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Equal inclusive education: a way to democracy?

-An explorative study in Brazil

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Abstract

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Titel: "Equal inclusive education: a way to democracy?"

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The purpose of this study is to examine the subject of the rights of intellectually disabled people to an equal education. Because education is a means of increasing participation as well as a way to develop democracy, we see the importance of offering an equal education to all groups in a country. People with disabilities are one of the minority groups that often receive fewer opportunities for participation in society.

The study focuses on individuals with intellectual disabilities or cognitive difficulties, as historically this group has, to a large extent, been discriminated against with regards to participation.

The methodology is a qualitative case study conducted from a social constructivist perspective employing qualitative methods, low inference observations, semi-structured interviews and is backed up by literature reviews. The case study concerns a school in Brazil that will remain nameless in this report.

The study looks to answer the following key questions:

- How does the school operate to provide an inclusive basic education for children with mental disabilities?
- From an egalitarian perspective, what quality of education is offered to pupils with intellectual disabilities? This includes issues such as empowerment over their own life situation, freedom of speech, participation and solidarity with society at large.

The results of the study show that the school currently has a structure of inclusive education which is both participating and excluding. The aim of this structure is to have regular classrooms in which all pupils can fully participate, including those with disabilities. The study shows that the education being offered promotes a high level of participation, solidarity and democratic values and accords with the legal framework concerning inclusive education. However the quality of the theoretical education is lower. The study highlights the need for teaching professionals to discuss the overall aims of the school and how different approaches to teaching can be united in the classroom. Teachers should also be made more aware of how inclusive education enriches everyone at the school.

Foreword

This study has given us great insights into the subject of inclusive education in practice in what is for us a foreign context. It has also given us the opportunity to meet many fantastic people who do their best to help children have a good day and a positive future.

We thank the school where we conducted our study for their warm hospitality and openness:

-You showed us that there is a lot of love in the world, and that one can make big changes if you have a generous heart.

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1. Introduction

From 1964 to 1985 Brazil was ruled by a military junta which restrained many individual and democratic rights. It became clear that the military dictatorship would come to an end when in 1984 the Brazilian population started a massive campaign for reform (Virtual-Brazil.com, n.d.). This led to the country becoming a democracy with an elected president in 1988. In this year the new government decided that a free basic and higher public education should be given to all Brazilians as a civil right (Brock & Schwartzman, 2004).

Since becoming a democracy the education system in Brazil has developed considerably, but it is still far from satisfactory according to the legal framework. In December 1996 Brazil adopted a law on national education which stated, among other things, that schools should educate all citizens, strengthen democracy and promote cultural diversity. The principle of inclusive education for pupils with special needs was included in the law (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional, Nº 9.394, 1996*).

Inclusive education aims to educate all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties and is a way to change discriminatory attitudes, promote welcoming communities and an inclusive society (Svenska Unescorådet). Although the law indicates that the country should offer equal educational opportunities to all this is not being achieved in practice and large differences remain. The quality of education being offered varies considerably between schools (Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, a Ciência e a Cultura, UNESCO 2007, 2008).

Tensions between the quality of education and equality and between integration and segregation are controversial in many countries. A quality education is one that provides resources and support, giving all individuals equal opportunities to learn and develop. This is closely linked to the right of non-discrimination - where everyone will get the opportunity to participate in activities in social life and be able to influence decisions that affect their lives and the community they live in. This is closely related to the right to freedom of speech and expression which is an important in democratic societies (UNESCO, 2007, 2008).

This study examines how a school deals with the fact that it has to enrol every child. It also aims to find out how an inclusive education is able to promote the democratic values.

2. Study aim and questions

The purpose of this study is to examine how the educational institution which is the subject of the case study works with the intellectually disabled people's rights to equal education. This will be compared to the legal framework which the country acceded to and to the country's governing document for the school, with a focus on inclusive education. There are large economic disparities within Brazil and this is reflected in the Brazilian school system. Because education is a means of increasing participation and of promoting and developing democracy, we see the importance of offering all groups in a country an equal education. People with disabilities are a minority that is often offered fewer opportunities for participation and solidarity in society. We will focus on individuals with intellectual or cognitive disabilities, as this group has, historically, been largely discriminated against with regard to opportunities to participate.

2.1 The study will seek to provide answers to the following questions and issues:

- How does the case study school work to provide an inclusive education for children in basic education with intellectual or cognitive disabilities?
- What are the explanatory models for these forms of disabilities and how do these models influence the pedagogical activity?
- Taking a democratic perspective, what is the quality of education being offered, taking into account aspects such as influence and power over one's own life situation, participation, solidarity and freedom of speech?
- What additional factors affect the pedagogical activity?

3. Conceptual explanation

3.1 Intellectual disabilities

This study uses the concept of disability in accordance with the World Health Organization (WHO) classification system: International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).

ICF is a classification of health and health-related domains. These domains are classified from body, individual and societal perspectives by means of two lists: a list of body functions and structure, and a list of domains of activity and participation. Since an individual's functioning and disability occurs in a context, the ICF also includes a list of environmental factors (WHO).

In this study the term intellectual disability will be used but a more common term for this is mental retardation. There are several concepts that are usually used synonymously with mental retardation such as intellectual or cognitive disability.

One of the criteria for intellectual disability is an intelligence quotient (IQ) below 70, as measured in a psychometric test. Diagnostic criteria for the degree of intellectual disabilities are divided into four distinct categories according to the results, as set out in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV). The American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR) adds to these criteria stating that, in addition to an IQ below 70, the person should also show clear limitations in adapting to social and practical situations. Furthermore the context in which the person exists should be taken into account, with the results of surveys interpreted in the light of social, cultural and biological conditions. To ensure a fair diagnose a number of professionals should be involved in collaborating and contributing their knowledge (Linikko 2009).

3.2 Cognitive difficulties

Another term that will be used is cognitive difficulties. "Cognitive difficulties" is an umbrella term that can be classified as a general delay in limited intellectual and functional abilities. Cognitive difficulties can occur after brain injuries, infections, asphyxia, poisoning, and injury to the central nervous system (CNS). Specific symptoms may be language difficulties, changed social behaviour, altered self-perception and motor difficulties. Cognitive difficulties can range from mild to very severe symptoms. Children with cognitive disabilities often suffer from other neurological functional disabilities such as epilepsy, brain injury and spasticity (James & Ashwill, 2007).

4. Theoretical framework

The study is conducted from a social constructivist perspective. This perspective sees individuals and the social world as products of social processes (Persson, R.S. 2006). In taking this perspective one seeks to understand society through social processes. Reality appears to be socially constructed. Individuals can be seen as objects of the conditions into which they were born. These factors provide opportunities and constraints for individual development (Egeberg & Jerlang, 1999).

Paulo Freire's theory about knowledge, the legal framework of the country and explanatory models of disabilities is used in the analysis of the data. Because the study focuses on inclusive education and educational rights, these points of view are useful. Our task is, in an empirical way, to describe the inclusive education being offered, to analyze how staff members at the school implement it and analyze if this inclusive education promotes democratic values.

4.1 Paulo Freire and the theories of knowledge

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was professor of education and a practitioner who was mainly active in Brazil. In his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* he discusses the relation between the student, the teacher and society at large. Freire (in Matheson, & Matheson 2000) maintained that to obtain knowledge connections have to be made on many levels: between the student, the teacher, the matter of subject and the society. The subject has to be learned in context and through dialogue. According to Freire (in Alrø & Skovsmose 2002) dialogue is not just any conversation. A dialogue is "a meeting between people in order to name the world..." (Alrø & Skovsmose 2002:3). A dialogue is directed by hope of change, which means that the partners of the dialogue have to think critically. Reflection and action enrich each other in a dialogue. Freire also considers that dialogue requires strong faith in humanity, love, humility, solidarity, respect and critical thinking. In a learning process both the learner and the educator contribute knowledge that is important to the further increase of knowledge. Freire contends that the roles of the educator and the learner are interchangeable. He states that we have to think in terms of teacher-student and student-teacher. To teach is not to program but to discuss and pose questions instead of answering them. He also says that the educator should prompt the learner to undertake self-determination, instead of just transferring knowledge (Freire, 1972).

Freire discusses (in Moacir Gadotti 1994) the nature of study and provides the following example:

Two men were travelling in a truck full of fruit. Suddenly they came to a very muddy part of the road. The driver stopped. The two men got down. They tried to improve the situation. They went through the mud trying to tread lightly. Then, they discussed the situation. They gathered some dry branches and stones and lined the road. They finally managed to get through the mud without any difficulty. (Moacir Gadotti 1994:53-54)

Freire contends that the two men in this case are studying. The term "studying" shouldn't be seen as something you only do in school; instead studying is everything according to Freire. His most important realization is that everyone who arrives in school has something of value to tell. The students are not just there to listen.

Teaching is often viewed in terms of a transfer of knowledge where the educator is superior to the learner. Freire uses the term “banking” to describe this method of education, where students are passive learners. The learner’s mind is in this case seen as an empty vault into which the superior teacher can transfer pre-selected, ready-made knowledge (Heaney, 2005).

According to Freire this constitutes a form of oppression against the students in the school. The democratic educational system is according to Freire (in J.Hyslop-Margison & Dale, 2010) focused on inquiry, discovery and dialogue. The so-called “banking” approach to education is directly linked to capitalism’s efficiency, which retards or prevents divergent thinking which is necessary in a democratic society. "Humans do not grow in silence, but in words, work and action - reflection" (Paulo Freire, 1972:89-90).

4.2 Explanatory models and attitudes

The term disability can be approached from different explanatory models; the most prominent are the medical and social models. The medical model assumes that establishing a diagnosis of an individual's divergence from normality indicates that the individual is the owner of the problem (Börjesson & Palmblad, 2003). The social model describes disability as a socially created problem (WHO's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – ICF), which ensures that the causes of problems are to be found in the environment (Persson 2003).

Haug (1998) analyzes the nature of social equality within the educational system. He states that this term can, ideologically, be seen in two ways. The first perspective is the compensatory perspective which according to Haug means that education gives the individual opportunities to take part in the school environment. To make this work, the school needs extra resources to make special arrangements to facilitate learning and compensate for the individual’s shortcomings. This perspective has been strongly criticized because it focuses on the disabilities and diagnoses. Börjesson (cited in Haug 1998) argues that diagnoses are doubtful since they are uncertain and created by the current culture values. The compensatory perspective can, according to Haug (1998), be stigmatizing as the students get special treatment and the focus on for compensating their disability.

The other perspective according to Haug (1998) is the perspective of democratic participatory education. In this perspective the education system is concerned with promoting social solidarity. Its focus is on the group and the learning environment instead of on the individual. The student with disabilities is seen as a resource and as an important member of the group. From this perspective the educational course is designed to meet student’s needs. As the design of the system flows from the requirements of the students, all students can be included in the educational offer. From this perspective education is not directed at changing pupil’s behaviour to make them conform, rather it should be accepting of differences and cater for diverse needs.

