

How are teachers promoting social inclusion?

A study of teachers' contribution to social inclusion in Georgian school

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inclusion?

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe teachers' practice in social inclusion in Georgian school. It tried to find out current situation regarding social dimension of inclusion. The study intended to reveal the effort teachers put in developing and improving this topic at school and find activities they use for better interaction among pupils in general and between regular students and students with special needs. The main question was *how are teachers promoting social inclusion?* Apart to this, the study asked what teachers know about inclusion in general and what kind of understanding of social inclusion they have. Research was conducted in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi.

The study chose qualitative approach for answering those questions. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and two observations were done in the same classes. The interpretational approach that was based on hermeneutics was used for the analysis of gained results.

The data revealed that teacher's knowledge in inclusive education was not very clear and based more on subjective impressions and judgments. The term social inclusion appeared to be a concept they were not familiar with, although the practice that was held by one teacher was corresponding to the ideas of social inclusion. Moreover, the practice teachers provided for helping interaction between students revealed an equal approach to all students and not specifically arranged activities for influencing the participation and interaction of students with special needs. What is more, the data showed a link between teacher's knowledge and practice because the one who knew more did more. The enthusiasm and creativity of teachers was also a component that affected the observed practice a lot. In whole, the observed data was reflecting the spoken one. There was no gap between those two sources.

Based on the findings the research formulated further implications for teachers. Firstly, because the knowledge both in inclusive education and in social inclusion appeared to be low and secondly, because there was a link between knowledge and practice, it was suggested to raise teachers' awareness regarding inclusion. In addition, it was also suggested to support enthusiasm and creativity as a determinant of teacher's fruitful practice.

Key words: social inclusion, interaction, cooperation, teacher's practice

Acknowledgement

The work with the master thesis has been an interesting and challenging process. It needs a lot of time, energy, and dedication. During the whole process through all the different procedures you get to know and experience what a careful work it is to collect the data, to communicate with people related to the study and to “communicate” with the results you obtain. As a conductor of a research I had possibility to feel it on myself and learn a lot through the mistakes I made and through the support I got from my supervisor and my fellow students.

Therefore, I would like to express my very great appreciation to my supervisor Jorun Buli-Holmberg for her valuable and constructive suggestions during this research work. Her willingness to give her time so generously has been very much appreciated.

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Best regards

Maia Javakhishvili

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1 Introduction

In this chapter you will find different sub-chapters that will lead you to the understanding of the problem stated in the research and familiarize you with the context where it was conducted. In the *general statement of the problem* you will be introduced the purposes of the study and the factors that affected the choice of that topic. About the sensitivity of social inclusion and its powerful influence on the interactions and school atmosphere will be discussed in the *significance of the study*. It will be explained why it is important to investigate this topic. Afterwards there comes the statement of *research questions* that provides the information about the primary research question and its supportive sub-questions, and the reason why they were defined as related and important issues. Moreover, the *key terms* of the study will be defined to make it understandable from the start what is meant under each term and to avoid any confusion afterwards. Furthermore, the chapter will guide you through the *background of inclusive education in Georgia*. The context of the research field is an important aspect to consider while facing the research process and its results. That chapter implies the overview of conventions and laws regarding inclusion, the steps made in the development of inclusive education in the country and the national curricular where all the achievements of this development are expected to be reflected. In the end you can have a look on the *organization of the study* that gives the opportunity to see the structure of the thesis and the discussed themes there.

1.1 General statement of the problem

The main aim of this project is to describe current situation in Georgian school regarding social dimension of inclusion. In particular, it interests in teacher's practice, what are they doing to help interaction of pupils, to make it more positive and cooperative. What kind of approach and activities they use. Teachers are the main facilitators of pupil's relationships in the school environment, especially when we are talking about inclusive setting. That is why they were chosen as main participants of the study. They have power to provide opportunities for frequent, meaningful, pleasurable, long lasting, and equal-status interactions for students

with and without disabilities that foster the attainment of affective outcomes for all students (Place & Hodge, 2001).

Current project has several focuses. It wants to find out teacher's knowledge of inclusion and social inclusion, their awareness of official documents and describe their practice in two directions: (a) regarding relationships of the whole class and (b) specifically between students with special needs and their classmates.

Furthermore, I will discuss how this particular dimension of inclusion is supported by national curricula of Georgia and by schools own regulations. Whether this issue is implemented in these documents and therefore, affects the teaching process and activities at school in general. National Curricular gives to teachers both authority and support to work for developing positive social atmosphere. For this reason, I decided to describe curriculum on national and school level. It is followed by general background of the country regarding inclusion, supporting legislations and discussion of national curricular. Afterwards you will read about the research problem, its sub-questions and definition of terms. The chapter ends with the organization of the thesis, guiding through chapters.

From my own experience at regular school the attention was always more on academic development and there were only few teachers who organized activities where pupils had possibility to work together as a team, to seek for a mutual aim, to develop the feeling of belonging and own importance as a part of that team. Besides, as far as I am informed, in many cases inclusion ends up only with physical attendance of a child with special needs in a regular classroom and it is doubtful whether there is any communication between this children and other fellows.

My personal interest was supported by finding the crucial importance of social relationships and the range of positive impacts it can have on a child's life and its development in general. If we refer to different authors and researches we will find positive effect of peer relationships even in ordinary class level. Hartup (1992) notes that peer relationships is important for adult's effective functioning and it contributes both social and cognitive development. Furthermore, adult adaptation is based on the adequacy with which child gets along with other children – “the single best childhood predictor of adult adaptation is not school grades, and not classroom behavior, but rather, the adequacy with which the child gets along with other children.” The same is supported by Kinsey (2000) “children's current and long-term social-

emotional development as well as cognitive and academic development is clearly affected by the child's social experiences with peers and adults" (p.18).

All these shapes and leads to the importance of the study.

1.2 Significance of the study

Maximizing the interaction between pupils with and without special needs is generally considered as an important aspect of inclusion (Koster, Nakken, Pijl, & Houten, 2009). And this increased opportunity is one of the main motives for parents to place their child with special needs in a regular school (Pijl, 2005). Though schools often are tend to choose as a priority the acquisition of academic knowledge rather than fostering socio-affective development of special needs student (Cambra & Silvestre, 2010). It is frequently questioned whether pupils with special educational needs in regular classrooms have interactions and friendships with their peers (Koster et al., 2009). Although attending regular class gives opportunity for contacts, research has shown that inclusion does not automatically lead to more social contacts and friendships with children without disabilities (Pijl, 2005). As an example, a study of Norwegian inclusive classrooms suggests that between 20 and 25% of pupils with special needs are not socially included in their peer group, whereas for their typical peers this is only 8% (Koster, Nakken, Pijl, & Houten, 2008).

This issue is extremely important because it is known that social isolation of child with special needs may harm their social-emotional development. This could result in low self-esteem, fear of failure, low self-confidence, fear to attend school, deviant behavior, lack of motivation, low performances on school tasks and result in negative effects like being bullied, drop-out and eventually possible referral to special settings (Pijl, 2005).

This is the setting where teachers play crucial role in mediating children's relationships. Many studies have focused on teacher's behaviors that might affect interaction among children. Those findings suggested that the use of cooperative activities or prompting and praising strategies to promote social interactions resulted in significant gains in social and academic adjustment for children with disabilities (Odom et al., 1998). Besides, such activities as field

trips, drama club, exhibitions, etc. are activities that release child from the pressure of educational expectations and allow free communication and expression of individuality among peers.

Interaction between regular students and students with special needs can even affect attitudes of regular students that by itself are great achievement. During a year the development of social interaction between those students was examined in an integrated pre-school. It was concluded that one year's participation in a structured, integrated setting fostered social interaction of students with special needs to a level comparable to that of regular students (Scheepstra, Nakken, & Pijl, 1999).

In addition to the described complexity of the issue there are some obstacles for social inclusion that makes the process of inclusion difficult. Research in Social and developmental psychology reveals that individuals tend to select friends on the basis of perceived similarities (self-selected grouping) (Place et al., 1998). Besides, as social rejection by peers is more common for children with disabilities (Odom et al., 1998) there is obvious challenge to encourage communication and interaction between students with special needs and their peers. Thus the practice of teachers becomes critical to inclusion and social inclusions.

Regarding the local level, the republic of Georgia as a member of United Nations (UN) has a political responsibility to provide quality education, social integration and participation in the public life for its citizens that also entails the state responsibility of meeting needs of people with special needs. Georgia has begun to work on the inclusive education only in the middle of nineties and with initiative of different nongovernmental organizations. After the country signed for the Salamanca Declaration the governmental level became more involved. They actively begun to collaborate with Norwegian colleagues and launched different projects on inclusive education (2006-2008, 2009-2011). This involved development of a national policy for inclusive education, preparation of training modules, adaptation of the physical, teaching and social environment of the selected schools, training of disabled children and their parents, introduction of inclusive teaching under the supervision of an elected coordinator, publication of a manual, establishment of libraries, increasing public awareness, and monitoring and evaluation (Ministry of Education and Science, 2005).

Although Georgia does not have a long history of inclusive education, the list of corresponding actions and projects raises some expectations. Therefore it should be

interesting to see how far the intentions are implemented in practice. In this particular case view it from the perspective of social inclusion.

Besides, because the relationships in school setting appears so powerful and important, it gives practical value to research, to see how this powerful “instrument” is used for improving inclusion and therefore the wellbeing of children. Knowledge of its current practice can help further support and development of this issue.

1.3 Research questions

How are teachers promoting social inclusion? – This is the main focus and main question of the study. However, aside to the practice of teachers in social dimension of inclusion, I found it useful to investigate the background of how teachers practice social inclusion. In particular, it was decided to see the knowledge and understanding of the concept of inclusion in general. To outline teacher’s view of the issue that in my opinion might determine the practice. Thus I wondered how aware teachers were about inclusion and what their perception of social inclusion was. I was interested how could it been linked with practice. After that I intended to find out firstly the general practice of social inclusion, teacher’s general approach to this issue of positive interaction among students and then narrow to interactions between regular students and students with special need. Therefore, for supporting the research question and broaden the expected results following **sub-questions** were raised:

- 1. How do teachers understand the concept of inclusion in general and in particular social inclusion?*
- 2. How do teachers practice inclusion and social inclusion?*
- 3. How do teachers promote interaction between regular students and students with special needs?*

1.4 Definition of terms

In this sub-chapter I will define the key terms that are used in the research so it is clear what is meant under each concept. I will define the term inclusion and social inclusion.

For the term of inclusive education I used the definition of Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. The reason is the specific of the study. Because teacher's education in Georgia is provided by the ministry therefore, I found appropriate to rely on their definition. Here it comes: *Inclusive education implies the involvement of students with all kind of special needs in educative process together with peers. It also includes teaching with individual and/or modified educational plan* (Inclusive Education, 2009).

It will not be out of place to make a comparison of this definition with the definition of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to see how the Georgian ministry meets UNESCO's vision towards this topic. According to UNESCO *"inclusive education is seen as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education"* (UNESCO, 2009).

The difference between these two definitions is that the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia determines the involvement of student in educative process while UNESCO extends the participation of learners to culture and community. However, as it was discussed in previous chapter the participation outside the classroom is also supported in the national curricular (see chapter 1.4 a). It might mean that the definition given by the ministry appears narrower than the corresponding statements in the curricular. Though the key – participation/involvement is common. Thus the main orientation is still followed.

As for the term social inclusion: As far as I looked for the definition, there is no clear agreement about terms and no clarification of concepts that are most commonly used regarding this topic. It changes from author to author (Koster et al., 2009). I will rely on the study of Marloes Koster and his colleagues who revised plenty of appropriate literature and gave main concepts describing social dimension of inclusion. According to their study, most used terms: social inclusion, social participation and social integration are used almost synonymously and share four key themes: friendship/relationships, contact/interactions, perception of pupils of special educational needs and acceptance by classmates. Although

authors chose the term social participation as most suitable, I will pick and use social inclusion that sounds more specific for me while talking about inclusion. Besides, I will base only on the first two key themes: friendship/relationships and contact/interactions. In these concepts I mean being involved and participate in common activities both on the lesson and on nonobligatory activities, like excursion, party, event, etc. And share of the responsibilities connected to these activities. In short, it implies shared activities and responsibilities. I will support it with the definition of Sherrill who states that social inclusion is a nature and intensity of personal interactions between classmates with and without disabilities. And this interaction is assumed as positive (Sherrill, 1998).

In the end I will also clarify that I will use the word ‘student’, ‘pupil’ and ‘child’ interchangeably meaning the child of school age.

1.5 Background of inclusive education in Georgia

In this part I will present the legislation and laws first that is connected to the responsibility developing inclusive education in Georgia. Because the study is done in a Georgian context you will also read about the history how inclusive education started and how it developed further.

