KERÄNEN HEIDI
INCLUSION OF THE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN THE FINNISH PRIMARY EDUCATION

Kasvatustieteen kandidaatintyö
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The main aim of this research is to support my individual growth as a teacher and to help me form a more holistic view on the situation of inclusive education. I will look at inclusion on different levels of Urie Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological System Theory to form a logically structured research. I will look at the four different levels: the global level dominant beliefs and ideologies, national level pedagogical frameworks, local level from the viewpoint of the schools and the teachers and finally the individual level of the student. The research question is: What does inclusive education mean on the different levels of the Ecological System Theory by Bronfenbrenner?

In this research I have used systematic literacy review in order to understand the research topic through essential literacy. Literacy review means that the scattered information about the topic is gathered, organized, evaluated and formed into a greater entity. My focus is in the educational inclusion of the intellectually disabled students. I will also focus on the society rather than on the individual and I have restricted this research on the prescriptive way of seeing inclusion, which means focusing is on concepts and wider perspectives.

This research shows that inclusion happens on various levels simultaneously and it is easier to improve teaching holistically, when using different frameworks. In order to improve inclusion in education, we must also improve the inclusion in the whole society, therefore we need more cooperation between different actors in the society. Altering education methods and tailoring education to respond to the needs of the students is the most effective way to improve inclusion. In order to improve the physical inclusion in Finland, the practical issues connected to physical inclusion need to be researched and teaching special education students in mainstream classes should be developed.

Asiasanat/Keywords  Inclusion, Finland, primary education, students with special needs,
1 Introduction

This research is needed in order to form a more holistic view of the situation of inclusive education in Finland and it also supports my individual growth as a teacher. I believe that inclusion is an approach, which benefits all students and therefore it is important to research this topic. History of inclusion in Finland is studied, because culture is not something static, but rather something which has developed during long time and which changes all the time. Therefore it is important to understand the history of inclusion in Finland to understand the current situation of inclusion in Finland.

According to Burton the term inclusion can be used in many different ways. Therefore it is important, that every time the term is used the user defines clearly what is meant by inclusion. By clear use of definition it is possible to avoid confusion. (Burton 2010, 121.) According to the World Health Organization the inclusive approach to special education can be educational, social or economic. The educational approach means that schools are developed to respond to individual needs in order to teach all children together beneficially. Social inclusion means, that inclusive schools should teach all children together in order to change attitudes towards the differences and to create a just society, where discrimination does not exist. (World Health Organization 2011, 210.)

I have chosen wide research questions, since I wanted to create a large knowledge-base for myself, since I will continue researching this topic in my Master’s Thesis. I have studied special education in my previous degree as a Bachelor of Social Care and I wanted to know more about the educational side of disabilities. Therefore I wanted to do a throughout literature review, which would provide me with a good understanding of this phenomena as a whole.

I have focused this research to on the prescriptive way of seeing inclusion. According to Kesälahti and Väyrynen the prescriptive way is more interested in understanding of inclusion as a concept. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 11.) In this research I will research inclusion in order to understand it as a concept, attempting to define how to use the terms connected to inclusion. I also look at inclusion from a wider point of view and look at issues of the whole educational system. On my Master’s Thesis I will bring my study to the descrip-
tive level and focus more on the individual experiences and find out more practical issues and solutions.

In this research Urie Bronfenbrenner’s *Ecological System Theory* is used as a framework to divide inclusion to four different levels which are: the global level dominant beliefs and ideologies, national level pedagogical frameworks, local level from the viewpoint of the schools and the teachers and finally the individual level of the student. Theory has been used as a framework when creating the structure for the thesis and when forming the research questions for this study. This theory is a good framework for research, since inclusion can be seen as the socialization process, which happens on many different levels simultaneously. (Attachment 2)

The ecological system of Bronfenbrenner consists of four different levels on which socialization process happens. In this theory micro system is the closest environment to the child, such as family or a school class. In Micro system child can affect and be affected on a personal level. The second environment is the mesosystem, which is the system combining two or more micro systems, for example the home and the school of the child. The third system is called the ecosystem, which consists of the connections or processes of two or more environments. At least one of those environments does not include the individual, but has an effect on the nearby events of the individual’s life. For example the relationship of the child’s home and the parent’s workplace. The fourth system is macro, which is the way society portrays a certain culture or social context, this system is the furthest from the child. (Härkönen 2008, 27–32.)

In this research I have focused more on the outer systems in the Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory, because I see special education as an issue of the society and community, rather than as the individual’s fault. I also believe that exclusion is a problem of the society which therefore needs to be addressed on the level of the whole society and on all systems mentioned above. I also believe that social inclusion needs to be seen as something comprehensive, the basic human right, which belongs to everyone.
2 Research Questions and Methodology

This research is a literacy review, aiming to answer the following research question: what does inclusive education mean in Finland on the different levels of the education?

1. What does inclusive education mean on the global level dominant beliefs and ideologies?
2. What does inclusive education mean on national level pedagogical frameworks?
3. What does inclusion on a local level mean from the viewpoint of the teacher and the school?
4. What does inclusive education mean on the individual level of the student?

Literacy review is the process of getting to understand the research topic by finding essential literacy and to become familiar with it. While doing the literacy review the scattered information about the topic is gathered, organised, evaluated and formed into a greater entity. Literacy review also guides all the choices made during the research. Systematic literacy review refers to the process in which certain keywords are chosen in order to find the correct information for the research. Then the terms should be translated onto different languages, familiar to the researcher, in order to find information from international sources. (Hirsjärvi, Remes, Liikanen & Sajavaara 1986, 14 & 35.)

The aim of literacy review is to get to know the phenomena throughout and to find out the concepts and point of view of the research topic. Literacy review also guides the choices of research methods and points out possible hypotheses. It is also possible to use literacy review as a way to find out in advance, what kind of issues and practical problems could be related to the topic of research. (Hirsjärvi, Remes, Liikanen & Sajavaara 1986, 15.)

The reliability of the research depends strongly on the liability and undertakings of the researcher. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2012, 140). In doing this research I will have to pay focus on many things and be reflective on all choices that I make. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi it is also important to pay focus on the importance of the research, since it is crucial that the research has a meaning. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2012, 140). This research is
necessary, since it enhances my professional growth as a teacher and improves my knowledge on inclusion and special education. This research is also needed to form a solid picture of the topic for my Master’s Thesis.

The ethical principles of an anthropologic research can be divided into three categories. The first is respecting the self-determination right of the individual who is the subject of the research. Secondly, the researcher must avoid causing harm to the people participating in the research or being in the focus group. Thirdly, also the privacy and the confidentiality of the participants or focus groups should be protected. (Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta 2009, 4, viitattu 24.1.2016.)