People’s attitudes and beliefs are to a large extent shaped by the relationships they have with people with disabilities. Attitudes and beliefs are also reflected in how people educate their children. When people with disabilities are segregated from the rest, this is a reflection of general attitudes. Attitudes vary from one society to another and cultural,

political, religious and economic factors affect these attitudes (Lopez, 1999). Altman, Hill & Rabe (cited in Lopez, 1999) found that negative attitudes are the greatest obstacle to including students with disabilities in ordinary classes. Teachers need to be the first in reevaluating their attitudes in order to make inclusive education successful (Emanuelsson cited in Lopez, 1999).

The Salamanca statement (1994) declares that policy-makers should regularly reaffirm their commitment to inclusive education and promote positive attitudes towards children with disabilities. Further to this the statement declares that mass media can play an important role to promote positive attitudes towards the inclusion of people with disabilities in society by informing the public on new approaches to education and promoting successful examples of best practice.

5. The education system

The Brazilian law on education (*Lei N° 9.394, De 20 De Dezembro De 1996, LDB 96 Art. 4° and 5°*) decrees that access to primary education is a public right and should be compulsory and free. It states that every child will be provided with a place in the nearest public school, kinder garden or elementary school and the school shall provide material, transportation, food and health care.

The Federal Government is in charge of national education legislation and the provision of Guidelines, for coordinating and developing National Educational plans and providing technical and financial assistance to the States. The Federal Districts and the Municipalities are in charge of the development of their educational systems and for priority assistance to compulsory schooling. Each school establishes its internal regulations, which must be endorsed by the Educational Council of the respective Educational System, state or federal government (Brazil-education).

The Brazilian education system includes both private and public schools. They are governed by the same law, but the difference is that public schools are free. The organisation of public education is set out in the 1946 constitution and the 1961 directives and standards for national education. Responsibility for public schooling is divided between the federal, state, and municipal governments. The educational system is divided into three levels: primary, intermediate and higher education. The primary and intermediate levels are almost exclusively the responsibility of municipalities and states, while higher education is the responsibility of the federal Ministry of Education. Preschool or infant education is added to this structure, for the purpose of providing assistance to children less than six years of age (Encyclopaedia of the nations).

Primary level basic education is compulsory while all other levels are not. Basic education starts at the age six and has a duration of nine years (*Redação dada pela Lei n° 11.274, de 2006*). Students are grouped into classes by grade, age and in some cases, level of accomplishment. In rural areas, it is still common to find multi-graded classes which include pupils at different schooling levels (Brazil-education). Many schools, especially public schools, operate in three daily shifts: morning, afternoon and evening ("*Brazils unequal*" 2010).

Basic education aims to develop pupil's skills, giving them the training which is deemed necessary for the common citizenship and provide them with a solid basis from which to progress further in work and study. The curriculum for basic education prioritizes the dissemination of core social values including learning about the rights and duties of citizens, respect for the common good and for democratic order (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional, N° 9.394, 1996*).

Secondary education starts at the age of 15 and lasts for three years. This level includes basic education as well as training for work. There is a degree of freedom given to educational institutions to adopt a different structure of their choosing (Brazil-education).

Higher education is focused on the sciences, arts and professional qualifications at university level and includes advanced research and academic specialization. It is equally free at public schools and universities (Brazil-education).

6. Inclusive education

According to UNESCO (*Inclusive education*) inclusive education is based on the right of all learners to a quality education that meets basic learning needs and enriches lives. Inclusive education is a process that involves the transformation of schools and other centers of learning. The schools and the centers have to focus on the cognitive, emotional and creative development of the child.

Inclusive education is founded on the values of democracy, tolerance and respect for differences and aims to eliminate exclusion that is a consequence of negative attitudes and a lack of response to diversity in race, economic status, social class, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability. The ultimate goal of inclusive quality education is to end all forms of discrimination and foster social cohesion. The children have to learn to know, how to do, how to be, and how to live together (*Inclusive education, Ten questions...*).

Being included may represent a situation in which you are a part, in an organic way, without necessarily being forced to conduct yourself according to a rigid norm (Linikko 2001:12).

6.1 Inclusive Education in Brazil

Educating children with disabilities is a relatively recent phenomenon in Brazil. There have been special classes in public schools since the 1930s, but access to those classes has been limited. Because of this limited access, many children with disabilities were referred to institutions.

In the 1980s, as part of the re-democratizing process, a discussion about principles of universal access and democratization of basic teaching and public education was started. There were also discussions about full time schools and other initiatives aimed at reversing poor academic achievement, as well as a discussion about the configuration of the so-called Special Education field. Since the 1980's special education has shifted away from being segregated and there has been a move towards a more inclusive education system. In 2009 a resolution (*Resolução No. 4 CNE/CEB*) was passed which provided guidelines concerning inclusive education. The resolution prescribes AEE as the model of schooling to achieve successful inclusion. AEE stands for Atendimento Educacional Especializado, which means Specialist Educational Support Services. In this paper the Portuguese abbreviation, AEE will be used. The organization of AEE is based on the following:

- *Decree No. 6.949/2009* which ratifies the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities UN;
- *National Politics Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008)*, which establishes general guidelines for special education;
- *Decree 6.571/2008*, which provides for the Union's support policy and funding of specialized educational services, and
- *Decree No. 4 CNE/CEB* which proscribes the guidelines of AEE (*Nota Técnica do MEC*, 2010).

6.2 The structure of AEE

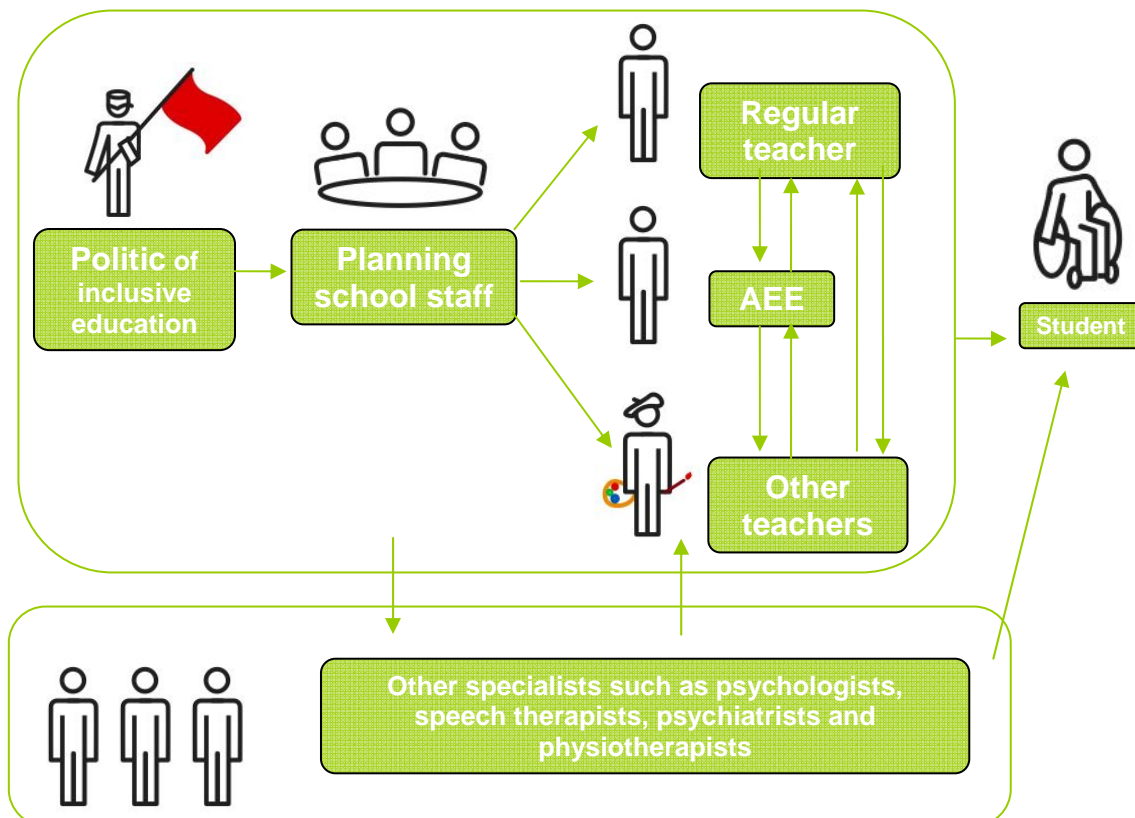
AEE is funded by the Ministry of Education (Ministério da Educação, hereafter referred to as MEC). To help schools, municipal authorities and states to develop inclusive education the government department has a number of programs. These include a program of continuing education courses for teachers in special education (including distance learning courses). They also have a program to develop multifunctional classrooms and a program centred on the right to diversity which trains principals and educators to develop inclusive educational systems (Secretaria de Educação Especial).

The AEE-model of education aims to help students with disabilities make as much progress as possible in their learning process and eliminate barriers which prevent them from participating fully in society (Cavalcante, 2010).

Under the AEE model students with disabilities are enrolled in an ordinary class. They study with the ordinary class for one shift of the day and get additional schooling in the other shift of the day. The extra training is primarily conducted with a specialized teacher in a resource room on an individual one-to-one basis or as part of a small group. The point of this arrangement is that the specialized teacher and the regular teachers will work together to achieve successful inclusion and an equal education for all. Pupils who need it benefit from the services of an ADI-assistant who helps them with their daily routines and gives them additional support during class time (Cavalcante, 2010).

ADI stands for Auxiliares de Desenvolvimento Infantil which translates as Teachers Assistant. The abbreviation ADI will be used in this paper. The following figure shows the model of AEE:

Figure 1 (Cavalcante, M. 2010)



7. The legal framework for inclusive education

The aim of inclusive education is to promote an inclusive society where no restrictions on human rights are accepted. There is a lot of legislation to support this and many changes have been made. Three parts of the legal framework are listed below which strongly support the work of inclusion.

7.1 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is a UN convention which states that disabled people have a right to fundamental freedoms and complete access to general human rights for. *CRPD* was approved by the Senate of Brazil on July 3 2008. The purpose of the convention is to:

...protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity (United Nations, *CRPD*).

The nations that are a party to the Convention are required to recognize that disabilities result from the interaction between people with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder them from fully and effectively participating in society on an equal basis with others. The convention states that the promotion of full participation, human rights and fundamental freedoms will give people with disabilities an enhanced sense of belonging and lead to significant advances in the human, social and economic development of society as well as contribute to eradicating poverty. Furthermore the signatories of the Convention recognize the importance of access to the physical, social, economic and cultural environment and to health and education, information and communication (United Nations, *CRPD*).