The development of inclusive education in Georgia corresponds with universally recognized norms and principles of some important international conventions. The process of special and inclusive education and the quality of services in Georgia are under development. After the first intention of local and international organizations to challenge existing system of education for children with special needs, Georgia began to become a part of international instruments concerning human rights protection, which are as follows:

- UNICEF Convention on the rights of children (1994);
- European Convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms (1999);

- N50/155 Resolution Adopted by the UN General Assembly Concerning Convention on the Rights of the Child (2000);
- Additional protocol N12 to The European convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms (2001);
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111) concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation Adopted on 25 June 1958 by the General Conference of the International Labour Organization at its forty-second session (1995);
- Convention Concerning Vocational Guidance and Vocational Training in the Development of Human Resources (1995);
- Geneva Convention on employment policy, 1964, International Labour Organization (1996).

Our country also recognizes (but has not been ratified yet):

- UN Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons” (1971);
- Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons” (1975);
- Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities” (1993);
- International Pacts on Civil, Political, Economic, Cultural and Social Rights (1995);
- Geneva Convention N117 (1962) on the aims and norms of social policy. European Social Policy Charter (with amendments) (1996);
- Salamanca Declaration and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994), which is a guiding document of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.

According to the Georgian **Law of General Education**, everyone has equal right for education. Moreover, same law says that the government provides and funds people with special needs through special educational programme for giving them proper education help in social adaptation and integration. One of the prior aims of the educational policy in a field

of the general education is the implementation and development of an inclusive education (Law about General Education, 2007).

The history of developing inclusive education in Georgia is young. The issue of children with special needs was raised by local and international organizations in the middle of nineties. Main concern was to change the educational system and to support an integration of children with special needs into society and their independent life by bringing governmental and the society's attention to this issue. Different projects were launched for creating day care and rehabilitation centers and for promoting placement of children with disabilities in regular schools. After the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science has enacted the new law that says that "general educational institutions are authorized to create conditions for inclusive education" (Article 31, paragraph 4), the situation has changed. This was reflected in projects that were held in Georgia. It will be discussed later.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia together with the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training launched the pilot project on inclusive education (2006-2008). This project involved development on both the policy level and practical level that was already described in the chapter 1.2.

One of the benefits of this project was the formation of the **multidisciplinary team**- this is a team of professionals including 3 psychologists, 2 special teachers and 2 occupational therapists. The function of this multidisciplinary team is to help schools of Tbilisi in developing an inclusive education. Their responsibility is to identify the child with special needs, to assess their needs and abilities, to give recommendations to parents how to effectively involve the child with special needs in the educational processes and to monitor his or her academic and social achievements.

A **group of experts** was also formed and funded. The group responsibility is to work out the model of education of children with special needs that would enable full access to high quality education and would be a basis of appropriate legislation and action plan development. It contain the rules of regulation of the educational process, the rules how to create, fulfil and monitor individual education plans. In addition to this, their responsibility is to adapt tests of assessment, discuss professional standards for teachers, make

recommendations for special programmes in higher education and so forth.

There was another project conducted with the support of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. That lasted from 2009 till 2011 and aimed to develop inclusive education in schools of nine selected regions of Georgia. Main goals of this project were: identification and assessment of children with special needs development of individual education plans for them; preparation of school staff; adaptation of physical environment within target schools, development of social awareness and so forth.

The centre of teachers' professional education started to create standards for special teachers since 2009 in order to help them to improve the theoretical and practical knowledge and consequently to provide schools with better qualified special teachers. The centre defines a special teacher as a person who is qualified enough to assess the special needs pupils in the process of education, to define and use appropriate strategies to increase the quality and to consult teachers, parents and people involved in the education of special needs children.

The centre of teachers' professional education determines four types of special teachers: (1) teacher for children with intellectual disabilities, (2) teacher for children with behavioural and emotional disorders, (3) teacher for children with hearing problems/disorders and (4) teachers for children with perceptual disorders. Each of them has standards that are specific and standards that are mutual for all of them.

This was an overview of the background of Georgia regarding inclusive education. This is the basis of current position that will help to give a better understanding of the gained data in the study.

National curricular is a document that reflects a political desire of the government regarding education. Therefore, I wanted to see if the subject of my study, social inclusion was somehow mentioned in it and if teachers were obliged or encouraged to benefit pupil's interactions at that level.

During last years the national curricular of Georgia was modified several times. When the current study was conducted the new national curricular was already in progress. For this reason, our overview will be based on the last version of it, national curricular 2011-2016.

I will list the statements that I find relevant to the research topic. That helps to define whether cooperation, interaction and social relationships is considered as important to focus on and whether national curricular authorizes school and teachers to support this domain.

While going through the document I found several chapters where my question of interest was presented. Firstly, the topic inclusion (chapter 5) was separately displayed, defining inclusive education, special needs of students and other related themes. Inclusive education was defined as the involvement of students with special needs in educative process together with peers.

The paragraph for Individual educational plan stated that it should consider the social, emotional, behavioral and other domains of student. Thus although social inclusion was not separately displayed and discussed as a concept and part of inclusion, the need of social domain was underlined in different paragraphs of the document. Specifically:

- (a) Part 1 Chapter 1 about main principles of teaching and learning regulates the general culture of schools and says that school should support and protect the equality and mutual respect. They should establish and support the creative and cooperative environment for its members. Schools should organize and support sport, art, club activities, school projects where pupils of different classes will be involved together with teachers and parents.
- (b) There is a separate paragraph for head teachers giving them responsibility to analyze achievements of each student both in academic field and social relationships; their participation is sport, club activities and different events. Consider important aspects of student's academic, physical, emotional and social development.
- (c) National curricular obliges schools to create a new educational plan for each academic year that includes individual educational plan for students with special needs (chapter 3).
- (d) It also authorizes schools to offer students additional academic or educative services (chapter 3). It means schools are not restricted and can use their own approaches and ideas to achieve the goals of national educational aims.
- (e) Chapter 6 about methods specifically talks about positive communication and interaction defining its exclusive importance in educative environment. It states the unique and different nature of each student and use of individual approach to them.

The involvement of students is separately discussed in the same chapter. It talks about importance of being involved not only in own learning but also involved in learning of classmates. “On the lesson while working in groups, participating in projects, planning or performing students help each other to better understand concepts, acquire new skills and abilities and forming independence. Therefore, the guarantee of student’s attendance is one of the most important objects of care for the school” (National Curricular, 2011).

To sum up, although the concept of social inclusion is not involved and used as a separate term in the national curricular of Georgia it is still discussed and stressed under different chapters and topics. It acknowledges student’s socio-emotional domain and positive interaction as important. In whole, the national curricular reflects the desire to support all students being socially involved in a cooperative atmosphere and sends these messages to schools and teachers.

1.6 Organization of the thesis

Chapter 1 deals with the statement of the problem, clarifying its significance and reasons of choosing the topic. It is followed by the research questions and definition of terms.

Afterwards you will read about the background of Georgia regarding related conventions, laws and legislations and the history of the development of inclusion there. In addition, you will find the review of the most related statements of national curricular.

Chapter 2 describes theories comprehensive to the study, like Bronfenbrenner’s ecological approach, Vygotsky’s social constructionist theory, Feuerstein’s theory of mediated learning and Bandura’s social learning theory. Besides, it reflects ideas of different authors and results of researches about cooperation, relationships and interactions in the school setting. It is explained why those theories were chosen and how they are linked to the research topic. In the end you will read about teacher’s role in inclusion, the power and influence they have in establishing positive relationships and attitudes between children.

Chapter 3 contains the description of applied design and approach. It refers to issues like research methods, instruments, sampling, data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations and validity considerations.

During the presentation of this information it will be explained why was the qualitative design preferable and which factors influenced the choice of two sources of data. Why was the interview an appropriate method and how observation supports it is also clarified here. The description of the interview guide will be also provided in this part. You will read about the detailed content of it. Besides, the chapter covers the procedure of data collection, the topics about pilot study and the process of main study, which steps were taken and what experiences were met by researcher on the way of conducting the study. Moreover, it includes the description of analysis of the data. Information about philosophical approach the analysis was based on. Ethical issues are also considered here. You will read which steps were taken to secure participants of any harm and to ensure the quality of the study. The chapter ends with the discussion of concepts of validity and reliability, talking about the suggestions that were followed to strengthen the value of the research.

Chapter 4 implies the analysis and discussion of the data gained through the interviews and observations. It aims to give a systematic and clear representation of results. Specifically, it holds a discussion about teachers' understanding and knowledge of inclusion based on the obtained data. Under this main theme will be presented teachers' knowledge of both inclusion and social inclusion and the understanding of their own role in the process of inclusion. This part is followed by teachers' knowledge of political documents that are related to inclusion. Particularly how this topic is reflected in those papers, and what is their knowledge about this.

Next part of this chapter reveals teacher's practice in social inclusion, review of what they are doing for generally promote interactions among students. Different activities are listed that show the approach of teachers to the process of their lessons. In the end the issue is narrowed on the interaction specifically between regular students and students with special needs, if there are actions that are taken to promote this field and what are they.

Chapter 5 contains the summary of results of the study and conclusion that were drawn from them. The flow of this chapter follows the research questions. First, conclusions are made on the topic of teacher's understanding of inclusion and social inclusion; what appeared to be the level of awareness of teachers regarding this theoretical knowledge. Afterwards there are

presented conclusion about the practice, what revealed to be the effort teachers put in supporting positive interactions among students. Then will be answered the last question of the study, how teachers promote interaction between regular students and students with special needs? All this is followed by brief summary of the finding regarding the primary research question, how do teachers promote social inclusion?

The last sub-chapters deal with future implications of the study that were based on the findings. Some suggestions are listed there. You can also read about the circumstances and factors that affected the results of the research.

2 Theoretical framework

This chapter deals with the theoretical framework. It reviews different related theories to the main question of the study – how are teachers promoting social inclusion? Because social inclusion implies themes like friendship/relationships and contact/interactions current study is grounded on theories that emphasize the role of social interaction to show how complex it is and how diverse its benefit can be.

For supporting these themes first I will overview theories of authors like Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner, Feuerstein and Bandura. Afterwards I will review different discussions and studies about cooperation and small group activities. Teacher's need and meaning in those activities will also be stressed.

2.1 Theories supporting the importance of environment and interaction

Theoretical perspectives discussed in coming sub-chapter have a tight links with inclusive education and philosophy. Social inclusion as a particular part of inclusion is specifically focused on interactions between students. Its goal is to reach the positive communication between them. Therefore, there are several circumstances that can affect this process. Firstly, it is a teacher, as a main facilitator in the school setting, who directly influences the atmosphere in the classroom and plays an important role model. Then it is interaction itself that has a great power in making modifications in thinking thus in actions. Moreover, the ideology and priority of the system reflected in the regulations means a lot, directing teachers to different objectives. All the theoretical perspectives presented in this chapter deal exactly with these issues. On the one hand theories of Vygotsky and Feuerstein both support the importance of interaction, stress the role of mediation by others and how it results in the new way of thinking and acting. On the other hand, it is the ecological system's theory with its holistic view that underlines circumstances indirectly affecting the center of the system –the child, and this indirect effect is the desired approach given from the educational system to teachers. And it is the social learning theory that again acknowledges the behaviors of

authoritative others – teachers in our case, as a model and determinant of behaviors of children. These links defined the choice of listed theories.

2.1.1 Ecological System's Theory, Bronfenbrenner

Bronfenbrenner's theory about ecology of human development says that development reflects the influence of several environmental systems. Therefore, to understand human development, it is needed to consider the entire ecological system in which the growth occurs. He said that there are layers of context that an individual interacts with. In particular, this system distinguishes environmental subsystems that are progressively distant from the child but nevertheless help support and guide human growth. Each contains roles, norms and rules that can powerfully shape psychological development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The systems are the following: *microsystem*, *mesosystem*, *exosystem*, and *macrosystem*. The first the *microsystem* is closest to the child. It refers to the immediate surroundings and social environment in which the child is directly involved. It includes the family, peers, school and, neighborhood. This setting is a place where children can engage in face-to-face interaction. Activity, role, and interpersonal relations are the main builders of this system. Specifically, the term *dyad* is the basis that also directly corresponds to the topic of current research. Therefore, I will clarify what it refers to.

As Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 56) states “*a dyad is formed whenever two persons pay attention or participate in one another's activities*”. Aside from the importance it has itself, dyad enables larger interpersonal structures. Among three forms of dyads I want to underline *an observational dyad* and *a joint activity dyad*. The first occurs when one member pays attention to the activity of other. What is important here, this attention not only needs be noticed but being responded back. And the second, joint activity that includes two participants who perceive themselves as doing something together. Usually these activities are different butt corresponding to each other as part of common activity. Reciprocity is an important aspect here. It means that action of one influences other and the way round. Members of dyad need to coordinate their activities regarding each other and this fosters the acquisition of interactive skills a lot (ibid.).

