Discourses of Including Students with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) in Swedish Mainstream Schools

Ulrika Gidlund

Main supervisors: Lena Boström
Co-supervisors: Jimmy Jaldemark

Faculty of Human Sciences
Thesis for Doctoral degree in Pedagogy
Mid Sweden University
Sundsvall, 2018
Akademisk avhandling som med tillstånd av Mittuniversitetet i Sundsvall framläggs till offentlig granskning för avläggande av filosofi doktorsexamen den 23 februari 2018, klockan 10.00, sal E 409, Mittuniversitetet Sundsvall. Seminariet kommer att hållas på engelska.

Discourses of Including Students with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) in Swedish Mainstream Schools

© Ulrika Gidlund, 2018
Printed by Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall
ISSN: 978-91-88527-40-0

Faculty of Human Sciences
Mid Sweden University, Holmgatan 10, 851 70 Sundsvall
Phone: +46 (0)10 142 80 00
Mid Sweden University Doctoral Thesis 276
To Filip and Felicia
Acknowledgement

The beginning of this thesis started a long time ago. Many different periods, events, and people have affected it independently of or in relation to each other. It all began in my childhood home. As a child of two teachers, Bengt and Maria Gidlund, the discussions about teaching, learning, and schooling were frequently present in our home. Even though I stated early in my life that I should never ever become an educator, I ended up as a secondary teacher. I completed my teacher education at Umeå University. Coincidentally, I had to perform my teacher training practice in another town, in Örnsköldsvik, where Lena Boström became my supervisor.

I worked for approximately 15 years at Parkskolan in Örnsköldsvik, and during those years, I got more and more intrigued and involved in why some students had greater problems dealing with their schooling than others. I want to thank my previous students and colleagues from Parkskolan for all these experiences and years. I especially want to thank Nina Ödmark, who served as the most interested and supportive headmaster I ever could have had. During those years, I continued to study pedagogy in different forms but always with a specific interest in learning strategies and students’ differences. The two most important steps that brought me to this thesis was (a) participating in a one-year SiS-project with Carina Hörnqvist, Parkskolan, on how to adapt the Swedish secondary school to match students with behavioural difficulties, and (b) being recruited by Professor Lena Boström to work as a junior lecturer at Mid Sweden University.

Important for the realization of this thesis has been the support I have received from my supervisors, Prof. Lena Boström, and Assoc. Prof. Jimmy Jaldemark, and the Head of Department, Ph.D. Lena Ivarsson. Thank you! Also, the colleagues who have read my different versions of my manuscript and have provided me with constructive critique and suggestions on improvements, especially Ph.D. Maria Rasmusson, Assoc. Prof. Göran Bostedt, Prof. Gunnar Augustsson, and Prof. Gitte Malm deserve great thanks. As you might have noticed, Lena Boström is frequently mentioned. She has been my mentor, my supervisor, and my very dear and precious friend ever since we met on Parkskolan some 25 years ago. Thank you for these years!

I also have to send a thanks to all my doctoral student colleagues for your support: Ulrika Bergstrand, Ida Johansson, Susanne Sahlin, and Marcus Sundström. The ‘older’ doctoral student colleagues who socialized us to become doctoral students—Catarina Arvidson, Jakob Billmayer, Linda Eriksson, Anneli Hansson, Håkan Karlsson, Ann-Katrin Perselli, Maria Rasmusson, and Lars Sandin—must be thanked as well as the new ones, those
who started their doctoral studies after us and made us feel experienced and learned: Helene Dahlström, Malin Norberg, Anders Lindqvist, Sandra Lund, Charlotta Rönn, and Ingela Åhslund. A special thanks to Susanne Sahlin and my roommate Ingela Åhslund.

The teachers and headmasters who were a part of my empirical material also deserve great thanks. Without you and your generous attitudes towards my project, nothing would have been possible.

A very special person for this doctoral project has been Professor Claes Nilholm. He has supported and supervised me on both paper presentations for international conferences, and he served as my supervisor on a doctoral course I attended in the beginning of my doctoral studies. But most of all, thank you for your reading, discussion, and suggested improvements to my 90% manuscript.

My last but greatest thanks will be to my family and dear friends who patiently supported me and accepted my absence when I disappeared to bury myself in my work. A special thanks to my dear Håkan Zaar, to Lena Boström, Nanne Nordlander, Boa and Mia Eklund, my mother, and Patrick Norgren. My most and everlasting gratitude will always go to my beloved children, Filip and Felicia.

Like I said earlier, there are many people who deserve my greatest gratitude. Some are mentioned here and others are not, but without you, this thesis would not have been possible, and you are all a part of it.

Ulrika Gidlund – Christmas 2017
# Table of contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... ix

List of included articles ................................................................................................ xi

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
   1.1. Aim and Research Questions ................................................................................. 4
   1.2. Disposition ............................................................................................................. 5

2. Background and significant concepts ......................................................................... 7
   2.1. Inclusion ................................................................................................................ 8
       2.1.1. Inclusive education ......................................................................................... 9
       2.1.2. Inclusive didactics ....................................................................................... 15
   2.2. The dilemma of differences ................................................................................... 18
       2.2.1. Special educational needs (SEN) ................................................................. 19
       2.2.2. Perspectives on special education needs ....................................................... 21
       2.2.4. Categorization/labelling ............................................................................ 24
       2.2.5. Emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) ............................................ 26
   2.3. Teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education .................................................... 28
   2.4. Swedish context .................................................................................................... 30

3. Theory and Methodology ............................................................................................ 34
   3.1. Discourse Analysis ............................................................................................... 34
   3.2. Constructionism .................................................................................................... 35
   3.3. Post-structuralism and the linguistic turn .............................................................. 36
   3.4. Discourse Theory .................................................................................................. 37
       3.4.1. Key concepts ................................................................................................. 38
       3.4.2. Key concepts in relation to this study ......................................................... 42

4. Methods ....................................................................................................................... 44
   4.1. Interviews ............................................................................................................... 44
       4.1.1. Focus group interviews ............................................................................... 44
       4.1.2. Discursive interviews ............................................................................... 45
       4.1.3. Stimulus texts ............................................................................................ 46
   4.2. Sample ................................................................................................................... 47
4.3. Documentation and transcription ................................................................. 49
4.4. Research review and synthesis .................................................................... 49
4.5. Thematic Analysis .......................................................................................... 52
4.6. Methodological discussion ........................................................................... 54

5. An overview of the articles .............................................................................. 58

5.1. Article I. Teachers’ Attitudes towards Including Students with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in Mainstream School: A Systematic Research Synthesis ................................................................. 58
5.2. Article II. Teachers’ Understanding of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) in Sweden – What is the Problem? ......................................................... 60
5.3. Article III. Why Teachers Find it Difficult to Include Students with EBD in Mainstream Classes ....................................................................................... 61
5.4. Article IV. What is Inclusive Didactics? Teachers’ Understanding of Inclusive Didactics for Students with EBD in Swedish Mainstream Schools .................. 62

6. Summary of the results ................................................................................... 65

7. Conclusions ..................................................................................................... 69
7.1. Practical implications .................................................................................... 69
7.2. The contribution of this study ...................................................................... 72
7.3. Further research .......................................................................................... 73

References ......................................................................................................... 76

Appendix A. Interview guide with stimulus texts (in Swedish) ......................... 86
Appendix B. Missive (in Swedish) ...................................................................... 88
Abstract

When students’ behaviours cause difficulties for their teachers, themselves, and the rest of the class, teachers often construct inclusion as problematic. The overall aim of this study was to contribute to the understanding of teachers’ discourses regarding inclusion of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) in Swedish mainstream schools. The sample of empirical data collected for articles II–IV was derived from focus group interviews of 5–8 mainstream teachers in grades 4–6 in 6 different schools. Article I is a research synthesis on 15 studies that feature the attitudes of teachers from 15 different countries. It frames the entire thesis by examining how teachers perceive students with EBD from other countries, cultures, and times. In this study, neither inclusion nor EBD are said to be so much objectively “real” as socially produced and can be regarded as social constructs. An approach of discourse theory that takes inspiration from Laclau and Mouffe (1985) is applied in articles II–III and is complemented with constructionist thematic analysis. The results revealed that teachers construct meaning and understanding of students in relation to their everyday professional missions in the classroom. Discourses about successfully including students with EBD face problem fixing their meaning as they require new and other types of resources as well as other time distributions, teachers, curricula, and classrooms. The teachers’ discourses revealed a clear gap between policy and practice in the Swedish education system. Discourses that were pragmatic based on everyday reality of the school overpowered the discourses of ensuring equal opportunities for all students and the celebration of diversity. When the wordings of the Swedish steering documents are arbitrary and interpreted differently among various actors within Swedish schools, the teachers feel insecurity, frustration, and inadequacy. Inclusion of students with EBD is a complex and complicated matter that the teachers do not feel competent enough to fully handle. They revealed their frustration with being expected to do something that cannot be done due to practical and economic reasons. When teachers experience failure and dissatisfaction with specific teaching situations, they construct discourses that justify and legitimize that failure. These discourses inevitably have consequences for how the teachers understand and organize their everyday teacher missions.

Keywords: emotional and behavioural difficulties, focus group interviews, inclusion, inclusive didactics, Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory, mainstream schools, teachers’ discourses.
List of included articles

This thesis is based on below listed articles. The articles will be referred to by their Roman numerals I-IV.

Article I

Article II

Article III

Article IV

Article IV also has a co-author. The first author, Ulrika Gidlund, was responsible for the background of the study and the collection of the empirical data. The analysis of the data and the discussion/conclusion were joint responsibilities.
1. Introduction

The rights of all children to education, including those in significant need of special education, is described in several international documents. The concept of inclusive education won international recognition when the United Nations (UN) put forth the idea of “Education for All” in 1990. Several countries have since implemented a policy to promote inclusion of students with special educational needs (SEN) in their neighborhood schools. With this in mind, the attitudes of teachers are of major importance for the successful implementation of inclusion, which is also emphasized in the Salamanca Statement (1994a).

However, the concept of inclusion is not something that has been agreed upon or developed by teachers and/or schools. Takala, Hausstätter, Ahl and Head (2012) described how inclusion originated in the human rights movement and how it has transferred from the UN to national and local governments and then to schools. As this is an example of a classical top-down approach, the whole concept of inclusion might become unclear. In addition, some mainstream teachers have not received any instructions or training on how to make inclusion work. Some teachers are even insecure about the meaning of the term ‘inclusion’, and the entire concept. Nevertheless teachers should implement inclusion despite their confusion and the frequent lack of resources. This, however, does not make teachers feel that the concept of inclusion is theirs (Takala et al., 2012). Assarson (2007) explained how mainstream teachers in Sweden are frustrated and insecure about how to organize education for diversity and variation. In constructing inclusive education, teachers understand their missions—either to be knowledge producing or to offer and create opportunities for equity, communication and participation. Teachers generally construct their teacher missions as “either/or” rather than interlinking the two missions. These tasks even conflict with each other from time to time.

However, it is important that teachers, who are supposed to implement inclusion, share the same understanding of its meaning as policymakers do. If this meaning is not shared, Dyson and Millward (2000) emphasized that the concept of inclusion might have totally different meanings for politicians and for the teachers who are obliged to implement it. However, little agreement or clarity exists regarding the meaning of inclusion, and it is highly influenced by context, cultural traditions and national, regional and local policy-making (Dyson & Millward, 2000; Gyimah, Sugden & Pearson, 2009; Lloyd, 2013; Takala et al., 2012). Lloyd (2013) implied that it is necessary to
pay close attention to the contradictions and ambiguities of the concept of inclusion, as inclusion might have multiple meanings and implications for different teachers, and that there might be many different types of inclusion.

In addition to the ambiguity of the concept of inclusion itself, many teachers believe that limits to full inclusion will always exist. Some believe that special schools and special education serve a purpose because not all students benefit from being included in the mainstream classroom, as their SEN might be neglected there. They also worry that students with SEN do not have the skills needed to manage mainstream schools’ learning goals and that they are disruptive to the other students in the class. Some teachers claim that special schools alone can secure these students’ learning and development (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Hedegaard Hansen, 2012). When it comes to inclusion, teachers seldom exclude students because of their disabilities; instead, they exclude them because of the way teachers construct the disabilities in relation to the problems they might create for the students themselves and for the class as a whole. Hedegaard Hansen (2012) emphasized that the teacher is the one who decides whether to include or exclude a student in any specific situation, and teachers make their decisions based on their experiences and the construction of the situation. Furthermore, Dyson and Millward (2000) pointed out that the more the students disturb the classroom climate, the more likely they are to be excluded from the classroom or even from the neighborhood school.

These students, who disturb others with their unacceptable behaviour, are often categorized as having emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). Thomas and Loxley (2001) suggested that this term comes from biology, medicine and psychology and from the school’s need for safety and order. EBD is a subjective rather than an objective category. It does not have a clear, distinct and uniform definition and seldom leads to the same diagnosis (Mundschenk & Simpson, 2014). Having EBD implies that the student has special needs. Thomas and Loxley (2001) claimed that EBD is not a clinical problem but instead a problem for the school and teachers. The EBD category is constructed when order and safety in schools are at risk. The categorized student is constructed as having SEN, even though immense variation exists between his or her needs and/or the situations underlying them. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2008) also reported that greater variation exists within the category of EBD than within other categories.

There is, though, a gap between the political rhetoric of inclusive education and the everyday school reality, and teachers have seldom received
any instructions about how inclusion should work in the classroom (Takala et al., 2012). Inclusive education is a social and political construction in which different discourses struggle to achieve dominance. Using the vocabulary of Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory, inclusive education is a nodal point, a floating signifier, exposed to a hegemonic struggle between discourses, shaped by different groups in their quest for influence and power over the content and design of the school (Assarson, 2007). Assarson’s results come from a Swedish study on how mainstream teachers in a school that includes children from special schools (intellectual difficulties) construct meaning of the Swedish concept “A School for All.” No studies have been conducted on how mainstream teachers construct meaning of including students with EBD in particular, which is of immense importance because international researchers claim that teachers usually consider including students with EBD to be much more stressful than including students with physical and cognitive disabilities (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Dyson and Millward (2000) suggested that it is when students’ behaviours cause difficulties for their teachers that the move toward inclusion becomes critical. They suggested that the exclusions of these students from the classroom and school are often a pragmatic decision to smoothly implement inclusion and equity for the rest of the class.

Inclusive education, EBD and inclusive didactics have been examined in other studies, but most studies have come to the same result: They are highly dependent on culture and context (Lloyd, 2013) and thereby floating. This study’s contribution to the field will be Swedish teachers’ constructs in mainstream schools in grades 4–6. Students in grades 4–6, aged 10–12 years old, have not yet been studied in this context, although they are interesting for many reasons. Therefore, their teachers’ constructions of inclusive education is of great interest. During these years, the learning outcomes are much higher and precise compared with grade F–3 (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a), and the students are no longer young children whose behaviours are accepted just because they are children. They are, during these years, more accurately viewed as youth who should know how to behave in school.

The concept of inclusion, SEN and the collective identity of EBD can all be viewed as social constructs. Hedegaard Hansen (2012) argued that examining the discourses of teachers might lead to an understanding of why a student is included or excluded in a specific situation, and it may open up other ways of constructing inclusion. As described earlier, EBD and inclusion of these students are surrounded by contradictions and ambiguity. Analyzing
these discourses will reveal the undecidability in the school organization in which these discourses were constructed and functioned, and make it possible to redescribe the phenomena in new terms. This study’s goal was to seek which discourses prevail and which are neglected to reveal what limitations the prevailing discourses have for teachers’ teaching practice and everyday missions. The discussion includes the practical effects of these discourses in the construction of identities and meaning in the Swedish school context, as well as the consequences for the teachers’ practice if one particular discourse is to be accepted instead of the other.

Examining mainstream teachers’ discourses of the collective identity of EBD and of including students with EBD in mainstream schools and classes will therefore contribute to the overall field of education. Another aspect of the importance of studying teachers’ understanding of including students with EBD is that a shortage of teachers in Sweden, as well as in many other countries, will occur around 2020. There is not only a shortage of teachers coming into the system, but also many newly graduated teachers choose not to go into teaching at all, or they leave after just a few years. As many as 35% (Olsson, 2017) of teachers in Sweden who have left school have explained that the most important reason for this is the lack of support they received in dealing with students with behavioural problems, and their parents (Greene, 2011; Olsson, 2017).

1.1. Aim and Research Questions
The overall aim of this study was to contribute to the understanding of teachers’ discourses of inclusion of students with EBD in Swedish mainstream schools. The goal of this study was not to try to fix the meaning of EBD or of inclusion of students with EBD but rather to investigate the discourses in the context in which they are constructed and maintained. In this study, EBD as a collective identity was considered from a discursive perspective as something accepted, refused and negotiated in discourses. The specific research questions were as follows:

- Which discourses of the collective identity of EBD as a category of SEN do mainstream teachers articulate?

- Which discourses of the advantages and disadvantages of including students with EBD in mainstream classes do mainstream teachers articulate?
• How is inclusive didactics articulated when teachers discuss including students with EBD in mainstream classes?

1.2. Disposition

The compilation thesis \(^1\) is divided into two parts. It consists of an introductory and summarizing part, Part One\(^2\), and four research articles, Part Two. The first part consists of an introduction to the research, the aim and research questions, and its theoretical and methodological assumptions, methods and limitations. Part One also presents a summary of the articles and a summary of their results. It furthermore summarizes, discusses and evaluates the results of the four research articles in relation to the overall research questions of this thesis.

Part One consists of seven separate sections. The first section serves as an introduction to the research field and presents the thesis aim and research questions. The second section contains a presentation of the significant concepts underlying the study. The concepts discussed are not only a background or summary of policy documents, previous research and other relevant literature but also provide an overview and a brief archaeology of the research field.

In the third section, the philosophical, theoretical and methodological assumptions underlying the study are presented, and the fourth section covers the specific production and analysis of the empirical data collection. Section five summarizes the four articles, and in sections six and seven, the results are presented, discussed and evaluated in relation to the research articles and research questions of this thesis. This is all done to combine the findings from each article to provide an understanding of the overall conclusions of this thesis.

