

**INCLUSIVE AND INDIVIDUALLY ADAPTED EDUCATION IN NORWAY
RESULTS FROM A SURVEY STUDY IN TWO MUNICIPALITIES FOCUSING THE ROLES
OF HEADTEACHERS, TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM PLANNING**

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This article aims to throw light on how the intentions behind inclusive and individually adapted education in Norwegian compulsory schools are followed up in practice with regard to central aspects of the roles of headteachers, teachers and curriculum planning. The study was carried out as a postal survey of compulsory school teachers in two municipalities. When the results are viewed as a whole, it is evident that some of the teachers have positive assessments of their own practice with regard to various aspects of inclusive and individually adapted education. However, there are a large number of teachers who have not given such positive feedback. In the majority of cases, less than half of the teachers agree with the category to a large degree in their responses. Thus, there appears to be a clear need in the role of headteachers, teachers and curriculum planning for further development in order to gain understanding for and realise the intentions of inclusive and individually adapted education.

The education policy in Norway has a very long tradition in relation to the ambition to develop a school that can foster inclusive and individually adapted education. This is based on developing *one school for all* that can facilitate the conditions of learning for all children, regardless of their background and aptitudes (Nilsen, 2010). We also belong to an international community that has focused this way of thinking, and UNESCO, among others, has for a number of years flown the flag for these ideas under banners such as *education for all* (EFA) and an *inclusive school* (UNESCO, 1994).

The Norwegian Educational Act states in paragraph 1-3 that: *Education shall be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of individual pupils*. This is the formal basis for Individually Adapted Education. This principle shall be maintained in an inclusive context. The principles of inclusive and individual adapted education are overarching and apply to all pupils. The latest Norwegian education system reforms (The Knowledge Promotion 2006) clarifies that inclusive and individually adapted education entails all pupils taking part in the academic, cultural and social community based on their abilities and aptitudes (Report no. 30 to the Storting 2003-2004). The education is primarily aimed at catering for the pupils' differences within the framework of the community. This means that the teaching must be differentiated to the diversity of the pupil community. Education in Norway is nowadays based on the understanding that everyone is of value to the community, and that all pupils have the potential to develop based on their abilities and aptitudes in a school for all.

As highlighted in the Education Act, the initial challenge is to adapt the ordinary education with a view to supporting the education of all pupils. Second, some pupils need greater support in their education through special education. Special education entails a more extensive adaptation than that normally provided in ordinary education with regard to the input of resources and expertise as well as differentiation of content. However, the implementation of centrally formulated intentions is a complex process, and is largely dependent on the teacher's interpretations of the intentions (Goodlad, 1979).

Research question

The main research question for this article is: *How do teachers characterise the situation in Norwegian compulsory schooling with regard to realising the intentions of inclusive and individually adapted*

education? This research question is limited to cover compulsory schooling in two municipalities in Norway. Furthermore the research question is broken down into three sub-questions, which cover the realisation of the intentions of inclusive and individually adapted education in the areas of the role of the head teacher, the teacher's role and curriculum planning. For each of these areas, the study is further specified into central sub-aspects. These sub-aspects are explained in more detail in the next section covering each area, and are followed up with the presentation of findings and discussion.

The empirical analysis shows the percentage of teachers who selected the most positive responses to the questions relating to the three areas and the sub-aspects therein. The objective is to establish a picture of how the situation is to gain practical success in carrying out the intentions in these areas.

Headteacher's Role in Inclusive and Individually Adapted Education

If the Knowledge Promotion is to have the desired effect, teachers and headteachers need to realise the intentions behind the reform. Headteachers have a special responsibility here to safeguard the overall perspective of the efforts to develop optimum differentiated education for all pupils, as imposed by the Education Act. Headteachers face challenges with regard to administrative management, which includes effective routines and quality assurance systems, as well as professional educational leadership that ensures continuous improvement in line with the school's objective (Shiba and Walden, 2001; Skogen, 2004). If, for example, the special education is to work well in relation to the intentions for optimum differentiated education for all, a great deal is required of the headteachers with regard to the organisation and evaluation of processes that lead to individual resolutions, as well as the planning, execution and evaluation of the special education itself.

International research has focussed on a number of conditions that must exist in order for a successful innovation process of this kind to be realised. One such condition is that all professionals who are involved have a conscious *focus on the primary user*, which in this context is the pupil (Shiba & Walden, 2001). This requires the professionals, i.e. teachers and headteachers, to have a concrete and common understanding of what they need to do as individuals and as a group (Kotter, 2002; Skogen, 2006). It is also of vital importance that those involved have a clear understanding of the perspective *continuous improvement*, and are not lured into believing that a one-off improvement will suffice (Shiba & Walden, 2001; Skogen, 2004). Additionally, the professionals need to have faith in the suitability of the new practice, in other words they must take a degree of ownership of the change. This ownership is best developed through an optimum balance of participation in discussions and decisions; something that requires continuous and active cooperation and interaction between headteachers, teachers, pupils and parents/guardians where appropriate (Skogen, 2004; Skogen, 2005). A coordinated effort is also required with complementary roles that enable a *holistic* input. Headteachers face major challenges here in relation to facilitating, managing, evaluating and improving processes that safeguard the relevant success factors. Furthermore, the realisation of a new practice will always require a high standard of *competency* at the work place, thus making it necessary to develop a learning organisation (Senge, 1990). The main characteristic of such a learning organisation is that the parties involved use their practical experiences as a basis, and process these experiences by reflecting on their own practice and through learning dialogues between cooperation partners (Evensen & Hmelo, 2000).

