



Johanna Lüddeckens

DIALECTICAL DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Involving students with autism spectrum conditions

**DIALECTICAL DIMENSIONS OF
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Malmö Studies in Educational Sciences: Licentiate
Dissertation, serial number 46

Copyright Johanna Lüddeckens 2022

Benjamin Löfquist

ISBN 987-91-7877-319-0 (print)

ISBN 987-91-7877-320-6 (pdf)

ISSN 1653-6037

Tryck: Media-Tryck, Lunds universitet, 2022



Media-Tryck is a Nordic Swan Ecolabel
certified provider of printed material.
Read more about our environmental
work at www.mediatryck.lu.se

MADE IN SWEDEN 

JOHANNA LÜDDECKENS
DIALECTICAL DIMENSIONS OF
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

involving students with autism spectrum conditions

Malmö University, 2022
The Department of School Development and Leadership
Graduate School SET

Publikationen finns även elektroniskt,
se www.mah.se/muep

To my extraordinary children

CONTENTS

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	9
ABSTRACT	10
PREFACE	12
INTRODUCTION.....	16
Aim and research questions	20
INCLUSION, INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	21
Perspectives on inclusion	21
The concept of inclusion.....	21
Inclusive setting versus inclusive education.....	24
Inclusive education involving students with disabilities	25
Inclusion and inclusive education—advantages and disadvantages	25
Inclusion for students with ASC in schools	27
School leadership in inclusive education.....	29
Model of inclusive school leadership.....	29
Inclusive school leadership from an organizational perspective ...	32
The student perspective within inclusive leadership	34
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	36
The dialectical approach—the dilemma perspective.....	36
The dialectical approach and outcomes.....	38
METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	40
Reasoning in research.....	40
The two studies	41
The overall analysis process	43
Crystallization	43
Ethical considerations	44
Quality in qualitative research	45
RESULTS	46
Summary of the results of the first study	46
Summary of the results of the second study	47

Conclusions and answers to the research questions	48
DISCUSSION	52
Discussion of results	52
A. Complexity and context	52
B. History and its processes	53
C. Power and power relations	55
D. Societal factors outside schools	57
The four dimensions—a brief summary and some final reflections	59
Methodological discussion	61
Prospective discussion and future research	62
AFTERWORD	64
SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING	68
Introduktion	68
Inkludering, inkluderad utbildning och skolläderskap	71
Teoretiskt ramverk	72
Teoretisk bakgrund	72
Dialektisk approach - dilemmaperspektiv	73
Uppsatsens metodologiska överväganden	75
Två studier	75
Övergripande analys	76
Kristallisering	77
Etiska överväganden, kvalitet i forskning och uppsatsens begränsningar	77
Summering av uppsatsens övergripande resultat och diskussion	79
Summering och avslutande reflektioner utifrån de fyra dimensionerna	82
Framtida forskning och praktiska implikationer	84
THANKS	87
REFERENCES	88
APPENDIX 1 (SWEDISH)	97
APPENDIX 1 (ENGLISH)	101



This research is part of the national graduate school Special Education for Teacher educators (SET), funded by the Swedish Research Council (Dnr. 2017-06039).

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

This essay is based on the following two articles:

1. Lüddeckens, J. (2020). Approaches to Inclusion and Social Participation in School for Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) – a Systematic Research Review. *Review Journal Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 8, 37-50.
2. Lüddeckens, J., Anderson, L., & Östlund, D. (2021). Principals' perspectives of inclusive education involving students with autism spectrum conditions – a Swedish case study, *Journal of Educational Administration*, 60(2), 207-221.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim of this essay and its contribution to research is to identify the opportunities, pitfalls, and dilemmas that can arise when inclusive education is organized with regard to students with ASC. In order to create more understanding of the situation for students with ASC in schools, the study focus on school leadership.

Sub-studies: The essay consists of two studies. In the first study (1) the aim was to identify, describe, and analyze different research approaches to inclusive education and social participation for students with ASC, by performing a systematic research review. In the second study (2) principals of Swedish schools were interviewed, data collection was divided into three sets of interviews based on and using two models as tools in the analysis process. The models are the *Index of Inclusion* (Ainscow & Booth 2002) and three key concepts for *inclusive school leadership* (European Agency of Special Needs and Inclusive Education 2018; Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020).

Theory: A dialectical approach (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995; 1998) or the dilemma perspective (Nilholm 2003) have been used as a theoretical lens. This approach aims to provide a dynamic and abductive reasoning for the overall analysis in the essay, since inclusive education appears to create dilemmas when societal cultures and norms, bureaucracy, and structures meet. The analysis demonstrates that inclusive processes appear as dilemma-creating at different levels in the system and addresses democracy in terms of social justice.

Method: *Crystallization* is a term that relates to the practice of using multiple data sources and results, research approaches and lenses (Ellingson 2008; Tracy 2010), which leads to a more complex understanding being opened up in the overall analysis.

Knowledge contribution: Inclusion is mainly interpreted as the students' experience of being socially accepted and having access to academic education and the curriculum. Principals' feeling of loneliness in relation to their superiors—they need to fight for their students and their staff against decision-makers higher up in the education system hierarchy. At the same time, it is noted that principals have a great deal of freedom in their practice, but the issue of communication needs to be raised and support for principals is important. A discussion is needed about whose perspective is the prevailing one in decision-making processes in schools and in the school system.

Limitations: The data collection of the second study (2) took place via virtual meetings due to the pandemic. Virtual meetings are limited by the lack of being able to observe the interviewee's body language and nonverbal communication, as well as a small sample of respondents. These limitations affect the essay in general and thus to some extent reduce the possibility of generalizing the results.

Practical implications: This essay can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the inclusion concept in relation to students with ASC. It can potentially initiate forums for further discussions on the working conditions of principals in relation to their responsibilities and the expectations placed upon them. In addition, to conduct a continuous discussion about the importance of authenticity and accountability for all professionals in the school and its stakeholders. Development and improvement of structures that facilitate the inclusion of the student voice in decision-making processes are also seen as important.

Keywords: inclusive education, autism spectrum conditions, inclusive school leadership, principals, dialectical approach, dilemma perspective, school organization.

PREFACE

Even as a baby, my son Valentin developed and behaved differently than his older siblings. He was a very happy child, always smiling and with his liberating laugh he seemed to fully enjoy life: all the colors, scents, and tastes to discover; all new noises to explore. Small details captured his interest and he got lost in his own world for long periods of time. He did not respond to interaction and did not seem to need anyone but himself and his own imagination. Everyone else seemed to exist in the background, like extras in the film adaptation of his life. Valentin's little sister Lily was born a year and a half later and was from the start only his to decide over. At the age of two, Valentin was diagnosed with autism spectrum conditions (ASC) and later also with intellectual disability (ID) and ADHD. About the same time, another one of my sons, Emanuel, was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, dyslexia, and ADHD. The older Emanuel became, the more difficult it became for him in school, especially socially. He went through long periods of problematic absenteeism due to bullying and also due to the adults in school who did not really understand him and his needs. During the years that followed, I learned a lot about struggle: the struggle with my children's mental health and exclusion in preschool and school; the struggle with adults who did not understand these disorders and a social system that was not as equal or open-minded as I had been led to believe.

I grew up and have lived most of my life in Sweden, which ranks first in the EU on the Gender Equality Index (2019) with 83.6 out of 100 points. Yet it seemed to me that there was a general lack of knowledge about disabilities, ASC in particular, and this lack of understanding in the Swedish school puzzled me. I wanted to understand why. On a private level, I wondered why our family did not get the help we needed, without having to always fight for it. On a general level, I wondered why structures that explicitly aim to improve inclusion in society did

not seem to work as intended. What I discovered was that many other individuals with disabilities and their relatives shared my experiences and those of my family. However, I also experienced open-mindedness and the willingness to understand from some teachers and principals. During most meetings with Emanuel's teachers and principals and with Valentin's preschool teachers, they expressed a lack of knowledge about neurodevelopmental conditions (NDC) such as ASC and ADHD, and stated they wanted to increase their knowledge in order to meet the needs of children like mine. From a systems perspective, I felt that the lack of knowledge about ASC and of the right strategies to meet the needs of these students was evident on many levels. My youngest daughter Lily was also diagnosed with ASC at the age of two, and later with severe language disorder. I reflected on these struggles, about all the obstacles I had encountered on a private level, as well as the dilemmas and pitfalls that I noted on the system level; decisions made higher up in the chain of command that affected me as a teacher, as a mother, my children, other adults working in school and also other parents and their children. As my children now are a bit older, I have had the opportunity to gather all these thoughts, memories and experiences and analyze them, together with previous research and results from two earlier studies, and to channel them, in some way, into this essay. The same questions remain unanswered. On a private level: what will the future of my children look like? On the systems level, will they, and other children with similar disabilities, enjoy access to an inclusive school and an inclusive society and be allowed to participate fully, with their personal needs taken into consideration?

According to Skrtic (1995), the contribution of interpretivism to the pursuit of social justice for people with disabilities is that it allows us to imagine how life could get better for them. He emphasizes the value of storytelling in contributing to a more just and equitable society. First, Skrtic (1995) argues that the stories being told can have a reformative effect by virtue of their content. He takes the example of parents telling their stories about raising their children with severe disabilities in the community, in the local school with other children, and how this has been one of the primary forces toward integrated, inclusionary education in the USA. Second, Skrtic (1995) is of the opinion that storytelling has an empowering effect on devaluated individuals and groups by giving them a voice. Equally important, interpretivism empowers by connecting people and providing the opportunity to share stories, by creating networks and by changing societal structures and systems through relating these stories about real individuals. In this essay, the stories of students with ASC in inclusive education are illustrated by a

systematic research review. These stories are also seen through the eyes of principals, who, according to the governing directives of Swedish schools, are responsible for developing and creating an inclusive school for all students. From a mother's perspective, there have of course been painful times, but equally I have always felt an overall deep pride and joy about the extraordinary individuals I have encountered. In this essay, I aim to find a balance between being professional and personal. The role of being an objective researcher in special needs education and the role of being a mother of children with special needs sometimes collide and this is probably inevitable because the subject is a personal one. My hope in sharing parts of my personal story in this preface is to be able to convey a sense of understanding. Yet, that said, I do not claim that my experience of being a mother to children with ASC has provided me with the one truth or the one right to interpret and write about this subject. In relation to this, I would like to quote Kulick (2015). Like other anthropologists before him, he problematizes "the problem of speaking for others" when he notes that several researchers in disability studies, for instance, tend to begin their texts with a personal reflection of their own experiences of disability (as I do here). He critically examines this phenomenon and concludes:

But despite all the problems that every single one of its [anthropology] practitioners would probably readily agree besets the discipline, the premise – and the promise – of anthropology is that one not only can, but one *should* represent people who are very unlike oneself. The premise/promise of anthropology is that we learn from difference. Difference enriches. It disquiets, it expands, it amplifies, it transforms. And engaging with difference respectfully always necessarily entails a risk. The risk is partly political and epistemological (one might get it all wrong), but it is also personal – anthropological fieldwork is considered by its practitioners to be a transformative experience that renders one a different person by the end than one was when one started (Kulick 2015, p. 31).



Valentin, three days old.

INTRODUCTION

Previous research (Bölte et al. 2021; Guldberg 2010; Syriopoulou-Delli et al. 2019; Warren, A. 2020) notes that inclusive education, and using the term inclusion as a definition for the placement of children in schools, is an important prerequisite for the social inclusion of people with disabilities, both during their school years and later in life. This is also reported by the European Agency of Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018), an independent, self-governing agency. In a systematic review of research in the area, they argue that inclusive education increases opportunities for students with disabilities for participating and interacting with peers at school, obtaining academic and vocational qualifications, gaining employment, becoming financially independent and thus being able to contribute to society. The European Agency of Special Needs and Inclusive Education (European Agency) therefore suggests that segregated settings for students with disabilities tend to minimize their opportunities for social inclusion. The Swedish School Inspectorate (2016) notes that disabilities constitute a risk factor for school absenteeism, especially for students with neurodevelopmental conditions (NDC) like autism spectrum conditions (ASC). The situation of these children in schools, and of the adults working in schools, is often affected by policies and decision-making higher up in the school system. Gaining a better understanding of the situation for students with ASC in schools and in inclusive education might be crucial for working toward increasing their opportunities for participation in inclusive education. To gain this knowledge, an analysis of how the school organizes inclusive education involving students with ASC becomes important. In this type of analysis, therefore, the study of the principal's role in relation to this becomes interesting.

The Swedish school system is guided by policy documents that include students with ASC without intellectual disabilities (ID; intelligence ratio [IQ] > 70) as an

additional diagnosis, in mainstream classrooms. Students with ID are preferably placed in inclusive settings but follow a curriculum for special needs and are generally placed in special schools to meet their specific needs. Until 2011, students with ASC without ID could be enrolled in these special schools. However, after a modification of the Swedish Education Act (2010:800), the law was generally interpreted as special schools being only suitable for students diagnosed with ID. Unfortunately, this sometimes led to students with ASC without ID being suddenly placed in mainstream school classes, sometimes with up to 30 other students. In many of these cases, the students with ASC without ID were placed in general education where the teachers had not been trained or prepared to meet the needs of the ASC students. Also, the learning environment in these mainstream classrooms was not always designed for meeting the needs of these students. According to parents to students with ASC, this led to major challenges in many cases, with regard to the organization of the school (schedule, organization of the groups, the organization of the learning environment etc.), and also often with devastating consequences for the individual students and for the staff who had to deal with these unexpected situations (Anderson 2020).

In 2018, an annual national survey in Sweden was organized by the Autism and Asperger Association (A & A), a relatives' organization, and was largely answered by parents. The findings described a disquieting situation for students with ASC. The goal achievement of this student group had decreased by 4 percentage points from 49 percent in 2016 to 45 percent in 2018. During general education, only 49 percent of students with ASC reached their goals in the various subjects. The high absence rate increased from 46 to 52 percent; absence was alarmingly high – up to 78 percent – for girls with autism in grades 7 to 9, due to low goal achievement within the student group. Increasing levels of absenteeism and the lack of goal achievement in students with ASC was a serious issue in all schools (A & A, 2018). The survey was carried out again in 2020; this time only 4 out of 10 students managed to attain the Swedish general education goals. Absenteeism also increased: 56 percent in 2020 compared to 52 percent in 2018 (A & A 2020). These results are not drawn from a purely scientific context, yet they could provide an indication of the problematic level of school absenteeism in students with ASC. This is also supported by earlier national reports (the Swedish Schools Inspectorate 2012; 2016). Based on their findings, Hebron and Humphrey (2014) suggest that individuals with ASC appear to have an increased risk of developing mental health difficulties. Furthermore, Hebron and Humphrey (2014) suggest that mental health, correlated to factors such as difficulties with

social relationships and the lack of routines can contribute to school absenteeism for students with ASC. Other studies found that students with ASC in mainstream secondary school settings seem to challenge existing ideas about normality in schools (Saggers et al. 2011; Holt, Lea & Bowlby 2012a; Holt, Lea & Bowlby 2012b). Holt et al. (2019) take this further, discussing and problematizing the way schools reproduce a class society and make reference to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) who highlight how the norms and expectations that permeate school spaces are implicitly classified, benefiting the middle class and certain ethnic groups. The challenge for school leaders and personnel is to reproduce more expansive norms in school spaces (Holt, Lea & Bowlby 2012).

Holmqvist (2009) highlights the need for opportunities to develop education for students with ASC and ID and points toward the lack of research that raises awareness of this problem, while also proposing ways of improving it. Other research (Cameron & Cook 2013; Humphrey & Symes 2014; Rosso 2016) suggests that teachers working with students with ASC require general knowledge about disabilities as well as strategies for engaging these learners. Cameron and Cook (2013) state that teachers generally assume that students with disabilities are not the responsibility of the general education system and therefore (maybe not unsurprisingly) often profess a lack of knowledge about teaching students with severe disabilities. Humphrey and Symes (2014), for instance, note that teachers express concern about potential problems associated with integrating students with autism spectrum conditions (ASC) into general education without having the knowledge required to do so. In line with Humphrey and Symes (2014), Rosso (2016) calls for better coaching strategies for education staff tasked with teaching students with ASC. There is a clear need for more knowledge about ASC and teaching strategies to meet the needs of this student group in schools—and, in the longer run, in society. In a school system where inclusion and inclusive education can be seen as key words regarding the democratic right to education and the development of each individual student, as well as in the sense of social justice, it is necessary to discuss students with ASC in inclusive education at different levels. In this essay, this question is analyzed and discussed from a scientific perspective as well as from an organizational and decision-making one, with a focus on the role of the principal. According to Cummings et al. (2003), schools are a good place to start the processes of eliminating “disabling barriers”, that is, barriers that continue to generate both discriminatory attitudes and other more material forms of discrimination that arise through the denial of accreditation opportunities, employment, social

interaction, to give some examples. Furthermore, Cummings et al. (2003) claim that the focus should not only be on the curriculum, pedagogy, or student results, but on the structures and practices in schools that prevent students with disabilities from participating on the same terms as others (Cummings et al. 2003). School principals could therefore, using their authority and jurisdiction, play a key role in initiating and facilitating the work of removing these barriers in schools.

Yssel, Koch, and Merbler (2002) explain how staff in schools who work with students with special needs need ongoing cooperation and communication among themselves to assure optimal functioning for students with ASC. This requires professional learning communities and an organizational structure that establishes learning networks for shared thinking and learning in order to enhance the welfare of students (Reiter 1994; Schechter & Feldman 2019). This can be done, for instance, in communities of practice (Wenger-Trainer et al. 2015). In relation to this, DiPaola and Walther-Thomas (2003) note that principals in special education schools have been challenged to develop learning communities as a means of meeting both the intent and the spirit of government legislation regarding the education of students with disabilities. By recognizing local expertise and providing opportunities for skilled teachers to share their knowledge and skills, principals can ensure that professional learning efforts are well suited to the context of the special educational unit (Davidson & Algozzine 2002; DiPaola et al. 2004). Schechter and Feldman (2019) highlight the role of the principal in creating conditions for the staff in schools that facilitate collaboration between them. Schechter, and Feldman (2019) further note that this collaboration is needed to meet the needs of students with ASC, with their unique characteristics and particular requirements. Like Schechter and Feldman (2019), Coelli and Green (2011) describe how principals influence many aspects of schools, and as well the students' outcomes. This includes teacher supervision and retention, introducing new curricula (in some cases) and teaching techniques, student discipline, and student allocation to teachers and classes. Coelli and Green (2011) also comment that being a school principal is a stressful job and note that many municipalities and school districts find it difficult to attract quality applicants and to retain successful principals. They then suggest that their results demonstrate that the principal can make an important difference to student outcomes, and that public policy could play a role in increasing efforts to retain good school principals.

The first study in this essay is a systematic research review that aims to review, identify, describe, and analyze various research approaches with regard to inclusive education and social participation for students with ASC. This study was carried out by me but was reviewed by senior researchers on several occasions during the process. According to the results in this study, inclusive education requires that all staff have a clear and common understanding of the goals and expectations of inclusion within their school, and that this must be supported by the school management. This led to further study of the perspectives of principals, which is the focus of the second study in this essay. Also in this study, all steps were carried out by me with continuous and careful review by senior researchers throughout the process. The article describing the second study in present essay was written with the support of my two supervisors Dr. Lotta Anderson and Dr. Daniel Östlund.

Aim and research questions

The aim of this essay and its contribution to research is to identify the opportunities, pitfalls, and dilemmas that can arise when inclusive education is organized with regard to students with ASC. In order to create more understanding of the situation for students with ASC in schools, the study focus on school leadership. This is guided by the following research questions:

1. How is the concept of inclusion interpreted in research reviewed and by the principals interviewed in this essay?
2. How are principals aware of their roles in the organization of an inclusive education involving students with ASC and what opportunities, pitfalls and dilemmas are they aware of?
3. What dilemmas may arise when organizing inclusive education involving students with ASC?

INCLUSION, INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Certain demarcations have been made to delineate the scope of this essay. Students with ASC are the focus here, rather than individuals from the entire spectrum of neurodevelopmental disabilities (NDC, diagnoses such as ASC, ADHD, Tourette's syndrome). On the other hand, ASC refers here to individuals with and without intellectual disability (ID). Another demarcation is to concentrate on primary and secondary education in Sweden, and not on preschool or adult education. This essay also focuses on principals in relation to the school system, rather than on other actors in schools, such as teachers or educational support staff.

Perspectives on inclusion

In this section, the reader is introduced to different perspectives on inclusion, such as the definitions of the concept itself and a brief discussion of the difference between inclusive education and inclusive settings.

The concept of inclusion

This section examines different understandings of inclusion since this is a major theme throughout this essay, and also examines the effect of inclusive education on students with ASC. This section starts with an overall analysis and the research background of the concept of inclusion, followed by research highlighting the benefits of inclusion as well as criticism in educational research. Taking the different aspects of inclusion into account is important in order to answer the first

research question of this essay, since this question looks for ways of organizing inclusion that also involve students with ASC.

According to Brantlinger (1997), the term “inclusive education” has been a contested term since its appearance, with strong advocates and opponents, often as a result of taking the definition of educational placement into account (placement refers to special needs students learning in a mainstream class or in a special unit). McGillicuddy and O’Donnell (2014) conclude that teachers generally expect students with ASC without ID to adapt to the existing education system because of their underlying understanding of inclusion as being synonymous with “integration” or “mainstreaming”, and also related to the “ordinary classroom”. Central to the concept of inclusion is the idea that “schools should, without question, provide for the needs of all the children in their communities, whatever the level of their ability or disability” (Foreman 2008, p. 14). Inclusion has caused significant changes to the mainstream classroom environment (Kuhl, Pagliano & Boon 2015), a statement that can be debated, depending on the views of the researcher. Kuhl, Pagliano and Boon argue that inclusive education is not a linear progression from special education needs and practices to education in the mainstream classroom. Instead, they describe and draw support from previous research (Benjamin 2002; Carrington 1999; Snelgrove 2005; Zoniou-Sideri et al. 2006), viewing inclusive education as a social movement working against structural, cultural and pedagogical exclusion, which thus necessitates a fundamental paradigm shift. This reflects concerns regarding the structural and cultural changes and the pedagogical support required when including students with disabilities in mainstream school education. Improving access to quality education for students with disabilities is one of the main issues related to inclusion (Kuhl, Pagliano & Boon 2015).

In the 1990s, research on the practice of inclusive education suggested that its meaning was contextual (Katsiyannis, Conderman & Franks 1995; O’Hanlon 2003). According to Florian (2014), this idea was reflected in definitions that emphasize the view of inclusive education as “a process”, for instance, the process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion (Ainscow & Booth 2002). Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) later developed a typology of six ways of thinking about inclusion, here, inspired by the presentation of Ainscow and Messiou (2017):

Inclusion as concerned with disability and “special educational needs”: this is seen as the most common (dilemmatic) approach. As Ainscow, Booth and Dyson

(2006) highlight, seeing inclusion as concerned with disability and special educational needs can act as a barrier to the development of the broader view of inclusion. At the same time, the way categories are used to draw attention to the deficiencies of individuals, rather than addressing wider contextual factors, might create barriers to the participation of individuals.

Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusions: here, inclusion is related to children with challenging behavior who might therefore be excluded from school. However, Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) again draw attention to the contextual factors that might lead to these exclusions.

Inclusion as being about all groups vulnerable to exclusion: this is similar to the first perspective; it focuses on certain categories of students, such as ethnic minorities, who are seen as vulnerable to exclusion.

Inclusion as the promotion of the school for all: this approach relates to the development of a common school for all, rather than allocating children to different kinds of schools based on their attainment at a certain age.

Inclusion as “Education for All”: this refers to UNESCO’s “Education for All” agenda (2010), which sets goals that focus on increasing access to and participation in education internationally. Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) highlight that setting global targets can be challenging, as there are differences at local levels.

Inclusion as a principled approach to education and society: here the articulation of inclusive values such as equity, participation, community, and respect for diversity is seen as important for guiding overall policies and practices.

The concept of inclusion in research has also been summarized (Göransson & Nilholm 2014; Nilholm & Göransson 2017; Amor, Hagiwara, Shogren, K., Thompson, Verdugo, Burke, & Aguayo 2018) and categorized into four different definitions, which focus on:

- A. the definition of placement of students in need of special support
- B. the social and academic needs of students in need of special support
- C. the social and academic needs of all students
- D. creating inclusive societies/cultures

Inclusive education and supporting students to participate in an inclusive society and in inclusive education, as well as everyone’s right to participate in it, is a

leading perspective in Swedish policy and legal texts. This perspective aims to establish new ideals for school in a society where individualism is probably the main ideology, as suggested by Göransson and Nilholm (2014).

Ainscow, Slee and Best (2019) analyze the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO 1994) and then highlight its three summarizing perspectives: educational, social, and economic. The educational justification focuses on the calls for inclusive schools to evolve teaching so that it corresponds to diversity in the classroom; the social justification looks at the creation of an inclusive society, and the economic justification notes that it would be less expensive to establish one kind of school rather than different schools (mainstream and segregated units) for different students. Magnússon (2019a), however, argues that since the Salamanca Declaration opens the way for a variety of approaches toward the inclusion concept, it is intended to be relevant at both policy and classroom level, given that the people who support inclusion have different ideals and political ideologies, the declaration ends up being quite confusing and contradictory, Magnússon (2019a) reflects. This is perhaps an example of confusion arising when policy documents are interpreted and put into practice.

Inclusive setting versus inclusive education

Before continuing, I would like to briefly discuss the concepts of inclusive setting and inclusive education and their complexities in relation to themselves and to each other, and how they are interpreted in this essay. This is important in order to understand the following summaries, analysis, and discussions. I will differentiate between the concepts, interpreting “inclusive setting” as referring to the placement definition of inclusion and is thus connected to expressions like “the mainstream classroom” or “mainstream school”, that is, a context in the local school where students of the same age learn together in large groups. In this essay, Inclusive education is a more comprehensive concept that refers to the organization, structures and execution of education, the execution of a differentiated teaching approach or differentiated instruction in the diverse classroom with regard to the needs and abilities of each student. Differentiated instruction (DI) is defined by Tomlinson and Allan (2001) as the teacher’s responsive reaction to student needs. DI takes the learning needs of a particular student or small group of students into consideration at group level and lesson planning is based on this, rather than the common teaching style that treats all individuals in the classroom as if they were the same, with the same needs and were at the same level in their learning. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is

often mentioned in connection with DI. UDL is an alternative framework that challenges the idea of organizing support for students as in the more traditional organization of special education with negatively differentiated groups. UDL has been developed since the 1980s by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) in Boston. The differences between the students and natural variation are the basis of UDL. UDL was inspired by architecture and is linked to the idea that in the construction, of new environments these must be accessible to everyone. These environments are to be adapted and prepared for all differences and variations (Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2014). DI and UDL are not the same, but both stem from the belief that variation and diversity exist in any group of students, and that variation and/or diversity are viewed as beneficial for the learning of all students (Tomlinson 1999; Tomlinson & Allan 2001; Ainscow & Booth 2002). This acknowledgement of variation and diversity in positive ways could pave the way for a focus on the successful coexistence of the individual and the group. In addition to the academic abilities and needs of individual students, inclusive education also considers the social inclusion of individual students, that is, how they are included in the social and academic context. Inclusive education is also viewed as a political and societal ideal about the ways that education and schools need to be welcoming and caring, both socially and academically. This issue is discussed at a later point in this essay from the perspective of a dialectical approach or a dilemma perspective, demonstrating the dilemmas that could emerge on a systems level due to the concept of inclusion.

Inclusive education involving students with disabilities

This section introduces research on inclusive education involving students with disabilities in general, with a particular focus on students with ASC.

Inclusion and inclusive education—advantages and disadvantages

When taking the placement definition of inclusion into account, as is the case in a great deal of research, several studies have determined many academic and social benefits for nondisabled students when they have the opportunity to interact and cooperate with students with disabilities. In their systematic literature review, Heihr, Pascucci and Pascucci (2016) note that the concept of inclusion is defined as the presence of one or more students with disabilities in classrooms

that also include nondisabled students. In other studies, inclusion is defined as "... teachers' use of practices that make the curriculum accessible to a wide range of students ..." (Heihr, Pascucci & Pascucci 2016, p. 9). At the same time, De Boer et al. (2014) suggest that the mere exposure of students with disabilities to their peers does not guarantee that students with disabilities will be accepted, valued, and included. Sagun-Ongtangco et al. (2018) mean that many students with disabilities face adverse physical, mental, and social consequences such as being excluded and dealing with a lack of sensitivity from their peers. Furthermore, Sagun-Ongtangco et al. (2018) believe that education and awareness programs must be designed to focus on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of peers who interact with students with disabilities if inclusive education is to be successful. They also observe that similar efforts are needed to increase the capacity and readiness of teachers who have the primary role in translating knowledge, and who act as models for guiding the behavior of students (Sagun-Ongtangco et al. 2018).

In a research review, Kalambouka et al. (2007) found that the vast majority (81 percent) of the studies reviewed indicated that nondisabled students either experienced no effects (58 percent of studies) or experienced positive effects (23 percent of studies) on their academic development as a result of being educated alongside students with disabilities. In line with this, Heihr et al. (2016) draw attention to many studies (e.g., Salend & Duhaney 1999; Friesen, Hickey & Krauth 2010; Dessemontet & Bless 2013, among others) highlighting how the findings from these studies indicate the many benefits, rather than disadvantages, for nondisabled students enrolled in mainstream school settings with their disabled peers. One study (Cole, Waldron & Majd 2004), which included around 1000 elementary school students in Indiana, USA, found that inclusion had a positive impact on the progress of nondisabled students in mathematics. According to the researchers, fifty-nine percent of the nondisabled students in inclusive schools had higher scores on a standardized mathematics exam, compared to the previous year, while only 39 percent of nondisabled students in traditional schools made similar progress. Hier et al. (2016) suggest this is linked to the students being part of inclusive or mainstream school settings. On the other hand, in their systematic review of research, Göransson and Nilholm (2014) observe that there is a lack of research based on factors and/or interventions that increase levels of inclusion in schools and/or classrooms in relation to a specific definition of inclusion (referring to their four definitions of the inclusion concept, as listed above).

The lack of studies showing how more inclusive practices are to be achieved should be seen in relation to the need, for example, of teachers who might have pupils with quite different needs in their classrooms. (Göransson & Nilholm 2014, p. 276).

In their study, Finke et al. (2009) examine the interaction between students with ASC and students without disabilities and highlight some of the potential benefits to students without disabilities from the interaction with their peers with disabilities. The researchers noted, for example, how students without disabilities developed greater compassion, a better sense of individual differences and a greater understanding of how individuals have different and individual needs. Students without disabilities also increased their academic skills and leadership abilities. The respondents in the study by Finke et al. (2009) explained this as "... the norm-typically developing children learn to function as a role model [for the peer with autism], they learn together with the student with autism and sometimes they [the norm-typically developed child] can be the 'expert' as children do not often get the chance to be ..." (Finke et al. 2009, p. 114). However, as this is a relatively small study, it is difficult to draw any major conclusions from the results of the study.

Inclusion for students with ASC in schools

ASC is now more common and, since the Salamanca Declaration, inclusive schools for students with ASC have also become more common. According to Merry (2010) and Roberts and Webster (2019), this has not been unproblematic and internationally schools are experiencing difficulties in meeting the needs of students with ASC, which places further demands on education. Merry (2020) notes that it is common for students with ASC to need similar protections from sensory overstimulation, help with enabling communication pathways and have a need to be understood, but highlights that it is important to understand that the autism diagnosis itself and its consequences are not always the same in every individual. Roberts and Webster (2020) note how educational and personal outcomes for students with ASC in mainstream schools are optimal when schools adopt a whole-school approach for these students, but also comment that this requires lot of work on the part of the school. They emphasize that "this involves incorporating the key elements described in the research as constituting good practice in autism intervention, particularly family involvement and collaboration, and modification and structuring of environment, curriculum and instruction" (Roberts & Webster 2020, p. 11).

In line with Merry (2019) and Roberts and Webster (2019), in a systematic research review, Dyssegaard and Søgaaard Larsen (2013) noted that if inclusion is going to have a positive effect on students with ASC in mainstream education, it is important that positive behavioral support is provided. In addition, teachers also need awareness of evidence-based teaching methods that benefit students with neurodevelopmental conditions (NDC), which is not always the case. The researchers also noticed the importance of close student–teacher contact, and that students learn to use self-regulation interventions. Students and teachers need to implement interventions in collaboration to ensure that these have a positive effect on the classroom environment. On the student level, it is important that students receive precise learning objectives and that the curriculum and tasks are adapted to individual student needs. On the organizational level, Dyssegaard and Søgaaard Larsen (2013) note that structured collaboration between teachers and support staff is required. Dyssegaard and Søgaaard Larsen (2013) define the term inclusion as:

...active participation with optimal outcome for all pupils in the given learning community, i.e., pupils are together with and participate actively in the same teaching and community as their classmates. Included in the concept of inclusion is also that pupils benefit optimally and develop positive self-images from participation in the learning community. (Dyssegaard and Søgaaard Larsen 2013, p.10)

Dyssegaard and Søgaaard Larsen (2013) suggest that inclusion has a negative effect or no effect on promoting inclusion of students with ASC in mainstream education in the following situations: when interventions are not evidence-based and do not seek to promote the academic learning of the students; when teachers lack knowledge of strategies and methods that directly affect student behavior and academic learning, and when the inclusion intervention is implemented at a late stage when the student may already feel socially and academically stigmatized, and has been defined as problematic. They also point out how inclusion interventions have no effect or a negative effect when the teachers have not received instruction or in-service training about the intervention prior to its implementation and the student has not been offered academic and social support. Also, if the student does not receive continuous support and action plans for learning throughout the school year and the curriculum and tasks are not adapted to the student, inclusion can have no effect or a negative effect. Collaboration between the adults working in school is seen as essential (Dyssegaard & Søgaaard Larsen 2013). As explained in the introduction, Schechter, and Feldman (2019) confirm the importance of the principal's role in this area, facilitating the

opportunities for school staff to organize themselves in collaborative teams, which is essential for meeting the needs of the students with ASC. To provide more understanding of the concept of inclusion from an organizational perspective, the next focus in this essay is on school leadership, leadership models, and the understandings and experiences of inclusion of school principals.

School leadership in inclusive education

This part reviews research that examines different types of inclusive leadership. Different leadership models and a review of inclusive school leadership from an organizational perspective are presented. Finally, research is presented on the student perspective in inclusive leadership.

Model of inclusive school leadership

The inclusive leadership model was introduced and developed by Óskarsdóttir et al. (2020). This model merges three well-established leadership theories about transformational, distributed and instructional leadership.



Figure 1: Óskarsdóttir, Donnelly, Turner-Cmucha and Florian, 2020, p. 528.