Mesosystem is the circle of the ecological system that refers to the relations of different structures of the child's microsystem. For example, that might be interconnections between home and school. *Exosystem* includes one or more settings that do not involve the person as an active participant but events that occur and happen there has its influence on child development. Those might be parents' work place, sibling's school etc. *Macrosystem* is the outer circle of the ecological mode. It refers to beliefs, traditions or ideology of cultures or sub-cultures. Laws, economic condition are also parts of it, affecting interactions and environments of all other layers.

The point of the ecological model is that each component interacts with other component, making a highly complex context the child grows up in. Another point is that the child isn't just a passive recipient of what goes on in his or her life. The child at the center of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model interacts directly with the people in the microsystems and the effects of the interaction go both ways. As people affect the child, so the child has an influence on them. Another point is that nothing ever remains static. As a result, the child, systems, and environments are ever changing. Milestones and life events occur as time passes, the child grows, and the contexts change.

The school setting, classroom environment and interaction with teachers and peers is placed in the first closest system to the child called microsystem. The people and institutions the child interacts within that environment make up the microsystem, give norms and rules. Hence, the whole school environment is one of the closest environmental systems individual interacts with and that influences and affects the development. Additionally, it is the macrosystem that includes official regulations and cultural traditions and that indirectly affect even microsystems.

2.1.2 Social Constructivist Theory, Vygotsky

There are theories that perceive individual development apart from its social and cultural context and discuss it separately. In contrast, Vygotsky supported the idea, that individuals are involved in the social, cultural, and historical context. He wrote that "the efforts of individuals are not separate from the kinds of activities in which they engage and the kinds of institutions of which they are part" (Rogoff, 2003, p.50). This became a basis for an implementation of individual into its context and thus basis to its holistic approach.

Central to Vygotsky's theory is also the idea that when children take part in activities through guidance of more skilled person this participation helps children in internalization of tools of thinking and to develop their skills of problem solving that they already practiced in social context. What is more, cognitive processes occur twice in individual's life, once on the social plane and then through internalization it moves and forms individual plane (Rogoff, 1990, p. 14). Vygotsky finds important to clear issues about the relationship between learning and development and about characteristic of this relation as well. He states that these two processes are interconnected and they immediately begin together with the birth of a child. Moreover, he believes in absolutely different power of school learning. On this basis Vygotsky built a concept that he found dramatically important, this is the *zone of proximal development*. He discusses two levels of development: actual developmental level that is current and already reachable abilities of a child. Apart to this we also have the potential ability of a child, what could be reached not independently but with assistance. This distance between this already established and matured mental functions and with the level that is in process of creation and could be potentially reached was called by Vygotsky the zone of proximal development.

Thus, social constructivist theory of Vygotsky considers the interaction with others as extremely important. Social context and interaction in learning is discussed as basic of child's development. During these interactions more capable others mediate child's environment by providing the tools for solving problems and by focusing attention on relevant information around (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, it is the *dialogue with more competent others* that introduce the new way of thinking and patterns of thought to children. Eventually, thinking and communication processes of children become internalized after repeated exposure to, skills become incorporated into child's mental system. This is how cooperative activity influences learning. In other words, functions are first formed in the form of relations among children and then become mental function for the individual.

The choice of this theory in this study is related to the importance it gives to social context, interactions and cooperation in it, and the guidance and mediation of others.

2.1.3 Theory of structural cognitive modifiability and mediate learning experience, Feuerstein

Reuven Feuerstein's approach to development is mentioned here for two reasons. Firstly, to state the flexible view of human organism and intelligence and therefore the second, the effect of mediation, belief that learning can be expanded and enriched through proper interaction.

I will not go deep into the theory, just give a brief look on the main points of it.

Feuerstein worked with low functioning and disadvantaged individual and believed in modifiability. He rejected static view of intelligence. In opposite, he claimed the potential to change if provided with the opportunities to engage in the right kind of interaction. He believed in so called structural cognitive modifiability through the mediated learning that means change in thinking and development of efficient thinking skills needed to become independent and autonomous learner, to adapt to requirements of society.

He found that human development is socio-cultural in its nature and not only biological. Therefore, the modification of cognitive and motivational functions by interaction was observed in his practice. According to the theory, there are two basic ways when an individual is modified through this interaction with his environment. The first is the direct exposure to stimuli and the second is the process of mediated learning. It takes place when another person serves as a mediator between the learner and the environment (Feuerstein, 2010).

2.1.4 Social learning theory, Bandura

Social learning theory is pretty comprehensive to current study as it states the importance of the environment in children's learning process. Albert Bandura (1977) says that behaviors are learned from the environment. Children observe the people around them and their behaviors. Individuals that are observed are called models. Children have many influential models around them who provide examples of behaviors. Children tend to observe those people and imitate afterwards. Important point is that people around the child can influence the probability of repeating or stopping that behavior as well. They do it by their respond with

either reinforcement or punishment. For example the approval will strengthen that imitated behavior more. A child will behave in a way it believes will earn this positive reinforcement.

Reinforcement can be external or internal. If a child is approved from parents or peers, this approval is an external reinforcement, but feeling happy about being approved is an internal reinforcement. Additionally, children also see and consider others experiences, what happened to them when they decided to imitate or not to imitate someone's actions. Different qualities that are seen as rewarded lead to attachment to a model who posses those qualities (McLeod, 2011).

This theory of social learning strengthens the importance of a teacher that she can and she should be a role model for children. That she can make difference by establishing desired atmosphere and modeling desired attitude and behavior among children. Besides, knowledge of this power is important as well, that they know how children imitate observed behaviors and be careful with this ability.

2.1.5 Different theories of cooperative learning

According to Cohen (as cited in Gillies, 2007) cooperative learning involves students working together in small groups to accomplish shared goals. It is widely recognized as a teaching strategy that promotes socialization and learning among students from kindergarten through college and across different subject areas. During cooperative activities individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members. Slavin (as cited in Gillies, 2007) proposed that it is the one of the greatest educational innovations of recent times.

An important advantage of placing students in cooperative learning groups and having them work together with a wide variety of peers to complete assignment is the resultant sense of belonging, acceptance, and caring (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1984).

There are lots of studies confirming positive outcomes of cooperative learning, such as higher achievement and greater productivity, more supportive, and committed relationships, and greater psychological health, social competence, and self-esteem (ibid.). Psychological health is affected in a number of ways. Cooperativeness is positively related to emotional maturity,

well-adjusted social relations, strong personal identity, ability to cope with adversity, social competencies, and basic trust in and optimism in people. Personal ego-strength, self-confidence, independence, and autonomy are all promoted by being involved in cooperative efforts. The powerful effects cooperation has on so many outcomes makes cooperative learning one of the most important tools educators have. Cooperative experiences are absolute necessary for healthy development (ibid.)

Studies about cooperative learning showed great benefits for both regular students and for medium and low ability level students. Shachar (as cited in Gillies, 2007) reported that in the first case it affected student's cognitive involvement and high motivation. As for the medium and low ability level students it improved academic achievements and social behavior as well.

According to Battistich and Watson, and Jordan and Le Metaias (as cited in Gillies, 2007) the development of positive social attitudes towards other group members is also enhanced by cooperative learning experience. Furthermore, it encourages more positive attitudes toward school.

The success of cooperative learning as a pedagogical practice is reported in many cases. That it promotes socialization among students and as said before, motivation to learn. In cooperative learning students have opportunity to see how their peers contribute to the working groups, to realize their worth and to get to know them in person.

When children work cooperatively, they get better understanding of others. They learn to give and receive information and develop new ideas and perspectives on how others think. They also start to communicate in more socially appropriate ways. Mercer (as cited in Gillies, 2007) says that the interaction with others in reciprocal dialogues promotes children to learn the use of language differently, to explain new ideas and realities, and therefore, to construct new ways of thinking and feeling. Besides, King (as cited in Gillies, 2007) states that cooperative learning provides opportunities for children to actively interact with others and negotiate new understandings, to appropriate new and creative ways of thinking about topics under discussion. In effect, in the environment that encourages children to test out their ideas freely, cooperative learning gives opportunities to children to co-construct new knowledge.

Putman, Markovchik, Johnsons, and Johnson (as cited in Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1984) reported that students with learning disabilities were more likely to be accepted by their peers when they had the opportunity of working with them in cooperative groups.

Sharan and Shaulov (as cited in Gillies, 2007) believe that compared to the whole-class settings or unstructured groups, students are more productive and learn more when they work cooperatively together in groups. The benefit attributed to cooperative learning experiences can be extended to students with multiple or severe disabilities as well. According to Hunt, Staub, Alwell, and Goetz (as cited in Gillies, 2007) they successfully learned to acquire basic communication and motor skills in cooperative groups and were able to generalize these skills to other sessions in different cooperative groups.

Lots of authors believe that there is a power to working in groups. Groups started its existence since there have been humans. It is obvious that groups exceed individuals, especially when performance requires multiple skills, judgments, and experiences. Despite of that, there are many educators who miss opportunities to use groups to benefit student learning and increase their own success (Johnson et al., 1984).

2.1.6 Teachers' role in social inclusion

Teacher's role in the classroom setting is crucial. They affect both academic and social development of children, their attitudes, relationships and values. They establish atmosphere in the classroom and play important role in wellbeing of pupils.

Entering school does not automatically mean becoming part of the community. Being involved in relationships, liked and respected does not always happen by self (Johnson et al., 1984). The social behaviors that students demonstrate define the success of interactions with others. However children are not born instinctively knowing how to interact effectively with others. Only the need of it does not help the interpersonal and group skills to appear. Students barely demonstrate these skills and often they need to be taught those social behaviors that are required when they are interacting with others. Especially with younger children, teachers will need to teach these behaviors in accurate ways so that young children understand not only

how to use them but also the effect these behaviors are likely to have on others. It is viewed as must for students to be taught these skills and be motivated to use them (ibid.).

Often happens that students are told to help each other but are not trained how to do so. Gillies and Ashman (as cited in Gillies, 2007) studied children who participated in trained and untrained cooperative groups and found that trained children were more cooperative, gave more help to each other, and used language with more courage inside.

Teachers are able to foster cognitive growth in children by creating situations that give children the opportunity to interact with others where they learn to exchange ideas, model patterns of thinking and reasoning, and solve problems (Gillies, 2007).

Teachers can facilitate children's interaction in groups by ensuring such details like sitting in close proximity to other group members so they can hear what is being said, seeing each other's faces, and participating in discussion with their peers. When children engage with peers in this way, they learn to read each other's nonverbal body language and respond to each other's social cues.

The role of teacher in establishing cooperative learning in the classroom is critically important for its success. Johnson and Johnson believe (as cited in Gillies, 2007) that this involves the knowledge in how to structure cooperative learning groups, including their size and composition; the type of task set; expectations for student behavior; individual and group responsibilities; and the teacher's role in monitoring both the process and outcomes of the group experience.

Regarding tasks, teacher should ensure that they are comprehensive to all students that children with special needs are able to participate as well. It is the teacher's responsibility to make appropriate modifications to tasks so it is inclusive of all students.

Teacher's awareness defines the approaches one will use and therefore defines the success one will have. Nowadays teachers realized the academic and social benefits to students from working with others, sharing ideas, discussing differences, and learning to deal with conflict in ways that are cognitively manageable and socially acceptable (Gillies, 2007). Thus, grouping students became a standard practice in many classrooms.

The research of Rutter, Maughn, Sammons, Hillman, and Mortimore (as cited in Gillies, 2007) on effective schools that make a difference in student's outcomes clearly acknowledges the key role teacher's play in implementing effective pedagogical practices to maximize student's learning. Ayres, Sawyer, and Dinham (as cited in Gillies, 2007) after studying the factors associated with the effective teaching found that teacher qualities such as friendliness, sense of humor, approachability, knowledge of content area, repertoire of teaching strategies, passion for their subject were important attributes of successful teachers. In addition, the willingness to try different things was other important attribute of effective teachers. In other words, the willingness to create positive classroom environments where students were encouraged to work with others and accept responsibility for their own learning and were challenged to think.

Some other study of Roseth, Johnson, Johnson, and Fang (as cited in Gillies, 2007) about the effects of cooperative learning found that there was such a strong positive relationship between interpersonal attraction or friendship and academic achievement that they recommended that teachers who want to increase student's academic achievements need to ensure that each student has a friend. They said that friendship is a very powerful determinant of academic achievement, and teachers will need to structure group experiences that enable students to build those social relationships that help to develop mutual respect.

In the end about the interconnectivity of different dimensions, like the physical organization of the classroom, the learning task, teacher's instructional and communicative behaviors, and student's academic and social behaviors. All they are so related and interdependent that the change in one dimension affects what happens in other dimension (Gillies, 2007). It is important to understand this connectivity, because as schools are expected to ensure to be more student-centered and students are more actively involved in their own learning, changes are likely to occur in how classroom of the future are structured. In particular such learning environments are likely to be more open and have flexible grouping arrangements that enable students move among small groups to work on different types of tasks.

2.1.7 Summary

If we sum up all discussed theories it will become obvious how this theoretical framework will help to analyze the data. They give meaning and support the key themes of the study like teachers' role in interaction of students and the influence and effect of those interactions and positive communications itself.

