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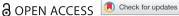Department of Teacher Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway

ABSTRACT

This study explores teacher talk in the early phase of a project in a Norwegian elementary school where Lesson Study is used as a method for professional development. The study focuses on inclusion and aims to explore what beliefs about student needs and teacher role and responsibilities become evident, and how these beliefs can challenge development towards a more inclusive practice. To this end, content analysis is applied to audio recordings of teacher teams' planning meetings. Despite an overall positive attitude towards inclusion, and inclusive structures in the school, findings point at factors in teachers' beliefs that can challenge the inclusion process. These factors are: student needs understood as individual problems, adaptation understood as individualised and laborious and a limited view on teacher role, where their responsibility mainly regard academic learning.

Introduction

Since the 1994 UNESCO conference in Salamanca, inclusion has become an important goal for school policy in many countries and had success to a degree that Pijl, Meijer, and Hegarthy in 1997 described it as 'a global agenda'. This success is however challenged by other policy trends, like the growing attention on educational output, measurement and publication of student performance (Meijer 2010), emphasising the power of market forces to improve educational standards. There is growing evidence from a range of countries that factors like these are found to increase segregation (Ainscow 2016).

The concept of inclusion has influenced policy in Norway, where mainstreaming has been an overarching political goal since the 1970s (Ogden 2014). Norway was one of the first countries in Europe to establish legislation supporting an inclusive school system (Nes, Demo, and Ianes 2018), and inclusion became part of legislation and curriculum from 1997 on. The National Education Act states that all children in Norway have the right to attend a regular class in their local school, regardless of ability and need. The curriculum is in principle to be adapted to all students, but with an individual right to special education for those who do not benefit satisfactorily from regular education

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(Nes, Demo, and Ianes 2018). Education up to grade 10 is compulsory, and policy regard the primary mode of organising education through a one-track system with the regular classroom as a common arena for all students. The long tradition of the inclusion ideal seems to have impacted school culture, and surveys find an overall positive attitude towards the general idea of inclusion among Norwegian teachers (Nes, Strømstad, and Skogen 2004).

Norwegian legislation and policy clearly support an inclusive school system, but the realisation of this ideal has proven to be a challenge. Research findings imply a gap between intention and reality and there has been a tendency also in Norway towards increased segregation of students with special needs (Nordahl 2018). This underlines the need for a continued focus on how to realise inclusive schooling and how inclusive ideals can be transformed into inclusive practices. Inclusive practice is about how to give individual students the support they need without treating them differently (Florian and Spratt 2013). According to Hedegaard-Sørensen and Tetler (2016), it is important for teachers to plan, teach and evaluate activities, having both the learning community and the individual student in mind.

Inclusion, according to UNESCO's description, means that regular schools are responsible for meeting the needs of all students. This implies that teachers in regular schools must believe that all students have the capacity to learn and they must believe in their own capacity and responsibility to promote learning for all their students. Teacher beliefs seem to have a strong influence on their actions in their classrooms (Kiely et al. 2015), and teacher beliefs of their students and their own role are therefore an important issue in developing inclusive practices, and a main research interest in this study. The study takes place in a Norwegian elementary school, which has implemented Lesson Study for professional development, and attempts to contribute to the knowledge base by exploring teacher talk about student needs and teacher role in the early phase of this project.

Inclusion and the dilemma of individual differences

Inclusion is a complex idea, open to differing interpretations. According to UNESCO (2017), inclusive education implies the process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners. One can distinguish between full inclusion which advocates that all student needs should be accommodated in general arrangements, and soft inclusion where needs should be taken care of by the regular system, but with some special support when needed (Norwich 2002). This article argues for the latter, acknowledging that some student needs require special arrangements, where meeting students' needs is a defining characteristic of inclusion. The challenge implicit to this view is both to acknowledge and respond to diversity, but at the same time avoid the negative effects of treating some children as different (Florian and Spratt 2013). Inclusion implicitly emphasises the social aspect of learning by viewing the community of students as an important resource for learning. This resembles a holistic framework where schools take responsibility for students' academic, emotional and non-cognitive development (Leicester 2008), and where students' academic and social needs are met. Inclusion implies individual differences as an opportunity for democratising and enriching learning, leading to innovations that can benefit all learners.