Under the convention states are obliged to educate students at all levels within the education system. The Convention states that disabled people are not to be discriminated against and are to be offered a free, qualitative and inclusive education system at all levels. A welcoming attitude is to be taken, one that shows respect for the rights of persons with disabilities. Signatories are also obligated to promote awareness training programs related to disabled people and their rights. A goal is to develop the human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth of disabled people and strengthen respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity. Another goal is to enable persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society (United Nations, *CRPD*).

7.2 Salamanca Statement

The Salamanca Statement was adopted by 92 governments and 25 international organizations in the Spanish city of Salamanca in 1994. These parties agreed that students with special needs should receive an education alongside other children in the same environment.

The statement established some basic criteria on how education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented in order to ensure that every student's needs were met with respect to physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic and other conditions. According to *the Salamanca Statement* those with

special educational needs should have access to regular schools, and these schools would have to be prepared to meet the needs of all students, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities. Education must accordingly be adapted to the needs of the child and curricula should be adapted to children's needs, not vice-versa. Each school should be held accountable for the success or failure of every student. Responsibility for the education of children with special needs should be shared by an educational team rather than fall on an individual teacher. School heads were given special responsibility for arranging effective cooperation between class teachers and support staff. The Statement also highlighted the need for shared responsibility and cooperation between school administrators, teachers and parents. It was recognised that parents should be actively involved in decision-making concerning the child (Svenska Unescorådet, 2006).

In order to achieve systemic change teacher education programmes, both pre-service and in-service, were needed to develop the supply of special needs education in inclusive schools. It was recognised that Universities had a major consultative role play in the process of developing special needs education, particularly with regard to research, evaluation, the development of teacher trainers and the design of training programmes and materials. When planning educational systems governments should ensure that education is provided to all people in all regions of the country and under all economic conditions, through both public and private schools (Svenska Unescorådet, 2006).

The challenge of the inclusive school is to develop a child-centred pedagogy which is capable of successfully educating all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties. The establishment of this school is a determinant step in helping to change discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities and in developing an inclusive society (Svenska Unescorådet, 2006).

For far too long, the problems of people with disabilities have been aggravated by a disabling society that has focused upon their impairments rather than their potential. The achievement of equal opportunity and full participation requires a concerted effort, commitment and good will, not only by teachers and school staff, but also by peers, parents, families and volunteers. There has been a trend in social policy during the past two decades towards encouraging integration and participation and the combating of exclusion. Inclusion and participation are fundamental to human dignity and to the development and exercise of human rights (Svenska Unescorådet 2006).

7.3 Lei N° 9.394, De 20 De Dezembro De 1996.

National legislation stipulates that all citizens should be offered equal opportunities to education. The training must be of equal quality throughout the country and be free in public education. The legislation further establishes that education must, in both public and private schools, be characterized by freedom, solidarity, tolerance and democratic values. It needs to prepare the individual for a future career and promote democratic citizenship (*Lei N° 9.394*).

The Brazilian State is, according to *LEI N° 9.394*, obligated to provide free compulsory primary education. They are also obligated to provide education to citizens who did not

attend school when they were of school age. It further establishes that the state has to provide free access to special teachers for students with special needs (*Lei N° 9.394*).

According to *LEI N° 9.394* there are minimum levels of the education that need to be reached. In 2007 the government approved a test called *Indicio de Decenvolvimento da educacao Brasilia (IDEB)*. Every other year all students and teachers are required to take the test and the results are used to assess the quality of the education. If the results in a city fail to pass a certain quality threshold the Brazilian state has to invest further in the education system in that city. The state is also obligated to give financially assistance to the federal districts and the municipalities to develop the educational system and develop guidelines for preschools, compulsory schools and high schools so that a *IDEB* standard of a common basic education is achieved.

Educational establishments are subject to these common standards and are responsible for the development and implementation of their own pedagogical strategies. Educational establishments are also obliged to inform parents and guardians about the implementation of the educational approach. The law also sets out that schools have to collaborate with families and the community to ensure that they are integrated and embedded in society (*Lei N° 9.394*).

The law also instructs teachers to participate in the development of the educational approach of the school. Teachers are instructed to offer education in accordance to the pedagogical plan of the school, and to develop strategies that provide all students with the opportunity to learn (*Lei N° 9.394*).

8. Quality of education in Brazil

As stated above all Brazilians are given the right to a free, non-discriminatory and fully participatory education. The general standard of education in a country is important not only because it improves productivity and strengthens democracy but also because it increases the ability of people to attain a higher quality of life (UNESCO, 2007, 2008). Despite this, only half (50.2%) of Brazil's population have completed primary education (“*Metade dos*” 2009).

UNESCO Brazil refers to the Education results of the Basic Education Evaluation System and point out that 51.6% of all fourth grade students had “critical” or “very critical” performances in Mathematics, 55.4% of all fourth grade students had “critical” or “very critical” performances in Portuguese. The term “critical” used in this way means “poor”. UNESCO also reports similar or even worse results in the last grades of primary and secondary education (*Qualifying and Training...*).

Moreover clear distinctions can be made between private and public schools. Private primary schools are considered much better than public schools despite the fact that both forms of schooling are subject to the same law (Brock & Schwartzman, 2004). To improve the standard of education being offered in Brazil UNESCO state members made a commitment to improve the standard of the professional training being given to teachers. UNESCO asserts that teachers’ status and the level to which they are educated is of fundamental importance when it comes to improving overall educational quality in the country. Teacher training is vital to the development of the profession and the status of teaching needs to be raised (*Qualifying and Training...*).

Achievement of non-discrimination and full participation in education requires the development of inclusive schools where education is embedded in the community and where everyone is welcome regardless of social and cultural differences, gender or personal characteristics (UNESCO, 2007, 2008).

9. Economic impact and socioeconomic diversity's

In the 1990s the system of financing basic primary education in the country was significantly reformed. The National Fund for Primary Education Development and for Enhancing the Value of the Teaching Profession (FUNDEF) was established in 1996 and fully implemented in 1998. It contributed to an increase in the resourcing of basic primary education and resulted in an increase in the number of pupils being taught (Oliveira, J.B.A, Education for All, 2000 & Departamento de Financiamento da Educação Básica / FUNDEF).

In 2006 the Fund for the Development of Basic Education and Appreciation of the Teaching Profession (FUNDEB) replaced FUNDEF. This new funding system has been in effect since 2007. Unlike FUNDEF, FUNDEB finances the entire school system. The financial resources stem from federal taxes and transfers from the states, federal districts and municipalities. The main objective of FUNDEB is to promote the redistribution of resources related to education. The strategy is to distribute resources across the country taking into account the social and economic development of each region. The allocation of investment is made in accordance with the number of students in basic education using school census data from the previous year. Monitoring and social control over distribution, transfer and use of program resources are divided between federal, state and municipal councils which have been created specifically for this purpose (FNDE 2009, FUNDEB 2009).

FUNDEB funds schools a set amount per enrolled pupil with a double amount paid out for each child with disabilities (*Resolution No. 4 CNE/CEB*).

According to 2007 OECD statistics covering 35 countries Brazil spends the least money per pupil on public education at all educational levels. These figures show that Brazil spends USD 1,862 per student per annum compared to an average of USD 6,741 across all OECD countries (Ekonomifakta).

According to *the Salamanca Statement* national authorities are responsible for supervision of external funding for special needs education. National authorities also agreed to cooperate with international partners to promote policies aimed at achieving education for all. A lack of investment in an equal education is leading to many drop-outs and poor scholastic results in basic education. Some experts argue that this is the result of a combination of two factors: students' socio-cultural capital and the quality of education, and it is contributing to high levels of illiteracy through the generations. Priority measures to break this pattern centre on the provision of quality education. The inability to express oneself and participate fully in society is a major risk factor connected to social exclusion and poverty (Inep/MEC 2007).

Statistics from 2009 show that 31% of Brazil's population lives in poverty (CIA World Factbook). According to some estimates from 2006 20% of those in poverty have disabilities. 14.5% of Brazil's population has some form of disability. This number is large because the statistics include people with minor disabilities such as those who need spectacles (Febraban-federaco Brasileira de Bancos, 2006). Estimates show that 80-90% of people with disabilities in Latin America are unemployed (Crosara Resende, de Paiva Vital 2008). Brazil is known for having one of the world's highest degrees of inequality and this is strongly related to education (Brock & Schwartzman, 2004).

Education alone cannot solve problems facing Brazilian society but it is a way of promoting social inclusion and sustainable development (Inep/MEC 2007).

10. Summary of theoretical background

The education system in Brazil has undergone changes and development during the last 15 years. In 1996 a law was passed that stated that every child has to be enrolled in the regular school system. This was the start of the process of inclusive education.

According to UNESCO inclusive education is based on the right of all learners to a quality education that meets basic learning needs and enriches lives.

In 2009 the country established a structure to receive children with disabilities in regular schools. This structure is called Atendimento Educacional Especializado (AEE) which translates as Specialist Educational Support Services. AEE aims to assist the learning process of students with disabilities and supplement their education to eliminate barriers to full participation in society. It also aims to improve the education of teachers and assist them to teach in a more child-centred way.

The term disability can be approached and discussed from different explanatory models, with the most prominent being the medical and social models. The medical model is concerned with making a diagnosis of an individual's divergence from normality, indicating that the problem lies with the individual (Börjesson & Palmblad 2003). This differs from the social model which views disability as a socially created problem (WHO). Under this model it follows that the causes of the problems are to be found in the environment (Persson 2003).

According to Haug (1998) the term social equality can be seen in two ways within the educational system. First there is the compensatory perspective which focuses on the individual, disabilities and diagnoses. The other perspective is that of democratic participation which focuses on the group and the environment instead of on the individual.

Three parts of the legal framework promoting the work of inclusive education can be identified:

- *The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)* is a UN convention setting out the rights of individuals with disabilities to fundamental freedom and complete access to human rights. for disabilities;
- *The Salamanca Statement* establishes that people with special educational needs must have access to regular schools, with the schools being prepared to meet their needs, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities
- *Lei N° 9.394* a piece of Brazilian national legislation that, among other things, stipulates that all citizens should be offered equal educational opportunities.

11. Methodology

11.1 Case study

The study is conducted from a social constructivist perspective as a qualitative case study, with qualitative methods, low inference observations, semi-structured interviews and literature studies. The case study is, according to Merriam (1994), a way to get an in-depth understanding of a particular situation and knowledge about how the involved people interpret the situation. Case studies focus on context and process rather than specific variables and results. This methodological approach assumes discovery, insight and understanding based on how people perceive the world. According to Merriam (1994) the case study offers the best possibilities for understanding and developing the educational field.

Information is gathered from low inference observations, semi-structured interviews and literature studies. Low inference observations were chosen as a suitable method due to the insight they provide into the classroom teaching in the case study school. Low inference observations also furnish the opportunity to ask relevant questions during interviews, and one can then analyse interview answers in the light of what has been observed.

