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A Curricular Approach to Inclusive Education

Some Thoughts concerning Practice, Innovation and Research

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Introduction

This article focuses on the development towards achieving educational inclusion in the local school for all. Educational inclusion is seen as the global policy prescribing development towards a local regular school that welcomes all children with their unique individual characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs; all children with and without special needs and disabilities; a school combating discriminatory attitudes, and offering a meaningful and individually adapted education to every pupil within the community of the class (Frederickson & Cline, 2002; Johnsen, 2000; 2007; UNESCO, 1994). This description of main characteristics of inclusion forms the basis for the common project plan for international comparative classroom studies towards the inclusive school; a joint research project between the universities in Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb and Oslo (WB 04/06). This understanding of educational inclusion is in line with Stainback and Stainback's (1990 in Igrić & Cvitković in press 2014) description of an inclusive school as a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, supports, and is supported by his/her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his/her educational needs met. The two statements are complementary. They are both in accordance with and provide more details than UNESCO's introductory outlines of inclusion in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994).

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The mentioned UNESCO statement on inclusion and the later UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) confirming the principle of inclusion, are accepted by a large majority of governments. However, questions about how to implement the principle of educational inclusion in individual countries and local schools have not yet found satisfactory answers in spite of a large number of innovative research projects worldwide[18]. To change from the deep-rooted tradition of competitive whole class teaching to inclusive practices based on cooperation, represents a major turn in professional knowledge, skills and attitudes held by regular teachers, special needs educators and other stakeholders. It is fair to say that no country has reached fully inclusive practices in their schools. Development towards inclusion is in the beginning phase in a continuous struggle for dominance amongst a variety of different and even contradictory educational trends. The research- and innovation focus on inclusion has come from many sources; from national policies and financial priorities and from reorganisation of educational structures and educational strategies.

In this article focus is on the school's inner activity and development of inclusive practices. The main question concerns how to construct a bridge between the principle of inclusion and practices related to individual pupils as partners in the joint class or group. The question challenges practitioners as well as researchers to consider what "professional tools" are available in order to plan, practice, evaluate and move on in the process towards achieving full inclusion. In the following a curricular approach is presented which has been applied by professionals as an innovative tool for implementing inclusion, and by researchers as a set of main topics or aspects determining the research perspective on practice. The approach is based on a curriculum relation model consisting of eight (or seven plus one) main areas of the teaching-learning situation and process. The curricular areas are interrelated as well as related with the intended users of the tool, practitioners and researchers. The main areas are:

- the pupil/s
- educational intentions
- educational content
- methods and organisation
- assessment

18. UNESCO's homepage contains some information, discussions and practical guidelines for inclusive education (http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.)

- communication
- care

+

- context / frame factors

As mentioned, the seven aspects are concerned with the school's inner activities; the teaching-learning situation and process on a micro level. Their point of departure is what may be called a 'bottom-up perspective' where the individual pupils and their curricula are the centre of attention. The seven aspects are embraced by contextual aspects within which the inner activity of the school is situated; a context consisting of several frame factors, which tend to be perceived from a top-down perspective, interrelating with one another and with the seven main aspects.

My involvement in development towards educational inclusion started in the two Nordic countries, Iceland and Norway, which developed similar educational legislation, later cooperating with a number of other countries both in Europe and on other continents. As a special needs educational advisor, I worked with pupils, parents, teachers, special needs educators and school leaders. I have been responsible for developing, leading and lecturing on special needs educational topics in higher education in several countries on two continents. The Russian scholar Lev Vygotsky and followers' cultural-historical school has become an important contributor to understanding this inner activity of teaching-learning processes; specifically their focus on the pupil-teacher relationship through communication and mediation as well as on learning and development in a cultural context. Relationships between the cultural-historical approach and the deeply entrenched curricular-didactic traditions are therefore in the centre of my scientific curiosity (Vygotsky, 1978; Cole, 1996; Johnsen, 2014b). One of my major works in this field is a historical study of ideas concerning the school for all (Johnsen, 2000). Another is a longitudinal classroom study of inclusive practices (Johnsen, 2013b), which is the Norwegian contribution to the project *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion* (WB 04/06) along with contributions of my research colleagues in the project. The joint study uses the eight curricular main aspects as a common denominator (Johnsen, 2013a). A continuous revision and – hopefully – improvement of this curricular approach has been developed through educational practice, innovation, research and dialogue with a number of student groups, teachers, special needs educators and researchers in the mentioned countries. Our dialogues have been especially fruitful for the clarification of curricular foci in different contexts.

In the following, the curricular relation approach is presented and discussed in more details and related to an illustrating model, before each curricular main area is subjected to description and discussion. However, before this takes place, some important concepts are briefly described.

Key concepts

As mentioned, educational inclusion is described and understood in various ways. The same applies to the wide selection of relevant notions in the discussion of inclusive practices. A brief clarification of a few of these terms follows here. They are a) the diverse class, the school for all and inclusion, b) individually adapted education and differentiation and 3) curriculum and didactics.

The diverse class and school in relation to the school for all and inclusion. Diverse classes are all too often called inclusive classes. Awareness of the diversity in a class – meaning that a class consists of pupils with different levels of mastery and needs for educational support – is indeed a necessary, but not sufficient aspect of inclusion. What characterises a school for all and an inclusive class is that all pupils with their diverse educational needs are taught in accordance with their individual needs within the class community.

The principle of educational inclusion was accounted for in the introduction of this article. It was related to another term, 'inclusive practices', that points to educational and special needs educational practices supporting the affiliation to the class for all its pupils. These practices may be actions directed towards an individual pupil, a certain group or the whole class. An example of inclusive practice is to plan one joint study topic consisting of a number of differentiated learning tasks in accordance with the proximal learning capacity of each and every pupil in the class (Vygotsky, 1978). The concepts representing the eight curricular main areas are all connected to the art and craftsmanship of inclusive practice. However, as mentioned, it applies to these as to all concepts that they are not given a conclusive definition; rather, they need to be discussed, clarified and revised as new aspects of practice are revealed. Thus, they are seen as dynamic and flexible, and their meaning varies in different contexts (Johnsen, 2000; 2001a).

Individually adapted education and differentiation. Norwegian educational legislation establishes that school is to provide equitable and suitably adapted education for everyone in a co-ordinated system of education based on the same national curriculum (Johnsen 1998; L 1997). This is possible because

the national curriculum is a so-called framework plan, i.e. open to flexibility and adaptation related to local contexts and individual differences. All pupils are entitled to receive education that gives due consideration to individual aptitudes and abilities. This is the principle of individually or suitably adapted education. The principle relates to all pupils and calls for a more or less detailed individual educational plan or curriculum for each single pupil along with flexibility in teaching within the regular recourses assigned to the class. In accordance with this principle, pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are, in addition to regular resources, entitled to additional resources. Thus, the foundation for inclusive practices is based on making, implementing and continuously revising individual educational curricula, particularly for pupils with special educational needs, in as closely as possible connection with the class curriculum. Focus on individual curricula resembles a bottom-up perspective to educational flexibility because it has individual pupils' needs as its starting point.

Conversely, there is what may be called a top-down perspective of educational differentiation. Differentiation means giving different learning tasks to pupils with different proximal learning possibilities. Providing variation in learning content, assignments and length of time to solve learning tasks are traditional ways of differentiating. Darlene Perner and her project group (UNESCO, 2004: 14) describe differentiation in the following way:

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

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

Curriculum[19]. In this article the individual curriculum is seen as a basic tool for the implementation of individually adapted education and differentiation. The two concepts, curriculum and **didactic**, are used similarly, even though applied with somewhat different starting points and used unevenly in different educational discourses and countries (didactics is seldom used in English discourse and, when used, often with a negative connotation), (Johnsen, 2000). Curriculum is also a key concept for Perner and colleagues, as shown above. Let us take a look at how they describe the concept and how they point to a serious dilemma many teachers all over the world experience with respect to their national curriculum.

> Curriculum is what is learned and what is taught (context); how it is delivered (teaching –learning methods); how it is assessed (exams, for example); and the resources used (e. g. books used to deliver and support teaching and learning). […]
>
> Often we, as teachers base our curriculum content, the "formal curriculum", on a prescribed set of educational outcomes or goals. Because this formal curriculum may be prescribed by authority, teachers feel constrained and often implement it rigidly. Teachers feel that they cannot make changes to or decisions about this type of prescribed curriculum including the predetermined textbook selection. As a result teachers are bound to teaching from textbook and to the "average" group of students. In many countries teachers do this because the system has content-loaded examinations that students must pass and teacher success is measured by students' performance on these examinations (UNESCO, 2004: 13).

This broad interpretation of the concept of 'curriculum' allows both detail and perspective. It contains similar details on the micro- or classroom level as the curriculum relation model presented below[20]. This interpretation of curriculum also allows a micro-macro dimension similar to the classic ecological curricular model of Goodlad (1979). In accordance with this understanding, curricula are developed on different levels. A national curriculum is developed within the frames of educational acts and other high-level policy papers (this is what Perner and colleagues call "formal curriculum"). A local or school curriculum is developed within the frames of national curriculum and the particular social-

19. The concept of 'individual curriculum' is used synonymously with individual plan and program, which is more often applied in West Balkan discourse, and which may also be seen in other international texts.

20. The Curriculum Relation Model was first presented outside the University of Oslo at Pedagoška Akademija, the current Faculty of Education, University of Sarajevo, in a different version (Johnsen, 1998; 2001a; 2007).

economic and cultural characteristics of the local community. A class curriculum is developed within the frameworks of the national and local curriculum and – from the perspective of inclusion – in accordance with the level of mastery and proximal learning possibilities of all the pupils in the class. An individual curriculum is developed within the framework of the class curriculum and in accordance with the level of mastery, proximal learning possibilities and mediation needs of the individual pupil. However, when a national curriculum is too rigid to allow necessary adaptation to individual learning needs, as Perner and colleagues point out, adapting the individual curriculum within the framework of national curriculum is not sufficient; and individual and joint class curricula need to extend the national curriculum.

