

# Leadership for Inclusion

*School leadership that motivates teachers to  
build inclusive classrooms*

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**School leadership that motivates teachers to build inclusive classrooms.**

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School Leaders role in motivating teachers to build inclusive classrooms.

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IV

# Abstract

The Government's recent commitment to promote inclusive education in Fiji aligns itself to the mainstreaming of children with special educational needs (SEN) with the international inclusion movement. One of the foundations of inclusion is for schools to provide conditions that will support the education of children with SEN. Therefore, it will also demand school leadership that assists teachers to construct inclusive classrooms. Research has identified the school principal as a key participant in bringing about inclusive school change (Riel, 2000; Day & Leithwood, 2007; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Although many researchers have provided evidence of classroom and school conditions that influence learning conditions, little is known about how school leaders affect those conditions (Riel, 2000; Day & Leithwood, 2007). To determine the kind of support school leaders provide to motivate teachers build inclusive classrooms, qualitative interviews were conducted on three Norwegian inclusive school leaders. The research found that the extent to which school leaders perceived the importance of inclusive education through the promotion of teachers learning and the provision of a flexible curriculum; and encouraged inclusive schooling through appropriate leadership; influenced the promotion of competency building strategies such as school based collaboration, in-service training and mentorship. The findings confirm that school leaders influence inclusive school change when they provide teachers with appropriate support for staff development.





# Dedication and Acknowledgement

This research is dedicated to all children with special educational needs in Fiji, school leaders, administrators, and teachers working in both special and inclusive school settings. It is also dedicated to Mr. Frank Hilton, the founder of special education in Fiji, the Hilton organization and Hilton Special School community that I have had the privilege of working in partnership with to provide children with special educational needs access to quality education.

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# 1 Introduction

The promotion of inclusion, coupled with mandates from governments to provide a ‘school for all’ is a major challenge (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010) as school leaders have a responsibility and obligation to ensure that they provide a school for ALL children. The Governments recent commitment to promote inclusive education in Fiji aligns itself to the mainstreaming of children with special educational needs (SEN) with the international inclusion movement. As a result, schools will need to provide the conditions necessary for the education of children with SEN. More so, school leaders will need to take a pro-active stance in assisting classroom teachers create inclusive classrooms, especially when insufficient training is provided by the government’s university.

After visiting inclusive schools in England, Norway and Czech Republic and talking to their school leaders, it was patent that the implementation of inclusive education will demand school leaders who not only believe in the philosophy of inclusion, but who can motivate teachers to build inclusive classrooms. Thus the interest in this research topic and in particular, how inclusive school leaders can motivate teachers to build inclusive classrooms, rather than relying on teacher training colleges.

## 1.1 Purpose of the study and Research questions

While there is considerable evidence of classroom and school condition that influence learning achievements, little is known about how principals affect those conditions (Day & Leithwood, 2007). Therefore, this study was conducted to extend on previous research on the role of school leaders in encouraging inclusive education by focusing in particular on the way they motivate teacher learning that leads to the construction of inclusive classrooms. Since

Norway has been practicing inclusion for more than three decades, the research hopes to investigate how Norwegian Inclusive School leaders motivate teachers learning and if strategies they use can be replicated or modified to suit the context of inclusive schools in Fiji. The main research question that guided the study is:

### **How do school leaders motivate teachers to build inclusive classrooms?**

And related research sub-questions are:

- I. To what extent do school leaders see the importance of inclusive learning?**
- II. How do they encourage inclusive education? and**
- III. What competency building strategies do school leaders use to motivate teacher learning?**

## **1.2 Outline of the study**

The thesis is organized in five chapters. The first chapter presents the interest in the study, the purpose of the research, followed by the research main question and sub-questions. The second chapter provides a general overview of the theories that are used in the study, followed by a review of relevant literature. The third chapter describes the methodology that was used to achieve the research. The fourth chapter focuses on the presentation of data and followed by discussions and conclusions. The fifth and last chapter concludes the research by discussing the implications of the research.

## **2 Literature Review**

This chapter will firstly discuss the theoretical framework upon which the research is built, namely, the Instructional leadership and Transformational leadership model. Second, it will focus on a review of relevant literature on i.) Earlier research, ii.) Leadership for school change, iii.) Leadership for staff development and iv.) Staff development that will promote inclusive practices. The fourth section will focus on staff development strategies such as training, enquiry and evidence based collaboration and creating an inclusive culture. The three strategies have been chosen as they were used by many school leaders in previous research.

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

#### **2.1.1 Instructional leadership( IL)**

The instructional leadership model was chosen for the research as instructional leaders are known to be important in schools where leaders are expected to bring change (Webb, 2005). For this reason, instructional leadership would be appropriate in schools that need to accommodate inclusive changes as they promote instructional time, promote professional development; provide incentives for teachers as well as for learning (Halliger, 2000).

At the same time, Instructional leaders are considered to be ‘strong directive leaders’ (Halliger 2005, p.3) who act as the day to day manager of the school building, are responsible for timetabling teachers and evaluating them accordingly (Palaiologou & Male, 2011). This implies that when promoting inclusive practices, changes will be based on school and teacher evaluation. In addition, IL are regarded as hands on principals who are well versed with curriculum and instruction( Halliger & Murphy, 1986), hence, they promote inclusion by

being role models and who are not only familiar with the curriculum but who practice inclusion for children with special educational needs (SEN). Furthermore, instructional leaders are culture builders (Halliger, 2010) who influence the school community in embracing inclusive attitudes and mindsets.

### **2.1.2 Transformational leadership (TL)**

The transformational leadership model has also been chosen as it is understood to meet the current demand for innovation (Southworth, 1999) by empowering others through a distribution of leadership (Sergiovanni, 2009). As a result, transformational leaders do not provide leadership alone (Halliger, 2010), instead they share their leadership responsibility with other teachers. Therefore, when providing leadership for inclusive change, school leaders using the transformational leadership model share their leadership responsibilities with other teachers through the delegation of responsibilities such as team leaders. In addition, they are motivated by the importance of individualized support, intellectual stimulation, and personal vision by supporting teachers through competence building that will enable them to create inclusive classrooms. By this they encourage collaboration to stimulate thinking and promote student learning. At the same time, they are grounded in understanding the needs of individual teachers rather than controlling them to meet desired outcomes (Halliger, 2010) as they seek to influence people by building from the bottom-up rather than from the top down.

As a result, transformational leadership demands social skills of team building and inspiration without dominion (Southworth, 1999). They are also concerned with modeling best practices and important organizational values, the continuous professional development of teachers, shared decision making and leadership, experimentation, teacher reflection and building relationships with the school community (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999).



## 2.2 Review of current literature

### 2.2.1 Earlier Research

To provide a point of departure, previous study in the field of inclusive education illuminate that challenges regarding inclusive education encompass i) clarity about the supporters role in the classroom, ii) personality clashes and boundary disputes between classroom teachers and supporters, iii) availability of appropriate support for children with behavior difficulties, iv) the severity of the child's disability v.) definition of special education needs and vi.) the definition of 'the most appropriate support' ( Clark, 2010; Avramidis & Norwich, 2010; Florian & Linklater, 2010). As a result, teachers are often left under considerable amount of pressure.

In addition, the feeling of uncertainty in providing services, the search for qualified staff, the lack of training and time and space to conduct inclusive practices are part of the challenges that principals face (Schmidt & Venet, 2012). It also places additional responsibilities on principals to ensure that policies and structures are in place for smooth communication, the availability of appropriate support and student-centered decisions (Guzman, 1997). Furthermore, children with special educational needs are often not socially included as they are less popular, had fewer relationships and participated less often as a member of a sub-group (Pjil, Frostad & Flem, 2008). Very often social exclusion resulted from the choice of peers which is usually based on similarities.

According to the Norwegian inclusive education policy, 'every individual shall be provided optimal learning conditions in the regular learning context-as far as possible' (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2008. p.10.) The report adds that adapted education is a

principle and not an individual right. This implies that necessary considerations and reasonable balance will be made between the individual learner, the institutions and the society, the teacher and fellow students. Although no one is excluded, provision of optimal learning opportunity also implies that some children may receive all or part of their teaching outside mainstream classrooms, in a specially adapted classroom. This applies to individual learners 'that represent a physical threat to other students and staff, or persons that by their behavior seriously reduce the learning opportunities for several other fellow students'(p.10).However, in such cases, assessments will be made to determine whether special education in a segregated learning context will provide the best solution. One of the specific measures that support and promote inclusive education includes the pedagogical-psychological services (PPT) in basic education.

Each municipality and county is obliged to have a body (PPT) that provides educational and psychological counseling services to kindergarten and schools. Its main function and responsibility is to assist children, young people and adults that experience a social and educational situation. PPT employs specialists with background from psychology, pedagogic, speech therapy or similar and one of its task is to assist institutions and their staff to work on organizational development and development of expertise in order to ensure adaptation of teaching, which reduces the need for special education. PPT also carries out expert assessment on students on the request of schools.

Although structured services are in place, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2008) also highlighted that there are indications that many teachers lack necessary competencies in the area. This finding is confirmed by Flem & Keller's (2010) research on the gap between Norwegian Inclusive education ideology and practice proved that one of the factors that hinder inclusion in schools relate to incompetent teachers. In addition, Takala,

Hausstätter, Astrid, Ahl & Head (2012) study of perceptions of student teachers in Norway, Finland and Sweden, revealed that although Norwegian students supported inclusive education, they confirmed that teachers were not competent. Takala et al (2012) concluded that inclusive education demands new skills and knowledge, not only for an individual teacher, but for the whole staff, as the whole school will need to be competent in order to make inclusion work. As a result, staff development is crucial.

Earlier findings thus suggest that inclusion is often problematic especially when what is termed inclusion is a mere transfer of students from special education schools to regular classroom settings without any change to traditional teaching. It further illuminates that inclusion may change school policy but not necessary school practice.

Booth (1996) argues that the on-going process of inclusion is rather complex and problematic when applied to different contexts. This means that the way inclusion works in one school may not be applicable in another school. It also implies that there are many road maps to achieving inclusive education. Accordingly, inclusion is a never ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity and is about learning to live with difference, and learning how to live with difference (Ainscow, 2004). How then can schools accommodate student differences when the curriculum is rigid? How can schools ensure that the accommodation of students with SEN is not just a mere transfer of students from one school to another? More so, how can schools ensure that change in traditional teaching does take place?

A comprehensive review of international literature (Arvamidis & Norwich, 2010) highlighted that extensive training opportunities for in-service training were seen as top priority and concluded that teachers will be more committed to change if they receive assistance in mastering the skills required to implement inclusion. In addition, the UNESCO (2005) report asserts that training model for teachers should be re-considered in many countries. This means

that school based in-service training should be strengthened rather than relying on lengthy traditional institutional pre-service training.

Since educating diverse students necessitates teachers who are competent in providing an enriching and interesting curriculum (Fullan, 2005; Norwich & Avramidis, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2006), they will need school leaders who will assist them in mastering the skills needed for building inclusive classrooms.

Consequently, guaranteeing a school for ALL will require school leaders to take a pro-active stance and facilitate teacher learning. Research has identified school leaders as key participants in bringing about school change and creating schools that support teachers meet the needs of diverse learners (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). This is especially the case when general education classrooms include a diverse range of students, including those with disabilities ( McLesky & Waldron, 2002; Clark, 2010; Drago-Sevenson & Pinto, 2006).

When school leaders strategically facilitate teacher learning, teachers thrive as they are challenged to grow (Leithwood & Janzti, 2000; Fullan, 2005) and as a result, the quality of teaching improves hence contributing to high student learning and achievement (Lieberman & Miller, 2007; Fullan, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2009; Timperley, 2011). However, not many new inclusive school leaders know how to effectively facilitate teachers learning and will therefore need more knowledge about effective conditions and programs that support teacher learning.

### **2.2.2 Leadership for school change**

The implementation of inclusive practices will demand school leaders who play a critical role in providing a vision, leadership and administrative authority (Sergiovanni, 2009; Day &

Leithwood, 2007) and who can also challenge the norm of traditional approach to teaching, inspire a clear mutual vision of what the school should and could be and empower staff through cooperative team work (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). This means the school leaders will first and foremost need to believe the importance of inclusion, followed by influencing the formation of a school vision that will direct the school towards embracing inclusive goals. It also implies that that the reconstruction of a school system will require the school to work as a team that will commit itself to the implementation of inclusive processes. Lindqvist & Nilholm (2011) affirms that school leaders' belief about inclusion is important as it will influence the way they organize their school in accommodating diverse needs.

However, a change of attitude cannot take place without a proper understanding of the inclusion process, more so, in acknowledging that all children, irrespective of their race, socio-economic status, gender or disability, deserve quality education. Florian & Linklater (2010) assert that part of transformation is the belief that all children have the capacity to change and be changed. It will entail a shift in their value system and supported by school based inclusion policy and procedures to ensure sustainability. (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010).

