

# FACILITATION AS A TOOL FOR INCLUSIVE PROCESSES IN CLASSROOMS

- When teachers are supported in developing inclusive environments in practice

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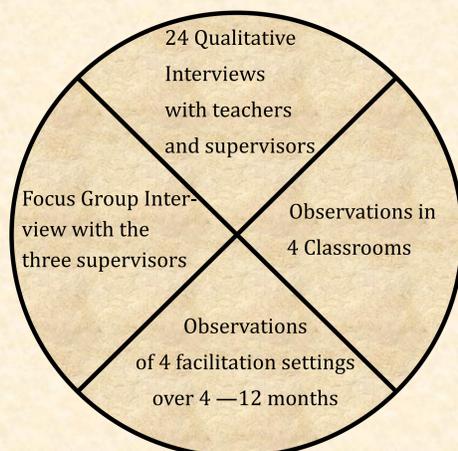


## THE STUDY

A Danish survey shows that teachers find 25 % of the students challenging and having behavior problems in a way that undermine the idea of inclusive education (Nordahl, 2011). Allan (2008) emphasizes furthermore that there seems to be some insecurity about how to develop inclusive environment within schools and how to arrange inclusive teaching. As a consequence several municipalities in Denmark have employed inclusive supervisors to assist teachers through in developing inclusive education.

My study concerns how dialectic processes between supervisors within the field of inclusive education and teachers influence on inclusive processes in the classrooms. Furthermore, my study focuses on strategies, methods and approaches that are used by the supervisors to support teachers in order to develop inclusive education.

I have studied four different facilitation settings with teachers and supervisors over a period from 4 month to 12 month.



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do teachers experience the facilitation process and how may it affect their practice? In which way can facilitation of teachers influence on the teachers' inclusive practice?

What kind of approaches, strategies and methods of interventions do inclusive supervisors use and how can these assist to develop including practices in the classrooms?

## THE METHODOLOGY

The data consist of semi-structured qualitative interviews (Kvale, 2009) with teachers and supervisors. The interviews are collected before, during and after the facilitation setting. These interviews are designed to make it possible to follow the changing of understandings, the approaches, the culture and the teachers experiences of the supervision process.

The research also includes observations (Tjora, 2012, Løkken, 2012) in the classrooms before, during and after the facilitation processes. In the final analysis phase a focus group interview with the three supervisors involved in the project will be carried out (Morgan, 1997).

The meta-theoretical framework is phenomenological. The theoretical framework will focus on theories with a life-world perspective that can handle a high degree of reflective complexity (Zahavi, 2011; Rønholt et al., 2003; Dahlberg, 2008; Husserl, 1995; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008).

From the cultural-historical psychology theory, the theories on development and learning will emphasize a social constructivist understanding and changing processes (Vygotsky, 1978; Vygotsky in: Lindqvist, 2004)

## DO MAGICAL AND EASY SOLUTIONS EXIST IN DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?



This preliminary finding concerns how all teachers are hoping and wishing for some magic in order to handle the inclusive task. They experience that the challenge working with inclusive environment is an overwhelming task. They experience that they are in lack of competencies and tools in their practices in the classroom and they wish that the supervisors can remove their despair and give them tools they can use directly in their practice so their challenges may disappear.

*Supervisor B: "We always talk about that the teachers immediately expect us to spread some magic powder. The teachers think that their challenges will be solved at the first facilitation setting. They hope that we will come up with the most brilliant ideas and suggest some tools, so they jcan go right back to their classes and then everything will be changed and turned around. Sometimes we actually tell the teachers that we have no magic powder and there is really only hard work ahead."*

*Supervisor C: "If I sense that the expectation from the teachers regards that I will wield a magic wand and then everything will be different, I think thoroughly about if that is possible. I want as far as possible to meet the request from the teachers', not to wield a magic wand but suggesting some tools that can change their challenges in practice. But my experience is if I do so, nothing really happens and there are no changes in practice."*

## FACILITATION AS A TOOL FOR INCLUSIVE PROCESSES IN CLASSROOMS?



Through the facilitation settings the mindsets of the teachers are transformed in a new way of thinking about the students which implies that teachers are having an increased awareness about how a relational and contextual perspective may help to develop inclusive practices.

Data also shows that at first teachers are frustrated and exhausted in their effort to develop inclusive environment in the classrooms and they are also considering their profession as teachers thoroughly before they participate in the facilitation process.

*Teacher B: "Well, the facilitation has opened my eyes and made it possible for me to take a step back and not take it so personally as one might do in the everyday bustle. Earlier I got offended at why the student could think of disturbing my teaching. The facilitation process has taught me and made me see that I need to step back and see him as a child and not like Dennis who tries to obstruct, what is going on in class. But like a child who needs help, because he does not benefit as much as we like him to do."*

*Teacher E: "When we first started the supervision I was very frustrated and exhausted, so I thought about if I wanted to be a teacher anymore. This has changed, and I don't have any doubts about my profession anymore. Even though I know that there will be more challenges ahead I am not afraid because I have got some tools now, so I feel well equipped. I have found some other ways of doing something that I already knew, I think that's nice'."*