A Study on Blind Students' Experience of Provision and Support in Schools

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Abstract

This is a qualitative study which aims to investigatewhat blind students experience to be appropriate provision and support in schools. In order to explorethe answer, this studyexamined the proper terms that could be used in educational researches, difficulties that a blind student encountered in study, provision and support that were provided to them in schools, what they considered to be appropriate provision and support for facilitating their study, challenges with the practices and suggestions for improvements. Three totally blind people were invited to participate in this study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. All interviews were transcripbed for data analysis. Result showed that the bind studentsexperienced difficulties at three different levels including physical/medical limitations, environmental limitations and they needed extra support on their study. Finding in this study showed that the informants received certain types of provision and support from the government and schools, including guide dogs, long canes, computers, audio programmes, training on compter skills and some one-to-one teaching sections. However, result also indicated that challenges of the practices tended to come from three different levels. At the individual level, the informants experienced a lack of training and support on orientation and mobility. At the teachers' level, there wasa lack of teacher training and the teachers had little kwonledge and skills to support blind students in schools. At the decison-making level, the informants experienced some mismatches between what they actual needed and the provision and support that being provided. In the end, the informants suggested that blind studentsshould be invited to participate in desicion-making events, their voice should be heard and they wanted to be decision-makers for their education. Potential implications of this study are that: First, for researchers, educators, and parents to learn what kind of difficulties blind students experience in study. So they will understand when they should provide help and support to a blind student. Second, this study shows some good practices of supporting blind students. These practices can be piloted and expended so that more blind students can be supported to tackle the difficulties they have in study. Third, this studypresents a model of how to involve blind people into an educational research.The last, the findings from this study might influence policymakers when they decide provision, support and education for blind students in futhure.

Key Words: Blind, Education, Provision, Support

Foreword

I grew up in a city where most blind people are invisible. I cannot remember I have ever seen any blind person walking independently in streets in my city, let alone studying in regular schools. I was working as an Education Project Officer with Save the Children China Programme. With this job, Ihad opportunity to visit at least twenty schools in my province. However, I have never found one blind child attending a regular school in the area. Most of them were studying in special education schools or staying at home. Moreover, I have never seen a guide dog in my province. Therefore, it became such a big supervise when I arrived in Norway and saw some blind people walking around independently with long canes for the blind. I managed to contact some blind people online and was amazed by the fact that they surfe online, use Facebook, read and write emails with no difference from people with sight! My curious was accumulating and I felt obliged to explore what have made blind people so capable and so independent in Norway. And I intend to hear the experiences from blind people themselves, to find out what have happened to them and theirpoint of view on the provision and support they have received.

Upon the finishing of my Master's dissertation, I would like to dedicate my work and my thanks to many important organisations and people. Firstly, I would express my deepest gratitude to the European Union who funded my study and provided me such a great opportunity to travel around the world and experience inclusion in different countries. In particular, I deeply appreciate European Union and Roehampton University for all provision and support that they freely offered to me to facilitate my study in this programme.Secondly, I would like to express my gratitude to convenors and professors in London, Norway and Prague, especially to Jorun Buli-Holmberg. She has been very supportive to my study and my life in Norway. Also, I am very thankful to my supervisor Kari-Anne Bottegaard Næss for her time and kind support. I am grateful to Denese Anne Brittain and Lynn Joy Josephson as well. Without their kind help and support, I would not be able to complete this research and my study in Norway. Thirdly, I am most grateful to Save the Children, especially our Country Director Pia MacRae, my dearest colleagues and all partners in China. It was this big "family" that provided me tremendous trust, support, help and learning opportunities which lead to my opportunity to join the Erasmus Mundus Special and Inclusive Education Programme.Forth, I would like to say millions of thanks to my parents and my brother. This dissertation could not be made without understanding, support and love from them; and I am so sorry for not being

able to be around. I love them. Moreover, I am deeply grateful to the people who dedicated their time and participated in this study. I have learned so much more from them than what has been written in this thesis. Lastly, I would like to express my thanks to my boyfriend Fridtjof. Thank you so much for loving me and accepting me as the way I am.

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1 Introduction

Eyesight is said to be the most important sense among all human senses in a way that approximately 80 percent of impressions are received by our sight. It helps us to distinguish light from darkness, protects us from danger, and ensures our participation in daily communication, activities, sports, work, as well as education (Carl Zeiss Vision, 2010). It might be difficult for most of us to imagine how a blind personmanages to live in a society where most architectures and facilities are established for sighted people. Likewise, it can be hard for sighted people to think about how a blind studentmanage to studyin a classroom that is well equipped with visual learning materials. This research therefore exploredthe difficulties bind students encounteredin schools and provision and support blind students experienced to be appropriate. To answer these inquiries, this study applied qualitative interviews to hear the blind people's own point of view on the raisedissues. The point of departure of this study is that "there are many individuals with disabilities who can speak for themselves and articulate what they desire"(Obiakor, Bakken, Rotatori, 2010, p.31). Hence, "we can learn from those individuals with disabilities, because they are the ones who are living the experience" (p.31).

1.1 Significance of theStudy

This study is important due to three main factors. First, it is essential to study what kinds of provision and support are given and what should be continued or changedso that we can support blind students to the extent that their blindness has as little impact on their study as possible. Praat and Keil (2003) point out that:

> People may not consider their impairment substantially affects their every activities if they are well supported. We would argue that this person is still of interest to researchers, not from a provision of service point of view, but from their example of a person with a visual difficulty succeeding in everyday life. (p.44).

Second, previous researches show that "qualitative research focusing on the voices of individuals with disabilities is limited" and most of them describe only the educators or parents' words (Obiakor, Bakken & Rotatori, 2010, p.31). Shakespeare (2006) claims that "disability studies should pay attention to the views and perspectives of disabled people" (p. 28). Whereas Curtin and Clarke (2005) agree that listening to students with physical

disabilities is one of the means to best support and educate disabled students as well as all students. As far as blind students are concerned, Gentle (2008) points out that blind people are living resources and documents in the field of blindness. As a result, in this qualitative study, three blind people were interviewed regarding their experience and their perspectives on provision and support they receivedin schools when they were students. This study is consequently significant in a way that the voice from blind people are highly valued.

Third and the last, by applying qualitative interviewing, this studyattempted to show how to include blind people into an educational research. By Duckett and Pratt (2007), many researches have been conducted to explore how inclusion is achieved for people with different types of visual impairment in society. However, little attention has been paid to how a research can be inclusive to blind informants. It is significant that for researchers to show the importance of includingblind people in education, employment and the society. The first step of doing so is to carry out researches which shows respects to informants, listen to what they really want to share and what the meanings are attached to their shared experience (Elloitt, 2005).

1.2 Research Problem and Research Questions

Through studying blind people's own point of view, this studyexaminedthe appropriate provision and support experienced by blind students.

Main research question:

What did blind students experience to be appropriate provision and support in schools?

Sub-questions:

- What sort of difficultiesdid the blind students experience in schools?
- What kind of provision or support did the blind students receive in schools?
- What are the blind students' experience and perspectives on the provision and support they were given in schools?
- What are the blind people suggestions for improvements on provision and support for blind students in schools?

1.3 Chapter Outline

This dissertation contains five chapters. The first chapter gives a brief introduction of this study and justifies why it is important to carry out such a study. The second chapter illustrates what has been considered by the other researchers with major focuses on the proper terms for use in educational researches, difficulties that a blind person might encounter, provision and support for blind students, and suggestions for improvements given by previous researchers. The third chapter deals with research methodology applied in this study. It describesfactorssuch as research paradigm, research design, how the interviews were carried out, how the data was analyzed as well as ethical issues. The forth chapter demonstrates theresults of this study and discussions will be made. Evaluation and conclusion will be presented in the last part of this dissertation.

2 Key Conceptions and Literature Review

2.1 Definitions of Key Terms

This section justifies main terms and conceptions used in this dissertation. Previous researchers have been debating on which termsare proper to refer to people whose eyesight falls below the normal version. Yet, little agreement has been achieved. Therefore, it is important to clarify the terms applied in this study and the reasons why they have been used.

2.1.1 Terms Used by Different Researchers

It is vital for researchers to explain terms they use in articles, especially when the terms are used to refer to people (Higgins & Ballard, 1999). Language presents not only people's identity, but also reveals a society's perspective and attitudes towards a person or a group of people (1999). However, educational researchers have achieved little agreement on the terms use to refer to "people whose vision falls below a 'normal' threshold" (Praat & Keil 2003, p.40). Frequently used terms include blindness, blind, visual impairment, visual difficulty, partial sight and sight loss. More detail about the usage of terms by different researchers can be found in Appendix 1.

Noticing the chaotic of terminologies, Praat and Keil (2003), carry out a study aims to find one basic definition that can be commonly applied in the fields of education and employment. However, to their disappointment, they find that "there is no standard definition and related assessment tool that could be used across research contexts" (2003, p.40). On the other hand, they point out that the chaos of terminology occur because terms are used differently in everyday life or by specialists; even with the same term, different people tend to have different understandings; besides, the debates on which term is more inclusive than another is unsettled. In the end, the authors suggest that any terms can be acceptable as long as the terms are developed from definitions by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (Praat & Keil, 2003).

As far as the definitions from WHO is concerned, visual function is put into four categories: normal vision, moderate visual impairment, severe visual impairment and blindness. Links among these four classifications can be seen in Figure 1.

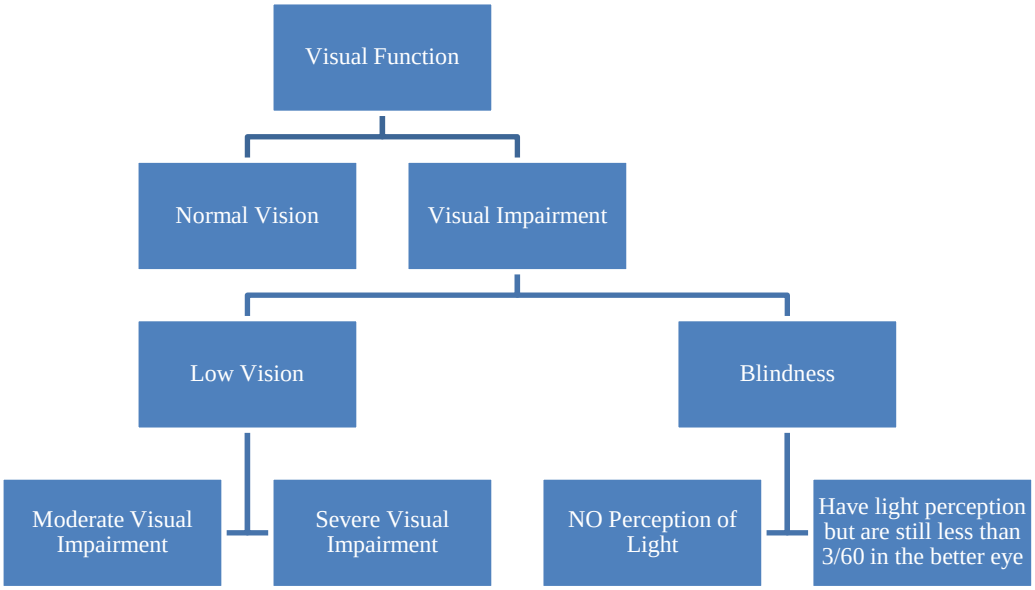


Figure 1. Classifications of Visual Functions (Developed based on classifications by WHO, 2014).

As seen in Figure 1, visual impairment is a wide concept which includes low vision and blindness. "Moderate visual impairment combined with severe visual impairment are grouped under the term 'low vision' " (WHO, 2014). "Blindness"refers to eyes' condition which is "'irreversible' blindness (No perception of light)"as well as eyes' conditions that "have light perception but are still less than 3/60 in the better eye" (WHO, 2014). In the light of Praat and Keil (2003), terms which are rooted from above mentioned conceptionsby WHO are acceptable for use in educational researches.

2.1.2 Terms Used in This Research

In this study, the term "Blind" is used to refer to people who are totally blind whereas "visually impaired" is applied when it is necessary to refer to people who have visual impairment but possess residual sight. There are three reasons that these two terms are applied in this study. First, in terms of people's vision and function, these two terms can distinguish people who have residual vision from people who are totally blind. Second, in terms of education, it is vital for researchers to realise the differences between visually impaired and blind students because the way they learn and the nature of their learning needs tend to be

completely different. For instance, Farrell (2006) points out that blind students are those sight loss to the extent that they "depend mainly on tactile methods of learning"; whereas visually impaired pupils are "children whose learning and teaching mainly involve methods relying in sights" (p.13). However, findings show that blind children and visually impaired children historically have been educated in same educational institutions (Taylor& Taylor, 1960); and many researchers often mention about both groups of children together.

The last, these two terms are used by visually impaired and blind people themselves (Dale, 2010; Higgins & Ballard, 1999). Kristiansen, Vehmas and Shakespeare (2009) argue that " it has been evident that there seem good reasons for giving great weight to the opinion of disabled people themselves in relation to definitional matters" (p. 40). Dale (2010), Higgins and Ballard (1999) find that "Visually impaired" and "blind" are two desired terms. Dale (2010) reported that people who have residual vision would like to register themselves as "visually impaired". They feel "uncomfortable" (p.208) to be called as blind and the term blind cannot reveal their eyes' condition and does not represent their identity. On the other hand, people who "have no sight at all" (World Blind Union Office, 2003, p.2) and "no light perception" (WHO, 2004) prefer to be called "blind people" or "the blind" (Higgins & Ballard, 1999; Omvig, 2009) as these terms can better present their identity as "people who cannot see" (Omvig, 2009).

> People who cannot see are blind, and the word 'blind' is perfectly acceptable--in fact, it is absolutely essential--when one is referring to the lack of eyesight. In my opinion (I got this opinion from Dr. Kenneth Jernigan), a person is blind--and should learn to refer to himself or herself as blind--when vision has deteriorated to the point that, to function capably and efficiently, the individual uses alternative (nonvisual) techniques to accomplish the majority of life's daily activities. (Omvig, 2009)

Moreover, Higgins and Ballard (1999) find that blind people dislike terms such as "people with blindness", they think that putting "blindness" after a person makes them feel that blindness is something they have to hide or are ashamed of.

Therefore, the term "blind" is used in this study to refer to the eyes' condition that cannot see anything and cannot perceive lights. "Blind people", "blind informants" and "blind students" are also applied to refer to people who are blind.

2.1.3 Difficulties A Blind Person Might Encounter

Article 1 of UN Convention (2014) states that persons with disabilities are people "who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments" and these impairments might cause different types of barriers which hinder them from fully and effectively participation in society as equal as the others (p.no).In the light of this statement, blind people are people with disabilities. Shakespeare's (2013) view of disability will be taken as the basis for this research to explore difficulties that blind people can encounter and provision and support that they need for tackle all sorts of problems. Shakespeare (2013) points out that disability should be understood that there are different levels of disability and difficulties can come at diverse levels. To solve the problems that a disabled person encounters, we need to explore at which level the difficultiescome and appropriate ways to intervene. According to the author (Shakespeare, 2013), there are three main levels of difficulties that a disabled person might experience: First, the impairment which including a person's physical or medical limitations. The solution to this problem is often a medical treatment such as Braille, long cane or a guide dog for a blind person. Second, limitations that are generated by the environment such as inaccessible transportation, uneven floor in schools, discrimination and treating disabled people unfairly. Solution to this problem is to remove barriers and create a level field, accessible transportation and treating people fairly. Third, for some disabled people, placing medical treatment and removing the barriers are not enough. There might be a need for extra support.