Teacher's Role in Inclusive and Individually Adapted Education

Teachers play a significant role in inclusive and individually adopted education to implement the intentions behind the in the Knowledge Promotion reform (2006). A central issue in inclusive and individually adapted education is to entail a higher level of correlation between the teaching and the pupil's learning abilities and aptitudes within the framework of a learning community (Vygotsky, 1978). A study of teachers' practice of inclusive and individually adapted education in Norway concludes that there are major differences between the pupils and the teachers' perceptions of the degree to which the teaching is adapted to the individual pupil's needs (Imsen, 2003). Other research shows similar tendencies with regard to the lack of coherence between what the teachers say they do and what they actually do in practice (Arnesen, 2008; Dale & Wærness, 2003). This implies a need to improve practice in relation to the intentions of inclusive and individually adapted education in Norway. The dynamic assessment and pupils' responses to the teachers' interventions (methods and organisation) are a two sided coin and are central for the pupils' learning process and outcome (Grigorenko, 2009). This paper sets out the various challenges that teachers are faced with in realising the intentions of inclusion and individually adapted education connected to three sub-aspects; dynamic testing and assessment, methods adapted to pupils' different needs and organising an inclusive learning community.

Teachers' dynamic testing and assessment are important in order to identify the individual pupil's abilities and aptitudes and which conditions foster learning. In accordance with the Knowledge Promotion reform, teachers have an obligation to monitor each pupil's learning process and development and report any need for special education. This requires the teacher to have knowledge of each pupil's abilities and potential in academic as well as social areas. Teachers' dynamic testing and assessment will form the basis for facilitating teaching that corresponds to the pupil's learning aptitudes (Vygotsky, 1978; Buli-Holmberg, 2008). Through dynamic testing and assessment, the teacher can establish a basis for selecting suitable methods meeting each pupil's learning preferences and for aptitudes to participate in a learning community. Dynamic testing and assessment are therefore key factors in the teacher's facilitation of inclusive and individual adapted education, and can help to provide an insight into individual differences and systemic factors that underpin every pupil's learning process and development.

Teaching methods adapted to pupils' different needs is described in the national curriculum as variations in the use of work tasks, curriculum content, working methods, teaching aids and in the organisation of and intensity of the teaching. This entails the teacher enabling differences and variations in their methodological approach. Finding from a study in Norway indicates that the pupils seldom experienced individual variations in the education or were offered differentiated volumes of work and tasks with varying degrees of difficulty, while the teachers themselves claimed that they adapted the teaching to each pupil's needs to a large degree (Imsen, 2003). Other research supports this, and implies that the teaching is still characterised by one-way communication and has a limited element of dialogue and differentiation (Klette, 2003; Dale & Wærness, 2003). A review of a number of studies shows that the traditional classroom solution is most common in Norwegian schools, and that the degree of flexibility and variation in methods and organisation is related to the teachers' expertise and experience (Backmann & Haug, 2006). Various and differentiated teaching methods based on the result from the dynamic testing and assessment is therefore a central issue in inclusive and individually education (Grigorenko, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978).

Teachers' organising of inclusive learning community is another sub-aspect in the Knowledge Promotion reform that highlights the teachers' obligation to work actively to foster equal psychosocial learning environment in order to give each pupil the opportunities to experience a sense of security and social belonging. Schools organise inclusive education differently. Result from a study of inclusive education in Norway indicated that the most used practice to organise the teaching were in classes of 20-30 pupils, with opportunities for pupils to work together in small groups or work individually, and special education was organised in small groups, while one-to-one teaching and extra teachers in the classroom were used to a lesser extent (Buli-Holmberg & Vogt, 2011). Another study concludes that the most common ways to organise within the classroom were that the pupils worked in pairs, on their own, and in small groups (Buli-Holmberg, Guldahl & Jensen, 2009). A central issue to realise the intentions of inclusive education is to build an inclusive learning community and to establish flexible ways of organising the teaching.

Curriculum Planning in Inclusive and Individually Adapted Education

Curriculum planning is defined for these purposes as the teachers' planning of the education based on the national curriculum, with a view to supporting pupils take part in a social, academic and cultural community and to catering for the differences in their abilities and aptitudes. Norwegian national curricula have focused on a combination of governing and freedom, by laying down common frameworks and guidelines whilst also providing the latitude for local and individual adaptation (Bjørnsrud & Nilsen, 2011). They may be regarded as providing a curriculum potential (Ben-Peretz, 1990). Current curricula specify goals for competency that are common to all pupils, but also give the schools a large degree of freedom to choose the content. The potential is dependent on the teachers' ability to interpret and execute the curriculum in a way that finds the right balance between the consideration to communality and the adaptation of the education. Such considerations in planning are essential to follow up the intentions of the formal curriculum toward an implemented curriculum (Goodlad, 1979).

