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“Just something I can do!”

Inclusive education and school experience of disabled children in Scotland, Sweden and Iceland.

European Perspective on Social Inclusion
D-level Thesis

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Abstract

This research is about inclusive education in three classes and the experience of a disabled child in the class. The aim was to find out what the factors were that created an inclusive/exclusive class from the perspective of the class teacher and the disabled child. For this I visited one class in Dundee in Scotland, one class in Reykjavik in Iceland and one class in a small community in Värmland in Sweden. The approach used to get this information were qualitative methods in the tradition of an ethnographic case study because the focus was on the culture in three different classes. I used ethnography as a way to go about conducting the research and collected data with participant observation and deep interviews in all three schools. Qualitative thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

The results indicate that it is complicated to say precisely what inclusive education is. I used the models of disability and frames of inclusive education developed from the literature to put a focus on the results of the data. And these paradigms are on three levels; the child level, the teachers or class level and the school authorities’ or policy level. A matrix was developed to better have an overview of the results. From the three cases one can presume that one of the factors that enhance inclusive education is the teachers thinking and ideology about inclusive education and thereby are the responsible people in a disabled child education and schooling. Both in the case of Scotland and Iceland the class teacher did not take this responsibility and that resulted as a barrier for these disabled children’s participation in class. Another result is about the understanding significant persons had regarding these disabled children’s communication and attempts to connect or relate to others in the everyday life at school. When their impairment regarding how they communicate and relate to others was regarded this promoted their participation and inclusive education. 
Key words: inclusive education, disabled children, participation, schools.
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Gratitude

The last couple of years I have been in the course “European Perspectives on Social Inclusion” at the University of Karlstad in Sweden. This was a joint master course of twelve universities in Europe. We had visiting professors from the participating universities lecturing in the modules and this I found very positive giving me new ideas and understandings about perspectives and status of inclusion and exclusion. The modules were about European perspectives on theories of social exclusion, ethics and social justice, visions of Europe, theories of intervention, comparative social policies, methodology, drug abuse, disability and the elderly. The last task was to do this research. During the years that have passed from the start of this research and through different phases of working on it many people have given support or helped me along the way.

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Introduction

Sigling

Hafið, bláa hafið, hugann dregur.
Hvað er bak við ystu sjónarrönd?
Pangað liggur beinn og breiður vegur.
Bíða mín þar æskudrauma lónd.
Beggja skauta byr baðst mér aldrei fyr.
Bruna þú nú, bátur minn.
Svíðu seglum þónum,
svíðu burt frá ströndum.
Fyrir stafni er haf og himinninn.

(Órn Arnarson/Friðrik Bjarnason)

I am using this Icelandic poem to describe my journey and how I have been pulled ahead with this strong urge to know more about and understand better the elements and functions of inclusion and exclusion. And I have taken my boat over the ocean as I moved from Iceland to Sweden to start with my studies. Also I travelled between Sweden, Scotland and Iceland for collection of the data.

This theme about social inclusion/exclusion has dwelled with me for a long time since this has been part of my work as a social educator which is my profession. And that led me into further search regarding the nature of inclusion/exclusion in schools where I have worked with disabled children both before and after the years in Sweden. The questions that I use in this research are about what an inclusive/exclusive class/school is, how this works out for a disabled boy in a mainstream class and what are the teacher’s attitudes and thoughts about inclusive education. Data was collected the spring of 2007 and my approach and tool are broadly understood as the ethnography method. I use the word disabled here in a broad understanding as is outlined below. In the autumn of 2007 I had to move back to Iceland and start a full job and did not manage to finish this report until now. I want to notice that since more than four years have passed from when data was collected the situation, laws and regulations may have changed regarding each of the three cases. I decided to write this up in English as that would make the thesis accessible to all three countries. Since I am from Iceland and have an Icelandic mother tongue this may affect my writings and surely made many interesting hours pass by as I needed to handle three languages.

The first part of this written form of my research is the background and a theoretical frame with definitions of concepts and the history and development of inclusive education in each of the three countries. Then there are chapters about the method used and analysis. The results are presented in separate chapters for each country and finally together in the last chapter as conclusions.
A. Background and theoretical frame

In the last decades mainstream schooling and inclusive education has been developing as well as research in this field. Discussions about whether to mainstream disabled children are still going on, although legislation and policy directives in most countries in Europe give directions for this. The school policy in different countries often changes according to opinions of current governments and one can see shifts or trends in the practice of executing the school policy. Common to all the three countries I visited is how the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994) is remarked as having significant impact on their policy, the key driver regarding the inclusive education agenda. In the Statement the delegates recognised: “the necessity and urgency of providing education for children, youth and adults with special educational needs within the regular educational system” (p.7) and also encouraged: ”to enrol all children into regular schools unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise” (p.8). Ólafur Páll Jónsson1 (2009) from the Icelandic context remarks that the Statement is just about what educational schooling is about but does not say anything about the methods of teaching or how to reach these goals.

Within the same country the municipalities can differ in their understanding as well as how they carry out the policy, acts or directives about inclusive schools or “the school for all” in the words of the politician. One can look at each school creating its own culture in which children, staff and parents participate and thereby contribute in this creation. School leaders and teachers have long discussed whether a disabled child should be mainstreamed or placed in a special school. This is affected by tradition and also changes in the policy each municipality has regarding the school forms and distribution of money and resources. Parents of a disabled child may want their child to be in a mainstream school but be guided by authorities, school leaders or teachers to rather choose a special school because the situation there and resources are more fitting the child’s needs. Is it still the child that has to fit the school but not the school to develop to fit diversity of all children? This is an important question and not just regarding where to place the disabled child but also regarding how the school meets this disabled child needs after he/she has been placed in mainstream or special school. Keith Topping in Dundee, Scotland and Sheelagh Maloney in Scotland and UK editors of the book Inclusive Education (2005) emphasize the significance of factors outside the child as well as within the child. They say that educational challenges and potentials are dependent upon the educational context in which the child is situated and the type and quality of the teaching they receive. This is a focus according to the social and educational model of disability which I believe is becoming more dominant in the discussion about inclusive education. This means when we are talking about disabled child in mainstream school we do not just look at the child and “his/hers” problems but also at the context the child is in and the quality of the teaching in class.

1 I want to notice that in Iceland the alphabetical order is by a person’s first name in all legal documents, in the national Register Iceland, in the telephone book etc. Therefore I refer to Icelandic authors by their full name.
Now I have been talking about disabled child and this concept needs to be defined. It is important to notify that in the disability legislation all types of impairment are under the umbrella of this term *disability* and also here in my use of the word it includes all the different types of impairment. Behaviour problems are for example one type of impairment as well as autism or physical deviation and so on. Still I want to recognise as an important issue that the disability legislation seems to simplify the diversity of disability, assuming it is for all disabled people and does not necessarily meet the needs of them in the context of their real life. Disabled people are of different age, sex and ethnicity which may add to the dimensions of disability.

The terminology about disability I use in the thesis is from Southampton Centre for Independent Living and Hampshire Coalition of Disabled People (HCODP). Their understanding and guidance for terminology is in line with the social model of disability.

- Impairment is the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, psychological, mental or sensory impairment
- Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the mainstream life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers
- The term “people with disabilities” is incorrect. People have impairments, they do not have disabilities.
- People with an intellectual impairment prefer to be described as people with learning difficulties not mental handicap.

It is important to realise the role language plays in the identity of disability. Through the different literature, documents and articles I found it was confusing to come across multiple understandings and use of terms in three languages. When it came to laws, regulations and school forms this was even more important. In most incidences I try to use similar phrasing like to talk about disabled children, not with disability but with impairment like physical impairment. Sometimes I use the same phrasing as is used in the text of researches or reports or books. In each of the languages there are even more complications and traditions in the use of different words like what is a special school or the difference between learning support and special education. This demanded a lot of considerations to be able to compare school policy and practice between the countries.

How is this in the context of real life? Since I had worked in a compulsory school where disabled children were part of the population in class the research questions had dwelled with me for a while. They also did develop as the work with the data enfolded and required a reflexive manner as I went between the data and the literature and to the data again and so on. My first question in first stages of the research was about how you practice inclusive education and what makes it work for the disabled child? Then I became interested to see what the disabled child’s experience was when inclusive education was said to be working well. This also became a question of by whom it was said to be working well. This can be looked at in many levels but my focus was on how this actually happens from the perspective of a disabled child here boys in all cases and his class teacher embedded in the macro level of the school policy and practice in particular country. This resulted finally in the following questions:
What makes up for an inclusive/exclusive class/school? What is an inclusive/exclusive class?

How is it for a disabled child to be in that class? What is the child’s experience?

How does the teacher feel and see the class situation? What are his/hers attitudes and thoughts about inclusive education?

By choosing examples of rich information classes my intention was to be able to emphasize the knowledge each one gives and in that sense inspire for the practice of inclusive education or at least contribute as valuable information for the conditions in schools for disabled children (and all children). The purpose was also to promote for wider understanding about the concept and practice of inclusive education.

The discourse of disability has gone through a lot of changes during the last decades and last century. One can say that mainly two models have been colouring this period, the medical model and the social model of disability. This is though not quite so simple because interpretations vary between countries as does the understanding and definition of disability. This calls for an historical background regarding disability.

1. The models of disability

I will now start with the medical model of disability which sometimes is also referred to as the individual model or categorical perspective. Then I go further to the changes that happened during the time of the theory of normalisation and last the social model of disability is revealed. This is not to be understood as a total explanation and description of understandings of disability since a lot has been written and researched about this. Rather I draw up the main themes to give a picture of the background and development of different understandings of disability.

a. The medical model

The medical model of disability has its origin in the early part of last century or even before. This was when the asylums were built and categorisation became one of the means for solving the situation for different groups like deaf, mentally ill, elderly people, intellectually disabled, criminals etc. The institutions were centralized often in big houses out in the country away from the rest of the population (Tøssebro 2004). This understanding is a diagnosed oriented thinking and gives emphasis to the role of the doctor and the institutionalized person the role of a patient. Both Jan Tøssebro and Lars Grue, Norwegian sociologists refer to the American sociologist Talcott Parson that described this connection between the doctor and the patient. They say his analyse of the patient role explains to some degree the understanding of disability at that time (around 1950). Parsons analyse looks at illness as a social deviation. It is a temporary reduced social role where the patient has to go to the doctor to be diagnosed and accept the role as a patient with the disempowering association that this includes. The longer a patient had this role the more pursuant it became for the person’s image, identity and expectations regarding his/her life. Parsons analyse opened up the field for further sociological research (Tøssebro 2004, Grue 2006). His analyse is useful to understand the fundamental effect on disabled
peoples’ lives even in today’s society regarding their social role in community or in school, their identity and self image. Decisions made by more powerful people like doctors or other people in health, educational or social sector can affect the social role disabled people have in life and community.

David Johnstone a senior lecturer at Edge Hill University in UK describes the medical model as a focus on the person and the deviance as an individual tragedy with emphasis on what disabled people cannot do and what they need, to function adequately with a particular medical condition (Johnstone 2004). And Rannveig Traustadóttir a doctor in sociology and disability research at University of Iceland say’s further that this view has been the foundation for professionals in the educational system, the health organizations and social services and often is the common way of thinking affecting the disabled persons own identity (Rannveig Traustadóttir 2006). The focus is on the deficit within the person, the deviation from the normality being the main cause for the disability. This thinking started to change around the 60’s and new paradigm emerged.

It is from about 1960 and ten years ahead the institutions changed status from being a solution to be a problem as Tøssebro (2004) describes it. This shift in thinking and understanding developed over period of time and from different arenas in the society. Examples of these are pressure from associations of parents of disabled people, needs of more workforce in the after war episode enabling some disabled people to enter into the labour market and disabled people themselves claiming their rights (Tøssebro 2004; Grue 2006). Theories about integration and normalisation had their effects in USA, in Europe and especially in the Nordic countries. Bank-Mikkelsen (Denmark), Karl Grunewald (Sweden) and Lennart Wessman (Sweden) are Scandinavians like Bengt Nirje (Sweden) that he names as contributors to the development of the normalisation principle. Nirje is the pioneer author of the originally written version in a newsletter in 1967. The understanding of disability was that the disabled person had the same rights as the normal person to live a normal life regarding occupation, education, work and spare time (Nirje 1999). Integration was another term used at the same time and meant that disabled people were to be integrated into society, into schools, working places and common living districts. This was at the same time legislation of civil rights and services came about. The isolation and living conditions that disabled people lived with were no longer accepted (Tøssebro 2004; Grue 2006; Socialstyrelsen 2006a; Félagsmálaráðuneytið 2006).

In North America, Wolf Wolfensberger had a different version of normalisation. While Nirje focused on the rights of disabled people to live a normal life in normal living conditions, Wolfensberger focused on the deviation in the perspective of norms in society and how disabled people need valued social roles which called for training and support. This could be expanded to all devalued and deviant groups in society. He developed this further into an updated version called Social Role Valorisation (SRV) that still is a valued principle (Grue 2006).

Walmsley (2001) in the UK context regards that normalisation affected the policy in UK and can been seen in the Jay Committee Report in 1979 and in the All Wales Strategy in 1983 (AWS) which is a coherent approach to service provision for people with learning difficulties. Normalisation was closely associated with
deinstitutionalisation, community care, small residential units and use of integrated facilities. Walmsley also remarks how normalisation affected the view that people with learning difficulties could be potentially active contributors in research and this still is so. Involvement in research was and is looked at as a way to promote a valued social role (Walmsley 2001).

In a paper from the Socialdepartement (2000) you can read how the social policy in Sweden was greatly influenced by the goals of normalisation and integration. As early as 1958 a committee was formulated that did important inspections that affected the policy and understandings like the inspection paper Social care of the handicapped in 1964. Many principals were formulated with the understanding that disabled people were to be regarded in the overall society. All services and help were formulated as rights. In 1967 a new law, Omsorgslagen (Act on care for people with certain disability) became operative. It was directed at people with intellectual impairment and underlined the rights for education, care, homes and daily activities (Socialdepartementet 2000).

In Iceland these changes came about in the 70’s and 80’s and discussions at the time were coloured of normalisation and integration. Parental organisations were affecting the discussion and started to drive day-care institutions. In 1976 a proposal came from the government to prepare new extensive laws and the parental organisations were active in the development of them. The act, Lög um aðstoð við þroskahefta (Act on affairs of people with intellectual disability), came about in 1979 and are viewed as a watershed for the lives and living conditions for disabled people. They made the authorities responsible for ensuring equality for disabled people with other members of society and to create living conditions for them to live as normal life as possible (Félagsmálaráðuneytið 2006).

The ideas of normalisation were criticised in some aspects while others still prevail (see Culham & Nind 2003) and the discussion and ideology developed further toward the social model of disability.

b. The social model of disability
The social model of disability had a big role in the changes of the last twenty to thirty years. With the social model of disability one is able to show how the medical model only focuses on the disabled person and his/her impairment and how the barriers in society and different procedures maintain and construct disability (Askheim 2003). Also within this model there is a clear difference between impairment and disability, the focus is on the hinder in people’s environment that contributes to their disability. One can take an example like if the steps are not in the way, a person in wheelchair is not disabled by physical hinders like stairs and with the same thinking you can look at the society as whole: How accessible is it for a disabled person? What is the hindrance? Is it the person’s impairment (medical) or is it the procedures in different areas in the community/organizations or our way of thinking and communicating (social)? We used to talk about integration in the time of normalisation; a disabled child was to be integrated into a normal class with the focus on the child and the impairment. Now from the social model viewpoint we talk about an inclusive school or inclusive class like a program that changes the school/class to adapt to everyone despite any personal impairment, to change the whole so it will fit to all (Tøssebro 2004).
Within the social model of disability are different understandings and here I want to mention two of them, the British social model of disability and the Scandinavian understanding of disability.

According to Grue (2006) the British social model of disability has its origin from The Union of Physical Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) which declared in 1976 that people with impairment is disabled by barriers in society. Their understanding was that impairment was a personal symptom while disability was the result of the consequence of the oppression that characterises the relationship between people with impairment and the rest of the population. The British model is known for how they largely focus on social barriers in society and are referred to as being more political with spokesman and activists like Mike Oliver, a British academic, author and disability rights activist. This understanding has been criticised by many feminists among others for its sole emphasis on social barriers dismissing the effect of the impairment itself in disabled people daily life. This has caused this part, the impairment, to be left within the medical sphere (Grue 2006; Rannveig Traustadóttir & Kristiansen 2004).

Scandinavian understanding of disability is called by Tøssebro (2004) the relational understanding of disability and can be found in legal documents and laws in all the Scandinavian countries as well as in academic writings. He divides this in three main parts.

- Firstly he says disability is a discrepancy between the environment and the disabled person, it is created because the environment and the individual do not match. This can be because the environment does not presume all human differences or that the individual does not have the ability that society expect him/her to possess.
- Secondly, disability is situational. Whether the impairment is disabling or not is bound to the situations the individual is in, like a deaf person would not be disabled if everybody used sign language.
- Thirdly, disability is relative. Here he points out how differently nations in Europe have defined disability according to levels of IQ and thereby very different how many of the population are regarded intellectually disabled.

This understanding can be found in both Swedish and Icelandic laws and governmental documents. But when it comes to disabled people rights and services the understanding is different and regulations build on the medical understanding which means that a disabled person needs to be diagnosed medically to be entitled those rights and services (Tøssebro 2004).

The definition of disability effects how municipalities conduct and implement legislations and regulations regarding disabled people. The overall direction has been supported and affected by the UNESCO Salamanca declaration 1994, the EU Acts about equal opportunities for disabled people 1996, and the latest UN Convention on the rights of persons with disability 2006 signed by 81 nations and the EU. All point out the importance to overcome social, physical or cultural barriers, in the spirit of the social model. Still, like Topping and Maloney (2005) say, it is difficult to translate grand ethical ideas into effective practice on the ground.

One could ask if a disabled child in a mainstream class according to the models evoke the teacher to think more broadly and inclusively or lead him/her to focus on
limited possibilities and segregated solutions amongst the children. Here the models are helpful to understand the thinking of important adults like the teachers in class as well as to understand the situation of the child. Looking at the facts of child’s impairment causing a hindrance or not in social participation and how or if this affects the social role in the situation, and how the overall setting, the structure of the lesson/class creates or hinders child’s possibilities for participation. The models are also useful to understand the bigger context of the school policy.

Let’s look at some researches in the field before we go further to the phrase inclusive education.

2. Researches in the field of education and disability

A lot of researches can be found as educational research or disability research or should I say special educational research. Here the focus can be on different levels as being the political welfare state level, the school level about leading, teaching and learning often linked with theories of the same, and the child’s level, about his/hers experiences. Much less research I found though in this last group. I will just draw attention to few researches here from the different countries I visited and on different levels.

In a report from a longitudinal research in Sweden (Heimdahl Mattson 2006) headmasters were interviewed both in 1996 and again in 2006 about the use of special pedagogical resources, how the school organized and implemented special pedagogical efforts and if or how this contributed for inclusion and counteracted segregation. All the 14 informants were headmasters in schools in the Stockholm area in Sweden. The author anchored her understanding in the view that school leaders are of decisive importance for how special education is organized and implemented in their school. This is interesting because it has been common in Sweden to direct children who do not achieve the academic goals to reach at each grade to the special school which is a separate organisation, or a school form sometimes within the same building as the compulsory school sometimes not.

The results from the research suggests the special pedagogical staff is seen in some schools as a resource for the team of teachers/staff working together to share the responsibility for all the children, while in other schools the teachers/staff rather chose to have the special pedagogical staff to take responsibility for the child with special needs and often in a separate area in the school. The special schools are still common but are now often organized not within the school but in collaboration with schools in the same area or commune. So now those children are not attending their home school building but have to travel a longer distance to school, are more segregated. If a special educational group/class is formed within the school this is often temporarily and with more flexibility than before with the child regularly visiting its normal class. Results from the interviews also show how this is explained by the obvious agenda that these children need suitable education in a calm environment, and more hidden agenda, that these children then won’t be as a hindrance in their peer’s education or make the school less popular. The author
points out the risk of making these children invisible and that this could develop into new stigmatising institutionalisation (Heimdahl Mattson 2006).

Here the researcher gets the information from headmasters as they are leading the work in their schools. I still go on thinking how the disabled children in question here would have responded regarding their schooling and see the importance of the children’s voices to come forward. I also want to notify the affect on those children’s lives when they need to travel a longer distance to school and the consequences this has on their potential for after school possibilities. How does this mark their lives and their identity? Does this give them a label as a disabled boy or girl and limit their possibilities for participation in activities or playtime with classmates or neighbour friends? These questions are important as we look at the whole, how the daily routine shapes their lives and participation in school and home community.

Behavioural problems were the main theme of a research in Reykjavik in 2006 (Ingvar Sigurgeirsson & Ingibjörg Kaldalóns). The authors found correlation between attitudes amongst the respondents, which were teachers and schoolmasters in all grammar schools in Reykjavik, with how many behavioural problems were. Where teachers had positive attitudes toward all the diversity of children then there were little or no problems and where the problems were biggest the teachers were about to burn out. Does the teachers’ attitude then either hinder or help him/her to deal with individual behavioural problems in a constructive way or is it affecting the whole management of the class? One could guess it is one of the factors contributing in the economy of the class, in the context of every situation where the diversity of children, disabled and non-disabled work and play together.