Ecological system's theory clarifies the role and importance of school and teachers as caretakers in child's life firstly by placing the child in a center of different environmental systems and secondly by placing school into the microsystem that is closest to the child. What is more, the circle of macrosystem includes the political documents as a determinant of functioning of other systems. Regarding this study, we are interested in the role of national curricular in teachers' practice. Feuerstein's theory together with social constructivist theory strengthens the importance and effect of mediation. Social learning theory underlines the power of modeling and imitation of different behaviors. Moreover, different authors and theories agree about the crucial role of interaction and cooperative learning, on its benefit both on academic and social development and other aspects of well being of a child as well.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and discusses the approach and methodology that was used for the preparation of research, collecting data, analysis and interpretation of findings. Why were they chosen and how were they used. I will discuss why the qualitative approach was preferred and why was interview and observation method more appropriate for collecting data. How it fits to answer the research questions.

In this chapter you will also find following methodological aspects: research design, data collection methods, sampling procedure of the study, ethical issues and validity of the study.

3.2 Research design and strategy

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) qualitative research is a multi method approach that involves interpretive, naturalistic view to its subject. Qualitative researcher studies things in its natural setting, trying to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of meaning that people bring to them (as cited in Creswell, 2007, p.36). Thus the main characteristic of a qualitative research is firstly the collection of data directly in the field where participants experience the interested issue. Having face-to-face interaction and watching individuals in their context without artificial modifications of it is the usual way of conducting the study. Secondly, the role of researcher is very active. They rarely use other researchers work but rather develop their own protocols and interview, or observe problem under study themselves. When it goes to the choice of the sources of data qualitative researchers prefer multiple methods. This helps to develop a complex picture of the problem and identify complex interactions and larger pictures of the issue (Creswell, 2007). Why is it a preferable and relevant design?

Usually the research question(s) itself leads to the strategy of answering them (Yin, 2009). The purpose of current study was to find out how do teachers understand the concept of inclusion/social inclusion, how they practice and promote it in Georgian schools. For

revealing teachers' understanding of those topics researcher needs to focus on learning the perspective and meaning teachers bring to the issue (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Moreover, the study seeks to understand how teachers are promoting interactions between students, what activities or approaches they are using to contribute to this aspect of inclusion. It wants to see how this particular phenomenon is functioning in the particular environment that is a school setting, specifically the classroom – the place where teachers and pupils interact most and that is a natural context for them.

This is how the needs of the study and requirements of qualitative research correspond to each other.

3.3 Data collection

For collecting data was decided to use two methods - interview and observation. On the one hand, it is common and natural in qualitative research to have multiple sources. On the other hand, the choice was affected by some other reasons as well. First reason for this decision was small size of a sample. As a beginner researcher to prevent additional difficulties I had decided ahead to narrow my sample on two respondents and on two classes that is not big enough for ensuring the quality of results. So, for rescuing the validity of the study additional method was needed. Secondly, aside to advantages of interview method, the information obtained through it has a weakness being biased by participants or not being recalled accurately. Therefore, observation method benefits by directly watching at the behavior and environment of participants. It gives additional source of data for verifying the information acquired by other methods (Gall et al., 2007).

All these circumstances led to the multiple sources of data, in particular – interview and observation. However, interview was the primary method here and the data obtained through observation was just used to support the former one.

3.3.1 Qualitative interview

Qualitative interview is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p.1). It helps to understand experiences and events where we have not participated. It is interested in the understanding and knowledge of the interviewed individuals. The interview method was found appropriate for the research because of its purpose to draw out views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2009). The main advantages of this method is building rapport with respondents and possibility of following up their answers for more information and clarification that is very suitable to a qualitative study (Gall et al., 2007).

There are three different formats of interview in the family of qualitative interview: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews. The first format is characterized with offering to the interviewee only the subject of discussion without specific questions and detailed interview guide (Rubin et al., 1995). In opposite, the structured interview includes closed-form questions and it does not aim to obtain depth. The third semi-structured form of interview introduces the topic first. Then it guides the discussion by specific questions for obtaining additional information and for going more deeply in topic (Gall et al., 2007).

The nature of interview was again determined by the purpose of the study. In order to answer the questions about teachers' knowledge and experience in social inclusion, *semi-structured interview* guide was formulated. Because I had a specific interest in the broader concept of inclusion I intended to direct my respondents to it and avoid discussion on topics not related to my objective.

Interview guide was divided in three parts, starting with ice-melting demographical questions about age, subject of teaching, years of experience in teaching, experience with students with special needs, attended trainings if any, and the amount of teaching hours per week. The second part was dealing with inclusion asking their understanding of this concept and personal attitudes first. Then it switched to social inclusion. Following questions were aimed to find out teachers' knowledge of documents like national curricular and school regulations regarding inclusive issues. The last part was focusing on understanding teachers' role in interaction of students generally and specifically between regular students and students with special needs. In addition, the third part was also seeking for the practical experience of teachers, activities they used for positive communication and the frequency of them.

The interview guide was originally made in English and translated into Georgian afterwards.

A tape recorder was used to record the interviews.

3.3.2 Observation

Observation is a method that allows researchers to establish their own version of reality (Gall et al., 2007, p 276). The data that is obtained from research participants themselves might be biased by desire to give socially preferable responses or might not be recalled accurately during the interview. Observing directly the behavior and the environment where the interested event occurs is an alternative way of collecting data. And if observation method is used properly, it enables to prevent the data from potential inaccuracy and bias (ibid.).

Furthermore, referring only to the interview data in the researcher's report does not provide as complete description of phenomena than can be reached by combining them. Observations provide additional source of data to support and prove information gained by other methods (Gall et al., 2007).

In this study observation was used too look at the flow of lessons and activities that were used meanwhile; to record the way teacher engaged students in common activities and supported their interactions. Therefore, it gave possibility to couple and to compare the spoken data of teachers with their observed practice.

There are two main *types of observation*, reactive and nonreactive. The former implies the awareness of participants being observed whereas in nonreactive observation participant do not know about it (Gall et al., 2007). Observation that was done for current study was reactive, so participants knew they were observed during the lesson. However, they did not know the exact objectives of the study.

Before starting main study I first presented myself to pupils and briefly described my task by explaining that I was interested what kind of lessons they had and what were they doing during them. The particular focus of the observation was not revealed. The reason was to avoid their behavior being affected that direction and to have as natural atmosphere as possible.

The role of observer during the observation varies. It depends on the level of involvement and participation of researchers in observed setting and on the level of interactions with observed individuals (Gall, et al., 2007). I as an observer had a role of observer-participant that means I was in the setting just to collect the data. Primarily as an observer I still at some point was interacting because some pupils were eager to communicate.

The focus of observation in qualitative research usually shifts during the study. The early stage is called descriptive and it is characterized with being unfocused. Then comes the focused stage when the observer identifies the features of the interested phenomena and directs his attention to deeper understanding of it. And the last selective stage is when the problem is defined and the observer shifts his focus to refine the specific elements he found (ibid.). As for the current study, my focus during observation started with general interest in the process of lessons, the general flow of it regarding interaction and communication. Afterwards I figured out the specific activities and narrowed my focus on them and in the end I tried to have detailed description of those activities

For *recording the data* it was used an observational protocol. “*The protocol is a predesigned form used to record information collected during an observation or interview*” (Creswell, 2007, p. 135). For describing this term I will use observational scheme. Such schemes usually include descriptive and reflective notes. Former section is for recording a description of activities. The last gives space for notes about process and reflections.

Since the objectives of the study were the activities and approaches that teachers use for positive interaction among pupils, the observation scheme was created accordingly. After the pilot observation several actions were defined as foci together with the whole process of the lesson. Therefore, the observational scheme I created for my research includes sections for describing interactions between teacher and the whole class and specifically between teacher and students with special needs. Moreover there is a section for describing observed activities and also a space for comments and reflections (see Appendix 8). Apart to observation scheme, I used audio recording directly after observation to keep my reflections and all valuable comments that was not possible to write down during the observation.

Each observation lasted around 45 minutes. Data was originally recorded in Georgian and then translated into English.

3.4 Sampling

Qualitative research is characterized by *purposeful sampling*. It attempts “to select cases that are likely to be ‘information rich’ with respect to the purpose of the study” (Gall, et al., 2007, p. 178).

A purposeful sampling was used to select research school, classes and teachers for this study. In particular, the *criterion sampling* was preferred because of requirements I had for participants. As Gall (2007) explains, criterion sampling implies the selection of cases that meet some important criterion. Because the research was looking for a good example of social inclusion, the main criteria of choosing school was the experience in inclusive education. Nowadays all schools of Georgia have status of inclusive school but since the experience in this field is different from school to school I decided to pick the pioneers. I assumed that the quality is somehow connected to experience and makes the probability higher of meeting one of the best examples. So I asked the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia to give the list of the first 10 pilot schools of the city. Afterwards I asked my colleagues there to recommend schools for research considering my criteria. The number of school reduced on 5. So I myself randomly picked one school from the list.

Specific criteria were made also for choosing research classes: (1) not to be less than third grade to make sure that classmates and teacher are familiar with each other, (2) to have at least one child with special needs with at least one year experience of being in this class, and (3) the teacher who was considered as one of the most successful at school. All those requirements were based on the main goal to pick examples that were considered as successful by the school staff.

3.5 Data collection procedure

3.5.1 Permission

The first step for conducting the fieldwork of the research was getting permission from the Norwegian Social Science Data Service that I received in October. Meanwhile with help of The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia I selected several schools for research. As

first pilot schools in inclusive education they were already experienced in having such researches at their school. Therefore, I did not have any problems to gain entry there before getting permission from NSD. Thus, I presented the research project and its objectives to the headmaster of the selected school and teachers who were included in this research study both verbally and in printed version. The headmaster contacted me with school psychologist who was very helpful. She was mediating between me and parents of children with special needs; giving them information by handing the information sheet and getting the signed permission from them in case of agreement.

3.5.2 Pilot study

Pilot study was conducted in the same school as main study. However, only part of the study was piloted that was an observation part. There were several reasons of not conducting pilot interview. Firstly, because the interview guide was discussed and modified together with my supervisor, and secondly the first interview appeared to be extremely informative and interesting, therefore, I accepted to take a risk of the validity of the study and kept this data as a part of main study. Furthermore, I was pretty happy and satisfied with the process of interviewing in whole.

Regarding observation, one pilot observation was done in each class for getting familiar with the environment and objectives being observed. As a result, more focuses were clarified in the frame of observation scheme.

3.5.3 Main study

After meeting the principle and getting permission to conduct the study I was redirected to the psychologist of the school. She was the one who chose teachers according to my criteria and contacted me with them. Afterwards I had a talk with teachers describing the aim of the study and their rights. Both teachers were interested and agreed to help with a pleasure.

First I made a pilot observation. Then, after getting to know both with teachers and pupils, I proceeded to the main study.

Interviews were held at school, in classrooms after the lesson. Since teachers knew the description of the study beforehand, they were already familiar with the aim of our interview. Before starting they were reminded about their rights and confidentiality of the conversation. Besides, they were asked about permission to go back to them for more clarifications if needed. Interviews lasted approximately an hour and were fully taped on the recorder.

It is useful to mention here that despite the qualitative interview, the information that I obtained through it was not of appropriate amount. Especially in one case the data was unexpectedly small. Although my inexperience in interviewing might affect it, I also had a feeling while having conversations with teachers that they started thinking about some things only after being asked about it and directing their attention to it. Thus, it might be another reason for the small amount of data in this study.

As for the *observation*, in both cases, pilot observation was held prior to the interview and the main observation was conducted after that interview. So I could get an idea about the process of the lesson, prepare my attention for the observation and find more particular events I could look at more carefully and ask about. What is more, pupils also got to know me. On the first meeting I introduced myself and explained my purposes of being there. I also had conversations with them on the break.

During both pilot and main observation I was sitting behind for not to distract pupils and to have a good view of the actions of the class.

Observed classes were of different age groups, 3rd grade and 9th grade. On the one hand it could be good for the diversity of research participants. On the other hand, the age of grade 9 is related to specific features. According to Ericsson the main characteristics of the developmental stage between 12-18 years' is the increased complexity of life. Adolescents are looking for their identity, struggling with social interactions and moral issues (Erikson, 1997). That could make the establishment of positive and cooperative atmosphere more difficult. However, exactly this reason stresses the need of special effort to make relationships helpful and supportive.

3.6 Analysis of the data

In order to produce significant, meaningful findings from the data I applied an interpretational form of analysis. This is the process of close examination of data to find constructs and themes that help the description and explanation of studied phenomenon (Gall et al., 2007, p.466). This form of analysis in this study is based on the principles of hermeneutics, one of the qualitative research traditions.