The contrasting theories of individual understanding and contextual understanding are those most often used to explain the concept of individual differences. In an individual

understanding, student differences and difficulties are presumed to be caused by innate ability, while in a contextual understanding, difficulties are caused by situational demands, such as the ways schools are organised and the approaches to teaching that are provided (Messiou and Ainscow 2015; Skidmore 1999). A contextual understanding of needs corresponds with the idea of transformability; that teachers believe they have the power to make a difference in what and how children learn (Hart 2004). Hart argues that by attributing difference to inherent abilities, the most significant factor for the student's learning is beyond the teacher's control. This narrows what possibilities teachers see for the students and lessens their own feeling of responsibility, both negatively affecting how they respond to student needs.

The distinction between individual and contextual understanding is important because it serves as a working theory that has consequences for practice. Perceiving student needs as an expression of inherent deficits is shown to lower teacher expectations and lead to a lower feeling of teacher responsibility (Rubie-Davies and Rosenthal 2016) and is associated with believing that responsibility for their instruction belonged to someone else than the classroom teacher (Jordan and Stanovich 2003). These beliefs are related to how teachers understand expertise in teaching. Skidmore (1999) finds that an individual view is connected to defining teaching expertise as specialist subject knowledge with adapting curriculum of secondary importance, whereas a contextual view is associated with believing that responding to student needs is part of the professional expertise that all teachers need to develop. Skidmore (1999) also finds differences in how teachers respond: an individual view is associated with targeted interventions aimed to remediate the shortcomings of individual students, while a contextual view leads to more generalised initiatives with collective development of classroom practice.

Kelchtermans (2009) argues that throughout their careers, teachers develop a personal interpretative framework—a set of cognitions and mental representations that operate as a lens through which they look at their job, give meaning to it and act in it. One component in this framework is task perception. This includes the teacher's idea of what constitutes his or her tasks and duties in order to do a good job. Research about teacher beliefs about what constitutes good teaching in general has evolved to focus two broad categories: student-centred, reflecting constructivist views of teaching, and teacher-centred, reflecting a transmission model of teaching (Fives, Lacatena, and Gerard 2015). Teachers with a contextual understanding of individual differences have been found more likely to prefer student-centred instruction (Jordan, Glenn, and McGhie-Richmond 2010). The beliefs concerning student needs and what constitutes good teaching will be part of a teacher's interpretative framework and therefore affect their task perception.

Research has shown congruence between teachers' beliefs and their effectiveness in teaching diverse students (Dyssegaard and Larsen 2013), and that teachers' beliefs are reflected in the way they talk about work – that of students as well as their own (Florian and Spratt 2013).

Professional development with lesson study

Research on interventions that contribute to more inclusive schools is limited. Amor et al. (2019) found that most interventions focus on providing different types of support for students with defined needs in inclusive classrooms. This points to an ambiguity that is

reflected in the research literature: although inclusion concerns all students, empirical research tends to focus on students with defined special needs (Haug 2010). It also points to a gap in the research literature: how to develop inclusion for all students. Thus, processes aiming to develop inclusion must involve all teachers and the regular school system.

Inclusion will often imply a change in school culture and a shift in teachers' mindset (Hart 2004). This calls for professional development where teachers are given opportunities to re-examine their practice, aiming to make practice more responsive and flexible to all students. Teacher professional development can be described as structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes (Borko 2004; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner 2017). It is a broad area that, over the last decades, has developed into what Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) call a new paradigm. This is characterised by teacher collaboration, focus on student learning and provision of opportunities for hands-on learning, all of which are sustained over time. Messiou and Ainscow (2015) suggest that teacher development should take place in classrooms, connect to and build on the expertise available within the school, create cooperative spaces and engage teachers in developing a common language of practice.

Lesson Study, originating in Japan, constitutes an approach to professional development that meets these criteria. In Lesson Study, groups of teachers work together in communities in order to develop their practice. The methods' centre is the *research lesson*, and teacher teams collaboratively formulate goals for student learning and long-term development and plan the lesson in detail. Then they conduct the lesson with one team member teaching and the others observing: gathering evidence on student learning and development. Afterwards, they meet to reflect on and discuss the evidence gathered during the lesson. It is then possible to improve and teach the lesson again in another class. In the last stage in the Lesson Study cycle, all teams meet to share and discuss their learning (Lewis 2002).