If we get a closer look at what disabled children themselves say about life in school, there is a general lack of literature in this field. Davis and Watson (2001) writing in the Scottish context emphasise how the children’s voices need to be listened to and accounted for by adults who control schools and how educational policy makers need to adopt a multi-level approach to inclusion if schools are to become fully inclusive. In their research they examined the everyday life of adults and children from their own perspective in both special and mainstream schools. They found in both school forms a labelling and categorising of disabled children by teachers that created an experience of discrimination and this was both related to the structural forces in school and the everyday practice. Also that exclusion in mainstream schools based on academic criteria led to disabled children being educated in separate learning support units and through this were segregated on the basis of their perceived academic ability. Ability grouping is structural exclusion and teachers’ attitude then act to limit educational opportunities for disabled children. This in turn encourages both children and teachers to adopt ideas of rank and status that also imply that parents and children know their place. From their interviews with the children they draw attention to the way disabled children are aware of the disabling nature of rules and that their capability for independent thought are overlooked. Davis and Watson do belief that all children should be treated as component social actors who can be included in the everyday process of schools if the necessary structural, cultural and individual issues are addressed. Further they argue that any improvements to the schooling of disabled children will also have important positive outcomes for all
children (Davis & Watson 2001). Structural, cultural and individual issues are the key words here in the meaning as individual issues regarding a disabled child in the structure of lesson/class/school in the culture of class/school.

Let’s widen the perspective now to what is meant with inclusive education, the understandings of the concept in the three countries and valuable perspectives. Many have written about inclusive education and on the next pages are some perspectives that are important to have in mind when discussing and understanding inclusive education. I look into the context for inclusive education first in Scotland then Sweden and Iceland shaped by legislation, regulations and practises, and the development over the past decades until now.

3. Inclusive education in Scotland/UK

In the Scottish context the legislation and authorities recommendations have been changing during the last decades. A lot of documents, reports, bills and legislation were found on the development toward inclusive education that seems to be the direction of leading authorities. Debate about inclusive or segregated provision was and still is going on and also issues on what inclusive education means. It was quite a confusing journey to draw up a picture of the context but in my attempt below I try to give insight into the changes occurring the last 20-30 years or so. This is though in no way a full-scale description but rather a look into main issues.

In Scotland are 5.1 million inhabitants and in Dundee are about 134,000 inhabitants. Compulsory education is on two levels; primary school is grade 1-7 (P1-P7) and begins at the age of 4/5 years old depending on when the child is born and secondary school starts at age 11/12 and is compulsory to 15/16 years old (S1-S4) but usually schools offer optional education for 2 years. Compulsory education is free of charge. Parents have a choice of different kinds of schools:

- There are local primary schools (2,151 schools in the country) up to the age of 12 and secondary schools (372) up to the age of 16 and above.
- It is common that in mainstream schools there are special units (344) for children that have ASN (Additional Support Needs).
- Special schools are about 182 in the country for children with very specific and severe ASN.
- In Scotland you also have about 377 denominated primary and secondary schools which are state-funded faith schools, mostly catholic and 63 Gaelic primary schools.
- And at last you have independent schools that are not funded by the government, primary schools (59) and secondary schools (55) but the special schools (45) are mostly funded by local authorities or 97% of the pupils.

(Statistic Publication Notice 2010a, 2010b; Adviceguide 2011; Learning and Teaching Scotland 2011; Scottish Government 2011).

Discussions about the school for all go far back and even were looked upon at different levels in the terms of integration. The Warnock Report in 1978 is presumed as a watershed in thinking about provision for disabled children (Riddel & Banks 2001; Scottish Parliament 2001) and the term special educational needs (SEN)
emerged from here replacing the statutory categories of handicap. It was recommended that a record would be established regarding those children that needed ongoing review because of severe and enduring difficulties and thereby Warnock introduced the notion of a continuum of need from temporary to enduring. Warnock also introduced and was influential regarding the term integration and said it could operate in three different levels. Namely location integration, social integration and functional integration which was most advanced and meant that all the children would be educated together by the same curricular goals and activities (Scottish Parliament 2001). The Warnock report affected education in both England and Scotland and the Educational Act 1980 incorporated Warnock’s recommendations. The formal document was called Records of Needs (RoN) in Scotland similar to Statement of Needs in England. Records of Need is a contract between authorities, the child and parents of the child stating what the Educational Authority proposes to do regarding the child’s learning needs. The Record guaranteed regular review and a multi-disciplinary assessment (Riddell & Banks 2001).

The Scottish educational policy changed after the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 and had in the beginning eighteen committees conducting inquires in many aspects of public life according to Allan (2003) an adviser for the Education, Culture and Sport Committee. During the direction of Scottish Education Department prior to the Parliament she describes how educational policy was coloured by targets that contradicted each other like the promotion of raising achievement and inclusive education. She as well as Dyson (2005) talked about the Blair politics that focused on raising standards and achievement with emphasis on excellence in education. This of course would lead those who fail into dependency and ultimately alienation from society or more exclusion. The emphasis was on excellence in education (Allan 2003; Dyson 2005).

Another committee chaired by Professor Sheila Riddell was established in 1998 to examine how the needs of children with severe low incidence disability were being met. This resulted in the Riddell Report in 1999 (Scottish Executive 1999) that affected a lot the debates about inclusive education. Amongst the 22 recommendations given in the report the committee emphasised that Government and local authorities should pay attention to the changes needed in mainstream schools since 55% of RoN pupils were placed there. Authorities were recommended to establish good practice that enabled these children and young people to be taken into account by schools and authorities when decisions were made affecting them (Scottish Executive 1999). Riddell & Banks (2001) also mean that shortcomings of RoN was that it often was written in anodyne terms and therefore authorities were less committed to provide for resources. It was not helpful to use statistics of the number of children with SEN or RoN in mainstream or special settings since many in mainstream schools really were most of their time in segregated special units. The trend in Scotland was to decrease the use of special schools and increase the use of special units (Riddell and Banks 2001).

The Riddell Report raised a lot of questions and gave information on how the situation was for disabled children and their families. It was followed by a response of the Scottish Executive in the document Improving our Schools (2000) and both of these were issued for public consultation. Quite a lot of debate went on about the different provision for disabled children and the Education, Culture and Sport
Committee described this in their report as statements like; all children should be educated in mainstream schools; special education of children with particular needs are best met in specialist setting; integration into mainstream can be an experience of being excluded, and they said that it seems to be easier to include some groups of children than others. One response of the report from Ian Liddle writing on behalf of the association of educational psychologists remarks that the RoN legislation is anti-inclusive since local authorities treat the children with special needs separately from mainstream whole-school practices (Scottish Parliament 2001) as it was another school form.

The Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSP´s) did come to the understanding that inclusion was about maximising participation and removing the barriers for that participation (Allan 2003). It seemed to be a pattern of higher mainstreaming in outlying areas and lower mainstreaming in cities and this was related to the choices parents had and an emphasis was put on parental empowerment to make informed decisions about their children future. Also it seemed to be an overwhelming preoccupation on the perceived gap between what is and what ought to be in respect of inclusion and the statement from Mittler (2003) “inclusion is a road to travel rather than a destination” was preferred amongst other understandings. Great concern was about that the current assessment and recording were outdated and overly bureaucratic and this resulted in new legislation, The Educational Act 2004 (amended in 2009) or Additional Support for Learning (ASL) (Scottish Government, 2006). It came into effect in 2005 and replaced earlier legislation regarding children with special needs. The terms also changed; now it was *additional support needs* (ASN) instead of *special educational needs* and this included also changes regarding RoN. The ASN refers to any child that requires additional support for learning regardless of reason for this and it could be a short term or long term support. When a child has complex or multiple barriers to learning that requires support from different services this is done with the new co-ordinated support plan (CSP). This plan replaced RoN and is long term and with focus on achievement and the outcomes and not on deficits and weakness as RoN did. Also new duties were placed on local authorities and other organisations to co-operate (Scottish Government 2006b). The term special education needs occurred in a lot of texts in books and articles that I came across when writing up this chapter though additional support needs was the new term. This may probable take time to change.

What do we mean when we talk about inclusive education? In a paper about approaches to inclusive education in Scotland Riddell (2006) talks about how three different policy approaches emerged in a research she did with Tisdall (2006). From political and policy activities from last ten years emerged these: the individualized approach as supporting or changing the child, a system approach as making schools inclusive for all and an anti-discriminating or civil rights approach as challenging the mainstream. These different understandings of inclusive education she regards like a patchwork rather than a rational linear structure policy. According to Riddell this can have benefits to produce a system which is flexible and open to change (Riddell 2006).

In the Index for inclusion, Booth & Ainscow (2002) describe the three dimensions of the Index as producing inclusive policies, evolving inclusive practices and creating inclusive cultures. The Index is a resource and guide to support and improve the
inclusive development and it was first published in 2000 and has been revised few times since (latest in 2011). It includes five phases of the process of working with the Index, a detailed questionnaire to find indicators for all the dimensions and a text about the understanding of what is meant with inclusive education or inclusive society. They say that inclusion is an unending process of increasing learning and participation for all students and reducing exclusionary pressures that come from difficulties in relationships or from what is being taught and also from feelings of not being valued. Inclusion is about change and can never be fully reached but just inspired, it’s about minimising all barriers in education. Inclusive education is one aspect of inclusive society (Booth & Ainscow 2002). It’s like a goal or destination but not the end station. Therefore it must be difficult to say precisely what is and how you see proof for inclusive education. It is complicated and on different levels like the three dimensions, policies, practices and cultures. And it is not just about disabled children like also remarked in the Riddle Report (Scottish Executive 1999) these children may have different ethnic, linguistic and cultural background that needs to be taken into account. Cummings et al. (2003) talk about marginalised groups unrelated to disability but rather to social, economic and cultural disadvantage and how we need to overcome this and reduce material inequalities in society. This is a wider perspective linking inclusive education into social inclusion in society. They quote one head teacher as he says that only an approach which reaches out to the community is likely to be successful and here we are talking about the social capital of the family and community (Cummings et al. 2003).

Today in Scotland there is just recently implemented a curriculum for excellence which is a coherent curriculum for age 3-18. It is for all schools wherever learning is taking place. The government regards this curriculum as the case for change, a change in the way young people’s learning is organised. This curriculum is made up of five stages plus a senior stage at 16+ and children are now more able to learn by their appropriate pace and challenge (Scottish Government 2008).

4. Inclusive education in Sweden

When reading articles, documents, books and official papers from the Swedish context it was interesting to find the phrase inclusion as rare as it was. More often there was talk about integration or the phrase a school for all which one can look at as a symbol for the educational policy (Jutegård & Linder 2009; Emanuelsson et al 2005; Persson 2010). Legal documents for the school policy are the Educational Act, the School Ordinances and the National Curricula.

There are several forms of schools in the country that constitute the National school system (Skolverket 2011a). These are in 2010-2011:

- Pre-school classes for children at age 6 (starting the autumn of the year they become 6 years old) but this is optional not compulsory;
- Compulsory (3880 schools in the country) for 7-16 years old, the seven years old are the first grade;
- Eight special needs school operated by National Agency for Special Education and Schools, five are regional for children with deafness or impaired hearing and three are national schools for children with additional impairment to visual/hearing or speech impairment;
Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir

"Just something I can do!"

- “Särskolan” or special schools (700) that has been divided in two operations, one for children with milder learning difficulties and other called training schools for children with intellectual learning difficulties;
- Sami schools (5);
- Besides these schools there are independent schools (741) or private schools and some of them are special schools as well.

(Skolverket 2011a).

It is important to note the differences of these school forms in English. The special schools in Scotland are a phrase for all special schools but in the Swedish context I will use the term special needs school for the eight regional/national special schools, “specialskolan” and special schools for the others. There are about 700 special schools in Sweden (Skolverket 2011a) which are for children with mild learning difficulties and intellectual learning difficulties. Sometimes when reading documents and papers it was confusing to understand which form of special schools was being discussed. To add more statistics to this the population of Sweden is about 9,422,000 people by the end of 2010 and in Wärmland County are about 270,000 people (Statistics Sweden 2011).

To look back in history the earlier grammar and elementary school forms became a 9 year old compulsory school in 1962 from age 7 to 16. This was decided by the government and beside the Educational Act 1962 the National Curriculum (Lgr62) was published. This change took some time to evolve in the whole country or about 10 years. The Act talked about that in schools there should be a special education for children that couldn’t follow the usual education or couldn’t adapt to it. Special classes and remedial classes continued as before and these classes even grew with the new Disability law in 1967 which entitled all disabled children to be educated, also children with intellectual learning difficulties or severe impairment. When their education became compulsory with the reform of the National Curriculum in 1969 this affected in increased cooperation between the special school and the compulsory school (SOU 1998:66). This also was at the time of normalisation and integration and the Curriculum recommended increased integration of disabled children into regular classes and proposed for a system of coordinated special education where the special teacher and class teacher worked together in class. During the next decade this increased as an alternative to remedial and special classes (SOU 1998:66; Emanuelsson et al 2005; Prop. 1975/76:39). Integration was then usually in lessons like sports, leisure time, supper time, library etc (Jutegård & Linder 2009).

The SIA inquiry (“Utredningen om skolans inre arbete” or inquiry of the inner structure of the school) in 1971 was in the beginning about the working environment in schools but in the end it was about decentralisation and stated that no regulations would solve the problems that had aroused with the changes of the school system. They suggested working teams instead of one-teacher classes and within these many problems could be solved and amongst them difficulties around children with special needs. Still they said there would be a need to have separately some constant special groups outside this working team. This report caused some debate amongst the teachers unions and for the first time there was talk about “åtgärdsprogram” or a record in a written form of action plan for how to help or support a disabled child. It would take some years for this to be actualised, also because of difficulties around
frequent changes of governments (SOU 1998:66; Prop. 1974:36; TAM-Arkiv). The SIA proposal also affected the National Curriculum in 1980. This curriculum placed a change from regulations toward goals (Dóra Bjarnason & Persson 2007) and tried to reduce the difference between regular education and special education (Emanuelsson et al 2005). Now the phrase a school for all was introduced (Persson 2010). In 1976 the six year olds were enabled to start in pre-primary classes but this was optional and still is. This became a special school form in 1998 with a separate curriculum (SOU 1998:66).

The overarching laws for the education of disabled children were the disability legislation but in 1986 this moved to the Ministry of Education and under the new Educational Act from 1985. In 1992-1996 compulsory schools moved from state to municipalities (Hedén & Karlsson 2008). Equality was a central concept in the 1990’s as well as other phrases from the market and the focus was on results on national tests in each school. New rules about independent school opened up the field and private or independent schools increased and are now about 13% of the compulsory school (Skolverket 2011a) and some are specialized for children with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), dyslexia etc. During these years it was a lot of political debate and lack of belief in the educational research. The welfare state went through a major regression and cuts because of financial crisis (Dóra Bjarnason & Persson 2007).

The reform of the National Curriculum 1994 (Lpo94) marked a change so that now you had one curriculum for all the school forms but with individual chapters for each. The difference now from earlier curriculum was that beside the goals to aim at, regarding knowledge and developing skills there also were goals to reach. These goals to reach became important in the coming years and still are because they affect the decision of placement for children with learning difficulties (Dóra Bjarnason & Persson 2007). Each of the school forms has their own adjusted goals to reach (SOU 1998:66). Inclusion is in no way obvious in the Swedish school system although Sweden has agreed upon international agreements like the Salamanca declaration (Dóra Bjarnason & Persson 2007).

According to Emanuelsson et al (2005) research in special education has more focused on the individual disabled child or his/hers deviation with limited paradigmatic perspectives. There seems to be lacking a focus on the environment or the overall context of school or school system in the society or municipality. Also they say that in Sweden you have the two track organisation, the compulsory school and the special school where the latter has been growing all the way from 1960 as well as the number of special educators/teachers. Tideman and Szönyi (2011) criticising how this separate school form has grown say that the number of children in special schools has been increasing since 1990 and now there is a report from the inspector saying that there are massive deficiencies regarding assessment when decisions are made about admittance of children into the special schools. The inspector wants to sharpen rules and regulation around this but Tideman and Szönyi ask if one can objectively decide if a child has intellectual impairment especially if the child has foreign ethnicity or mild intellectual impairment. They argue against how the school is supposed to be able to foresee every child’s educational development and say this also relies on other factors like the support, the teacher’s competence, the form of teaching and teaching material, the classmates and the size
of the class. The two factors that are the criteria for admitting children into special school are for one not to be able pass the goals to reach using standardised tests and the other is if a child has intellectual impairment. They use the relative understanding of disability with focus on the relation between the child and the environment to further explain how a child with intellectual impairment that does not get the support needed is disabled by that and state that one can’t predict this child’s future disabilities. Also they emphasise the longitude negative affect from being placed in a special school because then one automatically can only choose the special upper high school and usually end working in a supported work station instead of a workplace (Tideman & Szönyi 2011).

Emanuelsson et al (2005) say that inclusion is much broader than special education alone, that it is a concern for educational policy at large. What goes on in policy and practice of schools is a very good indication of how inclusive education is understood, developed and practiced. When you focus on inclusive education from the categorical perspective or the medical model this also affects the development of inclusive education as the problem of inclusion then belongs to the special educators as their special responsibility and task. To study an inclusive classroom from this understanding is not possible because the responsibility is with the special education (Emanuelsson et al 2005).

Today there are changes happening as the Educational Act from 2010 with a new School Ordinances 2011 and new National Curriculum 2011 that are now separate for each of the school forms is taking affect. Amongst them there is a new benchmark regarding the target group for the special school. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter there are two groups of children in special schools, children with mild intellectual impairment and/or ADHD or DAMP, dyslexia, asperger or autism and children with intellectual impairment in the training school. Now children with impairment in the autism spectrum are not to be part of the target group unless they also have intellectual impairment and there are demands of thorough assessment for more precise judgement regarding the placement (Skolverket 2011b). The inspection in 30 municipalities had revealed that children were wrongly admitted into the special school and also there were relatively more children with foreign ethnicity in the special schools than in compulsory school (Belger, Båath, Holm & Ängmo 2011). When reading the Swedish National Agency of Education’s additional paper regarding these changes it was interesting to find the phrase integration regarding an example of a child with impairment of the autism spectrum in the compulsory school that possible could be integrated into the special school, following the curriculum of the compulsory school but the education taking place in the special school (Skolverket 2011b). It is difficult to understand what this means unless this is about if the changes of the target group will not take place as mentioned above but the possibility is there for a child with impairment of the autism spectrum now belonging to compulsory school to continue in the special school. We will see how this develops in the coming years.

5. Inclusive education in Iceland

In the Icelandic context I need to notice that some lack of material is in the field of educational research about the development and evolvement in Icelandic educational
policy and the implementation of inclusive education that the policy emphasises. Grétar Marinósson (2003) states that development of research on special education in Iceland is 20 years behind the Nordic countries and 30-50 years behind UK and US.

Today most all children in Iceland attend to their home neighbour school. Schools are divided as follows:

- There are 158 compulsory schools in the country and 36 in Reykjavik
- Special schools are two in Reykjavik, one for children with severe behavioural problems that admits children for short periods and afterwards they go back to their school. And the other is now combined of two special schools, one for children with multiple impairments physical and intellectual and the other for children with severe learning difficulties. The third special school is in the capital of the north part of the country, Akureyri. In 2010 the number of these children was 0.3% of the total count of children in compulsory school.
- Within three of the compulsory schools in Reykjavik are special units for children with autism and additional disability with about 8-10 children in each of them.
- Private or independent schools are also few or 10 in the whole country with about 1.7% of all children in compulsory school. (Statistics Iceland 2011a; Reykjavíkurborg 2010)

The population of Iceland is about 318,450 people and in Reykjavík there live about 119,000 people (Statistics Iceland 2011b).

The school policy in Iceland had a shift in 1974 and Dóra Bjarnason and Persson (2007) say that with the Educational Act in 1974 every child was ensured equal access and possibility for education and this was coloured by normalisation and integration. Special schools for children with mild intellectual impairment were established. Prior these laws it was common that psychologists did IQ tests on children to group them into ability classes but now this need diminished as the old tradition was rejected. New National Curriculum Guide in 1976 ensured further the right of all children to be educated together. But this increased heterogeneity called for new problems that created difficulties for the teachers to respond to. Then experts and specialists guided for more segregated solution and special classes increased. In 1982 another special school was founded and now for children with severe impairment (Dóra Bjarnason & Persson 2007). In 1974 school also moved from state to eight educational authorities and later (1995) to municipalities. Changes in the Icelandic school system were affected by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992 and the Salamanca statement and framework for action from UNESCO in 1994 similarly as in other countries. The term special education is not found in Icelandic laws for as long as from 1995 but was though in regulation from 1996 (Grétar Marinósson 2003) that has just recently (2010) been revised and is now called Regulation for children with special needs in compulsory school.

Neoliberal influences also affected the school policy and when Icelandic schools internationally scored lower than expected regarding national tests this increased the competition and pressure on them. The Educational Act was revised in 1990 and again in 1995 and was affected by decentralisation, concurrences between schools and individualized education. The emphasis was on the development of a school
system that could meet the diversity and a variation of individual needs (Dóra Bjarnason & Persson 2007). This developed further and in 2001 the Reykjavik municipality put forward an ambitious policy regarding inclusion and closed all special schools and special classes. Today there are only three special schools in the country but in couple of schools there are special units for children with autism and additional disability. These changes in 2001 caused increase in number of learning units where children attend few lessons per week when they have difficulties in class regarding educational tasks or their behaviour (Grétar Marinósson 2003). The following years the school policy in Reykjavik was and still is directed to develop from the whole class oriented teaching and learning toward personalised learning and inclusive education or a school for all (Anna Kristín Sigurðardóttir 2007).

Arthur Morthens and Grétar Marinósson (2002) regard the situation about inclusive education both complex and contradictive where schools are obliged to meet the needs of each child and also to compete regarding audit accountability. Also inclusive schools are to promote for social inclusion amongst the children and prepare them for equal participation in the society. This seems not to fit to what many public schools consider them able to do regarding teacher education and staff quota, educational material and facility. Arthur Morthens and Grétar Marinósson further conclude that it seems that in schools you choose to use segregated solutions to solve the task of diversity in class or in other words the understanding of the medical model is prevailing. One could see these segregated solutions as a hinderance for inclusive education or the latter as a threat for the existence of these solutions. They say that teachers and specialists are against the conduction of inclusive education but for the ideology. The more availability of resources the more it is likely that these children are segregated from their peers (ibid). This is about how you use resources and how you organise and practice the work in school.

