine stands in front of the pupils wearing a colourful dress, with a tambourine in her hand and a purple wig on her head. She leans forward toward the eight individuals sitting in a semi-circle in front of her: four pupils and four staff members. "Now the story about the Fox's Widow will begin!" says Kathrine, while she shakes the tambourine, dims the lights and captures the attention of the pupils. "New hair for everyone!" she shouts, and her assistants pull out wigs for each pupil from the prop boxes. Some of the pupils lean forward toward their wigs, intrigued. The stage is set for a fairy tale experience where a sense of community is at the centre of the activity and where everyone participates in their own way

What we are witnessing here is a hypothetical example of practice. Later in this chapter, we will elaborate on this example and elucidate what is our overarching research question: What is required to develop well-functioning group activities for pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), and by what criteria should their quality be evaluated?

Before proceeding to the practice example, we will clarify what special challenges pupils with PMLD face in term of social participation. We will also include a general description of strategies that can be employed when group activities are to be planned, and how pupils' engagement can be used to assess educational quality. In addition, we will briefly discuss two educational approaches that may offer inspiration when activities are being developed and implemented: multi-sensory storytelling and developmental drama.

The group of pupils

The pupils in question have challenges concerning understanding, moving and sensing. They have profound or severe developmental disabilities and therefore often struggle to find order and meaning in things they observe or things that happen to them. Many are able to see, but due to cerebral visual impairment (CVI) they have difficulties understanding what they see. Motor skills disorders often make them unable to explore their surroundings and all kinds of objects. These pupils have a

weaker basis than other children for understanding social codes and participating in social interactions. They risk experiencing isolation and ostracism. These are pupils who, due to their disabilities, challenge the schools' efforts to create inclusive communities (Horgen, 2006, p. 34; Lorentzen, 2013, Ch. 7). When we assess the capacity of each individual pupil for social interaction with other pupils, we see that there are at least three factors at play.

The first factor concerns the pupil's capacity to perceive, interpret and respond to signals from other pupils, as well as the capacity to not be distracted or frightened by noises or movements that may occur when humans interact. Certain pupils will have social vulnerabilities entailing that they are only able to benefit socially in small, regulated groups.

The second factor concerns the nature of the teaching arena. Some pupils with PMLD attend special needs schools, some attend special needs classes at ordinary schools, while others attend ordinary classes (often with some separate room adaptations in this regard). How schooling is organized determines whom the pupil has the opportunity to encounter, and who can conceivably participate in group activities and be part of a social community with the pupil. In our opinion, all work relating to creating meaningful encounters between pupils can be considered forms of inclusion work. For pupils with PMLD, it is not suitable to limit the understanding of inclusion to contexts that involve 'ordinary pupils', as some might do. The essence of inclusion, irrespective of the arena, involves human encounters at the heart of which are belonging, perceived acknowledgement and active social participation.

The third factor concerns competence and attitudes in those who interact with the pupils. The pupils need teachers who see opportunities, create social arenas, and

have strategies for supporting the pupils' communication and participation. The pupils' learning, in the form of e.g. increased participation and enhanced understanding of the surrounding world, is best cultivated within frameworks of social communities (Horgen, 2006, p.145–147; Horgen, 2010).

If schools are to succeed in creating inclusive group activities where pupils are able to participate and get appreciation from other pupils, planning is required. The activities must be designed based on both the pupils' individual prerequisites for social interaction and the school's opportunity space.

Four principles for design of group activities

Development of structured small-group activities may, in addition to having academic justifications, be considered a specific type of inclusion strategy. The objective is to create a social community within a creative and controlled framework. The content must be understandable and engaging for the participants and must encourage participation and communication.

Small-group activities may be appropriate in many contexts. Occasionally, they occur as activities, embedded in a larger framework, for example sequenced in the beginning or the end of the day. Sometimes they are separate activities based on an academic topic the class or school is working on. Other times it may be an activity that is designed to entertain, and which is to be performed at some type of event.

The activities we are talking about here belong to aesthetic and cultural fields of education. Creative and artistic expressions are emphasised. The overall aim is the benefit of all pupils, among other things in terms of experience and learning.

In order for small group activities to function well, their design must take several matters into consideration.

First, the content of the activities must be centred around one or more themes. The themes may be diverse, they may for example come from culture or history. They may also be connected to news and local events or to nature and the local community. The theme can create a context that pupils, teachers and a possible audience can recognise.