> "but unless you provide extra support, disabled people are still going to have bad life. So the disability movement says move barrier and we will participate, but I will say don't forget that we need to provide extra support for some disabled people in order that they flourish (Shakespeare, 2013).

Therefore, this study will look into difficulties that blind people might face at three levels, i.e., the physical and medical limitation, environmental limitation and their needs for extra support. Only when these factors are made clear, can "the most appropriate" (Shakespeare, 2013) solution be determined to tackle each problem and provide sufficient support to a blind student.

2.2 Literature Review

Systematic literature review is applied in this literature review to obtain comprehensive and transparent data (the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2012). Systematic literature review is traditionally serve for quantitative researches. However, due to the nature of research questions, there are qualitative research researchers who also apply this method to review literatures and report their findings in narratives forms.The process is replicable in nature and selection bias is therefore minimised (the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control,2012). The procedure will be specified in following paragraphs and each step and decisions will be fully documented.

2.2.1 Types of Literatures

Electronic literature databases are applied for literature searches. Library category search engine of University of Roehampton (http://capitadiscovery.co.uk/roehampton/) is used for article searching. “Support for Blind People”, “Education for Blind People”, “support for blind students”, “Education for Blind Students” are typed into research title, abstract or keyword in the databases as searching terms. One word or shorter terms such as “blind”, “blind people”, “support” are not used for article search. The main reason is to be more specific on the topic and narrow down the scope of search. For example, “blind” and “blind people” tend to have more meanings than the intended meaning in this study, such as colour blind, literately blind or law blind. When “blind” or “blind people” are applied for advanced search, it shows huge number of irrelevant articles. Therefore, this study used longer phrases to search for research articles. The library category provides articles from databases such as:

- Science Citation Index
- Social Sciences Citation Index
- PsycINFO
- ScienceDirect
- ERIC
- SPORTDiscus with Full Text
- Scopus®
- Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews
- British Library Document Supply Centre Inside Serials & Conference Proceedings Communication & Mass Media Complete
- Communication & Mass Media Complete
- PsycARTICLES
- JSTOR Life Sciences
- Arts & Humanities Citation Index
- British Education Index
- MLA International Bibliography

The date of searching in the databases were from July 1st to July 10th, 2014. Two examples of search results can be found in appendix 2 and appendix 3.

2.2.2 Literature Selection Criteria

This studywas carried out by one Master's student with limited time. The abstracts and key words of all provided articles were quickly scannedfor one time. The selection followed the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:

- Articlespublished in academic journals;
- On topic: relate to life experience, education and support for blind people;
- Published after 1950;
- Should be available as a full and downloadable text;
- Priority on article using qualitative interview as research method.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Articles about sudden loss of sights and deafblind are excluded;
- Articles related to blindness as an aging progress are excluded.

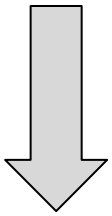
Although each hit showed thousands of articles, a great amount of them were about deafblind, blind that occurs in elder people, sudden blind and there were also a lot of articles that full text were not available. In the end, in total seventeen (17) articles were selected for literature review. The details of these articles can be found in Appendix 4.

These articles were all carefully read for three main reasons. Firstly, to study how the previous researches were conducted. The research goals, research questions, research methods, and data collection and analysis were highlighted while reading and notes were taken. Second, relevant information of education, provision and support were highlighted in each article and grouped together. Finally, the articles were again carefully studied at the stage of writing this dissertation in order to compare findings from previous researchers and the ones from this study. The writing style of these articles were also taken as a part of learning in terms of how a good report is written.

2.2.3 Education for Blind People: a Historical Perspective

Lowenfeld (1956) states that attitudes and treatments towards blind people went through three different stages in history. First, they were treated as people who could not survive and some were killed. Second, blind people's rights to live were respected and protected. Third, attempts were made for integrating blind people into the society and providing education opportunities to blind people were one of the means. Major historical educational events for the blind students are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1.
The Major Events of Education for Blind Students

Trend of Education for Blind People	Time	Place	Event
Segregated or Residential Schools (Lowenfeld, 1956)  Study with Sighted Peers (Argyropoulos & Stamouli, 2006)	1785	Paris	Establishment of the world first school for blind people (Lowenfeld, 1956).
	1790	England	The first school for the blind in England (Taylor, & Taylor, 1960)
	1793	Scotland	The first school for the blind in Scotland (Taylor& Taylor, 1960).
	1893	Britain	French (2007) Britain issued the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act to guarantee compulsory education for blind and deaf children (French, 2007).
	1900	Chicago	The first 'braille class' in a public school was set up in Chicago (Lowenfeld, 1956).
	1900s	Britain	Education was provided to blind pupils with extra special educational needs or impairments, and in segregated institutions (French, 2007).
	1960	Western Europe	14 Western European Countries providing compulsory education to blind children (Higgins & Ballard, 1999).
	1980	Hungary	A kindergarten department was opened to receive visually impaired or blind children (Kovács, 2002).
	1989	Greece	The first attempt of integrating visually impaired or blind student into mainstream primary school in Greece (Argyropoulos & Stamouli, 2006).

Education for blind people has several characteristics. Firstly, blind people's rights to education are realised and respected by different countries. Many countries issued compulsory education law to guarantee education for blind students and have been making efforts on providing inclusive education for visually impaired and blind children. Secondly, in history, segregated or residential education possesses a dominating role in the forms of education provided to blind people. According to Lowenfeld (1956), blind people were educated in

segregated or residential schools. This form of education "proved adequate and unchallenged for more than a century" in Europe and the USA (p.53). Thirdly, visually impaired and blind children are often housed and educated together (Taylor & Taylor, 1960).

2.2.4 Educational Placement of Blind Students

Segregated or regular school are two main forms of education system available for visually impaired and blind students in many countries. Researches show that there are three main factors impacting the placement of visually impaired or blind children into certain types of educational institution. First, sending a blind child to a segregated school tends to be a choice out of no choice. Traditional view that physically impaired children can only be educated in a special school (Kovács, 2000). In many countries, medical treatment and segregated education are often regarded as the only solution for blind children (Vickerman, 2009). Second, when it comes to choosing schools, it might be the parents' choices of the teachers instead of choices of the schools (Kovács, 2000). Regular school teachers are found to have negative attitudes towards blind students. Therefore, teacher's negative attitudes, lack of provision and short of supporting materials in regular school are reasons that parents prefer sending blind children to special education schools instead of regular schools (Kovács, 2000). The last, in some cases, blind children are studying in regular schools on first hand, but they went back to study in special education school within a few years. Their failed studying with sighted peers due to the lack of provision and support in regular schools (Marek, 2000).

Disadvantages and advantages of segregated schools have been recognised by many researchers. Gentle (2008) reports that the bright side of attending schools for blind students is that they gained long last friendships with their blind peers, they learned braille and music which are specialised for them, and one institute even support blind students on their transition into mainstream society and work. On the other hand, majority students who study in segregated institutions experienced separation from families at young ages as well as limited interaction with the mainstream environment. Vickerman (2009) shows that students often feel being treated differently, regarded as uneducable at home or regular schools, and forced into segregated schools. Consequently, many researchers promoting that blind children to study in regular schools so that they can live with their families and have more opportunities to socialise with sighted people (Kovács, 2000).

While educating blind students in regular schools now becomes the main trend of education for blind children, segregation is still maintained in many different countries (Higgins & Ballard, 1999). Kovács (2000) argues that segregated or studying in regular schools for blind students should not be treated as a simple "yes" or "no" question. Each form of education has its advantages and disadvantages especially when it comes to a specified country, a certain family and a definite child. To explain the failure of blind students attending regular schools, Higgins and Ballard (1999) point out that "because blind children are simply not receiving the support they need when attending the regular school" (p.72). Therefore, the core of the debate should not be focused on which form of education is better than another, but should be focused on how much support a child is receiving and to what extend a child's needs are met in a school.

2.2.5 Difficulties that Blind Students Experience and Provision and Support They Need

As mentioned by Shakespeare (2013), difficulties that a disabled person encounters tend to come from three different levels: physical and medical limitation, environmental limitation and the needs for extra support. This literature review therefore examines difficulties that a blind student experiences at these three levels.

As far as physical and medical limitation is concerned, with the absence of vison, it is vital for blind people to "develop independence and a sense of self-mastery" (Gary, 2008, p.240). In order to enable them to be aware of the space and where they are located, an orientation training should be provided (Farrell, 2006). In order to develop their abilities to go wherever they wish go safely and independently, mobility training should be provided (Gary, 2008). Blind students need to learn Braille, orientation and mobility (Higgins & Ballard, 1999). They need to learn life skills which help them to live and travel independently, for example, "bed making, washing and drying dishes, and setting tables" (Gentle, 2008, p.102). Besides, they also need special equipment such as long canes (Farrell, 2006).

Environmental limitation to blind students includes the barriers to public areas, transportation, school recourses, curriculum and environment (Gray, 2008), rights to educational opportunities including scholarships as well as employment access (Gentle, 2008).

Additional support that blind students need include “special attention, professional teachers and stuff”, special instruction, Braille instruction, information given in Braille, orientation and mobility support when move into a new environment (Higgins & Ballard, 1999), information and curriculum access, as well as vocational training (Gentle, 2008),. Farrell (2006) points out that blind students “depend mainly on tactile methods of learning” (p.13). Therefore, provisions such as Braille books and “talking” books, learning materials with Braille labels (Taylor &Taylor, 1960, p.23) and “tactile representations include maps, diagrams, graphs, charts, pictures and mathematical constructions” should be provided to blind students (Farrell, 2006, p.13).

It can be confusing regarding what “provision” and “support” refer to, as they both cover training on orientation and mobility. However, Shakespeare (2013) introduces an example of deaf people to clarify the differences between provision and support. He refers cochlear implant and sign language as provision to the deaf people. However, providing the cochlear implant and sign language skills is not adequate for a deaf person yet. The person is still unable to communicate in a meeting among hearing people who do not use sign language. The deaf person therefore needs a sign language interpreter. Interpreting and support from the interpreter is the extra support for a deaf person. Shakespeare does not offer an example on blindness. However, take his point of view for departure, it is easy to understand the differences between provision and support for a blind student. For instance, Braille is one of the basic provisions that should be provided to a blind child because it serves as a channel for the child to receive information. Equally, orientation and mobility are skills that should be learned at the very early stage of a blind person so that he or she can walk independently. However, these skills are not enough for them to handle their study in schools yet. They should be provided extra support includingBrailleor audio books all the way through their education, continues training and support on orientation and mobility when they move into new environments, and special attention and instruction from the teachers.

2.2.6 Challenges of Providing Provision and Support to Blind Students and Suggestions

Many different countries have been trying to provide provision and support to blind students. However, it turns out as a quite challenging task. Previous researches find that in order to

provide better provision and support to blind students, attention should be paid to following areas:

- Provision and support should be given to blind students. In many cases, Braille were not provided and blind students had little access to curriculum. As a result, blind students had to rely on their own in order to make progress in learning in regular schools (Gentle, 2008). Argyropoulos and Stamouli (2006) also point out that the lack of tactical materials makes blind students unable to learn through touching. Hence, in order to meet the needs of blind students, Braille books and audio books, learning materials with Braille labels (Taylor & Taylor, 1960; Gentle, 2008) should be provided to blind students and always kept up to date.
- Sufficient financial support should be provided to support learning of blind students. Blind students need financial support in areas such as transportation between home and schools, as well as Braille text books especially on post-primary school levels (Lowenfeld, 1956; Taylor & Taylor, 1960). Kovács (2000) points out that in Hungary, "the financial support which the State provides to local schools is very limited" (p.62). With insufficient funding, regular schools find it is difficult to make decision among "a mechanical Braille writer (Perkins Brailler)" or magnification software or the salary of a part-time special teacher' (Kovács, 2000, p. 62).

- A 'better curricula' (Taylor &Taylor, 1960, p. 28) should be designed for blind students. It is the students who are always asked to follow the curriculum and the different needs of students especially blind students are not taken into consideration (Argyropoulos & Stamouli, 2006). Although schools for the blind try to keep their curriculum as similar as the ones applied in regular schools, vocational training is often the nature of post-elementary education for the blind. 'In general the blind need more opportunities for advanced academic education leading to the professions' (Taylor &Taylor, 1960).
- There should be 'better teachers' (Taylor & Taylor, 1960, p.28) to provide education to blind student. A lack of teachers for the blind was find in many countries. On one hand, the education and training for teachers for teaching blind students was no differ from the training for teaching sighted children, the teachers were lack of knowledge and skills for teaching the blind. On the other hand, there are cases that regular teachers have negative attitudes towards visually impaired and blind students. Therefore, teacher's negative attitudes, lack of provision and supporting materials are

reason that parents prefer sending visually impaired or blind children to special education schools instead of inclusive schools (Kovács, 2000). Marek (2000) also points out that in order to support the learning of blind students, home tutor was provided on a one-to-one base in Poland, but none of the tutors held no professional knowledge on visually impairment or blindness.

- There is a call for cooperation among support providers. Marek (2000) claims that there was a lack of collaboration between special education schools and regular school in terms of sharing resources and professionals and helping blind students with learning. Argyropoulos and Stamouli (2006) point out another factor that impacting the quality of support providing to blind students. They find that in some cases, classroom teacher and the supporting teacher had wrong interpretation of co-teaching for blind student. They had a lack of collaboration but more in a sort of divided responsibilities and segregated teaching to the child. However, this is also caused by the nature of trainings that supporting teachers are provided. They are specialised in Braille and special education but gained little knowledge in supporting children in regular classrooms. Moreover, collaboration among support providers should be encouraged so that good practices and experiences can be shared (Gray, 2008).
- Social awareness is also vital for providing sufficient support to blind students. Higgins and Ballard (1999) argue that the failure of mainstreaming is because too much attention has been put on the blindness of blind people. The impairments and barriers are in fact created by the society where blind people have to live in a world which is made for the sighted while support is not provided to make it any easier (Higgins & Ballard, 1999). Furthermore, Marek (2000) points out that the attitudes and awareness of the public can be vital in initiating changes for blind people. For instance, instead of waiting for the authorities to make changes, a great number of changes were initiated at the grass-root level by parents, schools and non-governmental organisations. (Marek, 2000).
- Local authorities and professionals tend to have their power over blind students' lives and education (Marek, 2000; French, 2005). They might lay big power on deciding support for blind students. For instance, Marek points out a case when local authorities allocate funding to schools instead of each child, "regular schools are unable to hire support teachers or classroom assistants and they are unable to provide the child or the teachers with technology necessary for the preparation of study materials" (Marek,

2000, p.58). This way of financial allocation has a tendency of putting responsibilities of looking for support for blind children on the parents. French (2005) claims that it 'clearly indicates the power of medical professionals over the lives of disabled children' (p.109). The researcher therefore argues that "professional 'expert' judgment into the lives of disabled children can lead to oppressive practices and that the voice of disabled people, including children, should be central when considering inclusive educational policy and practice" (French, 2005, p.108).