According to the resource avoiding causing harm to the focus group includes treating the focus group respectively and also writing in a respective manner in order to avoid psychical damages. (Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta 2009, 4 viitattu 14.11.2014.) The main concern of this research is to make sure that it does not cause harm to the focus group, especially since the intellectually disabled students might already face disadvantage in their lives. Also overgeneralization can cause harm to the focus group and it is crucial to see the intellectually disabled as a heterogenous group of individuals.

Also financial and social damage should be considered while doing the research. (Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta 2009, 4, viitattu 14.11.2014.) Especially the social damage needs to be concerned, since the research focuses on inclusion as a social phenomenon. Therefore the issues discussed are more socially sensitive and cause social damage to the focus group and individuals.

According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi it is highly important that all the terms and methods in all phases of the research are carefully considered and rationalized. This is due to the fact that the terms and methods affect the result of the research. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2012, 96.) Also the terms used can be harmful and should be considered carefully. Therefore I have carefully researched on the topic to find the most suitable terms and ended up with the terms inclusion, special education and learning disabilities. These are the most current and most commonly used terms, which at the moment are seen as causing least harm. It has to be considered though, that the terms of this topic change and as a researcher I need to keep an eye on the changes.
3 Defining Concepts

3.1 Inclusion

3.1.1 Educational Inclusion

According to World Health Organization inclusive education is based on the fact that every child has a right to quality education, which meets their basic educational needs and improves their lives. Inclusive education focuses especially on marginalized and vulnerable groups in order to improve the potential of every child. (World Health Organization 2011, 304.) Educational inclusion promotes diversity among school children through reform process in schools. In inclusive education students are placed in their groups regardless of their abilities, gender, social status, religious background or ethnic origins. The aim of inclusive education is to counteract social exclusion. (Urton, Wilbert & Hennemann 2014.)

According to the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education there are certain things involved in inclusion in education. First step to inclusion is recognizing the students’ right to be educated in their locality. After this the actual changes to the schools can be done. First of all, all pupils and staff needs to be valued equally and the schools should be improved not only for students, but also for the staff. (Gibson & Blandford, 2005, 20.) Volz, Nelson and Sims remind that inclusion is more than the physical placement of a child. Successful inclusion depends on how well the teacher is able to respond to the children’s individual needs and difference. A variety of teaching strategies is needed for true inclusion. (Volz, Nelson & Sims 2010.)

Inclusion and participation has to be seen as a comprehensive issue on various levels. The participation of the students has to be increased and their exclusion from cultures, curriculum and communities of local schools has to be reduced. Inclusion in education also means, that cultures, policies and practices is schools have to be restructured to respond to the students’ diversity. (Gibson & Blandford, 2005, 20.)

Inclusion has to be seen as something that improves the lives of all human beings. Therefore barriers of learning and participating have to be reduced for all students, not only for the special education students or students with impairments. Attempts for supporting par-
ticipation and accessibility for certain students should be seen as changes that benefit students more widely as well. (Gibson & Blandford, 2005, 20.) Difference between students should be seen as a resource, which supports learning. Differences should not be seen as problems that have to be taken care of. (Gibson & Blandford, 2005, 20.)

Inclusion in education should be seen as an inseparable aspect of inclusion in society. The role of schools should be highlighted in building community, developing values and increasing achievement. Therefore a mutually stable relationships should be enhanced between schools and communities. (Gibson & Blandford, 2005, 20.)

3.1.2 Descriptive and Prescriptive Inclusion

Inclusion can also be divided into two categories; descriptive and prescriptive. The descriptive way to categorise inclusion focuses on the use of inclusion in practice. Descriptive definitions tend to focus on individuals and/or groups. The prescriptive way on the other hand is more interested on the understanding of inclusion as a concept and also on how we want other people to refer to inclusion. The prescriptive category has also a wider perspective on inclusion, it may relate to larger issues in the educational system. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 11.)

There are a few descriptive definitions of inclusion. The first way is to see inclusion as something concerned with the disabled learners and other students with special education needs. This is also called the category-based definition. The second view is more focused on the learners, who are excluded because of their inappropriate behaviour in the classroom. Therefore this view is interested in responding to the problems caused by excluding students as a disciplinary practice. Third descriptive definition is the way to seeing inclusion is the social inclusion view, according to which some groups are more vulnerable and more likely to be excluded from schools. This view focuses on both access and attendance. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 12-13.)

The first prescriptive definition of inclusion is the way to see inclusion as a way to develop a school for all: students with diverse needs, the staff and the surrounding community. The second way is called education for all and it is a global movement which stated in the 1990’s and it is criticised since it has not been responding well to the local nature of exclu-
The third way is the principled approach to education and society. It states that inclusion is something which can be enhanced through explicit actions, practices and policies, which are made more inclusive. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 13-15.)

3.1.3 Full Inclusion and Social Inclusion

The term inclusion is used in diverse ways, for example to refer to inclusive schools or society. According to some sources inclusion means increasing the number of special education students in schools, but preserving special schools for some students. Some sources state that inclusion means that all children are included in mainstream schools and classes. According to this view, generally called full inclusion, children are only temporarily taken away from mainstream education. It is also possible to see inclusion as a process, which demands for the re-organization of the whole school after which the school becomes inclusive. (Burton 2010, 121.)

The term of social inclusion refers to the kind of society where all individuals are valued and where everyone has important roles (Burton 2010, 121). Social inclusion can also be seen as the societies’ process of combating social exclusion and poverty. Social exclusion means excluding groups or individuals from the society’s political, economic or societal processes. This involuntary exclusion prevents the individuals or groups from fully participating in their surrounding society. (Atkinson & Marlier 2010.)

3.1.4 The Effects of Inclusion

Ikonen and Virtanen state that inclusion, integration and local schools are a basic requirements for the equal treatment of the children. Therefore structural changes are needed in the teacher education and in organizing primary education. (Ikonen & Virtanen 2007, 19.) It is also stated that inclusion enhances the fair and equal treatment of all students. Good basic education where different learning needs are considered is something which is beneficiary from a humane and economical perspective. The proactive approach in special education is more effective than the reactive one. (Ikonen & Krogerus 2015, 175, 176.)

Inclusion can be seen as an opportunity for educators, since it can enhance the disabled children’s access to general education curriculum. Also disabled students placed in general
education are believed to gain more academically. Another positive side to inclusion is that students with disabilities are able to learn socially accepted behavior from their non-disabled peers. Inclusion is also seen as a way to prepare students with and without disabilities for the demands of the real world. (Volz, Nelson & Sims 2010.)

According to Gibson and Blandford there are at least six positive outcomes from having the students with disability in association with peers who have no disabilities. First of all, the peers with no disabilities improve their self-conception and reduce their fear of human differences. Also association of this sort increases the peers’ tolerance of other people and encourages social-cognitive growth. Association also supports the peers’ development of personal conduct principles and supports their skills in being relaxed and accepting friendships. (Gibson & Blandford, 2005, 24.)