Successful inclusion is also associated with principal's positive attitude regarding the process of inclusion (Schmidt & Venet, 2012) and is reflected in the way they encourage teacher learning through collaboration that will enhance student performance. On the other hand, negative attitudes towards inclusion may result in failure (Guzman, 1997) as it is associated with lack of planning, lack of resources, lack of knowledge of better practices and limited experiences with special needs students (Schmidt & Venet, 2012; Bobb & Early, 2009; Sergiovanni, 2009). However, negative attitudes can be minimized when school leaders learn and acquire the knowledge they need to build inclusive schools, more so, in facilitating teacher learning that will produce inclusive classrooms. (Schmidt & Venets, 2012; Day &

Leithwood, 2007). Adequate knowledge will enable school leaders to display inclusive attitudes and articulate a philosophy that reflects inclusive beliefs and practices.

### **2.2.3 Leadership for staff development**

Blase & Blase (1999) study of 809 teachers perspectives of principals instructional leadership found that principals used five primary talking strategies with teachers to promote reflection. The strategies included: (i) making suggestions, (ii) giving feedback, (iii) modeling, (iv) using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions, and (v) giving praise. The strategies strongly influenced teacher's reflective behaviors and helped them to plan and prepare more carefully. It also reinforced the use of strong instructional strategies such as the use of innovative ideas and a positive response to student diversity. Teachers added that it positively impacted on motivation, self-esteem, efficacy, and sense of security. Furthermore the study found that according to teachers, effective instructional leaders used six teacher development strategies: (i) emphasizing the study of teaching and learning; (ii) supporting collaboration efforts among educators; (iii) developing coaching relationships among educators; (iv) encouraging and supporting redesign of programs; (v) applying the principles of adult learning, growth, and development to all phases of staff development; and (vi) implementing action research to inform instructional decision making .

Similarly, transformational leaders develop intellectual, academic and professional capital (Sergiovanni, 2006) while empowering and supporting teachers as partners in decision making (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). They recognize that the link between what happens to teachers and what happens to students is direct (Sergiovanni, 2006). For example, little collaboration among teachers will result in little collaboration among students. They also recognize that engaging students in higher academic levels and improving their performance

will require teachers who develop new capacities for understanding the subjects they teach and the pedagogical decisions that must be made to teach effectively.

Leithwood (2005) states that transformational leaders help staff development by maintaining a collaborative professional school culture and involving staff in collaborative goal setting (Sergiovanni, 2009). At the same time, learning is not only the result of saying things; rather administrators must support new meanings by acting on structures and routines (Riel, 2000) that will enhance teacher learning. Therefore, change will only be realized when schools are seen as 'professional learning communities in which school development and successful strategies are growing from a bottom up perspective' (Persson, 2005. p.20). Lontos (1992) adds that this strategy reduces teacher isolation, supports cultural changes, shares leadership with others by delegating power, and actively communicates the school's norms and beliefs. As a result teachers are taught to work smarter (Halliger, 2010).

However, Fullan (2005) cautions that knowledge of effective teacher training and how it works in schools is essential. This implies that successful inclusion will necessitate a planned intervention that will provide the teacher and student with the necessary support and the best possible environment (Day & Leithwood, 2007; Venet & Schmidt, 2012).

#### **2.2.4 Staff development that support Inclusion**

Bubb & Early (2009) maps out practical steps that school leaders can take to ensure that staff development will lead to school improvement. Their research in 13 secondary schools, 22 primary and three special schools revealed that:

- 1).Staff development will need to be managed and led effectively to ensure that it has a positive effect.

2).Schools will need to develop learning- centered culture: for example, many schools had resources to support adult learning including shelves in the staffroom for publications, storing of resources and websites for useful links.

3).Individual development should be linked to needs analysis. In this way, teachers will feel listened to and valued as their needs are met.

4).Staff development that involves discussing, coaching, mentoring, observing and developing others is highly effective:

6).Time will need to be made for staff development as workload and new initiative were seen to cause fatigue in all schools.

7).Learning and development should be shared, acknowledged and celebrated for improvement to be sustained: recognition and celebration of learning encouraged staff as staff notice board mentioned individual achievement and staff were encouraged to write their reflection on school web sites. These strategies promoted reflection and discussion on line as well as in person.

The above pointers are important as they can also improve staff development that is relevant to building inclusive classrooms.

Many researches including Guzman (1997), Clark( 2010), Schmidt & Venet (2012), Florian & Linklater (2010) and Ainscow & Sandhill (2010) have shown that although inclusive school principals use different strategies in promoting inclusion, the approaches they had in common included: i) Training, ii)Enquiry–based collaboration and iii) Creating an inclusive culture. The three strategies will be discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.



## **Training**

Training will need to go beyond mere explanation and focus on the acquisition of knowledge and skills that will engage teachers in 'systematic enquiry into the effectiveness of their practice' (Timperley, 2011. p.4). Guzmans (1997) study of evolution in 12 elementary schools found that skill training in addressing special needs is essential for classroom teachers. She found that five of the principals personally facilitated an annual retreat with special education staff to evaluate and restructure the special education support model to suit their inclusive model. The sixth principal invited a university professor to facilitate their special education team's annual team building and problem solving planning retreat. She recommended that inclusive school principals should be required to have a personal plan of professional development that includes issues with inclusion. And they should be required to guide their staff in a collaborative process of building inclusive practice philosophy, problem solving, and Individual Education Program management.

Training is important as a lack of knowledge and skills impact on how they engage in inclusive classrooms thus clearly demonstrating the importance of training (Florian & Linklater, 2010). Timperley(2011) emphasizes that schools need to change their perspective about professional learning. First, professional learning should be about seriously engaging in learning that is on-going and in-depth in order to achieve transformational change. Second, improvement in student learning should not be a by-product of professional learning; rather it should be its central purpose. As a result, part of the belief should be about ensuring deep learning for all. Third, professional learning should be about building the knowledge and skills of teachers rather than just using different methods. She asserts that the activity that facilitates the process of learning is not as important as the knowledge and skills that are acquired during learning. And fourth, professional learning is an active process of systematic

enquiry into the effectiveness of practice that promotes student engagement and learning. Therefore, professional development without professional learning will prove infertile.

### **Enquiry and evidence based collaboration**

A high level of staff and student involvement, joint planning, distribution of leadership and a commitment to enquiry will promote problem-solving among staff and encourage more inclusive responses to diversity (Ainscow, 1999). Therefore, school communities should develop a common language detailing aspects of their inclusive practice (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010), and through clear communication (Guzman,1997) support on-going success of inclusion. Schmidt & Venet's (2012) research highlighted that characteristics of good leadership in inclusive schools included encouraging the formation of learning communities. They reported that school leaders were using information from their own schools to provoke discussions on their values and its implications to diversity. Therefore, reiterating Clark, Dyson, Millward & Skidmore's (1997) belief that inclusion is not about the best form of provision but one of finding resolutions to enduring dilemmas.

Timperley's(2011) research on five school leaders found that school leaders integrated evidence to build teachers enquiry and knowledge. For example, a teacher of one of the principals had shown him that one of her students was doing quite well in reading but not in writing, therefore, he challenged his teacher to understand why the student was struggling with his writing and to work towards improving it. Hence, the move to accommodating diverse needs will challenge teachers to re-examine their practices in order to make them more responsive and flexible (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010).

Guzman (1997) also reported that successful leaders also collaborated with their staff to develop an inclusive philosophy that was relevant to the schools need and are actively and

personally involved in developing intervention strategies for at-risk students and in dialoguing with parents. He concluded that through constant collaboration, teachers will be able to discover their own ideologies and perceptions on inclusion and simultaneously be able to reconstruct their belief towards embracing diversity (Clark, 2010).

However, Persson (2005) reiterates that the most effective learning occurs when learners are able to apply what they have learnt in various and diverse situations. Therefore, it is imperative that learning communities allocate time for reflection. He adds that without reflection, the process of learning will not be based on true reasoning. Ultimately, the focus needs to be on the process of learning. As a result, practitioners will need to think outside the box in meaning making processes.

### **Creating an inclusive culture**

Cultures are about the deeper understandings of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization (Schein, 2004), therefore, inclusive schools should pay attention to the development of inclusive cultures (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010), and in particular to the formation of inclusive values within school communities. Guzman(1997) indicated that inclusive cultures encompasses written and unwritten philosophies which include a belief on the right of all students to learn, a belief that inclusive classrooms are beneficial for all students, and a commitment to ensuring optimal academic success for all students. Therefore, the restructuring of mainstream schools will require school leaders to value student diversity and promote a unifying vision and goal that will help recreate the school into an organization that will accommodate diversity. As a result, school leaders need to be committed to inclusive values and to a leadership style which encourages individuals to participate in leadership functions (Dyson, Polat, Hutcheson & Gallannaugh, 2004). They will

also need to improve student learning by focusing on getting relationships right between themselves, their teachers, students and parents. This means that a changed environment will first and foremost require changed people.

Kytle & Bogotch (2000) assert that real and sustained change is achieved by changing the culture of the school, rather than by simply changing the structures of the way the school operates. As a result, school principals must first understand a schools culture before leading.

Instructional leaders are viewed as culture builders who foster high expectations and standards for students, as well as for teachers (Mortimore, 1993; Purkey & Smith, 1983). As a result, they are directly involved in the teaching culture of the school, work directly with children and classroom teachers and base decisions on educational principles and values (Grace, 1995, p.123). Similarly, Leithwood & Jantzi (2006) study of 12 schools found that part of transformational leaders strategies in building a school culture was to reduce teacher isolation by encouraging staff to influence one another, promote collaborative learning and decision making and visiting each other's classroom.

## **2.3 Conclusion**

In spite of the dilemmas that are currently faced in inclusive schools, school leaders have a responsibility in ensuring that that they provide a school for ALL children. School leaders will need to have inclusive attitudes which will entail an inclusive school vision. Part of providing a school for ALL will also require school leaders to provide school leadership that will bring about inclusive changes; which will in turn affect the practices of classroom teaches. As a result, school leaders play an important role in motivating teachers to build

inclusive classrooms. School leaders will need to influence and challenge teachers thinking by promoting inclusive cultures, in-service training, and enquiry and evidence based collaboration that will go beyond a mere transfer of knowledge to the acquisition of skills that will encourage, nurture and facilitate learning for ALL.

# 3 Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the methods that were used to achieve the purpose of the research such as the research approach, research method, selection of research sample, data collection technique, the process of data collection, the process of data analysis and considerations for validity and limitations of this study. The chapter concludes by mentioning the ethical considerations.

## 3.1 Qualitative research approach

The qualitative method was chosen for this research because of my interest to what and how people do things. According to Merriam (2009), qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences; hence, the aim of this research is to understand how school leaders motivate teachers learning that will help them to build inclusive classrooms. The approach would help me understand how school leaders perceive inclusion and how their perception is reflected in the way they organize school activities such as learning for their teachers. Therefore, using a constructivist approach (Bryman, 2008), the research interviews also investigated how school contexts influenced the school leaders leadership style and competency building strategies.

Although different authors discuss qualitative research in different ways, Yin (2011) discusses five features of qualitative study that the research relates to. He states that qualitative study is about

- i) Studying the meaning of people's lives under real world conditions. This means that people will be performing in their everyday roles and as a result, there is minimal distraction s

social interaction will be taking place in its natural surroundings. As a result, the qualitative interviews were conducted at the head teachers' school to make them to feel at ease and to be in control of the interview.

ii) Capturing the views and perspectives of participants. To do this, the interviews were designed using a combination of both structured and semi-structured interviews. In this way it allowed more information to be gathered through a more flexible approach.

iii) Covering contextual conditions. Conducting the interviews at the schools had allowed me to gather relevant information about the school context. Bryman (2008) adds that 'conducting qualitative interview in more than one setting can be helpful in identifying the significance of context and the ways in which it influences behavior and ways of thinking (p.387). Therefore, by studying school leaders in different settings, the research hopes to relate the how different inclusive context affected school leadership.

iv) Contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behavior. Through analysis of data, the research will explain the reasons behind the school leaders' behavior.

v) Striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone: although this study would have yielded more data by using other source such as observation, however, the restriction of time and money only allowed for face to face interviews.

As illustrated above, the research had focused on the subjective views of school leaders as it believes that social realities are created (Basit, 2011), through peoples experiences. The research also acknowledges that people's perception change over time (Snape & Spencer, 2003) as they interact with their environment (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) and therefore, it is

important to understand the meaning they place on those experiences. Further discussion can be found in chapter four.

## **3.2 Research sample**

Due to limited time, four participants were chosen for the research. The criteria for sample selection were based on the research purpose and as a result, purposeful sampling occurred at two levels.

### **3.2.1 School context**

It was important to find schools in which children with SEN are taught. As a result, the criteria for school samples included the accommodation of children with SEN through the availability of a flexible curriculum, children with SEN are educated in the same classroom as their peers and the up skilling of teachers teaching skills to accommodate students with special needs is taking place on a regular basis.