Devising an individual education plan (IEP) is pivotal to special education planning and constitutes an important phase in the chain of actions aimed at securing the right to special education (Nilsen & Herlofsen, 2012). An IEP specifies the educational goals and the adaptations that the school will make to facilitate the pupil's learning. Although IEPs are relatively widespread in Norwegian schools, the planning process and the actual plans both seem to vary considerably (Nordahl & Hausstätter, 2009). It is

crucial here that teachers do not perceive the IEP work as a waste of paper (Cooper, 1996) but as a practical aid in different phases of the education. It can be used to map pupils' learning aptitudes, formulate goals for learning and devise measures. IEPs are also aimed at helping to execute and assess the special education.

The study covers three different sub-aspects of curriculum planning. First, we have studied how the teachers *emphasise both individual and communal considerations* in their planning. Such considerations may be considered as essential to ensuring differentiation and inclusion (Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1995). This is tied to nationally formulated intentions requiring teachers to contemplate and weigh up both the consideration to individual adaptations and communality in the differentiated education, either through ordinary or special education. Differentiated education is aimed at catering for the diversity in individual aptitudes and is primarily undertaken within the community (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2009). Focus has therefore been given to the interplay between the IEP and the plan for teaching in the classroom ever since proposals were made to establish the IEP by law (Odelsting Proposition no. 46 1997-1998).

The second sub-aspect of the curriculum planning is the degree to which teachers *perceive the IEP to be an aid*. In accordance with the Education Act, all pupils that receive special education must have an IEP. The plan should stipulate goals, content and how the education is to be managed. In principle, the national curriculum – and its goals for competency – also applies to special education where this is appropriate. Once an individual resolution on special education has been issued, the IEP, as a link in the chain of actions in special education, is intended to act as an aid for the planning, execution and assessment of the special education (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2009).

The third sub-aspect relates to the teachers' *cooperation with others when planning*. Collaborative curriculum planning is an important element to ensure the support and adaptations most appropriate for diverse learners (Carter et al., 2009). Cooperation is clearly emphasised in the national curriculum, and is essential for planning both the ordinary education with regard to classroom adaptations and special education through the IEP. The teacher's role includes an expectation to learn from each other through cooperation in such areas as planning. The staff shall function as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) who share responsibility for the pupils' development. The Education Act also clearly emphasises cooperation with the home, particularly in relation to special education. Securing such cooperation is an essential component of the IEP process (Margolis, Brannigan & Keating, 2006). Furthermore, the Act places a focus on the pupils' influence in special education, and recommended guidelines stipulate that the headteachers have a responsibility to facilitate effective planning (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2009).

Method

The study was carried out as a postal survey of teachers in compulsory (primary and lower secondary) schools in two municipalities, which were selected by discretionary sampling (Befring, 2004). One municipality is an urban municipality and the other is a rural municipality. Teachers in all schools within the two municipalities were invited to take part.

Permission to carry out the study was granted first by the municipal school administration and subsequently by the headteachers of the schools involved. Participation by the teachers was on a voluntary basis. The study covers 433 teachers, which corresponds to a response rate of 60%. The non-response was primarily due to a number of schools choosing not to take part. The main reason was that it would be too time consuming for teachers. No pattern is apparent in the non-response that separates these schools systematically from the other schools. Nevertheless, certain reservations must be made, which means that generalisations of the results must be made with caution (see Table 1).

The questionnaire was made up of a series of questions aimed at throwing light on our three areas and the associated sub-aspects related to the work on inclusive and individually adapted education. Questions and responses were tested beforehand in a preliminary study and adjusted on this basis. For each question, response options were given on a scale of 1-8, where the teachers had to indicate the degree to which they believed the conditions they were asked about manifested themselves or were significant. The scale varied from *to a very small degree* to *to a very large degree*. This article analyses and reports on the percentage of teachers that gave the most positive responses to the different aspects of inclusive and individually adapted education covered here. For this reason, and in order to simplify the analysis, we have limited our analysis to responses 7 and 8, which we have merged. The frequency distributions, as

presented in the tables in the appendix, show what percentage of the teachers report that the condition they were asked about manifests itself *to a large degree*. The total share of teachers whose response was within the other values thus constitutes the difference between 100% and the response given for the value *to a large degree*. The variables are measured at ordinal level, and data is analysed using descriptive statistics (Befring, 2004).

Despite the differences in context that the sample represents, the analysis shows that the same main pattern characterises the distributions of data in both municipalities. We have therefore opted to present the frequency distributions for both municipalities combined.

Descriptions such as *to a large degree* represent an uncertainty since the respondents may have different perceptions of the various degrees. Additionally, the self-reporting of practice and experiences on which the data is based contains in itself a *gold-plating effect*. This relates to the possibility of teachers, partly based on their knowledge of legislation and the curriculum, having varying degrees of assumptions as to what is considered to be the norm for good practice, and consequently demonstrating a propensity to report on their practice in line with this. There is therefore reason to assume a risk that the frequency distributions are positively skewed in the sense that they show a somewhat higher reporting of practice in line with the norm than the actual reality. The frequency distributions for the general questions seem to be most at risk of such a *gold-plating* tendency. When, on the other hand, various aspects of the practice are investigated in a more specific and indirect way, this tendency appears to dissipate, and the teachers' responses are more in line with reality.