11.2 Observations

Through observation one can register behaviour in the moment. There are also occurrences that people do not feel open to talk about which can be identified through observation. As an observer one can also see things that become routine for the participants themselves, which can lead to an increased understanding of the context. Observations can be implemented in different ways varying the structure and degree of participation. The approach is informed by the aim of the study. A clearly structured observation utilising an observation schedule allows one to register a predetermined event. Less structured observations can resemble a video recording of a given area. What one can begin to look at is governed by the questions at issue however where the focus will and the moment when observing should stop cannot be determined in advance (Merriam 1994).

Unstructured non-participant observations were used during the study. Non-participant observation can be conducted in two ways: either the group is aware of the observer, but the observer's participation is secondary, or the group is unaware that the observer exists. In this study the group has been aware of the observations (Merriam 1994). This form of non-participant observation was selected because there was no possibility to be "invisible". Non-participant observation was chosen instead of participant observation due to the fact that we are not fluent in Portuguese and therefore were unable to become a natural part of the group

All observations were recorded and processed immediately upon completion. This was to reduce the risk of being influenced by subsequent impressions that could change the perception of what was originally observed.

Through observations one is able to register behaviour in the moment. There are also occurrences that people are not comfortable or open to talk about that can be witnessed

though observation. It is also possible to recognize things that have become a routine for the participants themselves, which can lead to additional understanding of the context (Merriam 1994).

11.3 Interviews

Interviews can be conducted with different degrees of structuring: fully structured, semi-structured and unstructured. We opted to conduct semi-structured interviews because these are a useful tool that allows open answers where informants can describe how they see the situation (M. Ruane 2006/2005). A qualitative interview is focused on finding out what the interviewee thinks and knows. Patton (cited in Merriam, 1994) says that we interview people to learn things that we cannot observe. Interviews are helpful in gaining an understanding of another person's perspective.

The semi-structured interview allows one to receive the same type of information from all respondents. The interview is guided by the research questions that need to be explored but the structure is not predetermined. A non pre-determined structure makes it possible to fluidly move with the development of the situation and this helps the interviewer to gain a better picture of respondents' discourse. With unstructured interviews it is not possible to obtain the same type of information from all respondents as one moves with the progress of the situation (Merriam 1994).

Structured interviews are used to collect quantitative information. This type interview can be used in qualitative studies, but is not the only way to collect data. The following aspects are separate from the degree of structuring:

- the way interviews were steered;
- the topics and information covered;
- the interaction between the interviewer and respondent;
- how the interview situation is defined.

In this interaction, it is impossible to avoid the influence of the interview situation, when both parties have preconceived ideas and attitudes. Interviewing methodology is thus complex and there is a requirement for interviewers to be aware of these factors when it comes to analysing the results (Dexter in Merriam 1994).

11.4 Selection of the case study

This study is focused on children with intellectual disabilities or cognitive difficulties, since this group historically has been the subject of discrimination. Brazil was chosen because it is a developing country that has legislated for an inclusive education system. The city where the study was conducted has a school which according to the government of Brazil works in an exemplary way. This school was therefore chosen in order to observe at first hand an example of what the government considers to be a good example of inclusion.

Six children with intellectual disabilities or cognitive difficulties and in receipt of the services of AEE were enrolled at the school. Three of them had Down's syndrome. For more diversity in the study four children with different difficulties were selected:

- Eduardo: an 11 year old who is physically disabled and has cognitive difficulties and slow development;
- Fernanda: also 11. She is not diagnosed as intellectually disabled but her development is also slow.
- Nina: 5 years old. She is diagnosed with West Syndrome and has problems with her cognitive ability, motor coordination, speech and walking.
- Germana: also 5 years old. She has Down's syndrome. Her learning process is delayed.

11.5 Ethics

Merriam (1994) discusses the problem of anonymity in a case study. In a case study the focus is on the special case and the people in it. For that reason it is hard maintain the anonymity of respondents. The respondents were aware of the aim of the study. The school has an award for the inclusive education it offers. Staff members were proud of the school and were happy to lend full cooperation to the study. Parents, when asked, gave permission to have their children's real names used in the report. However because all parent's were not asked we decided to use made up names for all respondents for the purpose of reporting the findings of the study.

Merriam (1994) also discusses the analysis as an ethical problem. Because the information was collected by us with the help of an interpreter, the information was filtered through our values and theoretical point of views. In the analysis we are the ones who decide upon the importance of the information. This distortion is inevitable but it can, according to Diener & Crandall (cited in Merriam 1994), be reduced through accuracy, honesty and a conscious effort to be objective. In order to limit our effect of the study we recorded all findings, interviews and observations and subsequently watched and listened to the recordings, comparing them to the notes we made at the time of the observations and interviews.

12. Validation and Reliability

A study which is conducted using qualitative perspective can primarily be measured by internal validation. Through internal validity it is possible to describe if the researcher researches what she thinks she does and how her pre-understanding affects the study. Extern validation is more useful in quantitative studies because it informs about the quality according to generalization. As this is a case study, the aim is to understand this special situation in depth (Merriam 1994).

12.1 Internal validity

All information in this case study is understood by an interpreter and by us as researchers, and this means that the information is affected by our pre-understanding. Both we and the interpreter started with the belief that an inclusive education is something that is needed to achieve an equal education, and that this is a right of everyone. The purpose has not been to explain any objective truth. We see reality as socially constructed and it is from that point of view that we have described how the school deals with the fact that they have to accept every child. We have also tried to describe what is affecting the inclusive education and the attitudes of the people involved.

The observations were processed immediately after completion and also recorded and analyzed retrospectively. All interviews were also recorded and analyzed retrospectively. Dialogic clarification has been used to correct any misunderstandings during the interviews.

The analysis was carried out from three different points of view: a theoretical perspective of knowledge and education, a theoretical perspective of explanations of education for children with disabilities and a legalistic perspective.

12.2 Reliability

Reliability can be a problem when research is focused on understanding how, what and why people act or think like they do. People change over time and qualitative research is not concerned with establishing any kind of so-called “truth” (Merriam, 1994). Instead the aim is to describe and explain how people understand their own subjective reality.

A case study is a “one-off” and it would therefore be difficult to repeat it and expect to get the same results. This is because there are no fixed reference points (Bednarz in Merriam, 1994). In a qualitative study multiple understandings are possible and for this reason other results might be generated were the study to be repeated (Walker in Merriam, 1994).

13. Results

13.1 Description of the school and its structure

The school is situated in a Brazilian city with a population of approximately 237,000. It is a municipal school run by the municipal authority. The school offers pre-school and primary education up to 5th grade. At the time of the study some 449 pupils were enrolled at the school and 19 of these had some kind of disability and were in receipt of the services of AEE. The school is a popular one and the school roll has been increasing in recent years. For this reason a new locality had to be found for the younger children and the school is now divided in two. They are now constructing a new building next to the main so that all classes can be located together and this will increase the feeling of affinity and integration. The pupils learn in two shifts – one in the morning and one in the afternoon, with each shift lasting four hours. The children who receive the service of AEE are also offered services at a specialist-centre and eco-therapy. At the specialist-centre they can, once a week, get help with their psychological and physiological needs. Concerning eco-therapy, they are offered the opportunity to go horseback riding once a week.

The management of the school consists of a principal and two pedagogy coordinators. These people are very clear on the principle that all members of staff at the school are equal. They want the staff to work as a team and they believe that everyone at the school is important and can contribute to its improvement.

The principal and the pedagogy coordinators are elected by parents, the other teachers of the school and pupils over 12 years old. The election of the principal is every 2.5 years and the election of the coordinators is every 3rd year. The principal and the coordinators can hold their position for a maximum two periods.

The school started to work in an inclusive way four years ago when Eduardo enrolled - their first student with disabilities. At that time no one was prepared to work with him, but Gabriella, who at that point was a regular teacher, received him and started to find out new ways of teaching him. Gabriella got very interested in inclusion and new ways of teaching that were associated with it. One year ago they started to work with the structure of AEE and Gabriella started to work as an AEE-teacher instead of as a regular teacher. This year the school got an award from MEC, the Ministry of Education, for their inclusive teaching approach. Even before the award, the school gained a reputation within the community and the government as a school working really hard for inclusive education. Gabriella, the AEE-teacher, explains that when the special efforts of the school are recognized, staff members are proud and motivated to do even better work.

The Principal explained how staff members at the school are employed. Regular teachers in Brazil are hired by the government. The teachers have to pass an exam after which they are allocated to posts by the municipal or state authorities. These authorities can make their own decisions since, mostly, they are autonomous and teachers are not hired to work at any specific school. Sometimes, when there are many students to enrol, the government hires teachers who have not done the exam. These teachers are offered temporary contracts and can be laid off if they are not needed anymore. This is not the case with teachers who have passed the teaching exam. At the end of every year those teachers that haven't passed the exam are evaluated by the principal. The results of the

evaluation are then passed to the secretary of education. The policy of the municipality of the case study generally doesn't allow the retention of the same staff year after year, but the case study school has been able to keep its teaching team for almost four years. Gabriella says that the stability of staff group has made an important contribution to the successes achieved at the school.

13.2 Political effects

In 2005 the municipality got its first special education coordinator. When she started there were 48 children with disabilities in the schools governed by the municipality. Now there are around 430 children with disabilities in these schools. The municipality has 76 schools in total and all of them bar one have children with disabilities enrolled. So far however, only seven of the schools have an AEE-classroom and an AEE-teacher according to the special education coordinator. The children are offered services at a specialist-centre since inclusive education has only started recently and some of these services are not available through the AEE. The special education coordinator explained that MEC does not approve of this arrangement because they think that some of the services should be included in the AEE and some should be taken care of by the health authorities in the area. The special education coordinator expressed distrust in the ability of the municipal authority to provide this service to the children in the absence of this centre. The special education coordinator is aware that they have a lot of work to do to improve inclusive education. She said "we are just like a baby trying to learn to walk."

The special education coordinator detailed the process they went through during the last five years to get children with disabilities into regular schools. She thinks that they have good policies in place in the municipality to do this work. The biggest problem is when the children leave the municipal school at the end of the 5th grade and start at the schools ruled by the state because the state is not as good at providing a good inclusive education for children with disabilities. She says that, there is little municipal schools can do to make the state take their responsibilities seriously in this area. They can only convey to them their own good experiences of an inclusive approach to education. They have tried to make partnerships with the state system to promote better inclusive education and they have also tried to get control of the state schools. The problem is, according to the special education coordinator, that the state authorities do not seem to care about inclusive education, yet they still want to have control over their schools because if they were to hand the schools over to the municipal authority they lose the funding they receive for the children in school.