The critics of inclusion state, that basic education cannot respond to all the individual needs of the special education students. It is also stated that segregated education is more effective. Often it is also said that the inclusion is an idealistic creation of imagination and that it does not correlate with the reality or real facts. Therefore also the practical implementations are not properly considered. The biggest concerns in the educational inclusion have to do with the wellbeing and the know-how of the teachers and the learning results. (Mikola 2011, 29-30.)

3.2 Special Education

The World Health Education states that the terms special needs education, special educational needs and special education belong under the same category. (World Health Organization 2011, 209.) The organization states that special education includes children with special needs, which are caused by disadvantages such as gender, ethnicity, poverty, learning difficulties or disability. In high-income countries also the gifted and talented are seen to have special needs. The disadvantages stated earlier can cause the children diminished possibilities to learn or to access education. (World Health Organization 2011, 304.) In this research I have used the term special education, because it is the most commonly used term at the moment, both in Finland and abroad. Also the fact that it is used by the World Health Organization demonstrates how commonly the term is accepted.
Special education means that the student with disorder or disability is provided with certain type of individualized education to suit his/her needs. Special education provision contains the curriculum, pedagogy, school and classroom organization, resources and therapy. The aims of special education depend on the student, but there are some common aims. One is to recognize and assess the student’s disability and to evaluate how the student’s learning and development could be hindered. It is also important to identify how to support the learning and development. (Farrell 2009.)

According to the World Health Organization the approach to special education can be educational, social or economic. By the educational approach of special education WHO refers to the requirement, that inclusive schools should develop the ways of teaching in order to respond to individual differences. In this way it is possible to educate all children together in a way that everybody benefits. The social approach means that inclusive schools should educate all children together in order to change attitudes towards the different people and to create a just and non-discriminatory society. The economical approach means that special education should be arranged by establishing and maintaining schools for educating all children together, because this is a more economical option. Creating a complex system of specialized schools for different kind of students is argued to be more expensive. (World Health Organization 2011, 210.)

3.2.1 International and National Agreements

In the UNESCO Salamanca Statement on Special Education Needs it is stated, that every child should be given the opportunity to an acceptable level of learning, since every child has a fundamental right to education. It is also stated that all children have unique “characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs”. Therefore also the educational systems should be designed and education should be implemented according to the diverse needs of the children. Salamanca Statement also makes it clear that the special education students should have access to regular schools and those schools should respond to their needs. This is because regular schools with inclusive orientation are most effective in combating attitudes of discrimination, creating welcoming communities, creating an inclusive society, achieving education for the majority of children and making schools and the entire system more effective. (Gibson & Blandford, 2005, 16.)
On official page for the Finnish National Board of Education it is stated that special support is based on the Finnish basic education law. Special education in Finland consists of two things: special teaching, which is mostly pedagogic learning support and other support needed by the student. These two form an organized and systematic entity. (Opetushallitus 2010.)

In United States of America the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act became part of the Public Law in year 2004. This law also called the IDEA, sets the basis for the education of the children with disabilities. The Individualized Education Plan, also called IEP, defines the adjustments, goals and services which are necessary in order to provide appropriate education for the children. IEP requirements are that it has to be created after the child is diagnosed with a disability and IEP should be in use by the start of the schoolyear. IEP needs to be created in co-operation with the parents and the child should be placed after the creation of IEP. The IEP should be created to ensure educational benefit and to meet educational needs. The IEP goals should be used to form an annual plan, which focuses on specific IEP content and processes which are stated in IDEA. (Burns 2006, 3-10.)

3.2.2 Requirements for Receiving Special Education

To receive special support the student must have an official decision about arranging education according to the personal plan for arranging education called in Finnish “HOJKS henkilökohtaisen opetuksen järjestämistä koskeva suunnitelma”. This personal document defines for example what the studying emphasizes, how the learning is monitored and how the student can show his/her know-how. Also evaluation is determined in HOJKS as well as, self-evaluation and other pedagogical decisions such as grouping, teaching methods, learning strategies, working and communication methods and learning materials. Also other support ensured by the law, such as support assistants or interpretation has to be mentioned in HOJKS. (Opetushallitus 2010.)

The pedagogical decisions can vary depending on the subject or the area of learning. Some of the special support can be short-term support on specific subject or area of learning, such as supported learning or part-time special education. After receiving the decision on special education, called erityisen tuen päätös, the status of the student is “erityistä tukea saava oppilas”, special education student. The student can only receive one form of sup-
port at a time and therefore it is not possible to receive general support (yleinen tuki), intensified support (tehostettu tuki) and special support (erityinen tuki) at the same time. Student’s level of support is defined individually. Also student will have either tehostetun tuen oppimisuuunitma intensified support learning plan or HOJKS, but not both at the same time. (Opetushallitus 2010.)

3.3 Learning Disabilities

According to the World Health Organization WHO disability is a hypernym, which includes impairments, activity limitations and restrictions on participation. Impairment is a term used for a problem in a function or structure of the body. Activity limitation is a difficulty, which an individual experiences while doing a task or action. The problems in individual’s involvement in life situations are called participation restrictions. Disability is a complex phenomenon, which consists of more than just issues with health. Disability is something which reflects the individual’s interaction between the society’s features and features of the individual. (World Health Organization 2016, 1.)

World Health Organization (WHO) redefined the differences between the terms impairment, disability and handicap in 1970’s. According to the new definitions by WHO impairment means that the individual has lost his/her physiological or anatomical function of his/her body. Disability on the other hand refers to the impact which the impairment has on the life of the individual. Handicap is a term used for the social disadvantage, which is caused by the disability. (Thomas & Woods 2003.)

The World Health Organization defines specific learning disability as impairments, which cause difficulties in processing information. This can result in challenges in listening, reasoning, reading, writing and spelling or in carrying out mathematical tasks. (The World Health Organization 2011, 309.)

The term disability consists of multiple factors and aspects of social and medical kind. Learning disability means that the mind is arrested or incompletely developed. Learning disability is also characterized by impairment in skills or areas of intelligence, such as social abilities, cognition, language or motor skills. Usually these things mentioned above
lead to diagnose of learning disability. Learning disabilities can also be referred to as mental retardation, intellectual disability or handicap. (WHO 2000.)

Learning disability is a term, which can be used to label people who have significantly lower intellectual functioning level, compared to average people in our society. There have been many different definitions of learning disability in the past and the labels and titles used have changed and will change. The term disability rises from the medical and social viewpoints and therefore it is important to understand what these two perspectives actually mean. (Thomas & Woods 2003.)

The main causes of learning disabilities often relate to one of the following: genetic disorders such as phenylketonuria, chromosomal deviations like Down’s syndrome or Fragile-X syndrome, cranial malfunctions e.g. hydrocephalus. Learning disabilities can be caused by psychosocial and environmental factors or congenital factors, such as disease during maternity, prematurity of birth, exposure to harmful substances or perinatal concerns. (Thomas & Woods 2003.)