Part Two consists of the four articles. The first article, ‘Teachers’ Attitudes towards Including Students with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in Mainstream School?: A Systematic Research Synthesis’, lays the foundation for the other three articles by reviewing and synthesizing previous research. The other three articles then deal with one research question each. These articles are as follows: Article II, ‘Teachers’ Understanding of Emotional

---

1 In Swedish: Sammanläggningsavhandling. Used in the Nordic countries

2 In Swedish: Kappa
and Behavioral Difficulties (EBD) in Sweden – What is the problem?'; Article III, ‘Why Teachers Find it Difficult to Include Students with EBD in Mainstream Classes; and Article IV, ‘What is Inclusive Didactics? Teachers’ Understanding of Inclusive Didactics for Students with EBD in Swedish Mainstream Schools’. 
2. Background and significant concepts

In this section the background and development of the terms behind this study will be discussed. Because they are nodal points, floating signifier overflowing with meaning due to their different articulations within different discourses, the aim of this section is not to fix their meaning but to examine and reflect on their taken-for-granted meanings and open up for other meanings. The concepts discussed are not only a background or summary of policy documents, previous research, and other relevant literature, but they also provide an overview and a brief archaeology of my object of knowledge, EBD in inclusive education, and my object of study, Swedish teachers’ discourses of including students with EBD in mainstream schools.

How the concepts of inclusion and diversity are handled, is described by Enslin and Hedge (2010) as being two central questions for politicians and educational professionals, which have been the focus of some of the most contentious debates in education. Many forms of disability exist. Enslin and Hedge mention “ability, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, nationality, race, religion and sexual orientation” (2010, p. 286). This thesis focuses students’ ability because the concepts originate in sociology but are often used when discussing special education. Most people agree that education should recognize diversity of the needs of all learners and therefore be inclusive, but the historical overview Enslin and Hedge presented shows how a change in the understanding of inclusion and diversity occurred during the last 70 years. Inclusion is no longer seen as an end point but rather as a process.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defined inclusion as the following:

Inclusion is seen as a process [bold in original] of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. (UNESCO, 2005, p. 13)

3 In Swedish: kunskapsobjekt

4 In Swedish: studieobjekt
In the following section, 2.1, the contradictions and ambiguity of the concept of inclusion will be presented, and in Section 2.2 the same will be done for diversity of students’ needs and the dilemma of differences. Some researchers will be more visible than others in those sections because their contributions to the debates on SEN and inclusive education are considered most comprehensive and thoughtful by researchers within the field (e.g., Ainscow, 1998, 1999; Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1998; Dyson & Millward, 2000; Skrtic, 1991; Thomas & Loxley, 2001; and in the Swedish context Nilholm, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2017).

2.1. Inclusion

In order to explore the concept of inclusion this section commences by presenting a brief history of the term inclusion and then outlining the importance of context when defining the concept of inclusion. This section continues with an examination of the way in which inclusion is notable within educational discourses.

The term inclusion, told by Thomas and Loxley (2001) was first used in July 1988 at Frontier College in Toronto and then spread to the rest of the world. The term inclusion replaced integration, and it has a wider meaning that does not solely focus on the process of integrating students with disabilities into general classrooms. Inclusion is often contrasted with exclusion and is, according to Evans and Lunt (2002), considered to be much more idealistic and ideological than the term integration. In 1996, Scruggs and Mastropieri wrote that the term mainstreaming was used interchangeably with integration but with the even more narrow meaning of integrating students with SEN into regular classes during specific lessons depending on their abilities. The origin of the British term inclusion is compared, by Dyson and Millward (2000) with the American and New Zealand ones, as the countries have very different histories of social policies. In the United States, the term originated in the race and civil rights movement, and in New Zealand, it originated in the oppression of the Maori culture by Australians with European origin. It might therefore be confusing to take the term inclusion from one cultural context to another because its definition is due to the characteristics of that country’s history, culture, and politics. Some countries only focus on where to place the students. Some countries place most students in mainstream schools but in SEN programs within those schools. Some inclusive schools organize innumerable special programs which divide the students and which offer them different skills and knowledge according to
their abilities. Dyson and Millward concluded that inclusive schools are organized differently and therefore offer no guarantee to equity and participation in a school or society for all students.

There is no doubt that there is a close relationship between inclusion and context. When considering inclusion in a global context, different economic, political, and social conditions will always influence the interpretation and understanding of the concept. Therefore, the definitions and understandings of the concept of inclusion cannot, and should not be, transferred from one context to another. Policies for inclusion in the developed world are dangerous to transfer to developing countries, where the economic and educational systems are totally different (Lloyd, 2013). Gyimah et al.’s (2009) study also showed that cultural and historical contexts of each country have a bearing on the interpretation of inclusion, and the development of policies should therefore be created rather than transplanted in order to meet the local situations and requisites. The development and implementation of inclusion should be done in each country, state, and school. Because there is little agreement or clarity about the meaning of inclusion, Lloyd (2013) argued that there is consequently a need to meet the ambiguities in the concept of inclusion by considering different inclusions with multiple meanings and implications for practice. The concept of inclusion also changes, according to van Swet, Brown, and Tedla (2013), when talking about developing countries, which lack resources and policies to educate children with disabilities. In those countries, a high percentage of children with disabilities, especially children with behavioural disabilities, are not in any type of school at all. United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reported that fewer than 5% of all children with disabilities attend school globally (UNICEF, 2009). In these developing countries, inclusive education is secondary to the question of education for children at all.

To sum up, the concept of inclusion has no clear meaning that everyone agrees on. Inclusion is highly influenced by context, cultural traditions, and national policymaking, which cause multiple interpretations and its floating meaning. Inclusion also has floating meaning within the same country, community, school, and even classroom, and we will turn to that now.

2.1.1. Inclusive education

The previous section pinpointed some of the floating meanings of the concept of inclusion historically and internationally. This section will focuses on the concept within an educational discourse. All over the world since the early 1990s, the concept of inclusion has come to signify the development of
“Education for All” (1990). The core of the concept of inclusion is based on human rights, equal opportunities, and social justice. The right of all children to education, including those children in significant need of special support, is described in several international documents. In chronological order the following may be mentioned:

- *The Convention Against Discrimination in Education* (1960), which prohibited any discrimination, exclusion, or segregation in education;
- *The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), which set out children’s rights in respect of freedom from discrimination and in respect of the representation of their wishes and views;
- *The Jomtien World Conference on Education for All* (1990), in which delegates from 155 countries agreed to make primary education accessible to all children and to massively reduce illiteracy before the end of that decade;
- *The Salamanca Statement* (1994a), which called on all governments to give the highest priority to inclusive education . . . schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other condition” (UNESCO, 1994a, Article 3);
- *World Education Forum in Dakar* (2000), in which the 1,100 participants of the forum reaffirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All, in order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education systems should respond flexibly . . . Education systems must be inclusive . . . and respond flexibly to the circumstances and needs of the learner” (UNESCO, 2000, § 33); and
- *The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006), which called on all states to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels.

Inclusive education is aimed to be a key strategy to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students. Erten and Savage (2012) defined inclusive education as the vision of all students belonging and learning together as a community in regular classrooms in their neighbourhood schools. Nilholm (2006a) explained that inclusion not only means that all students should attend the same mainstream classes; it also implies that differences between children should be equally valued and be a natural part of their education.
“Inclusion in this case means that children of all kinds attend the same classes, that diversity is celebrated within the classroom and that children have a right to participate, to learn and to build social relationships” (Nilholm, 2006a, p. 436).

Inclusion is often presented as something positive and desirable within the discourse of school and special education. Carlsson and Nilholm (2004) used the comparison that one can be against inclusion just as little as one can be against peace. Inclusion is constructed as something good, something desirable. It is about human rights rather than special needs, but it is also a concept filled with contradictions, ambiguities, and dilemmas. Within both practice and research, different understandings of the concept struggle for hegemony. In order to find out how inclusion is defined differently in research, Göransson and Nilholm (2014) conducted a study on how the concept was defined in the 30 most cited journal articles from the European and the North American research arena. The inclusion concept was categorized according to how it was defined in the different articles. The following categories were used: (a) placement definition, (b) specified individualized definition, (c) general individualized definition, and (d) community definition.

As early as 1998, Haug claimed that the major fundamental problem with inclusive education is that equal value in education becomes subordinate to knowledge performance when the whole point of a school for all would be the opposite, that equal value should override all other considerations (Haug, 1998). But Clark et al. (1998) argued that even though much in special education is about the current values and values dealing with human rights, values are not at all as homogenous as they seem. Values within education and special education are often ambiguous and mean different things to different people and in different situations (Clark et al., 1998). Inclusion is often used without a clear definition and therefore becomes a floating signifier with polysemic meaning. Proponents for inclusion are thus faced with credibility problems. Inclusion is being criticized for being “too ideological, rhetorical or Utopian” (Thomas & Loxley, 2001, p. 130). Erten and Savage (2012) agreed, describing how supporters of traditional special education argue that inclusion is too idealistic and not practical. There are opposing perspectives and arguments for either philosophical or empirical investigation of inclusive education. The human rights perspective argues that inclusive education is a human rights issue which should not be questioned through research at all (Erten & Savage, 2012). Coherently, Thomas and Loxley (2001) stated that proponents of the human rights
The debate over the definition of inclusive education also includes arguments in favour of it. Haug (1998) pointed out that there is a political reason to develop inclusive education because the existing special education system does not have the desired effect, and there has been a steady increase in the number of students referred to as having SEN. From an economic point of view, it is necessary to develop new strategies and solutions in order to stabilize the cost of special educational actions because not all students are offered what they, according to the law, have the right to receive. Hedegaard Hansen (2012) also mentioned the ethical arguments for inclusion. All people in a society and in a school should feel that they are participating because that is everybody’s right and duty. Assarson (2007) claimed that the World Bank demands market adjustment of schools in developing countries in order to give grants. Within such an economic discourse, inclusive schools become a cost-effective way of organizing schools. In a socio-ideological discourse, an inclusive school will be the guarantor for the effective development of human rights values.

The debate over the definition of inclusive education is also critical, especially of 100 percent inclusion. Inclusion is often defined as a process and vision that is limitless, but according to Hedegaard Hansen (2012), inclusion has limits in educational practice. She explained that behaviour in school is based on normative principles, which determine what is acceptable and not. Schools can therefore not be truly inclusive if they only include what is morally acceptable to include and exclude what is morally unacceptable. From this point of view, Hedegaard Hansen argued that it is impossible for schools to be 100 percent inclusive and that accepting that inclusion has limits in practice is then accepting that teachers, special education teachers, or school administrators sometimes decide that it is better for the students’ learning and development not to be included in the mainstream classroom.

As described above, inevitable there are different arguments for either special education or inclusive education. Some argue for the human rights perspective in education, others argue for the students’ right to get the best possible special educational support, and there are also arguments for the economic situation.

What is an inclusive school then? As mentioned earlier, the term inclusion and its agenda arose during the 1980s and 1990s, and it might be of great interest to overview the debates and arguments of the end of the last millennium, when the concept had just come about. The arguments of
Ainscow (1999), Clark et al. (1998), Dyson and Millward (2000), and Skrtic (1991) will therefore form the centre of the presentation below.

As mentioned earlier, researchers have sought to define the key characteristics of inclusive schools, and Dyson and Millward (2000) considered Skrtic’s (1991) and Ainscow’s (1999) theoretical reports of inclusive schools to be the most extensive and important, even though they did not use the term inclusion. The works of Skrtic and Ainscow are claimed to offer a thorough report of the relationship between inclusive education and schools as organizations, in which the teachers’ work with a diversity of students is emphasized. Both Skrtic and Ainscow were concerned with trying to understand what an inclusive school is, how it is inclusive, and why some schools become inclusive schools and others do not. Dyson and Millward (2000) indicated that there are differences between them; Skrtic’s theoretical argumentations were based on philosophy, and Ainscow’s argumentation was based on his empirical work within schools. In the following part of this section brief presentation of the arguments and debates of Ainscow and Skrtic will be given.

To begin with, Skrtic (1991) argued that SEN is not a problem within the student, a student dysfunction. He claimed that it is a problem of the organization of schools. When students do not fit into the regular classroom agendas, special educational needs are constructed and support systems created.

Student disability is neither a human pathology nor an objective distinction; it is an organizational pathology, a matter of not fitting the standard programs of the prevailing paradigm of a professional culture, the legitimacy of which is maintained and reinforced by the objectification of school failure as student disability through the institutional practice of special education. (Skrtic 1991, pp. 178–179)

Skrtic continued arguing that schools tend to resemble bureaucracies in which the activities are simple and standardized and the teachers are ruled by laws, curricula, and historically rooted procedures. Skrtic’s alternative to bureaucracy is adhocracy, and he described the differences as follows:

The professional bureaucracy is nonadaptable because it is premised on the principle of standardization which configures it as a performance organization for perfecting standard programs. The adhocracy is premised on the principle of innovation rather than standardization; as such, it is a problem-solving organization configured to invent new programs [italics in original]. It is the organizational form that configures itself around work that is so ambiguous and uncertain that
Skrtić’s adhocracy school sees the diversity of the students as an aid to develop its own structures to include that diversity, yet the bureaucracy school sees the diversity of its students as a problem, and the school must fix that problem by specific special education.

Ainscow (1999) is, as mentioned before, less theoretical than Skrtić because his studies are based on his empirical work (Ainscow, 1999) within English schools. Ainscow defined inclusion as follows:

A process of increasing the participation of pupils in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of their local schools. . . . Furthermore, inclusion is often seen as simply involving the movement of pupils from special to mainstream contexts, with the implication that they are “included” once they are there. In contrast, I see inclusion as a never ending process, rather than a simple change of state, and as dependent on continuous pedagogical and organizational development within the mainstream. (Ainscow, 1999, p. 218)

Like Skrtić, Ainscow (1999) considered inclusive education as relying on school organization that uses students’ diversity and teachers’ collective problem-solving as sources of understanding and means for improvement. He suggested an approach to develop teachers’ skills in interpreting students’ difficulties, together with abilities to critically examine their own classroom activities, in order to improve schools.

In Dyson and Millward’s (2000) own analysis of inclusive education, they claimed that the forceful argumentations of Ainscow and Skrtić are not an answer in itself. Their arguments can, however, help in discovering and deconstructing the preconceived construction of SEN and inclusion and open up a new understanding of the current situation. In order not to be trapped in any specific perspective, Dyson and Millward claimed that an understanding of the contradiction, ambiguities, and dilemmas surrounding inclusion is needed. The understanding of the year 2000 was a product of its particular context. However, Clark et al. had similar arguments in 1998. They implied that societies often try to implement their complicated and ambiguous values via their school systems. These systems become determined and can therefore be deconstructed but not the ambiguities from which they originate. Because values as well as people are ambiguous, it is totally impossible to predict them, and that leads to dilemmas. Clark et al. (1998) suggested the importance of striving for solutions to the problems surrounding differences between
students, but, nevertheless, they did not believe in a school system capable of delivering everything to every student, because students are different from each other and will continue to be so. Some learn well, and others less well. Some are more motivated, more interested, more talented, and others are not. And, as discussed earlier, many teachers still claim that full inclusion never will be possible. Hedegaard Hansen (2012) emphasized that some teachers believe that all students do not receive the best educational progress in mainstream classes because their SEN might not be met there. Some teachers believe that special schools and segregated educational settings will best meet some students’ needs.

By examining different discourses on inclusion, the previous section has evaluated its floating character. The definition of the terms inclusion and inclusive education are not agreed upon, and different competing definitions have been presented. These different definitions should all be considered important and must all be dealt with, and we turn to that now.

2.1.2. Inclusive didactics
Inclusion of students is not only a matter of the placement of the student. There is a difference between spatial, social, and didactic inclusion. According to the Swedish Agency for Education (SNAE) a central problem for teachers in Sweden when it comes to handling diversity in the classroom is handling the aspects of social and didactic inclusion (SNAE, 2011b). Inclusive education is not only about physically including all students in the same classroom. It also includes inclusive didactics, in which the focus is on teaching and learning and on how the didactics can be adapted to all, and there is an ongoing hegemonic struggle between these discourses. This section will begin by outlining the theory of didactics used in this study and then different approaches to inclusive didactics.

Didactics includes factors that affect teaching and learning and the analysis and understanding of these factors. The field of didactic research processes teaching and learning both theoretically and through practical considerations. In this study, the model of the didactic triangle (Hoppman, 1997) is chosen to describe didactic inclusion. The didactic triangle is the core of didactic theory; it is a model for the planning of and reflecting on the teaching situation, and it consists of interactive and communicative interactions among three cornerstones and the relations between these three, called axes (Künzli, 2000). The cornerstones of the didactic triangle are Subject, Teacher, and Students, and the axes are Rhetoric, Methods, and Interaction (see Figure 1), which all interact with each other in different ways, to various
degrees, and in different contexts (Hoppman, 1997). The Teacher cornerstone refers to the teachers’ professional and personal qualities, the Student(s) cornerstone refers to learning at the individual and group level, and the Subject cornerstone refers to specific knowledge content. Interaction refers to the relationship between the teacher and the student or group, and it is communicative and relational. Rhetoric concerns how the teachers present the subject. Methods are about which teaching methods are offered or which suit the situation (Augustsson & Boström, 2016; Ullström, 2009; Wahlström, 2015).

The didactic triangle will serve as demarcation for the different discourses within the field of discursivity of inclusive didactics as well as the discourses of human rights versus knowledge-production.

Figure 1. An illustration of the didactic triangle with inspiration from Augustsson and Boström (2016, p. 4)

Didactics in an inclusive classroom should be curricula adapted to each and every student’s preferences in interactions between them, as student, and the other cornerstones, teacher and subject. When discussing inclusive education, there should not be a distinction between regular and special education (Clough & Corbett, 2000; Thomas & Loxley, 2001), nor, consequently, should there be one regular didactic and another special didactic. Different students, with or without SEN, respond differently to different teaching approaches and differently to different subjects. Inclusive didactics could be further developed by learning style theory, an educational platform to support curricula focused on individualization (Boström, 2016). Because inclusive didactics is individual and based on every student’s strengths and needs, it
can be compared to the Dunn and Dunn learning style theory. The cornerstones of the Dunn and Dunn model is that every student can learn and has strengths, but each student’s strengths differ from those of others (Dunn & Griggs, 2007). There are other learning styles models such as Kolb’s model, but the Dunn and Dunn model also has developed matching teaching and learning methods (Boström, 2016). These methods interact between the student and the subject, and the teaching interacts between the student and the teacher, as illustrated in the didactic triangle in Figure 1.