Second, the content of the activities must be adapted to the pupils' cognitive, motor and sensory skills and abilities. Since different pupils are involved, several considerations must be made in the design of the group activity. A good activity is characterised by the pupils displaying engagement and participating. Participation is about involvement and influence. There are many ways to participate in an activity. Even bodily expressions that are not intentional, such as sounds or movements that indicate excitement or joy, can be understood as forms of participation. Through participation, the pupil influences classmates, adults and the content and direction of the activity.

Third, activities function the best when they correspond with the pupils' individual interests. The activity must be designed with this in mind – with visual, auditory and action-based components that capture the pupils' attention and fascination. When activities are created, it will therefore be important to identify what captivates and excites the individual pupil. Sometimes such identification can be done by way of structured forms of preference assessment (Dalen, 2017).

Fourth, activities must be given content and structure that create opportunities for communication – to understand and to be understood. The pupil's experience of being understood is the responsibility of adults. Opportunities for contact and interaction with adults and classmates largely depend on the adults' competence as interpreters and communication partners (Evensen 2018, Horgen 2006, Lorentzen, 2013).

To summarise, these four principles for design of group activities can be said to represent a foundation for creating meaningful content for pupils:

1. thematic choice
2. adaptation to cognitive, motor, and sensory abilities
3. adaptation to preferences
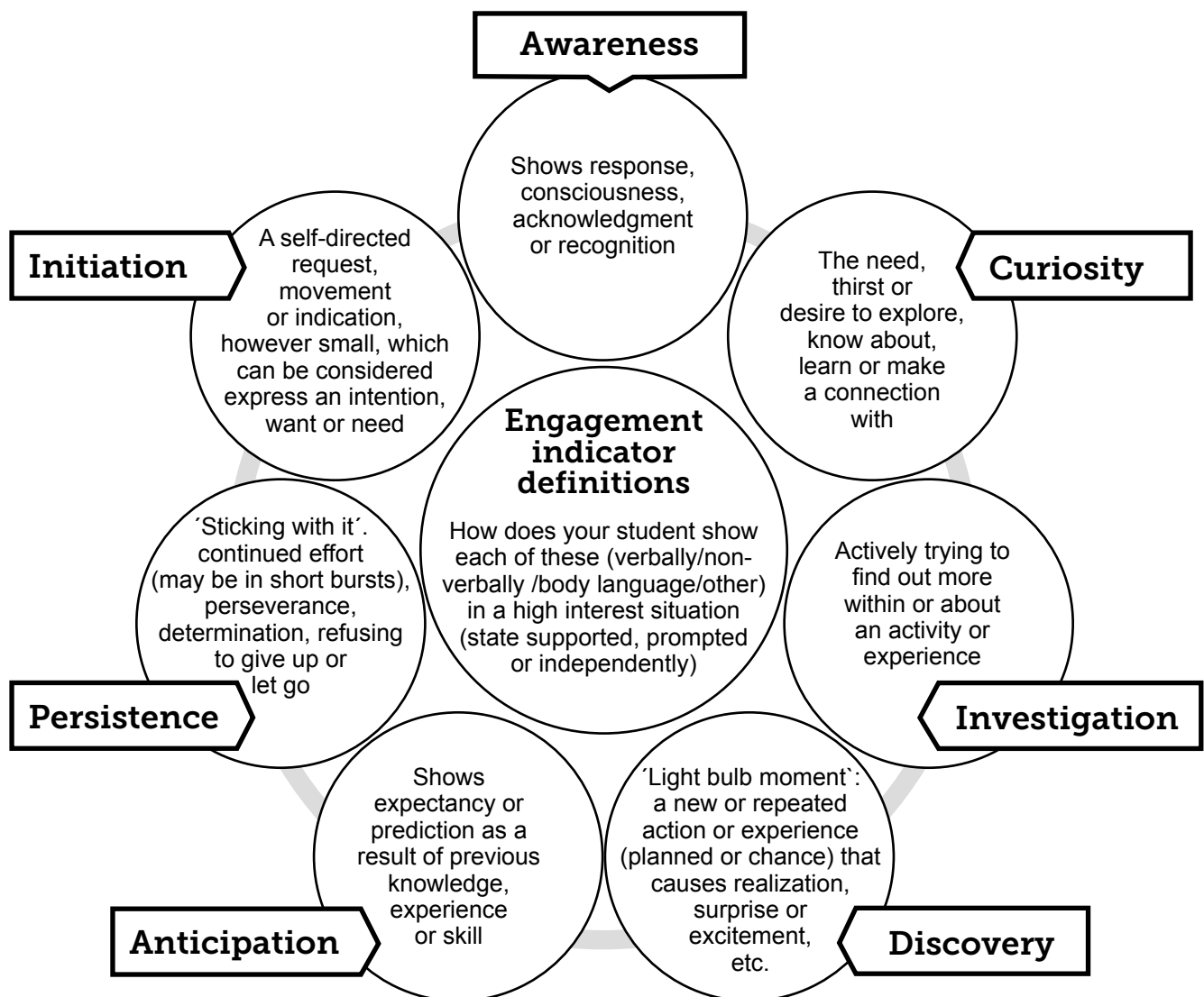4. adaptation to communicative functioning