Learning disabilities are often connected to issues in cognitive process or processes, such as attention, perception, memory or metacognition. Also working memory system is connected to learning difficulties and to challenges in language acquisition, since it is used for limited capacity information storing and manipulation in cognitive tasks. Working memory consist of three underlying systems: the phonological loop, the visuo-spatial sketchpad and the central executive. Phonological loop is used for keeping and rehearsing of verbal information. The visuo-spatial sketchpad is used for storing and structuring visual images. Central executive is in charge of all higher-level functions. Central executive connects the working memory with long term memory and coordinates the functioning of the two sub-systems. These systems are crucial in the formation of learning difficulties. (Masoura 2006, 29-30.)

Intellectual Disability often includes major deficiency in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Intellectual Disability can be expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills. It usually appears before the child turns 18 years. (Burton 2010, 39.) Difficult mental disability or disease can mean, that education cannot be provided in a similar way as for majority classroom students and also subjects might need adjusting. In Finland
this means that the education is provided through areas of operation, focusing on the areas that the child needs most support in. This method of operational areas has already been in use for 20 years, but according to studies the fact that the methods have not renewed is an issue on the special education field of Finland. (Takala 2011, 136.)

3.3.1 Medical and Social Views on Disability

In the medical view disability is seen as an individual problem, behavior or condition. According to the medical view disability should be seen as an illness, which demands for diagnosis and treatment. Disability is something which is located in the person as a character of the individual. This medical model has been criticized, because it leads to offering only fragmented help and seeing clients as problems. Medical view is said to focus too much on the challenges, rather than seeing the many aspects of individual humanity. Also the role of the society is not taken into account as much as it should be. (Thomas & Woods 2003.)

The social view on disability focuses more on the impact, which society has on people not belonging to the majority. Social view on disability is based on challenging norms and values of the society and it focuses on things such as accessibility. In the social view the society can cause the disablement by not meeting the needs of its people. (Thomas & Woods 2003.)
4 Inclusion in the History of the Finnish School System

4.1 Mid-1800’s to the Beginning of 1900’s

Finnish education system from the mid-1800’s to the beginning of the 1900’s was called *kansakoulu*, which was the 6-year long compulsory primary education form. In the pre-1900’s Finland the dominant way to see the people with special needs was similar to the other Nordic countries. The *lackadaisical* beings were seen to belong in the same group of handicapped people as the other sensory disabled people such as the deaf or the blind. In the 1920’s this definition became slightly problematic, since the deaf and the blind students were transferred under the ministry of education and the lackadaisical students under the ministry of social affairs. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)

During the 1800’s there was also a major change in the way of seeing the disabled students. Previously disabled people were protected from the surrounding world, but in the end of the 1800’s a view emerged that the society needs to be protected from the disabled people. Due this the disabled children were placed in institutions where they were supervised at all times. These institutions were maintained by the government. *Kansakoulu* was maintained by the municipalities and it provided education only for so called normal students. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)

The first *assistance schools* (*apukoulu*) for students with special needs were founded in the beginning of 1900’s in the bigger cities such as Turku (1901), Helsinki (1903), Vaasa (1905), Tampere (1907), Viipuri and Kuopio (1912) Oulu (1920) and Kotka (1921). There were great differences between the schools were great, because there were no common rules or recommendations. The classrooms were large, there were 12-22 students depending on the city and the time of the year. The student group was also very heterogeneous, since there were deaf, blind and lackadaisical students, but also various types of badly behaving students. Generally these classrooms were called the classrooms of idiots. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)

Until late 1900’s the recognition of the lackadaisical students was unclear and uncertain, since there were no clear criteria or the tools for identification. Only after the reformation
of the Finnish school system the recognition improved due to the intelligence testing. The first systematical attempt to teach disabled students was by a charity organization. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)

4.2 From 1920’s to 1960’s

Compulsory education law came in to action in year 1921 and changed the national education of the majority students, but it did not change much for the special education students. This was the era of special education schools and special education classrooms. (Ikonen & Krogerus 2015, 148.) The students of weak comprehension were exempted of their responsibility to study or otherwise placed in special education assistance schools if there was one near. According to the compulsory education law the cities of over 10 000 inhabitants had to found an assistance school. Also parents reinforced this policy by not sending their children to school because they did not believe it would be useful. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)

Also in the beginning of 1900’s there was a rising discussion on the individuals’ genetic differences. Genetic differences were generally seen as a threat to the society and to keep the civilization from deteriorating the disabled people were ruled to be sterilized. Although the 1935 sterilization law meant that all disabled students had to be sterilized, the schools did not follow the law very strictly. Out of the thousand special education students in Helsinki only 21 were sterilized before year 1947. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)

4.3 1970’s and 1980’s

The special education system as we know it today started forming when part-time special education started. Comprehensive school reform in years 1972-1977 created a major change in the school system. Now the aim of education was to improve equality between genders, different geographical areas and between society’s classes. This aim for equality also created pressure to bring special and normal education closer to each other. Meanwhile the special education became a concrete part of the national education policy and it was systematically taken care of. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)
The change in the Finnish special education was a result of the international human rights movement, which demanded for rights to minorities. In the 1960’s this movement criticized the national totalitarian institutions using forced power over individuals. The school institutions got their share of the critic. The start of this movement is said to be in the human rights movement in USA. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)

Exceptional Children –magazine articles written in the United States are said to be the starters of the open human rights discussion. They brought into discussion the basic thesis which started from the point of view that is the separated special education even needed in the first place. They also argued that a more ecological perspective is needed, the results of special education are questionable and the special education also stigmatizes the students. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)

The studies that paid attention to the educational surroundings created a base for the special education discussion in Finland. These studies also created a focus on where and how the special education should be taught. There were two schools of thought in this discussion: one side insisted on the old system of special education schools and classroom and the other side requested for part-time special education. In 1960’s this discussion created a crises between the special education teacher union and the school governance. This crises ended when the educational officials promised to improve equally both part-time special education and the special education schools and classrooms. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)

The debate on the form of special education still goes on. The people supporting integration state that the general human rights should mean that every child has a right to participate in the general education. The supporters of segregation on the other hand believe that the child should have education which caters for individual learning needs. If the focus of special education is moved from the location of the education to the actual learning occasion, this problem becomes insignificant. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)
4.4 After the 1990’s

The era of new liberalistic compulsory school began in the 1990’s due to the rise of international and national political right-wing thinking. This thinking meant freedom in choosing the school and therefore the principle of going to the nearest school was ruined. At the same time the schools were put into a competitive position and increased social-economical differences between schools. By reducing the normative guidance of schools the education itself was differentiated depending on the school. The original educational system was a welfare service which aimed to civilize the entire society. Now this system was changed towards a productive investment, where the results are received through markets and competition. (Moberg, Hautamäki, Kivirauma, Lahtinen, Savolainen & Vehmas 2015.)