- There are some countries that there are provision and support given by rehabilitation workers, but the support is quite limited (Gray, 2008). In order to make a difference, the author suggests that intervention should be provided as early as possible. Instead of a small coverage, all visually impaired or blind children should have access to provision and support. Specialised trainings should be provided to rehabilitation workers. It is essential for the workers to receive training on child protection in order to work with children (Gray, 2008).

2.2.7 Education for Blind Students in Norway

Norway started providing compulsory education to 7 to 16 years old blind children in 1881 (Taylor & Taylor, 1960). While the Act of November 23, 1951 promotes free education to children from 7 to 21 year-old. Founded by the Society for the Blind, the first school for the blind was opened in Oslo already in 1861; whereas the first state supported school for the blind was set up in Trondheim in 1885. There were state schools for blind studentsand all of them are residential. Any child "can only slightly benefit from the elementary school" such as a child who "is blind or suffers from very defective vision" is believed "would benefit from attending a special school" (Taylor & Taylor, 1960, p.327-328). Taylor and Taylor (1960) shows that provision and support have been provided to blind children in Norway in following forms: equal free special services as other children no matter where the child lives or studies, transportation to and from special schools, educational placement by local authority, small class sizes to ensure the most individual treatment, special materials, Braille, living skill and vocational training and job placement. Thanks to a 1936 law, partial help provided by the national government covered almost complete blind people regardless congenital or acquired blindness (Taylor & Taylor, 1960). Special Education Schools are abolished in Norway (Gresnigt, 2000), so that blind children are educated together with other

students. Provision and support provided to blind students were not found from the literatures. Therefore, it is important for this study to investigate in this field.

2.3 Summary

Through literature review, it can be found that different countries have been trying to providing quality education, provision and support to blind students. However, there are still a great number of challenges and debates in each area. First, a blind person might encounter difficulties from various levels such as physical and medical limitations, environmental limitations, and he or she may need extra support. Second, there have been arguments on the **educational placement of blind students**. Segregated education and studying in a regular school with sighted students have been two main forms of education for blind students. A great number of researches have been conducted to explore which form of education benefits blind students more and little agreement has been achieved yet. Third, certain sort of**provision and support** have been given to blind students, some of them prove quite appropriate whereas some of them need further improvements. Moreover, in many cases, provision and support are still missing due to policy, financial, human recourses or other factors. According to the above mentioned three main themes, an interview guide was developed in order to keep sample selection focused and better answer the inquiries of this study. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 6.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Paradigm

This study applied interpretative approach in order to explore certain individual's experience and point of view on provision and support that he/she was given or needed but always missing.Interpretivist which under the big umbrella of Social constructionist approach is the philosophical underpinnings of this study. It is an approach which lay its main focus on the individual instead of a group. This study's interests are in "how individuals construct and make sense of their world" and "how the social world is interpreted by those involved in it" (Robson, 2011, p.24). Rubin and Rubin (1995) claim that it is important to bear in mind that "objects and events are understood by different people differently" (p.35). Therefore, this study tries to "elicit interviewees' views of their worlds, their work, and the events they have experienced or observed" (p.35). By restructuring and understanding the told experiences, this study aims to "seek thick and rich descriptions of the cultural and typical arenas they are studying and try to develop an empathetic understanding of the world of others" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p.35).

3.2 Qualitative Research Approach

In the light of Creswell (1998), there are three main factors that determine the nature of a research. First, researchers "choose a qualitative study because the topic needs to be explored" (p.17). The nature of this research was to explore a few blind people's experience of provision and support given to them when they were students. Second, in this research, the researcher went out and talked to blind people face to face for information and this agrees with Creswell's point of view of qualitative research that the research should be conducted in natural settings (p.14) and "the researcher is an instrument of data collection" (p.14) who goes to the field to gather data in the form of words or images. Third, the collected data would be carefully analysed in order to find the meanings of informants, and the view of the topic will be presented in detailsCreswell (1998). Hence, it was determined that a qualitative research could better match the research questions and goals.

3.3 Sampling

This study aims to explore the blind people's lived experience and views of provision and support given to them when they were students and their suggestions on future practice. In order to keep the focus on the research goal, Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest thatresearchers can find evidences from concepts from previous literatures and research questions to keep sample selection focused. If these are not sufficient enough to narrow down the sample, then "the researchers at the very least makes the procedures and criteria for decision making explicit" (p.64). Therefore, to keep the sample selection in focus, purposive sampling (Punch, 2005) is applied in this study. It means that "sampling in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind" (Punch, 2005, p.187). According to the main themes found from literature review and research questions, the sample of this study is narrowed down to blind people who met the following criteria: First, they are totally blind: have no perception of light or have light perception but less than 3/60 in the better eye 2 (WHO, 2014). With the complete blindness, they can rely little on sight to study and live. The findings in previous researches and also in my pilot study show that there are big differences between blind and visually impaired these two conditions of eyes. As Farrell (2006) claims that blind students "depend mainly on tactile methods of learning"(Farrell, 2006, p.13); and visually impaired pupils can rely on their remaining sight to study. In this study, the main focus is put on entirely blind people and the corresponding provision and support for them in schools. Second, being blind from birth. Researchers find out that there are also differences between being blind from birth and a sudden loss of sight (Percival & Hanson, 2007). Therefore, this study intends to limit informantsto these who were born with blindness in both eyes. Third, the informants should have being through a certain period of school education so that they will have plenty information of different sort of provision and support in different school periods to share. Hence, when I was looking for informants, I was looking for someone who have studied in special schools or regular schools in Norway and who are older than 18 years old. The last, as the interview will be carried out in English. So the informants should speak good English.

Snowballing is the sampling method that used in this research. By snowballing, Edwards and Holland (2013) illustrate it as:

> A process in which contact is made with participants appropriate for your research through whatever access route you can find, and through these first participants you are introduced to other of similar/relevant characteristics for your research (p.6).

In order to find informants for my study, the following steps were taken: The criteria for potential informant are determined by my research goal and research questions. I sent these criteria and the ConsentForm to our programme convenor. She contacted people who she knew that could help me. While waiting for responses. I found Informant 1 on my own. Informant 1 was introduced by one of my classmate during my staying in Norway in the beginning of 2014. We simply greeted online and added each other as friends on Facebook. We had never talked to each other again until I contacted him and asked whether I could interview him. He happily accepted my invitation. After the interview, he introduced one of his friends to me. His friend then became informant 2 for this study. A few days before I interviewed Informant 2, I received several emails from the contacts from our programme convenor. I was forwarded with contact information of a person who showed willingness to participate in this study. I emailed this person and also called her on the phone. This person then became informant 3 of this study. Although one person was born in a Non-European country, he moved to Norway before he attend kindergarten, holds Norwegian passport and speaking Norwegian as his first language. Therefore, it can be said that all three informants are Norwegians and they are all interested in this study and willing to participate in interviews.

3.4 Research Tool

3.4.1 Interview

Interview is a commonly applied data collection tool for qualitative researches. It is proper for this study to use interview as a tool to collect information because interview is not only "a very good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality", but also "one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others" (Punch, 2005, p.168).

To make sure that my informants would be focused on their experience of provision and support given to them when they were students, semi-structured interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) was applied for data collection. Semi-structured interviews are commonly applied in flexible designs including qualitative interviews (Robson, 2011). In semi-structured interviews, the informant often has more flexibility to respond and he/she has more freedom

to say whatever they want to regarding the questions being asked (Robson, 2011). According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), in semi-structured interviews, "the interviewer introduces the topic, then guides the discussion by asking specific questions" (p.5). Therefore, in order to keep the focuses in interviews, an interview guide for this study was designed. Based on findings from literature review, the interview guide was planned to cover seven main topics: eyes' condition of the informant, support the informant needs in general, educational placement, the informant's experience of educational provision, difficulties the informant encountered in schools, the informant's experience and view of support that he or she received, and the informant's suggestion for future practice.Besides, there are several promoting questions under each theme, and both the themes and the questions were also developed in line with findings from literature review. The interview guide contains an "introductory comments" (Robson, 2011, p.284), the list of main topics that should be covered, main questions and their prompts, and some "closing comments" (p.285). A detailed interview guide can be found in Appendix 6.

I would quote Robson's (2011) words to describe what has exactly happened to my interview guide and three interviews that have been conducted for this research:

> The interveners has an interview guide that serves as a checklist of topics to be covers and a default wording and order for the questions, but the wording and order are often substantially modified based on the flow of the interview, and additional unplanned questions are asked to follow up on what the interviewee says (p.280).

3.4.2 Pilot Study

In this study, a pilot interview was carried out two days before the interviews. Valuable experiences were gained from the piloting. Robson (2011) puts pilot study as "a small-scale version of the real thing; a try-out of what you purpose so that its feasibility can be checked" (p.141). Researchers are encouraged to carry out a pilot study prior to the interviews to justify the research tool and the research methods. Also, to "identify potential problems in following the research procedure" so that necessary improvements on the study design and the research processcan be made in time (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Ideal participants for a pilot study are "volunteers, who are as similar as possible to the target population" (2001). In this study, due to limited time and contacts, and based on the willingness of the participant, a lady who is visually impaired participated in the piloting. Interview questions were tested on her. However, as it was mentioned in the beginning of this dissertation that the nature, difficulties,

provision and support for visually impaired people and blind people are quite different. During the piloting, it confirmed again that there are questions that are not suitable for a visually impaired person to answer. For instance, according to her visual function, questions regarding orientation, Braille, whether she has ever been to a special education school or whether she has got any special vocational training are not quite related. Therefore, during the last part of the interview, we stopped asking and answering the questions. Instead, I read interview questions to her and she told me whether she fully understood the questions or not. As she herself is an expert in the field, in the end, she provided some feedback of participating in the pilot interview as well as some suggestions on the interview questions. I rechecked with findings from literature review and modified the interview questions again according previous findings as well as reflections from the pilot study. Furthermore, my recorder was also tested during the pilot study. It was a small detail but it was very important for me to learn in advance that I should place the recorder close to the informants instead of putting it in the mid of us.

3.4.3 General Information of Informants

Three informants are all between 30 to 40 years old. None of them needs medical care regarding their eyes' condition and none of them have studied in a special education school.

Informant 1: He was born with vision between 2 and 3 over 60 due to genetic diseases. He was not able to see especially when there was light at young age and the eyesight was reduced to nothing before he could remember. He was provided with a guide dog before 2010. He can travel around under help with the guide dog but still need help from people around in order to find the right bus or a seat on bus or train. His knowledge of Braille is limited to numbers and a few simple words and he relays heavily on audios books, special programmes on computer and Mobil phone to "read". He holds a bachelor's degree and is working on a master's degree. He has a major-related job for more than 10 years.

Informant 2: He is originally from a Non-European country but moved to Norway before he was 3 year-old. He was born blind due to his mother's rubella. He got a certain amount of sight in one eye after a surgery in 1987. His caretakers knew he would be blind again. Therefore, he was trained with both visual reading and writing with a "huge" magnifier (10x) and Braille at the same time. He lost his sight again in 2005 and was provided with his first

guide dog. He relays on Braille and audio devices to "read". He's highest education is "Folkehøyskole" which is one year education after high school in Norwegian education system. He has been working an office job for a few years now.

Informant 2 does meet criteria I listed out such as being bind from birth and studied in Norwegian schools. However, his situation is quite special in the way that he actually had certain level of sight during most of his educational years. I need to bear in mind that this research aims to study educational provision and support for totally blind students. However, I still finished the interview and kept this person as one of the informants for this research. The first reason is that he did have certain degree of sight back, but due to the fact that he was going to be blind again, the provision and support that provided to him was actually a combination of those for visually impaired and blind. The second reason I kept this informant is that he serves as a good example for researchers to pay attention to the differences between people who have some sight left and people who are completely blind.

Informant 3: She was born blind and her eyes cannot perceive any lights. She was premature and she guesses this is the cause of her blindness. She doesn't feel confident to travel around especial to new addresses. She relays heavily on other people and her guide dog to move around. She had training in reading Braille. Now she depends on both Braille and audio books. She holds a master's degree and currently on an internship.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 How the Interviews Were Carried Out

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted in this research and they were fully recorded by a mobile phone device. Punch (2005) introduces a checking list for managing an interview, including preparation of an interview schedule, rapport establishment, skills of asking questions, communication and listening and closing the interview. As soon as informants confirmed their availabilities to me, I prepared maps, letters of consent, interview guide, pen, and the recorder in line with Punch's (2005) suggestion.

Researchers point out that establish rapports is very important for interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). It was not difficult to establish rapports with my informants.We all had conversations on the phone or online so we knew that we understood each other's English quite well. All conversations were quite joyful and this made an easy and pleasant start before the meeting. I met them at places they chose and there were always a short walk before we reached the location. Therefore, during the walk, we had small talks such as why I am studying in Norway, was it difficult to get to the meeting spots, are you in Oslo for holiday and how often do you come to this cafe. During these conversations, I showed "an interest in and a supportive attitude toward the interviewees' life or work" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) in order to make them feel being listened to and share more information with me.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) also emphasis on researchers' skills of asking questions, communication and listening. I showed my interests in what my informant said by responding with "yes", "yeah" or "ok". As all my informants are totally blind persons, I made sure that I was not only responding with a smile or nod. When my informant showed that he/she were thinking, and couldn't decide what to say, I followed Rubin and Rubin's (1995) suggestion that "wait a while, keep still, and provide the silence that encourage people to continue" (p.132). As closing the interviews, I informed the informant that my questions were finished and asked whether he/she had any questions or suggestions; and thanked the informant.

3.5.2 Recording

All three interviews were audio recorded by a mobile phone device. Although all informants had read the letter of consent before our meetings and they knew the interview would be audio recorded, each record did not start before asking permission from the informant. As blind people tend to be sensitive to sounds around, I put all interview questions into one page so I did not need to turn the papers; and there was no note taking during interviews. All data were transcribed when interviews were finished.

3.5.3 Background of the Interviews

All interviews were carried out in English. There was only one Norwegian word used by two informants and that is "Folkehøyskole". According toexplanation given by informants, it is one year education after high school but before university in Norwegian education system.

Interview with informant 1: The interview was carried out on September 21st, 2014. It was on the third floor of Oslo Central Station. It was Sunday when most shops were closed. We were sitting on the chairs that located outside of a closed restaurant. There were some background music from the second floor, but was not loud. There were not many people around.

Interview with Informant 2: It was September 29th, 2014. The informant preferred to meet in a pub he often went to after work. The music was loud but I put the recorder very closed to him and confirmed most of the information with him by repeating what he said or the key points in his talking.