As in qualitative research, interpretation is central in hermeneutics too. Hermeneutics is a philosophical discipline that excludes the possibility of developing knowledge about objective reality because it does not believe in such knowledge. This discipline assumes that instead we make interpretations of the world (ibid.). Therefore, the role of researcher is crucial here. Creswell states that the background, history, context and understanding are something that might not be separated from the researcher (Creswell, 2007, p.39). Hermeneutics has its methods that help the interpretation. Hermeneutic circle is one of those principles. It implies going back and forth within the data all the time and swing between parts of the text and the text as a whole. Interpretation of one of them aids interpretation of another (Gall, et al., 2007, p. 521). This is how it works.

The steps of analysis that were taken in this study were the following: analysis started after transcription, when I had all the data in front of me. I printed it and started a careful reading of answers. While doing this I was underlying key words for each question that was asked and main themes that appeared in the responses of each teacher. Categories were not determined ahead based on theories or other researchers but they emerged from the data (Creswell, 2007). This inductive approach to analysis raised several categories. Categories are constructs that are linked to different phenomena of the data (Gall, 2007, p. 467). After finding these categories it was possible to compare them and find connections between themes both within categories and across them.

Nevertheless, while doing the analysis the predefined specific topics included in the semi-structured interview guide and the questions that were asked need to be considered. Because the questions were constructed in accordance to my personal interest in the topic of social inclusion, it might have had some influence on themes and categories that emerged from the data.

After organizing the spoken data I started to read reports of observational material. I tried to find links with the spoken data. If there was a match I was adding observed data to the categories driven from the interview. If not, I was creating new ones. On the last stage of analysis, after putting data together and organizing data, the material was interpreted in terms of the discussed theoretical framework and official documents.

3.7 Ethical issues

Philosophy of ethics is one of the bases for educational research. Ethics deals with the questions of how people should treat each other. Educational research meets a wide range of individuals with different characteristics and different background. Every researcher thus needs to consider carefully the ethical concerns that can affect their research participants. Researcher needs to describe how he plans to protect them from possible harm. Educational researcher should show respect for research participants and honor their contributions to research knowledge. They do this by understanding and addressing those ethical concerns (Gall, 2007).

Because of the characteristics of qualitative studies the issue of ethics becomes more serious and important. Such studies require specific intimacy between researchers and participants for to discover experiences that might be secret and highly private. In a qualitative study reports there are often clues that make the identification of particular individuals or sites possible, even when the researcher protects the privacy of participants. Therefore, ethical issues need to be considered before, during, and after the conduct of a research study (Gall, 2007). Each step of the study involves different elements that need to be taken into account. Besides, Creswell (Creswell, 2009) says, that ethical practice means more than just following a set of guidelines. For doing a qualitative study it is recommended to develop own ethical perspective and to review personal values (Gall, 2007).

In order to undertake my study in an ethical manner and protect research participants from any harm the following was considered on different level of the study:

- (1) Data collection procedure rise several issues and stresses the need to respect the participants. For meeting this need researchers have to have their plans reviewed and

approved by the special board (Creswell, 2009). Regarding this particular aspect, permission from Norwegian Social Science Data Service was obtained to carry out the study (see Appendix 9).

(2) Gaining the agreement of individuals in authority to provide access to study participants at research sites is another ethical procedure during data collection (Creswell, 2009). For my study permission from the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia was gained for using school resources of particular schools and permission from the principle of selected school for conducting the research.

(3) In addition, the researcher should develop an informed consent form for participants that involve different information about the researcher, the sponsoring institution, the purpose of the research, guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity, assurance that the potential participant can refuse or withdraw at any time, contact information if questions arise, etc. (Creswell, 2009). Such informed consent was developed both for teachers and parents of students with special needs providing described details and the space for signing as an agreement to participate (see Appendix 7).

(4) During the analysis and interpretation of data the study needs to protect anonymity of individuals. In qualitative research there are used for example pseudonyms to protect identity (Creswell, 2009). In current study the identity of teachers was protected by giving them code numbers and not mentioning their names (teacher 1 and teacher 2). The use of codes for pupils was not needed at all, as the study was focused on activities and not particular students.

(5) By signing the terms of Norwegian Social Science Data Service the study also guarantees that the data will be deleted after completion of the project to make sure it does not fall into hands of other people and ruin the promised anonymity.

(6) Since the ethical issue does not stop with data collection and analysis and the actual writing is also linked with it (Creswell, 2009), the research ensures ethical awareness by using neutral and not biased language towards its participants.

3.8 Validity and reliability

There are several concepts related to the quality of qualitative researches and different strategies suggested for ensuring it. Qualitative researchers usually select the criteria themselves in accordance to their topic, methods, etc. (Gall et al., 2007). Validity and reliability are the two central components that affect the value of a study. They will be discussed here in relation to the study.

Validity as one of the strengths of qualitative research checks the accuracy of the findings by applying certain procedures (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The key concept of validity is defined as validity threat, a way researcher might be wrong. Therefore, it gives strategies to identify and exclude those threats (Maxwell, 2005).

As for those threats, researcher bias and reactivity is named as main risks to the study. The first is about the preconceptions and subjectivity that can lead to invalid findings. How a particular researchers background, values and expectations affect the process and conclusion of study. Thus, it is critical to explain and reflect on your possible biases and to discuss the strategies you will use to deal with it (Maxwell, 2005). There are several strategies that help researcher to ensure a high level of research quality and rigor.

In my research I tried to follow the suggested strategies like using thick and rich description. This was reached through immediate transcription of the interviewed data, by making detailed notes of observation and recordings of reflections after each interview and observation. This made possible to have a full picture of what was going on (Gall et al., 2007) and avoiding unconscious selection of memorized information.

During the interviews to make sure interviewees were understood correctly were used periphrasis. The questions were also clarified if informants asked for it or they seemed not to understand it well. This also helped to avoid subjective interpretation of responses.

Direct quotes of participants and description of concrete observed events were also given during the data presentation and analysis.

Reactivity is an important issue in the research. It is considered that interviewer and the interview situation always influences what the informant says (Maxwell, 2005). While being aware of this circumstance I tried to make my informants feel free by reminding about

confidentiality and right of withdrawal. I was also careful to avoid leading questions during the interview.

In addition, the use of multiple sources of data was also aimed to increase the quality of the research and ensure validity (Creswell, 2007). Especially when considering the small number of participants.

External validity that deals with the generalizability of findings might be a problem for a qualitative research because of a less representative character of the sample (Gall et al., 2007). Additional shortage to it is, as mentioned before, the small sample of current study. However, as description of particular teacher's knowledge and practice the data still showed an interesting variety in results and interesting links that might be taken into consideration in further examination of this topic.

Reliability deals with assuring that if other investigator conducted the same study and followed the same procedures he would arrive at the same conclusions. Its goal is to reduce biases in a study (Yin, 2009). In the first part of this chapter I tried to give a description of the research process - the steps I made and description of participants, data collection procedures, etc., to make the reconstruction of this study as much as possible.

4 Presentation of data and discussion

In this chapter you will find the presentation and discussion of interview and observation data. The data is divided in four main parts where each contains its sub-chapters. The first two chapters refer to teachers' knowledge regarding political documents and teachers' perception of their own roles in inclusion. The particular themes there are: inclusion, social inclusion, perception of own role, national curricular and school regulations. The second part deals with teachers' practice. It first focuses on helping interaction of all students and then goes to interaction of special needs child and others. Sub-chapters of this part imply the particular activities or approaches teachers use in their classes.

Regarding the brief demographic data about research participants - the interview data was collected from two female teachers. Average age was 35. Teacher 1 was a head teacher, having 14 hours weekly and teaching Georgian, nature and math, with 3 years of teaching experience. She had participated in trainings about behavior control and inclusive education. As for the teacher 2, she was a regular teacher of history, having four hours weekly and 14 years of experience in educational system. She had attended training about hearing impairment.

Observation classes differed in grade. Class of teacher 1 was of third grade and class of teacher two was of grade nine. Amount of pupils was the same in both classes, around 30. Students with special needs were 3 in class one and 1 in class two.

4.1 Teachers' understanding and knowledge of inclusion

4.1.1 Inclusion

While talking about inclusion, teachers expressed different knowledge of this issue. Their responses about understanding inclusion can be divided in two parts: first they gave explanation what they know and think it is and second - what kind of feelings and attitudes they have towards it.

Compared to teacher 2, teacher 1 gave more detailed description of her view. She explained inclusion as the right of all citizens to study and to be next to others. That their integration should be supported by others, and that people need to adapt to each other. *“Not only they need to adapt to us but we also need to adapt to them, we need to help each other”* - she said. Opposite to this, teachers 2 started her answer with saying that she is trying to get information about it - *“well, inclusion, I am trying to get information about this from girls who work as psychologists at our school”*. Still she gave her understanding of inclusion as disability but not in a negative way. She gave example about herself that she is also not capable in many things but it was not a tragedy (see Appendix 1).

There was also a difference in expressing their enthusiasm, like: *“I believe in them and expect them achieving more. I am working for their future to be better”* (Teacher 1) and *“I want to give them more than I am doing. I think if there is a desire one can achieve everything”* (Teacher 2). One teacher reflected her ongoing activity whereas the second one just expressed her desire to do so. These statements make obvious connection with observed practice that we discuss later (see Appendix 1).

What teachers shared towards the topic was the empathy by imagining the same need themselves. They said that nobody is insured from such experience in their own families. Therefore, they are careful to that topic (see Appendix 1).

Comment: According to responses we got from respondents regarding inclusion there is an obvious difference between teachers' knowledge and understanding of this topic. On the one hand teacher one gives an understanding that is corresponding to the definition of inclusion stated in the National Curricular. On the other hand, another teacher states her willingness to find out what it is. And the guess she makes about inclusion proves her lack of knowledge.

What teachers have in common on the subject of inclusion is their positive and supportive emotional attitude.

4.1.2 Social inclusion

The concept of social inclusion seemed to be new and not familiar for both teachers. *“Social inclusion? Mmm.. personally me, I have never talked about this with anybody”* - was the

response of teacher one. The second teacher was also direct by saying: *“this is the first time I hear it.”* Although both were confused about the concept, they differed in the way they tried to define it. One, after explaining that she had never talked about this with anybody just made a guess what she thought it could be. *“It should be about the feeling that children with special needs are part of us, being aware of it.”* She interpreted it as understanding that they are individuals with individual abilities, they do what they can and that all the people should stand for it. Her response sounded emotional, reflecting passion and enthusiasm. Compared to her rich description, another teacher gave a brief response. Because of the word ‘social’ she understood it as involvement or relationship in the society - *“because it is social it seems to be more about society”* (see Appendix 1).

Comment: Narrowing on the more specific concept of inclusion disclosed more confusion among teachers. They both agree about unfamiliarity with this notion. The explanation given by teacher one still echoes the attitudes towards inclusion but not the sense of social inclusion. Although second teacher mentions involvement and relationships in her guess, it is still not in accordance to the real implication of social inclusion.

4.1.3 Teachers’ understanding of their own role in inclusion

Although the practice of the two teachers appeared different, both showed a great agreement about teacher’s importance in pupil’s interactions. They believe that *“teacher is a guide who shows the way.”* They shared the opinion that the attitudes students might have between each other highly depends on teacher’s actions and behaviors, that peaceful relationships are outcomes of teacher’s guidance. *“If I will not be a role model the conflict can raise between them”* - said one of the teachers. The same works particularly for the attitude towards children with special needs. Teachers’ thought that students copy this attitude from teachers as role models as well. Thus, the power for establishing cooperative relationship was determined as teacher’s responsibility – *“it is needful and almost impossible without teacher’s participation”* (see Appendix 2).

Comment: This part of the interview mirrors the same view of interviewees’ concerning responsibilities of teachers. Despite respondents’ diverse knowledge about previously mentioned topics, the crucial importance of teachers in interactions is fully shared.

4.1.4 Discussion of teachers' views and understandings in inclusion

The presented data already displayed both similarities and differences between interviewed teachers. This diversity in answers changes from theme to theme. Let us follow the flow and start with inclusion, how two teachers of different background understand it.

First I will go back to the definition of inclusion that is given in the national curricular. As it is said in the sub-chapter 1.4, *inclusion* is the involvement of students with special needs in educative process together with peers (National Curricular, 2011). Teacher one seems to be consistent with it by saying that inclusion is the right of citizens to study next to others. It is not the same case for the second teacher. Her knowledge can not be counted as appropriate, identifying inclusion just with disability points on misunderstanding of the concept. The interesting point here is the educational background of teachers on the subject of inclusion. The one with more applicable knowledge named two courses of training she had taken and one of them was in inclusive education, whereas the second participated in course about hearing impairment and she was the one defining inclusion as a disability. This might be an influence resulted in different awareness of teachers in the topic of inclusion.