However, if group activities are to be meaningful or give rise to learning and well-being, more is required in terms of planning and evaluation of the activities: the pupils` engagement must be taken into consideration.

Seven factors of engagement

If pupils with PMLD are to take part in shared activities, the team that works with the pupils must create content that engages each individual pupil. Engaging activities are a source of joy and a good indicator of successful learning outcomes (Martins, 2017).

The British research project Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities – CLDD has argued in favour of developing education where the pupils' engagement takes centre stage (Carpenter et al., 2015). The British school system has established this approach as a standard for the educational work with pupils with severe disabilities (Rochford, 2016; Standards & Testing Agency, 2020).

Engagement is about passion, motivation, and action. This can be concretised in seven different forms of engagement: awareness, curiosity, investigation, discovery, anticipation, persistence and initiation (Carpenter et al., 2015).

Awareness

Shows response, consciousness, acknowledgment or recognition

Initiation

A self-directed request, movement or indication, however small, which can be considered express an intention, want or need

Curiosity

The need, thirst or desire to explore, know about, learn or make a connection with

Engagement indicator definitions

How does your student show each of these (verbally/non-verbally /body language/other) in a high interest situation (state supported, prompted or independently)

'Sticking with it'. continued effort (may be in short bursts), perseverance, determination, refusing to give up or let go

Persistence

Actively trying to find out more within or about an activity or experience

Investigation

Shows expectancy or prediction as a result of previous knowledge, experience or skill

Anticipation

'Light bulb moment`: a new or repeated action or experience (planned or chance) that causes realization, surprise or excitement, etc.

Discovery

In order to design activities that engage pupils, we need to know how these seven forms of engagement can be expressed by each individual pupil. Pupils with PMLD exhibit considerable variation in their styles of participation and communication. For example, some pupils may display curiosity by waving their arms and trying to grasp objects. Others may convey curiosity by intense stares or special sounds.

An important reason why pupils' engagement is expressed in such diverse ways is their different motor prerequisites. Their ability to voluntarily control movement varies. For some motor control is very difficult and it may appear as if limbs have a life of their own. Strong muscle contractions (spasms) or weak muscle tone are contributing factors in this regard.

Pupils` abilities to relate and respond are often limited. Difficulties regarding sight and hearing limits how the world around him or her can be perceived and understood. If activities are to generate engagement, they must have components that are understandable and interesting for the pupil. They should preferably be of such a nature that the pupil can influence the activity through their own engagement.

When social group activities are developed, the team working with each individual pupil must have a shrewd sense of what may trigger engagement in the pupil and how different forms of engagement may be expressed.

Inspiration from multi-sensory storytelling and developmental drama

Many have experienced that pupils with PMLD to a greater extent than others require activities where various sensory experiences have a prominent place. This is not surprising, since linguistic and abstract elements are not particularly intelligible for these children, and individual perceptions of the world largely revolve around direct experiences via sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch or movement.

In the academic literature we find theories regarding sensory-oriented activities in areas such as developmental drama (Booker, 2011) and multi-sensory storytelling (Lambe & Young, 2011).

Developmental drama, as Booker (2011) refers to it, is a dramatized story consisting of a frame story, supported by rituals, repetitions, rhythm and physical adaptations. Through these measures stories are made accessible and meaningful. This is an approach that emphasises imaginative content, sensory adaptations, and personal involvement of participants. The activities aim at offering interesting experiences to the participants, with a high degree of intrinsic value and potential for personal development and learning.

In England the theatre company Bamboozle has developed something similar, sensory-oriented theatre performances for young people with PMLD. Some of the stories are available as inspiration to others on YouTube (Bamboozle Theatre Company, 2011a, 2011b, 2013).