A Curriculum Relation Model

The eight main curricular aspects or arenas; the pupil/s – assessment – educational intentions – educational content – class organisation and teaching methods – communication – care – context or frame factors; are rooted in educational and special needs educational traditions. The following aspects; the pupil/s, assessment, educational intentions, educational content, and methods & classroom organisation, are classical categories rooted back to Plato and ancient Greek traditions. They are commonplace categories and parts of a joint European educational heritage (Johnsen, 2000).

The aspects of communication and care represent an extension of the curriculum field, arising out of current humanistic special needs educational discourse with links to regular education, psychology and other related research disciplines (Befring, 1997; Johnsen, 2001a; 2007; Noddings, 1992; 2003). The emphasis on communication in relation to the other seven curricular aspects stems from the cultural-historical approach to learning in context. Vygotsky (1978; Johnsen, 2014b) argues that knowing the pupil's level of mastery is necessary, but not sufficient. The educator also needs to know the level of potential development, which is found through assessing the pupil's problem solving skills under the teacher's guidance or in cooperation with more competent peers. Vygotsky states that learning is a social activity based on interaction between learner and environment, that the main mediating tool for learning is communication, and that the optimal quality of learning is determined by the learner's cultural-historical environment. His concept 'the zone of proximal development' represents a core argument underlying the development of this current Cur-

riculum Relation Model as a professional tool. Related concepts developed by Vygotsky and post-Vygotskyan scholars, such as dialogue (Bakhtin, 1986; Rommetveit, 1992), mediation (Rye, 2001; Wertsch, 1991), apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1990; 2003) and scaffolding (Berk & Winsler, 1997; Rogoff, 1990; Sehic, Karlsdóttir & Guðmundsdóttir, 2005) are embedded in the cultural-historical discourse and contribute knowledge within the same arena of education as curricular-didactic discourse, namely the teaching-learning relationship.

The cultural-historical approach, when joined with the related discourse on educational ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Goodlad, 1979), highlights the important connection between the inner activity of the school and its frame factors or context, which is the eighth main aspect of the Curriculum Relation Model. This aspect deals with the relation between individual and class curricula on the micro-level (local level) as well as national and international contextual factors on the macro-level, such as national policy and curriculum, economic and physical factors and a number of different cultural and historical aspects, all of which create opportunities and barriers for inclusive practices.

The important interrelationship between the eight aspects may be illustrated through a model. The model is inspired by North American curricular discourse in the mid-twentieth century (Herrick, 1950; Tyler, 1949; Johnsen, 2000). It is a modification and further extension of Bjørndal and Lieberg's (1978) *Didactic Relation Model*; a well-known model in different modifications to Norwegian educational practitioners, politicians and researchers. Here, the model has been further extended and revised, and its main focus is moved to the individual pupil in the class in conjunction with special needs educational aspects. In its current form the model is also known to participants in the former Bosnia- and West Balkan projects (SØE 06/02; WB 04/06; Johnsen, 2001a; 2007).

Some modifications are necessary whenever a model is applied. First and foremost it is important to keep in mind that no model is able to illustrate reality with all its complexity. Models are always simplifications, and every model is a result of prioritising certain aspects of reality and opting out of others. What models do (in particular this model) is help create an overview of the complex area of curriculum development. This model also indicates relationships between the different curricular main aspects as discussed below. But before each aspect is described any further, different areas of application are highlighted.

Areas of application. The Curriculum Relation Model and its eight main areas is an example of a professional tool used to help create relevant learning

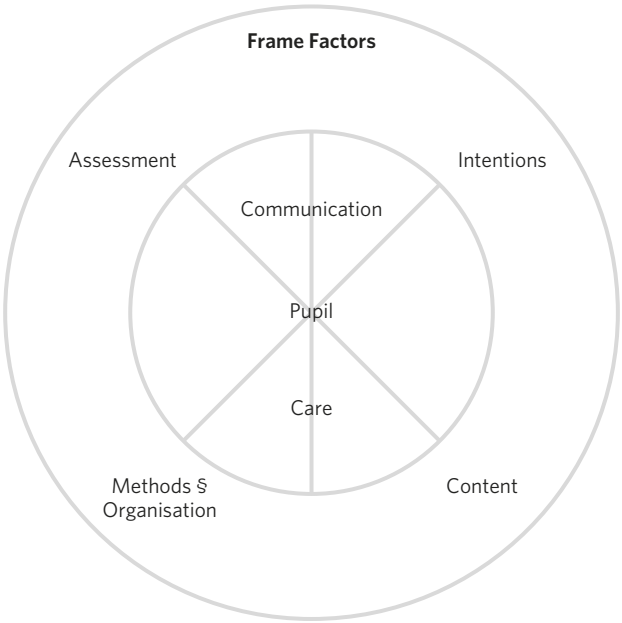

Figure 1 The Curriculum Relation Model revised in Johnsen (2007)

and teaching situations promoting he plurality of individual and special needs of all pupils in a classroom setting[21]. It can be applied in connection with different educational questions, problems and tasks:

- As a guide to an overview of vital aspects and processes related to teaching and learning
- To support awareness of the continuous interrelationship between the above-mentioned aspects and processes
- As a guide explaining how to ask necessary questions, discover important sub-aspects and processes, gather relevant knowledge and train educational skills within and between each of the main aspects, aiming towards fulfilment of the plurality of pupils' different educational needs and capacities in the inclusive classroom and school for all
- As a guide to long-term as well as short-term curricular or didactic planning

21. Some people have asked where the teacher is in the model. The answer is that the teacher is not in the model. The teacher applies the model as a tool in planning, implementing and revising individual and class curricula.

- As a framework for systematic work in planning, implementing and evaluating the relationship between teaching and learning for individual pupils as well as for groups and whole classes
- As arenas of focus, clarification and delimitation in research on practice and theory

The following presentation mainly focuses on how each main aspect of the Curriculum Relation Model may contribute to inclusive practices. The discussions are based on my articles presented in 1998 and 2001. New experience and knowledge have been added from the previously mentioned long-term innovation project in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Johnsen, 2007), and further knowledge has been generated from idea-historical research as well as longitudinal classroom studies (Johnsen, 2000; 2013b) and from the international comparative classroom studies implemented in collaboration with my colleagues from the universities in Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb and Oslo (Johnsen, 2013a; WB 04/06). In the following each of the curricular main aspects are discussed.

The pupil and pupils

Why do the teacher and special needs educator need to know their pupils in order to make a meaningful and individually adapted curriculum? And what do they need to know about their pupils? The main focus in this discussion is on the individual pupil. However, it is important to keep in mind all single pupils in the group or class as well as the diverse class as a joint holistic entity.

The pupil or the learner is, of course, the ultimate user of education and therefore the main agent in focus in the Curriculum Relation Model. Indeed, not only do the learner's experience, knowledge, skills and attitudes, mastery level, capacity and possibilities, interests and mentoring needs[22], but also the worries and fears have to be seen in relation to the education she or he is a part of. This view is in accordance with classical child-centred educational traditions, and I accepted my Master students' arguments for placing the pupil in the centre of the Model as a reminder of this fundamental educational principle (Dewey, 1916/2002; UNESCO, 1994). The opposite position is found in discipline-centred

22. Mentor is originally a Greek word, meaning an experienced and trusted adviser. While Knowles (1975) uses the concept in his description of the teacher as a facilitator for adult learners, it may also be used in relation to learners of all ages. Of the three terms applied here – teacher, mentor and mediator – the term mediator is taken from the socio-cultural approach and applied by Feuerstein and associates (1991), Rye (2001; 2005) and others.

education with its overall focus on teaching in accordance with the logic and content of the discipline. Discipline-centred education seems to have a deeply entrenched and strong position within teaching, and is often combined with one-sided discipline or norm-related assessment of the pupils' learning results. This kind of teaching and assessing is in opposition to individually adapted education in a diverse pupil group. Development towards inclusion therefore calls for the following changes:

- From narrow discipline-centred towards learner-centred education
- From narrow assessment of the pupils' learning products towards an extended assessment of all aspects of the teaching-learning situation, process and results.

When we focus on the pupil, there are many factors influencing our understanding as teachers and special needs educators. These factors are derived from a number of different and even antagonistic ideas and traditions, including theoretical and practical knowledge and actual experience with pupils. Our views of the nature of mankind, childhood and learning are fundamental to what we are looking for in the pupil, and how we interpret our findings. Such basic views are historically and culturally determined as well as subjectively constituted; they are therefore different from culture to culture and from educator to educator. They are also more or less conscious (Johnsen, 2000). An important component in reflecting on our understanding of the pupil (and of all other issues, for that matter) is therefore to focus our attention on, be conscious of and articulate our own view of mankind, childhood and the nature of teaching and learning. Professional special needs educational understanding of the learner is based on knowledge on the following levels:

- General knowledge about learning and development
- Knowledge about disability-specific learning strategies
- Knowledge about individual learning strategies, interests and communication types and styles

Our position in general theory of learning and development reflects our self-concept as educators. Thus, within socio-cultural theory the teacher is presented as a mediator (Feuerstein, 1991; Rye, 2001). Rogoff (1990) describes the teacher–pupil relationship as that between a master and a novice or apprentice, where the apprentice strives to reach the teacher's level of mastery through using the mediating or cultural tools demonstrated by the teacher. How do we learn, and

how do we develop? Different traditions have different answers to these questions. In this article Vygotsky's (1978:84) discussion of learning and development is in focus. He stated that "… in making one step in learning, a child makes two steps in development, that is, learning and development do not coincide", explaining his point in the following manner:

> Once a child has learned to perform an operation, he thus assimilates some structural principle whose sphere of application is other than just the operations of the type on whose basis the principle was assimilated (Vygotsky, 1978:83–84).