The government funds schools through FUNDEB, providing a set amount of money per child and double this amount for children with disabilities. The case study school receives 3,500 RS (approximately 14,000 SEK) every second month for all the children enrolled in the school. This amount is to buy pedagogical materials, products for cleaning the school and other consumable items. The money is not enough to buy even the most important of items. According to one of the coordinators from time to time additional funds are raised for the school by staff members selling cakes and soft drinks at large events in the city. They also raise money through a small café at the school that sells snacks to the children.

When the number of pupils at the school increased and more space was needed they had to find it by themselves. The secretary of education in the city didn't care about their

problem. The secretary also made a promise of extra money for cleaning and maintenance of the new building but this was reneged upon. Angela, the pedagogy coordinator at the school, stated: “We know that we have to improve but without any money we think that making this year possible is in itself a victory.”

The special education coordinator explained that sometimes politicians can help schools to find new localities and other things they need, but mostly it is born of egotism. She describes that the mayor provided them with a new site just before the election, but he didn't provide any money to make the locality usable. The special education coordinator had to find ways herself to raise the money to develop the site and bring it into use. Politicians are self-interested she said: “Everything is about ego, money and politics....Here in Brazil we have an expression: A lei não pegou (if the law isn't successful, it won't work.)”

The special education coordinator says that one of her most important things to do is to make people get in touch with children with disabilities, to make them recognize that they are very important and that they need to be educated just like everyone else. She says that they often feel like they are working in a political way. The work is hard, but they do it because they love what they are doing. They really want to provide a good, welcoming and high quality education for every child.

Angela, the pedagogy coordinator, explained about the IDEB education index. The case study school has an IDEB index of 5 (the maximum is 10). The mean index of education in the city is 4.6. If schools have an index of 4.5 or less a federal programme sends money to the school. In this municipality they use this money to hire people who can teach the children through cultural activities in the alternate shift so that the children are in school for the whole day. Last year the index score of the school improved from 4.2 to 5. Angela says that their goal for next year is to raise the index score further up to 6. Another goal for the future is to make all children be able to participate in all activities in the classroom.

They have only taken an inclusive approach for four years but are already recognising the benefits to the school that this is having. They are working hard by themselves to find out new ways of teaching. The special education coordinator of the city explains that it is hard to make changes in the schools. The teacher training programme has no focus on inclusive education and they don't want to provide courses that educate teachers in inclusive education. Teachers themselves have to learn how to deal with inclusive education. Now that there is a law about inclusive education the specialist institutions for children with disabilities are closing and the children are attending regular schools. They have rights to get an equal education inside regular classrooms.

Staff members at the school are very dedicated. They work very hard for the children and their future, but they don't feel supported by those with political power. Many people at the school sometimes work for free and put in extra time and effort to keep the school running. The principal Wilma says: “the secretary doesn't want to pay staff members who do an extra shift to cover for someone who is absent.”

13.3 The principal's view of education

Wilma has been principal for almost two and a half years. Before becoming a principal she worked as a pedagogy coordinator and as a teacher. She is a very warm welcoming person and it is apparent that she really loves her work as a principal. She wants to make many changes to the school and to its system of governance. She is very optimistic about being able to make changes and improve the inclusive education approach.

In an open interview she explained why she chose to be a teacher and how she became a principal. When she was working as a teacher she wasn't satisfied with the way she was teaching and she recognised that she was making a lot of mistakes. She therefore started a course at the university to learn more about pedagogy. People around her encouraged her to become a principal because she showed good qualities of leadership. Despite this she was surprised she was able to become a principal as she couldn't imagine herself in this position. In 2002 after being selected by the other teachers and the staff she became a pedagogy coordinator and after five and a half years she was elected to be a principal. Wilma stated how important it was to her to unite her staff. She confessed to not liking hierarchy. As far as she is concerned everyone is equal. "Sometimes I mop the floors in the school....and sometimes I make the food for the children." She explained that she likes to set an example, showing others how they can make an effort to give their best for the school which is necessary to keep the school running.

Wilma described that her ideal school would be a colourful and cosy one where you work in an interactive way with all disciplines working together in a team.

Imagine doing a fruit salad, you could count the seeds, work with the terms hard, soft, bitter and sweet. You could also produce texts about the fruit. The children could pick the fruit by themselves or bring them from home.

She thinks that is important to work in many different ways with the children, so that everyone can get the chance to learn and understand. She says that the school is too preoccupied with statistics and evaluation. She thinks evaluation should be based more on dialogue with the children instead of testing them. "It's about talking not just testing." If the child doesn't understand, it's not about them, it's about the teacher. "If a child gets bad grades, it's the teacher who failed not the child."

13.4 The Coordinator's views on team spirit and adversity

At the school there are two coordinators. One of them is working with the older children and one is working with the younger children. Angela, the coordinator of the older group, described her work as a tutor and aid to the teachers to improve their way of teaching. She also has a role in making the children at the school feel welcomed and she sees herself as an intermediary between the parents and the teachers, facilitating effective collaboration between them.

In practice Angela observes the teachers planning and their daily routines inside the classroom. She gives suggestions to the teachers aimed at helping them find ways to get every student to learn together. The goal is that every child can be able to participate in the education in the classroom. Once every 15 day the teachers, the principal, the AEE-teacher and the coordinators have a meeting to discuss how things are going. The

teachers are divided in different groups, with each group being responsible for a special subject. The group then tells the other teachers about this subject and then they all discuss it together. The objective of these meetings is to find out about new ideas of education and exchange ideas and experiences across the school. All the staff at the school used to participate in these meetings but the secretary of education prohibited the school from have meetings of this kind, insisting that these meetings should only be for teachers, the coordinators and the principal. They see things differently at the school and regard everyone who works close to the children as being important to the education being offered. According to this view education is not only in the classroom but is everywhere. The school has therefore appealed the decision of secretary of education at the municipal authority.

Besides the meeting the teachers and coordinators talk a lot about the children, the approach to inclusion and learning materials. When asked about observing classes, Angela said it could be possible, but she thinks that she has a good enough contact with the teachers and the children. She looks into the classrooms each day. She also says that the teachers ask her for help if they are uncertain about anything.

When the school receives a child with disabilities Angela talks to the parents to find out what the needs of the child are and she makes an assessment to decide which teacher at the school can best receive the child into the class. "Because we know that not every teacher is able or willing to accept a disabled child in their classroom."

Angela is concerned about this matter. She thinks it is very important that the child can learn inside the classroom, as opposed to just being inside the classroom with the others. She observes the development of all children. If the child improves, the teaching is good, but if they fail to develop she is the one to find out why and try to help the teacher to change their approach to teaching. "Eduardo's teacher only worked on grammar, but I suggested to her that she find a text where they could work many disciplines, to get a wider context."

Angela thinks it is important that everybody gets the same content, but the way of teaching must be adjusted to the individual. If she sees a good example in another class she tells the other teachers about it. There are many teachers at the school that want to improve their teaching, but Angela says there are one or two who don't want to change. However it is hard for them to resist the new ideas being developed in the school.

A matter that is really important to Angela is to get every child to always feel welcomed at the school. She wants them to love their school. A primary focus is for the children to be happy and like their school. If they do so they are more positive and want to learn. The school has almost no problems with truancy. Angela thinks this is because the children know that everybody at the school likes them. Angela is proud of the social climate of the school, but she says there is always room for improvement. "Life is a constant learning process. Experiences help us to learn. I am pretty sure that I am much better today than yesterday and worse than I'll be tomorrow."

Angela expresses that she is happy she got the chance to answer questions as it prompts her to reflect on the work she is doing.

13.5 How does AEE work at the school?

Since AEE was introduced into the school Gabriella, the AEE-teacher, has been working hard to develop its structure. She works fulltime (40 hours per week) and caters for 19 children with different forms of disability. Each child receives support from her for one or two hours per week. Almost every child is seen during the opposite shift of the regular class. Gabriella's work is to support the children to improve skills such as concentration, speech, motility and coordination. She also helps them learn topics such as daily routines and hygiene. For every child receiving support she makes a plan in which she describes what kind of difficulties they have and how they will work within the AEE programme to develop strategies to address their difficulties. To help the children develop she works with different materials and tries to stimulate all of their senses. She wants the classroom to be inspiring for the children and she believes that you have to work in many different ways to be successful.

To improve her way of teaching and developing the structure, Gabriella is studying a course for ten hour per week, this being a course offered to all AEE-teachers in Brazil. It is a distance course funded by MEC which teaches about inclusive education. The course is closely linked to teaching practice. Once a week she goes to every classroom and reproduces the things she learned through the course with the aim of transferring what she has learnt to the classroom teachers. She informs them on what to read and study and provides suggestions concerning teaching material, books and websites. When Gabriella is at the school she is always there to support the teachers. Sometimes teachers can feel very lonely in their work and she is on hand to provide support, encouragement and ideas. The structure of AEE was designed from the beginning to help both children and regular teachers. Gabriella was initially told that she was going to have four days a week with the children and one day to help the regular teachers. But there were too many children who needed her service she doesn't have time to spend a full day each week helping the regular teachers.

She says the main goal for the future is for the school to be able to offer a good level of inclusive education without an AEE-classroom. But because this way of working is so new there is still much progress to be made before this will be possible. She explains some of the difficulties associated with developing an effective structure and says: "It's something you must build over time". She is positive about this work and the development they have so far been able to make. She says that the principal is working well to create solidarity and positive attitudes at the school. She summed up her work of developing the structure to support inclusive education in the following way: "It has not been a big problem to change attitudes at this school because everybody is working as a team, a very united team."

13.6 Different points of views -the AEE and the regular classroom

The design of the AEE-classroom is very different to that of regular classrooms. The AEE-classroom is colourful; there is technical equipment as computers and a lot of the materials are adapted to meet the children's needs. Much of the material in the classroom was made of Gabriella and other teachers at the school. The regular classrooms are designed with the desks in lines, a black board and lectern at the front and they are empty of pedagogical materials.



The AEE-classroom



A regular classroom

The children we interviewed described the AEE-classroom as a place they enjoy coming to. They like coming to the AEE class but they also like to be with their classmates in the regular classroom. Despite this, Fernanda said she preferred to be in the AEE-classroom, because it's quieter. "The regular classroom it's messier" she said. She also says she would like to spend more time in the AEE classroom. In the AEE-class they use games and fairytales and work in a small group. Sometimes the regular teachers use material from the AEE classroom but in Fernanda's case the teacher has her own materials in the classroom. Fernanda explained that they play a lot of games in the classroom but that they never use the games as a way to learn mathematics for example.

What we noticed from our observations is that Fernanda role changed in the AEE-classroom. She seemed more secure and confident than in the regular classroom. In Fernanda's regular classroom they sit in rows with Fernanda sitting next to the door in the first row. During the observation they were learning maths. The teacher was writing different tasks on the board and the students were copying and counting. After 30 minutes Fernanda was given other tasks as she wasn't able to do the tasks on the board. Fernanda finds mathematics the most difficult subject. She finds it difficult when the teacher sets a lot of continuous mathematical work. Fernanda confirmed that she sometimes gets other kinds of activities and that she manages to solve them. When asked she said she finds it "cool" to have her own tasks.