The data does not give a basis for a statistical generalisation of the population of teachers at Norwegian primary and lower secondary schools; it gives a picture of how the situation is in two municipalities in Norway. The fact that there are no major differences in the results between the two municipalities leads us to ask if this may be the situation in many more places. This needs to be determined through a considered and analytical generalisation, with the reader/user of the study considering what transfer value the results have in their own context. This will depend on the degree of similarities that the reader experiences between central characteristics of the study and their own situation (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007).

Results

We present below the results of our research question on the situation concerning the realisation of the intentions of inclusive and differentiated education in three areas: the headteachers role, the teachers role and curriculum planning.

Headteacher's role in relation to Inclusive and Individually Adapted education

The first area covered by the research question is the role of the headteacher. The empirical findings in our study provide a basis for a number of indications concerning headteachers, with regard to how the practice relates to the political intentions and to the theory referred to above. In general, it may appear that the teachers are reasonably satisfied with their headteachers. As regards the four sub-aspects of the role of the headteacher; focus, continuous improvement, totality and competency, however, the teachers believe there is a clear need for improvement. The results from the survey are presented in Table 1.

Focus

The teachers would like to see a clearer and more specific expectation in relation to their work at the school. Headteachers can and should take more responsibility for developing and highlighting guideline quality criteria for the work at the school, and show more initiative. This is particularly interesting when we consider it together with the fact that the teachers do not express displeasure in relation to pedagogic development work, but instead value pedagogic development work both in general and in relation to the Knowledge Promotion in particular. There is an expressed wish for headteachers to take greater responsibility to improve planning at the school in relation to the development of differentiated education in general and in relation to special education in particular. The headteachers' expectations and requirements of the teachers can seem rather general and vague (see Table 1.1).

Continuous improvement

With regard to the Knowledge Promotion, differentiated education and special education, there is an expressed wish among the teachers for the headteachers at the relevant schools to place more emphasis on developing themselves as leaders. The teachers' responses indicate that the headteachers have a relatively large potential for development when it comes to ensuring that the school's overall efforts to

improve the differentiated education for all are continuously moving in the right direction. It appears that the headmasters should concentrate more on prioritising the pedagogic and professional leadership at the school. The teachers regard the headteachers' drive to improve as relatively general, with the greatest emphasis on an unspecified expectation to comply with the Knowledge Promotion, and with somewhat less drive in relation to differentiated education, and even less direction with regard to special education specifically (see Table 1.2).

Table 1: Sub-aspects of the headteacher's role and inclusive and individually adapted education.

Percentage that responded that the conditions described manifests itself *to a large degree* (N=433)

Aspects of the Headteacher's role	The conditions manifest itself to a large degree
1.1. Focus on the pupil	
Headteachers convey <i>clear expectations</i> concerning the <i>Knowledge Promotion in general</i>	39
Headteachers convey <i>clear expectations</i> concerning differentiated education in the Knowledge Promotion	36
Headteachers convey <i>clear expectations</i> concerning <i>special education</i> in the Knowledge Promotion	21
1.2. Continuous improvement	
Headteachers take <i>special responsibility</i> for realising the <i>Knowledge Promotion in general</i>	32
Headteachers take <i>special responsibility</i> for realising differentiated education in the Knowledge Promotion	25
Headteachers take <i>special responsibility</i> for realising <i>special education</i> in the Knowledge Promotion	17
Headteachers <i>should improve</i> in relation to the work on <i>differentiated education</i> in the Knowledge Promotion	20
Headteachers <i>should improve</i> in relation to the work on <i>special education</i> in the Knowledge Promotion	19
1.3. Totality	
Headteachers <i>coordinate previous and current development projects</i> with the Knowledge Promotion	15
Headteachers <i>should improve</i> in relation to <i>educational leadership</i>	17
Headteachers <i>should improve</i> in relation to <i>administrative management</i>	15
1.4. Competency	
Headteachers have <i>plans for developing competency</i> in line with the need in the <i>Knowledge Promotion in general</i>	13
Headteachers have <i>plans for developing competency</i> in line with the need connected with differentiated education in the Knowledge Promotion	11
Headteachers have <i>plans for developing competency</i> in line with the need in connection with <i>special education</i> in the Knowledge Promotion	7
Headteachers have an overview of the <i>teachers' competency</i> relevant to the <i>Knowledge Promotion in general</i>	36
Headteachers have an overview of the <i>teachers' competency</i> relevant to differentiated education in the Knowledge Promotion	33
Headteachers have an overview of the <i>teachers' competency</i> relevant to <i>special education</i> in the Knowledge Promotion	40
The teachers need more <i>support from the headteacher</i>	29
The teachers need more <i>support from the PPT</i>	30
The teachers need more <i>support from colleagues</i>	24

Totality

Headteachers and teachers alike have a considerable potential for improvement with regard to the concrete understanding of the intentions of the education policy, and with regard to the understanding of the content of key terms such as inclusion, differentiated education and special education. In general, there appears to be a wish for a clearer and more holistic leadership. A need is indicated for headteachers to take more explicit responsibility for the totality and cohesion in the school's overall effort to realise the school's objectives. For example, the headteacher should play a greater role in coordinating the

various activities and projects at the school so that the cohesion is more visible and the teachers get help to identify the overarching objectives behind individual resolutions (see Table 1.3).