As a result, one of the schools was chosen during one of our school observation trip, as it had encompassed all of the sample criteria. On the other hand, another three schools had to be identified. Since contact for other schools were not available, the course coordinator was relied upon to make contact. Although beneficial, the extent of inclusive education practices and competency building for teachers in those schools were not known.

The interviews revealed that the second school, Riverside primary, had a separate special education unit in which some students with SEN were receiving part of their education while others were there 100% of the time. Also, the third school, Lakeside primary, was taking students with SEN out of their classroom for separate lessons.



### **3.2.2 School leaders**

The school leaders needed to have more than two years of leadership experience in an inclusive school. Having more than two years of leadership experience was important as it would have allowed the school leader to learn from previous experience. Therefore, it was anticipated that school leaders were confident of why they were doing what they were doing. Also, since the school leaders were selected on purpose, it was understood that they would have had experiences worth sharing and that would contribute to the research (Merriam, 2009).

However, since research participants were based on the coordinators' contacts, it was not guaranteed that the criteria would be fulfilled. Again, the interviews revealed that although the second school leader (Ms. Richard) had been a school leader for more than five years, she had been at Riverside primary for only 18 months and the third school leader, Ms. Louise, was new to her leadership role and had been a leader for only 13 months. During the interviews, it was realized that one of the criteria for sample selection could have specified that each school leader had been at the school for more than two years as it would have yielded more sustainable staff development strategies.

Due to the lack of time to conduct more interviews and also on the amount of data that the three school leaders had yielded, a fourth school leader was not required. Lessons learnt at this stage included i.) the importance of finding the right samples as it would elucidate relevant information. ii.) I could have also visited several schools to ensure that the sample criteria were fulfilled. Nonetheless, I also understood that it would have taken a lot of time and therefore I am indebted to the course coordinator for helping me find suitable research participants.

### **3.3 Qualitative interview as data collection method**

Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) assert that interviews are best suited for studying peoples understanding and also for clarifying and elaborating their own perspective of their lived world. As a result, qualitative interviewing was chosen because it would help me probe and clarify school leaders' perception of inclusion and find out more about the way they motivate teachers to build inclusive classrooms. Interviewing is also appropriate as it helps to elicit information on some of the activities that the school leaders had practiced in the past and which are impossible to replicate (Merriam, 2009). Given the time span for the study, the face to face interview was also seen to be invaluable as it allowed direct contact (Thomas, 2009) and the eliciting of relevant information from the school leaders.

#### **3.3.1 Interview structure**

When designing the interview, it was important to make informed and reflective decisions about the interview method to use at different stages of the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Keeping in mind the kind of data that was needed from the interviews (Merriam, 2009), it was decided that both structured and unstructured interviews were going to be used. The first part of the interview was more structured to gather some background information about the school leaders, for example, their work experience, knowledge of inclusive education and school context. The second part of the interview was more semi-structured, thus allowing flexibility to focus more on the experiences or practices of the school leaders.

### **3.3.2 Interview Guide and Pilot study**

An interview guide was used to guide the interview rather than to dictate the structure and content (Thomas, 2009). Thus, it allowed the interview to remain focused and at the same time flexible enough to allow the interview to change direction when needed. The first interview guide was formulated from theories that were found in the literature review. These theories were used as a point of reference as it provided relevant information regarding how questions could be formulated to answer the research problem. Guiding questions were placed under each sub-question to ensure that issues pertaining to each sub-question were covered (refer to appendix 1). After the pilot interview, questions were reviewed and amendments were made according to the participant's responses and recommendations.

Changes encompassed the inclusion of two more questions which related to assessment of teachers competence and a question which was directed at how school leaders help incompetent teachers. The pilot interview also helped to weed out poor questions such as How do school leaders implement support programs to ensure that classroom teachers build the competency to create inclusive classrooms? as it was too long. Since piloting of the interview was conducted on the same day as the first interview, recommendations and adjustment of the interview guide were carried out in haste.

This process has not only highlighted the importance of conducting a pilot study but that the pilot study could have been held at least a few days before the first interview to allow for thorough planning. I could also have had more than one pilot study so that I could have practiced my interviewing skills. Nevertheless, the first interview was productive as the school leader had a lot to share.

### 3.3.3 The interview process

The introductions of the interviews were the same for all the three leaders. Each interview began with an introduction of the research problem and purpose of the research. Secondly, ethical issues were discussed such as the use of pseudo names, maintaining confidentiality of their school when describing its context, safe keeping of interview transcripts and the school leaders ability to withdraw from the interview if they wanted to. Then the school leaders were given the informed consent form, which they read and signed. They were also given time to ask any question regarding the interview.

The first interview was very helpful as Ms. Sally had a lot to say and therefore dictated the flow of the interview. Her answers helped to define follow up questions and confirmed the kind of questions that could be asked for later interviews. My part was to clarify, prompt and revisit what she had said. At the end of the interview, she pointed out that the interview was also a process of self-reflection as it provoked her thinking about the next step she needed to take to build her teachers competence.

Through consultation with the supervisor, changes made to the first interview guide also led to the restructuring of the interview main question and sub-questions. The first set of questions were:

Main Question: How do school leaders build classroom teachers competence in creating inclusive classrooms?

Sub-Question 1: What are school leader's philosophies about inclusive education?

Question 2: How do school leaders believe they can build classroom teachers competency in creating inclusive classrooms? And

Sub-Question 3: What strategies do school leaders use to build classroom teachers competence in creating inclusive classrooms?

The new set of questions included:

Main Question: How do school leaders motivate teachers to build inclusive classrooms?

Sub-question 1 : To what extent do school leaders see the importance of inclusive learning?

Sub –question 2 : How do school leaders promote inclusive schooling?

Sub-question 3 : What competency building strategies do school leaders use to motivate teacher learning?

The main research question was slightly changed as it was observed that school leaders do not build teachers learning, however, they facilitated teachers learning by putting in place strategies to help teachers learn. Changes made to sub-questions 1 and 2 were in response to the first school leaders interview answers. As mentioned earlier, Ms. Sallys' responses to the first interview led to the formation of new questions that would be relevant to later interviews.

After transcribing the first interview, the interview guide was further scrutinized and adjusted to accommodate emerging concepts. For instance, questions were more specific and focused and were aimed at theories and other concepts which emerged out of the first interview, for example, coaching, short courses, university studies, how do school leaders encourage teachers to further their studies and working with the school administration. As a result, the interview guide was improved by inserting more keywords to guide the interview (refer to appendix 2). As a result, the second interview gathered more information than the first interview. At the same time, the second interview turned out to be more structured as questions were aimed at eliciting what was wanted from the interviewee rather than through prompting and probing of answers that were provided by the school leader. For example,

instead of probing Ms. Richard about school based courses, she was asked about whether her teachers were attending university courses instead. It was obvious that she had more to say, however, my desire to get my own questions answered got in the way.

Upon reflections on the first two interviews, more emphasis was placed on probing. Therefore, using the same interview guide, more probing was carried out in the third interview. As a result, it turned out to have more depth. During this process, several lessons were learnt. First, engaging my supervisor from the initial planning of the interview guide and the piloting phase of the interview would have produced a more thorough interview guide. Second, the use of 'probing' during the interview would have guaranteed more rich data. Third, the constant changing of the interview guide led to eliciting of more information from one school leader than another. In spite of the drawbacks, the processes used to improve the interview guide have helped strengthen the validity of the research findings as questions did not only focus on theories but also on emerging concepts.

### **3.3.4 Recording and transcribing**

Merriam (2009) and Kvale (1996) explain three basic ways of recording interviews. They are: audio recording (digital/cassette or video), note-taking and recording data as soon after the interview. For the purpose of this interview, audio recording was used to capture the precise words of the interview participants. Audio recording also ensured that everything spoken during the interview was available for analysis. From the outset, it was recognized that not all data was going to be used; therefore, each interview was replayed twice to familiarize myself with the data. As a result, irrelevant data, such as the school leader's stories which did not relate to the research interest and disputes that happened due to misunderstanding of inclusive education concept, were not transcribed. During this process care was also taken so that

potentially valuable information was not lost. Reference was made to Merriam (2009) who stated that a segment or unit ought to satisfy the following two criteria: i) It should reveal information that is relevant to the study; ii) It could be the smallest part of information about something that can stand on its own. This means that it should be interpretable in the absence of any other information other than broad understanding of the context in which the enquiry was carried out.

Considerations were also given to how much of the interview transcript could be used as evidence and to the things that school leaders omitted and which could be regarded as important. (Thomas, 2009). For example, why did one of the school leaders only send competent teachers to attend courses?

## **3.4 Data analysis process**

### **3.4.1 Storing of raw data**

After each interview, memos were made about the context of the interviews and the context of the recordings (Richard, 2009). Thus a detailed description was made of the school and of the school leaders. Post interview notes also included interpretations gathered during and after the interview process. Richard (2009) emphasized the importance of keeping log entries of the project notes, setting notes, interpretive notes and the process of data records. She added that ideas and reflections should be noted in annotations, memos and links kept as they will help researchers in their final write up. Therefore, log entries were noted during the entire process and revisited to help discover emerging concepts and make conclusions.

Interviews were transcribed with enough space on the right hand side for comments and notes to be inserted. Each line was also coded with a number, starting from 1 onwards for

referencing purposes. The purpose of numbering the quotations is to make the analysis more transparent to the reader. It will also make the analysis easier to understand. The original transcript was stored away safely and a copy made and used as the working document for analysis.

### **3.4.2 Coding process**

The transcripts were double checked several times to develop an understanding of what was being said and why they were being said. It also ensured the valid interpretation of data.

#### **Thematic Coding**

Thematic coding using themes from the literature review was initially used as transcript segments from different school leaders were copied and pasted to answer the sub-questions. An example is shown below regarding part of third sub-question.

#### **Theme One : in-service training**

##### **Interview 1:**

*“We have tried to choose special subject so we can build their capacity together... for a while we have noticed that not all teachers observe the same way”.*

##### **Interview 2 :**

*“last year we started to have more courses here which all staff can attend.. Then all the teachers can attend and receive the same information.*



Initially, when focusing on the first sub-question, the theme was going to be centered on the school leaders understanding of inclusive education. Regarding the second sub-question, the theme would focus on leadership for school change and themes for the third sub-question would be centered on training, evidence based collaboration and building inclusive cultures.

However, after opening up the sentences and making further interpretations, recurring regularities were identified and as a result, new themes and concepts were generated and noted. As a result, analytical coding was adopted.

### **Analytical coding**

After repeatedly reading the transcripts, three themes were derived from the data related to sub-question one: To what extent do school leaders see the importance of inclusive learning? They were i.) schools as communities ii.) promotion of teachers learning and iii) promotion of a flexible curriculum. Further rechecking of data highlighted that each school leader perceived inclusion differently and as a result the first theme was changed back to i.) school leaders understanding of inclusive education, while the other two remained.

When finalizing themes for the second sub –question: How do school leaders promote inclusive schooling? It was discovered that the three leaders were carrying out their responsibilities using different leadership styles. As a result, themes were focused on the leadership theories which were discussed in the literature review. They are i.) Transformational leadership and ii.) Instructional leadership.

Finally, when finalizing themes based on the third sub-question: What competency building strategies do school leaders use? three new themes were added: i) team learning, ii) coaching and iii) distributed leadership. However, further analysis of data revealed that collaboration

was taking place throughout the other themes. As a result, it was removed from being a theme on its own.

Also, culture building was not viewed as a competency building strategy as it was used by the school leaders. Rather it was a by - product of the other strategies that the school leaders were employing. As a result, the themes were refocused to i) team building, ii) network clusters, iii) training, iv.) coaching and v) distributed leadership. Once themes were finalized, relationships between themes were analyzed and cross referenced (Thomas, 2009) and themes were further subdivided.

Networking was subdivided into i) working with PPT ii) Working with parents, iii) working with other schools and iv) others. Training was also subdivided into in-service course, university training and training of parents. Coaching was also subdivided into i) coaching by colleagues and ii) coaching by the school leader.

After much thinking, team building was renamed ‘collaborative teams’ because of the nature of collaboration that were involved in the teams. Furthermore, ‘networking’ was renamed as ‘Working with the community’. Again, after cross referencing and further analysis, it was concluded that ‘team collaboration’ and ‘working with the community’ would come under the main theme of ‘collaborative learning’. As a result, ‘collaborative learning’ was subdivided into ‘on-site collaboration’ (which was team collaboration) and ‘collaboration with the community’ (which was working with the community).

However, because of inconsistencies, ‘training’ was renamed ‘in-service training’ and sub-themes were removed and it was discussed only as in-service training. Also, ‘collaboration with the community’ was removed as its data did not relate to the research problem. In addition, when focusing on ‘coaching’ it was discovered that the school leaders were referring

to ‘mentorship’ when talking about ‘coaching’. Therefore, using Wong’s (2005) definition of ‘mentors’, the theme was focused on teaching mentor as the practices of school leaders were not regarded as ‘mentoring’ under Wong’s definition. Rather, they were regarded as coaches of team leaders. Collaboration with the school community was later removed as further analysis of data revealed that it was not relevant to the research question.