Multi-sensory storytelling is an umbrella term for told stories – fictional or non-fictional – where colours, sounds, materials and other sensory elements have a prominent role both as sources of experiences and as carriers of information. The 'Stories in a Box' concept is a type of multi-sensory storytelling (Lambe & Young, 2011). This is an attempt to personalise stories, where props in boxes are elements that guide the participants through the story. The props are selected based on the criterion that they are to provide information and evoke memories and associations. Research suggests that participation in multi-sensory activities over time reduces vulnerability to impressions that may be difficult to handle (Fenwick, Lambe, Hogg & Young, 2011).

In the Norwegian context, 'music and drama week' at Skogmo upper secondary school is an example of how multi-sensory storytelling and activities can be planned and implemented. These activities are discussed in a pamphlet of ideas published by the Telemark Habilitation Services (Schulerud, 2000).

The Fox's Widow – a practice story

We will now return to the group activity that introduced this chapter: the dramatized fairy tale of The Fox's Widow. The pupils participating are Kristian, Mia, Nina and Allan. They are of primary and lower secondary school age and belong to a separate group at the school. They are pupils with complex disabilities, and they require customised and highly individualised educational facilities (Norwegian Official Report (NOU), 2019; Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2015).

Just as other pupils, they each have their own personality and individual interests. None of the pupils are able to speak or communicate by pointing to symbols but are nevertheless making themselves understood through movements and sounds.

Kristian has good hearing and loves music and movement, action and fun. He has cerebral visual impairment, and it is unclear how much he is able to see. He is affected by spasticity and has difficulties making his body move the way he wants.

Mia has good vision but requires a hearing aid to be able to hear. It is difficult for her to manage visual and auditory impressions at the same time. She enjoys baby songs and baby sounds, and she enjoys being pushed on the swing and rocked.

Nina both sees and hears well and is excited by music and movement. She displays considerable social interest. She has many vocal sounds that she uses to express herself.

Allan is a quiet boy. He understands little of what he sees but it is possible to make eye contact with him when the room is quiet, and he is given time. His frequent epileptic seizures necessitate that he takes short naps during activities. His body relaxes when he is feeling good. When he feels uncomfortable, his muscles become tense and stiff.

The differences in these four pupils yield different challenges in adapting group activities. Although the activities to a great extent must be managed by adults, they should as far as possible be adapted to the children. The fairy tale we previewed in the introduction was developed with both the group and each individual pupil in mind. The story was created because the school was organising a Culture Week, and the team working with the pupils thought a drama project would be suitable. They wanted to create something that was exciting for the pupils to participate in.

The team working with the group of pupils knew that in order to create a story that appealed to the pupils, they would have to take into consideration what each individual child was capable of understanding and what sensory experiences could evoke particular interest. In this work the team could draw upon previous assessments they had made regarding the pupils' areas of interest.

The performance was rehearsed during circle time a few times during the spring semester. The rehearsals were of great importance to the staff members as well. They had to learn how they could appropriately assist the actors. The goal was a school performance during the Culture Week in June. There would be an additional performance at the summer assembly before the holidays, and siblings, parents and grandparents would be invited.

Planning of theme and content

The team began with a brainstorming session to decide on the content and format of a possible story. They wanted to create an activity that offered the pupils engagement, an experience of belonging and opportunities for participation. This was a creative endeavour, where everyone could contribute ideas, and everyone could showcase their talents. Various ideas were pitched, and the possible content in all ideas was assessed based on what Allan, Kristian, Mia and Nina could understand, participate in and be excited by.

Should they create a mini story inspired by existing stories such as Captain Sabertooth, Christmas in Blue Mountain or one of the classic folktales? Or should they take inspiration from animals in nature? Perhaps the starting point could be a story from the Viking age? Or how about a shared experience, such as the boat trip last summer?

The team finally settled on the folktale The Fox's Widow. The story had a simplicity that made it easy to understand and to participate. Moreover, it had a suitable number of roles and it contained animals with which some of the pupils were already familiar. The fairy tale is about an attractive fox's widow, a cat (Korse) who chases away dubious suitors (a bear and a wolf) and a hero (a fox) who appears toward the end.