Interview with Informant 3: I was invited to meet the informant in her flat on September 30th, 2014. It was very quiet and good for recording.

3.6 Data Analysis

First of all, all interviews were transcribed into detailed written texts according to the original recordings. The transcriptions reveal what have exactly been said by the informants.

As far as data analysis is considered, this study follows the coding procedures introduced by Rubin and Rubin (1995) in order to "formulate themes, refine concepts, and link them together to create a clear description or explanation of a culture or a topic" (p.251).In qualitative research, researchers use different methods to code the data in order to find out and fully understand the meanings and the ideas underlying the data (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). By coding, it means researchers group responses of informants into different themes. Anything that might be helpful for data analysis can be coded, for example, "similar ideas, concepts, or themes", and steps. Moreover, data can be recoded as many times as needed (p.238). The following steps were carried out for data analysis in this study: First, main coding themes are set up by reading the interviews and referring to research goals. Second, the data was identify and fit into different themes. If the data does not fit into a theme properly, the themes would be changed or a new theme should be made. Third, analyse the data within as well as across different themes. After these three steps, the results were ready for the final report (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

3.7 Reliability and Validity

3.7.1 Reliability

Traditional view of reliability is that when researchers can obtain alike data and the same results when they repeat the same research procedure. However, in qualitative research, reliability refers to the dependability of the data and research procedures (Flick, 2006). Dependability calls researchers' attention to "the ever-changing context within which research occurs"(Web Centre for Social Research Methods, 2006, p.no). Therefore, researchers should clarify "the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes affected the way the research approached the study" (2006, p.no).

A few strategies were applied to increase reliability of this research.In the light of Flick (2006), reliability of interview data is increased when the interviewer is trained. I have not received any official training to carry out an interview. However, with my previous job as an Inclusive Education Project Officer with Save the Children China Pragramme, I conducted a large number of interviews with children with disabilities, teachers, local officials and parents of children with disabilities. These interviews were carried out for purposes such as baseline survey, case studies, mid and final evaluation for projects. There were occasions that I had to conduct at least six interviews a day regarding disability and inclusive education. Therefore, I have gained certain experience of communicating with disabled people and to conduct interviews for this study.

On the other hand, researchers can increase reliability of a research by re-checking the interview guide or the interview questions after the pilot study or the first interview (Flick, 2006). As mentioned in pilot study, the interview guide and questions were read through by the lady who participated in the piloting. She, our programme convenor and my supervisor all provided valuable suggestion so that the interview guide was well modified before the first interview.

Another strategy to increase the reliability is that this report clearly distinguished the informants' exact words and my own analyses and discussions. To make sure that it is "possible to check what is a statement of the subject and where the researcher's interpretation begins" (Flick, 2006, p.370). Moreover, reliability of this research is increased in a way that

the research process, data collection and coding steps are fully documented and explained in this report (Flick, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

3.7.2 Validity

In qualitative research, validity means that the research findings can "accurately reflect the situation" and the researcher provides adequate evidence to make sure the findings are fully supported. Punch (2005) further points out that "validity means the validity of the data" (p.252) and "how well do the data present the phenomena for which they stand" (Punch, p. 253). The validity of this study is assessed according to the criteria introduced by Maxwell (1992). Maxwell divides validity of a research into five categories so that the validity of this study will be judged in line with the categories.

Descriptive validity

Descriptive validity refers to the level of accuracy that a researcher reflect the exact words said by the informants (Maxwell, 1992). In this study, the interviews were all clearly recorded. The transcription was carefully done and revealed everything that were said by the informants. Moreover, what have been quoted in this report were also loyal to the exact words from the informants.

Interpretive validity

"Interpretive validity isinherently a matter of inference from the words and actions of participants in the situationsstudied" (Maxwell, 1992, p. 49). This study mainly focused on the words that have been said by the informants. Regarding actions, only the laughing were revealed in the transcription. However, matches between the laughing and the contents of the conversation were often found in the data. For instance, Informant 3 was overjoyed when she could walk to school without holding the other people's arm. She said:

> *And the LAST year when I was 12, I was also allowed to school on my own. Wow!(Laughing)*(Informant 3).

In this case, the informant's words and her action were in an agreement. This brought more confidence for the researcher to analyse the findings and increased the validity of this study.

Theoretical validity

Theoretical validity “goes beyond concrete description and interpretation and explicitly addresses the theoretical constructions that the researcher brings to, or develops during, the study” (Maxwell, 1992, p. 50). All findings in this study were supported by data from the interviews. It can be found in Chapter 4. Result and Discussion that each finding were supported by the information from at least one informant.

Generalizability

Generalizability refers to the degree of generalisation of the findings, and to what extend the themes and findings can be repeated or applied into situations alike (Maxwell, 1992). This study investigatedthe blind people’s individual experiences and perspectives on provision and support they received when they were students. The findings are based on certain contexts. For example, the study was carried out in Norway. Education, provision and support given to blind student found in Norway cannot be generalized to other countries. Also, the informants of this study are around 30 to 40 year-old. Findings of this study cannot be generalised for blind students who are at other ages. Therefore, it can be risky tomake generalisations.

Evaluative validity

Evaluative validity (Maxwell, 1992) is understood as how researchers “evaluates the data they receive” by Thomson (2011, p. 80). It refers to the level of authenticity of what have been said by the informants (Flick, 2006). In order to receive authentic data for this study, the interview guide was designed in a manner that interview questions are linked and corresponding to each other. For example, informants were firstly asked about difficulties living as blind people. Then they were asked about corresponding support given to them in order to handle these difficulties; and to what extent the support helped them with difficulties they had. Also, they were further asked about their needs that were not much supported. At last, they were invited to suggest on what should be done and what should be changed in order to better support them. During the interview, I made sure that each person’s responses were consistent and corresponding to one piece and another. If there was anything that sounded conflicting, I always examined why immediately or after a few questions. This procedure is in line with the suggestion from Rubin and Rubin (1995) that “the most common way of handling contradiction is to ask, gently, about the contradiction, with the assumption that there is an explanation (p.89).

3.8 Ethical Issues

Ethics in a research often refers to "general principles of what one ought to do" (Robson, 2011, p.198). Ethical issues should be considered by researchers at the very stages of each study. Ethical issues were taken care of by this research according to the following steps:

3.8.1 Getting Permission from the Norwegian Social Science Data Service

For conducting researches in Norway, I filled up application form on the website of the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD) and submitted my interview guideline for their review as well. The research goals, procedures, sample, data collection and how data should be kept were clearly explained in the application form. Contacting with informants did not initiate until the NSD's approval of this study (Appendix 7).

3.8.2 Informed Consent

Informed consent refers to whether people know about what they would be doing and if they are ready to participate in a research (Robson, 2011). In this study, as an introduction, some brief information of the research and the Consent Form (appendix 7) were sent out to our programme convener and potential participants. The Consent Form clearly explains the goal of this study, the reason of inviting them to participate, the nature of the interview, questions they would be asked, and also about the audio recording of the interview and they could withdraw from the research at any time. The form also include information about how the data would be kept and how their personal information would be treated in a confidential manner. When people showed their willingness in participating in the research, I then confirmed with them again that I could interview them and the interviews would be recorded. As my informants are totally blind people, I asked each of them how they prefer to sign the Consent Form. In the end, one informant chose to print out the form herself, sign and give it to me when we meet; whereas the other two participant permitted me to print out the form and bring to them. After they signed the forms, I took a photo of what they have signed and sent them the photocopy online so that they would know and keep a record of what they have signed for.

4 Results and Discussion

Information collected from the interviews are presented in this section. The main findings cover the following areas which is in line with the findings from literature review and research questions of this study: educational placement of blind students in Norway, difficulties a blind student experienced in schools, provision and support given, provision and support that blind people considered appropriate to facilitate their studies in schools, provision or support that were missing or require improvement and the informants' suggestion on future practice. The results from the interviews are demonstrated following the above mentioned themes. Discussions of the results are made after presenting all results from the data.

In addition, findings regarding terms that are preferred by blind people are illustrated at the very beginning of this section. It is not the main goal of this study to figure out which term should be used to refer to visual function or to blind people in educational studies. However, due to the chaos in the use of terminology by different researchers, I feel obliged to clarify the terms I chose for this study and also to present the termswhich preferred by three blind people themselves.

4.1 The Terms: "Blind" and "Blind People"

Finding in this study showed that it wasnormal and proper to use "blind" and "blind people" to refer to people's eyes' condition and people who cannot see.

Informant 1 said that:

> *For me, it's easier for me to describe for people what blind is than to use the other terms. Then people will ask what does it really mean. And then I have to explain like this: it's blind. (Laughing), so, soso, that is the word I have to use anyway. So why don't you use from the beginning. It's my opinion.*

Informant 3 also pointed out that:

Blind. oh, because I cannot see anything… though when I talk about everyone, like, then I will talk about visual impairment... Like if I am in a part of the visual impairment group. But I am blind and I use blind the word to … in Norwegian, blind is very clear. If you are blind, you

are blind. If you are talk about blind in the United States you might see which is a kind of pain. But, how can you kind of be more clear? So, yeah, that's why I ALWAYS (loud) use blind, when I talk about myself.

Informant 2 was born totally blind but had some degree of sight back in one eye back as a teenager. With lived experience, he has clear differentiations among different visual functions. He described his eyes' condition when he got some sights back as:

> *Yeah, bad sighted, worse than partially sighted, and worse, you know, can see that few present, few.*

As he became totally blind from 2005 until now, he now uses the word "blind". He explained that:

> *Yeah, because it differs, it differs. After 2005, I got blind, before I was bad sighted, f..king (cursing word) bad sighted… before I got ten, and when I was three year-old, and before that I was also blind, you know, so, that's it.*

As shown from the finding in this study, the usage of a term might not as complicated as previousresearchesdiscovered. Terms such as "blind" and "blind people" tend to be preferred by blind people themselves for the simple reason that the term reveals the exact condition of their eyes and it could be easily understood by other people.

4.2 Educational Placement of Blind students

The informants all attended regular schools and studied in regular classes. However, the finding showed that visually impaired and blind students tended to go to schools which were professional in accommodating and educating students with visual impairments.

> *Because the school had 4 or 5 blind students. So we had a kind of special… I don't know how to really explain it. We were in normal classes, but the school also had special knowledge about how to educate blind people. So it was a regular school but with special knowledge to how to educate us, so, yeah* (Informant 1).

The one school, is now they became registered right after I finished. Now they are competence, a school has competence in visually impairment. So now they are registered as such.

They were a normal school, but they were registered as having special competence for blind people because they had so many visual impairments for a while, everybody got into that school (Informant 3).

4.3 Difficulties Blind Student Experienced in Schools

This section presents difficulties that three blind informants encountered when they were studying in schools. As mentioned in the very beginning part of this dissertation, a blind student might encounter difficulties at three different levels including: physical and medical limitation, environmental limitation and the needs for extra support(Shakespeare, 2013). Hence, the findings are demonstrated according to three different levels.

4.3.1 Physical and Medical Limitation

In this study, three informants all claimedthat they did not require any medical care regarding their eyes' condition. Two of them relied on Braille and audio programmes on phone or computer to "read"; while one of them did not learn much Braille but he thinks that Audio programmes and devices were adequate enough to support his study, work and daily life.

Without vision, three informants all depended on guide dogs and the blind canes to walk around and it did not prove difficult for them to do so. However, one informants claimed that it was not easy for her to travel around, specially to unknown environments.

Regarding the difficulties they had in study, they all agreed that mathematics and physical education.

And the challenge is when you actually have somebody which is using the regular dividing system, and then they try to explain to you: yeah, you know, it's over the line and under the line… and I am like: what do you mean? I write it all in one line more or less. And that's kind of, that is where a lot of challenges came from (Informant 3).

4.3.2 Environmental Limitations

This study found that environmental limitationfor a blind person tend to be that without audio guidance, a blind person might have difficulties to tell which bus or train is coming and how to find a seat on them.

> *I need help sometimes…*
> *I kind of need some help from people because I cannot see signs or anything when I travel and to find seat on the train or the bus, and, so so, I need help from people, yes. Sometimes I have a guide with me and helps me or sometimes I just ask people around me: can you help me to find a seat, yeah (laughing)* (Informant 1).

Informant 3 pointed out that schools or universities should simplify the process or provide some support to blind students for registration. She introduced a case where she was wrongly registered in the university as being disabled to reading instead of being blind. This error in registration caused her so much trouble and she was put into the risk of attending the university at the first year without any books and reading materials. She said that:

> *The first year when I went to uni. I was registered in the wrong category. I wasn't registered as blind, I was just registered as being disabled to READING (loud). So I didn't have right to get anything produced. So I literally came to uni. first year without anything.*
> *I have no idea how that happened. They have known I was blind since 1995. So I have no idea how that happened.*
> *I think I kind of try to do it on my own. But none of us understood how the paper things worked*(Informant 3).

4.3.3 Support A Blind Students Needed

Informants stated that they needed extra support in learning from the teachers, and orientation and mobility.Informant 1 illustrated that his learning would be difficult if the teachers did not pay attention to the ways they give instructions.

> *But, some of the times they use blackboard very much and very difficult for me to follow and I ask the teacher can you read what you are writing and they forgot and then was difficult. Eerr…eeerrr… og if they had papers they just give out to*

the pupils and forgot to to give to me on computer, something and I ..it was difficult.

Informant 3 showed that difficulties would arise with lack of support on orientation and mobility. She said:

Direction, like physical direction. Like I kept walking around a roundabout at school because I didn't know it was an around about. There isn't any guide or anything. I just follow direction like: where am I supposed to be…errr..

She further added that there was also a trouble when the classrooms were changed and there was no corresponding support to help her getting her way to the classroom:

You know, the higher up degree you get, the fewer students you are in class, so then they change classrooms to some of the most hidden classrooms in... So that…that was a challenge sometimes because none of the doors from …label because I was like: so where am I going(Informant 3)*?*

4.4 Provision Given to Blind Students in Norway

According to what have been said by informants, provision freely provided by Norwegian government to blind people in Norway include: long canes, guide dogs and the changing of the dog for a new one after certain years, training on Braille, computer, audio programme software, training on computer skills and the audio programmes, and basic orientation and mobility training.

Three informants were all provided with guide dogs around 2005 and 2007.

Informant 1 did not want to learn Braille and he thought his computer and audio programmes were sufficient for him to study in schools. The other two informants were provided one-to-one Braille course from early ages. According to Informant 2, although he had some sight in one eye after a surgery, trainings on Brailleand visual reading were provided to him since he was in elementary school. The training was about a few hours per week. He was taken away from his class for the sessions, "because… no other children learn it" (informant 2).Braille training was given to Informant 3 even earlier. Moreover, she and her father were also provided with training on how to use the Perkins Braille machine.

Yeah, I had one-to- one teaching. We had they was a lot of play involved actually. I remember seeing Braille all the way from Kindergarten of course. They also provided me course with…I think I remember that we had Perkins, that was the one Braille machine, maybe 5, at least 6 and we had that demo thing (Informant 3).

