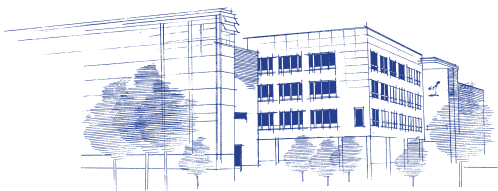




Who should do What to Whom?

Occupational Groups' Views on Special Needs

GUNILLA LINDQVIST



School of Education and Communication
Jönköping University
Dissertation Series No. 22 • 2013

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Dissertation in Education

School of Education and Communication
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ABSTRACT

The overall aim of this thesis is to increase our knowledge of different occupational groups' views on work with children in need of special support. This is explored in four separate studies.

The first study investigates the views of occupational groups in pre-schools and schools in one municipality. A questionnaire was handed out to all personnel (N=1297) in the municipality in 2008 (72.5 % response rate). The second study explores the views of educational leaders (N=45) in the same municipality. Questionnaire # 2 was distributed in 2009. All the educational leaders responded to the questionnaire. The third study describes the views of different occupational groups concerning special educational needs coordinators' (SENCOs) role and work. This was highlighted by comparing responses from questionnaire #1 and # 2. Responses concerning SENCOs' work were also added using a third questionnaire. This questionnaire was handed out in 2006 to chief education officers (N=290) in all municipalities in Sweden. The response rate was 90.3%. Finally, the fourth study presents five head teachers' descriptions of their work with special needs issues. Study four was a follow-up study of questionnaire # 2. These head teachers were selected because of their inclusive values and because they seemed to be effective according to certain criteria. They were interviewed in January 2012.

The results reveal a number of interesting findings. For example, there are both similar and different views among the occupational groups concerning work with children in need of special support. A majority of

the respondents in all groups state that children's individual deficiencies is one common reason why children need special support in pre-schools/schools. Differences between the occupational groups become especially visible regarding their views of SENCOs' work.

Critical pragmatism (Cherryholmes, 1988) is applied as a theoretical point of departure. Skrtic's (1991) critical reading and analysis of special education relative to general education is specifically used to interpret and discuss the outcome of the studies. Additionally, Abbott's (1988) reasoning concerning the "division of expert labor" is used to discuss the occupational groups' replies concerning "who should do what to whom".

The findings in the studies are contextualized and theoretically interpreted in the separate articles. However in the first part of this thesis (in Swedish: Kappa), the theoretical interpretations of the empirical outcome are discussed in more detail and the results are further contextualized and synthesised. Inclusion and premises for inclusive education are also discussed in more depth in the first part of the present thesis.

KEYWORDS

Occupational groups, children in need of special support, views, special needs, inclusion, SENCOs, educational leaders, preschools and schools

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Stennäset, november 2013

Gunilla Lindqvist

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part I

I. Introduction..... 13

Aim and research questions 17

Disposition of the thesis..... 19

2. Guidelines and special needs 23

A school for all..... 26

Special support in current policy documents..... 29

Special support and responsibilities 30

Concluding remarks 34

3. Prior research 37

Occupational groups and special needs..... 39

Defining occupational groups..... 39

Historical retrospective of occupational groups with focus on
special needs..... 41

Prior research investigating occupational groups operating
in the field today..... 44

SENCOs' role in prior studies..... 48

Educational leaders' role in prior studies..... 51

Inclusion in prior studies 56

4. Theoretical framework 63

A categorical and a relational perspective – a point of departure
for the study 63

Theoretical approaches 66

The significance of context when professions are studied – a mutual
point of departure in the theories 67

| | |
|--|----|
| Critical pragmatism as a means to approach the research field..... | 69 |
| Critical pragmatism and special education | 72 |
| Critique of Skrtic's critical approach..... | 78 |
| Occupational groups and the division of expert labor | 81 |
| The role of the notion of inclusion in the studies | 86 |

5. Method 91

| | |
|--|-----|
| Background of the study | 91 |
| Description of the municipality | 93 |
| Contacts, selection and procedure | 97 |
| Methodological choices and considerations | 100 |
| My role in relation to the field..... | 100 |
| The study of one municipality- generalizing the data | 102 |
| Reliability and validity | 104 |
| Ethical aspects | 111 |
| Collection and analysis of empirical data | 114 |
| Questionnaire # 1 (used in I and III)..... | 114 |
| Questionnaire # 2 (used in II and III)..... | 115 |
| Questionnaire # 3 (used in III) | 116 |
| Interviews (used in IV) | 118 |

6. Results – summary of findings in

the four papers 121

| | |
|---|-----|
| Paper I: Different agendas? The views of different occupational groups on special needs education | 122 |
| Paper II: Making schools inclusive? Educational leaders' views on how to work with children in need of special support..... | 126 |
| Paper III: SENCOs- vanguards or in vain?..... | 129 |
| Paper IV: Promoting inclusion? – “inclusive” and effective head teachers' descriptions of their work | 132 |

7. Concluding discussion 139

| | |
|---|-----|
| Views on division of labor- Who should do what to whom? | 141 |
| Special education as a parallel system to the general school system | 147 |
| The occupational groups' views in relation to the notion of inclusion..... | 151 |
| Towards more inclusive practices? | 152 |
| Democratic goals and inclusion in schools | 155 |
| Complementary ideas of inclusion | 158 |
| Methodological reflections..... | 160 |
| Contributions and future studies | 165 |
| Contributions of the study..... | 165 |
| Future studies..... | 171 |
| Implications for policy and practice..... | 174 |

8. Summary in Swedish/

Sammanfattning på svenska 177

9. References 187

Part 2

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Appendix I-IV..... | 207 |
|--------------------|-----|

I INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, views among different occupational groups¹ concerning special needs are studied. My particular focus is on how occupational groups perceive work with children in need of special support.² The formulation used in this thesis, “children in need of special support”, is based on definitions expressed in Swedish policy documents. A child who is considered to be at risk of not reaching schools’ academic requirements, or otherwise in need of support, is entitled to special support and thus defined as a child/pupil in need of special support (SFS 1985:1100, SFS 1997:0599, SFS 2010:800). However, special support is not defined in the statutes and there can be many reasons why children are considered as being in need of such support (SFS 2010:800).

¹ In Swedish: yrkesgrupper

² The term “Pupils in need of special support” is more frequent in statutes and legislative texts. The term “Children in need of special support” is used in the thesis when the text also refers to children in preschools. The term “Children/Pupils with special educational needs (SEN)” is frequently used internationally. However, I have chosen to translate the Swedish term “Barn i behov av särskilt stöd” in this study. The Swedish expression implies that the need arises when the individual encounters their environment (c.f. Emanuelsson et al, 2001). The latter term is closely linked to other expressions used in this thesis (e.g. pupils in school difficulties, problems in school, school problems). The formulation “Children in need of special support” can be seen as a categorization of a certain group of children (c.f. Hjörne, 2004). In order to investigate the field of special needs and views of the occupational groups participating in this study, “Children in need of special support” was considered an appropriate formulation to use. Additionally, this formulation is used in the policy documents. When the questionnaires were distributed, the definition of “Children in need of special support” applied in this study was clearly defined. It was also explained that the children referred to were children who could be considered by the respondents to be at risk of not reaching a school’s goals. This definition was specifically expressed in the accompanying letters (see appendices).

In Sweden today, basically all children go to preschool even if preschool is optional. Most pupils also attend compulsory school. However, in the Swedish school system today, there are pupils who are educated in segregated environments. Nilholm et al (2007) estimate that between 2.3% and 3.1% of the students (ages 7-17) obtain their education in segregated settings most of their school day and around 17 % of the students in Swedish compulsory schools receive special support at any particular point in time (Swedish Agency for Education, 2003, Statistics Sweden, 2008). More than 40 % of pupils are given such support at least once during their compulsory school years (Giota and Lundborg, 2007). Up until today, students perceived of as being in some sort of school difficulties have traditionally been educated, fully or to some extent, by special support staff, often through special education ³ (Isaksson, 2009). In spite of intentions to educate children in their regular learning environments (SFS 2010:800), there seem to be obstacles to fulfil this goal to its fullest.

According to the statutes (Government office, 2010, 2011), personnel in preschools and schools should detect and observe children and students who might be having school difficulties in order to deploy adequate measures. Hence, it becomes essential to investigate what perspectives on school difficulties (Emanuelsson et al, 2001) are prevalent in schools,

³ Special education (in Swedish: specialundervisning) has traditionally been defined as special education for special students carried out by special teachers in special settings (i.e. separated from other types of education usually defined as regular or normal education) (Emanuelsson et al, 2001). Special education can also be translated as specialpedagogik . This is a broader, but related concept to specialundervisning (Emanuelsson et al, 2001). Special education (specialpedagogik) is here defined as measures used when regular education is considered insufficient (e.g. Ahlberg, 2007, Nilholm, 2007).

also in relation to school policies. Traditionally, school difficulties are seen as difficulties situated within the individual child (e.g. problems are traced as shortcomings due to individual deficiencies). Ainscow (1998) terms this the deficit-perspective. Emanuelsson et al (2001) suggest an alternative perspective to the more traditional view. The alternative perspective, often referred to as a relational perspective (Persson, 1998), implies that school difficulties arise in the relation between the individual and their environment.⁴ It is likely that different perspectives become important when policy makers and practitioners work with issues regarding special needs. It is feasible to believe that perspectives taken will have consequences for preschools' and schools' work with children in need of special support concerning which children are considered to be in various school difficulties, what support measures are offered, as well as the outcome of the measures provided (Nilholm et al, 2007). Accordingly, one of the vantage points for this study is to investigate views among occupational groups in preschools and schools.

Two occupational groups, special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs)⁵ and educational leaders⁶ are specifically in focus in this thesis. According to Swedish guidelines (SOU, 1999:63) and statutes (SFS 2010:800) as well as prior research (e.g. McLeskey and Waldron, 2000, Malmgren Hansen, 2002, Leithwood et al, 2008, Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen, 2009), these two groups seem to have a

⁴ This will be further elaborated in Chapter 4,5 and 7.

⁵ In Swedish: specialpedagoger

⁶ The expression "educational leaders" is used to commonly describe head teachers (in Swedish: rektorer) working in preschools and schools. In 2009, when the second study was performed, educational leaders in preschools were called förskolerektorer in Swedish.

pivotal role⁷ in preschools' and schools' work with special needs issues and inclusion. The occupational group of SENCOs was specifically created and introduced in the Swedish school system in order for preschools and schools to work with school problems from different vantage points (UHÄ, 1990-06-27) in order to move away from the concept that certain children have individual deficiencies (c.f. Ainscow, 1998). The second occupational group of specific interest, educational leaders, has an overarching responsibility over how work with children in need of special support is carried out in preschools and schools (Rosenqvist and Tideman, 2000). This responsibility is further expressed in the newly introduced statutes (SFS 2010:800). Accordingly, it seems essential to investigate how these two occupational groups perceive work with children in need of special support. Additionally, perceptions of SENCOs' role, function and tasks, from other occupational groups' viewpoints, become interesting to study (especially in the light of school history and school policies) since it is plausible to believe that other groups in preschools and schools are affected when a new occupational group is introduced to the school system (c.f. Bladini, 2004).

Another area of interest in this thesis is the concept of inclusion. Including all children in general education appears to be one of the greatest challenges for school systems around the world (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). Within school, as well as in the general debate about school, positive emotive concepts such as "inclusion" and "inclusive education" are often used. However, there seems to be a large amount of confusion

⁷ The expression "role" is used relative to practitioners' functions and tasks in preschools and schools. "Role" should be read as an expression used in everyday-language in preschools and schools (e.g. Lansheim, 2010).

about what inclusion means and what actions to take in order to move school systems forward in a more inclusive direction (Allen and Slee, 2001, Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). Notions such as these are seldom defined, discussed or problematized in schools and too seldom also among scholars conducting research in the field (Nilholm and Göransson, forthcoming). Similar to the discussion concerning children in need of special support above, different perspectives on the notion of inclusion may create diverse ideas about how the word should be interpreted and consequently, how it should be operationalized in school practices. When the views of the occupational groups are studied in this thesis, a relational perspective (Persson, 1998, Emanuelsson et al, 2001) is used in order to investigate inclusion relative to the responses. By using this approach, the idea is to increase our knowledge concerning perspectives on inclusion as well as how the concept can be used in research when such perspectives are studied.

AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall aim of the thesis is to increase our knowledge of different occupational groups' views on work with children in need of special support. The thesis consists of two parts which relate somewhat differently to this overall aim. In the second part containing the articles, there are separate research questions for each article (see below). These articles all contribute to reaching the overall aim of the thesis by addressing different aspects of how occupational groups view work with children in need of special support. In the first part of the thesis (in Swedish: *Kappa*) the primary aims are to further contextualize the studies reported in the articles, to synthesise the findings of the separate studies and to deepen the theoretical interpretations of the empirical outcome. Thus,

the overall aim of this thesis, to increase our knowledge of different groups' views on work with children in need of special support, is reached by both collecting important data as well as providing a theoretically grounded interpretation of these data.

The research questions investigated in four studies described in articles I-IV are:

Study 1:

- How do different occupational groups explain why children have problems in school?
- How do different occupational groups believe preschools/schools should help children in need of special support?
- What role do different occupational groups believe that SENCOs should have in such work?

Study 2:

- How do educational leaders ⁸ explain why children have problems in schools?

⁸ When the second study was conducted, educational leaders in preschools were called preschool head teachers (in Swedish: förskolerektorer). Today, they are called preschool directors (in Swedish: förskolechefer). Educational leaders in this study were responsible for: 1) only preschools 2) preschools and schools together and 3) only schools. When the groups were divided into two sub-groups, one group consisted of head teachers responsible for category #1 (n=16) and one group of head teachers responsible for categories # 2 and #3 (n=29).

- How do educational leaders consider preschools/schools should help children in need of special support?
- How do educational leaders believe SENCOs should work?

Study 3:

- How do different occupational groups view where, and in what ways, SENCOs work and should work?

Study 4:

- What strategies do head teachers who work effectively and express inclusive values say they use in order to promote inclusive practices and how can the use of such strategies be interpreted?

As can be seen, these research questions have an empirical character. However, the empirical patterns found in the studies are of course contextualised and interpreted in the articles. Moreover, the patterns are further synthesised and contextualised in the first part of the thesis where the theoretical interpretations are further developed.

DISPOSITION OF THE THESIS

As earlier noted, the thesis consists of two parts. The first part contains 9 chapters. The second part holds the complete articles, I-IV. From now on, in order to make the reader's task easier, roman figures are used when the text refers to the four articles (I-IV). There are three major

aims for the first part of this thesis. Firstly, it serves as a contextualization of the four articles by providing a more elaborated background in terms of e.g. guidelines and prior research which is hard to provide in the short format of an article (cf. Liljegren, 2008). Secondly, it synthesises the outcomes of the studies. Thirdly, it deepens the theoretical interpretations of the empirical outcome. The intention is also that part one could be read as text by itself in order to provide an overarching understanding of the research design as well as the outcome of the four studies.

In part one, the introduction is followed by a description of guidelines that apply for work with special needs issues. A brief historical presentation of special education in relation to general education introduces the concept of “A school for all”. This is followed by a presentation of guidelines of significance for preschools’ and schools’ work today. This section also provides a short presentation and comparison between different formulations in the current policy documents. When prior research in chapter 3 is presented, the focus is primarily on studies investigating special needs issues, inclusion and what role different occupational groups have in relation to special education and inclusion. This thesis extends over a number of research areas and the review of earlier studies should be seen as a selection of the vast amount of research conducted with relevance for this study. The purpose of presenting prior studies in part one is to put the study in context and give some understanding of where research in these fields is today. Chapter 4 introduces the theoretical framework used in this thesis. As earlier noted, this chapter should be seen as an extended presentation of the main theoretical perspectives that have served as guidance through the research pro-

cess in the separate studies. The main theoretical perspective taken in this thesis departs from a critical pragmatic approach along with Abbott's (1988) reasoning concerning the division of expert labor and jurisdictional control.⁹

This study is to a large extent based on quantitative data presented in tables and figures. The investigation is conducted in a Swedish municipality during a certain time period, namely between 2008 and 2012. This study involves the views of all educational personnel (the whole population) in preschools and schools within this municipality. It investigates and describes contemporary phenomena in a complex unit (the municipality) (c.f. Larsson, 2005). The study is defined as being positioned within the area of descriptive research (Moore et al, 2009). This is further presented in chapter 5. Additionally, descriptions of the municipality, selection procedures, ethical considerations, methodological choices and the methods used are presented in this chapter. Chapter 6 summarises the findings in the four papers. In chapter 7, the results and conclusions drawn are highlighted and discussed in more depth. The discussion is linked to prior studies and the theoretical framework. More specifically, the views of the occupational groups participating in this study are linked to 1) discussions concerning jurisdictional control and division of expert labor (Abbott, 1988) 2) reasoning about how assumptions and structures in schools and in the Swedish school system might have consequences for educational work (Cherryholmes, 1988, 1999,

⁹ The critical pragmatic approach as well as the division of expert labor and the concept of jurisdictional control will be further described in chapter 4. I use the American spelling of the word *labor* since I use "Division of expert labor" as an entity used theoretically by Abbott (1988).

Skrtic, 1991, 1995) and 3) discussions relative to inclusive education (e.g. Persson, 1998, Emanuelsson et al, 2001, Allen and Slee, 2001, Ainscow and Sandill, 2010) . There is also a short passage concerning methodological considerations. Subsequently, the contributions of the study, possibilities for future research as well as some implications for policy and practices are presented.

2 GUIDELINES AND SPECIAL NEEDS

One can assume that guidelines, stated in the policy documents, which personnel in preschools and schools should comply with, have an impact on the responses from the occupational groups participating in this study. Thus, the responses of the occupational groups in the present thesis should be understood relative to tasks such as realizing the idea of "A school for all"¹⁰ and supporting children in various school difficulties. Accordingly, this chapter focuses on policy documents that preschools and schools are obliged to follow in their work with children in need of special support.

The first section presents the concept of "A school for all", a central concept that has been influential in Swedish school policies for several decades.¹¹ The idea of "A school for all" is illuminated in this thesis

¹⁰ A related concept to "A school for all" is the notion of inclusion (c.f. Rosenqvist, 2007, Giota et al, 2009). However, inclusion is not mentioned in Swedish policy documents (Göransson et al, 2011) and thus, will not be highlighted in this paragraph. The concept of inclusion and inclusive education will be illuminated further on in this thesis.

¹¹ The idea of "A school for all" is based on democratic values concerning equality and the child's right to participate in general education. Support should be provided when necessary and the child should be a part of the regular learning environment. In Sweden today, it is difficult to imagine policy makers or personnel in preschools and schools who are unaware of the expression "A school for all" (Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen, 2009, Gerrbo, 2012). It should be noted that several scholars argue that concepts such as "A school for all" carry ideological overtones (Assarsson, 2007, Nilholm, 2012) and are often used rhetorically (Assarsson, 2007, Nilholm, 2007, Isaksson, 2009). Assarsson (2007) argues that it is impossible to see concepts such as "A

since the vision has been, and still is, essential in the Swedish school system. The idea of providing an education for all Swedish children is often associated with special needs issues and therefore to students who are in school difficulties for different reasons (Assarsson, 2007). However, as will be highlighted, there have been challenges to the intentions of putting this idea into practice. The development of the concept of “A school for all” (including a brief historical review of special needs in Swedish school history) should be seen as background information in order to put current guidelines in a historical context. Principal perspectives and ideas through school history, as well as in previous policy documents, have most likely influenced the formulations in current guidelines. Reflecting on guidelines from a historical perspective can also illuminate the view that occupational groups are probably influenced by their school history when interpreting and conducting their tasks relative to current guidelines. The second section presents guidelines that describe how preschools and schools should work with, and relate to, children in various school difficulties today. As will be pointed out, formulations in policy documents and statutes can sometimes be somewhat ambiguous, which might have consequences when personnel in preschools and schools interpret the guidelines and put them into practice in their daily work.

school for all” as totally free from ideological struggle between different participants’ claims on power. However, this discussion is not further addressed in this thesis. The formulation “A school for all” is here presented as a guideline which personnel in preschools and schools should follow.

Before presenting key guidelines below, it should be noted that since the first conducted study in 2008/2009, Sweden introduced a revised curriculum for preschool (Government office, 2010) and a new curriculum for compulsory school (Government office, 2011) in July 2011. Sweden also has a new school law, the Education Act (SFS 2010:800). The curriculum has, among other things, a new grading system for pupils in compulsory school. Guidelines concerning work with children in need of special support have not changed much from earlier policy documents. Since three of the studies (I-III) have been conducted before July 2011 and the last study (IV) was carried out in January 2012, this thesis will refer to documents (statutes, policy documents and guidelines) that were prevalent before July 2011 as well as current policy documents.

A SCHOOL FOR ALL

Ever since elementary school (in Swedish: *folkskolan*) was launched in 1842, policy makers and practitioners have continuously struggled with issues such as which students should be defined as being in need of special support as well as different students' prerequisites to embrace the education offered. For many decades, several groups of children were completely excluded from the general school system. Individuals and groups were often categorized and differentiated in order to handle the variety of pupils who were entitled to education (Egelund et al, 2006).¹² Early on, students with physical impairments, low comprehension and students who were maladjusted and/or neglected constituted a problem for schools and were basically excluded from schooling (Egelund et al, 2006). Throughout school history, different groups have been categorized (e.g. girls, poor, blind, deaf, intellectual disabled, students with reading and writing difficulties, pupils with behavioural problems and so forth) (Hellblom-Thibblin, 2004, Hjärne, 2004, Egelund et al, 2006, Hjärne and Säljö, 2008). The solutions have also varied throughout the years (e.g. detention, remedial classes, observational classes, reading clinics, special schools and so forth) (Areschoug, 2000, Hjärne, 2004).

¹² In this paragraph, compulsory school is described. Preschool history as well as the current situation in preschools differ from compulsory school since few children are, as well as have been, educated in segregated settings (Bladini, 2004, Sandberg et al, 2010).

However, there have been attempts in school policies (e.g. Government office, 1980, SFS 1985: 1100, SFS 2010:800) to influence schools to move away from the tradition of using segregative solutions when school difficulties occur. The political intention of “A school for all” introduced in Swedish guidelines and policy documents is one example of such an attempt. The concept was first mentioned in a school commission report (SOU 1948: 27) in 1946 (Göransson et al, 2011). However, the idea was not realized until the curriculum of 1962 (Government office, 1962) was enforced and almost all pupils in Sweden became part of the same school system while the new nine-year compulsory schooling was introduced (Persson, 2008a, Göransson et al, 2011). When compulsory schooling was launched, the need for supportive measures drastically increased in Swedish schools (Ahlström et al, 1986). When the national report on internal school operations (In Swedish: Skolans inre arbete (SIA) SOU 1974:53) was published, it was revealed that between 40 and 50 % of Swedish pupils in compulsory school were involved in special education, which was often carried out outside the regular classroom (Swedish Agency for Education, 2013). The report focused on schools’ internal work (i.e. schools’ working methods and teaching procedures) and sheds light on schools’ difficulties handling students’ differences as well as teaching difficulties. Schools had almost exclusively focused on students’ individual deficiencies. The report also pointed out the importance of the school environment as a reason why students encounter problems in schools. Furthermore, the investigators argued that schools should work preventively rather than with compensatory measures directed toward the individual child (cf. Haug, 1998). When the curriculum of 1980 (Government office, 1980) was introduced, the learning environment was

more in focus and the expression “A school for all” was reinforced and clearly stressed.

In the following curricula (Government office, 1994, 2011) the concept of “A school for all” is formulated slightly differently, but pursues the same values as in the curriculum of 1980. According to the policy documents, education should be adapted to each pupil’s situation, prerequisites and needs as well as promote the development and learning of all pupils (Government office, 1994, 2011). Thus, the ambition to create “A school for all” has been prevalent in Swedish school policy for more than 60 years.

Despite a long tradition in Swedish policy documents prescribing “A school for all”, it seems as if schools are still facing major challenges reaching this vision. Several studies show that the intentions expressed in the policy documents have not been as successful as planned (Giota et al, 2009). The political intention with “A school for all” appears to put great demands on the personnel working in preschools and schools. Assarsson (2007) argues that there are even larger challenges for teachers to fulfil their assignments based on the notion of “A school for all” in today’s society. “Today’s postmodern, globalized society is characterized by fragmentation, of diversity and plurality, and it is in this society pedagogues are supposed to plan their tasks based on a school for all” (Assarsson, 2007, p. 51, my translation).¹³

Further, there are several additional formulations related to children in need of special support in guidelines and policy documents that person-

¹³ In Swedish: ”Dagens postmoderna, globaliserade samhälle utmärks av en fragmentarisering, av skillnader och mångfald och det är i detta samhälle pedagoger ska forma sitt uppdrag utifrån en skola för alla”(Assarsson, 2007, s. 51).

nel in preschools and schools need to comply with. A selection of these formulations is presented below.

SPECIAL SUPPORT IN CURRENT POLICY DOCUMENTS

Several laws and regulations¹⁴ as well as guidelines from the Department of Education, municipal plans and international agreements¹⁵ are relevant for preschools/schools and municipalities in their work with children in need of special support. In this section, the last two education acts (SFS 1985:1100, SFS 2010:800) will be primarily in focus, since the Education Act is the most basic document for preschools and schools (Nilholm, 2012). Additionally, formulations concerning children in need of special support in the curricula (Government office, 2010, Government office 2011) are illuminated since they are often referred to in research as well as in preschools and schools (e.g. Bladini, 2004, Nilholm et al, 2007). Formulations in the guidelines concerning responsibilities of different occupational groups (e.g. head teachers and teachers) in preschools and schools are also highlighted in this section.

¹⁴ E.g. the Education act (SFS 2010: 800), the School ordinances (2011:185), curricula and syllabuses

¹⁵ E.g. the Salamanca-declaration and UNICEF – convention on the rights of the child (UNESCO, 1994)

SPECIAL SUPPORT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In the former Education Act (SFS 1985:1100), it was recognized that special support should be given to pupils that had difficulties in their schoolwork. According to the current Education Act (SFS 2010:800), a student who is considered to be at risk of not reaching schools' academic requirements (or displays other difficulties in his/her school situation) is entitled to special support. As mentioned in the introduction, special support is not defined in the statutes and there can be many reasons why students are considered as being in need of special support (SFS 2010:800).

However, in chapter 3 in the Education Act (SFS 2010:800), there is some guidance regarding what measures to take when a pupil is at risk of not reaching the requirements set forth.¹⁶

Special support may be provided instead of the regular education in which the pupil should have participated or as a complement to this. The special support should be given within the group where the pupil belongs unless otherwise provided by this Act or other statutes. (SFS 2010: 800, 3 Ch 7§).¹⁷

Further down, in the same chapter, an exception to the rule that the support should be provided within the pupil's regular group is clearly expressed:

¹⁶ The Education Act (SFS 2010:800) has not been translated into English by government officials. Therefore, when the Education Act is cited, the translation is mine.

¹⁷ In Swedish: "Särskilt stöd får ges istället för den undervisning eleven annars skulle ha deltagit i eller som komplement till denna. Det särskilda stödet ska ges inom den elevgrupp som eleven tillhör om inte annat följer av denna lag eller annan författning" (SFS 2010: 800, 3 kap. 7§).

If there are specific reasons, a decision according to 9§ for a pupil in compulsory school, school for intellectual disabled, special school or sámi school may entail that special support should be provided individually or in another instructional group (special instructional group) than the one in which the pupil normally belongs (SFS 2010: 800, 3 Ch 11§).¹⁸

Thus, the wording in the Education Act leaves interpretations up to the individual school to decide whether there are particular reasons to provide support to the student in segregated settings. The responsibility to place the student in a special instructional group (in Swedish: *särskild undervisningsgrupp*) (where the majority of the student's schooling is provided) lies with the head teacher. The head teacher is also responsible for providing the student with an individualized course of study (in Swedish: *anpassad studiegång*)¹⁹ if this is considered necessary (SFS 2010:800, 3 kapitel 12 §). This responsibility to use segregated solutions and exclude pupils from their regular learning environment for extended periods of time cannot be delegated.

¹⁸ In Swedish: "Om det finns särskilda skäl, får ett beslut enligt 9§ för en elev i grundskolan, grundsärskolan, specialskolan eller sameskolan innebära att särskilt stöd ska ges enskilt eller i en annan undervisningsgrupp (särskild undervisningsgrupp) än den som eleven normalt hör till" (SFS 2010:800, 3 kap. 11§).

¹⁹ Using an individualized course of teaching means that the student's education departs from regular requirements and syllabuses in one or several subjects. This concerns mostly adjustments relative to time and place for the student. This measure is mostly used for students who are in the later stage of their compulsory school years. This could mean that some of the student's education is conducted at a workplace outside the actual school's premises (SFS 2010: 800).

In the curriculum of 2011, it is expressed that pupils with school difficulties should be seen as the responsibility of everyone working in school. Education should be modified to fit each student's needs. Teachers should stimulate, guide and give special support to pupils that experience difficulties:

The school has a special responsibility for those pupils who for different reasons experience difficulties in attaining the goals that have been set up for their education. For this reason education can never be the same for all (Government office, 2011, p. 10).

Head teachers are described as essential when special support is organized and they are responsible for ensuring that "the teaching and health services for pupils are organized so that pupils receive the special support and help they need" (Government office, 2011, p. 20).

In the Education Act, there are also formulations concerning children in need of special support in preschool as well as responsibilities of the educational leader (SFS 2010:800). In chapter 8 is a description of which children are entitled to special support:

Children, who need special support in their development due to physical, psychological or other reasons, should be provided the support that their special needs require. If there is information from preschool personnel, a child, or a child's legal guardian or if it otherwise emerges that a child is in need of special support, it is the responsibility of the preschool director to see to it that the child is given such support (SFS 2010:800, 8 Ch. 9§).²⁰

²⁰ In Swedish: Barn som av fysiska, psykiska eller andra skäl behöver särskilt stöd i sin utveckling ska ges det stöd som deras speciella behov kräver. Om det

The criteria, that describe which children who are qualified for special support as expressed above, can be said to be rather vague. No reasons are excluded in the expression "physical, psychological or other reasons". The formulations above give the impression that preschools, similar to compulsory schools, have quite a lot of influence concerning which children they define as children in need of special support as well as how special support should be provided.

In the revised curriculum from 1998 (Government office, 2010), the text indicates that personnel have the freedom to judge which child needs more support than its peers as well as to decide what measures to use in order for the child to develop as well as possible:

Pedagogical activities should be related to the needs of all children in the preschool. Children who occasionally, or on a more permanent basis, need more support and stimulation than others should receive such support in relation to their needs and circumstances so that they are able to develop as well as possible (Government office, 2010, p. 5).

The responsibility of the team working in preschools is specifically stressed in the curriculum. The team should "co-operate to provide a good environment for development, play and learning, and pay particular attention to, and help those children, who for different reasons need support in their development" (Government office, 2010, p. 11). This

genom uppgifter från förskolans personal, ett barn eller ett barns vårdnadshavare eller på annat sätt framkommer att ett barn är i behov av särskilt stöd, ska förskolechefen se till att barnet ges sådant stöd (SFS 2010:800, 8 Ch. 9§).

formulation indicates that different occupational groups together need to define children in need of special support and decide how to organize their work in order for preschools to provide good learning environments for all children.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To sum up, many formulations found in prior, as well as in current policy documents express the idea that personnel should meet and take care of all children in preschools and schools. Concurrently, there are formulations in the statutes that give schools possibilities to consider and decide on segregating solutions for pupils that are regarded as being in difficulties. There are several examples in the statutes where the school system can depart from the idea of “A school for all” and allow schools to exclude children from the general system. Two examples, on a structural level, are placing pupils in special programs for pupils with intellectual disabilities (1.4 % of all students) (Göransson et al, 2011) and special schools ²¹ (Nilholm et al, 2007). There are possibilities for an individual school to create and place students in special groups (in Swedish: *särskild undervisningsgrupp*) (c.f. Hjörne, 2004, Karlsson, 2007 Velasquez, 2012) and/or apply an adapted course of teaching (SFS 2010:800).

Moreover, when the decentralized system was introduced by the curriculum of 1994 (Government office, 1994), a lot of power was delegat-

²¹ There are eight special schools for: pupils with hearing impairments, deaf pupils, deaf blind pupils, pupils with vision impairment combined with other functional impairments, pupils with severe language impairments and pupils with hearing difficulties combined with intellectual disabilities (National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools in Swedish: Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten, SPSM, <http://www.spsm.se>)

ed to schools, and special needs issues are now mostly managed at the school level (Nilholm et al, 2007). The decentralization launched in the 1990's, as well as new formulations in the policy documents (e.g. SFS 1985:1100, SFS 2010:800), leave a lot of space for municipalities, pre-schools/schools and school personnel to interpret the documents according to the local conditions and assumptions that prevail in the individual preschool/school (Ekström, 2004, Assarsson 2007, Nilholm et al, 2007, Nilholm, 2012). This might have consequences for preschools' and schools' work since formulations in the most fundamental statutes and regulations concerning work with children in need of special support can be seen as vague and ambiguous (Ekström, 2004, Isaksson, 2009, Göransson et al, 2011). In this context, it becomes valuable to investigate how different occupational groups at the local school level (in this thesis exemplified by one municipality) perceive how and by whom special support should be given.

3 PRIOR RESEARCH

The review of prior research²² below is based on national and international reports, theses and articles. Research relevant to this study (e.g. concerning special needs, inclusive education, SENCOs' and educational leaders' work) has been investigated from different angles and in numerous studies. Several scholars argue that such research has increased dramatically the last couple of decades (Egelund et al, 2006, Nilholm, 2006b, 2007, Nilholm et al, 2007). However, there are few studies that concurrently investigate different occupational groups' views on special needs (for an exception, see Tideman et al, 2005). To my knowledge, there is no previous study in Sweden that, on a comprehensive level, investigates and compares views of different occupational groups. Moreover, most previous studies investigate work and views of one, or a few occupational groups at a time (e.g. teachers, SENCOs, special teachers, head teachers) (e.g. Malmgren Hansen, 2002, Ekström, 2004, von Ahlefeldt Nisser, 2009, Heimdahl Matsson and Malmgren Hansen, 2009). Due to the lack of previous studies with corresponding features as the one presented in this thesis, I have expanded my search area to encompass neighbouring areas of studies with similar themes. However, since this current study encompasses a large amount of material and involves several themes in the field of education (e.g. preschool and

²² The exposition of prior research mostly focuses on studies carried out between the last decade of the 20th century up until today. The review focuses especially on Swedish and Anglo-American research (primarily from Great Britain and the U.S). Searches have been made in data bases such as LIBRIS, DIVA, Google Scholar, ERIC, SCOPUS and EPPI-centre.

compulsory school, occupational groups, special needs and inclusion), I have seen myself compelled to make a selection of previous research. Thus, the section below presents earlier research that I believe best 1) represents what is previously known about views of occupational groups, special needs and inclusion 2) puts this study in its context and 3) provides guidance (relative to the theoretical framework and methodological choices) on how to interpret and understand the outcome of the study. For each of the four studies (presented in I-IV), there is an extended presentation of prior research which focuses on specific topics (e.g. the views of educational leaders, SENCOs' role, head teachers' strategies) relative to research questions posed in each study. Earlier studies presented below should be seen as an overview of the research field. I exemplify the findings by describing some of the studies of specific interest for the thesis in more detail.