The National Curriculum Guide is for all children irrespective of ability and schools develop their own curriculum based on the NCG. Still this is all dependent on financing from the municipality and Grétar Marinósson, Ingibjörg H. Harðardóttir and Ingibjörg Kaldalóns (2007) regard that though the policy of inclusive education is clear both in Educational Act and National Curriculum Guide the funding needed for the implementation is sometime not in line with the policy. In their research about the implementation of the policy of inclusive education regarding children with intellectual impairment in mainstream schools they also found out that the usual respond regarding these children was by the individual/medical model of disability, that teaching arrangements were individually resolved and children with intellectual impairment were partly taught separately in learning units. More of their results showed that there also was shortage of teaching material that made teachers spend more time creating this, teachers saw the reduction of number of pupils in class as the main objective in striving for a school for all. Also teachers assumed that as the children got older the gap between children with intellectual impairment and their classmates would widen and by expecting this they also lead toward it. The researchers saw that friendship was rare between the groups and it was difficult to establish and maintain social interaction (ibid). These results are in line with the writings of Arthur Morthens and Grétar Marinósson above.

Participation is one element of inclusive education according to Grétar Marinósson et al. (2007) meaning as to take part in an activity performed in interaction with a task
in a setting within social and historical context. That participation is at a core of a set of beliefs and arrangements that composes inclusive education or make it possible. They also refer to Barton (1997) that says inclusion is about maximizing participation and removing barriers and Moen (2004) that says participation involves belonging naturally to a class and its activities that gives the experience of engaging in activities together.

A model of participation was introduced in Snæfríður Þóra Egilsson doctoral research in 2005 about participation of children with physically impairment in compulsory school in Iceland. The model was adapted from the person-environment-occupation model developed from Law and colleagues in 1996. It has three main posts or like circles that connect in the middle which symbolises the participation at different places in school. One circle is the child with all his/her abilities or impairment, one is the task in question with different demands of performances regarding learning or socially and the third circle is about the environment, the physical environment, governance, society and culture. According to Snæfríður Þóra Egilsson there has to be a match between the child and the demands of a particular task and of particular setting for participation to occur. She defined participation as what a person does, where, with whom and how much satisfaction and enjoyment is in the activity performed. Grétar Marinósson et al. (2007) used this model for analysing their data and also talk about participation on different levels, macro level about social rights and part taking in democratic processes, meso level about access and part taking of resources and micro level about access and part taking of group activity. They were mostly looking through the meso level or institutional level asking about resources, access to them and use of them as well as use of services in the school. Their results are that children with intellectual impairment are ensured formal rights as other children by the policy, they are welcomed in school but there is a tendency to expect less of them educationally and resources are rather used for individual instruction than for social integration with the group.

If inclusive education is to be realized it means the ideology of it has to become the ideology of teachers, school boards, parents and students according to Ólafur Páll Jónsson (2009) a lecturer at the University of Iceland. This is about what education is and what schools are for. It’s not about how we arrange around a disabled child in mainstream schools but rather about what it is to be a mainstream school. He refers to what current ideology means, it is about what people think, how they behave and the goals and values they have and this will emerge from what they say and do or do not say or do.

Now I have been going through the context of inclusive education in each of the countries and many perspectives have emerged. How do I then comprehend inclusive education? I will summarize up the bearing frames from these different contexts and the meaning of them for my research in chapter seven but first in chapter six let’s look further into ideas and thoughts around the importance of the teacher and the culture of the class.
6. The teacher and the class

In the classroom of today teachers are facing more diverse challenges because children come from different cultures, different social class or may have unemployed parents and they are different in abilities, needs and interests. The modern society is changing very fast and teachers need to work hard to be up to date in the aspects of different subjects, new methods and understanding of teaching so they are able to deal with changes in work situations and new demands. Violence, bullying, gangs, behaviour problems are often in the media representing contemporary problems in schools. And audit processes in schools increase the pressure on teachers to demonstrate better educational performance and student retention numbers.

These are problems addressed by Topping and Maloney (2005) and also how the numbers of mainstreaming children have increased. They say the biggest increase is in mainstreaming of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and teachers also express greatest concern towards this group. These children are then often perceived most likely to damage the education of their classmates and to be most stressful for the teacher. Implementation of inclusion is affected by the teacher attributions and belief systems. Teachers with different experience of disabled children perceive them differently and what they expect from them, have different self-efficacy and self-confidence all resulting in different effectiveness in teaching and learning (Topping & Malone 2005). This is all part of the environment, the class in which a disabled child is part of along with all the other children.

Another perspective in this direction is from Grétar Marinósson et al (2007) as they talk about the teacher as the key player. The teacher has the knowledge of each child, the subject area and working methods and they remark that the disabled child participation is determined by the teacher’s ideology and skills in initiating learning activities. Like Ólafur Páll Jónsson (2009) says above the ideology of inclusive education has to become the ideology of the teacher if it is to be actualised. He also talks about reasons for why a teacher would be against inclusive education and those reasons could be for example unacceptable circumstances or conditions for inclusive education made by the municipality or school, overload of work, the teacher’s attitude for the work or a vocational problem. Key words here are teachers ideology, his or hers attitudes, skills and experiences and how these manifest in the classrooms.

There are also ways of teaching and learning, the pedagogy in class. This will though not be dealt with in this research except as a part of the culture and strategy as it reveals itself from the data. I rather want to notice the importance of the culture in class and the educational dimension in that culture stemming from Birgitta Qvarsell (2003) from Sweden. She talks about education as a cultural scientific discipline and calls it educology. In educological research you borrow methods from ethnography, you look at how people act and create meanings within cultural frames in a cultural setting. Culture can be an opening or a closing construction and is useful to understand conditions for learning and socialisation. There is an educational dimension within every culture as signs that are perceived and acted on and challenges being ethical, social or physical. What I find interesting in Qvarsell’s theory is how you understand children´s culture and the adult´s culture, how children use their own experience and competence to solve new developmental tasks and how...
they try to find learning and play possibilities in combination with work. The learning principle is:

- to start from the competence one has developed and to practice it,
- the motor is activity based on child’s own intentions to deal with cultural challenge.

Here the relationship between play and competence is the key question. Relations between children may enhance social development as a learning process. She talks about childhood culture, school culture, media culture and the fourth kind of culture is work where time and space are the components children need as opportunities to solve a task. Time and space for thinking, actively handling different problems and for play reflection and communication. The prerequisite is:

- space and room for discourse and
- time as a possibility for activities that lead to experiences.

And this is not the scheduled time and space but rather ones that are in-between planned activities or rooms, where children can make something personal and new of the environment and construct their own developmental task. When you talk about quality in schools the teacher may connect this with goals, personnel education, leadership, democracy etc but a child may relate quality to what is good or important, to peers, to be allowed to complete tasks, the child’s focus is on realities and activities on what they do or are not allowed to do (Qvarsell 2003). This is why it is important to interview children as well as teachers, to hear and see what they experience in class and in school, what is important for them. The interviews with children and teachers with the observation will give some idea about what the class is about, what stands out in the culture created by the teacher and children and school in the context of society.

7. Summarizing

In the previous chapters I have revealed the main issues regarding inclusive education and disability. Here I will summarize the importance of these main issues for my research.

When you visit a school you enter into a culture created by the people that are participating in that culture. According to Qvarsell (2003) it is about how people act and create meanings within cultural frames in a cultural setting. The important issues is the time and space for thinking, communicating and as a possibility for activities that lead to experiences together (Qvarsell 2003) in the class or school. The structure of school, its operation and overall school policy also mark the culture.

The researches tell us how the thinking of decisive adults or head masters affect the structure by how the resources are distributed (Heimdal Mattson 2006). And how teachers attitude toward the diversity of children have correlation with how many behaviour problems are (Ingvar Sigurgeirsson & Ingibjörg Kaldalóns 2006). Also that disabled children and all children should be treated as component social actors who can be included in everyday processes of school if the necessary structural, cultural and individual issues are addressed (Davis & Watson 2001). This is about the reality in disabled child’s daily life in school, the thinking and feelings about activities and tasks and about being part of a particular culture.
The importance of the teacher as the key player has been stressed as he or she has the knowledge of each child, the subject area and working methods and disabled child’s participation is determined by the teachers’ ideology and skills in initiating learning activities (Grétar Marinósson et al 2007). Their experiences of disabled children also cause different self-confidence and self-efficiency resulting in different effectiveness in teaching and learning according to Topping and Malone (2005). This means that teachers thinking regarding the disabled child and ideology of inclusive education, his or hers skills, attitudes and experiences do all manifest in the classroom.

The models of disability are fundamental for this research. The social model is of value when we think about the access and possibilities for participation and not least as to understand the thinking key persons have regarding this. The medical model is valuable to understand the direct affect of the impairment for the child in question, the impairment causing f. ex. a hindrance as the child experience it. To simplify this one could say from the disabled child’s perspective that it is his/her social role that comes into focus:

- The focus is on the person and the deficit in the medical model and this focus can in the context give the child different roles in the lesson, class or school.
- The focus is on the environment or hindrance in the environment in the social model, being the structure of school, class or lesson, teacher’s skills and attitude resulting in opportunities or not for participation.

The models are also useful to understand the bigger context of each case, the structure and culture of class and the school and the school system. They are useful on all three levels, the child’s experience as micro level, class structure and teacher understanding and focus as meso level and school or societies’ organisational structure as macro level. The models became a strong tool to understand how the daily life enfolded in the three classes and schools, what these schools were about, what was the teachers perspective regarding class and disabled child and what was the disabled child experience.

After have read the literature and studied the school policy in each country I saw that it was no simple definition of inclusive education. Though all three countries, Scotland, Sweden and Iceland have the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994) as a fundamental contributor in their policy regarding a school for all this has evolved differently in the sense of inclusive education. I use together different perspectives from the three countries as a frame for my research that can reflect to some degree the complexity of the phrase inclusive education in schools and the school policy:

- It is difficult to describe what inclusive education is or how you see proof of it, it is complicated and on different levels like policies, practices and cultures (Scottish Executive 1999). It is one aspect of the inclusive society and is linked with the overall community like the social capital (Booth & Ainscow 2002; Cummings et al 2003). Inclusive education is more actualised in outlying areas and lower in cities (Scottish Government 2006) and it is about to maximise participation and remove barriers to that participation (Allan 2003).

- Emanuelsson et al (2005) in Sweden say that inclusion is much broader than special education alone, that it is a concern for educational policy at large.
Further they say what goes on in policy and practice of schools is very good indication of how inclusive education is understood, developed and practiced.

- Participation is one element of inclusive education and it means to take part in an activity performed in interaction with a task in a setting within social and historical context. Or in other words it is on three levels, macro, meso and micro level (Grétar Marinósson et al 2007). It has to be a match between the child and the demands of a particular setting for participation to occur (Snæfríður Þóra Eglísson 2005).

The context of the policy is part of the third level, the macro level that is important for each of my cases. It is from there the daily organisation in schools and school life is build upon.

In the next chapters I will describe my methods and data collection and then how I handled data and analysed it. Finally the results are in three chapters each of them presenting one school or one case and in the last chapter I draw some conclusions from the results.
B. Method

In this chapter I will outline the way I went about doing this research, the methods and procedures. I start with my aims and questions and describe how my work began, why I chose to do qualitative ethnographic case-study, how I went about choosing participants in the research and last which data collection I used and procedures needed for this.

1. The beginning

The aim of my research was to find out what are the factors that create an inclusive/exclusive class from the perspective of a disabled child and of the class teacher in a mainstream class of 9, 10 or 11 years old children in compulsory school in Scotland, Sweden and Iceland. Each one of the three classes is one case or one example of this. The aim was also to see if there are similarities or differences between the classes and put forward the knowledge emerging in each case.

At first I did some reading about inclusive education and disability. I got information from research in this field and about debates and different aspects. This varied between countries where the Scottish context was least familiar to me. I knew and had worked in the Icelandic school system and at the moment I lived in Sweden where my daughter was in a compulsory school. I had experienced in some degree the difference between Icelandic and Swedish context and realised that the debate about whether and/or how to mainstream disabled children still was going on. I had once visited Dundee in Scotland at a school visit with my colleagues and felt like a Scottish class as a 3rd case would be valuable perspective outside the two Nordic countries, Sweden and Iceland. My earlier acquaintance particularly with one school in Dundee was the foremost reason why I chose Dundee above other places. Another factor was that all these countries are in North-West Europe with seemingly similar possibilities for school development in the society. Also I had pretty good skills in the Swedish and English language which is important to understand what I see and hear when visiting these schools.

To begin with my focus was on the ecology of a mainstream class in which one of the children was disabled as this would challenge the teacher to work with questions of inclusion. And I would use observations and interviews with the class teacher as main tools for data collection. Then I was guided to and realized the importance of including the perspective of the disabled child and decided to interview the disabled child in each class as well. This is further suggested by Davis (2000) as valuable tool in ethnographic research, that the disabled children’s views on good practice and practitioners and vice versa are included in researches about them and that their voice is heard. Though I still would focus on the ecology of the class I also focused on the boy in question as he worked in class and on how the teacher or adults acted and managed the class situation. My main questions were:

- What makes up for an inclusive/exclusive class or school?
  - What is an inclusive/exclusive class?
- How is it for a disabled child to be in that class?
What is the child’s experience?
- How does the teacher feel and see the class situation?
- What are his/hers attitudes and thoughts about inclusive education?

2. Qualitative ethnographic case study

I chose to use a qualitative method in the tradition of an ethnographic case study because my focus was on the culture in three different classes and I wanted to understand what the school life was about in each of them from the child’s and teachers perspective. Qualitative research is based on the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with each other and with their social world. The concern is to understand the phenomenon from the people’s perspective. The researcher collects data in their natural setting and seeks to understand and interpret their meanings. A case study as one type of qualitative research in education is an intensive, holistic in-depth description of a single bounded system that can be combined with other traditions as I did here and used ethnography as a way to go about conducting the research and writing it up. By focusing on a single phenomenon here inclusive education in one class I aimed to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon (Merriam 1998; Lichtman 2006).

The ethnographic desire is to understand cultures in their own premises (Nind et al 2005), and to describe how they work and to explore believes, language, behaviours and issues in that culture as well as the interaction of the members in the ordinary setting. This is often referred to as the way we do things around here and I visited the three classes and to some degree explored the culture of each class and school and used multiple methods collecting the data (Creswell 2007). My research was though like a compressed ethnography, a term borrowed from Walford (2001) and means that a time limit constructed the visits for data collection. I needed to travel abroad for visiting the schools in Iceland and Scotland and travel within Sweden for the visit there and this restricted the time I could afford for this. In each of the sites I stayed four to five days. The ethnography as a research strategy (O’Reilly 2005) means that I went into the field with my preliminary questions and ideas about inclusive education, open and flexible for new discoveries and insights’, reflecting on these in my diary and field notes as this was the beginning of the analysis. O’Reilly describes this as the move from idea to theory and design, to data collection to findings and analysis, and back to theory and she calls this iterative-inductive way of doing research. The data guided me further to the theory and in a reflexive manner I went back and forth or both as a straight line and a spiral, or as a loop and a tail in the words of O’Reilly. This inductive way meant that I with as open mind as possible allowed the data to speak for themselves and illuminated the locally relevant understandings in my results (O’Reilly 2005).

3. Participants

When planning to start the actual research my first task was to find schools to visit. How would I find information rich classes? The way this happened was a bit different regarding each case. I started by contacting key persons that might have information about this and this was in February 2007.
In Iceland I had a personal contact at the University of Iceland that guided me further on until I was in contact with the headmaster of one school in Reykjavik. My visits were in two periods that is I travelled twice to Iceland. This was my first school to visit and by that it was a pilot part of my study. The special teacher in this school became my contact person and gatekeeper.

In Sweden I was guided by a friend to a school in a little community in Värmland. She was a fellow graduate student at the University in Karlstad and this school was in an area which she knew well. I contacted the headmaster and both my friend and the class teacher were my gatekeepers there.

In Scotland I had an idea of a school to visit and started by corresponding with authorities in Dundee. After procedures with papers it became clear that it was them who decided which school I visited. After some letters to the headmaster in that school the special teacher became my contact person and gatekeeper. This was my last school to visit and was in early June 2007.

All this planning for travels, flights and accommodation took a great deal of time and needed to be done in some advance of the visits. The headmasters were positive toward me and my requests as well as the teachers and special teachers at place in these three schools.

4. Data collection

My main data collection methods were observations, interviews, photos, official documents and my diary written at each place. In all three cases I applied to authorities for permission to conduct the research in these schools. This I got in written form as a letter of Approval (Disclosure Scotland) from Dundee City Council Educational Department and similar from Reykjavik City Council Educational Department and from educational authorities in the small community in Värmland.

Collecting data with observation in the natural setting gives understanding of the complexity of human behaviour. You get to uncover deep meaning and develop new insights by understanding how individuals interact with each other (Lichtman 2006). I used participant observation which means that I both was an observer at the side in the class/area and participated in some incidents that naturally enfolded like in one class in an in-between time some girls at one table talked to me and I helped them count and sort some playing cards. Or like in another where I went with the class for a walkabout passing a road and naturally helped the teacher with the safety of the children and at the same time I focused on the boy in this class as he participated in this. In all three classes it was known who I was and what I was doing, I introduced myself to the class in the beginning and thanked them when I left. Like Merriam (1998) says the focus in an observation is about the physical setting, the participants, activities and interaction, conversation, subtle factors and my own behaviour. During the observation I wrote down what I saw and heard and right after the session I sat in a quiet place, avoided talking to others and recorded my thoughts, feelings and insights and filled into the notes what I did not write at the setting. This became my field notes (Merriam 1998).
I also used interviews as one source of data and chose to do in-depth interviews as this gives me the story from the point of view of the participant and does not force him/her in any one direction. Key factor is deep listening and after have planned 5-10 topics that I used as guidelines I started with an opening about the purpose of the research and reassured my participant about confidentiality and that he/she could at any time withdraw this participation. After little chit chat to make connection I used the more open questions like: “Can you tell me about how it is to be a teacher in this school?” And the important subjects of his/her story came about as the interview evolved and I needed to be flexible toward this. Usually I ended by asking if he/she would like to add something else and by thanking. This is similar procedure as described by Lichtman (2006). Regarding the boys I got a informed consent from their parents or custodians for the interview. In Sweden I did not interview the boy in question as this was not a good time for him regarding other happenings in his life. I tried to make some new contacts to find out if I could visit another school/class with short notice when this came up. My trials did not succeed in new arrangements so my decision was to go to this school in the countryside although I would not interview this boy. He was though very talkative and we had some conversations during my visits in class. I also did not interview the special teacher in Sweden but had some good conversations with her. The interviews were tape recorded and this was with consent from each participant.

I got official documents about each school both written and from web pages and I also took photos of surroundings in and out of class and took care of not taking pictures of people. I added this to the field notes it helped me reconnect with the data from each school/class when I was analysing it.

I also did a literature review and this was a considerable amount of reading and analysing as historical reviews regarding disability and inclusive education and the school policy in each country were vital for my research. This was like an endless path and there were always more researches or interesting views about these concepts that caught my attention and consideration. The historical background of the understanding of disability and of the school policy with the thinking and understanding of inclusive education is the macro level of my research from where the school practice is build on.
C. Data handling and analysis

In this chapter I will describe how I worked with the data, what procedures of confidentiality I used and how I analysed it. The models of disability and their function in this research combined with the understanding of inclusive education did evolve as the work progressed. As a professional working in the field with disabled people my roots are from the thinking of normalization and integration. During the course about European perspectives of disabled people in this master course I got to learn about the social model and this had a deep impact on my thinking and attitude. Initially I was engaged to have a stand with the social model thinking and against the medical model thinking. After the writings and work with the models started and with the theories of and thinking about inclusive education this changed as I realised that both models are valuable as a tool to understand the situation of the children and their teacher and class in the three cases. This developed in a Matrix as I call it and is useable as to approximately see and compare how the operation and understandings of the models of disability result in an inclusive or segregated education.

**MATRIX of how the operation and understandings of the models of disability at different levels result in an inclusive or segregated education.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVELS</th>
<th>MODELS</th>
<th>Social model Focus on:</th>
<th>Medical model Focus on:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Access and possibilities for participation.</td>
<td>Affect of impairment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Creating opportunities for participation and gives support for this. Takes responsibility in co-op. with others.</td>
<td>Impairment separates and causes hindrance for participation. Responsibility in hands of others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society/School system</td>
<td>All-inclusive understanding regarding laws, organisations and practice.</td>
<td>Segregated solutions in the understanding of disability regarding laws, organisations and practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main thinking</td>
<td>Creative, innovating, co-operative.</td>
<td>Impairment as individual problem solved by specialists.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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As I interviewed children, class teachers and special teachers and attentively read the literature about the evolvement in school policy of each country these became three levels of attention in each of the cases.

1. Handling data

After every visit I wrote up my field notes in my computer and transcribed the interviews. The Icelandic and Swedish field notes I translated to English when writing them up but the interviews kept their origin language.

I systematically used pseudo names for all participants to protect the identification of them. This I did both for my field notes as well for transcribed interviews. I chose names after the first letter in substantives in each language as follows:

- In the Scottish school the teacher is Tina, the disabled boy is Brian and another boy mentioned is Brady, the special teacher is Stella and the assistant is Anna.
- In the Swedish school the teacher (lärare in Swedish) is Lisa and another is Lotta, the disabled boy (pöjke) is Per, the craft teachers (slöjd) are Stig and Stina.
- In the Icelandic school the teacher (kennari in Icelandic) is Klara, other teachers mentioned are Karl and Karen, the disabled boy (strákur) is Siggi, special teacher/social educator (sérkennari) is Selma.

The schools are differentiated by from which country they are though this must not be interpreted as a generalisation for schools in that country but as an example of one class in that school. Some information is not precisely given to prevent schools or teachers and children to be identified.

Tape recordings and handwritten material and public documents with names of the schools and classes were kept safe when I was working with them and afterwards this was destroyed. Voice recordings were also destroyed. The data as texts with pseudo names still does exist and will be copied on discs, to be safely kept but deleted from my computer.