Due to the fact that Informant 2 had certain degree of sight in one eye, besides of training on Brailleand visual reading, the major provision given to himwas magnifying devices.

I think that time I used more zoom, like magnification applications. With, with big magnification, not, not so f..king (cursing word) magnification, HUGE like 10 x or magnification. That's a lot. I used until 2005. Then, then I became blind (Informant 2).

The finding showed that certain amount of trainings on orientation and mobility were provided to blind people. Informant 1 said that:

Yes. I had learned some (orientation and mobility) at (elementary) school. And also I had some, yeah, some help with mobility after I was grown up.

Whereas Informant 3 said:

I learn, I learned a lot during kindergarten and then I had hum… So it's like, but and then at schools, we had a little bit… And once they were training me on orientation, ah… I guess from age ten and onwards.

Three informants all relied on audio programmes on computer or phone to "read". Certain training and support were provided to them regarding how to use the computers and software. Informant 1commented on the training and support as: "yeah they helped me a lot, but but I need to to help myself out also". Whereas Informant 3's words were:

I mean I got the computer at school when I was eight, and home, too. And err… (long pause) I had, I had teachers at school who teach me how to use the computer.

4.5 Support Provided to Blind Students in Norway

The findings in this study agreed with previous researchers that support blind students need include: Braille or audio books all the way through the student's education years, special instruction, information given in Braille or in audio format, orientation and mobility when move into a new environment (Higgins & Ballard, 1999, p.73).

Continuous Support onBraille,Audio Books and Training on Audio Programmes:

Due to the fact that Informant 1 did not learn Braille and Informant 2 had some sight when he was a student, support provided to three informants were quite different. However, they all stated that they were always provided with the resources such as Braille or audio books as they needed.

Regarding support at schools, Informant 1 was provided with computers and audio programmes for reading and writing. The teachers often read what they wrote on blackboard and gave him information in the formats he needed.

Informant 3 was always provided with books in the format she needs and she even received books in various formats when she was in high school.

> *In the children's school, I had two sets of books. One set of book at home, one set of book at school.*
>
> *When I was little I used only Braille. When I was about 10, I remember about my first audio book for school.*
>
> *Yeah, I remember also at videregående (high school) I was started to getting electronic books on com. discs like compact discs. And they were also change from getting them in Braille to getting them on computer, and also getting them in audio.* (Informant 3).

Informant 3 also had continuous training on computer and audio programme skills:

> *I mean I got the computer at school when I was eight, and home, too. And err… (long pause). I had, I had teachers at school who teach me how to use the computer…*
>
> *I had some training by one of the teachers at school…That was when I was 16 or 17, something like that.*

I think they just added that couple of classes, or they did so when the others had their computer class because the other also got some computer training there. I had it on my computer and the teacher, I had one-one teacher with me (Informant 3).

Special Attention and Special Instruction:

Three informants all went to regular schools for their education and followed the same curriculums as the other students. However, due to the fact that they were blind, special attention and extra instructions were provided to all of them. First of all, Informant 2 and Informants 3 were provided with Braille training on one-to one support base. Some other relevant support were added in as well:

Informant 1*: Most of the time I do the same course with the others, but sometimes I had individual teacher. I had it in English and some in mathematics and other.*
Not many hours per week, but some hours per week, maybe two or three hours per week.
Maybe not the first year of elementary school but later I always had individual.
For example, in English, when the others had common course, I were had my own teacher in another room. So it was parallel.

Informant 3: *Until I was 9, 8, 9, I had special educational teacher*
The teachers would help me to I would sometimes get shorter homeworks than the others because my reading ability was not that good.

Informant 3 also mentioned about the support she was given when she was studying in University for her Master's degree. She was provided with two assistants. One of them helped her with book scanning while another assisted her with her thesis writing.

I had reading and writing secretaries who did very good job at scanning materials so I could literally get anything I needed.
During the writing period I had help with me maybe, actually, oh, we spent a lot of time, maybe… I guess would be 30 hours a week... I also made sure to produce some books that I knew I would need in work life as well. So, yeah, the last couple of day, the last two years staying in university I had maybe as average maybe 15 to 20 hours a week and during the really actic period I guess it was about 30 to 40

I guess. When I really had 12 hour workday sometimes… But I had two of them, one did scanning and one helping me with the research and did the reading through and actually wrote for me sometimes (Informant 3).

Information Given in Braille or in Audio format

Regarding getting information timely and on an equal base as other students, Informant 1 stated that he was not left behind. He said: "I think they told me, so I got the same information as the others, yes".

Orientation and Mobility in New Environments

When the informant was asked about whether he/she received any help with mobility in schools, Informant 1 replied:

No. the school, the first school I went to was quite small and easy to orientate.

Informant 2: *They just told me that, yeah you can find that, you can find that, then this and that, yeah.*

Then there you can piss and then you can have some this food something. Then you are going to have something, this and that. If it's burning, you are going to run like hell and that things. Running with the other guys; and everyone running to the same way so I just didn't think that was a big issue.

Regarding this topic, Informant 3 explained that she did receive certain amount of training and help on orientation and mobility:

Yes. But the teachers that were, well, first of all, it started to …I learn, I learned a lot during kindergarten and then I had uumm…

And a lot went on to be computer skills, and independent living skills, and not much orientation. And once they were training me on orientation, aaahh.. I guess from age ten and onwards.

I had a little bit of mobility training. Uummm… this went gradually I guess…I have mobility training when I moved to Oslo for…maybe a couple of weeks or so.

It seems there was a lack of support in orientation and mobility in schools for the informants. However, that did not prove a problem to Informants 1 and Informant

2.Informant 3 received more support and the support was on continuous base through her education.

Support with examinations:

Support blind students with examinations was not mentioned in the reviewed literatures. However, one informant in this study talked about the support he was provided for examinations.

> Informant 1: *I had, some exams I had…oh, not written, but..oh, they just ask me. And the others wrote their exams and I just speak with the "examinator". But other times, most of the times I had same exams as the others. Just I got it on computer. Yea, so.*

According to this informant, the schools he went to made some adjustments for him so that he could take examinations as the others. These adjustments include to conduct an oral exam or to work on the examinations on his computer.

Supporting Parents with Blind Child

Data in this research showed that parents of three blind informants all received certain forms of support. According to Informant 1, his parents did not receive any formal training in raising a blind child, and they did not contact the schools often. However, they had support from a group of parents who were in the same situation.

> *But they were…we were a part of a group with other parents with the blind children.*
>
> *I think when they met they had a weekend or something together so they had enough time to talk about different topics and also have social life together, eat some dinners and yeah, so, they were, they knew each other very well and also then you could call each other if there were something between the meeting something like that, yeah*(Informant 1).

Parents of Informant 2 were very often in contact with schools and were always invited to sit in the meetings for making educational decisions for their son. He says that:

yeah, they very in contact. Also with, you know, this group of people. Yeah, the first like meetings, make decisions what taken. All these decisions as far as I know were taken outside of these meetings(Informant 2).

Besides of joining the perkins Braille machine demonstration workshop, parents of Informant 3 also received some other sorts of support.

They have been to quite a few courses and so am I, actually, I forgot that. Maybe once, maybe a week a year something like that at children's school at least. We were, I don't know. We've just been three or four times, but we were sent to courses or blind and visually impaired at our age… And we also received visitors from the school who were responsible for us from the, like once they knew education and they were looking at how we were doing it. So, I remember that, right. All from kindergarten until…none of us have been to the uni. But until I started with college, yes (Informant 3).

4.6 Appropriate Provision and Support From the Blind Students Point of View

As it can be seen from above findings, the informants all received different sorts of provision and support during their study in schools. This section presents the provision and support which the informantsconsider appropriate and important in term of facilitating their study in schools.

Guide Dog

Informant 3 considered guide dog an appropriate provision for blind people.

I would say that a guide dog has definitely helped me to get around better
(Informant 3).

Braille

Braillewas highly valued by Informant 2 and Informant 3. Although audio devices were helpful, Informant 2 thought it could be noisy in certain environments. In addition, it proveda difficulty for him to combine audio devices with the music.

I love my Braille I never would survive without it...(Informant 3).

It's even great to know of it because also you should use this audio, you know, devices, that's that's noisy. In the office, you know. That's f..king (Cursing word) noisy. And it's hard to combine with rock and roll, you know (Informant 2).

Computer, Audio or electronic books and Audio Pragrammes

Informant 1thoughtAudio books, computers and audio programmes were the appropriate support that should be provided to blind students without any delay.

One thing is very important is the audio books that they have enough recourse to to to make audio books and to make it early enough because sometimes I got my books very late. Much later than the other students. So I had to to read very quick (laughing) when I got my books. So so so I was kind of behind. Because I got my audio books very late. That's very important, to get literature and other things at the same time as the others.

the the the computer. Technical support was the most important (Informant 1).

Informant 3 showed that she was overjoyed about receiving an audio book for school. Besides of audio books, she thought that electronic book were also useful because she could check the spellings of the words when she went through the texts.

When I was about 10, I remember about my first audio book for school, and I was like: wow! You got audio book too and not just for regularly literature! Woohooo (Informant 3)*!*

I've gone from hating books writing in electronic to loving them, because then you can get the texts as well. Also I can go in then and look at the spelling of things, which it great. Now I use, Now I use audio, I still use Braille as far as …on the computer (Informant 3).

Special Attention,Special Instruction and Information Providing in Special Formats

Informant 3 claimed that the appropriate support she received was from teachers who were professional in supporting bind students.

They were definitely giving me some support and they KNEW (loud)Braille and knew like how to, how about the things (Informant 3).

Informant 1 considered that he was appropriately supported when audio programmes worked, the teachers provide him information in the formats he preferred, and the teachers read aloud of what they wrote on blackboard.

> *I…if my programmes worked and so it's the teacher remember to give me the information in in email or something like that then I had had no problems. So that was the most important support I think. And, yes, of course that the teacher was aware of how they was teaching, what kind of procedure they had, yeah* (Informant 1).

Supporting Parents with Blind Child

The parents of Informant 1 joined a group of parents of blind children. He agreed that his parents received certain amount of support from this group. These support appropriate and quite important for his parents in a way that they had opportunities to share experiences and learn from people who were in the same situations.

> *I think they helped each other a lot and they could talk about problems they had and difficulties and …soso, that group was very important for them I think* (Informant 1).

Informant 3 claimed that it was a great help when her father had opportunities to learn how to use the Braille machine to better support the blind child.

> *my father marked a lot labelled a lot of my items so I could read what they were. That was definitely I, I… yeah. It could help* (Informant 3).

Informant 3 also commented that it was a greathelp that schools arrange special group meetings and events for blind students and their parents.

> *The challenge was at my age group there were only two so it was kind of … it was nice to organise yeah, just for us* (Informant 3).

Support with examinations

Direct comment from the informants regardingthe support they received with examinations was not found in the data. However, it is important to point out that the informants did not mention about any difficulties for them to take examinations in schools. Therefore,

examination providing in oral or on computer tend to be appropriate support that should be provided to blind students in schools.

4.7 Challengesin Current Practices and Suggestions Provided by Blind People

4.7.1 Challenges in Current Practices

As far as it can be seen in the data, certain provision and support were provided to blind students in Norway. However, there are several main areas call for researcher, educator and service providers' attention.

Lack of Training and Support on Orientation and Mobility

It has been mentioned in previous section that there is a lack of training and support on orientation and mobility for blind students, especially when they move into a new school. For Informant 1 and Informant 2, they either "had friends that helped" (Informant 1) him or learned by himself and "learned it everywhere" (Informant 2). Therefore, orientation and mobility did not prove a problem to them. However, if training and support on these areas were provided to them, they did not need to figure their ways out on their own.

On the other hand, it seems that Informant 3 received more training and support than the other two informants.

> *So it's like, but and then at schools, we had a little bit but my computer came so they didn't want to, you know, they teach me the computer skills. And a lot went on to be computer skills, and independent living skills, and not much orientation. And once they were training me on orientation, aaahh.. I guess from age ten and onwards.*
> *I had a little bit of mobility training. Uummm…*
> *I have mobility training when I moved to Oslo for…maybe a couple of weeks or so* (Informant 3).

However, mobility and orientation still proveda big issue for Informant 3. In the interview, she mentioned that it was not easy for her to travel around, she once got lost near a

roundabout at school which she had no idea it was a roundabout, and she mentioned about that she could not find her way to the class when her classroom was changed to some hidden corner at school. It is risky to make assumption that gender might be the key factor involved here as she was the only female informant in this research. Nonetheless it seemed the trainings provided to her were not enough and not systematic as well. Therefore, she thought that it is vital for blind students to get enough training in orientation and mobility.

> *And then from children's school I think it is important that the children are being not just educated in specific roads like how to get for me to be, but also how to do it when they actually get lost that's what I find a challenging part now. If I get lost, I will like: err… where can I go? What can I do* (Informant 3)?

Lack of Teacher Training

A lack of teacher training in the field of educating and supporting blind students was found in this research. For example, Informant 1 mentioned about that he had difficulties in cooperating with the others in group work. He said that his teachers were aware of the situation but were not sure about how to help him.

> *Yes, but they didn't really know how to handle it. They tried, but sometimes it works, sometimes not* (Informant 1).

From what he remembers, his teachers had certain amount of training but it was quite limited.

> *Yes, they got some but I think it was just one day or two days course they had before the year started. And after that I don't think they have enough support, no* (Informant 1).

Informant 3 also pointed out that not only was her teachers received little training, but also they were not clear between being supportive and being overprotecting to a blind student. She said:

> *They did not have the education they needed. They were be in like a two week course, and they were like: ok, we are going to train you and I'm like yeah, right. But then when even I was, you know, taught, the route, I was not encouraged to use it on my own, and I was always encouraged to hold on to somebody's arm while walking. And THAT (loud) definitely disabling me today.*

Mismatching of Support Given and the Actual Needs of the Blind Students

The data showed that there were some mismatching between the given support and the support that blind students really needed. For example, Informant 1 was very good at subjects that needs to mesmerise a lot whereas he was quite weak with practical ones such as physical education and mathematics. However, hedid not get much support in physical education or mathematics. Instead, he was taken away from the class for one-to-one tutoring for English when the other students were having the same subject:

> *I mentioned I had individual teaching in English for example. Now my English is not very bad, but but that's because I learn much English after I grow up, because the individual teaching didn't work very well actually. I think I…would work better if I was a part of the class, if I was with the others. Of course it depends on the if you get a good or bad teacher. If you were, yeah, if you work good together. I think also the social part of the learning is very important. Soso, yeah, individual teaching I think for me they should reduce it to a minimum (laughing). But but, and for me, because I'm strong in theoretical courses, they didn't need to give me so much of it but they could give me more more help with practical courses.*

Informant 2 introduced that there had always been three main groups of people who participated in decision making for his education: the schools he was studying in, a team of people from an organisation in Norway which is specialised in helping visually impaired and blind students, and his parents. He said that his parents were often invited into meetings with schools and this team of people, and "all these decisions as far as I know were taken outside of these meetings" (Informant 2).