From the observations with Nina we saw how the AEE-teacher, Gabriella, used different methods to stimulate Nina's senses and to practice concentration. For example Gabriella used music, flour, pictures and a hand puppet in the class.

Eduardo also says the studies are different in Gabriella's classroom than in the regular classroom. He said "I like Gabriella's class...because she gives me a lot of things, toys and games." His teacher also thinks the AEE helps him a lot, "Here he keeps growing...so this is a rich experience for him" she says. In Eduardo's classroom during the observation the students were sitting in rows with Eduardo sitting in the front row. He worked on the same tasks as the others pupils but he used a computer to write with instead of pencil and paper. When Gabriella knows what Eduardo is doing in the regular classroom she tailors her approach in the AEE-classroom to suit, covering the same subject matter to help him to better in the classroom.

When we observed Germana we could see a big difference in her behaviour in the AEE-classroom compared to her regular classroom. In Germana's classroom the children were sitting in rows with Germana sitting in the middle of the row with her ADI behind her. At the end of the lesson they arranged the chairs in a circle and had a presentation in which the children were reading from a book and showing the pictures to each other. Everyone read according to their ability. Germana was not able to read the text but instead she told a story that she made up herself to her classmates, while showing them the pictures. In the regular classroom she was very secure and she seemed to enjoy behaving more maturely. In the AEE-classroom Germana was more childish, insecure and not very cooperative. In the interview with Germana's teacher she explains that Germana doesn't like to get separated from her classmates. The teacher said it's more stimulating for Germana when they do activities working in pairs or groups. According to the regular teacher, the work the AEE-teacher does with Germana in the AEE-classroom helps her a lot when she is in the regular classroom.

13.7 Collaboration at the school

Concerning the planning of lessons teachers do their own planning and then collaborate with the pedagogy coordinators to improve their classes. Many teachers look to the AEE-teacher for advice especially concerning inclusion, but this is not obligatory in the planning process. Gabriella thinks that the school needs to make changes to the planning process. The teachers don't get paid for planning. For that reason some teachers prefer to do their planning at home. Gabriella sees the benefit of planning together with the regular teachers because it gives her a greater opportunity to make improvements and introduce new teaching techniques. The pedagogy coordinators, one of them in particular, commonly asks Gabriella for help if she has any doubts concerning teachers planning.

Gabriella commented on differences between teachers. Many teachers at the school look to her for help and are very open to looking to improve their work concerning inclusion. But some teachers at the school think they are educated enough to deal with this by themselves. Gabriella says: "Fernanda's teacher never asks me for suggestions. She considers herself to be experienced enough. The teachers with this attitude never involve me in their planning."

Gabriella sees that the teacher has a clear effect on the development of the child. Those teachers who are open to advice from others and seek to improve their teaching skills are able to help the children to make better progress in their development. They also achieve greater success concerning inclusive education. When a child does not develop in the classroom Gabriella, in her role as AEE-teacher, is responsible for finding out what is going on inside the classroom. She then encourages the teacher concerned to make adjustments that aid the child's development. She agrees that observation in the classroom could be useful in helping the teacher to find new strategies and approaches to teaching, but she wouldn't be comfortable doing that.

13.8 Teachers attitudes and experiences of inclusion

The four teachers interviewed had different experiences of inclusion. Three of the teachers had worked with children with disabilities before they started to work at this school of which two as teachers and one as an assistant. All of the teachers say that they modified their approach to teaching since they started to work with children with disabilities in an inclusive way.

Eduardo's teacher

Eduardo's teacher had experience of working with children with disabilities at another school, but this experience wasn't very good even though she believe in inclusive education. When she knew that she would receive Eduardo she started to do some research into his disability and to think about how she could manage her classes to include everyone.

Generally the teacher sets activities for everyone but some days when Eduardo isn't well she respects this and gives him other activities. Sometimes they work in groups. The teacher thinks it is important to give the pupils the opportunity to work together and learn from each other. Eduardo's teacher regards the experience of an inclusive education as a privilege. She says she has experienced and learned a lot from Eduardo. The hardest part for her was in the beginning, because it was something new.

At first teachers are scared about it. I can't say that I wasn't afraid because that would be a lie. I was uncertain about how to work with Eduardo in the beginning, but I looked for a way and discovered strategies that enabled him to participate in the same activities as the others.

Now inclusion has become normal to her. It has become a part of the planning and the daily routine. She says: "the child is there so you have to work together."

Eduardo's teacher thinks the most important thing that the children have to learn in school is to work with different classmates. She says that when the children work alongside different people the relationship between them strengthens and prejudices decrease.

Fernanda's teacher

Fernanda's teacher has experience of working with children with disabilities. The last five years she has been working in the regular school system in the morning-shift and in a special school for children with disabilities in the afternoon-shift. She has graduated from a special education course and says: "I receive children with disabilities in my class because I have experience of working with them at special schools."

Fernanda's teacher says that the greatest difference between the special school and the inclusion in of disabled children in regular schools is that when you work in an inclusive way you have to set activities for all children. In the special school you tend to set activities for each individual. Since Fernanda's teacher started to work with inclusion she changed her way of teaching. "Now I work individually with the student. I tell them that studying is very important."

Fernanda's teacher doesn't think it is hard to work in an inclusive way. "So far I have achieved all the objectives of the education. They (the pupils) are improving their learning a lot, especially Fernanda..... I like to work with these children" (children with disabilities).

Fernanda's teacher thinks knowledge is the most important thing that children have to gain in school. She thinks that Fernanda has improved a lot because she can now copy from the board, but she confirms that she struggles with mathematics.

Fernanda's teacher's attitude toward people with disabilities has changed a lot for since she started to work with children with disabilities. "I see them with different eyes. I have to socialize these children."

Germana's teacher

Germana's teacher has previous experience of working with children with disabilities, mostly as an assistant. Germana's teacher expresses the importance of finding activities for the children that are adjusted to their development. She also thinks that as a teacher you should be able to understand children's behaviour. For example concerning Germana:

When I set a specific activity and tell the ADI to provide some help, Germana starts to argue and be unruly, but if I set an activity where she works together with another child she is very quick and she enjoys it... She doesn't like to be separated from the others.

Germana's teacher has changed her attitudes to people with disabilities since she started to work in an inclusive way.

Now I think Germana is able to learn everything, it just takes more time. At first I thought that the school was only a place for them to have some interaction with others but not to learn.

From her point of view inclusion is a very good way to develop children, but it is difficult in the beginning. As a teacher you have to rethink and teach in a new way. The AEE- teacher, Gabriella, has been a very good support to her in this process. Germana's teacher says she tried to teach in her customary manner but she soon found out that it wasn't possible to apply the same approach to every child.

Nina's teacher

For Nina's teacher this is the first time she has worked with children with disabilities. This experience has made her think of education in a different way. She realized that she had to develop new ways of teaching. The AEE-teacher was very helpful in the process of finding out what she could do inside the classroom to get all the students participate. She started to make use of different materials to stimulate different senses. She also uses the playground to play games and build things using sand and other materials.

When Nina's teacher does her planning she is always thinking of Nina's participation and tries to design activities in which everyone can participate. Before she had any experience of working with children with disabilities in the regular class she was doubtful about that the children with disabilities would be able to interact with the other children, but she has since discovered that she was wrong. "I find that Nina wants to do the same as the others. It is the reason why she is smiling and wants to speak and walk and everything."

She says that the kind of doubts she had stem from the fact that many people don't have any contact with children with disabilities or experience of an inclusive education system.

She says she enjoys the experience of working in an inclusive way. It has changed her attitude toward children with disabilities. She used to feel sorry for them, but now she thinks that they are children just like others. "They are capable of the same things and can participate in the same activities. They just do it in their own way."

13.9 The ADI teacher's assistants, their role and their attitudes to inclusion

Many of the ADI- assistants come from special institutions. The name ADI originates from the kinder garden which is something similar to a preschool teacher. The two ADI teacher's assistants we interviewed had done a high school level teachers training course, but they were not pedagogic graduates. The name ADI is due to be changed and it will become necessary to be a pedagogic graduate in the future.

In the national documents it is important to note that the ADI-assistant is not intended to be a special teacher for the child. The ADI- assistant's role is to attend and support children to give them a helping hand in their daily life at school, for example to go to the toilet, help them at lunch and in the break. Another role that the ADI-assistants have is to give teaching support to the children and help the children with the activities that the teachers set them such as reading from a book or explaining what is written. The ADI-assistant can also help the other children when the teacher helps the child with disabilities.

The regular teacher is responsible for planning the classes. The regular teacher shows the plan to the ADI-assistant. They then discuss the plan together. During the class the ADI-assistant adheres to and supports the teacher's structure. When we interviewed Germana's ADI-assistant about where she gets support, she said at first she asks the teacher for help then Gabriella or the coordinator. She says: "Me and the teacher are always together so we help each other a lot, but if we don't know what to do, we ask Gabriella"

Eduardos ADI-assistant has a very positive attitude to inclusion and she say that she doesn't see any downside to it. "The best thing ever was inclusion. From everyone's perspective it's a positive experience." She also says everyone is very united in the classroom.

Germanas ADI-assistant also expressed these sentiments: “I don’t see anything negative about inclusion.”

13.10 Parent’s and children’s experience of schools and inclusion

Three of the children we followed had previously attended other schools and two children we interviewed expressed that they preferred this school above the others. During the interview with Fernanda’s father he said that she has made progress in some subjects and in her behaviour. He used to receive complains about her behaviour but now her teacher and coordinator gives a lot of compliments about her social skills. He also explained how grateful he is for finding this school for his daughter. “Thank god I found this place, because if I hadn’t found this school she would have had many problems”

Nina’s mother is also very thankful that they enrolled her daughter. She experienced another school before coming here. She said that the children there were isolated. When she came here she saw that everybody participated. She says: “Now I don’t want to take her away, I would recommend this school to everybody, not just for kids with disability”.

She explains that in the beginning she was not very concerned about whether or not they would be able to take care of Nina at this school. She was more concerned about whether they would be able to help her develop and stimulate all her sides. Nina’s mother said that Nina had made great progress. Before she didn’t smile, walk or hold hands but now she does. She says “This school is a good example that inclusive education really works”. Every day she talks to the teacher about Nina’s day, what happened and what she has learned. She also feels secure because Nina’s ADI-assistant has good knowledge of special needs.