2. Analysis

I used qualitative thematic analysis when I analysed the data. Qualitative analysis is a process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorizing. Through my data collection I already started to analyse and make sense of what I saw and heard as well as I refined my research questions. When analysing after data collection I sat down to read and reread my data to gain familiarity with it again, first my field notes as this would help me to reconnect with the lived experience and then each interview. This was like an intuitive and inductive process where I identified themes and developed concepts and propositions (Taylor & Bogdan 1998). Themes are the topics in each interview, the importance of here and now from what the respondents talked about, the link to what happened and the relevant issues that stand out. The analysis was done on three levels:
I analysed each case individually and each interview at first. This was like an ongoing discovery of an emerging story of the boy and the teacher in the context of the class. The themes are presented as headlines in the results chapters of each interview.

The next level of the analysis was to see if and/or how these findings answered the research questions and this was written up in the discussion part. Now the data was viewed in the light of theory, the understandings of disability and frames of inclusive education.

Finally the third level of the analysis was to look at these results in combination with the Matrix as to have an approximated overview of the results and conclusions.

I used standardised forms of notation (Griffiths & Evelyn 2004) when I transcribed the interviews to preserve many characteristics of the naturally occurring talk. This helped me to remember the real talk and to understand the meaning when a part of a word or sentence was emphasised or when pauses arrived as in Brian’s case when he could take long pauses in his utterance. This all took a great consideration as to understand the world from the participants’ perspective.

3. Validity

The data was collected in their natural setting of the schools where the children and teachers build the culture of their class. The ethnographic strategy is to use the in-depth interviews in order to encourage reflexivity toward peoples’ thoughts and doubts or contradictory opinions or hopes as the ethnographer seeks to learn about people from their own perspective (O’Reilly 2005). In qualitative research the researcher is the key instrument for data collection and analysis (Creswell 2007). What I saw and report here also depends on who I am and how I see the world (Taylor & Bogdan 1998). As I have worked with disabled children in compulsory schools in Iceland both before and after my residence in Sweden I am aware of this and made notes during data collection and analysis as to regard my responses to the data. I tried to keep an open mind for what I saw and heard and how I wrote about this (Walford 2001). This also was part of my analysis, the diaries with the field notes. I use the first person “I” as to make myself more visible in this report and as to acknowledge my presence in the research and the writing. My attempts were to make the procedure of conducting and writing this research as transparent as possible.

More than four years have passed since data was collected and this may affect the validity of the data. The data describes how the teachers and children’s lived experience was at that time and in that sense is impossible to repeat. Another matter was that it was impossible for me to double-check my findings with the teachers as I intended to do due to prolonged work with the thesis. One can also question the validity in regard to the data in the Swedish case as there I only had one interview. I did though have conversations with Per the disabled boy in class though I could not

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2 This means that there are symbols or forms for pauses like (.) as one second and (2.0) for two, emphasis as __, interruptions or unclear phrases [..], elongation of preceding sound as :, overlapping speech with [] and nonverbal utterance as [/]. There are no commas or points and responds as yes and mm are in [mm].
interview him at this time. And since the special teacher was an acquaintance I chose not to interview her.

With qualitative research one seeks to emphasise the understanding of a phenomena and interpret meanings thereof but not to generalise from the findings. O’Reilly (2005) says that ethnographic research is not representative to generalise the findings to a wider population but rather it can be representative as much as the things we learn from it can have meaning for other situation (p 199).

4. Ethics

Concerns were taken regarding confidentiality of names and possibilities of knowing which schools or people participated in this research. In some incidences less information about them was revealed because otherwise it would be easier to identify them. I have to notice though that in Iceland the populations is just over three hundred thousand and this sometimes makes it difficult to hinder identification of schools or informants. The city of Reykjavik and city of Dundee have though similar number of inhabitants (119 thousand in Reykjavik and 134 thousand in Dundee) so this problem may concern both sites. Informed consent was gained from all participants.

Before interviewing the teachers that they had agreed on I asked for permission to use a Dictaphone and also made clear that at all times they could discontinue the interview and reassured that all names would be changed.

The parents or custodians of the boys got a written letter for their consent for the interview. This I also got confirmed with the boys themselves at the start. Interviewing these boys caused a great deal of consideration as well as a reflexive manner of how to respond to their way of understanding questions and phrases and silences and left me with many questions regarding communication skills and possibilities to understand the situation and life in school from their perspective. In all aspects a concern was taken too respectfully regard their vulnerability during the process of the interviews.
D. The case of Scotland

What I am reporting here is from my 55 pages of fieldwork registration which are notes from my visit, my diary and my transcripts of interviews with the class teacher Tina, the special teacher Stella and with Brian a disabled boy in the class I visited. I want to notify that this primary school in Dundee in Scotland is not like a representative for the whole school system but rather an example of one class in one Scottish primary school.

The interviews were conducted after some days in the field and this was especially important when interviewing Brian as I found it helpful to be able to refer to recent events to get responses from him about how the school life was for him.

I start with some aspects about the school and go further towards the understanding the teachers have regarding inclusive education or class starting with Stella where she talks more about the overall school. Next I outline Tina’s understanding and how this is in her class and what I saw there also regarding Brian. Brian’s story and experience of school follows this and I end with my discussion. The headlines are the themes that emerged from the interviews.

1. Cultural aspects and a resourced location

The school is temporarily located in housing totally different than it had before. It has a schoolyard around made of concrete. There are 2-300 children in this primary school and 24 of them are assessed or diagnosed as having impairment whereas 2-3 are in each class. This is a resourced school like 8 other schools in Dundee. There are more quotas of specialised staff in this school like Stella explained and said:

...we have a team of 10 now who help these children within the mainstream setting ... children we decide what their needs are and sometimes they just access the class curriculum we are in the class to make sure that we can do that for best of their abilities and we will be support as they are doing things in class all our children are in class but we’ll have to think and [...] to see how we can support that to the best of their abilities

This I saw, it was a bit confusing the first day in class where different staff came in and left at different times. Beside either Stella or Anna the assistant that always are in class these are teachers providing learning support, laminate teachers for subjects like math or language when children are divided into groups and teachers covering planning hours. And then there is extra help for Brian and Brady his classmate but both of them use a wheelchair. This is when they arrive in the morning to help them go inside and also to follow them to the bus when they leave, when they go to the bathroom and at breaks.

These children are bussed or taxied in she said because many of them do not live in the school area. They leave a little earlier or a quarter before school ends in the afternoon because the bus driver needs to go before the traffic gets bad. This is part of the daily routine for the disabled children as well as for the rest of the group.
There were many new things I saw as I walked with Stella this first day of my visit and she explained some right away and some she told me more about during the interview. Here like in most Scottish schools or schools in UK the children wore uniforms and I wondered how this affected the culture, this was not common in either Sweden or Iceland. Also I saw that many classes were composite classes of two grades like the class I visited which was of 4th and 5th grades or 8-9 years old (9-10 years old now at the end of the school year). In this school society children can go home during lunch time which was an hour long break but most of them stay and eat at the catena and the assistants are with the children. I wondered if it is better for everybody to have this rest for an hour or if this creates a gap in the school working day.

I noticed when Brian and Brady were going out to the break the first day a woman came in and a girl too that assisted the boys with the crisps and jackets, like Stella explained in the interview. Yes children have sweets and crisps as a snack during breaks, they eat it outside and afterwards many seagulls came for the leftovers on the schoolyard. This was strange for me and different from both Sweden and Iceland. So this is something that has evolved in the culture here and the class teacher Tina said it was so difficult to change this since it had been this way for many years. And when she asked me how it was in my school where I worked I said well we don't allow sweets or crisps at all and it's really the opposite, we never have allowed this.

2. Stella's ideology and thinking of inclusive school

The interview with Stella took place in one corner of special teacher working room. At one table there was a group of children with a teacher and although we were sheltered away in the corner this caused some background noise that made some parts of the interview un-understandable. This is marked with an [...] in the citation.

a. Diversity is important for all children

Stella has worked in this school for ten years and always with disabled children. In the interview she emphasised her belief that all children should be together as they are here in this school. In the context of class it is important to learn that everybody is different and have different needs as this is only learned by having the diversity of the children. She felt that something was missing when they don’t have the experience of having disabled children in the population of class as she saw in other schools:

.. I also liked (.) the atmosphere that creativity these children came in they brought about and their own spark of light and ee the caring the children where toward these children who had needs (…) and I feel if they are not used to these children eem they are not they don’t have to be out there in another corner in another walk of life..

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Like they all have the same right to be part of class and she then describes how they do this, organize this with all the staff:

.. we work in an inclusive school so that ee (2.0) all our children go in at first hand ee (.) we then (.) look at there is lots of meeting with the class teacher what is happening in the week and if there is an area in the curriculum we felt (.) our children couldn’t access we would then look to see if we could adapt some of the curriculum or (.) if for the
worst case of scenario then we would take these children out of class but that (.) very very rarely happens.. (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She continued and compared how this would be different if all these children were out of class in the special education base and primary 1 to primary 7 together in the same room, which was not what they need though this might be easier for the staff. They gain more out of being part of the community in class and their age group.

b. To be in school is not just about taking tests

She emphasised the importance of how children learn that tests are not all that matters and it is more important to learn to cope with life like she is saying that this is what these children learn when they have this big ability span or diversity. And that the values of this are more important than outcome of national tests:

Ye ee (4.0) I think for the children the mainstream children it’s a good experience ee (…) we also as a school (.) don’t cheat you know in national tests aa (2.0) we don’t achieve as much as some schools who don’t have these children [mm] because our children are purer and have [...] but I think it’s about let the other children be aware that it’s not all about to take tests [mm] and you know there are there is more to life then eem that’s important but there is a whole other side of life just about learning how to cope with life and being part of life (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She is referring to other schools that don’t have disabled children and therefore score higher on national tests and this is known in all of the three countries as the competition between schools have increased.

c. Friendly atmosphere as one character of the school

Another thing she mentioned as a character of this school and Tina also talked about is the kind atmosphere between people, children and adults and respect for everybody, no hierarchy among the staff. I could feel that in class between staff, this friendly attitude and respect for each other during my visit. Despite that I also saw the attitude of Anna the assistant toward particular children as she scolded them out loud:

Then I hear Anna say to another boy that he should not put the pencil down in his throat (he had the end of his pencil at his teeth/mouth), Anna adds that he is the only kid in class that does this and she said this out loud over whole the class.

(Field notes second visit June 2007).

Since Anna was not part of those I interviewed I did not get the information of how she is thinking or what this was about or the other incidents I saw. I could feel the response of this as it affected this boy and the other children and my own surprise.

3. Tina´s ideology and life in class

The open ended interview with Tina was in some way both like an opportunity for her to let out the tension the load of the daily work in class and also an open space for self reflection as topics came up. What follows are the highlights, the outstanding themes from her talk.
a. Structure of the class and teaching

In the class are about 25 children divided at some clusters of tables. The teacher table is at the wall near one corner and usually all children gather around Tina in the beginning of the lesson. She turns her chair and they sit on the floor around her but Brian and Brady sit in their chairs and gives them all the same in full like she said:

... when I do my topic work I really just (.) give them all the same in full (.) ee well if they are falling out with some written work there will be different expectations you know I do not expect as much from the primary four if they are writing in their jotters you know it will just be not as much ... I feel personally that if you got a child that ok they can´t do the same (.) and they are totally separated (2.0) it’s worse for them [mm] and at least they are involved..

She says it is better to be to some degree involved than to be totally separated. I noticed that the children went to their tables and Brian and Brady and one other boy sat all together at one table and either Stella or Anna the assistant sat there as well, this was also their working table. They had some extra boxes and papers there which they used with the boys at the table. And usually the boys also did less of the writing or did some other task prepared by Stella or Anna. I never saw children change seats except for short paired or group work.

b. Reduced value

Tina is happy for all the support that comes in beside that Stella or Anna already is there for Brian and Brady. This could be another teacher having primary 4 while she had primary 5 and then also a special teacher with a little group but then she also expresses distress because of the noise factor that follows of having many groups with as many teachers in the same room. She is even suggesting a different form for the work where some could go out of the classroom as this would lower the noise:

GM: but how do you feel about working this way
Tina: well it’s great to have somebody else to coming in [mm] you know to take these children that you know you don’t have the time to spend with them [mm] then all adds to the noise factor [yeh] because if you are talking to your group (.) that person is talking to their group and then Stella is maybe down there talking to whatever [mm] and you know you are expecting them to be working a reasonable quiet [mm] (.) but then you are thinking what a noise you know so that’s the worst thing I think (.)[mm] it’s the noise if there were space to take some of these people out in to a corridor or out to here (.) you know it make such a difference [mm] ee (3.0) but some of these children work so much better if they have like an adult with them..

The values of getting support or a teaching according to children’s ability which is part of how this school operates is here reduced by the noise that this brings about.

c. Needs to be listened to

Early in the interview Tina expressed that her main thing was to be listened to. First it was about parents that seemed not to take seriously enough the need for their child to do better, to be involved in their child’s education. This is when children have problems with learning and she calls for their parent’s interest and support. She lowered her voice couple of times as she spoke of these parents. But when she talked about earlier school she smiled and said that most parents there were really involved in their child’s education and wanted them really well. The second was about the
class and difficulties of being listened to, even with a small math group. In that half page of the interview the word listen appeared seven times and some are in this bit:

GM: em (3.0) what can you tell me about teaching at this school in this 4-5 class
Tina: right ok [laughter]
GM: [laughter] yeh
Tina: Oh dear big split of ages big split of abilities big spit of you now really what they see as what is expected of them as well [mm] ee (2.0) and its (.) it’s difficult for even get some of them to even listen (.) or even appear to be listening [mm] instead of just (.) baffling about trying to (2.0) the thing is you are trying to do a lot of the whole class teaching and a lot of together time but in reality it sometimes just doesn’t work [mm] because they can’t sit still ..

And she also said with lowered voice that she really gets exaggerated just trying to get them to listen. That she doesn’t know what to do. In class I saw she used a tambourine during the gathering or counted backwards to let them know that they needed to slow down or be more quiet. And I could hear some stress in her voice couple of times.

d. Tina’s ideology of inclusive education

She says inclusive school has to fit the child with its needs and by that she means it is depending on the placement, school has to have everything. If it doesn’t fit then the child should go elsewhere:

.. well the thing is I think it is depending on the child [mm] I think the child that has the disability weather its physical or mentally or whatever it is I think it should be the best place for them and I think it isn’t always really looked in properly it’s just a case of inclusion..

She believes that this school is not the right school for Brian and Brady and gives impression of that it is just inclusion for inclusion. Because she doesn’t think their needs are meet and would like to see them get more often out of the chair, have more space, get swimming lessons and more training in what she calls for life skills meaning activities of daily life. She would like it to work if the child fitted the school:

.. yeh I mean I like it for the other children [yeh] because (.) they can see that well not everybody is the same and other people have difficulties I think it is good for them [mm] but (.) I don’t think it is not ideal for Brian or Brady (.) I think they will get more out of a setting that wasn’t as structured like a school because obviously neither of them are going to get (.) to be working in a bank or whatever [mm] I think they really would get more life skills (.) so for them I think it would be better to some you know (.) not mainstreamed but come in and out at times..

And she explained an experience from earlier workplace where disabled children came in and out of class but were not mainstreamed:

.. every child had their registration classroom of so to speak [mm] and the children who had special needs physical or otherwise ee they had their own area to go to they had you know far more stuff far more freedom (2.0) and certain times of the day they were in their and certain times they were in the class [mm] and I liked that you see ... I really feel I feel sorry for Brady and Brian (2.0) sitting (.) and trying to do the work at times and thinking (.) what benefits is this for them (.)[mm] do you know what I mean..

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The work in her class is not what is best for Brian and Brady and it makes her sad. She questions the tasks they are to do in class but Brian both takes part in work organized by her and then when he is at his table somebody else has the responsibility.

e. Brian’s lack of interaction as a hinderance

Tina has said that Brian is not the problem or Brady and that having him in class means she gets more support. Then also she said that it is difficult to include him:

.. Brian works with us as a group (.) e for laminate work (.) and he works with us when we are doing any topic (.) work he works when we are going with math but it means that you know he can work with a group ... he is very difficult to be included because it is as if he doesn’t want to speak out in the whole class (.) and you know with the story this morning (.) [mm] ee I actually he didn’t want that Stella spoke but ee (2.0) he doesn’t like that if there was just a few of you in a group (.) but he is very slow..

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She is saying that Brian doesn’t want to express him in front of the class and that is why it is difficult to include him. According to Stella Brian has mild intellectual impairment beside his physical one and he always has been a slow learner. I was in class during this incidence that Tina talks about when Stella helped Brian to tell his story. This was a class activity designed by Tina where she paired up the children and they were to finish a story beginning they got. This took a very long time for Brian and the girl he was paired with was with him just part of the time since Tina called a reading group to sit with her and read. Still Brian had an idea of what to write and this bit is from field notes of third visit:

Some children come to Tina to show her what they have done. Brian looks up to the ceiling like he is thinking. The third boy at their table talked to me and said some word in every other word and I asked him if this was about his story but it was about some computer game. He is working very well on his story. Stella comes again to Brian, he doesn’t carry on. After a while he starts to write while his partner already has written ten lines in her book... Now all gather to Tina. Some are going to read their stories. Both Brian and Brady are with the whole group. One girl did not want to read her story and it was ok. (30.6. Kids give their books to Tina and she approves them and offers the kid to read it). Brian tells his part with Stella’s help though he is not finished writing it up in his book. Brady is good in interacting with the children, taking and giving things. There is less contact with Brian. One girl was knocking on his shoes (like a game).

(Field notes, third visit June 2007)

She further remarks that Brian is not enthusiastic about anything and emphasises how slow he is and again she questions why he should be doing this work. She wonders why he doesn´t respond. Then she talked about how she thinks Brian is isolated and doubts he has anyone to share with at home and that is why he is not good at sharing “he is not really good in taking turns then there is nothing really”. And she recalls to have seen him corresponding with Brady one afternoon while they were waiting to leave for the bus, and then he was happiest. I had noticed in class that Brian did not interact much but few times he did. This caused me to wonder how he would respond in the interview or if he would share his experience with me. The results are revealed below.
4. Brian’s story

This interview took place in the sports hall and after have got a table and a chair in there we could start. Since Brian is in a wheelchair there were not many places this could happen. The headings are the themes that emerged from his talk.

a. Brian’s way of communicate

During the interview Brian sometimes had long pauses in his talk and this happened more when we talked about school. He specially had long pauses answering questions beginning with how. It also was like it took him some time to get the words or to say what he wanted to say when he did repeat himself. If I listened and was patiently waiting he then had a lot to say especially from his home or family or himself. Sometimes I had to ask back and repeat what he said to get it confirmed. He did much less pause in his talk when it was about his cats or something else that was important to him.

We also had a communication during the school day and on my first day of visit he responded to my remarks about the birds when we went out for some games:

Both Brian and Brady went out as well but had to go outside the fence to get to the part of school ground this was to happen in .... We saw the seagulls and one was very close to us. I talked to Brian and Brady about this big bird, how it was eating something and how big it was. Brian then tells me that one had crape on Brady and Brady told me as well in his way and pointed to his head but they laughed and Brady said it was on his shoulder not his head. (Field notes first visit June 2007)

Here he tells me something funny from the two of them that happened as they were out there together some time before. Also more spontaneously he talked about the weather for example, this had been in a recent direct experience the weekend before and he refers to his father:

GM: it was good weather wasn’t it?
Brian: yeh
GM: yeh
Brian: just eh quite windy [yeh] cold (4.0) I won’t find people go to the beach but (2.0) isn’t anything like winters is finished like it still going on
GM: what’s going on?
Brian: it’s like winter is never going to finish
GM: yeh, I thought it would be more sunny
Brian: my dad did not (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

He also explained to me what a stray cat is and what he meant by folding in art (below):

GM: two cats
Brian: two and start with three, well one of them is a stree
GM: is a stray
Brian: yeh, Snowbell [mm] Tabby and Charlie they aren’t (. ) Charlie is in heaven now [ok] now it’s only Tabby and Snowball (3.0)
GM: what is a stray?
Brian: it’s like isn’t that like wild like he scratches a bit [ok] because if somebody is coming to the house we know and he doesn’t know them he we try to might scratch them because if he gets stuck [mm] and we try to get him out he just scratches [yeh] (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Here in his last clause there are no pauses. They are more visible in next bits.
b. He wants to participate

Brian thinks school is ok as far as he can participate. This is at the beginning of the interview. He did not know what his thoughts are about school and he likes to do what he can do:

GM: what do you think about this school?
Brian: (3.0) well it’s ok [mm] (7.0) m
GM: you don’t know you can say whatever
Brian: I don’t really know
GM: no, (3.0) what do you like best to do
Brian: mm (5.0) mm [mhm] (8.0) some (3.0) well some I can, well somth [...] just something I can do

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

And little later in this bit when we talked about the games he further said:

GM: how did you like that how was that for you?
Brian: hh (5.0)
GM: remember when you were outside here
Brian: (3.0) yeh (11.0) was q it was quite (2.0) good for the bits I could do that were down there [yeh] even that were some I could do up high (2.0) I couldn’t do them because they were up: there [yeh] I could only do them that were on the ground.

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Here the long pauses are obvious. He couldn’t participate in some of the games because his chair didn’t manage to go up there.

c. Hinderances when working on tasks

When we talked about different subjects in school the scene sometimes went from school to the home like it was easier for him to refer to school topics from that site. One can ask if his participation or communication about schoolwork is more active at home. I did not include the home arena in my research as this was not part of my aims this time but interesting if that part of disabled child’s life was included with views of the parents.

