

Inclusion – in disabling schools

Research from the national evaluation of the 1994 reform of upper secondary education in Norway

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Abstract: This article documents patterns of the learning conditions of pupils who have been administratively categorised as needing specially adapted teaching in upper secondary education. The context is in Norway under the latest major reform known as 'Reform 94'. 'Pupils with special needs' covers a wide range of sub-categories. The main category is used to identify those pupils the system identifies as needing 'remedial teaching'. Patterns in learning conditions and processes are established by analysing longitudinal survey data following the 1995 intake cohort of pupils through their upper secondary education, analysing learning provisions during their transitions between course levels and school years. This is supplemented with interview data covering a period of one and a half-year. This article analyses and discusses the results and attempts to explain the transformation of structural changes of schooling into didactic and specially adapted teaching. A central question is whether we are facing a paradox of inclusion in disabling schools.

Special education in many European countries is said to be changing, in relation to organisation and the relationship between policy, goals and intentions on the one hand, and actual practice on the other. Pijl and Meijer (1991) identified different principles of organisation of education for pupils with special needs. Countries that segregate special needs children in a separate system are categorised as two-track systems, such as in Belgium, West Germany and the Netherlands. In one-track systems, the second category of regular education is a shared arena for both mainstream pupils and pupils classified as having special educational needs, and takes into con-

sideration the interests of both groups. The third category, a combination of one-track and two-track arrangements, mirrors the situation in countries such as Britain and Denmark. In Norway, inclusion has been the principle behind the organisation of special educational efforts for a number of years at both primary and secondary school levels. Inclusion is also said to be the principle guiding the 1994 reform of upper secondary education in Norway, known as *Reform 94*. The Norwegian solution can thus be described as a one-track system, at least as far as national curriculum plans are concerned.

To understand the operating mechanisms of inclusion, it is important to analyse the processes and conditions at school and class levels. A closer scrutiny of inclusion reveals that it may turn out to be a form of disguised exclusion. The amount of time pupils spend at school during their lifetime makes school a major arena in their lives. What happens in this phase of the life course is in many ways decisive in the distribution of welfare and also in the development of self-identity. This also opens up for an analysis of the relative importance of pupils' disability compared to the disabling aspects of schooling, when trying to understand and explain what happens to pupils.

The goal of this article is to present results from an analysis in a series of reports and articles from our research¹ on the conditions and processes of learning for pupils identified as having special educational needs at the start of their schooling and transition steps through to upper secondary school. The focus is on the first two years of this secondary schooling, which is school-based and precedes work-placement. The context of the transitions is analysed, and the research questions, theoretical frame of reference and research methods and material are described. Results of the analysis are then presented, followed by closing discussions which attempt to explain the results by relating them to relevant theory and international research.

The context of pupil transitions within Reform 94

From 1994 through 1999, the Reform 94 in Norway has been closely evaluated by a national evaluation project. Included in the evaluation is the situation for pupils administratively identified as being in need of special educational measures. One central concern of this reform was the reduction of basic courses from a total of 113 to 13, with the intention of increasing the vertical flow-through of pupils expected to finish within three years. The two first years of *vocational education* are to be spent at school. For pupils that choose vocational education, the following two years involve their receiving a contract as an apprentice in public or private production, one which leads to a skilled worker's certificate. This reform also follows the stated national aim of inclusive education at the upper secondary level.

Different reports to the Parliament and Public Committee Reports² underlying Norwegian school reforms during the 1990s have been analysed and discussed. School reform turns out to be legitimised by reference to the macro-economic values of economic growth, technological development, and international economic competition. In other words, it is the values and interests of the nation and the society that reign (Stenersen Hovdenak 1998, Trippestad 1998: 25-52), whereas interests reflected in the concepts of pupils' self-identity, active agency, life

identity, active agency, life space, cultural identity, meaning of life, quality of life are scarcely visible.