Further scrutiny of data, reflection and reading of relevant literature required one more change. Finally, themes based on the third sub-question were confined to: i.) School based collaboration, ii.) In-service training and iii.) Mentorship.

The process of categorizing themes, proved to be one of the most ‘intellectually challenging phase of data analysis’ (Marshall & Rossman, 1999. p.154).

### **Open coding**

Although open coding was not used much because of my interest in thematic coding, it was indirectly used as I was interested in the other things that each school leader had to say, e.g. Ms. Louise shared about the traditional teachers’ attitude to school change and Ms. Richard also shared her hardworking teachers.

### **3.4.3 Write up**

Once new themes and sub themes were finalized, the writing process began. The first draft began by focusing on sub-questions one and two. During the entire process, the interview recording was listened to again to ensure that transcripts were accurate and categories double checked. In the process more information was discovered. For example, Ms. Richards had applied to work at the school because of the inclusion of the special education unit but at the end of the day was working towards accommodating students with SEN in their regular

classrooms. Therefore, the analysis demanded a heightened and focused awareness of the data and openness to subtle and unstated perceptions (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The draft was edited as it was also discovered that it contained unnecessary and irrelevant quotations. Coleman & Briggs (2002) states that making informed judgments on the value of evidence for the study are something that will have to be made as the researcher moves along. However, too much quotes were deleted in the process. Selecting the right quotation was crucial when presenting findings (Watling, 2002) so that it provided insight into the way the school leaders think.

In doing so, it was discovered that valuable information had been left out. For example, I discovered that Ms. Sally had a logical reason for sending competent teachers to attend courses. It was because whole school learning was not effective at their school. As a result, the selected teachers would return to share what they had learnt with their team members.

The exercise of extracting quotes created a better understanding of the school leaders as it resulted in interpretations that were based on evidence. At the same time, it also resulted in the removal of interpretations that had no evidence. For example, I had concluded that teachers at Seaside primary would have been better equipped if they had all attended the course. However, Ms. Sally knew better as she had been evaluating her teachers.

By the end of the writing process, a better understanding of the school leaders had been gained. For example, the strategies that each leader devised were in response to their school context and the way they viewed the importance of inclusion.

The process of data analysis highlighted the importance of using the right research tool such as the interview, to elucidate the information that is relevant to the research topic, especially when research was limited by time. Also, selecting the right quotation was crucial when

presenting findings so that it provided insight into the way the school leaders think. At the same time, it also highlighted the importance of good time management that would allow enough time for analysis and double checking of findings for validation purposes.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability**

According to Yin (2011), validity in research is one that has properly collected and interpreted its data so that conclusions accurately reflect and represent the real world that was studied. To ensure content validity, themes were drawn from answers to each sub-question and themes were further divided into sub themes. Coleman & Briggs (2002) states that content validity is the way a data instrument shows that it has fairly and comprehensively covered the items that it expects to cover. Hence, the vigorous process of qualifying the interview guide had also enabled the extraction of data that would correctly represent the school leader's world.

Descriptive validity was also ensured through the review of interview accounts (Maxwell, 1999). When analyzing and discussing findings, interview recordings were replayed and transcripts reread to ensure that interview accounts were accurate. As a result, descriptive validity led to the validation of data interpretation.

During the process of interpretation, theories were generated, tested and applied at various stages (Watling, 2002). Consequently, some data were rejected, while others were adapted and retained. According to Maxwell (1999), interpretive validation is 'grounded in the language of the people studied and rely as much as possible on their own words and concepts' (p.289). Hence, when describing the findings in this research, care was taken and discussions justified by using the words of the school leaders.

## **3.6 Generalization**

Focusing on a few participants is understood to have a common critique for generalization. However, Kvale (1996) defends the generalization of a few participants by pointing readers to the pioneers of psychology such as Skinner (1961) and Piaget and the nature of their research. Kvale(1996) asserts that the generalization of a quantitative case lies in the immense number of observations on individuals, whilst in qualitative research; the focus on single cases makes it possible to investigate in detail the relationship between the phenomena and the subject. Therefore, the depth of the investigation in this research lies in the relationship between the perception of school leaders to their school context and the way they organize competency building for their teachers. Yin (2011) adds that the problem of generalization can be minimized by replicating the study in another similar setting, an approach that is adopted in this research. Generalization was also considered when theory was used to generate data.

## **3.7 Limitations**

During the research process a few limitations were encountered. First, relevant information on the context of inclusive education in Norway were limited in English print and which resulted in limited knowledge of the Norwegian context. Having limited knowledge could have also meant limited interpretation of data. Second, due to limitation of time, interview participants were limited to three and the use of one data collection method. As a result, the study does not include perspectives of teachers or other stakeholders to provide complementary or rival information that could strengthen the validity of the research. Therefore, it is unclear whether the school leaders were actually implementing Inclusive education. However, they seemed confident and knew what they were talking about. Also, the third school leader had admitted what was actually taking place and what she hopes to take place in their inclusion process.

Using other methods such as observation would have yielded more information on how the school leaders implemented their leadership role. Third, the continuous changes made to the interview guide had resulted in more data being collected from one school leader than the other and which resulted in varying analysis across all three leaders, nevertheless, relevant data was gathered to address the research problem. Fourth, the findings are context bound and relates to certain school leaders at a given time. However, it will be up to readers to decide whether any of the approaches used by school leaders are applicable to their setting. Last, using English as the main mode of communication could have led to the misinterpretation of questions and subjectivity of interpretation.

### **3.8 Ethical Issues**

According to Greener (2011), the nature of an interpretive approach to ethics is to protect its research participants, and to treat data sensitively. As a result, research participants were informed about what the research was about and how information will be divulged to others i.e. whether it will be published or not (Gregory, 2003). They were informed via personal email and through the course coordinator who was the research door opener. Before conducting the research, the application form for ethical approval was filled and submitted to the Norwegian Social Science data services, attached with the informed consent form and interview guide. Once approval was made, contacts were made to relevant school leaders and arrangements made for the actual interview. On the day of the interview, interview participants were again, informed about the purpose of the interview and assured of confidentiality by withholding their names as different names have been used instead. Sensitivity was also used when describing the school context and each school leader so that they would not be easily identified.

## **4 Data analysis and Discussions**

This chapter will first present the findings that are based on the first research sub-question: To what extent do school leaders see the importance of inclusive learning? and followed by a discussion based on i) the school leaders understanding of inclusive education, ii) the promotion of teachers learning and iii) the promotion of a flexible curriculum. Second, it will present the findings based on the second sub-question: How do school leaders promote inclusive learning? and followed by a discussion on i) transformational leadership and iii) instructional leadership. Lastly, it will present the findings based on the third sub-question: What competency building strategies do school leaders use to motivate teacher learning ? and both data presentation and discussions will focus on i) school based collaboration ii) in-service training and iv) mentorship.

### **4.1 To what extent do school leaders see the importance of inclusive learning?**

Research shows that school leaders' belief about inclusion will dictate how they reconstruct their schools in accommodating students' needs (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Therefore, this section will find out if the same principle applies to the three school leaders. It will focus on how the school leaders defined inclusive education and how their belief is reflected on the i) promotion of teachers learning and the ii) promotion of a flexible curriculum.



### 4.1.1 School leaders understanding of inclusive education

The findings reveal that the school leader's perceived inclusive education in different ways. However, similarities of perspectives were found between Ms. Sally and Ms. Louise despite differences in school context.

In lines 1-4 Ms. Sally saw inclusion in light of creating a school community in which every student is accepted regardless of who they are.

1. *“to me it means that children have a community where they are together with other*
2. *children, with the children whom we don't think have to be included, and to learn*
3. *and to work and to understand each other. ...it is to be and to learn and to act with*
4. *other children, both children with special needs and children without special needs.*

It is interesting to note that she refers to the formation of a community in which students who would otherwise be excluded are included and her belief is reinforced when she says that 'inclusion is very important'. Her perception reveals that she is concerned and would like to ensure that no one is excluded in her school. This is also reflected in way everyone is educated in the same classroom.

In lines 5-7, Ms. Sally emphasizes that keeping all students in the same classroom and organizing group lessons was important so promote good relationships and empathy.

5. *“that the children could build good relationships, help each other and understand*
6. *each other. To understand that some of the classmates have other needs than they and*
7. *that they also have needs which others can't see and to understand each other's needs”*

Like Ms. Sally, lines 10- 11 reveals that Ms. Louise believes that all children should be educated in the same classroom.

8. *“But this school is a very traditional school and I can see that they have had a*
9. *tradition of taking these kids out from their ordinary classroom, so for me, it is*
10. *important for the pupils to stay with the rest of the class mates and work with the*
11. *learning environment in their class where everybody is included and some can have*

12. *different progression in the same class but this is not happening in the way I'm*  
13. *describing it"*

However, Ms. Louise is leading a school that has had a tradition of taking students out from their classroom for more than a decade. As a result, she is faced with teachers who are not receptive to the change as shown in lines 14-15.

14. *"I can see that some teachers are not used to it and they seem to say..ok..this is your*  
15. *problem...its not my problem".*

In spite of negative reactions, Ms. Louise is adamant about changing her schools perception. Her perception is reinforced through her desire to implement inclusive procedures through teachers learning and the provision of a flexible curriculum.

On the contrary, Ms. Richard perceives inclusion rather differently when she points out:

16. *"I think it's quite difficult to include all children in all activities of the school but my*  
17. *vision is to include them as much as we can and as much as we can see that they are*  
18. *happy with. We have lots of children with special needs here. Now we try not to take*  
19. *them out of the classroom...most of them".*

Ms. Richards' perception of inclusion is also reflected in her choice of schools as she was a leader of an inclusive school with a separate special education unit before she was transferred to Riverside Primary. She also mentions in line 20 that when she applied for a new job she wanted to work in a school that had a special education unit.

20. *"wanted to work in this school because it has a small school (special education unit)"*

Her belief contradicts that of Ms. Sally and Ms. Louise as she allows some students with SEN to be taught in the unit. This is because she had already perceived that not all children are able to learn in the regular classroom.

Regardless of her attitude towards placing students with SEN in the separate special education unit, lines 21-24 reveal that her perception extends beyond the classroom to include social aspects such as birthday parties and the inclusion of parents of student with SEN in big classroom meetings.

21. *“when children have birthday parties, we ask parents not to invite only a few students,*
22. *and students are not allowed to deliver birthday invitations in the school if they are*
23. *not going to invite everyone, for example, all the girls, and now they are also*
24. *including the students in the special uni”.*

It is interesting to note that her perception of inclusion not only lies within the classroom walls, rather she is concerned about each student’s social well-being as well. As usual, being invited to birthday parties is something children look forward to and she ensures this by implementing appropriate school rules. In addition she mentions,

25. *“when we have meetings for the parents, the parents for the special unit also attend*
26. *the meetings for the whole class. They are included in both”.*

By doing this, Ms. Richards does not only ensure the inclusion of students with SEN but also their parents. Hence, parents of children with SEN do not need to feel left out even though their child is in a separate classroom.

#### **4.1.2 Promotion of staff development**

Promotion of teachers learning is important to the inclusion process as it will equip teachers in facilitating inclusive classrooms thus promoting sustainability. For this reason, this section will present findings on how the three school leaders promoted teachers learning in their schools.

Similarities that were found among the three school leaders included collaborative team work, attending school based courses and collaboration with PPT. This is evident in the extracts below: Ms. Sally explains

27. *“we try to build competence inside the school and we try to get teachers who have*  
28. *competence and mix them with others...we work very close in teams and teams have*  
29. *people with different competence. We also have some courses which teachers join or*  
30. *they go to, and we collaborate with the pedagogical, psychological service to find out*  
31. *which area we need more competence in”*

Similarly, in lines 30-34, **Ms. Richard** states that teachers are attending courses at the school as well as at the university.

32. *“Last year we started to have more courses here which all staff can attend.*  
33. *“last year..two teachers were attending university classes. This year, two of my*  
34. *leaders are attending leadership courses in the university”.*

She also mentions in lines 36-37 that teachers look for courses that are relevant to their students' needs.

35. *“for example, if we have a new SEN child whom the teachers do not know how to*  
36. *handle..they usually look for courses that are available..that is relevant to the needs of*  
37. *the child..and attend.*

At the same time, collaborative team work is taking place when she mentions in line 38-39 that teachers meet every week to make plans and discuss how to include all students in school activities.

38. *“The teachers have meetings every week. Every Tuesday we have meetings with all the*  
39. *teachers, we make plans for what we are doing, how to include the children, how to*  
40. *work with social competence, to avoid bullying. The teachers from the special units*  
41. *are together with the rest of the teachers from the whole school.”*

She also relays in lines 42-43 that her school is collaborating with PPT.

42. *“we have two persons from PPT working in the school. We have meetings with them*  
43. *...about our child with SEN...*

According to lines 44-46 **Ms. Louise's** school is collaborating with the PPT as they are currently helping the school during this time of transition.