Transformational leadership, as defined by Óskarsdóttir et al. (2020), is about inspiring the actors in an organization, building a shared vision, providing support, and developing a collaborative culture (Yu et al. 2002), with a focus on the establishment of structures and cultures that “enhance the quality of teaching

and learning, and setting a direction for the school organization...” (Day et al. 2016). In line with this, Navickaitė (2013) describes how transformational school leadership is traditionally associated with the leader’s ability to facilitate change and innovation through impacting the actors and cultures in schools. *Distributed leadership* is primarily concerned with the practice of leadership, rather than specific leadership roles or leadership responsibilities. Different theories of distributed leadership in research emphasize collaborative and joint efforts and are based on the network of relationships between people. Furthermore, it is linked to the core principles of collaborative practice and social connections (Jones & Harris 2014). Some research describes how distributed leadership is concerned with sharing responsibility across teams of leaders and can thus be related to the core function of human development (Hansen 2013; Hargreaves & Fink 2003; Spillane et al. 2001). *Instructional leadership* is concerned with “setting and communicating clear instructional goals and expectations”, as well as “promoting and participating in teacher learning and development” (Brown & Chai 2012, p. 753). Instructional leadership focuses on the relevance of establishing clear educational goals, planning the curriculum, and evaluating teachers and teaching. It highlights the responsibility of leaders for advocating better measurable outcomes for students, and the importance of enhancing the quality of classroom teaching and learning (Day et al. 2016).

Furthermore, Óskarsdóttir et al. (2020) identifies three key concepts that were developed during research done by the European Agency (2018): *access*, *autonomy*, and *accountability*. These concepts are thought to facilitate inclusive school leadership practices and, according to Óskarsdóttir et al. (2020), must be supported by relevant national, democratic policies that promote the vision that “all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers” (European Agency 2015). It is important that these concepts are supported by relevant national policies that ensure the *access* to appropriate pay and status in the community for principals, as well as ongoing support on all levels. Such policies should provide access to professional development and ongoing support and resources in order to develop the capacity of school staff to understand diversity issues and to implement national policy initiatives. Principals must also have the *autonomy* to make evidence-based decisions about the school’s strategic direction, development, and organization as well as the *autonomy* to appoint staff who take responsibility for and raise the achievement levels of all learners. Regarding *accountability*, national policies must ensure that principals are able

to define the vision, values, and outcomes for which they (and other stakeholders) wish to be held to account for by students, families, the local community and others (e.g., equity, non-discrimination, meeting the needs of all students) and that this is done via mechanisms aligned with other policy areas that facilitate support for inclusive education policy and practice. This accountability is particularly relevant because, like other important stakeholders, principals have a leading role in monitoring, self-reviewing, evaluating, communicating student results and reflecting on data in order to work continuously toward improvement (Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020).

The sustainable leadership is defined by Hargreaves and Fink (2004) according to different principles. It is introduced here to the reader first as: *sustainable leadership creates and preserves sustaining learning*. Sustaining learning means to nourish learning and is based on learning that matters, that lasts and that engages students intellectually, socially, and emotionally. It is not achievement results, but the learning behind them that matters most. The prime responsibility of educational leaders is to sustain learning (Glickman 2002; Stoll, Fink & Earl 2002). This type of leadership *secures success over time*. Sustainable leaders stay, preserve, and endure. Third, this leadership style *sustains the leadership of others*. The sustainable leader emphasizes dialogue and shared decision-making, and staff come to appreciate that “we were all administrators, and we all shared the administration” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004, p. 12). Sustainable leadership is a distributed necessity and a shared responsibility. Fourth, *it addresses issues of social justice*. Social justice is not only about improving one’s own school, but also the surrounding community and, in a wider perspective, also on the ethical level (Hargreaves and Fink (2004). Fifth, *leadership develops rather than depletes human and material resources*. Systems of sustainable leadership have knowledge about how to take care of their leaders and how to get leaders to take care of themselves. Teachers and school leaders who are “burned out” by excessive demands and diminishing resources have neither the physical energy nor the emotional capacity to develop professional learning communities (Byrne 1994; Hargreaves & Fink 2004). Sixth, this type of leadership *develops environmental diversity and capacity*. According to Hargreaves and Fink (2004), sustainable leadership recognizes and cultivates many kinds of excellence in learning, teaching and leading. It provides the networks for these different kinds of excellence and diversity to be shared in order to cross-fertilize processes of improvement. And lastly, Hargreaves, and Fink (2004) conclude that sustainable

leadership *undertakes activist engagement with the environment*. When the environment is unhelpful, this leadership must have an activist dimension.

Inclusive school leadership from an organizational perspective

Sundström and Ahlström (2018) believe that organizational structures that promote opportunities for principals and employees to act can also have positive effects on organizational conflict management and on promoting good social relations in the organization. A principal's leadership is often event-driven and based on everyday problems that are managed by more or less temporary solutions. Less time and support are available for developing more long-term strategies. Leadership in school is performed on many levels. In addition to the responsibility for short-term and more immediate and direct teaching and learning, the principal is also responsible for students achieving national goals. Furthermore, the principal's role includes responsibility for more long-term organizational and financial planning. Sundström and Ahlström (2018) note that the competence of the principal in filtering and communicating information, prioritizing and having the ability to support and encourage employees is crucial in his or her work. They conclude by stating that the decisions made and how these are implemented at the organizational level also affect the individual level. Equally, they note that less than ideal working conditions for principals can be observed, and that this affects practice.

The chain of command can be briefly defined as the processes between political decisions at different levels and the execution of activities in schools, for example (Johansson & Ärlestig 2020). According to these authors, the chain of command also refers to leadership levels and contacts between public officials and the principal and teachers. The links in this chain are united in such a way that political decisions cannot determine in detail how the next level interprets and implements decisions. In this way, spaces are formed that ensure intervals for understanding and interpreting political and administrative intentions. In these spaces, public officials at different levels strive to adapt the intentions of the policy to suit the current situation at a relevant level. Moos and Merok Paulsen (2014) suggest that when the chain of command is vertically formed from the top to the bottom, these spaces are formed horizontally, at the school board or local school level, for example. According to Johansson and Ärlestig (2020) the way that communication, interaction, sensemaking and cooperation between these levels is organized is of great importance. Direct and very detail-oriented management can be experienced as controlling and limiting on the local level;

vague and poorly communicated governance can be experienced as insecure and unclear. Ball et al. (2012) are of the opinion that the will and accountability of individuals in the organization to be creative and work for the best possible result—within given parameters—is the main focus. These executive processes depend on bureaucratic structures and cultures where those who lead the executive processes have room to act. The bureaucratic structures and culture must function in such a way that they create confidence in how different political decisions are implemented.

Developing an organization where school staff gain in-depth knowledge and develop classroom structures that respond to diversity (students with ASC in this context), requires professional learning communities and a robust organizational structure (Reiter 1994; Schechter & Feldman 2019). Here the principal is viewed as a key player and facilitator of this work. In a study by Norberg and Johansson (2018), principals emphasized that they rarely had problems with teachers' academic knowledge. The problems were often due to the teachers' attitudes and particularly toward individuals who were viewed as deviating from the prevailing norms in the school. In the same study, the principals stressed the importance of leadership characterized by diversity. According to Hjortlund (2020), the principal has three roles in the changemaking process: first, the role of "culture developer", second the role of "educator" and finally, the role of "architect", meaning inspiring and motivating the staff, planning for the staff's well-being and leading them in professional development initiatives that have been developed from the organization's needs (Lüddeckens et al., 2021).

Principals must have the will to create professional communities of practice (Mulford & Silins 2003), and to create a learning culture (Fullan 1993) with a climate that is based upon trust and positive working relationships (Heagreaves & O'Connor 2018). In the role of the educator, the principal must focus on the learning on all levels (Leithwood & Jofi 2006) and function as a role model (Stoll et al. 2006). Finally, in the role of architect, the principal must facilitate the time and space to meet and organize and a climate for continuous and regular discussions (Stoll et al. 2006; Jarl et al. 2017), as well creating opportunities for professional exchange in practice (Dimmock & Walker 2004; Hjortlund 2020). Furthermore, Starrat (2004) discusses the importance of presence in leadership, to be fully present and fully aware of what is in front of the leader, an individual, or the current situation. Starrat (2004) concludes that being fully present does not take away the focus from the role of the leader in relation to the other person or situation. Being present means an exchange between people that involves a

recognition of organizational boundaries, as well as social and cultural boundaries.

The student perspective within inclusive leadership

Grissom and Loeb (2011) note that in research on student academic achievement, school leadership consistently features among the different school-level factors viewed as having impact on student achievement. Grissom et al. (2021), for their part, conclude that the effect of principals on student achievement could be almost as large as the average contribution of teachers. Fuller et al. (2011) suggest that a contributing factor here is that principals who have participated in more professional development tend to select more qualified teachers, which has ongoing positive effects on student achievement. Gümüs et al. (2018) describe in their findings that the experience gained by principals in other school management positions can be associated with student achievement. They further suggest that this experience, gained when these principals had other leadership roles in schools, gave them a foundation of knowledge and problem-solving ability. When designing successful inclusive school contexts and inclusive education, it therefore seems meaningful for the principals to include the student perspective in the decision making. This section continues with an introduction to research on the importance of student voice in decision-making processes, which the results of both studies in this essay have highlighted from the adult perspective (Lüddeckens 2020; Lüddeckens et al. 2021).

Research has highlighted the importance of incorporating the student perspective when developing successful and inclusive school practices for students with ASC (Baines 2012; Falkmer et al. 2015). According to Ferguson et al. (2011), some studies have examined the concept of allowing the active participation of students in decision-making about their learning environment (Cook-Sather 2006a, 2006b; Rudduck & Fielding 2006; Smyth 2006; Bergmark 2008). This strategy has high potential for increasing student engagement in and motivation for their own learning. Cook-Sather (2006a, 2006b) highlights the importance of student voice in decision-making processes as being a fundamental characteristic of democratic education and argues that teacher practice must change to become a collaborative effort involving students. Ferguson et al. (2011) argue "... that students participate in meaningful decision-making and dialogue regarding their learning environment and classroom climate for the purposes of building upon foundations of community and trust" (Ferguson et al. 2011, p. 67).

Tetler and Balzer (2011) also examined the perspective of students on their own participation in education. They used a survey that was answered by students with and without disabilities. The findings demonstrated that although the answers of the students with disabilities were quite positive with regard to their school experiences concerning both the academic and social dimensions of school, these students also commented that they had little influence on important aspects of their everyday school life. If adults in school aim to facilitate the development of student independence and involvement in their own learning processes, students must be involved in teaching planning and evaluation, even when some students find it difficult to express their wishes orally or otherwise have difficulty in presenting their wishes. Tetler and Balzer (2011) note that creativity, endurance, and empathy are required to access the wishes of the students and to transform these into sustainable practice. In line with this, Messiou (2019) argues that “listening to children’s voices in education is a manifestation of being inclusive ...” (Messiou 2019, p. 769) and continues by highlighting the need for more collaborative and transformative studies in education. Paying attention to student voice constitutes a dilemma: first how to find out what different perspectives the students have and then how to interpret and execute these on an overall level.

In this chapter, the complexity of the concept of inclusion and the different understandings of it have been introduced, as well as the importance of cooperation between the adults in the school for meeting the needs of students with ASC. The role of the principal in promoting this cooperation, as well as the practice of inclusive leadership has also been discussed. This chapter also highlights the importance of considering student voice in decision-making processes. These issues will be analyzed and discussed in more depth using a dialectical approach or the dilemma perspective, which are presented in the next chapter (Clark, Dyson, & Millward 1998; Nilholm 2003, Magnússon 2019a).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this essay, a dialectical approach (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995; 1998) or the dilemma perspective (Nilholm 2003) have been used as a theoretical lens. This approach aims to provide a dynamic and abductive reasoning for the overall analysis in the essay, since inclusive education appears to create dilemmas when societal cultures and norms, bureaucracy, and structures meet. The decision to use this theory is based on the results of the two different studies. The analysis demonstrates that inclusive processes appear as dilemma-creating at different levels in the system and also addresses democracy in terms of social justice.

The dialectical approach—the dilemma perspective

Nilholm (2003) explains that the compensatory perspective on special education regards the individual student as needing to compensate for his or her difficulties in order to be able to participate in school, which is derived from the field of traditional medical psychology. Nilholm (2003) goes on to note that this special education perspective has developed a pedagogy that aims to compensate for the lack of abilities identified, as well as training these abilities. Haug (1998), on the other hand, is critical of the compensatory perspective and examines this from a more democratic participatory perspective, in line with the participatory democracy model explained later in this chapter (Held 1997). According to Haug (1998), the right to participate and the right to social justice include active participation in the mainstream classroom—the core value of education—but without stigmatization. Haug (1998) considers segregated special educational units as signifying school failure. Clark, Dyson, and Millward (1998) and later Nilholm (2003) take a critical perspective of special education, highlighting the

phenomena that lie “behind” special education (Skirtc 1991; Skirtc 1995). These phenomena include the interests of different actors connected to schools, school failure, discourses on education, class society, and oppression (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995; Clark, Dyson & Millward 1998; Nilholm 2003). In the critical perspective, disability at the societal level is seen as a social construction, a function of the environment in which people live, not a characteristic that belongs to them as people (Burr 2015). This perspective on special education highlights criticism of the compensatory perspective and is of the opinion that this perspective results in students with disabilities not being given the opportunity to access equal education and that it segregates students with disabilities and deprives them of their right to participate. Oliver (1992) discusses how the dominance of those who are “able-bodied” over those who are considered to have a disability is recreated, thus special education creates structural problems in the form of marginalization and devaluation. In this sense, special education can be concluded as “the schools’ failure in handling students’ diversity” (Nilholm 2003, p. 70).

In the space between the compensatory and critical perspectives on special education, Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995; 1998) and later Nilholm (2003) argue that the dilemmas that occur must be addressed, and compromise must be found between the groups involved. The interpretation of this space in this essay is based on the explanation given by Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995; 1998), and calls this perspective the *dialectical approach* (Clark et al. 1995). This comes from the idea that “apparently stable phenomena – such as special needs education in a given national or local context – are actually the product of multiple forces and processes, which temporarily find a point of resolution, but which create endemic stresses in that resolution which ultimately cause [the multiple forces and processes] to break apart.” (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1998, p. 170). The difference between Nilholm’s dilemma perspective and the dialectical approach that Clark, Dyson and Millward (1998) present is that Nilholm is more distinct about the dilemmas that arise in special education practice in his explanatory model. Clark, Dyson and Millward (1998) continue this by dividing the dilemmas into four different dimensions. First, *complexity and context* are related to the complex features of special education in practice, the complex processes, and the context in which it is produced. According to Nilholm (2005) this complexity, which in concrete situations and circumstances within the education system is defined as a dilemma, theories that only refers to one aspect of the dilemma are used, which leads to the diminishment of the complexity of

the phenomenon. Second, Clark, Dyson, and Millward (1995; 1998) see a *historical and process* dimension in their analyses in which special education has been produced over time and opens up speculation about its future. They also see a third dimension of *power and power relationships* regarding special education, as the forces that work in the production of special education themselves are controlled and affected by one or more social groups. The fourth aspect has been developed by Magnússon (2015) and refers to *societal factors* outside schools. Henceforth, this is referred to as *the dialectical approach* (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995; Clark, Dyson & Millward 1998, Magnússon 2015).

The dialectical approach and outcomes

The concept of dilemma is explained as contradictions without solutions, for example, in the case of special education, not every student has the same desire to participate and receive education in the same way. In line with this, Nilholm (2003) explains how the dilemma itself can be viewed as a contradiction or conflict in the setting of goals. These can be solved but this requires positioning. Haug (1998) proposes a scenario in which all students participate on equal terms in the mainstream classroom; this is seen as utopian in the dialectical approach. The critical perspective could take too narrow a view of the rights of certain groups, which, according to the dialectical approach, runs the risk of this criticism contributing to the continued maintenance of the differences between the “special” and the “normal”. Clark, Dyson, and Millward (1998) note that in a dialectical approach, the view of individual differences can thus be discussed, since the need to meet students in a differentiated way remains and is itself a dilemma. These authors highlight a need for concrete investigation of education systems in the context of the complexity they manifest, based on the dilemmas these systems face in practice.

When discussing inclusive education from the different perspectives of special education, a discussion of democracy is unavoidable. In discussions involving critical and compensatory perspectives, this often leads to a debate between the rights of the individual and social justice versus the actual needs of the individual. Therefore, in order to further analyze and discuss this question, I will continue with a presentation on some areas of the democracy perspectives of Held (1997). Democracy refers to a form of government where the people rule and its foundation includes membership and/or citizenship, consent, voting, right to self-determination and minority rights, as well as freedom of assembly and speech, inclusiveness, and equality. The discussion of social justice is also relevant here,

according to the definition of Nieto and Bode (2018) as social justice being “... a philosophy, an approach, and actions that embody treating all people with fairness, respect, dignity, and generosity” (Nieto & Bode 2018, p. 8).

Held (1997) describes four democracy concepts that can be applied to the school system as a democratic system and its inhabitants (the students and the adults working in it). First, Held describes *the representative democracy*, in which there is an independent public administration and also presupposes knowledgeable experts (in various levels of the societal system). It is built upon competitions of elites (parties) to ensure open elections. *Representative democracy* assumes definite consequences for how issues of power are viewed in relation to inclusive education. This means that different stakeholders seem to attain different degrees of power and influence, depending on the model of democracy applied. Second, *legal democracy*, which according to Held (1997), originates from the neoliberal tradition (the New Right). Third, *participatory democracy* strives to involve citizens in decision-making, both in referenda and at local-level participation. The power of the citizens is thus expressed at the expense of the influence of experts and is influenced by clear communal ideals, morals, and virtue. Fourth and lastly, *deliberate democracy*, which in some areas is reminiscent of *participatory democracy*, but differs in the view that communicative processes are of the utmost importance in order to ensure the legitimacy of democracy.

According to Habermas (1996), procedures with rational arguments for and against an issue, introduced by equal participants, end in a consensual decision, with the common good as its rationale. Educational processes in relation to this model underline the importance of communication between stakeholders. Nilholm (2006) reflects that in the representative model of democracy, the outcome could be that of professional groups having more influence, whereas parental groups might have more influence in the participatory and legal models and the deliberate model might attract academics. In a democracy today, Held (1997) further explains, citizens only have the real conditions to be active citizens if they can enjoy access to rights that enable them to demand democratic participation and see it as their right. And in relation to a democratic school system, this means that students need the right conditions to enable their active participation.

If one chooses democracy, one must choose to operationalize a radical system of rights and obligations—obligations which follow from the necessity to respect the equal rights of others and to ensure that they enjoy a common structure of political activity (Held 1997, p. 277).

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter presents the overall methodological considerations, the analysis process and the ethical considerations of this essay.

Reasoning in research

According to Bryman and Bell (2013), the *deductive reasoning* represents the most common perception of what the relationship between theory and practice in the social sciences looks like. Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2008) describe how deduction is based on theory, in line with Bryman and Bell (2013) who explain how a deductive reasoning is based on existing theory, and then hypotheses are formulated and finally data is collected. The researcher then compiles results from the collection of empirical data, and confirms or rejects the hypotheses, ultimately reformulating the theory in his or her conclusion. Patton (2002) also suggests this, giving a similar explanation of how the deductive reasoning requires a specification of variables and statements from a specific hypothesis before collecting data. Patel and Davidson (2011) also explain that in the deductive reasoning, existing theory decides what information is to be collected, how to be interpret it and finally how to relate the results to the existing theory. According to Yin (2013), the deductive reasoning can potentially save the researcher from uncertainty when the research begins by observing relevant concepts instead of waiting for them to emerge.

However, research has been undertaken where such apparently linear processes are not followed, as in the deductive reasoning, and instead use an *inductive reasoning*. Bryman and Bell (2013) describe this as a reverse deductive reasoning where observations lead to theory. Likewise, Patton (2002) comments on how the inductive reasoning begins with specific observations that then build further

toward general patterns. Categories and dimensions emerge from the observations, when the researcher sees and understands the patterns in the phenomenon they are investigating. According to Yin (2013), the inductive reasoning is the opposite of the deductive, and Yin goes on to explain how the two approaches stand for different ways of moving between data and concepts.

Patel and Davidson (2011) consider a third way of relating theory and empiricism, the *abductive reasoning*, and this is the position of this essay. Denzin (2009) describes abduction as a combination of inductive and deductive thinking that also uses logical substantiation. Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2008), in turn, believe that abduction is based on empirical facts in the same way as the inductive reasoning, but that it does not reject theoretical pre-understanding and therefore is also related to the deductive reasoning. Furthermore, Patel and Davidson (2011) explain that the abductive reasoning means that a hypothetical pattern is designed that is based on an individual case, and that this leads to a proposal for a theoretical structure. According to Denzin (2009), researchers who use an abductive approach do not apply a completely deductive hypothetical schema to their thinking, neither do they apply completely inductive thinking that lets facts speak for themselves. Furthermore, Denzin (2009) emphasizes that facts do not directly speak for themselves but must be interpreted and explains that the abductive approach combines deductive and inductive models, and that the researcher works from the consequence back to the cause. In this event, the observer registers what happened in a particular event and then works his or her way back in time in an attempt to reconstruct the events (causes) that caused the event (consequence) in question. The positioning towards an abductive reasoning in this essay is due to the different methods used in the two data collections and how these are combined. This can be seen in the overall analysis process, as in the first study a deductive reasoning was adopted in the systematic search for research, and in the second study, an inductive reasoning was adopted in relation to how data was collected.

The two studies

The purpose of the first study in the essay was to identify, describe, and analyze different research approaches to inclusive education and social participation for adolescents with ASC. The study is guided by research questions that investigated different definitions of inclusion in research, as well of the perspectives that the research was based on, and which research approaches were observed and the

implications this has for practice. A systematic search for research was performed according to pre-selected inclusion and exclusion criteria.

In the second study where principals of Swedish schools were interviewed, data collection was divided into three sets of interviews based on and using two models as tools in the analysis process. The models are the *Index of Inclusion* (Ainscow & Booth 2002) and three key concepts for inclusive school leadership, formed by the European Agency of Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018) and then later developed by Óskarsdóttir et al. (2020). The first model, the Index of Inclusion, was developed in the UK by researchers in cooperation with staff in schools and other stakeholders in society. Ainscow and Booth (2002) and Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) summarize inclusion in three overlapping ways:

1. As reducing barriers to learning and increasing participation for all students
2. As increasing the capacity of schools to respond to the diversity of students in their local communities in ways that treat them all equally
3. As the integration of inclusive values into action in education and society

Inclusive education focuses on overcoming barriers that prevent the participation and learning of all students, regardless of their functionality, gender, social background, or attendance record (Ainscow and Booth 2002).

Ainscow et al. (2004) continue by stating that actions to advance inclusive education have focused more on the ideological aspects of inclusion rather than on more pragmatic issues and take a “whole-school approach”, or focus on direct change at the systems level. Ainscow and Booth (2002) conclude that the three aspects of inclusion—evolving inclusive practices, creating school cultures, and designing inclusive policies—overlap with each other in a continuous process. The second model focuses on the three key concepts of *access*, *autonomy*, and *accountability* in the inclusive leadership model (The European Agency 2018; Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020), which was introduced in the chapter on previous research.

The overall analysis process

The results of these two different studies have certain points of contact but also differences due to their differences in design, layout and execution. In the first study, a systematic research review, the method becomes quite static in the sense of following a template and a finished plan, which can be referred to and observed in the deductive reasoning. The plan for the second study with principals was changed due to the covid-19 pandemic and had to be reorganized several times as some respondents were no longer able to participate. For instance, interview templates based on the two different models for inclusion and inclusive leadership was produced. When I started to combine the results and analyze them, the theoretical background emerged more clearly and became a tool for the overall analysis and for setting the course of this essay. Thus, I used an inductive research reasoning in the second study. Finally, when the two different studies, containing quite different data sets and different research methods were combined, this led to an abductive reasoning being adopted overall in this essay.

Crystallization

Crystallization is a term that relates to the practice of using multiple data sources, researchers, and lenses (Ellingson 2008; Tracy 2010), and is used in this essay when combining results from the two studies, previous research and the theoretical framework. The aim of merging the different data sources in this essay via crystallization is to find new understandings. (Richardson 2000, p. 934) describes the crystal as a “central imaginary” that transcends the “rigid, fixed, two-dimensional” triangle and furthermore proposes that a crystal:

... combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, and arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose. (p. 934)

According to Tracy (2010), crystallization encourages researchers to gather multiple types of data and employ various methods, multiple researchers, and numerous theoretical frameworks. Tracy continues by explaining that one could assume that the goal of employing various methods is not to provide researchers with a more valid singular truth, but instead to “... open up a more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding of the issue” (Tracy 2010, p. 844). In the two studies in this dissertation, two different types of data collection

have been done. This led to a more complex understanding being opened up in the overall analysis, where different types of methods and results, as well as different types of research approaches were used.

Ethical considerations

The All European Academies (2017) state the fundamental principles on which good research practice is based. These principles are intended to give researchers guidance on practical, ethical, and intellectual problems associated with research:

- *reliability* in safeguarding the quality of the research, which is reflected in the design of the data collection, method, analysis and use of resources;
- *honesty* in developing, implementing, and scrutinizing research, and in reporting and informing others about research in an open, fair, complete, and objective way;
- *respect* for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage, and the environment;
- *accountability* for research from idea to publication, for management and organization, for education, supervision, and mentorship, and for their wider consequences

An ethical application has not been sent to the Swedish Ethical Review Authority with regard to the two studies in this essay, since neither study included respondents who were minors nor was any special ethical review permission required. The school principals in the second study did, however, give their consent after receiving information about regulations regarding their rights, the anonymization of their personal data and security regarding the handling of data (Appendix 1). The Swedish Research Council (2017) details the rules required for conducting research ethically. Among other things, individuals who participate in research must have individual protection from injury and violations and it must be ethically justified to conduct the research. Furthermore, the importance of fulfilling the information requirement is delineated; here the researcher informs those concerned about the purpose of the research, permission must be obtained and the consent requirement must be met, the material can only be used for research purposes in the use requirement, and participants' information must be treated confidentially. The Swedish Research Council (2017) affirms that this research is of significance to society and citizens and could lead to improvements in health, the environment, and quality of life, to

name some examples. The importance of protecting subjects and informants from injuries or violations in connection with the conducting of research is emphasized. The summary of the guidelines for ethical considerations in this essay was taken into consideration during the production of this text.

Quality in qualitative research

According to Tracy (2010), the key markers of quality in qualitative research include sincerity and credibility. Regarding the key marker of sincerity, Tracy notes that studies should be characterized by self-reflexivity regarding the subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s), as well as transparency about the methods and challenges. With regard to the key marker of credibility, Tracy (2010) proposes that studies should be characterized by thick description, concrete detail, explication of non-textual knowledge, showing rather than telling, triangulation or crystallization, multivocality (multiple and varied voices in the qualitative report and analysis) and member reflections (the researcher seeking input during the processes of analyzing data and producing the research). These key markers, in relation to the results that will be introduced in the next chapter will be further reflected upon in a discussion of the results in this essay.

RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of both studies and the overall results of the essay will be presented and then summarized in final conclusions.

Summary of the results of the first study

According to the articles reviewed in the first study, there are two approaches for interpreting the concept of inclusion: A) students are socially accepted in the school context and participate socially in the group and in school and B) the physical placement of students in mainstream classes, leading to social participation. The majority of the 15 articles reviewed had definition A ($n=11$); most of the articles with this definition also adopted the perspective of students as their informants. Definition B was used in $n=4$ articles, two of which had an adult perspective (parents, teachers etc.) and two had a student perspective. Four approaches were identified in the articles. First, social/academic inclusion and participation—level of anxiety ($n=4$), often focused on the anxiety and distress of the adolescents with regard to social relations and how this affected their academic studies. In the second research approach, methods and/or development of best practice for inclusion and academic participation in school and society ($n=6$), the articles mainly dealt with improving students' academic achievements and social relations in school. The third research approach is that of teachers' perspectives, approaches, and training ($n=2$), and evaluated the role of the teacher. Finally, the fourth research approach looked at individuals with ASC regarding their social and academic participation in school and society from the student perspective ($n=4$). The four research approaches are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Research approaches in article 1 (Lüddeckens 2020)

Research approach	Number of articles
1. Social/academic inclusion and participation—level of anxiety	3
2. Methods and/or development of best practice for inclusion and social and academic participation for individuals with ASC in school and society	6
3. Teachers’ perspectives, approaches, and training	2
4. Perspectives of individuals with ASC regarding their social and academic participation in school and society	4
Total	15

Implications for the practice in the reviewed articles is summarized as: the importance of carefully planned opportunities for interaction in school for students with ASC, rather than hoping that these will occur by chance. Also, there is a need to develop better instruments for evaluating academic outcomes for students with ASC, as well as the importance of having common values and consensus in schools regarding the interpretation of inclusion. It is also proposed that it is important that schools are both accessible to all and can organize with flexibility, and thus motivate and encourage students with ASC to participate in education and social life at school. For this to be successful, practice should incorporate the student voice in different decision-making processes. In sum, the concept of inclusion is repeatedly the relevant issue, that is, the way this concept is interpreted, understood, implemented, and evaluated, with a focus on student voice. After the analyses had been carried out, new questions arose about the prevailing perspectives in schools that lay the foundation for decisions concerning this group of individuals (and all other students). Do these perspectives create and develop attitudes in school that support student diversity, or do they result in attitudes that support creating individuals who fit into predetermined societal norms and templates?

Summary of the results of the second study

The aim of the second study in this essay was to describe what commitment and actions are needed in Swedish schools so that school principals—within the Swedish school policy framework and with the intention of creating an inclusive school culture and practice—can positively affect schooling for students with disabilities, with a particular focus on students with ASC. The study was guided by research questions that examined what kind of commitment and which actions

principals consider important for developing an inclusive school for all students, with a particular focus on students with ASC and also on how principals reflect on their own leadership in relation to this issue, as well as the implications for practice.

The principals in the second study described the concept of inclusion as the students' own feeling of participation in school, with the implication that it is important to consider the student perspective in decision-making processes. Some of the principals articulated a sense of loneliness and vulnerability in relation to their superiors, to the extent that they felt they had to fight certain battles on behalf of their students when faced with the decision-makers higher up in the education system hierarchy. At the same time, they note that they have a great deal of freedom in their practice. This demonstrates the importance of highlighting the organizational processes and decision-making procedures that exist in the school system in order to define the issues that can make it difficult for principals to make well-balanced decisions. Some of the principals in this study see themselves as changemakers who initiate processes that improve school culture and create a shared vision of inclusion and inclusive education, thus developing a school for all students, despite their different abilities and disabilities. This seems to be a key factor for successful inclusive leadership. However, the lack of accountability, or the shift in responsibility by the adults within the school system, is seen in this study as holding back the learning of ASC student. This also supports previous research that emphasizes the importance of common values and robust structures in the implementation of inclusive education involving students with ASC.

Conclusions and answers to the research questions

In this section, the results from both studies have been merged using the model of crystallization and are outlined as answers to the research questions in this essay. Research question I: *How is the concept of inclusion interpreted in research reviewed and by the principals interviewed in this essay?* is answered by the following conclusion:

- ❖ In both studies in this essay, the inclusion concept was mainly interpreted as the experience of students of being socially accepted and having academic access to education and the curriculum.

In the first study, the research review, two perspectives of the inclusion concept were considered: A) socially accepted in the context and participating socially in the group and in school; this is a more student-oriented perspective, and B) the physical placement of students in mainstream classes, leading to social participation; this is considered as being a more adult perspective. A major part of the studies reviewed had perspective A. In the second study in this essay, the principals interviewed explicitly expressed the concept of inclusion as the students having a feeling of belonging, of being socially accepted and having access to education and the curriculum.

Research question II: *How are principals aware of their roles in the organization of an inclusive education involving students with ASC and what opportunities, pitfalls and dilemmas are they aware of?* can be answered by the following conclusion:

- ❖ Principals can sometimes feel alone and vulnerable in relation to their superiors; sometimes they have to fight for their students and staff against decision-makers higher up in the education system hierarchy. However, the second study notes that principals have a great deal of freedom in their practice. A dynamic interplay between struggle and responsibility seems to exist. At the same time, principals have the authority to act as change agents and initiators to strengthen school culture with regard to shared visions of inclusion and to facilitate the development of flexible structures for the design of an inclusive school for students with ASC.

The principals in the second study highlighted their feelings of loneliness, of bearing a large responsibility toward society, students, and their families as well as for staff in schools. These different aspects of responsibility sometimes collide, but the responsibility toward students always comes first. Being a principal was viewed as a vocation by the principals in the second study. In both studies, the importance of creating a school organization in which the staff share values regarding inclusion and there is progress toward a shared vision of this inclusion. This is expressed in the first study as “whole-school inclusion requires all staff to have a clear and shared understanding of the aims and expectations of inclusion within their school, and these must be supported by senior management” (Lüddeckens 2020, p. 8). In the second study, this is also addressed in the reflections of principals about their own role and responsibilities: “... enhance the school culture in their organizations toward a shared vision of inclusion in developing a school for all students” (Lüddeckens et al. 2021). According to

previous research (Barnard et al. 2000; Yu et al 2002; Day et al. 2006; Eldara et al. 2010; Huang & Wheeler 2007; Horrocks et al. 2008; Humphrey & Symes 2014; Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020), a shared understanding of inclusion is important in schools. Horrocks et al. (2008) define “Whole-school inclusion” as requiring staff to have a clear and shared understanding of the aims and expectations of inclusion in their school, and that this must be supported by leadership and school management. This is supported in both studies in this essay (Lüddeckens 2020, Lüddeckens et al. 2021) also the importance of the issue of communication and of providing support for principals.

Finally, there is the answer to research question III—*What dilemmas may arise when inclusive education involving students with ASC is organized?* Here, two conclusions emerge:

- ❖ In both studies, the question arises as to whose perspective prevails in decision-making processes in schools and in the school system. There is a need for discussion and questioning of prevailing perspectives and whether these create and develop attitudes in school that support student diversity or create well-behaved individuals who fit into predetermined societal norms and templates.

In the first study, these two questions arise in the discussion, noting that the perspectives of students and those of adults sometimes diverge, leading to questions about whose perspective prevails in decision-making. In the second study, these questions also arise when principals emphasize the importance of accessing the opinions of students as well as the emphasis on differentiated teaching and learning and a differentiated approach to the students.

- ❖ The lack of accountability, access and autonomy, or shift in responsibility by adults in the school system can become a hindrance to student learning. It seems to be of importance that school staff share this responsibility at all levels, both in the school organization, at the policy level, and in the local community.

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018) and Óskarsdóttir et al. (2020) highlight the importance of accountability and that this must be facilitated at a systems level. The results in the second study (Lüddeckens et al. 2021) support this as some of the principals in the second study discussed this issue in relation to the concept of inclusion. Table 2 provides a summary of the results, conclusions, and knowledge contribution of the essay:

Table 2: Summary of the results, conclusions, and knowledge contribution of the essay.