In the interview he told me what his favourite subjects were, math and art. This was also something I heard in class though it was math and football then:

Now two kids come and ask Brian what are his favourite subjects. Math and football he answers, and I can see kids in groups asking different questions to each other and even to me and the teachers. (Field notes second visit 2007)

He said drama was quite good though he could not say what it was about or what he did in drama lesson. He sometimes attends drama lesson. He also told me it was easier to write in computer than on paper. This I did not see but noticed that it took him a long time to write on a paper and often Stella helped him. He also said it was easier to write numbers than letters:

Brian: (3.0) cause its cause (.) my hands are quite, it’s quite hard for my hands to write well [...] stuff, because (3.0) its takes longer my hands to write toward numbers cause it’s easier to write numbers [...] sometimes would write one number (3.0) but not hard to number

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

He liked math and he said it was easy:
Brian: eh well mine is quite easy cause I have breakaway maths [mm] (5.0) mm (8.0) hhm sometimes it’s […] three times and its forty or even it is ninety something is ninety [mm] hm (4.0) quite good at it anyway
GM: you are good in maths
Brian: mm
GM: do you always work alone or do you work together with the other kids?
Brian: emm (5.0) emm (5.0) well I do it (2.0) out one table not so many (. ) many times doesn’t look like there are many people is doing it (2.0) looks its only me and like it is me and few other people I don’t know who (2.0)
GM: that is doing the same stuff
Brian: because I used to do it with somebody else but don’t do the don’t do it with somebody else now (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

He refers to what he used to do, that before he did the same as someone else. And he is quite aware of the bits that he can’t do like folding a paper:

GM: what about drawing, in arts and like that?
Brian: yeh
GM: how is that?
Brian: arts bit easier [mm] cause I’m good at some of that I am not good at the folding art bits not good at the folding bits
GM: fodin?
Brian: cause its quite hard to fold for me
GM: mm, fold:
Brian: its only if it’s like fold apart [slams][yeh mm] we get the card the piece of paper its tough its quite hard for me [mm] cause I try to fold over but it’s quite hard because I sometimes get half of the paper like that and half of it for round cause sometimes get it like that [ok] yeh (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Here the physical impairment is a real hindrance for him and he realises this.

d. Dealing with changes with mixed feelings
During our talk he often had the focus at the home arena and to all the changes that had happened in his life. He has moved houses and told me about how his father was “struggling trying to break through something of the stuff that was making me stuck” so he could get around more in the chair. This sounded like his father was helping him as much as he could in the situation of being stuck, the situation with his body sitting in the chair. Now they had to have ramps so he could go in and out. When I asked him about friends at home he talked about a cat that comes for a visit and a pigeon. Both Tina and Stella talked about Brady as his friend in school and so did he. As soon as I mention the time before he sat in the wheelchair he talks about these changes and recalls good memories and even sees a humorous side of them:

GM: so which of the boys is mostly your friend in the class?
Brian: Brady [mm] really well Brady
GM: but before when you weren’t sitting in the chair was it someone else then
Brian: well I wasn’t s well I could walk when Brady was in the class [ok] because I walked for a m then I started not to walk [mm] (. ) because I couldn’t jump on my bad anymore [mm] because I use because I another a way I was going to bed was in another room and run to my bed and jumped into (2.0) and just jumping and just ended in my bed /I laugh/ its quite good to jumping on my bed
GM: you loved that
Brian: cause I was quite good in jumping on my bed and so teasing an yeh cause sometimes jump don’t the […] sometimes
GM: mm (6.0) so you were friend with Brady when you still were walking
Brian: yehh [mm] that’s when I have to when I had […] but when I started not to walk I started falling in the and fell to my bed /smiling/ [mm] and dad was holding me up
trying [yeh] to hold me up but I had before I started not to walk I started to be a bit dizzy because I had to hold on to things to get to room [yeh] something had to start hold the cause when I was on the way to fall I just grip something anything [.] as long it wasn’t the radiator (2.0) [I laugh] because I don’t know if they are on or off [mm] sometimes you get confused with the radiator sometimes you think they are on when they are off and sometimes [yel] you think they are off when they are on. well
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

He links his experience of not being able to walk with the change of not being able to jump on his bed anymore. This is really very emotional part of his story because it is like this is what he misses most and smiles remembering this, like he is longing back to this time. He also sees the funny side of this and told me more of incidences at home like when he nearly fell into the bath:

I think they have something go over to the bath and the toilet [mm] think that would be to rear things that top on the roof going above the toilet or bath [mm] cause I would have to go in the bath or going on toilet [.mm] cause the bath I have got just now I am is quite hard to get in it [ok] cause I sometimes mm I sometimes slip cause I am nearly falling down
GM: out of the bed
Brian: out no into the bath [ok] [I laugh] cause it sometimes nearly fall in the water on my up to bath [ok] [I laugh] (6.0) mh (7.0) [smiles]
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Here are very few pauses in his talk and it is not difficult for him to talk about the changes that have happened with his body the last years.

e. Shared experience

As written above Brian talks about Brady as his friend. They are connected through their shared experience of being in a wheelchair:

GM: yeh (3.0) and what do you then do when you come to class
Brian: eeeh (2.0) yeh well you just (3.0) go and well I and well ... me and Brady jus.. well I just go on the floor when class come and (2.0) Brady comes on the floor when he is ready too [yeh] cause he sits on floor in his chair as well [mm] (.mm) and (.mm) we start when (.mm) get up from the floor [mm] but we just go from the floor [yeh] me and Brady [mm] but everybody else gets up from the floor [yeh] (4.0) /yawn/
GM: that’s a different
Brian: they have to get down again and get to the chair to do the work (.mm) everybody does but we Brady doesn’t (.mm) cause we just need to roll there, cause we are always sitting down [mm] cause we cause I’m always sitting down because we (.mm) cause I am always sitting down because (.mm) I don’t get in my standing thing anymore because of my feet [yes] cause that it is (2.0) quite hard to keep them in the right place [yeh] [.mm] get something from get my feet to in right place [mm] ehh (5.0)
GM: so it’s difficult [yeh] mm (4.0) so you and Brady you just roll out you roll in and you roll out [yeh] from the assembly or something
Brian: cause because I used to be able to walk but I can’t now
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

I also had seen Brian during a break playing with a ball with Brady and another boy let’s call him Elvis. Brian noticed the pattern of their play and wondered if that could be different:

GM: I saw you playing out here (.mm) through the window one day [yeh] was it Elvis that was with you or?
Brian: (.mm) I don’t yeh I think it was Elvis
GM: you had some
Brian: [and Brady was there too
GM: yeh and you had some ball
Brian: yeh that was Braddy's ball [ye ok] cause Elvis was throwing it to Brady and Brady was throwing to Elvis (3.0) Elvis threw it to me and I threw it back to Elvis, and it keep going back and forward back and forward because it went to Brady to Elvis to me to Elvis [mm] always went back to Elvis [yeh] because Elvis was always doing it was always catching it (4.0) heh and me and Brady always (3.0) me and Brady caught it after Elvis [mm] I think (2.0) cause when I caught it I give it back to Elvis [yeh] h could maybe go the other way (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

He also said that he didn’t mind if others played with him or not and added that Brady didn’t mind either. According to Stella Brian and Brandy had been in training together in their wheelchairs and she also said that Elvis was being friendly to both of them since he came in this class.

5. Discussion

I will now sum up the main findings about Brian and his school and class and compare it with the models of disability and frames of inclusive education regarding structural, cultural and individual issues.

Visiting this class and school in Scotland was in many ways novel to me. Some of these novelties I knew about in beforehand like the school uniform but now I wondered how this affects the culture. Definitely it seemed to be more similarities between the children and they are not marked by financial status or fashion. Does that prevent mobbing and create a more acceptance amongst the children or does the difference between children when wearing private clothing create clearer base to work with acceptance of that difference? Here children from poorer and better financed homes, disabled children and non-disabled and both genders wear uniforms and I saw girls both wear skirts and some were in trousers or shorts. This is more like the invisible effect of all known facts in the culture just like the hour long lunch break. What I am used to is that teachers alternately always eat with the children and time for lunch and a break outside is about 30-50 minutes and is considered as a school time where children do not go home. The third part of what was novel to me was the sweets and crisps in breaks and that these were eaten outside. This felt very unthinkable because in both Iceland and Sweden sweets are forbidden in schools and also the weather would hinder this to be eaten outside as well as the trash following this. The above novelties are all some characteristics of the outer frame of this culture. Though new to me they seemed unquestioned facts of the daily life in this school.

a. What makes up for an inclusive/exclusive class/school? What is an inclusive/exclusive class in this Scottish school?

First I need to make remarks about the school building. I didn’t see this school in its proper location as this was a contemporary housing. Regarding the access in this building and out in the playground this is not planned this way for this school. Still with reckon to that it is clear that the school building and playground poorly meet the needs for wheelchairs. In that sense the housing and playground was a hindrance and
created a gap between the boys in wheelchair and the other children. This was segregation for these two disabled boys at this time but was expected to change. I heard Stella say in the interview in a sad tone that this was not at all what they wanted for children with physical impairment but that they tried to bear with this and do the best out of the situation. This meant that these two boys could not access classrooms on other floors like for example the ICT classroom and it limited their possibilities for participation. This is opposite to what inclusive education is according to Allan (2003). He says it is about maximising participation and moving barriers for that. The housing was segregating and hindering participation.

The structure of teaching and daily organisation was not at all what I expected as this was an inclusive school according to Stella and school authorities in Dundee. Surely that meant they had more resources and children came from other parts of the city to this school.

A lot of staff was coming and going to/from the class and teaching happened often in many groups at the same time in this classroom. Sometimes they were in groups by grades and sometimes by ability in math lessons and language lessons. Then children sat on the floor around their group teacher and after a while they went to their tables and worked individually. A special teacher could come in during some of these lessons and have one group working with her in learning support doing similar or different work. When working on topics Tina “gave them all the same in full” in a gathering at the beginning of a lesson. Then they were one group and their role was mostly to listen. Only couple of times children were working on a task that included interaction with each other in pair work or as groups. When that happened Brian’s partner was called to the teacher to read for her with the rest of that reading group. This limited the possibilities for interaction and it seemed like Brian’s needs regarding his communication was not important at this time. His individual issues were not addressed. Opportunities for interaction and communication in the culture of this class are here hindered by the structure of teaching also in lessons that had the potential for this. In the understanding of Qvarsell (2003) this culture is not a unifying construction but rather a distinguishing concept where the children learn to act according to their status in ability groups.

Brian was mostly working at the special education table where his placement was as well as Brady’s and one other boy. This was his group. And also Stella or Anna had some materials and papers there for the tasks they prepared for them. Responsibility for their learning and teaching was mostly in hands of Stella and Anna. This is why Tina was surprised that I wanted to interview her when she knew Brian was the child I would focus on in class. Here Brian has a certain place in the class that entitles him support but also separates him from the others. Both he and the other children learn that this is his role, to be a disabled boy and this is expected of him. Davis & Watson (2001) say that when children are differentiated by their impairment you are measuring children bodies and minds against physical and cognitive norms. They call that structural exclusion. Further this kind of thinking or attitude limits disabled children educational opportunities. And even encourages teachers to recognise and adopt ideas of rank and status which in turn require parents and children to know their place (Davis & Watson 2001).
The understanding of inclusive education is in this class to teach children by their ability and group them thereby resulting in that Brian is part of special education group in the same classroom as the others but with different teacher and often different tasks. Many of the children he never interacted with or shared experience with as opportunities for this were limited by this structure. This separated Brian and the rest of his group from the others and surely did not maximise participation but rather created barrier for that and was not at all inclusive education according the understanding of Allan (2003). Even in his group there was little interaction between the boys since their role was usually to either listen or work individually and silently. Emanuelsson et al (2005) say that inclusion is much broader than special education and when the focus is from the medical model or categorical perspective this affects and hinders the development of inclusive education as the problems regarding inclusion belong to special educators as their responsibility as is in this class.

Both Tina and Stella talked about the value of having this diversity in class as then children learned that everybody is different and both talked about the kindly atmosphere and respect among people in this school. This I did feel as well, the acceptance towards the children and respect between the adults. There were though some exceptions when Anna scolded particularly some children with a kind of intolerance for small incidences regarding their behaviour. Also in one lesson I saw when Tina encouraged the children to come up with own ideas regarding imaginative writing. I was surprised when she then gave the children her idea. Similar happened in the special education group when Anna the assistant asked the boys at special education table to name something that could be white and fury and after different suggestions from the boys she wrote up her own idea of a fox. These incidences caught my attention and surprise as I expected the children’s ideas to be valued. Booth & Ainscow (2002) say that inclusion is an unending process of increasing learning and participation for all students and reducing exclusionary pressures that come from difficulties in a relationship or from what is being taught and also from feelings of not being valued. These incidences and the structure of ability groups are teacher centred and teacher’s ideas are valued more than children’s ideas. This indicates an opposite direction of inclusion according to Booth & Ainscow.

This class was more exclusive than inclusive. The structure is a hindrance for participation and inclusion and separates the children and hindered opportunities for interaction and communication. Disabled children are categorised and though diversity in class is of value this class and culture is more stemming with the medical model of disability (Tøssebro 2003). Resources are used to promote support for individual children instead of improving the overall quality of teaching (Clark et al in Davis & Watson 2001).

b. What is Brian’s experience of this class?
From my interview with Brian it is clear that he can communicate, even with someone he just has got to know. He needed to have his pauses in his talk and sometimes it seemed like the way I put out the question was more an issue than the topic. Still it was also clear he talked with more ease about things and changes at home, his body, his father and his pets. All of these are arenas in his life he has a reference with where he interacts and communicates with another, has a shared experience with and this is visible from his talk. In school his interaction is limited and communication with others is little, he doesn’t build a reference with anyone
except Brady and perhaps Elvis. He rarely initiated communication but rather waited for the other to start. Tina understands this as he could be holding back or doesn’t want to talk and she thinks this is caused by him being isolated at home having no one to share with. For Tina this is the main hindrance since “he is very difficult to be included because it is as he does not want to speak out in the whole class”. When communication takes place the participants take turns and when one has long pauses this can mean many things but seems here to be interpreted as Brian does not want to talk. He was placed with Brady and shared with him the experience to be in a wheelchair and mostly communicated with him, they had a reference together. And then Tina saw him happiest when he corresponded with Brady. Stella did support Brian by partly talking for him in the gathering but I also saw both Anna answer for him when a question was raised and also a girl in class that he was paired with. When others answer for Brian he learns that he is not to answer and when adults do this the other children learn to do so as well. In the educational dimension of this culture it is a social challenge for Brian to share and talk with pauses in his utterance but the sign he gets is that others talk for him. According to Qvarsell (2003) it is an educational dimension within all cultures as signs that are perceived and acted on and as challenges being ethical, social or physical.

Brian’s communication is also his individual issue among others that needs to be addressed for inclusion to happen as explained by Davis and Watson (2001). This is not done as seen above. Also this was clear when a girl he was paired with had to leave for a reading group going on at the same time. There seems to be lack of understanding for his situation regarding communication since Tina would like him to participate but doesn’t see how that can happen and that she can support him. Brian wants to participate in the work and the games. What he likes mostly in school is “just something I can do” and that fits with Snæfríður Dóra Egilsson (2005) theory where she talks about how there has to be a match between the child and the demands of a particular task and of a particular setting for participation to occur. This does not often happen as he experiences that he can’t do the task as supposed to do. He said his favourite subjects were math and art and I was surprised that neither Tina nor Stella knew this when I asked each of them in the interview. Grétar Marínósson et al (2007) talk about the teacher as the key player because he/she has the knowledge of each child, the subject and working methods but here they seem to lack information that could support Brian’s situation in class.

When working on tasks Brian’s experience often is about how he can’t do things as he used to do and he expresses this as a hindrance like from the understanding of the medical model of disability. He is aware of how this has created hindrance in his life as his body went from walking to being in a wheelchair. Still he gets support during the day and that helps him deal with the task and gives his situation the potentiality for participation. His attitude was often positive when he talked about his situation and communication was with more ease. He even made jokes about himself regarding these changes. And I could also feel what was important for him and how he misses most the parts of his earlier life when he could jump on his bed or run into his bed. His emotions here and willingness to talk about these changes are also important for the knowledge of the teacher as the key player in the class situation.
Brian’s experience of the class is affected by his impairment. Though the support he has gives a potential for participation then the structure of class and organisation of teaching more or less hinders this. His attempt to talk and share with pauses in his utterance is a social challenge both for him and the class. The signs he and his classmates get from adult is that they talk for him (Qvarsel 2003). This is not addressed as an individual issue that is needed for inclusion to happen along with structural and social issues (Davis & Watson 2001). He wants to participate but then needs to be a match between the child, the demands of the task and of the setting (Snæfríður Þóra Egilsson 2005). This is usually not the case for him and he experiences often he can’t do the task as supposed to. There is a lack of knowledge of Brian’s favourite subjects and about his emotions and willingness to share his experiences. The teacher as key player in this class does not include this as his individual issue (Grétar Marínósson et al 2001; Davis & Watson 2001).

Brian is disabled by his impairment as the support he gets is shaped by the structure in class. Adding to that he is disabled by the structure, by the lack of understanding for his needs regarding communication, by the organisation of lessons and by the lack of shared experiences. His disability is here visible through the hindrance in the environment that creates barrier for his participation (Askheim 2003). From the social model thinking one would focus on access and possibilities for participation but here these hindrances add to the effect of his impairment.

c. How do Tina and Stella see the class situation? What are their attitudes and thoughts about inclusive education?

Tina and Stella have different understandings of inclusive education.

Stella believes disabled children “don’t have to be out there in another corner in another walk of life” and when I walked with her through the school I felt her attitude as she talked about different classes and how placement and arrangement were part of life in each class. This is an acceptance of the diversity of children and a welcoming atmosphere. The way they structure the work is though another side of how inclusive education is actualised in this class or rather hindered.

Tina both says it is good that the disabled children are involved and not totally separated and she is happy to have the support that this includes when disabled children are in class. But then she also liked the structure to be different like if some of the simultaneous groups in class “could be out there in the corridor” and she liked if disabled children “had their own area to go to.. and certain times they were in their and certain times they were in the class” as she had experienced in an earlier workplace. She doesn’t see another solution and also expresses that she doesn’t know what to do. She doesn’t think disabled children like Brian should be mainstreamed but be in a different setting where his needs are better met that he does not fit in this school. Topping and Malone (2005) say that teachers different experience of disabled children affect how they perceive them and what they expect from them. It is important to notify in this concern that Tina does not have the responsibility for Brian’s education but Stella has. She has only worked in this school for short time and she didn’t see herself as a creator of his situation or the possibility to change or work differently. Her thinking is like from the medical model of understanding in segregated solution and where the specialised professionals are the ones taking responsibility (Emanuelsson et al 2005). Though Stella’s thinking stems from the
social model of disability the actualisation of her work, the structure is in many ways like earlier special education that happened outside the classroom now was in the class. This is especially obvious through the separation between the special education group and the rest of class. Here the teachers thinking regarding Brian is in segregated solutions with focus on the impairment causing separation and hindrance for participation or from the medical model of disability (Tøssebro 2003). Davis & Watson (2001) got similar results about teachers in their research and said they only appeared to have strategies to change the individual rather than addressing the group culture. They say further that subjective views of teachers regarding the models reflect the view of society as a whole.
E. The case of Sweden

The school I visited in Sweden is not a city school like in both Iceland and Scotland but a small school in the countryside in the county Värmland. What I am reporting here is from my diary, field notes and an interview with Lisa one of the class teachers together about 30 pages. As explained before at this time it was not possible to interview Per the disabled boy in grade 4 or 10 years old. This is not a typical countryside school in Sweden but rather one example of such school.

I will start with some cultural aspects in this school and then report the highlights from the interview with Lisa. She also talked a lot about Per and I will use her perspective of his school life situation with some parts from my field notes to give a view of his story. This is though not a full story as Brian’s or Siggi’s since I did not interview Per to get to know his experience of this school.

1. Cultural aspects in a small country school

What affected me when I arrived to this school was the closeness to the nature that made a beautiful frame of just being outside. It was an open field, woods and lakes and also a road not so far away. In one lesson I walked with Lotta the other teacher of the class and one group of children as we had to walk by the road to the recycling station. This was a bit dangerous since a part of the way had no walking path. There were though not many cars passing but this was risky and Lotta was grateful that I went with them.

Some lessons like craft lessons are in a different location in another school because children are bussed to these lessons and I also was in some of them.

Since this is in the countryside many children live far from each other and may go to the leisure centre after school or take the school bus home. I got to know that Per went to the centre but few of the ten years old did.

Teachers arrive early in the morning or at 7 am and school starts at 8 am. The first morning I arrived at half past seven I got to understand that teachers have this time to make plans together and/or prepare for the lessons. This was new to me as schools usually start at ten minutes or half past eight in Iceland and teachers arrive just little before that and this was very different from Scotland where the school I visited started at 9:15 am and went until 3:15 pm.

Another thing special about this school was that parents built a fellowship or company that owned the housing and municipality hired it from them. Parents did this to keep a school in the area when the municipality was closing down schools because of the budget.
A so called planning book was not totally new to me but rather the importance of it as Lisa told me during one day of the visit. It is used in the whole school and is very important part of the school work and even more important than tests or examinations according to her. This is a book in A4 size and teachers plan in it for
each child and children make reports in it. Sometimes the teachers ask the child a question in the book and the child must then give an answer. Every week they see how the work is going for the child and the child gives a report about last week, what they think or like about it. I did see one lesson where the children were writing reports, working with tasks given in the book or with anything that was left to do. In Per’s book the home and the school also communicate and he gets stickers for good behaviour.

In the catena teachers and children had about a 20 minutes long lunch together and right after there was a break. Not all classes were there at the same time though. In the morning children were offered fruits and I saw Per once leave the classroom and come in again with a piece of an apple and then carry on with his work.

These cultural aspects of the school were colouring the routine of the daily activities and caught my attention during these days of my visit in the school.