When the team was developing the story, they wanted to stay true to the fairy tale format. The narrator of the play would begin with "Once upon a time …" and then proceed to tell the story. The fairy tale would have to end with "and they lived happily ever after …", as all fairy tales do. This would allow the pupils to recognise the format from fairy tales they had heard or participated in the dramatizing. Words and phrases are repeated, again and again. "Let him go, let him go", says the fox's widow. Even though the words and actions do not immediately evoke associations in the pupils with their everyday lives, they are transported into the world of the fox's widow, where everything revolves around rejecting suitors who arrive at her door. When a suitor with a red coat, like her deceased husband, appears, the story reaches a turning point. With a slow and steady pace and dramatic effects, created with the aid of rhythmic instruments, the group is guided through the short story. The instruments selected are easy to use for pupils and adults.

The lines are delivered with the aid of single message communication devices containing pre-recorded lines. When the device is pressed, the line is delivered. The lines are in the form of rhymes and are accompanied by various instruments. When the dark-clad bear appears, a heavy, rhythmic drum noise is heard. When the red fox finally appears, he is accompanied by a harmony so flattering that it becomes apparent to all that the chosen suitor has *finally* arrived.

Strategies for communication and support

As mentioned, the team must consider each individual pupil when developing the various components of The Fox's Widow. The activity will not succeed if the pupils become passive or bored. The content and support strategies must be developed in such a manner that the activity promotes communication and engagement. The adults must assume a role in which they explain, motivate, guide and model. This way, they can help the pupil take on a good participant role in the drama.

To provide the pupils with the best possible support, it is necessary for the adults to interact with the pupils on the basis of partner-perceived communication (Siegel & Cress, 2002). The partners must have the ability to interpret and attribute meaning to the pupils' actions, and they must themselves act in a manner that makes sense to the pupil. Each individual pupil

communicates using their own non-verbal language or variations of the same non-verbal language. This language has no words but is expressed through actions, movements, mimicry and breathing. Sometimes the language is expressed using sounds and, less often, looks (Evensen, 2018; Lorentzen, 2013). The adults must learn the pupils' idiosyncratic language and communicate with them in this language. As a part of the communication adults will also use ordinary words (Eldorado, 2020; Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, 2013).

During the fairy tale it is first and foremost the staff members who are tasked with ensuring that the pupils are able to communicate and participate. In her book *Developmental Drama,* Mary Booker refers to such helpers as 'support actors' (Booker, 2011), a term we adopt.

In order to make the story of The Fox's Widow comprehensible, sensory and interesting for all the pupils, a separate prop box was devised for each of them.

These boxes were filled with items that would be used during the story. The fox's widow's red-brown silk scarf was placed in Nina's box together with a single message communication device containing pre-recorded lines. Kathrine had recorded the fox's widow's voice, while the bear's booming vocals had been enthusiastically recorded by a burly supporting actor with a baritone voice. Allan had a chime-like musical instrument in his box, in addition to costumes and single message communication devices. The chimes were fitted to his hand movements, allowing him to master this instrument. The instrument provided a suitable sound effect to introduce the fox's widow's lines. The sound indicated that 'the fox's widow is about to take stage'. The use of a prop box was inspired by the 'Stories in a Box' concept, which is an individually adapted storytelling format in which specific items are incorporated (Whinnett & Bell, 2010).

The fairy tale is performed: examples of engagement

In many ways, the goal of pupil engagement guided the team's design of The Fox's Widow. The theme, content and supporting strategies were selected to make the pupils genuinely interested in the activity.

The pupils were placed close to one another so that the opportunities for communication and interaction between them would be as good as possible. The supporting actors were also seated in a manner enabling them to support each pupil. Let us examine the lead-up to the fairy tale:

The drama begins with the curtains opening.
The spotlight shines on the fox's widow, played by Nina. She has brown ears, a red coat and scarf and is made-up with whiskers and a large red snout. There is no doubt who is standing before us.

Teacher Kathrine plays blues music on the piano. Nina cries the fox's widow's tears of despair over the loss of her husband, using both her own sounds and sounds of crying from the single message communication device she is pressing. Kathrine dramatically tells the audience about the fox's widow's loss of her husband.

Teacher Kathrine plays blues music on the piano. Nina cries the fox's widow's tears of despair over the loss of her husband, using both her own sounds and sounds of crying from the single message communication device she is pressing. Kathrine dramatically tells the audience about the fox's widow's loss of her husband.