Competency

The teachers report that they have not received enough help in connection with upgrading their skills in relation to realising the intentions of the Knowledge Promotion for better differentiated education for all. There seems to be a desire for the headteachers to play a more active role and take special responsibility in relation to developing competency at the school. Limited competency will, without a doubt, always be a barrier to improving quality. The teachers appear to want more support from colleagues, the Educational and Psychological Counselling Service (PPT) and the headteacher in connection with the work on differentiated education. However, they give a higher priority to support from the headteacher and their own colleagues than from the PPT in connection with developing better differentiated education. Generally speaking, it may be said that the headteachers should to a greater degree map the need for competency at their school, utilise their teachers better according to their competence, and organise a systematic and targeted upgrade of skills both formally and informally (see Table 1.4).

Teacher's Role in Relation to Inclusive and Individually Adapted Education

The second area covered by the research question is the teacher's role divided into the three sub-aspects; dynamic testing and assessment, methods adapted to pupils' different needs and organising inclusive learning community. The results are illustrated in Table 2.

Dynamic testing and assessment

The first sub-aspect, the dynamic testing and assessment of each pupil's learning abilities and aptitudes, does not appear to be given any particular emphasis by many teachers (see Table 2.1). The study shows that only around a quarter of the teachers' report that they do dynamic testing of how the pupils are performing academically as the basis for individual adaptation to a large degree. Even fewer, around 15%, report testing the pupils' preferences for learning and preferred way of working to a large degree. With regard to assessing individual pupils' learning outcome, approximately 15% of the teachers purport to emphasise this to a large degree.

Methods adapted to pupils' different needs.

In relation to the second sub-aspect of the teacher's role, concerns the methods of adapting the teaching in line with the pupils' different needs, a fifth of the teachers say that they practice this to a large degree (see Table 2.2). Almost a quarter of the teachers report that managing to achieve cohesion between their teaching and the pupils' learning aptitudes to a large degree. Methodical approach is a key instrument in facilitation of inclusive and individually adapted education, and fifteen per cent of the teachers report that they adapt the methods to the individual pupils' aptitudes and needs and guide the pupils in their learning process to a large degree. One third of teachers use varied methodical approaches and verbal forms of presentation in their teaching. Eighteen per cent of the teachers say that they use learning aids to adapt both the learning activities and working methods to the pupils' different needs. As regards the use of work plans, around a fifth of the teachers report differentiating these to a large degree. Standard classroom text books are used to a large degree by a quarter of the teachers. A tenth of the teachers use digital teaching aids to a large degree, and just as many report adapting the teaching aids in order to differentiate the teaching.

Organising of inclusive learning community

The third sub-aspect relates to the teachers' organisation of education as a gateway to inclusion (see Table 2.3). With regard to the standard education, around a third of the teachers report that the pupils have the opportunity to work on their own to a large degree, and a fifth say they give the pupils the possibilities to work in pairs and a sixth say they work in small groups. Less than half the teachers believe that they facilitate the inclusion of pupils with special needs to a large degree. However, 10% of the teachers report organising the teaching as one-to-one teaching to a large degree. Just as many say that they organise the special education with an extra teacher in the classroom. Less than half report organising the special education in small groups to a large degree. These results indicate that small groups are used as a form of organisation for special education to a greater extent than one-to-one teaching and extra teachers in the inclusive classroom.

Curriculum Planning in Relation to Inclusive and Individually Adapted Education

The third area covered by the research question is curriculum planning. This is further divided into three sub-aspects. The results from the survey are presented in Table 3.

Table 2: Sub-aspects of the teacher's role and inclusive and individually adapted education.
 Percentage that responded that the conditions described manifests itself *to a large degree* (N=433)

Aspects of the Teacher's role	The conditions manifest itself to a large degree
2.1. Teachers dynamic testing and assessment:	
Teachers are testing individual pupils' learning aptitudes	27
Teachers are testing the pupil's strong learning preferences	16
Teachers are assessing the suitability of the method	6
Teachers are assessing the pupil's learning outcome	10
2.2. Teaching adapted to pupils' different needs:	
There is a cohesion between my teaching and the pupils' learning aptitudes	21
Teachers are guiding the pupil's in their learning process	15
Teachers are using verbal forms of presentation in the classroom	32
Teachers are using varied methods	35
Teachers are adapting methods to individual aptitudes and needs	15
Teachers are doing adaptations for the pupil's preferred method of working	18
Teachers are doing individual adaptations of learning activities	18
Teachers are using text books in their teaching	25
Teachers are using digital aids to adapt teaching	13
Teachers are doing individual adaptations of the learning aids	10
Teachers are using individual adapted work plans for each pupil	20
2.3 Teachers organising of inclusive learning community	
Teachers are facilitating for pupils to work on their own	29
Teachers are facilitating for pupils to work in groups	14
Teachers are facilitating pupils to work in pairs	22
Teachers are facilitating inclusion for pupils with special needs	41
Teachers opinions are that special education is organized one-to-one teaching	14
Teachers opinions are that special education is organized in small groups outside the classroom	43
Teachers opinions are that special education is organized with extra teachers in the classroom	9