Economic instrumentalism is the explicit reform value in changing the mainstream upper secondary school. In a macro-economic conception, the school serves as a means of effective qualification of the mainstream pupils as a labour force for competing European societies, an idea clearly stated by the government as the basic understanding of this reform. Inclusive education in a one-track system is also said to be a leading principle. The term inclusion is considered to be a more open concept when compared with the concept of integration. One is *integrated* into something that already exists. *Inclusion* tells us that the community is not a given entity to be integrated into, but it is rather the result of processes of communicative cultural negotiation and construction (Kvalsund 1999). Inclusion and inclusive education are thus based on the notion of active agency, as well as individual and collective rights for the pupils with special needs, and assumes an inclusive society framing the school. The agent, in this case the pupil with special needs, is not an object of welfare measures, but an independent welfare subject with whom one needs to communicate because she/he is supposed to be speaking with authority as a fellow citizen. In the tension between these two contexts of meaning, the reform of upper secondary education in Norway has taken place, one

considered to be a reform for all pupils (Kvalsund 1999: 194-199). Thus, the fundamental presumptions of Reform 94 are ambiguous.

The upper secondary teaching offered in schools is part of a wider context that must be included in an evaluation of changes in the learning situation. There has been a marked tendency in Norwegian society in recent decades to assign a clearly reduced role to the professional work and production as a socialisation arena for children and young people. More than nine out of ten young people continue their education after they have completed their compulsory schooling. Other alternatives exist merely as rare exceptions. Compared with most other school systems, the Norwegian one is characterised by its delayed specialisation, meaning that pupils attend school longer before any choice of profession or career has to be made. Vocational teaching according to this new model, which implies attending school for at least two years followed by two years of work placement, is essentially a postponed work experience. In addition, young people in general are excluded from the actual production process (Kvalsund & Myklebust 1998a: 13). As many as possible are expected to attend school, which is the dominant and main qualifying route. The requirements, standards and terms of the school are the deciding factors in determining who is qualified and valued and who is not. The follow-up service in each county is responsible

for monitoring the situation and helping the pupil back to continue their training (Grøgaard, Midtsundstad & Egge 1999). Alternative routes are thus for all intents and purposes closed.

Despite this situation of the ambiguous principles of Reform 94 and school as the main qualifying route, research on what happens in upper secondary school is rare, and typically undertaken within a restricted perspective. Norwegian research in the field of special education is dominated by research focusing on pupil characteristics, their special educational problems and deficits (cf. Haug, Tøssebro & Dalen 1999, Markussen 1999, Tøssebro 1999). This seems to be the case in Sweden as well. Curriculum plans at the national level and documents on the national policy of schooling mention pupils *in* difficulties, known as a relational perspective of special education, compared with research focusing on pupils *with* difficulties, known as the 'categorical perspective' (Emanuelson, Persson & Rosenquist 2001). This has had clear consequences for the research questions, theoretical perspectives, and methods used in our research.

Following pupil transitions - research questions, methods and material

One of the main aims of Reform 94 was to improve *the flow pattern* and increase the percentage of all pupils who completed their upper secondary education, including 'those with special

needs'. Our task was to analyse the flow pattern of the 'pupils with special educational needs'. We have chosen to interpret this assignment as analysing the transitions as seen from below as well, that is from the point of view of the pupils involved (Kvalsund & Myklebust 1998a: 20-21). This implies that at any given time a 'pupil with special educational needs' is the result of a complex negotiating process that is dynamic. The pupils may change status from one course level as a 'pupil with special needs' to the next level as a 'pupil in ordinary conditions'. In other cases, pupils themselves may want to be considered 'normal' after years of experience with special educational measures that have had no effect. If so, it is no use for the school administration to simply count changes in the numbers of those definite cases in various administratively defined categories of 'pupils with special needs' during their upper secondary education.

A pupil who is seen by teachers as needing a specially adapted teaching programme, but who for various reasons does not receive it or does not wish to receive it, is typically referred to as a *grey-area pupil*. In earlier works, we have explained what we mean by the terms 'pupils with special needs' and 'grey-area pupils' and why it is essential, although difficult, to identify these categories. We use *expert categorisation* as a source of identifying pupils with whom we want to communicate and from whom we want