Eduardo said he didn’t want to go back to the previous school because he fell a lot and got hurt. He also said he didn’t learn anything. Eduardo’s mother explained that a friend of hers told her that she had the right to enrol Eduardo in a regular school as she didn’t know about this herself. Eduardo thinks it’s different in this school. He says: “I like my friends and this school, I like to study. Eduardo’s mother can also see a big difference in his development since he first started at the school. “Now he doesn’t want to miss classes...he loves it very much here”, she says. Eduardo’s teacher also thinks he has made a lot of progress. She says “He didn’t want to do the activities in the beginning, he used to answer that he didn’t know.” She worked a lot with him and persisted until he started to respond. The ADI-assistant also says: “The days when Eduardo doesn’t feel well, I don’t give up on him.” These days she keeps trying to make him participate and this helps Eduardo a lot. Eduardo also explained how important his ADI-assistant is to him. He said “she helps with many things, I like her “

Turning now to Germana’s case there is also big difference in her behaviour according to the staff at the school and the parents. In the previous school and when she started at this school she was more aggressive, she bit herself and she was lonely. According to Germana’s father they were not prepared at the previous school; no one was concerned about educating children with disabilities so she didn’t develop. Even the ADI-assistant confirms the difference from the previous school and says: “Here she is happy and she has some structure.” She also commented on the teacher’s work with Germana. She said

that the teacher makes effective adjustments to her lessons to enable Germana to participate. The teacher always takes notice of Germana's needs the ADI-assistant said.

Gabriella and the teacher had to put considerable effort into addressing Germana's behaviour. Germana's teacher said "Sometimes I thought I couldn't make it, Gabriella helped me a lot." Now her behaviour has changed. Her aggressiveness is much diminished and she has also stopped biting herself. In the interview with Germana's father he said "I ask myself, why didn't I look for this school earlier?"

The two children we interviewed told us that they liked their school, Fernanda said: "I like to go to school, it's cool, and I learn more.... My favourite subject is gymnastics"

and Eduardo said: "I learn a lot in school....I like all subjects, especially doing presentations. I love it when people applaud me."

13.11 Social inclusion

The picture we got from observations and interviews was that all the children felt very included in the school, especially among their friends.

During observations with Nina we saw a much kindness and friendship from the other children in her classroom. Nina's mother said "This is going to be helpful for her to develop, to interact with other children. If this were to stop she might not develop." According to Nina's mother, the doctor has also confirmed that the daily interaction with the other children is important for her. "She smiles a lot when she hears the other kids in the morning as she arrives at school", says Nina's ADI-assistant.

According to Eduardo's ADI-assistant he participates in everything and he is well included in the classroom. Since he got a laptop he says it is easier to participate. The other children understand that he needs the laptop to be able to do his tasks, so they are not jealous of him. Eduardo really values the friendships he has made "I like everybody" he said. Eduardo's ADI-assistant confirms this, stating that "the classmates give Eduardo much attention, they play with him a lot." She also explained that she sometimes keeps an eye on him in the playground from a distance when he plays with his friends. Eduardo's teacher also confirms this: "The children love to work with him". She also enthuses that this is a positive experience for everybody concerned. To work in an inclusive way brings everybody together. There are no prejudices. She feels that this will be of value for the rest of their lives.

In the interview with Fernanda she said "My friends are cool and fun we play a lot". However she also said that sometimes her friends make fun of her which she hates. When it happens she tells her teacher. Sometimes when it happens she swears at them.

In the observations we made in Germana's classroom she seemed like any other child in the class, she was one of them. Her classmates didn't treat her any differently. Her father also told about her progress and his gratitude to the school "She was more isolated before, the interaction between the children is different here...everybody gets along with each other". Germana's ADI also confirmed that Germana always lays with the other children. The ADI-assistant is a big help to Germana regarding social activities. She always stays with her to make her feel included and she helps her to be

able to partake in all activities with the other children. She keeps her eye on Germana to make sure there incidents that cause other children avoid Germana because of her behaviour. “Thank god the children love her...no one see her as any different. To them everyone is the same”, the ADI-assistant said.

13.12 The children’s future

When we interviewed Fernanda about why school is important she answered “It’s important for the future, it’s important to learn more, for us to be someone in life”. When we interviewed the children about what they wanted to do for a job in the future Fernanda said she wanted to be a doctor because she wants to take care of ill people and heal them.

Fernanda’s father explained it is hard for him to see his daughter struggling her condition and lagging behind the development of other children her age. He realises that she is not likely to be become a doctor or a teacher, although he wishes that someday she could become one. He says “sometimes I wish she could learn faster but I have to respect her condition.” Above all he wants her to be happy and he wants what’s best for her.

As stated above Nina has West Syndrome. Her mother says she doesn’t know how long she will live. She says: “every single day is a new contest” and this makes her sad. She knows of a case of West Syndrome where a boy was cured at an early age, but this will probably not happen to Nina she says.

Eduardo is approaching the age for moving up to secondary school. He told us he was looking forward to going to his next school. Eduardo explained that he also wants to be a doctor because he wants to give other people injections.

Germana’s ADI-assistant is more worried about what will happen to Germana in the future. “Here she is well received, but what will happens at the next school.”

Taking an inclusive approach in schools run by the state is problematic and the special education coordinator is trying to make the state take its responsibilities more seriously in this area. She is also working to create a centre where children with disabilities can get training for a profession once they leave the primary education system. She doesn’t want this training to be offered in a special centre but she doesn’t think that society is ready to train people with disabilities yet.

The principal, Wilma, tells us that she doesn’t know what will happen to the children with disabilities after they have left her school at the end of 5th grade. As they have only worked in an inclusive way for four years they have not yet had many children with disabilities who have moved on. She says: “The parents themselves have to look for schools, but I don’t know of any state school that works in an inclusive way”.

She continued with tears in her eyes: “I don’t want the children to suffer when learning... I want every child to be able to go to the university but maybe it’s a utopia.”

She is concerned that none of her students will reach university because of the current political and the educational systems.

14. Analysis

14.1 Inclusive education at the school compared to the legal framework

The national law on education *Lei Nº 9.394* establishes that education should be characterized by freedom, solidarity, tolerance and democratic values and should prepare the individual for a future career as well as democratic citizenship. The case study school has adopted a structure based on a non-hierarchical ethos. Everyone is considered equal and a strong team work approach is taken. This structure is based on solidarity, tolerance and democratic values. At this school these values are reflected in the education. The school works hard for inclusive education and they have succeeded in creating a climate in which the children enrich each other. The parents of the children with disabilities say that their children have developed greatly since they were put into regular classes.

The intension of the AEE structure is to support the teachers and the children to achieve an equal education for all. This is also a main goal of the legal framework governing the Brazilian education system. Under the AEE children are given individual services away from the regular classroom and this could be viewed as a form of segregation in its current form. According to the Salamanca statement the challenge for the child-centred pedagogy is to provide an education system that successfully meets the needs of all children. The AEE-teacher told us that this is a process and there is still some way to go. Ultimately the goal for the future is for teaching to be conducted from the children's perspective and that everyone will be able to participate. From this perspective the AEE can be seen as way of including children because it is a way for the school to address the individual needs of every child and thus contributes to an equal education.

Under the AEE structure collaboration between the regular teacher and the AEE-teacher is very important. Teamwork within the school is dependent on the attitudes of individuals. Some teachers are very grateful to be able to work collaboratively and see it as a way to improve the quality of the inclusive education they are offering. However not all teachers take this view. This has an impact on the education being offered and its further development.

Even though the principal of the case study school and most of the staff want to change the cognitive approach and teaching methods, they are required to evaluate children and teachers. This evaluation makes change more difficult because this tradition comes from a cognitive approach where theoretical knowledge is considered to be paramount. According the legal framework it is just as important to learn about freedom, solidarity, tolerance and democratic values as it is to learn academic knowledge. Freire also says that every kind of knowledge is of importance to the development of more knowledge. Conducting education and evaluation in just one way can create barriers to development. When education is seen as constant learning, not just in school, the learning can be taken to another level. Freire's view of teaching is reflected in the way the principal talks about education. She wants to create a school that doesn't take a "banking" approach. Although this was observed on numerous occasions during lessons. The valuation of academic knowledge can be the reason why teachers make use of banking as a method because they want to make sure that the students get the knowledge they need to achieve good results and grades. Many children in the

classroom didn't participate when the banking approach was taken. Divergent thinking is, as Freire says, necessary for learning and for the promotion of egalitarian values.

At this school the staff is a product of the system of evaluation, but in terms of the social inclusion of children with disabilities they have made significant progress in line with the requirements of the legal framework. They have succeeded in creating a very welcoming, tolerant atmosphere and this is one way of creating an inclusive society according to *the Salamanca statement*. The participation in the society will, according to the *Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, result in an enhanced sense of belonging and in significant advances in the human, social and economic development of society and the eradication of poverty. Developing the knowledge and skills of being able to work and live together with different people is important to building an inclusive democratic society.

Unfortunately the children's academic knowledge is less well developed than their "social knowledge". The children at the school will probably be tolerant, helpful, open-minded citizens and these are very important qualities for a democratic society. But everyone also has a right to academic knowledge of subjects as this type of knowledge is important to enable one to fully participate in the society and influence one's own life situation. An important aspect of inclusive education is that the teacher has to teach in different ways. This promotes wider thinking which according to Freire is one of the elements of learning that can help to increase the quality of the education as a whole.

14.2 Explanatory models and attitudes

Making use of Haug's explanatory models AEE is a structure that is both compensatory and democratic participatory in nature. The intention of the AEE structure is to promote democratic participation, and if the new structure is successful then the AEE will no longer be needed in the future. The AEE-teacher helps the regular teachers to improve their teaching approaches and adapt their classrooms and use of pedagogical materials so that everyone is able to participate. The AEE-teacher doesn't have the responsibility to teach the children different subjects. She has the responsibility to help the regular teachers to find out ways to teach in an inclusive way and to help the children find ways to deal with their disability. The democratic participatory model can also be seen in the regular classrooms of the case study school. Teachers are mindful of the need for everyone to participate when they are doing their planning. Almost every teacher took the approach that the children with disabilities are a resource in the classroom. Some teachers stated that one learns lessons for life when learning to work together with different people. They also said that it was difficult to have a child with disabilities in the class at first. They had to modify their way of teaching but now they don't experience difficulties anymore as they have become used to planning lessons for the entire class.

The compensatory model can be seen in the fact that the children with disabilities get individual specialist attention through the AEE service. Here the work focuses on addressing the individual's shortcomings. In the regular classroom some special arrangements were seen such as the help offered by ADI-assistants or the setting of special tasks.

Some teachers said that they changed their attitude toward people with disabilities. Once they had gotten to know children with disabilities, they began to regard them just as anyone else. The teachers who had their attitude changed then tried harder to develop new ways of teaching and plan lessons that would meet all pupils' needs.

Through legislation and the funding system FUNDEF a movement of changing attitudes is underway in Brazil. Now the number of children enrolled in school has drastically increased and parents of children with disabilities send them to regular schools instead of "hiding them".