44. *“since we've been reviewing and evaluating, we've been co-operating with PPT now.*  
45. *So the leader of the PPT is here. She's been meeting with the leadership and the*  
46. *social teacher.*

She also mentions in line 47 that her school is one of the first to attend a course on leadership at the municipality office .

47. *“so we're now in the first group..to attend the course in the municipality.. we are*  
48. *going to work in school leadership, we will have to have meetings with some of the*  
49. *teachers who are in the planning group with the leadership team and we will have to*  
50. *plan for meetings and talk with them on development”.*

According to line 51 Ms. Louise's teams also meet on a regular basis for planning purposes.

51. *“The teachers work in teams and every week they meet for one hour or more but*  
52. *sometimes we put in the plan for the year and what they have to do every*  
53. *week...sometimes..e.g. if the teachers have to plan for mathematics or meet...so they*  
54. *meet to discuss what they need to do for different subjects”.*

Also, she is educating teachers on the importance of learning, as she explains in lines 55-57 that teachers tend to think of children with SEN as a problem and therefore do not plan for their learning.

55. *'bit scary to think of students with SEN as a problem' and because of that teachers*  
56. *'don't take the responsibility' for their learning. As a result, 'they don't plan for*  
57. *students with SEN and leave the responsibility to the teacher who assists them”.*

These awareness has influenced Ms. Louise to work with teachers on 'how to plan' and to 'create a good learning environment' for students with SEN.

In addition to team meetings, line 58 show that Ms. Louise transfers knowledge by pointing teachers to look at effective classrooms practices and in lines 59-60 she encourages competent teachers to share what they do.

58. *'look at what is happening in effective classrooms'.* She added  
59. *"I try to tell competent teachers to share with others what they do, they are always*  
60. *contributing in a positive way and I keep on giving them positive feedback"*

Differences that were found between Ms. Sally and Ms. Richard include how they strategically use their team leaders.

In line 61 **Ms. Sally** states that she mixes teachers with competence with those who have less competence.

61. *" try to get teachers who have competence and mix them with others"*

From our conversation I understood that competent teachers were used as team leaders because of their competence. As a result they were mixed with other teachers to form teaching teams. In addition Ms. Sally explains in lines 62-63 that the responsibility of team leaders is to observe and provide feedback to their team teachers.

62. *"the team leader has a responsibility to observe the teachers and to give them*  
63. *feedback and to find out if some teachers need more competence.*

She implies that school leaders assess and evaluate their team teachers and provide them with feedback that will enhance their teaching. At the same time line 64 shows that they try to find out if a teacher needs more practical help.

64. *"They are given learning and help from someone in the leadership team"*

On the other hand, **Ms. Richard** strategically puts teams together by separating new teachers and mixing them with competent teachers as shown in lines 65-66.

65. *"when I'm putting teacher teams together, I never put two new teachers together.*

66. *Each group will always have a competent teacher..I believe in having a good model,*  
67. *so it's important to put them with very good teachers. Also team leaders meet with*  
68. *their own teachers; they have courses, for e.g. now they are learning how to*  
69. *communicate to children with speech problems”*

As a result, lines 66-68 communicate that they are used as role models and also to facilitate courses for their teams. She also mentions in line 70 that one of her team leaders is in charge of the new teachers.

70. *“right now one of them (referring to team leaders) is in charge of the new teachers.*  
71. *So she meets with them for one hour every Friday and talks to them”.*

In addition to team collaboration, working with PPT, mentoring and doing courses, Ms. Richards points out in line 72-73 that her staff visited another country and also visited neighboring schools.

72. *“this year, everyone working here went to see schools in.....to see how they did*  
73. *inclusion. We work with schools in the neighborhood; we visit each other and have*  
74. *meetings. The school leaders have meetings because we have three schools the same*  
75. *as this one, so we share ideas”.*

Furthermore she mentions in line 76-78 that some regular classroom teachers have already been teaching in the special education unit, which she thinks is good for inclusion.

76. *“some of the teachers had started teaching in the normal school and also in the small*  
77. *school. It's good for inclusion, I think”.*

### **4.1.3 Promotion of a flexible curriculum**

As mentioned earlier, the promotion of a flexible curriculum is part of reconstructing a school to accommodate diverse students. Therefore, this section will present findings that reflect how the three school leaders view the importance of a flexible curriculum.

Ms. Sally demonstrates the importance of a flexible curriculum by emphasizing in lines 78-81 the importance of group work within individual classrooms.

78. *“we organise the lessons they shall have in different subjects, and the lessons they*  
79. *shall have in learning how to collaborate and to give empathy and to have tolerance*  
80. *or values and... ..because we try not to teach children with special needs one to one*  
81. *but to organize groups in the class ...with help from another grown up in the group*  
82. *...it is the responsibility all every grown up in the school... not just the teacher for*  
83. *children with special needs.*

She also emphasizes in lines 84-86 the importance of changing of learning environments.

84. *“I think sometimes we need different environments. We had collaborated with a farm*  
85. *in this area, so some of the children are there one day a week, in organized groups of*  
86. *different ages to learn in more practical ways about farm animals”.*

Students with special educational needs (SEN) are supported within their classrooms with the assistance of team teachers through group work and the modification of their activities. Furthermore, the open classrooms and organization of learning groups were also observed to allow teachers to plan and implement their lessons appropriately. As a result, all students are accommodated.

On the other hand, the way Ms. Richard’s teachers organize their lessons is in response to the availability of a separate unit. As a result, lines 87-90 point out that the three specialized teachers from the unit regularly meet with the regular classroom teachers to help the teachers plan their activities so that it will suit the needs of their students with SEN. She points out

87. *“we have meetings every week. The teachers from the special unit meet with the other*  
88. *teachers in the big classes and talk about the following weeks lesson and how they*  
89. *can include children from the special unit.e.g. which part of your lesson can the*  
90. *children from the special unit attend? It is singing or lesson no. 2?etc..”*



The flexibility of classroom activities to accommodate students with SEN mirrors a flexible curriculum.

Although Lakeside Primary is currently reconstructing their inclusive programs, line 94 demonstrates that Ms. Louise echoes the importance of a flexible curriculum.

91. *“And now we are working on a timetable...because we want to make some changes.*  
92. *When you work on the timetable, it becomes practical...it’s very important for the*  
93. *teacher. I think that if we can work on some changes then it will be more flexible. It’s*  
94. *the most important...to see the flexibility of the curriculum”.*

It is evident that the school has not totally produced a flexible curriculum; however, it is something they are working towards. In doing so, the school has managed to slot the same subjects (Norwegian and mathematics) for each grade level to be taught across that grade at the same time. Therefore, due to the way students with SEN are taken out of their classrooms, they are able to be grouped together; for example, lines 96-98 shows that during maths, students are given extra help by their maths teacher.

95. *“We try to..if you’re at... one grade...we see that very often they have difficulty with*  
96. *Norwegian and Mathematics...so we try and put those subjects at the same time so it*  
97. *can be more flexible. So the responsible teacher for these pupils progress, e.g. in*  
98. *maths..can take more than one kids out of their original class and do some group*  
99. *activity”.*

She concludes in line 100 that it is important for students with SEN to share the same classroom as their peers.

100. *“But the idea is for them to be in the class”.*

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1 School leaders understanding of inclusive education

Over the years, the rapid evolvement of Inclusive Education has categorized it as one that goes beyond special education to social integration (Armstrong & Spandagou, 2010). This is evident in the way Ms. Richards describes inclusion as she takes account of not only academic aspects but also social aspects such as invitation to birthday parties and participation of parents of SEN in big school meetings. The notion of social integration could also be implied when Ms Sally and Ms. Louise saw the importance of importance of everyone being in the same classroom. Ms. Sally emphasized that it will promote understanding as students work and to act together.

According to Ofsted (2000) ‘an educationally inclusive school is one in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter ( p.7)’ This means that students may not be treated the same way if their different life experiences and background are taken into account. Ms. Louise agreed with this statement when she mentioned that all students need to learn in the same classroom but ‘have different progression’. It also echoes Ms. Sally’s belief of a school community in which children who are not usually accepted in society are accepted. The same could also be understood of Ms. Richards view, that is, students with SEN could receive quality and appropriate education in the special unit after taking into consideration their life experiences and background.

Alternatively, Ms. Richards perspectives may very well concur with Avramidis & Norwich (2010) review of literature which found there were no evidence of acceptance of a total inclusion or ‘zero reject’ approach towards inclusion. They found that teachers’ attitudes were

strongly influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition presented to them, that is, child-related variables and less by teacher-related variables. Her belief could also be associated with the Norwegian context of Inclusive education, which states that although no student is excluded, the provision of optimal learning may imply ‘that some children may receive all or part of their teaching outside mainstream classrooms, in a specially adapted classroom’ (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2008).

At the moment Ms. Louise is adamant to make changes in her school. Her goal is to move her school away from taking students with SEN out of their classroom, which the school has been practicing for the past decades. Accommodating all students in the same classroom is something she aims for as she believes that it is important for students to stay with the rest of their class mates and to work in the same learning environment, however, they can have different progression. Ms. Louise is seen to be creating an inclusive culture in which all students are taught in the same classroom. Her belief is reflected in the way she is promoting the importance of learning by working with teachers on how to plan and to create a good learning environment for students with SEN and the provision of a flexible curriculum.

According to Mulford (2007) successful leadership is underpinned by the school leader’s values and beliefs which inform their decisions and actions regarding provision for individual support and capacity building. These values include the belief that ‘all children can learn’ and ‘all children matter’ (p. 21). In trying to create an inclusive school Ms. Louise is currently working towards changing her teachers their mind-sets and creating a unified vision with her staff. According to Ainscow & Sandill (2010), implementing change will require leaders who can challenge traditional and individual approach to thinking and motivate teachers by empowering them through collaborative team work and showing what schools should and

could be. This is reflected in the way Ms. Louise is currently collaborating and working with her teachers.

Similarly, Ms. Sally believes that schools need to be a community where students are able to learn and form good relationships with others. Her belief is reflected in the way, she establishes good relationships amongst teachers through collaborative learning and the inclusion of all students in the same classroom. Sergiovanni (2006) agrees by explaining that schools act as learning communities when there is capacity and relationship building. It is when leaders ensure that the interests of the children are served, and that people are responsible for their actions.

#### **4.2.2 Promotion of teachers learning**

Deppler (2010) expressed that the improvement of schools will depend on the quality of teachers to meet inclusive challenges. Thus, he reinforces the importance of teachers learning. In their effort to promote teachers learning, the strategies that the school leaders used to motivate teachers ranged from school based collaboration, working with the school community, training and mentorship. Bubb & Early (2009) confirmed that staff development which involves discussing, coaching, mentoring, observing and developing others is highly effective.

As presented in the literature review, both Instructional and Transformational leaders see the importance of teachers learning, however, they show it in different ways. Instructional leaders (i) make suggestions, (ii) give feedback, (iii) provide modeling, (iv) use inquiry and solicit advice and opinions, and (v) give praise (Blase & Blase, 1999). This is evident when Ms. Richard provides teachers with feedbacks and make suggestions when she attends class level

meetings. She also provides good modeling through the mixture of teams, solicits advice and opinion when they make plans to include all students. Ms. Louise demonstrates this by telling teachers what she believes in, pointing them to good classroom practice and giving positive feedback.

Ms. Richard takes teachers learning further by allowing regular classroom teachers to take turns to teach in the special unit so that they are better equipped and skilled as they learn to teach students with SEN. This is a strategy that she thinks is '*good for inclusion*'.

On the other hand, the transformational leadership nature of Ms. Sally is demonstrated when she states that the team leaders responsibility is to observe teachers, provide them with feedback and analyze whether they have learning needs. In this way, leadership is distributed. Sergiovanni (2006) add that transformational leaders recognize that the link between what happens to teachers and what happens to students is direct. For example, a lack of collaboration among teachers will result in less collaboration among students. Collaboration is evident in the way Ms. Sally encourages analysis and problem solving during team meetings. She also mentions that classroom activities encourage students to give empathy and learn to understand one another.

The findings also reveal that although Ms. Richard and Ms. Louise demonstrated more Instructional leadership characteristics, they also valued the importance of collaboration. For example, Ms. Richard demonstrates collaboration when she mentioned that they make plans to include all children. Also when Ms. Louise mentioned that teachers meet to discuss what needs to be done for different subjects.

Moreover, as Ms. Louise is trying to change her teachers' mind set, she is currently focusing on whole school collaboration. Timperley (2011) explains that mind-sets are not about picking a few pointers but about '*seeing and doing things in a new way*' (p.93). However,

‘seeing and doing things in a new way’ will need strategic and systematic needs analysis of the needs of teachers and facilitating learning that will meet their needs(Bubb & Early, 2009). It is evident that Ms.Louise is facilitating learning when she talked about how it is bit scary when her teachers think of children with SEN as a problem and because of that teachers don’t take the responsibility to assist children with SEN. These awareness has influenced Ms. Louise to work with teachers on how to plan and to create a good learning environment for students with SEN.