The cat, Korse, played by Mia, sits next to the crying Nina. Mia is assisted by an adult supporting actor to hold her arm around the crying widow. Mia places her head on Nina on her own initiative. "Spring and summer have passed – will a suitor come at long last?" asks Mia, as Korse, using the flattering and cute voice on her single message communication device.

Kathrine moves around the circle of participants. The spotlight is directed at her and she is beating a tambourine as she sings without using words. The supporting actors keep the time together with the actors. Some do so by slapping their thighs or chair, others by rocking in-sync or carefully leaning rhythmically toward the actor, shoulder to shoulder. Everyone feels the rhythm, but they express it in different ways.

When Kathrine and the supporting actors play their roles in the drama, both planned and random elements are included. It is a delicate balance of improvisation and structure. There is an openness to seeing meaning and responding to all the input the actors provide during the performance. The whole time, the ambition of Kathrine and the others is that the performance will evoke the pupils' engagement.

The behaviour of Kathrine and the supporting actors is key to whether or not the pupils will be captivated by the story and become active participants, rather than "mere" spectators. The intention is to support a spectrum of different types of engagement. Let us examine a few examples.

1. Awareness

When the pupil`s sense something that evokes interest or attention, the phenomenon that occurs can be referred to as awareness. Concentrated awareness and attention over time enables new understandings.

"Who is it that comes knocking on my door?" asks Kathrine as she moves forward slowly, hunched over. The tambourine underscores the tension in the air and

Kristian begins to rock, moving his body back and forth. Kristian listens with his entire body and turns his left ear toward Kathrine.

For those not acquainted with Kristian, it may appear as if he is turning away from her, but those who know him see that he is listening intently and is fully present, and that he cannot get close enough using his ear and entire body.

2. Initiation

When the pupils experience that they can accomplish something by their own volition, it becomes easier to take initiatives to act. Initiatives met by staff in a positive way lead to influence and co-determination.

Kristian is the suitor about to arrive. He leans in the direction of Nina, as he hears her enthusiastic sounds. The supporting actor notices the initiative and helps him get closer, but Mia is standing in the way! Boom! He begins to smile as the single message communication device is placed in his lap.

Kristian's movement toward Nina is not pronounced but clear enough to the person next to him. Perhaps his initiative reveals an interest in her sounds? Perhaps it is his way of seeking contact?

3. Persistence

To try and try again when you do not succeed is often a result of good experiences. Such persistence is good to have in all of life's struggles.

Paralysis in Kristian's upper body makes it difficult for him to press the single message communication device at the right time. The supporting actor holds the device where she anticipates Kristian will move. He misses – and tries again. The device is a bit closer. He feels an arm and a hand underneath his own. The two hands move in unison. Finally, the line is delivered! "Ask her out to go, some good advice for her to know", Kristian says to Korse, loud and clear. He did it! The persistent effort makes his body tremble from the exertion.

The dialogue between the fox's widow and Korse ends with a rejection of the suitor. Kristian takes the rejection in his stride. His hand rhythmically moves in the direction of the arm rest on his wheelchair and the supporting actor places a hand on his shoulder to help stabilise his body.

Once again, Kristian has experienced that he can succeed even if he fails in his first attempt. We can assume that he experiences joy when he achieves something, and that each time he feels a sense of achievement his trust in his own abilities is strengthened.

4. Investigation

By studying and exploring, humans acquire new knowledge and experiences. Investigations makes the world more comprehensible and also more exciting.

Allan feels the wig in his hands. It has stiff, grey curls. His hands search through the curls and he becomes interested in feeling and listening. He disconnects his vision and directs his ear toward Kathrine's sounds. For a moment, he becomes stiff and has spasms, but shortly after he is back in the situation. He explores the wig once more, before letting go of the curls so that the supporting actor and Kathrine can place it on his head. He raises his arms and stretches them toward the tambourine.

The fairy tale experience Allan is invited into in gives him the opportunity to explore new things. When he touches the wig with his fingers, perhaps he gains a better understanding of what the item in front of him is, and what it can do?

5. Curiosity

When curiosity is displayed, it is a reflection of focus and energy. It is important to cultivate curiosity as it is an important factor both for learning and well-being.

Mia follows Kathrine with her gaze and stretches toward her. Kathrine sees the movement and teases Mia a bit by placing the tambourine on her hand only to move it away while they maintain eye contact and smile. Curious, Mia reaches forward. Finally, her hand reaches the tambourine, and she beats it with a satisfied look on her face. Nina looks at Mia, Mia looks back at Nina, and the two of them beat the tambourine together.