This study reports on findings from analyses of the teacher teams planning meetings in Lesson Study, and the research questions are:

- What beliefs concerning student needs and teacher role are revealed in the teachers talk during lesson planning?
- How can these beliefs challenge inclusion?

The study

This study's research interest is teacher talk concerning student needs and teacher role and how their understanding of both is reflected in their dialogues. An underlying assumption is that language reflects the internalised norms and views upon which participants base their actions. Language reflect a specific understanding of the world (Bakhtin 1998; Rommetveit 1972) and can tell us something about teachers' beliefs regarding themselves and their students. Krippendorff (2004) uses the word *languaging* and says that language directs attention, frames perception and creates facts. Rommetveit (1972) say that, when attempting to understand conversation, it is important to analyse the unspoken assumptions underlying it. Participants in professional development activities such as

Lesson Study are carriers of a culture that is expressed through language. This theoretical backdrop, combined with content analysis is used as an approach to collect, analyse and interpret data. The following section describes the context where the study takes place, and the methods used for collecting and analysing data.

Context

The context for the study is an elementary school with approximately 370 students from grade 1 to 7, located in a suburban/rural area. As Norwegian legislation gives all students the right to attend their local school, the school has a diverse group of students. Students' educational needs are mainly handled through support in the regular classroom, with some use of smaller groups on occasion. In a baseline study conducted before starting the Lesson Study work, the teachers were nearly united in having a positive attitude towards inclusion. It seems to be a theme that engages teachers. Some express pride over what they have achieved, and many want to improve their practice. None question the principle of inclusion or say they want more segregation. Nonetheless, some say that they find inclusion difficult and demanding and many want more guidance and support in better adapting their lessons for student diversity. The school leaders wanted to use the project to develop different qualities: more active learning forms and better adaptation of the curriculum were two of them. The project period is four years, with all teachers and school leaders involved. The teachers complete nine Lesson Study cycles during the period. All students, including those with special educational needs, participate in the research lessons.

The participants in this study are four of the teacher teams taking part in the larger project. The teams are interdisciplinary and include teachers for grades 1, 2, 5 and 7. The 19 participating teachers cover a wide range of subjects, with special education teachers participating on some teams. Teacher experience is mixed, ranging from newly educated to 30 years of experience, with an average of 10–19 years.

Data collection

The raw data that form the basis of this study consists of an approximate total of 11 h of audio recording of the four participating teacher teams as they held planning meetings prior to their classroom research lessons. Each team of teachers was given a digital audio recorder and they managed the recordings themselves. The school leader gave the recordings to the researchers involved with the larger development project at the end of each Lesson Study cycle.

Data analysis

To gain both a broad and deep understanding of teacher beliefs, the conversations have been analysed in a three-step process that provides both quantitative and qualitative results. The first part aims to get an overview of the concrete and objectively observable content – what Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1999) call manifest content. The coding scheme emerged from data through an inductive process and is in accordance with summative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon 2005), where the purpose is to quantify

elements in the conversations. In the second step of the analysis, utterances on student needs are analysed in a deductive process. The aim is to find patterns that can shed light on underlying beliefs of student needs and teacher role. Here, utterances are analysed for what Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1999) call latent content – what is below the surface and must be interpreted. Theory and prior research form the basis for the developed coding scheme, and this part of the analyses are consistent with theory-driven content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). The third step of the analysis also aims to find latent content with an inductive approach and is consistent with what Hsieh and Shannon (2005) call conventional content analysis. In addition, this part is inspired by concept coding (Saldana 2016), which analyses larger sections of text with the intention of finding underlying ideas in wider and more abstract and general codes.

Results

First reading

To begin with, all utterances concerning student needs in each of the teams' conversations were categorised and counted. Table 1 shows results for each team, then the total results, divided into the type of needs the utterances describe and whether they talk about the needs of individual students, subgroups or the whole group.

There was a total of 42 utterances concerning student needs in the conversations. They were spread evenly between teams, with between 8 and 13 utterances per team. A clear majority (33) of the utterances in all teams concern the social and behavioural needs of students, while significantly fewer utterances (9) are about academic needs. There was a strong focus on student behaviour in all teams and especially the difficulty students had with maintaining concentration through a lesson. Typical formulations are, 'He disengages quickly and turns his attention to other things' and 'She can often lose herself completely'. All teams talk about several students in their groups who experience these kinds of challenges. Some of the teams also talk about students they describe as insecure. Examples of formulations here are, 'He is very quiet' and 'She needs to be able to have a trustworthy girl sitting beside her'. In terms of expressions of academic needs, most of them were related to difficulties students had with writing, a theme with which the school worked specifically during this period.