So, according to Vygotsky, development is a consequence of learning, which again "… presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978:88). Learning takes place within what Vygotsky called the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978; Johnsen, 2014b). Accordingly, the educator, classmates and adaptation of the teaching and learning situation and process as a whole are crucial to learning and development. Consequently, assessing only the pupil's independent learning achievement provides only a part of all the information that is necessary in order to plan for further learning and development. A whole range of influencing factors concerning the teaching and learning environment needs to be considered. The Curriculum Relation Model is an example of a "professional tool" offering an overview of some of the main aspects of this complex phenomenon.

How can we learn to know the pupil? The question may to some extent be answered related to assessment. In the following the question is limited to three key informants and partners; the learner, parents and educators. The most important informant is of course the pupil. Teaching and learning needs are assessed through regular communication and through formal and informal assessment of the learner's work and working strategies. It is important to encourage pupils to participate in a dialogue about their education, and listen carefully to the pupils' voices, paying attention to what their interests, priorities and worries are and understanding which learning strategies they manage and prefer.

Parents are essential partners in assessing pupils' needs and interests; in reflecting over long-term aims as well as other aspects of making and re-evaluating individual curricula. As a rule they have a great deal of information about their children. Moreover, parents need information from educators about their children's rights and opportunities. Regular exchange of information and

co-operation with parents proved to be important and fruitful in individual curricular co-operation with parents in a higher education programme in special needs education for practicing teachers in eastern Iceland (Johnsen, 1988). There are several ways to arrange co-operation and exchange information with parents. If circumstances allow, it is a great advantage to prepare thoroughly for the first meeting. In my experience, no matter how small the difficulty may seem to us educators, parents feel despondent and are concerned about their child's future. In addition, many parents are insecure with regard to school and uncomfortable before their first meeting with educators and other possible advisers. If there is a prepared written proposal for an individual curriculum, this might help focus attention on the matter, which is the pupil's teaching and learning situation and process.

The third key informant is the educator who has an overall overview of a pupil's individual learning potentials and possible special needs. The concept 'educator' is used here about class teachers, subject teachers, special needs educators and assistants; all those who have or are currently working with the pupil. Ideally, they should be part of a working team, conducting regular meetings and co-ordinating responsibility (Dalen, 1982; Dyson, 1998; Fox & Williams, 1991; Johnsen, 2007; Strickland & Turnbull, 1993). Assessment and reassessment of individual learning needs is one of their responsibilities. While the class teacher has formal responsibility for all pupils in the class in Norwegian primary schools, special needs educators often carry out large parts of special needs curriculum planning. In my classroom study (Johnsen, 2013b) the principal played a key role in cooperating with all the teachers, parents and external advisory institutions (she was said to know the name of every pupil in her school). During the study this school established a resource team consisting of the principal, special needs educator and a teacher in order to provide services for an increasing number of vulnerable pupils[23]. Such resource teams have become common in Norwegian schools. My colleagues at the University of Zagreb carried out an innovation project where regular class teachers were given additional support in the diverse classroom in cooperation with NGOs. Assistants were hired to participate in the classroom work, and special needs educators offered advice regarding individual educational plans and practices (Igrić & Cvitković, 2013). In several countries external institutions support schools in gathering relevant

23. References to the seven classroom studies in the WB 04/06 project relate to research plans since the results have not yet been published in English. Results of the Norwegian study are currently only available as draft.

knowledge about pupils. These institutions differ from country to country. They may be local or centralised; educational-medical, educational-psychological or special needs educational, and they may be potential or obligatory partners with schools. Members of other professions, including medical practitioners, child welfare and social workers and, in some cases, even representatives of police forces, religious leaders or athletic coaches, may be potential partners. Co-operation may vary from one brief meeting to partnership in regional, national or international networks over several years. Special needs educational work often calls for cross-disciplinary team work. It is important that teachers are self-evident participants in this type of networking for the school development to develop towards the principle of inclusion.

What do educators need to know about their pupils? The question is related to ethical principles of privacy for pupils and families. One important aspect of this principle is that educator and school should not contact external advisers without having received informed consent from parents to do so, a process which places attention on "the important conversation or conversations" with parents, building trust and inviting co-operation. Another important point is that not all information about the pupil is relevant to the school. Many aspects belong to the pupil's and family's privacy. Ethical sensitivity is crucial in order to distinguish between relevant information and private information that should neither be used nor recorded or even remembered. It is only in cases when there is reason to suspect child negligence or abuse that a school should inform child welfare services, which according to Norwegian law is the only institution which may override parental decision-making rights over their children.

Assessment

> To assess and evaluate is to gather, interpret and reflect on a variety of information in order to adjust the direction towards reaching a future goal. Educational assessment and evaluation consists of considerations and judgements about teaching and learning environments, processes and results, and about their contextual relations. In special needs education assessment and evaluation draw attention to specific possibilities, barriers and adaptations concerning teaching and learning environments, processes and results, and their contextual relations.

According to this account, a great deal of information about the learner as well as the teaching is derived from assessment. Traditionally, pupils have been the focus of assessment. Their learning achievements have been measured and given

marks in comparison with the other pupils in the class as well as in nationwide relational product assessments. At the bottom of – or even below – such norm-referenced marking scales, we find pupils with a variety of special learning needs. In this way some pupils are stigmatised and even denied being with "the good company" of the class or school, often with serious consequences for their educational path and personal self-esteem. Assessment has also played a decisive role in decisions concerning placement of children outside ordinary classes in special classes and units, special schools or even outside the educational system in social or health institutions. This kind of assessment for segregation purposes is still more or less practised in all countries despite national and international official intentions about promotion of diversity in the inclusive school.

According to the principle of inclusion and the basic ideas underlying the Curriculum Relation Model, the purpose of assessment and evaluation is neither to give marks nor to place pupils in segregated environments. On the contrary it is characterised by being extensive, flexible and dynamic:

- Extensive because it concerns more than assessing the pupils' learning products
- Flexible because the assessment's form and content are supposed to be adapted to individual pupils as well as classes and schools
- Dynamic because the assessment is intended to take place through dialogue between teachers, special needs educators, pupils and parents

In spite of critique of assessment traditions, co-operation aiming towards inclusion indicates that schools discover new ways of using assessment tools they already possess as well as developing new ones. In my experience as a special needs educational supervisor, lecturer and leader of innovation and research projects, schools have developed a number of different assessment procedures of a more or less informal character in addition to formal tests. Many and different assessment practices have been described focusing on individual learning processes, such as observation of activities in school, homework and dialogue with pupil and parents. Concerning product assessment, schools also demonstrate a series of practices concerning step-by-step evaluation. Several schools are genuinely interested in developing individual curricula and adapting assessment practices to this development. These observations apply to co-operating schools in Iceland and to the Norwegian school participating in my longitudinal study as well as other schools (Johnsen, 1988; 2013b). Moreover, seventy-two Bosnian teachers, special needs educators and researchers who participated in

an innovation project from 2003 to 2005 reported applying a number of methods and approaches in their assessment of individual curricula, as the following categorisation sums up (Johnsen, 2007)[24]:

- How do you assess the pupil's level of mastery and next possible step in learning and development?: 13 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise relevant long-term goals and short-term objectives of teaching-learning?: 4 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise learning strategies – teaching methods and classroom organisation?: 3 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise communication between pupil – teacher/s and pupil-pupil/s?: 7 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise the care given to the pupil in the class?: 4 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise the long-term individual curriculum for a pupil with special needs in the class?: 9 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise the long-term class curriculum in relation to revised curricula for individual pupils with special needs in the class?: 3 assessment methods or approaches
- Assessing professional needs for upgrading: Whom (professions, institutions, etc.) would you seek cooperation and support from when discussing and answering your professional questions?: 5 different suggestions

The first category presented with the question "How do you assess the pupil's level of mastery and next possible step in learning and development?" points directly to the two levels of mastery needed to be assessed according to Vygotsky's (1978) arguments for the zone of proximal development. It is necessary to know the level of independent mastery in order to plan for the next educational steps, but it is not sufficient. We also need to know what the pupil is able to master "with a little help from a friend"; be it a fellow pupil or the teacher, in other words the pupil's learning process in cooperation with others (Johnsen, 2014b). In addition to clarifying the importance of assessing both product and process of pupils' learning, the statement of the zone of proximal development also places responsibility for adaptation of the learning process on the educators in the making of all aspects of individual and class curricula. Consequently, the purpose of assessment and evaluation might also be described as curriculum

24. For a detailed presentation of each category, see Johnsen, 2007, chapter 5.

review of all aspects and on all levels (Johnsen, 2001a). According to the Curriculum Relation Model, all eight main aspects – with relevant sub-aspects – and the interrelationship between these aspects are to be assessed.

As indicated in the examples above, while a number of traditional assessment methods may be applied, this is not done with the narrow goal of assigning marks but rather with extended intentions of reviewing the curriculum as a whole and shedding light on relevant aspects of the teaching and learning process, of the nearest zone of development (Vygotsky, 1978) and of specific needs for support. When needed, more specialised assessment tools may be added and administered by special needs educators. The pupil, parents, teachers and special needs educator of the school working together on a daily basis are in the best position to assess the actual teaching and learning process. However, cooperation with external supporters having specific knowledge and experience in relevant fields may shed new light on and add depth to the understanding, thereby resulting in alternative teaching and learning approaches.