Although the team leaders at Seaside primary are evaluating their teachers, it is seen to be happening on an informal basis. However, it is not known whether assessment of any kind is taking place at Riverside and Lakeside Primary schools.

In addition to the strategies that the school leaders are already using, Bubb & Early (2009) suggests that learning and development should be shared, acknowledged and celebrated in order for improvement to be sustained. This means that staff notice board should mention individual achievement and teachers encouraged to write their reflection on school web sites. They expressed that these strategies promoted reflection and discussion on line as well as in person.

It is concluded that although the three school leaders had a few similarities, however, they differed in the way they used their team leaders. Ms. Sally gave her team leaders the responsibility to assess evaluate and provide feedback and help to their team members. On the other hand, Ms. Richard was seen to be using them to facilitate meetings and do certain courses together. Therefore, it is assumed that the need for these courses may arise from the needs of team members to learn more. Also, team leaders in Lakeside Primary are seen to facilitate small group meetings also. However, it is not clear if they have other responsibilities.

### **4.2.3 Promotion of a flexible curriculum**

Armstrong (2007) proposes that an organizational strategy to learning see schools as organizations that have the potential to instigate and implement change in becoming inclusive. As a result, part of schools organizational change is the implementation of a curriculum that accommodates diverse needs. Curriculum in this sense refers to the content of lessons as well as how it is organized and taught to promote learning for all.

According to Ms. Sally, the organization of classroom activities varies to promote learning. For example, the formation of small groups within their classrooms enabled all the adults (i.e. teaching team members) to provide the necessary support to their students with SEN. In addition, the school had collaborated with a neighboring farm to which students were taken in small groups to have hands on lessons on learning about farm animals. Ms. Sally emphasized that keeping all students in the same class and at the same time placing them in groups encourages students to form good relationships' and to recognize 'that some children have more needs than others.

Furthermore, classroom lessons are designed to help students to learn how to collaborate and to give empathy and have tolerance for one another. Hence, the organization of the school, the curriculum and team teaching echoes Ms. Sally's vision to create a school in which all children can learn and act together.

According to Ms. Richard, the weekly meetings between regular classroom teachers and teachers from the unit were to discuss lessons for students with SEN. Therefore, it is inferred that such meetings resulted in the provision of a flexible curriculum as teachers talk about the ways they can include children from the special unit.

Although some students at the school stay in the special unit the whole day, others attend regular classes on a part time basis and the rest stay in the regular classrooms 100% of the time. According to Ms. Richards students who attend regular classes on a part time basis have their lessons modified in the unit where assistance is provided by specialist teachers and their staff. However, it is interesting to note that she likes this school as it has more employees thus it should have been easier to accommodate students with SEN in their regular classrooms.

Ms. Louise is currently working with her teachers on restructuring timetables to allow flexibility of learning, for example, they have managed to slot the same subjects on the same time during the day so that students with SEN are easily grouped together to receive assistance from their subject teacher. She points out that providing a flexible curriculum is *'the most important'*.

Even though, Seaside and Lakeside Primary schools do not have a separate unit for students with SEN, it can be concluded that having a special education unit at Riverside Primary may be appropriate for students who are currently there for the whole day, i.e. for those with severe autism and for those who may need more space and resources like children with severe cerebral palsy. In this case, it is also observed that the availability of a special education unit enables the centralization of learning resources, more so, when there are only three specialized teachers of students with SEN. However, Ms. Sally asserts that placing all students in the same classroom will help them to build good relationship and enable students to understand each other's needs.



### 4.3 Conclusion:

Although the three school leaders may not have direct contact with students to influence their learning, however, their attitude towards inclusion does matter as they play an important role in molding the attitudes and behaviors of staff members, parents, students and most of the school community (Guzman, 1997). Their attitude is also reflected in the way they support their teachers in constructing inclusive classrooms.

It is obvious that Ms. Sally's vision to create a school community is taking shape progressively as she prioritizes collaborative team teaching and team learning. Her team leaders observe their team members regularly, thus they are familiar with their teachers teaching needs, and their school based training geared towards their needs. At the same time, classroom activities vary thus demonstrating a flexible curriculum.

Although Ms. Louise echoes the same beliefs as Ms. Sally, she is faced with the challenging task of changing her teacher's mindset through consistent collaboration and reflection opportunities. Her school is not only 'a very traditional school' but one that also has teachers who have had a tradition of taking SEN students out of their classrooms for more than a decade. Although her school is still taking students with SEN out of their classroom for separate lessons, her aim is to build an inclusive school environment in which all students will be able to learn in the same classroom. In order to do so, she is helping her teachers through the process of inclusion.

On the other hand, in spite of Ms. Richards reservations in including all students in the same classroom, she is making an effort to try out ideas that may go against her initial thinking when she emphasizes that they are '*trying NOT to*' take students out of their classrooms. This is evident in the way that she has been collaborating with her teachers as well as school

leaders of other inclusive schools and even visiting a neighboring country to see how inclusion is practiced. It is also seen in the way teachers collaborate to provide appropriate activities thus promoting flexibility of curriculum. Ultimately, her vision to include students ‘*as much as*’ they can and as much as they can see that ‘*they are happy*’ is what Ms. Richards strives towards.

## 4.4 How do school leaders promote inclusive schooling?

To investigate how school leaders motivate teachers to build inclusive schools, it is important to highlight what they do. As a result, this section will focus on their responsibilities as inclusive school leaders. Their responsibilities will be discussed in light of the proposed leadership theories which are i.) the Transformational leadership, and ii.) the Instructional leadership.

In lines 101-102, **Ms. Sally** communicates that her responsibility is to ensure that school activities are happening in a good organized way.

101. *“I have the responsibility for this to happen in a good organized way ...in the best*  
102. *organized way I can manage and together with the leader team and the teachers.*

When asked about what she means by ‘good organized way’ she highlights:

103. *“as a team we organize the children schedule and we organize the lessons they shall*  
104. *have in different subjects ...and... supporting children in smaller groups in the big*  
105. *classes ...the lessons for children with special needs and to organize this in a*  
106. *systemic way so that the teachers know...”.*

It is evident that a lot of what Ms. Sally does is based on collaboration with her team leaders, who make up the schools leadership team. As these leaders are also responsible for evaluating and conducting teachers learning, it is reasonable to say that she functions as a transformation leader who distributes leadership.

On the other hand, **Ms. Richard** explains in lines 107-108 that it is quite difficult as she spends a lot of time out of the office to talk to teachers to know what is happening at the school.

107. *“..its quite difficult. I try not to be in the office too much. In the morning, I try to talk*  
108. *to the teachers when they arrive and to find out how they are. I try to meet with*  
109. *parents and children in the morning, I attend all the parents meetings, just to see how*  
110. *the teachers talk to parents about the work they do at school, they tell about the things*  
111. *the children are going to learn this year, showing plans, the maths, the different*  
112. *subjects...it’s good for me. I try to have meetings with all the teachers in the first*  
113. *grade, second grade and so forth...just to see how they are doing are good job...if they*  
114. *are following the national plan..etc....it’s a lot of work. I also provide them with*  
115. *feedbacks..etc..”*

Lines 109-114 reveals that Ms. Richard acts like a manager who ensures that school activities go as planned. It is also reasonable to say that she plays her role more as an instructional leader who is in charge of the day to day learning.

At the same time, lines 116-117 stresses that she also believes that a leader’s responsibility is to promote inclusion by teaching others.

116. *“I believe that it’s the leaders’ responsibility to always teach the teachers and talk*  
117. *about inclusion. You need somebody who burns with it, to motivate the others and talk*  
118. *nice about inclusion and teach the teacher...we do that a lot...and we try to include all*  
119. *the staff in this”.*

**Ms. Louise** shares the same sentiments as she explains in line 20 that she tries to tell teachers what she believes in and why it is important for her.

120. *I'm trying to tell them what I believe in and why it's important for me. In the process*  
121. *we also work with some ideas that are important for the school and we put it as our*  
122. *vision for the school and then we could identify why it is important and what will it look*  
123. *like in the classroom”.*

In line 124 she shares her understanding of teaching and learning and the importance of using good examples as in line 125.

124. *“So I try to tell them my understanding of teaching and learning and also to make the*  
125. *staff come up with good examples of it as well..so...it's not just me telling them...*  
126. *I have to co-operate with them and find out if this is the way we want to go together.*  
127. *Then I will have to sort of lead them in small steps...”*

In line 127, Ms. Louise demonstrates that her responsibility is not only to teach teachers about learning but to also take them through the process step by step so that teachers get a clear understanding of what she is saying.

## **4.5 Discussion**

Transformational and instructional school leaders are reported to carry out their responsibilities in different ways. While transformational leaders are seen to distribute leadership with responsibilities, instructional leaders are in charge most of the time, and with little recognition given to distribution of leadership (Sergiovanni, 2009).

### **4.5.1 Transformational leadership**

Ms. Sally is understood to be functioning as a transformational leader as a lot of responsibilities are placed on teams and team leaders. According to Halliger (2010) transformational leaders do not provide leadership alone but shares it with teachers. He added that the model is grounded in understanding the needs of individual staff rather than `co-

coordinating and controlling them towards the organizations desired ends. Therefore, since team leaders at Seaside Primary are familiar with the needs of their team teachers through the process of evaluation and providing feedback, it is also believed that Ms. Sally is using the same strategy to understand her team leaders. It is evident that gives her team leaders the responsibility to make decisions.

Southworth(1999) expressed that transformational leadership demands social skills of team building and inspiration without dominion and is evident in the way Ms. Sally strategizes her teaching teams and the freedom she gives team leaders to facilitate their teaching teams. In this sense she is acting as a transformational leader who seeks to influence people by building from the bottom-up rather than from the top down. The strategy she uses reinforces that success in schools is also attributed to the extent in which leadership opportunities are distributed through the school community (Mulford, 2007).

#### **4.5.2 Instructional leadership**

On the other hand, Ms. Richard and Ms. Louise are understood to be acting as instructional leaders. Ms. Richard is observed to be a more hands on leader who is well versed with the school curriculum. She takes her role seriously and is evident in the way she tries to make contact with the teachers, parents and students more than doing administrative work in her office. She follows up with her teachers and is aware of what is happening in the school. According to Halliger & Murphy (1986), instructional leaders are regarded as hands on principals who are well versed with the curriculum and instruction.

At the same time, she can be regarded as a manager (Palaiologou & Male, 2011) who always ensures that her teachers are following the national curricular, she is knowledgeable about what is happening at the school, and evaluates teachers accordingly by providing feedback

during meetings. This is apparent as part of her responsibility is to ensure that teachers are doing ‘*a good job*’ that will promote teaching and learning. Her managerial role is also reflected in the way she is involved in different teacher meetings to ensure that she is aware of what *is* happening in the school.

One of the responsibilities of instructional leaders is to define the schools mission and communicate school goals (Halliger, 2000). It means that instructional leaders work with their staff by formulating clear and measurable goals that are focused on the academic progress of the students as evident in Ms. Louise’s leadership. For example, Ms. Louise tells teachers what she believes and in the process they work towards formulating a vision for the school.

Ms. Louise is currently coordinating instruction and curriculum at her school. In doing so, she says that it is important not to make teachers feel threatened. Therefore, she co-operates with teachers and listens to them in order to bring about change.

Evidence claim that Ms. Richards and Ms. Louise are functioning as instructional leaders because they are new to their school setting and therefore would like to ensure that their schools works towards a common vision. At the same time they are trying to make inclusive changes. Halliger (2010) asserts that Instructional leadership is practical for schools needing substantial change. In this case, it could be relevant to Ms. Richard changing attitude to include everyone in their classroom and Ms. Louise’s desire for their school to come out of their ‘traditional’ teaching style. Hence, it was not surprising that they are seen to be confident and ‘‘strong, directive leaders’’ (Halliger, 2005. p.3).

It is therefore inferred that Ms. Sally was an instructional leader when she first became the Head Teacher of Seaside Primary seven years ago, especially when she was chosen to be the school leader of the new school. However, as years passed and followed by the success of

their inclusive program, she has built her trust towards her teachers by facilitating collaborative decision making and promoting a culture in which innovation and risk-taking are encouraged (Mulford, 2007). Mulford adds that risk taking in a supportive environment will facilitate change. The practice of providing a supportive environment is used by Ms. Louise when she leads teachers ‘in small steps’ until they are able to grasp the concept of inclusive learning that she is teaching them about.

Furthermore, Ms. Richards and Ms. Louises’ passion to share what inclusion ought to look like concurs Persson’s (2005) statement that Head teachers need to contribute to a deeper understanding of their missions as well as to create meetings in which teachers notions about learning are challenged. As a result, Head teachers will need to ‘change from planning and organizing the content of teachers’ workload to leading their learning’ (p.17).