Firstly, chapter 3 commences with a presentation of a central concept of this thesis, namely *occupational groups* and the concept of *professionals*. Some historical background is provided in order to contextualise occupational groups relative to special needs. This is followed by prior research investigating different occupational groups in preschools and schools in relation to special needs and inclusive education. A specific focus is on SENCOs and educational leaders, since these groups are expected to have a special impact on how special education is organized and carried out in preschools and schools (SOU, 1999:63, SFS 2010:800). They are also expected to have a pivotal role when schools are striving to become more inclusive (e.g. McLeskey and Waldron, 2000, Malmgren Hansen, 2002, Tideman et al, 2005, Abbott, 2007, Heimdahl Matsson and Malmgren Hansen, 2009). The last section in this chapter contains research investigating inclusion from various vantage points.

OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS AND SPECIAL NEEDS

DEFINING OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

As will be further elaborated below, the groups studied in this thesis are defined as occupational groups. This is in line with previous scholars who avoid giving a definition of profession and instead offer a list of relevant occupational groups (Abbott, 1988, Hanlon, 1998). Since the study is conducted among people with various backgrounds (e.g. assistant resource staff do not have a formal education), with rather similar tasks and work (i.e. to educate children and pupils in preschools and schools) but also with different functions²³ in schools, I found that using the definition of occupational groups was more relevant and suitable for this study than corresponding definitions such as professionals and professions.²⁴

Several researchers describe difficulties when attempting to narrow down what is meant by concepts such as profession and professionalism and it might become problematic to separate the professional occupations from the non-professional (Heimdahl Mattson 1998, Bladini, 2004,

²³ Function should here be seen as the main task that the occupational group has, e.g. class teachers are responsible for educating group of students, special teachers teach individuals or groups of students who are in need of special support, assistant resource staff assist teachers with individuals and/or challenging school situations. (see I and III for a more detailed description of the task of each occupational group).

²⁴ When the theoretical framework is presented (Chapter 4), the definitions, “occupational groups” and “professionals” are used concurrently. I do this since the scholars I refer to (Abbott, 1988, Skrtic, 1991, 1995) use the wording profession. When these theories are presented, I use the expressions “professionals” and “occupational groups” synonymously. I do so even if I am aware that e.g. assistants can hardly be defined as professionals, when a more generally applied definition is used (c.f. Colnerud and Granström, 1996)

Liljegren, 2008). Throughout history, many scholars have attempted to define and establish criteria for what constitutes a profession (c.f. Abbott, 1988, Skrtic, 1991). For example, Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933) who, at the time, divided professions into four categories 1) established professions (e.g. doctors and lawyers) 2) new professions (e.g. engineers and researchers) 3) semi-professions (e.g. nurses, social workers and teachers) and 4) “would-be” professions, i.e. professions that have not yet reached a status in which they can be classified as a profession but are close enough to be called a profession. Another Swedish example of attempts made to define professions are studies conducted by Colnerud and Granström (1996) who suggest that the occupation of teachers can be defined as being in a process towards professionalisation.²⁵ However, Liljegren (2008) points out that many scholars have rejected categorisations and have criticised them as being meaningless, essential and naive. This criticism has also been put forward by Abbott (1988). For example, Abbott argues that professions are often defined by society based on their ability to assert their prestige and power through abstract knowledge (e.g. by attaining academic knowledge). Evetts (2013) suggests that the operational definition of profession can be rather pragmatic. It no longer seems important to draw a firm definitional line between professions and other occupations.

Since there are evident difficulties in defining and establishing relevant criteria for professions as well as for persons working in the profession, there has been no attempt in this thesis to define or differentiate professions or professionals. Instead, as mentioned above, the concept of occupational groups is used. This concept is also close to an every-day

²⁵ In Swedish: *professionaliseringsprocess*

language which hopefully can be related to by all the occupational groups participating in this study. As a concluding remark, it could be argued that several of the occupational groups described in this thesis come from the same semi-profession (c.f. Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1933) (i.e. their common background as educated teachers). However by using the definition of occupational groups, as well as focusing on the groups' functions and tasks in school rather than their formal education, it is possible to divide the participating groups into smaller units (e.g. special teachers, class teachers and subject teachers). This enables me to investigate and understand more about how different groups in the school system perceive work with children in need of special support.

HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE OF OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS WITH A FOCUS ON SPECIAL NEEDS

Before turning to prior research concerning occupational groups and special needs issues, I will give a short presentation of how the school system has handled occupational groups' work with children in need of special support in Swedish school history. By reviewing the historical context, it is possible to make comparisons between the present and the past which can help us understand and interpret the views of occupational groups today (Rosenqvist and Tideman, 2000). Thus, this approach together with presentations of earlier studies investigating work and views of occupational groups can cast additional light on the outcome of the present study.

Through the Statute for Elementary Schools (in Swedish: *Folkskolestadgan*) in 1842, it was expressed that the government was obliged to give all children education and that school attendance was obligatory. Already at an initial stage, as earlier described in this thesis, this became difficult for schools to manage (Malmgren Hansen, 2002). Questions

were raised concerning what education was needed, as well as who should be responsible, for children who could not reach the requirements schools set down.²⁶ Matters concerning competence and education in relation to special needs have been an issue ever since (Bladini, 1990, Ström, 1999, Areschoug, 2000, Malmgren Hansen, 2002, Sundqvist, 2012).

Teachers who were given the task of teaching children with various impairments were sent on courses that initially lasted just a few days or some weeks (Bladini, 1990). The recruited teachers were often primary school teachers (in Swedish: folk- eller småskollärare) who taught remedial classes. They were called remedial-class-teachers (in Swedish: hjälpklasslärare) and were expected to have additional knowledge about pupils' deficiencies (e.g. cognitive, medical and psychological). Later on, the courses were extended to one semester and in 1961, it became a one-year-course. The teachers that graduated were called special teachers (Bladini, 1990). Their education and work were based on the view that certain children had individual deficiencies (c.f. Ainscow, 1998) that could be measured by experts (Haug, 1998, DS 2001:19, Nilholm, 2007). In order to compensate for the deficiencies pupils displayed, special teachers worked mostly with the pupils outside the classroom on ability training (in Swedish: färdighetsträning) (Haug, 1998). However, after a couple of decades, special teachers also started to work inside the class-

²⁶ For a vivid example of this issue, see *Svensk läraretidning* (Swedish Teachers' Journal) p. 894, nr 45 v 43, 1924.

room with the individual pupil (Giota and Emanuelsson, 2011), commonly called integrated special education.²⁷

Haug (1998) states that the method to compensate for children's deficiencies was established in the early 19th century and was the predominant perspective until the national report on internal school operations (SOU 1974:53) was published in the middle of 1970. As earlier described, the report turned its focus towards the learning environment and the teaching methods. As a consequence of the report (SOU 1974:53), another report was published in 1986 (DsU 1986:13). In this report, it was suggested that teachers should handle differences among students in the classroom and accordingly, receive knowledge about special education in their regular teacher education. This can be seen as a starting point for the creation of a complementary occupation to the occupation of special teachers (i.e. special teachers had no formal education to supervise teachers in order to educate all students within the regular classroom) (Bladini, 2004). Hence, SENCOs were introduced to support personnel in preschools and schools so that e.g. teachers could handle all children within the regular learning environment. SENCOs should take care of, and analyse, educational difficulties at several levels in schools in addition to their individual work with pupils. This could be done by e.g. removing obstacles in the learning environment, supervis-

²⁷ Sundqvist (2012) calls this companion teaching (*kompanjonundervisning*). This type of integrated special education is also used in Finland and Norway (Sundqvist, 2012, Cameron and Lindqvist, 2013). This has also been called *samundervisning* in Swedish policy documents (Holmberg et al, 2005). A related American term is co-teaching, where general educators and special educators are working together in the classroom. The idea of co-teaching is that it benefits more students than the individual student in need of instructional support (Scruggs et al, 2007).

ing teachers and staff and developing the school's organization (UHÄ, 1990-06-27).²⁸ The education for special teachers was discontinued and the education for SENCOs was introduced in the early 1990's (UHÄ, 1990-06-27). In 2008, the Swedish government initiated a restart of education for special teachers working towards compulsory schools. It should be noted that there are differences between the performed tasks of previous special teachers and newly educated special teachers (SFS 2007: 638).

In preschools, there has not been a tradition of special teachers working with children in need of special support. Instead, preschool psychologists, speech therapists, social workers, child habilitation units or child psychiatric units have been available (Bladini, 2004, Sandberg et al, 2010). Another occupational group that supports preschool teachers, as well as the child, are resource teachers (in Swedish: *resurspedagoger*) (Bladini, 2004). SENCOs became, in the beginning of the 1990's, a new occupational group that was supposed to establish a new role both in preschools and schools (Malmgren Hansen, 2002, Bladini, 2004, Wetso, 2006).

PRIOR RESEARCH INVESTIGATING GROUPS OPERATING IN THE FIELD TODAY

In a Swedish context, a majority of prior studies investigating occupational groups' work with special needs focuses on the working procedures of special teachers and SENCOs (e.g. Helldin, 1998, Ström, 1999, Malmgren Hansen, 2002, Sahlin, 2004, Bladini, 2004, von Ahlefeld

²⁸ For further information about the functions of the two groups of SENCOs and special teachers, see articles I-IV.

Nisser, 2009, Lansheim, 2010). However, in recent years, there have been an increasing amount of studies exploring teachers' perspectives on special needs issues in preschools and schools (e.g. Assarson, 2007, Isaksson, 2009, Lillvist, 2010, Gerrbo 2012). The studies usually investigate participants' perspectives and definitions of different concepts (e.g. children in need of special support and "A school for all"). An additional example of such research is the study carried out by Jerlinder et al (2010) exploring teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. An e-mail questionnaire was distributed to physical education (PE) teachers in primary schools concerning their general attitudes towards inclusion in PE classes. The results indicate that teachers often have a positive attitude towards integrating children with impairments into mainstream PE classes. Relevant education, security in their role and support from colleagues and school management are interpreted as decisive variables for their attitudes. The study also shows that several of the teachers felt a lack of adequate training and support in providing inclusive education (Jerlinder et al, 2010). Other studies indicate that teachers often express the view that children in need of special support should be educated by resource staff (e.g. SENCOs, special teachers and assistants) rather than by the teachers themselves (e.g. Persson, 1998, Malmgren Hansen, 2002). Persson (1998) interviewed 27 special teachers, 18 head teachers and 35 class and subject teachers. His study reveals that special teachers usually work with special education outside the classroom. This form of special education is often a request expressed by the class and subject teachers. Additionally, none of the participants in the interview study mentioned that special teachers should supervise teachers in order for the teachers to manage all pupils in the regular learning environment.

Besides the occupational groups of SENCOs, special teachers and regular preschool and school teachers, there are several other groups that work with special needs issues on a daily basis. One of the occupational groups participating in the current study is assistant resource staff. However, there are few studies conducted in Sweden studying assistants' perspectives on special needs.²⁹ This is remarkable, since many schools hire assistants whose job is to work specifically with students who are in school difficulties (Gadler, 2011). Considering the scarce documentation of assistants' views on work with children in need of special support, this study can contribute with further knowledge in this matter.

As a final remark, it should be noted that occupational groups operating in a multi-professional team, commonly called the pupil health team,³⁰ also play a pivotal role in work with pupils in need of special support at schools (in Swedish: elevhälsoteam) (Guvå and Hylander, 2011). Therefore, it may be appropriate to present some research that studies the views of different occupational groups in these teams, where professionals from different fields are assembled in order to collaborate on issues concerning special needs (Hjörne, 2004, Guvå and Hylander, 2011). In this thesis, two of the occupational groups (i.e. SENCOs and head teachers) in the pupil health team are represented. However, descriptions of views and work tasks of other occupational groups in the pupil health team might be helpful when the outcome of this study is

²⁹ Internationally, assistants' working situation is investigated by e.g. Moran and Abbott (2002) Groom and Rose (2005) and Takala (2007).

³⁰ The pupil health team usually consists of school pediatricians, school nurses, head teachers, SENCOs, school social workers and school psychologists (Guvå and Hylander, 2011).

interpreted and discussed. For example, it has been illuminated in previous research that the tasks of SENCOs are similar to those of other occupational groups' tasks operating e.g. in these pupil health teams (Bladini, 2004, Sahlin, 2004, Guvå and Hylander, 2011). School psychologists supervise teachers and other school personnel ³¹ in order to improve the situation for children in need of special support (Guvå and Hylander, 2011). Additionally, school social workers often have a consulting role for both students and teachers in schools (Liljegren, 2008).

Guvå and Hylander (2011) explored views of different occupational groups concerning "pupil health". Teachers as well as members of the pupil health team³² were interviewed. Data was collected from professionally homogenous focus groups. The study points out that the groups often give the impression of being in agreement concerning the salutogenic³³ meaning of "pupil health" (often in a mode of consensus in the team). However there appears to be a gap between the rhetorical way of talking about "pupil health" and the individual (and medical) treatments of pupils that are suggested and performed in practice. Guvå and Hylander (2011) suggest that in order to make full use of the team's professional diversity, so that different perspectives can surface, the group should have constructive dialogues and not avoid confronting

³¹ For a more extensive presentation of the notion of supervision, and related concepts, concerning SENCOs' and special teachers' work, see e.g. Sahlin (2004) Bladini (2004) von Ahlefeld Nisser (2009) Sundqvist (2012).

³² The interviewees were: 9 teachers, 14 school pediatricians, 11 school nurses, 9 principals, 8 special educators, 12 school social workers and 19 school psychologists.

³³ Guvå and Hylander (2011) refer to Antonowski (1996) who defines the salutogenic perspective as focusing on what promotes health and not what prevents illness.

each other with their views, in order to make reflection productive and not limiting.

SENCOS' ROLE IN PRIOR STUDIES

As earlier noted, there is a special focus on the work and views of SENCOs and educational leaders³⁴ in this thesis since these two occupational groups are often described as having a certain impact on special educational work as well as preschools' and schools' changes towards more inclusive practices (e.g. Szwed, 2007a and 2007b, Hoopey and McLeskey, 2013). In this thesis, I use the British term, SENCOs, when I refer to the Swedish occupational group of "specialpedagoger" (in English literally: Special pedagogues) since SENCOs' tasks seem to have many similarities with their Swedish counterparts. However, SENCOs in Britain are not completely similar with SENCOs (specialpedagoger) in Sweden. For example, there are differences concerning education and managerial tasks (e.g. Cole, 2005, Pearson, 2008).

³⁴ Prior studies concerning educational leaders are presented further down in this section.

SENCOs have been in focus in several studies and researchers have pointed out that there appear to be many ideas about what SENCOs should do (e.g. Cole, 2005, Hargreaves et al, 2007). In a four-year research project called “The Teacher Status Project”, researchers from the University of Cambridge, England conducted a study investigating teachers’ perceptions of their status. Among the participating occupational groups was the group SENCOs. Focus groups and individual interviews were conducted between January 2004 and December 2005. Several of the respondents describe their work as overloaded and confused and the status of this group varied from school to school. Some SENCOs also picture their work place as a *war zone* where there is a struggle between different groups’ views on: Who should be responsible for what? (Hargreaves et al, 2007). Cole (2005) reviews policy documents and prior studies concerning the role of SENCOs in England and Wales. In the article the author states that” the role of the SENCOs lies at the cross-roads of these competing policies, creating inevitable tensions for the people within the role” (Cole, 2005, p. 287). According to Cole, research indicates that SENCOs often feel overwhelmed by their operational tasks with little support, time or funding for more strategic work in order to promote inclusive practices.

In a Swedish study, Malmgren Hansen (2002) followed thirteen SENCOs through their education as well as when they started working as SENCOs and six years onwards. Malmgren Hansen (2002) found that SENCOs had problems establishing their new role in the existing school culture. In addition to difficulties in establishing their occupational role, prior research also reveals that SENCOs encounter obstacles when working towards more inclusive practices (Lingard, 2001, Cole, 2005, Abbott, 2007, Szwed, 2007a and 2007b, Pearson, 2008). For example, Abbott (2007) conducted a qualitative study in Northern Ireland. Twelve SENCOs were asked in semi-structured interviews about their role in relation to inclusion. Abbott (2007) found that there are expectations on SENCOs to initiate and implement inclusive strategies. Despite this, SENCOs describe that there are many significant obstacles that remain and progress could be slow due to e.g. teachers' knowledge of, and attitudes towards, special needs. Additionally, Szwed (2007b) concludes that SENCOs work in complex settings and the role of SENCOs is composed of several roles. Thus, according to Szwed (2007a and b), it is more appropriate to refer to SENCOs' *roles* rather than to discuss *the role* of SENCOs. Further, it is argued in the article that in order for the occupational group to be effective within the inclusive schools agenda, schools need to consider that SENCOs have a leadership function in order to work towards inclusive practices (Szwed, 2007b). Wetso (2006), on the other hand, focuses on SENCOs' role as supervisors as well as the importance of direct contact and communication with individual children and their parents in order for schools to develop inclusive practices. Through action research, the situation for 40 children who were identified as children in need of special support was studied. The children were not involved in pre-schools' and schools' daily programmes. The results indicate that the

children showed willingness to participate in daily activities and negative communication patterns were reduced when the SENCO introduced four activities: 1) meetings concerning play, learning, communication, theory and practical activities 2) supervision of teachers 3) practical use of the theories and; 4) conversations with parents.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERS' ROLE IN PRIOR STUDIES

Research indicates that leaders have a significant effect on students' learning as well as on the quality of the school organization (Leithwood et al, 2008, Hattie, 2009). For example, Leithwood et al (2008) have made a review of the literature concerning successful school leadership. The empirical studies show e.g. that school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as having the most influence for students' learning. Basically all leaders draw from the same repertoire of leadership practice (i.e. direction setting, developing people and redesigning the organization). These repertoires are necessary for school success, according to the researchers. Jacobson (2011) has reviewed leadership literature with findings drawn from longitudinal studies of the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP) with seven participating countries (including Sweden). The review of Jacobson points towards similar findings as the results above. However, the repertoires are performed slightly differently depending on differences in national school contexts (Jacobson, 2011).³⁵

³⁵ For further reading on successful school leadership, see article IV and e.g. Leithwood and Riehl (2005), Gurr et al (2006), Crum and Sherman (2008), Höög et al (2005), Theoharis (2010).

Since research in this thesis specifically deals with educational leaders' work with special needs issues and inclusive education (II, IV), the presentation below will focus on prior research related to educational leaders and work with children in need of special support. Studies concerning educational leaders in relation to special needs and inclusion seem to have increased in Sweden in recent years (e.g. Tideman et al, 2005, Persson, 2008b, Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen, 2009, Giota and Emanuelsson, 2011). Possible explanations for the increased amount of studies might be that educational leaders today are supposed to exercise more of a pedagogical leadership (Riehl, 2000, Day, 2005, Rapp, 2010, Jacobson, 2011) and be responsible for children in various school difficulties, according to the national guidelines (Government office, 1994, 2011).³⁶ In a comprehensive study conducted by Tideman et al (2005), different occupational groups in compulsory schools were asked regarding their perceptions about why and how pupils are defined as deviant as well as their views on how education for the pupils should be carried out. One part of the data-collection consisted of a questionnaire to educational leaders in 109 (59 % response rate) schools in nine different types of municipalities in Sweden. Most school leaders state that the proportion of children in need of special support has increased during the last ten years. The leaders mention biological and social factors as explanations for this trend. A child's problematic home environment as well as harsher social climate is specifically addressed. Similar results are highlighted in a study carried out by Giota and Emanuelsson (2011). They posed questions in a questionnaire to head teachers concerning how spe-

³⁶ Head teachers' responsibility for the students' to reach nationally set goals is even more pronounced in Sweden since the new Education Act was enforced in July 2011 (2010:800).

cial educational procedures were handled in the head teachers' schools. The results indicate that "old traditional ways" of support are still the most common and that students' difficulties are seen as caused by the students' own characteristics and disabilities rather than as limitations in e.g. teaching.

Several international studies illustrate that educational leaders play a significant role in the implementation of inclusion in schools (McLeskey and Waldron, 2000, Hoopey and McLeskey, 2013). In a case study where combined ethnographic methods were used, Hoopey and McLeskey (2013) followed one principal for one school year.³⁷ The results indicate that the amount of support educational leaders give to their staff, as well as the visions they express, have a significant impact on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion (Hoopey and McLeskey, 2013). However, it should be noticed that this study is based on a small sample and the principal participating in the study was specifically selected by the researchers because of his reputation of being particularly successful in his work towards inclusive settings.

Nevertheless, there are other international studies pointing towards similar results as the study of Hoopey and McLeskey (2013). Researchers point out that inclusive schools can develop when educational leaders support communities where several stakeholders (e.g. teachers, students and parents) are involved in the learning processes (Riehl, 2000, Day, 2005). Day (2005) explored the work of ten head teachers. The head teachers had their place of work in schools in challenging urban environments in England. The views of the head teachers as well as of

³⁷ The study by Hoopey and McLeskey (2013) will be further highlighted in the following section concerning inclusion in prior studies.

other principal stakeholders (students, governors, parents, teachers and non-teaching staff) were sought. According to the results in Day's (2005) study, the head teachers expressed some components that were important for success. For example, the head teachers moved the school forward by keeping moral purposes rooted in care for the whole child and the community as well as ensured that the personnel were respected and trusted in the process. Through a combination of essential leadership values, qualities and skills, the head teachers managed a number of tensions and dilemmas associated with the assignment to meet pupils in challenging environments.

Educational leaders in general seem to be positive toward inclusion, but findings also show their ambivalence and uncertainty towards diversity and inclusive practices (Villa et al. 1996, Barnett and Monda-Amaya 1998). This is highlighted in a longitudinal case study conducted in an English secondary school by Leo and Barton (2006). The article focuses on five leaders in the school relative to issues concerning leadership, diversity and inclusion. Data was collected over a period of six years and contains observational and interview data as well as directions in school policies. The outcome of the study reveals that the participants often re-evaluated practice and their assumptions concerning inclusion and related matters in order to tackle disadvantage and underachievement, relative to requests from their staff parallel to the dominance of requirements from the government to achieve high academic scores and associated pressures of short-term performance targets (Leo and Barton, 2006). Persson (2008b) interviewed 200 different occupational groups and politicians in order to study the degree to which Swedish schools are accessible for all students. Among the interviewed groups were 26

head teachers. In accordance with previous research (e.g. Barnett and Monda-Amaya, 1998) the results indicate that the ambition level is high with regard to adapting educational programs for disabled students. However, in practice, head teachers had difficulties to make schooling satisfactory for the students.

To sum up, according to prior research, educational leaders seem to be influential concerning school achievements (e.g. Leithwood et al, 2008) and schools' work with special needs (Rosenqvist and Tideman, 2000, Tideman et al, 2005, Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen, 2009). Research seems to point in various directions concerning educational leaders' views and work relative to special needs and inclusion. Scholars point out that educational leaders view children, and factors outside the school (e.g. home environment and society), as the main reason special needs have increased during the last ten years (Tideman et al, 2005, Giota and Emanuelsson, 2011). Special education seems to be carried out in "old traditional ways" in the head teachers' schools (Giota and Emanuelsson, 2011). Concurrently, head teachers in other studies seem to take a large responsibility for their schools' work with school difficulties and special needs. They run their schools towards less segregating environments and they engage their staff so that they are involved in the working process (e.g. Day, 2005, Theoharis, 2010, Hoopey and McLeskey, 2013). Additionally, the research presented above, internationally as well as nationally, indicates that the idea of the educational leader as a front figure working towards inclusive practices seem to be complex and afflicted by several controversial ideas (Villa et al, 1996, Barnett and Monda-Amaya, 1998, Persson, 2008b). Leaders seem to struggle between various demands from within the school organization (e.g. teachers and resource staff) as well as from outer forces (e.g. the government through policy documents) (Leo and Barton, 2006).

INCLUSION IN PRIOR STUDIES

In this section, prior research related to the concept of inclusion is presented. I found it suitable to present a selection of prior studies investigating how the concept has been perceived, since the views of occupational groups concerning special needs are related to the concept of inclusion in the present thesis. Firstly, the section highlights different ways of using the concept of inclusion when inclusive practices are studied. Subsequently, results from studies conducted in preschools and schools are briefly presented.

Inclusion has been a value set forth in international policy arenas (e.g. UNESCO, 1994) as well as a focus for school development (Thomas and Loxley, 2001, Booth and Ainscow, 2002). There has been an increasing amount of research, in Sweden as well as in other countries during the last two decades investigating practices in relation to the notion of inclusion (e.g. Villa et al, 1996, McLeskey and Waldron, 2000, Nutbrown and Clough, 2004, Leo and Barton, 2006, DeVore and Russell, 2007, Farrell et al, 2007, Persson, 2008b, Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen, 2009, Huang and Diamond, 2009, Isaksson et al, 2010). The concept of inclusion is per se context-bound and can be described and defined in different ways (Dyal et al, 1996, Ainscow and Sandill, 2010, Göransson et al, 2011). A majority of the studies reviewed in this thesis (see II, IV) investigates integration i.e. placing students with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools³⁸ (c.f.

³⁸ Mainstream schools usually consist of one or several classes where one student or a group of students with SEN are integrated. Mainstreaming could be described as educating these students in regular classes (Avramidis et al, 2000).

Göransson et al, 2011). As an example, Farrell et al (2007) investigate correlations between inclusion and achievements in mainstream schools. What is studied by Farrell et al (2007) is the physical placement of pupils. However, most scholars today would probably agree that inclusion is about more than physical placement. Inclusion is also studied in a broader context where inclusion e.g. is defined as adopting values of social justice, building communities and celebrating difference (c.f. Nilholm, 2006a, Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). Scholars argue that inclusive education is not just about those students described as being in need of special support; it is about all students (Allen and Slee, 2001). Booth and Ainscow (2002) describe inclusion as “an unending *process* of increasing learning and participation for all students. It is an ideal to which schools can aspire but which is never fully reached” (Booth and Ainscow, 2002, p. 3). Allen and Slee (2001) argue in a similar mode that “Inclusive schooling should be seen as a social movement against educational exclusion” (Allen and Slee, 2001, p. 177). Göransson and Nilholm (forthcoming) argue that few studies have been conducted in preschool and school settings where inclusive values have been demonstrated empirically.

In a preschool context, several of the studies reviewed in this thesis involve placements of children with SEN into regular preschool contexts. Research often describes how children with severe impairments are integrated into preschool settings (e.g DeVore and Russell 2007, Huang and Diamond 2009) and “early intervention” in relation to special needs (Bladini, 2004, Sandberg and Eriksson, 2010). Preschool teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion are also investigated in some work (e.g. Huang and Diamond, 2009). Nutbrown and Clough (2004) investigate early

childhood educators' views on inclusion. The study was conducted in Denmark, Greece, Italy and the UK. The researchers present key structures that are seen as platforms for further studies concerning early childhood education and inclusion. The researchers highlight that further studies are needed concerning e.g. the dominance of the role of parents and the home, and that preschool personnel express both inclusive ideologies and the maintenance of practices that exclude children concurrently. The researchers also state the importance of studies concerning professional development at an advanced higher education level.

In a school context, several studies have recently been conducted investigating school practices relative to the notion of inclusion (e.g. Abbott, 2007, Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen, 2009, Nilholm and Alm, 2010, Hoopey and McLeskey, 2013). Research indicates problems establishing more inclusive practices (Cole, 2005, Szwed, 2007a and 2007b). McLeskey and Waldron (2007) question whether schools in the USA are becoming more inclusive in general. Several researchers (e.g. Ainscow, 1998, Isaksson et al, 2007) point out the persistence of a deficit perspective in special needs education in which school problems are understood as individual shortcomings. Ainscow (1998) argues that this might be one of the largest obstacles towards making education more inclusive.

Relations between student variation, special education and inclusive education are highlighted in a longitudinal study conducted by Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen (2009). Fourteen principals in municipal compulsory schools in Sweden were interviewed twice – in 1996 and 2006. The principals were administrating schools that were located in various socio-economic settings. Some schools had students from a

wide range of backgrounds, while others had a more homogenous school population. The semi-structured interviews included issues concerning inclusive and exclusive organisations. According to the principals, there were reduced amounts of segregated groups in each school in 2006. However, there seemed to be more students placed in segregating settings organised together by several schools or municipalities. Principals also appeared to relate the role of SENCOs (in the article referred to as special educators) to inclusive education in which SENCOs function as coordinators and supervisors, while special teachers' work tasks were discussed more in the direction of exclusion. The results of the Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen (2009) study point towards similar conclusions as other researchers have drawn, namely that it seems difficult for schools to move away from the idea that children have individual deficiencies which can best be addressed by adopting segregating solutions. This can be assumed to be an obstacle in order to move towards more inclusive practices (Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen, 2009).

There are a few studies describing different occupational groups' strategies in order for schools and classrooms to become more inclusive. An example is a study conducted by Nilholm and Alm (2010). They followed pupils (11-12 years old), their teachers (one primary school teacher and one preschool teacher) and the education performed in the regular classroom. The group of children was heterogeneous and one third of the pupils had a disability diagnosis at the time of the study. The data consists of interviews, sociograms, a questionnaire answered by the students, students' poetry as well as notes from observations. Strategies teachers used were 1) Instruction adapted to individual needs of chil-

dren, 2) Clear frames, 3) Group activities, 4) Creating good relations with the parents, 5) Involving talk and discussion in academic exercises, encouraging joint problem-solving and 6) Avoid fighting relations with the pupils. Through the variety of data displayed, the researchers suggest that the learning environment seems to be inclusive. An overall conclusion was that the teachers seemed to try to create a learning community where differences were valued.

Another example of strategic work for inclusion is a recent case-study from the U.S, where Hoopey and McLeskey (2013) describe the strategies of a principal who was reported to lead an effective and inclusive³⁹ school consisting of about 460 students. The principal had been selected due to his extensive and successful experience working with reforms for both general and special education. According to several sources (e.g. student outcome data on the state accountability measure), the school had previously been successful in including students with disabilities in general education classrooms and improving student academic outcomes for low-achieving students. The research took place during one school year and consisted of ethnographic methods (interviews and observations) and a phenomenological approach studying life experience from the principal's perspective. The findings are mostly related to the principal's strategies and leadership towards the staff, and not to the students directly. Three characteristics of the principal's leadership style specifically emerged a) caring for, and personally investing in, teachers

³⁹ Inclusion was defined based on certain criteria, which the researchers set up. This study was mentioned earlier in the previous section concerning the role of educational leaders for work with special needs and inclusion.

b) buffering teachers and staff from external pressure, and c) promoting the development of teachers.

In a similar mode as the studies described above (Nilholm and Alm, 2010, Hoopey and McLeskey, 2013), the fourth study in this thesis (IV) was conducted in order to investigate strategies head teachers say they use in order to promote inclusive practices. The head teachers in study four were selected since they could be described as both inclusive and effective from various criteria. However, as discussed earlier, when such studies are conducted and presented, it is essential to keep in mind that the notion of inclusion is described and defined differently in various settings and situations. It becomes essential to contextualise studies that are claimed to investigate inclusive practises. As an example, one of the reasons why the principal and his school were selected in Hoopey and McLeskey's (2013) study was that the school agreed to implement a model inclusive school program from the district authorities. Various programs offered for schools to apply for (e.g. for reading and maths education) seem to be a common procedure in the American school system (McLeskey and Waldron, 2000, Hoopey and McLeskey, 2013). Additionally, in 2009, the school in Hoopey and McLeskey's (2013) study still had 33% of its students "with disabilities" in special educational services outside the general education classroom for more than 21% of their school day. Thus the level of "inclusiveness" is a complex phenomenon which has to be handled with caution, regardless of whether it is an adult's description of his/her work in inclusive schools or children's experiences, assessed from an adult perspective, that are analysed and interpreted (Nilholm and Alm, 2010).

The concept of inclusion is studied in this thesis by posing questions to occupational groups that are working in the same context.⁴⁰ Issues related to inclusion are investigated by using concepts that are framed in a language that is closer to everyday practices in preschools and schools.⁴¹ This is done in order to get a more concrete idea of the practitioners' views on the matter and thus, an effort to increase clarity concerning what is asked for. This type of comprehensive study, investigating the views of occupational groups working mostly in the same context, as well as using an everyday language familiar to the participants when investigating views relative to inclusion, has to my knowledge, not been done before.

⁴⁰ Even if the participants are working in the same context (consisting of one municipality); it is not assumed in the study that the participants share the same idea about inclusion.

⁴¹ The concept of inclusion and how it is applied in this thesis is further described in chapter 4.

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, theoretical perspectives in relation to special needs and occupational groups in preschools and schools are presented. The first section describes perspectives used when the empirical material was collected. The second section, which forms the main part in this chapter, concerns the theoretical tools used in the studies (presented in articles I-IV). These theoretical tools are further described and elaborated upon in more depth. The section illustrates the theoretical approach as well as the relation between the theories (i.e. critical pragmatism and Abbott's (1988) division of expert labor). This is followed by a more detailed presentation of the theories applied. Finally, the chapter ends with a presentation of how the notion of inclusion is used in the studies and what role inclusion plays when the outcome of the studies is interpreted and discussed.

A CATEGORICAL AND A RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE – A POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR THE STUDY

Two questionnaires were constructed in the 2008/2009 academic year. The purpose was to investigate occupational groups' views on work with children in need of special support. Several questions in the questionnaires were constructed so that perspectives among the personnel could become visible. When it was suitable, depending on the character of the questions, the questions were divided into the categories of a categorical and a relational perspective (c.f. Persson, 1998). Persson (1998)

refers to Weber (1904/1949) and points out that the two perspectives should be seen as ideal types.