The following are general examples of methods and approaches in individual assessment:

- Interviews and conversations
- Questionnaires
- Pupil's self-evaluation
- Assessment as part of mediating
- Achievement tests
- Specific mastery or ability tests

Several of these are also applicable in assessment in group or class settings:

- Checklists
- Dialogue with pupils
- Observations
- Logbook or diary
- Pupils' work
- Screening tests
- Portfolios

As pointed out, the pupil is not the only part of the educational process that needs assessment. In addition to assessing the pupil related to other aspects of the curriculum, all curricular aspects need to be simultaneously assessed in order to the adapt the teaching and learning environment to meet the pupils'

different needs. This parallel thinking is in line with the principles and future aims towards which this text is heading, which is inclusion and promotion of the diversity of individual educational possibilities and needs. Assessment of an individual curriculum is both a continuous process and a series of "milestones" or long-term assessments. The continuous assessment process takes place through everyday teaching and assessing in dialogue with individual pupils and the whole class, with the use of checklists, observations, collection in portfolios and the use of logbooks or diaries. Regular systematic long-term assessment and revision of the individual curriculum may be implemented every semester and related to class curricula revision. The "milestone" revisions should expand on the foregoing short-term assessments and logbooks in teamwork undertaken between class-teacher and/or subject teachers and special needs educators. Some educational teams prefer to do long-term assessment more often than once each semester.

The Curriculum Relation Model allows a contextual and ecological assessment of the quality of individually adapted education. Each of the eight main curricular areas is open to examination, and relevant and important sub-aspects may be identified and assessed in relation to the pupil's educational needs. In this way the individual curriculum may be tailored to each pupil in relation to the collective curricular levels represented by the class curriculum as well as local and national principles and contexts. Some pupils have specific needs regarding a whole range of educational aspects, and consequently, their individual curriculum needs to be extensive, while other individual curricula are more modest and less time-consuming to assess and revise.

When assessing school-related information, all involved teachers and special needs educators are important key informants in addition to the pupil and his or her family and related environment, as discussed in the previous section. Gathering background information provides access to contextual and ecological connections. The following questions might function as "door openers" for acquiring a more accurate and detailed curriculum assessment:

- Is there a need for changing priorities within some of the frame factors?
- Should the actual educational intentions be changed or repeated?
- How does the content suit the pupil's zone of proximal development, interests and need for support?
- How does the adaptation of content and learning environment correspond to the pupil's communication and learning strategies and pace?

- Does the individual curriculum lack any important aspects for the individual learning process?
- Are there any aspects of the individual curriculum that are not essential to the learning process and, consequently, should be taken away?
- Are the individual curricula and the class curriculum sufficiently related so that they make inclusion possible?

As already mentioned, in order to secure individually adapted education, the class curriculum needs to be assessed and revised in relation to the individual curriculum of all the pupils in class. This does not mean that educational principles laid down in statutes and policy documents are neglected, since they are given space within the curriculum model in the two main areas of 'frame factors' and 'intentions'. However, the starting point or baseline for assessment and revision of the class curriculum is in a so-called 'bottom-up perspective' that starts out by considering the pupils' educational needs. This is contrary to traditional, ordinary class curriculum planning, which has been based on a top-down perspective (Johnsen, 1998).

Educational intentions

Institutionalised education as represented by schools is, as a rule, built on intentions described in education acts and other policy documents. An important part of educators' professional work is to transfer general intentions into concrete and manageable goals through adapting them to pupils' learning needs and capacity. Society has a need to hand over traditions to new generations, helping them to become responsible adult citizens and develop new knowledge and skills for future society. National education acts reflect this need in their aims[25]. On the other hand pupils have their own more or less clear-cut personal aims and preferences, distant future dreams and concrete, immediate objectives. Choosing learning goals and objectives in an individual curriculum is therefore reasonably based on the three components:

- Aims and goals stated in education acts and other official documents
- Individual aims, goals and objectives
- Assessment of the learner's knowledge, skills and learning potentials (Vygotsky's zone of proximal development discussed earlier)

25. Please, note that legislation and policy documents are discussed as both frame factors and intentions.

Thus goals and objectives are expected to be "operationalised" or adapted to concrete educational action within the framework of existing policy. If existing acts and regulations are too limited to meet the educational needs of a pupil or class, making an exception from the legal requirements could be a short-term solution. In this process of adaptation, maintaining dialogue and co-operation with the pupil is of essential importance. So, too, is maintaining cooperation with parents, co-teachers and other partners. Dialogue and cooperation are especially important when the pupil has special needs. In addition to cooperating on concrete educational goals, the partners need to engage in an ongoing dialogue about the pupil's various alternative future aims and goals, both personally and professionally speaking, such as vocational possibilities.

As mentioned, many parents of children with special needs are anxious about their children's future. Therefore, maintaining a regular dialogue between parents and school is important for the development of realistic long-term plans. In cases of severe disabilities, collaboration also needs to be extended to other related services. Interdepartmental local cooperation is also important with a view to future employment, housing, social and health care services, leisure-time activities and social network, to mention a few important aspects of general human activities and needs. There are great differences between and within countries in how they organise local service networks. Therefore, international comparative studies of "good cases" of cooperation may be useful sources of new ideas[26] However, as with all international comparative studies, seemingly good ideas are not fit to be transferred directly and without adaptation from one community to another. On the contrary, it is important that ideas are discussed thoroughly and adapted in accordance with local contexts (Johnsen, 2013a).

Returning to the school situation for pupils with special needs, it is important that individual goals and objectives are stated in all educational subjects and themes, and not only where barriers are found. Having a limited focus on the area where a child has special educational needs magnifies any barriers in the pupil's mind at the expense of successful learning in other areas. Howard Gardner's (1993a; 1993b) idea of multiple intelligences strongly supports this view. He criticises the narrow focus on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence in modern education, arguing that there are in addition musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, personal intelligence and

26. The innovation process in the municipality of Meland on the west coast of Norway, which started three decades ago, is a "classical good example" of local interdepartmental co-operation (Meland/NFPU 1987).

social intelligence. Furthermore, all these "intelligences" need to be addressed. Education is not only a matter of producing subject-bound knowledge and skills. It aims at developing active and responsible independent individuals. There are general aims for developing positive self-esteem, a personal sense of responsibility, communication and cooperative skills, tolerance, solidarity and care. In literature on individual curricula there is a growing tendency to emphasise developmental aims of such general human character, as is also the case in the more traditional literature on individual educational programmes (Fox & Williams, 1991; Gunnestad, 1992; Nordahl & Overland, 1996; Putnam, 1993; Strickland & Turnbull, 1993).

Educational intentions consist of several aspects or sub-categories of importance in curriculum planning. In the following, four different categories are presented by examples concerning 1) training of certain skills, 2) bringing about a certain type of knowledge, 3) possibilities to develop attitudes and 4) ensuring access to learning experiences. 1) Using goals and objectives concerning reading acquisition as an example of specific **skills**, this may again be divided into many small steps of developing skills, each with a specific learning intention. Another example is Activities of Daily Living (ADL), such as independently getting dressed or setting the table is also often taught through small step objectives. 2) Goals and objectives in different subjects such as biology, literature and history may be stated in terms of **knowledge** brought to the pupils by a variety of means. 3) While some skills and types of knowledge might be rather easily transferred to concrete and measurable items for assessment, educational goals concerning **attitudes** are often more difficult to describe. Moreover, there are serious ethical problems associated with stating attitudinal objectives in terms of expected pupil behaviour, simply because they are not measurable – either in terms of marks or written statements about the learner's supposed attitude. Nevertheless, developing acceptable attitudes is an immensely important educational goal, and they must not be neglected because of a lack of measurability. In a curriculum plan they can be described as opportunities offered to develop attitudes through literature, films, poems, role-play, and visits to museums, and they may also be offered through discussion and dialogue. 4) To mention an increasingly popular example of equal **access to experiences**, several city schools list making visits to local farms among their goals so that the children may see and touch animals "for real", and not merely look at them in picture books and on television. Creating opportunities for pupils to listen to different kinds of music, to look at paintings and visit theatres are also examples of

goals that provide pupils with access to experiences. Some pupils need special arrangements in order to gain access to these kinds of experiences. For instance, touchable art is developed for people with visual impairment, music is played so that people with hearing impairment may feel its vibrations, and mobility is assured to art centres, theatres and athletic stadiums for people with physical impairments. These are examples of educational as well as general societal goals for equal universal access to experiences.

This is only a very limited description of a few of the many aspects and levels of educational intentions that need to be considered when creating individual and class curricula.

Content

There is a close relationship between educational intentions and content because these two main aspects are expected to jointly answer questions concerning **what** a certain type of education is about. Educational content may be understood as phenomena and values that are supposed to form the pupil into an educated[27] person. This educational theoretical statement raises questions about what is meant by "an educated person" and, consequently, questions what kind of content phenomena or substance and values ought to be chosen for educational purposes, as the German scholar, Wolfgang Klafki, points out:

> … that a double relativity constitutes the very essence of contents of education, in other words their substance and values. What constitutes content of education, or wherein its substance and values lie, can, first, be ascertained only with reference to the particular children and adolescents who are to be educated and, second, with a particular human, historical situation in mind, with its attendant past and the anticipated future (Klafki 1999:148).

Bjørndal and Lieberg (1978) also stress the relativity of educational content when they highlight socio-cultural and pupil-centred dimensions alongside qualitative and quantitative dimensions as the four main criteria for choosing educational content. However, Klafki and his Norwegian colleagues, all outstanding scholars in the field of regular education, limit the interrelation to a

27. Neither of the two English concepts 'form' and 'educate' exactly encompasses the meaning of the German concept of 'Bildung' (Norwegian: danning), which is a basic concept in educational discourse. Therefore, the German word is often used when discussing this educational foundation, even in English texts.

matter between content and different groups of pupils such as classes and levels. By turning the focus towards the individual pupil in the classroom, the special needs education and inclusive tradition represents an extended view of great importance, as illustrated in the Curriculum Relation Model.