The silly and funny acting facilitated by Kathrine and the supporting actor brings out Mia's curiosity and playfulness. The silly behaviour thrills her and may entail that she will be curious as to what Kathrine has to offer next time.

6. Anticipation

Joys become bigger when you look forward to them. Anticipation brings joy in itself.

Mia, Nina and the others recognise Kathrine's counting 'one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine ...' and hear the sound of the tambourine grow louder and more intense. Whose turn is it now? Allan is rolled closer. It is his turn! His face lights up with a big expectant smile.

Kathrine counts with growing intensity. She does the same thing in all of her projects with the pupils. The pupils know that we are approaching a climax.

7. Discovery

The world becomes more comprehensible when we make discoveries. Perhaps we see connections where we once saw chaos? Perhaps we gain insight into our own possibilities?

Allan stares intently at the big red button that enters his field of vision. His body tenses and suddenly his arm moves forward in an arching motion. "Where is the fox's widow?" says a booming voice from the single message communication device when Allan presses it. Everyone is excited by Allan's line.

Teacher Kathrine, who is leading the performance, briefly thinks back on the first test of single message communication devices three weeks ago. Back then, Allan did not understand that he could say something to others by using a device. But quickly, with adaptation and trial and error, Allan discovered the connection and began using the single message communication device.

Allan discovered that he has a voice. He has understood a causal relation, whereby he, with the aid of a device, can make something happen of his own volition. He has been given a participating role in the fairy tale, making him more visible to the others. It gives him the opportunity to experience the joy of receiving recognition and positive responses.

As we have seen in these examples, engagement can manifest itself in various ways. The various forms of engagement will often overlap. Sometimes, a single act can be perceived as an expression of multiple forms of engagement.

Let us follow The Fox's Widow to its conclusion. They are nearing the climax of the piece and the pupils are bursting with anticipation. Nina, Mia, Allan and Kristian experience the synergy of the community.

One suitor after another is rejected and then Allan reappears in the light, where he encounters Mia, as Korse. This time, he has a nice red faux fur draped over his shoulders. "And what colour is his coat?" asks Nina. "Handsome, beautiful red, just as he who is dead", explains Mia, as Korse. Nina is unable to sit still in her chair. She is bouncing up and down. Both of her hands eagerly press the button, which declares "Dear, ask him in to see; his advice is good for me".

Shortly after, Kathrine is sitting by the piano. The piano tunes are more upbeat than at the beginning of the piece. "And they lived happily ever after!"

Applause erupts from the audience and the pupils receive the plaudits in their own ways. Allan has the supporting actor's arm around him to prevent his eagerness from triggering an epileptic seizure. His mouth is open, and he arches his back. Kristian smiles and is moving his arms and legs. He bumps into Nina's arm, who holds his hand and raises it together with her own to receive the applause. She is beaming to the audience and shrieks with pride. Mia applauds and looks at Allan, who is sitting next to her, and at the other children and the adults. Together, they have performed The Fox's Widow, and they have all experienced the rhythm, the rhymes, the lights and the costumes. Each pupil has found meaningful things to capture their interest during the piece, and they share the joy of having delivered a good performance.

As we have seen, the fairy tale of The Fox's Widow was developed with the pupils' engagement and participation in mind. To accomplish this, the story was designed with an overall direction that accommodated everyone, but with a considerable degree of individual adaptation in terms of communication and participation along the way. Through the pupils' joint participation and performance of tasks it was highly likely that they would experience a sense of belonging.

Good stories facilitate enhanced community

In this chapter we have discussed what is required to create good and inclusive group activities for pupils with PMLD. Participation in such activities is important for those who rarely experience contact with their classmates.

When pupils are gathered around stories, drama and fairy tales, it becomes a community arena that may provide opportunities for encounters and experiences that are different to those in their everyday lives. Storytelling, drama and theatre are cultural activities deeply rooted in human history.

We have used a performance of The Fox's Widow as our example of how stories can be designed in such a manner that they become meaningful for pupils with PMLD. We have stressed the importance of taking the pupils' views, interests, abilities, and sensory capacities into consideration when planning content. We have also emphasised engagement, participation, and joy as the primary objectives for each individual pupil. In order for the activity to succeed, it is crucial that those working with the pupils provide adapted support to enable contact and communication with adults and classmates.

