

# TEACHERS ROLE IN AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL (?)

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## THE RESEARCH (1)

- A PHd.- research project
- A qualitative approach
- Interpretive paradigm used along with post-structuralism
- Data gathered in 2007-2008 in two primary schools in Iceland and two in the Netherlands
- Semi-structured interviews twice - 8 teachers of 11- and 12-year-old children and 4 headmasters.
- Teaching LOG for students with SEN or disabilities.
- Public documents, such as laws, curricula and reports, were also analysed



## THE RESEARCH (2)

- The overall aim of the study is *to explore, describe and interpret the ideas and understanding of primary school teachers about the teacher in an inclusive school*  
and
- *how a different cultural background and the predominant education policy shapes teachers' ideas and understanding*



## THE RESEARCH (3)

- The Icelandic data is analysed et.al. through the lens of comparable Dutch data in order to highlight the impact of different cultural background and different exclusionary school system, and the experience and understanding of the teachers and how this reflect their attitude to the policy and its implementation.



# FINDINGS

## TEACHERS PROFESSIONALISM AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

What characterize teachers' ideas on teachers' professionalism as regards inclusive education and is their *Professional theory* based on inclusive ideas and principles?

1. Lack of discourse on education policy and curriculum
2. Conflicts in ideology and work habits between SEN teachers and regular teachers
3. Mismatch in requirements for diversity vs. uniformed requirements for learning criteria
4. Segregated discourse on students based on classification
5. The adaptation of learning material to students abilities



# FINDINGS

## DISCURSIVE THEMES (1)

Lack of discourse on education policy, ideology and theories

What does that mean for teachers professionalism?

- *Teachers' professional theory* is based on interplay of three ideas:
  1. based on what teachers do (practice)
  2. based on knowledge, understanding and what teachers know (theoretical arguments) and
  3. based on personal ideas, view of life, values, reasoning, and what teachers find (ethical reasons)



# FINDINGS

## DISCURSIVE THEMES (2)

Conflicts in ideology and work habits between SEN teachers and regular teachers

SEN teachers: Medical approach

Regular teachers: social approach

= lack of collaboration and discussion



# FINDINGS

## DISCURSIVE THEMES (3)

Mismatch in requirements for diversity versus uniformed requirements for learning criteria

Teachers claim that this is an attack on their professionalism as the standardised tests control their teaching.

Conflicts with parents regarding grades



# FINDINGS

## DISCURSIVE THEMES (4)

4. Segregated discourse on students based on classification (primarily school A)
  - In contrast with the idea; that everyone is unique and schools should celebrating diversity



**Normal students**

**Not normal students**

SCIENCES

**Strong:  
outstanding and  
manage on their  
own**

**In the middle = Normal  
students**

**Weak**

**Sub Group:  
Normal students  
at risk**

**Several Sub Groups  
depending on:**

**Disability**

**Academic  
position**

**Can be saved, also those  
at risk e.g. By intensive  
lessons**

**Shared  
feature: Weak  
or slow  
learners**

**Hopeless: "will never  
succeed in the school  
system"**

## FINDINGS

### DISCURSIVE THEMES (5)

An extensive part of their job is to **adjust** learning material (and tests) to students ability

Because:

- The study book is the criteria = only one type of book
- They adjust the study material to the categories – though mainly for the *Weak learners and normal students at risk*



## CONCLUSION (1)

### Teachers professionalism and inclusive education

- What characterize teachers' ideas on teachers' professionalism as regards inclusive education and is their *Professional theory* based on inclusive ideas and principles?



## CONCLUSION (2)

- Contradictory dilemmas concerning teachers role and practices in heterogeneous students groups
- School staff finds it difficult to distinguish between procedures which lead to discrimination and exclusion of students and those who do not.
- **Teachers professional theory** is weak because:
  - It lacks theoretical arguments
  - It is more unconscious than conscious
  - It lacks self-reflection
- Because of this teachers do not have a clear picture of their role in an inclusive school.