Debate and decisions concerning educational content have deep historical roots and take place on macro and micro levels. Political decisions are made on a macro level and stated in statutes and other policy documents and, in many countries, in national curricula. However, the way in which the educational content is prescribed varies greatly. Some national curricula describe content in general terms, allowing the opportunity for flexibility for local schools and educators with respect to how they may apply the term, while others give detailed directions as to its application. On a micro level the teacher and special needs educator have the professional responsibility of bridging the gap between official curricula statements and the actual learning situation in the individual classroom.

A variety of concepts are used to describe content in educational literature and national curricula. One widely used categorisation is to divide the content into school subjects and themes, which may in turn be divided into main parts and subparts. An important part of the bridging process from the macro to micro level may be to make plans for different alternative learning activities and, consequently, for teaching activities. Based on their cooperation with practising teachers, Bjørndal and Lieberg (1978: 116–118) present a set of general quality criteria for a learning activity:

- Consistency with the entire teaching programme
- Compatibility with goals
- Variety and multiplicity
- Adaptive to individual pupils and group
- Balanced and cumulative
- Relevance and meaning
- Open to optimal integration with other learning activities
- Open to pupils' choices.

Similarly, Tony Booth et al. (2000:77) presents a number of questions to be asked in order to monitor choice of educational content:

- Do lessons extend the learning of all pupils?
- Do lessons build on the diversity of the pupils' experiences?
- Do lessons reflect differences in the pupils' knowledge?
- Is the way opened up for different subjects to be learnt in different ways?

These two sets of criteria for choosing educational content are examples of considerations to take into account in curriculum planning. However, the daily plan of educational content consists of even more concrete considerations, such as choice of phenomena, situations, experiments, examples, resource persons and illustrations. Learning materials, equipment and learning environment are concrete manifestations of educational content. The educator, textbooks and blackboard or currently the electronic board constitute "the classical triangle of teaching content". In addition, a large variety and number of materials may be at hand – either readymade purchased or handmade. In all the schools I have visited, I have found a great deal of additional teaching and learning materials; a large part of them handmade by teachers and special needs educators. This applies to schools in both Europe and other regions. A good example of a school with its own production of teaching and learning material is the case school in our research cooperation project with Addis Ababa University (NUFU 32/2002). Another good example is the Norwegian case school in my longitudinal classroom study (Johnsen, 2013b), where the teachers are steadily producing and exchanging materials.

Selecting curriculum content for an individual as well as a group is based on societal aims and needs as well as the educational needs of individual pupils and of the group or class. A main question arises regarding how to **adapt** subjects and themes from national and local curriculum to the variety of individual learning needs. This leads to another question: How can we **create** learning environments, plan learning sequences and obtain materials and equipment to suit the needs of every pupil? And how can we **coordinate** these differentiated individual learning tasks so that the whole class cooperates on learning tasks within a common theme or subject area? The "we" mainly refers to teachers and special needs educators; those who use the Curriculum Relation Model or other approaches to planning and implementing teaching in the diverse and inclusive classroom. In Vygotskyan terms they are mediators in the pupils' learning process, together with mediating tools such as the Model, all kinds of manifestations of learning content as well as methods, organisation and other factors that serve as adaptation to learning (Cole, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978).

Teaching methods and classroom organisation

Not only content, but also teaching methods and organisation must be considered when planning group and classroom activities involving the plurality of

individual learners. As mentioned, methods and classroom organisation are also considered to be mediating tools in the teaching-learning process, adapting as they do the pupil's apprenticeship within the zone of proximal development. However, these considerations need to be based on knowledge about the pupils' preferred learning strategies. Therefore, the following discussion starts with illustrative examples of learning strategies or methods before proceeding with consequences for teaching methods and classroom organisation.

Pupils learn through different strategies, activities, media and methods. Some master making generalisations through literature, while others learn the same thing more effectively from observing and experimenting. Some pupils need to write things down to remember; others learn faster by concentrating on listening. Some need to use paper and pencil in order to "think in interrelations"; some remember well what they see, while touching is of great help to others. Some prefer to study by themselves while others prefer studying in a group. The curricular scholar Hilda Taba (1962:307) pointed out that different individuals use different learning techniques for their self-development. Today, terms such as learning strategies and learning styles are the focus of educational discourse, referring to individual strategies of communication, attention focus, memorising, problem-solving, learning and development.

Barriers to learning may be caused by biological, psychological or contextual factors or, and in most cases, from a combination of these. For example, sensory impairment is a barrier to input of external information. Attention deficit and depression may have a severe impact on a pupil's ability to concentrate. Research on reading and writing difficulties focuses on problems with use of learning strategies such as short-term memory and meta-linguistic operations. Learning strategies are also related to arithmetic difficulties, general learning difficulties and developmental impairment. Most types of learning difficulties are related to communication problems between the environment and learner. Research and development of modes of communication and equipment is therefore crucial to many learners, such as those who have multiple impairments, cerebral palsy and functional deaf-blindness (Lyster, 2001; Nafstad, 1993; Ostad, 1989; 2001; Rye, 2001). The concept of learning difficulties used in connection with teaching methods and classroom organisation is not unproblematic. In light of the principle of inclusion, it raises questions like the following:

- When does an individual way of learning become a learning difficulty?
- To what extent is the organisation of the environment – the classroom teaching – or other curricular factors the main reason for labelling a specific way

of learning a difficulty, instead of looking at it as an example of the plurality of different ways of learning?

A serious problem concerns labelling a small group of pupils "owners of difficulties", "deviations from the normal", or in other words, not fully belonging to the pupil group. The principle of a school for all offers an alternative attitude, which is the inclusion of all pupils in the recognition of the plurality of individual differences and the positive use of these differences as a source of joint learning and understanding in the classroom.

In order to successfully address the diversity of individual learning, the learning environment must be adapted so that each learner is able to develop and use a collection of learning strategies and methods that are suitable for her or him. Handling this variation is not an easy task, not least in view of the many available educational programmes advocating that "they represent the best solution to most educational challenges". My argument is that no method or programme is so complete that it suits all pupils or all educators. On the contrary, it is the professional duty and freedom (!) of every educator to create and develop her or his own arsenal of different methods, programmes, knowledge and skills to select from when making and revising curricula for individual pupils and classes.

As indicated, the field of **educational methodology** is so immense and varied that it is difficult – if not impossible – to grasp a complete overview. Most certainly, updating our professional knowledge in the field is a lifelong challenge. In this article there is only room to mention a few aspects and examples, starting with some old "evergreens", since methodological discussion is not a new phenomenon. In the 1830s Danish educational scholar, Gerhard Brammer (1838) discussed the following four main teaching methods in his detailed work on didactic and pedagogic methods:

- The prescribing method: lecturing, dictation and demonstration
- The achromatic method: uninterrupted lecturing
- The dialogic method: conversation with questions and answers
- The heuristic method: The teacher asks questions and the pupils answer through undertaking independent activities

It is no surprise to learn that Brammer's classification was by no means the first methodological discussion to ever take place; such discussions may be traced back to antiquity (Brammer, 1838; Johnsen, 2000). The methodological categories discussed by Brammer are illustrations of different kinds of interaction between educator and pupil. The emphasis on dialogue is classical, and

has currently been revitalised within cultural-historical and related theories. There is good reason to believe that Brammer's use of the concept of 'dialogue' within his historical context was not the same as is used today. Bakhtin (1986) and Rommetveit (1992, 2014) situate the dialogue in the subject's meeting with another subject or subjects and with other cultural phenomena, for instance between mediator and learner, between peers or pupil and text or other culturally mediating learning tools. The educational intention behind dialogue may be to construct a joint inter-subjective understanding, which, put simply, means that the apprentice is in the process of becoming a master. Similarly, Henning Rye's (2001) eight themes for caregiver-child and teacher-pupil interaction represent a modern elaboration of the dialogue principle based on new research on attachment, communication and mediation. They follow here in a slightly modified version:

1. To demonstrate positive feelings
2. To adapt to the pupil(s)
3. To talk with the pupil(s)
4. To give relevant praise and acknowledgement
5. To help the pupil(s) focus
6. To assist in giving meaning to the pupil's (pupils') experience
7. To elaborate and explain
8. To help the pupil(s) achieve self-discipline

Another methodological concept, scaffolding, is a metaphor from the construction industry frequently used within cultural-historical education when elaborating on Vygotsky's theory. Scaffolding is a structured and systematic assistance in the zone of proximal development through social interaction between an expert and a novice. Several scholars have contributed detailed descriptions of scaffolding through applying concepts from didactic literature, most often regarding teaching methods and sometimes adapted to cultural-historical terminology (Berk & Winsler, 1997; Cole, 1996; Johnsen, 2014b; Rogoff, 1990; Sehic, Karlsdóttir & Guðmundsdóttir, 2005; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

Storytelling is another teaching method with ancient roots that has recently been revitalised. What characterises a well-told story is that it touches the listeners' emotions, creates interest and involvement, and is therefore well suited to change attitudes and increase knowledge. But is it possible that the same story can grasp the attention and hold the interest of a group of pupils with different educational needs? In the 1850s Norwegian teacher Ole Vig described

storytelling or "the living word" as he preferred to call it, with the following characteristics:

> It was very important that the teacher did not tell directly from the book, but used his or her own free style of oral presentation. The content of the story had to be at the children's comprehension level. It should also be illustrative, with the use of examples, explanations and repetitions. The storytelling should be fluid, lively, amusing, preferably like a tale. This would awaken the children's interest and involvement, and then their learning would take place freely and not be forced upon them (Johnsen, 2000:174).

Like quality literature, quality storytelling reaches an audience with different levels of acquisition and various background experiences simply because a good story is told on different levels. However, this does not mean that we do not have to take special precautions when we have members of the audience with individual needs. For example, if any of the pupils are dependent on sign language, the story might be told simultaneously by a signing storyteller. Alternatively, one person tells the story orally while signing. The use of sign language enriches the presentation for the whole audience, not least because of its lively use of gestures and mimicry. Storytelling might also be supplemented with pictures, requested movements and questions to be answered by the pupils, to give some further examples.