Dataset	Study I	Study II
Procedure	Systematic research review	Interviews with principals
Results	Carefully planned opportunities for interaction in school for students with ASC is needed, rather than hoping that these will just occur. The importance of having shared values and consensus in school regarding the understanding of inclusion.	Inclusion described as the students own feeling of participating in school. The principals articulated a feeling of loneliness and vulnerability in relation to their superiors and sometimes needed to fight for their students and staff. The lack of accountability, or the shift in responsibility by the adults in the school system is seen in this study as a hindrance to ASC students' learning success.
Conclusions	Incorporating the student voice in different decision-making processes is seen as important. To achieve an accessible school for all students, it is proposed that adults need to organize with flexibility, and thus motivate and encourage students with ASC to participate in education and in social life at school.	It is proposed that it is important to consider the student perspective in decision-making processes. It is proposed that it is important to review organizational processes and decision-making procedures in the school's management system to define pitfalls that may make it difficult for principals to make well-balanced decisions. The results support previous research emphasizing the importance of shared values and solid structures in the implementation of inclusive education involving students with ASC.
Knowledge contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Inclusion is mainly interpreted as the students' experience of being socially accepted and having access to academic education and the curriculum. ❖ Principals' feeling of loneliness in relation to their superiors—they need to fight for their students and their staff against decision-makers higher up in the education system hierarchy. At the same time, it is noted that principals have a great deal of freedom in their practice. This implies a dynamic interplay between these two: struggle and responsibility. Questions about deficiencies in communication and support for principals need to be discussed. ❖ A discussion is needed about whose perspective is the prevailing one in decision-making processes in schools and in the school system. ❖ It is proposed that it is important that school staff share responsibility for all students at all levels. 	

Consistent in both studies and in the overall analysis in this essay is the realization of the importance of responsible adults who take into account students' voices and perspectives in decision-making processes.

DISCUSSION

This chapter begins by discussing the results using the four dimensions of the dialectical approach: 1) complexity and context, 2) history and its processes, 3) power and power relations, and 4) societal factors outside schools (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995; 1998, Magnússon 2015). The chapter also discusses the methodological considerations already presented in this essay.

Discussion of results

The results are discussed using the four dimensions of the dialectical approach, as described by Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995; 1998) and also Magnússon (2015 1) complexity and context, 2) history and its processes, 3) power and power relations, and 4) societal factors outside schools.

A. Complexity and context

Previous research on inclusion underlines the importance of a shared vision in schools for successfully working toward inclusive schools (e.g., Yu et al. 2002; Day et al. 2006; Horrocks et al. 2008; Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020). This was also demonstrated in the results of the first study in this essay (Lüddeckens 2020). Transformative leadership, introduced earlier in this essay as a part of the inclusive leadership model (Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020) belongs to this model. A principal who applies transformative leadership, inspires the actors in the organization, builds a shared vision, provides support, and develops a collaborative culture (Yu et al. 2002). According to the second study in this essay, it appears that the principal plays a key role and acts as facilitator to develop an organization that increases knowledge and creates classroom structures that respond to diversity (Reiter 1994; Schechter & Feldman 2019). The principals in

the second study also spoke about sustainable leadership, about how the leadership of a school must ensure that enough time is available to sustain the change-making processes being implemented. In the research on sustainable leadership introduced in the previous chapter (Hargreaves & Fink 2004), it is proposed that this leadership has an activist dimension. As described earlier in the theoretical chapter of this essay, this activist dimension is also present in the critical perspective of special education; Haug (1998) describes a scenario where all students participate on equal terms in the mainstream classroom.

Clark, Dyson, and Millward (1998) note how the critical perspective considers the rights of certain groups, and they warn of the risk of the criticism itself contributing to an inflexible maintenance of the differences between the “special” and the “normal”. In a dialectical approach, the view of individual differences can be discussed given the continued requirement to meet the needs of students in a differentiated way and thus itself constitutes a dilemma. With regard to this aspect, Clark, Dyson, and Millward (1998) call for concrete investigations of educational systems. The sustainable leader—here the principal—can in this context be an activist for the well-being of his or her students. However, using the dialectical approach, he or she must be practical, with a pragmatic and problem-solving attitude. In this situation, the goal must be to focus on what is best for the students, which, in turn, leads back to the aspect of adult accountability. Developing values and structures in a local school context takes time and commitment. Furthermore, being a sustainable leader who steers staff toward a common ground of access, authenticity, accountability, and respect toward the students and each other is a complex, but yet important task, that is nonetheless necessary during the process of developing inclusive education in the local school context.

B. History and its processes

Both of the studies in this essay demonstrated the need for a robust and carefully implemented organizational system in schools than can meet the needs of students with ASC. The first study (Lüddeckens 2020) emphasizes the need for planned structures in situations where students with ASC and their peers interact, and the importance of these situations being planned in advance and not be left to chance (Chung et al. 2015). Historically, this may not always have been really taken into account, but the study with the principals shows the importance of how leadership is conducted and what the principal focuses on. In addition, the principals in the second study emphasized the importance of having structures for

developing shared values among staff, time and space for discussions, professional development, sense-making, and accountability. The principals also highlighted their own role in creating time and space for teachers to interact with students and build relationships to them. In the previous chapter in this essay, Norberg and Johansson (2018) notes how principals often have more problems with teachers attitudes and lack of norm-critical approach and not with teachers' subject knowledge. This would suggest that it is necessary to deviate from the prevailing norms of the school and underlines the importance of leadership characterized by diversity. This proposal is supported by the second study in this essay. The necessity of a leadership that highlights diversity can also be considered from the democratic perspective (Held, 1989; Nilholm, 2006) where the common ideal of inclusive education, discussed in the previous research in this essay, is seen as caring for and welcoming to all students and responds to their diversity.

The feelings of loneliness and vulnerability experienced by the principals in the second study are probably due to the fact that accountability is lacking somewhere higher up in the chain of command, and that the existing culture has become an obstacle to development. Here, various pitfalls become dilemmas, which, according to the principals in the second study, could be solved via robust structures and routines for facilitating processes. Another dilemma that can arise is when these robust structures or routines are not flexible enough, and act not as scaffolding but instead as obstructions. Decisions made and the actions performed higher up in the system affect the individual, be it the principal or the student. Some discourses within the debate on education in Sweden have referred to inclusive education in the way that Haug (1998) describes it—as something utopian—and that it is not realistic since, in the end, students will always have different needs and requirements. In an article with the somewhat startling title *Scrap the idea of equality for everyone—provide more years of school* Jan Björklund—Swedish Minister of Education 2007–2010 and leader of the Swedish Liberal Party 2010–2014) was of the opinion that “...the idea of inclusion, of all children, regardless of circumstances, being in the same class, has gone too far...” (Björklund 2018).

In the second study in this essay, the principals expressed the need for creating structures that facilitate the development of shared values and shared ideas among school staff about what inclusion is and how it should be viewed and how it should be implemented in schools. Developing new structures takes time, and this time is needed. Simply rejecting the idea of inclusive education and assuming

that inclusion is merely utopian, and then proclaiming that the idea of equality for all should therefore be scrapped, circumvents the issue at hand and is counterproductive. Magnússon (2019b) highlighted (in reply to Björklund 2018), that in times of increased extremism, sectarianism, and political disappointment, it is important to consider the fact that inclusive education is based on democratic ideals and human rights and that it views diversity as a goal and means for society and for attaining future ideals. From a historical perspective, the struggle for democratic ideals and human rights has been long.

Schools in general have historically sometimes been criticized for reproducing a class society. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), for example, believe that students with different class affiliations use knowledge in different ways and, since schools traditionally use methods that suit middle-class children, schools therefore tend to reproduce the class structure of society. Here, the attitudes of the dominant group in society are regarded as being objectively correct and this group's values are taken for granted. Rejecting inclusive education and reducing the concept of inclusion to the physical placement of a student in a particular group, is only scratching the surface. Due to tradition and prevailing norms, inclusive education creates dilemmas at different levels. Recognizing these dilemmas and dealing with them at their core requires time for reflection and actions that facilitate opportunities for training school staff about differentiated teaching and supporting diversity.

C. Power and power relations

According to the results in this essay, the issue of power and of dominant perspectives must be highlighted and examined. Nilholm (2006) asks the question of how and who should decide the role of special education in schools and how these issues should be interpreted and handled. This question is also raised in the discussion of the systematic research review in the first study in this essay (Lüddeckens 2020). Nilholm (2006) continues this discussion by explaining how inclusion must be related to the notion of "democracy", to understanding more about and analyzing the dilemmas of perspectives in relation to inclusivity and democracy. The results of this essay point toward the need for discussing power in relation to decision-making processes regarding students with ASC. How is this power used? The dilemma faced by principals, described in the second study, suggests that they do not always have enough leeway when making decisions about students with ASC. The support systems created at a higher level in the chain of command tend to be too static or are out-of-date. If these systems are not

flexible enough and are not continually redesigned to stay in step with changes in society, they not only do not meet the needs of the students of today, they also become a systematic barrier. The student voice has to be present somewhere in these processes. Carlsson and Nilholm (2004) demonstrate how the idea of inclusion has gained more support from the political elite. When inclusion becomes “a project initiated from above”, as in the representative democracy model (Held 1997), it can be difficult to change basic structures. Political control from above also means that administrative categories become important, especially regarding resource allocation. According to Carlsson and Nilholm (2004), these can be two important factors for explaining why the idea of inclusion is so difficult to translate into inclusive practice. The good intentions of decisions made in a representative democracy become a dilemma at local level. When analyzing this, it becomes evident that resource allocation is controlled politically via various administrative processes, the processes themselves can create barriers. In this sense, the original intention of representative democracy (Held 1997) is to protect its citizens, political control takes on a major role, sometimes so major that it prevents the independence and empowerment of individuals.

Hjortlund (2020) describes the principal’s three key roles in processes of change as follows: the inspiring “culture developer”, the teaching “educator” who focuses on learning at all levels (Heagreaves & O’Connor 2018), and the “architect”. With regard to the role of the architect, the principals in the second study highlighted the importance of creating and developing robust structures (Lüddeckens et al. 2021). From a participatory democratic aspect (Held 1997), and based on the results in both studies, the way that principals execute power and organize staff seems to have great influence on outcomes for students in schools. Being a changemaker and a role model sets a standard for the professionalism of staff when it comes to meeting the needs of students with ASC, and thus puts great responsibility upon the principal. The principal is also very much dependent on his or her coworkers. The trust between these actors is crucial, as is being present and authentic (Starrat 2004). From a participatory perspective or a deliberate democracy perspective (Held 1997)—which are communication controlled—a dilemma arises when conversation or communication becomes associated with unequal (power) relationships. Principals have a certain power, and teachers have a certain dependency within this relationship, this is similar to the relation of teachers to their students. According to Carlsson and Nilholm (2004), deliberative democracy requires stakeholders to ensure that different

issues are discussed, thus guaranteeing one type of participation. Deliberate democracy can be problematic for potentially marginalized stakeholders, for example, those who have communicative difficulties, as is often the case with ASC. When discussing deliberate democracy or communication and the importance of being fully present, as explained by Starrat (2004) earlier in this text, and in relation to ASC and communicative disability, this becomes a dilemma. How can one know for sure that the shared vision of inclusivity reaches and involves the student with ASC?

D. Societal factors outside schools

Inclusive education has been under discussion in Sweden for several decades and is a topic that seems to create many emotions. Both ideological and structural discussions have taken place and inclusive education in itself also seems to be sensitive to how the discourse is conducted in society. One such example is when Magnússon et al. (2022) questions that the Swedish government distributes funds to municipal and private principals with targeted grants that can be applied for to start special education groups, including groups for students with neurodevelopmental conditions. They believe that the targeted grant, which they see as a political initiative (in election times, author's remark), risks legitimizing and consolidating segregated special education groups. Magnússon et al. (2022) refer here to the fact that both government investigations and research show that special education groups and segregated school placements should be used with great caution, as there are several risks with placement in segregated teaching environments, such as stigma and other factors that risk affecting students' self-esteem and motivation. In addition to the fact that segregated teaching groups lack scientific support, this also goes against the Education Act and opposes the fulfillment of the international commitments Sweden has signed, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Agenda 2030, according to Magnússon et al. (2022).

Looking at this phenomenon with a dialectical approach, it is noted that the public rhetoric about the school influences the general view of the school. In the middle of this, principals have to juggle budgets that do not go together, the mental illness of young people increases partly due to school failure, and teaching staff flee the profession as a result of savings and deteriorating working conditions. In this way, the school and inclusive education are affected by societal factors outside the school and the discourses that also are politically driven. On the one hand, these discourses change based on who is pushing the most at the moment and

who holds the political power. On the other hand, school as an arena is vulnerable to short-term changes and solutions. If inclusive education is to be successful, long-term perspective and work on several fronts are required at the same time. For example, the research presented in this essay shows how school staff need time to develop professional communities and in these develop common views and values (Reiter 1994; Schechter & Feldman 2019), such as what inclusion is and how inclusive education can be organized (Yu et al. 2002; Horrocks et al. 2008; Óskarsdóttir et al., 2020; Lüddeckens 2020; Lüddeckens et al. 2021). For this to happen, long-term perseverance and endurance are needed, and for it to work, sustainable and inclusive leadership of the school is required.

The principals in the second study highlighted the barriers to designing inclusivity in school, like the lack of resources, trained and informed staff. The principals commented on pitfalls and long bureaucratic proceedings, and how there is sometimes a great distance between decision-makers and those who are affected by the decisions they make. They also commented that the principal is often the person who needs to announce the decision or change, without having been able to influence the decision prior to it being taken. When a principal is at risk of being left alone to deal with the resulting conflict, this can create a dilemma. The chain of command plays a role here. Ball et al. (2012) highlights the will and accountability of staff in the organization, and how the individuals leading the implementation of processes must work in such way that creates confidence in the actions and interpretations of various political decisions. Yet with this confidence also comes accountability (Leithwood 2018; Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020; Lüddeckens et al. 2021).

Sundström and Ahlström (2018) argue for the importance of the skill of the principal in filtering and communicating information, as well as being supportive and encouraging toward staff. A skilled leader with these qualities and who is a “role model” of accountability will have an effect on staff. At the same time, this is also a dilemma. The work of a principal is, among other things, dependent on his or her own resources, that is, his or her own knowledge and experience. As also highlighted in the second study, Sundström and Ahlström (2018) propose that what is decided and executed at the organizational level has an influence at the individual level: on the principal, the teachers and, by extension, on the students. Taking a dialectical approach (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995; Clark, Dyson & Millward 1998), one might ask if the societal demands placed on principals are in fact reasonable. Do they have the scope and power to make decisions when the requirements set by policy and the surrounding community

are considered? Do principals receive sufficient social support to be able to carry out their work in relation to these requirements? In the end, what are the outcomes for the students in these situations, and especially students with ASC? Being a sustainable leader who remains in their post over a long period of time seems to be a difficult task. The principal has to carry the can and accept criticism. Principals may do well to develop a kind of protective outer shell to avoid becoming too vulnerable to criticism. Principals bear responsibility for ensuring that the governing directives of schools are followed, and are accountable to many stakeholders, like students, staff, families, the local community, and government agencies (Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020; Lüddeckens et al. 2021). The principals in the second study viewed their profession as a vocation and took these responsibilities very seriously. The question remains however: does policy really facilitate the work of principals so that they can be the sustainable leaders they need to be, as this affects all students and not just those with ASC?

The four dimensions—a brief summary and some final reflections

According to the results in this essay, when principals are faced with structuring and organizing the school day for students with ASC in an inclusive school, there are many dilemmas on the general and individual level to be overcome. With regard to *complexity and context*, the overall results of this essay could be described as underlying the importance of evolving structures when creating values and a shared understanding among adults of what inclusion actually is. Also of significance is the complexity in providing differentiated teaching and learning, as is the discussion about prevailing perspectives in schools. The discourse of school itself is also relevant. A further complexity is taking the student perspective into account in decision-making processes. This may seem easy from the democracy perspective, but from the perspective of the individual, is the decision taken by the majority, and taken in the spirit of democracy, always the best for the individual student, here, the student with ASC? I would like to argue that this is not the case. The results in this essay point to the importance of developing structures that include the student perspective, as well that decisions made ensure greater individual flexibility.

With regard to *history and its processes*, the overall results highlight and discuss the feeling of loneliness and vulnerability occasionally experienced by principals in relation to their superiors. In general, do principals have access to the right policy support in order to develop autonomy and accountability, and are they able to implement sustainable leadership? According to the small amount of data in

the second study, this is not always the case, but they do have a relatively high level of freedom to act. In addition, the results underline the importance of evolving robust, yet flexible structures in schools. The processes for doing this and improving staff knowledge and building shared values require time and commitment.

With regard to *power and power relationships*, the results in this essay highlight questions about prevailing perspectives as well as discussing the accountability and authenticity of adults in schools. It also addresses the question of the direction we want to take as a society by asking whether we want to create and develop attitudes in school that respond to the diversity of the students, or do we want to create well-behaved individuals that fit into predetermined societal norms and templates?

The final dimension is that of *societal factors outside schools* and how political discourse matters with regard to inclusive education involving students with ASC. Sweden is a democracy with democratic ideals, but bureaucratic processes higher up in the chain of command on the level of policy and organization, sometimes affect individual students and people working in schools and these processes can sometimes be counterproductive. They are initially well-intentioned, yet political management and administration of schools is time-consuming, and ultimately this can have an effect on the opportunities for teachers to deliver qualitative teaching and may even be restrictive when it comes to assessment. According to previous research, supported by some of the results in this essay, the knowledge and skills of policymakers seem to be crucial. The parameters discussed earlier in this chapter, such as power, freedom to make decisions, accountability along the chain of command, social norms, values, and the competence, experience, skill, authenticity, and autonomy of individuals' all affect decision-making processes and planning regarding students with ASC. There is a clear need to strengthen the ability of school staff to meet the needs of students with ASC, and also their competence in taking student perspectives into account in decision-making.

Methodological discussion

Reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability in research, and in reference to the All European Academy (2017) are reflected in this essay by the range of considerations made during the research process. First, the research was done under the supervision and guidance of senior researchers who gave continuous support, asked questions, supported planning, and gave feedback. The research credibility of the project can be considered of a high level since the empirical data is original and was collected and handled in variable ways and analyzed in established known and identifiable ways.

Second, this study was restricted in several ways by the Covid-19 pandemic, which began in the middle of data collection for the second study. For instance, the data collection took place via virtual meetings and was based on the different experiences and thoughts of the individuals more than had been originally planned. The fact that I was not able to meet the respondents in person led to certain limitations, like not being able to follow up on what the respondents had said during for instance observations. Virtual meetings are also limited by the lack of being able to observe the interviewee's body language, nonverbal communication, etc. The second study has a fairly small sample of respondents, which can also be considered a limitation. These limitations affect the essay in general and thus to some extent reduce the possibility of generalizing the results. The respondents (principals) in the second study viewed their participation in the study and the interviews as a learning opportunity and a time for reflection. The principal has a complex task as a leader who is constantly under critical scrutiny by authorities, his or her own school organization, and sometimes also by the society in general, and this task requires insight, self-knowledge and the ability to feel compassion and empathy. At the same time, this essay demonstrates the importance of principals being able to see things from the perspective of students when it comes to making decisions and working with distributed leadership with regard to staff. Developing leadership skills and how to reflect on one's professional role is important, and the interviews carried out as part of this research have, to some extent, contributed to such professional development.

An abductive reasoning in this essay seemed to be the natural starting point when it came to merging the two different studies. Using crystallization (Tracy 2010) as a starting point in the combined analysis of the different data sets meant that the results and the discussion were complex and may, in the end, give rise to more questions than answers.

Prospective discussion and future research

It would be advantageous if the research in this essay were to be followed up by a focus on the student perspective. The results of this essay and future research projects will, hopefully, encourage more research projects on schools with the aim of promoting professional development in order to better meet the needs of students with ASC, and to also take the student perspective into account. The contribution of this essay to current knowledge in this area could be to identify some of the opportunities, pitfalls, and dilemmas that may arise when inclusive education is to be organized in relation to students with ASC. These have been analyzed and discussed in this essay but can certainly be researched further. Any such future research should focus on practical collaboration, like for example, action research where the researcher acts as a consultant helping to lead the research (Denscombe 2014). This type of research could inspire the development of a model for the professional development of staff in Swedish schools in order to meet the needs of students with ASC. This research could be carried out in various educational settings, in upper secondary school and higher education settings, as well as special education and mainstream education settings, with the student perspective always being taken into consideration. Over a defined period of time, teachers, paraprofessionals and their principals could form collaborative action research teams, in which they increase their knowledge, improve their teaching and capacity for supporting students, as well as organizing to support diversity, improve lessons and develop the learning environment.

Another potential area of research is that of decision-makers in the school system and their role in designing inclusive learning environments for students with ASC. There is a need for closer connections between research and practice, and between higher education and schools. A further proposal for an area of research is to explore studies of different legal texts in relation to power and the effect of this power on students. With regard to implications for practice, this essay can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the inclusion concept in relation to students with ASC. The views of the principals in the second study and in the discussion have the potential to initiate a forum for further discussions on the working conditions of principals in relation to their responsibilities and the expectations placed upon them by the local community. The implications of the results for practice are, again, the importance of the authenticity and autonomy of all professionals in schools and of stakeholders in schools. The development and improvement of structures that facilitate the inclusion of the student voice in decision-making processes is another potential future research area.

Collaboration between different agencies, finding structures and working methods in schools that make it easier to meet the needs of students with ASC is another potential, and major, area of development for research.

AFTERWORD

This essay was written during a process that had many twists and turns, and as I complete this research, I will conclude with some final thoughts. One of the studies reviewed in the first study in this essay has continued to interest me. The study included a photograph, taken by a 12-year-old girl with ASC, and depicts a changing room in her school (Lamb et al. 2016). The girl had been given the assignment of taking photographs of different learning environments in her school and to then describe her feelings with regard to these environments.

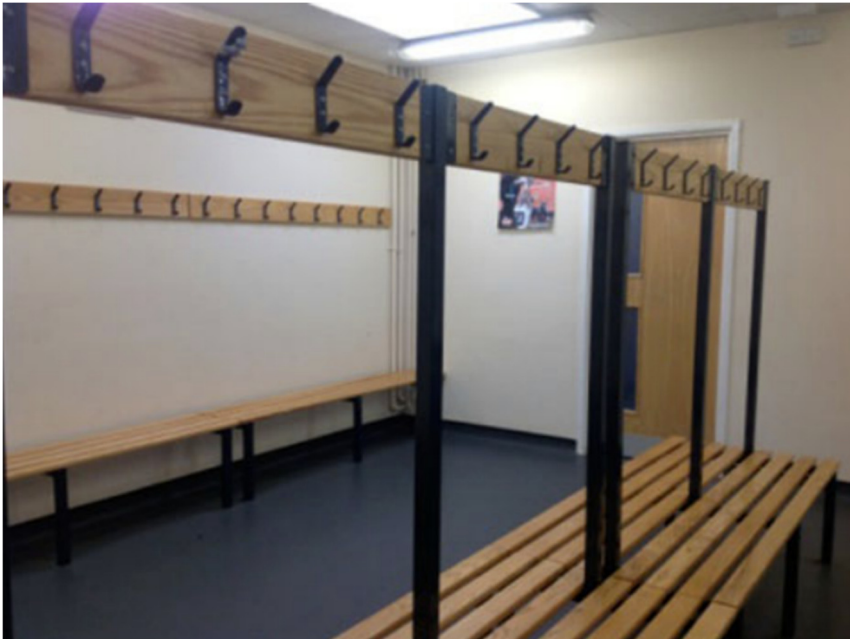


Figure 3: Josie's photograph of the changing room (Lamb et al. 2016, p. 706)

The changing rooms and the school corridors were associated with trepidation, worry, and fear for the girl. Lamb et al. (2016) propose that the appropriate focus for inclusion must be that of levels of ability, careful differentiation, variety in teaching styles, and approaches to assessment, while always paying careful attention to the need for adapting or modifying facilities, equipment, and activities in school. The feelings the girl expressed about the changing rooms describe her feelings of being exposed and of vulnerability and this further emphasizes the importance of schools being a safe and secure place for all students, including students with ASC. Some answers to the second research question could include the importance of the accountability of not only principals, but also all adults responsible for and working in schools; the importance of the responsibility of adults to ensure schools are a safe place for all students. Working with young people is an important undertaking and it is crucial that those who work in and with schools are able to do a good job. Responsibility for this lies on many levels and, ultimately with all adults in society, since we all have had experience of school, and have been affected by it and affect it in different ways, in the ways we look at school, discuss it and act toward it. According to Skrtic (1995), the story of this girl is one of interpretivist narratives that could be considered as having a reformative effect by the virtue of its content. Such stories could have an empowering effect on marginalized groups and individuals by giving them a voice by connecting people, and thus providing an opportunity to change societal structures and systems.

The dilemmas that arise in the results of this essay and are analyzed and discussed in the discussion chapter are in some ways overwhelming. It is suggested, for example, that it is a dilemma that so much responsibility is placed on one person—the principal. Sweden is in many ways still a fairly traditional society where a strong leader is desired, thus being the person who can be held accountable when things go wrong. Another potential dilemma is that of adult responsibility and attitudes towards diversity. The development of a democratic society includes a paradigm shift of society's view of children, and of placing greater focus on their needs. Swedish society is built upon traditional norms and moral ideals, while the era we live in requires other types of knowledge, ability, and attitudes than was the case historically if children and students are to enjoy academic and social success in school and society. Another dilemma is working at organizational, group and individual level simultaneously, and always having to keep this in mind when decisions are to be made and measures and plans are to be formulated. New dilemmas arise from earlier dilemmas when these issues

are analyzed, and the dialectical approach has been valuable in the analytical process of this essay. The dilemmas highlighted in this essay will not be resolved here but may provide some opportunities for improvement if they are considered and if student voice is given space. These dilemmas (or collisions) are likely to continue to exist in some form yet recognizing and dealing with them provides opportunity for positive change. Ultimately, however, I think that it is the discourse outside schools, about schools that has a certain effect on schools. In Sweden, as in many countries, every person has some kind of relationship to school: in the past, in the present and perhaps even in the future. And as such, most people have an opinion about education. The things that we say, who gets to say these things and how discussions about school are conducted all have an effect on the general view of schools. So-called experts, given the interpretive precedence to lead the discussion on school, also have an influence on school. Adults generally mean well; in the end, the issue is that of wanting to give young people a better future, and to create a better future society for them. If we really mean this, perhaps the voices of young people need to be prioritized?

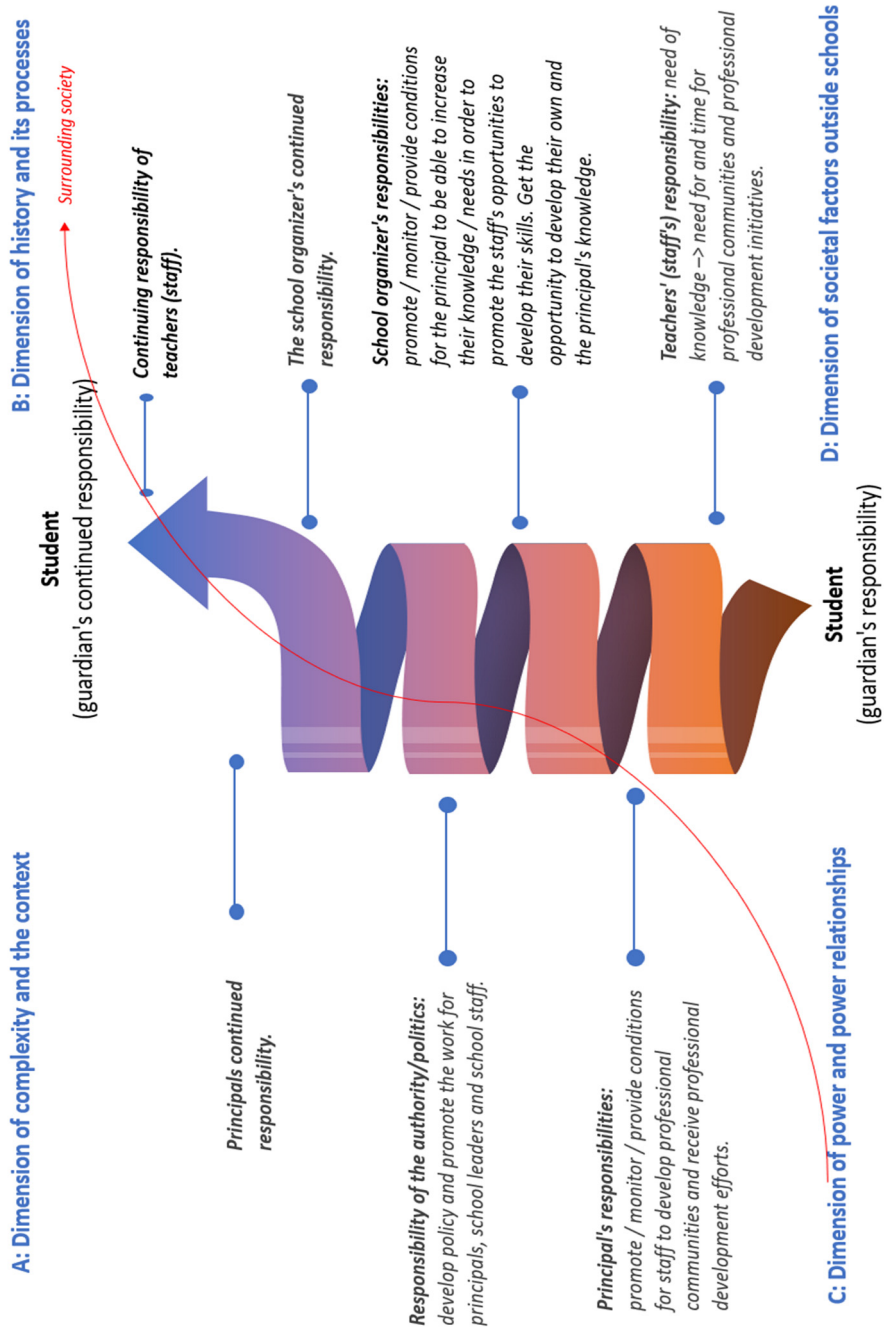


Figure 4: An upward (positive) spiral of responsibility in relation to the four dimensions of the dialectical approach (Lüddeckens 2022).

SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING

Introduktion

Föreliggande uppsats inleds med att beskriva hur forskning, både av oberoende aktörer så som European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018) och seniora forskare (Bölte et al. 2021; Guldberg 2010; Syriopoulou-Delli et al. 2019; Warren, A. 2020) menar att inkluderande utbildning, då genom att använda inkludering som en placeringsdefinition, är en viktig förutsättning för social inkludering för personer med funktionsnedsättning, både under skolan och senare i vuxenlivet. Detta både vad gäller deltagande i skolan både socialt och akademiskt, men även vad gäller senare anställningsbarhet och att bli finansiellt självständig och aktivt deltagande i samhället. Samtidigt noterar Skolinspektionen (2016) att funktionsnedsättning innebär en ökad riskfaktor för problematisk skolfrånvaro och att detta är särskilt högt bland elever med neuropsykiatriska svårigheter, så som ADHD och autismspektrumtillstånd (AST). I linje med detta visar anhörigföreningen Autism och Aspergerförbundet årliga medlemsenkäter (2016, 2018 & 2020) en ökande problematisk frånvaro hos elever med AST. Fram till 2011 kunde elever med AST utan intellektuell funktionsnedsättning (IF) mottas i grundsärskolan, men efter en ändring i texten till skollagen (2010:800) blev dock den allmänna tolkningen att sarskolorna endast var till för elever med IF. Detta ledde ibland till att elever med AST utan IF oförberett placerades i ordinarie skolklasser, ibland med upp till 30 andra elever. I flera av dessa fall var lärarna i de mottagande klasser inte förberedda och utrustade med tillräcklig kunskap för att möta behoven hos elevgruppen. Utöver detta var inte alltid heller lärmiljön i klassrummen utformade för att möta behoven hos eleverna med AST. Detta ledde till stora utmaningar i flera fall, både inom skolorna som organisationer, men även ofta med förödande konsekvenser

för de enskilda eleverna och för personalen som fick hantera den oväntade situationen, berättar Anderson (2020) i en artikel som genom ett föräldraperspektiv beskriver hur skolgången för elever med AST har varit.

Hebron och Humpfry (2014) menar att individer med AST har en ökad risk att utveckla psykisk ohälsa som riskerar att uppkomma vid ökad press i sociala relationer och brist på rutiner, vilket de menar är en bidragande orsak till ökad skolfrånvaro hos elever med AST. Andra studier föreslår att elever med AST i ordinarie gymnasieskolor utmanar den befintliga normen för vad som anses vara normalt i skolan (Saggers et al. 2011; Holt, Lea & Bowlby 2012a, Holt, Lea & Bowlby 2012b). Samtidigt identifierar tidigare forskning (Cameron & Cook 2013; Humphrey & Symes 2014; Rosso 2016) att lärare som arbetar med elever med AST behöver ha kunskap om funktionsnedsättningen samt kunskaper om strategier för att möta dessa elevers behov. Cameron och Cook (2013) menar att lärare i allmänhet antar att elever med funktionsnedsättning inte är ansvar för det allmänna utbildningssystemet och därför ofta upplever sig ha en bristande kunskap om att klara av att undervisa elever med funktionsnedsättningar. I likhet med detta berättar Humphrey och Symes (2014) att lärare uttrycker oro över de potentiella problem som kan uppkomma i samband med att elever med AST i grund- och gymnasieskolan integreras, utan att personalen har nödvändig kunskap.

Yssel, Koch och Merbler (2002) förklarar hur personal i skolan som arbetar med elever med särskilda behov måste samarbeta och kommunicera sinsemellan kontinuerligt för att säkerställa att eleverna får en optimal lärandesituation. Detta, menar de, kräver professionella lärandegemenskaper och en organisatorisk struktur som etablerar nätverk för gemensamt tänkande och lärande i syfte att förbättra för eleverna (Reiter 1994; Schechter & Feldman 2019). I samband med att dessa tydliga behov har identifierats har rektorer i resursskolor exempelvis fått utveckla lärandegemenskaper som ett medel att möta de mål i styrdokumentet som handlar om att utbildningen ska möta elever med funktionsnedsättning, berättar DiPaola och Walther-Thomas (2003). Schechter och Feldman (2019) lyfter fram rektors viktiga roll i arbetet med att skapa förutsättningar för personalen i skolan för att möjliggöra denna samverkan. Ett samarbete behövs för att kunna möta elever med AST, framförallt på grund av deras unika egenskaper och särskilt uttalade behov, förklarar Schechter och Feldman (2019) vidare. I linje med Schechter och Feldman (2019) har även Coelli och Green (2011) tidigare hävdad att rektorer har en påverkan på elevers resultat genom sin ledning och sitt organiserande av lärares utveckling och fortbildning, vid

införande av nya läroplaner och mål i styrdokument, utvecklande av undervisningstekniker, elevdisciplin och i organiserandet av schema, klasser och lärare. De identifierar också att arbetet som rektor är ett stressigt jobb. De menar att många kommuner, skolor och huvudmän har svårt att locka till sig kvalificerade sökanden och svårt att behålla rektorer som är framgångsrika i sitt yrke. Coelli och Green (2011) summerar att därför utgör en rektor en viktig skillnad i elevernas resultat, vilket innebär att det är en viktig aspekt för politiker och makthavare att ta hänsyn till, och att det då gäller att öka ansträngningarna för att behålla goda rektorer.