4.5 Current situation

The concept of inclusive education today can be looked from many viewpoints. If we focus on the fact that the disabled learners and other learners with special educational needs are receiving special support in their near-by school, we are seeing the current situation from a categorized viewpoint of inclusion. Also when focusing on the legislation, which allows segregation based on the individuals’ needs of support, this is the categorized way to see the current inclusion situation in Finland. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 27.)

The second way to see the current situation is to look at it from the viewpoint if groups, which are especially vulnerable to exclusion. In Finland these vulnerable groups would include for example learners from Roma and immigrant backgrounds. At the moment there is a raising concern towards the vulnerable groups being excluded from mainstream education. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 27.)

Inclusion in Finland can also be looked at from a third viewpoint, which is called developing the school for all. There have been recent changes in the Finnish National Curriculum, which refer to the need to improve the schools in order to respond to the diverse needs of the students in normal school settings. The fourth and final way to look at inclusion in Finland is called the education for all –approach. From this point of view it can be stated that Finland has signed the Salamanca Statement and also the Framework for Action on Special
Needs Education. Finland has also signed the *Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, but has not ratified it. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 27.)
5 Inclusion on Different Levels of Education

5.1 Inclusion in the Pedagogical Frameworks

The child’s right to participation is secured by the law. Therefore child should also be able to participate, according to the child’s age level, in planning, executing and evaluating the things that affect him/her at school. The student should be in an equal role with the teacher and the teacher should not be an authority, but rather an equal companion, who enables learning. (Takala 2011, 109.) For example the ”Perusopetuslaki”, Primary School Education Law, states in 2§ Opetuksen tavoitteet, the goals of the education which are amongst others to improve learning and equality in the society as well as to enhance the student’s opportunities to participate in education and develop themselves during their lives. (Finlex 21.8.1998/628.)

According to Kesälahti and Väyrynen the inclusion in the Finnish legislation can be looked at from different viewpoints: the right to education, the right to inclusive education, school placement and entitlement to support. All children in Finland have the right to free education and according to the law all children should be treated equally. They should also have the right to active participation. Also all children are entitled to attend their near-by school, unless the school is unable to provide adequate support. The entitlement to support is divided into three categories, which are general, intensified and special support. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 44.)

5.1.1 Inclusion in the Finnish National Curriculum and in the City of Oulu

In the National Curriculum of the Primary Education (2014) it is said that the primary school education should be developed according to the principles of inclusion and also accessibility should be taken care of. It is also said, that equality and justice are the social goals of primary education and therefore primary education should also prevent inequality and social exclusion. The intercultural and multicultural view is also present in the 2014 national curriculum, since it states that primary education should improve the student’s diverse cultural understanding and support their understanding of their own cultural heritage. (Opetushallitus 2014, 18.)
In Finland the special education works on a three-step model, which is divided into general support (yleinen tuki), intensified support (tehostettu tuki) and special support (erityinen tuki). According to the three-step model the student can end up in the special education, if he/she has been receiving general and intensified support for long enough and these measures have not been sufficient. It is believed that the three-step model enhances inclusivity in schools. It is also one way to ensure that local schools have all forms of support available. (Takala 2011, 22, 32, 46).

The pedagogical work of special education in the city of Oulu is organized around the national curriculum and the schools’ own curriculum work. On the official website of the Oulu city there is also a document named “4 Kasvun, oppimisen ja koulunkäynnin tuki esija perusopetuksessa” which means supporting growth, learning and schooling in preschool and primary education. This document includes a variety of topics ranging from supporting special education students with the three-step model to the security and wellbeing of the individual. This document does look at special education issues from various viewpoints. (Oulun kaupungin opetuslautakunta, 2011.)

Another interesting thing about the special education arrangements in the city of Oulu are the specialised education classes called the “erikoisluokkaopetus”, which means that some students are chosen from entrance exams to specialised classes, which provide talented students with visual arts, music and sports. The education on these specialized classes is more challenging on the specific subject and specialized education continues throughout the primary school. (Oulun kaupungin opetuslautakunta 2011.)

5.2 Inclusion in Schools

5.2.1 School as an Inclusive Community

According to Durkheim, socialization is the purpose of education. Education should be something that creates a complete social integration of the individual. Therefore the main aim of the schools and the parents should be to help the children to join and participate in co-operation with other children and adults. In order to become inclusive, the school has to be a community inside a community and all members of the school should participate in the creation of that community. In the context of this school community, education has to
be seen as something that contributes to the member’s life. (Gibson & Blandford, 2005, 48.)

It is crucial to understand the school culture before considering the management of special education needs (SEN). The culture of school can be determined by collective and individual beliefs and values. These believes and values are the ethos created through interpersonal relationships. Feeling of the whole school as the community can drive the school towards improving the learning of all students. Therefore activities of the whole community should be urged in the extended school community. (Gibson & Blandford, 2005, 48.)

In order to make teaching inclusive, all the professionals in school need to participate in the education of the children (Gibson & Blandford 2005, 20). It is crucial that the whole teaching staff and school principals have positive mind-sets towards inclusive education. This attitudes also need to be actively expressed in the community. These positive attitudes not only make it possible for students with special needs to enrol permanently in the school, but also supports their active participation in the classroom activities. Attitudes have a major impact on everything that one does. (Urton, Wilbert & Hennemann 2014, 152.)

The attitudes towards inclusion are influenced by the teacher’s sense of self-efficiency. Supportive school atmosphere and positive attitudes of the staff in general can effect positively on individual teachers, which then affects positively on the whole school community. Positive attitudes towards inclusion are therefore created simultaneously on multiple levels. Also, positive and supportive school environment increases the teachers’ self-confidence in teaching students with special needs and it makes dealing with anxieties easier. (Urton, Wilbert & Hennemann 2014, 153.)

5.2.2 Inclusive Practices in School: Provision Mapping

According to Kesälähti and Väyrynen there are certain practices in schools, which can be seen as ways to enhance inclusion. They mention that two teachers sharing the responsibility of one classroom, also called co-teaching, can be an inclusive practice. In addition the shared leadership and teamwork in schools improve inclusion. Also mixed-age groups as well as same-age groups studying together are beneficial practices. Inclusion can also be
enhanced by making it possible for learners with special needs to study together with other learners in ordinary classroom settings. In fact, any inclusion or interaction between special and other groups is beneficial. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 64, 65.)

Provision maps are a practical tool for the school to visually record and define the actual situation of the school and students. This tool can then be used to develop the school so that it truly meets the needs of the students. Provision mapping can be used as a framework of strategic decisions concerning the needs of all students. Provision mapping can be seen as a crucial tool in improving inclusion in schools. (Ekins & Grimes 2009, 95.)

Provision mapping is a practical system, which leads to concrete actions in schools. The system is built on staff discussions and on analyzing and reflecting the issues concerning the strategic decisions. It encourages the teachers to plan, record, monitor and evaluate the provision for all students. Schools should also be encouraged to create their own provision mapping systems to suit their own needs. (Ekins & Grimes 2009, 95-96.)