Consideration to individuality and communality in the planning

As regards the first sub-aspect of curriculum planning, which deals with highlighting the consideration to individuality and communality in the teachers' planning, the impression is mixed (see Table 3.1). If we first consider the planning of the *teaching in the classroom*, around a quarter of the teachers report that a large degree of consideration is given to the need for differentiated education. Consideration to the fact that some pupils have special education in the classroom is given a corresponding focus by around a fifth of the teachers. With regard to the consideration to communality, there is a weak tendency for a slightly stronger emphasis. Around a third of the teachers report that, giving a large degree of consideration to the need for communality between the pupils in the planning of differentiated education in the classroom. However, the majority of the teachers report that they do not give much emphasis to the consideration to individuality and communality when planning the teaching in the classroom.

With regard to the planning of *special education* for individual pupils through IEPs, we are aware that individual considerations play a significant role. However, what about the consideration to communality with the other pupils? A quarter of the teachers report that this is also given a large degree of focus. Nevertheless, this is a slightly lower share than was the case for the planning of teaching in the classroom. Another indication of the consideration to individuality and communality in the planning is the teachers' coordination of IEPs with plans for the class. Here, almost a third of the teachers say that

IEPs are to a large degree coordinated with the teaching planning for the classroom as a whole. However, in relation to special education, the majority of the teachers also say that the consideration to individuality and communality is not given much emphasis in the planning.

Table 3: Sub-aspects of curriculum planning and inclusive and individually adapted education.

Percentage that responded that the conditions described manifests itself *to a large degree* (N=433)

Aspects of curriculum planning:	The conditions manifest itself to a large degree
3.1. Consideration to individuality and communality in the planning	
Planning in the classroom takes account of the need for differentiated education	24
Planning in the classroom takes account of pupils with special education	19
Planning in the classroom takes account of communality between the pupils	32
Planning of special education (IEP) takes account of communality between the pupils	25
IEPs are coordinated with the plan for teaching in the classroom	31
3.2. IEP – aid for planning, executing and assessing?	
IEPs act as an aid for mapping the pupils' need for support and adaptation	38
IEPs act as an aid for drawing up goals	73
Goals for competency in the national curriculum are emphasised when IEPs are drawn up	19
There is a need for exceptions from the goals for competency when IEPs are drawn up	25
The goals for competency hinder the consideration to different learning aptitudes	14
IEPs act as an aid for planning the content	54
IEPs act as an aid for planning the organisation	51
IEPs act as an aid for executing the special education	48
IEPs act as an aid for assessing the special education	51
There is a need to improve the planning of differentiated education in the classroom	25
There is a need to improve the planning of special education (IEP)	23
There is a need to develop competency in order to plan differentiated education in the classroom	40
There is a need to develop competency in order to plan special education	43
3.3. Cooperation and planning	
Teachers are cooperating in order to draw up IEPs	44
Teachers are cooperating to plan differentiated education in the classroom	30
The pupils provide input when drawing up IEPs	2
The pupils provide input in the planning of differentiated education in the classroom	3
The parents provide input when drawing up IEPs	24
The parents provide input in the planning of differentiated education in the classroom	7

IEP – aid for planning, executing and assessing?

In connection with IEPs, we have also – as the second sub-aspect – examined how the teachers perceive such plans as aids for planning, executing and assessing the special education (see Table 3.2). An IEP often starts with a pedagogic mapping process. Almost 40% of the teachers report that IEPs are helpful to a large degree when mapping the pupils' needs for support and differentiated education.

When the mapping is complete, conclusions can be drawn and a plan devised for a suitable education for the pupil. The first part of the plan normally entails considering and formulating *goals* for the education. The understanding of the significance of IEPs is clearly positive here. Almost three quarters of the teachers believe that IEPs to a large degree are an aid when drawing up goals for the special education.

An interesting finding also emerged in relation to the goals for competency in the national curriculum, which is to be given focus together with the mapped individual learning aptitudes when drawing up the

IEP. Around a fifth of the teachers report that the goals for competency are given a large degree of focus. However, even more (a quarter) believe to a large degree that there is a need for exceptions from the goals of competency when drawing up the IEP. It further transpired that around 15% of the teachers regard the requirement to achieve the common goals of competency as an obstacle to the consideration to individual learning aptitudes to a large degree.

With regard to the goals that are formulated in the IEP, which stipulate the competency one will help the pupil to develop, it is easy to see these in correlation with which *measures* should be initiated. In particular, this applies to two important areas: content and organisation. The teachers generally have a very positive view of the IEP's role in both these areas. A good half of the teachers believe that the IEP to a large degree helps with the planning of the content in special education, and almost as many believe this to be the case for planning the organisation.

The purpose of planning is to lay a foundation for better *implementation*. The positive view of the IEP is also reflected here. Almost half of the teachers believe that the IEP to a large degree acts as a support in the execution of special education. Over time, the special education is *assessed*. These assessments are carried out during term time and as a six-month summary. A positive view is also evident here, with almost half of the teachers believing that IEPs to a large degree act as an aid in the assessment of special education.