> *In fact there was …I didn't have lots difficulties. But let think about other made difficulties… for me. So.*
>
> *Yeah, when I should, when I to start this videregående (High school) …this guys I told you earlier, that… collaborate to make the best things out of it, and then my parents and teachers and you know, this special teachers and all whatever they call, they have this meetings, and they found that I should have this videregaa for four years instead of three, which is normal, because there was so much wrong. They did…they recommended I should take away music because that was too much work. I don't know which work, but hey, rack and rock is the thing.*

As a result, music was taken off from his study after the meeting. He was still very angry when recalling about this experience.

> *Because they think it was too much work, I wouldn't manage to do it. I guess if I had something interesting to do I would manage to do it more. I need interesting things then there was no much lust to do anything. You know, only computer stuff, only computer stuff* (Informant 2).

Challengesin Cooperating with Individual or Special Educational Teacher

Three informants were all assigned with individual tutoring teachers to help them with Braille, English or other issues. There are not much positive feedback given by three informants regarding the one-to-one teaching or supporting sections; and two of them pointed out that "the chemical" (Informant 3) between the teacher and the student plays important role.

> Informant 1: *I think I…would work better if I was a part of the class, if I was with the others. Of course it depends on the if you get a good or bad teacher. If you were, yeah, if you work good together.*
>
> Informant 2: *It was not quite so fun. Because I enjoy much socialising. I enjoy more socialising than learning.*

Informant 3 tended to experienced more individual support. She had personal teacher for Braille, one-to-one teachers who helped her with her computer skills, a special educational teacher when she was around 9 year-old, and reading and writing secretaries when she was working on her Master's degree. She agreed that most of the times the support from these teachers were very helpful. However, there were also a lot of issues involved in working with individual teachers. She gave an example that she had to call off her special educational teacher because she felt that she was watched.

> *I have had an intense and I actually came to a point where I ordered my teachers to stay away, because I was hindering me from getting in touch with the other pupils.*
>
> *I guess because I felt so watched I mean like the others could always cheat a little bit, send messages back and forth, or…you know, and I felt, yeah, watched and*

they know how to, oh, I had no choice but being a nice, sweet angel child, kind of, yes (Informant 3).

She further introduced another case where her individual tutor put her in a difficult situation.

When the teacher would, try to persuade me to cheating. And she would give me the wrong answer and I knew was wrong. And the other time, she would correct my answer I knew she was right. But I still chose to keep the wrong answer there because I knew I had, had answer wrong anyway. And that was so challenging when, when one of the teacher sat, when the main teacher of the subject sat down and went through with me, at the… teachings where… then… they would… I, I just simply told the teacher, I said: look, this and this happened. This has been very tough for me. And I'm so glad I didn't get any consequence for me, but nor did get for the teacher I think (Informant 3).

She further added one more case in which the person who was supposed to support her learning indeed attempted to overpower her decision and life.

And, and I also had a case where, when my reading assistant who did the corrections for me, when her sudden corrected things within my paper where I did not want the person to. Like started from changing words and started changing sentences. So I was became scared of being caught by cheating because it was VERY (loud) different from my writing style. So I've had a couple of situations like that. And that was really scary because I don't want to do (Informant 3).

4.7.2 Suggestions From Blind People

The main suggestion from informants were that they wanted their voice to be heard especially when making decisions relating to them.

Informant 3 did not claim that she wanted her voice to be heard and to be able to participate in decision making processes. However, from the data, it indicated that she was always overjoyed when she was able to make decisions for life. For example, she was very happy when she could walk to school without holding the other people's arm.

And the LAST year when I was 12, I was also allowed to school on my own. Wow!(Laughing)(Informant 3).

She showed her worries when other people attempted to overpower her life and make decisions for her:

> *And that was really scary because I don't want to do … Ok, if I … If I cheat, I want to cheat with style, no, (laughing). But it's like I wanted to be as authentic as possible, as far as it's being my work and it's important* (Informant 3).

All her reading materials were decided by her teachers before her Master's study. When she was able to decide which book to read, she showed that she was in happiness:

> *That's why I really like when I came out of the regular school system. To be able to actually choose my own, because before, everything was given to me and I was like: yeah, that's the books you are going to use, that's the way you are going to do the best, and that's the way you are going to do that… Now it's actually forced to do research on my own and now I like that but I still need support of getting things produced when I need them* (Informant 3).

However, Informant 1 and Informant 2 showed very strong wishes of being heard and participate in decision making for themselves:

> Informant 1: *What I think the most important is to talk with the student, the blind student and really ask, I I sometimes I felt that why didn't they ask me, wha what I need. They had their own idea about what kind of help I needed and and they give it, and sometimes it was the right things, sometimes not. Soso, that case it is very important that I was strong and expressed my own wishes and my own needs. But…soso, I hope that the school and the government that they don't need to make a programme if you are blind you do that that and that. We are individuals, so some blind people need some kind of help, some other blind people need other help. Because…yeah, we are working in different ways. And I was strong in theoretical courses. Others can be strong in practical courses. So, yeah, we are different.*
>
> Informant 2: *You know, the thing is, we are all different, so, most should be heard if there should be such meetings, get these decisions done. And then… you should decide it's your way, you know, instead of, THAT* (loud) *way. It's not… said that,*

a child could know what's the best for himself. So, therefore, but hey, in these days, they should be the… in general, they should be heard, and I mean, that also applies to those visual impaired and blind f..king (cursing word) people, or whatever the other guys. But if you are a part of it, that your thing, that applies to individual, so that differs.

4.8 Summary of the Main Findings

The main goal of this study is to investigate what blind students experience to be appropriate provision and support in schools. In order to do so, this study also examined factors such as appropriate terms that could be used to address blind people and the condition of their eyes, educational placement of blind students, difficulties that blind students encountered in schools, provision and support they were given, their experience and perspectives on the given provision and support. The main findings of this study are shown as follows:

1. "Blind" is the term that preferred by the informants to refer to their eyes' conditions whereas "blind people" is proper to address people who are blind.

2. The informants attended regular schools or regular schools which were specialised in educating visually impaired and blind children in Norway. They followed the same curriculums as the other students.

3. The blind students encountered difficulties at three levels. At the physical or medical level, they might have great difficulties travel around without long cane, guide dog, and training on orientation and mobility. They relied heavily on Braille, audio books, computer and audio programmes to study. At the Environmental level, it proved difficult for them to find out which bus or train was coming and find a seat on these means of transportation. Some barriers were also found relating administration procedures in universities for blind students. At the level of the needs for extra support, it was difficult for blind students to find their classrooms when moved into new classes or schools. It could be problematic for them to study if Braille, audio or electronic books were not provided to them in a timely base. They could encounter difficulties if oral instructions, adjusted examinations, and information in oral or electronic format were not provided to them.

4. The informants were provided with different sorts of provision and support when they were studying in schools. They freely received provision such as long canes, guide dogs, computer, and audio programme software from Norwegian government. They were also provided with training on Braille, computer skills, how to use the audio programmes, and basic training on orientation and mobility. Most of these trainings were carried out on a one-to one tutoring base and in most of the cases, blind students were withdrawn from their classes to join the private sections.

5. From the informants' point of view, they considered appropriate provision and support for facilitating blind students' study include guide dog, training on Braille, computer, audio or electronic books, audio programmes, special attention and instruction from the teachers, providing them with information in certain formats, and providing support to their parents.

6. Some issues were found with provision and support that provided to the blind students. Firstly, the teachers had little training on educating and supporting blind students. Second, the education, provision and support of blind students seem been over controlled by authorities and professionals. Due to this fact, some mismatches between the needs of blind students and the given provision and support were found. Third, the finding also indicated a lack of training and support on orientation and mobility for blind students. Forth, blind students were sometimes provided with special educational teacher, but not all support from the special educational teacher or the tutor worked well.

4.9 Discussion of the Findings

This part of dissertation discusses the findings in line with the research goal and research questions of this study. Some findings from this study tended to corresponding to previous researches; whereas there also raised some new aspects that call for further investigation.

4.9.1 Proper Terms to Use in Educational Research

Findings from three interviews in this research showed that blind people preferred to use "blind" to refer to their eyes' conditions and they did not mind themselves to be called as "blind people". The reasons behind this were quite simple: these terms could reveal the condition of their eyes, and these terms were conventional and it made them easily understood

by the others in terms of the degree of their visual impairments.However, the usage of terms proved a great chaos in previous researches. Previous researches have not achieved an agreement regarding which terms to use to refer to different degrees of visual function and people with visual impairments. Praat and Keil (2003) argues that the chaotic usage of terms is due to the fact that a standard definition and an assessment tool to measure the terms are difficult to find. In the end, these researchers suggest that any terms that developed from the definitions by WHO are acceptable for use in educational researches. However, it proved difficult for this study to follow this suggestion because the researchers failed to provide a criteria of how the terms can be developed based on the definitions by WHO. Therefore, the recommendation from these researchers does not prove a solution for settle down the chaos in the uses of terms in educational researches.

This study used the terms which were preferred by the blind informants. It did not prove difficult to ask the informants' opinion and little embarrassment was detected when they were providing their opinions on this topic. This showed a good model of how researchers decide the terms to use in their researches. The terms' deciding procedureof this study was in line with the suggestion from some researchers as well. In the light of Higgins and Ballard(1999), Kristiansen, Vehmas and Shakespeare(2009), the voice from people with visual impairments should be listened to and researchers should use the terms that are suggested by the target groups.

4.9.2 Educational Placement of Blind Students

Results of this study indicated that blind students attended regular schools or regular schools which were specialised in educating visually impaired and blind children in Norway. Moreover, blind students often followed the same curriculums as the other students.Since the first attempt of educating blind students in regular elementary schools in Greece in 1989 (Argyropoulos &Stamouli, 2006), a great number of debates have been made regarding which form of education would better benefit blind student. Little evidence in this study indicated that it was problematic for blind students to study in regular schools. In opposite, two of the informants achieved highly in education: One informant has just completed her Master's degree and another was working on his Master's dissertation. This might be contributed by the factors that they attended regular schools and followed the same curriculum through their education as the sighted students.

4.9.3 Difficulties Blind Students Experience

Findings in this study showed that at the physical or medical level, blind people could not see anything and they could hardly "read" or receive information without Braille and audio programmes on computer or mobile phones. These findings are in line with the findings by the previous researchers that blind students need to learn Braille and life skills such as making bed, wash dishes and set tables (Higgins & Ballard, 1999; Gentle, 2008, p.102). Moreover, this study found that the blind students relied heavily on guide dog and long cane to walk around, even so, travelling to unfamiliar places proved difficult for them. These findings also corresponded well with the findings from previous researches that without vision, blind people are lack of awareness of space, location and it is difficult for them to travel around (Gary, 2008, Farrell, 2006).Therefore, training and support on orientation, mobility, Braille and related life skills play vital roles for blind students to cope with difficulties they encounter.

As far as environmental limitation is considered, it proved difficult for blind people to have full access to public transportation. Moreover, some administration procedures in universities turned to complicated and not easy for blind students to handle. From this point of view, this study agreed with previous researchers that blind students needed support for them to have fully access to public places, transportation, and educational opportunities (Gray, 2008; Gentle, 2008).

The results in present study indicatedthat blind students needed extra support in order to catch up with the other students in the class. They needed instructions in oral form and examinations and information given to them in oral or electronic format. They also needed training and support on orientation and mobility when they moved into a new school or when their classrooms were changed.This findings also corresponded with the suggestion from previous researches that blind students needed special learning resources, special attention, special instruction, access to information, and continuous training and support on orientation and mobility (Higgins & Ballard, 1999; Gentle, 2008; Farrell 2006).

4.9.4 The Provision and Support Given and the Appropriate ones Suggested by Blind People

As shown in previous section blind students could encounter difficulties at different levels and provision and support should be provided to facilitate their study in schools. This section discusses the nature of provision and support that are provided to blind students in Norway. The informants' view on the appropriate provision and support that they experienced are also discussed in this section.

Results showed thatthe blind students were provided with various provision and support in Norway. In previous researches, researchers find that the lack of funding is the main reason that most difficulties come from (Kovács, 2000). Without sufficient funding, blind student receive little support on transportation between home and schools, Braille books (Lowenfeld, 1956; Taylor & Taylor, 1960). Therefore, in some countries, Braille and audio books and related materials are not provided to blind students and blind students are depending on themselves to study in regular classes (Gentle, 2008; Argyropoulos & Stamouli, 2006; Taylor & Taylor I., 1960). However, little evidence on the shortage of above mentioned provision and support were found in the data. As a result, little difficulties were mentioned by the informants in terms of following the curriculums and study in schools.

Finding of this study showeda quite different aspect of education for blind students in regular schools. The informants of this study tended to have high achievements in education. For example, one informant had just obtained a Master's degree while another was working on his Master's dissertation. Only a few cases of blind students attending university for Bachelor's degree were found in literature review. It reveals that the cases of blind students who attend university seem to be rare. There are two main barriers stopping them from higher education: there is a lack of provision and support to facilitate blind students for them to study in regular schools and especially in higher education institutes (Argyropoulos & Stamouli, 2006) and most blind students choose vocational training when they finish elementary schools (Taylor W. and Taylor I., 1960, p.23). In this study, the blind informants achieved highly in education might be resulted from the fact that special education schools were abolished in Norway (Gresnigt, 2000). The informants therefore had opportunities to attend regular schools, specially the schools which were experienced and profession to accommodate and education blind students. However, the most important fact was that the blind students received essential and appropriate provision and support thatassistedtheir study in regular schoolsand facilitated their education in higher educational institutions.

As a combination of the recommendations from the blind informantsand the suggestions from previous researchers, in order to ensure blind student' full access to quality education and minimum difficulties they encounter in schools, the following provision and support are suggested to be appropriate for blind students:

1. Equal access to education;
2. Long canes, guide dogs, Braille, computer, and audio programme software and facilitate their training on their application of these provisions;
3. Training on orientation, mobility and related life skills;
4. Providing learning materials in related formats such as Braille or audio forms;
5. Accommodation of methods of instruction and examinations;
6. Provide training and support to the parents of blind students.

4.9.5 Challengeswith Given Provision and Support

Although results showedthat the blind students received certain amount of provision and support in schools, some issues with the practices were also found. This section discusses challenges with the provision and support that blind students receivedin schools.

Challenges with Teacher Training

The findings in this study showed that there was a lack of training for the teacherson educating and supporting blind students. In one case the informant thought his teachers only received very short trainings before each term in order to help blind students. As a result, the teacher did not know how to cope with the situation that the blind student could not manage well in the group work. Another informant pointed out that her teachers merely had received about two weeks training before they provided her training on orientation and mobility. Therefore, it can be seen that teacher training proved a problem.However, teacher training issue was not a unique phenomenon in Norway. Previous researchers also point out that 'better teachers' (Taylor & Taylor, 1960; Gentle, 2008) should solve a great number of problems with education for blind students. In some countries, teachers' education and training were designed for them to learn how to teach sighted children. The teachers do not have knowledge to teach blind or disabled students (Gentle, 2008). The lack of knowledge and skills on educating blind students might lead to negative attitudes towards blind students and this makes it difficult for blind students to stay in regular school (Kovács, 2000).