The perspectives should be understood as “ideal types” that means mental constructions intended to demonstrate differences between the phenomena that are described “ideal typically” and reality (or other ideal typical phenomena). The ideal type is therefore not an objectively true existent phenomenon, but a sort of tool with which a part of reality better can be understood (Persson, 1998, p. 32, my translation).⁴²

In a categorical perspective, causes of difficulties are often viewed unambiguously and special needs arise from e.g. individual factors, such as inborn or by other individually-related causes. Children’s school difficulties are reduced to e.g. low intellectual ability or poor home environment (Persson, 1998). Emanuelsson et al (2001) point out that time becomes an essential aspect since special educational activities, from a categorical perspective, are used in order to handle difficulties occurring in acute situations with short-termed solutions. Children are categorized and distinguished according to the concept of normality. Using a categorical perspective, measures are taken and adapted towards the individual child and special educational competence means qualified support from special teachers, SENCOs, assistants and pupil health personnel. The measures traditionally used in a categorical perspective are special

⁴²In Swedish: ”Perspektiven ska förstås som ”idealtyper” dvs mentala konstruktioner avsedda att påvisa skillnader mellan de fenomen som beskrivs ”idealtypiskt” och verkligheten (eller andra idealtypiska fenomen). Idealtypen är således inte en objektivt sant förefintlig företeelse utan ett slags verktyg med vars hjälp en del av verkligheten bättre kan förstås” (Persson, 1998, p. 32).

education inside the classroom or in special groups outside the classroom (Persson, 1998).

From a relational perspective, on the other hand, special educational activities are seen as an interactive part of other pedagogical activities in general education. The focus is on relations, communication and interaction. Thus, what happens between members in a community becomes essential (Persson, 1998). In this perspective, school difficulties appear when different phenomena meet in the learning environment. Persson (1998) argues that this perspective opens the way for other explanations why children are in need of special support than those explanations which can be found in the individual child. Here, it becomes important to also cast light on teachers' teaching as well as on the learning environments in order to find reasons why children become children in need of special support. The child's prerequisites are viewed in relation to their environment and the environment can influence the child's prerequisites (Persson, 1998). The idea is that all participants in a community (e.g. a class or a school) cooperate in order to influence the entire system. Relations create involvement and each participant is engaged in learning processes e.g. in school (Persson, 2008a). The responsibility for special educational activities is shared by all pedagogical personnel in school. Long term solutions are important and the educational leader gives active support in the process to the personnel. Special educational competence is seen as providing qualified help in order for teachers to plan differentiated teaching in order to meet all children's needs (Persson, 1998).

As described above, several questions in the questionnaires were constructed and based on the ideal types of a categorical and a relational

perspective. The purpose was to sort responses from the occupational groups in order to gain a comprehensible picture of the participants' views concerning work with children in need of special support. In order to theoretically explain empirical patterns (i.e. views expressed by the participants, categorized through the two perspectives presented above), I then use critical pragmatism (primarily through Skrtic's (1991, 1995) critical pragmatic reading of special education) and Abbott's (1988) reasoning concerning division of expert labor and jurisdictional control. These theories, and associated concepts, form my theoretical framework. My approach, as well as how the theoretical tools, relate to each other is described below.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

In order to interpret, discuss and provide possible explanations of the outcome of the studies, I use critical pragmatism and Abbott's (1988) theories concerning division of expert labor. These theoretical approaches have been useful tools when conclusions have been drawn concerning how views of the occupational groups are constructed, established and maintained. The theoretical concepts have provided guidance throughout the research process; especially when the empirical material in the separate studies has been analysed and the outcome of the results have been interpreted. The theoretical framework has also been particularly useful when the results of the studies have been discussed in the articles. In this first part of the thesis, I further deepen the theoretical interpretations of the empirical findings. Additionally, the theoretical concepts are used as tools when prior descriptions of occupational groups' views are connected to the findings in the four studies and thus, contribute and develop knowledge concerning occupational groups' views on special needs issues. Thus, this approach can be described as a

mode to cumulate and develop empirically-based theory within the borders of larger, already existing theories (Larsson, 2005).

Before turning to each theory, a short description will be provided concerning interrelated themes and central aspects in critical pragmatism and Abbott's theory of division of expert labor.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTEXT WHEN PROFESSIONS ARE STUDIED – A MUTUAL POINT OF DEPARTURE IN THE THEORIES

As noted above, the present study is conducted in a certain context. The assumption is that school practices and special education take diverse forms in different environments related to local history, traditions and legislations (Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2004). Using a critical pragmatic mode, all activities (thinking and action as an entity), and consequences of activities, should be viewed in their context (Cherryholmes, 1999). "We begin with where we are – in context. The idea that we could begin tracing consequences from a 'god's-eye-view', one outside the context, is unavailable" (Cherryholmes, 1999, p. 27). Critical pragmatists stress the role of dialogue and interpretation for our social lives relative to the future that is unknown and unpredictable.

Abbott (1988) studies professions' jurisdictional control⁴³ in various fields (e.g. medicine, law, and education). He argues that professions' jurisdictional control over work and clientele changes within cultures and through time and thus, also in line with a critical pragmatic mode, professionals' endeavours should be interpreted and understood in con-

⁴³ The concept of Jurisdictional control will be further explained and discussed below.

text. Abbott (1988) highlights the division of expert labor and jurisdictional control from a historical as well as a sociological perspective.⁴⁴ He views the system of professions as a whole, constructed and affected by the past and the present society. Skrtic (1991) also emphasizes professions as having a special relationship with society, since professions are given a greater autonomy in society than other social groups. Professionalism is a key concept in the social disciplines. Skrtic (1991) argues, in line with Abbott, that a profession's knowledge tradition is time-honoured and is mutually agreed upon conventions of its members. From a critical pragmatic point of departure, Skrtic argues that professional education is a process whereby a student is inducted into a culture of customs and conventions. In universities and professional schools, people gain access to the repertoires of codified knowledge and skills in order to perform in their professional work.

As in the case of scientific knowledge and skills, professional knowledge and skills are premised on a commitment to view the world in a particular way which randomizes complexity and thus narrows and focuses activity, making it more productive (Skrtic, 1991, p. 97).

⁴⁴ The theories of Abbott (1988) derive from "the old Chicago School" (Abbott, 1988, p. VX) in which his theories lie much in the traditions of Everett Hughes (1897-1983). In the 1930's, in the spirit of the Chicago School, Hughes had the ambition to leave prevailing research traditions behind (e.g. research that primarily focused on how professions were defined) in order to concentrate on approaching professionals' daily work (Liljegren, 2008). Hughes' theories evolve from symbolic interactionism represented by philosophers and sociologists that previously worked at the University of Chicago, including G.H Mead, John Dewey and Herbert Blumer (Cuff et al, 2006).

Abbott's sociological approach about the division of expert labor, as well as critical pragmatism, mainly interpreted by Skrtic, is used in this thesis to illuminate the views of different occupational groups in pre-schools and schools. By presenting the responses from the participants, and critically discussing the outcome of the four studies, the intention is to unveil unquestioned structures that may be present within special education, schooling and the entire school system. As has been highlighted above, the theories used can be seen as interrelated. However, they complement each other and thus, the idea is that each theoretical approach makes a specific contribution when the outcome of the four studies are analysed, interpreted and discussed. By using these interrelated viewpoints, the intention is to build new knowledge concerning occupational groups' views on work with children in need of special support, special needs issues and the notion of inclusion related to the context studied.

In the following sections, the theories are presented in order to illustrate and clarify how the theoretical framework can be useful when the outcome of the four studies is discussed as well as how the views of occupational groups can be understood.

CRITICAL PRAGMATISM AS A MEANS TO APPROACH THE RESEARCH FIELD

In this section, a short presentation of critical pragmatism is provided. This is followed by a few words concerning the relevance of using critical pragmatism as a theoretical tool when the empirical material is analysed and discussed. Finally, a more detailed description of Skrtic's (1991, 1995) interpretation of critical pragmatism in relation to the field of special education is provided.

Critical pragmatism can be used when complex phenomena are studied.

⁴⁵ Using this approach different aspects of phenomena can be unveiled and highlighted (Rorty, 1982, Cherryholmes, 1988). When I refer to critical pragmatism, I do so based on Cherryholmes' (1988, 1999) interpretation of the theory. Cherryholmes (1999) argues that in order to study "discourse[s] on the consequences of thinking" (p. 26), a variety of descriptions of the world is required. Critical pragmatism is a well-suited approach when unreflected assumptions and constructs of structures (e.g. views, classroom environments, educational research and society as a whole) are investigated and discussed (Cherryholmes, 1988). By using a critical pragmatic approach, there are possibilities to reveal e.g. the exercise of power within these structures. "These privileged structures, however, can be identified, read, interpreted, criticized, accepted, rejected and modified" (Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 186). In discussions and deliberations concerning reflections and consequences, critique is seen as enriching for the results:

If we can be critically pragmatic in the construction, deconstruction, construction... of how we live and together build communities using our best visions of what is beautiful,

⁴⁵ Critical pragmatism derives from pragmatism, a philosophical method where theories and concepts are studied relative to their practical consequences (von Wright, 2007). Critical pragmatism can be seen as a supplement to this view and stresses the construction of reality as a battle between conflicting discourses and different definitions of situations (Cherryholmes, 1988). This makes it possible for deconstructive and controversial approaches to the making and remaking of reality as a political act. The purpose for critical pragmatists is to clarify and discuss political and moral dimensions and maintain an ongoing debate concerning education policy issues (Cherryholmes, 1988, Skrtic, 1991, von Wright, 2007).

good, and true, then the unreflective reproduction of what we find around us, including some of its injustices, might be tamed and changed a bit (Cherryholmes, 1988, p.186).

The emphasis in a critical pragmatic approach is that multiple realities are created in social actions as well as cultures' openness toward critical change (Cherryholmes, 1988, 1999). The idea is also to: identify and unveil structures and assumptions, interpret and critically discuss them, illuminate what consequences the assumptions might have for practice and finally provide suggestions for policy and practice. Proposals are created for a future that is unknown and unpredictable: "Discourse on thinking and experience continually moves from where we are to where we are not, to what is known to what is unknown" (Cherryholmes, 1999, p. 40). Thus, suggestions as well as possibly reshaped structures can, or rather should, again become the focus for investigation which reveal unacknowledged and unqualified structural principles in order to once again deconstruct and reconstruct (and so forth) systems.

When investigating views of personnel in preschools and schools, different aspects of phenomena in the school system, relative to special needs, can be unveiled and discussed. In line with what Cherryholmes (1988) suggests, a critical pragmatic mode can be useful when unreflect-ed assumptions and constructs of structures are studied in order to detect rhetorical claims in the school system, claims which promise foundational, final and efficient answers to school difficulties (Cherryholmes, 1988, 1999, Skrtic, 1991). Both Cherryholmes (1988) and Skrtic (1991, 1995) distinguish critical pragmatism from pragmatism. Cherryholmes refers to some forms of pragmatism as vulgar pragmatism while Skrtic uses the term naïve pragmatism. When vulgar or naïve pragmatism is

applied, the system is seen as intact and changes are made using a functionalistic rationality within the prevailing system. Conceptions can also be tested through practical effects (Cherryholmes, 1988, Skrtic, 1991, 1995). Critical pragmatism on the other hand is used to scrutinize the rationality of organisations and structures of systems. Concurrently it investigates practices in order to develop the best practice possible from what is currently known based on moral, aesthetic and democratic values (Cherryholmes, 1988, Skrtic, 1995).

In this context, Skrtic's (1991) critical reading and analysis of special education and its foundational assumptions relative to general education becomes valuable. I use Skrtic's reasoning and central concepts in order to specifically investigate and unveil phenomena related to the field of special education. Skrtic's theories are particularly useful since there are few scholars who have attempted to develop theories about school in general with specific interest to finding related theories for special education (Rosenqvist and Tideman, 2000).

In a critical pragmatic mode, I also give some suggestions for policy and practice (see I-IV and the concluding discussion below) that I believe is needed in order to develop education to better meet the needs of all children in preschools and schools

CRITICAL PRAGMATISM AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Skrtic's (1991) main argument is that achieving educational equity and excellence are the twin goals behind the idea of public education in a democracy. However these goals are threatened by a functionalistic view on public education. Functionalism views social reality as objective, inherently orderly and rational. Functionalism derives from the industrial

era where organisations were conceptualised as rational, purposeful and goal-oriented. Functionalism is manifested through bureaucracy (Skrtic, 1991). Within the educational system, Skrtic detects and differs between two kinds of bureaucracies, a machine bureaucracy and a professional bureaucracy.⁴⁶ When a functionalistic perspective is applied, organisations are managed and operated as rational machine bureaucracies. According to Skrtic, schools are seen as machine bureaucracies and are still organized and managed as such. Accordingly, Skrtic argues that organising schools as machine bureaucracies can be seen as hindering schools (and public education in general) to become more democratic. When schools are managed as machine bureaucracies, efficacy and rational solutions are in focus, matters are dealt with through standardised and formal routines. Individuals are more or less seen as objects that can be replaced (Skrtic, 1991).

The second obstacle which impedes the development of democratic schools is professional bureaucracy (Skrtic, 1991). This has to do with the professional culture at schools that is constructed by accomplished professionalisation through e.g. education and socialisation. In a professional bureaucracy, the workers are loosely coupled, i.e. workers are not very dependent on each other since one worker does the whole work activity alone. Tightly coupled workers on the other hand “are highly dependent on one another because they each do one part of a larger work activity (e.g., building an automobile on an assembly line)” (Skrtic, 1991, p. 163). Skrtic means that the professionals’ standardisation of

⁴⁶ Skrtic refers to Mintzberg (1979) who differentiates between five general ideal typical forms of organisations. Among these, the machine bureaucracy and the professional bureaucracy are the most accentuated.

skills creates some interdependency in which professionals share mutual facilities and resources. However, they do their specialised job alone with an assigned client group. In a professional bureaucracy, the professionals perform their work from certain learned repertoires. Teachers working in schools are examples of loosely coupled workers (Skrtic, 1995). The standardisation of skills creates professionals who are equipped with a finite repertoire of standard programs that are supposed to fit clients' needs. Skrtic (1991) calls this the pigeon-holing process. This is an effective procedure if the client's needs match the standard repertoire of the professional.

Pigeon holing is not a problem as long as the student's needs actually match what the professional has to offer. But, as we have seen, when learning style and individual needs of a particular student do not match the professional's repertoire of standard programs, the student gets forced artificially into one program or another or forced out of the system all together (Skrtic, 1991, p. 177).

The rationality of public education, and the non-adaptability of the professional bureaucracy creates pigeon-holing and produces "disabled students" that special education serves.

From an organizational perspective, student disability and special education are byproducts, unintended consequences of the particular kind of schooling that traditional school organizations provide (Skrtic, 1991, p. 181).

The professional bureaucracy, implying that workers (e.g. teachers) perform their job from learned repertoires and standardised skills, might

explain why reforms often fail to produce changes in schools. Teachers adjust only formally to reforms and continue to do the things they consider necessary (Skrtic, 1995). In the culture and structure of schools, which are organised and managed as machine bureaucracies and inhabited by professionals that are loosely coupled, specialised and execute standardised routines, conflicts between different groups and interests are likely to occur. However, these conflicts are also distorted by the artefacts of disability and special education. According to Skrtic, when conflicts and uncertainties occur in the school system and between professionals, the solution is to define children as deviant (often in terms of disability) and place them in a certain type of education (often referred to as special education) (Skrtic, 1991, 1995).

Schools encounter difficulties when managed as machine bureaucracies as well as professional bureaucracies (Skrtic, 1991). School organisations are governed as if they were machine bureaucracies even though the technical demands on their work direct them towards a professional bureaucracy. Schools are forced into rationalisation, standardisation and formalisation, more in line with the managements of machine bureaucracies, even if machine bureaucracies are badly fitted for skills that require executing complex tasks. “In principle, the effect is that the professional bureaucracy configuration of schools is driven to be more like the machine bureaucracy” (Skrtic, 1991, p. 163). However, both the machine bureaucracy and the professional bureaucracy are built upon the functionalistic idea of standardisation (e.g. through standardised programs and ability testing). They are non-adaptable structures that require stable environments (Skrtic, 1991). Thus, as described above, special education and student disability should, according to Skrtic, be seen as

artefacts and unintended consequences of the functionalist quest for rationality, order and certainty in the field of education “These artefacts distort the problem of school failure and, ultimately, prevent general education from entering into a productive confrontation with uncertainty” (Skrtic, 1991, p. 44). Special education, and in this mode also occupational groups working within special education (decoupled from general education), facilitates schools to continue general education without evaluating the system in order to meet all children and celebrate differences (Skrtic, 1991, 1995). Further, Skrtic describes special education as an unquestioned system parallel to the general school system. This dual system serves the regular educational system. When the prevailing system is exposed to uncertainties, confusion and anomalies, special education is advocated as the solution to the regular educational school system’s problems and failures. If the functionalistic view is not questioned, the prevailing school system will have no possibility to change its existing paradigm (Skrtic 1991).

Skrtic’s (1991) conclusion is that “there is no way out of the professional- bureaucratic dilemma as long as schools are configured as professional bureaucracies and managed as if they were machine bureaucracies” (p. 198). According to Skrtic, the prevailing system will not develop to be both equal and excellent (the twin goals of public education in a democratic society). In order for schools to reach equity and excellence, schools need to be deconstructed and reconstructed. However, while waiting for the deconstruction and reconstruction of the school system, the temporary solution according to Skrtic (1991) is to take an

anti-foundational⁴⁷ stance and create adhocracies rather than bureaucracies. “The adhocracy is premised on the principle of *innovation* rather than on standardization; as such, it is a *problem-solving* organization configured to *invent new programs*” (p. 182). In adhocracies, multi-professional teams are creating new solutions for each individual case without using standardised programs and solutions. In schools, this means that professionals should move away from standardised solutions and leave specialised skills behind in order to be open for new, innovative solutions. Communication among the professionals is a key factor for success. Skrtic argues that democracy is based on collaborative problem-solving through reflective discourse within a community of interest. Participants in the school community learn collaboratively “with and from persons with varying interests, abilities, skills, and cultural perspectives, and taking responsibility for learning means taking responsibility for one’s own learning *and* that of others” (Skrtic, 1991, p. 233).

Skrtic (1991) admits that the adhocratic school organization can be viewed as an idealised characterisation, and there is a warning to adapt to a naïve pragmatic (c.f. Cherryholmes, 1988) approach in solutions suggested. “As the case of special education demonstrates even well meaning attempts to reform practices adhocratically can result in new bureaucratic practices that simply produce old problems in new forms” (Skrtic, 1991, p. 215). However, Skrtic argues that it is empirically evident that the organisational phenomenon appearing in adhocracies is

⁴⁷ According to Skrtic (1991), taking an anti-foundational stance means to be open for many different theoretical perspectives and interests of research. It is essential not to be locked into a single perspective if dialogue and new knowledge is supposed to occur.

also found in successful schools, schools that achieve equity and excellence, the goals behind the vision of public education in a democratic society.

My intention to use Skrtic's critical reading of special education in relation to general education is to illuminate, as well as unveil structural and cultural impacts as well as unreflected assumptions in the school system. Through different occupational groups' views expressed in questionnaires and interviews, some of the phenomena related to special education might be highlighted and discussed. My point of reference is taken in Skrtic's concepts. I use the concepts presented above as tools in order to analyse, interpret, discuss and finally gain an understanding of how the responses from the groups can reflect ideas and values expressed through history and in prevailing guidelines and policy documents.

CRITIQUE OF SKRTIC'S CRITICAL APPROACH

It is also important to note that scholars also take a critical stance to the critical perspective represented by e.g. Skrtic. Dyson and Millward (2000) argue that contradictions in the school system are not as easily solved as representatives of the critical perspective imply. They argue that the critical perspective is just another attempt through just another paradigm shift to solve school's difficulties to handle differences. They argue that the critical perspective is characterised by a reductionist view and that history clearly shows that just adding a new perspective is insufficient to understand the complexity of the field of special education.

Representatives of this critique above stress that ideals and deconstructions of the schools system (as e.g. Skrtic, 1991 and Thomas and Loxley, 2001 suggest) have been characterised as truths irrespective of time, place and empirical studies. Clark et al (1998) also emphasise that values such as inclusion, participation, equity and excellence are complex and different motives and values of concepts (or dimensions of similar values) can contradict one another depending on what situations they are used in.

It is not surprising, therefore, that empirical inquiry is of limited interest for some scholars within the paradigm, Skrtic, for instance, develops a powerful notion of the “adhocratic school” (Skrtic, 1991 a, b, c) with which he clearly intends to influence the practice and configurations of actual schools. Despite this practical orientation, however, the empirical base of his work is almost non-existent, at least in terms of studies of actual schools and their attempt to become more inclusive. The conceptual framework which he has at his disposal, in terms of notions of bureaucracy on the one hand and equity on the other, makes it possible for him to delineate the nature of an equitable school not through a study of such schools by means of logical *tour de force*. His argument is not so much that adhocratic schools *are* in practice more equitable, but that they *must*, by definition, be so (Clark et al, 1998, p. 163).

Clark et al (1998) also argue that the school system always needs to be in a concrete form. The educational system, as well as the individual school, needs to consider dilemmas at a structural level as well as in eve-

ryday practice. According to Clark et al (1998) it is reductionistic to claim that the contradictions concerning how to handle children's differences can be eliminated. Further, Clark et al (1998) discuss that each educational system will use some sort of categorisation in order to meet and handle people's differences. Thus, one can deconstruct systems (by e.g. abolishing special education and the construction of disability) but in order to meet children with different prerequisites, differences are essential to acknowledge. Thus, the dilemma of how to handle children's differences can also be seen as a remaining dilemma in a newly reconstructed educational system (Clark et, al 1998, Nilholm, 2007).

In this thesis, I explore different occupational groups' views on how school difficulties should be handled. This is interpreted and discussed in relation to Skrtic's (1991) reasoning concerning how schools should work with such matters. In line with what Clark et al (1998) suggest, I do so by investigating the system and practices in which the complexity is manifested by the dilemmas that practitioners have to handle (c.f. Nilholm, 2007).⁴⁸ I investigate the complex phenomena of special needs, both from the practitioners' viewpoint as well as discussing the outcome of the study relative to the structure of the educational system as a whole. Through this mode of procedure, my intention is that the present study can be a contribution, where Skrtic's (1991) critical pragmatic

⁴⁸According to Nilholm (2007) dilemmas cannot be solved. However dilemmas need to be considered and decisions have to be made in relation to the dilemmas. Several dilemmas are built into the educational system. For example, schools should provide children with equivalent and contemporary education while, at the same time, schools should also adapt to children's differences. There might be tensions and conflicts between common goals and the adaptation to the individual child.

reading of what is “behind” special education is complemented by concrete empirical investigations of school practices.

OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS AND THE DIVISION OF EXPERT LABOR

In this section, I will present and briefly discuss Abbott’s (1988) ideas of the division of expert labor and jurisdictional control.⁴⁹ I relate these ideas to occupational groups within the field of education, as well as highlight some possible benefits of using Abbott’s concepts in this study.

One purpose of this thesis is to investigate different occupational groups’ views on work with children in need of special support. The occupational groups’ views on how this work should be performed are also in focus. Since Skrtic’s (1991, 1995) reasoning concerning professional work (described above) does not involve or discuss *several* occupational groups’ views on special education, I searched for complementing theories. I found Abbott’s (1988) theoretical concepts of division of

⁴⁹Abbott (1988) argues that there is a legal as well as a general arena where professionals struggle to gain legitimacy. Jurisdictional control can be achieved both through legislation and through the eyes of “the public” (e.g. media and political representatives). To claim jurisdiction means to claim legitimacy in certain areas in order to control and execute specific tasks in society. Jurisdictional control means that the profession gains autonomy of the tasks that the jurisdiction comprises. Jurisdictional control also involves the right to exclude other occupational groups claiming jurisdictional control of the same e.g. tasks, clients and knowledge.

expert labor and jurisdictional control as plausible tools in order to interpret and understand responses received from the occupational groups in the study. Abbott's reasoning about how different professions struggle, negotiate and come to agreements concerning mutual work in order to gain jurisdictional control became a relevant interpretive framework. In this study, it is primarily exemplified by the responses from SENCOs as well as from other occupational groups concerning SENCOs' role and work. However, it is plausible that Abbott's reasoning about the division of expert labor also could be used to describe other occupational groups in the school system concerning their aspirations for legitimacy and control over e.g. clients and work (c.f. Bladini, 2004, Liljegren, 2008, Guvå and Hylander, 2011).

In history, professionalism has often been depicted as persons in occupational groups who more or less monitor their own and others' interests (Liljegren, 2008). Abbott (1988) rejects the long-established picture of how professions are defined and constructed. Abbott argues against this traditional way of describing professions, i.e. as exclusive occupational groups with special, usually abstract skills, which develop irrespective of other professions and outside pressure. "Professionalism has been viewed as a matter of individual choices and corporate action taken to protect or extend them" (Abbott, 1988, p. 7). Instead, Abbott (1988) sees professions as interdependent groups with common work. This is a matter of jurisdiction. Professions' jurisdictional control over work and clientele changes within cultures and through time. In contrast to previous profession theorists, Abbott stresses the importance of the system, where professions are involved and compete against each other, when

occupational groups achieve or lose jurisdiction. The competition is about who should do what to whom in the professional field.

Abbott (1988) studies relations between different professions and different professions' development over time. He sheds light on how professions control the fields of e.g. work, knowledge, clientele and actions. Jurisdictional control is a matter of a constant struggle and negotiation between different groups. Professions can have full jurisdictional control of one field while they, in other fields, need to subordinate to other professions. If the profession has the right to define and solve all the problems that are encountered within the field of the profession, the profession has full jurisdiction.

To claim jurisdictional control over a professional field implies that one occupational group desires to have the right to execute tasks that, according to the group, belong to them. Tasks can be perceived by various occupational groups as being within their own jurisdiction within a professional field. In the system, occupational groups constantly have to take in to consideration the consequences of other groups' claims on who should do what to whom (Abbott, 1988). Abbott gives an example: Through history, there have been different claims among different professions (especially stressed by superior occupational groups) concerning what clients the occupational groups should handle. Accordingly, subordinate groups are left with tasks towards clients that are not as sought after (e.g. psychiatrists treat clients from the upper class, psychologists treat clients from the middle class and social workers handle clients from the economically less fortunate). Tasks are constructed as desirable or not desirable (so-called dirty work) by the professions. It is also suggested that if "the public" (i.e. people and groups in the society

represented by e.g. politicians, researchers and journalists) sees benefits and effects of an occupation; it will be sanctioned from “the public” and the profession can claim jurisdictional control over a certain field (Abbott, 1988). Evetts (2011, 2013) argues that governments can create professions to implement state policies.⁵⁰ These occupations have not been developed out of an expressed need from the organisation or from other occupational groups within the organisation. Thus, the created profession becomes dependent on the sanctions, jurisdiction and approval of the state. The state will then control the occupational group and its work while the group is implementing state policies in order to reflect state interests. This is particularly pronounced today as professionalism is changing and professionals now increasingly work as service professionals often in large-scale organisations (Evetts, 2011). Thus, professionals in organisations might experience tension between professional interests and power structures manifested through e.g. the creation of new professions by the government (Abbott, 1988, Evetts, 2011, 2013).

There are differences between formal descriptions of an occupational groups’ jurisdiction and how jurisdiction actually appears in organisations. Even with work descriptions and standardised divisions between the occupational groups, there will be negotiations in local organisations (e.g. in schools) about the jurisdictional control. There is seldom a strong correlation between these standardised and detailed work descriptions and what the professionals actually do (Abbott, 1988). There is a tendency that borders of division of labor become blurred. One rea-

⁵⁰ Applying Evetts’ (2011, 2013) reasoning on school organization, the occupational group of SENCOs could be described as a profession created by the government.

son for this is the uneven distribution of skills among occupational groups. For example, skilled subordinate groups will be assigned duties that formally belong to less skilled but superior occupational groups. In local organisations, there are also likely to be internal differentiations within occupational groups. Occupational groups are often segmented and not always homogenous. Some interest claims are shared with the occupational group whilst other interest claims are individual (or shared with a small group within the occupational group) and might come in conflict with other claims in the group. Thus, there might be internal competition within occupational groups following the same principles for claims on jurisdiction that occur between different professions (Abbott, 1988, Liljegren, 2008).

In the school system, several occupational groups (e.g. teachers, assistant resource staff, educational leaders, special teachers, SENCOs and so forth) have mutual access to the field of special education and work with children in need of special support. Using Abbott's reasoning concerning jurisdictional control as well as the idea of the division of expert labor, it becomes especially interesting to study the role of SENCOs. This occupational group seems to have a central position in preschools' and schools' work with special needs tasks as well as preschools' and schools' endeavours to work towards more inclusive practices (Cole, 2005, Abbott, 2007, Hargreaves et al, 2007). Additionally, Bladini (2004) points out that the introduction of SENCOs into the Swedish school system has had consequences on other occupational groups in preschools and schools. Thus, different occupational groups' views on fields (e.g. work, knowledge, clientele, and actions) that could be expected to belong to SENCOs, in order for SENCOs to have full jurisdictional control, become important to study. In the third study (III), this area is further investigated in order to deepen our knowledge about

how occupational groups believe work concerning special needs issues should be divided as well as who should have jurisdictional control over the field of special education. When the results are discussed below, Abbott's (1988) notions are used in order to further understand the occupational groups' views on the role of SENCOs and what possible consequences this might have for SENCOs' work in preschools and schools.

THE ROLE OF THE NOTION OF INCLUSION IN THE STUDIES

The notion of inclusion plays an important role in the articles. Inclusion is a concept not only used in politics and policy but also in research. This is not an uncommon situation and inclusion shares this destiny with many other concepts such as e.g. democracy and justice. Inclusion can be viewed as one, or rather different ideas, about what schools should accomplish (c.f. Skrtic, 1991, Allen and Slee, 2001). Since inclusion has gained such significance in special needs and has increasingly been used to denote the whole field (Allen and Slee, 2001), I found it relevant to discuss the empirical outcomes in the articles in relation to the notion of inclusion. As described earlier, the questionnaires used in the studies were in part constructed in order to discern the participants' views on work with children in need of special support and special education. These perspectives ranged from categorical to relational ones. The theories of primarily Skrtic (1991) and Abbott (1988) were then used in the articles in order to understand and explain the empirical patterns found. I also discussed the outcome of the empirical analyses in terms of inclusive education. Emanuelsson et al (2001) suggest that a relational perspective can be used to interpret and understand conditions for inclusive education. Since this perspective is closely tied to in-

clusion to the point where it is sometimes denoted as an inclusive perspective (Emanuelsson et al, 2001), the articles primarily discussed in what sense the responses reflected a relational perspective among the occupational groups.

More specifically, some aspects that are frequently associated with a relational perspective and inclusion were focused on. Thus, the following pattern was seen as indicating inclusive practices:

- children's difficulties are not seen as being caused only by individual shortcomings but also by limitations tied to teachers and groups/classrooms
- medical diagnoses are not seen as decisive in obtaining special support
- integrated organisational solutions are preferred
- the task of SENCOs is to work with the whole learning environment
- teachers are able to adapt teaching and material to varying conditions for the learning of the child
- support measures are not only provided to the individual child, but can be given to teachers in order to adjust the teaching and learning environment
- teachers have a shared responsibility for the education of all children

These are some characteristics that are often associated with inclusive schooling. It would of course have been possible to investigate other aspects of inclusive education but these ones were chosen because they

were considered to be highly significant for my research area. It should also be underscored that I chose not to use the word inclusion in the questionnaires because at the time of the first studies it was not frequently used in schools and in the Swedish context and, when used, assigned quite different meanings. Mostly, however, inclusion seemed to be used to indicate only the placement of children in need of special support and/or children diagnosed as disabled or other characteristics in mainstream classrooms. Other characteristics, such as the ones listed above, appeared to be absent. Thus, words closer to everyday realities of the participants were used. On the other hand, they were used in such a way so that inferences could be made about inclusive education as defined here.

Thus, in the studies inclusion was operationalised in the presented mode. In article IV, the situation was different since the point of departure for this article was to investigate head teachers who according to certain criteria seemingly worked inclusively and effectively. Thus, while the discussion of inclusion in relation to articles I-III circled around issues of whether the occupational groups in the community had relational/inclusive perspectives or not, the aim of article IV was to deepen the understanding of the work of head teachers who presumably worked in an inclusive (and effective) direction given the definition described above. Moreover, in study four, I also wanted to investigate how the participants understood the notion of inclusion. Consequently, in all articles, inclusion was studied indirectly, but in article IV, I also investigated the head teachers' own definitions of inclusion. Thus, I have taken care to be clear how inclusion is defined and investigated in the articles and the relation between how it is used by me as an analytic concept

in relation to the views held by the participants in the studies. In the discussion section, I will return to the issue about inclusion in order to reflect on other and complementary ways to investigate inclusion among occupational groups.

5 METHOD

The following chapter presents the context in which the empirical data was collected. It also consists of general methodological considerations, selection procedures and descriptions of data collections and analyses of the data used in the separate studies. Relations between the methodological choices and the theoretical framework used in this study have been considered throughout the research process.

BAKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study was carried out in a Swedish municipality between 2008 and 2012. The origin of this study originates from an initiative taken by a local school politician who made a political proposal to the municipal board. The proposition expressed that "The municipality investigates the possibility to provide all children with special and exceptional needs proper preconditions, considering both qualitative as well as socio-economic aspects and that the investigation consists of causes and suggestions for actions in order to develop the preconditions for these children" (Local school politician, 2004-03-08, my translation).⁵¹ Through this proposal, the school board in the municipality decided to investigate how personnel perceived work with children in need of special support and what could be possibilities and limitations when such work was car-

⁵¹ In Swedish: Kommunen utreder möjligheten att ge samtliga barn med särskilda och synnerliga behov rätt förutsättningar, både ur kvalitetsmässig och samhällsekonomisk aspekt, samt att utredningen innehåller orsak och förslag till åtgärd för att utveckla förutsättningarna för dessa barn (Local school politician, 2004-03-08).

ried out in preschools and schools. The idea from the school board was to investigate these issues in order to develop work related to special needs in the municipality. At a school board meeting in August, 2007, it was decided that an external investigator should examine the municipality's support for children in need. There was also a request that the study should be based on scientific grounds. In the beginning of 2008, school administrators in the municipality contacted the local university in order to discuss this research project. The university then suggested a doctoral student (me) who could investigate issues concerning special needs in the municipality. It was decided that perceptions among school personnel on work with children in need of special support should be mapped out at an initial stage of the project. This approach was selected in order for the municipality to use the investigation as a point of departure for future work with special needs issues in the municipality. The study initially consisted of two separate studies. The first study (I) was designed as a questionnaire to all personnel working with children in preschools (age 1-5) and compulsory schools (age 6-16) in the municipality. The second study (II) was also formed as a questionnaire posed to all educational leaders in preschools and compulsory schools in the same municipality. The questionnaires were distributed in the 2008/2009 academic year. Before this research project was initiated and the two questionnaires were distributed, there had not been a certain, outspoken interest (e.g. in policy documents, web-sites, professional training for teachers) from the school board or the central school administration in the municipality to focus on special needs issues.