According to Lopez (1999) segregation is a reflection of human attitudes. Changing attitudes within the teaching profession is a long term process. At the case study school the AEE-teacher says that most teachers are willing to change although their thinking is still affected by existing attitudes which can be seen in their working practices. The regular teachers and the AEE-teacher don't work entirely from a child-centered pedagogy, but this is the goal of the AEE structure. The regular teachers often use the method that Freire (cited in Heaney, 2005) calls "banking". The children don't learn from their own knowledge through dialogues and this limits the degree of participation and development of the children. The children can, because of the warm welcoming atmosphere, fully participate in the social context. The limitation cited here concerns participation in the development of knowledge and affects every child, not only the children with disabilities.

To improve the educational standards the staff at the school commonly discuss issues and assist each other. This teamwork ethos is empowering and it gives teachers more courage to try new ideas. A problem however is that they limit their interaction to discussions. Neither Gabriella nor Angela the coordinator feels comfortable carrying out observations in the classroom. Observations could help to develop further the education being offered. As the situation is now, the teachers discuss what they consider to be the problems. If the lessons were to be observed by Gabriella and Angela they would be able to provide the teachers with more objective advice.

14.3 Other factors

The education system in Brazil is undergoing a process of democratisation. The government is promoting an equal education through FUNDEB. It is also promoting the right to education for all by supporting the development of the AEE system and the training of AEE teachers. The way AEE is structured allows a balanced approach to be taken: it provides extra help to children with disabilities during one shift of the day allowing these children to attend the regular classroom in the other shift. Another point is that the regular teachers are responsible for every child in the class, but they can get a lot of support from the AEE-teacher with regard to methods and materials. According to the Salamanca statement, a team should be responsible for providing an inclusive education rather than an individual teacher. In the case study school there is a team in place which the regular teacher can draw upon and ask for advice. However the regular teacher is responsible for the lessons in the classroom. This aspect of the structure helps regular teachers to think of children with disabilities as full members of the class. Most teachers try to learn how to achieve effective inclusionary education but there is

sometimes a lack of knowledge. The teacher training in Brazil doesn't provide any specialist training on inclusive education.

Another thing that affects the pedagogic activity is that the political system is not fully supportive of the school. There appear to be many different groups working against each other. The principal has to defend her teachers from the municipal government in order to keep her team together and there are new threats that have to be faced every year. The times when coordinators and principals are up for election are also quite stressful. The short period that staff members of the school are contracted makes long-term planning difficult. Much time is spent on efforts to maintain a stable staff group and maintain a stable cognitive approach to the way of working. There is little stability in the educational system due to the lack of cooperation between state and municipal authorities. The poor approach to inclusive education taken by the state doesn't affect work within the case study school (which is a municipal school) but it does concern staff and it is in contravention of the legal framework of the country.

15. Discussion

This study shows that the school works effectively in accordance with the legal framework and its focus is on freedom, solidarity, tolerance and democratic values. The school provides a good example of how social inclusion can work. The diversity at the school enriches all because it contributes to greater tolerance and decreases segregation between different groups in society. A good basis for democratic citizenship is provided which is a legal requirement of *LEI N° 9.394*. This is achieved by promoting inclusive values, involving all children and teaching that everyone is equally important. The structure demonstrates to children that it is possible to do things in different ways, and that this is acceptable. The teachers have started to realize that they need to adapt their teaching and make use of different methods. This will promote broader thinking, which according to Freire is one of the elements of learning.

The case study also demonstrates that the structure of AEE helps regular teachers to regard the child with disabilities as a fully member of the class. It has helped most of the teachers to change their attitudes towards people with disabilities. Those teachers that see children with disabilities just as anyone else tend to make more of an effort to get everyone to participate inside the classroom. From the beginning almost every teacher found it hard to have a child with disabilities in their class, but after a while when they got used to it, they didn't find the child with disabilities any different from the others. Almost every teacher thinks this change enriches every child in the class and that it is a matter of getting used to new things. To live and learn together is a very important skill in a democratic society. This ties in with the finding of Altman, Hill & Rabe that negative attitudes form the biggest obstacle to the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in ordinary classes.

Although the case study school was set in a foreign country, the results are relevant to us in our own domestic context. Negative attitudes make inclusion difficult. *The Salamanca statement* advocates that a team work approach within schools. Those teachers in the study who used their colleagues as a resource experienced a bigger change in attitudes than other teacher. To have a structure where teachers feel that they are supported, but still take fully responsible for the children in their class, is a way of achieving successful inclusion in terms of participation, freedom of speech and solidarity.

The theories on how attitudes affect pedagogical activity are confirmed in this study. The research also confirms that if teaching is going to be for everyone then being open to new ideas is important and divergent thinking. There is a strong traditional approach to teaching that contrasts with Freire's theories. This traditional approach is in evidence despite the requirements of the legal framework and the principal of the school advocating new approaches.

The results of this study are filtered through our own understanding and the understanding of an interpreter. This means that information is affected by our preconceptions. The subjects of the study were also aware of why we were there which might have affected their answers and the result. We are aware that these are factors that could have had an impact on the reliability of the study. To achieve as objective view as possible we recorded all interviews and observations. We then analysed them twice, once directly after the interview/observation and then again some time following the

field work when we went over the recorded material and compared this to our original notes. This helped us to see different point of views. The purpose of this study is not to explain any objective reality. Rather it is to understand case study situation in depth. According to Walker (in Merriam, 1994) multiple understandings are possible in a qualitative study. For that reason other conclusions might be reached were the research to be repeated.

15.1 Pedagogical Implications

The purpose of this study has been to examine how the educational institution that is the subject of the case study works with intellectually disabled people's rights to an equal education. Education is a means of increasing participation in society and a way to develop democracy. To live and learn together is a cornerstone of equal education and participation. The results of this study are important for school heads, because they demonstrate that inclusive education is facilitated through a structure where teachers help each other. It also shows that negative attitudes among the staff are a big obstacle towards successful inclusion, and this can also be addressed if good structures are in place.

Of relevance to the individual teacher are the differences and tensions between the prevailing system and attitudes at the school which are highlighted in the study. These findings can be used to address the prevailing situation and attitudes at the specific school.

This case study of a Brazilian school was very informative to us as educators. We took from it many ideas that will be of use when we work to implement inclusive education in our future role as teachers. We learnt for example that one can create learning material using one's own hands therefore a lack of budget needn't always be a problem. Also many tips and ideas are available through courses and through discussions with other educators.

A major problem for us as teachers, regardless of if one lives in Brazil or Sweden, is that teacher training does not offer any guidance or instruction specifically concerning inclusive education. There are many teachers who experience difficulties because they haven't been sufficiently trained to deal with classes that contain a wide range of abilities. If the teacher is not supported by the head or by other members of staff, it may be very difficult for him/her to know how to respond in the class and devise approaches that ensure an equal education for all in the class.

One of the most important attributes of good teaching is to have a commitment to inclusive education and to realise that all children bring something to the class regardless of whether they have difficulties or not. It is important to see all children as an asset and to ensure that opportunities are provided. Our host school in Brazil provided an excellent example of this being implemented in practice. All staff members at the school worked together and demonstrated solidarity in the face of difficulties, in order to improve the quality of the education being offered and ensure that everyone was made welcome. The school has a strong team ethos where everyone is considered to be of equal value from the headmaster to the cooking staff and there is hardly any hierarchy. Because members of staff shared this ethos of equality they set a good

example for the children, which is an important factor in an inclusive approach to education.

What we ultimately saw as the biggest problem, and this is still a dilemma for us as future teachers, is how does one develop a form of teaching that suits all children, given that teachers need to evaluate all pupils according to a single knowledge template. Many children are only taught using the traditional academic educational approach (which Freire terms "banking"). There are many other ways of achieving the objectives of the curriculum, but without the support of the principal and other staff it is likely to be difficult for a teacher to take a unilateral approach.

We are extremely grateful that we got to experience the school and see at first hand such a fine example of how inclusive education can be implemented and we look forward to sharing this knowledge with our Swedish colleagues.

15.2 Concluding words

Although there is still much work to be done to implement the principle of an equal education for all at the case study school in Brazil the provision of an inclusive education has to be seen as a process. Achieving a high level of social inclusion is a very significant step. The education on offer encompasses many people who are at different levels and this makes it hard to bring in big changes. The structure of AEE is a way to initiate these changes. If some schools demonstrate that the new system works and has very real benefits then this may have an influence on the thinking of politicians. It may help to start broader discussions on the practice of evaluation and other policies that have an impact on the ability of staff to provide a good quality education.

An effective structure can help reduce the isolation that regular teachers may feel and it can give them the courage they need to make inclusion commonly accepted practice for everyone. By taking this approach it should be possible to give every child an equal education, one that relies on egalitarian values.

16. Further Research

In this research we discovered the importance of having a good structure in place to facilitate a good standard of education. The focus of the study has been on a particular structure in a single country. It would be interesting to continue this research with comparative research of different structures of inclusive education in different countries. The aim would be to find out how different countries deal with inclusive education and also to find out about the strengths and the weaknesses of divergent approaches.

We have also discovered that politics and the corruption have a huge affect on the people who work in the field of education. We haven't in this study been able to understand in depth how it affects these people and their work. Follow-up research into this would provide a better understanding of these factors in practice in Brazil and further sharpen awareness of the problems of collaboration, particularly with regard to the transition from primary to secondary education.

Poor collaboration affects disabled children when they change from municipal- to state-schools. The education on offer in the two systems differs greatly and the state system does not have good policies for the implementation of inclusive education. The children in the case study school are very excited about their future. It would be extremely interesting to follow these children and monitor their future as it unfolds. Such a study might provide insights into the durability of efforts to promote equality of opportunity from child through to adulthood.

Another question is whether or not parents of children with disabilities are aware of their children's rights and how the government goes about providing information on this. To promote the development of inclusive education parents need to know of their rights. It is the government's job to inform the population. According to the legal framework the right of each individual to participate in society is fundamental. If the government doesn't inform the population they are not acting in accordance with their own legal framework.

The focus of this study was not on gender. According to *the Salamanca statement* women with disabilities suffer more from discrimination than men. The states have a responsibility to make sure that everyone participates in educational programmes. Further research in this area would find out whether or not women with disabilities participate on an equal basis, and what measures might be available to reduce any differences related to gender.

In Brazil as well as in other countries private schools are common. In Brazil primary level private schools are more successful at preparing students for university. It would therefore be interesting to find out what kind of knowledge the university system considers important. If they only place importance on academic knowledge of subjects, they are likely to be a hindrance to the development different kinds of knowledge in primary schools.

Another question related to university level education is as follows: why does the teacher training system place no importance on preparing teachers to implement inclusive education? This is also an interesting topic for further research because

teachers need to acquire skills in this area for inclusive education to be effectively implemented at all levels across the county.

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