2. Lisa’s thinking and life in class

The interview with Lisa took place in the teacher room as the only other private room in the house was being used by the special teacher. Although many interruptions were during the interview, telephone ringing and someone at the door this seemed not interrupt Lisa. She remarked in the end that it was good to reflect over her job this way. The following chapters are the highlights from the interview.

a. When school matters it affects the atmosphere

Lisa is also a parent in this school and she has been part of it from the beginning some years before. She is engaged to teach there and said it was enjoyable to work with parents and children when school matters to them:

…it becomes something positive that surrounds everything really then it is enjoyable to work [mm] you also feel eh on working days that are one in spring and one in autumn then you are with the parents and children and work together in school and everybody get a different contact in a different in another kind of situation ... I feel that is valuable that is fun...when parents are involved it affects the feeling they have for the school...

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Also when you work together to make this school survive it has a positive effect, you aim at the same goal she said. She repeated herself couple of times about how she was engaged to work there and loved this school.

b. Values the small school and composite classes

The number of children in this school was under 100 and they were preschool children or 6 years old and 1st – 5th grade or 7 – 11 years old. After that age they go to a different school. Here they are in composite classes or so called B-form. That is common for small schools because of the number of children and Lisa feels that is the positive thing about them and that this also decreases competition between children:
.because I see the advantage of working with ages together you get rid of the
competition and really children really can develop from where they are ... it creates a
good atmosphere in the playground children help each other..
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She also said that the number of pupils affect the possibilities for making friends on
similar age. It would be difficult if they were fewer than in this school.

c. Pedagogical issues are important and take time

Lisa is also a leader for this school as the head teacher is situated in another school
which he also is a head teacher for. He comes just once a week for a meeting. She
misses to have a head teacher that also has a pedagogical leadership about how and
what you teach:

..it is demanding that you don’t have (3.0) we don’t have a head teacher that has time
[mm] for this pedagogical discussion it is all about the budget and the schedule (.) if you
need help there .. it is about how and what you teach and what you do .. he never gets
to discuss that..
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She has to do this here both lead the work and the pedagogical discussion and she
feels it is difficult to delegate the work. While we sat there people came and asked
her questions and the phone rang. And she added “colleagues think it is me that has
to do it all”.

She also thinks it is important that teachers in the municipality get to an
understanding together regarding pedagogical issues:

GM: this pedagogical issue you are talking about is that (.) is it something you create
here or is it the municipality ah that has some goals
Lisa: both I believe
GM: it does exist
Lisa: yes it does we have the National curriculum that we follow and subjects plans eh
but just these discussion what we really are doing out there in the schools how eh (2.0)
you teach and what [mm] because it is so easy that you get stuck in just following a
textbook and then believe that it is enough [mm] eh but it is not so simple but we have
the goals to aim at and goals to reach in each subjects ... it is still too different how we
do in schools how we understand and interpret the goals [mm] .. the goals to aim at are
very wide what do we mean with this ... what does this knowledge mean [yes][,] it is
really this we haven’t spent time for or got time for or a leadership for to come to an
understanding together regarding the goals [yes] that is important..
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Financial and political issues are also linked with this and here she is referring the
municipality’s website:

.. ah there are fine visions that you really don’t follow because it says we shall support
children [mm] to be able to reach their goals (.) and now the municipality is in a phase
where they are drawing back two 75% positions in the special services [ok] so we will
loose our speech therapist and math therapist..
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She is saying the website of the municipality is not following owns visions since
children should get support but at the same time there are cuts in the fields of
specialised support.
d. Staff co-operation is important
Lisa is professionally engaged as seen here when she talks about the importance of co-operation, values and ideas. She likes it when staff co-operates and also with the leisure centre and here it is about ideas and values of literacy. And she is also concerned about children that don’t reach their goals:

.. now we have been working () a bit like in a reading circle about literacy the whole school staff even () the leisure centre staff too .. it feels very positive when you are together around this what do we mean and what development do we want how shall we work for that with the children [mm] to get the literacy level we want and even what can be done at the leisure centre when we see that children don’t get to their goals to reach [mm] we need to have more co-operation [yes] but that is also difficult () it is difficult in all schools I believe () this to get the leisure centre and the school together as one operation ..

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

And next winter they will have a similar circle around math skills. A contradicting side of this is how her engagement for the school and the school development gets to be too much. She feels this gets to be too many threads on her responsibility:

.. so this is the negative side of working in a small school that you get to many tasks that you really () you don’t get a penny for but you put a lot of overtime on your working hours ... It gets to be nerve-racking and I feel that I () pull too much () because I think that much comes from me that I want so much in the development yes yes I like school development..

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She repeated several times that she was doing too much.

e. Themes are valuable - heart-growth is like a red thread
Through the winter Lisa said they work with themes on whole school level and divide the children into groups of all ages.

Then we mix different classes we try to work a lot with the whole school inspired of themes [mm] when we are this size of school we think it is important to work from preschool class to 5th grade and mix different ages...

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

All groups work with different aspects of the theme and this I did see during my visit in the theme about environment, both a musical about the earth and recycling and a lesson with Lotta where one group is sorting different material and I walked with them to the recycling station with the sorted material. Per is in this lesson:

First Lotta talked about the different stages of recycling and showed that on the board like a stairs of how you do. She invited and asked the kids about their experiences like if they got clothes from others which was the best way of recycling at the top step, to inherit. Many kids responded and had different feelings around this but now it was clear that they were doing a good thing for the earth by inheriting clothes, bikes etc. Now they got different kinds of things that needed to be sorted out, diff paper, diff plastic etc. Soon Per took the teachers yardstick and acted like he was to hit more than one child, kept on this until Lotta took it of him. Then he found some stick to walk with and had it on the way to the recycling station. (Field notes second visit may 2007)

Lisa talked about social skills and communication as of value and explained why and how they used so called heart-growth as a method of working with this and also had combined this with the themes:
.. the heart-growth is going on all the time [ok] it goes through everything like a red thread ... we believed when we talked about these matters and worked separately in each class it didn’t go through like when we talk and the children got many ideas and when they were out in the schoolyard they forgot it [yes] so we felt we needed to do this differently on whole school level so everybody has done the same thing [m] (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

And this is done with parental involvement in a meeting where parents and teachers decide what is important to work with here in their school. She further described that this was about how you connect and behave with others:

.. it is about moral and ethics how we are toward each other like to say I am sorry or give others a good working atmosphere .. it is those foundation in relationships that we believe we have lost a little [mhm] because people are in a hurry (. ) families are in a hurry and have all too much to do so we have lost those common things like saying good morning or thank you.. (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

And this they did work with through the themes work like relations in games like a special bandy they planned just for this, role playing and more. Affects of this has been good she said with less conflicts:

.. there have been less conflicts and we don’t have the (. ) [m] big conflicts any more out in the bandy field this is how we can feel that now they have understood what we talked about (. ) but of course this comes back [m] but it changes what it is about ... still it feels that we have a good atmosphere and we can respond quickly to what happens between the children .. (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She is saying that the heart-growth work has made it easier to work with behaviour and relations.

3. Lisa’s perspective about Per in the class

Here I will report the parts of Per’s story that was available both through what I saw and heard at place and from Lisa, how she understands his problems and needs and how they respond to that in school. Per is in 4th grade in the composite class of the 4’s and 5’s all together about 24 children. Lotta is also a teacher in this class and Stig is the woodcraft teacher and Stina the textile craft teacher and sometimes an assistant is in class. Per was very talkative and we had some conversations at different times during those days of my visit.

a. Per and his impairment

Lisa told me that Per was diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and described how his impairment affects his school day, that he needs to be occupied and not waiting. I noticed she said that he was integrated in class and it meant the staff quota was higher:

.. we have one diagnosed child integrated and that means we often need help from the leisure centre or we are two teachers in class ... he needs to have something to do and not sit and watch another one work ... for him to wait is very difficult in class.. (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

And this I saw in the first lesson of the first day of my visit in a sewing craft lesson with the teacher Stina where half of the class was attending and the other half was in
woodcraft lesson. Per called for assistance several times and started to disturb others when he had to wait:

… But Per called out that he needed help - and again – they don’t run right away when he calls, he also has to learn to wait Stina told me. I could hear Per make provocative comments. Stina comes to him and looks after his work and gets a perm and shows him one page there, handwritten. I think this is some kind of work description. I also can see that the children have different kind of work that they are working on. Stina shows Per how he has to put the pins. The assistant also goes around helping the kids. Just after few minutes Per says: “so difficult, so very difficult”, he gets an answer that he has to wait. Then he goes behind one girl standing there and kicks her a little. She replies something and Per sits down again and asks what I am writing. I tell him I am writing down my thoughts. Assistant comes and tries to tell him what to do, - “wait, wait” he says when she leaves again.  

(Field notes first visit May 2007)

Lisa said that when things get to heavy they go out with him from the classroom and before when this class was very lively he had to do a lot of work outside the classroom:

…usually then he had to work outside the classroom at a table there … now when he feels he can’t concentrate in class he decide himself to sit there … he works in class most of the time.. he knows (.) about his diagnose and why he responds the way he does [mm] and that helped him to understand his own behavior..

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She talked about his needs regarding his impairment and how things could get difficult. She used to have some extra tasks for him but has less need for that now. When he is working with another and things are too difficult for him it can get all wrong. Now she believed he has got pretty far when he decides to leave for example in sports games before problems arise.

Lisa has a feeling for what is most important for Per and connects it with his future in society, that they need to help him toward that goal:

...most important for him is that he thrives (.) that he has a place in the society (.) that is how I feel (2.0) eh then it is that he gets to his goals to reach (.) for him it is still most important to learn the social rules [mm] I feel like [mm] that that we need to help him with [mm] ... to be able to live in our society..

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

And she said his favourite subjects were woodcraft, to build things and working with his hands. And I saw him in the woodcraft lesson enjoying the work and being in a helping role:

Per gets his piece and sits down. Again he is sitting a bit away from the boys. He has some wood pieces – three parts, and starts to sand one of them. He calmly calls the assistant to come.... Stig helps Per to make holes for the screws – this they do in a big drill press. All kids get help to use the bigger machines. I see Per enjoy doing this work and also to be with the teacher. Later this session Per goes and help another boy also make holes and gives him same kind of screws he had used. This I saw him really enjoy, to be able to give information and show another how to do.

(Field notes first visit May 2007)

Lisa added that he also likes history and is then more independent in the classroom but English and math are difficult for him.
b. Concern when they plan a lesson or work as groups

There are two teachers in class but not always at the same time but then there is an assistant partly in this class. Some time before they had a resourced person sitting with Per but that made him irritated. It matters if you are alone with the class:

..You don’t do things in class that you know will not work for him [mm] when you are alone if you are two you can find another alternative for him if he had a bad day...

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Lisa said that working as groups was difficult for him or even impossible but then they have a back-up plan for him also regarding his daily form:

... we want to work like this for all of the children and then we have to have a back-up plan for him if this doesn’t work ..it is good for him when younger children are there because then he is a bit older and knows more [mm] if he takes that role [mm] (3.0) but that goes by his daily form

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Sometimes the teacher goes into the group where he is and thinks: “what can Per do so this will work?” also when you plan a lesson “you have to think about to have a back-up plan for him all the time like what can I do if this doesn’t work for him.” She said it sometimes works for him to be in a paired work but then you have to think about with whom you pair him:

.. to solve a math problem doesn’t work because math is a problem for him and then it can get clownish .. you have to think with whom you put him and have a sense for his daily form since that affects this..

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She added that in some parts of this he is getting better at like when the children are showing up results of working as groups, he is always part of that and contributes to this.

c. Per’s lack of friendship makes Lisa sad.

Lisa said he more often played with younger children and it was a problem that he didn’t have friends:

.. you feel bad that he doesn’t have a close friend that it doesn’t work .. he is part of class and is accepted but doesn’t have a friend..

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She added that he at breaks often plays in the sand or walks around seeking contact. This I saw though he did not manage to continue these contacts that time:

I watched Per at a little distance – he was jumping on a board so that another kid went up when he jumped on one end. I also saw him kick a little to another boy and he then went away like the boy on the board. Some girls were on a seesaw but they went away when Per arrived. On the way into the building I saw him throw some little stones at direction to the teachers.

(Field notes second visit May 2007)

Lisa also said that situation at home did not allow friends for visits but still there was a good contact with his home that gives Per a feeling of safety and for this they also used the planning book:

..we work closely with his home through his planning book [yes] (. ) there he has a special scheme about his behavior and both the teachers and parents write in this book
every day and he gets a sticker for good behavior .. his aim is to give others a more quieter working space (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Lisa repeated several times at different places in the interview that she felt bad that he didn’t have a best friend.

d. Per has made a progress.
This winter Per has developed a lot according to Lisa and he can now much better deal with his behavior:

..he really also has grown [mm] () and started to understand and can work out his own situation [mm] em has started to talk much more at home about happenings in school and he doesn’t lie as much and he then doesn’t get into conflicts … the world around him is much calmer and then it is much easier to get him back on track if he gets agitated .. this can happen and he may be just about to hit someone () then we go outside and talk to him … he also sees his own change…

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

And she said now they can start to work with goals and make demands of him. His participation in the musical that I saw was a big progress for him: “.. a big step to have the role in the musical he used not to be able to follow through such roles.” And she added that often these children become scapegoats for something that goes wrong and this also was important for the other children to see he could do this.

4. Discussions

Here I will now sum up the main findings about Per and his school and class according to the information possible at that time and compare it with the models of disability and frames of inclusive education regarding structural, cultural and individual issues.

It was new to me to visit a county side school though a Swedish school I knew to some degree since I lived in Sweden at the time and my daughter attended a school in our area. One of these novelties were the early mornings the teachers arrive at school as they started at 7am for preparation for the coming school day. I wondered if it was easier to plan this way when you know if anybody is sick or if the weather affects the plan etc. At least it is a chance to organize together some of the work since in this school teachers often work on whole school level and more than one together in class.

Another thing there was the closeness between teachers and parents that seemed to symbolize this school and I started to think of questions about how cultures can differ in small communities from cities or areas in cities. Or was the reason here that parents were owners of the housing and had therefore a different relationship with the school and/or school authorities? They worked a whole day with the teachers in school both in autumn and spring and that according to Lisa was valuable and affected the atmosphere in school. This is part of the construction of the culture in this school and affects the school life.

At the same time another factor is that children live far apart and need to organize or plan differently if they want to play together after school or during weekends. The leisure centre had a role here as a place of opportunity for making contact or
friendship and to maintain it. Per’s classmates usually did not attend to the leisure centre like he did and he sometimes played with younger children.

And also the planning book was an important link between the home and the teachers and the child and seemed to act as a medium to address individual issues.

All of these were cultural characters of this school and part of the daily life of children and teachers there.

a. What makes up for an inclusive/exclusive class/school? What is an inclusive/exclusive class in this Swedish school?

In this school the teachers work in co-operation in many areas like when working on themes and heart-growth and then on whole school level. Another example of teachers co-operation was regarding pedagogical issues to create solutions or aims regarding literacy and later mathematic and the leisure centre was involved in the work. Then they also focused on the needs of children that do not get to their goals to reach. In Sweden this is one of the benchmarks for placing children in the special school (see page 15-16). To work with these pedagogical issues and also have this focus on children’s needs is a concern for the whole group addressing the ability span as to include all of the children. It is thinking for inclusive education as to maximize participation like Allan (2003) talked about. Here the focus is on the whole group aims and how you can support all children toward them.

The structure of the teaching is mostly in composite classes where the ability span is of a value as Lisa talked about, children are then able to “really develop from where they are” and are less competing than in non composite classes. Teachers work together and plan with parents important values regarding communication skills and relations between the children. Working with themes often in whole school groups where these skills are practised was also a characteristic of this structure as I saw in the lesson about recycling. This also created an accepting atmosphere and understanding for the development of each child as was visible when teachers had concern for individual issues in different subjects. Like regarding Per’s needs about his impairment where teachers planned lessons to fit the class and him. They differentiated this planning by weather they were alone or if they were two in class. They also took concern to individual issues by the demands they made to Per if the task was in subjects that were difficult for him or his favourite ones or if he had had a bad day or not. Individual issues are also addressed with the way the planning book is used as well as the informative and co-operative link it is with the homes. Here the teachers create and innovate for there to be a match between the child and the demands and the setting so all children including Per can participate (Snæfríður Þóra Egilsson 2005). This is also what Davis and Watson (2001) talked about, how all children should be treated as component social actor included in everyday process of schools if necessary structural, cultural and individual issues are addressed. In this structure of class and teaching the teachers adapt their planning and teaching to fit to individual needs, to change the whole so it will fit to all as Tøssebro (2004) calls an inclusive class. Here the individual, structural and cultural issues are addressed.

Parents are participating in this culture, both as owners of the housing and as co-actors in decisions regarding the work with the heart-growth and that can be viewed as inclusive thinking promoting an inclusive society (Booth & Ainscow 2002).
b. How is Per’s situation in this class according to Lisa?

Since I did not interview Per the information about his thinking and experience is not available. Important here is though his situation in school and the understanding regarding that.

Before when the class was heavy Per often had to work outside of the classroom at a table in the hall. No other classes were on this floor. Lisa said that now Per more often could take responsibility for his behaviour by “choosing to work outside the classroom when he feels he can’t concentrate” and when he “gets out of the sports game” before problems arise. He had made a progress that was visible for example by his participation in the musical and was able to follow through his role there. Here Lisa is saying that Per both is participating in tasks he now manages and also he rather separates himself from the class than to make the situation there worse when he gets agitated or class is too lively. I did not see Per sit at this table in the hall but I saw teachers occasionally move him to another seat in class to talk to him and help him with tasks. He then was protesting but did do his work. He often chose to sit apart or at little distance from the others like in crafts lessons. One can ask if that stems from how he was used to be separated from class or if he has learned that this works better.

He enjoyed having a role as a helper like when he was helping another boy in woodcraft lesson and showed positive behaviour when relating to that boy. This I also saw in another lesson where children worked individually or as groups creating things from cardboard boxes and he borrowed couple of times the glue from another boy. Here he was working in areas of his interest and as Lisa said he was good in working with his hands and he works more independently in subjects that he manages. Similarly things could get worse in working with another in subjects that were difficult for him like math and English.

Teachers were aware of his diverse behaviour and had a back-up plan that Lisa said she did not use as much now as before but this was important, to respond to his individual needs. She also notified the importance of how the world around Per is calmer and that makes it easier to deal with his impairment. She is looking to the affect of the environment like in the understanding from the social model of disability (Tøssebro 2004; Askheim 2003).

When individual needs are addressed this gives access to and possibility for participation as from the perspective of the social model.

c. How does Lisa see the class situation? What are her attitudes and thoughts about inclusive education?

Lisa is ambitious and enjoys teaching in this school where the atmosphere is created by the structure and culture of it and by the joint goal to make this school survive. She values the co-operation when teachers and parents work together and likes to work in composite classes and talked about it as the positive thing about small schools. But if children are too few they have less opportunity to make friends. She is aware of that as a part of child’s life in school and the importance of this for the child. Grétar Marinósson, Ingibjörg H. Harðardóttir and Ingibjörg Kaldalóns (2007) talked about how children with intellectual impairment and their peers had
difficulties to establish and maintain social interaction. This is visible here as Per has these difficulties and Lisa is aware of this and also of how to create opportunities for better relations and interaction but difficulties in relationships are one of the elements that create exclusionary pressures (Booth & Ainscow 2002). The class was very lively before as she said but was calmer now and that affected also Per’s situation.

A great deal of work was put into working with themes and Lisa connected themes work, the values of working in whole school level in groups of all ages with the heart growth or the social skills and communication. This resulted in fewer conflicts and made it easier to work with behaviour and relations which all children benefitted of. This created a culture of similar understanding around social skills and communication diminishing the exclusionary pressure of difficulties in relationships.

Lisa is professionally engaged about “how you teach and what you do” or the pedagogical understanding amongst the staff and also regarding the municipality. She even criticized the authorities for not following own visions regarding support for children. She likes school development and was leading the co-operative circle work around literacy in this school. This showed a longing to work further with pedagogical questions amongst teachers and leaders as to increase the quality in schools in the municipality. She is innovative thinking and seeks solutions and strategies in co-operation with others and that effect the implementation if inclusive education (Topping & Malone 2005).

When Lisa talked about Per and his impairment she connected that and the situation in class with how his life possible could be later and feels that the teachers in school have a responsibility to help him with what she counts as most important for him “to learn social rules” so he can live in the society. Here she is linking what is most difficult for Per with his situation later in society, individual issues in the perspective of the social model and the inclusive society (Booth & Ainscow 2002). Her thinking is within the ideology of inclusive education as she sees Per’s impairment not as his problem as an individual tragedy like from the medical model thinking but rather she thinks of how to create opportunities for participation and support for that and responsibility for this is in co-operation with others. This is the understanding stemming from the social model of disability.
F. The case of Iceland

The Icelandic school was the first school I visited and I went there in two periods, first one in March and second in May. The former period was therefore the pilot part of my study and the interviews were my pilot interviews. I went into more than one class as to get what the school was about and that helped me to further adjust my focus for everything that was happening in the class Siggi was in, the boy I interviewed. The school was a rather new school in Reykjavik in a temporary housing. All classes were composite classes of two grades.

The data of about 62 pages do not describe a typical primary school in Reykjavik but an untraditional young school. I interviewed the special teacher Selma and class teacher Klara during the former period and the boy Siggi in the latter one. He was 10 years old in 5th grade in a composite class of 5th and 6th grade. It was not possible to interview him in the former period because of situations in his life at that time. The headlines are the main themes from what each of them talked about in the interviews.

I will start with some cultural aspects of this school and go further to some aspects from Selma and the thinking and ideology of Klara and then to Siggi´s story and end with my discussion.

1. Cultural aspects in a rather new school

In this school there were some novelties to me though this time I was visiting Icelandic school in Reykjavik where I had been working some years before in another school and the school system was known to me also because I grew up there and lived there most of my adult life.

The surroundings of this temporary building were mostly an open space of gross gravel with swings in one area and a basket in another. Usually there are more playing possibilities around schools in Reykjavik.