Different students also need different learning strategies and representations of the subject. Therefore, inclusive education has been mentioned in relation to new technological teaching aids. One example is “Interactive Didactic Tools for Inclusive Didactics” developed by Microsoft for Office 365 in order to innovate learning and teaching processes. Classic didactics are integrated with interactive didactic tools in digital format modules that can be modelled and remodelled independently by each teacher for each student. The specific subject or content can be organized as video lessons, exercises, or conceptual maps, which can be individualized and increase each student’s perceptive abilities (Fondazione Mondo Digitale, 2014). This interaction between the representation of the subject and both teacher and student is also to be found in the didactic triangle (see Figure 1).

Every student also responds differently to different methods, environments, resources, and approaches. Some students prefer one method through which other students do not learn well at all. Inclusive didactic, like learning styles, should thus offer a variety of methods, environments, resources, and approaches in order to match the most effective strategy for each learner. Inclusive didactics must consequently be individual, but carried out in a social community which provides both participation and cooperation. Learning styles are applicable to all students, even those labelled with SEN. Research since 1987 has documented significantly improved educational success for student with SEN and EBD when taught by approaches matching their individual learning styles (Dunn & Griggs, 2007).

Extra adaptations and special methods and strategies suitable for students with EBD are mentioned in a large number of research studies (e.g., Humphrey, 2009) and methodological handbooks (e.g., Juul, 2005; Kadesjö, 2010). Examples include unstructured strategies, such as praising students, helping them to organize themselves, and providing clear and structured instructions. Moderately structured strategies include manipulating specific behaviour by positive reinforcement, and structured strategies are more complex and rigid and involve teams of different specialists working together
towards a goal. Each of these strategies is recommended especially for students with EBD and not for all students. But in Sweden, special support and extra adaptations receive a stronger focus than inclusive didactics. For instance, SNAE (2014) provides advice on special support and extra adaptation for students in need within mainstream schools. Extra adaptations are less comprehensive and most often performed by teachers within compulsory education. Special support is more comprehensive and is normally not possible for teachers to carry out in class. Extra adaptations or special support are assessed in terms of how likely the student is to reach the curriculum’s learning goals.

School in Sweden has functions of being both knowledge producing and knowledge reproducing (criterion-referenced curriculum) and offers and creates opportunities for equity, communication, and participation (human rights) (The Swedish Education Act, 2010:800). At the same time, it should be ensured that all students reach the learning goal and that no student is singled out when in need of extra adaptations or special support. In a study by Assarson (2007), teachers showed frustration and insecurity about how to organize inclusive didactics. There is no established publication on inclusive didactics and how to make it work, and teachers understand their mission as either to create a social climate in the classroom based on human rights or to transfer knowledge, rather than interlinking the two missions.

The brief presentation of the concept of inclusion in Section 2.1 has pinpointed an important set of developments and hegemonic struggles. It began by presenting the history of the concept before moving on to noting the way in which the concept is highly influenced by context, cultural traditions, and national, regional, and local policy making, followed by various thoughts on moving on in the process of inclusive education. Finally, it showed how the concept relates to didactics, the knowledge of teaching and learning. In order to further delimitate this study, the next section will turn to discussing the specific group under investigating in my study—students perceived to be different from the norm.

2.2. The dilemma of differences

In order to consider the ways in which some students are perceived as different, this section will focus on discourses on student differences, special needs within mainstream schools, and different categories of SEN, especially EBD.
Educational systems face a dilemma of differences in terms of dealing with the differences between students within the same educational framework. Dyson and Millward (2000) described a system that people in most countries are familiar with, clarifying that education always has some basic, common components. In most national systems there are some joint skills and knowledge, and a national curriculum which defines those skills and knowledge. They also explained how education is conducted by teachers with similar teacher education and using similar didactics. The education system is expected to fulfil certain functions, such as preparing students for employment as well as promoting solidarity, participation, and equity. But students learn differently; they have different abilities and disabilities, interests, and expectations. Clark et al. (1998) argued that educational systems are ambiguous in that they are expected to find ways of delivering a common education to all and, at the same time, responding to individual differences. Dyson and Millward (2000) stated that inclusive changes in schools lead to dilemmas. Including children in a common educational system, in the same school, in the same curriculum, and in the same classroom will not make all students the same; instead, it will make their differences appear more clearly. Some students do not learn well in an ordinary classroom, while others are disruptive and require a large part of the allocated resources. Inclusion is not a solution to this issue, and Dyson and Millward (2000) claimed that it is the origin of it.

The discussion of differences between people is becoming crucial within the educational discourse. Educational systems have had a specific way of dealing with students who are perceived as different and not fitting into the regular classroom and/or learning path. The following sections will examine this further.

2.2.1. Special educational needs (SEN)

This section will present special education as a subdiscipline of education. Education is a vital discipline which has existed with links to various phenomena and to other disciplines during different time periods and forms of society. Regarding education as interdisciplinary can be explained historically, how it has develop from a clear connection to philosophy, to psychology, and now to the social sciences. The boundaries of education are not given once and for all, but are constantly changing. Education has always interacted with society and hence received its contemporary touch (Sahlin, 2009). Dahllöf (2000) also argued that educational research needs its auxiliary disciplines.
Historically, research on special education has been dominated by the psycho-medical paradigm, which focused on curing or ameliorating the student’s needs through interventions based on medicine and educational psychology. Recent research has shifted to view SEN as a product of social processes (Ahlberg, 2012; Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006; Clark et al., 1998; Clough & Corbett, 2000; Dyson & Millward, 2000; Emanuelsson, Persson & Rosenqvist, 2001; Haug, 1998; Nilholm, 2006b, 2012; Skrtic, 1991; Thomas & Loxley, 2001). The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (2009) has mentioned special education on numerous occasions as a subdiscipline of education. The emergence of special education as an operating subdiscipline of education in Sweden is described in the light of the changes in Swedish educational history in general. Special education is changing as the psychological perspective on education is taken over by the sociological perspective and it is thus approaching education where it stands today.

Some researchers have found it difficult to discuss special education together with inclusion. Takala et al. (2012) pointed out that the problem today seems to be that striving for making special education stronger in schools may work against the goal of inclusion. Hedegaard Hansen (2012) discussed that exclusion sometimes becomes the consequence of separating regular and special education. The purpose of special education has been to meet the special educational needs of some students, not to exclude. Haug (1998) claimed that special education failed because it is based on the compensatory idea, which means that individual weaknesses should be strengthened by adding extra resources. This requires the school to diagnose students, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and then provide remedial education that develops their weaknesses in order to lift them up to the level of their peers. Once this is achieved, the students can go back to receiving mainstream teaching again. This is according to Haug completely unrealistic because it has been proven to be impossible in most cases to compensate for the child’s difficulties. Experience has shown that students who have relatively large learning problems rarely manage to make up for the lack of knowledge that is their reason for attending special education. Even more rarely do they come up to the same level of knowledge as their classmates (Haug, 1998). This was also mentioned in the SIA investigation (SOU, 1974:53).

Special needs are not only questioned in practice, but also in theory. Special needs are not an objective truth, but a social construct that may not be a special need in another social context. The social context in which needs are constructed determines what needs are, and what needs are to be considered “special” (Clark et al., 1998). Thomas and Loxley (2001) claimed that needs in
SEN, especially in EBD, is the need for control and discipline in schools. The word “needs” has been constructed within a psycho-medical discourse in order to help schools maintain order, but is used as students’ needs for special education. Clark et al. (1998) agreed that needs and special education are social constructs that maintain the system in favour of those who gain the most from that system, in this case the medical sector, psychologists, teachers, and others within the special education system. These same groups also maintain the psycho-medical discourse. Both Clough and Corbett (2000) and Thomas and Loxley (2001) argued in the beginning of 2000s that the term “special education” should be replaced by another term because it alludes to traditional special educational for students with problems in school. The alternative term is “inclusive education,” which does not imply a special education for some students in need, but rather an education for all students. Dyson and Millward (2000) referred to the term SEN as something that relates to students’ difficulties and inclusive education as something for everyone. But Clark et al. (1998) pointed out that students need different educational strategies, but these needs do not disappear simply by taking away the differentiation between special and regular education.

Within the field of SEN, there are different discourses struggling for hegemony, and there are also varying perspectives on how to understand and explain educational difficulties, which all form the field of discursivity of special education—both within schools and teachers, and among researchers in the area. The next section will present some of these discourses.

### 2.2.2. Perspectives on special education needs

Special educational needs can be viewed in different ways - from different perspectives. Perspectives on educational difficulties are explained as follows:

1. “those basic assumptions that determine our attitudes, values and beliefs, and lead us to predict the nature and meaning of incoming information” (Ainscow, 1998, p. 8).

2. “attempts to characterise alternative ways of looking at the phenomenon of educational difficulty, based on different sets of assumptions that lead to different explanations, different frames of reference and different kinds of questions to be addressed. In this sense they lead to assumptions that provide the basis of different theoretical positions” (Ainscow, 1998, p. 8). Nilholm (2006a) explained, “the perspective underpins what we will see, how we will interpret it and how we will act” (p. 433).
There are some established perspectives on special education, which can be grouped as either traditional or alternative perspectives. Different researchers have defined and labelled different perspectives somewhat differently, but despite different names, the traditional perspectives have common characteristics. It has been summarized by Nilholm (2006a) that the problem is located within the individual student, focuses on diagnoses and interventions based on psycho-medical special needs professionalism, advocates segregating teaching settings and methods, and carries out research from a positivistic starting point. Historically, research on special education has been dominated by this positivist and psycho-medical perspective, which focuses on fixing the student by methods and treatment based on medicine and educational psychology. But during the late 1990s, research shifted to view SEN as the product of social processes (Clark et al., 1998; Dyson & Millward, 2000), in concordance with Skrtić’s (1991) and Ainscow’s (1998) arguments. In the alternative perspectives, SEN are viewed as social constructions rather than as student deficits, and therefore these perspectives also question special education. The alternative perspectives consider SEN to be caused by different contextual factors outside the student (Nilholm, 2005). Even though the traditional and the alternative perspective are different, they are identically normative. They both focus on diagnosis and curing - either the student, the school, or the society (Nilholm, 2005). According to Ahlberg (2007), the majority of the research around 2000 showed elements of both perspectives.

There are also other perspectives, such as the dilemma perspective (Nilholm, 2005). In this perspective the focus is on the contradictions and dilemmas that characterize schools and educational situations. These issues have been discussed since the late 1990s, (see e.g. Ainscow, 1998; Clark et al., 1998; Dyson & Millward, 2000) but not as a perspective in itself. Examples of these contradictions and dilemmas include how school administrators and teachers must decide whether to act according to human rights (to not single out or segregate anyone), or to neglect the student’s need of extra support. Nilholm (2005) also mentioned the dilemma of how to decide on the allocation of limited resources, whether to benefit the collective or the individual, special education or regular teaching. These dilemmas can never be solved satisfactorily for all, but they must still be handled. Questions of which student is in need of extra support, what that support will look like, and who makes the determination also underlie this perspective. The dilemma seems inevitable. Clark et al. (1998) further emphasized that the human conditions that lie behind special education cannot be changed or deconstructed. The
unfortunate outcome of special education can be deconstructed, but not the complex origins of the differences between students.

The dilemma perspective problematizes the single-track way of viewing perspective on special education. Focusing on only one perspective makes the other perspectives lose their significance, even though they may still be thoughtful and rewarding. The problem with the alternative perspective, according to Clark et al. (1998), is that it excludes and silences all issues and discussions within the psycho-medical perspective. Skrtic (1991) argues that there is no single source of final knowledge, “that there are no independent foundational criteria for judging knowledge claims, and thus that the ‘truth’ about the social world is better understood as conversation or dialogue amongst many voices” (p. 19). Clark et al. (1998) agreed and claimed that the purpose of research on special education is to reveal injustices and help students fight them; even though that research may not result in any “truth” or right way, it may reveal other understandings and practices. However, Ainscow (1998) pointed out that when different perspectives on special education provide radically different implications for how special education should be understood and organized, it is important to discuss what the fundamental perspectives in the field are.

In Sweden there was a change in wording from “students with SEN” to “students in SEN” in the National Board of Health and Welfare in Sweden (NBHWS) in 1991 and the Swedish Education Act in 1999. This change of wording was meant to mark that the problem is not always a deficit within the student. This change of wording mirrors a change of perspective, from a psycho-medical to an alternative perspective (SNAE, 2011b). Even though this research is being conducted in Sweden, it does not use that wording in attempts not to focus on only one perspective. Its aim is to present and discuss all perspectives in an objective and versatile manner. In this study, an awareness of the different perspectives helped in delineating the different discourses in this field of discursivity. The terms discourse and perspective are often used interchangeably, but the term perspective lacks the specific ontological and epistemological assumptions that discourse analysis prescribes (Bergström & Boréus, 2012). In this section, the term discourse will be used because it is both constituent and also constituted by external structures. Discourses are never totally fixed, which is important to keep in mind when analysing the field of discursivity of this study.

From this brief overview of different discourses of students’ needs and special education, the following section will turn to investigating the way in which students’ needs are categorized and its field of discursivity.
2.2.4. Categorization/labelling

The NBHWS (2010) describes how The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health: for Children and Youth (ICF-CY) to describe different aspects of health and disability. The ICF-CY is the first universal classification system of children’s and youth’s health and disability, with the aim to open up communication about health and disabilities between professionals, disciplines, and countries. The ICF-CY describes both the medical and biological sides of dysfunction and the impact of environment and contextual factors. The ICF-CY is a comprehensive taxonomy of health which consists of 1,600 codes for children of all ages (WHO, 2017).

ICF-CY is stated to be a tool for education, for curriculum design, and to increase awareness and plan for social activities. It offers a categorization of human abilities and disabilities and serves as a frame for organizing information about them (WHO, 2017). The entire content of the ICF-CY was developed to be in line with international conventions and declarations concerning children’s rights. The NBHWS (2010) has mentioned that those conventions include the UN Convention for the rights of children with special reference to Article 23 (1989), the UN Standard Rules for Persons with Disabilities Equality (1994b), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action for the education of students with special educational needs (1994a), Education for All—World Education Forum in Dakar (2000), and the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (2006).

Despite ICF-CY, teachers may not be sure of the identifying characteristics of students with SEN. The categories of disability may have totally different and unpredictable interpretations among teachers. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) indicated that teachers ascribe different characteristics to the same category based on their own experiences of it. According to the OECD (2008), all countries use categories, but regardless of ICF-CY, the categories used are not uniform within countries. Gyimah et al. (2009) argued that categorization is criticized because students do not often fit categories of difficulty, and not all SEN are due to disabilities, nor do all disabilities require special education. Important to note is that they report that there is evidence of a greater differentiation within EBD than within other categories.

There is huge variation in how to define categories among different countries. The OECD (2008) divided the categories into three groups
depending on the wide variety of reasons for students’ risk of not reaching the knowledge goals in school: (a) disabilities, (b) difficulties, and (c) disadvantages. In Sweden, only one category is needed to receive special support, and that is in need of special support. The Swedish Education Act (2010:800) defines such students as being at risk of not reaching the learning goals or having other difficulties related to school, and there is no difference whether this is due to disabilities, difficulties, or disadvantages. But the main findings of Nilholm, Almqvist, Göransson and Lindqvist’s (2013) study showed that, in contrast to the Swedish Education Act, categorizations and diagnosis are more usual and needed for special educational support in schools. Similarly, Göransson, Nilholm and Karlsson (2011) indicated that a medical diagnosis increases the likelihood of receiving special educational support.

In any case it is necessary to be aware of the fact that categorization is part of human action. Hjörne (2004) stated that categorization is something humans do when they are talking in order to construct meaning. It is thus one thing to categorize in general and another to do so within the professional school organization, which may affect students’ identities, development, and learning. When a category is constructed, people are supposed to fit in to it, and their identities may be shaped into it. Assarson (2007) provided the example of the label concentration disturbed, which is socially constructed but has become a common, taken-for-granted category. When the category is constructed and named, it becomes something to relate and contrast to, which leads to maintaining the limits of normality. The category then gives instructions on how to behave in order to belong to that category. When parents strive for a diagnosis and students shape their identity according to the assigned diagnosis, Assarson claimed that they contribute to preserving the view of them as deviators. If a diagnosis is needed to get special educational support, the negative descriptions of the child are likely to dominate the parents’, teachers’, and child’s own information during the period of diagnosis. That negative picture of the child is then what it will identify with (Schaarup & Kehlet, 2011). Categorization and diagnosis therefore have an impact on the child’s identity, but Nilholm et al. (2013) also pointed out that this displays a fundamental dilemma in the educational system. Without an identification of the child’s special needs, no appropriate support can be given. But to be categorized as not normal or deviant will then single the child out in a negative manner. Thomas and Loxley (2001) concordantly claimed that there is no individually separate or distinct category of people who are different or deviant. Deviance is an interplay
between the student and the responses from the people in that particular context. They claimed that behaviour becomes deviant only when the people in that context react negatively to that behaviour.

This section has presented different ways of understanding categorizations of different disabilities or difficulties as collective identities. This study will focus on an invisible difficulty, and will therefore delimitate the next section to examine that disability and its particular attributes.

2.2.5. Emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD)

The NBHWS (2010) defined behaviour problems as a child repeatedly violating the rules, norms, or expectations of his/her childhood setting, and most behaviour problems are defined in terms of the values and norms of the social community. A certain act of the child could be perceived to be a problem in one situation (a protest against a teacher’s demands in the classroom) but not in another (a protest against a bully). Children with behavioural problems are described as being a motley crowd. Across the years (NBHWS, 2010) and between different countries (OECD, 2008) in both research and practice (NBHWS, 2010), the naming of students that have been identified to have behavioural problems or challenging behaviors have been many. The term is not even uniform within the same country at the same time; this is a heterogeneous group of difficulties that is clustered under the same umbrella term, though with slightly different names, because the behaviours challenge people in their context in one way or the other (NBHWS, 2010). In this study, the term EBD will be used. The term EBD does not have a Swedish equivalent, and the Swedish word for behaviour problem is used in the empirical material. EBD is the term used in this thesis, though, because it is the term used in most international research on the area.