Den första studien i uppsatsen är en systematisk forskningsöversikt som syftar till att granska, identifiera, beskriva och analysera olika forskningsansatser för inkluderande utbildning för elever med AST och deras sociala deltagande i skolan. Enligt resultaten kräver inkluderande utbildning att all personal har en tydlig och gemensam förståelse för målen och förväntningarna på hur inkludering tolkas inom sin skola, vilket måste drivas av och stötts av skolledningen. Detta ledde till att ytterligare studera rektors perspektiv, som är i fokus för den andra studien i föreliggande uppsats. Syftet med uppsatsen och dess kunskapsbidrag är därför att identifiera de möjligheter, fallgror och dilemman som kan uppstå när inkluderande utbildning ska organiseras i relation till elever med AST. För att ytterligare skapa förståelse för situationen för elever med AST i skolan görs detta med fokus på skolans ledarskap. Uppsatsen guidas av följande forskningsfrågor:

1. Hur tolkas begreppet inkludering i forskningen och av rektorerna i denna uppsats?
2. Hur identifierar rektorer sin roll i organisationen av en inkluderande utbildning som involverar elever med AST och vilka möjligheter, fallgror och dilemman är de medvetna om?
3. Vilka dilemman kan uppstå när inkluderande utbildning som involverar elever med AST organiseras?

Inkludering, inkluderad utbildning och skolledarskap

Avsnittet med tidigare forskning inleds med olika beskrivningar av begreppet inkludering. Generellt finns flera definitioner av begreppet inkludering i forskningslitteraturen, vilket har sammanfattats, kategoriserats och rangordnats i fyra olika definitioner så som:

- A. definitionen av placering av elever i behov av särskilt stöd.
- B. de sociala och akademiska behoven hos elever i behov av särskilt stöd.
- C. alla elevers sociala och akademiska behov.
- D. att skapa inkluderande samhällen/kulturer

(Amor et al. 2018; Göransson och Nilholm 2014; Nilholm och Göransson 2017).

Avsnittet om tidigare forskning i uppsatsen fortsätter med att presentera skillnaden mellan begreppen inkluderande miljö och inkluderande undervisning. *Inkluderande miljö* tolkas mer som en placeringsdefinition av inkludering och kan därmed relateras till uttryck som "det ordinarie klassrummet" eller "ordinarie skolan", ett sammanhang i den lokala skolan där elever i samma ålder går ihop i större grupper. Uttrycket *inkluderande undervisning* är i uppsatsen mer ett övergripande begrepp som syftar på organisationen, strukturerna och genomförandet av själva utbildningen. Det syftar även på genomförandet av ett differentierat undervisningssätt eller differentierad undervisning i det diversifierade klassrummet i förhållande till varje elevs behov och förmågor. Efter detta kommer en redogörelse för forskningsläget vad gäller elever med funktionsnedsättning i inkluderad utbildning och i relation till segregerade skolmiljöer, både vad gäller fördelar och nackdelar för detta och då med ett fokus på elever med AST. I denna del lyfts att forskningsläget för hur placeringsdefinitionen av inkludering fungerar i praktiken är tämligen litet men att viss forskning pekar på att det ger positiva effekter, både för elever med och utan funktionsnedsättning.

Kapitlet leds slutligen in på en genomgång av forskning kring ledarskap i inkluderande utbildning. En presentation av olika modeller görs, så som en beskrivning av det *inkluderande ledarskapet* (European Agency 2015; Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020) samt det *hållbara ledarskapet*, vilka båda anses vara av vikt för att leda inkluderad utbildning. Kapitlet fortsätter med en redogörelse om vad forskningen säger om ledarskap i skolan rent organisatoriskt och avslutas

med en beskrivning av vad forskningen menar är av stor vikt för att lyckas med det inkluderande ledarskapet, nämligen elevens röst i beslutsprocesser. Kapitlet avslutas med en genomgång av demokratibegreppet i förhållande till de olika perspektiven.

Teoretiskt ramverk

I detta kapitel introduceras läsaren till en bakgrund till de olika specialpedagogiska perspektiven och som ligger till grund för en dialektisk approach (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995; 1998) och till dilemmaperspektivet (Nilholm, 2003). Kapitlet avslutas med en introduktion av de fyra olika dimensionerna som påverkar en dialektisk approach.

Teoretisk bakgrund

I det kompensatoriska perspektivet på specialpedagogik ses den enskilde eleven som i behov av kompensation för sina svårigheter att kunna delta i skolan, vilket härrör från ett traditionellt medicinskt psykologiskt område, förklarar Nilholm (2003). Detta specialpedagogiska perspektiv har utvecklat en pedagogik som syftar till att kompensera för den brist på förmågor som har identifierats, samt att träna upp dessa förmågor. Haug (1998) är å andra sidan kritisk till det kompensatoriska perspektivet och resonerar kring detta ur ett mer demokratiskt-deltagande perspektiv. Rätten att delta och en social rättvisa innefattar enligt honom att aktivt delta i det ordinarie klassrummet, vilket är kärnan i utbildningen, men utan stigmatisering. Enligt Haug (1998) innebär det att segregerade specialpedagogiska enheter i skolan i slutändan blir ett skolmisslyckande för eleven med funktionsnedsättning.

Skirte (1991) visar på hur byråkratin kan "sätta en käpp i hjulet" i beslutsprocesser kring elever och menar att byråkratin i sig kan bli ett hinder. Han beskriver två olika sorters sammanflätade byråkratiska modeller, där den externa kontrollen är "maskinbyråkratisk" med standardiserade mallar och processer, kallad den *standardiserade* byråkratin. Modellen kan liknas vid ett löpande band på en fabrik där resultatet av en förändring förväntas ge omedelbar effekt, när nya rutiner och mallar införs. Verksamheten i skolan styrs dock av den *professionella* byråkratin, där yrkesutövaren tar ett helhetsansvar för sina specifika ansvarsområden utifrån sitt yrke och sitt kompetensområde. I den andra typen av byråkrati sätts den professionella byråkratin, det professionella ansvaret för "klienter", en viss grupp elever, i centrum. I mötet med dessa "klienter", det vill

säga mångfalden av elever i skolan, blir de professionella beroende av att vara flexibla och innovativa i sina arbetssätt. Den externa/politiska ledningen av skolan ställer dock allt högre krav på mätbara resultat och effektivitet, vilket innebär rutiner och standardiserade mallar som de professionella ska följa. Den detaljstyrning som då uppstår leder till att både åtgärder, arbetssätt och beslutsprocesser systematiseras och standardiseras, vilket urholkar de professionellas flexibilitet i mötet med eleven (Magnússon 2015; Nilholm 2020; Skrtic 1991).

Clark, Dyson och Millward (1998), och senare Nilholm (2003) identifierar ett kritiskt perspektiv på specialpedagogiken och lyfter fram de existerande fenomenen "bakom" specialpedagogiken (Skirtc 1991; Skirtc 1995). Dessa fenomen är till exempel de professionellas intressen, skolmisslyckanden (klassamhället), diskurser och förtryck (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1998; Nilholm 2003). I det kritiska perspektivet ses funktionshinder på samhällsnivå som en social konstruktion, en funktion av den miljö där människor lever och inte en egenskap som tillhör dem som personer (Burr 2015). Det kompensatoriska perspektivet på specialpedagogik riskerar att beröva elever med funktionsnedsättning möjligheten till lika utbildning, då de separeras och därmed berövas rätten till deltagande, vilket leder till att specialpedagogik skapar strukturella problem i form av marginalisering och devalvering, menar Oliver (1992). På så sätt återskapas dominansen hos dem som är "arbetsföra" över de som anses ha en funktionsnedsättning, vilket leder till att specialundervisning skapar strukturella problem i form av marginalisering och devalvering, fortsätter Oliver (1992). Specialpedagogik kan ur den synvinkeln i viss mening summeras som "skolornas misslyckande med att hantera elevers mångfald" (Nilholm, 2003, s. 70).

Dialektisk approach - dilemmaperspektiv

Någonstans mitt emellan, eller snarare vid sidan av de kompensatoriska och kritiska perspektiven på specialpedagogik, hävdar Clark, Dyson och Millward (1998) och senare även Nilholm (2003) att i slutändan måste de dilemman som alltid uppstår i utbildningssystemet åtgärdas och diskuteras mellan de inblandade grupperna. Begreppet *dilemma* förklaras som motsägelser utan lösningar, vilket till exempel i demokratisk mening i specialpedagogiken innebär att inte alla elever har samma önskan eller behov av att delta och få undervisning på samma vis. I linje med detta förklarar Nilholm (2005) detta som hur själva dilemmat kan ses som motsägelser eller konflikter i målsättningen. Dessa kan inte riktigt lösas

upp utan kräver positionering. Det scenario som Haug (1998) bygger, där alla elever deltar på lika villkor i det vanliga klassrummet, ses i dilemmaperspektivet som utopiskt. Det kritiska perspektivet i sig ser för snävt på vissa grupperns rättigheter, vilket riskerar att kritiken i sig bidrar till ett fortsatt upprätthållande av skillnaderna mellan det "särskilda" och det "normala".

I ett dilemmaperspektiv kan synen på individuella skillnader alltså diskuteras, eftersom behovet av att möta elever på ett differentierat sätt kvarstår och i sig är ett dilemma, fortsätter Clark, Dyson och Millward (1998). De ser ett behov av konkreta analyser av utbildningssystemet i den komplexitet som det uppenbarar och befinner sig i, utifrån de verkliga dilemman som utbildningssystemet står inför i praktiken. Tolkningen av detta utrymme, eller perspektiv, i föreliggande uppsats baseras på den förklaring som Clark, Dyson och Millward (1995; 1998) ger, genom att också kalla detta en *dialektisk approach* (Clark et al. 1995). Det kommer från idén att "uppenbarligen är ett stabilt fenomen – såsom specialpedagogik i en givet nationellt eller lokal kontext – i själva verket är produkten av flera krafter och processer, vilka temporärt finner en upplösningsspunkt [överenskommelse], men vilken skapar lokala påfrestningar i den lösningen som i slutändan leder till att de [krafterna och processerna] går isär" (fritt översatt från Clark, Dyson och Millward, 1998, s. 170). Skillnaden mellan Nilholms (2003) dilemmaperspektiv och den dialektiska approach Clark, Dyson och Millward (1998) presenterar är att medan Nilholm synliggör de dilemman som uppstår i den specialpedagogiska praktiken, visar Clark, Dyson och Millward genom att i sin förklaringsmodell analysera dessa i fyra olika dimensioner. För det första, a.) *komplexitet och sammanhang* är relaterade till de komplexa egenskaperna hos specialundervisning i praktiken, de komplexa processerna och det sammanhang i vilket den produceras. Enligt Nilholm (2005) används denna komplexitet, som i konkreta situationer och omständigheter inom utbildningssystemet definieras som dilemman, teorier som endast refererar till en aspekt av dilemman, vilket slutar i en minskning av fenomenets komplexitet. Sedan ser Clark, Dyson och Millward (1995; 1998) en b.) *historisk dimension och dess processer* i sina analyser där specialpedagogiken har producerats över tid och öppnar upp för spekulationer om dess framtid. De ser också en dimension av c.) *makt- och maktrelationer* gällande specialpedagogik, då de krafter som verkar i produktionen av specialpedagogiken själv styrs och påverkas av en eller andra sociala grupper, och, utvecklad av Magnússon (2015), d.) *samhälleliga faktorer utanför skolan*. Fortsättningsvis i uppsatsen hänvisas detta till den dialektiska approachen (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995; Clark, Dyson och

Millward 1998; Magnússon 2015) genom att senare diskutera uppsatsens övergripande forskningsfråga.

Uppsatsens metodologiska överväganden

I denna del förklaras uppsatsens metodologiska överväganden och de två olika studiernas metodologiska design, metodval och analysmodeller samt etiska överväganden.

Två studier

Uppsatsen består av två olika studier som är ganska skilda både till metodologi och utförande. Den första studien i uppsatsen är en systematisk forskningsöversikt som har som syfte att granska, identifiera, beskriva och analysera olika forskningsansatser till inkluderande utbildning och socialt deltagande för ungdomar med AST. Studien guidas av forskningsfrågor vilka undersöker olika definitioner av inkludering i forskningen, samt på vems perspektiv som forskningen bygger på, vilka forskningsansatser som kan ses och vilka implikationer som föreslås för praktiken av de granskade artiklarna. Den andra studien är en studie med svenska rektorer där datainsamlingen delades upp i tre uppsättningar intervjuer som baserades på användandet av två modeller, vilka även användes som analysverktyg av den insamlade empirin. Modellerna är *Index of inclusion* (Ainscow & Booth 2002) samt användandet av tre nyckelbegrepp för modellen för *det inkluderande skolledarskapet*, framtaget av European Agency (2018) och senare utvecklat av Óskarsdóttir et al. (2020). Index of Inclusion delar in inkludering i tre kontinuerligt pågående och överlappande processer som handlar om att utveckla inkluderande praktiker, utforma inkluderande styrdokument och skapa inkluderande praktiker.

Den andra modellen som användes var genom att fokusera på de tre nyckelbegreppen *access*, *autonomi* och *ansvarighet* som ses i modellen för det inkluderade ledarskapet (The European Agency 2018; Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020). Dessa begrepp förklaras som nödvändiga för att rektorer ska kunna uppfylla sina nyckelfunktioner och underlätta till en mer inkluderande skolpraktik; de måste dock stöttas av tillämpliga nationella styrdokument som säkerställer rektorers tillgång till lämplig lön och status i samhället utöver det löpande stödet på olika nivåer. Styrdokumentet bör ge tillgång till professionell utveckling och kontinuerligt stöd och resurser för att rektorer ska ha möjlighet att kunna utveckla personalens kompetens att förstå mångfaldsfrågor och implementera nationella

politiska initiativ. Rektorer behöver också utveckla *autonomi* för att fatta evidensbaserade beslut om skolans strategiska inriktning, utveckling och organisation samt utveckla *ansvarighet* i att kunna utse personal som tar ansvar för och stöttar och hjälper alla elever att öka sin prestation. När det gäller ansvarighet måste nationella policyer säkerställa att rektorer har möjlighet att ange de visioner, värderingar och resultat som de ska kunna ställas till svars för (till exempel rättvisa, icke-diskriminering, att tillgodose behoven hos alla elever) inför elever, familjer, lokalsamhället och andra. Denna ansvarsskyldighet är särskilt relevant eftersom rektorer, tillsammans med andra intressenter, har en ledande roll i att övervaka, självgranska, utvärdera, kommunicera (elevresultat) och reflektera över resultat för att kontinuerligt arbeta för förbättringar, förklarar Oskarsdottir et al. (2020).

Övergripande analys

Deduktiv forskningsansats representerar den vanligaste uppfattningen om hur sambandet mellan teori och praktik inom samhällsvetenskapen ser ut, enligt Bryman och Bell (2013). Patton (2002) föreslår att det deduktiva tillvägagångssättet kräver en specifikation av variabler och påståenden från en specifik hypotes innan data samlas in och Patel och Davidson (2011) fortsätter samstämmigt att i deduktion bestämmer befintlig teori vilken information som ska samlas in, hur den ska tolkas och slutligen hur man relaterar resultatet till den redan existerande teorin. Enligt Yin (2013) kan den deduktiva ansatsen potentiellt rädda forskaren från osäkerhet så forskaren i den deduktiva forskningen inleder med att observera relevanta begrepp istället för att vänta på deras uppdykande. Det finns dock forskning där de till synes linjära processerna inte följs, vilket ett deduktivt förhållningssätt innebär, och istället används ett induktivt förhållningssätt. Bryman och Bell (2013) förklarar detta som ett omvänt deduktivt tillvägagångssätt, där observationer leder till teori. På samma sätt menar Patton (2002) att det induktiva tillvägagångssättet börjar med specifika observationer som sedan bygger vidare mot allmänna mönster. I dessa mönster framkommer kategorier och dimensioner ur observationerna, då forskaren iakttar och förstår de mönster som finns i det fenomen de undersöker. Den induktiva ansatsen är motsatsen till den deduktiva, enligt Yin (2013), som menar att de två ansatserna står för olika sätt att växla mellan data och begrepp.

Enligt Patel och Davidson (2011) finns också ett tredje sätt att relatera teori och empiri i den abduktiva forskningsansatsen. Denzin (2009) framhåller abduktion som en kombination av induktivt och deduktivt tänkande och Alvesson och

Sköldberg (2008) menar i sin tur att abduktion bygger på empiriska fakta precis som med ett induktivt förhållningssätt, men det avvisar inte heller teoretisk förförståelse och ligger därför också nära ett deduktivt förhållningssätt. Forskare som använder ett abduktivt förhållningssätt har inte ett helt deduktivt hypotetiskt schema i sitt tänkande, men de har inte heller ett helt induktivt tänkande som låter fakta tala för sig själva, enligt Denzin (2009). Fakta talar inte direkt för sig självt utan måste tolkas och Denzin (2009) förklarar hur i det abduktiva förhållningssättet som kombinerar deduktiva och induktiva modeller, forskaren arbetar utifrån konsekvensen tillbaka till orsaken.

Kristallisering

En term som relaterar till användandet av flera datakällor, forskare och teoretiska fokuslinser är *kristallisering* (Ellingson 2008; Tracy 2010), som används i i den övergripande analysen av resultaten från de två studierna och den tidigare forskningen kombineras tillsammans med det teoretiska ramverket. Syftet med att slå samman de olika datakällorna i föreliggande uppsats genom att använda kristallisering är att hitta nya förståelser. Kristallen är en "central imaginär" som överstiger den "styva, fixerade, tvådimensionella" triangeln (Richardson 2000, s. 934) och föreslår vidare att en kristall:

...kombinerar symmetri och substans med en oändlig variation av former, substanser, transmutationer, multidimensionaliteter och infallsvinklar. Kristaller växer, förändras, förändras, men är inte amorfa. Kristaller är prismor som reflekterar externa effekter och bryts inom sig själva, skapar olika färger, mönster och samlingar, som kastar av i olika riktningar. Vad vi ser beror på vår vilovinkel. (s. 934)

Enligt Tracy (2010) uppmuntrar kristallisering forskare att samla in flera typer av data och använda olika metoder, flera forskare och olika teoretiska ramar. Hon fortsätter med att förklara att det kan antas att målet med att använda olika metoder inte är att förse forskare med en mer giltig singular sanning, utan att "...öppna upp för en mer komplex, djupgående, men ändå helt partiell, förståelse av frågan" (Tracy 2010, s. 844).

Etiska överväganden, kvalitet i forskning och uppsatsens begränsningar

En etikansökan har inte skickats till Etikprövningsmyndigheten avseende de två studierna i denna uppsats, eftersom båda studierna inte hade respondenter som var minderåriga eller krävde något särskilt etikprövningstillstånd. Rektorerna i

den andra studien har dock medgivit sitt samtycke efter information om reglementet kring deras rättigheter, avidentifiering av deras personuppgifter samt säkerheten kring hantering av data. Vetenskapsrådet (2017) beskriver vilka regler som krävs för hur forskning kan bedrivas etiskt. Bland annat ska de individer som deltar i forskningen ha ett individuellt skydd där de är skyddade från skador och kränkningar och att det ska vara etiskt motiverat att bedriva forskningen som uppfyller forskningskravet. Vidare beskrivs vikten av att uppfylla informationskravet, där forskaren informerar berörda om syftet med forskningen, att tillstånd erhållits och samtyckeskravet är uppfyllt, att materialet endast används för att -söksyften i användningskravet och att deltagarnas information behandlas konfidentiellt. Vetenskapsrådet (2017) menar att forskning är av stor betydelse för samhället och medborgarna genom de förbättringar av till exempel hälsa, miljö och livskvalitet som den kan leda till. Bland annat betonas vikten av att skydda försökspersoner och informanter från skador eller kränkningar i samband med bedrivande av forskning. Riktlinjerna som sammanfattats under rubrikerna om etiska överväganden tidigare under de två studierna i föreliggande uppsats har också beaktats. I båda datainsamlingarna låg All European Academies (2018) fyra etiska grundprinciper till grund: *informationskravet*, *samtyckeskravet*, *konfidentialitetskravet* och *nyttjandekravet*.

Tracy (2010) beskriver hur nyckelmarkörerna för kvalitet i kvalitativ forskning inkluderar bland annat *uppriktighet* och *trovärdighet*. När det gäller nyckelmarkören uppriktighet menar Tracy (2010) att en sådan studie kännetecknas av självreflektion kring subjektiva värderingar, fördomar och böjelser hos forskaren/forskarna, samt transparens om metoder och utmaningar. Om nyckelmarkören trovärdighet menar Tracy (2010) att en studie präglas av fyllig beskrivning, konkreta detaljer, förklaringar av icke-textuell kunskap där det visas snarare än att berättas, såväl som triangulering eller kristallisering. Trovärdighet så som i *multivokalitet*, vilket innebär flera och varierande röster i den kvalitativa rapporten och analysen, samt *medlemsreflektioner*, där forskaren söker input under processerna för att analysera data och ta fram forskningen. Detta forskningsprojekt gjordes under ledning och vägledning av seniora forskare innebar ett kontinuerligt stöd, ifrågasättande, planering och feedback under forskningsprocessen. Projektets trovärdighet anses vara god, då empirin är original och samlad, hanterad och analyserad i kända och erkända former. Uppgifterna har samlats in i former som är föränderliga, det vill säga baserat på människors erfarenheter på olika vis. Exempelvis så begränsades den andra studien på olika sätt av pandemin Covid-19, som kom mitt under

datainsamlingen. Detta innebar att de planerade fysiska mötena, liksom planerade observationer, inte kunde genomföras. Datainsamlingen fick då ske via virtuella möten och påverkades mer än planerat utifrån respondenternas olika erfarenheter och tankar, då observationer skulle innebära ytterligare en dimension och ett komplement till vad som sagts i intervjuerna. Det mindre urvalet i den andra studien anses också utgöra en viss begränsning och benämns från denna aspekt i studie två som en fallstudie. En fallstudie ger i detta fall en ögonblicksbild av hur en viss verklighet kan te sig. Dessa begränsningar påverkar dock uppsatsen till viss del och begränsar således möjligheten att generalisera resultaten i viss utsträckning.

Summering av uppsatsens övergripande resultat och diskussion

I denna del har resultaten från båda studierna slagits samman och de övergripande slutsatserna i föreliggande uppsats är följande:

- ❖ I båda studierna i föreliggande uppsats tolkades inkluderings-begreppet främst som elevernas individuella upplevelse om att de är socialt accepterade och har akademisk tillgång till utbildningen och läroplanen.

I den första studien, forskningsöversikten, kunde två perspektiv av inkluderingsbegreppet ses: A. Socialt accepterad i sammanhanget och socialt deltagande i gruppen och i skolan; ett mer elevorienterat perspektiv, samt B. Fysisk placering i vanliga klasser, vilket leder till socialt deltagande, vilket anses baseras mer på ett vuxenperspektiv. En stor del av de granskade studierna hade perspektivet A. I den andra studien i uppsatsen uttrycker de intervjuade rektorerna samstämmigt begreppet inkludering som att eleverna har en egen känsla av sammanhang, att de är socialt accepterade och har tillgång till utbildningen och läroplanen.

- ❖ I båda studierna uppstår frågan om vems perspektiv är det rådande i beslutsprocesser i skolan och i skolväsendet. Det behövs en diskussion och ett ifrågasättande av rådande perspektiv om de skapar och utvecklar attityder i skolan som möter elevernas mångfald, eller om dessa perspektiv leder till en syn på att eleverna ska utvecklas till välvilliga individer som passar in i förutbestämda mallar och samhällsnormerna.

I den första studien uppstår dessa två frågor i diskussionen där det noteras att elevernas och de vuxnas perspektiv ibland går isär, vilket väcker frågor om vems perspektiv som råder i beslutsfattandet. I den andra studien uppstår dessa frågor också när rektorerna framhåller vikten av att få tillgång till elevernas uppfattningar samt deras betoning av en differentierad utbildning och att ha ett differentierat förhållningssätt gentemot eleverna.

- ❖ Rektorer kan ibland känna en viss ensamhet och sårbarhet i förhållande till sina överordnade, de får ibland kämpa för sina elever och sin personal mot beslutsfattare högre upp i utbildningshierarkin. Rektorer har dock stor frihet i sin utövning, konstateras i den andra studien och det innebär ett dynamiskt samspel mellan dessa två: kamp och ansvar. Samtidigt är rektorer de som har jurisdiktionen att fungera som förändringsagenter och initiativtagare för att stärka skolkulturen och utveckla en gemensam vision om inkludering, samt att underlätta utvecklingen av flexibla strukturer för att utforma en inkluderande skola för elever med AST.

Rektorerna i den andra studien lyfter fram en känsla av ensamhet, att ha ett stort ansvar gentemot samhället, eleverna och deras familjer samt deras personal i skolan. Ibland kolliderar dessa olika aspekter av ansvar, men ansvaret gentemot eleverna kommer alltid först. Att vara rektor och ledare är ett kall, menar rektorerna i den andra studien. I båda studierna ses det som viktigt att skapa en skolorganisation där personalen har samma värderingar och visioner om inkludering. Detta uttrycks i den första studien: "inkludering i hela skolan kräver att all personal har en tydlig och gemensam förståelse för målen och förväntningarna på inkludering inom sin skola, och dessa måste stödjas av högsta ledningen" (Lüddeckens 2020, s. 8). I den andra studien tas detta också upp i rektorernas reflektioner över sin egen roll och deras ansvar: "...förbättra skolkulturen i deras organisationer mot en gemensam vision om inkludering i att utveckla en skola för alla elever" (Lüddeckens et al. 2021). Enligt tidigare forskning (Barnard et al. 2000; Yu et al. 2002; Day et al. 2006; Eldara et al. 2010; Huang & Wheeler 2007; Horrocks et al. 2008; Humphrey & Symes; 2014, Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020) ses en gemensam förståelse för inkludering som viktig i en skola. "En helhetsbild av inkludering" kräver att personalen har en tydlig och delad förståelse för målen och förväntningarna på inkludering inom sin skola, och dessa måste stödjas av ledarskap och ledningen för skolan, menar Horrocks et al. (2008). Detta stöds i båda studierna i föreliggande uppsats (Lüddeckens 2020; Lüddeckens et al. 2021) och frågan om kommunikation behöver lyftas och stöd till rektorer ses som viktigt.

- ❖ Bristen på ansvarstagande eller förskjutningen av ansvar bland de vuxna inom skolsystemet blir ett hinder för elevers lärande. Det föreslås vara av vikt att skolpersonal delar detta ansvar på alla nivåer, både inom skolorganisationen, på policynivå och i det omgivande samhället.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018) och Óskarsdóttir et al. (2020) framhåller vikten av ansvarighet och att underlätta detta genom hela systemet. Resultaten i den andra studien i denna uppsats (Lüddeckens et al. 2021) stöttar detta då några av rektorerna i den andra studien diskuterar detta i relation till inkluderingsbegreppet. Uppsatsens resultat, slutsatser och kunskapsbidrag summeras här i tabell 2:

Tabell 2: En översikt över uppsatsens resultat, slutsatser och kunskapsbidrag.

Dataset	Studie I	Studie II
Procedur	Systematisk forskningsöversikt	Intervjuer med rektorer
Resultat	Möjligheterna till interaktion i skolan för elever med AST behövs noggrant planeras, snarare än att slumpmässigt hoppas att det kommer att hända. Vikten av att ha gemensamma värderingar och samsyn i skolan om vad inkludering är.	Inkludering beskrivs som elevernas egen känsla av delaktighet i skolan. Rektorerna uttrycker en känsla av ensamhet och sårbarhet i förhållande till sina överordnade och behöver ibland få kämpa för sina elever och sin personal. Bristen på ansvarsskyldighet, eller förskjutningen av ansvar från de vuxna inom skolsystemet, ses i denna studie som ett hinder för lärandet hos elever med AST
Slutsatser	Inkorporera elevens röst i olika beslutsprocesser. För att få en tillgänglig skola för alla elever behöver de vuxna organisera skolan med flexibilitet, vilket på så sätt kan motivera och uppmuntra elever med AST att delta i utbildningen och i det sociala livet i skolan.	Det föreslås vara viktigt att beakta elevens perspektiv i beslutsprocesser. Det föreslås vara viktigt att se över organisatoriska processer och beslutsprocesser hos skolans huvudmän och beslutsfattare, för att hitta eventuella fallgropar som kan försvåra för rektorer att fatta väl avvägda beslut. Resultaten stödjer tidigare forskning som betonar vikten av gemensamma värderingar och solida strukturer i genomförandet av inkluderande utbildning som involverar elever med AST.
Kunskapsbidrag		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Inkludering tolkas som elevernas upplevelse av att de är socialt accepterade och har akademisk tillgång till utbildningen och läroplanen. ❖ En känsla av ensamhet i förhållande till sina överordnade kan ses hos rektorer, de behöver kämpa för sina elever och sin personal mot beslutsfattare högre upp i utbildningshierarkin. Samtidigt konstateras att rektorer har stor frihet i sin praktik. Detta innebär ett dynamiskt samspel mellan dessa två: kamp och ansvar. Frågor om brister i kommunikation och stöd till rektorer behöver diskuteras. ❖ Det behövs en diskussion om vems perspektiv som är det rådande i beslutsprocesser i skolan och inom skolsystemet. ❖ Det föreslås vara av vikt att skolpersonal delar ansvaret för alla elever på alla nivåer.

Summering och avslutande reflektioner utifrån de fyra dimensionerna

När rektorer ställs inför att strukturera och organisera skoldagen för elever med AST i en inkluderande skola ställs de, enligt resultaten i uppsatsen, inför många dilemman på både övergripande och individuell nivå. Av a.) *komplexiteten och sammanhanget* av de övergripande resultaten i föreliggande uppsats i fråga, hänvisas till vikten av att utveckla strukturer för att utveckla värderingar och delad förståelse bland de vuxna om vad inkludering är. Här ses även en komplexitet i att genomföra en differentierad utbildning/undervisning och en komplexitet i diskussionen om vilka perspektiv som råder i skolan såväl som i hela diskursen om skolan. En komplexitet är också att ta elevperspektivet i beaktande i beslutsprocesser. Det låter enkelt ur ett demokratiperspektiv, men ur ett individperspektiv: är beslutet alltid fattat i majoritet, taget i demokratins anda, alltid det bästa för den enskilda eleven, i det här fallet eleven med AST? Resultaten i uppsatsen pekar på vikten av att utveckla strukturer för att säkerhetsställa att elevens perspektiv finns med när beslut tas och att rum för individuell flexibilitet ges.

I diskussionen om b.) *historien och dess processer* lyfter de övergripande resultaten fram och diskuterar rektorernas stundtals känsla av ensamhet och exponering i förhållande till sina överordnade. Har rektorer i allmänhet rätt tillgång till stöd från styrdokument för att utveckla sin autonomi och ansvarighet och har de möjlighet att utöva ett hållbart ledarskap? Enligt den något begränsade data i den andra studien, inte alltid, men de har en ganska stor frihet i sitt agerande. Dessutom pekar resultaten på vikten av att utveckla solida strukturer i skolan som är tillräckligt flexibla. Processerna för att göra detta och förbättra personalens kunskaper och få gemensamma värderingar kräver tid och engagemang.

Under c.) *makt och maktrelationer* handlar diskussionerna om rådande perspektiv, vikten av ansvarighet och autenticitet bland de vuxna i skolan. Den tar också upp frågan om vart vi som samhälle vill ta vägen genom att fråga om vi vill skapa och utveckla attityder i skolan som möter elevernas mångfald, eller vill vi skapa välvilliga individer som passar in i med förutbestämda samhällsnormer och mallar vi sätter upp?

Slutligen, i diskussionen om d.) *de samhällseliga faktorerna utanför skolan* i relation till inkluderande utbildning som involverar elever med AST, så föreslås att den politiska diskursen vara av betydelse. Sverige är en demokrati med

demokratiska ideal, men byråkratiska processer och beslut högre upp i styrkedjan, på de politiska och organisatoriska nivåerna, påverkar givetvis individnivån, både de som arbetar i skolan så som den enskilde eleven. Ibland kan dessa processer dock bli kontraproduktiva. De är initialt välmenande, men till exempel den politiska kontrollen och administrationen/organisationen av skolan som tar tid, kan kanske i slutändan ge effekter på lärarnas förmåga att få möjlighet att genomföra en kvalitativ undervisning rent tidsmässigt och kanske till och med bli begränsande när det kommer till rättvis bedömning. Tidigare forskning menar att kunskapen om skolan bland beslutsfattare är avgörande, vilket resultatet i uppsatsen stöttar. Uppsatsens kunskapsbidrag är att vad som påverkar beslutsprocesser och planering gällande elever med AST är parametrar såsom makt, ansvarsfrihet, vuxnas ansvarsskyldighet i styrkedjan och dess mellanrum. Så även rådande sociala normer, värderingar, enskilda professionellas kompetens, erfarenhet, skicklighet, autenticitet och autonomi är också faktorer som påverkar.

Inkluderande utbildning har varit under diskussion i Sverige i flera decennier och är ett ämne som verkar skapa många känslor. Både ideologiska och strukturella diskussioner har förts och inkluderande utbildning i sig verkar också vara känsligt för hur diskursen förs i samhället. Ett sådant exempel är då Magnússon et al. (2022) ifrågasätter att den svenska regeringen delar ut medel till kommunala och privata huvudmän med riktade bidrag som kan sökas för att starta specialpedagogiska grupper, inklusive grupper för elever med neuropsykiatriska svårigheter. De menar att det riktade bidraget, som de ser som ett politiskt utspel (i valtider, författarens påpekande), riskerar att legitimera och konsolidera segregerade särskilda undervisningsgrupper. Magnússon et al. (2022) hänvisar här till att såväl statliga utredningar som forskning visar att särskilda undervisningsgrupper och segregerade skolplaceringar bör användas med stor försiktighet, eftersom det finns flera risker med placering i segregerade undervisningsmiljöer, såsom stigmatisering och andra faktorer som riskerar att påverka elevernas självkänsla och motivation. Förutom att segregerade undervisningsgrupper saknar vetenskapligt stöd, går detta också mot skollagen och motsätter sig uppfyllandet av de internationella åtaganden Sverige undertecknat, inklusive Barnkonventionen och Agenda 2030, sammanfattar Magnússon et al. (2022).