The vast majority of utterances (30) deal with individual student needs. Only a few utterances are about subgroups of students (9) and even fewer (3) about the whole student group.

Analyses were also conducted as to whether each of the utterances about student needs is followed up with explicit suggestions for ways to meet the needs. Because there was a

Table 1. Team-wise subject of utterances.

		Team 1	Team 2	Team 5	Team 7	Total
Subject of utterances	Social / behavioural needs	7	9	7	10	33
	Academic needs	2	4	1	2	9
	Individual students	5	9	5	10	30
	Subgroups	2	3	3	1	9
	Whole group	2	1	–	–	3
	Total number of utterances	9	13	8	12	42

Table 2. Team-wise count of utterances and suggestions for adaptation.

	Team 1	Team 2	Team 5	Team 7	Total
On academic needs	2	4	1	2	9
Explicit suggestions for adaptations	2	4	0	2	8
On social / behavioural needs	7	9	7	10	33
Explicit suggestions for adaptations	0	8	3	0	11
Total	9	13	8	12	42

large difference between the number and frequency of utterances about social/behavioural needs versus academic needs, these two categories are examined separately. Table 2 shows the total number of utterances followed by suggestions for adaptations, with the numbers for each team.

11 out of 33 utterances concerning social and behavioural needs are followed up with explicit suggestions for adaptations, while utterances concerning students' academic needs are followed up in 7 out of 9 cases. However, if we look at each team, we see that the suggestions for adaptations aimed at following up on student social and behavioural needs are distributed relatively unevenly between the teams, with 8 of the total 11 suggestions taking place in Team 2. In other words, one team is responsible for most of the suggestions for adaptations that could potentially meet their students' social and behavioural needs. The other teams talk just as much about such needs, but without making plans for meeting them.

Analyses were then conducted as to what kind of adaptations were suggested. Regarding utterances about the students' social and behavioural needs, with Team 2 as an exception, few of the utterances were followed up with any action. In cases where it did occur, the adaptations mainly concerned teacher support in the form of external control. 'He needs someone who is close and keeps him going' is a representative statement in this category. We see here that Team 2 stands out by following up on 8 out of 9 utterances about social and behavioural needs with suggestions for adaptations. The planned adaptations in this team were not about external control, but about how they, as teachers, could help the students learn how to overcome their challenges. One example from this team is a conversation concerning the trouble their students had with cooperation. This was followed by formulating a specific social goal for the lesson and a discussion about how the teachers could organise the class so that students would have the opportunity to practice cooperation.

The school focused on writing across subjects during this period and needs regarding writing represented most of the utterances concerning academic needs. In almost all teams, the teachers had suggestions for different types of help to support student writing. Examples include that students could draw instead of write or use a computer with a spelling programme. When it comes to how adaptations were organised, there was a difference between Team 2 and the other teams. Team 2's adaptations were mainly aimed at the whole student group, with general whole-class adaptations that could meet the differing needs of their students. The other three teams made more individual adaptations tailored to each student.

In summary, we see that the main part of teacher talk concerns the social and behavioural needs of individual students, but that the adaptations they propose are mainly aimed at meeting students' academic needs. Team 2 differs from the others by taking responsibility for their students' social and behavioural needs and by making interventions directed at the whole class.

Second reading

Based on a pre-made coding key, the utterances on student needs are coded regarding whether they represent an individual or contextual understanding. Additionally, utterances that explicitly indicate that the teacher can influence student learning are coded in the transformability category. Table 3 shows the number of expressions in each category, in total and for each team.

First, we see that a clear majority – 31 of the 42 utterances – represent an individual understanding of students' needs. Examples of statements in this category are, 'She is very quiet' and 'He is clever but doesn't get much done'. Furthermore, we see that a total of 11 out of 42 expressions reflect a contextual understanding. An example of this category is: 'He can engage himself, but when something becomes difficult for him, well …'. In all teams, utterances that reflect an individual understanding are in the majority, but we see that in Team 2, the distribution is more even, with 8 individual and 5 contextual utterances. We also see that 5 of the 42 expressions can be coded in the transformability category. Examples of such expressions are, 'He is engaged when there's a game or competition' and 'They can be great if we can just get them to connect'.