The concept of behavioural problems, known as social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) in Britain, was described similarly by the British Department of Education (1994). It also emphasised that the culture and the religious and traditional context are important for what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. Social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties are, therefore, highly sensitive to the background and situation of the children concerned. The following quotation illustrates this:

For a colleague from India, the inclusion problem is not about

---

5 In Swedish: Beteendeproblem
accommodating the challenging behaviour of the children or about the attitude of the teachers towards that behaviour. It was about ensuring that all the children were able to attend school rather than having to go to work for a few pennies in order to ensure that the family was able to eat. (Lloyd, 2013, p. 333)

The NBHWS (2010) further presented how children’s difficulties can also be described as patterns of behaviour, which are summarised in diagnostic terms. These terms are defined in a diagnostic system (Diagnostic Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders) that is used internationally, primarily in healthcare. In the manual’s current edition, DSM-IV, the terms attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), disruptive behaviour disorders, oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), and conduct disorder (CD) are used. In Sweden, these diagnoses are made by psychological and medical examinations and tests.

The terms SEBD/ESBD/EBD are used as a category in a clinical or quasi-clinical context; it belongs to a mixture of disciplines, such as psychiatry, psychology and education. Thomas and Loxley (2001) strongly opposed that. They claimed that EBD is rarely a problem for the student but instead a problem for the teacher, the class, and the school. But unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour in school is closely linked to the discourse of psychology and psychiatry. Undeniably, students who misbehave in school are assumed to have EBD and SEN, even though much inappropriate behaviour in school is often caused by factors other than emotional disorder; such as the schools need to regulate and control behaviour. Thomas and Loxley continued to emphasise that EBD is neither a clinical problem nor an abnormality or deviancy; it is, thus, just inappropriate behaviour in a specific context. In school, some behaviour is regarded as appropriate and other behaviour is not, and maintaining control in school is considered necessary for safety reasons. Schools and teachers try to foster the behaviour of students by punishment or promotion. When students fail to conform to the order, Thomas and Loxley claimed that the construction of students having EBD and SEN might become an easy solution for school officials. This was notable in the SNAE (2011b, which reported that students with EBD in Sweden often are given the wrong special support. They disturb the rest of the students, and the support given is mostly to separate them from the rest of the class. The reasons behind the behaviour are seldom investigated, which leads to interventions aimed at training the student to act as normal as possible.

The quasi-clinical classification of students with SEN and EBD also fails to take into account the social and environmental factors that might have a
profound influence on students’ behaviour. Banks, Shevlin, and McCoy (2012) gave examples from the US in which African Americans are over-represented in particular categories of SEN, such as mild general learning disabilities and EBD. In England, certain ethnic groups (Travellers/Black Caribbean) are overrepresented within the categories of moderate general learning disabilities and EBD. According to Banks et al. (2012), these categories tend to be non-normative, subjective, and more dependent on professional judgments than on normative objective disabilities such as a visual or hearing impairments. Students from poorer backgrounds are far more likely than their peers to be identified as having a SEN of a non-normative type, such as EBD.

Since EBD largely is a subjective category created by teachers and schools to maintain order, the next section will examine what attitudes teachers hold towards inclusion and towards including students with EBD in mainstream classes.

2.3. Teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education

All previous sections have examined and presented different discourses surrounding this study. In this section, what research is known about teachers’ attitudes and beliefs that encode their discourses will be presented, in order to lay a deeper foundation to this study.

In trying to map out different theoretical ways in which the term discourse is used, Mills (2004) gave one definition that refers to the beliefs, values and categories that constitute a way of looking at the world or representations of experiences (Mills, 2004). Teachers’ attitudes and beliefs are aspects of their discourses, but their attitudes and beliefs are not uniform. According to Hedegaard Hansen (2012), some teachers believe that students’ participation in the classroom is a precondition for their educational progress. Others believe that students’ participation is mostly important for the students’ social life and that their learning is secondary. There are also teachers who believe that participation in the mainstream classroom reduces the possibility of meeting a student’s SEN and that more students would benefit, both educationally and socially, from attending special schools and segregated educational settings. According to many teachers, full inclusion is therefore not possible, and special schools and special educational have a continuing role, since it is not advantageous for all students to be included in the mainstream classroom (Hedegaard Hansen, 2012; Khochen & Radford, 2012). Teachers also argue, according to Takala et al.’s (2012) study, that the special needs of students with learning difficulties, whether physical, intellectual, or behavioural, takes too much time from the other students in
the class and that the focus on including students with SEN might hinder teachers from handling diversity in relation to culture, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, and gender. Inclusion has also led to additional workload, often without resources, which has resulted in increased demands on teachers (Gunnthorsdottir, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, the implementation of inclusion does not derive from teachers and/or schools. Takala et al. (2012) described how the concept of inclusion originates in the human rights movement and has transferred first from the UN to national and local governments and then to schools. The concept of inclusion might therefore be unclear for mainstream teachers. Teachers should, anyway, implement inclusion, regardless of what they know and believe; this does not make teachers feel that they own the concept of inclusion. It is necessary to consider teachers’ impact on the process of inclusive education in order to understand the complexity of the area. Dyson and Millward (2000) mentioned how improvements within schools can be made by two opposite approaches. The first approach is top-down. The second is bottom-up, emphasizing the need to build on the teachers’ knowledge, thus engaging the teachers in the improvement process. They also argue that it is important that teachers, who are supposed to implement inclusion, have the same understanding of the meaning of it as the policymakers. If this meaning is not shared, Dyson and Millward (2000) claimed, the concept of inclusion might have totally different meanings for practice for the politicians, principals, and the teachers who are obliged to implement it, which, in turn, leads to confusion and frustration.

Teachers’ attitudes are also affected by discourses of the psycho-medical perspective. If effective interventions for SEN are based on medicine and psychology, then regular teachers are not qualified to use them. Thomas and Loxley (2001) stated that one unfortunate consequence of theories of special education is that teachers have been convinced that they do not have the knowledge and expertise to deal with students with SEN. The researchers claimed that teachers have been told that common sense and humanity are not enough to understand and deal with differences and student difficulties. Because of this, the teachers feel insufficient to the task, and when they feel insufficient, they construct the students who disturb as in need of something else, conducted by someone more psycho-medically competent. Teachers construct special needs in order make their educational situations work (Assarson, 2007). Nilholm et al. (2013) also implied that since the psycho-medical perspective views educational problem as an individual shortcoming
of the student and not as a school failure, it removes the schools’ and teachers’ responsibilities for students’ educational shortcomings.

There are quite a few research studies on teachers’ feelings and attitudes. These studies have been reviewed (see e.g. Avramidis & Norwish, 2002; de Boer et al., 2011), and they indicated that students with EBD are seen as more problematic than others when it comes to inclusion. Therefore, teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion are most negative when it comes to inclusion of students with behavioural problems, and they perceive these students as their greatest challenge. A more thorough review and synthesis on teachers’ attitudes towards including students with EBD in mainstream classes is given in Article I.

2.4. Swedish context

Articles II–IV in this study were conducted in Sweden and relate to the importance of context when analysing people’s discourses of a concept. In order to better understand the context of teachers in Sweden, this section will conclude by presenting a brief summary of the historical development of the Swedish school system, special education, and curriculum in relation to inclusion. The teachers working conditions and situations will also be presented here.

Sweden, like most Western countries, has a long history of different educational systems. Those systems will not all be presented here, since the focus of this summary is to give a background for inclusion and the dilemma of differences, which starts in 1946, when Swedish students began to be grouped in schools according to age, not by ability or social background. Göransson et al. (2011) gave a brief recap on this time span by describing how it took some 15 years until this vision was reached. In 1962, almost all children were part of the same school system, and by then, the diversity among the students had become apparent. The schools were responsible for all students reaching the goals, and different special groups and classes were established. Students with severe learning difficulties did not have the right to education until 1967. Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen (2009) also emphasised how reforms for integration were developed in schools in the late 1970s in reaction to different types of segregated educational forms. Special schools and institutions for children and young people were closed down, with the exception of schools for students with visual and hearing impairments. Special schools for students with intellectual disabilities also remained but became integrated into mainstream schools. All students, regardless of disability, received the right to attend schools in their neighbourhood
(Swedish Education Act, 2010:800), which led to a larger differentiation between students in schools. With this in mind, we turn to examine the current Swedish system and special education policy.

In 2014, the Swedish Education Act (2010:800) was revised. Since 2014, special education in Sweden is presented as having three main functions: to promote, prevent, and support, all in relation to human rights. This also permeates the wordings in the Swedish Education Act (2010:800). The SNAE (2016) explains that special educational interventions are introduced to compensate for students different prerequisites to develop and/or achieve the learning goals. The interventions should be given when the student is at risk of not reaching the knowledge goals or needs special support for other reasons. These interventions could be extra adaptations or special support, depending on the nature, continuance, and intensity of the need. Extra adaptations are less interventional and can be implemented by the teacher and other personnel within the ordinary teaching. The special support is more interventional and is not possible for the teacher alone to implement within the ordinary teaching situation. Special support also has to be documented. The special support might be individual teaching, a special class, an adapted study plan, or a study guide in their native tongue (SNAE, 2017). There are two main difficulties that cause special support in Sweden: Learning and behavioural difficulties. Difficulties in reading and writing are most common for younger students, and behavioural difficulties are most common for older students (SNAE, 2011b).

In the 1980s, more than 15% of the students in the Swedish compulsory school system received special support at any specific moment, and more than 40% of the students received special support at some point during their school years (SNAE, 2011b). Revision 2014 of the Swedish Education Act (2010:800) made a distinction between two different kinds of special educational support: Extra adaptation and special support. With this change in the law, the documented students with special support decreased dramatically. In the year before the change in the law, 13.9% of the students received special support, and during 2016/17 that rate had dropped to 5%, since there are no statistics on extra adaptations (SNAE, 2017). The levels of support and adaptation vary based on the situation of each student, but more students receive it during their last school year than during their earlier school years. As mentioned before, in Sweden, there was a change in wording from students with SEN to students in SEN during the 1990s, in order to mark that the problem not always was within the student. This change of wording
mirrors a change of perspective, from a psycho–medical to an alternative perspective (SNAE, 2011b).

Even though there are special segregated solutions for some students in Sweden, the main policy is that there should be one school for all students. The SNAE (2011b) claimed that evaluations and statistics show that there is a rise in students that do not reach the learning goals and that teachers have experienced an increased need of special support. The extent of the special support is presumed to have turned out to be a question of resources, rather than the students’ actual need of extra support. Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen (2009) agreed. They pointed out that it has been difficult for schools to find inclusive and non-segregation forms, both economic and educational, within mainstream schools that match all students’ different needs. This has, in turn led to the fact that nearly double as many students attend classes for students with intellectual disabilities, and that special segregated groups in mainstream schools have increased, maybe due to the fact that the Swedish Education Act (2010:800) stated that permanent segregated educational settings for students should be avoided, but they are not said to be forbidden. The students should be taught in the class to which they belong, if there are not strong reasons not to. Göransson et al.’s (2011) study proved that even though these groups should be avoided, they are not uncommon. This could be one reason for the difficulty teachers in Sweden have grasping the concept of inclusion. The word ‘inclusive education’ is not mentioned in the schools’ policy documents. There is some support for the concept of inclusive education, but in the schools’ most important legal policy documents, inclusion is not a clearly stated goal. Göransson et al. (2011) indicated that the many values and goals in the schools’ policy documents open up for varying interpretations and implementations in different schools and municipalities.

One explanation to these contradictions within schools is that the Swedish school system has changed to a great extent since the 1990s; it has changed from a centralised school system to a decentralised one. Because of Sweden’s decreasing scores in PISA tests, there is more focus on learning skills and goal achievement. This has, in turn, led to more national tests in earlier grades. Schools are also inspected by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, which was established as late as 2008, and Sweden has also an escalating privatization of schools. These factors were considered by Heimdahl Mattson and Malmgren Hansen (2009) to have led to an increase of segregated educational settings. In addition to this, teachers in Sweden have experienced several new or revised curricula, grading systems, and education acts since
the 1960s (Richardson, 2010), which could have led to both contradictory and ambiguous understandings among teachers concerning their role as teachers.

There are many consequences related to this. According to a number of different prognoses (Statistics Sweden, 2017; SNAE, 2015), there is a severe teacher shortage in Sweden that will grow even more severe by around 2020. This shortage will be most severe in pre- and elementary schools in Sweden, and new teachers will especially be needed for grades 7–9 (SNAE, 2015). In 2020, the Swedish educational system will, according to national statistics, lack roughly 22,000 teachers, approximately 20% of the teaching workforce (Lindqvist, Nordanger, & Carlsson, 2014).

However, statistical findings also indicate that the major problem for schools is not a shortage of teachers coming into the system. The real problem is that it appears that many of the newly graduated choose not to go into teaching at all or to leave after just a few years (Greene, 2011; Statistics Sweden, 2017). The situation seems to be similar in the US; extensive quantitative studies have estimated that only 40–50% of graduated teachers are still working as teachers five years after graduation (Ingersoll, 2003). An article in one journal of the teachers’ trade union states that 35% of the teachers leaving their teacher profession in Sweden do not leave because of low salary; in fact, they end up in professions with similar or lower salaries. As many as 35% of the teachers who leave school explain that their most important reason for leaving is lack of support in dealing with conflicts with students or parents. Problems with the working environment in schools is one factor that many teachers highlight, both those who consider leaving the profession and those who have already left it (Olsson, 2017). Greene (2011) pointed out that half of all the teachers that leave their profession do so during their first four years, mainly because of their relationships with children with behavioural problems and their parents. This is in line with the situation in the US, where the second-most–reported reason for teachers leaving the teaching occupation is dissatisfaction with students’ discipline and behaviour and the scant influence exerted by rules and sanctions of student behavioural conduct (Ingersoll, 2003).

To sum up, teachers in Sweden have difficulties prioritizing what to do and how to act in their classrooms. Few new teachers are entering the profession, and many educated teachers leave it. They are steered by contradictory policies and curricula issues that are difficult to interpret, they have few or no additional resources, and they find it problematic to deal with conflicts with students and parents.
3. Theory and Methodology

The methodology\(^6\) is the link between the theoretical and epistemological approaches and the concrete methods. Philosophical trends often underlie the methodological choices in data collection, interpretation, validation, and reporting (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The following sections will present the post-structuralist approach as the choice of methodology.

This study deals with discourses of inclusion of children within the category of special education needs (SEN) in mainstream schools. Within SEN there are several interesting and interdisciplinary research areas. SEN in itself relates to several scientific disciplines such as biology, education, medicine, philosophy, psychology, physics, and sociology. Due to its interdisciplinary nature, research on SEN pendulum between different ontological and epistemological approaches (Ahlberg, 2007; Fischbein, 2007; Håkansson & Sundberg, 2012; Nilholm, 2007; Nilholm & Björk-Åkesson, 2007). Besides its interdisciplinary nature, SEN may also be described from different perspectives, which may also have different ontological and epistemological considerations. This means that it is important to account for the approach of this study.

This section will therefore first present the philosophical and theoretical assumptions underlying this study. It will then present the specific production and analysis of the empirical data collection for the different articles of this thesis. The end of this section will discuss the credibility and trustworthiness of the methodology.

3.1. Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis was explained by Winther Jørgensen, and Phillips (2002) as a complete package with predefined theoretical and methodological assumptions. Theory and method are linked together, and to use discourse analysis as a method of empirical study the basic philosophical premises must be accepted. The focus lies on the ontological and epistemological assumptions about language’s importance for the social construction of the world.

\(^6\)Because the terms methodology and method sometimes are used synonymously, I here state the difference in this thesis. Methodology is the study of methods and deals with the philosophical assumptions underlying the research process, whereas a method is a specific technique for data collection and analysis under those philosophical assumptions.
The study of discourse is the study of language in use and the study of human meaning making. Discourse analysis explores the relationship between discourse and reality and interprets hidden meaning. Discursive activity does not occur in a vacuum, and a discourse itself does not hold a meaning. In order to understand discourse, we must also understand the contexts in which they arise. It is also the study of order and pattern. Wetherell, Taylor, and Yeates (2001) exemplified that there are many different, more or less distinct, discourse traditions (e.g., Bakhtinian research, Foucauldian research, discursive psychology, and interactional sociolinguistics). The next sections will present the theoretical and methodological assumptions underlying this study.

3.2. Constructionism

This study is related to the world in a constructionist way. According to Schwandt (2000), constructionism means that people do not find or discover knowledge as much as they construct or create it. Meaning is constructed by people's shared understanding and not in isolation. It is created in and by the language of people interacting. Burr (1995) explained further that language is of great importance for constructionism, in which language and thought are dependent on each other. Language gives our experiences meaning. Human thoughts and the way people act are always a product of language. Schwandt (2000) claimed that constructionism relies on language's capability to reveal meaning and that the world is constructed by people talking about it and writing about it.

Constructionist conceptions of knowledge and learning are built on the ontology and epistemology that meaning making is a process of social negotiation between people. Jonassen and Land (2012) argued that knowledge comes from people's discourses, their negotiations, and their social interactions. Knowledge is produced from a specific time and culture and the people of that culture. People absorb part of its culture and become a merged part of that culture, and culture is in turn affected by the people living in that culture. People's knowledge and beliefs are highly affected by the discourses and practices they are engaged in. People cannot separate their

---

7 The two terms constructivism and constructionism are sometimes used interchangeable and sometimes with distinction. I have chosen to use only constructionism because it emphasizes social construction (Schwandt, 2000), does not associate to mathematics and psychology (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008), and is used more frequently today (Bryman, 2011).
knowledge from their interaction with that context (Burr, 1995; Jonassen & Land, 2012).