The picture was also not promising after asking about *social inclusion*. The lack of familiarity with this concept was obvious. Teachers were open in saying it was something new for them. Besides, their guesses were also not matching. As specified in the Definition of Terms (ch.1.4.) this study implies in social inclusion friendship, relationship, interaction of classmate with and without disabilities, shared activities and responsibilities. And what was said by one teacher was more about personal feelings and attitudes people have to have towards children with special needs. The understanding of second teacher was just guided by the word 'social' not including the awareness of the term in real. However, such results were expected after reviewing the national curriculum. It does not use this term itself but the activities and ideology that is supported in this document fully corresponds to the philosophy of social inclusion. In particular, national curricular require or suggest schools to promote cooperative environment, positive communication, involvement and interaction of all students (National Curricular, 2011). This means that awareness of national curricular already guides school and teachers in their practice. This interconnected issue will be discussed in coming chapters.

Before moving to the next theme it is worth mentioning the shared emotional attitude both teacher expressed. Despite their level of awareness in current topic teachers had the same attitude. They felt empathy and approached the issue positively by showing expectations towards children and willingness being supportive. Hence, the knowledge did not affect the feelings.

As for the teacher's *perception of their roles*, after family members and main caretakers of a child teachers are one of the most important persons in their life. Apart from the education they provide, teachers have power to affect and form behaviors of their students. If we refer to Ecological System's Theory, Bronfenbrenner (1979) places teachers in the closest system to the child (microsystem). Interpersonal relationships that occur there are main builders of that system. Therefore, the placement of teachers in microsystem strengthens the significance of their roles. Furthermore, Social Constructivist Theory and Theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability both stress the responsibility of teacher as a mediator and as a competent other who can guide child to new skills, new thinking and opportunities of interaction. Apart to it the discussion of teacher's role is grounded on Bandura's social learning theory. Bandura believed that action of others is most common that influences behavior (Bandura, 1977). According to the theory people learn through observing others behavior, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviors (ibid.). Thus, teachers as main members of educational setting are models children look at and imitate. Regarding current study it means they can stimulate positive atmosphere in the classroom and direct relationships between pupils into friendly way. Especially when it is applied to students with special needs, teachers become mediators between her pupils by providing good example of treating each other and using positive or negative reinforcement in the process of shaping the desired interaction. What is more, except models teachers are facilitators in children's interactions (Gillies, 2007). Their role is central in establishing cooperative learning; they are the ones who ensure tasks meet abilities of all students and in whole, they are key in implementation of effective pedagogical practices (ibid.). To meet these expectations first teacher needs to be aware of having those functions and duties by being a teacher; therefore she needs to be careful and purposeful in actions. This is why this study included finding out how teachers perceive themselves and whether they feel this responsibility at all; and to see if their practice is corresponding to their views.

We mentioned the social learning theory and it is interesting that both teachers reflected with practically the same. Both agreed about teacher's crucial role and its responsibility in pupil's

interaction and particularly in their attitude towards pupils with special needs, that they as models give examples and guide to healthy and cooperative relationship. Thus, respondents realize the mission they have while being in a school setting. It is another matter if they follow their views.

To sum, view of teacher's role and attitudes towards inclusion was common in respondents. It was the knowledge that made a difference so far.

4.2 Teachers' knowledge of political documents related to inclusion

4.2.1 National curricular

Teachers' awareness of national curricular was pretty different as well. One (teacher 2) was very direct in revealing her mistake and disadvantage not having read and worked on the topic of social inclusion neither in the old nor in the new curricular. She just knew that the new curricular exists and that there are many important changes there (see Appendix 1).

Another teacher (teacher 1) mentioned the focus on individual educational plan in both old and new curricula. Besides, she named involvement of all pupils and child oriented approach as main demands of national curricular. *"Lessons should be oriented on students and therefore on students with special needs as well. But not separated and distinguished"*-she said (see Appendix 1).

Comment: These data revealed the self-critics of teacher two who was direct in taking the responsibility of not knowing much about requirements of national curricular. In opposite to this teacher one demonstrated her knowledge by naming main focuses and demand of this document.

4.2.2 School regulations

Discussion about school regulations revealed that the school does not have specific and purposeful activities for children with special needs. They do not have distinct attitude implied in regulations. But this is for not to make them special and separated. Therefore rules are same and activities are same. Everything that is done is just for everybody. “We are doing it for everybody and we are doing this because children with special needs can do it as well. They can participate not worse than others” stated teacher one (see Appendix 1). Teacher two tried to be careful in explaining the reason the school did not have special focus on children with special needs. She explained: *“we do not discuss them as separate unit. We do not have special attitude in regulations and do not make other students feel special about them. Rules are the same for everybody.”*

None of teachers gave particular description of school regulations, it was more about general approach and just mentioning that it follows national curricular. Different projects and programs that were listed appeared to be initiated from teachers as they are free in choice and they individually decide what kind of activities they will have. One teacher explained that because the school does not have requirements she and some other teachers had to work over standards. Working over standard means doing something that is not included and obliged by program, thus some additional work. So it is up to the teacher`s initiative what she decides is useful for her pupils (see Appendix 1).

Comment: Teachers appeared to be similar in giving information about school regulations. Both named equality as a main approach to students and both mentioned the additional work they could do as a result of free choice that was ensured by school regulations.

4.2.3 Discussion of teachers' knowledge of inclusive politics

The national curricular and school regulations are the documents that according to Bronfenbrenner (1979) are parts of the outer circle of the ecological system called macrosystem. Although the child is not directly involved in this layer, it still gets affected because as the theory says, changes or conflict in any layer spreads throughout other layers

and forms the environment of child. Therefore, the national curricular as an important official document can affect this environment by offering values to the members of the system. It has this power as a creator and provider of the ideology of educational system in the whole setting.

Another thing is how consecutive the system is. In this I mean the level of awareness of teachers' and the relevance of their knowledge to their practice as a following level after the documents. As it was repeated in chapter 4.1.4, the national curricular does not use the term 'social inclusion' but follows all necessities it implies. This means that if teachers follow this document, they become promoters of social inclusion and they seek for goals it has. But first it is needed to get familiar with this goals and demands.

To assess in whole, the data about each teacher was pretty consecutive. What they said was seen in their practice afterwards. Correspondingly, teacher with little knowledge in topics discussed above showed no education in national curricular either. What is more, all these were also reflected on the course of her lessons. And the same consecutiveness was noticed in case of the teacher with more awareness. She knew main aspects of the document regarding inclusion and practiced all the suggestions it gave. I will not go further with it now but discuss it in the following sub-chapter about practice.

There is an interesting point in the school regulations I want to focus your attention on. Apart from the information teachers gave about the school's approach towards students with special needs, they stated that teachers have free choice in action to achieve students' involvement in the school setting; that except the obligatory individual educational plan they could work over these standards if the teachers would decide she needs it. This statement is corresponding to the one offered by national curricular presented in sub-chapter 1.4 d which empowers schools to use their own perspectives and ideas to achieve national educational aims (Ch.3, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, 2011). The reason I focused on this is the conclusion that can be drawn from it. It simply means that at some point it is up to the teachers wish and desire whether or not she puts more effort to improve and enrich the atmosphere for students.

4.3 Teachers practicing social inclusion

In this chapter you will read about teachers' practice in social inclusion. It will deal with general practice between all students. The two sources of data were coupled for answering how teachers are helping students interact positively. Thus, following description is based on combined data from interview and observation that gave an interesting result. The connection of spoken and observed information revealed obvious.

In the following sub-chapters you will read about the themes that were drawn from this combination of data. In particular, there are themes as: attitudes towards interaction, love and respect, sharing knowledge, participation in indoor and outdoor activities, involvement, making teaching joyful, different activities and standard course of the lesson.

4.3.1 Teachers' attitudes towards interaction with students

Teacher 1 described her own interaction with students as friendly. She explained: *"I am both their mother, their friend, and sometimes I myself am a student and they are teachers for me."* She expressed her respect to student's opinion and talked about her frequently organized so called free lessons, where the class was discussing different things, sharing knowledge and experience. She named trust, respect and love as main priorities for teaching to children – *"this is most important, to trust each other"*. Friendship and cooperation with pupils was preferred to remarks. Listening to each other and sharing was stressed several times by her while talking. And again her main priorities: "we were learning it from the first grade: respect, trust, love."

The same main themes were observed on the lesson as well.

Comment: The explanation of how the teacher sees herself in different roles while interacting with pupils reflects her intimate and emotional approach towards them. Stressing respect of their opinions, love and trust as main priorities reveals her perception of students as individuals and her involvement with them as more on personal level.

4.3.2 Love and Respect

During the lesson when it was becoming noisy and pupils were responding simultaneously teacher kept repeating and reminding the rules of behavior, the importance of listening to each other and not disrespecting by interrupting their classmates. She was reflecting on their active participation by expressing appreciation of their knowledge and their desire to share it but reminding again to raise hands for getting turn. Student's behaviors were always regulated by such reminders, they were becoming quiet and disciplined. She was calling pupils always by names, moving back and forth between rows, approaching them, giving positive verbal feedback, like "thank you", "you explained it well", etc. when for example the child with special needs suddenly stood up on the lessons and took a pencil of his classmate without asking, the teacher approached him and explained with the same calm voice that it was not nice taking others things without permission, that he had to give it back and apologize. And the child obeyed. Teacher was also encouraging others to help their classmate if one had difficulties in answering a question. Thus promoting help and therefore positive interaction was comprehensive to teacher's own interpretation of her activities.

Comment: Teacher showed her attitude and approach to students even on physical level by approaching them in person and trying to involve, praise and encourage during lessons. She was both expressing love and teaching love by her actions.

4.3.3 Sharing knowledge

Sharing knowledge was also observed on the lesson. While discussing the topic of their homework pupils were connecting it to their own experience and they were allowed to tell some stories related to that. For example, when talking about different artificial sources of light, pupils were telling about lamps they saw at grandparents house, their impressions, how it worked, etc.

Another example was about a girl who had prepared an essay about the moon and wanted to read it to others. She was supported by teacher by explaining others that their classmate prepared it independently that was nice and it would be interesting to listen to her and they did so.

In the interview teacher talked about summarizing activities and behaviors as well. She explained that she was giving students possibility to discuss what they had done during

particular activities and evaluate and reflect on their behaviors themselves – *“they can judge who was behaving well and who was best on that day”*.

Comment: Teacher reflected willingness to give students possibility to express their selves. It was supported by giving them choice, free voice and time to evaluate their own and others behaviors. Giving meaning to everything was reinforcing the perception of each other as unique individuals.

4.3.4 Participation in indoor and outdoor activities

In the interview teacher listed different activities used for better interaction, both in the classroom and outside the classroom like: outdoor lessons in science, planting trees, excursions, going to museums. The participation of all students was underlined: “we go there all together” – said the teacher.

As indoor activities she named: day of apologize, where all pupils and the teacher were reminding each other their behaviors and asking for apologize and to forgive.

She also described integrated lessons. It includes inviting other pupils both from higher or lower grades, to perform together or have conversations on different topics. She showed her awareness in importance of such meetings explaining how beneficial it is both for intelligence and for warm social relationships.

Going to school library, watching videos, cartoons, having discussions on them, working in groups, making presentations was also included in her various lists of activities in the interview.

As the teacher described further, theatre was also actively used in teaching process. Giving small pieces to read, drawing posters, invitation cards for other teachers and pupils were works that were already usual and common for students. *“Students themselves are so creative”* – she said, -*“they are used to such works and I try to give it artistic-theatrical image.”* It was described as her approach to teaching and interaction with her pupils. Participation of all students was mentioned in this part of interview as well, involvement without distinction.

Teacher's described desires regarding artistic approach and involvement was observed in the end of the lesson. She asked pupils how they wanted to summarize the information and topics they learned so far. She offered activities and asked to vote for choosing one. The majority chose to write a scenario and to perform it. The minority did not express any protest or anger. They seemed to be obedient, accepting and respecting the decision of majority, smiling and listening to following guidance and instructions. This example reflected also cooperation and friendly approach of the teacher that she described in the interview.

Comment: By letting students think about their actions and deciding what is good or bad helps to create values and tolerance in children. Stressing positive relationships and joint participation all the time reflects the sensitivity of this topic for teacher and therefore shows her philosophy in approaching her students.

4.3.5 Involvement

The stress on common involvement was already presented based on the interview data. The observation revealed the same focus. During the lesson when the teacher saw pupils sitting passively, not participating in answering questions, she approached them with asking questions directly to them or saying that they were talking on interesting topics. Furthermore, if the teacher started a new activity she always gave space to the student with special needs to take part in it. She herself initiated this participation. Besides, in the end of the lesson teacher offered the class to say a rhyme together. So the whole class stood up and repeated it in chorus.

In whole, the high involvement of pupils was observed during the course of the lesson. In particular, more than a half of students were raising hands and expressing eagerness to participate and respond.

Comment: While communicating with the whole class teacher managed to approach students individually and ensure their participation in activities by being initiative.

4.3.6 Making teaching joyful

Nonacademic events, like celebrating birthdays together was also mentioned as common tradition. *“When we are here I do my best to make them feel as much joy as possible”*. She described how pupils enjoyed saying toasts, nice wishes and poems to each other. “Everybody is involved”- add the teacher again.