Therefore, the teachers should be provided with professional and systematic training in order to accommodate and educate blind students in schools and this is an area that calls for policy-makers' attention.

The Authorities and Professionals' Power over Blind Students' Lives and Education

Findings of this study showed that professionals and authorities tended to have great power deciding education, provision and support for blind students and a great number of decisions were made without asking the blind students' opinion. As a result, some mismatches between what the blind students really needed and what kind of provision and support they receivedwere found. For example, three informants preferred to sit in the class, learn and socialise with the others; but they were often taken away for individual tutoring, and the individual support were often provided on the subjects that they actually did not need any extra help. In one case, the student loved music but the subject was deleted from his syllabus on a good will that music would be too much work for him.Findings in this study agree with the findings from previous researches. Previous researches also point out that the tendency that blind students' lives and education are often over controlled by local authorities and professionals (Marek, 2000; French, 2005). This turns out to be the causes of many oppressive practices in educating and supporting blind students (French, 2005).

Lack of Training and Support on Orientation and Mobility

Finding of this study indicated that blind students were not very well supported in terms of orientation and mobility. Informants either received little training and support or received unsystematic and non-professional training on them. However, the lack of training and support on orientation and mobility is rarely mentioned by previous researchers. The reason why it proved an issue for the informants were not found in the data. It might be caused by the deficiency in related policy or legislation at that time. A lack of training provided to the service providers or the teachers also might impact on the practice. However, as little evidences were found, further exploration on this issue are necessary.

Challenges with Cooperation Between the blind student and the Special Educational Teacher

The findings showed that cooperation between the special educational teachers and the blind student did not always work well. Firstly, some blind students prefer to study in the classroom

with their peers instead of being taken away for one-to-one sections. Secondly, “the chemical” (Informant 3) between the blind student and the special educational teacher might have little match. Thirdly, individual teachers sometimes are overtaken the blind student’s will and make decisions for the student such as influencing the blind student’s answer on examinations or in writing. Issues of the presence ofa special educational teacher in schools have also been mentioned by previous researchers. However, the previous findings are quite distinguish from the results of this study. Previous researches put more focuses on the cooperation between the classroom teacher and the supporting teacher. Issues arise when the teachers do not know how to divide responsibilities and how to cooperate with each other (Gray, 2008). In this study, it could be seen that the blind students were often withdrawn from their classes and receiving the support from a tutor or a special educational teacher. Therefore, little conflict between the classroom teachers and the special educational teacherwas detected. This might serve as a solution regarding cooperation issues between supporting teacher and the classroom teacher mentioned by previous researches. However, the problems of cooperation between a blind student and a special educational teacher was not mentioned by previous researchers. Suggestion on how to solve this problem is discussed in the following section.

4.9.6 Suggestion for Improvement

Three blind informants expressed their wishes to be able to make decisions for themselves. When it comes to meetings or discussions regarding their life or education, they were eager to participate in the event and have their voice heard. They believed that they knew what they what and what were good for themselves. They believed that not being able to participate in the decision-making events and not being able to speak their needs out are the main causes of most issues they had in education. They consideredparticipating in decision-making processesas the solution to most of the problems they had through their education. If they were invited in decision-making processes, there should have not been miss-matching of provision and support for them or missing of any kind of support that they needed. Findings of this study corresponds well with recommendations by previous researchers. Listening to the voice from disabled children are also advocated by promoted by previous researchers such as French (2005). This author argues that the only way to minimum oppressive practices is to include children, hearing what disabled people have to say and central their voice when making policies and bringing out practices (French, 2005).

5 Evaluation and Conclusion

5.1 Limitations and Strengths of This Research

This study did not go without any challenges. This study was conducted by a Master's student with limited time. During the literature review, all provided literatures from the databases were quickly scanned for one time in terms of abstract and key words. Besides, a great number of literatures were not available in full text. Therefore, there might be literatures which were relevant but were not included for literature review.

The person who participated in pilot study was not completely blind. Therefore, it was difficult for her to answer all interview questions such as questions regarding Braille, orientation and mobility. However, we went through all questions together and she confirmed that all questions were understandable. The lady was an expert in the field of visually impaired and blindness, she provided me feedback and suggestion which I think were assets for this study.

Informant 2received a surgery and had certain level of sight back in one eye during his educational years. In this case, he does not perfectly meet the goal of this research tostudy educational provision and support for totally blind students. However, the informant said that his caretakers, parents and teachers all knew that he would lose the sight in soon future. Therefore, he was provided with provision and support both for blind and visually impaired. For example, he was provided with both visual reading and Braille trainings from elementary school. Thus, I kept him as one of the informants. Moreover, Informant 2 was born in a non-European country. Information of nationality and language that his parents or caretakers speak was not found in the interview. Therefore, there might be other difficulties he encountered such as language problems when he was a student.

Furthermore, the informants were asked about things that happened many years back to their lives. Therefore, there might be some events or factors that they did not recall during the interview.

The last, the interviews were all conducted in English. English was not mother tongue of the author and the informants. Therefore, there might be intended meanings by the informants and the interviewer but were not conveyed by the language.

Besides of the above mentioned limitations, the biggeststrength of this study is that it presented the voices of blind people. This study respects what they have to say and what they have said. All transcripts were done in the manner of revealing exact words of the informants. The finding showed that blind people wanted their words to be heard and they wanted to participate in every event that is about them. Their desires have been presented in this dissertation. Hopefully this study will arouse more attention from other researchers as well as teachers and parents.

5.2 Potential Implications

Hopefully, this study will benefit educators, researchers, parents and Non-governmental Organization workers for them to learn what kind of difficulties blind students experience in schools and what kind of provision and support are appropriate to facilitate their study.

This study has explored some good practices in providing provision and support to blind students. These practices can be piloted in other countries such as Mainland China. Firstly, segregated education still dominating education for blind students in countries like Mainland China. It is important for the government official and teachers to know that educating blind students in regular classes are possible and can be successful. Secondly, it is important for the decision-makers and service providers to know there are different forms of provision and support. For instance, Braille or audio books. So that they can make choices subject to their current situation. Third, it is vital for them to them to know what have been suggested by blind people and invite blind people in decision-making events.

5.3 Future Research

This study explored the difficulties that a blind student experience in education, provision and support in practice, challenges and blind people's suggestion for improvement. The findings pointed out that blind people are eager to participate in decision-making events for their lives

and education. Further researches can be focused on the investigation of how to involve blind people into events about them and how their voice can be heard by decision-makers.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, through interviewing three totally blind people, this study explored the appropriate terms that can be applied in educational researches regarding blind people, difficulties a blind person often encounters, education for blind people in Norway, different point of views from blind people regarding provision and support for blind students, as well as suggestion from blind people for better practices. As a result, blind people are quite well supported in Norway and three informants currently working and living no differ from the other people and they do not show major difficulties in their lives. They felt they were quite lucky in the way that they were always provided provision and support in schools so that they could follow the teachers and study with the same pace as their peers. However, among all sorts of provision and support, some mismatching were found between what they really needed and what were provided to them. As a result, it is vital for policy makers, researchers, teachers and parents to know that blind people wish they could participate in events that are relevant to them, speak for themselves and make own decisions for their education and lives.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Terms Used by Different Researchers to Refer to Visual Impairments

Terms for Visual Function	Terms Refer to People	The Author	Year	Title of the Article
Blindness	Bind people	Higgins, N. & Ballard, K.	1999	*Case Studies: Reflections on the Meaning of Blindness in the Life Experiences of Four New Zealanders*
Blind	The blind/blind children	Lowenfeld, B.	1956	*History and Development of Specialized Education for the Blind*
	Blind Australian women	Gentle, F.	2008	*Insights from Six Blind Australian Women*
	Children who are blind	Brambring, M.	2005	*Perceptual Perspective Taking in Children who are Blind: the State of Research and a Single- Case Study*
Visual impairment	People with a visual impairment	Gresnigt, H.	2000	*ICEVI Europe: Leading Up to Cracow*
		Marek, B.	2000	*A Time of Cheng: Education of People with a Visual Impairment in Poland*
	Children with a visual impairment	Kovács, K	2000	*Hungary: Changing Atiitudes in the Education of Children and Youth with a Visual Impairment*
	Visually impaired people	Percival, J. & Hanson, J.	2007	*'I Don't Want to Live for the Day Any More': Visually Impaired People's Access to Support, Housing and Independence*
		French, S.	2007	*Visually Impaired People with Learning Difficulties: Their Education from 1900 to 1970- policy, practice and experience*
		Duckett, P. & Pratt, R.	2007	*The Emancipation of Visually Impaired People in Social Science Research Practice*
	Children with a visual impairment	Gray, C.	2008	*Support for Children with a Visual Impairment in Northern Ireland: the Role of the Rehabilitation Worker*
	People who are visually impaired	Dale, S.	2010	*Songs at Twilight: A Narrative Exploration of the Experience of Living with a Visual Impairment, and the Effect this has on Identity Claims*
	Visually impaired children	Rosenberg, T., Flage, T., Hansen, E., el.	1996	*Incidence of Registered Visual Impairment in the Nordic Child Population*
Visual difficulty	People with visual difficulties	Praat, A. & Keil, S.	2003	*Defining Sight Difficulties for Education and Employment Research*
Partially sight	Partially sighted children	French, S.	2005	*Don't Look! The History of Education for Partially Sighted Children*

Sight loss	People with sight loss	Thetford, C., Robinson, J., Knox, P., Mehta, J. & Wong, D.	2011	*Long-term Access to Support for People with Sight Loss*

Appendix 2. Search Result for "Support for Blind People"

University of Roehampton Library Category

Search for Journal Articles and Databases

Key words: Support for Blind People

Search Results

Fulltext only (In total 3523 results)

- yes
- **no**

Source Type

- Academic Journals (2246)
- Books (368)
- Magazines (354)
- eBooks (273)
- News (74)
- More...

Subject

- blind (285)
- double-blind (270)
- human (244)
- education (199)
- adulthood (18 yrs & older) (146)
- More...

Publisher

- wiley-blackwell (302)
- american foundation for the blind(135)
- taylor & francis ltd (129)
- elsevier science (107)
- national archives & records service, office of the federal register (98)
- More...

Journal

- journal of visual impairment & blindness (145)
- cochrane database of systematic reviews (105)
- federal register (98)
- optician (48)
- international congress series(45)
- More...

Geographic Subject

- united states (268)
- great britain (108)
- england (45)
- china (38)
- australia (18)
- More...

Content Provider

- Science Citation Index (491)
- Social Sciences Citation Index(253)
- PsycINFO (243)
- Business Source Premier (199)
- ScienceDirect (104)
- More...

Fulltext only (In total 2802 results)

- **yes**
- no

Source Type

- Academic Journals (2186)
- Magazines (249)
- News (63)
- Reports (35)
- Books (34)
- More...

Subject

- double-blind (269)
- blind (250)
- human (188)
- education (175)
- blindness (119)
- More...

Publisher

- wiley-blackwell (298)
- american foundation for the blind(135)
- taylor & francis ltd (129)
- elsevier science (106)
- reed business information limited (74)
- More...

Journal

- journal of visual impairment & blindness (145)
- cochrane database of systematic reviews (105)
- optician (48)
- international congress series(45)
- trials (29)
- More...

Geographic Subject

- united states (175)
- great britain (105)
- england (45)
- china (33)
- australia (18)
- More...

Content Provider

- Science Citation Index (491)
- Social Sciences Citation Index(252)
- PsycINFO (185)
- Business Source Premier (122)
- ScienceDirect (99)
- More...

Appendix 3. Search Results for "Education for Blind People"

Key Words: Education for Blind People

Results 1 - 10 of 4277

Sorted by Relevance Sort

Fulltext only

- **yes**
- no

Source Type

- Academic Journals (3251)
- Magazines (546)
- Reports (129)
- News (58)
- Reviews (48)
- More...

Subject

- blind (474)
- people with visual disabilities(373)
- education (310)
- blindness (288)
- blind -- education (283)
- More...

Publisher

- american foundation for the blind(657)
- sage publications inc. (264)
- wiley-blackwell (260)

- taylor & francis ltd (229)
- heldref publications (144)
- More...

Journal

- journal of visual impairment & blindness (697)
- american annals of the deaf(116)
- chronicle of higher education(51)
- international congress series(38)
- palaestra (38)
- More...

Geographic Subject

- united states (569)
- great britain (100)
- england (54)
- china (40)
- massachusetts (28)
- More...

Location

- **Internet**

Content Provider

- ERIC (240)
- PsycINFO (223)
- Science Citation Index (208)
- Social Sciences Citation Index(186)
- Business Source Premier (151)
- More...

Appendix 4. The List of Articles Applied in Literature Review

1. Argyropoulos, V., & Stamouli, M. (2006). A collaborative action research project in an inclusive setting: Assisting a blind student. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*. 24(3), 128-134. doi: 10.1177/0264619606066187.

2. Bishop, D., & Rhind, D. J. A. (2011). Barriers and Enablers for Visually Impaired Students at a UK Higher Education Institution. *The British Journal of Visual Impairment*. *29*(3), 177-195. doi: 10.1177/0264619611415329.

3. Brambring, M. (2005). Perceptual Perspective Taking in Children Who Are Blind: The State of Research and a Single Case Study. *The British Journal of Visual Impairment*. *23*(3), 122-128. doi: 10.1177/026461960505621.

4. Dale, S. (2010). Songs at Twilight A narrative Exploration of the Experience of Living with a Visual Impairment, and the Effect This Has on Identity Claims. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*. *28*(3): 204-220. doi: 10.1177/0264619610368751.

5. Duckett, P., & Pratt, R. (2007). The emancipation of visually impaired people in social science research practice. *British Journal of Visual Impairment. 25*(1), 5–20. DOI: 10.1177/0264619607071771.

6. French, S. (2005). Don't look! The history of education for partially sighted children. *British Journal of Visual Impairment. 23*(3), 108-113. doi: 10.1177/0264619605056206.

7. French, S. (2007). Visually Impaired People with Learning Difficulties: Their Education from 1900 to 1970- Policy, Practice and Experience. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*. *36*, 48-53. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-3156.2007.00438.x.

8. Gentle, F. (2008). Insights from six blind Australian women. *British Journal of Visual Impairment, 26* (1), 99–108. doi: 10. 1177/0264619607083830.

9. Gray, C. (2008). Support for children with a visual impairment in Northern Ireland: the role of the rehabilitation worker. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*. *26*(3), 239–254. doi: 10. 1177/0264619608093642.

10. Higgins, N., & Ballard, K. (1999). Case Studies: Reflections on the Meaning of Blindness in the Life Experiences of Four New Zealanders. British Journal of Visual Impairment. 17: 36. doi: 10.1177/026461969901700107.

11. Kovács, K. (2000). Hungary: Changing Attitudes in the Education of Children and Youth with a *Visual Impairment. British Journal of Visual Impairment*. 18(2), 61-66. doi: 10.1177/026461960001800206.