Special needs education has a number of classical methodological aspects, such as breaking down learning tasks into small steps, systematic repetition and variation in use of examples. In general, adapting methods and approaches to the plurality of different educational needs consists of the following aspects:

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

As mentioned, methodological considerations strongly affect choice of materials and equipment, such as literature, paper and pencil, computers and programmes, videos, materials for painting, drawing, sewing and cooking and equipment for physical exercises. Some pupils need special learning materials and equipment. Thus, pupils who are functionally blind need machines for printing in Braille and, when possible, access to computerised Braille transcription technology. Some pupils with cerebral palsy need access to BLISS symbol language and, if possible, to computers with special communication programmes. Pupils with

reading difficulties need special books, books on CD and other training materials. Pupils with developmental impairment need concrete learning materials and circumstances. However, as Vygotsky (1978) points out, they first and foremost need guidance in the direction of more abstract and general cognitive functioning.

Choosing educational content and methods is closely connected to **classroom organisation**. The traditional learning environment is the classroom. In literature on inclusion, creating classrooms that welcome pupils with special learning needs is emphasised. However, there are other possibilities of creating learning environments, like gardening, excursions, study visits and field work (Johnsen, 2001a; Klafki, 1999; Smith, 1998; Putnam, 1993). A fundamental criterion of inclusion is that all pupils belong to either a class or group. In a Nordic context this means that all pupils of the same age are organised together in classes. Age is thus the only criterion for placement in a class. Although this is a fundamental principle underlying the idea of inclusion, it does not mean that the classroom as an organisational entity is an absolute. It is wise to keep in mind that the classroom has not always been part of school. In the not too distant past, schools were established on street corners and in marketplaces, churches and other buildings. People of all ages gathered in groups; some even numbering up in the hundreds. Private tutors gave lessons to single pupils or small groups. Thus, although the class is important as a main organisational entity, as pupils' "educational home", so to speak, the following additional arrangements should also be taken into consideration:

- Organising into large classes (two or more classes together)
- Organising into groups
- Individual teaching
- Inside and outside the classroom

Along with the whole-class structure, these organisational entities are arenas where a variety of possible approaches to teaching and learning may be applied. A well-used example is that individual learning may be arranged either as independent learning or as a dyad consisting of one teacher or special needs educator and one pupil. Dyadic teaching might create excellent possibilities for various quality-teaching approaches, from effective training to creative dialogue. However, individual teaching also has its serious pitfalls. For example, extended use of teacher-pupil dyads might be a way to avoid making radical changes in traditional classroom management. The consequence may be that the pupil with

special needs is separated from the rest of the class activities for a considerable part of the school day and thereby loses important opportunities to learn and take part in peer socialisation. This problem is, however, limited to financially wealthy school environments.

Inclusive organisation of pupils in class depends upon a number of physical frame factors related to the classroom and how we are able to utilise them to create flexible solutions and – most importantly – a friendly and welcoming learning environment for everyone. Thus, the class is expected to reflect the class members' diversity with respect to different mastery levels and learning possibilities.

Group work and collaborative learning take into account Vygotsky's (1978) focus on peer support in the learning process. Pupils divide tasks among themselves, discussing, assisting and drawing conclusions (Dzemidzic, 2007). This kind of organisation may be applied to a variety of tasks. In addition to encouraging factual learning and cognitive development, it also supports creative thinking, critical thought, the art of discussion as well as listening, and recognition of a variety of barriers that may arise during the cooperative process. Last but not least, it may encourage pupils to have a sense of solidarity and care connected to the joy of joint problem solving. Ultimately, collaborative learning is an extremely important approach to developing democratic skills and attitudes. However, cooperation is not learned over night. There are many pitfalls to achieving successful cooperation, which must be learned step by step under the teacher's close supervision.

Collaborative learning calls for collaborative teaching, where more than one educator works in the classroom, possibly aided by assistant (Johnsen, 2001a; Igrić & Cvitković, 2013). This, however, presupposes that educators are willing to change their professional attitude and teaching style. Traditionally, educators are self-sufficient, assuming independent responsibility for either an entire class or smaller group of pupils. To team teach with one or more colleagues means that lessons are prepared, practiced and assessed together so that the capacity of all educators is effectively utilised, and nobody is passive while one of the teachers takes the traditional responsibility for the entire class. This also means that preparatory work and teaching tasks are divided among colleagues beforehand. (Bigge & Stump, 1998; Dalen, 1982; Dixon-Krauss, 1996; Dyson, 1998; Hjelmbrekke, 2014; Johnsen, 1998; 2001a; Mittler 2000; Booth et. al., 2000; Skrtic, 1995).

An important aspect of flexible class organisation is to use the classroom as a base combined with different activities outside of it. Pupils are assigned

tasks where they go elsewhere to find solutions; for instance, they might go to the school library in order to search for handbooks or find another room in which to interview a pupil or assist a group. They might be asked to go out into the schoolyard to measure the circumference of trees or go shopping to the local grocery store. Currently, most pupils leave the classroom for special needs education and many of them feel themselves negatively labelled. The inclusive school needs to be open to a greater extent of "inside and outside classroom activities". Ideally, having either single pupils or groups leave the classroom to take part in separate learning activities should be a natural occurrence. Thus, flexibility and openness in organisation will enrich the learning environment for all. Further, it will allow the possibility of providing specific studies and support services adapted to a variety of pupil interests and levels of comprehension. Another highly important reason for "inside and outside classroom activities" is that children and young people need space in order to thrive, learn and develop. Even the most pleasant classroom is too small in a physical sense to be an ideal permanent learning environment.

Communication

Communication and care, two of the main aspects of the Curriculum Relation Model, represent an extension of traditional education. In the model the two aspects are located inside the circle of classical didactical areas and serve as bridges between the instruction planning and the pupil. There can be no education without communication, no matter how qualified and relevant the adaptation of intentions, content, methods and organisation seems to be.

The notion of communication covers a wide range of aspects. It is a core concept in education for democratic citizenship called for by Englund (1997), who also points to creation of inter-subjective meaning and training in argumentation or discursive practices. He further develops educational practices with roots in the Socratic dialogue of ancient Greece. Similarly, in Freire's education for empowerment (1972) communication and dialogue are basic concepts along with joint experience and reflection. Communication is certainly at the core of interaction and mediation, as argued by Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1996) Feuerstein (1991), Rommetveit (1992; 2014) and Rye (2001, 2005). They focus on the following factors:

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

Communication and mediation theories like these offer direction to individual and class curriculum activities. They are therefore of great importance when we are preparing concrete educational intentions, content, methods and organisation based on assessment of individual learning possibilities and need for support.

Communication may be divided into two aspects; technological and human-relation. The following examples illustrate the first aspect:

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

The human-relation aspect of communication relates to our ability to see and hear the single pupil, every pupil and the entire class. According to Rye (2001, 2005) research and theory building during recent decades indicates the following traits in human nature in general and children's development in particular:

- The child has an innate social nature and potential to develop communication and social interaction
- The child has a fundamental need to establish reciprocal social relationships in order to survive, develop physically and socially, and learn to understand and relate to the physical and social world
- The child – particularly throughout the early years – learns through social interaction with caregivers, who become the child's important mediators and supporters in the process of socialisation and mastery of their relationship to the surrounding world

Human relationships are based on being seen, listened to and taken seriously. Let us take ourselves as examples; we tune in to each other's attention. This is

the case in families, between man and wife, between friends – and in school. However, we all have experienced either not being seen or we do not see all of our family members, friends or every single pupil in class. And when we feel that someone does not really see us over a long period of time, our relationship with that person may gradually fade away. Thus, a pupil that is not seen loses sight of the meaning of school. Seeing and being seen are fundamental elements of human relationships and communication. The communication act may be illustrated by Martin Buber's (1947) early discussion of the notion of 'inclusion', where he relates it to similar concepts, namely 'dialogue' and 'dialogical relation', and argues that 'inclusion' is the opposite of 'empathy', before he proceeds with his clarification:

> It (inclusion) is the extension of one's own concreteness, the fulfilment of the actual situation of life, the complete presence of the reality in which one participates. Its elements are, first, a relation, of no matter what kind, between two persons, second, an event experienced by them in common, in which at least one of them actively participates, and, third, the fact that this one person, without forfeiting anything of the felt reality of his activity, at the same time lives through the common event from the standpoint of the other.
>
> A relation between persons that is characterized in more or less degree by the element of inclusion may be termed a dialogical relation (Buber, 1947: 124–125).

In this way Buber places 'dialogical relation', described as open, positive and profound communication, in what today may be called an inclusive practice. Throughout the history of schooling, there have been many dialogical relations between teachers and pupils, and such teachers are cherished in our memories as "The Good Teacher". Last but not least, the kind of dialogical relation or recourse-based communication act discussed here goes beyond the spoken or signed words and incorporates non-verbal communication (Aðalsteinsdóttir, 2000).

Care

Care is another main aspect of fundamental importance for the entire educational process. Similar to communication, it represents an extended professional understanding compared to traditional limited discipline or knowledge-related education. It emphasises that positive learning depends on the satisfaction of basic human needs (Rye, 2005) as belongingness, love, acceptance and recogni-

tion. Therefore we need to be aware of not only the learner but the whole child or adolescent within their social and cultural context. We also need to be conscious of the joint cultural heritage and conditions that we share with our pupils, with its potential and joy as well as its barriers and traumas. Knowledge and care for pupils' personal living conditions and the whole range of their developmental potentials and needs is an important part of our challenge as educators. It was therefore impressive to witness the extensive knowledge the class teacher in my longitudinal classroom study had of every child in her class, and how carefully she handled this sensitive information (Johnsen, 2013b). Our pupils need to be aware of our care. It shows in our attitudes, small informal talks, eye contact or a light touch on the shoulder; in some nice words about what was good in the homework as well as our concerns. Care shows itself in how we plan, implement and evaluate all aspects in the Curricular Relation Model.