Further on, the first two studies displayed several interesting features which inspired me to further investigate specific issues in two follow-up

studies. The third study (III) considered how different occupational groups view the work of SENCOs. The fourth study investigates five head teachers' descriptions of strategies they use in order to promote inclusive and effective schools. Compulsory school leaders in the present municipality were interviewed (IV).

Concurrently, parallel to the research process, the municipality (initiated and supported by the school administrators) has worked actively with issues concerning school difficulties as well as how to improve schools and school development in general. The results of the questionnaires conducted in this study were one of several vantage points for the municipality's work. The municipal school board, school administrators and preschool and school personnel were continuously provided with preliminary and final results from the questionnaires. By highlighting responses from the occupational groups, several issues have been illuminated. These issues have formed the bases in the municipality's developmental work with children in need of special support.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MUNICIPALITY

This study is performed in a specific context, and therefore, should be read as a description of occupational groups' views on special needs in a particular municipality at a certain time in history. Thus, it is appropriate to describe the municipality and some prevailing conditions in the municipality's preschools and schools at the time of the distribution of questionnaire #1 and 2. The information about the current municipality presented in this section is collected from the municipality's school administrative department, the municipality's home page, The Swedish

National Agency for Education⁵² and The Municipality and County Council database.⁵³ See Table 1, below.

The municipality consists of about 55,000 inhabitants. It consists of numerous small towns, but the majority of the population lives in one central town. For the 2008/2009 academic year, there were approximately 6400 pupils in compulsory schools and 2600 children in preschools.⁵⁴ Preschools were available for parents and their children both in the central town as well as in the surrounding small villages. The preschools varied in size and could have one to four sections. All parents that applied for a placement for their child received such a place within less than four months. Children (1-5 years) were placed in regular preschools in the municipality. In 2008/2009, there were 26 compulsory schools in the municipality. Most pupils went to their local school, however there were segregating solutions within schools (i.e. for example, almost all secondary schools had at least one small group where approximately 3 to 10 students spent most of their school day). There were also 66 pupils who went to the municipality's schools for students with intellectual disabilities (In Swedish: Särskola).

In order to have a broader understanding of the municipality in relation to Sweden as a whole, Table 1 was created. The intention is to give a descriptive picture of the situation in the municipality when the study

⁵² Skolverket <http://www.skolverket.se/statistik-och-analys/statistik>

⁵³ Kolada, Kommun och landstingsdatabasen <http://www.kolada.se>

⁵⁴ In this study, no independent preschools or schools are reported. By the time of the first study, in 2008, there were one independent compulsory school and less than five independent preschools in the municipality.

was launched. It should be noted that the purpose of Table 1 is not to provide a “complete” presentation of the municipality or make an encompassing comparison between the municipality and the entire country. One should expect that there are innumerable variables that affect the outcome in a municipality as well as how the staff perceives their work with special needs and why children have problems in school. However, by selecting some information about factors that are considered important for the outcome in preschools and schools (c.f. Swedish Agency for Education, 2009) as well as results in national exams, it is possible to compare the municipality to Sweden as a whole.

Table 1 Background data about the municipality in relation to the country as a whole at the time of the data-collection (questionnaire #1 and 2) in 2008/2009.

| | Sweden | The Municipality |
|--|--------|------------------|
| The percentage of personnel in preschool with a university degree | 56,8 % | 60,1 % |
| The percentage of teachers in compulsory school with a teachers degree | 89,0 % | 92,7 % |
| The percentage of SENCOs in compulsory school | 5,7 % | 7,7 % |
| Number of children/personnel in preschool | 5,4 | 5,9 |
| Number of pupils/teacher in compulsory school | 11,8 | 13,2 |
| The percentage of pupils in year 9 that achieved the national goals in all subjects | 76,8 % | 83,0 % |
| The percentage of pupils in year 9 that have reached the minimum requirements in English | 95,0 % | 96,2 % |
| The percentage of pupils in year 9 that have reached the minimum requirements in Mathematics | 86,0 % | 91,0 % |
| The percentage of pupils in year 9 that have reached the minimum requirements in Swedish | 96,3 % | 97,2 % |

| | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| Average merit rating of 16 grades for a pupil in year 9 ⁵⁵ | 210 | 209 |
| The percentage of pupils born outside the country | 7,0 % | 5,0 % |
| The percentage of pupils with foreign background, born in Sweden | 9,0 % | 4,0 % |
| Index of parents' level of education ⁵⁶ | 2,21 | 2,29 |

In the 2008/2009 academic year, according to Table 1, there were more teachers and personnel with a university degree in the municipality's preschools and schools but fewer personnel and teachers per child compared to the national average in Sweden. This should be taken in to consideration when the result is interpreted and discussed, since research points towards the impact of the teacher on students' learning (e.g. Hattie, 2009, Swedish Agency for Education, 2009). There was a higher percentage of SENCOs in compulsory schools in the municipality, which is noteworthy, since this thesis specifically focuses on perceptions of the function and work of SENCOs. When the proportion of pupils who reach the national goals in all subjects was accounted for, it seems as if the current municipality was above the national average. This seems also to be the case for the proportion of pupils who reached the

⁵⁵ The Swedish National Agency for Education <http://www.skolverket.se> (2012-11-20) provides information concerning merit value for all pupils' grades in year 9 in each school and municipality in Sweden. The maximum merit value for a student in year nine is 320. SALSA (Skolverkets arbetsverktyg för lokala sambandsanalyser) <http://salsa.artisan.se/> (2012-11-20) presents results of grades in year 9 when some considerations are accounted for concerning pupil's background (i.e. sex, parents' level of education and origin). The expected merit value for the current municipality, when these background-factors are accounted for is 214 p.

⁵⁶ Index of parents' level of education is the mean of the parents' highest level of education. 1=completed compulsory school, 2=completed secondary education (in Swedish: gymnasial utbildning) up to three years, 3=completed at least 20 credits at university level.

national requirements for English, Mathematics and Swedish, even if the percentage is close to the national average in Sweden. When merit values are calculated, the same pattern appears. However, when socioeconomic factors were accounted for (i.e. SALSA-value), pupils performed slightly poorer in the municipality than pupils in general in Sweden. However, it should be noted that the differences between the municipality and the mean for Sweden are rather small. Thus, it seems if the municipality is quite representative for an average municipality in Sweden concerning features presented in Table 1.

CONTACTS, SELECTION AND PROCEDURE

As earlier described, school administrators in the current municipality contacted the local university in January 2008 with a request where the university was asked to help the municipality to investigate how work with special needs was pursued in preschools and schools. I was asked to be a doctoral student in this research project. The school administration in the municipality showed a specific interest in questions concerning how schools view and handle school difficulties. In order to receive an overarching picture of the personnel's views concerning work with children considered as children in need of special support, a comprehensive approach was taken. The first study became one of several steps in exploring how preschools and schools work with school difficulties in the municipality. Questionnaire #1 was sent out in December 2008. An introductory letter was attached to questionnaire #1 in which the purpose of the study was described (see appendix I). Two reminders were sent out before the inquiry ended in February 2009. The administration in the municipality had encouraged the educational leaders at preschools and schools to let their staff answer questionnaire #1 during working hours. The position taken by the school administrators indicated that

this specific questionnaire was considered important. The response rate was (72.5 %). The approach from the administrators might be one of several reasons why such a high response rate was attained.

Three months later, in May 2009, educational leaders in preschools and schools answered a similar questionnaire (see appendix III and IV). In June 2009, after two reminding e-mails to leaders who had not yet answered the questionnaire, the survey was closed. All educational leaders in the municipality had then responded. The high response rate might be a result of a large interest among the educational leaders concerning special educational needs issues. The educational leaders had earlier encouraged their staff to answer questionnaire #1. Additionally, the school administrators in the municipality had encouraged the educational leaders to answer the questionnaire. This can also be a contributing cause to the 100 % response rate. Questionnaire #1 and 2 were analysed and then reported in articles I and II.

The first two studies illuminated e.g. the role of SENCOs in relation to work with children in need of special support and school difficulties. Specific interest was on how different occupational groups view SENCOs' role and work. Data from study one and two made it possible to pose certain questions about how the role of SENCOs is perceived among different occupational groups in the school system as well as investigate if possible changes can be discerned in the school system due to the introduction of SENCOs. It was decided that the results concerning SENCOs deserved its own study. A comparative study was carried out (III). Responses related to SENCOs' work and role was pulled out from questionnaire #1 and 2. Additionally, questionnaire #3 was used in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of different groups'

views on SENCOs' role and work. Questionnaire #3 was used in a previous study by a research-group in 2006 (Nilholm et al, 2007).⁵⁷ Chief education officers (i.e. the highest ranking school employee) in all municipalities in Sweden were asked to respond to questionnaire #3 (90.3 % response rate). Four of the questions in questionnaire #3 were used in the third study (III).

The second study (II) made it possible to further investigate views of educational leaders who had responded to questionnaire #2. By selecting responses of interest for further investigation, head teachers⁵⁸ could be detected and selected for participation in the fourth study. Head teachers who could be described as representing inclusive values, relative to a relational perspective, and according to certain criteria were selected. The focus in the fourth study was head teachers leading both "inclusive" and successful schools (i.e. schools with relatively high goal attainment on national exams). Thus, these head teachers in compulsory schools were selected from questionnaire #2 (n=29). After an elaborate selection procedure (see below and IV), five head teachers participated in an interview study concerning strategies head teachers use to promote inclusive practices and to lead successful schools.

⁵⁷ Questionnaire # 3 was used in a prior research-project financed by the Swedish Research Council: "I demokratins marginaler – ett projekt om barn i problematiska skolsituationer (2006-2010)." In English: "In the margins of democracy- a project about children in difficult school situations (2006-2010)." I got permission from the head of the research project (Claes Nilholm) to use four of the questions in questionnaire #3 within the frame of this thesis.

⁵⁸ The concept "Educational leaders" is used in the second study (II) as a generic name for leaders in preschools and compulsory schools. When the interviews with educational leaders in compulsory school were performed, it was considered appropriate to use the term "Head teachers" since it is a recurring expression in compulsory school practices and academic work (see e.g. Day, 2005).

METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES AND CONSIDERATIONS

MY ROLE IN RELATION TO THE FIELD

In order to clarify my position in relation to the field, it can be fruitful to discuss the importance of closeness and distance towards the area studied, (c.f Malmgren Hansen 2002, Isaksson, 2009). Isaksson (2009) argues that it is a central issue how familiar the researcher is with the field he/she intends to set foot in and the activity he/she is about to study. In relation to my study, I have been working in the current municipality for about 20 years, both as a primary school teacher and a SENCO. Thus, I am well oriented in some of the areas I am investigating. This can be seen as an asset. For example, I had access to, as well as knowledge about the field ⁵⁹ and I was already known by many of the participants in the municipality. I also had a kind of legitimacy to the field since I had the same background as a majority of the participants in the study. The closeness to the field can also be seen as a limitation, since my preconceptions might have influenced me when the material was interpreted and discussed. I have sought to confront my preconceptions, expectations and ideas about the field by highlighting and discussing issues related to the study together with practitioners and scholars in various situations and settings (e.g. research seminars, paper presentations, school activities with school personnel and so forth). This ap-

⁵⁹ When the study was launched in 2008, I had been a SENCO in the municipality since 2002. I had also been an educator in the field of special education at the local university since 2004.

proach has helped me to try and adopt several perspectives on the research field studied in this thesis.⁶⁰

I also chose to have my office at the university where the processing and analysing of data took place. This was a deliberate choice in order to create “space” between me and the participants in the study. However, I have had close contact with practitioners at all levels in the municipality e.g. by continuously reporting the research process and preliminary results to different groups (e.g. administrators, local school politicians, educational leaders⁶¹ and teachers). My intention was to oscillate between closeness and distance to the field (c.f. Isaksson, 2009) in order to see and be aware of phenomena that could have been hard to detect if I had been active mostly in one of the two settings (i.e. mostly in the municipality or mostly in the academic milieu of the university).

Additionally, I have kept a research diary throughout the years as a doctoral student (2008 – 2013). I have continuously, once a week, written about events and activities relative to the municipality and my research. Primarily, I have focused on expressing my own reactions towards things I have experienced as a doctoral student. The research diary has not been used as empirical material. However, I have read my text on several occasions during the research process. This procedure has increased my reflexivity on the research field and thus, made me more aware of my own assumptions, standpoints and attitudes in relation to

⁶⁰ See also the section Reliability and validity below.

⁶¹ In study IV, educational leaders in compulsory school (in IV called head teachers) were interviewed. The five head teachers were interviewed more than three years after the research project was launched. The possible influence of the ongoing research project and of me as a doctoral student in the municipality, and an interviewer, is further discussed in the section of Reliability and validity.

e.g. the participants, ethical dilemmas and results (Gustafsson et al, 2006). This course of action is in line with what Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008) suggest in order for the researcher to reflect on uncertainties as well as the complexity in relation to decision making throughout the research process.

THE STUDY OF ONE MUNICIPALITY – GENERALIZING THE DATA

This study highlights a certain phenomenon: Occupational groups and their views on special needs issues. A special focus is on how personnel in preschool and school view work with the group of children often referred to as children in need of special support. This phenomenon is investigated within rather distinct boundaries. Most of the research presented in this thesis is studied within the same context - one Swedish municipality between year 2008 and 2012.⁶² Accordingly, there is no strict sampling reflecting representativeness of a larger population (Stake, 1998, Larsson, 2005, 2009).

Larsson (2005) stresses that when results from one case ⁶³ are depicted; there is no easy way to generalise the outcome to other cases (e.g. other municipalities). The results can only be related to the specific case (Larsson, 2005). However, the results derived from this specific study can

⁶² The exception is the above mentioned “questionnaire #3”. This questionnaire was posed in 2006 to all chief education officers in Sweden.

⁶³ When I discuss the possibilities to generalise the data, I mostly refer to Larsson (2005, 2009). Larsson uses case as a concept. However, I would like to stress that the present study should not be understood as a case-study (c.f. Stake 1998). Rather, the study should be seen as a descriptive study in which one particular municipality is described in context (e.g. time and place). As such, I found Larsson’s reasoning concerning generalisation to be applicable for this study.

contribute to the understanding of work with children in need of special support in other municipalities. The relevance to other municipalities might be revealed when the design of the study in relation to the specific municipality is described and brought to light. Then, the description of the municipality might be useful outside its own context (c.f. Larsson, 2005). According to Larsson (2009), the interpretation of the case to recognize patterns is essential. No contexts can be identified without interpreting them as something. Thus, according to Larsson (2009) it is important to use several lines of reasoning on generalisations when cases are studied and interpretations are made.

However, being able to generalize from a researched case to this new case is a matter of how the interpretation fits the whole case. It is the whole configuration – interpretation in context – that is the basis of generalization – an experience of a recognition of something. Here, there is no *a priori* assumption that an interpretation can be generalized to similar contexts: It is not enough. The generalization is loosely related to contexts in the sense that the researcher cannot predict in which cases the interpretation is useful, only suspect in which contexts one might look for it. It is often more a matter of ‘realization’ – someone who is familiar with a piece of research realizes that the original interpretation ‘fits’ cases they have met (Larsson, 2009, p. 34).

In order to make possible recognitions of patterns in other municipalities with similar contexts, some background information about the municipality has been provided. In a similar mode, the theoretical framework is presented above in order to account for my interpretations of the data.

Generalisation can also occur when the problem area studied is compared to other already known cases investigating similar situations. The generalisation goes from several cases to one case and researchers refer to their repertoire of familiar cases when new research is initiated. Stake (1998) calls this naturalistic generalisation. This approach has been applied when prior studies have been reviewed and analysed in relation to the present study. By generalising what is previously known about e.g. views of occupational groups and special needs and then relating it to what is known from the study in the current municipality, there are possibilities to put the specific municipality in a broader context. As Larsson (2009) suggests above, it is also up to the reader whether he/she finds patterns in the current study that might fit cases he/she has met before.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

There are few studies in Sweden that, on a comprehensive level, investigate how occupational groups in preschools and schools view work with children in need of special support (for exceptions see e.g. Tideman et al, 2005, Giotta and Enmanuelsson, 2011, Göransson et al, 2012). In general, most studies have qualitative characteristics, conducted with a relatively small sample (Nilholm, 2007). In order to investigate views of different occupational groups in a whole population posing the research questions set forth,⁶⁴ questionnaires were considered to be the only reasonable choice for this study.

⁶⁴ Investing views of different occupational groups, using the approach applied in the current study, has never been done in Sweden before.

Reliability and validity of a study involve questions about whether the received results can be trusted as valid and correct. Reliability means that the instruments used to measure the object of study are reliable and that repeated measures would show the same result. The study shows high reliability if there is little space for random errors occurring while data is collected (Ejlertsson, 2005). A study is considered valid if the researcher manages to measure what was intended to be measured (Kvale and Brinkman, 2012) as well as being able to draw correct inferences from the results. In a study based on questionnaires, it is highly important to carefully reflect on the questions constructed so that they are addressed in such a way that the questions really measure what was intended (Ejlertsson, 2005). Below, I will present courses of action that I believe have secured the reliability and validity in the present study.

When the questionnaires were used, it was important to consider how to secure reliability in the study. As with validity, it is important to construct questions correctly from reliability aspects. In order to avoid random variation in the answers, the questions were constructed to be as clear and precise as possible. Further, in order to secure reliability in the study, it was important that the questionnaires were well formulated and considered as suitable tools to measure the occupational groups' views on work with children in need of special support (Ejlertsson, 2005). Firstly, when the questions in questionnaire #1 (60 questions) and #2 (59 questions) were formulated, experts from the national agency of Statistics Sweden ⁶⁵ were consulted. This was done in order to assure that the questions were clear and that ambiguities were erased so that

⁶⁵ In Swedish: Statistiska Centralbyrån, SCB

misunderstandings could be avoided. The two questionnaires were also tried out in two pilot studies. The formulations of the questionnaires were discussed and tested accurately and the questions were formulated and re-formulated through an extensive procedure. When the final adjustments were made, the questionnaires were handed out. The response rate was high in both questionnaires and the person to whom the questionnaire was addressed appeared to be the person who answered the questionnaire. This strengthens the reliability of the study as well (Ejlertsson, 2005).

At an early stage of the data-analysing process, I read and compiled the comments on question 60 in questionnaire #1. This was an open-ended question where the respondents could comment on and discuss the questionnaire. I then presented the compiled summary of question 60 to a reference group consisting of school managers and special educators (SENCOs and special teachers) working in close contact with the respondents at preschools and schools. This group was called “the reference group” in the municipality. The group met at least twice each semester throughout the whole research project (2008-2012). Through this group, I had possibilities to pose questions about how the questionnaires were perceived and understood by the participants. This approach helped me to obtain a picture of how the questionnaire had been received, interpreted and perceived by approximately one fourth of the respondents. According to the responses in the open-ended question, there seemed to be a large interest in the questionnaire. Many participants were thankful that someone asked them about their opinion. A large amount of the respondents commented on questions in the questionnaire that were particularly engaging to them. A very small amount

of the participants also commented on formulations of questions that were difficult to understand and interpret. These particular questions were discussed in the “reference-group”. There were no questions that were more highlighted than others by the respondents which indicate that most questions were posed sufficiently, which strengthen the reliability of the study.

In order to strengthen the content validity of the study (Ejlertsson, 2005) and see that observations and results reflected phenomena and variables of interest for the study (Kvale and Brinkman, 2012), several measures were taken. For example, before questionnaire #1 was distributed, I gathered a group of special educators who worked administratively, but also in close contact with preschools and schools in the municipality. In this group, we discussed formulations as well as adjusted some questions so that the questionnaire could be suitable for all occupational groups at preschools and schools participating in the study. The purpose was to assure that the formulations in the questionnaire were as clear as possible. The respondents also received my phone number and e-mail address in case they needed to pose further questions about formulations in the questionnaires. All the participants also had access to special educators who were familiar with the concepts used in the questionnaire. The intention was that they could clarify concepts and formulations when necessary. The respondents were informed about the possibility to ask a special educator connected to their preschool or school when the educational leaders informed their staff about the questionnaire that was sent out by mail.

When the data collection was completed, several presentations, discussions and meetings with participants in the study as well as other stakeholders in the municipality were held. The overarching research idea to e.g. reconnect different steps in the research process to the participants is supported by Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008). To discuss formulations in the questionnaires, to offer help to the respondents when needed and to communicate results when the data collection was finished were primarily used in order to ensure that the questions were relevant and understood by the respondents as intended. This approach increases the validity of the study (Miles and Huberman, 2008). In order for the reader to validate the reasonableness of my interpretations in relation to how the questions were posed as well as assess the reliability of the study, I attach questionnaire #1 and #2 as well as the accompanying letters as appendices to this thesis.

Concepts such as reliability and validity are seldom used in interview studies. Instead, credibility (or trustworthiness) is often referred to in order to assure the quality of the study (Shenton, 2004, Kvale and Brinkman, 2012). Kvale and Brinkman (2012) point out that it is essential for the researcher to attend to how the interviews are carried out and transcribed. For example, it is important how the questions are formulated and that the researcher is aware of the purpose of the questions posed (Kvale, 1992). Equally important, it is essential for the study that the analysis procedure is clearly accounted for (Kvale, 1997).

When study four was planned, performed and finally analysed, several methodological decisions were taken in relation to the purpose of the study (Kvale 1992). It was essential for the study that I considered my role and subjectivity towards the research area through all stages of the

interview study. I also had to take into account influential factors such as how the research project had developed in the municipality as well as my relation to the participating head teachers that I interviewed. However, during the interviews, my impression was that the head teachers spoke freely and felt at ease in the interview situation and their answers were quite extensive. The head teachers' mode to use the majority of the time to speak in the interviews can indicate that the personal role of the interviewer was of minor importance. Further, when the study was transcribed and interpreted, I had to be clear about the purpose of the study in order to make accurate transcriptions and analysis (Kvale, 1992, Linell, 1994). When the interviews were processed, it was essential to go back to the recorded as well as transcribed interviews at several occasions in order to control, challenge and theorise the statements of the head teachers. Their responses to specific questions have been compared to the entire interview as well as to the other interviews in the study. I analysed the material in four steps. 1) The interviews were transcribed, read through and summarised 2) The interview questions were used as tools and considered as themes 3) Similarities and differences in the responses were listed and 4) A critical pragmatic approach was used when data was interpreted and discussed (for a further description, see article IV).

Before the main study was performed, test interviews were carried out and the interview design was modified over a period of ten months. Three pilot interviews were performed between June 2011 and January 2012. Throughout this time period, professors and doctoral students discussed the design of the interview study and the questions posed in the interviews during research seminars at the university. This was done

in order to modify the interview towards the purpose of the study (Kvale, 1992). Through the pilot interviews, the interview guide was also adjusted to the participating head teachers' context and conditions.

The study was performed in a specific context (the municipality). Therefore, the head teachers were previously familiar with me as a doctoral student and the research project which I ran. None of the head teachers had previously been administratively responsible for me. However, some of them had been in contact with me previously in the project while others were new to me. This can be seen as an advantage as well as a drawback for the credibility of the study. There might have been an unspoken sense of what answers the head teachers believed I wanted to hear. Additionally, their responses might reflect tacit ideas and preconceptions about how head teachers should respond (Kvale and Brinkman, 2012). However, as earlier reported, the head teachers seemed to answer rather freely and spontaneously to my questions. This is an indication that the familiar context in which the interviews were performed was perceived as an asset rather than a weakness by the head teachers as well as by me as their interviewer.

Finally, Torrance (2012) argues that respondent validation is essential in quantitative investigations as well as in studies where a more qualitative approach is applied. Response validity means that participants have the opportunity to check the accuracy of initial data gathered. They should be able to be influential in order to add to e.g. transcripts of interviews. It can also involve comments from the participants concerning whether interpreted data can be recognised as fair and reasonable reflections of the situation as the respondents understand it (Torrance, 2012). In this current study, a majority of the participants have been able to check preliminary data on several occasions, through presentations and discus-

sions. My understanding is that the participants have recognised and agreed to what has been described for them from the data during these presentations and discussions. Thus, the response validity can be said to have been attended to in this current study.

ETHICAL ASPECTS

In order to protect individuals in the studies, four ethical principles have been followed (Swedish Research Council, 2010).⁶⁶ In the letters attached to the questionnaires (#1-3) the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and that the collected material was related to a research project. They were informed that the results would only be used for research purposes. Additionally, in the attached letter to questionnaire #1 and 2, it was clearly expressed that the results would also be used in the municipality's developmental work (see appendix I and III). In the attached letter, name, affiliation and contact information was provided in case the participants wanted additional information about the research project. In the accompanying letters it was clearly stated that no individuals or schools would be revealed when results were reported. Additionally, the current municipality is never mentioned by name in the separate articles or in the thesis. Individual consent was considered to have been granted when the questionnaire was returned completed. Thus, there have been possibilities to refrain from responding to the questionnaires. This possibility was used, to some extent (questionnaire #1 and 3). Concerning questionnaire #2, all educational leaders in the municipality participated. This could be interpreted that

⁶⁶ 1) Information about the research 2) Consent of the participants 3) Confidentiality of the responses given 4) Use of the results for research purposes. In Swedish: Informations-, samtyckes-, konfidentialitets- samt nyttjandekravet

work with children in need of special support is considered important by this occupational group. They also encouraged their staff to answer questionnaire #1. During the process of collecting questionnaires for the second study, several educational leaders contacted me when their email addresses had been wrong and they had not yet received a questionnaire. They were eager to receive the questionnaire and to answer the survey. The action from the leaders strengthens the interpretation made above. The educational leaders might have felt more or less obliged to reply (despite intentions from the researcher to communicate the voluntariness of the study) since they are part of the school system as administrators in the municipality.

In the interview study (IV), further precautions were taken in relation to ethical aspects while interviews can be considered as even more sensitive as studies using quantitative methods (e.g. questionnaires (Kvale, 1997, Oliver, 2003)). By the time of the mailing concerning participation in the interview study, the head teachers also received an attached letter which clarified that I was the only one who knew which head teachers in the municipality had been asked to participate in the study. The letter explained that they were selected since their replies in questionnaire #2 were of specific interest to the study and for further investigations. It was also mentioned that participation was voluntary and that the head teachers could terminate their involvement at any time. They were also informed that the results from the interviews were supposed to be used only in relation to this thesis. The transcripts would only be analysed by me as a researcher. In the interview study, only five head teachers in one municipality were interviewed and quoted in the finished paper (IV). One can expect that head teachers in a municipality of about 55,000

inhabitants (29 compulsory school leaders) know each other and that it is plausible that the identities of the head teachers in this study somehow could have been revealed. The head teachers themselves were of course free to tell colleagues, superiors or staff about their participation in the study. However, I have taken specific precautions (both orally and in writing) in order not to reveal the identity of the head teachers. When reporting the results of the study, I have chosen not to disclose the gender of the participants. In a similar mode, I have chosen not to relate quotations to specific participants or interviews (e.g. Interviewee 1, 2 and so forth). The quotations were first transcribed in Swedish, and then translated into English (c.f. Isaksson, 2009). This procedure also made it more difficult to relate a specific quotation to a certain person. All the material has been stored in my computer and the memory stick with the recorded interviews has been locked in my office. As earlier mentioned, before submitting the article manuscript, the participants have read excerpts and preliminary results. They have also been given the opportunity to contact me in order to pose questions or receive further information about the interview study.

In order to ensure that the ethical aspects have been properly taken into consideration, several specialists and experienced researchers have been consulted about formulations in attached letters, questionnaires and interviews. Finally, it should be stressed that ethical aspects have been considered through the entire research process (i.e. from the first contacts until the results were finally presented in papers and in the introductory text) (c.f. Oliver, 2003, Gustafsson et al, 2006). These ethical considerations throughout the whole research project have been of spe-

cial importance to me, since I have worked in close contact with the municipality in this study.

COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL DATA

QUESTIONNAIRE # I (USED IN I AND III)

The first questionnaire was sent by mail to all teaching and support staff in preschool and compulsory school (N=1297) in the municipality for the 2008/2009 academic year. There were 938 respondents (72.5 %) in the study. Initially, the responses from the staff were studied and analysed as a whole. Further into the analysing process, it became interesting to investigate if different occupational groups in preschool and school might view special needs and work with children in need of special support differently. The data was categorised, computed and analysed related to occupational groups. Six occupational groups were then selected: ⁶⁷ preschool teachers (199), assistant resource staff (56), SENCOs (35), special teachers (22), class teachers (147) and finally, subject teachers (123).⁶⁸ These groups were selected in order to study staff working with children between the ages of 1-16. The occupational groups were also selected due to their different functions in the school system, as well as their various level of education. Assistant resource staff, special teachers and SENCOs were of special interest since these

⁶⁷ The number of participants within each group is shown in brackets.

⁶⁸ In addition to the six groups selected for study I, the following occupational groups also responded in questionnaire #1: child minders, child care workers, preschool teachers in preschool class, leisure time pedagogues and resource teachers.

groups are often expected to have specific roles, and are given assignments, in relation to children in need of special support.

An initial version of the questionnaire was tested in October 2008. The final version included 60 questions. The questions concerned how staff view work related to special needs issues. Most questions had formulated response alternatives, but the respondents had the possibility to express their views in an open response alternative within most questions. The questions in questionnaire #1 concerned e.g.; experiences of questions about work with children in need of special support, teaching, preventive work, guiding procedures as well as influence and competence. A selected number of questions and responses from questionnaire #1 are reported in this thesis (see I and III). The function of several questions was to map characteristics of the population (e.g. age, sex, education and so forth). The questions selected for further analysis were the most interesting based on the purpose of the study as well as the theoretical perspectives taken. Analysis of the data was completed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 16), in which descriptive statistics were computed, using frequency counts. The frequency counts were converted and presented in percentages. Since whole populations were studied, only descriptive statistics are presented. Upon the completion of the study, the municipality provided a list of the total number of members in each occupational category. The list clarified that no occupational group was over- or underrepresented in the study.

QUESTIONNAIRE # 2 (USED IN II AND III)

The second questionnaire was sent out in May 2009 to all educational leaders in the municipality (N=45).⁶⁹ The educational leaders worked in

⁶⁹A preliminary questionnaire was tested in March 2009 by two educational leaders working outside the current municipality.

preschools and compulsory schools and the response rate was 100 %. Questionnaire #2 was constructed as a web-survey and the educational leaders were contacted through their e-mail addresses and they answered the questionnaire over the internet. The questionnaire contained 59 questions. The alternatives in the questionnaire were fixed, but most questions had an alternative where the participants could formulate responses freely. The last question was an open-ended question. The questions in questionnaire #2 dealt with more or less the same issues as questionnaire #1. Educational leaders were not asked about teaching. Instead, there were more questions about guidelines, personnel and organisation in questionnaire #2. Some of the questions were directed solely to leaders in compulsory schools. A selection of questions and responses from questionnaire #2 is reported in article II. After the first analysis of the responses from the educational leaders, the group was divided into two sub-groups; educational leaders in pre-school (16) and educational leaders in compulsory school (29) (called head teachers in study IV). This was done in order to detect if there were similarities and differences between the two sub-groups. Analysis of the data was completed using SPSS 17, in which descriptive statistics were computed, using frequency counts. The frequency counts were converted and presented in percentages. As in questionnaire #1, whole populations were studied, so only descriptive statistics are presented.

QUESTIONNAIRE # 3 (USED IN III)

Questionnaire #3 was distributed in spring 2006. As mentioned earlier, this questionnaire was used in a study as part of a research-project financed by the Swedish Research Council. The study was carried out before the current study in the municipality was initiated. I was not engaged in this research project at the time of the distribution of questionnaire #3. Data from questionnaire #3 is earlier reported by Nilholm et

al (2007). From an early stage of the research process, there have been intentions to compare answers between participants in different questionnaires and studies (see also Nilholm et al, 2012, Nilholm et al, 2013, Cameron and Lindqvist, 2013). When the role of SENCOs was further investigated (III), it was found valuable to compare responses from different occupational groups in the school system. This approach made it possible to broaden our picture of SENCOs' role and work to a larger context and be able to validate the answers from different studies and groups. Thus, the answers from chief education officers who had answered questionnaire #3 in 2006 were included in the third study.

The questionnaire was handed out to chief education officers in all municipalities in Sweden. The response rate was 90.3% (262 out of 290 municipalities). Formulations in questionnaire #1 and #2 correspond to some extent to questionnaire #3. Questionnaire #3 contained 30 questions. As in questionnaire #1 and #2 most of the questions were fixed however the respondents were given some possibilities to formulate their own responses. Questions concerning special needs issues and work with pupils in need of special support in the municipality were asked. This questionnaire was directed towards work in regular compulsory schools (i.e. independent schools and preschools, for children aged 1-5 were not included). SPSS was used in order to give descriptive statistics from whole population data. As pointed out earlier, four of the 30 questions were used in order to receive a more comprehensive picture of the views of occupational groups in the Swedish school system and correlate responses from the highest school administrator to other occupational groups responding in questionnaire #1 and #2.