This is a study of teachers’ discourses of students with EBD as a category of SEN, and the inclusion of students with specific special needs, although “special needs” are said to be not so much objectively “real” as socially produced. Both categories—needs and special education—can be regarded as social constructs (e.g. Ainscow, 1998; Assarson, 2007; Clark et al., 1998; Haug, 1998; Skrtic, 1991). Winther Jörgensen, and Phillips (2002) explained how knowledge is considered as both culturally and historically dependent as well as contingent. Social actions could have been viewed differently, and the way they are understood will change over time. This explains how some forms of social action are regarded as natural, whereas others are unthinkable. Different times and different contexts have their own boundaries for what is considered natural and what is unthinkable. Research is not about all truths being perfect, exact, and final. That is irrelevant though, according to Bunge (1996), because much research tries to improve the currently known incomplete and/or imprecise truths. It is also the purpose of this study, which aims to contribute to the understanding of a part of the process of inclusion.

3.3. Post-structuralism and the linguistic turn

This study not only relates to the world in a constructionist way. It also views knowledge as human-made construction based on language. Post-structuralism has its origins in Saussure’s structural linguistics, and Winther Jörgensen, and Phillips (2002) explained his view of language using a metaphor of a fishing net. All linguistic signs are located in specific places in the fishing net. These knots acquire their meaning in relation to their difference from each other. Post-structuralists agree on this, but Howarth (2000) described how they have developed the theory by considering the specific places of the signs as changing in the actual usage of language and therefore they often change meanings. Post-structuralists claim that the meaning of a sign is indefinite and ambiguous and can never be totally fixed. It is the use of language within social contexts that transforms, challenges, and reproduces the meaning of the signs.

In the next section, Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory will be presented. Because it was developed from Saussure’s structuralism and Derrida’s post-structuralism, the brief presentation above serves as the foundation for the rather philosophical theoretical framework of discourse theory.
3.4. Discourse Theory

To study teachers’ discourses of inclusion of students with EBD, an approach of discourse theory that takes inspiration from Laclau and Mouffe (1985) is applied in articles II–III of this thesis. Drawing on Saussure (structuralism, langue and parole), Derrida (deconstruction and post-structuralism), Foucault (discourse), and Lacan (psychoanalysis and theory of the subject) Laclau and Mouffe have developed their discourse theory.

According to discourse theory, neither language nor social reality are finalised or determined (Eleveld, 2016). Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis (2000) stated that “discourse theory stresses the ultimate contingency of all social identity” (p. 10). Meaning is created by the process of predetermine meaning. Meaning can never be permanently determined because there are constant struggles about the definitions of the social. No concrete fixation of meaning is thought possible because it will always be contingent. That goes for both discursive and non-discursive phenomena because Laclau and Mouffe do not distinguish between them (Bergström & Boréus, 2012; Eleveld, 2016; Howarth, 2000; Howarth et al., 2000; Mills, 2004; Torfing, 1999).

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) stated that “meanings are never completely fixed, but nor are they ever completely fluid and open” (p. 113). This is the core of their discourse theory and they explained it as follows:

We will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call discourse. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call moments. By contrast, we will call element any difference that is not discursively articulated. (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105)

What Laclau and Mouffe call elements are signs whose meanings have not yet been fixed; they are signs that have multiple potential meanings. A discourse attempts to transform elements into moments by reducing their polysemy to a fully fixed meaning. The discourse establishes a closure, a temporary stop to the multiple variation of the meaning of the signs. But the closure can never be definitive: “The transition from the ‘elements’ to the ‘moments’ is never entirely fulfilled” (Laclau & Mouffe 1985, p. 110). Howarth et al. (2000) explained discourses as contingent and historical constructions and that discourse theory stresses the ultimate contingency of all social identity. However, temporary fixations of meaning are both possible and necessary. The aim of discourse theory is, as Winther Jörgensen, and Phillips (2002)
interpreted it, to examine and describe the struggles of meaning, how meaning is partially fixed, and how that meaning then becomes so unquestioned that we take for granted that it is the absolute truth.

The debate about what is true or not involves both the physical world and discourses, and different forms of discourse analysis interpret them slightly different. Discourse theory claims that our entrance to the real physical world is always through discourses. In other words, the physical world exists—but it will only be meaningful through discourse. Like language, social actions in the physical world acquire their meaning in relation to each other (Eleved, 2016; Howarth et al., 2000; Torfing, 1999). As explained earlier, discourses are not closed units, they constantly transform in contact with other discourses with the aim of closing the importance of language in their own ways. It is through these changes in discourse that the social aspects of the world change. This is how struggles between discourses contribute both to reproducing and to transforming social reality. Thomas and Loxley (2001) agreed. They claim that discourse not only describes what we see, it also constructs it. “The very words we use shape our understanding” (Thomas & Loxley, 2001, p. 92).

Discourse theory is suitable as a theoretical foundation for discourse analysis because of its broad focus. But because Laclau and Mouffe (1985) sought theory development, they did not offer many practical methods or examples. Therefore it is rewarding to combine their theory with other constructionist methods. Articles II–III therefore have discourse theory as their foundations combined with other methods of analysis. However, there are some concepts that will be used throughout these studies, and they will be explained in the next section.

3.4.1. Key concepts
Within Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory there are some concepts that are used in very specific ways. The key concepts used for the empirical analysis of these studies are nodal points, floating signifiers, empty signifiers, identity, “the other,” chains of equivalence and chains of difference, hegemony, antagonism, and deconstruction. The section below will present the key concepts one by one and then discuss them in relation to this study.

**Nodal points, floating signifiers, and empty signifiers**
A discourse gains its meaning by the partial fixation of meaning around certain *nodal points* (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). The nodal point is a privileged
sign around which the other signs are organized. The other signs acquire their meaning from their relationship to the nodal point (Eleveld, 2016; Howarth et al., 2000; Torfing, 1999).

An empty signifier is a signifier without a signified. The concept was first mentioned in Barthes’s Mythologies (1957), but earlier illustrated by e.g. Carroll (1872) see Figure 2. An empty signifier is so over-coded that it means everything and nothing (Howarth et al., 2000). The empty signifier’s emptiness opens up for other signifieds to fill this lack (Dahlberg, 2014).

“*When I use a word, “* Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, “*it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.”*

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master – that’s all.”

*Figure 2. An example of how Carroll (1872) in Through the Looking-Glass illustrated the concept of an empty signifier.*

A floating signifier, on the other hand, is a signifier that is overflowed with meaning because it is articulated differently within different discourses (Torfing, 1999). The nodal point is an empty signifier that is capable of fixing the content of a range of floating signifiers by articulating them within a chain of equivalence (see Figure 4). Nodal points partially fix the meaning in a discourse by constructing a knot of defined meanings (De Cleen & Stavrakakis, 2017; Eleveld, 2016; Howarth, 2000; Torfing, 1999). Floating signifiers are the signs that are still open to different meanings and targets for the different discourses that struggle to provide them with their specific meanings. Dahlberg (2014) explained how nodal points are floating signifiers, but with the distinction that the term nodal point mean the point of partial fix of a specific discourse, and the term floating signifier is the continuing struggle between different discourses before the partial fix of meaning has occurred. Howarth et al. (2000) clarified how nodal points act as reference points in a discourse and bind together a particular system of meaning. Those floating
signifiers are partially fixed by reference to the nodal point. Figure 3 is an attempt to visualize how these concepts relate to each other.

![Diagram showing the field of discursivity and the role of the nodal point.](image)

*Figure 3. An illustration of how hegemonic interventions transform a floating signifier to a nodal point.*

**The field of discursivity**

A discourse is fixed by excluding all other possible meanings and partially affixing one meaning. All the excluded possibilities of meaning are part of what Laclau and Mouffe (1985) called *the field of discursivity*. The field of discursivity was described by Winther Jørgensen, and Phillips (2002) as everything that the discourse excludes, which will be everything outside that discourse. A discourse is always constituted in relation to the field of discursivity, but it can never be totally fixed and will always be threatened by the other meanings within the field of discursivity (see Figure 5). Every discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity by partially fixing the meaning of the floating signifier (Torfing, 1999). Because Winther Jørgensen, and Phillips (2002) claimed that Laclau and Mouffe were not clear about exactly what the field of discursivity includes, they proposed that only a limited range of discourses that struggle in the same terrain should be denoted, which is also how the current study defines the term.

**Identity and “the other”**

In discourse theory, identities and collective identity are accepted, refused, and negotiated in discursive processes. Identity is thus something entirely social and it is as contingent as discourses are. Identity, like nodal points, gets
its meaning through the linking together of signifiers in chains of equivalence that form the identity relationally (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Discursive identity formations are always formed in relation to something they are not, thus it is something because it is contrasted with something that it is not—the other. The discursive construction of an identity thereby pinpoints what it is equal to and what it differs from (De Cleen & Stavrakakis, 2017; Torfing, 1999). This construction can be identified by chains of equivalence and chains of difference (see Figure 4). Identity is discursively constructed through these chains of equivalence in opposition to how other chains define the nodal points and how they do not. The other is always created together with an us. To analyse the other clarifies what the particular discourse excludes. As an example, Hedegaard Hansen (2012) problematized the concept of inclusion by stating that all concepts are both constructed by the otherness of other concepts and require their otherness. She implied that inclusion as a concept has to exclude what constitutes its otherness, in this case exclusion. There is therefore a need to exclude in order to include. Without exclusion, there is no inclusion.

The chains of equivalence and differences
The nodal point is filled with meaning relationally by being equated with some signifiers and contrasted with others. The logic of equivalence constructs a chain of equivalential identities among different elements that express a kind of sameness. The logic of differences relates discursive elements in and through their mutual differences (De Cleen & Stavrakakis, 2017; Howarth et al., 2000; Torfing, 1999). The chains of differences construct meaning and identity in relation to what something is not, and the chains of equivalence construct meaning and identity by clustering elements with a certain similarity. The way in which the chains of equivalence and chains of differences have clustered similar or different signifiers to fix the meaning of the nodal point male, in a stereotype definition, is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Examples of chains of equivalences and differences.
**Antagonism, hegemony, and deconstruction**

A postulate for discourse theory is that discourses will always struggle with each other in order to establish reality in their own ways. The partial fixity of meaning of a discourse is a result of exclusion of other discursive elements by the conflict in the discourse called *antagonism*. This antagonism could be terminated by hegemonic interventions. Hegemony is the expansion of a discourse that partially fixes meaning around nodal points and excludes the antagonistic meanings. Deconstruction and hegemony are opposite sides of the same coin. Deconstruction is breaking the discourse into pieces and opening it up for meaning, and hegemony is partially closing the meaning (Howarth et al., 2000; Torfing, 1999; Winther Jörgensen, & Phillips, 2002). The ongoing hegemony/deconstruction circle is driven by antagonistic discourses. As shown in Figure 5, the antagonistic discourses break up the hegemony and open the discourse up for deconstruction, which in turn opens up a gap that different discourses struggle to fill until hegemony is reached, over and over again.

![Figure 5. The interplay between hegemony and deconstruction.](image)

**3.4.2. Key concepts in relation to this study**

In article II–IV, EBD, inclusive education, and inclusive didactics are the nodal points and floating signifiers. The articles investigate how competing discourses define the same signs (the floating signifiers) in alternative ways. By examining the competing ascriptions of content to the floating signifiers, the struggles taking place over the meaning of the nodal points can be identified.

In order to answer the research questions of article II–IV, this study started by delineating the fields of discursivity of EBD, inclusive education,
and inclusive didactics with the aid of previous research and policy documents (see Section 3 Background and Significant Concepts). When examining the field of discursivity of EBD, policy documents and previous research on different discourses of SEN in general and EBD in particular (see previous section on different perspectives on SEN) were focused on. For the field of discursivity of inclusive education, antagonistic discourses surrounding human rights versus knowledge production were the focus. When investigating the field of discursivity of inclusive didactics research on didactic theory, and individually adapted didactic methods in general, individually adapted didactic methods for students with EBD in particular were studied.

The second step was to investigate what competing discourses of EBD, inclusive education, and inclusive didactics exist in the empirical material. In order to do this, the chains of equivalence or chains of difference that were articulated were examined. The “other” in the empirical material was also investigated in order to find out what the discourse excluded.

Not everyone has equal access to all discourses. Some people or professionals (e.g., psychiatrists, psychologists, headmasters, or policymakers) have “expert” status in particular discourses in contrast to “ordinary people” (teachers, parents, or students) whose discourses will be silenced. What are the consequences if the one or the other wins out and hegemonically pins down the meaning of the floating signifier? The focus of the analysis is therefore the interplay between the discourses in the field of discursivity rather than in the single discourse. What consequences for teachers’ practices will occur if one discourse were to be accepted instead of other discourses? It is in this interplay that the social consequences might become most apparent.
4. Methods

In this section the data collecting methods, the samples, and the analysis method will be presented in relation to the studies, followed by a methodological discussion. The ontological and epistemological assumptions are the same in all the articles but their methods differ. These will be presented and argued for in this section.

4.1. Interviews

Because the data in articles II–IV primarily come from focus group interviews on which discourse analysis was conducted, a moment of reflection on the significance of interviews in discourse analysis would be convenient. Interviews were conducted in order to find out which different discourses are struggling for hegemony and to examine and analyse the relationships between the different discourses in a field of discursivity and the relations between different fields of discursivity.

By using focus group interviews it is possible, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), to clarify the important discourses that people, in my case teachers, use to establish social bonds and identities, which are inevitable and important at workplaces such as schools. The aim of focus group interviews was not to reach consensus nor to find solutions, but to bring forth different views and understandings of the issue. They also give the opportunity to study the hegemony of discourses in different schools. In this study, both individual interviews and focus group interviews, with the same teachers, were conducted in order to find out how discourses differ when discussed with an outsider or with colleagues with the same mission. There is always a noteworthy struggle between discourses, but in different ways, in both the interviews conducted individually and in focus groups.

4.1.1. Focus group interviews

In a focus group interview, the most important thing is to obtain a rich collection of views on the focus of the topic of the group discussion. The moderator introduces the topics of discussion and ensures that there will be an exchange of views. The goal is not for the group to reach consensus or find solutions, but to articulate different views (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Focus group interviews are considered to be social interplay, an appropriate strategy for catching discourses, with what they include and what they exclude, because possible and valid discourses in a group always are limited
Focus groups are useful when studying people’s collective construction of meaning in practice, because the method is based on the dynamics between communication, language, and thought. The participants in a focus group discussion share experiences, question each other, challenge each other to develop arguments, and sometimes even change the opinions and arguments during the discussion. Different opinions and perspectives interact during the discussion. Some of them dominate, whereas others disappear in the background (Kidd & Parshall, 2000; Wibeck, Abrandt Dahlgren, & Öberg, 2007). During the focus group interviews, the interplay between the discourses around the concept of inclusion and students with EBD in the focus group became evident.

Focus group interviews create less homogeneous discourses than individual interviews (Kidd & Parshall, 2000) and thus fit better for a discourse analysis. However, a combination of focus group interviews and individual interviews was used. This combination was used to follow up the discourses in the focus group interviews with the individuals. Although Morgan (1996) indicated that the greatest deviations between the interviews is obtained when the individual interview is performed first, this study conducted the focus group interviews first and then used the individual interviews as an opportunity for the participants in the focus group interviews to pick up things they did not feel confident to take up during focus group interviews (e.g. Kvale & Brinkmann’s, 2009, discussion on the follow-up of focus group interviews). Kidd and Parshall (2000) also mentioned the value of having a post-session with the participants after the focus group interview.

4.1.2. Discursive interviews

During discursive interviews, the interviewer must be sensitive to the differences between his/her own and the interviewees’ discourses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) which is why stimulus text were used. The background of the discourse analytical approach is found in structuralism and post-structuralism which claim that our entrance to the real world is always through language (see Section 3). In a discursive interview approach, the situated and dynamic meaning that is created in the interview situation is emphasized in contrast to the notion that there is a fixed meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Because language both transfers and constitutes the social reality, changes in the discourse also change the social reality. Therefore, the struggle of the discourse in focus group interviews both reproduces and transforms the social reality (Winther Jörgensen, & Phillips, 2002). Denzin
(2001) also emphasized how we only have access to the world and reality through our constructed representations of them. He also wrote about the importance of language for our understanding of the world. The interview thus becomes a way of constructing the world and reality and gives it its situated meaning. Wibeck et al. (2007) described how focus group interviews provide an opportunity to observe construction of meaning in practice. A discursive interviewer should therefore be attentive to, and in some cases even encourage, confrontation between different discourses and fields of discursivity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The concepts of inclusion and EBD were not problematized during the interviews. These concepts were put into the mouths of the interviewees using quotations and stimulus texts (see the interview guide with stimulus texts in Appendix A). This was because the concepts are central in teachers’ policy documents and policy texts but are known to be ambiguous in character, and the purpose was to learn how differently the concepts are understood and articulated by different teachers. The stimulus texts will be discussed in the following section.

4.1.3. Stimulus texts

During the focus group interviews, stimulus texts were used to encourage the interviewees to talk about the research topic. In this study, the stimulus texts were treated as cultural objects chosen for these interviews as they can be seen to discursively represent the topic being studied. The stimulus interview has its roots in semiotic traditions and constructionist approaches, and it draws influences from research paradigms which have undergone a “linguistic turn” (Törrönen, 2002). Therefore, it is suitable for this study.

The stimulus texts and the interview questions posed with them should make the topic being studied perceptible because the interviewees “through interpreting the stimulus text, are ‘empowered’ to express their social experience and cultural knowledge of the issue under question” (Törrönen, 2002, p. 345). The interview questions were used as resources to guide the interviewees to interpret the stimulus text in comparison to their own conceptions and experiences of the world constructed in the stimulus text. Three quotation were used, one each from the NBHWS (2010), the SNAE (2011b), and the Swedish Education Act (2010:800) dealing with EBD, inclusion, and inclusive didactics. The quotations were used in order to encourage the interviewees to express their personal values, ideals, and subject positions in relation to the specific social and cultural context.
(Törrönen, 2002) of schools (see the interview guide with stimulus texts in Appendix A).

4.2. Sample

The sample of empirical data collected for articles II–IV of this thesis was derived from focus group interviews of five-to-eight mainstream teachers in grades 4–6 in six different schools in different regions in the catchment area of Mid Sweden University. The schools in the area of this university were deliberately chosen because the catchment area of Mid Sweden University is geographical large and multifarious. The schools chosen each have different cultures and contexts due to their sociocultural, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical backgrounds. They are situated in medium-sized cities, suburbs, or in rural villages ranging from some 500 to 50,000 inhabitants. They also have different geographical characteristics, such as mountains, rural, or coastal.