Although a large number of teachers have a positive perception of the IEP as an aid, their views on the planning situation are rather different. Other results show that the teachers believe there is a clear need to improve the school's planning practice. This primarily relates to the way the planning of differentiated education in the classroom is carried out, with a quarter of the teachers reporting a need for improvement to a large degree. This also applies to the planning of special education, where almost as many believe there is a need to improve the practice. In order to develop a better planning practice, many teachers call attention to the need to develop competency. Both with regard to planning differentiated education in the classroom and special education, around 40% of the teachers report a need to develop their competency to a large degree. These results indicate a clear need for improvement in the planning practice.

Cooperation and planning

The final sub-aspect of curriculum planning relates to the teachers' cooperation with others when planning differentiated education and special education (see Table 3.3). In this study, more than 40% of the teachers report that plans for special education (IEPs) are devised to a large degree in cooperation between the *teachers*. With regard to planning differentiated education in the classroom, almost a third say that they work together with other teachers to a large degree. In both of these areas – the regular teaching in the classroom and the special education for individual pupils – a large part of the planning seems to take place as cooperation between the teachers. However, it should also be noted that the majority of the teachers report less extensive cooperation among teachers.

Another important group for cooperation is the *pupils*. Here, however, the tendency is rather different. The study shows that only 2-3% of the teachers report that the planning is carried out in cooperation with the pupils to a large degree. This applies to drawing up IEPs as well as planning differentiated education in the classroom.

The *parents* make up a group that is in an intermediate position with regard to the extent of cooperation. Seven per cent of the teachers report that the parents are involved in relation to planning differentiated education in the classroom to a large degree. The cooperation, on the other hand, appears to be more widespread with regard to IEPs. Around a quarter of the teachers say here that the parents are involved in drawing up the plan to a large degree.

Discussion

The discussion shows the results we have presented in relation to official intentions for inclusive and individually adapted education in two municipalities in Norwegian compulsory schooling. This entails the practice reported by the teachers being weighed up against how the practice ought to be according to education legislation, the national curriculum and the theory frameworks.

Headteacher's Role

With regard to the headteacher's role in relation to inclusive and individually adapted education, as perceived by the teachers, it seems as if the headteachers are well aware of their responsibility and that,

to the best of their abilities, try to help realise the intentions of the Education Act as they interpret them. According to the teachers, the headteachers understand pretty well that the pupils are the school's primary users and that their learning needs to be in *focus*. However, there may be a substantial potential for improvement as regards the ability to create a concrete and common understanding of the teachers' goals and working methods in this area.

Because the expectations of the headteachers are sometimes rather general and not entirely clear, according to the teachers, the thrust towards a targeted process of *continuous improvement* of the teachers' practice can appear to lack momentum. This may of course also be due to the headteachers having no clear understanding of their role as leaders of change, instead perhaps viewing themselves more as operations managers, administrators or bureaucrats.

Although the headteachers cannot readily demonstrate any concrete or clear understanding of the intentions of the education policy they are helping to implement, they do appear to be aware of their responsibility to protect the *totality* of the running of the school. Perhaps a slightly unclear understanding of the broad and overarching intentions of the Education Act is a key reason why the schools' internal improvement process does not move as quickly as teachers and headteachers would like.

The link between quality on the one hand and upgrading skills and competency management on the other is generally understood by teachers as well as headteachers. However, it would appear that the headteachers' strategy for safeguarding the need for *competency* in general may be somewhat lacking. The teachers and head teachers however, seems to agree on the criteria for quality stated earlier in this article and which are based on international research in the field (Shiba and Walden, 2001; Skogen, 2004).

The possible weaknesses that are highlighted above may be related to the headteacher training being too fragmentary, too focused on administrative management and on a more abstract and sociological perspective. A greater focus on change management and putting the intentions of school policy into more concrete terms would be beneficial.

Teacher's Role

Although the teachers have made good progress in realising the intentions of inclusive and individually adopted education they still have the potential to develop with regard to adapting the teaching to the pupils' different needs in an inclusive learning community.

The results from dynamic testing and assessing the pupils' learning abilities and aptitudes, show that there is a minority of teachers who practice this to a large degree. There were also similar results with regard to the teachers' assessment of the pupils' learning process and outcome. This implies that the cohesion between political intentions and practice is not extensive enough with regard to testing the pupils' learning aptitudes and assessing their learning outcome. There is therefore a need to further develop the teachers' dynamic testing and assessment as an instrument to help achieve inclusive and individually adapted education to a higher level (Vygotsky, 1978; Grigorenko, 2009).

Concerning methods adapted to pupils' different needs, it seems as if the teachers use an extensive degree of traditional classroom teaching, as verbal forms of presentation in the classroom and standard text books for the relevant class year. These teaching approaches do little to facilitate varied methods related to pupils' different needs. Adapted teaching aids and learning activities are used to a limited extent, which is an indication that more flexibility and variation in these areas is needed. These are fundamental factors in the facilitation of inclusive education in relation to pupils' different needs, and the results imply that practice does not correspond to the intentions to an adequate degree (Backmann & Haug, 2006; Klette, 2003).