Recently, the ethics of care have gained renewed interest in educational discourse. Nel Noddings (1992; 2003) discusses the challenge to care in school. She argues that there is a need for a radical change in both curriculum and teaching to reach all children, not just the few who fit our conception of the academically able. She argues that care is a form of relationship founded on the receptivity, relatedness and responsiveness of both the care-giver and the cared-for. It has to do with recognizing actual needs from the point of view of the cared-for. Referring to Carol Gilligan (1993), Nodding points out that care has a long tradition as a feminine endeavour. Care also seems to have been a driving force in many of the male and female pioneers who opened special schools for children who were deaf, blind or had developmental impairments in the latter part of the eighteenth century and onwards (Johnsen, 2001b). It had also great attention in early inclusion debates in Norway in the 1960s and 1970's, as seen in the national curriculum of that time (M 1987: 16–17). However, in the late 1970s and 1980s, the conception of care was criticised as being a type of naive pity, and there was a terminology shift in educational discourse that is found in the following Norwegian national curriculum (L 1997), where the term 'care' is hardly used. Recently, the ethics of care have gained renewed interest. In Norway Edvard Befring (1996; 1997; 2001) discusses care in a special needs educational and inclusion perspective, arguing that care and learning are complementary functions.

Care is manifested in concrete actions in the way we as educators interact with individual pupils and the class, in our choice of content, methods, classroom organisation and not least how we choose to assess and give feedback to

our pupils on their work and progress. Gross (1996) and Webster-Stratton (1999) describe a number of specific caring actions that are in line with Befring's and Nodding's recommendations. Here are some of their examples:

- Encouragement of and participation in play activities with pupils
- Listening to pupil(s)
- Sharing personal experiences with pupil(s)
- Creating opportunities for feelings to be expressed and discussed through play and through a variety of creative activities, like drawing, painting, drama and role-play, literature reading and discussions, writing logbooks, dialogue books and essays
- Giving support to pupils who have experienced disappointments, traumatic events and loss
- Supporting pupils to develop positive coping and mastering strategies
- Promoting self-confidence through self-talk and other empowerment strategies
- Showing pupil(s) trust

These examples of caring activities are all in line with Rye's (2001, 2005) previously described principles for teacher- pupil interaction. The general message in the literature referred to above supports the basic philosophy of this article, pointing out that care means seeing and supporting each pupil as a unique individual who has their own learning opportunities and needs (Johnsen, 2001a).

From their slightly different theoretical positions, Maslow (1954) and Vygotsky point out that we are not only individuals but also members of a group or collective. Care must therefore be extended to support individual pupils as members of a collective entity such as the class, as well as to develop the class as a caring environment for all pupils. Gross (1996) focuses on the importance of organising the caring classroom through measures where pupils' personal autonomy and development of self-esteem go hand-in-hand with showing respect, involvement and caring for others. She points out that the teacher is an important role model for pupils' development of involvement and care. Tetler (2000) presents a number of recommendations for the development of an inclusive and caring classroom culture under the metaphorical "Didactics of Generosity"[28]. Her main point is that in order to develop an inclusive classroom,

28. Didactics of Generosity has been translated from the Danish "rummelighedens didaktik" by the author of this article, who regrets the fact that the English translation does not fully grasp the Danish concept.

it is necessary to turn from categorisation and grouping of pupils towards focusing on how to plan and practise classroom activities that meet the plurality of different needs of all the pupils in the class.

Advocacy is another important topic in the internal work of the inclusive class, and perhaps even more so outside the classroom and school. Educators have a professional ethical duty to defend and argue for pupils' rights to receive suitably adapted education in an inclusive school. This is still of great importance for pupils with needs that have traditionally not been met in the ordinary school. The French-Bulgarian philosopher and psychoanalyst, Julia Kristeva, revitalises and extends the slogan of early French Enlightenment in her ethical-political project on liberty, equality, community[29] – and vulnerability. Her expansion is based on recognising the community of vulnerability as well as that of liberty (Johnsen, 2010; 2014c; Kristeva, 2010). Kristeva's point of departure stems from her observations of people's as well as society's all too common avoidance of persons with disabilities, especially people with severe intellectual challenges. She situates the reason for this avoidance the individual's sub-consciousness, where the encounter with the disability evokes uneasiness; an uneasiness that we need to confront in ourselves in order to meet the disabled as an equal citizen in our collective society of vulnerable individuals. In this way she applies psychoanalysis, arguing in favour of making individual ethical choices which in turn relate to the ethical mentality of the entire community.

Similar to the art of communication, care is an ability that can be made conscious, learned and developed, even though we will never be fully qualified.

Context

Michael Cole presents a thorough discussion and continuation of Vygotsky's (1978) pioneer argumentation for the culture-historical context of learning in his work *Cultural Psychology – A* **Once** *and Future Discipline* (1996), where he relates Vygotsky's theories to contemporary and current scholars such as Rogoff (1990; 2003) and Bronfenbrenner, whose theory of ecology (1979) is mentioned

29. The phrase 'liberty, equality and fraternity' became a motto for the French Revolution on August 26, 1789. Kristeva refers directly to this phrase. The emphasis on the community of brothers was, however, quickly criticized by contemporary women's rights activists. The French Olympe de Gouges pronounced the Women's Rights Declaration in 1793, and the English philosopher and educational scholar Mary Wollstonecraft argued for gender equality (Rustad, 2007). With this backdrop the initial slogan becomes less faulty as 'liberty, equality and community'. The change from 'fraternity' to 'community' is made by the author of this chapter.

above in conjunction with Goodlad's (1979) curricular ecology. According to Rogoff (1990:140), Vygotsky emphasises that development is a process of learning to use the intellectual tools provided through social history. Thus so-called 'scaffolding', a term frequently used by cultural-historical and socio-cultural scholars, consists of finding or developing and adapting the intellectual tools available at any time, be they the pen and inkwell of yesterday or apps (application software) of tomorrow. These are what in the deeply rooted science of didactics or curriculum may be categorised as educational intentions, assessment, content, methods and organisation, and the most classical and important intellectual tool at all time; the educator. Bronfenbrenner and Goodlad pay particular attention to the cultural and curricular context of the local school with its opportunities and barriers, called 'frame factors' in sociology of education. Thus, school as an institution depends upon and operates within a framework that may be constructed by several factors, such as legislation, financial and human resources and a number of physical, social and cultural aspects. Frame factors set limits and give direction, and they also allow new opportunities. Therefore context and frame factors are a main area in the Curriculum Relation Model, embracing the inner activity of schooling as indicated by placing context as a second circle around the other main areas in the model.

As mentioned, educational **legislation** and **policy** "have two faces", one as macro-level educational intentions and the other as frame factors. In most countries the documents describe official educational rights, responsibilities and general aims. These are in many cases related to internationally agreed principles such as the principle of education for all and the inclusive school. However, national educational acts and curricula tend to have a variety of aims and goals that do not necessarily correspond to one another. On the contrary, they might modify or even contradict each other. This is rather usual in countries that have a self-image as actively performing political democracies. One reason for this may be that their legislation is the result of a number of compromises between different interests and ideas (Englund, 1986; Johnsen, 2000). In the making of individual and class curricula, national legislation and policies therefore need interpretation in the process of adapting them to actual educational situations. They also need to be related to other frame factors and curricular main aspects.

Annual national budgets are nicknamed "the law above the law" in some countries because budget items influence the possibility for implementing political intentions. **Economy** is the most discussed – and complained about – of all the frame factors. What is too often forgotten is that the division of available

financial resources depends on what priorities are made by central and local politicians and officials and, ultimately, the local school and even the class.

Professional quality is perhaps the most important element in the development towards an inclusive school. The prevalence of qualified teachers and special needs educators as well as the quality and perspective of their education are important frame factors. The process from principle to reality of an inclusive school needs strong professional advocacy and solid craftsmanship, flexibility and creativity in the art of educating. Consequently, educators of regular teachers and special needs educators have a great responsibility when it comes to preparing future professionals for adapting schools and classes for all children, with and without special needs. The same is the case for research and research policy.

The school building, its surroundings and neighbourhood may be categorised as **physical frame factors** or **context**. The physical framework of schools varies enormously both within and between countries. Classrooms may be dark and cold, with doors too narrow for a wheelchair. The schoolyard may be small and dirty, surrounded by streets with heavy traffic. Buildings may be small and located in secure surroundings, with trees, grass and beautiful flowers, and with ample opportunity for children to play and learn. Or the building may be clean and nice, with rooms of different sizes, tables and chairs adapted to pupils' changing sizes, with modern teaching equipment and secure surroundings. In some localities the school building functions as the heart of the community; a place for education and the area's cultural centre. In some places caring for the school and for suitably adapted education for all pupils is given high priority by local politicians as well as educators and parents. Quite often, minor changes made to the physical surroundings may decrease or even eliminate barriers to learning. For example, a dark classroom may be given more light so that it becomes easier for pupils to read their textbooks and see the blackboard. Another example may be when a pupil who is hard of hearing is placed in the room so that she or he is able to see the teacher's mouth and facial expressions. The classroom equipment and working conditions for educators are certainly important frame factors as well. New technology developed during recent decades has radically increased teachers' possibilities to create flexible and suitably adapted individual curricula in the class setting. However, new technology is dependent on economic frames as well as infrastructural factors, such as having dependable electricity in the area. There is a danger that the gap between western schools and educational opportunities in the south will further increase as a

consequence of the new possibilities accompanying computer technology due to the major differences in schools' financial ability to utilise these "new helpers".