INTERVIEWS (USED IN IV)

Interviews were carried out with five compulsory school head teachers in the aforementioned municipality in January 2012. The interview study was a follow-up study of questionnaire #2 (see II, IV). The five head teachers were selected through several steps in order to find head teachers who could be described as representing inclusive views and leading successful schools. The steps taken in order to find the participants in this interview study were as follows: 1) Six statements from questionnaire #2 were selected ⁷⁰: a) a medical diagnosis should not be of significance for acquiring special support b) special groups outside the classroom are not sought-after c) students should not be educated more than 50 % of their school day outside their classroom d) teachers can be a reason why students are in need of special support e) classes/groups functioning badly can be a reason why students are in need of special support and f) SENCOs should work with organisational school development as one of their assignments. Each selected head teacher agreed to these statements to a higher degree than their colleagues in the municipality. The head teachers should also lead schools with relatively high academic achievements (above average) on national exams, in relation to grades and socio-economic factors. 2) At the end of 2011, two school administrators, who worked in close contact with head teachers in the municipality, were asked (independent of each other) to choose eight head teachers from a pre-printed list of all compulsory school head teachers (29) participating in questionnaire #2. They were asked to pick out the head teachers who they believed could best be described as

⁷⁰ The formulation, inclusive practices, is related here to a relational perspective (Persson, 1998), and described in chapter 4.

working towards inclusive practices.⁷¹ The head teachers who later on participated in this interview study were all selected by the school administrators. There was no information back to the administrators about which head teacher had finally been selected. 3) One interview was taken away from the interview study since this interview could not fulfil the criteria set forth as representing inclusive values (see IV for a more detailed description of the selection procedure).

After the selection procedure, the head teachers were contacted in December 2011 by e-mail. A week later, they were contacted by phone when the time and place for the interviews were decided. Concurrently, an interview guide was sent out to the participants. This interview guide was tested in three pilot interviews between May 2011 and January 2012 and built upon the following overarching questions:

- 1) How does the school organise work for students in need of special support?
- 2) What organisational solutions do the head teachers value?
- 3) How do head teachers lead and organise their schools and what is most important in their leadership?
- 4) How do head teachers use their support staff (e.g. assistants and SENCOs) and how do they view the roles of special teachers versus SENCOs?

⁷¹The two school administrators were given some examples of the criteria presented above. Apart from that, the administrators used their own perception of the word “inclusive practices”.

5) How do head teachers define the concept of inclusion?

Within the overarching five questions, sub-questions were asked. The interviews took place in the schools where the head teachers work. The interviews lasted approximately 1 - 1 ½ hours.

The semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 1997) were recorded and shortly after, transcribed (a total number of about a hundred pages). The transcripts were read through and summarised in order to obtain an overall picture of the material (Linell, 1994). The interview questions above were used as themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994, 2008). More specifically, what head teachers said in relation to a theme was marked in the transcribed interviews. For example, themes based on the questions above were: *organising work*, *valued solutions* and *leadership*. Further, two additional themes (in all seven themes) emerged from the head teachers' replies.

These two themes could not be sorted under any of the five questions. The next step involved listing similarities and differences in the responses relative to each theme. Finally, I listened to the interviews once more and carefully read the transcripts several times. When the data was interpreted and later on discussed, a critical pragmatic stance was taken. The critical pragmatic reading of the transcribed interviews made it possible to trace and uncover unreflected assumptions and constructs of structures manifested through the responses of the head teachers (c.f. Cherryholmes, 1988).

6 RESULTS- SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN THE FOUR PAPERS

The empirical foundation of this thesis is based on four separate studies. Each study is presented in four articles (I-IV). The joint approach for the four studies is to investigate different occupational groups' views concerning work with children in need of special support in preschools and schools in one municipality. Each study concerns occupational groups' perspectives on how preschools and schools should work with special needs and what function different groups should have in such work. A particular focus is on SENCOs (III) and educational leaders (II, IV). The four papers are connected to each other in several ways. For example: 1) the studies presented in articles I-III use the same, or similarly constructed questionnaires 2) the results presented in articles I and II are followed up in article III. Article IV is a follow-up study of article II 3) articles I-IV use Skrtic's (1991) critical pragmatic reading of special education in order to highlight and discuss the outcome of the studies and 4) all papers discuss the results in relation to the notion of inclusion.

When data was analysed and results were presented, descriptive statistics were used (Moore et al, 2009). Since the whole population in the municipality is studied, I chose not to do significance testing. All information necessary for the study was already available (Löfgren, 2006).⁷²

⁷² It should be noticed that the groups studied are of different sizes. Additionally, some of the groups are quite small (e.g. SENCOs and sub-groups of the educational leaders) which might have affected the quantitative result. Comparing the groups using percentages can be somewhat misleading since the views

The results in each paper are presented in relation to the overall aim of the thesis. Thus, the focal point is a selection of relevant results in relation to the aim. The presentation of the papers focuses mainly on the results of the studies since other chapters in this introductory text mostly cover and develop what is presented in the separate articles (e.g. aim, research questions, prior research, theoretical framework and concluding discussions).

PAPER I

Different agendas?- the views of different occupational groups on special needs education. (Lindqvist, Nilholm, Almqvist and Wetso)⁷³

The purpose of the first study was to investigate how different occupational groups in preschools and schools explain why children have problems in schools, how they believe schools should help these children and the role they believe SENCOs should have in such work. This was investigated using questionnaire #1.

The results show that all occupational groups studied state that teachers' competence, access to special educational competence, parents' attitudes, the child's motivation as well as adjustments of working methods

of each special teacher (n=22) become more influential for the results than the responses of e.g. each preschool teacher (n=199). However, descriptive statistics are used through tables and figures in articles I-III and the number of participants of each occupational group is clearly accounted for in the articles. This approach can hopefully help the reader to track how the data has been interpreted and presented.

⁷³ Lindqvist and Nilholm are first authors.

and procedures are very important in order to make work with children in need of special support successful. About 75 % (or more) of all personnel in each occupational group replies that these factors are very important, which indicates that the staff consider organisational, individual and environmental factors as equally important when working with children in need of special support. It should be noted that placing pupils in a smaller group outside the classroom is considered as a very important measure by more than 60 % of the preschool teachers, subject teachers and assistants. About half of the class teachers agree to this as well.

In order to investigate how different occupational groups explain why children are in need of special support and thus, have problems in schools, the question *How common are the following reasons to explain why children are in need of special educational support?* was posed. For all participants answering the questionnaire (N=938), the rank ordering of the different explanations is as follows: 1) children have individual deficits, 2) the child's home environment is insufficient, 3) the goals of compulsory schooling are too difficult for these children, 4) preschool/school is poorly prepared to handle differences, 5) some groups/classes function badly, and 6) some teacher's skills are insufficient. The factors that are most often marked as common in the questionnaire are factors that are the most difficult for the participants to influence. The response pattern for the teachers (preschool, class, and subject teachers) is fairly similar. Factors associated with the child (deficits, home environment) are most often mentioned as common reasons why children are in need of special support. School's influence on why children might become in need of special support (goals, school's preparedness to handle differences) are the second most often mentioned, while factors connected to the class-

room (teacher skills, class/group functioning) are least often mentioned as common reasons why children need special support. Preschool teachers mention less often than class and subject teachers that preschools/schools are poorly prepared to handle differences. Special educators (special teachers and SENCOs) mention school factors as being a more common reason for educational difficulties than the home environment. Assistants and special teachers respond more often than other groups that the class/group functioning badly can be a reason why children are in need of special support.

In order to further investigate the participants' views on why children are in need of special support and how they account for school problems, the additional question *What importance do you think a medical diagnosis should have when municipalities allocate special educational support?* was asked. Approximately 50 % of the class teachers, subject teachers and assistants answer that a medical diagnosis should be of importance when allocating special support (despite the fact that it is not required by legislation). Preschool teachers, special teachers and SENCOs are less prone to respond that a medical diagnosis should be of importance. Twenty-two percent of the SENCOs state that a diagnosis should be of importance.

All occupational groups in the study respond that SENCOs should work with supervision as well as special education directed to the individual child. More than 90 % of the special teachers, assistants, subject teachers and class teachers respond that SENCOs should work with individually taught special education to children categorised as children in need of special support. There are few participants in the study who

state that SENCOs should work with organisational school development. The only group that considers this work task important for SENCOs are SENCOs themselves (78 %). A majority of the participants in all groups, except for preschool teachers, believe that special educators should have the largest influence on pedagogical content in the education of children considered as being in need of special support. More than 80 % of the subject teachers chose this alternative.

To sum up, a majority (between about 80-95 % in each group) of the six occupational groups specifically highlighted in this study agree to the alternative that children's individual deficits are a common cause why children are in need of special support. A majority in most groups also agree that a medical diagnosis should be of importance to obtain support. Special educators, especially SENCOs, deviate somewhat from the general pattern. SENCOs e.g. more often consider school factors and teacher's insufficient skills as reasons for children's school problems, and put less weight on the importance of medical diagnosis, the placement of children in small groups and the reinforcement of assistants and support staff. They also state more often than other groups that SENCOs should work with school development, documentation and pupil welfare. Additionally, there are differences between the teacher groups as well. Preschool teachers are more likely to select the alternative that preschool teachers/ class teachers/ mentors should have the largest influence concerning the pedagogical content for children in need of support, class teachers are less likely to consider the placement of children in a special group as a valuable measure to take and subject teachers are more critical of children's home environment. Finally, assistants see the reinforcement of assistants as very important. This answer deviates from other occupational groups studied.

PAPER II

Making schools inclusive?- Educational leaders' views on how to work with children in need of special support. (Lindqvist and Nilholm)⁷⁴

The aim of the second study was to investigate how educational leaders explain why children have problems in schools, how they consider pre-schools/schools should help children in need of special support and the role they believe that SENCOs should have in such work. This was studied by using questionnaire #2. As can be noted, the aim of studies I and II is almost identical (apart from the occupational groups studied in the two papers). Several questions used from questionnaire #1 and #2 in papers I and II respectively, are the same, or very similar.

The most frequent explanation why children are in need of special support and thus, have problems in schools, is that children have individual deficiencies, according to around 80 % of the educational leaders. The second most frequent answer is that goals are too difficult. The two least chosen alternatives are teachers' insufficient skills and classes/groups functioning badly. Thus, two factors educational leaders can actually influence (teachers and groups) were chosen least frequently by the educational leaders. When investigating what importance the participants state a medical diagnosis should have when municipalities allocate special educational support, more than three fourths of the participants do not reply that a medical diagnosis should be of importance.

Teachers' competence is most often considered as very important in making work with children in various school difficulties successful. Ac-

⁷⁴ Lindqvist is first author.

cess to special educational competence, adjusting working methods/procedures and the educational team around the child are also considered as very important by almost all of the leaders. The question *What is the most desirable organizational/personnel solution to strive for at your school concerning children in need of special support?* was posed to compulsory school leaders only since this particular question about organisational solutions is most applicable in a compulsory school context. The most desirable solution, according to the leaders, is that the pupil is part of his/her regular class/group and is supervised by the special teacher/SENCO. The second most desirable solution is that there is an extra teacher in the classroom. The least sought-after solutions are that there is access to assistants in the classroom and that pupils are instructed in special groups more than 50 % of the time.

More than half of the participants state that special educators should have the largest influence on the pedagogical content when educating children in need of special support. SENCOs should, according to almost all educational leaders, focus on supervising staff, doing documentation, and writing school assessments and evaluations. A majority (58 %) of the educational leaders respond that SENCOs should work with organisational school development. Less than half of the participants (49 %) state that SENCOs should work with individually taught special education.

When comparing the two sub-groups of leaders (compulsory school leaders (n=29), preschool leaders (n=16)), responses between the two groups slightly vary. For example, more preschool leaders than compulsory school leaders believe that preschool teachers/ class teachers/

mentors are the occupational group that should have the largest influence on the pedagogical content when educating children categorised as children in need of special support.⁷⁵ More than 60 % of the compulsory school leaders state that special educators should have the largest influence. Furthermore, basically all leaders (94 %) in preschools state that a medical diagnosis should not be of importance in order to receive special support. Concurrently, more than a third of the leaders in compulsory schools respond that a medical diagnosis should be of importance. Another difference is the way educational leaders view the work of SENCOs. Few leaders in preschools (13 %) state that SENCOs should work with individually taught special education and just one third state that they should work with pupil welfare. Leaders in compulsory schools (90 %) respond on the other hand that SENCOs should work with pupil welfare and more than two thirds state that they should work with individually taught special education. Regarding SENCOs' work with organisational preschool/school development, the situation is reversed. Leaders in preschools respond more often than leaders in compulsory schools that SENCOs should work with this task.

To sum up, many educational leaders in the municipality studied seem to have a deficit perspective (i.e. the child's individual deficiencies as an explanation of school difficulties) on reasons why children are in need of special support. However, preschool leaders seem to adopt this per-

⁷⁵ In the attached letter (see appendix III) it was clarified that children/pupils in need of special support were children who could be considered as being at risk of not reaching a school's goals. It was also clearly expressed that the questionnaire related to all children in need of special support from preschool up until year 9 in compulsory school.

spective less often than their colleagues in compulsory schools. Some of the data also display tendencies where the educational leaders, in pre-school as well as in compulsory schools, seem to be more open to alternative solutions on how to work with school difficulties. As a general pattern, educational leaders seem to be somewhat ambivalent in their answers on how to work with children in need of special support. On the one hand, they e.g. state that teachers' competence is very important in order to succeed. On the other hand, several educational leaders (especially frequent by compulsory school leaders) respond that teachers' insufficient skills have little to do with why children are in need of special support, that special educators should have the largest influence on the pedagogical content when educating children in need of special support and that SENCOs should work with children individually.

PAPER III

SENCOs- vanguards or in vain? (Lindqvist)

The aim of the third study was to investigate possible changes within a school system when the introduction of a new occupational group, SENCOs, challenges established structures. This was studied by posing questions concerning how different occupational groups view where, and in what ways, SENCOs work and should work. These issues were investigated by using selected questions from questionnaires #1-3. As will be noted, some of the results regarding SENCOs' work presented in papers I and II will also appear in paper III.

In questionnaire #3, the question, *Where is the most common place for SENCOs to work in your municipality?* was posed. The alternatives given were: at school, within pupil welfare teams organised by the municipality, within

school districts in the municipality and within SENCO-teams organised by the municipality. The results show that there are different ways of organizing SENCOs in municipalities in Sweden. According to chief education officers (47 %), the most common mode is that SENCOs are located at preschools and schools. This seems to be what most of the personnel working in preschools and schools prefer. All the occupational groups (with a variation between 80-100 % between the groups) in questionnaire #1 state that they think SENCOs should work, and be situated, at the preschool/school.

Most chief education officers and compulsory school leaders state that SENCOs' assignments of working with documentation, supervising staff and pupil welfare work have increased during the last five years. Many leaders also respond that SENCOs now work more with school development. A majority of the leaders state that SENCOs work less with individually taught special education today compared to five years ago. However, it should be noted that 40 % of the leaders in compulsory school state that SENCOs' individual work with pupils are basically unchanged and that 30 % state that work with organisational school development is basically unchanged as well. Documentation and supervising staff have increased the most during the last five years, according to the leaders.

There are both similarities and differences among the occupational groups concerning what SENCOs should work with. A majority in each occupational group at school level, except educational leaders, respond that SENCOs should work with special education, taught individually or in small groups. This is especially outspoken by subject teachers, class teachers, assistants and special teachers. The response rate for this alter-

native is above 90 % in all four groups. A majority in all groups also state that SENCOs should supervise staff. However, this response is less frequent among special teachers and subject teachers. Basically all SENCOs, educational leaders, preschool teachers and assistants reply that SENCOs should supervise staff. Concerning work with documentation and evaluation, a majority in all groups are positive to this task. Basically all educational leaders and SENCOs respond that SENCOs should work with documentation. Assistants (45 %) choose this alternative the least. More than 80 % of the SENCOs reply that they should work with pupil welfare. Concurrently, 26 % of the preschool teachers respond to this alternative. It should be noted that the concept of pupil welfare might be somewhat unfamiliar to preschool teachers since this particular form of work and cooperation, described earlier in this thesis, is mostly related to compulsory school. Concerning organisational school developmental work, there are only two groups where the majority seem positive to this task. Around 80 % of the SENCOs and a little less than 60 % of the educational leaders state that SENCOs should work with school development. Except for these two occupational groups, it seems to be very little interest from the groups participating in this study that SENCOs should work with developing schools.

A majority of all the occupational groups asked in questionnaires #1-3, except for preschool teachers, state that special educators/teachers with education in SEN should have a large amount of influence over the work/the pedagogical content for children in need of special support. A majority of the preschool teachers respond that preschool teachers/class teachers/mentors should have the greatest amount of influence. This response from preschool teachers differs quite considerably from other

occupational groups. For example, 83 % of the subject teachers state that special educators should have the greatest amount of influence.

To sum up, SENCOs seem, according to these data, to have established an extended work role to some extent. According to school leaders, the tasks to supervise staff as well as document and evaluate working procedures have increased the most during the last five years, while work with special education to children has decreased during the same period. However, there appear to be different views on how SENCOs should work among different occupational groups in the municipality. For example, a majority of the participants state that SENCOs should work with individually taught special education. Thus, it is difficult to discern if the role of SENCOs have challenged established structures and thus, have had the impact to make changes within the school system.

PAPER IV

Promoting inclusion? – “inclusive” and effective head teachers’ descriptions of their work. (Lindqvist and Nilholm)⁷⁶

The purpose of the fourth study was to contribute to our understanding of how head teachers can promote inclusive practices. The focus in the interview study was what strategies head teachers who work effectively and express inclusive values say they use in order to promote inclusive practices.

The head teachers say that they enjoy leading their schools and state that leadership and its challenges are exciting. They like being able to make an impact and they now have the authorisation to run the school to-

⁷⁶ Lindqvist is first author.

wards the visions set forth. The head teachers describe working with staff through dialogue and discussions. They emphasize the importance of having trustful relations with students and staff. According to all leaders, it is essential for them to create an environment of trust and respect between head teacher, personnel and pupils. Some of the head teachers speak about the importance of having a holistic perspective on their school's activities and their own assignments. They have structured suggestions about how to run the school and they state that they distribute special educational assignments if needed.

The head teachers seem to welcome the government's increasing demands and policies concerning how head teachers should manage their schools. In order to improve the learning environment, they also stress that they lead their schools by following up the students' results and scrutinising teachers' documentation of the students' goal achievements and individual plans (e.g. IEP). They all point out the significance of their pedagogical leadership and their close contact with their school's activities. They express that they visit teachers and their classrooms on a regular basis. They observe how, and if, the teacher has planned the lesson, how it is planned in relation to curricula and other policy documents, how the planned lesson is followed during the lesson and if the teacher has special focus on students in need of special support. If there is a special focus, the head teacher investigates how the intention is given to the student. After the lesson, the head teacher and the teacher discuss the lesson. During this session, the teacher can explain and discuss goals, motives and other choices made before and during the lesson.

Head teachers express the importance of consensus among their staff and they emphasise their pedagogical leadership as essential in their

work with teachers' attitudes and how teachers understand their assignment, especially in relation to students in need of special support. Some of the head teachers relate what they know about children in various school difficulties to guidelines and research in the field. Most head teachers state that the teacher should have a broad repertoire of teaching methods and a selection of different pedagogical tools in order to provide the support that is needed for each student. The head teachers' task is to create conditions so that this becomes possible.

Several of the head teachers state that they have made, or are planning to make, changes in the organisation of the special support. For example, the amount of assistant staff has been reduced in order to be able to have more teachers in the classroom more often and special teachers are now working in the classroom supporting the teacher and the student in his/her regular learning environment. According to the head teachers, special support should preferably be given by the students' regular teacher within the framework of the classroom. However, the head teachers are not reluctant to try different solutions to help the students to succeed. Support can be given to students in different ways and places (i.e. outside or within the classroom). Head teachers are strikingly unanimous when discussing the importance of being flexible when providing support for the pupils.

Head teachers plan to change or have changed the working routines for SENCOs in order for them to work more with school development and in closer collaboration with the head teachers. The head teachers state that special teachers and SENCOs (this is particularly expressed by head teachers working with SENCOs) are vital as partners in order for head teachers to develop their schools towards more inclusive practices and

help students to accomplish academic goals. However, there seems to be little experience among the head teachers of SENCOs who supervise their teacher colleagues in more organised forms. A couple of head teachers state that the timing has not been right yet to implement and pursue this idea among the staff. On the other hand, SENCOs seem to supervise assistant staff on a regular basis and according to the head teachers, SENCOs also discuss and follow up students' academic results and their well-being regularly as well as have daily dialogues about students and their learning environment with teachers.

Finally, the head teachers talk about inclusion in various ways, e.g. inclusion as a process and a vision, inclusion as being safe, that the child himself/herself is the only one who can decide if he/she feels included and that inclusion can be to enrich each other. Meanwhile, they all describe inclusion as a student "being part of" and "not being left outside". Inclusion should not be about being placed within or outside the classroom, according to most head teachers. One head teacher expresses that a student can be sitting in the classroom, and still has a feeling of being excluded. When the head teachers mention inclusion spontaneously in the interviews, without me (the interviewer) introducing the concept, a majority use the word inclusion almost exclusively as integrating children in need of special support into the regular classroom.

To sum up, the five head teachers have similar ways of describing their visions, goals, working procedures and strategies. They seem to value external governance provided by the government through policy documents on how to manage their work (i.e. through higher demands on accountability). They all state that their role as pedagogical leaders is important in order for their schools to succeed. They have a special fo-

cus on teaching, teachers and the learning environment when they describe their work with students in need of special support. The support should preferably be given inside the classroom. They all stress the importance of being flexible when providing support for the students. They also stress creating a secure and allowing environment for students as well as for adults. Communication and dialogue seem to be recurring values for the head teachers when they lead their schools. On the specific question in the interview about the concept of inclusion, the head teachers give slightly different answers. The answers indicate that the notion of inclusion might be perceived differently and that the concept of inclusion is complex. For the head teachers, the concept might be related to the head teachers' context in which they are leading their schools. Thus, head teachers might lead their schools differently depending on context as well as perceptions of the concept.

As described earlier, the last step in the analysing process was to read the transcribed interviews using a critical pragmatic approach. As part of the results of study four, it is discussed that the threat from bureaucracy identified by Skrtic (1991) in order for schools to become equitable and excellent (and accordingly, to become more democratic and inclusive), is not acknowledged by the head teachers interviewed. Instead, they seem to be rather loyal to the prevailing school system. The head teachers also state that it is important to strive towards the same vision and goals at the school. Different occupational groups in their schools are, or should be, more or less in agreement on how to work with pupils in need of special support. Thus, different opinions about inclusion and special needs as well as the threat from external bureaucracy (i.e. things schools have to do to confirm to the outside world that they do their job), are not expressed by the head teachers. Using a critical pragmatic reasoning, head teachers (who can be described as successful) are related to as one

part of the prevailing school system (Cherryholmes, 1988). They are governed by policymakers to supply high goal achievements in “a machine bureaucracy” (Skrtic 1991). It is argued in the article that head teachers in order to be “successful”, might speak about e.g. work with pupils in need of special support and inclusion in a general mode that is not further critically discussed or problematised (see further discussion in IV).

7 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The intention with this chapter is to discuss and problematise the outcome of the four studies based on prior studies and the theoretical framework presented earlier in the thesis. On the basis of discussions held in articles I-IV, three themes have emerged. Accordingly, these themes are highlighted in relation to prior studies and theoretical perspectives. Within the themes, the focus is both on a structural political level as well as on a local practical level, since the first level sets the agenda (through policy documents) for the latter level (consisting of personnel in preschools and schools) to interpret and execute the guidelines set forth (cf. Ekström, 2004, Assarsson, 2007, Isaksson, 2009). This approach is also in accordance with a critical pragmatic approach where rationalities of organisations and structures of systems are scrutinised parallel to empirical investigations of practices operating in the systems (Cherryholmes, 1988).

The first theme derives from the occupational groups' responses concerning how work with children in need of special support should be divided among different groups in preschools and schools. Within this theme, jurisdictional control in relation to work with children in various school difficulties is highlighted. The discussion is based on Abbott's (1988) reasoning about how professionals constantly struggle as well as negotiate the division of expert labor and who should do what to whom. Further, the outcome is discussed in relation to Skrtic's (1991) argument that professionals in schools are loosely coupled and perform their specialised and standardised work towards a certain client group. The second theme involves a critical pragmatic discussion concerning,

among others, what impact educational policy ideas and documents may have on educational work when the political intentions meet practice. Within this theme, the results concerning views on work with children in need of special support are discussed; how responses from the participants can be interpreted and understood relative to perspectives prevalent in the Swedish school system; today as well as in the past, in research as well as in steering documents. General and special education relative to democratic values in the school system are also highlighted and problematised in this section. It is discussed by using Skrtic's (1991, 1995) reasoning concerning schools run as machine bureaucracies which special education helps maintain within the public educational system. The third and last theme presented in this concluding chapter is the occupational groups' responses in relation to the notion of inclusion. As earlier described, the point of departure for the concept of inclusion in this present thesis is a relational perspective (Persson, 1998, Emanuelsson et al, 2001). Thus, the discussion within the third theme centres primarily on the notion of inclusion relative to the views of the participants, mostly represented by two ideal types (i.e. a categorical and a relational perspective). Complementary approaches to investigating inclusion among occupational groups are also illuminated in this theme.

The preceding sections concerning the three themes are followed by a section presenting methodological reflections. Subsequently, some significant research contributions of this study as well as suggestions for further research are highlighted. The last section in this chapter consists of implications for policy and practice.

VIEWS ON DIVISION OF LABOR - WHO SHOULD DO WHAT TO WHOM?

As earlier described in this thesis, there has been a tradition in Swedish compulsory schools to direct work of pupils with various school difficulties to occupational groups specifically employed to compensate for pupils' deficiencies (Haug, 1998, Nilholm, 2007). The occupational group of special teachers has developed over the years and received further education in order to work with children individually (or in small groups) (Egelund et al, 2006). In later years, assistant resource staff (Gadler, 2011) and SENCOs (Malmgren Hansen, 2002) have been added to the system. Based on the medical and individualistic perspective on school difficulties prevalent since the introduction of Elementary schools in 1842 to the 1970's, the role and work of special teachers were relatively little disputed (Haug, 1998). In the publication of the national report on internal school operations (SOU 1974:53), the division of work relative to children in need of special support was questioned. Teachers were supposed to take more responsibility for all students and the learning environment should be evaluated as a first measure when school difficulties occurred (SOU 1974:53). A new occupational group, SENCOs, was created by the government (c.f. Evetts, 2011, 2013) in order to support teachers in their task to educate all children as well as evaluate learning environments and work preventively through school development. Concurrently, SENCOs were supposed to work with children individually or in small groups (UHÄ 1990-06-27). In a similar way, SENCOs were introduced in preschools in order to work preventively with staff and organisations. However, it should be noted that special teachers have not been operating in preschools (Bladini, 2004).

Keeping school history in mind as well as remembering that there have been different ideas and political intentions throughout the years about division of work in relation to special needs issues, it is not so surprising that there seem to be different views among the participating occupational groups concerning the roles, functions and tasks of SENCOs. More than 90 % of the respondents among teachers (i.e. class and subject teachers), special teachers and assistants reply that SENCOs should work with individually taught special education. Preschool teachers are the only group where the majority of the participants respond that mentors/class teachers/preschool teachers should have the greatest influence over the pedagogical content of the education for children in need of support. An opposite view is represented by e.g. most subject teachers, where more than 80 % of the participants respond that special educators should have the most influence over the pedagogical content. Concerning SENCOs' work with organisational school development, the only group where this response is frequently given is among SENCOs and to some extent also among educational leaders. The results presented above can be related to several prior studies where it seems difficult for SENCOs to establish a new work role and to obtain a mandate and legitimacy for the tasks assigned the role (e.g. Lingard, 2001, Malmgren Hansen, 2002, Cole 2005, Abbott, 2007). Using a critical pragmatic perspective on the outcome of the study, it becomes interesting to discuss what consequences the different views on the work of SENCOs might have on (special) educational work in preschools and schools (Cherryholmes, 1999, von Wright, 2007).

In order to further interpret and discuss the outcome of the study, the results are related to Abbott's (1988) reasoning about jurisdictional con-

trol and division of expert labor. This procedure can be useful in order to widen our understanding of the views of different occupational groups operating in preschools and schools. Firstly, it becomes essential to discuss the jurisdictional control of SENCOs in relation to other occupational groups in school. Prior studies show that several occupational groups are involved in work with children in need of special support (e.g. Sahlin, 2004, Bladini, 2004, Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen, 2009, Guvå and Hylander, 2011). For example, special teachers educate pupils individually, educational leaders have the jurisdiction to organise and develop schools concerning special needs issues (SFS 2010:800) and school psychologists as well as school social workers consult teachers and staff concerning children in various school difficulties (Sahlin, 2004, Liljegren, 2008, Guvå and Hylander, 2011). Thus, it becomes relevant to ask what area SENCOs actually have jurisdictional control over. In addition to this, in a more strict definition of legal jurisdiction, the responsibilities of SENCOs as an occupational group concerning work with children in need of special support are not formulated in Swedish guidelines (e.g. Government office 2011, SFS: 2010:800). Taking this into consideration, the jurisdiction of SENCOs seems rather vague and filled with complexity.

Using Abbott's (1988) reasoning, it is plausible that there are constant (silent or open) struggles, negations and agreements concerning "who should do what to whom" in preschools and schools. In this context, it is also important to discuss whether the governments' creation of the occupational group of SENCOs, in order to control occupational groups and work towards political intentions (Cole, 2005, Evetts, 2011), might have caused further tension between different occupational

groups (Abbott, 1988). This can be presumed since the introduction of SENCOs into the Swedish school system has most likely had consequences on other occupational groups in preschools and schools as well (Bladini, 2004). Furthermore, tasks are constructed as desirable or not desirable by the professions (Abbott, 1988). Using Abbott's reasoning, once again, it becomes legitimate to ask what tasks in schools and preschools are seen as desirable or not desirable. Abbott (1988) argues that tasks that involve the "less fortunate"⁷⁷ in society (clientele not sought after by professions) are delegated downwards in the professional hierarchy.⁷⁸ If work with children who could be considered as "less fortunate" in preschools and schools are delegated downwards in the school system (e.g. to assistant resource staff, often without education), this might also cause tensions, dilemmas and negotiations about "who should do what" between and within occupational groups in preschools and schools (Abbott, 1988).

As a final remark, Abbott (1988) suggests that professions might have difficulties to gain jurisdictional control if "the public" has problems recognising the effects of the work that the professionals perform. The occupational group of SENCOs was created and introduced into the

⁷⁷ The expression of "less fortunate" could be translated in a school context to children in various difficulties in preschools and schools.

⁷⁸ Abbott (1988) gives examples in society where e.g. education can make the profession negotiate away from direct work with the "less fortunate" in society (e.g. mentally ill, convicted prisoners or people on welfare). Instead, mental care workers and social workers attend to these "less fortunate", while e.g. psychiatrists prescribe medication for the mentally ill and psychologists consult the workers (Abbott, 1988). When Abbott's reasoning is tried on the school organization, occupations such as school psychologists and SENCOs with further education, might negotiate themselves away from direct work with the "less fortunate" and "delegate" these tasks to e.g. assistants with less education.

school system by the government (c.f. Evetts, 2011, 2013) in order to make some changes in how work with children in need of special support was performed (e.g. Malmgren Hansen, 2002). One can assume that the intention with this reform was to improve the situation for children in need of special support, both academically and socially. However, to my knowledge, no study has been done in Sweden that shows specific effects on pupils' goal achievements related to the work and role of SENCOs. Thus, in the eyes of "the public", there might be difficulties to discern the visible effects of this new occupational group of SENCOs. Relating back to Abbott (1988), this might be a reason why SENCOs in this municipality seem to have difficulties gaining jurisdictional control in one or several areas.

In order to further analyse differences in the occupational groups' responses concerning SENCOs' work, I turn to Skrtic's (1991, 1995) argument that schools are organised as professional bureaucracies. That means that the professional culture at schools is constructed through education and socialisation. Occupational groups are loosely coupled and they do their specialised job mostly alone towards an assigned client group (Skrtic, 1995). Through certain learned repertoires, they perform their standard programs that are supposed to fit the client's needs. Clients who are already pre-defined through e.g. age and knowledge level (Holmberg et al, 2005). Through the pigeon-holing process, described in chapter 4, teachers try to match the student's needs to what the teacher has to offer (Skrtic, 1991). However, this may become problematic, if the individual needs of the student do not match the learned repertoire and standard programs of the teacher. As shown in prior studies (e.g. Hjörne, 2004, Karlsson, 2008, Heimadahl Matsson and Malmgren Han-

son, 2009, Velasquez, 2012) and Swedish school history (Ahlström et al, 1986, Egelund et al, 2006) a common procedure has been to force the child “into one program or another or forced out of the system all together” (Skrtic, 1991, p. 177). The traditional school organisation, represented by the non-adaptability of professional bureaucracy, creates students in need of special support which the organisation of special education has traditionally served (Skrtic, 1991, 1995). Keeping the pigeon-holing process in mind, it is not surprising that several of the occupational groups in this study expect that professionals representing special education (i.e. SENCOs and special teachers) have the largest influence of the pedagogical content of the students. SENCOs should preferably work individually with certain groups of students. However, as described earlier, there are occupational groups in the current study that show slightly different response patterns. For example, the majority of the preschool teachers state that teachers should have the largest influence over the pedagogical content, and SENCOs and pedagogical leaders respond more often that SENCOs should work with organisational school development. It should also be noted that a majority of the respondents in all groups state that SENCOs should work with supervision (however, 46 % of the class and subject teachers disagree).

When the results are interpreted, using a critical pragmatic reading, there seem to be different opinions of what special education should be about and who should do what in the matter. The responses from several of the participants in the study also seem to come in conflict with prevailing policy documents, presented in chapter 2. In statutes and guidelines, it is stressed that all occupational groups working in schools should stimulate, guide and give special support to pupils that have difficulties (Government office, 2011). Special support should preferably be pro-

vided in the child's regular learning environment (SFS 2010:800). However, while the statutes leave room for individual interpretations of the formulations, which makes segregating solutions possible, it is plausible that conflicting perceptions of how to work with school difficulties remain silent. Special education, where the individual child is measured and compensated (c.f. Haug, 1998), might be the solution when these conflicting views among personnel appear (Skrtic, 1991, 1995). Skrtic's (1991) argument that the school system, managed as a machine bureaucracy and operated as a professional bureaucracy, uses e.g. special education in order to veil and/or repress contradictions, uncertainties and anomalies in general education is further discussed below.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AS A PARALLEL SYSTEM TO THE GENERAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

Regarding the educational leaders (who have a specific responsibility for work with children in need of special support (SFS 2010:800)), the results from the second study (see article II) indicate that the leaders' views on special needs issues are somewhat complex and ambivalent.⁷⁹ In a recently published article, Nilholm et al (2013)⁸⁰ highlight that educational leaders (both in independent and municipal schools) do not seem to find deficiencies in teaching and the functioning of classes/groups as a common cause when pupils are considered as being in need of special support. In the article, it is discussed that educational leaders seem to believe that school problems are caused by factors that

⁷⁹ However, it should be noted that the five head teachers interviewed in study IV did not express ambivalence in their responses concerning views on special needs (see article IV).