Ser man på detta fenomen med ett dialektiskt förhållningssätt konstateras att den offentliga retoriken om skolan påverkar allmänhetens syn på skolan. Mitt i detta ska rektorer jonglera med budgetar som inte går ihop, den psykiska ohälsan hos

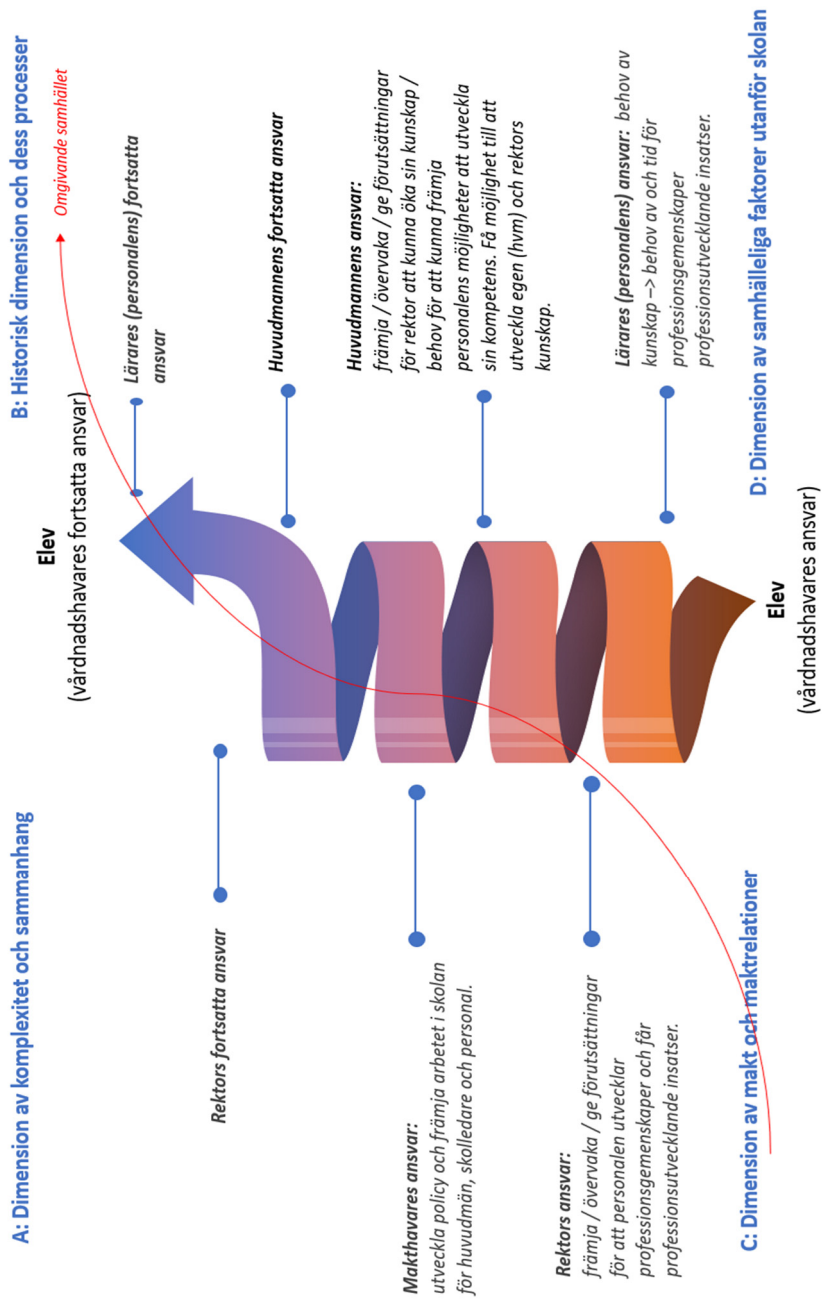
unga ökar delvis på grund av skolmisslyckande, samt pedagogisk personal flyr yrket till följd av besparingar och försämrade arbetsförhållanden. På så vis påverkas skolan och inkluderad utbildning av samhälleliga faktorer utanför skolan och de diskurser som även drivs politiskt. Å ena sidan skiftar dessa diskurser utifrån vem som just då driver på mest och vem innehar den politiska makten. Å andra sidan är skolan som arena sårbar för kortsiktiga förändringar och lösningar. Om inkluderad utbildning ska bli framgångsrik krävs långsiktighet och arbete på flera fronter samtidigt. Exempelvis visar forskningen presenterad i denna uppsats på hur skolpersonal behöver få tid till att utveckla professionsgemenskaper och i dessa utveckla gemensamma synsätt och värderingar (Reiter 1994; Schechter & Feldman 2019), som exempelvis om vad inkludering är och hur inkluderad undervisning kan organiseras (Yu et al. 2002; Horrocks et al. 2008; Óskarsdóttir et al, 2020; Lüddeckens 2020; Lüddeckens et al. 2021). För att det ska kunna ske behövs långsiktighet, uthållighet och ihärdighet, och för att det ska fungera krävs ett hållbart och inkluderande ledarskap av skolan.

Framtida forskning och praktiska implikationer

Forskningen i föreliggande uppsats skulle tjäna på att följas upp av ett fokus på elevperspektivet. Förhoppningsvis kan resultaten av uppsatsen och framtida forskningsprojekt också leda forskningsprojekt i skolan som syftar till att förbättra för yrkesverksamma i skolan i deras möte med elever med ASC, då med ett större fokus på elevperspektivet. Syftet i denna uppsats och kunskapsbidraget i att identifiera de möjligheter, fallgropar och dilemman som kan uppstå när inkluderande utbildning ska organiseras i relation till elever med AST, har analyserats och diskuterats här, men kan med fördel beforskas ytterligare. I denna framtida forskning skulle mer praktisknära forskningsmetoder, såsom aktionsforskning där forskaren mer är en konsult som hjälper till att leda forskningen (Denscombe 2014), vara ett alternativ att använda som inspiration för att utveckla en modell för svensk skolpersonals professionella utveckling i mötet med elever med AST. Denna forskning skulle kunna utföras i olika grundskolemiljöer, i gymnasieskolor och/eller högre utbildningsmiljöer, både specialskolor/resursskolor och ordinarie skolmiljöer, med elevperspektivet som en kontinuerlig förespråkande faktor. Lärare, annan skolpersonal och deras rektorer kan i detta sammanhang bilda samverkande aktionsforskargrupper där de under en viss period utvecklar sina kunskaper, sin undervisning och stöttar varandra, samt organiserar för att möta mångfalden av eleverna. Ett annat

potentiellt forskningsområde är att forska om beslutsfattare och politiker och deras roll i att utforma inkluderande lärmiljöer för elever med AST. Det behövs en närmare koppling mellan forskning och praktik, mellan lärosäte och skola i denna aspekt. Studier av olika juridiska texter och styrdokument i relation till makt och utfallet av denna makt bland eleverna föreslås som ett annat forskningsområde att utforska.

Implikationer för praktiken föreslås föreliggande uppsats kunna bidra med en mer omfattande förståelse av inkluderingsbegreppet i relation till elever med AST. De frågor som ställdes inledningsvis har fått svar men väcker nya frågor som landar mer åt ett maktperspektiv. Rektorerens synpunkter i den andra studien och i diskussionen kan potentiellt initiera ett forum för vidare diskussioner om rektorers arbetsvillkor i förhållande till deras ansvar och förväntningar på dem från det omgivande samhället. Implikationerna för praktiken när det gäller resultaten är också, återigen, vikten av autenticitet och autonomi för alla yrkesverksamma inom skolan och dess intressenter, och utveckling och förbättring av strukturer som underlättar möjligheten att använda elevernas röster i beslutsprocesser. Att samverka mellan olika instanser, hitta strukturer och arbetssätt i skolan i att möta elever med AST föreslås fortfarande att vara ett stort utvecklingsområde.



Figur 4: En uppåtgående (positiv) spiral av ansvar i förhållande till de fyra dimensionerna i den dialektiska approachen (Lüddeckens 2022).

THANKS

And so, thanks to you who made this essay possible.

First, of course, to my children, who give an extreme nerve and meaning to my life. You are like an underlying table tone in everything I do. Who would I ever be without you? Then, thanks to my beloved Mikael, the spice of my life. And thanks to my strong mother and my five bff's; my siblings!

My supervisors Dr. Lotta Anderson and Dr. Daniel Östlund: thank you so much for all your valuable advice. You have shown a great deal of patience with all the twists and turns in this essay and given wise admonitions in interpreting data and texts to make everything a whole.

Dr. Gunnlaugur Magnússon and Dr. Nina Klang, thank you both for the contribution of your knowledge and your reviews in parts of the final process. Thanks to Professor Claes Nilholm for inspiration and for generously sharing knowledge and time.

Thanks to my colleagues at Malmö University (Adrian, Christina, Lisa, Anna-Karin, Eva etc.) and my doctoral teammates in the research school Swedish National Research School Special Education for Teacher Educators (SET), as well as the board of the research school: Professor Mona Holmquist, Professor Jonas Aspelin, Professor Sven Bölte and Professor Peter Karlsudd. Thank you for a great journey, a fantastic learning process and for all excellent feedback. In addition, thanks to the Swedish Research Council (grant no. 2017-06039), who made all this possible.

Johanna in June 2022

REFERENCES

- Ainscow, M., and Booth, T. (2002). *Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools*. Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education.
- Ainscow, M. Booth, T. and Dyson, A. (2006). Inclusion and the standards agenda: negotiating policy pressures in England. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 10(4–5), 295–308.
- Alvesson, M. & Sköldbberg, K. (2008). *Tolkning och reflektion: vetenskapsfilosofi och kvalitativ metod*. [Interpretation and reflection: philosophy of science and qualitative method]. Studentlitteratur.
- Ainscow, M., Slee, R., & Best, M. (2019). *Editorial: The Salamanca Statement: 25 years on*. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 671-676.
- All European Academies (2018). *The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity*. (Revised Edition). ALLEA - All European Academies.
- Amor, A., M., Hagiwara, M., Shogren, K., A., Thompson, J., R., Verdugo, M., A., Burke., K., M., and Aguayo, V. (2019). International perspectives and trends in research on inclusive education: a systematic review. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 23(12), 1277–1295.
- Autism and Asperger Association. (2018). *Report from member survey on schooling*. Demoskop AB.
- Autism and Asperger Association. (2020). *Report from member survey on schooling*. Demoskop AB.
- Ball, S., J., Maguire, M., Braun, A., Hoskins, K., and Perryman, J. (2012). *How schools do policy, policy enactment in secondary schools*. Routledge.
- Barnard, J., Prior, A., and Potter, D. (2000). *Autism and inclusion: is it working?* National Autistic Society.
- Benjamin, S. (2002). Valuing Diversity: A Cliché for the 21st Century? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 6(4),309-323.
- Bergmark, U. (2008). ‘I want people to believe in me, listen when I say something, and remember me’ – how students wish to be treated. *Pastoral Care in Education* 26(4), 267–79.
- Bernstein, B. (1990). *The structuring of pedagogic discourse*. Routledge.

- Baines, A. (2012). Positioning, strategizing, and charming: How students with autism construct identities in relation to disability. *Disability and Society*, 27(4), 547–536.
- Björklund, J. (2018). *Skrota idén om lika för alla – ge fler extra skolar*. [Scrap the idea of equal for all - give more extra school years]. DN-debate. Dagens Nyheter. April 20, 2018. <https://www.dn.se/debatt/skrota-iden-om-lika-for-alla-ge-fler-extra-skolar/> (Retrieved 09/07/2021).
- Bolton, L. (2018). *Effective Learning Strategies to Improve Basic Education Outcomes*. K4D Helpdesk Report. Institute of Development Studies.
- Booth, T., Ainscow, M., and Vaughn, M. (2002). *Index for inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools*. Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, Bristol. <https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Index%20English.pdf> (retrieved 12/12/2019)
- Bourdieu P., & Passeron J. (1990). *Reproduction in Education, Culture and Society*. Arkiv Förlag.
- Bourdieu, P. (2000). *The Weight of the World*. Stanford University Press.
- Brantlinger, E. (1997). Using Ideology: Cases of Nonrecognition of the Politics of Research and Practice in Special Education. *Review of Educational Research*, 67(4), 425-459.
- Burr, V. (2015). *Social constructionism*. Routledge.
- Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2013) *Företagsekonomiska forskningsmetoder*. [Business economics research methods]. Liber AB.
- Byrne, B.M. (1994). Burnout testing for the validity, replication, and invariance of causal structure across the elementary, intermediate, and secondary teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 31(3), 645-673.
- Bölte, S., Leifler, E., Berggren, S., and Borg, A. (2021). Inclusive practice for students with neurodevelopmental disorders in Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal Child Adolescence Psychiatric Psychology*, 29(9), 9-15.
- Cameron, D., and Cook, B. (2013). General education teachers' goals and expectations for their included students with mild and severe disabilities. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 48(1), 18–30.
- Carlsson, R., and Nilholm, C. (2004). Demokrati och inkludering – en begreppsdiskussion. [Democracy and inclusion – a conceptual discussion]. *Utbildning & Demokrati*, 13(2), 77–95.
- Carrington, S. (1999). Inclusion Needs a Different School Culture. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 3(3), 257–268.
- Cherryhomes, C. (1992). Notes on Pragmatism and Scientific Realism. *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 21(6), 13–17
- Chung W., R., L. Darling-Hammond and F. Adamson. (2010). *Professional Development in the United States: Trends and Challenges*. National Staff Development Council.
- Chiner, E., and Cardona, M. C. (2013). Inclusive education in Spain: how do skills, resources, and supports affect regular education teachers' perceptions of inclusion? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(5), 526–541.
- Clark, C., Dyson, A., and Millward, A. (1995). *Towards inclusive schools?* David Fulton.
- Clark, C., Dyson, A., and Millward, A. (red.). (1998). *Theorizing Special Education*. Ruthledge.

- Cole, C., Waldron, N., and Majd, M. (2004). Academic progress of students across inclusive and traditional settings. *Mental Retardation*, 43(2), 136-144.
- Coelli, M., and Green, D. A. (2011). Leadership effects: school principals and student outcomes. *Economics of Education Review*, 31(1), 92-109.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2006a). Sound, presence, and power: 'Student voice' in educational research and reform. *Curriculum Inquiry* 36(4), 359-90.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2006b). 'Change based on what students say': Preparing teachers for a paradoxical model of leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 9(4), 345-58.
- Cummings, C., Dyson, A., & Millward, A. (2003). Participation and Democracy. What's inclusion got to do with it? J. Allen (Red.), *Inclusion, Participation and Democracy. What is the Purpose?* Springer Netherlands.
- Day, C., Gu, Q. and Sammons, P. (2016). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: how successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make a difference, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(2), 221-258.
- Davidson, D., and Algozzine, B. (2002). Administrators' perception of special education law. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 15(2), 43-48.
- Denscombe, M. (2014). *The Good Research Guide: For small-scale social research projects*. Open University Press.
- Dessementet, R. S., & Bless, G. (2013). The impact of including children with intellectual disability in general education classrooms on the academic achievement of their low-, average-, and high achieving peers. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 38(1), 23-30.
- Denzin, N. (2009). *The research Act - A theoretical introduction to sociological Methods*. AldineTransaction
- Dimmock, C., and Walker, A. (2004). A new approach to strategic leadership: learningcentredness, connectivity a cultural context in school design. *School leadership and management*, 24(1), 39-56.
- DiPaola, M.F., and Walther-Thomas, C. (2003). *Principals and special education: The critical role of school leaders*. Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education, University of Florida.
- Dyssegaard, C. B. and Larsen, M. S., (2013). *Evidence on Inclusion. Danish Clearinghouse for Educational Research*. Department of Education, Aarhus University.
- ESRC (Economics and Social Research Council). (2018). ESRC-DFID Research for Policy and Practice: Quality Teaching. ESRC and DFID.
- Eldara, E., Talmora, R., and Wolf-Zukerman, T. (2010). Successes and difficulties in the individual inclusion of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the eyes of their coordinators. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14(1), 97-114.
- Ellingson, L. L. (2008). *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research*. Sage.
- Evans, D., and A. Popova. (2016). What Really Works to Improve Learning in Developing Countries? An Analysis of Divergent Findings in Systematic Reviews. *World Bank Research Observer*, 31(2), 242-270.

- European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. (2018). *Supporting Inclusive School Leadership: Literature Review*. European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education.
- EU on the Equality Index. (2019). <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2020> Retrieved 09/09/2021
- Falkmer, M., Oehlers, K., Granlund, M., and Falkmer, T. (2015). Can you see it too? Observed and self-rated participation in mainstream schools in students with and without autism spectrum disorders. *Developmental Neurorehabilitation*, 18(6), 365–374.
- Ferguson, D. L., Hanreddy, A., and Draxton, S. (2011). Giving Students Voice as a Strategy for Improving Teacher Practice. *London Review of Education*, 9, 55-70.
- Finke, E., McNaughton, D., and Drager, K. (2009). All Children Can and Should Have the Opportunity to Learn: General Education Teachers' Perspectives on Including Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder who Require AAC. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 25(2), 110–122.
- Florian, L. (2014). What counts as evidence of inclusive education? *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 29(3), 286–294.
- Foreman, P. (2008). *Setting the Scene: Teachers and Inclusion*. In *Inclusion in Action*, 2nd ed., edited by P. Foreman, 2–36. Thomson Learning.
- Friesen, J., Hickey, R., and Krauth, B. (2010). Disabled Peers and Academic Achievement. *Education Finance and Policy*, 5(3), 317–348.
- Fullan, M. (1993). *Change Forces. Probing the Depth of Educational Reform*. Falmer Press.
- Haug, P. (1998). *Pedagogiskt dilemma: Specialundervisning*. [Pedagogical dilemma: Special Education]. Skolverket.
- Grissom, J.A., Egalite, A. J., and Lindsay, C. A. (2021). *How principals affect students and schools: A systematic synthesis of two decades of research*. Research Report. Wallace Foundation
- Glickman, C. D. (2002). The courage to lead. *Educational Leadership*, 59(8), 41-p44.
- Guldborg, K. (2010). Educating children on the autism spectrum: Preconditions for inclusion and notions of “best autism practice” in the early years. *British Journal of Special Education*, 37(4), 168–174.
- Gümüş, S., Bellibaş, M. Ş., Esen M., and Gümüş, E. (2018). A systematic review of studies on leadership models in educational research from 1980 to 2014. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 46(1), 25–48
- Göransson, K. and Nilholm, C. (2014). Conceptual Diversities and Empirical Shortcomings - A Critical Analysis of Research on Inclusive Education. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 29(3), 265-280.
- Habermas, J. (1996). *Between fact and norms*. MIT Press.
- Hargreaves, A., and Fink, D. (2004). The seven principles of sustainable leadership. Educational leadership, *Journal of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development*, 61(7): 8-13.
- Heagreaves, A., and O'Connor, M. T. (2018). *Leading Collaborative Professionalism*. Center for Strategic Communication.

- Hebron, J., and Humphrey, N. (2014). Mental health difficulties among young people on the autistic spectrum in mainstream secondary schools: a comparative study. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 14(1), 22–32.
- Held, D. (1997) *Demokratimodeller från klassisk demokrati till demokratisk autonomi*. [Models of democracy from classical democracy to democratic autonomy]. (Göteborg, Daidalos).
- Heihr, T., Pascucci, S., and Pascucci, C. (2017). *A summary of the Evidence in Inclusive Education*. Instituto Alana.
- Hjortlund, T. (2020). Rektors roll i att organisera och leda lärares professionella lärande. [The principal's role in organizing and leading teachers' professional learning]. In Johansson o., and Svedberg, L. (Eds). *Att leda mot skolans mål*. [Leading towards school goals]. 3 ed., p.143-157. Gleerups Utbildning AB.
- Holmqvist, M. E. (2009). Structured flexibility: Six case studies of how children with Autism Diagnosed developmental independency in daily living activities. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 11(3), 175–193.
- Holt, L., Lea, S. and Bowlby, J. (2012a). Emotions and the habitus: Young people with socio-emotional differences (re)producing social, emotional and cultural capital in family and leisure space-times. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 9, 33-41.
- Holt, L., Lea, J., and Bowlby, J. (2012b). Special units for young people on the autistic spectrum in mainstream schools: sites of normalization, abnormalisation, inclusion, and exclusion. *Environment and Planning A*, 44(9), 2191-2206.
- Holt, L., Bowlby, J., & Lea, J. (2019). Disability, special educational needs, class, capitals, and segregation in schools: A population geography perspective. *Population in Space and Time* 25(4), e2229.
- Horrocks, J. L., White, G., and Roberts, L. (2008). Principals' attitudes regarding inclusion of children with autism in Pennsylvania public schools. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 38(8), 1462–1473.
- Huang, A., & Wheeler, J. (2007). Including Children with Autism in General Education in China. *Childhood Education*, 83(6), 356–360.
- Humphrey, N., and Symes, W. (2014). Inclusive education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in secondary mainstream schools: Teacher attitudes, experience and knowledge. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(1), 32–46.
- Humphrey, N., and Symes, W. (2014). Inclusive education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in secondary mainstream schools: teacher attitudes, experience and knowledge. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(1), 32–46.
- Jarl, M., Blossning, U., and Andersson, K. (2017). *Att organisera skolframgång*. [Organizing school success]. Natur och kultur.
- Johansson, O., and Ärlestig, H. (2020). Skolans styrning – om styrkedjan och dess mellanrum. [School governance - about the chain of command and its spaces]. In Johansson o., and Svedberg, L. (Eds). *Att leda mot skolans mål*. [Leading towards school goals]. 3 ed. P. 143-157. Gleerups Utbildning AB.

- Kalambouka, A., Farrell, P., Dyson, A., and Kaplan, I. (2007). The impact of placing pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools on the achievement of their peers, *Educational Research*, 49(4), 365-382.
- Katsiyannis, A., Conderman, G., and Franks, D. J. (1995). State Practices on Inclusion: A National Review. *Remedial and Special Education* 16(5), 279-287.
- Kuhl, S., P. Pagliano and H. Boon. (2015). 'In the Too Hard Basket': Issues Faced by 20 Rural Australian Teachers When Students with Disabilities are Included in Their Secondary Classes. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 19 (7), 697-709.
- Kulick, D. (2015). The problem of speaking for others redux: Insistence on disclosure and the ethics of engagement. *Knowledge Cultures*, 3(6), 14-33.
- Lamb, P., Firkbank, D., and Aldous, D. (2016). Capturing the world of physical education through the eyes of children with autism spectrum disorders. *Sport, Education and Society*, 21(5), 698-722.
- Liethwood, K., and Jantzi, D. (2006). Transformational school leadership for large-scale reform. Effects on students, teachers and their classroom practices. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 17(2), 201-227.
- Lüddeckens, J. (2020). Approaches to Inclusion and Social Participation in School for Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) — a Systematic Research Review. *Review Journal Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 8, p. 37-50.
- Lüddeckens, J., Anderson, L., and Östlund, D. (2021). Principals' perspectives of inclusive education involving students with autism spectrum conditions – a Swedish case study, *Journal of Educational Administration*, 60(2), 207-221.
- Magnússon, Gunnlaugur (2015). *Traditions and Challenges: Special Support in Swedish Independent Compulsory Schools*. Diss. Västerås: Mälardalen University.
- Magnússon, Gunnlaugur. (2019a). An amalgam of ideals: Images of Inclusion in the Salamanca Statement. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 23(7-8), 677-690.
- Magnússon, G. (2019b). *Har inkluderingen gått för långt?* [Has the inclusion gone too far?] <https://www.skolaochsamhalle.se/flode/skolpolitik/gunnlaugur-magnusson-har-inkluderingen-gatt-for-langt/>
- Magnússon, G., Malmqvist, J., Almqvist J., Andersson, A., Asp-Onsjö, L., Backman, Y., Bagger, A., Barow, T., Basic, G., Bengtsson, K., Berhanu, G., Berthén, D., Emanuelsson, I., Evaldsson, E., Gardelli, V., Gardelli, Å., Giota, J., Göransson, K., Hansson S., Hellberg, K., Hirsh, Å., Hjärne, E., Höstfält, G., Karlsudd, P., Lillvist, A., & Lindqvist, G. (2022). *Nytt bidrag ökar skolsegregation och minskar likvärdighet*. [New grant increases school segregation and reduces equality]. <https://www.dagensarena.se/opinion/nytt-bidrag-okar-skolsegregation-och-minskar-likvardighet/>
- McGillicuddy, S., and G. M. O'Donnell. (2014). Teaching Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Mainstream Post-primary Schools in the Republic of Ireland. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 18(4), 323-344.
- Merry, M S., (2020) Do Inclusion Policies Deliver Educational Justice for Children with Autism? An Ethical Analysis. *Journal of school choice*, vol 14(1), s.9-25.

- Messiou, K. (2017). Research in the field of inclusive education: time for a rethink? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 21(2), 146-159.
- Messiou, K. (2019). The missing voices: students as a catalyst for promoting inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 23(7-8), 768-781.
- Meyer, A., Rose, D-H & Gordon, D. (2014). *Universal Design for Learning, theory and practice*. CAST Professional Publishing.
- Moos, L. and Merok Paulsen, J. (2014). *School boards in the governance process*. Springer.
- Mulford, B., and Silins, H. (2003). Leadership for organizational learning and improved student outcomes – What do we know? *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(2), 175-195.
- Myles, B. S. (2005). *Children and youth with Asperger syndrome: strategies for success in inclusive settings*. Corwin Press.
- Nieto, S., and Bode, P. (2018). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural Education* (7th edition. ed.). New York: Pearson.
- Nilholm, C. (2003). *Perspektiv på specialpedagogik*. [Perspectives on Special Education]. Studentlitteratur.
- Nilholm, C. (2006). Special education, inclusion and democracy. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 21(4), 431–445.
- Nilholm, C. and Göransson, K. (2017). What is meant by inclusion? – an analysis of high impact research in North America and Europe. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 32(3), 437–451.
- Norberg, K., and Johansson, O. (2018). Det pedagogiska ledarskapets etiska dimension. [The ethical dimension of the pedagogical leadership]. In Törnsén M., and Ärlestig, H. *Ledarskap i centrum- om rector och förskolechef*. [Leadership in the center - about the principal and preschool director]. Malmö: Gleerups Utbildning AB.
- O’Hanlon, C. (2003). *Educational Inclusion as Action Research: An Interpretive Discourse*. Open University Press.
- Óskarsdóttir, E., Donnelly, V., Turner-Cmuchal, M., and Florian, L. (2020). Inclusive school leaders – their role in raising the achievement of all learners. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 58(5), 521–537.
- Oliver, M. (1992). Changing the social relations of research production. *Disability, Handicap and Society*, 17(2), 101–114.
- Patel, R. & Davidson, B. (2011). *Forskningsmetodikens grunder: att planera, genomföra och rapportera en undersökning*. [Fundamentals of research methodology: to plan, carry out and report on a study]. Studentlitteratur.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. Uppl. 3. London: SAGE.
- Reiter, S. (1994). *Special education: Methods and basic principles*. The Open University.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 923-948). Sage.

- Roberts, J., Webster A., (2019) Including students with autism in schools: a whole school approach to improve outcomes for students with autism. *International journal of Inclusive Education*. (Published online 16 Jan 2020).
- Rosso, E. (2016). Brief report: Coaching adolescents with autism spectrum disorder in aschool-based multi-sport program. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 46(7), 2526–2531.
- Rudduck, J., and M. Fielding. (2006). Student voice and the perils of popularity. *Educational Review* 58(2) 219–31.
- Saggers, B., Y. S. Hwang, and K. L. Mercer. (2011). Your Voice Counts: Listening to the Voice of High School Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Australasian Journal of Special Education*. 35(2), 173–190.
- Sagun-Ongtangco, K., Medallon, K G., Tan, A J., (2018) Inclusive classrooms: making it work for peers of children with disability. *International journal of Inclusive Education*. (Published online 24 Jan 2019).
- Salend, S. J., and Duhaney, L. M. G. (1999). The Impact of Inclusion on Students With and Without Disabilities and Their Educators. *Remedial and Special Education*, 20(2), 114–126.
- Schechter C., and Feldman, L. (2019). The Principal's Role in Professional Learning Community in a Special Education School Serving Pupils with Autism. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 32(1), 17-28
- SFS (Swedish Code of Statutes) 2010:800. (2010). Swedish Higher Education Act.
- Sharma, U., Forlin, C., and Loreman, T. (2008). Impact of training on pre-service teachers' attitudes and concerns about inclusive education and sentiments about persons with disabilities. *Disability & Society*, 23(7), 773–785.
- Skrtic, T. (1991). *Behind special education*. Love Publishing Company.
- Skrtic, T. (1995). *Disability and democracy: reconstructing (special)education for postmodernity*. Teachers College Press.
- Smyth, J. (2006). 'When students have power': Student engagement, student voice, and the possibility for school reform around 'dropping out' of school. *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 9(4), 285–98.
- Snelgrove, S. (2005). Bad, Mad and Sad: Developing a Methodology of Inclusion and a Pedagogy for Researching Students with Intellectual Disabilities. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 9(3), 313–329.
- Syriopoulou-Delli, C. K., Polychronopoulou, S. A., Kolaitis, G. A., and Antoniou, A.-S. G. (2019). Views of Teachers on Anxiety Symptoms in Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 49(2), 704–720
- Sundström, E., and Ahlström B. (2018). Rektorer i korselden - rektorers upplevelser av stöd, krav och eget beslutsutrymme. [Principals in the crossfire - principals' experiences of support, requirements, and their own decision-making space]. In Törnsén M., and Ärlestig, H. *Ledarskap i centrum- om rector och förskolechef*. [Leadership in the center - about the principal and preschool director]. Gleerups Utbildning AB.
- Starrat, R. J. (2004). *Ethical leadership*. Jossey-Bass.

- Stoll, L., Fink, D., and Earl, L. (2002). *It's About Learning (and It's About Time)*. Routledge/Falmer.
- Symeonidou, S., ed. (2018). *Evidence of the Link Between Inclusive Education and Social Inclusion: A Review of the Literature*. European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education.
- Tetler, S. and Balzer, K. (2011). Educational Participation: The Issue of Students' Voices. *London Review of Education*, 9(3), 333–344.
- The right to education. (2022). *Föräldranätverk: "Vi accepterar inte att våra barn döms till utanförskap"* [Parent network: "We do not accept that our children are sentenced to exclusion"]. <https://www.altinget.se/artikel/foraldranatverk-vi-accepterar-inte-att-vaara-barn-doms-till-utanforskap>
- The Swedish Research Council. (2017). *Good research practice*. https://www.vr.se/download/18.5639980c162791bbfe697882/1555334908942/Good-Research-Practice_VR_2017.pdf Retrieved 09/09/2021.
- The Swedish School Inspectorate. (2012, 2016). *Omfattande ogiltig frånvaro i Sveriges grundskolor*. [Extensive invalid absence in Swedish primary schools]. Report/quality control: 45. Stockholm: Skolinspektionen.
- Tracy, S. (2010). Qualitative Quality: Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), p. 837-851.
- UNESCO. (1994). *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000098427> Retrieved 03-30-2000
- UNESCO. (2000). *The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: meeting our collective commitments (including six regional frameworks for action)*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000121147> Retrieved 03-27-2022
- Warren, A., Buckingham, K., and Parsons, S. (2020). Everyday experiences of inclusion in Primary resourced provision: the voices of autistic pupils and their teachers, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*.
- Wenger-Trayner, E., Fenton-O'Creedy, M., Hutchinson, S., Kubiak, C., and Wenger-Trayner, B. (2015). *Learning in landscapes of practice: Boundaries, identity, and knowledgeability in practice-based learning*. Routledge.
- Yin, R. (2013). *Kvalitativ forskning från start till mål*. [Qualitative research from start to finish]. Studentlitteratur.
- Yssel, N., Koch, K., and Merbler, J., B. (2002) Professional development schools and special education: A promising partnership? *The Teacher Educator*, 38(2), 141-150.
- Yu, H., Leithwood, K., and Jantzi, D. (2002). The effects of transformational leadership on teachers commitment to change in Hong Kong. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 40(4), 368-389.
- Zoniou-Sideri, A., E. Deropoulou-Derou, P. Karagianni and I. Spandagou. (2006). Inclusive Discourse in Greece: Strong Voices, Weak Policies. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 10(2–3), 279–291.

APPENDIX 1 (SWEDISH)

LÄRANDE OCH SAMHÄLLE



Skolutveckling och Ledarskap



Inbjudan och samtycke till medverkan i

forskningsstudie

Studiens namn: *En tillgänglig skola och utbildning för elever med AST*

[Graduate School in Special Education
for Teachers Educators](#)

Mitt namn är Johanna Lüddeckens och jag är doktorand i specialpedagogik vid Malmö Universitet. Min pågående avhandling handlar om hur man i skolan organiserar inkluderad utbildning och tillgängliggör skolan för elever med Autismspektrumtillstånd (AST) och ökar deras deltagande. I den här delstudien undersöker jag detta ur ett rektorsperspektiv med att intervjua rektorer. Du som deltar kommer att bli tillfrågad att bli intervjuad vid minst tre tillfällen.

Jag kommer att spela in intervjuer med ljudinspelning och föra anteckningar. I anteckningarna avidentifierar jag personer med påhittade namn och ljudfilerna spelas in med utrustning som inte är uppkopplad mot internet. Alla insamlade personuppgifter i form av anteckningar och ljudklipp lagras på hemkatalogen på Malmö Universitets skyddade server. Samtyckesblanketterna samlas in och lagras i pappersform på Malmö Universitet och det insamlade materialet har endast jag och mina två handledare tillgång till.

Studien genomförs enligt Vetenskapsrådets forskningsetiska principer i följande avseenden:

- Varje deltagare har rätt att avbryta sin medverkan när som helst, utan några negativa konsekvenser.

- De deltagande eleverna kommer att tillfrågas inför materialinsamlingen och har möjlighet att avböja medverkan i studien.
- Deltagarna kommer att avidentifieras i det pågående och i det färdiga arbetet.
- Materialet kommer enbart att användas för aktuell studie och kommer att förstöras när denna är examinerad.

Jag är tillgänglig både på mejl och på telefon för mer information.

Välkommen att delta!

Hälsningar

Johanna Lüddeckens

Doktorand i specialpedagogik på Malmö Universitet

Forskarskolan SET: *Graduate School in Special Education for Teachers Educators*

Underskrift

Medverkan baseras på samtycke och detta samtycke kan när som helst återkallas. Malmö Universitet är personuppgiftsansvarig för behandlingen och du kan ta del av de uppgifter som samlats in genom att kontakta kursledaren på kursen. Skulle du ha ytterligare frågor kan du vända dig till universitetets Dataskyddsombud (se nedan).

Datum:

Deltagarens underskrift:

.....

Namnförtydligande:

.....

Information om Malmö Universitets behandling av personuppgifter

Personuppgiftsansvarig

Malmö Universitet

Dataskyddsombud

dataskyddsombud@mau.se

Typ av personuppgifter	Namn, anteckning av lärandesituation och/eller ljudklipp samt ditt samtycke till att Malmö Universitet behandlar dessa personuppgifter.
Ändamål med behandlingen	För att möjliggöra intervjustudie av rektorer.
Rättslig grund för behandling	Ditt samtycke.
Mottagare	Personuppgifterna kommer endast användas i forskningssyfte inom ramen för den utbildningsvetenskapliga forskningen vid Malmö Universitet och kommer inte att spridas vidare till någon annan mottagare.
Lagringstid	Malmö Universitet kommer spara dina personuppgifter så länge de behövs för ovan angivet ändamål eller till dess att du återkallar ditt samtycke. Efter genomförd kurs/program kommer personuppgifterna att raderas. Malmö Universitet kan dock i vissa fall bli skyldiga att arkivera och spara personuppgifter enligt Arkivlagen och Riksarkivets föreskrifter.
Dina rättigheter	Du har rätt att kontakta Malmö Universitet för att 1) få information om vilka uppgifter Malmö Universitet har om dig och 2) begära rättelse av dina uppgifter. Vidare, och under de förutsättningar som närmare anges i dataskyddslagstiftningen, har du rätt att 3) begära radering av dina

uppgifter, 4) begära en överföring av dina uppgifter (dataportabilitet), eller 5) begära att Malmö Universitet begränsar behandlingen av dina uppgifter. När Malmö Universitet behandlar personuppgifter med stöd av ditt samtycke, har du rätt att när som helst återkalla ditt samtycke genom skriftligt meddelande till Malmö Universitet. Du har rätt att inge klagomål om Malmö Universitets behandling av dina personuppgifter genom att kontakta Datainspektionen, Box 8114, 104 20 Stockholm.