The results from the organisation of inclusive learning community indicate that pupils in standard education have the opportunity for their work to be based on different forms of organisation, and that they can vary whether they work on their own or with others. As regards special education, this is mainly organised in small groups. Pupils' different needs in relation to working on their own and/or with support from a teacher in the classroom do not appear to be met to the same degree. This is an indication that the organisation is not varied enough and does not adhere to the principle of inclusion and individually adapted education to a sufficient degree (Vygotsky, 1978; Imsen, 2003; Dale & Wærness, 2003).

Curriculum Planning

When it comes to curriculum planning, we first looked at the attention to individuality and communality, which may be considered as an important aspect of ensuring differentiation and inclusion (Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1995).

Compared to the intentions, it must be regarded as a mark of quality that a number of teachers place emphasis on both individual and community considerations in their planning. The teachers' efforts to coordinate the adaptation of the classroom teaching and special education in their planning are also in accordance with the intentions. This can be viewed as an important contribution to ensuring that special education is not excluded as a special measure. However, the results also indicate that many teachers do not seem to be sufficiently aware of the significance of emphasising and balancing individual and community considerations in their planning, which necessitates a need for improvement. This is a crucial factor in the further development of inclusive and differentiated education.

The second sub-aspect of curriculum planning relates to the IEP as an aid for planning, executing and assessing the special education. In relation to the IEP being decreed by law for all pupils with special education, it must be regarded as positive that so many teachers have a constructive opinion of the IEP as an aid. This applies to planning different parts of the education – goals, content and organisation – and to executing and assessing it. This is an indication that the IEP is not regarded as a waste of time (Cooper, 1996), but as having a practical pedagogic utility value. Nevertheless, there are a large number of teachers who are not as positive about the IEP as an aid. This implies that there is a need to further examine how such plans are devised and used.

The results also indicate a somewhat problematic relationship between the IEP and the national curriculum's goals for competency in the planning of special education. The tension between uniform goals and varying aptitudes is central, and indicates that the teachers believe that common standards for teaching restrict the latitude for adaptation (Ben-Peretz, 1990; Bjørnsrud & Nilsen, 2011). Although planning is regarded as important and is considered of value, the picture is complex. The results further indicate a perceived need to improve the planning practice both with a view to differentiated education in general and special education in particular. The teachers therefore feel they need to develop their competency in both areas.

With regard to the third sub-aspect; cooperation in planning differentiated education and special education, this appears to have several marks of quality in relation to centrally determined guidelines. This particularly applies to the cooperation between teachers, which is given a strong emphasis as an intention. Notwithstanding, the teachers still express a need for more cooperation with colleagues than is currently the case. A community of practice (Wenger, 1998) between teachers in regular and special education seems crucial. Cooperation may increase the awareness of the interplay between individual factors and factors related to teaching-learning processes and conditions when special educational needs are defined and IEPs are developed and implemented (Isaksson, Lindqvist & Bergström, 2007). Developing a collaborative school culture seems important to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special needs (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010).

Cooperation with and involvement of the pupils, on the other hand, does not seem to be very extensive in relation to the intentions. This applies to the planning of the adaptation in the classroom as well as IEPs for individual pupils. The cooperation with parents also appears to have been modest. This does not accord well with the intention for pupil's voices to be heard and for parents to have a final say when the educational offer for the pupil is being drawn up.

Conclusion

The results as a whole indicate that the situation in the participating primary and lower secondary schools is characterised by a number of the teachers having positive assessments of their own practice with regard to different aspects of inclusive and individually adapted education. As such, many of the teachers seem to have developed a practice that corresponds reasonably well with the intentions in this area. However, simultaneous to this, there are also a large number of teachers who are unable to give such positive feedback. In the majority of cases, less than half of the teachers agree with the category *to a large degree* in their responses. Thus, there appears to be a clear need in the role of headteachers, teachers and curriculum planning for further development in order to gain understanding for and realise the intentions. This further development will pave the way for improving the quality of inclusive and individually adapted education, via both ordinary and special education.

In relation to the headteacher's role, the results indicate that the current headteachers maintain too low a profile when it comes to educational leadership, perhaps due to certain democratisation ideals. This could be a serious warning sign when juxtaposed with the tendency towards an increasing bureaucratisation of the school's activity. Clearer educational leadership seems to be a key factor for quality development. It appears that the headteachers have a potential for improvement in relation to putting the policy intentions into more concrete terms, emphasising and supporting the upgrading of skills and development work, and coordinating the school's work with a view to broad participation.

As regards the teacher's role, the results indicate that the situation is in some ways good in realising the intentions of inclusive and differentiated education. Nevertheless, there is still a potential for improvement in relation to mapping and assessing, adapting goals for learning, method adaptation and choosing suitable forms of organisation. There appears to be an obvious need to upgrade teachers' skills in the area of inclusive and differentiated education, both at an individual level and for the staff as a whole.

With regard to curriculum planning, despite a number of teachers indicating that they already carry out a great deal of important planning work, it must be recognised that there is still a major need for improvement. A more systematic approach to the planning work is needed, both in relation to differentiated teaching in the classroom and special education for individual pupils, and with regard to the interplay between the ordinary and the special education. The cooperation function also needs to be strengthened between various parties in the schools, including between pupils and teachers, and between the school and the home, in order to improve the correspondence between the practice and the intentions.

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