⁸⁰ The results displayed in the article by Nilholm et al (2013) are partly based on the empirical data from questionnaires #1 and #2 presented in the present thesis.

they cannot influence. This is called the *school-leadership paradox* (Nilholm et al, 2013). The authors discuss that the reason for this paradox may be because educational leaders are responsible for their school. The educational leaders work closely together with teachers. They are responsible for teachers' work, the functioning of classes as well as students' achievements. Hence, they might act as "defenders" of their schools (Nilholm et al, 2013). One reason why leaders seem to act as defenders, and concurrently display a somewhat ambivalent view towards special needs issues, might be that educational leaders need to balance between e.g. views among different occupational groups in their schools and requests in statutes and policy documents regarding e.g. high academic achievements and the intentions of "A school for all" (c.f. Rosenqvist and Tideman, 2000). Additionally, the responses from educational leaders reflecting expressions of ambivalence⁸¹ concerning special needs issues could possibly also be explained by the relatively vague formulations regarding how to work with children in need of special support in statutes and policy documents. Decentralisation, as well as the way in which policy documents are formulated, leave room for individual interpretations by preschools and schools. The interpretations are then put into practice by educational leaders and their staff (Ekström 2004, Assarsson, 2007, Nilholm et al, 2007, Gerrbo, 2012).

Considering the long tradition of relating school's goals to individual deficiencies as well as exercising segregated solutions (e.g. Ahlström et

⁸¹ For example, the *school leader-paradox* described above and ambiguities concerning SENCOs' work (see II and IV).

al, 1986, Egelund et al, 2006), it is not so surprising that a deficit perspective (Ainscow, 1998) still seems prevalent in the current municipality. This might have consequences when educational leaders and their staff interpret and put the political intentions into actions (c.f. von Wright, 2007), especially when it is taken into account that there are formulations in the Education Act (SFS 2010:800) which make it possible for schools to continue to define children as deviant and use segregating solutions. At a structural level, it is possible to exclude pupils from general education entirely.⁸² There seems to be a rhetorical and overarching idea of e.g. “A school for all” (Assarsson, 2007). Concurrently, there are formulations in the statutes and measures in the system (SFS 2010:800) sanctioning the implicit assumption that the school system cannot educate all children within general education (cf. Haug, 1998).

Skrtic’s (1991) critical examination of general education (in the light of special education) becomes valuable when issues illuminated above are discussed using a critical pragmatic approach where unreflected assumptions and constructs of structures in the school system are detected and unveiled (Cherryholmes, 1988). To recapitulate from chapter 4, Skrtic (1991) argues that the organisation of schools is powered by a functionalistic perspective where the school is operated as a machine bureaucracy. When managing schools as machine bureaucracies, efficacy and rational solutions are in focus. For example, issues concerning work with children in need of special support are dealt with through standardised

⁸² For example, as earlier reported, approximately 1.4 % of the Swedish students are placed in schools for students with intellectual disabilities (Göransson et al, 2011).

programs and formal routines. According to Skrtic, the functionalistic perspective of managing schools as machine bureaucracies can be seen as hindering schools from achieving equity and excellence. In fact, running schools as machine bureaucracies can be a threat against democracy in public education. One of the largest obstacles for schools to become more democratic is to allow special education to be a system parallel to general education (Skrtic, 1991). Special education is used as an artefact to dismiss uncertainties, confusion and anomalies in general education. Thus, problems and failures in general education are seldom problematised and the functionalistic view on education remains unquestioned. Thus, the prevailing school system has no chance of changing its current paradigm.

Using Skrtic's (1991) arguments above in relation to what has been presented and unveiled in this study, it seems reasonable to suggest that existing views and interests within schools play a major role in the persistence of traditional special educational structures. Following the results in this study in relation to school history, prior research, formulations in statutory texts through Skrtic's line of reasoning, it is not surprising that the vision put forth on national as well as international policy arenas concerning inclusion and "A school for all" seems to have failed to be achieved to its fullest. However, it is somewhat surprising that despite efforts and failures (for several decades) to implement ideas of "A school for all" (SOU 1948:27, Government office, 1962, 1980) and inclusion (UNESCO, 1994) in the Swedish school system, there are no studies, to my knowledge, that critically examine the Swedish school system's structural construction as well as unveil uncertainties and anomalies in the system in order to critically scrutinise the current paradigm of general education. Using Skrtic's (1991) argument, once again, such an unveiling of schools' structure can initiate discussions concern-

ing why children still are defined from a deficit perspective as well as why school's continuously use segregating solutions and keep special education as a parallel system when general education fails to embrace all children.

THE OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS' VIEWS IN RELATION TO THE NOTION OF INCLUSION

The notion of inclusion can be viewed as ideas about what public education in a democracy should be about (c.f. Skrtic, 1991). In this section, I will discuss the occupational groups' views concerning work with children in need of special support relative to ideas of inclusion and inclusive education. More specifically, I will reflect on how the responses are related to an inclusive perspective. I will do so using the ideal type of a relational perspective presented earlier in this thesis (Weber 1904/1949, Persson, 1998). The relational perspective can be seen as an aspiration towards more inclusive practices (c.f. Emanuelsson et al, 2001, Persson, 2008a). It is argued that when a relational perspective is adopted by the participants, it is more plausible that preschools and schools have the chance to be (or become) inclusive.

The text below is a continued discussion developed from discussions in articles I-IV regarding in what sense the empirical patterns express a relational/inclusive perspective among the occupational groups. I specifically develop the discussion related to educational leaders and SENCOs and their work towards inclusive practices. The idea of inclusion is also discussed in relation to democratic goals in preschools and schools. I conclude the section by presenting an expanded definition of inclusion.

TOWARDS MORE INCLUSIVE PRACTICES?

As noted at numerous occasions in the present thesis, there are several response patterns in the questionnaires (e.g. individual deficiencies as reasons why children are in need of special support, the importance of a medical diagnosis and the focus on SENCOs to teach children individually) that cannot be said to correlate with a relational/inclusive perspective. Moreover, many participants advocate segregating solutions for children in need of special support.⁸³ It is argued by researchers (e.g. Ainscow, 1998) that a deficit perspective is one of the largest obstacles towards making education more inclusive. However, the results presented in this study do not seem to be unique. On the contrary, findings similar to the ones presented here have been presented in national as well as international studies. In fact, Ainscow and Sandill (2010) argue that the largest challenge for educational school systems throughout the world is how to develop more inclusive practices. In an American context, McLeskey and Waldron (2007) question if the educational system in the USA is becoming more inclusive at all. Similar discussions have been brought to light in Sweden (Göransson et al, 2011).

Turning to the two occupational groups in focus in this thesis, educational leaders and SENCOs, we can further our understanding why inclusive ideas seem difficult to implement into the school system.

Concerning educational leaders, prior studies indicate that they are of decisive importance when schools are working towards inclusive practices (McLeskey and Waldron, 2000, Hoopey and McLeskey, 2013). Ed-

⁸³ In addition to pupils (approximately 2.3-3.1 %) who are already in different types of segregated settings (Nilholm et al, 2007).

educational leaders can also be said to be in a position of power concerning decision-making relative to special needs issues (Rosenqvist and Tideman, 2000). However, prior studies point out that leaders can be ambivalent and uncertain about how to handle diversity and issues related to inclusion (Villa et al, 1996, Barnett and Monda-Amaya 1998). They seem to find inclusion highly problematic (Leo and Barton, 2006). A certain degree of ambivalence towards special needs issues and related areas can also be traced among the educational leaders in the present study. Additionally, several of the educational leaders (see II) seem to represent a deficit perspective concerning reasons why children are in need of special support. Considering that educational leaders have to handle various, and sometimes opposing, views among their staff concerning how to work with school difficulties, striving for inclusion might become challenging and highly problematic. As discussed earlier, educational leaders also need to balance several interests both within their preschools/schools as well as from outside pressure, manifested through “the public” (e.g. governments’ political intentions, formulated in statutes and policy document) (c.f. Abbott, 1988, Evetts, 2011, 2013). Thus, educational leaders might end up in the intersection between different views and ideas about how to handle work with children in need of special support and school difficulties. This can cause dilemmas for educational leaders on how to steer their schools towards inclusive practices. However, it should be noted that the five head teachers in study IV do not express dilemmas; rather, they stress the importance of national requirements and having consensus among their staff about how to work with children in need of special support. This in itself can cause dilemmas when the head teachers’ views are confronted with opposite ideas on how schools should work. The head teachers’ visions how to

manage and steer their schools towards inclusion, where e.g. different groups should be part of school's decision-making, can be hard to combine with individuals' and/or groups' opposing views and interests on how to work with special needs (i.e. divergent ideas from the visions expressed by the head teachers). As a concluding remark, following the results of this study in relation to prior research, educational leaders' power, possibilities and ambition to create inclusive practices can be questioned.

Similar patterns can be traced in relation to SENCOs' role and possibilities to develop schools towards more inclusive practices. Several researchers have pointed out that SENCOs have a significant role in initiating changes in preschools and schools in order to develop inclusive environments (Malmgren Hansen, 2002, Abbott, 2007). However, research also indicates that SENCOs have difficulties working towards more inclusive practices (Lingard, 2001, Cole, 2005, Abbott, 2007, Szwed, 2007a and 2007b, Pearson, 2008). The results in studies I and III indicate similar patterns. Even though the outcome of study III indicates that SENCOs have partly established their occupational role in the school system in recent years, several response patterns from other participating occupational groups point in the opposite direction. For example, just a few respondents in each occupational group reply that SENCOs should work with organisational school development. Further, the deficit perspective highlighted above may enhance traditional special educational structures. These findings can be put in relation to the relational/inclusive perspective. Placing the results in the light of the theoretical framework, it seems as if there are obstacles for SENCOs to gain jurisdictional control (Abbott, 1988) to work preventatively with school organisational development towards more inclusive practices. Following Skrtic's (1991) line of reasoning, it is suggested that the professional

bureaucracy, implying that workers (e.g. teachers) perform their job from learned repertoires and standardised skills, might be one explanation why reforms towards more inclusive education fail, despite endeavours from e.g. SENCOs to initiate changes. According to Skrtic (1995), teachers adjust only formally to reforms and continue to do the things they consider necessary. Another obstacle for SENCOs' work might be the preconception of the occupational group by other groups in preschools and schools and by "the public". SENCOs (*special* educational needs coordinators) are by definition seen as 'special educators', representing the notion that mainstream education cannot deal with all pupils in school (c.f. Abbott, 1988, Skrtic, 1991, Haug, 1998). A related question is if the introduction of the occupational group of SENCOs into the school system (an occupational group created, designed and designated by the Swedish government) (c.f. Evetts, 2011) in order to e.g. develop inclusive education has been initiated despite possible resistance among occupational groups in preschools and schools.

DEMOCRATIC GOALS AND INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS

As mentioned above, it seems as if the rhetorical claims of inclusive education at times have been pushed forward despite tacit or open resistance among different occupational groups and individuals in preschools and schools (cf. Dyson and Millward, 2000). This can be seen as a dilemma in which two virtuous goals seem to meet head on. On the one hand, there is the goal to create inclusive practices. On the other hand, there is the goal to democratically balance the impact of different groups (often with different and sometimes conflicting interests and views) in educational decision-making (Nilholm, 2006). An example of such an area of decision-making deals with different occupational groups' views on the division of labor relative to children in need of

special support. This can be exemplified as follows: imagine a school where the SENCO believes he/she should work primarily with supervising staff. At the same time, the head teacher decides that SENCOs should be of assistance when managing and developing the school organisation and concurrently, several of the occupational groups in the school prefer that SENCOs prioritise work with children in need of special support at an individual level.⁸⁴ This raises questions with democratic overtones: Who should have the right to decide how schools should work with children in need of special support? If there are stakeholders in preschools and schools who are not involved in discussions and democratic decision-making processes concerning who should do what to whom, can preschools/schools be characterised as inclusive and democratic? What consequences will these seemingly unbalanced democratic procedures (illustrated by the example above) have on special educational work as well as on educational issues concerning all children in preschools and schools?

The issue raised above can be seen as critique of Skrtic's (1991) argument that all contradictions can be solved by deconstructions of the school system (or at least dealt with if professionals are working in adhocratic settings). In accordance with Dyson and Millward's (2000) argument, the result in the present study indicates that contradictions in the school system are not easily solved. Skrtic's (1991) line of reasoning might easily turn to reductionism if the argument is pursued to its fullest: namely to suggest that democratic goals are easily achieved if

⁸⁴ These various opinions might neither be openly discussed, nor problematised (c.f. Abbott, 1988).

schools function as adhocracies which then will make contradictions concerning how to handle school difficulties disappear (c.f. Clark et al, 1998). This in itself, as argued above, might become a threat to democratic values in preschools and schools.

Problems can also arise when different goals in the school system need to be weighed against each other. One such example is when the goal of inclusion (in accordance with a relational perspective) is balanced with the goal to attain high academic achievements. As highlighted in IV, there are stronger demands on schools, specifically on head teachers, to achieve both high academic requirements as well as maintain (or develop) high inclusive and democratic values (Government office, 2011, SFS 2010:800). According to prior research, decision-making is decentralised and at times delegated downwards in the school system (Ekström 2004, Nilholm et al, 2007). It is reasonable to suggest that the decision-making of how to balance the goals is left to each school, and maybe even to individuals. At a structural level, Skrtic (1991) argues that the twin goals behind the idea of public education in a democracy, to achieve equity and excellence, should be seen as equally important goals. In fact, equity should be viewed as a prerequisite for excellence. However, it might be difficult for school personnel to come to agreement on how to interpret and balance the goals of inclusion with the goal to achieve high academic requirements. These goals should then also be operationalised and converted to pedagogical actions by the educational leaders and their staff.

Furthermore, problems might occur when rhetorical claims are put forth (by e.g. policy makers and school administrators) suggesting that

the notion of inclusion can solve all difficulties in schools. If the prevailing mode⁸⁵ to claim inclusion, as it is often presented in research (Nilholm and Göransson, forthcoming), in policy documents (e.g. UNESCO, 1994) as well as in practice (IV), then the speech of inclusion might, in the worst case, further enable schools and the educational system to maintain a status quo. As a consequence, uncertainties occurring in the general system might not be unveiled (cf. Cherryholmes, 1988, Skrtic, 1991, Clark et al, 1998). The persisting non-adaptable, bureaucratic school organisation may use the speech of inclusion to reproduce old structures and create students who do not fit within the educational system (Skrtic 1991).

COMPLEMENTARY IDEAS OF INCLUSION

The following section presents complementary ideas⁸⁶ of what inclusion can be about. These ideas are highlighted by several scholars (c.f. Allan and Slee, 2001, Ainscow and Sandill, 2010, Nilholm and Göransson, forthcoming). Representatives of a more radical perspective on inclusion take a stance where it is argued that the right to inclusion in schools is a goal in itself. This goal cannot under any circumstances be negotiated (c.f. Skrtic, 1991, Haug, 1998). These ideas display other possible and complementary ways to investigate inclusion among occupational groups. If the responses from the participants had been reflected in the light of this more radical definition of inclusion, it most certainly

⁸⁵As has been highlighted earlier in this introductory text as well as in the articles (mostly in II and IV), the prevailing practice has often been to equate inclusion with integration. The concept has sometimes been used without much consideration (see also IV).

⁸⁶Relative to a relational perspective (Persson, 1998, Emanuelsson et al, 2001) presented in chapter 4.

would have had consequences for the study. However, as a final remark in this section, I make an attempt to connect this extended idea of inclusion to findings in the present study.

Allen and Slee (2001) argue that inclusive schooling should be seen as a social movement. In such a movement, inclusion is seen as the very precondition of a democratic education. Thus, inclusive education is not just about those students described as being in need of special support; it is about all students (Allen and Slee, 2001). Variations in a population (in school as well as in society) should be seen as natural. Diversity is seen as a resource that can be applied rather than a problem that should be compensated for, solved or adjusted (c.f. Haug, 1998, Ainscow and Sandill, 2010).

In a similar vein, democratic schools are schools that recognise equity as a way to excellence (Skrtic, 1991). In order to develop democratic schools, diversity should be seen as beneficial for the school system, since it causes uncertainties and anomalies in how schools are managed. This in turn can contribute to re-evaluating prevailing structures in the school system and as a result, be a tool in the endeavour to reconstruct schools to be more inclusive and democratic (Skrtic, 1991, Thomas and Loxley, 2001).

An additional and essential value in the vision for inclusive education is the focus on democratic processes, not only at an overall structural level, but in groups and classrooms at the preschool and school level as well. In an inclusive classroom, the focus is not only on the education of the individual but also on what can be learned together as a community (Persson, 2008a). The community becomes valuable since the idea of

inclusion adopts ideals of social justice (Allen and Slee, 2001, Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). Groups are working towards mutually set goals and the common result is dependent on the contribution of all participants in the group (c.f. Nilholm and Alm, 2010).

When the inclusive values presented above are connected to the present study, it seems as if the perspectives expressed by the personnel are even further away from these radical ideas (c.f. Allen and Slee, 2001, Ainscow and Sandill, 2010, Nilholm and Göransson, forthcoming).⁸⁷ Thus, this raises questions concerning conceptualisations of the notion of inclusion. Additionally, several ideas presented above, e.g. the social movement suggested by Allen and Slee (2001), Skrtic's (1991) reasoning concerning democratic schools and diversity as beneficial for the school system as well as the idea of building learning communities for social justice (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010) seem to be rather far away from the views and daily work of a majority of the personnel studied in this thesis.

METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

In such a comprehensive study as this which investigates complex phenomena in the compounded context of school and education (Cherryholmes, 1999), methodological considerations are taken continuously. Accordingly, the methodological reflections below are a selection of the considerations taken throughout the research process. The presented considerations are seen as essential for the overarching methodological understanding of the study. I will describe the reflections by presenting one study at a time. I have chosen this approach in order to create struc-

⁸⁷ Compared to a relational perspective mostly applied in this thesis.

ture in the material as well as provide an overarching picture of the methodological issues. Further, since the four studies were conducted in chronological order, the presentation form can provide some guidance of how the different methodological reflections have influenced each other as well as where in the overarching research process the methodological issues have been most current.

One of the first considerations taken was the question of how data from questionnaire #1 was going to be processed, analysed and presented. After the first processing procedure where the responses from the whole population ($N = 1297$) were computed and processed, the decision was to analyse the data by dividing the population by function in preschools and schools and thus into occupational groups. A plausible alternative to the choices made could have been to process and analyse the statements based on variables such as e.g. sex, age or years in the field. The final choice to focus occupational groups' different and similar views was based on previous knowledge concerning occupational groups' background and traditional work with children in need of special support (e.g. Persson, 1998, Ström, 1999, Malmgren Hansen, 2002, Hjärne, 2004, Isaksson, 2009). However, it should be noted that there are likely to be internal differences within occupational groups (Abbott, 1988) and some group members' views might be closer to other occupational groups' views concerning certain issues. Additionally, some occupational groups' views seem to overlap in their replies concerning some questions in the questionnaire (e.g. special teachers' and assistant recourse staff's views that groups/classes functioning badly can be a reason why children are in need of special support). Thus, when the results are read, one should keep in mind that the idea of occupational

groups should not be seen as segmented and that groups are seldom completely homogeneous (Abbott, 1988, Liljegren, 2008). An alternative approach in order to study differences and similarities among the occupational groups would have been to select one preschool or school in the municipality. This preschool/school could have been studied for a longer period of time, using a variety of methods, such as interviews, observations and diaries written by the staff. This approach could possibly have captured a more nuanced picture of the views among occupational groups. However, patterns which emerged and became visible, when all the personal in the municipality (with nearly a thousand respondents) were asked, would not have been possible to detect with a small-scale study investigating one particular preschool/school.

In study two, educational leaders' views on work with children in need of special support were studied. Responses from all leaders (N=45) were accounted for as well as statements from the two sub-groups, i.e. preschool leaders (N=16) and compulsory school leaders (N=29). In this context, it is worth mentioning that leaders in preschools and schools manage partly different types of school systems (or rather activities; in Swedish: *verksamheter*) with two separate curricula (Government office, 1998, 2010, Government office, 1994, 2011). Thus, concepts used in the questionnaire (e.g. school difficulties, small groups, goals) might have slightly different meanings for the two sub-groups operating with somewhat different practices.⁸⁸ A possible way to handle differences between the two sub-groups of educational leaders would have been to direct questions specifically to each sub-group or hand out two

⁸⁸ A similar reflection can be highlighted regarding questionnaire #1.

different questionnaires entirely. However, as presented in chapter 1, some educational leaders were responsible for both preschools and schools concurrently. This circumstance would have made the distribution procedure hard to handle. Additionally, using two different forms would have made it difficult to compare answers between the two sub-groups. When it was decided that the same questionnaire was to be used for the two sub-groups⁸⁹ it was assumed that educational leaders, in accordance with the curricula prevailing at the time of the study (Government office, 1994, Government office 1998), viewed education, school interventions and work with children in need of special support as a continuum throughout the child's school years (i.e. in this study, between the ages of 1-16). This was also clearly expressed in the instructions of the accompanying letter (see appendix III).

Study three investigates different occupational groups' views on SENCOs' work. As in study one, the views of several additional occupational groups (e.g. preschool teachers in preschool class, leisure time pedagogues and resource teachers) could have been added to the study as well. However, in order to receive an overarching picture of occupational groups working in the entire school system, the choice fell on the seven groups presented in article III. It would have been interesting to add the occupational group of resource teachers to the study, since they can be expected to work with various school difficulties and in close contact with SENCOs in their daily work. Additionally, this group has not been frequently highlighted in educational literature and in research. However, in questionnaire #1 (from which data for study three was

⁸⁹ It should be noted that some questions in the questionnaire were only directed to educational leaders in school.

partly collected), there were only 11 of the 938 respondents who stated that they worked as resource teachers in the municipality. This was considered to be too few participants to display in a questionnaire-based study. The ethical aspects also needed to be considered. In the municipality's preschools and schools, there are a limited amount of resource teachers. The responses from the recourse teachers might have been easier to trace to individuals than the responses from other groups participating in the study. Nevertheless, the answers from this occupational group are still available for me, and it would be possible to further investigate their views in relation to SENCOs in a follow-up study in the near future.

The intention with study four was to select head teachers who could specifically be said to represent inclusive values and lead successful schools (i.e. relatively high academic achievement). The five head teachers were also selected through certain criteria and selection procedures and the interview questions were posed in order to achieve the purpose of the study (Kvale, 1992). An alternative procedure in the interview situation would have been to leave the interview completely open for the head teachers so they could describe their daily work, without any questions or guidance from me as their interviewer. However, I considered it to be a risk using this approach since the aim of the study might have been difficult to achieve. There were also possibilities to randomly select head teachers from several municipalities. However, in the light of the entire thesis, it was considered important to keep the interviews within the boundaries of the municipality, since the intention has been to investigate views of occupational groups in the same context (c.f. Cherryholmes, 1999, Larsson, 2009), namely the current municipality.

Concluding the section of methodological reflections, I would like to say a few words concerning how the concept of inclusion was presented and investigated throughout the research project. The notion of inclusion was primarily investigated in questionnaires and interviews by using a relational perspective (Persson, 1998), which can be seen as closely linked to an inclusive perspective (Emanuelsson et al, 2001). During the research process, the participant's responses in relation to the notion of inclusion became visible and interesting to study. However, this was not a specific point of departure when the questionnaires were constructed or when the interviews were conducted. In order to know more about the occupational groups' views in relation to a more radical definition of inclusion (c.f. Skrtic, 1991, Haug, 1998, Allen and Slee, 2001, Ainscow and Sandill, 2010, Nilholm and Göransson, forthcoming), I could have posed questions about e.g. how educational leaders and personnel organise schools and groups in order to develop learning communities and a mutual understanding of the idea to make use of and celebrate each other's differences (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010).

CONTRIBUTIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The methodological approach of this study made it possible to investigate different occupational groups' views on a comprehensive level. The approach also made it possible to investigate phenomena within the same context. Such an overarching, descriptive study, investigating different views almost exclusively within one municipality ⁹⁰ has never been done in Sweden before. Through this approach, several patterns have emerged. These patterns would probably not have occurred using

⁹⁰ The exception is questionnaire #3 presented in III.

another methodological approach and/or a different theoretical framework. As the research process progressed, it became useful to combine descriptions of participants' views expressed in preschool's/school's practices with discussions at a structural level using mostly a critical pragmatic perspective (Cherryholmes, 1988, 1999). I believe this approach has strengthened the credibility of the study as well as the possibility to generalise the results and make the outcome interesting in other contexts as well (Stake, 1998, Larsson, 2005, 2009).

As noted above, this study has contributed to several important features relative to our understanding of work with children in need of special support. For example, this thesis brings to light the fact that different occupational groups in the municipality seem to have both similar as well as different perceptions why children are in need of special support and how work with school difficulties should be carried out. These matters have scarcely been highlighted in earlier work (see also e.g. Persson, 1998, Holmberg et al, 2005, Tideman et al, 2005) and are significant both for policy and practice, as well as for further investigations concerning what consequences different and similar views might have for preschools' and schools' work.

In accordance with international studies (e.g. Villa et al, 1996, Barnett and Monda-Amaya 1998), but rather unstudied (and perhaps unfamiliar) in a Swedish context, this study indicates that educational leaders have a rather ambivalent view on special needs issues and inclusion. For example, it is highlighted and discussed in article II that several educational leaders seem to agree to a deficit perspective in order to explain why children are in need of special support. Concurrently, the data also dis-

play tendencies where the leaders seem to be more open to alternative solutions and leave traditional deficit perspectives behind. In Sweden, there are relatively few studies investigating educational leaders' work concerning special needs and inclusion (for exceptions see e.g. Persson, 2008 b, Heimdahl Matsson and Malmgren Hansen, 2009, Giota and Emanuelsson, 2011). Thus, this study provides further knowledge on educational leaders' perspectives on work with children in need of special support. This can be considered as an essential contribution since educational leaders now have a pivotal role and an increased amount of responsibility and jurisdiction related to special educational work (SFS 2010:800).

Head teachers' views on their work were further investigated in study four, and their descriptions of strategies, perceptions and understandings for inclusive education were studied. Through a rather elaborate selection procedure, five head teachers (who could be said to work both effectively and inclusively) were identified and interviewed. As mentioned earlier, study four provides new features in respect to the dimension of leadership for inclusion. Additionally, there seems to be a gap in literature and prior research as regards leadership for inclusion relative to attempts to work out what it actually involves and entails. In the interviews, the word "inclusion" was not mentioned by me as an interviewer until the end of the interview. This approach can also be seen as an innovative methodological approach concerning studies of perceptions of inclusion. Apart from displaying different strategies, which the head teachers say they use in order to promote inclusive practices, the study also reveals that the five head teachers seem to be rather loyal to the prevailing school system, where higher demands have been set forth

for head teachers to manage all students in the learning environment (SFS 2010:800) as well as higher demands on accountability concerning academic achievements (Government office, 2011). It is discussed in paper IV that the head teachers are part of the prevailing school system and might adopt a general way of talking about work with children in need of special support and inclusion which is not discussed in more depth or problematised. The discussion in article IV is based on a critical pragmatic reading of the transcribed interviews (c.f. Cherryholmes 1988). As an analytical tool, I used critical pragmatism as a step in the analysing process. This mode of procedure can be seen as a contribution of this study as well.

Another feature that can be seen as a contribution of this thesis is the way I use the notion of inclusion and how the idea of inclusive education is discussed in the articles and in this introductory text. A relational perspective is used as a point of departure for the sampling of the data as well as when the outcome of the separate studies is discussed and related to inclusion. A relational perspective, as well as complementary ideas of inclusion, is accounted for in this introductory text. When prior research concerning inclusion is reviewed in this thesis, there is often a lack of clarity concerning the concepts used in studies. Thus, the thesis can contribute to illuminating difficulties which might occur when inclusive practices are intended to be investigated scientifically. For example, even after the elaborate selection procedure to find head teachers who display certain inclusive values (related to a relational perspective), the head teachers have different concepts of what inclusion can entail. Thus, one can assume that there will be conceptual confusion in studies when so-called “inclusive practices” are intended to be investigated.

The study also provides further knowledge regarding views on SENCOs' role and work. The procedure used to pose questions, on a comprehensive level, to several occupational groups in preschools and schools in one municipality made it possible to obtain an overall picture of the occupational groups' different views on how special educational work should be carried out. This can provide valuable knowledge for preschools and schools (as well as the entire school system, c.f. Skrtic, 1991) concerning (special) educational work. The role of SENCOs was created and initiated by the Swedish government in the early 1990's (UHÄ 1990-06-27). Many years have passed since the reform was implemented. During this time period, there has been prior research investigating SENCOs' work from different vantage points (e.g. Malmgren Hansen, 2002, Bladini, 2004, Wetso, 2006, von Ahlefeldt Nisser, 2009). However, this study, conducted more than 20 years after the reform, is the first study, to my knowledge that highlights questions such as "Who should do what to whom?", based on several occupational groups' views on SENCOs' work, as well as related special educational issues. One significant result that has been brought to light by this study is that different occupational groups in the municipality often have different views on how school difficulties should be dealt with, as well as how the special support should be carried out. Such knowledge is likely to be important when personnel in preschools and schools plan (special) educational interventions based on political intentions manifested through statutes and policy documents.

Further, I also see the theoretical framework used in this thesis as a contribution to the field of (special) education. By using both Skrtic's (1991, 1995) critical pragmatic reading of special education as well as Abbott's

(1988) reasoning concerning jurisdictional control and the division of expert labor, I believe issues related to school difficulties are discussed from partly new angles. This can provide us with further dimensions on special education relative to general education. Based on a critical pragmatic perspective it has been possible to unveil tacit power structures and hidden agendas, often veiled in the rhetorical claims of political representatives formulated in statutes and policy documents (Cherryholmes 1988, 1999, Skrtic, 1991). Using Skrtic's (1991) arguments, there are reasons to believe that power structures in the school system are concealed by the parallel system used in Sweden (consisting of general education and special education). Through long-established structures of special education and disability (Skrtic, 1991, 1995), manoeuvred by the pigeon-holing process, it is possible to maintain a functionalistic view of education. Schools can continue to be managed as machine bureaucracies and professionals can work as loosely coupled employees in professional bureaucracies. "The public" (Abbott, 1988) represented by e.g. the politicians can continuously require schools to account for achievements of various goals based on a functionalistic perspective. Thus, general education stays untouched without critical discussions concerning what consequences a functionalistic view might have for children's education and future in school as well as in society. Responses from different occupational groups participating in this study are likely to reflect e.g. traditions and political intentions that have been prevailing throughout the years. By highlighting possible underlying structures in the system, this study can encourage discussions among participants at different levels (e.g. politicians, school administrators, educational leaders and teachers) about implicit assumptions concerning general as well

as special education, so that new structures can be constructed, detected, revealed and again, deconstructed (Cherryholmes, 1988).

FUTURE STUDIES

The study presented in this thesis should be complemented by "in-depth" studies investigating practices from within. Through e.g. ethnographical studies, it would be possible to investigate how occupational groups in preschools and schools work with children in need of special support on a daily basis. Further, ethnographical "in-depth" studies can explore how occupational groups divide their work (Abbott, 1988). Observations and interviews in preschools and schools during an extended time period might make it possible to further explore Skrtic's (1991, 1995) ideas concerning professional work in loosely coupled organisations. It is also important to study consequences for practice (especially for children educated in preschools and schools) when different occupational groups express different (and/or similar) ideas of how special educational work should be carried out. Furthermore, the present study is closely linked to practices in one municipality. The practice-based approach could be further elaborated by studies developed together by researchers and personnel in preschools and schools. One example of such studies is action-based research, where personnel and researchers together formulate, investigate and develop the object of research. Preschools and schools could develop their teaching content and problematise the learning object in e.g. learning studies in order to facilitate learning for all children (Runesson, 2008, Marton, 2009).

According to a majority of all occupational groups participating in this study, SENCOs should work with supervision of teachers and staff. In

article III, it is reported by chief educational officers as well as by educational leaders in compulsory schools (i.e. head teachers) that the SENCOs' task of supervision has increased during the last five years. The head teachers in study four also agree with the importance of SENCOs' work with supervision. However, none of the head teachers interviewed has much experience of SENCOs who supervise teachers in any organised form. It seems as if SENCOs (and also special teachers) working in the head teachers' schools mostly supervise assistant resource staff. When it comes to teachers, SENCOs mostly seem to follow up results and discuss pupils' well-being. A couple of head teachers express the view that the timing has not been right to pursue the idea of SENCOs supervising their teacher colleagues. The results above indicate the importance of further studies concerning SENCOs' role as supervisors. Since this task seems to be required by a majority of the personnel in the municipality, it is essential to investigate what kind of supervision is required by the occupational groups, as well as who they believe should receive and benefit from this type of supervision. Additionally, there have been few studies carried out empirically, which investigate how the supervision of teachers and staff conducted by SENCOs has affected children in need of special support.

Further investigations could also be made in the schools of the five interviewed head teachers (IV). The statements from the head teachers concerning their strategies on how they manage their schools could be followed-up and validated. Studies could involve school observations and interviews with pupils, parents and staff (c.f. Hoopey and McLeskey, 2013). This could also be a step to developing studies methodologically in order to investigate learning environments that are considered to

be inclusive. Further studies could specifically investigate how educational leaders and their personnel organise groups and schools. Questions could be posed in order to investigate conditions for inclusion using a wider concept of inclusion (e.g. where the creation of learning environments are crucial) (c.f. Ainscow and Sandill, 2010, Nilholm and Göranson, forthcoming).

Further on, studies that empirically examine effects of the creation of occupational groups, implemented and steered by the government in order to implement political ideas into organisations (c.f. Evetts, 2011, 2013) would be fruitful to study. In a critical pragmatic mode, it is essential to ask what the consequences might be for practice when governmental reforms are forced into the system (Cherryholmes, 1999, von Wright, 2007). The creation and introduction of the new occupational group of SENCOs into the Swedish school system is an example of such a reform (see III). In general, as I see it, it would be fruitful for education if more studies were to investigate practices in the educational sector, using a critical pragmatic approach. Such studies could critically examine the school system's structural construction as well as unveil uncertainties and anomalies in the system in order to critically scrutinise prevailing structures in general education. In turn, this approach might help to initiate discussions of importance for practice. The discussions can then lead to actions and solutions which contribute to deconstructions and reconstructions of the system (Skrtic, 1991, Thomas and Loxley, 2001).