APPENDIX 1 (ENGLISH)



EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

School development and Leadership

[Graduate School in Special Education for](#)

[Teachers Educators](#)



Invitation and consent to participate in a research study

The name of the study: *Accessible school and education for students with ASC*

My name is Johanna Lüddeckens, and I am a doctoral student in special education at Malmö University. My current thesis is about the way inclusive education is organized in schools and how schools are made accessible to students with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) and how their participation could be increased. In this substudy, these issues are examined by interviewing principals in order to better understand their perspective. Principals who participate will be interviewed on at least three occasions.

I will record interviews using audio recording and also take written notes. In the notes, identities will be anonymized with fictitious names and the audio files will be recorded with equipment that is not connected to the internet. All collected personal data in the form of notes and sound files is stored in the home directory on Malmö University's protected server. Consent forms are collected and stored in paper form at Malmö University and the material is only available to me and my two supervisors.

The study is carried out in accordance with the Swedish Research Council's research ethics principles according to the following aspects:

- Each participant has the right to cancel their participation at any time, without any negative consequences.

- The participating students will be asked before the material collection and have the opportunity to decline participation in the study.
- The participants will be anonymized during the research and in the finished work.
- The material will only be used for the current study and will be destroyed after the doctoral examination.

I am available both by email and by phone for more information.

I look forward to your participation

Best regards

Johanna Lüddeckens

PhD student in Special Education, Malmö University

Research school SET: *Graduate School in Special Education for Teachers Educators*

Signature

Participation is based on consent and this consent can be revoked at any time. Malmö University is responsible for personal data for the processing, and you can access the information collected by contacting the course leader of the course. Should you have further questions, please can contact the Data Protection Officer of the university (see below).

Date:

Signature:

.....

Name:

.....

Information about the processing of personal data by Malmö University

Data Protection Manager

Malmö Universitet

Data Protection Officer

dataskyddsbud@mau.se

Type of personal data	Name, notes on learning situations and/or sound files and your consent to Malmö University processing this personal data.
Purpose of the treatment	To enable interviews of principals and study of this material.
Legal basis for treatment	Your consent.
Receiver	The personal data will only be used for research purposes within the framework of educational science research at Malmö University and will not be disseminated to any other recipient.
Storage time	Malmö University will save your personal data for as long as it is needed for the above purposes or until you revoke your consent. After completing the course/program, the personal data will be deleted. However, Malmö University may, in some cases, be obliged to archive and save personal data in accordance with the Archives Act and the National Archive regulations.

Your rights

You have the right to contact Malmö University to 1) receive information about what information Malmö University has about you and 2) request correction of your information. Furthermore, and under the conditions specified in the data protection legislation, you have the right to 3) request the deletion of your data, 4) request a transfer of your data (data portability), or 5) request that Malmö University restrict the processing of your data. When Malmö University processes personal data with the support of your consent, you have the right to revoke your consent at any time by written notice to Malmö University. You have the right to lodge a complaint about Malmö University's processing of your personal data by contacting the Swedish Data Inspectorate, Box 8114, 104 20 Stockholm.

I



Approaches to Inclusion and Social Participation in School for Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC)—a Systematic Research Review

Johanna Lüddeckens¹

Received: 11 January 2019 / Accepted: 10 April 2020
© The Author(s) 2020

Abstract

This systematic research review identifies approaches of inclusive education concerning adolescents with autism spectrum (ASC) without intellectual disability (ID). The definitions of inclusion, whose perspectives are taken into account, approaches, and the implications suggested for best practices are reviewed in the articles included in this study. The results show how inclusion is defined as a sense of social acceptance and an approach that physical placement in a regular class can lead to social participation. Taking into account students' perspectives is seen as important. Implications for best practice include information on how to improve school personnel's reflections on their responsibilities and expectations of students with disabilities and points to difficulties for teachers in meeting the diversity of students in the classroom.

Keywords Autism spectrum conditions · Inclusive education · Social participation · Perspectives · Approach

Introduction

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018) states that inclusive education and social participation in school are the most important contributing factors for people with disabilities' future social participation in society. Although there are different definitions of the term inclusion in the research, inclusion tends to be identified as students with disabilities being educated in the same environment as their typically developed (TD) peers (Kurth and Mastergeorge 2010; Mesibov and Shea 1996; Norwich 2005; Reed and Osborne 2014). This study focuses on examining the concept of inclusion in school regarding students with autism spectrum conditions (ASC) without intellectual disability (ID) in inclusive school settings; in this article defined as individuals diagnosed with for instance Atypical Autism or Asperger syndrome: individuals with the intelligence quotient [IQ] > 70. Unfortunately, this systematic review is unable to cover the vast field of special education;

hence, this search is limited to excluding individuals with ID.

An increasing number of adults with autism became affected by the closure of long-term care hospitals in the UK during the 1970s and 1980s, which, according to Wolf (2004), lead to an increased awareness of the needs of individuals with ASC. This also has led to an increased activity of parent organizations, which developed during the 1960s and are now widespread internationally. Not only have such organizations provided information to decision-makers and the public, but they have also established residential and day-care centers for individuals with autism; moreover, they have supported the implementation of evidence-based best practices (Whitaker 2002). According to the American Psychiatric Association (2000), individuals with ASC without ID are characterized as having difficulties with social interactions and as having unusual patterns of interests or behaviors. That is, they can have the same characteristics as those diagnosed with "classic autism." However, individuals with ASC without ID often display cognitive functions within the average to above-average range; sometimes they may demonstrate intellectual functioning at high levels within some areas. Consequently, many students with ASC without ID appear to have the capacity to attend general education classrooms. However, this does not automatically mean that they require only minimal educational

✉ Johanna Lüddeckens
johanna.lueddeckens@mau.se

¹ Faculty of Learning and Society, Malmö University, SE-205 06 Malmö, Sweden

support in school as a result of demonstrating uneven skills. Due to the severity of their social skills limitations, students with ASC without ID are more likely to be socially isolated by peers (Locke et al. 2010). Moreover, they exhibit mood disorders such as anxiety and depression (Berney 2004). Therefore, students with ASC without ID become stressed and emotionally uncontrollable when faced with change and environmental stressors (Myles 2005 as cited in Sansosti 2012). Previous research also indicates that the adaptive skills for daily living—which require social communication and motor skills, etc. of the students with ASC without ID—are often lower than their intellectual and communicative abilities (Lee and Park 2007; Myles et al. 2007). Hence, this student group often struggles to accomplish a variety of daily tasks (Sansosti et al. 2010). Given these challenges, most of the students with ASC without ID at some point during their schooling will require educational support, despite their higher functioning abilities (Sansosti 2012).

Individuals With ASC Without ID During Adolescence

As adolescence is a critical period of identity exploration and adjustment, both physically and mentally, this is a period of changing roles within the family and in society (Cronin and Mandich 2015). Adolescence has been described as a time in which family becomes less important, with a greater focus on social contexts outside the family, including peer-relationships, increased independence, and a transition to higher education or employment (Vandell et al. 2005). The transition to adulthood also comes with increased external requirements from school and society, as well as higher expectations of social interaction and social competence. Because adolescents are commonly expected to learn patterns of actions required for participation in society (Farley et al. 2009), this is a particularly challenging period for adolescents with ASC, with the increasing demands of social participation while transitioning to adulthood.

Krieger et al. (2017) used Heart's participation ladder (Hart 1992) in a systematic review of research on supporting and hindering environments for the participation of adolescents with ASC. The Heart ladder describes the participation of children and adolescents in terms of shared decision processes, which, due to their impairments in social interaction and communication, shows that adolescents with ASC might be at risk of being patronized, which can result in reduced shared participation in decision-making (Krieger et al. 2017). Ultimately, this process can result in reduced participation in social and inclusive contexts, both in terms of self-determination and from a social perspective. Krieger et al. (2017) concluded that security and connection are environmental aspects

affecting the participation of adolescents with ASC and their desire for positive peer relationship experiences.

Adolescents With ASC Without ID in Social and Inclusive Educational Contexts

Munkhagen et al. (2017) examined the prevalence of school refusal behavior in 216 students aged 9–16 years (88 with ASD and 138 TD) who were recruited for a cross-sectional study. They found that partial or complete absenteeism assessed at school was present in 42.6% of students with ASC, compared with 7.1% of TD students during a 20-day period (Munkhagen et al. 2017). A number of studies have problematized the finding that students with ASC are at greater risk of being bullied than their TD peers (Fernando and Perera 2012; Hwang et al. 2018; Wong 2017; Sreckovic et al. 2014). This phenomenon might also be linked to the difficulties sometimes faced by students with ASC in expressing their emotions regarding situations related to the school setting (Able et al. 2015; Twachtman-Cullen et al. 2006). Hebron and Humphrey (2014) analyzed the risk factors for mental health difficulties affecting individuals with ASC in mainstream secondary schools. A range of factors influence the way students with ASC process, experience, and ultimately make sense of the world around them, and each may contribute to mental health difficulties. Hebron and Humphrey (2014) note that the problems of social and emotional understanding faced by individuals with ASC, including a reduced ability to adopt the perspective of others (“theory of mind” or “metalizing”; Baron-Cohen 2005), are linked to maladaptive social attribution processes, such as the tendency to infer hostile intention from the behavior of others. This phenomenon has been associated with anxiety and depression (Meyer et al. 2006). The desire for routine, predictability, and “sameness” caused by difficulties understanding the external world can also trigger increased anxiety (Gillott et al. 2001). Some previous studies have indicated that the sense of being different, which is felt particularly strongly by individuals with ASC without ID, might also trigger distress (Bolman 2008; Portway and Johnson 2003; Hebron and Humphrey 2014).

The teacher can play a significant role in the prevention of distress and anxiety among individuals with ASC in an inclusive school setting. Although a previous study by Tennant et al. (2014) reported that teacher support can promote academic competence and prevent problematic behaviors in the classroom, the importance of teacher support for children's social well-being remains unclear (Farmer et al. 2011). However, Chung et al. (2015) state:

It is crucial to address the final limitation, because when teachers' cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses to students with ASD are different from their responses toward typical students, it may lead to not only different

expectations, but also effect of self-fulfilling prophecies about student performance. (Chung et al. 2015, p. 3)

Chung et al. (2015) emphasize the importance of teachers' attitudes towards students with ASC when supporting their academic and social success. Falkmer et al. (2012) concluded that teachers' personal interest in teaching students with ASC was correlated with their accuracy in teaching these students, representing important factors to consider when planning for successful placements in mainstream schools. Koegel et al. (2013) note that when teachers (and other school staff) organize school activities in a way that incorporates the preferred interests of adolescents with ASC into the activities organized, students with ASC show an increased level of engagement and an increased rate of initiating social interaction with TD peers.

In this systematic research review, the concept of "approach" refers to the starting point, the viewpoint, or perspective about inclusion and social participation, which can be found in the literature. The previous research introduced in this article highlights the importance of identifying key components of successful inclusion for ASC individuals. However, it is necessary to consider how we define inclusion in research, and its effects. Importantly, the way we in general address inclusive education in society, and how we set the standards for the dominant norms formulates the discourse. According to Foucault (1972), discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak." In this article, this is interpreted as how the approaches of inclusive education are debated in research, how this constitutes social practice, and, ultimately, how it affects the lives of adolescents with ASC.

Aim and Research Questions

The purpose of the current review is to identify, describe, and analyze different research approaches or angle of incidents, to inclusive education and social participation for adolescents with ASC without intellectual disability (ID, IQ > 70).

The study focused on the following research questions:

- What research articles about inclusion and social participation for students with ASC without ID fit the inclusion criteria in this study?
- What are the main definitions of inclusion in the present literature?
- On whose perspectives are the studies in the current review based (students, teachers, or parents)?
- What research approaches can be identified in the reviewed studies?
- What implications for practice, if any, are suggested in the reviewed studies?

Methods

Study Design

This study is part of a doctoral project; the systematic data collection and review were conducted under the supervision of two senior researchers. Wiley et al. (2011) divided systematic research reviews into different types. One type is a systematic review that focuses on the examination of complicated or controversial topics, or areas in a field. In this current systematic review, the focus lies within the field of inclusive education for adolescents with intellectual able ASC. Wiley et al. (2011) argued that this type of review plays an important role of identifying, explaining, and providing persuasive perspectives on complicated or controversial issues in the lives of students in need and professionals in education. These reviews are often designed to outline the history of the issue in question, and assess its status by identifying different approaches in research and their implications. Finally, these types of systematic research reviews typically conclude with recommendations for policy and practice (Wiley et al. 2011).

The searches were limited to two known and reliable databases in order to manage a reasonable amount of data, which were selected because of their access to research in the fields of education, psychology, and related disciplines. The aim of this study is to identify the research approaches to inclusive education in the articles reviewed. In addition, to analyze social participation in school for adolescents with ASC without ID. To facilitate the aim, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied in the search string for various interpretations of the concepts of autism spectrum disorder, social participation, inclusion, and education. Moreover, the string sought to find studies that did not focus on individuals with ID. To find studies that focus on adolescents in secondary school, it also searched for interpretations of secondary schools. The following is the complete search string:

(autism OR asd OR autism spectrum disorder OR asperger's OR asperger's syndrome OR autistic disorder OR aspergers) AND (inclusive education OR participation) AND (social inclusion OR social participation OR social inclusive) NOT (intellectual disability OR mental retardation OR learning disability OR developmental disability OR learning disabilities) AND (high school OR secondary school) NOT (pre-school OR kindergarten OR early childhood education)

To limit down the amount of hits in the databases further, due to the later manageability of the data, the results were refined by peer review from the last 5 years (from 2012 to 2017), written in English, age-refined (Database ERIC: *Elementary Secondary Education, High schools, High Schools Equivalency Programs, Secondary Education, Postsecondary Education, Junior High Schools*; Database PsycINFO: *adolescence*). The search produced 85 hits (Table 1). Two independent individuals from the Malmö

Table 1 Databases used for the literature search

Database	Number of articles
ERIC	1
PsycINFO	84
Total	85

University Library staff also verified the search and its results in both databases.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Since this study aimed to identify, describe, and analyze different research approaches to inclusive education for adolescents with ASC and without ID, the inclusion criteria (Table 2) restricted the focus to student groups aged 11–21 years old among the 85 articles, and included articles addressing inclusion and social participation in school and society. Systematic research reviews were examined, while medical and/or clinical studies (studies addressing topics such as individuals' communicative or behavioral development) were excluded. The exclusion process is shown in Table 2. Some articles met more than one exclusion criterion (Table 3). After sorting the articles using the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a sample of 15 articles was included in the final review (Table 5).

Inclusion Criteria

The current study sought to identify research on social participation and/or inclusion in schools and/or society, informing the main inclusion criteria. To further narrow the search, the focus was on adolescents/young adults, which was used as the

Table 2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Activity	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Selection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social participation in school and/or society 2. Inclusion in school and/or society 3. Age group (high school and secondary school, adolescents > 11 years old, young adults < 21 years old) and student group in mainstream school, general education settings, no specifically defined age group 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Age group (infants, children in Kindergarten, primary or elementary school, preschool, or adults > 20 years old) 2. Intellectual disabilities 3. Diagnosis other than ASC 4. Articles mainly focused on communicative or behavioral development (i.e., medical or clinical studies) or only in non-educational contexts 5. Systematic research reviews without a specific focus on inclusion 6. Book reviews

third inclusion criterion. This inclusion criteria-type selected studies focused on student groups in mainstream schools, general education settings; no particularly defined age group (i.e., articles in which participants were defined as a more general group of individuals with a certain disability). The study also included articles examining groups of individuals participating in a specific intervention (for instance communicative developmental interventions, or the use of augmentative and alternative communication [AAC]). These articles generally included no specific information about participants' age.

Exclusion Criteria

The current review targeted adolescents, defined as individuals aged 11–21 years. Thus, studies of children between 0 and 10 and adults over 22 years were excluded. Studies focusing on individuals with ASC and intellectual disabilities, or individuals with other disabilities (i.e., attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or reading and writing impairments), as well as clinical or medical studies mainly focusing on individuals' communicative and/or behavioral development performed in a non-educational context, were also excluded. The results included systematic research reviews, which were generally excluded because of the current study's focus on recent and original research in the area of inclusive education and social participation, unless the main aim was focused on research within the field of the current study. Three systematic research articles were included in the search; two of these studies were excluded because of the first and fourth exclusion criteria. The third systematic research article in the search was included because of its direct link to the purpose and research questions of the current study. One book review was excluded because it was not an original study (exclusion criterion 6).

Selection Process

The selection process began by reviewing abstracts three times and sorting them according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria described above. The articles that were difficult to define were reviewed by reading the research purpose and discussion sections, and applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The articles were then divided into four groups:

- I. Articles about individuals with ASC without ID within the specified age range (according to inclusion criterion 3).
- II. Articles that were mainly medical studies; studies performed in a non-educational context (according to exclusion criterion 4).
- III. Articles about individuals with intellectual disability and/or other disabilities other than ASC (according to exclusion criteria 2 and 3).

Table 3 Number of articles excluded by each exclusion criterion

Exclusion criteria	Number of articles excluded
1. Age group (infants, children in kindergarten, primary or elementary school, preschool, or adults > 20 years old)	27
2. Intellectual disabilities	10
3. Diagnosis not ASC	15
4. Articles focused mainly on communicative or behavioral development (i.e., medical or clinical studies) or only in non-educational contexts	45
5. Systematic research reviews without a specific focus on inclusion	2
6. Book reviews	1

IV. Systematic research articles, sorted later by research focus, systematic research articles dealing with inclusion in school included (according to exclusion criterion 5).

The remaining articles were examined in full, analyzed, and categorized using a thematic analysis process (Bryman 2015). The differences and similarities were recorded in Excel, providing a visual overview of the content in the articles. The different research areas in each study were noted. After this, the articles were distributed into four groups of research areas/approaches, dealing with topics as social anxiety, best practice for inclusion and participation, the role of the teacher, as well as focusing on individuals with intellectual able ASCs' own perspectives regarding inclusion or participation. These four research approaches are shown in Table 4, and the results of the articles and their individual research approaches are presented in Table 5. A cross analysis was made by the results on research questions B, D, and C, which are introduced in Table 6, Table 7, and Table 8.

Results

In this section, the results are discussed—based on and organized by the alphabetical order of the four research questions (A, B, C, and D). Table 5 introduces the data answering the research questions A, B, C, and D, as well as a column for a code of reference for each article, later used as references in the cross-analysis tables: Tables 6, 7, and 8 under the rubric

Cross analyze of the results in research questions B, C, and D. The results answering research question A are presented in Table 5, followed by individual rubrics for research questions B and C. Research questions D and E are listed under the same rubrics.

Research Question A: Research Articles About Inclusion and Social Participation for Students

In Table 5, the research articles that fit the inclusion criteria in this study are introduced.

Research Question B: the Definitions of Inclusion in the Articles

The results from research question B can be seen in Table 5. Nine of the articles found (Baines 2012; Chung et al. 2012; Gotham et al. 2014; Goldingay et al. 2013; Myers et al. 2015; Falkmer et al. 2015; Chen et al. 2016; Rosso 2016; Lounds Taylor et al. 2018) defined inclusion as “*being socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school*” (perspective A). The remaining six articles (Foster and Pearson 2012; Cameron and Cook 2013; Humphrey and Symes 2014; Watkins et al. 2015; Lamb et al. 2016; Taheri et al. 2017) defined inclusion as “*being physically placed in mainstream classes, leading to social participation*” (perspective B).

Lamb et al. (2016) defined inclusion in reference to different experiences addressed within the social model of disability

Table 4 Research approaches

Research approach	Number of articles
1. Social/academic inclusion and participation—level of anxiety	3
2. Methods and/or development of best practice for inclusion and social and academic participation for individuals with ASC in school and society	6
3. Teachers' perspectives, approaches, and training	2
4. Perspectives of individuals with ASC regarding their social and academic participation in school and society	4
Total	15

Table 5 Articles found, definitions of inclusion, perspectives, research approaches in the articles and article reference code

RQ A: article	RQ B: definitions of inclusion in school and society	RQ C: perspective	RQ D: research approach	Reference code
Gotham et al. (2014). "Rumination and perceived impairment associated with depressive symptoms in a verbal adolescent–adult ASD sample"	Socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school (A)	Students'	1	A1
Chen et al. (2016). "The experience of social participation in everyday contexts among individuals with autism spectrum disorders: An experience sampling study"	Physical placement in mainstream classes, leading to social participation (B)	Students'	1	A2
Lounds Taylor et al. (2018). "Social participation and its relation to internalizing symptoms among youth with autism spectrum disorder as they transition from high school"	Socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school (A)	Students' (parents')	1	A3
Chung et al. (2012). "Social interactions of students with disabilities who use augmentative and alternative communication in inclusive classrooms"	Socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school (A)	Students' (through observations)	2	A4
Foster and Pearson (2012). "Is inclusivity an indicator of quality of care for children with autism in special education?"	Physical placement in mainstream classes, leading to social participation (B)	Teachers and parents'	2	A5
Watkins et al. (2015). "A review of peer-mediated social interaction interventions for students with autism in inclusive settings"	Physical placement in mainstream classes, leading to social participation (B)	Teachers' and students'	2	A6
Goldingay et al. (2013). "An intervention to improve social participation for adolescents with autism spectrum disorder: Pilot study"	Socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school (A)	Students'	2	A7
Rosso (2016). "Brief report: Coaching adolescents with autism spectrum disorder in a school-based multi-sport program"	Socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school (A)	University staffs' and school staffs'	2	A8
Taheri et al. (2017). "Exploring factors that impact activity participation of children and adolescents with severe developmental disabilities"	Socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school (A)	Parents'	2	A9
Cameron and Cook 2013. "General education teachers' goals and expectations for their included students with mild and severe disabilities"	Socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school (A)	Teachers'	3	A10
Humphrey and Symes (2014). "Inclusive Education for Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders in Secondary Mainstream Schools: Teacher Attitudes, Experience and Knowledge"	Socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school (A)	Teachers'	3	A11
Baines (2012). "Positioning, strategizing, and charming: How students with autism construct identities in relation to disability"	Socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school (A)	Students'	4	A12
Myers et al. (2015). "Community and social participation among individuals with autism spectrum disorder"	Socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school (A)	Students'	4	A13
Falkmer et al. (2015). "Can you see it too? Observed and self-rated participation in mainstream schools in students with and without autism spectrum disorder"	Socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school (A)	Students'	4	A14
Lamb et al. (2016). "Capturing the world of physical education through the eyes of children with autism spectrum disorders"	Physical placement in mainstream classes, leading to social participation (B)	Students'	4	A15

(Oliver 1990). The model "provides a way of conceptualizing the disadvantage experienced by people with impairments which emphasizes the social, economic and environmental barriers to participation in society" (Burchardt 2004, p. 735). Different versions of this model have highlighted inclusion issues within schools (Fitzgerald 2012), illuminating the need

for curriculum reform (Kirk 2005) and measures to ensure inclusive physical education (PE) experiences, rather than expecting disabled pupils to "fit in" (Lamb et al. 2016). Another study emphasized the importance of a whole-school approach to inclusion (Booth and Ainscow 2002). Regarding the inclusion of students with ASC, it has been argued that just

Table 6 Cross analysis between RQ B (definitions of inclusion) and RQ C (perspectives)

Definition of inclusion (RQ B)	Total number of articles	Perspective (RQ C) = number of articles	References
A	9	Students' = 7 (3) Parents' = 1 (2) Teachers' = 1	A1, A3, A4, A7, A12, A13, A14 A3, A9 A8, A10, A11
B	4	Students' = 2 (3) Parents' = 1 Teachers' = 1 (2)	A2, A6, A15 A6 A5, A6

a few members of staff cannot achieve positive outcomes. Rather, schools must buy in to inclusion wholesale if the approach is to be successful. Inclusion cannot rely on the interest, commitment, and enthusiasm of one or two individuals. Without a shift in the whole organization's attitude and approach, it will fail children with autism and Asperger's syndrome, Barnard et al. (2000) states. By this, they mean a joint understanding in the organization of what inclusion really is, having mutual goals such as common values and that all students getting access to the education and to the social life in school, in this case students with ASC. Humphrey and Symes (2014) argue, in accord with previous studies (Eldara et al. 2010; Huang and Wheeler 2007), that whole-school inclusion requires all staff to have a clear and shared understanding of the aims and expectations of inclusion within their school, and these must be supported by senior management (Horrocks et al. 2008).

Overall, the concept of inclusion in the reviewed articles tended to highlight physical placement in mainstream class leading to social participation, as well as being socially accepted in the context and socially participating in the group and in the school. A key component of successful inclusion and social participation for students with SEN/disabilities suggests the need for a united whole-school approach towards inclusion.

Research Question C: Perspectives

The results from research question C can be seen in Table 5; however, studies taking the first research approach: *Social/academic inclusion and participation—level of anxiety*, tended to consider students' perspectives (Gotham et al. 2014; Chen et al. 2016; Lounds Taylor et al. 2018). One of

the studies also considered parents' perspectives (Lounds Taylor et al. 2018). Studies taking the second research approach: *Methods and/or development of best practice for inclusion and social and academic participation for individuals with ASC in school*, tended to focus on the perspectives of the school staff or parents (Foster and Pearson 2012; Watkins et al. 2015; Goldingay et al. 2013; Rosso 2016; Taheri et al. 2017). One of these studies also considered students' perspectives (Watkins et al. 2015), while one focused on the student perspective through observations (Chung et al. 2012). Studies taking the third research approach: *Teachers' perspectives, approaches and training*, considered the perspectives of the teachers (Cameron and Cook 2013; Humphrey and Symes 2014). The studies taking the fourth research approach: *Perspectives of individuals with ASC regarding their social and academic participation in school and society*, considered students' perspectives (Baines 2012; Myers et al. 2015; Falkmer et al. 2015; Lamb et al. 2016). Overall, the fifteen articles found focus on three perspectives: the students', the teachers', and the parents' perspectives.

Research Questions D and E: Research Approaches and Their Implications for Practice

The approaches found in this review are categorized into themes, with each theme (approach) sharing the same content focus.

First Research Approach: Social/Academic Inclusion and Participation—Level of Anxiety

Gotham et al. (2014) examined the relationships between depressive symptoms and several psychosocial constructs

Table 7 Cross analysis between RQ B (definitions of inclusion) and RQ D (research approach)

Research approach (RQ D)	Dominating definition of inclusion (RQ B)	Number of articles	References
1	A	2 of 3	A1, A3
2	A	4 of 6	A4, A7, A8, A9
3	B	2 of 2	A10, A11
4	A	3 of 4	A12, A13, A14

Table 8 Cross analysis between RQ C (perspectives) and RQ D (research approach)

Research approach (RQ D)	Total number of articles	Perspective (RQ C) = number of articles	References
1	3	Students' = 3 Parents' = 0 (1) Teachers' = 0	A1, A2, A3 A3
2	6	Students = 2 (3) Parents' = 1 (2) Teachers' = 1 (3)	A4, A6, A7 A5, A9 A5, A6, A8
3	2	Students' = 0 Parents' = 0 Teachers' = 2	A10, A11
4	4	Students' = 4 Parents' = 0 Teachers' = 0	A12, A13, A14, A15

(insight into one's own autism symptoms, rumination, desire for social interaction, and satisfaction with social support) that potentially play a role in the development or preservation of depression among adolescents with ASC. The findings suggested that to ruminate upon one's own autism-related impairment might be related to depressive symptoms in adolescents with ASC, regardless of their "true" degree of impairment (i.e., examiners' perceptions of their autism-related symptoms on the same scale). In addition to the association between rumination and preservation, it has been suggested that low self-esteem can function as an important proponent of depressive symptoms. Thus, there is the indication that individuals with ASC are more likely to perpetuate routines, rituals, and circumscribed interests (Gotham et al. 2014).

In accord with the study described above, Chen et al. (2016) examined the experience of anxiety in social situations among individuals with ASC. The authors reported a correlation between individuals with less severe autism and high social anxiety with less social engagement. However, the results indicated that severe social anxiety was only weakly correlated with "feeling lonely," suggesting that individuals with less severe ASC symptoms did not seek fewer social interactions. Rather, these individuals were less likely to experience high levels of interest and enjoyment in solitary or parallel leisure activities compared with people with more severe ASC, despite social challenges (Carrington et al. 2003; Howard et al. 2006; Müller et al. 2008; Chen et al. 2016).

Lounds Taylor et al. (2018) analyzed how unstructured (e.g., spending time with friends or co-workers) and structured (e.g., attending social events at a place of work, socializing with sports teams) social participation changed from before to after high school for young people with ASC. They also examined the longitudinal and concurrent relationships between social participation and internalizing symptoms. The results indicated no average change in

participation after leaving high school, although some individual variability was observed. Participation in structured social activities within this group of individuals was significantly reduced after leaving high school. Young people with more structured social participation in high school were substantially more likely to experience increases in unstructured social participation after leaving high school. In terms of the relationships between internalizing and social activities, a high level of internalizing symptoms while young people with ASC were in high school significantly predicted increasing social isolation after leaving high school, for both structured and unstructured activities.

Overall, the reviewed articles suggested that anxiety and anxiety-loaded activities prevent respondents from being able to participate to the extent they desire.

Implications for Practice in the First Research Approach The articles reviewed in relation to the first research approach focused on social inclusion and exclusion, as well as social and academic participation in relation to individuals' levels of anxiety. Gotham et al. (2014), as well as Lounds Taylor et al. (2018), suggested that adolescents with high levels of rumination about one's own autism-related impairment, as well as those who internalized symptoms while at high school, may be at greater risk of depression and declining participation in social activities after leaving high school. An understanding of the ways in which social and other activities might influence the internalization of symptoms in adolescents with ASC is important, as they are amenable to intervention, and could potentially provide an avenue for improving mental health (Lounds Taylor et al. 2018). Chen et al. (2016) proposed that strategies for dealing with anxiety, in addition to research approaches to improving social skills and providing medication for

mental health conditions, are included among the measures available to young people with less severe ASC symptoms and higher levels of social anxiety.

Second Research Approach: Methods and/or Development of Best Practice for Inclusion and Social and Academic Participation for Individuals with ASC in School and Society

Chung et al. (2012) evaluated naturally occurring social interactions for students with disabilities (e.g., ASC) who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) in general education classrooms. They found that most of the time students almost exclusively interacted with an assigned staff member as their primary support, such as special teachers or paraprofessionals, and they tended to play a somewhat passive role within the interaction. The authors also reported that students with AAC systems infrequently used their devices; instead, they primarily relied on facial expressions, gestures, and vocalizations within the interactions. Goldingay et al. (2013) evaluated and analyzed a model for developing social interaction among adolescents with ASC and suggested that direct interventions, such as interventions in social training and social interaction designed especially for the individual participant, might have a positive effect.

Similar to Chung et al. (2012) and Goldingay et al. (2013), Watkins et al. (2015) evaluated social interaction through reviewing the effectiveness of different interventions based on interactions between students with ASC and their peers. The results implied that using peer-mediated interventions (PMI) when fostering social interactions among students with ASC shows promise. A study by Rossos (2016) indicated that the use of specially designed coaching strategies and programs in sports education was a critical factor when fostering socialization and developing social skills among students with ASC.

Foster and Pearson (2012) analyzed whether the proportion of time spent in an inclusive educational setting functioned as a process indicator of the quality of schooling for children with autism, thus improving key outcomes. The researchers found no systematic indication that the level of inclusivity improved key future outcomes. However, as introduced in the introduction of this article, The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EA; 2017) studied this issue in further detail, examining a large-scale sample. In line with Foster and Pearson (2012), it showed that inclusive education for students with SEN/disabilities in mainstream schools improved the level of inclusion later in adulthood. Taheri et al. (2017) reported that higher levels of adaptive behavior, greater parental socialization, and placement in integrated school programs were significant predictors of greater participation in activities.

Implications for Practice in the Second Research Approach

Research approach 2 deals with methods and/or development, including best practice for inclusion and social and academic participation for individuals with ASC in school and society. For example, Chung et al. (2012) emphasized the importance of interaction opportunities being carefully planned rather than haphazardly hoped for, when dealing with students using ACC. In addition, the authors argued that students must have ongoing access to functional and appropriate AAC systems, be equipped to be active communicators, and be supported by staff with high expectations and a desire for meaningful interactions among the students with whom they work (Chung et al. 2012). In accord with this research approach, Watkins et al. (2015) systematically examined research on PMI in their article, suggesting that it provides a promising approach for promoting social interaction between students with ASC and their peers in inclusive settings.

Foster and Pearson (2012), meaning inclusion as physical placement in mainstream classes, leading to social participation (B), reported that inclusivity did not improve educational or functional outcomes for students with ASC, concluding that, in essence, schools have failed to meet their obligations to these young people. The authors emphasized the need for better instruments to evaluate education outcomes among this student group, calling for a more comprehensive understanding of inclusivity and other potential measures of educational quality, while noting that this may have to wait for both better data and methods. Rosso (2016) also called for future developments of better coaching strategies for students with ASC, using the case of PE. In addition, Rosso (2016) advocates for measurements of this type of education, as well as the investigation of motivational strategies for adolescents with ASC. Like Foster and Pearson (2012), Taheri et al. (2017) examined parents' perspectives, suggesting the importance of efforts to develop the social skill level of both parents and children, in accord with the finding that parental social skill level has an indirect effect on children.

Third Research Approach: Teachers' Perspectives, Approaches, and Training

Studies utilizing the third research approach focused on the role of the teacher, including teachers' approaches with and expectations of students with ASC, which was the reported purpose of both of the reviewed articles using this research approach. In one study, Cameron and Cook (2013) reported that teachers typically aimed for students with ASC to develop socially, make friends and interact with their peers, and tended to emphasize the beneficial effects of inclusive education for all students. Teachers were also adamant about the goal of supporting TD students to behave in a more accepting way towards students with disabilities. To support all students to improve their

behavioral skills was emphasized by teachers as one of the most important goals. However, teachers felt that they had lower expectations regarding their own ability to engender positive outcomes for included students with severe disabilities. Teachers reported that the attention to the academic instruction of students with disabilities distracted from the teaching of “core” students. Generally, teachers in the study assumed that students with disabilities were not the responsibility of the general education system, which, according to the researchers, unsurprisingly showed that teachers generally professed a lack of knowledge about educating students with severe disabilities (Cameron and Cook 2013).

Overall, previous studies have reported that teachers tend to indicate positive attitudes towards inclusion and that teachers with more moderate views on integration were more likely to feel that there were high levels of inclusion within their school (Humphrey and Symes 2014). In line with Cameron and Cook’s (2013) findings, respondents in a study by Humphrey and Symes (2014) revealed that the potential key benefits for mainstream pupils without ASC that could be gained from interacting with a child with ASC integrated into mainstream classes included increased understanding and tolerance of people different to themselves. However, regardless of these positive attitudes towards including students with ASC into mainstream classes, teachers expressed concern about potential problems associated with integrating this student group (Humphrey and Symes 2014).

Implications for Practice in the Third Research Approach One of the two articles focused on the third research approach (dealing with the teachers’ perspectives, approaches, and training) suggested that generic training for all school staff about students with ASC might not be appropriate. Rather, teachers reported a preference for informed, targeted training for all groups working directly with students with ASC (Humphrey and Symes 2014).