Inside the housing every part of the building was made useful, the hallways and passages and in one big hall there were some computers and tables. Later there were moveable tables there as teachers sat with groups of children during planning and at lunch the catering was there and children came and got warm food on their plates and then sat in their classrooms when eating lunch.

Another thing was that children were allowed to have hats inside and a chewing gum. They could also use iPods or listen to music from mp3 player but mobiles needed to be shut off. Doors of classes were usually open and children could go to get themselves a glass of water in the hall. The first break in the morning was a fruit break and children did not need to go outside. What was also new to me in this school with all classes as composite classes was how the children worked in all these areas and not inside one classroom. Some were in the classroom, others in the computers in the hallway and still others sitting in the
passages or going between places. It was some kind of flow between places and all the time some working noise was there.

All classes used a planning book and had a weekly planning in groups with their teacher and at other times were working individually in subjects as they had planned for. Then they would take their drawer and even a laptop and find a space to do their work.

Another thing in their weekly schedule was the so called workshops during eight lessons a week. The children are then in groups from two composite classes or four grades. I saw 1st-4th grade in three different groups, one about a work with digital camera making an animated film with clay figures, one about reading and writing with different stations of this and one about health and motion. The older groups were working on a theme about the disco period and one that I saw was the theatre group where Siggi was.

The culture of this school was also marked by having newcomers in all classes as the number of children was increasing and at this time they were over hundred.

Some unusual situations were also affecting my days of visit. One day in earlier period was a so called free day in children’s schedule of 5th-6th grade. Then the children could design the schedule of the day as some kind of reward that had been promised. I saw them in both sports lesson and a domestic lesson of their choice. In the latter period of visit Siggi is a lot outside the class taking a test or preparing for a one. He then sat with the assistant in one end of a passage sheltered from the others.

2. Selma’s thinking and ideology

The interview with Selma took place in her special education room for about 50 minutes. She is a social educator and a special teacher and is leading the work around children with impairment in this school. She is also evaluating children in all classes as there are newcomers at all ages coming from different schools.

a. Different educational material

Selma told me early in the interview that here they work with focus on each individual and she is the one consulting for educational material for each of them:

.. here we have been able to think from the individual child and that is no big deal (.) now I am doing a lot of consulting regarding educational material for the children and I do these (3.0) all the tests or evaluations needed and from there I can see what material suits the children in co-operation with the class teacher and then (2.0) they get material that suits their ability.. (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Even when there are behavioural problems or difficulties then the educational material is looked into and they try to find ways to make the learning enjoyable for the child. Parents are involved in this:

..we try to find children’s strong sides and if there are problems or weaknesses we find methods that they like (.) because first and foremost we know (.) that no one makes a progress if (3.0) he or she is bored (.) all hidden behaviour and problems in this school are looked into by what educational material the child has (2.0) and sometimes we
change it and always in co-operation with the parents (.) they know that not everybody
has the same material.. we don`t have any fifth grade educational material..
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She also told me she liked working this way and enjoyed it. Earlier she once worked
in another school where everybody was working in the same book and usually there
was someone that was bored because it was too easy or too difficult. The children
themselves respond with some protests when they are new in school and she said this
was an attitude they bring with them from other schools but after they see that
everybody has different material this is no problem for them.

b. Importance of thriving children

Selma said that children worked better when they liked what they were doing and
that parents were happy about this. She also emphasised the importance of teachers´
attitude:

..they do much rather work on their tasks (1.0) if they are doing both what they like and
also if they manage the task (1.0) and that adequately challenges them.. usually the
parents are very happy [yes] and they say (2.0) and most of them talk from experience
(1.0) that the children really thrive here and we made a lot of emphasis on that and still
do (2.0) that the staffs attitude is what controls the children and believe that the school
is there for the children... (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She further told me that the children are allowed to work in different areas of the
building and there is minimal teaching from the board:

.. we have of course so little space we need to make use of it (.) and they just ask if they
can work in the hall or in the passage and if you trust the child (1.0) you allow it and
then you just go and follow up (.) the teaching is minimal from the board [yes] (2.0) but
it happens (2.0) if you need to have an input...
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

And she added that she usually worked in class if she was working with a certain
child or children not in her special education room.

3. Klara´s ideology and life in class

Klara is a pre-school teacher to start with but later took further education to become a
compulsory school teacher. The interview with her was in the special education room
and it took about 90 minutes. She had a lot to talk about and sometimes lowered her
voice or even talked while breathing in. She has only worked there for a short time.

a. Controversial thinking about the school

Klara talked about the school in different ways that is she both liked to teach there
and also had doubts about this kind of organisation. She said there was good
atmosphere in the building and the staff´s trying to work together:

..the housing is of course just temporary but I think the children feel the close quarters ..
also just the schoolyard there are lack of some equipments ... and of course everything
is rather new and staff is trying to find themselves in the work together ..beside all that
then there is a good working atmosphere in the building but (3.0) there are both pros
and cons (.) I just (.) I don’t know (.) I don’t know I haven’t made up my mind about the
school yet after so short time.. (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)
As seen above she said couple of times that she did not know what she thought about this school or what was gained with this kind of organisation. She silenced couple of times for about 5 seconds and then praised the workshops as being of value for both teachers and children, a vocational part of the work in school:

..think they generate a lot, I think this vocational work delivers a lot you know then each teacher has his/her workshop and shares from what he/she is good at doing you know and it is a big diversity of workshops. (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Then she also valued the traditional system the A-form that she is more used to and said it was up to the teacher of how to plan the work:

.. it is up to the teacher for how open or closed the structure of the teaching is (.) how lessons are you can take one page and work as vocationally or initiate discussions with the children or do the work as groups (.) you don’t have to go by the book (.) there are different ways to work in traditional classes. (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She really hadn’t made up her mind about the school she said but also added that it was fine to teach here but a different pressure. And then she said she did not like the noise or the hats:

...I find that the working atmosphere often is little and get tired because I have little tolerance for noise myself (1.0) dislike noise ... miss some of the quiet or calmness ... this here I am so tired of the hats sorry (2.0) I am (2.0) when I (6.0) [sighed] I think hats are to wear outside.. (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Another teacher did talk to me during my visit about the working noise as part of the daily work situation but not as a disturbing noise.

b. Valuates the planning but difficult to have an overview

Children are allowed to work in different areas of the school and also are at different places in books or have different books. Then she finds it difficult to have an overview:

..you have to remember to have the overview of the group wherever they are in the building.. it is more difficult to have an overview of the educational demand when they are at different places/levels in subjects [mm] of course this demands more organisation and more time [yes] .. it is more difficult to teach them but then I have the chance to do that in the weekly planning that are thirty five minutes with four to five children it is a bit of a sacred time .. (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She wants them to start the day by reading and then have the overview of the group, who is at place and how they are:

.. when they are at different places you don’t know who is here today how they are feeling...I find it difficult to come here ten past eight when the noise is terrible (.) I need to start with calmness (.) start to read ... I start this on in the morning to begin the day by reading (.) but this is not quite started yet you know (1.0) not all teachers do this (.) want to have it this way but I just can’t come in and get the overview (.) you have to have the overview (.) to see who has attended school (.) who is sick... (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Selma had said they did this reading every morning but Klara says it was different how teachers did.
The overview is also connected with each child’s place regarding teaching material and how they are progressing. This is done with Selma’s assessment to begin with and also through planning lessons. Klara would like to have more time with individual child like in the planning, she uses that time to evaluate and see where the children are:

“.I like to evaluate when they are (.) you know (.) you write down the planning (.) you know (.) you see how far they have got and this (.) I like that very much but I find it difficult to have an overview of this all [yes] it is more difficult here than in the old system...”

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

I did see a planning lesson during my visit and here it is a group with Selma.

Now Selma gets another group as all children change places. This is a girl group and some girls have learning difficulties. I see when one of them is planning with Selma and they are discussing if letters are big enough in her reading book because she needs that for her sight and this seems a natural discussion. Then Selma asks if she knows the gender of nouns and starts to practice this with her and the other girls. This becomes a lesson very near the students. They are about 5-6 in each group.

Field notes first visit.

The planning book was supposed to be in the schoolbag for parents to follow up but Klara said it rarely was taken home.

c. To handle the freedom

When the children work at different places they are very independent going around doing their work as I saw. They have a certain freedom regarding hats, chewing gum and iPods or where they sit. Klara said they handled this differently:

“.this freedom here it is different how they handle that (.) can go out in the hall or stay in the room a bit of in and out some need it (.) to function others don’t (3.0) this is like (2.0) more open than you are used to...”

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

But she decides who can go and work in the hall:

“.some have to have more calmer situation than others (3.0) [yes] and of course I teach them and they are ambitious and I can trust them to go and sit there and some have iPod in their ears and that helps them study and that is great (1.0) it is a bit of difference..”

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

d. Children with difficulties and social skills

Klara talked about how the children are new in all age groups and some had been in many schools and then had different education before. She emphasised the importance of teaching them social skills and to work together:

“.but like here (.) you need to teach them to work together (.) it really should be a separate subject and it takes time.. here they are trying to make them work more as groups and help each other.. because I think the social factor is just as important as their study I mean (.) if the social communication is good it is more likely they get help from each other .. much of those social skills are more important than assessment..”

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Klara had opinions regarding boys in older classes that showed bad language and difficult behaviour as I could see during my visit. This took some part of the
interview and she repeated several times “what about the others” and stressed out the pressure this has on the work. Klara both lowered her voice, breathed in as she talked and sighed when talking about this:

..this group has been very difficult you know (.) some individuals that have been in many schools and have problems with joining in
GM: yes I heard this was the most difficult group
Klara: but what about the others (.) you know (.) I ask myself often (.) what about the others I have a question mark for that...well (2.0) there are some developments going on it takes a long time but [sighed] (2.0) sometimes I become [breaths in as she talks and lowered the voice] like I would just throw them out .. so it is a lot of stress

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She further talked about how this was time consuming when the teacher should be teaching and how this is a problem in today´s society, that children use bad language and show difficult behaviour. She thought there needed to be more quotas of teachers to be able to solve this situation for example to take a child out of class when he or she can´t deal with being in the group. And also to be better able to meet the needs of each child so they will thrive in school.

e. Gives up for Siggi´s behaviour

Klara started by telling me that she did not agree with what Selma would say about Siggi and that she did not know so much about him. I could feel like she was a bit agitated when she talked about him and said she did not know what to do:

...he told me to shut up in every other word you know and I think he should not get away with it (1.0) what shall I do I can’t respond to that on the second we need to find a coordinated way about this we can’t give up we have to let him go by some ground rules like everybody else [mm] and I feel like we don’t have that so I have just been indifferent about him I’m going to spend my energy to the other twenty eight that are waiting not just him I can’t deal with this with him.....

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

She referred to an incidence when Siggi had started to do his usual task and she stopped him because the schedule was changed during the free day. And right away she made a remark about the others and did so about ten times while we talked about Siggi. I witnessed this at place how Siggi could be rude in his utterance and respond negatively. She knows little about him and just let’s him be:

GM: how do you deal with this?
Klara: well half or whole day long I just let him be because he needs to have an assistant with him (1.0) he hasn’t got that it’s just limited he has (3.0) so this has been a bit about that he shall thrive in school which is good but he has not been demanded to go by the rules in school (4.0)
GM: how do you feel about that?
Klara: I don’t like it I don’t agree with it (3.0) but I have decided to just spend more energy to the others you know
GM: you just put him aside
Klara: yes totally I can’t attend to him he needs an assistant to be with him and he doesn’t always have that he can sometimes follow the others or I don’t know sometimes I just know nothing about him (2.0)
GM: you are his teacher?
Klara: yes I know nearly nothing about him because he doesn’t plan with me he plans with Selma

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)
Klara added that she thinks that Siggi should be part of the class when the class list is read in the morning and felt he had too much priority above others and said he needed a firm frame.

This was explained by Selma that Siggi in a way got some special service and that he also was with the group like in arts and workshops and some children are with him in extra domestic lessons.:

Selma: .. he gets special service here in a way (1.0) [yes] but he also is with the group (2.0) Siggi had for example in his older school (3.0) there were lot of problems (.) everything was a mess a total disaster (2.0) [yes] though he sometimes talk like it was fun then it probable were some good days... he has an impairment in the autism spectrum with delayed language development (1.0) he can’t read (2.0) though he has developed a lot regarding literacy (2.0) but he is good in math and spatial intelligence

GM: how do you work with his reading?
Selma: he reads every day
GM: with you or?
Selma: no with the assistant (1.0) twice a week with me and then we also he has been working in the computer (.) he likes that ... and he has been able to enjoy himself in subjects where he is strong (.) in arts and gets extra lessons in domestic classes (2.0) he has decided he is going to be a baker or a chef

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Selma also said that when children have impairments the threshold of tolerance for them is higher than for others.

4. Siggi’s story

This was the first interview I had with a disabled child since I did not interview Per in Sweden and Brian’s interview was in June. The interview with Siggi took place in the latter period of visits and Stella was with us during the interview. Since the earlier period of visits Siggi had been diagnosed as having typical autistic disorder.

As I had witnessed during my visits how he responded aggressively when his usual routine changed I decided to prepare him for the interview by communicating with him in the hall where he was working with the assistant.

I went to see what Siggi and his assistant were doing. They were looking in chapters in a book about the planets, the assistant said it will be a test about this soon so they were preparing. I mentioned to Siggi that we might talk together after this lesson. He said he was going to have an English test and I added that maybe we would have time after that.

Field notes last visit second period.

Selma also told me he would take the English test and also do the planning with her. This meant we had some limits around the time for the interview.

During the interview Siggi got agitated and that changed after Stella gave him something to eat. She said he was not having a good day.

a. Complications regarding communication

Very early in the interview it is visible in Siggi’s expression how his understanding of time can be misunderstood or cause difficulties in communication with others. His
use of words can be seen here where he talks about that he was born in England and lived there for a moment and visits his father who lives in Scotland for 10 days or 2-3 weeks:

Siggi: my father lives in there Scotland
GM: he lives in Scotland [yes] have you been there
Siggi: I have been there with him every Christmas [mhm] not last Christmas
GM: not last year
Siggi: yes then I would go and be with him about 10 days (.) I am going to be with him couple of weeks [mm] two three
GM: but you have always lived in Iceland
Siggi: no [nono] (4.0) I am born in England and went back to Iceland and then I went back to England [yes] and lived there for a moment

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

At another place very late in the interview he had taken up his phone to look at the calendar and argued with Selma about if it was long or short time since he got this phone:

Selma: he just got this phone
GM: I see
Siggi: no it is some long time ago
Selma: which month?
Siggi: yes I got it then whe when my cousins had confirmation
Selma: yes it is a month ago (.) that is short time

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Another thing that had affect on our talk was about how he did not remember things or events and responded by arguing against the person as I experienced when I brought up that I had been there two months before:

Siggi: I don’t remember no idea
GM: no it is a while ago
Siggi: never remember when you came here
GM: no no ok I understand
Siggi: maybe you were in a different school
GM: no I was here with your class for some days
Siggi: I don’t remember at all

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

He argues for his understanding and this caused some problems when I mentioned events or lessons I had been in during earlier period of visits.

In some incidences during the interview when I ask the question *how* something is Siggi delays his answer for 5-7 seconds or changes the subject:

GM: but how do you like working with planning
Siggi: (6.0)
GM: did you also do that in your other school
Siggi: where planning
GM: Yes
Siggi: no we just learned
GM: mm (5.0) how do you like planning
Siggi: (7.0) it was some classrooms it was a computer classroom

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

And he starts talking about different classrooms in his earlier school.
Sometimes it was helpful that Selma reframed or asked Siggi again when he did not answer my question.

GM: did you act or play in the annual feast [no] no
Selma: what did you do before the annual feast Siggi
Siggi: what
Selma: what did you do before the annual feast
Siggi: (3.0) did carpeting
GM: yes (4.0) and how was it then
Siggi: (5.0) not much fun (4.0) it was just until 8pm (.) only thing I got to eat was there
cheese bar and one juice and slice of pizza

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Here he describes the annual feast by how little he got to eat and for how long it lasted.

b. To cope with changes

Above in the interview with Klara it was visible how Siggi responded when routine changed. I also noticed when the textile craft teacher was not at place Siggi did not carry on the work from the point she had told him earlier to stop in his sewing task but instead he lay on the sofa in the hall:

GM: what is most fun in school
Siggi: domestic crafts and arts
GM: mm what do you like in arts
Siggi: sewing and drawing
GM: wasn’t there sewing yesterday
Siggi: yes
GM: and what did you do then
Siggi: nothing
GM: ok
Siggi: my teacher wasn’t there
GM: yes (5.0) I saw you were lying in the sofa just resting
Siggi: ye I it she forgot to tell me what to do next
GM: and no-one else could tell you that
Siggi: nohh she told me to stop at one place and I am there so now I am stopped

(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

He was inactive in this lesson because the teacher was not at place and he did not accept instructions from anybody else.

c. Likes drawing and textile craft lessons

As seen above when I asked him about his favourite subjects he said it was art and textile craft lesson and I also got to know that he loves domestic lessons. He even initiated information about himself by asking me about one of his drawings and had a lot to say about that picture:

Siggi: do you know who drew the picture on the door [no] with the bull and everything
GM: is it on the head masters door [yes] did you draw that one too [yes] ok I have to look at it later
Selma: do you remember what this kind of symbol is called
Siggi: (3.0) ee country symbol someth (.) Iceland symbol or symbol Iceland
GM: yes you mean the Icelandic Coat of Arms with the guardian spirits
Siggi: yes the bull (.) the giant (.) the bird and the dragon
GM: yes (4.0) great I need to look at this
Siggi: it is the story of all the men there (.) there vikings found I don’t remember two
found it (3.0) which they the bird so big the wings between the mountains
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

d. Attitudes toward school

Right in the beginning of the interview he said this school was fun but soon he starts
to talk about what he doesn’t like about it:

Siggi: this is my third school
GM: yes how do you like to be
Siggi: this one is much fun
GM: mm how
Siggi: because (2.0) the only problem is (.) because of all the stupid boys in this school
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

He changed from talking about what he liked to what he dislikes in his school and
even said that his school sucked. He used this word about a lot he didn’t like but
doesn’t say what it is that sucks. He more often starts to talk about his earlier school
and what he liked there and compares these schools by the food he got there, the
number of children and the housing:

GM: how is this school different than the other schools you have been in
Siggi: this one is small and [yes] (.) sucks and the other one big and much better
GM: mhm (5.0) many children there
Siggi: in the other school there were no 5th and 6th grade together (.) it was just 5th grade
alone and 6th grade alone (.) third second fourth
GM: you like that better
Siggi: yes
GM: how
Siggi: (7.0) it was much better food there [mm] at Christmas you get ice cream with the
dinner
GM: but why is it better to have the classes separate
Siggi: what
GM: why is it better to have the classes separate
Siggi: because it is no fun to be with fifth and sixth grade
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Through the interview he continued to talk about his earlier school and this made
Selma comment more and they even had some arguments between themselves:

Selma: but Siggi now there is a long time since you talked about your earlier school
Siggi: no
Selma: yes with me at least (3.0) would you like to go back there
Siggi: yes now there the 6th grade is in the upper grades building
Selma: would you like that
Siggi: yes the teenagers are now in the same place (.) I was first in the small building (.)
it is small house they built a new house for more classes
Selma: but Siggi the school is more than just the housing and food (.) would you be able
to have all the domestic lessons in the earlier school
Siggi: I was
Selma: did you have domestic lessons there
Siggi: yes
GM: who is your teacher here in domestic lessons
(translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)
Here it is also visible how an interview enflods when you have an assisting person and this can lead into an unexpected direction and also the interviewer needs to find a way into the communication again.

**e. Having friends and interact with others**

I had seen Siggi play with some boys outside during one break and asked him early in the interview about this:

- **GM:** I saw you outside playing basket ball with some boys (...) who were they
- **Siggi:** aaju [names these boys]
- **GM:** mm (4.0) did you like this I saw you were good in basketball
- **Siggi:** I am no good in basket [lowered his head]
- **GM:** you did score didn’t you
- **Siggi:** yes I had fun (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Some later I asked him about his best friends he right away gets agitated and says he doesn’t have any best friend. And when I asked if he had friends at home he was silence and knocked on the table:

- **GM:** but whom are your best friends in school
- **Siggi:** nobody [makes noise by knocking on the table with sth]
- **GM:** nobody (4.0) but what about the boys you are playing with at breaks
- **Siggi:** they are my friends [yes] I really was supposed to play with them (...) I just play with them in school
- **GM:** I see (3.0) do you have friends at home instead (3.0) maybe
- **Siggi:** where
- **GM:** do you have friends at home instead maybe
- **Siggi:** (14.0) [knocks on the table] (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

Here Selma made a comment to him that he interrupted the recording of the interview and asked if he had slept well last night. Little later he is even more agitated. Selma asked if he had got any breakfast and offered him something. She went out to get him some crackers and he gets calmer after eating

Later at the end of the interview I asked if he worked on tasks with others he said he never was with them:

- **GM:** I just want to ask you one more question (...) do you work on tasks with the other children
- **Siggi:** no
- **GM:** you do that little
- **Siggi:** I am really never with the children
- **Selma:** that is not true Siggi
- **Siggi:** wha
- **Selma:** that you are never with the children
- **Siggi:** I am almost never in the classroom (3.0)
- **Selma:** then you are in the computers in front of the classroom
- **Siggi:** no (translation Guðný María Hreiðarsdóttir)

They argued a little about this and Selma explained that he only comes to her once a week for the planning and that situation was different the last days and he always was with the group but then Siggi emphasized that he was not with the group. And here at a critical moment Klara comes in the room to pick up the English test he did before the interview. And after that he starts to do the planning with Selma.
5. Discussion

Here I will now sum up the main findings about Siggi and his school and class and compare it with the models of disability and frames of inclusive education regarding structural, cultural and individual issues. Several things were new to me in this school.