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The present thesis illuminates and unveils several issues that are important in future work, both for policy-makers and in practice. I will discuss three implications for practice and two major implications for policy.

Regarding practice, it is essential for preschools and schools to discuss what the consequences might be for work with children in need of special support, and not least for the children themselves, when a deficit perspective dominates. One obvious risk of this state-of-affairs is that preschools and schools will not question and develop their own work practices and the child will be routinely identified as the educational problem. An additional and related implication concerns the fact that staff in schools at times hold very different opinions with regard to the issue “who should do what to whom”, not least seen in the views on SENCOs. Thus, one implication for practice concerns the necessity to develop discussions in e.g. teaching teams (in Swedish: *arbetslag*) in order to reach some common ground in this important work. Thirdly, the outcome points to the importance of relating the practical work to rules and regulations in the guidelines. One example is the importance attached to medical diagnoses in schools. Such diagnoses are not prescribed in the guidelines (Nilholm et al, 2012). On a more speculative note, this openness to the medical discourse might imply the need to further develop practice and an educational language in order to describe children in difficulties in schools.

As regards policy, the study taken together with prior research highlights difficulties with the creation and introduction of the occupational group

of SENCOs into the school system (c.f. Evetts, 2011) as well as with the coordination of special needs work in general. It is suggested that it would be wise to investigate and deal with perceptions in preschools and schools before introducing a new occupational group such as the group of SENCOs. Further, there are reasons to believe that it would be beneficial to empirically investigate and evaluate political reforms before implementing new reforms through the creation of occupational groups (UHÄ 1990-06-27, SFS 2007: 638). Another adjacent implication of this would be to initiate a governmental investigation which took a firm grip on special needs work in general, in order to more clearly define “who should do what to whom” in the area of special education. Additional reasons for such an encompassing investigation are based on the argument that several prior investigations (DsU 1986:13, SOU 2008:109) as well as political decisions (UHÄ 1990-06-27, SFS 2007: 638) seem to blend perspectives in this area. To be more specific, relational and categorical perspectives dominate in different political contexts historically (c.f. Emanuelsson et al, 2001) as well as at present. For example, the report in the mid 1980’s (DsU 1986:13) stressed the need for a new teacher education with a large amount of additional education in special education in order for regular teachers to handle differences within the classroom. The same report also emphasised the importance of improving the specialised supplementary education (UHÄ 1990-06-27) in order to achieve the ideological goal of “A school for all”. This post-graduate education became the education of SENCOs in the 1990’s. Twenty years later, the political intentions are to reinforce special teachers who are supposed to work for pupils in need of special support related to the subjects of Swedish and Mathematics. The special teachers should have the ability to analyse difficulties in the learning environment on an indi-

vidual level (SFS 2007:638). According to a report from 2008 investigating preconditions for a new teacher education, it is suggested that

Pupils with difficulties must receive qualified help here and now and cannot wait for reforms that can take decades to implement. Thus, there is still considerable space for an *individual perspective*. The government has also recently reintroduced the postgraduate education for special teachers, who, in contrast to SENCOs, should work directly with pupils who have needs of special support. However, it is the regular teacher who first meets the different special educational needs. Thus, it is totally essential to be able to identify different learning difficulties and call for the expertise and help that the special teacher can provide (SOU 2008: 109, p. 108, my translation).

Using the ideal types of a relational and a categorical perspective, this statement could probably represent a categorical perspective (c.f. Persson, 1998).

Different perspectives, illustrated in this present thesis, among occupational groups are most likely a reflection of the different political intentions, highlighted above. This blend of perspectives has been prevalent for several decades as well as in current policy documents. I suggest that the government should prioritise an investigation concerning “who should do what to whom” since one can assume that different perspectives on how work with children in need of special support is viewed and carried out have consequences for individual children as well as for the entire school system.

8 SUMMARY IN SWEDISH/SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING

Inledning och avhandlingens syfte

Denna sammanläggningsavhandling, som bygger på fyra delstudier, har sin huvudsakliga fokus på hur olika yrkesgrupper i en svensk kommun ser på arbetet kring barn i behov av särskilt stöd. Formuleringen att "barn är i behov av särskilt stöd" är hämtad bland annat ur Skollagen (SFS 2010:800) där även formuleringen elev i behov av särskilt stöd används för den elev som går i den obligatoriska grundskolan. Ett barn som anses vara i behov av särskilt stöd har rätt till sådant stöd enligt lagar och förordningar (SFS 1985:1100, SFS 1997:0599, SFS 2010:800). Dock är inte särskilt stöd definierat och det kan finnas många orsaker till att barn bedöms vara i behov av särskilt stöd (SFS 2010:800). I Sverige deltar i stort sett samtliga barn i den frivilliga förskoleverksamheten. När det gäller grundskolan beräknar Nilholm m.fl. (2007) att mellan 2,3 % och 3,1 % av alla elever som ingår i det svenska skolsystemet (i åldrarna 7-17 år) går i någon form av segregering under hela eller delar av sin skoldag. Elever som ansetts vara i någon form av skolsvårigheter har oftast undervisats, helt eller delvis, av personal med någon typ av specialpedagogisk funktion (Isaksson, 2009). Trots intentioner att utbilda samtliga barn inom den ordinarie verksamheten (ex. SOU 1974: 53, SFS 2010:800) tycks det finnas hinder för skolor, såväl som för det allmänna skolsystemet generellt, att uppnå detta mål fullt ut. Avhandlingen fokuserar särskilt två yrkesgrupper, specialpedagoger och ledare (dvs. förskolechefer och rektorer) i förskola och skola. Enligt tidigare forskning tycks dessa två grupper ha en central roll i skolors arbete med

specialpedagogiska frågor (ex. McLeskey och Waldron, 2000, Malmgren Hansen, 2002, Leithwood m.fl., 2008, Heimdahl Mattson och Malmgren Hansen, 2009).

Det övergripande syftet med avhandlingen är att öka vår kunskap kring olika yrkesgruppers syn på arbetet kring barn i behov av särskilt stöd. Avhandlingen består av två delar som relaterar något olika till det övergripande syftet. De fyra separata artiklarna, som presenteras i del två, strävar alla mot att uppfylla det övergripande syftet för avhandlingen. Detta görs genom att artiklarna behandlar olika aspekter av hur yrkesgrupper ser på arbetet kring barn i behov av särskilt stöd. I den första delen (Kappan) är det primära syftena att kontextualisera delstudierna vilka är rapporterade i artikel I-IV, sammanfatta och syntetisera resultaten redovisade i de fyra artiklarna samt fördjupa de teoretiska tolkningarna av de empiriska studiernas resultat. Funna empiriska mönster kontextualiseras, tolkas och diskuteras även i de separata artiklarna. Således uppnås det övergripande syftet, att öka vår kunskap kring olika yrkesgruppers syn på arbetet kring barn i behov av särskilt stöd, både genom att generera betydande empiriska data samt genom att teoretiskt tolka dessa data.

Teoretiskt ramverk

Studiens teoretiska ramverk bygger på kritisk pragmatism (Cherryholmes, 1988, Skrtic, 1991, 1995) och Abbotts teorier kring hur professioner förhandlar och fördelar arbete (1988). I ett kritiskt pragmatiskt perspektiv ska all verksamhet, och konsekvenser av verksamhet ses i ett sammanhang (Cherryholmes, 1988, 1999). Verkligheten ses som en kamp mellan olika intressen och konkurrerande definitioner av situat-

ioner. Genom kritisk pragmatism kan komplexa fenomen studeras och belysas utifrån olika aspekter (Cherryholmes 1988, Skrtic, 1991). Fenomen kan avtäckas så att strukturer blir synliga och därmed kan diskussioner initieras kring vilka konsekvenser uppenbarade strukturer kan få för verksamheten (Cherryholmes, 1988, 1999, von Wright, 2007). Utifrån dessa antaganden blir Skrtics (1991,1995) kritiska läsning och analys av specialpedagogiken (och dess grundläggande antaganden) i relation till den allmänna pedagogiken och det allmänna utbildningssystemet värdefull. Skrtics resonemang och centrala begrepp används för att särskilt undersöka och avtäckta fenomen och synliggöra strukturer inom det specialpedagogiska fältet. Skrtic (1991) menar att skolors organisation drivs utifrån ett funktionalistiskt perspektiv. Skolor styrs som maskinbyråkratier (jmf Mintzberg, 1979) där personal (dvs. lärare, rektorer och annan skolpersonal) verkar inom skolor i professionella byråkratier. Vidare menar Skrtic (1991) att när skolor drivs som maskinbyråkratier kommer effektivitet och rationella lösningar i fokus. Exempelvis hanteras frågor kring barn i behov av särskilt stöd med standardiserade program och formella rutiner. Samtidigt menar Skrtic att personal (t.ex. lärare) i en professionell byråkrati utför sitt arbete utifrån inlärd repertoarer och standardiserade kunskaper och förmågor. Enligt Skrtic innebär det funktionalistiska perspektivet, där skolor drivs som maskinbyråkratier med personal verksamma i professionella byråkratier, som hindrande då skolor ska utvecklas mot att bli mer rättvisa och excellenta. Skrtic (1991) menar att ett av de största hindren för skolor att bli mer demokratiska är att specialpedagogiken tillåts att vara ett parallellt system till den allmänna pedagogiken. Specialpedagogiken används som ett redskap för att undanröja osäkerhet, anomalier och förvirring inom det allmänna utbildningssystemet. Därmed kan den funktionalistiska synen på skola

och utbildning fortsätta stå oemotsagd utan att misslyckanden och problem i det allmänna utbildningssystemet avtäcks och problematiseras.

Abbotts (1988) resonemang om "division of expert labor" handlar om att ständiga strider, förhandlingar och överenskommelser (implicita eller öppna) pågår mellan olika yrken och yrkesgrupper kring vilken yrkesgrupp som ska ha kontrollen över exempelvis kunskap, klienter, arbete och handlingar. Att skaffa sig kontroll över en professionell jurisdiktion innebär att yrkesgruppen skaffar sig autonomi över de arbetsuppgifter som behörighetsområdet (jurisdiktionen) omfattar. Att ha full professionell jurisdiktion innebär även att yrket har möjlighet att exkludera andra yrkesgrupper som strider om samma, eller liknande arbetsuppgifter. Abbotts (1988) teorier har i första hand använts i denna avhandling för att tolka och förstå specialpedagogers och andra yrkesgruppers synsätt kring specialpedagogers arbete.

Det empiriska materialet har i första hand tolkats utifrån de teoretiska resonemang som presenterats ovan (Skrtic, 1991, 1995, Abbott, 1988). Därutöver har det empiriska materialet också diskuterats utifrån idéer kring inkludering. I artiklarna såväl som i kappan diskuteras i vilken mån yrkesgruppernas svar kan sägas spegla ett relationellt perspektiv (Persson, 1998). Detta kopplas i sin tur till inkludering då ett relationellt perspektiv är nära kopplat till ett inkluderande perspektiv (Emanuelsson et al, 2001). Utifrån ett relationellt perspektiv ses bland annat specialpedagogiska aktiviteter som en sammanflätad del av aktiviteter som utförs inom den allmänna pedagogiken. Fokus ligger på relationer, kommunikation och interaktion. Vad som händer i mötet mellan människor blir avgörande (Persson, 1998). Således poängterar Persson (1998, 2008 a) att skolsvårigheter uppstår när olika fenomen möts i undervisningsmil-

jön. Utifrån ett relationellt perspektiv blir lärarens undervisning och förhållningssätt såväl som lärandemiljön viktig då skolsvårigheter förklaras. Barnets förutsättningar ses i relation till miljön och miljön kan påverka barnets förutsättningar. Ansvaret för specialpedagogiska aktiviteter delas av samtlig pedagogisk personal i förskola/skola och långsiktiga lösningar är att föredra. Specialpedagogisk kompetens ses som kvalificerad hjälp som erbjuds lärarna. Lärarna ska sedan ha möjlighet att planera undervisningen så att alla barns behov kan tillgodoses (Persson, 1998).

Studie 1: Different agendas?- the views of different occupational groups on special needs education.

Syftet med den första studien var att studera hur olika yrkesgrupper i förskola och skola förklarar varför barn har svårigheter i skolan, hur de tror att skolor bör hjälpa dessa barn och vilken roll de tycker att specialpedagoger ska ha i detta arbete. I delstudie ett skickades en enkät ut till samtlig personal (N=1297) i förskola och skola i en svensk kommun läsåret 2008/2009 (72,5 % svarsfrekvens). Sex yrkesgrupper valdes ut: förskollärare (199), assistenter (56), specialpedagoger (35), speciallärare (22), klasslärare (147) och ämneslärare (123). Vid dataanalysen användes dataprogrammet *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS 16). Resultaten visade bland annat att yrkesgrupperna hade lika, men också olika syn på arbetet kring barn i behov av särskilt stöd. De flesta i alla yrkesgrupper svarade att barnets individuella brister var anledning till att barn är i behov av särskilt stöd samtidigt som få svarade att anledningen kunde ligga i att vissa grupper/klasser fungerar dåligt eller att vissa lärare har brister. En majoritet av alla som svarade menade att en medicinsk diagnos bör ha betydelse för att få särskilt stöd i kommunen. Svaren i de olika yrkesgrupperna skilde sig åt då det gällde hur det specialpedago-

giska arbetet skulle utföras och hur specialpedagogen skulle arbeta. Flera av yrkesgrupperna menade att specialpedagogen skulle ägna sig åt individuellt inriktad specialundervisning och handledning för arbetslag/lärlarlag medan få i alla yrkesgrupper förutom specialpedagoger svarade att specialpedagogerna ska arbeta med organisationsutveckling.

Studie 2: Making schools inclusive? – Educational leaders' views on how to work with children in need of special support.

Syftet med den andra studien var att studera hur ledare i förskolan och skolan förklarar varför barn har svårigheter i skolan, hur de menar att förskolor/skolor bör hjälpa barn i behov av särskilt stöd och vilken roll de tycker att specialpedagoger ska ha i detta arbete. I den andra delstudien svarade 45 ledare (i samma kommun som i studie ett) på en webenkät våren 2009 (100 % svarsfrekvens). Ledarna delades under analysfasen upp i två undergrupper, rektorer i grundskolan (29) och förskolechefer (16). Vid dataanalysen användes dataprogrammet *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS 17). Resultaten visade bland annat att de flesta av ledarna svarade att barnets individuella brister var en viktig anledning till att barn är i behov av särskilt stöd. Ledarna svarade inte lika frekvent att anledningen kunde ligga i att vissa grupper/klasser fungerar dåligt eller att vissa lärare har brister. En minoritet av de tillfrågade ledarna svarade att en medicinsk diagnos bör ha betydelse för att få särskilt stöd i kommunen. Merparten av rektorerna och förskolecheferna uppgav att specialpedagogen bör arbeta med handledning, dokumentation och organisationsutveckling. När resultaten redovisas utifrån de två undergruppernas svar skiljer sig de två grupperna något åt. Bland annat svarade rektorer i grundskolan oftare att specialpedagoger ska arbeta med individuell specialundervisning. Förskolecheferna svarade däremot

oftare än sina kollegor i grundskolan att specialpedagogen ska ägna sig åt organisationsutveckling och att en medicinsk diagnos inte bör ha betydelse för att erhålla särskilt stöd.

Studie 3: SENCOs- vanguards or in vain?

Syftet med den tredje studien var att undersöka möjliga förändringar i skolsystemet när introduktionen av en ny yrkesgrupp, specialpedagoger, utmanar etablerade strukturer. Delstudie tre beskriver olika yrkesgruppers syn på specialpedagogens roll och arbete. I delstudie tre används data från enkäterna i delstudie ett och två samt ytterligare svar från en enkät från 2006 ställd till samtliga skolchefer i Sverige (N= 290). 90, 3 % av de kommunala skolcheferna svarade. Utifrån studiens resultat tycks det som att specialpedagoger i viss mån har etablerat en ny yrkesroll. Enligt både kommunala skolchefer och rektorer i grundskolan i en kommun tycks specialpedagoger arbeta mer med handledning, dokumentation och utvärdering nu än för fem år sen. Uppgiften att arbeta med specialundervisning till elever tycks på samma sätt ha minskat under de fem senaste åren enligt cheferna. Det verkar dock råda olika syn bland kommunens olika yrkesgrupper kring hur specialpedagogen bör arbeta. Exempelvis uttryckte en majoritet av respondenterna att specialpedagogen bör arbeta med individuellt riktad specialundervisning. Det är därmed svårt att avgöra i vilken grad specialpedagoger har utmanat etablerade strukturer och på så vis åstadkommit förändringar i skolsystemet.

Studie 4: Promoting inclusion? – “inclusive” and effective head teachers’ descriptions of their work.

Syftet med den fjärde studien var att bidra med förståelse kring hur rektorer kan främja inkluderande praktiker. Studien har sin huvudsakliga fokus kring vilka strategier rektorerna, som förfaller arbeta både effektivt och uttrycker vissa inkluderande värden, säger sig använda för att främja inkluderande praktiker. Studien är en intervjustudie där fem grundskolerektorer i en kommun beskriver sitt arbete med elever och personal. Studie fyra är en uppföljande studie av studie två och rektorerna togs ut genom en noggrann urvalsprocess. Intervjuerna genomfördes i januari 2012. Under intervjun beskrev rektorerna strategier de använde för att förebygga och hantera skolsvårigheter. Rektorerna hade likartade sätt att beskriva visioner, mål och strategier. De tycktes uppskatta yttre styrning och krav från exempelvis styrdokument kring hur deras uppgifter ska skötas. Samtliga rektorer uttryckte att rollen som pedagogisk ledare var viktig i arbetet för en framgångsrik skola. De fokuserade särskilt undervisning, lärare och lärmiljön när de beskrev arbetet med elever i behov av särskilt stöd. Enligt rektorerna bör stödet företrädesvis ske i klassrummet. Alla rektorer poängterade dock vikten av att vara flexibel då det gäller stödet till eleverna. Kommunikation, dialog, trygghet och skapandet av goda relationer på skolan var återkommande värden som rektorerna diskuterade. Rektorerna svarade delvis olika när den specifika frågan kring begreppet inkludering ställdes.

Som ett sista steg i analysprocessen lästes de transkriberade intervjuerna åter igenom. En kritisk pragmatisk läsning gjordes på materialet i sin helhet. Som en del av studiens resultat diskuteras i artikel fyra att rektorerna inte tycks identifiera hot från de byråkratier som tidigare beskrivits (Skrtic, 1991). Exempelvis ses inte den yttre styrningen i form av ökade krav på redovisningsskyldighet som ett hot mot demokratiska värden

och inkludering. Rektorernas uttryck tyder snarare på att de anpassar sig och kan sägas vara lojala till det rådande utbildningssystemet.

Diskussion

Utifrån vad som diskuterats i de separata artiklarna har tre teman utkristalliserats. Det första temat behandlar yrkesgruppernas svar gällande hur arbetet kring barn i behov av särskilt stöd bör fördelas mellan olika yrkesgrupper i förskolan och skolan. Inom detta tema belyses kontrollen över professionell jurisdiktion i relation till barn i olika skolsvårigheter. Diskussionen baseras på Abbotts (1988) resonemang kring olika yrkesgruppers kamp, förhandlingar och överenskommelser om frågor som behandlar vilken yrkesgrupp som ska arbeta med vad och med vem. Här diskuteras vilken jurisdiktion (behörighetsområde) som specialpedagogen kan sägas ha kontroll över. Inom detta tema diskuteras också Skrtics (1991) argument kring att professionella i skolor är löst sammankopplade och att lärarna utför sitt specialiserade och standardiserade arbete och uppdrag mot vissa klienter. Detta kan få konsekvenser för det pedagogiska arbetet och för elever i behov av särskilt stöd. Det andra temat behandlar bland annat vilken påverkan utbildningspolitiska idéer och dokument kan ha på det pedagogiska arbetet när de politiska intentionerna möter det vardagliga arbetet i förskolor och skolor. Här diskuteras Skrtics (1991,1995) resonemang kring att skolor är drivna som maskinbyråkratier, vilket gör att specialpedagogiken tjänar som upprätthållande artefakt till det allmänna skolsystemet. Utifrån detta resonemang kan specialpedagogiken ses som ett parallellsystem till den allmänna pedagogiken. I det tredje temat diskuteras yrkesgruppernas svar i förhållande till inkluderingsbegreppet. I första hand diskuteras huruvida delta-

garnas perspektiv på arbetet kring barn i behov av särskilt stöd kan sägas representera ett relationellt perspektiv. Inom det tredje temat presenteras bland annat också komplementära perspektiv på inkludering och hur deltagarnas svar förhåller sig till dessa perspektiv.

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Enkät om barn i behov av särskilt stöd

Syfte

Denna enkät har till syfte att beskriva hur verksamheten kring *barn/elever i behov av särskilt stöd* ser ut och fungerar i X Kommun. Högskolan X har fått i uppdrag av X kommun att kartlägga situationen och arbetet kring dessa barn.

Enkätundersökningen genomförs på samtliga grundskolor, fritidshem, särskolor, förskolor och familjedaghem. Kartläggningen ska ligga till grund för ett utvecklingsprojekt. All personal som arbetar med barn och elever i X kommun ska ges möjlighet att delta och utveckla de pedagogiska insatserna. Utvecklingsprojektet kommer att pågå till och med 2010 med start i höst 2008 och enkäten är ett första steg i arbetet.

Vi vill ta vara på dina tankar, synpunkter och erfarenheter. För att få ett så bra underlag för fortsatt arbete som möjligt är det angeläget att all berörd personal får komma till tals. Ditt svar kommer att vara viktigt när vi planerar det fortsatta utvecklingsarbetet. Eftersom kommunen lägger stor vikt vid ditt svar får du avsätta arbetstid för att svara på frågorna. Det är viktigt att enkäten besvaras individuellt. Enkäten tar ungefär 30- 45 minuter att besvara.

Vilka barn och elever gäller enkäten?

Enkäten avser arbetet med *barn/elever i behov av särskilt stöd*. Den grupp det gäller är de barn och elever som enligt din bedömning riskerar att inte nå skolans mål. Enkäten gäller alla barn och elever i behov av särskilt stöd från förskolan upp till och med skolår 9. Elever i särskolan är i formell mening inte definierade som elever i behov av särskilt stöd, men det är ändå av stort intresse för undersökningen och utvecklingsarbetet att personal för denna elevgrupp svarar på enkäten. Vi vill att särskolans personal betraktar alla sina elever som elever i behov av särskilt stöd.

Resultat

Utvecklingsprojektet sker i samverkan mellan X kommun och Högskolan X. Resultatet från enkäten kommer att redovisas och ventileras successivt vid uppföljningsdagar i kommunen. Enkäten är kopplad till forskning och kan utöver arbetet i kommunen bara användas för forskningsändamål. Våren 2009 kommer de första resultaten från enkätsvaren att redovisas under planerade utvecklingsdagar i kommunen.

Dina svar är skyddade

I de resultat som redovisas framgår aldrig vad enskilda personer har svarat. Numret högst upp på enkäten är till för att ansvarig forskare ska kunna se vilka som har svarat och vilka som ska få en påminnelse. Efter avslutad insamling avlägsnas alla identitetsuppgifter. Ditt svar skickar du i bifogat, adresserat och frankerat kuvert.

Skicka ditt svar till Högskolan Dalarna senast den

Med vänlig hälsning och stort tack på förhand för din medverkan!

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Om barn i behov av särskilt stöd

| Din bakgrund | |
|--|--|
| 1. Är du kvinna eller man? 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Kvinna 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Man | |
| 2. Hur gammal är du? 1 <input type="checkbox"/> – 30 år 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 40 år 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 41 – 50 år 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 51 – 60 år 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 61 år – | |
| 3. Vilken är din högsta utbildning? 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grundskola, folkskola, realskola eller liknande → Gå till fråga 6 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Gymnasieutbildning → Gå till fråga 6 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Universitets- eller högskoleutbildning | |
| 4. Har du pedagogexamen? 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ja 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nej | |
| 5. Har du någon annan universitets- eller högskoleexamen? 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ja 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Nej → Gå till fråga 6 Om ja: Vilken examen? <input type="text"/> | |

6. Har du enstaka kurspoäng eller annan utbildning på universitets- eller högskolenivå?

- 1 ☐ Ja
2 ☐ Nej → Gå till fråga 7

Om ja:

Vilken utbildning?

- 1 ☐ Speciallärarutbildning
2 ☐ Specialpedagogutbildning
3 ☐ Talpedagogutbildning
4 ☐ Vidareutbildning i enstaka kurser:

7. Vilken är din huvudsakliga sysselsättning just nu?

Markera endast ett alternativ.

- 1 ☐ Dagbarnvårdare
2 ☐ Assistent
3 ☐ Barnskötare
4 ☐ Förskollärare i förskolan
5 ☐ Förskollärare i förskoleklass
6 ☐ Fritidspedagog
7 ☐ Klasslärare
8 ☐ Ämneslärare i teoretiska ämnen
9 ☐ Mentor och ämneslärare
10 ☐ SVAS-lärare
11 ☐ Ämneslärare i praktisk-estetiska ämnen
12 ☐ Resurslärare
13 ☐ Studie- och yrkesvalslärare
14 ☐ Speciallärare
15 ☐ Specialpedagog
16 ☐ Talpedagog
17 ☐ Annat:

8. Hur många år har du haft nuvarande befattning?

- 1 ☐ Mindre än 6 månader
2 ☐ 6 mån – 1 år
3 ☐ 2 - 5 år
4 ☐ 6 - 10 år
5 ☐ 11 - 20 år
6 ☐ 21 år -

9. Arbetar du i särskolan?

- 1 ☐ Ja
2 ☐ Nej

10. Arbetar du i särskild undervisningsgrupp?

Med det menar vi en grupp speciellt utformad för barn i behov av särskilt stöd.

- 1 ☐ Ja
2 ☐ Nej

Erfarenheter av arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd

11. Möter du i din dagliga verksamhet barn som är i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Ja
 2 ☐ Nej → Gå till fråga 12

Om ja:

Hur många barn?

- 1 ☐ 1 barn
 2 ☐ 2 – 3 barn
 3 ☐ 4 – 6 barn
 4 ☐ 7 – 10 barn
 5 ☐ Fler än 10 barn

12. Har du erfarenhet av arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Mycket stor erfarenhet
 2 ☐ Ganska stor erfarenhet
 3 ☐ Ganska liten erfarenhet
 4 ☐ Mycket liten/Saknar erfarenhet

13. Har du deltagit vid upprättande av åtgärdsprogram?

- 1 ☐ Aldrig
 2 ☐ 1 gång
 3 ☐ 2 – 20 gånger
 4 ☐ Fler än 20 gånger

Undervisning och verksamhet

| 14. Hur ofta använder du följande arbetsformer? | Flera gånger per dag | En gång per dag | Ett par gånger i veckan | Ett par gånger i månaden | Ett par gånger per termin/ Aldrig |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| a. Grupparbete | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Individuellt arbete | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Verksamhet Undervisning om ämnen eller teman i grupp/hel klass | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Andra aktiviteter i grupp/hel klass t.ex. information och allmänna instruktioner | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

15. Hur tycker du att tiden ska fördelas mellan barnen?

- 1 ☐ Fördelas lika mellan barnen
- 2 ☐ Delvis efter barnens behov
- 3 ☐ Helt efter barnens behov

Förebyggande arbete**16. Har du möjlighet att påverka barns måluppfyllelse?**

- 1 ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- 2 ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- 3 ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- 4 ☐ Mycket små möjligheter/Inga alls

17. Vilken av följande personalkategorier tror du har störst möjlighet att påverka situationen för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

Markera endast ett alternativ.

- 1 ☐ Rektor
- 2 ☐ Klasslärare/mentor/förskollärare
- 3 ☐ Barnskötare
- 4 ☐ Dagbarnvårdare
- 5 ☐ Ämneslärare
- 6 ☐ Specialpedagog/speciallärare
- 7 ☐ Fritidspedagog/fritidsledare
- 8 ☐ Skolsköterska/skolpsykolog/kurator
- 9 ☐ Assistent/resurspersonal
- 10 ☐ Annan
- 11 ☐ Ingen uppfattning

Om barn i behov av särskilt stöd**18. Får de barn som har rätt till stöd enligt gällande lagstiftning sådant stöd?**

- 1 ☐ Ja, alla
- 2 ☐ Ja, de flesta
- 3 ☐ Nej, bara en del
- 4 ☐ Nej, endast ett fåtal

| | Ofta | Ibland | Sällan | Aldrig |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 19. Hur ofta möter du barn som du oroar dig för när det gäller ... | | | | |
| <i>Markera med ett kryss på varje rad.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| a. ... barnets förmåga att nå de kunskapsrelaterade målen? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. ... barnets förmåga att nå de sociala målen? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. ... om barnet känner sig delaktig i gruppen? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. ... barnets aktiva deltagande i gruppen? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. ... om barnet är socialt accepterat? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Ofta 1 | Ibland 2 | Sällan 3 | Aldrig 4 |
| 20. Hur ofta möter du barn som är i behov av särskilt stöd men ännu inte fått det och behöver kartläggas av specialpedagog för eventuella insatser? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20b Hur ofta möter du barn som behöver utredas? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Av t.ex. psykolog eller logoped</i> | | | | |
| 21. Hur nöjd eller missnöjd är du med de <u>lokaler</u> du förfogar över för att möta barn i behov av särskilt stöd? | | | | |
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Mycket nöjd | | | | |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Ganska nöjd | | | | |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Ganska missnöjd | | | | |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Mycket missnöjd | | | | |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Arbetar inte med barn i behov av särskilt stöd | | | | → Gå till fråga 23 |
| 22. Hur nöjd eller missnöjd är du med det <u>material</u> du förfogar över för att möta barn i behov av särskilt stöd? | | | | |
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Mycket nöjd | | | | |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Ganska nöjd | | | | |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Ganska missnöjd | | | | |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Mycket missnöjd | | | | |

| 23. Hur vanliga är följande anledningar till att barn är i behov av särskilt stöd? | Mycket vanligt | Ganska vanligt | Ganska ovanligt | Mycket ovanligt | Ingen uppfattning |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Markera med ett kryss på varje rad.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| a. Skolans mål är för svåra för dessa elever | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Barnen har individuella brister | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Förskolan/Skolan är dåligt anpassad för att hantera olikheter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Barnen har brister i hemmiljön | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Vissa lärare har brister | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Vissa grupper/klasser fungerar dåligt | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Annat | | | | | |

24. Vilken betydelse tycker du att medicinsk diagnostisering bör ha för att få särskilt stöd i kommunen?

Gäller inte barn med utvecklingsstörning.

1 ☐ Mycket stor betydelse

2 ☐ Ganska stor betydelse

3 ☐ Ganska liten betydelse

4 ☐ Mycket liten betydelse eller ingen alls

| | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 25. Hur viktigt tycker du att följande är för att arbetet med barn i behov av särskilt stöd ska bli framgångsrikt? | Mycket viktigt | Ganska viktigt | Ganska oviktigt | Inte alls viktigt |
| <i>Markera med ett kryss på varje rad.</i> | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| a. Placering av eleven i liten grupp | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Särskild färdighetsträning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Anpassade läromedel | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Anpassning av den fysiska miljön | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Förändring av klass/gruppsammansättning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Tillgång till specialpedagogisk kompetens | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Stöd av experter/konsulter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. Förstärkning med assistent/resurspersonal | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Anpassning av arbetsformer/arbetssätt i undervisningen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j. Lärarkompetens | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k. Arbetslagets funktion | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l. Föräldrars attityder och åsikter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| m. Barnets motivation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| n. Barnets kunskaper | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| o. Annat | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

26. Vad tycker du att specialpedagoger ska arbeta med?*Flera svar kan markeras.*

- 1 ☐ Individuellt inriktad specialundervisning
- 1 ☐Handledning för arbetslag/lärlarlag
- 1 ☐ Organisationsutveckling
- 1 ☐ Utredning och dokumentation
- 1 ☐ Elevvårdsarbete
- 1 ☐ Annat

27. Var tycker du att specialpedagoger ska arbeta?*Flera svar kan markeras.*

- 1 ☐ På förskolorna/skolorna
- 1 ☐ Inom skoldistrikt
- 1 ☐ Inom specialpedagogiska team, gemensamma för kommunen
- 1 ☐ Inom elevhälsoteam, gemensamma för kommunen
- 1 ☐ Annat

Inflytande**28. Vilket inflytande har du över din egen arbetssituation?**

- 1 ☐ Mycket stort inflytande
- 2 ☐ Ganska stort inflytande
- 3 ☐ Ganska litet inflytande
- 4 ☐ Mycket litet inflytande

29. Vilket inflytande har du över fördelning av ekonomiska resurser för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Mycket stort inflytande
- 2 ☐ Ganska stort inflytande
- 3 ☐ Ganska litet inflytande
- 4 ☐ Mycket litet inflytande eller inget alls
- 5 ☐ Arbetar inte med barn i behov av särskilt stöd

→ Gå till fråga 32

30. Vilka möjligheter har du att påverka det pedagogiska innehållet för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- 2 ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- 3 ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- 4 ☐ Mycket små möjligheter eller inga alls

31. Vilka möjligheter ska föräldrar ha att påverka det pedagogiska innehållet för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- 2 ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- 3 ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- 4 ☐ Mycket små möjligheter eller inga alls
- 5 ☐ Ingen uppfattning

32. Vilka möjligheter ska barn i behov av särskilt stöd ha att påverka det pedagogiska innehållet?

- 1 ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- 2 ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- 3 ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- 4 ☐ Mycket små möjligheter eller inga alls
- 5 ☐ Ingen uppfattning

33. Vilket inflytande ska specialpedagogen/specialläraren ha över fördelning av ekonomiska resurser för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Mycket stort inflytande
- 2 ☐ Ganska stort inflytande
- 3 ☐ Ganska litet inflytande
- 4 ☐ Mycket litet inflytande eller inget alls
- 5 ☐ Ingen uppfattning

34. Vilka möjligheter ska specialpedagogen/specialläraren ha att påverka det pedagogiska innehållet för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- 2 ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- 3 ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- 4 ☐ Mycket små möjligheter eller inga alls
- 5 ☐ Ingen uppfattning

35. Vilka möjligheter ska rektor ha att påverka det pedagogiska innehållet för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
 2 ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
 3 ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
 4 ☐ Mycket små möjligheter eller inga alls
 5 ☐ Ingen uppfattning

36. Vilken kategori ska ha störst inflytande då det gäller det pedagogiska innehållet för barn i behov av särskilt stöd på din förskola/skola?