12. Lowenfeld, B. (1956). History and Development of Special Education for the Blind. *Exceptional Children*. *23* (2), 53-90. Retrieved from http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?sid=bf2c17a4-5708-4fd6-9840-d18a2bc1d5e6%40sessionmgr198&vid=0&hid=120&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#db=ehh&AN=19775391.

13. Marek, B. (2000). A Time of Change: Education of people with a visual impairment in Poland. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*. *18*(2), 55-58. doi: 10.1177/026461960001800205.

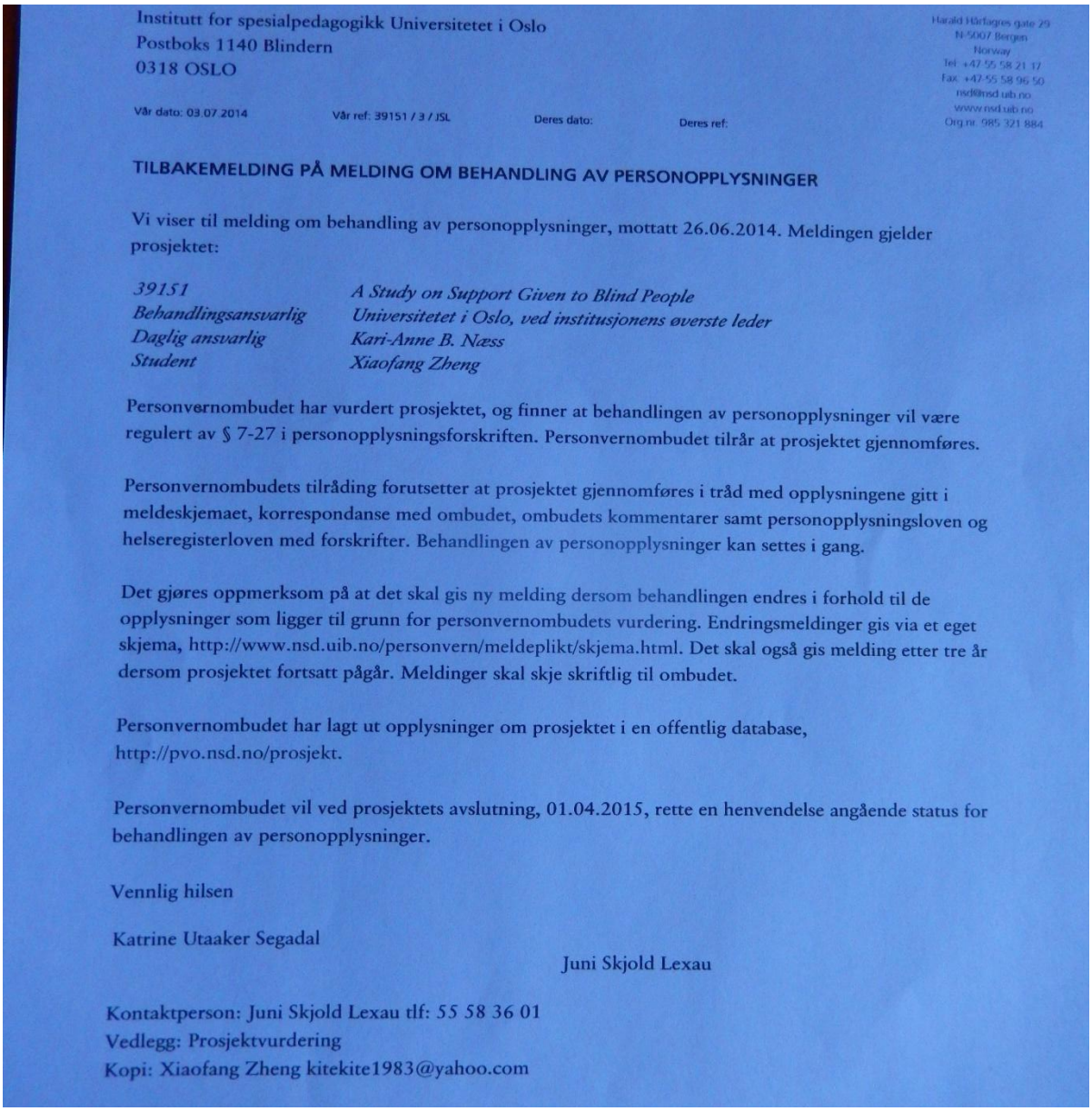
14. Praat, A., & Keil, S. (2003). Defining Sight Difficulties for Education and Employment Research. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*. *21*(2), 40-46. doi: 10.1177/026461960302100202.

15. Percival, J., & Hanson, J. (2007). 'I don't want to live for the day any more': visually impaired people's access to support, housing and independence. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*, *25* (1), 51-67. doi: 10.1177/0264619607071774.

16. Rosenberg, T., Flage, T., Hansen, E., Riise, R., Rudanko, S., Viggosson, G. &Tornqvist, K. (1996). Incidence of Registered Visual Impairment in the Nordic Child Population. *British Journal of Ophthalmology.80* (1), 49-53. doi: 10.1136/bjo.80.1.49.

17. Thetford, C., Robinson, J., Knox, P., Mehta, J. & Wong, D. (2011). Long-term Access to Support for People with Sight Loss. *The British Journal of Visual Impairment. 29*(1), 46-59. doi: 10.1177/0264619610387889.

Appendix 5. Approval for Research



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Vår dato: 03.07.2014 Vår ref: 39151 / 3 / JSL Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 26.06.2014. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

39151	*A Study on Support Given to Blind People*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Kari-Anne B. Næss*
Student	*Xiaofang Zheng*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, 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.

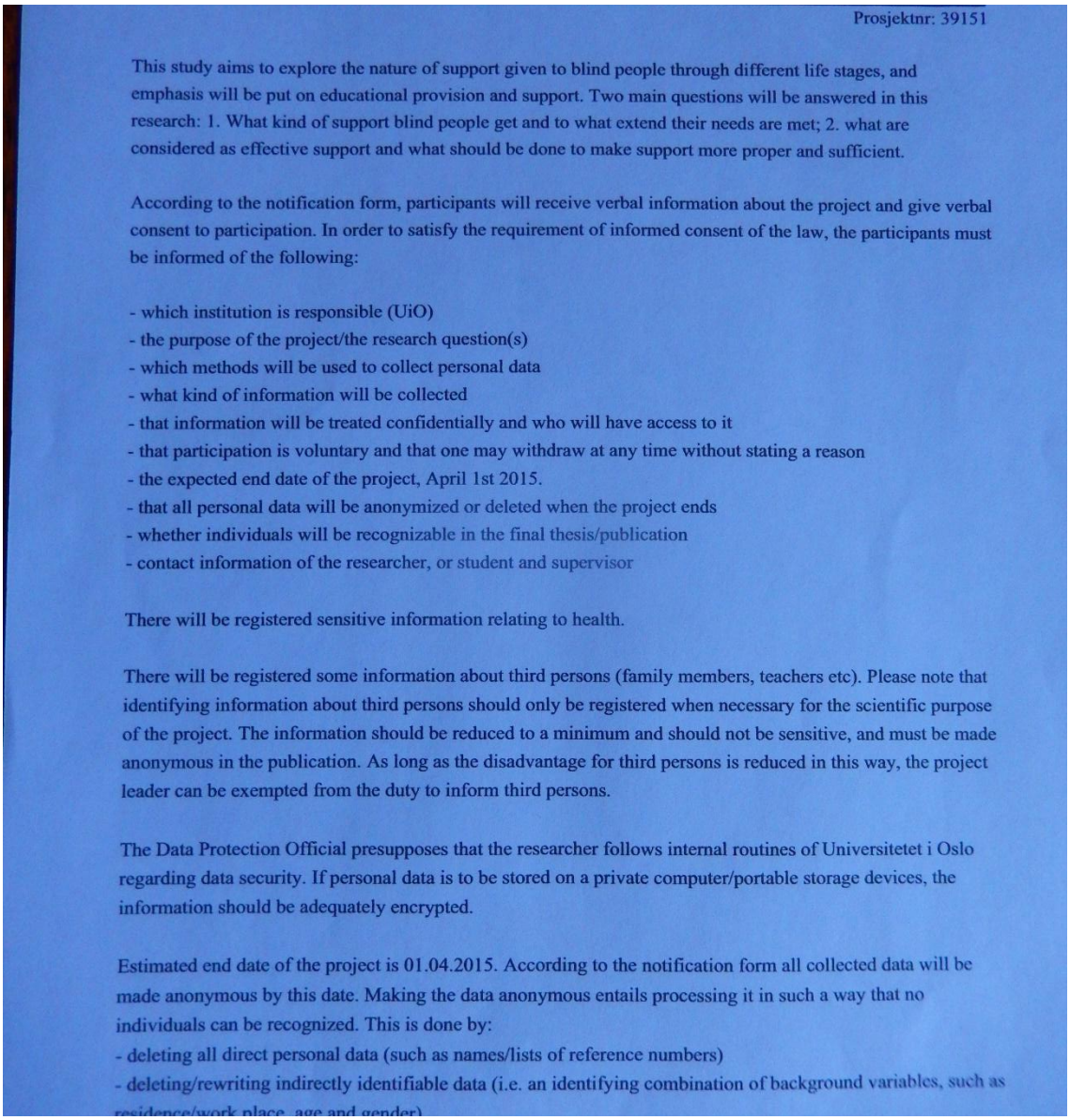
Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.04.2015, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Juni Skjold Lexau

Kontaktperson: Juni Skjold Lexau tlf: 55 58 36 01
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Xiaofang Zheng kitekite1983@yahoo.com



Prosjektnr: 39151

This study aims to explore the nature of support given to blind people through different life stages, and emphasis will be put on educational provision and support. Two main questions will be answered in this research: 1. What kind of support blind people get and to what extend their needs are met; 2. what are considered as effective support and what should be done to make support more proper and sufficient.

According to the notification form, participants will receive verbal information about the project and give verbal consent to participation. In order to satisfy the requirement of informed consent of the law, the participants must be informed of the following:

- which institution is responsible (UiO)
- the purpose of the project/the research question(s)
- which methods will be used to collect personal data
- what kind of information will be collected
- that information will be treated confidentially and who will have access to it
- that participation is voluntary and that one may withdraw at any time without stating a reason
- the expected end date of the project, April 1st 2015.
- that all personal data will be anonymized or deleted when the project ends
- whether individuals will be recognizable in the final thesis/publication
- contact information of the researcher, or student and supervisor

There will be registered sensitive information relating to health.

There will be registered some information about third persons (family members, teachers etc). Please note that identifying information about third persons should only be registered when necessary for the scientific purpose of the project. The information should be reduced to a minimum and should not be sensitive, and must be made anonymous in the publication. As long as the disadvantage for third persons is reduced in this way, the project leader can be exempted from the duty to inform third persons.

The Data Protection Official presupposes that the researcher follows internal routines of Universitetet i Oslo regarding data security. If personal data is to be stored on a private computer/portable storage devices, the information should be adequately encrypted.

Estimated end date of the project is 01.04.2015. According to the notification form all collected data will be made anonymous by this date. Making the data anonymous entails processing it in such a way that no individuals can be recognized. This is done by:
- deleting all direct personal data (such as names/lists of reference numbers)
- deleting/rewriting indirectly identifiable data (i.e. an identifying combination of background variables, such as residence/work place, age and gender)

Appendix 6. Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Name: _____ Age: _____ Job: _____
Interview Starting Time: _____ Place: _____

Eye Condition

- **Could you please briefly tell me about your eyes' condition?**

- **How long have you been blind? The cause?**
- **What term do you prefer people to refer to your eyes' condition? Why?**

Support

- **What kind of support do you need in life?**
  Do you need any medical care for your eyes? Do you feel it is easy for you to travel around and to go wherever you want to go? Did you get support to learn skills such as orientation, mobility and Braille? Do you feel these skills are sufficiently helping you to live an independent life?

Educational Placement

- **Could you tell me about your education background?**
  What is your highest education? What schools have you been to? Are they mainstream schools or special schools? **Who made the decisions?** Have you ever been to a mainstream school/ Special Education School? What was it like studying in that special/mainstream school?

Educational Provision

- **What kind of learning materials and resources did you need? Did you get all your needed materials and resources?**

Difficulties in Education

- **What did you master well and not so well in study?**
- **Did you have some individual curriculums or did you follow the same curriculum as the others? What was your learning outcome from school related to the curriculum?**
- **How did you manage to follow the teachers' teaching and collaborate with others?**
- **With the blindness, did you have difficulties when you study in schools?** What are they?Orientation, mobility, social life with peers at schools, learning, getting information…

Support in Education

- **Did you get any help or support with the difficulties you mentioned just now?** From the schools or … How much help or support did you get? How frequent was the support provided to you? How systematic was the support? How long was the support last?
- **Did the help or support you got really helped you with all the difficulties you had?**
- **Can you think about some more examples of help or support you got when you were a student that are very important to you?**
- **What are your parents' role in your education?** Do they make decisions for your education?Do they contact or work with the schools often? Have they got any training for supporting you? By whom?

Suggestions and further questions

- **Have you had any difficulties or needs that were not much supported when you were at schools? If so, …**
- **What should be done in order to better support you or other blind students?**

- **Do you have suggestion or any words on education for blind students?**
- **Any other questions or concerns?**
- **Thank the informant.** Ending time:

Appendix 7. Consent Form

Request for participation in research project

"A Study on Educational Provision and Support Given to Blind People"

Background and Purpose
This is a master's and a single institute project. This research aims to explore what kinds of provision and support are given to blind people in educational institutions in Norway.

Three totally blind adults will be selected as samples for this research. The reason for doing so is that: A blind person is the best one to determine the best provision and support for the blind. Blind people are living resources and living documents in the field of blindness. Their voices and suggestions should be listened to and treated as assets to better serve the group.

What does participation in the project imply?
Semi-structured interviews between one researcher and one informant will be carried out and you will be invited to answer questions such as: What kind of difficulties did you have when you studied in schools? Were you provided with any sort of provision or support? What were they? Did the provided provision and support help you to solved problems you faced? Was there any provision or support provided to you but you didn't feel it's necessary? What could be done to make you feel very well supported?

According to the information you give in the first interview, there might be one or two more interviews in order to confirm some facts with you or collect more information from you. Each interview will last about 40 minutes. All interviews will be audio recorded.

What will happen to the information about you?
All personal data will be treated confidentially. No name will be mentioned in the data and report. Your age will be mentioned in a way such as 'above 20 years old'. There will be only one researcher and one supervisor have access to your personal data. All data will be stored in a personal Laptop with password and an encrypted audio recording device and both will be often kept in a locked room. You will not be recognizable in the publication.

The project is scheduled for completion by April 1, 2015. All information will be deleted at the end of this research.

Voluntary participation
It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be made anonymous.

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions concerning the project, please contact Xiaofang Zheng through 0047 46720956 or kitekite1983@yahoo.com

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

Consent for participation in the study

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate

---

(Signed by participant, date)