In this section of the analysis, we see that most utterances indicate student needs understood as inherent qualities the students have – an individual understanding. Utterances representing transformability and a contextual understanding are few.

Third reading

The transcribed sequences were then analysed to find pattern content that can inform which beliefs of student needs and teacher role are implicit in the teachers' talk, and six different patterns were found:

- 'Strong-weak' The descriptions of the students are largely characterised by an individual and static understanding. Utterances like 'Are we going to have a strong and weak group now?', and 'This is very good for the weak students' are representative for this category. The concepts of strong and weak students are widely used in all teams and no one questions these utterances. These descriptions are, in some cases, combined with negative expectations of the students: 'We know the answer to this' (on which of the students will get into trouble). 'She will not benefit from this; that's the way it is'.
- 'Controlling chaos' A repeated theme was the teachers' concern about losing control of the students' behaviour. Fear of chaos seemed to form a backdrop for many discussions in the teacher teams. Sometimes it applied to the entire student group, sometimes to individual students. But it seems clear that maintaining control was an important topic that limited what they were willing to attempt, with respect to organising

Table 3. Count of utterances by subject and team.

| | Subject of Utterances | | | |
	Individual understanding	Contextual understanding	Transformability	Total
Team 1	7	8	–	9
Team 2	8	5	1	14
Team 5	6	2	2	10
Team 7	10	2	2	14
Total	31	11	5	

lessons. Teachers felt they must keep control over the students. They perceived this control as their responsibility and that it should be practiced through external means. Utterances such as ' … which prevent them from freaking out' and ' … otherwise he will destroy the whole lesson' represent this category.

- 'Teacher as puppeteer' This category is related to how the teachers discuss learning. It is commonly referred to as something that depends on the teacher's initiative and responsibility. Teachers seem to perceive themselves as initiators and driving forces for students' learning and learning as something that happens only between the teacher and each individual student. The teacher is the active party, responsible for initiating and maintaining learning, whereas the students are passive receivers. The teachers seem to believe that learning depends on the teacher, and there is no talk about how to help students take responsibility and act as agents of their own and each other's learning. A large proportion of the student needs teachers described regard problems with getting started and continuing. Likewise, when students are described as having difficulty in controlling their behaviour, the teacher is responsible for regulating the students. There is no talk about how the teachers can help students regulate and control themselves.
- 'Adaption as time-consuming' If all learning and regulation of student behaviour depends on the teacher, it puts a heavy responsibility on the teachers. In the diverse student groups these teachers deal with, this is characterised as demanding, and discussions about adaptation of the curriculum are accompanied by comments such as: 'Good grief!', 'It's really not so easy!' and 'My god, this is a full day's work!'.
- One team's discussions represent the exception in several ways. These teachers raise some topics that contrast with the conversations of the other teams:
  - 'Teaching as teamwork' This team's conversations seem to be characterised by a strong sense of community. They talk almost exclusively in we-form and appear to take joint responsibility for both past successes and current challenges. Statements like: 'We have a job to do here!', 'We managed that!', 'This is the kind of thing where we've made a difference before; we can do it again!', and 'Well, we haven't taught them cooperative learning yet' illustrate this.
  - 'Learning as teamwork' The same team also demonstrates a different approach to learning than the others. They emphasise learning between students and adapt the curriculum by making groups that allow students to collaborate and support each other. The learning goals for the lesson are formulated in we-form and the teacher team uses a lot of time to discuss how to group the children in ways that are supportive and how they can frame the activities in ways that give all the students the opportunity to contribute.

In sum, we have seen that the main part of the teachers' talk concern individual students' social and behavioural needs, but the adaptations they propose to meet student needs are mainly aimed at the students' academic needs. Most of the utterances indicate that student needs are understood as inherent qualities the students have – an individual understanding. This is reflected in the use of 'strong-weak' when describing students. Utterances representing transformability and a contextual understanding are few. The teachers seem to view themselves as initiators and driving forces for student learning and responsible for the external control of student behaviour. These findings represent most teacher teams, but as the analyses show, there are other voices that represent a contrast.