The first thing that caught my attention was the housing and the space around it with big area of gross gravel and just few swings and a basket. Of course this was a temporary situation and I know that later there was more playground equipment though at this time it limited possibilities for play at least from what usually is a standard in school playgrounds in Reykjavik. Inside the housing it was interesting to see how every corner was used for different tasks, a multiple ways of using the space in all areas of the building. In the hallways and passages between areas were many ideas and tasks to do both like creative and inviting. Also it seemed very easy to change scenes in the big hall where moveable tables were put up in planning and in workshops. One could say that space was one factor of the culture in the school as well as the question of what is a classroom since children were using all areas of the housing. Like Klara said this was nothing like “one classroom with a closed door, one teacher and twenty something children” and emphasised the difference, how the more traditional way was turned-up. Here it was rather like a flow between places and between grades.

In the culture of this school children could wear hats, use chewing gum or listen to an iPod and could stand up to get a glass of water in the hall or even choose where they sat when working. This was like their rights or freedom and gave the children more value and more say over their situation in contrast with where children have no say of own situation or needs. What was most new to me was to see the children independently go about in the class or hallway and do their work like this was an autonomic procedure and they looked like active agents responsible for their own study. According to Qvarsell (2003) there is an educational dimension in every culture as signs and challenges. The signs the children get here are that they are in control of their conditions and study and the challenge is to take that responsibility. This also can be valued as the personalised learning as is directed in the school policy in Reykjavik and also in the National Curriculum Guide (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti). What also affected the culture was the growing number of children as there were newcomers in all age groups every year or term. Both Selma and Klara talked about how that affected the life in school in different ways for example regarding behaviour and it would take some time to adjust the groups.

In this school as well as in both the Swedish and the Scottish school classes are composite classes and here were even more grades working together like in the workshops. The planning book was used here like in the Swedish school for the weekly planning and also as a link for parents to follow up the studies. Still Selma and Klara had different remarks about the planning book where Selma talked about it as this link but Klara meant this failed as it was usually not in children’s schoolbag but kept in school.
a. What makes up for an inclusive/exclusive class/school?

What is an inclusive/exclusive class in this Icelandic school?

The work in this school was structured differently than I had seen before. The main parts of the weekly schedule was the planning and the workshops, where planning seems to be the key for teachers to get to know each child, a valuable time like Klara talked about and she even wanted to have more time.

The definition of a class and classroom is challenged here where you use the space in and out of rooms. How do you then belong to a class? Does this encourage for interaction between the children or limit possibilities to connect? Klara did talk about that she wanted to encourage the children to help each other and work together when they worked individually like in math. I saw Siggi’s composite class of 5th and 6th grade with the composite class of 3rd and 4th during planning with the teachers. The whole of these four grades were divided into groups of 5-6 children with which the three responsible teachers plan. Children that are not planning are then doing different independent tasks. Siggi is not with them during this time as he plans with Selma. And in the lessons where they work on planned work they seemed to do this very independently and kind of owned their time and space. Davis and Watson (2001) belief that all children should be treated as component social actors who can be included in every day process of schools and that seems to be the case here. Children actively decide every week with their teacher the work they will do and have the freedom to use hats or gums or iPods, can move about and are used to a working noise as they can talk to each other. This also allows them to be on their personal pace in their study and then individual issues are regarded.

Where are then their interactions? They have possibility to work with others in the workshops as I saw Siggi do in the theatre group. His composite class was then with the older class of 7th and 8th grade and the whole of them divided in 3-4 groups. The workshops are vocational work often linked with themes or annual traditions. In a way this has similarities with the themes work in the Swedish school that was on whole school level. Selma talked about how the workshop had made a big difference for Siggi, he enjoyed the work and participated as I saw in the theatre group. He sat with the group and did join in at his own pace. The teacher told me later that he did not put a pressure on the children but had some rules to follow and a welcome inviting atmosphere as I could feel. Klara said that the workshops were valuable for both teachers and children and teachers then can “share from what they are good at doing” since they also are leading workshops built on their interest and competence. This can be viewed as human capital regarding the teacher resources. Siggi is participating here and like Allan (2003) says inclusive education is about maximizing participation and removing barriers to that participation.

In the culture of this school children learn that everybody can have different educational material, it is the norm. In the interview with Selma she emphasised the importance of thriving children and they are more likely to thrive when they have interest for and manage the tasks they are doing that also adequately challenges them. For that the educational material has to fit the child and suit his or hers ability. This is in coherence with Snæfríður Þóra Egilsson (2005) model about how there has to be a match between the child and of a particular task in a particular setting for participation to occur. Here individual needs are met through chose of educational material and methods of working. This is regarded as an important part of children’s
achievement in school, their behaviour and wellbeing and is inclusive education where participation is enhanced.

These are factors contributing to inclusive education as structural and individual issues are addressed (Davis & Watson 2001). It was though interesting to find that Klara the class teacher was not approved towards the policy and structure in the school at this time. The structure around Siggi does also point to the opposite direction of inclusive education. He was often working away from the class and that is a structural hindrance in his environment that creates a barrier for participation (Askheim 2003).

b. What is Siggi´s experience of this class?
When analysing the interview with Siggi many considerations came up and it was very visible how communication is an important individual issue regarding a disabled child similar to Brian´s case in Scotland. What also affected the situation was that Selma was present and sometimes it helped but also left more questions.

First to mention regarding Siggi´s communication is how he understood time differently and assumed it a long time what Selma felt was a short time. He did not remember me from earlier visit and suggested I had visited another school. He had difficulties regarding describing things or talking about what he liked or disliked when I asked him about his school or earlier school. Then he answered often how the food was or the classrooms. He also like Brian in Scotland had delayed answer when I asked with the pronoun how. Sometimes Selma responded or interfered and it helped like when he became calmer after have had something to eat. He often responded in like an aggressive manner or a defensive one and it was easy to get into an argument with him as Selma did when they talked about time and also at the end of the interview when the question was up if he worked with the other children. How do I then evaluate what he says if it is a response to her? What does he really mean? And is he talking about food because he is hungry or is it because food is of his interest and he masters language and communication better in that area? Arts and drawing are also his interests and he initiated information about himself when we talked about that. All of these are important results as this information can guide and shed a light on what can happen during interviews with disabled children. It would have been interesting to interview Siggi repeatedly as to make his voice clearer and stronger.

Though some ambivalent conclusions about the data will be there Siggi did say that he didn´t like to have the grades together or at least some boys in 6th grade. He talked about the housing in his older school about different subjects and rooms and I wondered if the flow between places and classes was more complicated for him here than in his older school. Or were these just memories from his older school that he remembered? These are his individual issues, how he communicates and how he manages himself in the structure of the school and class. Selma showed disbelief that he really would like better the older school and they got into an argument. My assumptions here are around how important it is to listen to his voice, what he felt about his situation and if there was a need and a possibility to improve or adjust it. Like Davis and Watson (2001) say above all children should be treated as a component social actor to be included in every day process of school but Selma does not believe him or his discontent.
Siggi’s individual issues were met when there was weekly a special domestic lesson designed for him and he invited some other of the class to participate there with him. He also did enjoy arts and the workshop as I did see and also the textile lessons though he was inactive during the one I was part of. This was because the textile teacher was not at place and he did not take instructions from someone else. The school staff seemed to be unable to respond to his needs here regarding his communication skills and/or ability to deal with changes. Here his individual issues are not met and this was a hindrance for his participation and there was not a match between Siggi and this particular task in this setting (Snæfríður Dóra Egilsson 2005). He did respond with bad language when Klara stopped him from doing the usual work when the schedule had changes into a free day. Neither she nor Selma talked about this as one of issues regarding his impairment that needed to be addressed though Selma said that teachers had more tolerance toward diagnosed children. Booth and Ainscow (2002) say that inclusive education is an unending process of increasing learning and participation and reducing exclusionary pressure that come from difficulties in relationships. The pressure here in teachers’ relationship with Siggi disables him and creates a barrier for his participation (Allan 2003).

Siggi said he had no friends and got very agitated when we talked about this. He answered like he was supposed to play with the boys he joined in basket during the break and therefore was with them. I had seen one boy play with him in a sports lesson and put his arms around him and some did play cards or joined in when he was playing with his assistant. He did not live in the area of the school and that can affect possibilities for friend connections as well as his communication skills. He said he almost never was with the class and got very argumentative toward Selma when she protested and said he was. This was his experience and during my visit when the interview took place he was often with the assistant in a sheltered area for extra work and preparing for tests, he was more separated from the class than in the class. Here one also can question the possibilities for the belonging to a class when this structure to go out of the group to work alone with an assistant is prevailing daily situation. This surely was hindering his participation and interaction with others. For inclusion to happen individual, structural and cultural issues need to be addressed (Davis & Watson 2001) and here the structure of school as Siggi experienced it and his individual issues above are not addressed and therefore this hinders inclusive education.

c. How do Klara and Selma see the class situation? What are their attitudes and thoughts about inclusive education?

The teacher thinking is important according to Selma as she said their attitude and manner toward the children is what controls them. And she meant staff’s thinking was more tolerant regarding diagnosed children, for their behaviour or behaviour problems. Her thinking was a lot about to meet the needs of each child, to evaluate child’s strong sides and look into what educational material the child has when there are for example behaviour problems. It is obvious here that her understanding is that problems arise from child’s environment not just the child itself like from the medical model. Her thinking is here from the social model of disability (Askheim 2003; Tøssebro 2004).

Klara’s thinking is more controversial regarding the school. She thinks some of the methods used in this school also can be used in the more traditional class, it is up to
the teacher to design the lessons or how open or closed the structure of teaching is. When Grétar Marínósson et al (2007) talked about the teacher as a key player this was one aspect of that, to have the knowledge of different ways of working. What Klara finds difficult in the structure of this school is to have the overview, both regarding to follow up each child’s education and to know where everybody is and how they are doing. She felt this was more difficult here than in the old system. This is a different structure and Klara seemed to have difficulties to cope with it. She also had just worked there for a short while.

Klara showed an understanding regarding child’s needs when she said that some needed to work in calmer situation or can’t be trusted to sit in the hallway while others need to move to function. These were individual issues that she marked to be of importance. She also believes that the social factor is as important as the other subjects and this was when she talked about boys using bad language and said children needed to have good social communication. This is both an issue of the school culture and an individual issue that she is addressing and therefore her thinking here is in direction of inclusive education. Communication is a vital part of participation as well as an understanding for diverse ways to communicate. Klara was not happy with the situation regarding these boys and felt this was a lot to deal with. She did not have tolerance for these individual issues or for Siggi’s behaviour and did not know what to do. Since she knows nothing about him and is indifference about it, this is a hindrance for his participation. She calls though for co-operative responses and ground rules in Siggi’s case but it is Selma that has all the information and plans with Siggi. Another aspect of Grétar Marínósson et al (2007) view of the teacher as a key player is that he or she has the knowledge of each child but Klara is lacking information about Siggi and therefore his participation is hindered. His individual issues are not valued and Klara also said there needed to be more staff quota in class, he needed to have assistant through whole day. Her thinking is more in line with the medical model of understanding where the specialist staff had the responsibility for disabled children. Selma had the responsibility for Siggi and that is not inclusive education according to Emanuelsson et al (2005).
G. Conclusion

Here I want to draw together the results from the findings of the research. I have looked into the life of one class in one school in each of the countries and want to notify that by no means are these classes symbols for the rest of schools in the country. But rather they are one example of the “what is” and “how” inclusive education is conducted by the understandings of decisive adults in these schools and municipalities. The understanding of inclusive education is vital here, how you interpret and implement ideas thereof. Though I have focused on one disabled child in each case I want to remark as Both & Ainscow (2002), Riddle (Scottish Executive 1999) and Emanuelsson et al (2005) say that inclusive education is not just about disabled children or special education. My intention was rather to see examples where the teacher was challenged to work with questions of inclusion and to see and hear what the child’s experience was in the class. The results do indicate differences regarding by whom the school is understood as inclusive and what that means. Also how teachers ideology needs to be ideology of inclusive education if this is the road to travel and the aim in school policy (Ólafur Páll Jónsson 2009).

To better understand the picture made up with the models of disability and the understanding of inclusive education I use the Matrix for each case. There the focus is visible at each level and main thinking. This could be viewed as simplification of the complexity that an inclusive education is and the life of a child in class. Still I believe this helps us to see where we are and how we want to continue. What is the next step?

1. Inclusive education in the Scottish school

The culture of this class and school is characterised by a welcoming and positive atmosphere, by the resources they have as support for disabled children and they all belong to the classroom. More controversial results indicate that the resources were organised to individually meet their ability level in separate groups in the class which different teachers had responsibility for. This is the individualised approach as supporting or changing the child (Riddle 2006) or a focus as in the medical model. The overall work in class, structure of teaching was mostly individual work with just few opportunities for interaction that even not always were used. This structure hindered communication and interaction that caused a lack of shared experience. The children had often the role of a passive learner.

This structure causes that Brian had few to communicate with or create a reference with. There was a lack of understanding for his individual issues regarding his communication skills or knowledge about him like his favourite subjects. Brian experiences a lot that he can’t deal with tasks, he is disabled by hindrances in the environment giving him the role and status as a disabled boy.

The ideology and thinking of the teachers was mostly with the focus of the medical model addressing segregated solutions with focus on the impairment (Tøssebro 2003).
This inclusive school as understood by school authorities was not at all inclusive as the structure rather created barriers for participation than removed them (Allan 2003) and the structure here even affects the development toward inclusive education (Emanuelsson et al. 2005). According to the guidance in the Index for inclusion from Booth & Ainscow (2002) inclusion is about change and it never can be fully reached but just inspired in the direction of minimising barriers in education. One can conclude here that school authorities’ understanding of inclusive education is mainly about the rights disabled children have for education in a mainstream school, or the placement of these children and the resources that follow. The focus is on child’s impairment which is solved by specialists and resulted in segregated education.

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<th>MODELS</th>
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2. Inclusive education in the Swedish school

The culture in this Swedish country school is marked by the atmosphere where parents are engaged for their school and teachers co-operate regarding pedagogical issues and social skills like the heart-growth. Concerns are for the children that do not get to their goals to reach and for the whole group addressing the ability span as to include all of the children and by this maximising participation (Allan 2003).
Per’s experience was mostly within the group with access and possibilities for participation like in the understanding of the social model. Though his way of communicating and relating to others both could be as a provocation and also for example as the role of a helper he was less separated from the group than earlier. The back-up plan regarding his daily form was not as much needed as before as there more often was a match between the demands, his needs and the setting resulting in increased participation (Snæfríður Þóra Egilsson 2005).

This indicates that the teachers’ thinking is innovating and creative in finding solutions in the practice of daily operation and organisation that increased participation. This is an example of which the teachers thinking and ideology is in line with the ideology of inclusive education (Grétar Marinósson et al 2007; Ólafur Páll Jónsson 2009).

The Swedish school policy, laws and regulation is interestingly remarked by the main emphasis on a school for all meaning access to equivalent education for all children in the compulsory school. Children with impairments often get that education within the compulsory special school or compulsory special needs school or in special groups in the compulsory comprehensive school. No mention is of inclusive education as an aim in the Education Act from 2010 (SFS 2010:800) and
the aims to meet the needs of each child and give the support needed so children can benefit from their education seems rather to be practised in segregated school forms or groups.

3. Inclusive education in the Icelandic school

In this school inclusive education is about how the structure enables children to be active and independent in individual work as well as working together with different grades and on multiple vocational tasks in the workshops. Children are on their own personal pace in their study with emphasis on adequate challenging tasks and educational material and this means that their individual issues are regarded. This is according to Snæfríður Þóra Egilsson (2005) needed for participation to occur, the match between the task, the child and the setting. The school is here innovating and creative in the way they work and how teachers work in teams.

Picture 3 Icelandic case

| MATRIX of how the operation and understandings of the models of disability at different levels result in an inclusive or segregated education. |
|---|---|---|
| MODELS | Social model Focus on: | Medical model Focus on: |
| **LEVELS** | | |
| Child | Access and possibilities for participation. | Affect of impairment. |
| **Teacher** | Creating opportunities for participation and gives support for this. Takes responsibility in co-op. with others. | Impairment separates and causes hindrance for participation. Responsibility in hands of others. |
| **Society/School system** | All-inclusive understanding regarding laws, organisations and practice. **School policy Iceland** | Segregated solutions in the understanding of disability regarding laws, organisations and practice. |
| **Main thinking** | Creative, innovating, co-operative. **Icelandic school** | Impairment as individual problem solved by specialists. **Klara** |

Though Siggi did participate in some areas of the work in school like the workshops his individual needs were not met regarding communication skills and ability to deal with changes. This was a hindrance and created barrier for his participation as well as the pressure in Klara’s relationship with him (Allan 2003; Booth & Ainscow 2002).
He often was working in separate location away from the group which limited possibilities for interaction and is a structural hindrance in his environment (Askheiem 2003).

The teachers thinking are different and controversial. Selma´s thinking is more stemming from the social model of disability as to create opportunities for participation regarding educational material and thriving children. She though took responsibility for Siggí´s education at large and Klara didn´t and that is more in the direction of the medical model of disability and hindered his participation. Klara´s thinking both emphasised the importance of good social communication amongst the children creating a better atmosphere and increasing social skills. And she also was indifferent regarding Siggí and felt his presence demanded others responsibility and that hindered his participation. According to Grétar Marinósson et al (2007) it is the teacher that is the key player with knowledge of each child, subject area and working methods and the teachers ideology and skills in initiating learning activities determines disabled child´s participation.

The school policy in Iceland is in the direction of inclusive education as stated in the Compulsory School Act and the National Curriculum guide (Mennta- og meningarmálaráðuneytið) with directions for all children to be educated in mainstream classes given the support needed.

4. Final words

Inclusive schools can be something else than inclusive that is exclusive, it matters who says they are inclusive. The authorities in Dundee evaluated the Scottish school as an inclusive school but the result of this research says it is not. When the specialist regime has the responsibility for disabled children’s education and not the class teacher it is segregating the child from the class mates with focus only on his or hers impairment. This is a view from the categorical perspective and this kind of structure affects the development of inclusive education because this hinders the actualisation and motivation of the class teachers to be innovative and creative in designing the structure of lesson and class. In the Icelandic case the class teacher also was not responsible for the Siggí’s education and that affected his situation and participation in school. The structure in the Icelandic school was though very different than in the Scottish one placing the first more as inclusive.

The Scottish policy is coloured by the portion of resources put into schools like in the school I visited, a resourced mainstream school. How are then usual mainstream schools? Are they challenged with questions of inclusive education? And how usual is it to teach children in ability groups? Is that part of the general classification in the society? One could say that if the social class of the student group matters it would be necessary to have more statistical information about parents in the area or community of the school.

To get the right informants didn´t turn out the way as I expected since the Scottish class was rather exclusive then inclusive. Still all three classes gave valuable information if not about what inclusive education is then about what it is not and
what the experience of the disabled child was in the class. It was enriching to reflect one case toward the other as information in one shed a light on another.

Though all the three countries are in the North-Europe the school policy is different regarding distribution of money, how municipalities and ministries organise resources and how open different processes are for change and ongoing development. The school for all has a different meaning between the countries where both the Icelandic and the Scottish legislation and directives emphasises inclusive education. In the Swedish legislation this seems to be understood as different equivalent schools for all, segregating groups of children from the mainstream schools into special schools and special needs school. This is more in the direction of exclusive education with segregation in the school system as disabled children go to a separate school form. One can ask if the reason for finding the Swedish school out in the country could be that it was less likely to find an inclusive class where a disabled child is part of its population in the city? Emanuelsson et al. (2005) regard the Swedish school policy as being the two track policy where special education has developed as a special separated school since 1960 and is still growing. It was interesting after searching in legal and official documents to find in none of them the phrase inclusive education and this caused many questions to arise like how is influence and direction from school authorities and legislation affecting the thinking and ideology of teachers and the development toward inclusive education? An urge emerged for diving deeper into the function of educational politics and how a decision for their direction originates.

Another result from the cases shows how all three boys have difficulties regarding communication and relations with others. This was very obvious from the interviews with the boys and from the visits in all of the classes. The Swedish class teachers did prepare their lessons with regard to Per’s daily form and adjusted the teaching by if they were two or one teacher in class, if the subject was his favourite or not and if he could manage to work with another that day. All of this can be viewed as to make the setting and the task match the child’s needs resulting in participation and inclusive education. Neither class teachers nor special teachers in the Icelandic and the Scottish case did remark the boy’s communication as an individual issue that needed attention or a special regarding for to enhance their participation. Still this was a hindrance in their daily situation in school.

It seems there are several layers in the development toward inclusive education that one would think are entwined but sometimes not. Here I am first referring to the laws and country curriculum and directives that give the tone for the understanding and practice of inclusive education. Then you have the level of school authorities in each municipality of how you plan resources and school forms. Individual schools are then obliged to follow and work by school authorities decisions but are though able to make and create their own status and understanding of inclusive education as seen in the Swedish case. Or is it just because the teachers’ ideology is in the direction of inclusive education that it becomes reality?

Different questions have arisen as the results give new insights and ideas for further investigations on all three levels. It is perhaps appropriate to end with the words from Brian and his voice may even be a voice for many other disabled children as he answered what he liked most in school with just something he could do.
H. References

Note: In Iceland the alphabetical order is by a person’s first name, in all legal documents and in the national Registers Iceland, the telephone book etc. Therefore I refer to Icelandic authors by their full name.


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Appendix

**MATRIX of how the operation and understandings of the models of disability at different levels result in an inclusive or segregated education.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVELS</th>
<th>MODELS</th>
<th>Social model Focus on:</th>
<th>Medical model Focus on:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Access and possibilities for participation.</td>
<td>Affect of impairment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Creating opportunities for participation and gives support for this. Takes responsibility in co-op. with others.</td>
<td>Impairment separates and causes hindrance for participation. Responsibility in hands of others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society/School system</td>
<td>All-inclusive understanding regarding laws, organisations and practice.</td>
<td>Segregated solutions in the understanding of disability regarding laws, organisations and practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main thinking</td>
<td>Creative, innovating, co-operative.</td>
<td>Impairment as individual problem solved by specialists.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>