The pilot study was carried out in a city outside the catchment area of Mid Sweden University that has some 140,000 inhabitants. The school is situated in the centre of the city, but with a huge apartment complex next to it. The school has 336 students and 80% of them are immigrants. In this school, five teachers participated in the focus group interview. In other words, this is a quite different school from those in the actual study. Apart from functioning as a test of the interview questions, it also gave perspective on the importance of culture and context for discourses. See the Table 1 for information on schools and focus group participants in the actual empirical data of this study.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial characteristic</th>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>Size of school</th>
<th>Participating teachers in the focus group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Village (rural)</td>
<td>Grade 4 - 6</td>
<td>115 students</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village (rural)</td>
<td>Grade F - 6</td>
<td>130 students</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>Grade F - 5</td>
<td>135 students</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City (coastal)</td>
<td>Grade F - 6</td>
<td>340 students</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City (coastal)</td>
<td>Grade 4 - 9</td>
<td>357 students</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City (mountain)</td>
<td>Grade F - 5</td>
<td>184 students</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Research Council’s rules for good ethical research in the humanities and social sciences (Hermerén, 2011) were followed in this study. The ethical norms regarding individual protection of information, consent, confidentiality, and use were all followed. All teachers participated voluntarily in the study after a presentation and were assured of anonymity. The participants were guaranteed anonymity by being coded (see Appendix B). No findings were linked to any individuals.

Before the interviews, data about the schools were collected from their headmasters. This was done because all discourses are parts of culture and context. All teachers participating in the interviews also completed a demographic survey before the interviews started in order to collect background data from each of them. Teachers are a part of a school system, which Hedegaard Hansen (2012) pointed out is in turn a part of a specific culture and a part of a specific way of understanding educational processes. The organization of a school, its special educational support system, its educational leadership and physical environment, resources, and teacher–student ratio are therefore important for the teachers’ understanding of inclusion. The more general discourses such as professional discourses, a school discourse, a teaching discourse, an educational discourse, and broader societal discourses also impose conditions on and present opportunities for the teachers’ actions and meaning making. In order to understand the discourses, it is therefore important to understand the context (Wetherell et al., 2001), which is also discussed in Section 2.4. The Swedish Context.

Because the purpose of the focus group interviews was to clarify concepts—how to understand and define the concepts of inclusion and EBD—the focus groups of this study consisted of teachers from the same teacher teams all teaching the same age of children. The purpose of teachers working in teacher teams is that together, in discussions, they should develop the school and the solutions to specific students and students’ special needs. Based on their social context, Assarson (2007) claimed that teachers in teacher teams also construct their own subcultures in which they jointly construct discourses. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) indicated that with the help of concepts interviews one can reveal the taken-for-granted assumptions, which also forms the basis for the discourse analysis in which constructing the meaning of the concepts is central.
4.3. Documentation and transcription

The interviews were conducted as focus group interviews, which is meant to be more like a conversation in which the interviewer’s function is to be the moderator who comes up with topics of conversation (stimulus texts), steers the conversation back on topic if it drifts away, makes sure everyone gets the opportunity to speak, and checks the time. Participants discussed quite freely with each other different definitions and their thoughts, experiences, and attitudes concerning issues mentioned in the stimulus texts. The idea was that participants would also learn from each other during the discussion and maybe get some new ideas themselves (see appendices A and B).

The interviews were recorded with a video camera and a voice recorder to make it easier when analysing the material to keep track of who said what. Each focus group interview took about 60 minutes. During this time, the participating teachers discussed the three stimulus texts with each other. After each focus group interview, short individual follow-ups were conducted with each of the participants, so that no one left the interviews without feeling that they had said what they wanted to, or had clarified something they felt was unclear. This took some 10–20 more minutes per group to complete.

The interviews were not transcribed in detail, only the words expressed were transcribe. For this type of interview, only transcribing functional was interesting. In this study, all linguistic, para-, and extralinguistic traits are not important information useful to answering the research question (e.g., Karlsson, 2002). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) stated that specialized transcripts are not appropriate or necessary for concept analysis of an interview. It is also the recording not the transcription that is the data (Karlsson, 2002; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Lapadet & Lindsay, 1999), which means that the analysis of the interviews was not as dependent on the transcripts when there was direct access to the recordings. The entire empirical material thus consists of about 6 hours of video- and audio-taped focus group discussion transcribed to 59,419 words.

4.4. Research review and synthesis

In the first article of this compilation thesis, the research field was examined. In order to study teachers’ understanding, a review and synthesis of previous international research of the field was conducted. There were many terms that sometimes were used interchangeably to label literature reviews. Article I is a research synthesis which not only reviews but also synthesizes the research. The aim of the research synthesis was to acquire substantially deeper
knowledge of international research on teachers’ attitudes towards including students with SEN, especially students with EBD, in mainstream schools. This research synthesis summarized existing research to provide a platform for the reading of the other articles in this compilation thesis. It also aimed to identify research gaps and describe current knowledge, justify the need for and significance of new research, and describe the quality of the available research (see e.g. Boaz & Sidford, 2006; Fink, 2005). The research synthesis of Article I aimed to go beyond the individual studies and sought out and synthesized the research on teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion regarding students with SEN and identified what was specifically found regarding attitudes to including students with EBD. In doing so, the barriers that are claimed to affect teachers’ attitudes were also explored.

A descriptive research synthesis relies on explicit search strategies and unambiguous inclusion criteria for selecting relevant studies. It is “systematic, explicit, comprehensive, and reproducible” (Fink, 2005, p. 3). However, a research synthesis is only one of several possible constructions of the research area (Nilholm, 2017). The theoretical point of departure of Article I is that the concepts of inclusion and EBD are regarded as something socially constructed with multiple interpretations and floating meanings due to context, cultural traditions, and national policy making.

A research synthesis involves multiple phases, and the recommendation of PRISMA statements were followed (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses, 2015). To begin with, an initial identification of studies dealing with the research question was conducted via an advanced keyword search in a large database. Scopus was chosen for Article I because it claims to be the world’s “largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed research literature” (Elsevier, 2017) with over 22,000 titles from more than 5,000 international publishers, and studies from different countries were needed for this synthesis. First, a broad search was conducted to establish the main outline of the study with the key words from the research question as search terms. Only articles within the subject area of social sciences and articles in English, from all years and which were peer-reviewed, were searched for. From this broad search, too many articles emerged which led to a series of more detailed searches. The Boolean operator and was used and “emotional and behavioural difficulties” and “teachers’ attitudes” were enclosed in brackets to be processed as a unit in order to limit the search. To extend the search and possibly find more relevant articles or was also used.
Key journals and articles in other relevant articles’ reference lists, important journals in the field, and articles for other research projects within this area were also hand searched so as not to miss out on any relevant articles. The search resulted in 183 article which then went through a screening of first abstracts and then the full articles to determine whether their findings were comparable and compatible with the inclusion criteria. After reading the titles, 109 of 183 articles were rejected because they did not meet the inclusion criteria. After this first filtering, 72 articles remained (one article was found in all three searches but is only counted as one remaining article). These 72 articles went through an additional abstract screening which led to a database of 39 articles; the manual search added six more studies, for a total of 45 articles. After reading these 45 articles carefully, 30 were rejected because they did not satisfy the selection criteria for this review question. This led to a final database of 15 studies (see Figure 6). All 15 studies are presented in Article I.

Figure 6. Overview of the review process.

No Swedish or Scandinavian studies met the inclusion criteria. Although there are plenty of Swedish and Scandinavian studies on inclusion and EBD, they all compared the attitudes of people other than primary-level teachers, focused on specific subjects, or focused on inclusive educational interventions.

The synthesis of the included articles was based on the data presented in each article. A synthesis can differ based on what counts as data and what does not (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). In Article I, any data presented in the
articles that were relevant to the aim of this study were considered as data. It is important to account for the criteria used in any research synthesis because there is a lack of consensus on what counts as good quality qualitative research and what formal criteria should be used (Boaz & Sidford, 2006). The included articles in Article I were all peer reviewed and published in international scientific journals.

The themes that run across the included articles were strongly linked to the data and identified inductively. The steps of constructionist thematic analysis were followed to identify these themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Throughout the analytical process, the included articles (in their entirety) functioned as points of reference when a deeper understanding was needed to identify and categorize the themes.

4.5. Thematic Analysis

Within discourse analysis, there are different manifestations of the method. Discourse theory is suitable as a theoretical foundation for discourse analysis because of its broad focus. But since Laclau and Mouffe (1985) sought theory development, they did not offer many practical tools. Therefore it can be productive to complement their theory with another constructionist method, such as constructionist thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Elements from discourse analytical perspectives and the non-discourse analytical perspectives of thematic analysis are then combined. According to Winther Jørgensen, and Phillips (2002), a multiperspectival work such as this is accepted and positively valued in most forms of discourse analysis.

Thematic analysis, as a constructionist method, analyses the ways in which meanings and experiences are the effects of the discourses that dominate or are neglected within a specific context. Thematic analysis is suitable as a method for discourse analysis because constructionism, according to Burr (1995), claims that meaning is socially produced and reproduced, rather than definite. Thematic analysis from a constructionist paradigm thus overlaps with some forms of discourse analysis, in which understandings and/or meanings underlying the data are identified or examined. It also considers language as important for our understanding of the world (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the analysis of articles II–IV, great emphasis was placed on the participants’ subjective understanding of the stimulus texts and the context discussed. The idea behind conventional content analysis is that our beliefs construct and reflect the reality around us (Ahuvia, 2008).
Thematic analysis was not described by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a specific method, but as an aid to use within many different methods. It is theoretically free and flexible, with the potential to account for rich and detailed data. It is a method for identifying and analysing patterns and themes within a data corpus and selecting those of interest for the research question. During the analysis the researcher is constantly moving back and forth between the original data corpus, the analysed coded extracts, and the ongoing analysis of the data. When performing thematic analysis, one can either code for a specific theory (deductive approach as in Article IV) or the themes can develop through the coding process (inductive approach as in articles I–III) (Elo & Kyngä, 2008). An inductive approach means the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves in an inductive or “bottom up” way. A deductive approach is driven by theoretical questions and tries to fit the data into a pre-existing coding frame (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). During the inductive approach the themes themselves involve interpretative work, and the analysis will therefore never be pure description. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) pointed out that a researcher is not free from theoretical and epistemological engagements, and data are never coded in an epistemological emptiness. As mentioned above, thematic analysis was used in all articles of this thesis but in different forms and to differing extents. In articles I–III, the inductive approach was used. Themes from the data corpus were identified in relation to the research question. In Article IV, a deductive approach was used to fit the data into the pre-existing coding frame of didactic theory in order to answer the research question.

The analysis of all the transcribed interviews and included articles in Article I was performed in several steps. The first step was an “open” reading of each interview or article to obtain an overall impression of its content. In the second step, meaning units or moments with reference to the participants’ construction were identified from the transcribed data or article. This could be every articulation that dealt with teaching methods or classroom climate. A meaning unit consisted of one or more sentences or paragraphs of a narrative. In the third step, the interpretation of the underlying meaning was expressed in terms of codes and subcategories, which could be “individualization” or “disturbance”. In the fourth step, the outcome data were compared. Thereafter, in the fifth step, the codes were analysed and labelled into subthemes such as “dilemmas” or “teacher”. The interviews and the articles, in their entirety, served as a point of reference throughout the analytical process when deeper understanding was needed of the meaning units, codes, and subcategories. Therefore, there was a constant moving back
and forth between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data that were analysed, and the analyses of the data that were produced. In Article IV, the cornerstones of the didactic theory were used as predefined themes. To shape the analysis during the discourse analysis in Article III, the terms articulation, moment, chains of equivalence, and nodal points were used.

After presenting the data collecting methods, samples, and methods of analysis, it is time to turn to a discussion about their appropriateness.

4.6. Methodological discussion

Traditionally, research in special education has been influenced by theories derived from biology and psychology, as a search for effective methods and interventions to use in classrooms. Within this research tradition the emphasis is on the use of experimental or, more likely, quasi-experimental designs of a quantitative type. In 1998, Ainscow said that he would prefer research within SEN that focused on the specifics of specific contexts, the specific interplay between specific people in a specific time and specific situation, which cannot be produced by quantitative research methods. However, there are numerous approaches, paradigms, schools, and movements within the broad term qualitative research. The criticism of them is that they tend to vary in terms of the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions on which they are based and that those assumptions are too diverse and contradictory, and therefore the concept of what is “quality” might vary with these assumptions (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis, & Dillon, 2003). But when it comes to special education, Ainscow (1998) claimed that a more profound understanding of individual educational situations is needed. Reality is constructed in the minds of the students and teachers involved in a particular situation, which cannot be defined or measured objectively or accurately. To answer their doubts about qualitative research, Spencer et al. (2003) agreed with the above arguments and went on to clarify that the quality of a qualitative research project can be judged if it is contributory, that it makes a contribution to a deeper understanding of a specific policy or practice, in this case inclusion. It can also be judged if it is rigorous in conduct, which must be systematic and transparent to account for the way the data is collected, analysed, and interpreted. A qualitative research project must be credible in claim; that is, its author must argue reasonably and legitimately about the importance of the findings, which have been thoroughly accounted for in this study. Winther Jörgensen, and Phillips (2002) also mentioned another way of determining validity, which is to evaluate the fruitfulness of the analysis. In assessing the fruitfulness of the analysis, the focus is on the analytical
framework’s ability to provide new explanations or to come up with new kinds of acting and thinking, which often is the purpose with discourse analysis, and consequently with this study.

This is a qualitative study, and in qualitative research the concepts of credibility, dependability, and transferability are often used to describe different aspects of trustworthiness. Credibility refers to how coherent data and analysis take on the research question (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) and how credible a particular description of a social part of the world is (Bryman, 2011). One way to approach credibility is to show appropriate quotations from the transcribed interviews, and another way is to seek agreement among previous research. This study has therefore been thorough in detailed descriptions and used appropriate references to other researchers and quotations from the interviews. Dependability refers to how consistent the data is or how much the data might change over time (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). It also refers to how complete and available the different parts of the research process (research aim, sampling, data collection, analysis, etc.) are in order to be available for peer review (Bryman, 2011). This is also something that has been done accurately and was detailed in this study because all its articles were peer-reviewed. Transferability refers to the extent to which the results can be transferred to other contexts. To give a thorough description of the context, the sample and the process of analysis together with representative quotations is one way to make transferability possible according to Graneheim and Lundman (2004). To gain transferability, a researcher also needs to produce thick descriptions, which means vigorous descriptions of details of the specific culture (Bryman, 2011). This is the reason for the thorough review of the cultures and contexts of the schools in which the interviews were carried out. In order words, trustworthiness will increase when the culture and context, the methods, the analysis, and the findings are thorough and vigorous (Bryman, 2011; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

In discourse analysis, some common objections to research validity have no significance (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). This applies both to the question of authentic personal meaning and to the question of the objective reality. According to discourse analysis, meaning and understanding are relationally constructed and are therefore contingent. Within discourse analysis, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) emphasized that the researcher has to be particularly transparent and reflexive because discourse analysis has been criticized for its insufficient lucidity and for its focus on the linguistic and the analysis itself. Winther Jörgensen, and Phillips (2002) proposed a thorough consideration and explanation of how a study relates to the
examined discourses, what consequences this contribution might have, and the importance of its implications, as well as determining the validity of the analysis by estimating its ability to generate new explanations, thinking, or actions.

By using a discourse theory approach in which teachers’ discourses have been explored, the intention was to uncover discourses behind teachers’ understanding of including students with EBD in mainstream school, and then to analyse them in order to elaborate or redirect currently made meanings, challenge them, or open up new ways of understanding that might impact the field. Even if this process never ends in some absolute and final truth, it may open up new ways of understanding and acting. However, Dyson and Millward (2000) suggested that more elaborate understanding can help teachers challenge old preconceptions, open up new possibilities, and see beyond the situations in which they find themselves. Some critics of social constructionism argue that social constructionism is not valid research at all because it cannot determine what is true or not and what is good or bad. The purpose of a social constructionism approach, as Winther Jörgensen, and Phillips (2002) put it, is not to seek the truth; it just aims to contribute with one result among many other possible results, but it opens up for new explanations, thinking, or actions. Skrtic (1991) argued that no single paradigm can be the only source of final knowledge and that the “truth” is only one among many (Skrtic, 1991). In this study, there is no claim of having captured the truth because no single truth is possible, but it offers an interpretation or version which is inevitably partial. From a constructionist point of view, there are multiple realities and therefore multiple truths. The aim was thus to investigate meaning and significance rather than to find a permanent and final truth.

It is necessary to emphasize that the focus was on the reality described and discussed among the teachers in the focus groups of articles II–IV, and not on interpreting the truth of the descriptions. The descriptions were all considered true because they were the truth that the teachers chose to communicate in that current situation in interplay with the available focus group members. The discourses presented here should thus not be seen as typical of discourses of EBD, inclusion, and inclusive didactics but only as the discourses the teachers at these schools brought up during the focus group interviews after being confronted with the stimulus texts that were put forward. There is a hegemonic struggle in relation to political aims between different discourses when teachers describe their experiences and meanings. Teachers make sense of political rhetoric by negotiating and renegotiating
concepts in order to give them meaning in relation to different incidents and situations in their everyday mission. Based on its social context, Assarson (2007) claimed that teachers jointly construct their understanding as a basis for their talk about how teaching and schools should be organized, and for their understanding of the mission to teach all students. Teachers are part of a school system, a specific culture, and a specific way of understanding educational processes which seem to be important for the teachers’ understanding of inclusion. Teachers’ professional educational discourse constitutes their acting and understanding in the classroom (Hedegaard Hansen, 2012). It is by the teacher’s main discourses that she or he constructs categories of students, teaching, and classrooms and by examining them an elaborated understanding of inclusion and exclusion processes can take place. Using the post-structuralist approach, risks being in conflict with the scientific requirement of stringency. However, the analytical approaches of the different studies provide an opportunity to follow the interpretation of the interviews, and thus both increase the credibility and open the way for other interpretations. This is the reason why discourse analysis was chosen as the methodological approach.
5. An overview of the articles

In this section, a short overview of each of the four articles is presented. They were not chronologically published in the same order as they are numerically presented. Due to the different time spans in the various journals’ publication processes, they were or will be published in the following order: Article IV, Article III, Article II and, finally, Article I. After this section, a summary of the findings from each article is presented, along with these results in relation to each other and to the thesis’s overall research questions.