Cameron and Cook (2013) reported that teachers’ goals and expectations for students with disabilities in their class conformed to their perceptions of how apparent the child’s disability was. This led teachers to conclude that they might have little to offer to this group of students, beyond an opportunity to socialize with other children, resulting in a reduction of learning opportunities for students with disabilities. The authors therefore recommended that school staff take time to reflect on the different goals and expectations they hold in relation to this student group, and to consider how these beliefs may affect student achievement and development. In addition, for teachers to set realistic, challenging, and appropriate goals for the students with disabilities in their classes, it may be necessary to address the finding that general education teachers do not consider themselves primarily responsible for educating students with severe disabilities (Cameron and Cook 2013).

Fourth Research Approach: Individuals with ASCs’ Own Perspective/View on Their Social and Academic Participation in School and Society

This research approach deals with identity formation, social stigma, social acceptance and self-acceptance, anxiety, and the positive and negative feelings of being or not being part of a social context. Adolescence is a time of a transition from childhood to adulthood, where social interaction clearly shapes personality. Baines (2012) characterizes adolescence as follows:

For young people, words and actions serve as a measure of where they stand in the social hierarchy of ability, potential, and acceptance. Everything they say and do forms patterns of behavior used to judge what they are capable of, how they measure up to peers, and whether their participation is valued. Students with the label of autism are often studied in terms of what makes them ‘different’ from others. Instead, Bagatell (2004) suggests the identities of people with autism are not an underlying substance to be discovered, but constructed in social worlds through engagement. Instead of focusing on the individual student, this approach attempts to understand the personal, institutional, and sociocultural storylines that make up their lives. (Baines 2012, pp. 547–548)

Baines (2012) examined the worldviews of adolescents with ASC over a relatively long period, suggesting that disability labels influenced these students across different contexts in ways that shaped their future life trajectories. Baines (2012) notes that perceptions of ability and disability continuously emerged through social interactions, playing a central role in shaping how a person identifies themselves as learners. The ongoing interplay of relating to the surrounding society’s labeling and demands about following certain norms can be distressing. Chen et al. (2016) examined the anxiety induced by the pressure of having to take part in social activities, from the perspectives of individuals with ASC. The findings suggested that people with more severe ASC symptoms were more likely to experience greater “interest” and “enjoyment” in “solitary/parallel leisure” than those with less severe ASC. Participants with high social anxiety were more likely to experience high levels of “in-the-moment anxiety” while engaging in “productive” or “social” activities than those with lower levels of social anxiety. In addition, social anxiety was also found to moderate experiences (Chen et al. 2016).

Some situations and environments in the school feel safer than others do. Lamb et al. (2016) examined the experiences of adolescents with ASC during PE in school. Respondents reported that situations involving the teacher’s presence or being in the teacher’s office felt safe. These situations and

places with contiguous spaces provided a micro-space for these students, and were regarded positively, as were activities that provided opportunities for engagement with peers. Opportunities to be celebrated by peers, such as scoring a goal for their team or being given an official role, were found to be important factors, as was the opportunity to engage in team sports. However, students' interactions with changing rooms and corridors were associated with trepidation, worry, and fear (Lamb et al. 2016).

Researchers have attempted to explore the perspectives of adolescents with ASC regarding their social participation in a mainstream inclusive school (Falkmer et al. 2015; Lamb et al. 2016). Falkmer et al. (2015) revealed that though students with ASC participated less frequently in activities in school, they were not less involved when they participated in comparison to their classmates. When comparing perceived participation in school activities and social interaction between students with and without ASC, the results revealed a discrepancy between students' self-rated/perceived participation and their observed participation in interactions. This pattern was not restricted to students with ASC but was found for all students. The results also disclosed higher levels of involvement in parallel activities among students with ASC compared with their classmates. In particular, this was in reference to situations where a student was observed in proximity to classmates, was participating in an activity in which the student was using the same materials as the classmates, and with no observable ongoing social interaction (Falkmer et al. 2015).

Implications for Practice in the Fourth Research Approach In one study using this research approach, Baines (2012) examined the perspectives of individuals with ASC regarding their social and academic participation in school and society. Based on the results, Baines (2012) argues that practitioners should not assume that young people with the label of autism are isolated from the sociocultural process of identity development. Rather, the author emphasizes that these students make a deliberate effort to promote a positive perception of themselves in the eyes of others. Further, Baines (2012) suggests that, as researchers and practitioners, it is important to recognize these efforts and find ways to disrupt patterns of interaction that position students with disabilities in ways that limit their opportunities to participate in full. Moreover, it is important to improve societal understanding about how to best advocate for adolescent individuals with ASC, whether through professional case management services or in the education of families. Myers et al. (2015) argue that schools, caregivers, families, professionals, and legislators must recognize the impact that diminished participation in society and social contexts has for this vulnerable population.

Falkmer et al. (2015) analyzed the degree to which participation can be measured through observation and self-rated interactions for students with and without ASC, examining

involvement in parallel activities, and social interactions in school settings. The results revealed that students with ASC showed higher levels of involvement in parallel activities compared with their classmates. Falkmer et al.'s (2015) findings also raise the question of whether students with ASC have as many opportunities for social interaction as they desire.

In studies of PE, some researchers have suggested that there may be a misconception about the way inclusion is understood by some PE departments that emphasize the modification of planning to accommodate students with SEN or disabilities rather than planning to their individual needs (Fitzgerald 2012; Smith 2004). Rather, Lamb et al. (2016) suggest that the appropriate focus for inclusion must be levels of ability, careful differentiation, variety in teaching styles, and approaches to assessment, while paying careful attention to adapting or modifying facilities, equipment, and activities. Further, Lamb et al. (2016) recognize the contextual reality of the emotive and powerful feelings of adolescents with ASC in their study in relation to PE. Fitzgerald (2012) notes that this finding highlights that each individual with ASC is different, and that manipulating the delivery of activities or the group composition does not equate to inclusive practice. Other researchers argue that it is crucial for teachers to plan for inclusion through informed awareness of the barriers pupils may face, which extend to actual and conceptual fields beyond the formal space of lesson delivery (Lamb et al. 2016).

Cross Analyze of the Results in Research Questions B, C, and D

The results from research questions B, C, and D were cross analyzed triangularly, which resulted in three tables (Table 6, Table 7, and Table 8). Some of the articles focused on two perspectives (for example both teachers and students or both teachers and parents), hence some of the values with in parentheses.

Discussion

Defining Inclusion Through Diverse Perspectives

Overall, two predominating definitions of inclusion can be seen in these articles: A—inclusion as being socially accepted in the educational context and socially participating in the group and in the school, and B—inclusion as being physically placed in mainstream class, thus leading to social participation. The majority of articles focus on student perspectives, which perhaps not surprisingly define inclusion according to definition A. The definition B, meaning the concept of inclusion as social participation being reached through physical placement in mainstream class, is largely taken by the articles

focusing on teachers and/or parents. This visualizes in the cross analysis in Table 7, where this definition of inclusion is the focus in the two articles in the third research approach about teachers' perspectives, approaches, and training. However, applying this definition of inclusion, one must take into account the difficulties some individuals with ASC face, such as perceptual sensitivity, which can result in difficulties in sorting impressions such as sound, light, scent, and touch, as well as difficulties in social interaction. The barriers of this must be reduced and a learning environment for diversity pre-assembled, supporting these individuals. Stakeholders who applies the definition B tend sometimes to reject the thought of students being taken out from the mainstream classroom in order to receive education. Applying the definition A however opens up a somewhat more flexible interpretation of the concept of inclusion. Maybe inclusion instead is better off being translated into a *sense of coherence* in which the individual describe its situation as "comprehensive," "manageable," and "meaningful" (Antonovsky 1987). Considering the students' perspective therefore gets essential.

The majority of articles reviewed in the current study base on the perspectives of ASC students. These perspectives make an important contribution to knowledge that can inform the development of successful practices for individuals with ASC, both in schools and in later working life and other social settings. This understanding can help create best practices and methods for supporting a higher level of participation for individuals with ASC. Considering the views of teachers and parents also helps to broaden students' individual perspectives. However, these perspectives sometimes diverge, raising questions about whose perspective prevails.

Implications for Practice

The different research approaches described in the current study involve many points of convergence. Ultimately, these research approaches are united by the concept of inclusion, the prospect of participation in school and society, and the outcomes at both an individual level and a societal level. Some of the articles summarize the concept of inclusion as physical placement or presence, while others include both physical placement and the possibility of developing successful inclusion. Overall, the results of the present review emphasize the importance of a united whole-school attitude towards inclusion. The studies in this article calls for best practices with carefully planned interaction opportunities for students with ASC, rather than haphazardly hoped for (Chung et al. 2012). They also calls for best practices using better instruments for evaluating education outcome for this student group (Foster and Pearson 2012), calling for a more comprehensive understanding of inclusivity and other potential measures of educational quality. In sum, it repeatedly comes down to the concept

of inclusion, how this concept is being interpret, understood, implemented, and evaluated.

Future Research

In terms of future research, the current study can contribute by highlighting the different research approaches to inclusion for adolescents with ASC. Further, it raises several questions: Whose perspective prevails and sets the foundation in the process of decision-making? Are social norms involved, and, if so, which norms dominate the approaches in research? Are we creating and developing social approaches that cater to the diversity of individuals, or are we merely aiming to create acquiescent individuals who fit well into predetermined community norms? The current study contributes to the area of research by highlighting these questions as well as by validating previous research reviews (Nilholm and Göransson 2017; EA 2017), which state that the concept of inclusion is defined in various ways in research and in diverse social contexts. The focus of future research might be to explain the underlying factors that dominate the social norms, the prevailing perspectives, and approaches in the area, if they exists at all.

The research mentioned in this article highlights the importance of educational practices where there are common values and consensus regarding the inclusion concept, as well as available and flexible educational practices, which can motivate and encourage students with ASC to participate in education and social life at school. Perhaps this can become a reality, or at least support the design of better education practices for students with ASC, when it is considered through the lens of *Universal Design for Learning*, where the framework of a universal education practice is already designed at an initial stage to meet the diversity of students (Meyer et al. 2014). According to Hall et al. (2012), an inclusive society enables the participation of all citizens without restrictions, which starts with an inclusive and accessible school that embraces and celebrates diversity.

Acknowledgments This study is a part of a doctoral dissertation containing a compilation of articles. It is part of the Swedish National Research School Special Education for Teacher Educators (SET), funded by the Swedish Research Council (grant no. 2017-06039), for which the author is grateful. The author wishes to thank main supervisor Professor Mona Holmqvist, Malmö University, Sweden, and co supervisor Dr. Daniel Östlund, Kristianstad University, Sweden, for accurate and rewarding guidance during the process of performing this study.

Funding Information Open access funding provided by Malmö University.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included

in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- American Psychiatric Association (2000). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (4th ed., text rev.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Able, H., Sreckovic, M. A., Schultz, T. R., Garwood, J. D., & Sherman, J. (2015). Views from the trenches: teacher and student supports needed for full inclusion of students with ASD. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 38*(1), 44–57.
- Antonovsky, A. (1987). *Unraveling the mystery of health: how people manage stress and stay well*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bagatell, N. (2004). *Constructing identities in social worlds: stories from four adults with autism*. PhD dissertation: University of Southern California.
- Baines, A. (2012). Positioning, strategizing, and charming: how students with autism construct identities in relation to disability. *Disability and Society, 27*(4), 547–536.
- Barnard, J., Prior, A., & Potter, D. (2000). *Autism and inclusion: is it working?* London: National Autistic Society.
- Baron-Cohen, S. (2005). Theory of mind and autism: a fifteen year review. In S. Baron-Cohen, H. Tager-Flusberg, & D. J. Cohen (Eds.), *Understanding other minds: perspectives from developmental cognitive neuroscience* (2nd ed., pp. 3–20). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Berney, T. (2004). Asperger syndrome from childhood into adulthood. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment, 10*, 341–351.
- Bolman, W. M. (2008). Brief report: 25-year follow-up of a high-functioning autistic child. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 38*, 181–183.
- Booth, T., & Ainscow, M. (2002). *Index for inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools*. Bristol: Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education.
- Bryman, A. (2015). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Burchardt, T. (2004). Capabilities and disability: the capabilities framework and the social model of disability. *Disability and Society, 19*, 735–751.
- Cameron, D., & Cook, B. (2013). General education teachers' goals and expectations for their included students with mild and severe disabilities. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 48*(1), 18–30.
- Carrington, S., Templeton, E., & Papinczak, T. (2003). Adolescents with Asperger syndrome and perceptions of friendship. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 18*, 211–218.
- Chen, Y., Bundy, A., Cordier, R., Chien, Y., & Einfeld, S. (2016). The experience of social participation in everyday contexts among individuals with autism spectrum disorders: an experience sampling study. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 46*(4), 1403–1414.
- Chung, Y., Carter, E., & Sisco, L. (2012). Social interactions of students with disabilities who use augmentative and alternative communication in inclusive classrooms. *American Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 117*(5), 349–367.
- Chung, W., Edgar-Smith, S., Palmer, B., Chung, S., DeLambo, D., & Huang, W. (2015). An examination of in-service teacher attitudes towards students with autism spectrum disorder: implications for professional practice. *Current Issues in Education, 18*(2), 1–12.
- Cronin, A., & Mandich, M. B. (2015). *Human development and performance throughout the lifespan*. Clifton Park, New York: Thomson Delmar Learning.
- Eldara, E., Talmora, R., & Wolf-Zukerman, T. (2010). Successes and difficulties in the individual inclusion of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the eyes of their coordinators. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 14*(1), 97–114.
- European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018). Evidence of the link between inclusive education and social inclusion: a review of the literature. https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Evidence%20%E2%80%93%20A%20Review%20of%20the%20Literature_0.pdf (21-12-2018).
- Farley, M. A., McMahon, W. M., Fombonne, E., Jenson, W. R., Miller, J., Gardner, M., et al. (2009). Twenty-year outcome for individuals with autism and average or near-average cognitive abilities. *Autism Research, 2*(2), 109–118.
- Falkmer, M., Parsons, R., & Granlund, M. (2012). Looking through the Same Eyes? Do Teachers' Participation Ratings Match with Ratings of Students with Autism Spectrum Conditions in Mainstream Schools? Autism research and treatment. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2012/656981>.
- Falkmer, M., Oehlers, K., Granlund, M., & Falkmer, T. (2015). Can you see it too? Observed and self-rated participation in mainstream schools in students with and without autism spectrum disorders. *Developmental Neurorehabilitation, 18*(6), 365–374.
- Farmer, T., McAuliffe Lines, M., & Hamm, J. (2011). Revealing the invisible hand: the role of teachers in children's peer experiences. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 32*, 247–256.
- Fitzgerald, H. (2012). Drawing on disabled students' experiences of physical education and stakeholder responses. *Sport, Education and Society, 17*(4), 443–462.
- Foster, M., & Pearson, E. (2012). Is inclusivity an indicator of quality of care for children with autism in special education? *Pediatrics, 130*(2), p 17.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. London: Tavistock.
- Gillott, A., Furniss, F., & Walter, A. (2001). Anxiety in high-functioning children with autism. *Autism, 5*(3), 277–286.
- Goldingay, S., Stagnitti, K., Sheppard, L., McGillivray, J., McLean, B., & Pepin, G. (2013). An intervention to improve social participation for adolescents with autism spectrum disorder: pilot study. *Developmental Neurorehabilitation, 18*(2), 122–130.
- Gotham, K., Bishop, S., Brunwasser, S., & Lord, C. (2014). Rumination and perceived impairment associated with depressive symptoms in a verbal adolescent–adult ASD sample. *Autism Research, 7*(3), 381–391.
- Hall, T. E., Meyer, A., and Rose, D. H. (Eds.). (2012). *Universal design for learning in the classroom: practical application*. Guildford Press.
- Hart, R. (1992). *Children's participation: from tokenism to citizenship*. Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Center.
- Hebron, J., & Humphrey, N. (2014). Mental health difficulties among young people on the autistic spectrum in mainstream secondary schools: a comparative study. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 14*(1), 22–32.
- Horrocks, J. L., White, G., & Roberts, L. (2008). Principals' attitudes regarding inclusion of children with autism in Pennsylvania public schools. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 38*(8), 1462–1473.
- Huang, A., & Wheeler, J. (2007). Including children with autism in general education in China. *Childhood Education, 83*(6), 356–359.
- Howard, B., Cohn, E., & Orsmond, G. (2006). Understanding and negotiating friendships: perspectives from an adolescent with Asperger syndrome. *Autism, 10*(6), 619–627.
- Humphrey, N., & Symes, W. (2014). Inclusive education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in secondary mainstream schools:

- teacher attitudes, experience and knowledge. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(1), 32–46.
- Hwang, S., Kim, Y. S., Koh, Y. J., & Leventhal, B. L. (2018). Autism spectrum disorder and school bullying: who is the victim? Who is the perpetrator? *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 48(4), 225–238.
- Kern Koegel, L., Ashbaugh, K., Koegel, R. L., and Detar, W., J. (2013). Increasing Socialization in Adults with Asperger's Syndrome. *Psychology in the Schools*, 50(9). <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21715>.
- Kirk, D. (2005). Physical education, youth sport and lifelong participation: the importance of early learning experiences. *European Physical Education Review*, 11(3), 239–255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X05056649>.
- Krieger, B., Pisikur, B., Schulze, C., Jakobs, U., Beurskens, A., & Moser, A. (2017). Supporting and hindering environments for participation of adolescents diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder: a scoping review. *PLoS One*, 13(8), 1–30.
- Kurth, J., & Mastergeorge, A. (2010). Academics and cognitive profiles of students with autism: implications for classroom practice and placement. *International Journal of Special Education*, 25(2), 8–14.
- Lamb, P., Firbank, D., & Aldous, D. (2016). Capturing the world of physical education through the eyes of children with autism spectrum disorders. *Sport, Education and Society*, 21(5), 698–722.
- Lee, H. J., & Park, H. R. (2007). An integrated literature review on the adaptive behavior of individuals with Asperger syndrome. *Remedial and Special Education*, 28, 132–139.
- Locke, J., Ishijima, E. H., Kasari, C., & London, N. (2010). Loneliness, friendship quality and the social networks of adolescents with high-functioning autism in an inclusive school setting. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 10, 74–81.
- Lounds Taylor, J., Adams, R., & Bishop, S. (2018). Social participation and its relation to internalizing symptoms among youth with autism spectrum disorder as they transition from high school. *Autism Research*, 10(4), 663–672.
- Meyer, A., Rose, D. H., & Gordon, D. T. (2014). *Universal design for learning: theory and practice*. CAST Professional Publishing.
- Myers, E., Davis, B., Stobbe, G., & Bjornson, K. (2015). Community and social participation among individuals with autism spectrum disorder transitioning to adulthood. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 45(8), 2373–2381.
- Mesibov, G., & Shea, V. (1996). Full inclusion and students with autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 26(3), 337–346.
- Meyer, J. A., Mundy, P. C., Vaughan Van Hecke, A., & Durocher, J. S. (2006). Social attribution processes and comorbid psychiatric symptoms in children with Asperger syndrome. *Autism*, 10(4), 383–402.
- Munkhagen, E., Gjevik, E., Pripp, A., Sponheim, E., & Dieseth, T. (2017). School refusal behaviour: are children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder at a higher risk? *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 41, 31–38.
- Müller, E., Schuler, A., & Yates, G. B. (2008). Social challenges and supports from the perspective of individuals with Asperger syndrome and other autism spectrum disabilities. *Autism*, 12(2), 173–190.
- Myles, B. S. (2005). *Children and youth with Asperger syndrome: strategies for success in inclusive settings*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Myles, B. S., Lee, H. J., Smith, S. M., Tien, K., Chou, Y., Swanson, T. C., & Hudson, J. (2007). A large-scale study of the characteristics of Asperger syndrome. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 42, 448–459.
- Nilholm, C., & Göransson, K. (2017). What is meant by inclusion? An analysis of European and North American journal articles with high impact. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 32(3), 437–445.
- Norwich, B. (2005). Inclusion: is it a matter of evidence about what works or about values and rights? *Education*, 3–13(33), 51–56.
- Oliver, M. (1990). The individual and social models of disability. Paper presentation. Joint workshop of the living options group and the research unit of the Royal College of Physicians, 23rd July 1990. <https://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/library/Oliver-in-soc-dis.pdf> (21-12-2018).
- Portway, S., & Johnson, B. (2003). Asperger syndrome and the children who “don’t quite fit”. *Early Child Development and Care*, 173(3), 435–443.
- Reed, P., & Osborne, L. A. (2014). Mainstream education for children with autism spectrum disorders. In J. Tarbox, D. R. Dixon, P. Sturmey, & J. L. Matson (Eds.), *Handbook of early intervention for autism spectrum disorders* (pp. 447–485). New York: Springer.
- Rosso, E. (2016). Brief report: coaching adolescents with autism spectrum disorder in a school-based multi-sport program. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 46(7), 2526–2531.
- Sansosti, F. J. (2012). Reducing the threatening and aggressive behavior of a middle school student with Asperger's syndrome. *Preventing School Failure*, 12, 8–18.
- Sansosti, F. J., Powell-Smith, K. A., & Cowan, R. J. (2010). *High functioning autism/Asperger syndrome in schools: assessment and intervention*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Smith, A. (2004). The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in secondary school physical education. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 9(1), 37–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1740898042000208115>.
- Sreckovic, M., Brunsting, N., & Able, H. (2014). Victimization of students with autism spectrum disorder: a review of prevalence and risk factors. *Research of Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 8, 1155–1172. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2014.06.004>.
- Fernando, S., & Perera, H. (2012). School refusal: behavioural and diagnostic profiles of a clinical sample. *Sri Lanka Journal of Psychiatry*, 3(1), 10–13.
- Taheri, A., Perry, A., & Minnes, P. (2017). Exploring factors that impact activity participation of children and adolescents with severe developmental disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 61(12), 1151–1161.
- Tennant, J., Demaray, M., Malecki, C., Terry, M., Clary, M., & Elzinga, N. (2014). Students' ratings of teacher support and academic and social-emotional well-being. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 30(4), 494–512.
- Twachtman-Cullen, D., Baron, G., Groden, J., Groden, G., & Lipsitt, L. (2006). *Communication and stress in students with autism spectrum disorders*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Vandell, D., Pierce, K., & Dadisman, K. (2005). Out-of-school settings as a developmental context of children and youth. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, 33, 43–77.
- Watkins, L., O'Reilly, M., Kuhn, M., Gevarter, C., Lancioni, G., Sigafos, J., et al. (2015). A review of peer-mediated social interaction interventions for students with autism in inclusive settings. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 45(4), 1070–1083.
- Whitaker, P. (2002). Supporting families of preschool children with autism. *Autism*, 6(4), 411–426.
- Wiley, A., Cook, B., & Rummil, P. (2011). *Research in special education*. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Limited.
- Woff, S. (2004). The History of Autism. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 13(4), 201–208.
- Wong, S. (2017). Challenges encountered by 17 autistic young adults in Hong Kong. *Support for Learning*, 32(4), 375–386.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

III

Principals' perspectives of inclusive education involving students with autism spectrum conditions – a Swedish case study

Perspectives of
inclusive
education

Johanna Lüddeckens

*Department of School Development and Leadership, Malmö Universitet,
Malmö, Sweden*

Lotta Anderson

Malmö högskola Lärarutbildningen, Malmö, Sweden, and

Daniel Östlund

*College Department of Education and the Environment, Kristianstad University,
Kristianstad, Sweden*

Received 2 February 2021
Revised 9 May 2021
29 July 2021
22 October 2021
12 November 2021
Accepted 19 November 2021

Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this case study is to describe what commitment and actions are needed in the Swedish school so that principals — within the Swedish school policy framework and with the goal of creating an inclusive school culture and practice — can positively affect schooling for students with disabilities, with a particular focus on students with autism spectrum conditions (ASC). Three research questions guide the study: (1) What commitment and actions do principals consider important for developing an inclusive school for all students, with a particular focus on students with ASC? (2) How do the principals reflect on their own leadership in the development of inclusive education, with a particular focus on students with ASC? (3) Based on the results, what are the implications of the study in practice?

Design/methodology/approach – As part of a three-step data collection method, a snowball sampling was conducted in which $n = 6$ principals were initially interviewed and the data analyzed by an inductive thematic content analysis.

Findings – (1) Certain structures are needed when planning how to develop mutual values when organizing an inclusive school involving students with ASC, (2) the principals could, at times, feel a sense of loneliness in relation to their superiors and decision-makers and (3) more accountability from educators and greater consideration for the student perspective in decision-making are needed.

Practical implications – It was found that (1) certain structures are needed when planning how to develop mutual values when organizing an inclusive school involving students with ASC, (2) the principals could, at times, feel a sense of isolation in relation to their superiors and decision-makers and (3) more accountability from educators and greater consideration for the student perspective in decision-making are needed.

Originality/value – Index for inclusion and elements from the inclusive leadership model were used in the data collection and analysis.

Keywords Autism spectrum, Case studies, Inclusive education, Inclusive school leadership, Index for inclusion, Principals

Paper type Research paper

© Johanna Lüddeckens, Lotta Anderson and Daniel Östlund. Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

This study is a part of a doctoral thesis containing a compilation of articles. It is part of the Swedish National Research School Special Education for Teacher Educators (SET), funded by the Swedish Research Council (grant no. 2017-06039).



Introduction

Inclusive education is often discussed as involving the attitudes and classroom techniques that meet the diversity of the educational culture, practice and policy (Ainscow and Booth, 2002). In addition, according to Humpfrey and Symes (2014), inclusive education requires all staff to have a clear and shared understanding of what inclusion involves, matched with shared expectations of inclusion that must be supported by the school leadership (Horrocks *et al.*, 2008). Angelides (2011) explains that being a leader in inclusive education requires understanding the local context and the students' perspective and, accordingly, designing strategies in the leadership that support the teaching by considering the children's voices. Dotger and Coughlin (2018) analyzed the actions and decisions that school leaders made regarding students with autism spectrum conditions (ASC) and noted a prevailing culture and structure that often excludes students with disabilities when circumstances in the classroom became difficult. This action reflects well-intentioned but ultimately negative consequences for the student with ASC. Therefore, school leaders' skills and knowledge in special education are crucial and must permeate all decision-making (Dotger and Coughlin, 2018).

This article concerns school leadership, with a particular focus on leadership involving the inclusion of students with ASC; accordingly, six Swedish principals were interviewed to gain insight into their perspectives and how they initiate their practices. The aim of this case study is to describe what commitment and actions are needed in the Swedish school so that principals — within the Swedish school policy framework and with the intention of creating an inclusive school culture and practice — can positively affect schooling for students with disabilities, with a particular focus on students with ASC. The study is guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1. What commitment and actions do principals consider important for developing an inclusive school for all students, with a particular focus on students with ASC?
- RQ2. How do the principals reflect on their own leadership in the development of inclusive education, with a particular focus on students with ASC?
- RQ3. Based on the results, what are the implications of the study in practice?

Students with ASC in inclusive education in Sweden

Neurodevelopmental conditions (NDC) – for example, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD), Tourette syndrome and ASC – are characterized by atypical and norm-breaking behavior, social communication and interaction ability, among others (Järbrink, 2007; Knapp *et al.*, 2009; Hirvikoski *et al.*, 2016). This can be a challenge when students with ASC are confronted with a school culture founded on social norms, also referred to as *collective representations of acceptable group behavior* (Lapinski and Rimal, 2005). Anderson (2020) describes how students with ASC in Sweden have traditionally been placed in special schools for students with intellectual disability (ID) or been subject to customized solutions and special school units due to their reduced ability to understand the social context of school compared to the other students. The anxiety caused by the excessive sensory stimulation of school also contributes to the ASC student's reduced ability to learn and adapt socially in mainstream schools. Several directives and policies in Sweden (Education Act, SOU, 2010, p. 800) have specified that only students with diagnosed ID can be placed in special schools for students with ID. According to Anderson (2020), the result is that a considerable number of students with ASC without ID are expected to complete schooling in mainstream primary and secondary schools under the same conditions as students without ASC. This puts extraordinary pressure on students with ASC, which Anderson (2020) explains has been reported to create certain difficulties. According to the Swedish Regular Compulsory School Ordinance, support intended for students in need of special support must “in the first instance

be provided within the class or group to which the pupil belongs. If there are special reasons, such support may instead be provided in a special group” (Public Law 1194, 1994; chap. 5, §5). In addition, the Swedish Curriculum for compulsory school, preschool class and school-age educare (2011, revised 2018) states that

equivalent education does not mean that the education should be the same everywhere or that the resources of the school are to be allocated equally. Account should be taken of the varying circumstances and needs of pupils. There are also different ways of attaining these goals. The school has a special responsibility for those pupils who for different reasons experience difficulties in attaining the goals that have been set up for the education. For this reason, education can never be the same for all. (p. 6)

The principal is ultimately responsible for distributing resources within the unit (SOU, 2010, p. 1,303, Swedish Education Act). However, Johansson-Hidén and Blossing (2011) describe the dilemmas of today’s Swedish principals as involving days filled with result-oriented questions about school policies and economic issues, with the consequence that quality and development often come second.

Leadership in inclusive education

Research (Kugelmass, 2003; Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2004) suggests that the role of school leaders is central in successfully shaping inclusive education. Irvine *et al.* (2011) highlight how principals in rural Canada express inclusion, as in a place definition of the inclusion concept, as a normal component of the area’s educational system. This may be related to how many small communities have no alternative than to include students with exceptional needs in the general education classroom, but this was expressed as positive by the principals in the study.

Some studies (Cambron-McCabe, 2006; Marshall and Oliva, 2006) have proposed that one way to develop inclusive education in schools is through the creation of leaders who promote social justice and inclusion. According to Aarons *et al.* (2014) and later Aarons *et al.* (2017), effective leadership is seen as a necessary factor in supporting the successful implementation of evidence-based practice, which Standick *et al.* (2019) explore in their study of how principals led schools that implemented evidence-based practice for students with ASC. Their findings suggest that leadership actions that reflect the optimal leadership profile demonstrate moral and ethical integrity and inspire others. Angelides (2011) emphasizes the need for transformational *leadership*, in which the principals influence and change the culture of their school and places this within the context of transformational models of leadership (Bass, 1999). This is characterized by inclusivity and teacher participation, which promote *distributed leadership* – a form of power distribution in schools that extends the authority and influence of groups or individuals (Arrowsmith, 2007). In relation to students with ASC, Schechter and Feldman (2019) investigated the role of the principal in creating professional learning environments (PLCs) in special education. They identify how PLCs in research are defined as a “network or network of learning processes that arises among its members” (Schechter and Feldman, 2019, p. 17) and further explain that special education school principals must often foster learning communities as a means for meeting policies regarding the education of students with special needs (DiPaola and Walther-Thomas, 2003; Schechter and Feldman, 2019). The principal plays a key role in allowing the time and space for staff members to collaborate with each other, explains Schechter and Feldman (2019). In the work of developing PLCs, perhaps distributed leadership should be seen as an important factor. In the present study, two models were used in the analysis of the data. In the inclusive leadership model (Oskarsdotir *et al.*, 2020), which is described in more detail in the next section, elements from the distributed leadership, such as staff participation in decision-making, the transformational leadership (changing and developing the school culture) and the implementation of *instructional leadership*, are seen as key components for successful

JEA

inclusive leadership. The elements in the instructional leadership are the focus on having clear educational goals, planning the curriculum and highlighting the leaders' responsibility to advocate for better measurable outcomes for students, in addition to the importance of enhancing the quality of classroom teaching (Day *et al.*, 2016).

Two models used in the data collection and in the analysis process

To examine how principals can create a more inclusive environment in their schools, two models were chosen as analytical tools: the index for inclusion and elements from the model for inclusive leadership. The first, the index for inclusion, was paired with three key concepts identified in the model for inclusive leadership (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2015; Óskarsdóttir *et al.*, 2020). Ainscow *et al.* (2006) explain how, according to this index of inclusion, the concept of inclusion can be summarized in three overlapping ways: as inclusion that reduces barriers to learning and increases the participation of all students, as inclusion that increases the capacity of schools to respond to the diversity of students in their local communities in ways that treat them all equally and as inclusion that involves the integration of inclusive values into action in education and society, as shown in Figure 1.

Ainscow (1999) explains that inclusive education focuses on overcoming the barriers that prevent the participation and learning of all students, regardless of ability level, gender, social background or attendance record. In addition, Ainscow *et al.* (2004) claim that actions to advance inclusive education have focused more on the ideological aspects of inclusion rather than taking a whole-school approach or directing change at the systems level. The index for inclusion highlights the need for evolving inclusive practices, creating school cultures and designing inclusive policies aimed at enhancing a more inclusive approach in school and society (Ainscow and Booth, 2002).

In the second model – the model for inclusive leadership mentioned earlier – Óskarsdóttir *et al.* (2020) point out three key concepts in the successful inclusive leadership: *access*, *autonomy* and *accountability*. These concepts are necessary for principals to fulfill their core functions and facilitate more inclusive school practices; however, they must be supported by applicable national policies that ensure principals' *access* to appropriate pay and status in the community in addition to ongoing support commensurate on all levels. The policies should provide access to professional development and ongoing support and resources to develop the capacity of the workforce to understand diversity issues and implement national policy initiatives. Principals must also have the *autonomy* to make evidence-based decisions about the school's strategic direction, development and organization as well as the autonomy to appoint staff who take responsibility for and raise the achievement levels of all learners.

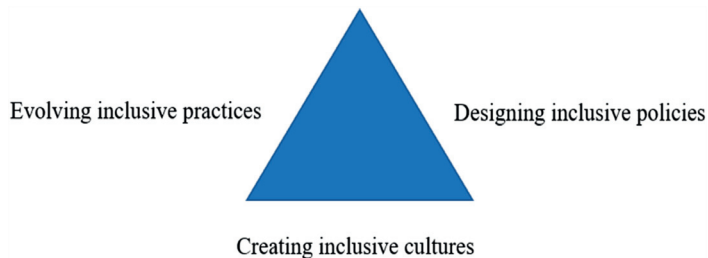


Figure 1.
The index for inclusion

Source(s): Ainscow and Booth (2002)

Within the *accountability* factor, national policies must ensure that principals are able to set out the vision, values and outcomes for which they (and other stakeholders) wish to be held to account (e.g. equity, nondiscrimination, meeting the requirements of all learners) to learners, families, the local community and others through mechanisms aligned with other policy areas to facilitate support for inclusive education policy and practice. This accountability is particularly pertinent because, along with important stakeholders, principals have a leading role in monitoring, self-reviewing, evaluating, communicating (student results) and reflecting on data to work continuously for improvement (Oskarsdottir *et al.*, 2020). In this study, the index for inclusion and the three key concepts in the inclusive leadership model were used as tools in the analysis process and in the organization/presentation of the findings.

Method and respondents

In this case study, the data were collected over a period of one year and divided into three parts. This research design enabled us to gain detailed insight into critical events, the principals' challenges and actions taken to address threats in the school context (Yin, 2014) in relation to students with ASC. In the first part, $n = 6$ Swedish principals were interviewed. In the second part, $n = 3$ agreed to give a second interview, and later, $n = 2$ participated in a third, written interview. The second and third interviews were added to supplement the study with a more in-depth discussion from the participants about the inclusion concept in general in relation to the principals' own leadership and theories of inclusive education.