When using provision mapping to support vulnerable groups of students, such as the students with special needs, we have to be careful not to compartmentalize practices too much. Compartmentalizing the learners with learning difficulties and disabilities or the special education needs students can lead to curriculum narrowing and increased segregation in practices. Nevertheless, provision mapping results in good outcomes, when school staff is involved in the provision mapping process and the system is seen as a practical way to improve the everyday planning and teaching. (Ekins & Grimes 2009, 96.)

5.3 Inclusion in Teaching

The teacher’s role is not only to give information to the students, but also to support the individual students social development and to participate in the creation of an inclusive and effective community in school. One of the most important things is to listen to the needs of the students and support their participation in the assessment of learning needs. In the child-centered approach it is highly important, that the teacher reflect on the various approached to learning and teaching, but also on the structure of the classroom. (Gibson & Blandford 2005, 20)
According to Gibson and Blandford (2005) in order for the education to be inclusive, the teacher must have high expectations towards the students. Also the teacher must plan the education based on the knowledge, interests and aptitudes of all the students. Shared objectives and feedback should be seen as involving students in their own learning. The education should likewise enable the students to improve skills for life, not just for school. One of the main goals of the teacher should be to help the students in becoming confident learners.

Also the relationship between the teacher and the student is crucial to the inclusivity of education. In order to have a good relationship, the teacher should be available to give support and instructions to the students at all times. It is also important that the teacher is willing to support the student’s competencies and take the student’s perspective on the issues. Also the teacher should challenge the student to actively and responsibly participate in choosing, planning, executing and evaluating all of the educational activities and their results. (Gibson & Blandford 2005, 20)

5.3.1 Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities

There are also methods for improving the learning of the students with learning disabilities on each specific primary education subject, but it is important to pay attention to the overall learning of the students and to improve the methods in the whole class. The most important thing in teaching students with learning disabilities is to strengthen their self-esteem and to assure that the student gains also experiences of succeeding. The student should be recognised as an active participant and he/she should be able to demonstrate his/her knowledge to others as well. Student should also be able to actively tell what kind of support he/she needs in order to learn. (Yanoff 2007, 19.)

In teaching students with learning disabilities the teacher should focus on strengthening the skills of the student instead of just helping the student to finish the tasks. There are also computer programs specifically designed for students with learning disabilities. These programmes could be used in the teaching as a support. With students with learning disabilities it is useful to support learning through group works and peer tutoring.
In majority classrooms the students with mental disabilities can profit from small changes in the ways of teaching procedures. The first thing is to pay attention to the teacher’s own verbal communication and to enrich it with gestures, intonation and body language. It is important that the student is included in all classroom activities, but the teaching is adjusted to the student’s skill level. Assignments should still be kept short, but otherwise similar to the rest of the class. Also lesson outline and notes on the material can help the student to understand the progression of the lesson. (Yanoff 2007, 79.)

Especially the student’s ability to focus on the topic for longer periods of time should be developed. Repetition works well in teaching as well as relating the teaching to real-life experiences and practical skills. Nevertheless the student should not have to work on one activity too long, in order to avoid frustration and getting bored. (Yanoff 2007, 79.)

Social interaction plays an important role in teaching students with mental disabilities. Therefore peer-learning and working together with a study-buddy are great for learning. Student should be supported especially in improving self-motivation, self-direction and skills of making choices. Also appropriate ways of self-expression and working with emotions should be taught. It is important to support the student’s self-esteem by praising often, but only when the student has earned praise. (Yanoff 2007, 80.)

5.3.2 Teaching Methods and Differentiation

When planning the lessons, there are several issues that need to be taken into account. First of all, the lessons should be planned according to the students’ prior knowledge and their preferred learning styles. There should also be a clear structure of work. The second phase is to identify the objectives for students based on their skills, understanding and knowledge. Also the student’s attitudes and personal development should be considered. Thirdly, the lesson needs to be structured by separating them into clearly distinct steps of phases. The fourth phase is the choose the most suitable pedagogical approach, the best teaching and learning strategies and the most effective order for each episode. The fifth and final phase is to ensure coherence. This can be done by creating a distinct and stimulating start to the lesson, a transition between different episodes and a final plenary for reviewing learned topics. (Gibson & Blandford 2005, 20)
Although creating a detailed lesson plan is important and supports the teaching, it should not be seen as something absolute and restricting. The teacher should be able to respond to the student’s reaction. The teacher should make modifications and adjustment to the education Inclusive approaches and ways of giving instructions in order to meet the needs of the students on each lesson. (Gibson & Blandford 2005, 20.)

There are instructional methods, which can be seen as inclusive. The multiple intelligences, cooperative learning, tiered lessons, learning centers and graphic organizers can be seen as inclusive methods. Also the instructional approach can be inclusive. For example differentiated instruction, universal design, sheltered instruction and multicultural instruction are inclusive approaches. By making various combinations of the previous approached and methods, different results emerge. See attachment number one for a detailed chart on the combinations on the instructional methods and approaches (Voltz, Nelson & Sims, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development 2010.)

Co-teaching can be seen as a practical way of making teaching more inclusive (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 77, 78). Co-teaching can be formed in many ways. One way is to alternate leading and supporting between the two teachers by one teacher taking the charge and the other observing and helping. In this form of co-teaching the roles are changed and divided equally. The second form of co-teaching is parallel teaching, which means that students are divided into two same-sized groups which are taught the same content. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 77.)

Station teaching means that learners move between stations, in which teachers teach their own topics. The fourth form of co-teaching is the alternative teaching form, where one teacher has a bigger group and the other has a smaller group. It is typical that the smaller group focuses on revising and the bigger group learns new content. In this form of co-teaching in is crucial to vary students in the smaller group, so that the students will not get stigmatized. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 77, 78.)

The fifth form of co-teaching is called flexible grouping. In this form of teaching the students are divided into groups according to their skill levels and the needs of support. Also on this form there needs to be flexibility in groups of students as well as in teacher’s roles. The sixth co-teaching type is called team teaching and it means that both teachers actively
participate on the lesson. For example, the other teacher can comment or ask questions, add information, bring in examples, demonstrate or present problems while the other teacher teaches. This form of so-teaching is the most difficult, since it demands for a lot of experience and flexibility. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 77, 78.)

Instruction should be differentiated according to the pupils’ needs, because without differentiation inclusion of special needs children in regular classrooms could not be successful. Differentiated instruction should be seen as a supportive approach that embraces heterogeneous needs of the students and creates multiple learning paths for students. (Voltz, Nelson & Sims, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development 2010.) Nevertheless, Farrell reminds, that needs of students with mild to severe cognitive impairments are most likely not met by just following the principles of differentiated instruction, but they will need various forms of support. (Farrell 2009, 23.)