to obtain data. This does not mean that we accept this categorisation, nor the concept of the person that is embedded in the categories (see Kvalsund & Myklebust 1996, Båtevik, Myklebust & Kvalsund 1997, Kvalsund 2000). The categorisation of pupils as having 'special educational needs' of some kind is a value-based action, and not a description. The term 'pupils with special educational needs' establishes a categorical status signifying deficit and failure in students that can lead our attention away from conditions in the school situation. In order to reduce the focus on individual deficits, we are using the term *pupils in special conditions*. This term indicates that contextual and situational factors are as important in the picture as are individual characteristics. Using other terms such as *pupils with special needs*, the terms are put within single quotation marks ('...') to indicate that the terms are used in this way by the special educationalists in schools. The problem of categorisation of pupils pertains to an important discussion where one can trace a consensus that special educational needs cannot be understood simply in terms of the characteristics of individual learners (Holst 1978, Skrtic 1995, Corbett 1996, Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare 1999, Clark, Dyson & Millward 1998). The conceptual terms one uses resemble conceptual looking glasses that determine what one sees: disabled pupils or disabling schools. The problem is not the terms in and of themselves, but rather the consequences they produce

concerning our understanding and explaining of deviance and in the designing of necessary measures. This situation calls for more research. The school as an organisation has to be analysed if we are to understand the actors' reasons for what is happening. Just as with the many intersecting threads in a piece of woven cloth, the main lines of discernible patterns are only visible when viewing the entirety from a distance. It is not uncommon to try to understand such patterns by making cross-sectional analyses of phenomena, to take a snapshot-picture of actors and the contextual conditions at one given point in time, such as pupils with special needs involved in upper secondary education at the end of the spring term of a certain year. This method is similar in many ways to the procedure with a *photo finish*, measuring results at one very decisive moment in time. Analysing primarily the final results on different levels of the school system will probably not provide necessary data about overall quality.

If we reframe the research question and ask what frame factors and processes in the upper secondary schools can help us understand the patterns, the dimension of time becomes the first anchor point to focus on in the research approach. Thus following the pupils over a period of time, including what happens on the "final turn", data at the end of each term, will provide us with a series of "still frames" taken at various points of time. In this way, we establish a basis

for analysing the frame factors and learning processes during and between the stages of the course of their education, the transitions between levels of upper secondary schooling. Transitions prove to be important points with the potential of reconsideration and changes of direction in the life course (Hagestad 1991). Within this perspective, pupils are seen as actors moving through changing social contexts of the life course, focusing on socially created, socially recognised and shared turning points, that is, the transition from one course level to the next in the cultural system of schooling. What happens at a given point of time is better understood as part of a longer context of time, as parts of the life course. This perspective invites a prospective comparison of what pupils experience. Thus our research aim is to analyse what is happening in the field of specially adapted teaching during Reform 94, based on theories about results, frame factors and processes, combined by a theory of life course with special emphasis on transitions (see Kvalsund & Myklebust 1996, Kvalsund 1998, Kvalsund 1999, Myklebust 1999). An important part of our theoretical frame of reference is a frame-factor theoretical thinking, one that leads us to an understanding of the bridging processes between conditions and results (Dahllöf 1971, Kvalsund 1995).

Use of the phrase ‘special needs pupils’ in our material are pupils administratively categorised by experts as having

‘special educational needs’ in Norwegian upper secondary education. These pupils represent approximately 10% of the cohort of 60–70.000 secondary pupils each year. We are interested in the results, conditions and processes these pupils experience. And, how does the Norwegian reform of upper secondary education respond to student diversity, when we analyse the transitions from the Basic Course level to the level of Advanced Courses?

Extensive survey data is necessary to achieve an overview of the main patterns in the picture. The relationships between key variables, such as subject area of study, conditions of learning, and delay or dropout figures, must be analysed statistically and expressed numerically. Quantitative analyses have been carried out for 764 ‘pupils with special educational needs’ from all upper secondary schools in six counties at four different points in time, at the end of each term for consecutive four years. The quantitative material is representative of the 1995 cohort, that is for those pupils starting first year upper secondary school in the autumn of 1995 (Kvalsund & Myklebust 1998b). However, such data provide limited material on which to understand and explain the overall situation. They are illustrations of links between selected variables. Such correlations, however, have limitations in conveying meaning. Therefore, we have to resort to “spoken” data from conversations or interviews. In this way, we can create pictures of se-