First part of the data collection

In this study, a purposeful sampling was performed first. Thereafter, based on the first participants, the last participants were recruited by snowball sampling. A purposeful sampling involves the deliberate choosing of a participant due to certain characteristics of that participant, explains Etikan *et al.* (2016). This involves identifying individuals or groups of individuals who are skilled and well-informed about the topic of interest. In addition to knowledge, experience and being willing and able to participate, they also possess the ability to communicate experiences and opinions. Purposeful sampling involves certain limitations compared to a random sample of participants. In this sense, the researcher is subjective and biased in the choice of subjects in the study. This hinders the researcher's ability to draw conclusions about a population, and therefore only general conclusions and implications to the practice can be made. In a snowball sampling, the researcher asks the first few respondents, usually selected via convenience sampling, if they know of anyone with similar views or experiences who could take part in the research (Polit-O'Hara and Beck, 2006). Two of the participating principals were already known to the researchers and were selected based on purposeful sampling. The four other participating principals were chosen based on a snowball choice built on information from two of the principals who were first interviewed and from a principal who declined participation. The first six interviews were performed on site ($n = 4$) and via the video conference tool, Zoom ($n = 2$).

Selection of respondents in the first part of the data collection

Three of the respondents lead compulsory schools and/or compulsory school for students with intellectual disability (CSSIDs) for students between the ages of 13 and 17 and, in one case, between 6 and 12. The remaining respondents lead school organizations in upper-secondary school and/or upper-secondary school for students with intellectual disability (USSIDs) between the ages of 16 and 21. The respondents and their school level/type of school are shown in Table 1. This table also gives information about the various types of schools in

Respondent	School years	School level/type	School organization
P1	Preschool class to Grade 6	Compulsory school	Mainstream school setting, including students with ASC
P2	Preschool class to Grade 9	Compulsory school	Mainstream school setting, including students with ASC
P3	Preschool class to Grade 9	Compulsory school and school for CSSIDs	Inclusive school setting (TDs and CSSIDs in the same classes), students with ASC, including those with and without ID
P4	Grades 10 to 12	Upper-secondary school	Mainstream school setting, including students with ASC
P5	Grades 10 to 12	Upper-secondary school and special group for USSIDs	Two special groups in the arts program: one group with students with ASC (without ID) and one group with USSIDs (including students with ASC and ID)
P6	Grades 10 to 12	USSIDs	USSIDs (ASC with ID)

Note(s): CSSIDs = compulsory school for students with intellectual disabilities
USSIDs = upper-secondary school for students with intellectual disabilities
TD = typically developed
ID = intellectual disability

Table 1.
Overview of the respondents and their school organizations

Sweden, such as schools for typically developed (TD) students and students with disabilities, and special school units for students with ID.

The first interview

Unstructured, in-depth individual interviews (Creswell, 2012) were conducted to gain insight into the principals' personal values on the practice of inclusive leadership and the challenges they encounter in their work. The interviews were recorded on digital audio devices and transcribed verbatim. As each interview in the first part of the data collection lasted for one hour, the transcripts provided rich data for further analysis. The first interview involved questions about planning for, including and educating students with ASC as well as any other students who may display challenging behavior at school. These questions covered topics about the school's culture and values; accessibility and participation for students with ASC in school; the development of more universally designed curricula, instruction and assessment; collaborative learning; meeting the students' needs; and strengthening the school's community connections.

Second and third parts of the data collection

In the second part of the data collection, three principals declined to continue participating, but the three remaining principals agreed to take part in a second interview. The three remaining principals work in similar school forms (Swedish upper-secondary school). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews were performed via Zoom with the aim to use a virtual meeting platform with which the staff felt the most comfortable (Hill *et al.*, 2021). The second and third parts of the data collection consist of three oral interviews and two written interviews, described in Figure 2.

In the second and third interviews, the principals were asked to reflect more on their role and actions as leaders in relation to inclusive education, particularly education involving students with ASC. A written interview was sent to the two remaining principals who agreed to participate. According to Scheik (2014), a written interview can be defined as a written text production created by the researcher, which the respondent performs in the researcher's

absence and in a delayed communication, as text productions like this are considered more as everyday, reflective writing processes. Writing, according to [Goody and Watt \(1963\)](#), promotes “private or individual thinking” which

Enables the individual to objectify his own experience and gives him some check upon the transmutations of memory under the influences of subsequent events. (p. 339)

Analysis process

The data in this study were analyzed by a thematic analysis, which provides flexibility both in terms of theory and in forming research questions, the sample size/composition, the data collection method and methods for generating meaning. According to [Clark and Brown \(2017\)](#), thematic analysis is used to

Identify patterns within and across data in relation to participants’ lived experience, views and perspectives, and behavior and practices; “experiential” research which seeks to understand what participants’ think, feel, and do. (p. 297)

Another approach adopted for this study is [Thorne’s \(2016\) interpretative description](#) inductive qualitative method; however, it does not aim to offer practical results for the practice. This method entails a qualitative researcher cataloging the preliminary coding notes and looking for patterns or themes, [Thorne \(2016\)](#) explains, with the result that

The construction of these themes remains tentative as the analytic process continues. This allows researchers to modify or restructure them as they develop, and they can be redefined at higher or lower levels. Coding is primarily used not to predetermine meaning, but to allow for segments about an identified topic to be assembled in one place to complete the interpretative process. (p. 5)

As described by [Braun and Clark \(2006\)](#), in this process, the following steps are to be taken: 1) familiarizing oneself with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes and 6) producing the report. In the first step, the interviews were transcribed, and while reading the interviews multiple times, the second and third steps were taken. These steps involved creating initial codes and searching for themes. Based on the data material, two major themes with subthemes crystallized. These themes will be more specifically introduced in the Results section along with the results in relation to the index of inclusion model ([Ainscow and Booth, 2002](#)). At the end of the Results section, the results are presented in relation to the three concepts identified in an inclusive leadership model: *access, accountability and autonomy* ([Oskarsdottir et al., 2020](#)).

Results

According to the principals in this study, what levels of commitment and actions are necessary to develop an inclusive school involving all students, particularly those with ASC?

Respondents in the second interview (oral)

Focus on the respondents’ own leadership and their actions in leading a school, which, according to Swedish national policy, is assumed to include all students, but in this case, with a special focus on the students with ASC.

P4
P5
P6



Respondents in the third interview (written)

Reflections over their own actions and leadership in relation to the concepts in the inclusive leadership model ([European Agency 2018; Oskarsdottir et al., 2020](#)): access, autonomy, and accountability.

P4
P6

Figure 2.
Participants in the second and third parts of the data collection

The main themes with subthemes in the overall results from the three data collection parts are as follows:

First main theme: developing shared values

The school culture: The principals experience a general acceptance of diversity among their staff. In general, all six respondents highly praise their school's culture, describing it as supportive, caring and without prestige. "Here, all children are everyone's children," one expresses. The principals view inclusion as involving the students' individual sense of participation in school. Regarding creating inclusive cultures, participation in the school must be ASC-adapted, and it is important for the adults in the school to have access to the ASC students' thoughts and ideas. "Students with ASC are different, just like everyone else," one says. Organizing for diversity and having a high level of knowledge about ASC is important in terms of different needs and the teaching techniques that meet these needs. Adults in school must work professionally in all situations and not end up locked in their own personal conflicts. One of the principals explains how "understanding an ASC student's needs also involves understanding how to use the relationship as a pedagogical tool to help the student."

Authenticity and clear communication: This steers the development work. "It is important for a leader to be authentic and communicate clearly," one of the principals say. The principals face various dilemmas when trying to meet the needs of students with ASC in school, which they claim are the results of limited budgets and the requirements of policies that collide when juggling, for instance, both the students' right to support and the staff's right to a good working environment. The principals in this study explain that they often feel as though they are fighting for their students, especially when facing the decision-makers higher up in the educational hierarchy. Here, they articulate a sense of loneliness and exposure in relation to their superiors.

Prosperity and sustainability: High staff turnover in the Swedish school is a systemic difficulty. To prevent this, the staff must prosper – if the staff are comfortable, the students will also be. A central part of a principal's task is to create a healthy *we*-feeling in the school. Regarding evolving inclusive practices, one principal explains: "a pitfall can be when principals ally themselves too much with the staff, as there is a risk that exclusive tendencies may arise." Creating meaning and guidance for accessibility, knowledge of ASC and what the needs within ASC have for the teaching is a basis for the school to function. These requisites should not be considered special or extra but rather part of high-quality teaching. The same principal continues "I am constantly working to convince the decision-makers that the school practice needs this competence."

Visionary leadership: This is important for developing an inclusive practice. It sets an example that influences the staff and surrounding community. However, effective visionary leadership can be challenging due to lack of time.

The society: Cooperation with the surrounding community is a key factor in creating mutual understanding and shared values. "Invite the community into the school and the school reaching out to the community," one of the principals say.

Second main theme: developing structures

Flexibility: Regarding flexibility in an organized form, it is important to have structures and routines to follow-up on the students' social situations, behavioral development and academic achievements to make flexible adaptations. "The organizational structures must be flexible and not static in the meeting with the individual student," one of the principals summarizes.

Professional development: Certain structures are required when implementing various plans and policies for equal treatment of the students. This can be organized on a practical level, for instance, in the classroom during the start and end of each school day and lesson.

These structures also strengthen the teacher's leadership skills. The experience of teaching and interacting with one student group in the meeting of a new group of students can be used in an advantageous way – rotating the staff allows them to experience teaching a diverse range of students and helps develop the skills needed to make adaptations on a group level. To teach for diversity in school, the ability to differentiate the teaching is a requisite for success. Differentiation is not the same as individualizing and having an individual lesson plan for each student, but rather it is about flexibility in the execution of the teaching. A challenge with inclusive education is to plan and execute the education despite a wide range of abilities in the same classroom. However, “students in this environment develop social skills and mutual respect of others through interacting with those who are different from themselves.” Continuous education for the staff to increase the understanding of disability is seen as crucial by the principals.

Documentation: A metaphor of handrails is used when describing the development of structures in an organization and documenting the use of them (as one would use handrails) in decision-making processes.

Cooperation: To restore the ASC student's (or a student with earlier school failure's) affiliation with, and trust in, the school, working together with other stakeholders and professions creates relationships. Cooperation also in the sense that the school staff work close together with each other, in planning, organizing and in the execution of the teaching. In addition, the principals highlight the importance of cooperating with the parents and surrounding community.

How do the principals in this study reflect on their own leadership in relation to the development of inclusive education, particularly regarding students with ASC?

In this section, the results are introduced by a disposition that uses the key concept from the inclusive leadership model (European Agency, 2018; Oskarsdottir *et al.*, 2020) of *access*, *autonomy* and *accountability* for answering the second research question.

Access

Principals' access to policy: A principal's responsibility is to create a school that works for all students and falls in line with the governing documents. Here, the decision-maker's responsibility is to fully understand that, to improve the possibilities for good results, the governing documents must be followed in terms of accessibility. Only then will politicians see the outcome that they want in the form of increased results for all students. Limited budgets present problems in achieving this. Regarding policy that gives access to appropriate pay and status in the community as a principal as well as ongoing support commensurate with levels of autonomy, the principals address how they have good salaries and status but lack support from senior executives and politicians. Much time is spent fighting on behalf of the students and what is in their best interest. The onus is on the individual principal to work on creating good relationships at different levels. A generally limited budget can prevent access to professional development and ongoing support and resources to develop the capacity of the workforce for diversity and implement national policy initiatives. There is commitment conflict in this but also a feeling of violating the Education Act when it comes to students with ASC's right to support, as the budget often goes before these students' needs. The principals in this study generally understand their responsibility for all the students, the staff and the surrounding community. However, tight budgets create obstacles, which sometimes makes them feel a sense of failure.

Principals' ability to develop visionary leadership: The principals describe their role as one which facilitates the staff to improve their ability to teach for diversity. One of the principals emphasizes the importance of the teachers' relational competence to succeed with this, stating that “a principal, being the educational leader, must take the time to be in the classrooms and continuously discuss the education with the staff.”

Principal's access to perform a sustainable leadership: Principals are responsible for the different development processes they start. "Principals need to stay and give time," one of the principals says.

Autonomy

Principals' autonomy in decision-making: Regarding to policies that are intended to facilitate principals to make evidence-based decisions about the school's strategic direction, development and organization, the principals in this study express a great deal of freedom if the budget is kept. They also have a great deal of freedom based on policy. "This is a freedom that must be exercised!" one principal exclaims. From the school's point of view, principals are quite free to organize the work of providing support for all learners without recourse to labeling or bureaucratic processes. The principals experience that when obstacles and limitations occur, they usually lie with the other stakeholders due to their difficulties in having time to collaborate.

Principals' autonomy in leadership: In a general sense, the principals see their key role as changemakers who enhance the school culture and develop it toward a shared vision of inclusion that meets all the needs of the students. It is the principal's duty to facilitate time and structures for the adults in school to create and develop good relationships with students and colleagues and perform a visionary and sustainable leadership.

Accountability

Principals' responsibilities for different actors: Regarding national policies that the principal is held accountable to learners, families, the local community and others through mechanisms that are aligned with other policy areas to ensure support for inclusive education policy and practice, the principals refer to their job as a mission rather than a job. It can be a challenge because certain laws give different and double responsibilities, such as the Education Act and the Work Environment Act — staff may see certain students in need of support as a work environment problem, while, at the same time, the student is entitled to support. "Change takes time," one of the principals reflects. The school is "reborn" every school year and therefore is not a static culture but rather a flexible one. Another principal states that "the principal has the ultimate responsibility to give the adults in school the best possible conditions for students with ASC to succeed in school," meaning that, in a long-term perspective, the school's mission is to prepare students for life after school. When coming to the interpretation of the concept of inclusion, the student's perspective must take precedence over other perspectives, as this gives the students a sense of participation. One of the principals explains how "exclusion appears when teachers are left alone with dilemmas."

Accountability when taking the lead: Regarding the principals to have accountability in playing a leading role in monitoring, self-reviewing and evaluating, together with key stakeholders, to provide information on learner outcomes and reflect on data to inform ongoing improvement, this accountability is seen as important and usually works through the systematic quality management, which, according to Swedish policy, the principal is required to do.

Shift in responsibility: The principal stands in the front line of difficult decisions. If there are organizational changes, the principals must take center stage and announce these. One of the principals summarizes this by explaining that "the farther one comes from the front line in the decision-making chain, the easier it is for one to make difficult decisions that can affect students, teachers, and parents."

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that tight budgets and demands for goal-driven results may risk a reduction in principals' commitment to work toward including all students. The difference between the schools and the school organizations the principals lead also reveals

something about the complexity of addressing inclusive education simply as a matter of a student's placement. In the introduction of this article, [Ainscow and Booth \(2002\)](#) note that inclusive education is about attitudes and classroom techniques to meet diversity. This calls for more knowledge about how to differentiate the education among the teachers to meet all students, which is also an aspect that reoccurred in the results. [Tomlinson and Allan \(2000\)](#) describe *differentiated instruction* (DI) as teachers reacting responsively to the student's needs, meaning that differentiation is simply attending to the learning needs of a particular student or small group of students rather than the more usual method of teaching the class as though all the individuals are basically alike. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is often mentioned in conjunction with DI, and while these models are not the same, both are rooted in the belief that variability exists in any group of students, but this variation is seen as beneficial for all the students' learning ([Tomlinson, 1999](#); [Tomlinson and Allan, 2000](#); [Ainscow and Booth, 2002](#)).

Further, the results in this article indicate the meaning of values and structures as important for an inclusive leadership. They also highlight how, in addition to professional development in ASC and teaching techniques in meeting these students, collaboration among the staff and the surrounding society is needed. [Tomlinson and Allan \(2000\)](#) examine how the leadership role includes making plans to ensure that abstract visions for change become concrete. In line with this, the present study shows how the principals oversee budgets, schedules, access to materials and knowledge and organize other resources necessary for change. In addition, [Tomlinson and Allan \(2000\)](#) explain how the principals work with teachers and administrators to determine their needs related to change processes. The principals respond in an effective and efficient manner, continuously formally assessing both the process of change and its outcomes.

Accountability is a recurring theme in these interviews. Lack of accountability, or the shift in responsibility by the adults within the school system, can hinder the success of student learning. The results suggest that school staff share this responsibility at all levels — inside the school organization, at the policy level and within the surrounding community. The policies are meant to guide the adults in decision-making, both academically and in fostering future responsible adults into an inclusive society. However, if these policies are not accessible enough, without an accessible design and created for the diversity of the individuals who are meant to read and interpret them, this creates barriers. Adults working in schools can also inadvertently create barriers in their demeanor toward students, for instance, in what they say and how they say it, how they offer students access to information and the ways in which the students are allowed to express their knowledge. Adults also inadvertently create barriers to students' learning by the rules they set up and the structures they shape in the classroom. In addition to the student perspective, to enhance the adults' ability to see the possible barriers that they may create for students' learning or participation, the adults need the eyes of their colleagues — others' observations of their practice beyond solely their own. But how can the adults be held more accountable? The results of this case study suggest that this involves the conditions surrounding the adults' work with students. In this work, it is proposed that the principal's role, approach, ability and knowledge are important. In the chain of command, having knowledge of disabilities, demonstrating an awareness of diversity and showing trust and respect are essential for outcomes that are in the students' best interest.

According to [Dotger and Coughlin \(2018\)](#), leading an inclusive organization with a focus on inclusive education evidently requires good knowledge of special education in addition to the ability to listen and demonstrate a high ethical pathos with authentic, visionary and sustainable leadership. A school leader with these attributes may serve to strengthen the coworkers' sense of accountability and responsibility toward their students. Nevertheless, to include the student perspective — as highlighted in the results of this study — and to succeed in inclusive leadership, a leader should value the notion that “all children are everyone's children.”

Conclusions and implications

The principals describe the concept of inclusion as the students' own sense of participation in school, with the implication that it is important to consider the student perspective in decision-making processes. The principals articulate a sense of loneliness and vulnerability in relation to their superiors, to the extent that they feel they must fight certain battles on behalf of their students when faced with the decision-makers higher up in the educational hierarchy. This shows the importance of highlighting the organizational processes and decision-making procedures that exist in the control system to find any pitfalls that can make it difficult for principals to make well-balanced decisions. In general, the principals in this study see their key role as changemakers who initiate processes that enhance the school culture in their organizations toward a shared vision of inclusion, thus developing a school for all students. This may be a key factor for successful inclusive leadership. However, the lack of accountability, or the shift in responsibility by the adults within the school system, is seen in this study as a hinderance to the success of the ASC students' learning. The results of this case study support previous research emphasizing the importance of common values and solid structures in the implementation of inclusive education involving students with ASC.

Limitations and future research

One limitation is that the current study was conducted on a relatively small scale, which means that the results are not directly transferable. Nevertheless, it provides a snapshot of the complexity of inclusive education in relation to a certain group of students who risk facing certain challenges involving inclusion. The study's contribution can be considered as relevant for the school practice of principals and researchers, for instance, by considering the use of the index for inclusion (Ainscow and Booth, 2002) and key concepts in the inclusive leadership model (Óskarsdóttir *et al.*, 2020) as tools in the analysis processes and school development work. Another limitation involves the difference in the sizes of the schools and the difference in the types of schools where the participating principals work. In addition, the three phases of the study consisted of a varying and ever-smaller number of participants, which further limited the ability to generalize the results. Although this study's initial focus was on students with ASC, it should be noted that the views of the principals generally reflect the perspective of leading an inclusive school geared at meeting all disability categories rather than one specific type of disability. School leaders are, according to the Swedish school policies, required to design a school that meets all students' needs, but this generalization by the principals in this study may also have to do with relying on models that focus on inclusive education in general in the interviews. This is a limitation in the present study, as the aim was to target inclusive school leadership in relation to students with ASC. The principals' general perception regarding this may be related to their concerns about the risks that students' difficulties will be objectified rather than be a matter of their actual participation and success in school. Future research can add to the body of knowledge by including student perspectives about inclusive school leadership and how students can be more involved in decision-making processes, including problematizing the prevailing perspectives of inclusive education.

References

- Aarons, G.A., Ehrhart, M.G., Farahnak, L.R. and Sklar, M. (2014), "Aligning leadership across systems and organizations to develop a strategic climate for evidence-based practice implementation", *Annual Review of Public Health*, Vol. 35, pp. 255-274.
- Aarons, G.A., Ehrhart, M.G., Torres, E.M., Finn, N.K. and Beidas, R.S. (2017), "The humble leader: association of discrepancies in leader and follower ratings of implementation leadership with organizational climate in mental health", *Psychiatric Services*, Vol. 68, pp. 115-122.

-
- Ainscow, M. (1999), *Understanding the Development of Inclusive Schools*, Falmer, London.
- Ainscow, M. and Booth, T. (2002), *Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools*, Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, Bristol.
- Ainscow, M., Booth, T. and Dyson, A. (2004), "Understanding and developing inclusive practices in schools: a collaborative action research network", *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 125-139.
- Ainscow, M., Booth, T. and Dyson, A. (2006), *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion*, Routledge, London.
- Anderson, L. (2020), "Schooling for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: parents' perspectives", *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, Vol. 50 No. 12, pp. 4356-4366.
- Angelides, P. (2011), "Forms of leadership that promote inclusive education in Cypriot schools", *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 21-36.
- Arrowsmith, T. (2007), "Distributed Leadership in secondary schools in England: the impact on the role of the head teacher and other issues", *Management in Education*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 21-27.
- Bass, B. (1999), "Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership", *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 9-32.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006), "Using thematic analysis in psychology", *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 77-101.
- Cambren-McCabe, N. (2006), "Preparation and development of school leaders: implications for social justice policies", in Marshall, K. and Oliva, M. (Eds), *Leadership for Social Justice*, Pearson, Boston, MA.
- Clarke, V. and Braun, V. (2017), "Thematic analysis", *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 297-298.
- Creswell, J.W. (2012), *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, Pearson, Boston, MA.
- Curriculum for compulsory school, preschool class and school-aged educare (2011), *National Agency for Education*, Norstedts Juridik, Stockholm.
- Day, C., Gu, Q. and Sammons, P. (2016), "The impact of leadership on student outcomes: how successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make a Difference", *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 52 No. 2, pp. 221-258.
- DiPaola, M.F. and Walther-Thomas, C. (2003), *Principals and Special Education: The Critical Role of School Leaders*, Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.
- Dotger, B. and Coughlin, A. (2018), "Examining school leaders' simulated interactions in support of students with autism", *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 27-38.
- Etikan, I., Abubakar Musa, S. and Sunusi Alkassim, R. (2016), "Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling", *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 1-4.
- European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2015), *Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems*, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense.
- European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018), *Supporting Inclusive School Leadership: Literature Review*, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense.
- Goody, J. and Watt, I. (1963), "The consequences of literacy", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 5 No. 3, pp. 304-345.
- Hill, M.V., Bleicher, R.J. and Farma, J.M. (2021), "A how-to guide: virtual interviews in the era of social distancing", *Journal of Surgical Education*, Vol. 78 No. 1, pp. 321-323.
- Hirvikoski, T., Mittendorf-Rutz, E., Boman, M., Larsson, H., Lichtenstein, P. and Bölte, S. (2016), "Premature mortality in autism spectrum disorder", *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 208 No. 3, pp. 232-238.

-
- Horrocks, J.L., White, G. and Roberts, L. (2008), "Principals' attitudes regarding inclusion of children with autism in Pennsylvania public schools", *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, Vol. 38 No. 8, pp. 1462-1473.
- Humphrey, N. and Symes, W. (2014), "Inclusive education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in secondary mainstream schools: teacher attitudes, experience and knowledge", *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 32-46.
- Irvine, A., Lupart, J.L., Loreman, T. and McGhie-Richmond, D. (2011), "Educational leadership to create authentic inclusive schools: the experiences of principals in a Canadian rural school district", *Exceptionality Education International*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 70-88.
- Järbrink, K. (2007), "The economic consequences of autistic spectrum disorder among children in a Swedish municipality", *Autism*, Vol. 11 No. 5, pp. 453-463.
- Johansson-Hidén, B. and Blossing, U. (2011), "Hur skall rektor kommunicera för bättre ledarskap?" [How should the principal communicate for better leadership?], in Blossing, U. (Ed.), *The School Leader in Focus - Knowledge, Values and Tools*, Studentlitteratur, Lund.
- Knapp, M., Romeo, R. and Beecham, J. (2009), "Economic cost of autism in the UK", *Autism*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 317-336.
- Kugelmass, J.W. (2003), *Inclusive Leadership: Leadership for Inclusion*, New York State University, New York.
- Kugelmass, J. and Ainscow, M. (2004), "Leadership for inclusion: a comparison of international practices", *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 133-141.
- Lapinski, M.K. and Rimal, R.N. (2005), "An explication of social norms", *Communication Theory*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 127-134.
- Marshall, C. and Oliva, M. (Eds), (2006), *Leadership for Social Justice*, Pearson, Boston, MA.
- Oskarsdóttir, E., Donnelly, V., Turner-Cmuchal, M. and Florian, L. (2020), "Inclusive school leaders – their role in raising the achievement of all learners", *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 58 No. 5, pp. 521-537.
- Polit, D.F. and Beck, C.T. (2006), *Essentials of Nursing Research: Methods, Appraisal, and Utilization*, 6th ed., Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, Philadelphia, PA.
- Public Law 1194 (1994), *Regular Compulsory School Ordinance*, Swedish Code of Statutes, Stockholm.
- Schechter, C. and Feldman, N. (2019), "The principal's role in professional learning community in a special education school serving pupils with autism", *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 17-28.
- Scheik, D. (2014), "Das schriftliche Interview in der qualitativen Sozialforschung. [The Written Interview in Qualitative Social Research]", *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, Vol. 43 No. 5, pp. 379-395.
- SOU (2010), *Skollag, [Education Act]*, Skolverket, Stockholm.
- Stadnick1, N., Meza, R., Suhrheinrich, J., Aarons, G., Brookman-Frazee, L., Lyon, A., Mandell, D. and Locke, J. (2019), "Leadership profiles associated with the implementation of behavioral health evidence-based practices for autism spectrum disorder in schools", *Autism*, Vol. 23 No. 8, pp. 1957-1968.
- Thorne, S. (2016), *Interpretive Description: Qualitative Research for Applied Practice*, Routledge, New York and London.
- Tomlinson, C.A. (1999), *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia.
- Tomlinson, C. and Allan, S. (2000), *Leadership for Differentiating Schools and Classrooms*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia.
- Yin, R. (2014), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5th ed., Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Further reading

- Angelides, P., Antoniou, E. and Charalambous, C. (2010), "Making sense of inclusion for leadership and schooling: a case study from Cyprus", *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 319-334.
- Blandford, S. (2012), "The impact of 'achievement for all' on school leadership", *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 45-62.
- Booth, T., Ainscow, M. and Vaughn, M. (2002), *Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools*, Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, Bristol.
- Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) (2011), *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines Version 2.0*, National Center on Universal Design for Learning, Wakefield, MA.
- Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) (2014), *What Is Universal Design for Learning?*, Center for Applied Special Technology, Wakefield, MA.
- DeMatthews, D. and Mawhinney, H. (2014), "Social justice leadership and inclusion: exploring challenges in an urban district struggling to address inequities", *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 50 No. 5, pp. 844-881.
- Lindqvist, G. and Nilholm, C. (2013), "Making schools inclusive? Educational leaders' views on how to work with children in need of special support", *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 95-110.
- Rose, D.H. and Meyer, A. (2002), *Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia.
- Tomlinson, C.A. (2001), *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia.

Corresponding author

Johanna Lüddeckens can be contacted at: johanna.vinyl@gmail.com

Malmö Studies in Educational Sciences: Licentiate Dissertation Series

Licentiate Dissertations in Education

Editor: Lena Holmberg (until April 4, 2007)

Editor: Feiwei Kupferberg (from April 5, 2007)

Editor: Claes Nilholm (from January 1, 2014 until January 1, 2015)

&

Licentiate Dissertations in the Theory and Practice of Teaching and Learning Swedish

Editor: Bengt Linnér (until June 30, 2008)

Editor: Johan Elmfeldt (from July 1, 2008)

Editor: Cecilia Olsson Jers (from June 1, 2011 until January 15, 2021)

1. Öhman-Gullberg, Lisa: Movere. Att sätta kunskap i rörelse. 2006.
2. Lutz, Kristian: Konstruktionen av det avvikande förskolebarnet. 2006.
3. Horck, Jan: A mixed crew complement. 2006.
4. Economou, Catarina: Gymnasieämnet Svenska som andraspråk – behövs det? 2007.
5. Christensen, Jonas. Företagsekonomi och ekonomiska studier i Litauen. Om ett universitetsämnes konstituering. 2007.
6. Schenker, Katarina. Perspektiv på ökad tillgänglighet inom högre utbildning– med hjälp av digitala verktyg. 2007.
7. Holmgren, Barbro. Svensklärares arbete. Om villkor för gymnasieskolans svenskämne. 2008.
8. Hansson, Fredrik: Tala om text. Om gymnasieelevers metaspråk i gruppsamtal. 2008.
9. Amhag, Lisbeth. Potentialen och rösterna i nätbaserade dialoger. Dialogiska och medierande redskap för lärande. 2009.
10. Jonasson, Kalle. Klungan och barndomens sociala rum – Socialt gränsarbete och figurationer i rastfotbollen. 2010.
11. Welwert, Gunnilla. "Bilden påminner mig om mig själv". En studie om ungdomar och deras bilder i två olika miljöer. 2010.
12. Dahl, Christoffer. Ett annorlunda brus. Ett läromedels litteraturförmedling i spänningsfältet mellan tradition och förnyelse. 2010.
13. Lundström, Mats. Vetenskap eller pseudovetenskap? En studie om elevers uppfattningar om naturvetenskap, pseudovetenskap och tillförlitlighet. 2010.
14. Lansheim, Birgitta. Förståelser av uppdraget specialpedagog. Blivande och nyblivna specialpedagogers yrkeslivsberättelser. 2010.
15. Kouns, Maria. Inga IG i Kemi A! En språkdidaktisk studie av en kemilärares undervisningsstrategier i en gymnasieklass med elever med svenska som andra språk. 2010

16. Skans, Anders. En flerspråkig förskolas didaktik i praktiken. 2011.
17. Lelinge, Balli. Klassråd – ett socialt rum för demokrati och utbildning. Om skola och barndom i förändring. 2011.
18. Bringéus, Eva. När känslorna får styra. Om litteraturläsning i en mångkulturell gymnasieklass. 2011.
19. Källström, Lisa. Berättelser om en röd stuga. Föreställningar om en idyll ur ett svensksdidaktiskt perspektiv. 2011.
20. Magnusson, Petra. Läsning i ny tid. Pappersburen skrift i ett multimodalt perspektiv. 2011.
21. Westlund, Kristina. Pedagogers arbete med förskolebarns inflytande. 2011.
22. Thörnqvist, Petter. Heder på schemat. En didaktisk studie av hederskultur i svensk ungdomslitteratur. 2011.
23. Waltå Lilja, Katrin. Läroböcker i svenska? En studie av ett läromedel för yrkesförberedande gymnasieprogram och dess modellläsare. 2011.
24. Söderling, Maria. Att sätta erfarenheter i rörelse. En undersökning av hur elever i år 7 läser film och hur svenskundervisningen kan förvalta deras film läsning. 2011.
25. Sjögren, Stella. Att säga tulipanaros... Svensklärares arbete och lärarutbildningens relevans för arbetet som svensklärare sett ur ett professionsperspektiv. 2012.
26. Thelander, Maria. Om fostran i förskoleklass. 2012.
27. Malmström, Martin. Tillbaka till texten. Derivatvt skrivande i en svensk gymnasieklass. 2012.
28. Andersson, Helena. En bro mellan högstadiet och gymnasieskolans nationella program. Elever med erfarenheter av det individuella programmet berättar. 2013.
29. Delacour, Laurence. Didaktiska kontrakt i förskolepraktik. Förskollärares transformering av matematiska mål i ett läroplansdidaktiskt perspektiv. 2013.
30. Ljunggren, Åsa. Erbjudanden till kommunikation i en flerspråkig förskola. Fria och riktade handlingsområden. 2013.
31. Svensson, Petra. Elever med utländsk bakgrund berättar. Möjligheter att lära matematik. 2014.
32. Sjunnesson, Helena. Bedömning av läsförståelse – och sen då? Pedagogers meningsskapande i en kommun-övergripande bedömningsprocess. 2014.
33. Dahl, Jonas. The problem-solving citizen. 2014.
34. Lembrér, Dorota. Towards an understanding of how the swedish preschool constructs mathematics. Children being and becoming mathematicians. 2014.
35. Berkhuisen, Carina. De yngsta barnens möjligheter till samspel på förskolegården. 2014.
36. Wester, Richard. Matematikundervisning utifrån ett elevperspektiv. 2015.
37. Lindgren, Therese. Bland dokumentationer, reflektioner och teoretiska visioner. Idéer och diskurser om hur barn skapar mening i förskolan. 2015.
38. Öhrfelt Sjöstrand, Magdalena. Barn i natur och natur i barn. En diskursanalys av texter om utomhuspedagogik och uteförskola. 2015.

39. Sundman Marknäs, Anna. Betygsättning i grundskolans svenskämne. 2015.
40. Sjöblom, Marie. Promoting student-to-student interactions in mathematics. A study in a multilingual upper secondary classroom. 2015.
41. Thorshag, Kristina. Barns teknikskapande- en studie av bygg- och konstruktionslek i förskolan. 2019
42. Lindgren, Ann-Charlotte. Med uppdrag att dokumentera de yngsta barnens lärande – en verksamhetsteoretisk analys av förskolors dokumentation. 2019
43. Adolfsson Narkaj, Paulina. Att balanser pedagogiska positioner i förskolans undervisning. En fallstudie om hur förskolepersonal hanterar pedagogiska dilemman. 2020
44. Alkhede, Maria. Aritmetik i förskolan - en studie av taluppfattningens betydelse för matematikundervisningen. 2021
45. Wästerlid, Catarina. Specialdidaktiska perspektiv på grundläggande antals- och taluppfattning. 2022.
46. Lüddeckens, Johanna. Dialectical dimensions of inclusive education involving students with autism spectrum conditions. 2022

This essay aims to identify the opportunities, pitfalls, and dilemmas that can arise when inclusive education is organized with regard to students with ASC. In order to create more understanding of the situation for students with ASC in schools, the study focus on school leadership. The essay consists of two studies. In the first study (1) the aim was to identify, describe, and analyze different research approaches to inclusive education and social participation for students with ASC, by performing a systematic research review. In the second study (2) principals of Swedish schools were interviewed, data collection was divided into three sets of interviews based on and using two models as tools in the analysis process. The models are the Index of Inclusion (Ainscow & Booth 2002) and three key concepts for inclusive school leadership (European Agency of Special Needs and Inclusive Education 2018; Óskarsdóttir et al. 2020).

MALMÖ UNIVERSITY PRESS
205 06 MALMÖ, SWEDEN
MAU.SE

isbn 987-91-7877-319-0