Discussion

In this section, the results from the study are discussed according to the themes from the research questions: *What beliefs concerning student needs and teacher role are revealed in the teachers talk during lesson planning?* The themes will be discussed considering the possible challenges they represent for developing a more inclusive practice.

Perception of student needs

Several lines of research have shown compliance between teachers' beliefs regarding student needs and their effectiveness in teaching diverse students (Hart 2004; Rubie-Davies and Rosenthal 2016). The analysis shows that student needs are mainly referred to as stable qualities and deficits that the students have. This is in accordance with an individual understanding (Messiou and Ainscow 2015; Skidmore 1999). This is, in some cases, combined with negative expectations of how the students will respond to the lesson, which is in line with Rubie-Davies and Rosenthal (2016), who argue that an individual view of student needs leads to lower expectations for the students. Sometimes the teacher talk about students is characterised by resignation. The teachers express, in advance, that some students will not benefit from the lesson, and they do not seem to see any alternative. They seem to feel a form of powerlessness in facing some of their students' needs and do not see any possible way to influence those students' learning. This resembles the opposite to transformability (Hart 2004), which implies that teachers believe in having the power to influence student learning.

Teachers spend relatively much time talking about student needs and especially about the social and behavioural challenges they experience in their classes. It may seem that some of the students represent potential chaos that teachers need to keep under control. It is, however, regarding the students' academic needs that they make most adaptations. It seems they believe in their own ability to influence students' academic learning, but not the students' social and behavioural development. The few interventions addressing this are actions aimed at controlling the students. Furthermore, the conversations give the impression of a passive student role, where teachers provide the knowledge and control and the students are passive receivers. Teachers' perception of students and their needs is significant because it influences what strategies the teachers choose to meet students' needs.

Perception of the teacher role

Kelchtermans (2009) uses the concept task perception to describe the idea teachers have about what to do in order to do a 'good job'. One defining characteristic of inclusion is meeting students' needs, but the challenge is how to do this in a way that does not represent negative effects (Florian and Spratt 2013). In Lesson Study, the teacher teams are given a substantial amount of time to collaborate to create good learning conditions for all their students, and it can be assumed that the adaptations they make here express how they wish they could do in their daily work. The teachers seem to have a common understanding of adaptations of the curriculum as something they would like to do but consider impossible in their daily work. They express joy over having the time to adapt the lessons to their students, but also admit that it is time-consuming. There seems to

be a common resignation and acceptance that, often some of the students do not benefit from the lessons. Several expressions of negative expectations for individual students appear to be based on previous experiences. This aligns with Rubie-Davies and Rosenthal's (2016) assertion that an individual understanding of student difficulties leads to a lowered sense of responsibility for these students' learning. Conversely, the joy they show about finally having time to make what they think of as good adaptations indicates that they feel responsible, even though they do not see any opportunity to implement the necessary adaptations within the timeframes they usually have. At the same time, we see that the team interventions resemble what Skidmore (1999) associates with an individual understanding of student difficulties; namely targeted interventions aimed at remediating the shortcomings of individual students. Teachers discuss the needs of individual students, and when discussions lead to interventions, the interventions are generally to help these specific students overcome the difficulties the teachers have attributed to them. The interventions are highly individualised, and some teams make their own material for a few individual students. The teachers thus tailor the tasks to each student, which naturally takes a lot of time. One team represents an exception to this approach, and their interventions are more in line with what Skidmore (1999) associates with a contextual understanding of student needs. This team makes general adaptations alongside the regular lesson planning and adaptations do not come afterwards, as tailor-made interventions for some students, but as an integral part of the plan for the lesson itself. This team does not express the notion that adapting lessons is constrained by time, and there is reason to believe that what they do is also possible without the timeframe Lesson Study gives them.

Although teachers spend significantly more time talking about the students' behavioural and social needs than their academic needs, we see that, in most teams, it is the academic needs on which they follow up. Their task perception (Kelchtermans 2009) seems to be focused on academic learning. The social and behavioural challenges of the students become 'noise' – just something they must make sure to keep under control. This contrasts with a holistic approach (Leicester 2008) implicit in the concept of inclusion. With a holistic approach, the school is not only responsible for the academic and cognitive development of the students, but also the personal development, of which emotions, self-regulation and social skills form an important part. As before, one team differs from the others: while this team, like the others, talks about the students' social and behavioural needs, they also plan how to support student development in these areas.