There is a whole range of **social and cultural frame factors** or **contextual aspects** influencing the internal activity in school. Bronfenbrenner (1979) takes into consideration the local community's social and economic structures, its employment situation and natural environment as important influential factors for learning. In a local innovation project Høgmo (1981) demonstrated contradictions and dilemmas when a centralised national curriculum heavily biased by social and cultural factors from the capital was implemented in a small fishing village in northern Norway. His criticism led to major changes in the next national curriculum (M 1987), introducing local curriculum development as an obligatory part of educational planning. The intentions were to suitably adapt general national guidelines in accordance with the local environment of each school. Accompanying this turn from centralised to locally adapted curriculum development was the principle of meaningful and suitably adapted education for the individual pupil.

A number of more or less concrete and easily discovered social and cultural factors also influence schools and pupils' learning opportunities. Bilingualism and the fact that children are expected to learn to read in a language other than their first language is a well-known barrier to reading acquisition. Parents' illiteracy is another factor that needs to be taken into account when planning school curricula. Changing priorities in educational matters are – or should be – consequences of social and cultural contextual factors on the local and national level. Attitudes are important aspects of this context that influence how information is interpreted and choices made, consciously as well as unconsciously. Prejudices also exert influence; in the case of attitude, perhaps the main view in a local community is that its school should give "bright pupils" high priority? Perhaps special needs are seen as dangerous or shameful? Or maybe they are viewed as natural states of human diversity?

This brief descriptions and examples indicate that socio-cultural contexts consist of many vague as well as clear and concrete aspects. Some are even quantifiable, such as economic factors or the number of qualified educators. Others are more diffuse and hard to detect, while several aspects remain undiscovered as hidden frame factors. Some factors are subjected to official debate on a macro level and lead to revisions in laws and priorities. These revisions are in turn prone to having actual consequences for the single school and educational team in the planning, practicing and revision of local and individual curricula.

Some practical considerations

After this review of the eight curricular main aspects of the Curriculum Relation Model, some unifying considerations regarding purposeful use of it are required. As mentioned, the model has been used in research, innovation and professional-practical work. The following discussion is delimited to practical considerations, starting with two fundamental questions:

- How can we organise our work as teachers and special needs educators so that the relevant main aspects of importance for individual pupils and the whole class are considered?
- How can we assure enough flexibility so that the variety of individual needs is met?

As a starting point to answering the questions, the context in which the Curriculum Relation Model was developed in the 1990s is briefly outlined. At that time – as today – there were several books and articles about individual curricula focusing on pre-produced checklists and forms as 'prescriptions' for working with learners with special needs. Professional educators are invited to follow the checklists and fill in the forms. However, a serious problem with these forms is that they are static and encourage one absolute, detailed understanding of curriculum making, thus adapting the work to the form instead of to the pupil. Among all the forms and checklists in circulation, I have never seen a form that suits every pupil, every educational team and all varieties of educational needs within different contexts. Inflexible use of pre-produced forms may therefore limit educational planning and overlook important possibilities, barriers and needs. In this way they may function as obstacles instead of positive professional tools for suitable facilitation of teaching-learning processes.

The Curriculum Relation Model was developed as a dynamic and flexible alternative to pre-prepared forms. This is why the model only consists of eight main aspects in interrelation with each other and no pre-prepared checklist. Three main components are recommended in curricular planning; 1) development of a professional-personal list of important curriculum keywords, 2) use of a diary or logbook and 3) development of individual long-term curricula in relation to class curricula and for further detailed planning of short-term curricula that are continuously revised throughout the teaching-learning process.

1) Every teacher and special needs educator applies a number of professional concepts regarding teaching-learning processes. Each educator is advised

to use these to develop their own **personal-professional list of important curriculum keywords** related to each of the main aspects, and in this way create an overview of the many possible aspects of individual education in a class context. The keywords function as reminders of practice phenomena such as a specific academic content or communication approach. Flexibility is a main feature of the list, which should be continuously revised so that new keywords are added and outdated ones discarded. Thus, the list serves as a foundation for tailor-making individual curricula in planning and re-evaluation. Creating and revising a personal-professional list of curricular keywords does not require any sophisticated and expensive material or forms. On the contrary, because of the expected continuous changes, it is well suited to be written down and placed in a portfolio or in a folder on the computer. A version of such a list is presented in the report from the Bosnian curricular innovation project where the participants developed individual lists of keywords related to curricular main aspects. These were discussed and summarised in teams and presented in plenum (Johnsen, 2007).

2) The use of **a diary or logbook** is a classic and strongly recommended practical aid in curriculum development. The logbook is suitable for gathering informal information about the pupils' daily educational process in one place, recording thoughts that may be important regarding progress, barriers, needs and surprises. Commenting on the efficiency of teaching methods, aspects of the individual curriculum and communication with other pupils, co-teachers, parents and other collaboration partners may also be noted in this highly personal medium. Taking five to ten minutes every day to write down observations may prove of great importance next time we make long-term curricular revisions. However, diaries and notebooks must be stored in a safe place to ensure that unauthorised persons do not access our highly important and sensitive information about individual and class curricula[30].
3) The last crucial component in curriculum creation is, of course, the individual and class curricula, created as long-term curricula, which are further developed as short-term curricula at a level of detail relevant to each case. It should be noted that special needs educational practice is often characterised as "the small steps endeavour". This is a quality that must be

30. It is also a matter of ethical consideration to decide which kind of information should be written down in this and other curricular working documents and which information is better stored in our memory or not at all.

catered for in the curriculum of the inclusive class. According to this curricular relation approach, all curricula are continuously revised through the teaching-learning process.

Concluding thoughts

Finally, there are three matters that need to be given some consideration. The first is the choice of curricular main aspects. Secondly, some problems and dilemmas of special needs education are commented upon through using examples discussed by Dyson (1998). Lastly, the need to develop perspectives that are in favour of suitably adapted education in inclusive schools must be mentioned.

As stated earlier, the eight curricular aspects described here are intended to focus on some, but not all, important aspects and relations of learning and teaching processes. My assumption is that no model or list of keywords is able to cover all aspects of reality. The keywords chosen are important factors in deciding which parts of reality are being focused on, and which parts are not discussed, and therefore remain taken for granted and less visible. As mentioned, several of the main aspects commented upon in this article are classical curricular aspects or 'commonplaces', by which is meant there is a common understanding and agreement on the importance of these aspects in educational and special needs educational discourse. Intentions, content, methods, organisation, assessment and learning have been classical focus points as far back as the history of educational ideas has been recorded (Johnsen, 2000). However, context, communication and care are aspects that are in the process of gaining attention at least within some educational and special needs educational traditions. There is also a rising criticism of "the taken for grantedness" of these educational commonplaces. Both their content and focusing effect are seen as problematic (Englund, 1997; Popkewitz, 1997). Some critics go so far as to argue for replacing them with other concepts. As mentioned above, Englund states his view in the following way:

> … in didactics and curriculum theory we are often too entrenched in concepts like schooling, planning, teaching and learning. Instead, I think we need a language which uses concepts like experiences, communication, meaning-creating, discursive practices and so on (Englund, 1997:22).

This important criticism is met by adding main aspects, such as communication, which contains much of what Englund (1997) advocates, to the classical and

commonplace ones. Another view is that explicit reflections on commonplace construction and aspects of education are necessary elements of a purposeful changing process of schooling. In school settings educational intentions, content, organisation and other methods need to be problematised in relation to pupil diversity. This is a key principle in special needs education and a fundamental inclusive practice. Thus, communication and care have been introduced and given central positions in the Curriculum Relation Model because the ability to communicate and provide care is viewed as so fundamental that all other important educational aspects depend on them in order to be activated.

As repeatedly mentioned, the field of education and special needs education is complex and in some respects contradictory. Consequently, there are a number of dilemmas that are important to face in practical curriculum work. Dyson (1998:11) states that "… the notion of dilemmas offers a powerful lens through which education generally and special education in particular can be viewed". Thus, from his point of view, dilemmas are not merely accidental and temporary difficulties arising in particular situations. Rather, education and special needs education are characterised by a series of dilemmas tied to specific aspects of the field. Dilemmas are supposed to be found in each of the eight main aspects pinpointed here. For example, there is a dilemma between the teacher's need to assess special learning needs and the danger of labelling certain pupils in the class. Being labelled and categorised into a disability group may have a negative effect on both the pupil's self-concept and other pupils' attitudes.

Dyson (1998) is in line with the cultural-historical school when he points out that special needs education and the principle of inclusion do not emerge out of a social vacuum, but are found within a particular social context filled with the interplay of history, knowledge, interests and power. Several different educational principles, some of which are in direct contradiction, are rubbed against each other in ongoing discourses[31]. One such example is the principles of solidarity, co-operation and inclusion confronted by the societal urge for competition (Johnsen, 1998:11). The principle of suitably adapted education in an inclusive school is challenged from several different positions, one of which being the deeply ingrained tradition concerning the worship of the genius.

31. In my study of the history of educational ideas in early modern times (Johnsen, 2000), a flow of different ideas was found to be apparent already in the early phases of educational discourse – strengthening, moderating and even exterminating each other in "the fight for a privileged position" as the centuries went by.

This leads us to a third topic for reflection. A continuous creation of new perspectives in favour of inclusion is necessary. Befring (2001; 2014) launched a new perspective when arguing for the enrichment perspective as a special educational approach to the inclusive school. According to this perspective, a "good" school for children with disabilities also offers an ideal environment for the learning, nurturing and well-being of all other pupils, not only in the class, but also the entire school. How? Applying the curricular relation approach with its flexibility embedded in the connection between individual and class curricula, accommodating the variety of comprehension levels, interests and educational needs of all pupils is a practice-focused approach in accordance with the enrichment perspective.

The Curriculum Relation Model discussed in this article represents one possible and fruitful approach to bridging the gap between the international normative principle of inclusion and the school and educational practice. It also offers a research and theory-based perspective advocating the application of innovation and research on inclusive practices in the process towards achieving full educational inclusion.

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