5.1. Article I. Teachers’ Attitudes towards Including Students with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in Mainstream School: A Systematic Research Synthesis

The concept of inclusive education won international recognition when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) put forth the idea of ‘Education for All’ in 1990. Several countries have since implemented policies for promoting integration and, more recently, the inclusion of these students in regular schools. Previous research reviews on teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion have revealed that the types of SEN influence teachers’ attitudes and have indicated that teachers are most negative about the inclusion of students with behavioural problems. This article is a systematic synthesis of the research on teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion with regard to students with SEN, and it aims to identify specifically what is found regarding teachers’ attitudes towards the inclusion of students with EBD.

This research synthesis involved multiple phases to identify the studies dealing with the research questions. An initial identification of potential studies was conducted via an advanced keyword search of the SCOPUS database in January 2017. The theoretical point of departure of this study is that the concept of inclusion and EBD are regarded as something socially constructed with multiple interpretations and floating meanings.

The first broad search resulted in too many articles, which led to a more detailed search with the keywords and their thesaurus terms: ‘EBD’, ‘inclusion’, and ‘teachers’ attitudes’. Articles were included only if they dealt with various categories of SEN in relation to teachers’ attitudes regarding inclusion in mainstream schools. Articles on the attitudes of other students, pre-service teachers, teacher students or special education needs coordinators (SENCO) were excluded, and so were articles not focusing on primary school.
Fifteen studies met the inclusion criteria, featuring teachers’ attitudes from 15 different countries.

The fifteen countries involved in the 15 included articles were: Dubai, England, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Haiti, Lebanon, the Republic of Ireland, Russia, Scotland, Slovenia, South Africa, Turkey and the United States. Most of the studies were conducted from 2005 through 2016, but one is from as early as 2001. The methodologies of the studies also varied, for example, qualitative and quantitative studies; questionnaires, observations and semi-structured interviews. The number of participating teachers in the studies also varied, ranging from 1,360 teachers to just 14 teachers.

Some themes on teachers’ perceived barriers to the inclusion of students with EBD, run recurrently across the included studies. They were thematically encoded and labelled by the described barriers, namely their effects on; (a) the classroom climate, (b) students’ learning outcomes, (c) teachers’ frustration and, because of (d) the school organization, (e) the attitudes of others. The themes were identified inductively; they were strongly linked to the data, and the steps of constructionist thematic analysis were followed to identify these themes.

The themes indicated that teachers found it quite difficult to value the behaviours of students, which entailed physically endangering, threatening and disturbing the other students in the class, as well as disrupting the learning situation. Disruptions, reprimands and behavioural discussions take time and negatively influence the classroom atmosphere causing the class to become unfocused. The teachers mentioned myriad supports that they need to ensure a successful, or at least a manageable, inclusion of EBD students, such as sufficient skilful classroom personnel, adaptable classrooms, fewer students in each class, more time for planning and reflection, more time for collaboration with resource personnel, and suitable in-service training or skills for working with these students. However, these supports were not provided.

The results of this synthesis confirmed that most teachers had negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties and that they had similar reasons for these; however, this was not true in all countries. This result, highlights the specific reasons for the negative attitudes of teachers towards including students with EBD in their classroom and their previously mentioned prerequisites for overcoming them. In order to change these negative attitudes, further research and targeted efforts are needed, dealing with the previously outlined reasons for having these attitudes.
5.2. Article II. Teachers’ Understanding of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) in Sweden – What is the Problem?

EBD is an imprecise term that is difficult to define because it represents a continuum of behaviour that challenges teachers. EBD is a subjectively perceived disorder rather than an objective one, and it is highly susceptible to the situation and context of these children. Student behaviour that challenges teachers has drawn much attention due to the need for order in schools. The purpose of this article was to contribute to the understanding of how some teachers in mainstream schools construct meaning of the collective identity of EBD.

This study was based on six focus group interviews and 37 individual follow-ups. Stimulus texts were used to encourage the teachers to articulate their views and experiences on students with EBD. The theoretical framework is discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Discourse theory claims that our ways of talking play an active role in creating and changing identities. According to discourse theory, identities are constructed in and through social relations. The theory aims to map out the struggles regarding the way in which the meaning of signs is to be fixed as well as the processes by which certain fixations of meaning become established and thus true. In this article, identity was investigated by discourse analysis. The starting point was to identify the nodal point around which the identity was organized—in this case, EBD. Then, the ways in which the nodal point was filled with meaning relationally by being equated with some signifiers and contrasted with others was investigated. During the search for expressions linked in these chains of equivalence, the key concepts of the discourse became clear, and thereby also the formation of its identity. The important point was to map how the different discourses struggled and filled the nodal point by equating it with different signifiers.

The way in which the students’ identity is constructed in teachers’ discourses is the focus of this article. In this article, teachers’ talk about students with EBD is understood as if the teachers convey different identity to students that are incorporated into various discourses. Central to these identities are the norm, in this case, the other. Identities are the result of contingent, discursive processes, as they are accepted, refused, and negotiated in discursive processes. Identity is relationally
organized; it is something because it is contrasted with something that it is not. An analysis of the other was made to find out what the discourse excludes and what social consequences this exclusion has. The discursive construction of the collective identity of EBD reveals what it equates to and what it differs from and contrasts with. The discourse thus provides behavioural instructions for people who identify with EBD, which they have to follow to be regarded as having EBD.

The findings revealed that the prevailing discourses about students’ EBD focus on students’ being disturbing and disrespectful or introverted—and thus deviant. The antagonistic discourses, such as a school and/or curriculum problem, or parents’ upbringing, face problems with being accepted and are strongly and rapidly dismissed due to their described impossibility and insolubility. This article is an important step towards developing an understanding of what limitations the prevailing discourses have in contributing to social change, thus leading to more equal power relations in schools, and it will also contribute to the international debate about the categorizing of students with disorders and difficulties.

5.3. Article III. Why Teachers Find it Difficult to Include Students with EBD in Mainstream Classes

Inclusion has been implemented in several countries since the UN put forth the idea of “Education for All” in 1990, but as a top-down approach. Therefore, Swedish teachers in mainstream schools are frustrated and insecure about how to organize education for inclusion and diversity (Assarson, 2007). This article contributes to the understanding of how they articulate their views on the advantages and disadvantages of including students with EBD in mainstream classes.

SEN, inclusion and EBD are by no means universally agreed upon and may all be viewed as social constructs. In constructing education, teachers understand their teacher missions either as to be knowledge producing or to offer and create opportunities for equity, communication and participation. There is a gap between the rhetoric of inclusive education and the everyday school reality of teachers. Inclusive education is a construction in which different discourses struggle to achieve hegemony.

To study teachers’ understanding, an approach of discourse theory that takes inspiration from Laclau and Mouffe (1985) was applied. When this
study used discourse analysis to investigate teachers’ understanding of the inclusion of students with EBD, the starting point was to identify the nodal point around which their understanding was organized. Then, the study investigated the way in which the nodal point was relationally filled with meaning by being equated with some signifiers and contrasted with others. Looking for expressions and articulations, linked in these chains of equivalence, allowed the key concepts of the discourse to become clear.

The empirical material consisted of six focus group interviews and 37 individual interviews based on stimulus texts. The stimulus texts were quotations from Swedish educational policy documents and policy texts known for their ambiguous character, and the focus was to detect how differently the teachers understood and defined the concept. The interview questions posed were to guide the interviewees to interpret the world constructed in the stimulus texts in comparison with their own experiences.

The analyses began with an open reading to identify articulations related to the inclusion of students with EBD. The nodal points emerged during the analysis of how articulated elements turn into moments and by being related in chains of equivalences. The analysis of the teacher discussions followed constructionist thematic analysis. According to the results, the prevailing discourses focused on the disadvantages of the inclusion of students with EBD. However, they were articulated differently and filled with meaning mainly by three recurring nodal points: (1) problems, (2) dilemmas and (3) impossibility. The advantages of including students with EBD in mainstream classes were to be found only in the antagonistic discourses that mostly drew on the Swedish Education Act (2010:800) and the school policies. They were articulated in various ways but failed to fix the meaning because others overpowered them. The overall conclusion is that teachers base their understanding on both their experiences and on the policy of the Swedish Education Act, but the pragmatic discourse of the disadvantages was hegemonic to the ideologically antagonistic discourse of the advantages.

5.4. Article IV. What is Inclusive Didactics? Teachers’ Understanding of Inclusive Didactics for Students with EBD in Swedish Mainstream Schools

Including students with EBD in general education is one of teachers’ greatest challenges and make the dilemma of inclusion display its most difficult side, regardless of various school systems and cultures. This could be explain by
the fact that students with EBD are likely to be in conflict with their schools due to their difficulties. Students who disturb are constructed as being a problem to themselves, their classmates and their teachers. This is true despite the fact that their teachers have to assure that teaching and learning work well for all students. This article contributes to the understanding of how teachers in Swedish mainstream schools understand the concept of inclusive didactics for students with EBD.

This article employs a directed qualitative content analysis supplemented with descriptive statistics related to the categories of inclusive didactics. In this study, didactic theory was the basis of the predefined categories and codes by which the analysis was done. The ontological and epistemological premises underlying the study are social constructionism and the role of language in the social construction of the world. Didactic theory was the basis of the predefined categories by which the analysis was completed. In the analysis, emphasis was placed on the participants’ subjective understanding of the text. The idea behind conventional content analysis is that our beliefs construct and reflect the reality around us.

The empirical data were collected through six focus-group interviews followed by 37 individual interviews, in which stimulus texts focusing on the concept of inclusive didactics for students with EBD were used. Stimulus texts were used to encourage the interviewees to express their personal values and their ideal and subject positions in relation to the specific social and cultural contexts of schools.

The findings indicated that three didactic aspects were dominant in teachers’ understanding of inclusive didactics: Student (26.4%), Methods (22.2%), and Teacher (19.8%). Less accentuated were Subject (5.4%), Rhetoric and Interaction (9.8%). Most comments were to be found in the category Student, in which the problem is placed within the student. These students have problems with their classmates, not only by disturbing them but also by making problems for themselves in the group and feeling singled out. Concerning the didactical aspect Methods, individualizing, adapting, structuring, simplifying and shortening were important. Regarding the Teacher’s role in didactic inclusion, the importance of creating and maintaining the students’ confidence, to choose one’s conflicts and to be consistent were mentioned. The teachers in this study also yearned for more knowledge and more competencies. They claimed they need a special knowledge to meet these students’ needs, and that the subject must be adapted to the students’ levels of knowledge and special needs. Opportunities
to perform collegial work were also expressed as important aspect of working with these students.

The Subject and the requirements of the curriculum were mentioned as causing these students to fail. These students need subject requirements at their own levels to feel good enough and competent. A paradox, however, is that the teachers mentioned the importance of not lowering the knowledge requirements. More than 16% of the comments about didactic inclusion dealt with the Learning Environment and ‘Other’, which included both the lack of and the need for adapted classrooms and resources in terms of personnel, time and assistance. Parental upbringing and responsibilities were also mentioned.

The overall conclusion is that the concept of inclusive didactics is complex, complicated and difficult for teachers to relate to. The understanding of inclusive education is derived from a special educational paradigm, with segregated learning for students with difficulties. This article clearly highlights that teachers often feel frustrated and inadequate, and they blame themselves for the students’ deficiency and failure, mostly because they are told to do something they cannot do for practical and economic reasons.
6. Summary of the results

The overall aim of this study was to contribute to the understanding of teachers’ discourses of inclusion of students with EBD in Swedish mainstream schools. This is a compilation thesis consisting of four separate articles, each with research questions of their own. In the following section, the way in which the results of the individual articles relate to one another, as well as to the overall research questions of this thesis is presented.

In Article I, the research synthesis concluded that teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion are dependent on the nature of the disability and that students with behaviour problems are one of the SEN students who are perceived to be most difficult to include in a mainstream classroom. The themes on teachers’ perceived barriers to the inclusion of students with EBD, that recurrently run across the included studies in this article, were as follows: their effect on (a) the classroom climate, (b) students’ learning outcomes, (c) teachers’ frustration and, because of (d) the school organization, (e) the attitudes of others.

Article II answers the first research question of this thesis: Which discourses of the collective identity of EBD as a category of SEN do mainstream teachers articulate? The result indicated that teachers jointly construct discourses and identities and that talking together in teacher teams both reflects and constructs the social reality (e.g. Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). They construct the collective identity of students with EBD as being disturbing and disrespectful, and as the opposite of those students who know how to behave. Teachers make their categorization of a specific student against the background of their construction of meaning and understanding in relation to their everyday professional missions in the classroom. When looking at EBD from a psycho-medical perspective, the problem lies within the student, and the focus is on professionals’ expertise and psychological or psychiatric intervention to change the student, which Thomas and Loxley (2001) also mentioned. This categorization of the students according to the psycho-medical perspective inevitably has consequences for how the teachers understand and organize their everyday teacher missions. Within the cultures of the schools studied, discourses about schools being more adapted for and open to students with EBD are not visible because they are considered unthinkable. They require new and other types of resources as well as other time distributions and other teachers, curricula and classrooms, which seems more or less impossible to conquer. The same result is found in the other three articles of this thesis as well.
In Article III, the second research question of this thesis is answered: *Which discourses of the advantages and disadvantages of including students with EBD in mainstream classes do mainstream teachers articulate?* The result of this article revealed that the nodal points of the teachers’ discussions all dealt with the disadvantages of including students with EBD in mainstream classes. The advantages of including students with EBD in mainstream classes were only to be found in the antagonistic discourses. They were articulated in different ways, but other discourses overpowered them, and therefore, they failed to fix the meaning. The teachers articulated the disadvantages of inclusion, such as problems, dilemmas and impossibility, when it comes to their classroom context. *Problems* were articulated as problems for all of the actors within schools. The *dilemmas* that the teachers articulated in this study revealed their confusion about not understanding the conflicting strategies of inclusion, as the study of Takala et al. (2012) also depicted. *Impossibility* suggests that including students with EBD in mainstream classes is impossible for schools because they are not designed for such purposes. The teachers based their understanding, in accordance with Assarson (2007), on their experiences, on the one hand, and on the policy of the Education Act, on the other hand. Their articulations revealed how they were reflecting in a pragmatic way rather than in an ideological one. The pragmatic discourse of the disadvantages is therefore hegemonic to the ideologically antagonistic discourse of the advantages. They also revealed the clear gap between policy and practice in the Swedish education system. Discourses that were pragmatic and based on the everyday reality of the school overpowered the idea of ensuring equal opportunities for all students and the celebration of diversity, which is also notable in the next article IV.

Article IV, answered the third research question of this thesis: *How is inclusive didactics articulated when teachers discuss including students with EBD in mainstream classes?* The overall conclusion of this article is that teachers do not have a clear and uniform image of the concept of inclusive didactics. The concept is complex, complicated and difficult for teachers to relate to, as Assarson (2007) also argued. The descriptions of inclusive didactics are both vague and simplistic and therefore difficult for the teachers to implement. The teachers, however, articulated that using individualized instructional strategies, teaching methods and interactive technological teaching aids were successful for inclusive didactics. Teachers’ individualization not only of methods but also of interaction, rhetoric and relation was highlighted. Articulations of being professionally conscious in how to meet and match all students are to be found in all cornerstones of the didactic triangle. However,
the understanding of inclusive education is derived from a special educational paradigm, where the most attention is given to segregated learning with students with disabilities (see also, e.g. Ainscow, 1998; Dyson & Millward, 2000; Thomas & Loxley, 2001). The teachers of this study mainly related to, and constructed meaning from, three of the six didactic aspects, namely Student(s), Methods and Teacher. The fact that 16% of the comments about inclusive didactic were about the Learning Environment and ‘Other’—including both the lack of and need for adapted classroom resources in terms of personnel, time and assistance—revealed the teachers’ frustration with being told to do something they cannot do for practical and economic reasons. This could, as mentioned earlier, be found in all other articles.

Article I is the bridge between the other three articles, laying the foundation and framing the entire thesis by examining how teachers perceived students with EBD from other countries, cultures and times. Because it does not include or discuss Swedish teachers’ attitudes, it provides a broader picture to use for comparison purposes. What is common for Articles I-IV is that including students with EBD in mainstream classes is a complex and complicated matter that the teachers do not feel competent enough to fully handle. They also find the lack of resources, such as adapted classrooms, time and personnel and skills in inclusive didactics, to be strong obstacles making the successful implementation of including students with EBD in mainstream classes possible. The development of the school system in Sweden has also moved towards a much firmer and more rigid system. When it comes to learning goals and inclusion, the Swedish curriculum has developed in a much stricter direction, and a state-controlled schools inspectorate have been established to, among other missions, control the fulfilment of the curriculum’s knowledge requirement. This makes the mission of inclusion ambiguous and hard to achieve (see e.g. Göransson et al., 2011).

The overall finding is that the teachers’ discourses, during the interviews of Articles II-IV, articulated how the teachers feel frustration, inadequacy and self-reproach. They blame themselves for the students’ failure. The teachers construct their discourses against their practical experience of their professional mission in making school a positive place for all students, and the words concerning human values in the Swedish Education Act (2010:800). In both the included studies of Article I and the data of Articles II-IV, the teachers articulated temporarily closed discourses that the school organization has not adapted, nor aims to adapt to the new, time-consuming and contradictory conditions of including students with EBD.
Within their discourses, a strong mismatch also seems to exist between teachers’ own expectations of including students with EBD, and the expectations their headmasters and policy-makers have. Teachers also articulated that the headmasters do not seem to understand or care about what is going on in the classroom. The teachers did not articulate including students with EBD as an improvement for either these students or the rest of the class. The teachers’ discourses of disruption from mostly effective classroom teaching to a new challenging and unpredictable classroom situation has not changed much since the situation Dyson and Millward (2000) described in 2000.
7. Conclusions

The results of each article and the results of the articles in relation to the overall research questions have been presented and discussed. Now it is time to turn to the conclusions. First, the implication of this study for practice is presented, followed by a discussion of its contribution. Then this section ends with suggestions for further research that the results of this study have identified as important.