Markera endast ett svar

- 1 ☐ Barnet/eleven
 2 ☐ Föräldrar
 3 ☐ Klassläraren/mentorn/förskolläraren med ansvar för barngrupp
 4 ☐ Specialpedagogen/specialläraren
 5 ☐ Rektorn
 6 ☐ Assistenten
 7 ☐ Barnskötaren
 8 ☐ Dagbarnvårdaren
 9 ☐ Annan
 10 ☐ Ingen uppfattning

Samverkan och roller

37. Vem samarbetar du med idag när det gäller barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

Flera svar får markeras

- 1 ☐ Rektor
 1 ☐ Kurator
 1 ☐ Skolsköterska
 1 ☐ Skolläkare
 1 ☐ Skolpsykolog
 1 ☐ Specialpedagog
 1 ☐ Talpedagog
 1 ☐ Annan funktion

38. Vem skulle du vilja samarbeta med mer än idag när det gäller barn i behov av särskilt stöd?*Flera svar får markeras*1 ☐ Rektor1 ☐ Kurator1 ☐ Skolsköterska1 ☐ Skolläkare1 ☐ Skolpsykolog1 ☐ Specialpedagog1 ☐ Talpedagog1 ☐ Annan funktion8 ☐ Önskar inget mer samarbete**39. Har du samarbetat med externa aktörer kring barn i behov av särskilt stöd under höstterminen?***T.ex. habiliteringen, barn- och ungdomspsykiatri, polis eller socialförvaltning*1 ☐ Minst en gång per månad2 ☐ Ett par gånger under terminen3 ☐ En gång under terminen4 ☐ Aldrig**40. Skulle du vilja samarbeta med externa aktörer utanför förskola/skola kring barn i behov av särskilt stöd?**1 ☐ Minst en gång per månad2 ☐ Ett par gånger per terminen3 ☐ En gång per terminen4 ☐ Aldrig5 ☐ Ingen uppfattning**41. I vilken roll ser du dig själv i förskolans/skolans verksamhet?***Endast ett svar får markeras*1 ☐ Visionär *Ser att det är viktigt, ser möjligheter, vill gå före andra*2 ☐ Uppfinnare *Ser möjligheter i hur arbetet bör utformas*3 ☐ Utformare *Arbetar för att anpassa uppdraget till våra förutsättningar och styrdokument*4 ☐ Pådrivare *Tycker det är viktigt, nu måste det hända något*5 ☐ Ifrågasättare *Försöker att ställa relevanta frågor, kritisk*6 ☐ Bromsare *Tycker att det tar för mycket utrymme och tid*7 ☐ Annan funktion

42. I vilken roll vill du se dig själv i förskolans/skolans verksamhet när det gäller utvecklingsarbete?

Endast ett svar får markeras

- 1 ☐ Visionär *Ser att det är viktigt, ser möjligheter, vill gå före andra*
- 2 ☐ Uppfinnare *Ser möjligheter i hur arbetet bör utformas*
- 3 ☐ Utformare *Arbetar för att anpassa uppdraget till våra förutsättningar och styrdokument*
- 4 ☐ Pådrivare *Tycker det är viktigt, nu måste det hända något*
- 5 ☐ Ifrågasättare *Försöker att ställa relevanta frågor, kritisk*
- 6 ☐ Bromsare *Tycker att det tar för mycket utrymme och tid*
- 7 ☐ Annan funktion

| Styrning och uppföljning | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Markera med ett kryss på varje rad. | Mycket tydliga 1 | Ganska tydliga 2 | Ganska otydliga 3 | Mycket otydliga 4 | Vet inte 5 |
| 43. Hur tydliga tycker du att de <u>statliga</u> riktlinjerna är för ditt arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 44. Hur tydliga tycker du att de <u>kommunala</u> riktlinjerna är för ditt arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 45. Hur tydliga tycker du att <u>din förskolas/ skolas</u> riktlinjer är för ditt arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Mycket bra 1 | Ganska bra 2 | Ganska dåligt 3 | Mycket dåligt 4 | Vet inte 5 |
| 46. Hur tycker du att <u>statens</u> uppföljning och utvärdering av ditt arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd fungerar? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 47. Hur tycker du att <u>kommunens</u> uppföljning och utvärdering av ditt arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd fungerar? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 48. Hur tycker du att <u>skolledningens</u> uppföljning och utvärdering av ditt arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd fungerar? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ditt arbetslag | | | | | |
| 49. Har ni bra eller dåliga <u>resurser</u> i ditt arbetslag för att möta olika barns behov? | | | | | |
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Mycket bra 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Ganska bra 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Ganska dåliga 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Mycket dåliga | | | | | |

50. Vilka möjligheter har ni i ditt arbetslag att påverka användning av resurser för att möta olika barns behov?

- 1 ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- 2 ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- 3 ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- 4 ☐ Mycket små möjligheter

51. Vilka möjligheter har ni i ditt arbetslag att organisera arbetet för att möta olika barns behov?

- 1 ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- 2 ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- 3 ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- 4 ☐ Mycket små möjligheter

52. Vilket stöd känner du att du får av ditt arbetslag då det gäller arbetet med barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Mycket bra
- 2 ☐ Ganska bra
- 3 ☐ Ganska dåligt
- 4 ☐ Mycket dåligt

53. Vilket stöd känner du att du får av skolledningen då det gäller arbetet med barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Mycket bra
- 2 ☐ Ganska bra
- 3 ☐ Ganska dåligt
- 4 ☐ Mycket dåligt

54. Hur ofta skapar ditt arbetslag aktiviteter för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Ofta
- 2 ☐ Ibland
- 3 ☐ Sällan
- 4 ☐ Aldrig

55. Hur bedömer du att kompetensen i ditt arbetslag är för att möta olika barns behov?

- 1 ☐ Mycket bra
- 2 ☐ Ganska bra
- 3 ☐ Ganska dålig
- 4 ☐ Mycket dålig

56. Vilka av följande aspekter vill du att ni diskuterar mer i ditt arbetslag?*Flera svar får markeras*

- 1 ☐ Barns behov
 1 ☐ Barns kunskaper
 1 ☐ Barns motivation
 1 ☐ Hur vi aktiverar barnen
 1 ☐ Hur vi kommunicerar med barnen
 1 ☐ Hur vi möter barnen
 1 ☐ Hur vi möter föräldrarna
 1 ☐ Barns svårigheter
 1 ☐ Barns funktionshinder
 1 ☐ Grupper/Klasser
 1 ☐ Verksamhetens organisation
 1 ☐ Undervisning
 1 ☐ Annan funktion
 8 ☐ Inget av ovanstående

Din kompetens**57. a) Arbetar du med barn i behov av särskilt stöd?**

- 1 ☐ Ja
 2 ☐ Nej → *Gå till fråga 59*

*Om ja:***b) Vilka av följande svårigheter möter du i ditt arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd?***Flera svar får markeras*

- 1 ☐ Läs- och skrivsvårigheter
 1 ☐ Matematiksvårigheter
 1 ☐ Socio- och emotionella svårigheter, beteendestörning
 1 ☐ Koncentrationssvårigheter *T.ex. allmän oro*
 1 ☐ Tal-, språk och kommunikationssvårigheter
 1 ☐ Rörelsehinder
 1 ☐ Synnedsättning
 1 ☐ Hörselnedsättning
 1 ☐ ADHD/DAMP
 1 ☐ Aspergers syndrom
 1 ☐ Generella inlärningssvårigheter
 1 ☐ Utvecklingsstörning
 1 ☐ Grupp/Klassproblematik
 1 ☐ Organisations- och samordningsproblematik
 1 ☐ Annat

58. Vilka av följande svårigheter har du kompetens att möta?

Gäller även om du inte möter svårigheterna i ditt arbete.

Flera svar får markeras

- 1 ☐ Läs- och skrivsvårigheter
- 1 ☐ Matematiksvårigheter
- 1 ☐ Socio- och emotionella svårigheter, beteendestörning
- 1 ☐ Koncentrationssvårigheter *T.ex. allmän oro*
- 1 ☐ Tal-, språk och kommunikationssvårigheter
- 1 ☐ Rörelsehinder
- 1 ☐ Synnedsättning
- 1 ☐ Hörselnedsättning
- 1 ☐ ADHD/DAMP
- 1 ☐ Aspergers syndrom
- 1 ☐ Generella inlärningssvårigheter
- 1 ☐ Utvecklingsstörning
- 1 ☐ Grupp/Klassproblematik
- 1 ☐ Organisations- och samordningsproblematik
- 1 ☐ Annat
- 1 ☐ Saknar sådan kompetens → *Gå till fråga 61*

59. I vilken utsträckning tas din kompetens tillvara när det gäller barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- 1 ☐ Mycket stor utsträckning
- 2 ☐ Ganska stor utsträckning
- 3 ☐ Ganska liten utsträckning
- 4 ☐ Mycket liten utsträckning

60. Skriv ner här om du har andra synpunkter och reflektioner som du vill lämna till projektet?

Tack för din medverkan!

Arbetet med barn i behov av särskilt stöd i X Kommun

Syfte och innehåll

Denna enkät har till syfte att beskriva hur verksamheten kring *barn/ elever i behov av särskilt stöd* ser ut och fungerar i X Kommun. Högskolan X har fått i uppdrag av X Kommun att kartlägga situationen kring dessa barn. Enkäten skickas till samtliga skolledare för förskolor och grundskolor i X Kommun och är en del i det utvecklingsprojekt som påbörjades kring barn i behov av särskilt stöd hösten 2008. En enkätundersökning för samtlig pedagogisk personal har tidigare under läsåret genomförts och avslutats. Resultaten från de båda undersökningarna kommer att redovisas och ventileras successivt vid uppföljningsdagar i kommunen.

Enkäten avser arbetet med *barn/elever i behov av särskilt stöd*. Den grupp det gäller är de barn och elever som riskerar att inte nå skolans mål. Enkäten gäller alla barn och elever i behov av särskilt stöd från förskolan upp till år 9. Vissa frågor gäller enbart grundskolan (alltså exklusive förskoleklass). Detta står då utskrivet i enkäten. Är du rektor för flera grundskolor ska du svara GEMENSAMT för dessa när frågan bara gäller grundskolan även när frågan är formulerad som att du ska svara för din skola. Är du rektor för flera skolor/enheter ska du svara GEMENSAMT för dessa även när frågan är formulerad som att du ska svara för din förskola/skola.

Ditt deltagande är viktigt för att få en rättvisande och tydlig bild av hur verksamheten kring denna barngrupp ser ut.

Resultatredovisningen kommer att ske så att ingen enskild person eller skola kommer att kunna identifieras. Enkäten är kopplad till forskning och kan utöver arbetet i kommunen bara användas för forskningsändamål. Eftersom kommunen lägger stor vikt vid ditt svar får du avsätta arbetstid för att svara på frågorna. Enkäten besvaras individuellt.

Vi ber dig svara på frågorna senast den ... **april**.

Om du har frågor angående enkäten och projektet är du välkommen att kontakta oss.

Stort tack på förhand för din medverkan!

Kontaktperson:

Gunilla Lindqvist

Specialpedagog i X Kommun och

Universitetsadjunkt i pedagogik vid Högskolan X

gln@du.se

Ansvarig forskningsledare:

Claes Nilholm

Professor i pedagogik, med inriktning mot specialpedagogik

Högskolan för Lärande och Kommunikation

Högskolan i Jönköping

Om barn i behov av särskilt stöd

| Din bakgrund | |
|---|---|
| 1. Är du kvinna eller man? | <input type="checkbox"/> Kvinna <input type="checkbox"/> Man |
| 2. Hur gammal är du? | <input type="checkbox"/> – 30 år <input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 40 år <input type="checkbox"/> 41 – 50 år <input type="checkbox"/> 51 – 60 år <input type="checkbox"/> 61 år – |
| 3. Går du eller har du gått rektorsutbildning eller annan skolläda- rutbildning? | <input type="checkbox"/> Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Nej → Gå till fråga 4 Om ja: <input type="text"/> Vilken utbildning? <input type="text"/> |
| 4. Har du pedagogexamen? | <input type="checkbox"/> Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Nej → Gå till fråga 5 Om ja: <input type="text"/> Vilken utbildning? <input type="text"/> |
| 5. Har du någon annan universitets- eller högskoleexamen? | <input type="checkbox"/> Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Nej → Gå till fråga 6 Om ja: <input type="text"/> Vilken examen? <input type="text"/> |
| 6. Har du någon utbildning inom specialpedagogik? | <input type="checkbox"/> Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Nej → Gå till fråga 7 Om ja: <input type="text"/> Inom vilket område? <input type="text"/> |

7. Hur många år har du varit skolledare?

- ☐ Mindre än 6 månader
☐ 6 mån – 1 år
☐ 2 - 5 år
☐ 6 - 10 år
☐ 11 - 20 år
☐ 21 år -

8. Hur många år har du haft nuvarande befattning?

- ☐ Mindre än 6 månader
☐ 6 mån - 1 år
☐ 2 - 5 år
☐ 6 - 10 år
☐ 11 - 20 år
☐ 21 år -

9. Vilka verksamheter ingår i ditt ansvarsområde?

- ☐ Grundskola f-9/skolår 1- 9
☐ Grundskola endast skolår 6-9/skolår 7-9
☐ Grundskola, skolår f-5/f-6
☐ Grundskola, annan skolårsindelning
☐ Grundsärskola
☐ Specialskola
☐ Träningsskola
☐ Förskola/Familjedaghem
☐ Annan verksamhet

Identifiering av gruppen och arbetet med åtgärdsprogram**10. Ungefär hur stor andel av barnen (i procent) bedömer du är i behov av särskilt stöd?**

Med särskilt stöd menar vi att barn har sådana svårigheter att särskilt stöd behövs.

%

11. Ungefär hur stor andel av barnen (i procent) får särskilt stöd?

Med särskilt stöd menar vi att barn har sådana svårigheter att särskilt stöd behövs.

%

12. Ungefär hur stor andel av barnen (i procent) har åtgärdsprogram?

Gäller för grundskolan

%

13. Vilka personer deltar vanligtvis aktivt i utarbetandet av åtgärdsprogram för enskilda barn?*Gäller för grundskolan**Flera svar kan markeras*

- ☐ Jag som rektor
☐ Klass-/ämneslärare/mentor
☐ Specialpedagog/speciallärare
☐ Skolsköterska/skolpsykolog/kurator
☐ Assistent/resurspersonal
☐ Föräldrar/vårdnadshavare
☐ Elev
☐ Annan, nämligen

14. Hur vanliga är utredningar och bedömningar som underlag för utarbetande av åtgärdsprogram?*Gäller för grundskolan.*

| | Mycket vanligt | Ganska vanligt | Ganska ovanligt | Mycket ovanligt |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Normerade test | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Nationella prov | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bedömning av elevens kunskaper | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bedömning av interaktion i klassen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervju/observation av eleven | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Medicinsk utredning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psykologisk utredning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Social utredning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Samtal med föräldrar/vårdnadshavare | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bedömning av arbetssätt/arbetsformer i undervisningen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

15. Hur vanliga är följande anledningar till att barn är i behov av särskilt stöd?

| <i>Markera med ett kryss på varje rad.</i> | | Mycket vanligt | Ganska vanligt | Ganska ovanligt | Mycket ovanligt | Ingen uppfattning |
|--|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. | Skolans mål är för svåra för dessa barn | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. | Barnen har individuella brister | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. | Förskolan/Skolan är dåligt anpassad för att hantera olikheter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. | Barnen har brister i hemmiljön | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. | Vissa lärare har brister | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. | Vissa grupper/klasser fungerar dåligt | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. | Annat | | | | | |

16. a) Vilken betydelse bör medicinsk diagnostisering ha för att få särskilt stöd?

- ☐ Mycket stor betydelse
☐ Ganska stor betydelse
☐ Ganska liten betydelse
☐ Mycket liten betydelse eller ingen alls

b) Vilken betydelse har medicinsk diagnostisering för att få särskilt stöd?

- ☐ Mycket stor betydelse
☐ Ganska stor betydelse
☐ Ganska liten betydelse
☐ Mycket liten betydelse eller ingen alls

17. Får de barn som har rätt till stöd enligt gällande lagstiftning sådant stöd?

- ☐ Ja, alla
☐ Ja, de flesta
☐ Nej, bara en del
☐ Nej, endast ett fåtal

18. Hur vanligt förekommande är följande i åtgärdsprogrammen?

| <i>Gäller för grundskolan</i> | | Mycket vanligt | Ganska vanligt | Ganska ovanligt | Mycket ovanligt |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. | Placering av eleven i liten grupp | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. | Särskild färdighetsträning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. | Anpassade läromedel | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. | Anpassning av den fysiska miljön | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. | Förändring av klass/gruppsammansättning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. | Stöd av expert/konsulent | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. | Förstärkning av assistent/resurspersonal | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. | Anpassning av arbetsformer/arbetssätt i undervisningen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

19. Hur viktigt tycker du att följande är för att arbetet med barn i behov av särskilt stöd ska bli framgångsrikt?

| <i>Markera med ett kryss på varje rad.</i> | | Mycket viktigt | Ganska viktigt | Ganska oviktigt | Inte alls viktigt |
|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. | Placering av barn i liten grupp | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. | Särskild färdighetsträning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. | Anpassade läromedel | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. | Anpassning av den fysiska miljön | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. | Förändring av klass/gruppsammansättning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. | Tillgång till specialpedagogisk kompetens | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. | Stöd av experter/konsulter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. | Förstärkning med assistent/resurspersonal | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. | Anpassning av arbetsformer/arbetssätt i undervisningen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j. | Lärarkompetens | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k. | Arbetslagets funktion | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l. | Föräldrars attityder och åsikter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| m. | Barnets motivation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| n. | Barnets kunskaper | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| o. | Annat | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

20. Hur viktiga är åtgärdsprogrammen som ...

| <i>Gäller för grundskolan.</i> | | Mycket viktiga | Ganska viktiga | Ganska oviktiga | Inte alls viktiga |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. | ... stöd i den pedagogiska verksamheten? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. | ... underlag för fördelning av resurser? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. | ... underlag för utvärdering av barns lärande och utveckling i skolarbetet? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

21. Har du deltagit vid upprättande av åtgärdsprogram?

- ☐ Aldrig
☐ 1 gång
☐ 2 – 20 gånger
☐ Fler än 20 gånger

22. a) Finns det särskilda undervisningsgrupper där barnen tillbringar mer än 50 % av tiden?

Gäller för grundskolan.

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nej → *Gå till fråga 23*

b) Hur många? grupper

c) Har grupperna en inriktning mot typer av diagnoser/problem?

Markera för vilka diagnoser/problem

- ☐ Rörelsehinder
☐ Synnedsättning
☐ Hörselnedsättning
☐ Aspergers syndrom
☐ ADHD/DAMP
☐ Tal-, språk-/kommunikationssvårigheter
☐ Socio-emotionella svårigheter
☐ Läs- och skrivproblem/dyslexi
☐ Matematiksvårigheter/dyskalkyli
☐ Koncentrationssvårigheter (t.ex. allmän "oro")
☐ Annat
☐ Har ingen inriktning

23. Finns barn som är inskrivna i särskolan på din skola?

Gäller för grundskolan.

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nej → *Gå till fråga 24*

Om ja:

Hur många?

24. I vilken utsträckning upplever du att din förskola/skola ger stöd till de barn som behöver det?

- ☐ Mycket hög utsträckning
☐ Ganska hög utsträckning
☐ Ganska låg utsträckning
☐ Mycket låg utsträckning

Personal**25. Hur har specialpedagogernas arbetsuppgifter förändrats under de senaste 5 åren?***Gäller för grundskolan.**Markera ett kryss för varje arbetsuppgift.*

| | Ökat | Minskat | I stort sett oförändrat |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Individuellt inriktad specialundervisning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b.Handledning för lärarlag/lärare | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c.Handledning av elev | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Organisationsutveckling | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Utredning och dokumentation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Elevvårdsarbete | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

26. Vad tycker du att specialpedagoger ska arbeta med?*Flera svar kan markeras.*

- ☐ Individuellt inriktad specialundervisning
☐ Handledning för arbetslag/lärarlag
☐ Organisationsutveckling
☐ Utredning och dokumentation
☐ Elevvårdsarbete
☐ Annat

27. Var tycker du att specialpedagoger ska arbeta?*Flera svar kan markeras.*

- ☐ På förskolorna/skolorna
☐ Inom skoldistrikt
☐ Inom specialpedagogiska team, gemensamma för kommunen
☐ Inom elevhälsoteam, gemensamma för kommunen
☐ Annat

28. Finns specialpedagog på din förskola/skola?

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nej

29. Finns speciallärare på din skola?

Gäller för grundskolan.

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nej

30. Vilken av följande personalkategorier har störst möjlighet att påverka situationen för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

Markera endast ett alternativ.

- ☐ Rektor
☐ Klasslärare/mentor/förskollärare
☐ Barnskötare
☐ Dagbarnvårdare
☐ Ämneslärare
☐ Specialpedagog/speciallärare
☐ Fritidspedagog/fritidsledare
☐ Skolsköterska/skolpsykolog/kurator
☐ Assistent/resurspersonal
☐ Annan
☐ Ingen uppfattning

Förebyggande arbete**31. Har du möjlighet att påverka barns måluppfyllelse?**

- ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
☐ Ganska små möjligheter
☐ Mycket små möjligheter/Inga alls

32. Har din personal möjlighet att påverka barns måluppfyllelse?

- ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
☐ Ganska små möjligheter
☐ Mycket små möjligheter/Inga alls

33. a) Har förskolan/skolan något samarbete om förebyggande arbete med andra myndigheter?

☐ Ja

☐ Nej → Gå till fråga 34

Om ja:

b) Hur vill du beskriva samarbetet?

Inflytande

34. Vilket inflytande har du över din arbetssituation?

☐ Mycket stort inflytande

☐ Ganska stort inflytande

☐ Ganska litet inflytande

☐ Mycket litet inflytande

35. Vilket inflytande anser du att din personal har över sin arbetssituation?

☐ Mycket stort inflytande

☐ Ganska stort inflytande

☐ Ganska litet inflytande

☐ Mycket litet inflytande

36. Vilket inflytande har du som rektor över fördelning av ekonomiska resurser för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

☐ Mycket stort inflytande

☐ Ganska stort inflytande

☐ Ganska litet inflytande

☐ Mycket litet inflytande eller inget alls

37. Vilket inflytande ska specialpedagogen/specialläraren ha över fördelning av ekonomiska resurser för barn i behov av särskilt stöd på din förskola/skola?

☐ Mycket stort inflytande

☐ Ganska stort inflytande

☐ Ganska litet inflytande

☐ Mycket litet inflytande eller inget alls

38. Vilka möjligheter har du som rektor att påverka det pedagogiska innehållet för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- ☐ Mycket små möjligheter eller inga alls

39. Vilka möjligheter bör du som rektor ha att påverka det pedagogiska innehållet för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- ☐ Mycket små möjligheter eller inga alls

40. Vilka möjligheter ska föräldrar ha att påverka det pedagogiska innehållet för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- ☐ Mycket små möjligheter eller inga alls

41. Vilka möjligheter ska barn i behov av särskilt stöd ha att påverka det pedagogiska innehållet?

- ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- ☐ Mycket små möjligheter eller inga alls

42. Vilka möjligheter ska specialpedagogen/specialläraren ha att påverka det pedagogiska innehållet för barn i behov av särskilt stöd på din förskola/skola?

- ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- ☐ Mycket små möjligheter eller inga alls

43. Vilka möjligheter ska din personal, utöver specialpedagog/speciallärare, ha att påverka det pedagogiska innehållet för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- ☐ Mycket stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska stora möjligheter
- ☐ Ganska små möjligheter
- ☐ Mycket små möjligheter eller inga alls

44. Vilken kategori ska ha störst inflytande då det gäller det pedagogiska innehållet för barn i behov av särskilt stöd på din förskola/skola?

Markera endast ett svar

- ☐ Barnet/eleven
☐ Föräldrar
☐ Klassläraren/mentorn/förskolläraren med ansvar för barngrupp
☐ Specialpedagogen/specialläraren
☐ Rektorn
☐ Assistenten
☐ Barnskötaren
☐ Dagbarnvårdare
☐ Annan

45. Hur stort inflytande har olika grupper över fördelningen av ekonomiska resurser för stödverksamheten vid din förskola/skola?

Markera ett kryss för varje grupp.

| | | Stort inflytande | Ganska stort inflytande | Ganska lite inflytande | Lite/Inget inflytande alls |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. | Politiker | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. | Tjänstemän | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. | Rektorer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. | Lärare | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. | Personal med specialpedagogisk utbildning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. | Föräldrar/vårdnadshavare | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. | Annan | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

46. Hur viktiga tycker du att följande former för elevinflytande är när det gäller barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

Gäller för grundskolan.

Markera ett kryss för varje form av inflytande.

| | | Mycket viktigt | Ganska viktigt | Ganska oviktigt | Helt oviktigt |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. | Inflytande i samband med utvecklingssamtal | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. | Medverkan i upprättandet av åtgärdsprogram | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. | Inflytande via föräldrar | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. | Inflytande i det dagliga arbetet i klassrummet | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. | Medverkan i upprättande av individuell utvecklingsplan | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. | Annat | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Styrning och uppföljning

47. a) Följer förskolan/skolan upp sitt arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

☐ Ja

☐ Nej → Gå till fråga 48

Om ja:

b) På vilket sätt?

Flera svar kan markeras.

☐ Speciell ekonomisk redovisning av området

☐ Ingår i skolans kvalitetsredovisning

☐ Redovisning av sociala och pedagogiska utfall för barn i behov av särskilt stöd

☐ Annat

48. Hur viktiga är följande styrdokument för arbetet med barn i behov av särskilt stöd?*Markera ett kryss för varje styrdokument.*

| | Mycket viktig | Ganska viktig | Ganska oviktig | Helt oviktig | Vet inte |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Skollagen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Grundskoleförordningen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Läroplanen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Nationella kursplaner | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Statliga utredningar inom området | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Utbildningsdepartementets policydokument | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Kommunal skolplan | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. Barnkonventionen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. FN:s standardregler för funktionshindrade | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j. Salamanca-deklarationen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k. Annat | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Markera med ett kryss på varje rad.

| | Mycket tydliga | Ganska tydliga | Ganska otydliga | Mycket otydliga | Vet inte |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 49. Hur tydliga tycker du att de <u>statliga</u> riktlinjerna är för förskolans/skolans arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 50. Hur tydliga tycker du att de <u>kommunala</u> riktlinjerna är för förskolans/skolans arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 51. Hur tydliga är din <u>förskolas/skolans egna riktlinjer</u> för arbetet med barn i behov av särskilt stöd? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | Mycket bra | Ganska bra | Ganska dåligt | Mycket dåligt | Vet inte |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 52. Hur tycker du att <u>statens</u> uppföljning och utvärdering av förskolans/skolans arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd fungerar? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 53. Hur tycker du att <u>kommunens</u> uppföljning och utvärdering av förskolans/skolans arbete med barn i behov av särskilt stöd fungerar? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Organisationsformer i arbetet med barn i behov av särskilt stöd | | | | | |
| 54. a) Finns det någon på förskolan/skolan som har det övergripande ansvaret för barn i behov av särskilt stöd? | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ja | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nej → Gå till fråga 55 | | | | | |
| Om ja: | | | | | |
| b) Vilken befattning har denna person? | | | | | |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> | | | | | |
| 55. Hur vanliga är följande organisatoriska/personella lösningar för barn i behov av särskilt stöd på din skola? | | | | | |
| <i>Gäller för grundskolan.</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Markera ett kryss för varje lösning.</i> | Mycket vanligt | Ganska vanligt | Ganska ovanligt | Mycket ovanligt/ förekommer inte | |
| a. Barn undervisas i särskild undervisningsgrupp mer än 50 % av tiden | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| b. Barn undervisas både i stor och liten grupp (mindre än 50 % av tiden) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| c. Eleven ingår i "vanlig" klass/grupp och får handledning av specialpedagog | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| d. Anpassning av klasstorlek | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| e. Integrering i grundsärskolegrupper | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| f. Extra lärarresurs i klassrummet | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| g. Tillgång till assistent i klassrummet | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| h. Särskild undervisning av speciallärare/specialpedagog under viss tid av veckan | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

i.

Annat

☐☐☐☐

56. Hur eftersträvansvärda är följande organisatoriska/personella lösningar på din skola för barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

Gäller för grundskolan.

Markera ett kryss för varje lösning.

| | Mycket eftersträvans- värt | Ganska eftersträ- vansvärt | Lite eftersträ- vansvärt | Inte alls eftersträ- vansvärt | Ingen uppfattning |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Barn undervisas i särskild undervisningsgrupp mer än 50 % av tiden | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Barn undervisas både i stor och liten grupp (mindre än 50 % av tiden) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Eleven ingår i "vanlig" klass/grupp och får handledning av specialpedagog | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Anpassning av klasstorlek | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Integrering i grundsärskolegrupper | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Extra lärarresurs i klassrummet | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Tillgång till assistent i klassrummet | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. Särskild undervisning av speciallärare/specialpedagog under viss tid av veckan | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Annat | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Kompetens

57. Hur bedömer du din personals samlade lärarkompetens för att ge stöd till barn med ...

| | Mycket god | Ganska god | Ganska dålig | Mycket dålig |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ... rörelsehinder? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... synnedsättning? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... hörselnedsättning? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... Aspergers syndrom? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... ADHD/DAMP? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... tal-, språk-/kommunikationssvårigheter? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... socio-emotionella svårigheter? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... läs- och skrivsvårigheter (t.ex. dyslexi)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... matematiksvårigheter (t.ex. dyskalkyli)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... koncentrationssvårigheter (t.ex. allmän "oro")? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ... generella inlärningssvårigheter? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Annat, nämligen

58. I vilken utsträckning tycker du att din personals kompetens tas tillvara när det gäller barn i behov av särskilt stöd?

- ☐ Mycket stor utsträckning
☐ Ganska stor utsträckning
☐ Ganska liten utsträckning
☐ Mycket liten utsträckning

59. Skriv ner här om du har andra synpunkter och reflektioner som du vill lämna till projektet?

Tack för din medverkan!

DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

School of Education and Communication, Jönköping University

1. Boström, Lena (2004). Lärande och metod. Lärstilsanpassad undervisning jämfört med traditionell undervisning i svensk grammatik.
2. Hugo, Martin (2007). Liv och lärande i gymnasieskolan. En studie om elevers och lärares erfarenheter i en liten grupp på gymnasieskolans individuella program.
3. Barkho, Leon (2009). Strategies and Power in Multilingual Global Broadcasters. How the BBC, CNN and Aljazeera shape their Middle East news discourse.
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5. Wahlgren, Victoria C (2009). Den långa vägen till en jämställd gymnasieskola. En studie om genuspedagogers förståelse av gymnasieskolans jämställdhetsarbete.
6. Almers, Ellen (2009). Handlingskompetens för hållbar utveckling. Tre berättelser om vägen dit.
7. Ludvigsson, Ann (2009). Samproducerat ledarskap. Hur rektorer och lärare formar ledarskap i skolans vardagsarbete.
8. Möllås, Gunvie (2009). "Detta ideliga mötande" – En studie av hur kommunikation och samspel konstituerar gymnasieelevers skolpraktik.
9. Åberg, Karin (2009). Anledning till handledning. Skolledares perspektiv på grupphandledning.
10. Segolsson, Mikael (2011). Lärandets hermeneutik – Tolkningens och dialogens betydelse för lärandet med bildningstanken som utgångspunkt.
11. Otterborg, Annica (2011). Entreprenöriellt lärande. Gymnasieelevers skilda sätt att uppfatta entreprenöriellt lärande.

12. Nordevall, Elisabeth (2011). Gymnasielärarens uppdrag som mentor. En etnografisk studie av relationens betydelse för elevens lärande och delaktighet.
13. Andersén, Annelie (2011). Ett särskilt perspektiv på högre studier? Folkhögskoledeltagares sociala representationer om högskola och universitet.
14. Adolfsson, Margareta (2011). Applying the ICF-CY to identify everyday life situations of children and youth with disabilities.
15. Granbom, Ingrid (2011). "Vi har nästan blivit för bra". Lärares sociala representationer av förskolan som pedagogisk praktik.
16. Maxwell, Gregor (2012). Bringing more to participation: Participation in school activities of persons with disability within the framework of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health for Children and Youth (ICF-CY).
17. Falkmer, Marita (2013). From Eye to Us: Prerequisites for and levels of participation in mainstream school of persons with Autism Spectrum Conditions.
18. Simmeborn Fleischer, Ann (2013). "Man vill ju klara sig själv": Studievardagen för studenter med Asperger syndrom i högre utbildning.
19. Alnervik, Karin (2013). "Men så kan man ju också tänka!" Pedagogisk dokumentation som förändringsverktyg i förskolan.
20. Hirsh, Åsa (2013). The Individual Development Plan as Tool and Practice in Swedish compulsory school.
21. Fleischer, Håkan (2013). En elev - en dator. Kunskapsbildningens kvalitet och villkor i den datoriserade skolan.
22. Lindqvist, Gunilla (2013). Who should do What to Whom? Occupational Groups' Views on Special Needs.

Who should do What to Whom?

Occupational Groups' Views on Special Needs

GUNILLA LINDQVIST

In this thesis, different occupational groups' views on work with children in need of special support are presented in four articles. The first study investigates the views of occupational groups in preschools and schools in one municipality. A questionnaire was handed out in 2008 to all teachers and staff (1297) in the municipality. The response rate was 72.5 %. The second study explores the views of educational leaders in the same municipality. All the educational leaders (45) answered a questionnaire in 2009. The third study describes different occupational groups' views of the role and work of special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs). This is explored through three different questionnaires. Finally, the fourth study presents five head teachers' descriptions of their work with special needs issues. The head teachers' strategies related to inclusive education were explored in an interview study. The theoretical framework of this thesis is critical pragmatism and Abbott's (1988) reasoning concerning the division of expert labor. Inclusion and premises for inclusive education are also discussed in the thesis.

There seems to be both similar and different views among the occupational groups concerning work with children in need of special support. A majority of the respondents in all groups state that children's individual deficiencies is one common reason why children need special support in preschools/schools. Many of the participants also state that a medical diagnosis should be of importance in order to receive special support. Differences between the occupational groups become especially visible regarding their views of SENCOs' work. From the perspective of inclusive education, the data reveals that there are still several challenges to overcome.



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