Finally, teacher summarized her main focus *“to make them love the process of studying, to make it funny and without any compulsion”*. This desire was also reflected on the observed lesson. While struggling to remember a particular word, she offered students a game called hangman. She drew on a blackboard as many dots as in the word and let students guess it by naming letters in turn. By initiation of students the class decided to praise the winner with a poem. All pupils were raising hands to get the turn. The student with special needs was also involved by the teacher. She asked him to name a letter. After a while when the word was guessed and that pupil got a prize, the one, who read a rhyme was also praised with applause for saying it.

Comment: Teacher’s practice was not restricted with the academic hours but she tried to please her students out of it too. She put the same effort to make them feel joyful both on lessons and outside lessons. Her intention to make students feel happy shows her personal attitude and ideology very well.

4.3.7 Different activities

Compared to the first part of the data, the second interviewee was not as rich in talking about different activities as the first one. Teacher 2 named group work and work in couples as ways that are used once a month for better communication among students. Furthermore, excursions that are twice a year. As the teacher explained, it is also depended on the subject they learn. She gave example of visiting money museum last year. That they prepared different topics related to that and then organized this activity.

Comment: The second teacher was more general and less passionate in describing the few activities she used in practice.

4.3.8 Standard course of the lesson

Since the named activities were not frequently expected, it was not seen during the observation. The lesson was held more in a “classical” way, just asking and responding. It started with reading the list of students and continued with checking the homework by asking brief questions to students. Teacher was calling pupils by names and asking to answer. If they made pause or could not respond she was answering herself. She was standing mainly in the front and asking the same students who raised hands and who were active. However, in the second half of the lesson she started to involve others as well. She was doing it by asking them directly. The behind part of the class still remained passive and not involved. They seemed not to be interested in the lesson. Some of them were talking or playing with mobile phone. Teacher tried to stop them by calling their names, approaching them, using eye contact, though it did not help. After a while they continued their own conversation. While trying all these techniques she was not interrupting the course of lesson and did not change her voice or emotions.

Teacher tried to involve the student with special needs only once though while doing this she was actively using eye contact, mimics and body language to make the understanding easier. She stood in front of the student, speaking clearly and asking more short and concrete questions. During the whole lesson she rarely used any praise. After checking the knowledge teacher started to explain new topic. She was talking and students were listening. After the bell rang, she gave students homework and let them go (see Appendix 3).

Comment: The course of observed lesson reflected not as close contact with students as the other teacher’s lesson but lack of praise and joy. However, the way she communicated with student with special need showed her awareness in techniques useful with child with hearing impairment.

4.3.9 Discussion of teachers’ practice of social inclusion

To sum, the gained data showed different type of practice. In one case the main characteristics of teacher’s approach and style of teaching like obeying rules and respect, sharing, involvement, creative and joyful atmosphere that was described during the interview was comprehensive to observed data proving the existence of variable activities for helping

positive communication among pupils (see Appendix 3). Besides, all those activities were corresponding to the requirements and suggestions of national curricular. If we refer to the discussion of knowledge about political documents the link becomes obvious. It means the teacher who was aware of requirements of national curricular showed this knowledge in the practice. And the same consecutive connections showed up in the case of second teacher.

The data collected from the teacher two was not as diverse as the previous one. She named couple of activities that were not used frequently. And this information was reflected in having a so called standard style of teaching, questions-response, without any additions. Regarding her knowledge in national curricular, it was poor. She even criticized herself for this. That means she was aware she was not putting so much effort in her practice of inclusion.

It is worth mentioning here the background of teachers. Although teacher two had more years of experience of teaching compared to teacher one, she does not seem as successful as the first one. However, teacher one had advantage of having training courses in inclusive education that appeared to be one of the determinants of an effective practice.

Furthermore, it should also be taken into consideration that despite such a difference in the quality of practicing social inclusion both teachers were named by school as one of the best ones.

4.4 Promoting interaction between regular students and students with special needs

4.4.1 Equality in interaction

Regarding promoting the interaction particularly between regular students and students with special needs, teacher 1 has not specified and separated interactions. Rather perceived it as one whole issue and explained that everything what is done is for everybody and not because of attendance of students with special needs. She explained that everything is done because

they believed they also could do it. Thus everything said and described above is a general approach for all students (see Appendix 4).

Comment: Teacher was following equal approach to all students not arranging activities specifically for special needs students but for everybody.

4.4.2 Teacher as a role model of equality

“Relationships regulate somehow themselves” - responded teacher 2. She explained it by being a role model for children. And as a model, she said, she was regulating this issue by giving a good example, treating the student with special needs the same way as others, expressing friendly and open relationship and encouraging positive interactions that way- *“they observe you and notice that you are not having a distance from this child”*.

Comment: Teacher was using her authority for being a model of communication and attitude.

4.4.3 Oral and written discussions in the interactive classroom

Other method described by teacher 2 was writing essays on the topic of special needs. For example writing about how would they help children having integration problem.

Furthermore, preparation of the class is done with discussing particular student's need before meeting him/her. Talking about the causes of that special need, what they would wish for themselves if being in the same situation, etc. She also mentioned the assistance of psychologists in this process – *“because we do not know much and we also need information. This is like a dialogue”* (see Appendix 4).

In whole, the approach to the issue of interaction between regular students and students with special needs was differently practiced by participant teachers. One showed a general perception of all students and activities used with them, while another teacher named teacher's authority and discussions as main tools in dealing with the marked issue.

Comment: Compared to the first teacher the second showed lack of creativity and enthusiasm that resulted in a poor practice of social inclusion.

4.4.4 Final discussion

This study showed different creative activities that teachers use for helping students interact positively. Before discussing them it is interesting to compare the attitude and personal approach of teachers because it appeared to be reflective of their practice. Although both respondents expressed their positive feelings towards inclusive education the description of their practice was dissimilar. While one said “I am working” for better future of students with special needs, another stated “I want to give them more than I am doing”. After linking these statements to practice it became obvious that first teacher expressed already the process by stressing her action and the second just the wish and desire. That the first teacher was more persuasive was proved by practice she told herself and by activities that were observed during lesson. Though, the second teacher appeared objective and adequate in describing her activity. Thus, there was a correspondence between what teachers said and did.

Now about what teachers did and what are they generally doing to improve interactions among students.

Although both teachers had positive view and same perception of their central role in mediation relationships, the effort they put in promotion was different. The one who named cooperation and friendship as her preference was seeking for respect, trust and love between her students and joyful atmosphere in the process of studying. She was trying to reach these goals by letting her pupils to express their ideas (e.g. discussions), to feel responsibility for own behaviors (e.g. evaluation of actions), to share knowledge (e.g. integrated lessons), to reach shared goals (e.g. work in groups) being creative (e.g. performances), having choice (e.g. shared planning), to share and enjoy non-academic events (e.g. birthdays, excursions). Apart from these precise actions we got also more general treatment of social inclusion, like modeling and discussion i.e. using the knowledge enrichment in different disabilities as a tool for better acceptance and therefore better relationships. And this combined with using the status of authoritative model teacher.

These diverse results seem to reflect the holistic and non-specific view of students with special educational needs described in both official documents. For example, its child oriented approach as a mean of positive atmosphere generally for all participants of educational system and no separate specification on children with special needs. Besides, that practiced activities are so different it shows the free choice that official documents give to teachers in dealing with positive communication issue.

If we go back to the theory we will see the link of the data with social constructivist thinking in focusing and actively using integrated lessons or group works. By being in integrated situations children reach a shared understanding with those who serve as their companions and guides through discussion and joint participation (Rogoff, 1990). Integrated lessons give opportunity to have dialogue with more competent others and face new patterns of thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). As human development is socio-cultural it is the engagement in interaction that benefits modification and adaptation of individuals (Feuerstein, 2010). Discussions, performances, outdoor activities and all those creative works described above are the joint activities that provide more understanding of each others differences and similarities and encourages positive acceptance (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The roles, approaches, activities and outcomes, all are interconnected and all together give rise to the same result. In this I mean that if teachers provide interaction and cooperation, they as the members of the system (ecological theory), mediators (social constructivist, structural cognitive modifiability theory) and models (social learning theory) are the builder of the desired atmosphere and relationships in there. In our case their effort results in friendly interaction and cooperative relationships and therefore it contributes social inclusion.

In the end I would like again to mention the connection between teacher's background and practice. The one with more reach practice and enthusiastic approach to the topic had participated in several trainings regarding inclusion, whereas other teacher had a training only once in a particular field, hearing disability. Although the difference between working experience is 10 years, the teacher with less experience seemed to be more updated in the field, than the more experienced one. We can make a rough conclusion from this particular aspect that knowledge and awareness combined with personal motivation can result in an effective practice of inclusion. Thus, raising awareness and motivation among teachers' can lead to improvement.

In addition, as we said before teacher's activities reflect the requirements of the national curricular that itself accords to the basic theories of this study. Particularly the involvement, group works, joint participation, sharing knowledge, etc. It means that if teachers firstly will be familiar with the approaches the national curricular wants to implement and then will base their practice on that, inclusion and particularly social inclusion will be automatically improved and promoted.

5 Summary and conclusions

The primary goal of this study was to find out how teachers are promoting social inclusion. On the way of answering this question several other issues were raised. The study wanted to describe teacher's general knowledge and understanding of inclusion in whole. Besides, the awareness in social inclusion was also revealed. In addition, teachers were asked how these topics were represented in official documents like national curricular and school regulations. After checking the knowledge first, I went through their practice by asking what exactly they were doing to improve interaction between students. And finally I specified on the relationships between regular students and students with special needs. Thus, the sub-questions were the following:

1. How do teachers understand the concept of inclusion in general and in particular social inclusion?
2. How do teachers practice inclusion and social inclusion?
3. How do teachers promote interaction between regular students and students with special needs?

The investigation consisted of two parts, first was the interview with teachers and then the observation on their practice in the classroom. This chapter contains the summary of presented data and conclusions drawn from the discussion. It is followed by recommendations and ends with limitations of the study.

5.2 Teachers' understanding of the concept of inclusion

After summarizing all data discussions it became obvious that teachers understanding of inclusion both generally and particularly of social inclusion is not very clear but more intuitive. Although the explanation of one teacher was reflecting the idea of inclusion defined by the national curricular, the second's associations were far from that.

As for the social inclusion, it was an new concept however, one teacher showed the idea of social inclusion in her practice.

Thus, participant teachers lacked professional knowledge of inclusion and relied more on personal feelings and judgment.

5.3 Teachers' practice in social inclusion

Similar to the understanding and knowledge of inclusion the difference revealed also in practicing it. As teachers said by themselves it is up to them to choose their individual way of organizing lessons therefore it seems to be depended on their personal desire, enthusiasm or wish whether they put as much effort as needed for reaching inclusive environment.

According to the data of this study the teacher that new more did more. Thus we can suppose than there is a link between teacher's education and practice.

As the data revealed connections between theoretical perspectives, statements of national curricular and teacher's practice it can be supposed that teacher following the national curricular automatically promotes social inclusion and contributes friendly relationships among all students despite not knowing the term "social inclusion". And this was the result of current study. Teachers practiced social inclusion according their knowledge in national curricular. And supposedly the personal experience, feeling and view how their lessons should be also had its impact on the whole process. One with more awareness used different creative activities aiming positive respectful interactions and one with lack of knowledge held question-answer style lessons without involving additional actions and approaches.

5.4 How teachers promote interaction between regular students and students with special needs?

Regarding interactions particularly between special needs and regular students, discussion firstly raised the topic of placement of students with special needs. There is no separate discussion and approach to them but individual view of all students that implies special needs

as well. Therefore, everything teachers do, is aimed on all participants of the setting and results in equal approach to them. If there is a goal of involvement or joint participation, it is for everybody despite the abilities. Therefore, all diverse activities used by one teacher aimed to all students. The additional tool for promoting acceptance and interactions between regular students and students with special needs was discussion of different needs with children and manipulation with teacher's authoritative role. Hence, there is no specific plan or goal that is aimed deliberately on socialization of students with special needs.

5.5 Conclusion of how do teachers promote social inclusion

After analyzing and discussing gained results for answering the main research question of the study we can draw the following conclusion: social inclusion is not separated from the larger concept of inclusion. Even more, its approach is implied in the general statements about school environment and expected atmosphere there. Therefore, there is no direct and deliberate contribution to social inclusion by teachers but indirect; through just following requirements of national curricular and school regulations regarding opportunities that school should give to students.

Thus if teacher contributes to social inclusion it happens without knowing it and by establishing appropriate atmosphere for all students, not specifically focusing on student with special needs.

5.6 Future implications for teachers

According to the results of this study the following suggestions could be drawn for the improvement of the social dimension of inclusion.

First of all there was an obvious lack of knowledge in inclusion therefore it becomes important to raise awareness in this field.

Secondly, if we rely on the data that teachers who know more do more, it strengthens the need of first recommendation.

Apart to it, since the national curricular appeared to be so corresponding to inclusive philosophy the familiarity with this document could work as a better practice as well.