In our story, the group of staff members chose a reflection sheet to evaluate the benefits of the activity for each individual pupil (see appendix). This helped them gain insight into the qualities of the activity. In their evaluation afterwards they reflected on what was worth keeping and what was not worth keeping.

The principles which the team employed to develop The Fox's Widow are the same as those used in other contexts. Based on the pupils' understanding and interests, they wanted to create content in the school day that evoked various forms of engagement – awareness, curiosity, investigation, discovery, anticipation, persistence,

and initiation (Carpenter et al., 2015). The pupils participated in several smaller group activities during the Culture Week held at the school, and it was particularly important to consider what might spark the interest of each individual pupil.

Learning is social and occurs in joint activities and collaboration. Together with their supporting staff, pupils like Kristian, Mia, Nina, and Allan can form a rich and accommodating environment for one another.
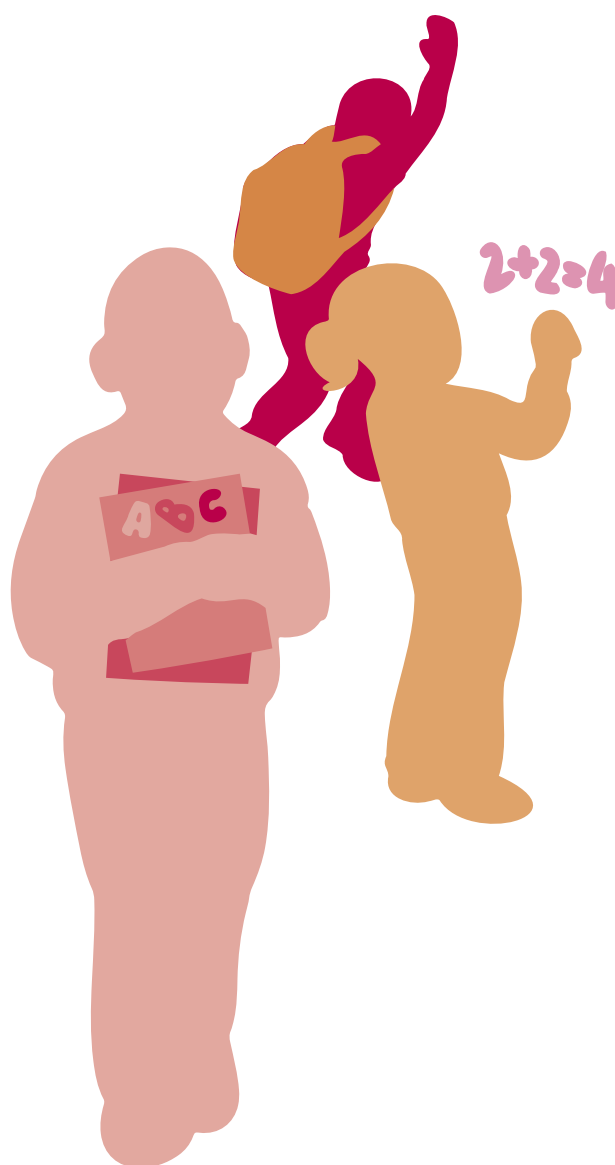
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Appendix
Reflection sheet for group activities

What did we observe in the pupil?	How was it expressed and at what point in the activity did we observe it-
Enjoyment	
Participation	
Curiosity	
Awareness	
Investigation	
Initiative	
Persistence	
Anticipation	
Discovery	
Contact and interaction with classmates	
Learning	
Overall, how do we think the activity has worked for the pupil? Should any changes be made?	
Overall, how do we think the activity has worked for the group? Should any changes be made?	

Quality assessment sheet. Based on the seven factors of engagement by Carpenter et al. (2015).

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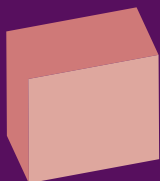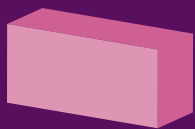
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From a sociocultural perspective, children's learning and development occurs through participation in social communities — where community with peers is of particular importance. Children's participation in learning communities with other children, or facilitation of such participation, is a recurring theme in this anthology. The contributors to this anthology are advisers at Statped with experience from a variety of fields. They account for various approaches founded on experienced-based and research-based knowledge. What they all have in common is that they, through their adviser roles, have worked closely with the field of practice. This anthology shares the experiences from collaborations with kindergartens and schools in the efforts to develop a knowledge-based practice.

The anthology is primarily directed at students and professionals who work in kindergartens and schools but may also be of interest to others.