## **4.6 Conclusion**

When principals provide conditions and means for teacher learning (Sergiovanni,2009) and emphasize the importance of building an effective learning community, teachers learning improves, thus, student achievement improve also. The indirect involvement of the three school leaders are seen in the way they organize teachers learning, the school curriculum and creating an inclusive community. It has also resulted in distribution of leadership as evident through the formation of teaching and learning teams. For example, Seaside Primary has teaching teams that meet once a week to collaborate and plan their lessons for the following week. At Riverside Primary teams are structured according to different grades, for example, there is a team for grades 1-3, another for grades 4-7 and the last team is for those that look after school program for grades 1-4. Lakeside Primary’s teams are categorized according to subject teaching. As a result, team leaders are seen to be facilitating the collaboration and

learning in their teams, however, it is not clear as to how much extent do team leader at the three schools influence teachers learning. At the same time, Timperley(2011) cautions that distributing leadership across people does not mean that the school leader distributes the responsibilities to team leaders and then remain ‘aloof from what is happening’(p.95), rather, they need to influence their leaders to maximize learning for all.

It is also seen that that the number of years each school leader has spent at their school influences their leadership style. For example, Ms. Richard and Ms. Louise are both new to their schools and both are using the instructional leadership model. Whereas Ms. Sally has been at her school for seven years and is using the transformational leadership model.

## **4.7 What competency building strategies do school leaders use to motivate teacher learning?**

Kennedy (2011) claims that collaboration covers a lot of activities ranging from working with colleagues in informal and unplanned ways to more structured learning communities. He added that all forms of collaboration valued ‘learning by working with others’ (p.26) and establishing good relationships as conditions for learning. This section will adhere to Kennedy’s definition by focusing on school based and community based collaboration. Community based collaboration will be further subdivided into collaboration with i) PPT ii) Parents iii) other schools and iv) others.

### **4.7.1 School - based collaboration**

Collaboration is about working together and communicating with others ‘not only to gain professionally but to empower others and to develop professional connections’ (Persson,2005.



p.21). Collaboration is evident at Seaside Primary when team leaders observe teachers and give them feedback, also to find out if some teachers may need more competence in certain areas.

It is evident that collaboration which stems from observation and feedbacks not only helps teachers to reflect and analyze their work, however, line 128 shows that it also helps team leaders to find out their teacher's needs.

128. *“it is also easier to find out what the problems or what their capacity is”.*

**Ms Sally** points out in lines 129-131 that it also helps teachers to reflect on their practice.

129. *“you have to discuss, you have to reflect and you have to think... “Am I doing what I*  
130. *am saying I am doing? and Do I manage what I think I manage? because there are*  
131. *others there who can see and who can talk with me afterwards?”.*

She emphasizes that reflection is an important part of teaching and line 133 show that it is part of what teams do after receiving feedback from their team leader.

132. *“the leadership team does that every week... they observe one teacher or one assistant*  
133. *and then give feedback and then reflect as a team”.*

In addition, lines 134-136 reveal that problems are taken out of teachers own experiences and discussed, analyzed and solved.

134. *“the problem is taken from the teachers experiences and to find out what is the*  
135. *problem they feel and what can be holding this problem as a problem and then*  
136. *analyze if it is from the context.. if its individual or if it is the feeling of the*  
137. *students..and then..they try to find out what to do to solve this problems”*

This is an important part of learning as lines 138-139 reveal that in the process teachers find out their need to learn more or to get in contact with others in the school.

138. *“ sometimes.. they find out the need to learn more and or the need to get in*  
139. *contact with other teachers in the school ...”*

Furthermore, lines 140-141 reveal that teachers have another group for reflection and analyzing apart from their teaching teams so that they can receive different opinions.

140. *“ that we do have teams but we also do have groups of reflection and analyzing so*  
141. *teachers do come from different teams to get another view of the situation”*

On the other hand, **Ms. Richard** reveals that collaboration is taking place at her school when she mentions in lines 38-41 that teachers would meet every week to make plans and discuss how to include all students in school activities.

It is inferred that meaningful collaboration is taking place throughout their discussions. At the same time lines 107-109 show that unstructured collaboration is taking place when she meets teachers in the morning to find out how things are and when she attends grade level meetings and provides feedback when needed.

According to Ms. Louise teams meet to plan their different subjects or to discuss what they need to do as mentioned in lines 51-54.

However, she admits in line 142-143 to get their meetings to focus on developments as teachers are not used to talking about their experiences.

142. *“its hard to get their meetings to focus on developments because teachers are not used*  
143. *to talk about what they are doing in their classes”*

As a result, Ms. Louise explains in line 145 that she has had to describe in detail what is expected of her teachers.

144. *“ to make them share good ideas and their actual practice in the classroom, I have*  
145. *noticed that I have had to be very specific, to describe what I want them to do”*

## 4.7.2 In-service training

**Ms. Sally** mentions in lines 146-147 that they had tried to build teachers capacity together, however, they have observed that not all teachers learn the same way.

146. *“We have tried to choose special subject so we can build their capacity together... for*  
147. *a while we have noticed that not all teachers observe the same way”.*

She mentions in lines 148-149 that as a result, teachers have had to go back and discuss about the courses more.

148. *“and then we find out we must go back and.. discuss it more ..and find more how to*  
149. *...to be more sure...”*

From this experience it is inferred that building all the teachers competence together may not be as effective as previously thought. Therefore, when asked about courses, Ms. Sally mentions in lines 150-151 that she had chosen a few teachers to attend the courses at the municipality.

150. *“and we have chosen some teachers to attend the course with me ...and then we will*  
151. *implement it at school... to all the other teachers and then build up their capacity”*

She further emphasizes in lines 152-153 that this strategy has been used so that the teachers could return from the courses and share what they have learnt with the other teachers.

152. *“these teachers were chosen to be at the course to learn more and then give it back to*  
153. *the teachers”.*

She also mentions in lines 154 that the teachers were chosen as they were already doing a lot before the course, and therefore they would easily understand and be able to return and share what they had learnt to the other teachers.

154. *“... they were chosen by me because they could do so much before the course and so*  
155. *they can easily bring it back, so that others can understand”.*

It is interesting that Ms. Sally uses this strategy when selecting candidates to attend courses. Therefore, it is concluded that this strategy is used as building everyone’s capacity together did not seem to work.

On the contrary, **Ms. Richard** explains in lines 156-157 that it was more appropriate to conduct courses at the school so that all teachers could learn together.

156. *“last year we started to have more courses here which all staff can attend.. Then all*  
157. *the teachers can attend and receive the same information.*

She adds in lines 158-159 that it was a much better way of building teachers competence as the attendance of only a few teachers was not as beneficial as everyone attending.

158. *“Just three teachers attending a course is not the same as all teachers attending.*  
159. *So..now..we’re going towards that direction”.*

It is apparent that building everyone’s competence together is more effective at Riverside than at Seaside Primary. When asked about other courses, Ms. Richard mentions in lines 160-161 that two of her teachers are attending university courses.

160. *“last year..two teachers were attending university classes. This year, two of my*  
161. *leaders are attending leadership courses in the university”.*

She adds that teachers are self-motivated to take up these courses and therefore she did not need to motivate them. In addition lines 161-163 reveals that teachers also look for courses that were relevant to their students’ needs.

161. *“for example, if we have a new SEN child whom the teachers do not know how to*  
162. *handle..they usually look for courses that are available..that is relevant to the needs of*  
163. *the child..and attend”.*

It is obvious that teachers at Riverside primary are intrinsically motivated when it comes to teachers learning. Perhaps their desire to learn could have contributed to the effectiveness of their school based courses.

Similar to Ms. Richard, **Ms. Louise** highlights in lines 164-165 that it is also better for teachers to do the same course so that they can share the same experience.

164. *“I want the whole school to do the same course together. I think its important to have*  
165. *the same experience and to share”.*

However, she did not state that such courses were taking place at the school. This could be the case as they are still in the initial stages of restructuring their curriculum. She also mentions in line 166 that some of her teachers will be attending an in-service course at the municipality.

166. *“so we’re now in the first group..to attend the course in the municipality.. we are*  
167. *going to work in school leadership”*

She adds in line 168 that some teachers are also attending courses that are related to the subject they are teaching.

168. *“Also I have teachers who get training for their own subjects more..to be more*  
169. *competent...”*

Although Ms. Louise believes in in-service courses, she emphasizes that it must be about skills. Ms. Louise expresses in line 170 the importance of skills.

170. *“but I think...the courses must be about skills...what to do with what we learn.*  
171. *Because for me ..when I interview teachers who apply for a job at the schools..they do*  
172. *have their education, but their skills...how do they use their strategies? I think that’s*  
173. *the thing...that if we have to do some courses..that these are the things that we will*  
174. *focus on”.*

### **4.7.3 Mentorship**

Ms. Sally explains in lines 175-176 that if a teacher was seen to be not making any progress, they will be given support from one of the school leaders.

175. *“if you see someone who is not making progress...they are given by- learning and that*  
176. *is a help from one in the leadership team, that is, mentoring”.*

Also Ms. Richard explains in line in line 178 that one of her school leader is in charge of the new teachers and meets with them for an hour every week.

177. *“ yes..we do. For e.g. right now one of them (who is also one of the leaders)..she is*  
178. *incharge of the new teachers. So she meets with them for one hour every Friday and*  
179. *talks to them”.*

## **4.8 Discussion**

A comprehensive review of international literature (Arvamidis & Norwich, 2010) highlights that extensive training opportunities for pre and in-service training were seen as top priority and concluded that teachers will be more committed to change if they receive assistance in mastering the skills required to implement inclusion.

### **4.8.1 School Based Collaboration**

Staff involvement, joint planning and commitment to enquiry are exemplified in different degrees at the three schools. For example, Ms. Sally had placed a lot of emphasis on structured team collaboration, whereas, Ms. Richard was understood to use both structured and unstructured collaboration. On the other hand, Ms. Louise was still trying to encourage structured collaboration.

Team learning is understood to be backbone of Seaside Primary and its main function is to encourage collaboration. Therefore, collaboration included discussion of feedbacks from team leaders who observe and evaluate their team members teaching, thus allowing team leaders to identify teachers teaching needs, that is, if they needed 'more competence' or if there are some 'special subject' that they need to know more.

Other characteristics of collaboration included identifying, analyzing and solving of teaching and classroom problems, for example, they would find out if a teacher needed to learn more or if they needed to get in contact with other teachers in the school. Collaboration also included reflection. Apart from their ordinary teaching teams, teachers also have groups for reflection and analyzing which consist of different team members. According to Ms. Sally, changing of members allowed team members to get another view of their situation.

Like Seaside Primary, teams at Riverside Primary collaborate once a week as team leaders meets with their own teachers to discuss about their courses and also discuss lessons and deliberate. Teachers from the special education unit also have weekly meetings with regular classroom teachers to discuss lessons for students with SEN. Collaboration is also understood to be happening on an informal basis as she converses with teachers in the morning and during grade level meetings to provide feedback. Ms. Richard also meets with her teachers once a week to discuss and make plans for what they are doing, how to include all students in their curriculum and finding ways to minimize behaviors such as bullying. As a result, collaboration is taking place through meaningful discussions.

As noted in earlier discussions, the traditional structures of Lakeside Primary affect its teachers in numerous ways. One of it is that teachers are not used to talking about what they were doing in their classes. As a result, it is hard to focus their meetings on developments. Ms. Louise tries to facilitate collaboration by specifically describing what is expected of her

teachers. At the same time, she points teachers to good examples of classroom learning that is already taking place in the school. She also uses other teachers to share their experiences. Cardno (2002) added that 'real learning and effective problem solving' will require a skillful and courageous leader. By this he means that collaboration will often involve conflict of ideas and interest and will necessitate leaders who can learn the skill of productive dialogue. This is demonstrated in Lakeside Primary as Ms. Louise skillfully paddles her traditional school and teachers away from their traditional mindset to more inclusive learning styles.

Collaboration is also seen during meetings when the Ms. Louise shares about her intentions concerning their transition and as she listens to and co-operate with her teachers to construct school visions.

Alexandra et al (2005) stated that dialogue and communication are fundamental and is more than finding solutions. However, a dialogue is when we start with attitudes where the objective truth does not exist and differing truths are found depending on the choice of perspectives as is evident in the way teams at Seaside Primary analyses, reflects, evaluates and solve teaching and classroom problems. It is also evident in the way Ms. Louise shares her intentions and listens to teachers.

When forming collaborative teams, Ms. Sally also has teams for analysis and reflection, which, according to Persson (2005) leads to new experiences and is a base for continuous learning and doing. However, Timperley(2011) points out that collaboration must not only focus on the process through which learning is taking place, rather it must also be enquiry and evidence based. For example, when directing teachers to the importance of learning, Ms. Louise also provides good example by pointing teachers to successful classroom practices that are already taking place in their school. In doing so, Ms. Louise encourages reflection through transmission of knowledge and using other teachers to share what they are practicing, in the



hope that others will learn and realize that they need help and will co-operate. Ms. Sally also uses evidence based collaborations when team leaders observe and provide feedback to their teaching teams. Through this process they find out if team members need to have more competence or if they need to get in contact with other teachers in the school. Furthermore, teams identify classroom problems, analyze it and look for solutions together.