Furthermore, in this study the personal enthusiasm and creativity resulted in diverse and joyful lessons. Accordingly, supporting and motivating teachers would be useful. And motivation can be reached by informing why those particular approaches and activities are important, effective and beneficial.

To sum, it is knowledge, support and motivation what teachers need to improve their practice.

5.7 Limitations of the study

The results gained through the study are limited by several circumstances and factors that could affect them. Firstly, the research as a qualitative study lacks the possibility to generalize findings (Gall, 2007). Furthermore, the number of participants can also be counted as a shortage of the project. There were only two teachers and two classes chosen as participants. What is more, the sampling has not fully met the expectations of the research. Although the main criteria was revealing good examples and although the data seemed to be interesting it still appeared not as rich as preferred. Besides, the original data was recorded in Georgian and then translated into English. While translating from original language there is a risk of losing preciseness in the process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The same effect refers to instruments. They were created in English first and translated afterwards. In addition, the fact that the interview was done prior to observation could affect the course of lesson afterwards and thus affect the validity. However, the reason of doing so was the need of preparation for observation; to make the objectives clear. In the end, despite the familiarization, the presence of the observer still has some effect on teachers and students.

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Appendix 1: Table 1

Knowledge and understanding of inclusion and political documents	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
Inclusion	<p>“Children with special needs as citizens, as personalities have right to be next to us and study with us. We should support and help the integration of both sides.”</p> <p>“I believe in them and expect them achieving more. I am working for their future to be better.”</p> <p>“My personal attitude is very sensitive. Nobody knows when the same happens to their family therefore, I pay a lot of attention to this topic.”</p>	<p>“Well, inclusion, I am trying to get information about this.”</p> <p>“I understand it as disability but not in a negative way.”</p> <p>“I want to give them more than I am doing. I think if there is a desire one can achieve everything.”</p> <p>“I have positive feelings towards inclusion. Especially when you have children you always think what if it happened to you? How would you approach it?”</p>
	“Social inclusion? I have never talked about this with	“This is the first time I hear it. I would think it is

Social Inclusion	<p>anybody. As I understand, it should be about feeling that children with special needs are part of us, being aware of it.”</p> <p>“They think, act and behave according to their abilities. Everybody should understand all this.”</p>	<p>something about involvement in the society or relationship.”</p>
National Curricular	<p>“This is the first thing in National Curricular, child oriented approach and individual education plan of course.”</p>	<p>“To be frank, I have not read, discussed, or worked on the topic of social inclusion. And I do not know.”</p>
School Regulations	<p>“We are not doing these (projects & programs) deliberately for students with special needs, to involve them specifically. We are doing it for everybody.”</p> <p>“I often work over standards. It means, I am not obliged by fixed program and the school does not have such requirements from classes either.”</p>	<p>“Rules are same for everybody. There are no purposeful activities in regulations.”</p> <p>“It is up to the teacher. We individually try to involve these students. We have a free choice in action.”</p>

Appendix 2: Table 2

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
Understanding teacher's role in interactions	<p>“Weather students have positive or negative attitude towards each other is greatly affected by a teacher.”</p> <p>“The way teacher behaves and treats children, is influencing their action.”</p> <p>“It is their responsibility to reach a healthy and cooperative relationship between students.”</p>	<p>“The role of teacher in pupil interaction is crucial.”</p> <p>“The involvement of the teacher is extremely important for peaceful relationships.”</p> <p>“Regarding student with special needs and others, children will have the attitude that you give them.”</p>

Appendix 3: Table 3

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
Generally helping students interact positively	<p>“I have a very friendly relationship with students. Their pain is my pain and their happiness is my happiness.”</p> <p>“We were learning it from the first grade: respect, trust, love.”</p> <p>“We have different projects that requires going out, observe, involve. So we go there all together.”</p> <p>“My main focus is to make them love the process of studying, to make it funny.”</p>	<p>“Approximately once a month we have group works on the lessons. And we also have working in couples same, once a month. Excursions are usually twice a year, depends on the subject we learn.”</p>

Appendix 4: Table 4

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
<p>Promoting interaction between regular students and students with special needs</p>	<p>Same as in table 3</p>	<p>“Relationships regulate somehow themselves.”</p> <p>“You as a teacher are a model. They observe you and notice that you are not having a distance from this child.”</p> <p>“The only preparation before meeting and accepting child with special needs is verbal discussion. We are discussing the particular problem.”</p>

Appendix 5: Interview guide

Background:

- Sex
- Age
- What subject do you teach?
- How long have you been teaching?
- How long is it since you have a child with special needs in the class?
- Have you had any training in the field of inclusion?
 - If yes, what kind of?
- How many lessons do you have per week now?

2. Inclusion

What is your understanding of inclusion in general? And what is your attitude towards it?

How do you understand the term 'social inclusion'?

Do you know if there are some obligations in the national curricular for supporting social inclusion?

Do you know if there are some school regulations specifically for social inclusion? Are there some specially arranged activities? (excursions, competitions, art classes, team work, etc.).

If yes, how often do they take place?

3. Teacher's social inclusion practice

How would you explain your understanding of your role in social relationships, communication and interaction between pupils in general?

How you think about your role in communication and interaction between children with special needs and their fellows?

What are you doing for promoting positive interaction in general?

What are you doing for promoting positive interaction between children with special needs and their classmates?

What kind of help does SNE child need for interaction? How are you helping?

How often do children have group work or tasks where they need to act together? 1- never, 2 – at least two times a week, 3 – always 4 - every day

Appendix 6: Information sheet for parents

Information and request for consent to observe your child's classroom during lessons and to interview teacher about methods and activities that are used for better communication and interaction between regular students and students with special needs.

I am a master student at the Institute for Special Education at the University of Oslo and I am conducting my master's project in Autumn 2011. My project intends to examine what teachers are doing to promote social inclusion, what are they doing for helping students to interact positively and particularly how teachers promote interaction between regular students and students with special needs. For collecting this data I will interview some teachers about their practice. I plan to use audio recordings during the interviews. I plan to use audio recordings during the interviews. Besides, I will make observations during lessons to see what activities are used by teachers. It will not refer particular student, it is about the way lessons are held, but if your child have special needs it is a possibility that the child will be identifiable in the notes form observation and/or in the notes and the audio recordings from the interview with your child's teacher. I therefore ask for your consent for these activities. You have the right to see the interview- and observation guide I plan to use for collecting data, so that you can see what kind of information will be registered regarding you son/daughter.

All data will be kept confidentially. The study has been reported to the Data Protection Official for Research, at the Norwegian Social Science Data Service.

If you do not mind to participate and contribute this study, please sign the consent form and give it back in enclosed envelope. The participation in this project is voluntary. All information will be made anonymous in the published material. You have right to refuse or withdraw from participation at any time and without any justification. It will not have any consequences for your child's relationship to the teacher, headmaster or school if he/she chooses not to participate, or if you later choose to withdraw from the study.

I ask you to consider the discussion of your child's participation in the project with him/her if possible, and that relevant information about the project will be given in a way that he/she can understand.

The date for project completion is June 2012. All data will then be deleted. In case of questions please do not hesitate to ask me for more clarification. You can also contact my supervisor at the University of Oslo, Jorun Buli-Holmberg, on e-mail: jorun.buli-holmberg@isp.uio.no or telephone: 22858069

Master Student: Maia Javakhishvili

557 57 23 16

mjavaxishvili@yahoo.com

Appendix 7: Information sheet for principal/teacher

Information and request for consent to use school resources

I am a master student at the Institute for Special Education at the University of Oslo and I am conducting my master's project in Autumn 2011. My project intends to examine what teachers are doing to promote social inclusion, what are they doing for helping students to interact positively and particularly how teachers promote interaction between regular students and students with special needs. For collecting this data I will use two classes as two examples and interview one teacher in each class. Teachers will be asked about their opinion about this issue, their practice and experience. I plan to use audio recordings during the interview. Furthermore, I will make observations during lessons to have more knowledge about teacher's experience. I will not refer to a particular student. It is about the way lessons are held.

All data will be kept confidentially. The study has been reported to The Data Protection Official for Research, at the Norwegian Social Science Data Service.

If you do not mind to participate and contribute this study, please sign the consent form and give it back in enclosed envelope. The participation in this project is voluntary. All information will be made anonymous in the published material. You have right to refuse or withdraw from participation at any time and without any justification. It will not have any consequences for your relationship to the headmaster or your employer if you choose not to participate, or if you later choose to withdraw from the study.

The date for project completion is June 2012. All data will then be deleted. In case of questions please do not hesitate to ask me for more clarification. You can also contact my supervisor at the University of Oslo, Jorun Buli-Holmberg, on e-mail: jorun.buli-holmberg@isp.uio.no or telephone: 22858069

Master Student: Maia Javakhishvili

557 57 23 16

mjavaxishvili@yahoo.com

Appendix 8: Consent letter

I hereby give my written consent for my child's participation in the project.

I understand that this involves that personal information about my son/daughter with special needs can be written down during the researcher/students observation in the classroom and during the interview with the teacher. I know that I have the right to see what kind of information is being registered about him/her, if I contact the student.

I have considered talking to my son/daughter about the project and given relevant information that he/she can understand.

If you give consent to participate in the project, please sign this consent form and give it back in the enclosed envelope.

Project Title: How are teachers promoting social inclusion?

Purpose: To describe social dimension of inclusion in Georgian school.

Project Supervisor: Jorun Buli Holmberg

Department of Special Education

University of Oslo

PO Box 1140 Blindern

0318 Oslo

Master Student: Maia Javakhishvili

Department of Special Education

University of Oslo

5 Niagvari st.

0108 Tbilisi

I agree to participate in this study. Consent is voluntary and I am informed that I may withdraw from the study and obtain information about myself deleted.

Principal's /Teacher's / Parent's Name:

Address:

Phone:


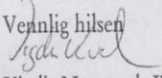
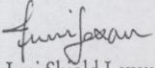
Location:

Date:

Appendix 9: Observation scheme

	Teacher – student (all)	Teacher – SN student
Interaction :		
Activities :		
Comments :		

Appendix 10: Permission from Norway

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES		
Jorunn Buli-Holmberg Institutt for spesialpedagogikk Universitetet i Oslo Postboks 1140 Blindern 0318 OSLO		Harald Hårfagres gate 29 N-5007 Bergen Norway Tel: +47-55 58 21 17 Fax: +47-55 58 96 50 nsd@nsd.uib.no www.nsd.uib.no Org.nr. 985 321 884
Vår dato: 26.10.2011	Vår ref: 27671 / 3 / JSL	Deres dato: Deres ref:
TILRÅDING AV BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER		
Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 04.08.2011. All nødvendig informasjon om prosjektet forelå i sin helhet 22.10.2011. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:		
27671 Behandlingsansvarlig Daglig ansvarlig Student	Teacher's Contribution to Social Inclusion Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens overste leder Jorunn Buli-Holmberg Maia Javakhishvili	
Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.		
Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.		
Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html . Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.		
Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp .		
Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.06.2012, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.		
Vennlig hilsen  Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim	 Juni Skjold Lexau	
Kontaktperson: Juni Skjold Lexau tlf: 55 58 36 01 Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering Kopi: Maia Javakhishvili, 5 Niagvari st. 0108 Tbilisi GEORGIA		

Personvernombudet for forskning



Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 27671

The purpose of the project is to describe current situation in Georgian schools regarding social dimension of inclusion. What are teachers doing to promote social inclusion, how do they understand the concept of inclusion, how do they practice social inclusion and what are they doing to help positive interaction in general and between regular students and students with special needs?

The sample consists of 2 teachers and 2 classes (approximately 20 persons in each class) at 2 different schools. The sample consists of approximately 42 persons. The pupils will be aged 7-8 years old and above. The headmaster of the schools will make the initial contact with the sample.

Sensitive personal data regarding the pupils' health will be registered (cf personopplysningsloven § 2 nr 8 letter c).

The data material will be collected through personal interviews with the teachers and through observation in the class room. Audio recordings will be used during the interview with the teacher. The teacher and the child(ren) with special needs will probably be indirectly identifiable through the notes from observation in class and through the interview with the teacher. The position as teacher in the class will be sufficient information to identify him/her and the special needs child(ren) will probably be identifiable through the fact that there might only be 1 or 2 children in the class with special needs.

The parents and the teacher will be given written information regarding the project (cf Information sheet received on October 22nd 2011) and they will give their written consent for participation. The parents also give their consent for the teacher to be interviewed about these issues. The special needs pupils will be orally informed about the project through their parents if possible, and give their consent for participation through their parents. All the students in the class room will be informed about the project, but they will not know that the student concentrates on the children with special needs (in according to the e-mail received in October 22nd 2011).

We presuppose that the student and her supervisor follow the internal guidelines for data security at the University of Oslo.

The data material will be made anonymous at project end, no later then June 30th 2012. This involves that audio-recordings and names will be deleted, while any indirectly identifying data will be deleted or altered in such a way that the information cannot be traced back to an individual.