There are various ways of differentiating instruction, such as tailoring content, modifying methods or adjusting the learning products or assignments according to the students’ individual skill and ability levels. (Voltz, Nelson & Sims, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development 2010.) Peer support and collaborative learning are crucial in order to enhance the students’ learning in inclusive education. Collaborative work should be used in teaching in order to improve the learning experience of all students and also to free the teacher to provide individual and group support. (Kesälahti & Väyrynen 2013, 79.)

5.4 Inclusion on the Students’ Level

5.4.1 Inclusion in Formal Learning Settings

Research (Beckman et al 1987) shows that being with peers is good for the development of the disabled children’s social skills. In communication situations children can practice existing skills, but also acquire new skills from peers. Study shows that the integrated children had an increase in the number of positive interactions and they also improved their social skills. Integrated school settings are believed to effect positively on the development of disabled children, because of the company of peers developing in typical manner. (Burton 2010, 39.)
The content and process of social interactions is important for the language acquisition of intellectually disabled children. The attention of the caregiver is an important factor, since children with disability profit of the joint attention between the child and the caregiver. With the caregiver attention to play, the children can choose the type of play and the props used. (Burton 2010, 39.)

Studies have shown that the mothers of disabled children respond to their children’s signals more often than the mothers of non-disabled children. Mothers of disabled children responded 75-80% of the signals, when mothers of non-disabled children responded to 50-60% of the signals. Because of this the intellectually disabled children did not have to modify their interaction or modify their intended meaning. Therefore one way of improving the disabled children’s language skills would be that parents would reduce their level of directive responding. (Burton 2010, 39.)

There are various factors that improve the play and social-interactive skills of intellectually disabled children. First of all, the activities should be pleasurable and stimulating to the children. Also child-centered approach should be applied in the activities. The size of the play space and the number of children in the space affect the disabled children. Smaller spaces enhance social interactions between children whereas larger space encourages the children to play games which involve gross motor movements such as running. (Burton 2010, 39.)

Especially when learning academic content, it is important that the learning is structured carefully, especially in the beginning of the educational path. When learning academic content, the direct instructional methods combined with learning cognitive strategies has proofed to be most effective. The students should have many different opportunities to practice things and to apply learned in real life. The emphasis on practice means that information and skills are repeated and applied concretely in real life. (Westwood 2008, 45.)

The student should gain experiences of succeeding when learning the formal content. (Westwood 2008, 45.) The teacher should encourage positive learning behavior in the students. The positive behavior includes high feelings of self-worth, self-knowledge, self-confidence, independence, positive attitude towards life as well as sense of personal power. (Gibson & Blandford, 2005, 52)
5.4.2 Social Inclusion in the Children’s Play

Informal approach in learning, for example play, has been proved to benefit the young children. Academically diverse programmed combining formal and informal learning improved the intellectually disabled children’s learning of basic skills, language skills, relationship skills and gross motor skills. (Burton 2010, 39.)

The challenges of the inclusion in play can be divided into three broader categories, which are organizational, social and physical challenges. For example, what was the length of the disabled students play- and lunchtimes, who were they playing with, what they played and where they could play. (Woolley, Curtis, Ginsborg, Armitage & Bishop, 2005, 27.)

The first category, organizational issues, have a major impact on the inclusion of the students with special needs. Organizational issues recognized were for example limitations of time, inadequate training of the staff and considerations of health and safety. The second category of social challenges means that the relations had an important role in the inclusion of the children in play. Both peer-relations and child-staff relationships influenced the inclusion. (Woolley, Curtis, Ginsborg, Armitage & Bishop, 2005, 27.) Also according to Burton the disabilities of physical or intellectual kind as well as delays in communication can be a challenge to a child’s ability to play and can affect negatively on their social relations with adults and other children. (Burton 2010, 39.)

The third category is the physical issues. For example playground access or the design of it can create physical challenges to the inclusion of special needs students. Access issues in many school building are dealt with lifts and ramps and room for moving around with a wheelchair inside the school. Also access to computers was provided and the toilet facilities had been improved. There are also schools, which are auditing or planning to audit the interior of the school in order to make it suitable for various impairments. Never the less, there were major issues with accessing the playground and its facilities such as fixed equipment. The paving or other ground materials had not been appropriately considered. (Woolley, Curtis, Ginsborg, Armitage & Bishop, 2005, 27.)

Intellectually disabled children are sometimes left out of the play opportunities by their peers. Studies show that children do not always reject disabled playmates, but they do prefer other children who do not have disabilities. Only if the disabled child behaved aggres-
sively, other children rated the disabled child disliked. Socialization process and all of its components are difficult for children with special needs. Intellectually challenged children show less affection in their play, but they also smile and laugh less. This makes interaction with peers more challenging, since the playmates receive less positive affect from disabled peers. (Burton 2010, 39.)

The most challenging aspects of disabled children’s play is the use of language, which causes lack of social interaction. Verbal and non-verbal language use is less common for disabled children which means that there is also less pretend play. (Burton 2010, 39.) Intellectually disabled children also use touch differently as a way of communication. When peers use touch also as a matter of positive communication, for intellectually disabled children touch is often more negatively charged. Intellectually disabled children often use touch to make demands or to get something they want. The way of touching is also often inappropriate such as pulling or pinching and it might result a negative affect such as crying. (Burton 2010, 39.) It is also found by Leiber (1993) that disabled children are more likely to use direct or disruptive strategies to enter a play situation. Therefore they receive negative response more often than non-disabled children. (Burton 2010, 39.)

There are various things that can improve inclusion. For example, the supervisors could enhance the inclusion in play. Therefore training the school staff is important. Communication with the parents and professionals such as physiotherapists can increase the understanding of the child’s actual potential. It is also important to realize that the special needs child would benefit from playing extra time on the playground. The staff is in an important role in helping the children develop confidence in themselves. The staff should encourage the special education students so that after a while the children would be able to play on the playground with other children, without the help of an adult. (Woolley, Curtis, Ginsborg, Armitage & Bishop, 2005.)

Also the focus children themselves or the equipment they used created inclusion. Also other children facilitated inclusion by adapting their play according to the needs of the focus children. Inclusion was detected on all categories of play. (Woolley, Curtis, Ginsborg, Armitage & Bishop, 2005.)
There are some good practices, which can improve the inclusion of special needs children during play. For example, morning and afternoon playtime maximized the play opportunities for all children. Also the mixed age groups sharing playtime enabled siblings and cousins to play. Having individual routines at some other time than the playtime. For example, having physiotherapy during quiet reading time, during assembly or any other time than playtime. (Woolley, Curtis, Ginsborg, Armitage & Bishop, 2005.)