Guzman (1999) asserts that through constant collaboration, teachers will be able to discover their own ideologies and perceptions of inclusion and simultaneously be able to reconstruct their belief towards embracing diversity (Clark, 1997). Through this process, reflection is important as it allows team members to think about their learning and how their learning can bring about inclusive change. Persson (2005) stresses the importance of reflection by emphasizing that time will need to be defined for without time for reflection; ‘the process will be a mere act of consumption without true reasoning and conclusion drawn for learning’(p.18).

#### **4.8.2 In-service training**

The UNESCO (2005) report states that training models for teachers should be reconsidered by strengthening school based in-service training rather than relying on lengthy pre-service training. It is evident that the three school leaders have been managing the training of their teachers in different ways.

For example, at Seaside primary, competency building for everyone was usually held together, however, their strategy changed when the leaders noticed that teachers did not learn the same way. As a result, teachers who attended courses would return to share what they have learnt with their team. It is understood that team leaders facilitated courses for their teaching teams. Perhaps this is because teachers learning were based on the needs of the

teams and not on the whole school. Consequently, it could have contributed to the importance of teaching teams, which is clearly the backbone of Seaside primary's inclusive structure.

On the other hand, Ms. Richard and Ms. Louise found '*training all teachers*' more effective than sending school representatives to attend and then return to disseminate what they had learnt. However, it is important to highlight that teachers at Riverside are intrinsically motivated and therefore their positive attitude would have also contributed to the success of their school based courses. Group courses may not be applicable to Ms. Richard and Ms. Louise because they did not perceive team work as Seaside primary teachers did.

The self-motivation of teachers at Riverside and Lakeside primary is reflected when they enroll in other courses such as university and online courses. Therefore, no matter what in-service training may look like, Bobb & Early (2009) assert that staff development will need to meet teachers teaching needs. At the end of the day, effective learning is about being able to apply what teachers have learned in various situations (Persson, 2005). Ms. Louise echoes these sentiments when she mentioned that teachers need to focus on courses that will enhance their teaching skills.

Therefore it is concluded that no matter what form teacher training takes, that is, whether it is conducted in teams, as a whole school or in universities, at the end of the day it is important that the new knowledge and skills are reflected in effective classroom practices that will ultimately impact student achievement. Ultimately, in-service teacher training will need to go beyond mere explanation. Timperley (2011) reiterates that improvement in student learning should not be a by-product of professional learning; rather it should be its central purpose.

### **4.8.3 Mentorship**

Webb (2005) defines a mentor as a single person, whose basic function is to help a new teacher. Mentoring was practiced at Riverside Primary when one of the team leaders meets with new teachers for one hour every Friday. However, mentorship was practiced at Seaside Primary when competent leaders work beside a teacher who 'is not making progress' or not co-operating 'with the other teachers'. As a result, they are given help by someone in the leadership team.

According to Moir (2005), mentors decrease the isolation of new teachers when they guide them through their first year of teaching or getting them acquainted with their new environment. They provide practical answers, 'pose important questions to prompt reflection, model teaching techniques, observe and offer feedback' (p.60). Thus, their experience helps the novice teacher to develop their professional life. She adds that it is important for mentors to develop a specific plan that will encourage collaboration. In doing so, the mentor will motivate the teacher by making them part of their learning community. It is not clear if Riverside and Seaside school encourage mentoring by using the above strategies. The teacher mentor at Riverside Primary only meets with her teachers for an hour a week, on Friday afternoons. On the other hand, team leaders are used as mentors at Seaside primary only when the need arises, that is, to help an incompetent teacher. Based on the above references, it could be said that the use of mentors at each of the school is not as effective as it could have been.

## 4.9 Conclusion

This section highlights that the three school leaders were promoting teachers learning by implementing various competency building strategies such as school-based collaboration, in-service training and mentorship. However, these activities were implemented in different ways and in varying degrees, depending on their school context.

It is noted that the characteristics of inclusion at Seaside Primary influences the way Ms. Sally provides leadership. Teachers learning mainly occur in teams which focus on collaboration that is based on the team leaders' assessment of their teachers teaching. The collaborative nature of their meetings is also influenced by their school set up and the nature of team teaching. As a result, teachers learning that is based on teams are understood to be more effective at Seaside primary rather than whole school training.

On the other hand, despite of having a separate special education unit at Riverside primary, Ms. Richards passion, together with her teachers motivation to work and attend whole school course shows that they are motivated to make inclusion work.

In hindsight, the way Ms. Louise is focused on whole school collaboration is a direct result of the transition that her school is going through at the moment. Although she mentioned a lot of positive things concerning inclusion, it is important to note that her school is still striving towards inclusion.

Nonetheless, Timperley (2011) assert that competency building strategies need to be about seriously engaging in learning that is on-going and in-depth in order to achieve transformational change. Hence it needed to depict an active process of learning through knowledge and skill building of teachers that will promote student engagement and learning.

# 5 Concluding Remarks

## 5.1 Implications for practice

One of the foundations for building an inclusive school is to believe that ALL children, regardless of their social, economic, emotional, physical or cognitive background have the ability to learn. In addition, adequate knowledge of inclusion and its processes can influence school leader's attitude and will determine: i.) the extent of the schools inclusive practices, regardless of the school context. ii.) the emphasis they place on teachers learning and iii.) the emphasis they place on the importance of a flexible curriculum. Furthermore, the way a school leader constructs and employs certain leadership characteristics will depend on: i.) the changes that are taking place at the school at a given time, ii.) the school leaders knowledge regarding the change that needs to be implemented compared to his/her teachers, and iii.) the school leaders ability to co-operate with others and build teaching teams. Moreover, strategies that can effectively facilitate teachers learning include school based collaboration, in-service training and mentorship. However, the strategies that school leaders will use to promote teachers learning will depend on the schools vision and its inclusive education context.

Although the study found how the school leaders motivated their teachers to build inclusive classrooms, it did not delve on how some of those strategies were used. Therefore, future research could investigate i.)The extent to which distributed leadership influence teachers learning and ii.) How mentorship programs in inclusive schools help teachers build inclusive classrooms.

## 5.2 Implications for practice in Fiji.

Although the context of the three school leaders are different from inclusive schools in Fiji, however, their perception of inclusive education, the promotion of teachers learning, together with the promotion of a flexible curriculum is something that inclusive school leaders in Fiji can learn from. At the same time, competency building strategies such as school based collaboration; in-service training and mentorship can be adapted to suit their school context.

School based collaboration can be encouraged through grade level teaching teams, also with neighboring special schools and inclusive education specialists. However, an analysis of teachers learning needs will need to be conducted before the implementation of such processes. On- going in-service training will also need to focus on teachers classroom needs. Mentorship may not be applicable at this time as there are no specialist teachers of students with SEN in inclusive schools. However, mentorship would be possible if special school teachers are integrated into mainstream schools.

It is envisioned that through constant collaboration, teachers will be able to discover their own ideologies and perceptions of inclusion and simultaneously be able to reconstruct their belief towards embracing diversity. Teachers and leaders could also be empowered by collaborating ‘with their colleagues in ways that address the demands that different subjects, topics or tasks make on different learners’ (Florian & Linklater, 2010.p.371).

Ultimately, school leaders of inclusive primary schools in Fiji will need to change their attitudes towards the inclusion of children with SEN. However, a change of attitude cannot take place without a proper understanding of the inclusion process, more so, in acknowledging that all children, irrespective of who they are, deserve quality education. It will entail a shift in school leaders value system and supported by school based inclusion

policy and procedures to ensure sustainability. (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). An important feature that was found in all three school leaders was their personal belief or vision which directed their leadership responsibilities and motivation to support teachers learning.

Therefore, it is recommended that school leaders could undergo in-service training on inclusive ideologies and practices, coupled by assessment skills and identification of children with SEN. In a country where there are limited resource people such as educational psychologists, it is imperative that school leaders are able to identify at-risk children. Furthermore, a structured in-house training will need to be conducted for all teachers in the area of inclusive classroom practices and management. Karim & Banik's (2012) states that since teachers are expected to accommodate diverse needs of students, they will need to be 'equipped with the knowledge and skill to understand and teach all beyond their traditional teaching methods' (p.4).

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# 7 Appendices

## **7.1 Appendix 1 : Interview Guide 1**

**Main Question: How do school leaders build classroom teachers competence in creating inclusive classrooms?**

### **General Background**

1. Can you please introduce yourself and describe your school?
2. What experience do you have in working with children with special needs?
3. How did you gain your knowledge in working with SEN children?

**Sub-Question 1: What are school leader's philosophies about inclusive education?**

4. What do you know about inclusive education?
5. What is your vision for inclusive education within your school?
6. How does your vision affect your role as a leader?

**Sub-Question 2: How do school leaders believe they can build classroom teachers competency in creating inclusive classrooms?**

7. What organization structures do you think you can put in place to build classroom teachers competency in creating inclusive classrooms?

**Sub-Question 3: What strategies do school leaders use to build classroom teachers competence in creating inclusive classrooms?**

8. What support do you provide classroom teachers to accomplish school goals?
9. How do you implement your support programs to ensure that classroom teachers build the competency to create inclusive classrooms?



## 7.2 Appendix 2 : Interview guide 2

### **Main Research Question:**

How do school leaders motivate teachers to create inclusive classrooms?

### **Sub- Questions:**

- To what extent do school leaders see the importance of inclusive schools?
- How do they encourage inclusive education?
- What competency building strategies do they use?

### **General Background**

- a. Can you introduce yourself and describe your school?
  - i. Number of years working in inclusive school?
  - ii. Number of years as a school leader in an inclusive school?
  - iii. Academic qualification?
  - iv. How /where did they gain knowledge in working with SEN children?

### **Sub – Question 1: I. To what extent do school leaders see the importance of inclusive schools?**

- b. What is your vision?
- c. How important is it to you? School? Implementing inclusive education?
- d. How do you ensure that inclusion is implemented?

### **Sub-Question 2: II. How do they encourage inclusive education?**

- e. How do you promote and encourage inclusion in the school?
- f. How do you motivate your teachers to accommodate every child in their classroom?
- g. What support do you give your teachers to ensure that they achieve school goals?

**Sub-Question 3: What competency building strategies do they use?**

- h. How do you organize in-house training sessions?
- i. How often does in-house training take place?
- j. How do you encourage teachers to attend short courses, seminars, conferences?
- k. How do you encourage teachers to further their education?
- l. In what extent do you take the initiative to discuss with staff how and when do they need further education?
- m. What network/partnership do you have outside of the school?
- n. How do you encourage collaboration within the school?
- o. How often does collaboration take place?
- p. How many teachers are competent in IE?
- q. How do you make use of them ( as a resource?

## 7.3 Appendix 3 Informed consent form

I am a student at University of Oslo, and I am conducting interviews for my Erasmus Mundus Masters in Special and Inclusive Education research project. The research project, which ends on 31st November, 2013 will be supervised by Steiner Theie, an assistant professor at the Department of Special Needs Education. The title of my research project is: The role of school leaders in building classroom teachers competence in creating inclusive classrooms.

### **Background of the study**

The interest in this topic has been motivated by the recent changes in Fiji's education system to support inclusive education. And due to lack of teacher training courses in teaching children with special needs and inclusive education, it is hoped that this research will inform school leaders on ways to provide on-site/in-house capacity and competence building for inclusive classroom teachers.

The purpose of the study is to find out how school leaders motivate classroom teachers in creating inclusive classrooms. Therefore, related questions will be asked about your role in building classroom teachers competence in creating inclusive classrooms. The interview is designed to be approximately one hour.

### **Confidentiality Issues and participation rights**

All the information will be kept confidential and will be stored in a secure place. Upon completion of this project, all data will be destroyed. Names of interviewees will be withheld and sensitivity will also be used when describing the school context and the school leader so that they will not be easily identified. Interviewers may withdraw at any time and for whatever reason. Participation is voluntarily, however, please feel free to expand on the topic or talk about related ideas. Also, if there are any questions you would rather not answer or that you do not feel comfortable answering, please say so and we will stop the interview or move on to the next question, whichever you prefer.

Should you need further information, you can contact me on 93956732 or Steiner Theie on 90841167/ 22858058

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## 7.4 Norwegian Social services data service

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS  
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



Harald Hårfagres gate 29  
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Steinar Theie  
Institutt for spesialpedagogikk  
Universitetet i Oslo  
Postboks 1140 Blindern  
0318 OSLO

Vår dato: 03.07.2013

Vår ref:34807 / 3 / LB

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

### TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 20.06.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 34807                | <i>The School Leaders Role in building classroom teachers competence to create inclusive classrooms</i> |
| Behandlingsansvarlig | <i>Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>   |
| Daglig ansvarlig     | <i>Steinar Theie</i>  |
| Student              | <i>Merelesita Qeleni</i>  |

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

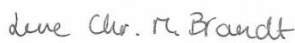
Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 15.12.2013, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

  
Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

  
Lene Christine M. Brandt

Lene Christine M. Brandt tlf: 55 58 89 26  
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering  
Kopi: Merelesita Qeleni, Nuggerud vein 23c, 1089 OSLO

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