lected factors. The Privacy Issues Unit of the Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services approved our proposal to collect data from the persons about whom we had collected mass data. However the decision was turned down by the Norwegian Council of Data Supervision. After appeal to the ministry our proposal was finally approved – one half a year too late (For details of the process cf Kvalsund & Myklebust 1998b: 7-35). We therefore in addition had to contact almost twenty departments and schools, interviewing selected pupils, teachers, administrators and headmasters in order to make the statistical figures even more meaningful, and also to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons for what is happening. This article is in addition to statistical data on the 1995 cohort, based on 272 interviews of about 45 minutes each, carried out at ten schools in different counties of Norway during one and a half year starting in the autumn of 1997. 162 of these interviews are with pupils identified as having 'special educational needs', and 110 interviews are with teachers, inspectors or counsellors with special responsibility for the provision of special education arrangements at each school. The interviews were undertaken over a period of one and a half years covering the transitions in which dropout is greatest and where many 'pupils with special needs' cross back and forth between courses, branches of study, and unspecified training programmes. This three-point anchoring – in time, statisti-

cal figures and spoken words – will better guarantee us a sound grip on the phenomena under study.

Transitions and special educational provision within a one-track system

Both the *application data* (Edvardsen et al 1998: 71, 181) and our own *data on the actual flow patterns* for 'pupils with special needs' show that there are very great differences between mainstream pupils and those in special programmes (Kvalsund & Myklebust 1996:100-104, Kvalsund 1998b: 7-33, Myklebust 1997: 72-73,79-80, Myklebust 1998, Båtevik 1998). The main features in the picture are as follows: First, the majority of 'pupils with special educational needs' are boys, about two-thirds of the total number. This supports findings in surveys carried out before the reform (Skaarbrevik & Dybdal 1990: 9). Second, more than four out of five attend vocational courses. And third, two out of ten mainstream pupils do not complete their education or spend more than the normal length of time doing so. By comparison, more than seven out of ten of 'pupils with special needs' do not complete their courses or take longer than normal to do so. Approximately half of the pupils categorised as having special needs drop out of school or abandon their studies.

The number of 'pupils with special needs' who leave their studies before having completed VK2 (Advanced course 2, the

third year of study) is high. An analysis done by Markussen (1998:38) studying *teachers' judgements* of the need for special educational provision reveals a similar direction. Is this a kind of mechanical drop-out, that in some cases happens automatically, or do pupils have serious reasons for not finishing? Støren & Skjersli (1999:7-8) show that the 'flow-through' of *mainstream pupils* has considerably improved in the wake of this reform. What are the reasons for this pattern of difference between 'pupils with special needs' and mainstream pupils? The main theme of this section is the analysis of learning conditions and accompanying processes during transitions between course levels, in an attempt to understand and explain these results.

What does our research show concerning these transitions? The routes followed by the 'special needs pupils' through the school sector of their education would seem to go *back and forth* between types of courses and levels. Change of status from a 'pupil with special needs' to a mainstream status, and vice versa, is also part of this picture. Switching from one subject area of study to another and being divorced from a particular area of study are also phenomena that are found, such as going from an academic branch of study to a vocational branch of study. This dynamic is particularly strong during the transition from the first to the second year of study (Myklebust 1999). The flow pattern of the pupils, "back and forth between branch and level of study and between categories of

study and between categories of deviation" in the transition between the first and second school year, makes analysis of the ways 'special educational needs' have been met in the mainstream classes during the first two years particularly important. The classes may be vocational or general studies classes. In these classes there are various subgroups of pupils. We use the administrative distinctions between mainstream pupils on admitted on ordinary terms, pupils admitted on special terms ('pupils with special needs') and what we call 'grey-area pupils'. We have tried to follow these individuals in and out of these categories during their transitions between courses at the upper secondary level. Do we find any patterns in the allocation and administration of special educational measures? What does it tell us about our one-track system of special educational provision within the mainstream classes?

Special educational measures: mass-produced or tailor-made?