Also appropriate toys and props encourage the development of skills of social, play and language in disabled children. The amount of toys is also important, since there is more interaction between children, when less toys are provided. The type of the toy influences the play as well. Associative and co-operative play was more common when discussion was encouraged by an adult, for example in “Doll corner”, car play or reading activities. Also “Social toys” such as toy garages or replicas of other familiar everyday objects encouraged social play. Solitary and parallel play was more common during focused tasks such as drawing of puzzles or when playing with static toys such as crayons. Toys and playthings that were new for the children increase cognitive demands for the intellectually disabled children, probably because the functions of the toy need to be learned. (Burton 2010, 39.)
6 Conclusion

In this research I have used The Ecosystemic Theory of Bronfenbrenner’s to look at inclusion from various perspectives. By using literacy review to study inclusion I have learned that inclusion is a phenomena, which happens simultaneously on different levels. I have also formed a comprehensive research about inclusion and during the process I have learned about defining inclusion and about the history of inclusion in Finland. I have learned that inclusion is needed in our society, because it is a basic human right and it increases the wellbeing of all individuals. In education inclusion can be seen as a way to support learning for all students.

The term inclusion can have many meanings and therefore it has been important to define different ways to use it. In order to understand inclusion in a wider perspective, the division to descriptive and prescriptive inclusion has been useful. The descriptive way focuses on the use of inclusion in practice through individuals. The prescriptive way on the other hand is more interested in understanding inclusion as a concept and also on how we want other people to refer to inclusion. The prescriptive category has a wider perspective on inclusion, it may relate to larger issues in the educational system. Through this categorization I have made the division that I will focus more on the prescriptive issues in this research and continue on the descriptive issues on my Master’s Thesis.

According to the World Health Organization the approach to special education can be educational, social or economic. Educational approach means that inclusive schools should develop the ways of teaching in order to respond to individual differences. In this way it is possible to educate all children together in a way that everybody benefits. The social approach means that inclusive schools should educate all children together in order to change attitudes towards the different people and to create a just and non-discriminatory society. The economical approach means that special education should be arranged by establishing and maintaining schools for educating all children together, because this is a more economical option.
Educational inclusion means promoting diversity among students by reforming schools and reducing barriers of learning and participating for all students. Inclusion improves the lives of all human beings and differences between students should be seen as a resource, which supports learning. The aim of inclusive education is to counteract social exclusion. The participation of the students has to be increased and their exclusion from cultures, curriculum and communities of local schools has to be reduced. Inclusion in education also means that cultures, policies and practices in schools have to be restructured to respond to the students’ diversity.

The history of inclusion in Finland is the basis of the dominant beliefs and ideologies in Finland and therefore it is important to understand the context. The history of inclusion in Finland started in the beginning of 1900’s, when first assistance schools were founded in the biggest cities. Until 1960’s the special education students were educated in special education schools and classrooms, but the comprehensive school reform in 1972-1977 aimed for equality between all people and there was also pressure to bring special education and majority education closer to each other. The era of new liberalistic compulsory school began in the 1990’s and it meant withdrawing the principle of going to the nearest school. Schools were also put into a competitive position and the socio-economical differences between schools rose. Earlier the Finnish educational system was a welfare services meant to civilize the whole society, but recently the educational system has been seen more as a productive investment.

The current inclusion discussion can be looked at from categorized viewpoint by focusing on the legislation and on the near-by-school principles. We can also look at inclusion from the viewpoint of different groups who are vulnerable to exclusion. Inclusion can also be seen from the viewpoint of developing the school for all, which in Finland has meant changing the National Curriculum more inclusive. It is also possible to look at inclusion from the education for all –approach. In Finland this approach has meant signing the Salamanca Statement and the Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. Finland has also signed the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but has not ratified it.

On the national level inclusion has been reinforced in the law and in the pedagogical guidelines of the teaching such as the Finnish National Curriculum. The National Curriculum states that education should be made more child-centred, practical and versatile to re-
spond to the individual needs of the student. The law states that the student has the right to receive education in the near-by school, but also makes it possible to create special education institutions, where some special education students can be placed. Also the national three-step model attends to create inclusion by ensuring that only the students with most challenges are placed in special institutions. Nevertheless this arrangement categorizes the students and causes physical segregation.

Inclusion on the local level can refer to the school, the teacher and the family of the child. On the school level the methods of the teacher play an important role as well as the form of instructions. By differentiated instruction the different needs of the students can be taken into consideration in order to improve learning of all students. Also co-teaching and co-operative learning can support inclusive education and responding to the special needs. Local level research on practical methods is needed in order to improve the special education in majority classes.

Inclusive learning on an individual level happens through formal learning, but also through play. On the level of the student the most crucial thing is to support the development of the social skills and self-esteem. Also careful structuring supports the learning of academic content. The most important thing is to see each student as a unique individual and to adjust the teaching to suit the special needs. It is also important to co-operate with different people working with the child in order to get more perspective. Special education should be seen as an approach to support all children in the classroom.

In this research I have understood that the social issues are tied to the educational issues and this connection has to be recognized. In order to improve inclusion in education, we must improve the social inclusion in the whole society and for all people, and vice versa. In practice this means more co-operation between actors in schools and communities in order to have a more holistic approach to inclusion. As a teacher it is important to ensure the students’ active participation in their community and to support interaction between different actors. Also teacher education could be developed to prepare future teacher to co-operate with the different actors in the society and to have a more holistic view on educational inclusion.
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Oulun kaupungin opetuslautakunta. 4 Kasvun, oppimisen ja koulunkäynnin tuki esi- ja perusopetksessä. (Ltk 15.6.2011 § 100)  


LIITE 1: Chart on combinations of instructional approaches and methods. Adapted from the chart of Voltz, Nelson and Sims (2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES</th>
<th>INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS</th>
<th>Differentiated Instruction</th>
<th>Universal Design</th>
<th>Sheltered Instruction</th>
<th>Multicultural Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple Intelligences</strong></td>
<td>Process and product differentiation is encouraged</td>
<td>Various ways of gaining and demonstrating knowledge</td>
<td>Use of visual cues is encouraged in addition to language</td>
<td>Respect for different learning styles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperative Learning</strong></td>
<td>Differentiation in assigning the roles in group</td>
<td>The differences in learners are seen valuable</td>
<td>Peer mediation is used to support language learners</td>
<td>Cooperative learning styles are encouraged and valued</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tiered Lessons</strong></td>
<td>Process and product differentiation is encouraged</td>
<td>Various ways of gaining and demonstrating knowledge</td>
<td>Provides a framework for differentiating levels of language</td>
<td>Respect for different learning styles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Centers</strong></td>
<td>Process and product differentiation is encouraged</td>
<td>Various ways of gaining and demonstrating knowledge</td>
<td>Provides a framework for differentiating levels of language</td>
<td>Respect for different learning styles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graphic Organizers</strong></td>
<td>Provides a framework for instruction planning</td>
<td>Provides a framework for instruction planning</td>
<td>Provides a framework for instruction planning</td>
<td>Highlights the diverse needs of the learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIITE 2 Ecological system theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner according to the model by Penn (2005, 45). (Härkönen 2008, 35.)