7.1. Practical implications

Given the increasing Swedish and international debate on the inclusion of students with EBD one conclusion is that the voices of the teachers, those who are supposed to implement inclusion in their classrooms, must be highlighted. Inclusion is a controversial issue within a political agenda because students, parents, teachers, and school management strongly argue either for or against the benefit of inclusion in mainstream classrooms. When it comes to implementing reform recommendations, focusing on teachers’ discourses is important. However, if the intention is to discuss, challenge and redirect these discourses, examining the factors behind such attitudes is even more important, as addressed in Article I. The research synthesis of Article I, as well as the empirical studies of Articles II-IV, with a focus on the teachers’ discourses, may help us to gain insight into teachers’ discourses on including students with EBD in mainstream classes in relation to their experiences of the past and the present.

If considering EBD not as a mental dysfunction but rather as a construct made by teachers in the context of a classroom teaching situation, the result of this study will contribute to elaborating or redirecting the understanding of EBD and will open up new ways of understanding and acting. These teachers’ prevailing discourses imply that the students’ behaviour is located within the individual student, and a strong emphasis is placed on the special needs professionalism. The teachers articulate the problem for the students themselves and for others involved in the educational situation, which makes inclusion less suitable. As a consequence there is a continuing focus on, as Thomas and Loxley (2001) put it, fixing the student with interventions based on medicine and educational psychology. The educational implications of this study include highlighting and analysing the prevailing discourses, those that are neglected, such as the students’ behaviour being a reaction of various causes, such as schools’ striving to meet and teach all students in the same way and placing all students in the same
context in relation to the schools’ economic situation. This might challenge school management as well as assist them, along with special educators, teachers and parents to see behind the discourses that prevail and consider those discourses that are neglected to make the interpretation of students’ needs more dialogic. This might impact both teachers’ practice and the research field.

However, to neglect the psycho-medical perspective might also be dangerous, as students are different and learn differently, and some students need special didactics to develop and learn well in a regular classroom. When it comes to viewing EBD from a dilemma perspective (see, e.g. Clark et al., 1998; Dyson & Millward, 2000; Nilholm, 2005), a more versatile understanding is possible and, in turn, more needs-oriented interventions become possible.

Therefore, another conclusion is that it is important that teachers’ experiences with their classroom missions and how they understand dilemmas and contradictions in their everyday meetings with a diversity of students who they should include successfully, are positive. The wordings in the Swedish Education Act (2010:800) and SNAE (2011a) are arbitrary and therefore interpreted differently by various actors within Swedish schools, which places the teachers in a confusing situation. To leave the decisions and the responsibility to the individual teacher or to teacher teams is not enough. It is also important that the teacher has been provided with adequate resources and support from the school organization to implement this inclusion and that the inclusion process has been carefully prepared and planned (see Article I; Gunnthorsdottir, 2014). These discourses can also impact teachers’ identities. They can feel desperation, and might have an unrealistic belief that others who are more professional and more competent should take over. The professionals are likely to position themselves in a problem culture that can easily escalate and cause despair and powerlessness (Schaarup & Kehlet, 2011). The teachers’ insecurity, frustration and sense of inadequacy are a consequence of these ambiguities, and their lack of opportunity to influence the situation, and, in turn, a teacher shortage are other consequence (Greene, 2011; Olsson, 2017).

To challenge the prevailing discourses and to introduce others is productive because considering them might open up for antagonistic struggles and spark development and change. Lund and Hauge (2011) believed that a challenge exists when new understandings are introduced into a system. There is a risk that previous and current ways of thinking about students, teaching and learning may control or prevent alternative ways of
thinking to gain hegemony. To claim that as a teacher, one is not qualified enough to teach and match all students is an easy way out. It also justifies the role of educational and psychological expertise within schools. It might also be convenient for both teachers and school administrators to continue doing what they have done, something which has, over time, been shown to work, at least for some students. To uncover new and/or other understandings might lead to other actions that, in turn, will lead to other and elaborated practices within schools. The antagonistic discourses of Articles I-IV reveal that there are potential for other didactics that could make inclusion for all students, not just students with EBD, more successful. Using individualized instructional strategies, teaching methods and interactive technological teaching aids is successful for inclusive didactics (Boström, 2016; Dunn & Griggs, 2007). Teachers need to elaborate their methodological repertoire. In addition, the individualization of teachers’ interaction, rhetoric and relation towards any individual student strengthens inclusive didactics. Teachers need to be trained to be professionally conscious of how they meet and match all students in every aspect of the cornerstones of the didactic triangle. The learning environment is also mentioned in all articles as something which is important to adapt and adjust to these students. Unfortunately, teachers have unsuccessfully included students with EBD for a long time now. Discussions in Article I address how teachers are more negative the longer they have worked unsuccessfully with students with SEN (Dupoux, Wolma & Estrada, 2005; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2014), which must highlight the need for school organizers to be fully engaged in the process of change and in its scientific results.

Remarkably, the alternative perspective with focus on the curricula is rarely mentioned in the focus group interviews of Articles II-IV. What might be the reason for this? As Foucault (1980) claimed, any time and particular context set limits to what can be said or not. Every context, society and culture has its system for which statements are considered true and which are completely unthinkable. Within the culture or context of Swedish schools today, discourses about schools being more adapted and open for students with EBD are not visible because they are considered unthinkable. Article IV examines teachers’ understanding of inclusive didactic but comes to the conclusion that the teachers want to do more but feel they cannot without the right resources, or no resources at all. Inclusive didactics require new and other types of teaching methods and resources as well as other time distributions and other teachers, curricula and classrooms, which seems more or less impossible to achieve, even though the Salamanca statement (1994a)
stated that “curricula should be adapted to children’s needs, not vice-versa” (p. 11). Yet, without opening up new and other ways of talking about and understanding these students, no redirection or elaboration of their educational situations is possible. As mentioned earlier, teachers cannot, and are not allowed to embrace these changes. This can only be made possible by the authority of the school organization.

7.2. The contribution of this study
This thesis will contribute to the overall knowledge of, and debate about discourses of including students with EBD in Swedish mainstream schools. Swedish teachers’ discourses on this topic are not as explicit as this in any other study. The results revealed how the teachers’ hegemonic discourses articulate including students with EBD as a problem, a dilemma that makes the entire inclusion process impossible. In this case, the teachers’ discourses are formed by their negative teaching/classroom experiences on the one hand, and by the Swedish Education Act (2010:800), on the other hand. However, the positive and human-rights focused discourses of the Swedish Education Act are though not strong enough to hegemonize.

We know that discourses emerge from collective practices. The discourses that arise among teachers are part of the teachers’ experiences (Hjörne, 2004). Assarson’s (2007) study reported that teachers base their discussions about their teaching missions on their practice and on their experiences with educational situations. In this way, their experiences of concrete everyday life are constantly present as the starting point for shaping discourses. This study revealed how the teachers’ discourses in this study articulate their experiences of being torn between contradictory teacher tasks due to a curriculum with plenty of room for interpretation. They articulated a feeling of being left alone to make the learning environment safe and sound for all students, and also feelings of frustration; as a consequence they might even be ready to leave the profession. They react against a system that seems to create categories for solving the economic situations of the schools. At the same time, they feel concern for their students and really want to do more.

As mentioned earlier, discourses are formed in a social context via the individuals involved in it. The discourses constructed from a specific context enable actions which at that time or in that situation are considered more relevant and more possible than others actions. Thus, discourses also give rise to social consequences and affect the actions of individual teachers and groups. Decisions and actions are dependent on the discourses that prevail.
When teachers construct meaning out of intuitive action in teaching situations, different discourses struggle against one another, and verifying discourses becomes convenient for justifying and finding legitimacy for action in specific and urgent situations (Assarson, 2007; Torfing, 1999).

Therefore, when teachers experience failure and dissatisfaction with specific teaching situations, they construct discourses that justify and legitimize their failure. If teachers experienced success and harmony, other discourses would hegemonize. The prevailing discourses form the actions of the teacher in the classroom. They also open up for other ways of teaching and matching each student. As Ainscow (1998) put it, “a teacher’s methods are social constructions” (p. 11). The teachers’ actions and decisions are due to prevailing discourses. When discourses construct and reconstruct themselves in relation to the context, the context of teachers’ experiences from their everyday teaching is important for which meaning the discourse gains. If there were a deliberate drive to change these experiences to more positive ones, then the antagonistic discourses presented in the articles of this study would be much more likely to hegemonize. If teachers articulated including students with EBD in Swedish mainstream schools as something positive and interesting to carry out, then their teaching practice would be reconstructed along with the students’ needs as well. This study has clearly shown which discourses prevail, which are neglected and which barriers must be removed to deconstruct the teachers’ prevailing discourses.

If teachers’ attitudes, articulated through their discourses, are important for the successful implementation of inclusion, the research on teachers’ attitudes and the barriers that can affect them is highly relevant because problems concerning inclusion remain, both in Sweden and internationally. If teachers’ negative attitudes towards students with EBD have implications for the success of the overall inclusive education, as Monsen et al. (2014) argued, the contribution of this research is important. If the students with EBD themselves, their teachers and their classmates all suffer when students with EBD are including in mainstream classes, then the contribution of this research is even more important.

7.3. Further research
This compilation thesis has brought attention to some areas where further research would be fruitful. If teachers are at least willing to include students with EBD in mainstream classes, and if the teachers’ negative attitudes towards students with EBD have implications for the success of the overall
inclusive education, further research is needed. This thesis has detected five areas as important to examine further.

The first area is the lack of the uniformity of the concept of EBD and of inclusion. According to discourse theory, a total fixation of meaning is not possible, but to discuss the different temporary fixations of their meanings will reveal their multiple and potential meanings. Further research pertaining to both the definitions of inclusion and EBD and how they are perceived in different cultures and contexts are important when comparing and understanding inclusion for all students in different contexts. As long as only some countries use categories, or the categories used are not uniform within countries and the definitions of the categories, when available, vary between countries (OECD, 2008), this will continue. This will inevitably have an impact on research as well as on practice.

The second area is the importance of a deeper analysis of the category EBD, as a closed category. The need also exists for analyses that highlight how various professionals interact within and between discourses, as well as analyses for understanding and practice when categories are viewed from an alternative perspective, rather than the psycho-medical one. The results of this thesis are an important step towards an understanding of what limitations the prevailing discourses have to contribute to social change in schools. It might help to elaborate or redirect both teachers’ and school management’s understanding of including students with EBD in mainstream schools, which may have some impact on teachers’ practice and on the research field, which Ainscow (1998) also pointed out back in the late 1990s. This thesis will therefore also contribute to the international debate about the pros and cons of the categorization of students’ disorders or difficulties within schools. This will be a subject for further research including more teachers from other socio-cultural contexts, in other parts of Sweden as well as internationally. It will also be beneficial to include parent and student voices in further research, especially since teachers in this study claimed that neither the EBD student nor his or her classmates benefit from their inclusion.

The third area is that more research is clearly needed to explore teachers’ understanding of inclusive didactics for students with EBD. We need to know more about students with EBD, including why and how their learning strategies differ from other students’ strategies, to help teachers to become competent in inclusive didactics. Research may also help to develop new methods that will be both effective for these students and be manageable for teachers and schools with the available, and for the time being prevailing economic resources. One question still remains; is there a specific didactics for
students with EBD, which inevitably requires special education support and interventions (see e.g. Clough & Corbett, 2000; Dyson & Millward, 2000; Thomas & Loxley, 2001), or is there an inclusive didactic that fit all students? If one exists, more research is needed on how to implement this specific didactic and on what obstacles might hinder this implementation.

The fourth area is the teachers’ emotions. Research needs to highlight and illuminate the teachers’ frustration, what they feel, and how they feel. The negative discourses of including students with EBD also impact teachers’ identities. They might appear desperate and have an unquestioned belief that others are more professional and more competent and thus should take over these students. The teachers revealed a tendency to position themselves in a problem culture that can easily escalate and cause despair and powerlessness, which in turn leads to sick leave, burnout and leaving the teaching profession. Due to the escalating teacher shortage in Sweden, the discussion has turned to focusing on teachers’ workloads, and what could or should be removed from their previous assignments. The inclusion of students with EBD might be one of the assignments to be removed.

The fifth and last area is the school organization. Within schools, it is claimed to be difficult to adapt to inclusion of all students and to take into account the variation of students, the students’ different needs and the reallocation of resources in the forms of adapted classrooms, time and personnel. It is claimed that implementing inclusion is difficult when insufficient structures exist for collaboration between regular and support staff. Further research could focus on what resources and what organizational structures are needed for the successful implementation of the inclusion of students with EBD.
References


Fink, A. (2005). Conducting research literature reviews: From the Internet to paper.
New York, NY: SAGE.


Gunnthorsdottir, H. (2014). The teacher in an inclusive school: Exploring teachers’ construction of their meaning and knowledge relating to their concepts... Diss. Reykjavik: School of education, University of Iceland.


towards inclusion in Lebanon. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16(2), 139–153.


UNESCO. (2000). Education for All: Meeting our collective commitments. Paris:
UNESCO.


Hej!

Tack för att ni vill delta i denna intervju! Jag är så glad och tacksam över att få ta del av era erfarenheter och era tankar.

Kom ihåg att detta är mer ett samtal än en intervju. Vi kommer att hålla på tillsammans i ca 40 minuter och sedan kommer jag att prata enskilt med var och en av er hur ni upplevt intervjun.


Kom ihåg!

Det finns inga rätt eller fel! Det är hur ni tänker, från hjärtat, som är det viktigaste.


OK! Då börjar vi!

När en elev upprepat bryter mot de regler, normer eller förväntningar som finns i skolan kan man kalla beteendet eller handlingsmönstret för ett beteendeproblem (Socialstyrelsen 2010).

Kan ni ge konkreta exempel på hur detta kan se ut i klassrummet?

På vilket sätt är detta ett problem?

Vems är problemet?

Skolverket (2011) beskriver beteendeproblem som en svårighet som föranleder särskilt stöd.

11 § Om det finns särskilda skäl, får ett beslut enligt 9 § för en elev i grundskolan, innebära att särskilt stöd ska ges enskilt eller i en annan undervisningsgrupp (särskild undervisningsgrupp) än den som eleven normalt hör till (Skollag 2010:800).
Behövs det andra typer av undervisningsgrupper? När? Ge exempel?
Vilken typ av anpassning behövs i klassrummet för att där kunna göra inkluderingen så effektiv som möjligt för dessa elever?

Inkludering av elever handlar dock inte bara om var eleven befinner sig. Det skiljer mellan rumslig, didaktisk och social inkludering. En central svårighet för lärare när det gäller att möta elevers olikheter i undervisningen, är just hanteringen av både sociala och didaktiska aspekter av inkludering i klassrummet (Skolverket, 2011).

Vad betyder didaktisk inkludering?
Hur kan inkludering se ut för dessa elever som tillgodoser alla olika aspekter?
Har ni några bra exempel?

Enskilt:
Vi har nu pratat om elever med beteendeproblem och inkludering. Är det något mer du skulle vilja ta upp som vi missade eller inte hann med? Är det något som sas som du känner att du inte håller med om men inte ville säga under gruppsamtal?
Tack! Då har jag inga fler frågor! Hur tycker du att denna intervju känts?
Tack!

87
Hej!


Syftet med denna studie är att undersöka hur klasslärare:

a) definierar begreppet ”elever med beteendeproblem”,
b) anser att inkludering av dessa elever bör se ut i vanliga klassrum, och
c) vad man behöver (något ”extra”) för att inkluderingen av dessa elever ska gå så bra som möjligt.

För att finna svar på hur klasslärare förhåller sig till ovan behöver jag intervjuar dig/er, som har kunskap, utbildning och erfarenheter som är värdefulla för min undersökning och jag hoppas att du/ni kan och vill avvara den tiden.

Intervjun kommer att genomföras som en fokusgruppsintervju om 5-7 klasslärare i åk 4-6. Fokusgruppsintervjun är ett samtal i vilket min funktion kommer att vara moderator; komma med samtalsämnen, styr tillbaka samtalet på ämnet om det flyter i väg, se över talordningen och hålla tiden. Deltagarna kommer att diskutera ganska fritt kring olika definitioner, egna tankar, erfarenheter och förhållningssätt kring ovan nämnda frågor med varandra. Tanken är att deltagarna även lär av varandra under diskussionen och kanske får en del nya idéer själva.

Intervjuerna kommer att spelas in med hjälp av videokamera och diktafon för att det skall bli lättare för mig att hålla reda på vem som har sagt vad när jag analyserar materialet, och beräknas ta 30-45 minuter. Därefter önskar jag hålla en kort individuell uppföljning med var och en av deltagarna för att ingen ska gå från intervjun utan att känna att de fått sagt det de vill, eller klargjort något de känner blev otydligt. Detta kommer att några till minuter i anspråk. För att underlätta ert deltagande kommer intervjun att genomföras vid ett tillfälle då både ni och ert rektor anser det lämpligt. Er rektor kommer att sammankalla er, alternativt ge er möjlighet att meddela intresse att delta.

Vid intervjun kommer jag att ta hänsyn till Vetenskapsrådet forskningsetiska principer. Detta innebär att deltagandet är frivilligt och om ni så skulle vilja kan ni när som helst avbryta intervjun och därmed ert deltagande. Ert deltagande kommer att behandlas konfidentiellt och resultatet kommer enbart att användas i forskningsändamål. Det inspelade materialet kommer att förvaras så att integritetsintrånget minimeras. Om ni har några frågor eller funderingar är ni välkomna att kontakta mig eller mina handledare, docent Lena Boström lena.bostrom@miun.se eller docent Jimmy Jaldemark jimmy.jaldemark@miun.se, för mer information.

Tack på förhand för er medverkan

Med vänlig hälsning
Ulrika Gidlund
Doktorand i pedagogik
Mittuniversitet
ulrika.gidlund@miun.se
070-2289722