The teachers seem to perceive themselves as the driving force of student learning, where students are passive recipients and teachers are responsible for initiating and keeping the learning going. This is in line with a teacher-centred, transmission model of teaching (Fives, Lacatena, and Gerard 2015). The findings in this study are consistent with findings showing that teacher-centred instruction often is preferred by teachers holding an individual view on individual differences (Jordan, Glenn, and McGhie-Richmond 2010). With the exception of one team, we find no mention of the idea that students can learn from each other through cooperation. Similarly, we see that teachers perceive that controlling student behaviour is their responsibility, rather than that of the students. The teachers stay close to, check, help to get started, and keep the students' learning process going, all through external control. Interventions aimed at developing the students' internal control and self-regulation are not mentioned. In the same way that teachers seem to feel responsible for controlling students, they also seem to perceive

themselves as drivers of the student learning process. Here too we see an exception: one team works more in accordance with Meijer's (2010) claims that peer tutoring or co-operative learning is effective both in cognitive and affective areas of student learning and development. This team plans for students to collaborate and thoroughly discusses how to group students in ways that will give all the opportunity to contribute and learn.

In sum, we have seen that the teachers' talk reveals mainly an individual view of student needs, and that this is followed by laborious individualised adaptations. Adaptations to diversity seem to be considered an unrealistic wish. Combined with the view of the teacher as the driving force for learning and as responsible for controlling behaviour, it may seem overwhelming. In addition, there is a limited view of the teacher responsibility, as students' cognitive and academic learning are prioritised. At the same time, we see exceptions, such as meeting needs through collective adaptations, emphasis on learning between students and accepting responsibility for the overall development of students.

Conclusion and implications

The participating school has, in many ways, a very positive starting point for working towards a more inclusive practice. Norwegian emphasis on inclusion and students' right to an adapted education is a supportive factor. The baseline study showed a generally positive attitude towards inclusion among the teachers, although some admitted to finding it demanding. The school's practice with much of the learning support for students with special needs taking place in the classroom also supports inclusive education. Nevertheless, the findings from this study show that some aspects of the teaching staff's beliefs may hinder development towards more inclusive practice. These beliefs can be summed up along three lines: individualisation, teacher centring, and a limited view on learning:

(1) Individualisation means that learning is understood as an individual phenomenon and needs are understood as individual problems that each student owns, and which must be solved by tailor-made interventions, the creation and implementation of which are time consuming and unrealistic in the context of daily work. The inclusion discourse implies a different view of learning: as a social activity where students learn from each other, by participating in a learning community, and needs as something that arises in the meeting between the student and the learning environment and where diversity is a resource for learning.

(2) Teacher centring means that learning is perceived as something that is given by the teacher to each student. The teachers see themselves as drivers of student learning processes and students as passive recipients. The inclusion discourse implies that collaboration between a diverse group of students should be a driving force in the learning process.

(3) A limited view on learning means that teachers see it as their primary responsibility to develop students' academic skills, while social and behavioural challenges are seen as noise and something that they must control, rather than as an opportunity to help students develop social and self-regulation skills.

Lesson Study represents a space that allows for dialogues where beliefs and habits can be challenged and changed. The findings of this study emphasise the need for deeper

reflections in which underlying beliefs are discussed so that the work can lead to more fundamental changes, which lead to a more inclusive practice. We have seen that there are clear differences between the teams in this school, and discussions among the staff, as Lesson Study suggests, may provide the potential for teachers to reflect on their own underlying assumptions about students and their role as teachers.

Limitations and further research

The process of posing and answering research questions typically generates additional questions that need to be explored through further research. This study analyses teacher talk about student needs and the teacher's role in an inclusive perspective. Because the study focused solely on talk, what the teachers actually do in their classrooms is beyond the purview of this study. Therefore, one potential avenue for further research is whether and how teachers' beliefs become visible in their teaching. Inclusion also has a subjective component, and another question not answered by this study is how the lessons are experienced by the students. Finally, it is an open question whether the teachers at the participating school will use the opportunity afforded by Lesson Study to reflect upon their underlying beliefs in a way that will develop their beliefs and practice.

Disclosure statement

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Notes on contributor

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