The extensive data in reports from teachers and school counsellors were important sources in our efforts to define patterns in learning conditions and processes. This is data on individual pupils and their learning situations, data which the pupils have given us permission to collect anonymously for almost two and a half years, every spring and autumn. Regarding the learning situation for *the pupils categorised as having special educational needs* in mainstream classes, informants report that

several different types of differentiation measures are used, such as time extensions during exams, technical aids, pupil assistants, twin-teacher arrangements, remedial teaching in small groups, individual remediation periods in and outside the regular class, the Work-Production-School course (specially designed for pupils after proposal to start directly in practical work and production) and work experience, to mention a few (Kvalsund 1997a; 1997b; 1998 a, b, c). From an inclusive perspective, it is expected to communicate with the pupils individually and to combine special educational measures which reflect an interest in individualising the combination of measures. Combinations of measures listed above would thus be one indicator of individualised and inclusive-orientated special educational practice.

The general pattern for the pupils categorised as having special educational needs involves special measures outside the mainstream classes. This is also apparent from the fact that eight out of ten pupils in vocational classes and nine out of ten in the general study classes have no experience of a twin-teacher arrangement as a differentiation measure. Comprehensive analyses have been made of possible combinations of measures as additive variables. Combinations of this kind indicate whether the special adaptation has been made in concrete terms on the basis of the learning situation for each individual pupil,

in other words individual differentiation not only in word, but also in deed.

The analyses show an almost unambiguous picture: combined measures are rare. The pupils classified as having special educational needs and their specially adapted teaching are exported out of the mainstream classes into separate classes and groups in other rooms, with other teachers than the regular classroom teacher, and often grouped together with pupils from other classes categorised similarly, often after the mainstream pupils have gone home for the day. So they have in many cases been placed into some kind of "exhibition of deviance" position. The general subjects of Norwegian language, mathematics and English top the list of subjects that cause pupils problems and lead to remedial teaching outside the ordinary class. This is clearly the general pattern (Kvalsund 1997c: 217 ff, Kvalsund 1998a: 105ff), and one which also corresponds with Markussen's (1998:18-22) findings. His analyses of 777 pupils receiving specially adapted teaching from the 1994 intake cohort show that most of the specific remedial subject teaching is organised as segregated arrangements, individual teaching or in groups outside of the mainstream class. A similar pattern is found for the upper secondary schools, particularly in Oslo (Nordahl & Overland 1998:104).

The pattern becomes even clearer when comparing the measures for the same pupils at various *points of time* during

the first and second years of upper secondary education. The occurrence of *combined measures* as a decisive sign of individual differentiation occurs too rarely to be registered as significant. Combinations of two such measures are rare, and combinations of three differentiation measures are nearly non-existent. This pattern is the same for both 'grey-area pupils' and pupils identified as having 'special educational needs'. In other words, there is no difference in the measure profile between what the system speaks of as lesser or more needy cases. Within each of these groups of pupils, our informants report the same pattern of special educational measures at several different points in time for the same pupils, that is, early and late within each course and at the transitions from one course level to the other. Stability in the patterns over time indicates that the results express realities and are scarcely effects of methods or coincidence. The picture does not change noticeably if we analyse the *intake cohorts* of autumn 1994 and 1995 separately. Remedial teaching in separate periods seems to have become routine, a sort of repetition of a basic administrative measure, meaning that central school subjects are provided in remedial lesson arrangements. This way of thinking is often part of the established everyday talk among those who are responsible for planning special measures, such as "It must be possible to fix up a couple of support lessons", as if that was the only and most self-evident measure. The question of

whether the basic problem is the pupil's insufficient knowledge of the subject is hardly addressed. This mechanical, superficial "that something is done about it" approach is also common at lower levels in the school system and is even used in cases of social emotional problems. Behavioural difficulties in the classes are handled by offering support lessons in the theoretical school subjects of mathematics and Norwegian and English. Analysis of the learning situation and conditions are hardly undertaken. It is very close to the picture of a *standard specially adapted mass-production of remedial periods* for those who are seen as carriers of the problem – 'the pupils with special educational needs' – and in this way exporting the problem pupils out of the regular class. (cf. Kvalsund 1997c, Kvalsund 1998a).

This seems to be usual practice at lower school levels as well. Sørli & Nordal (1998:248) have assessed the situation in elementary school regarding measures for pupils with behavioural difficulties, and using Skaarbrevik's (1997) mapping of the situation in the elementary school, they conclude: "If we exaggerate the situation a bit, it can be claimed that the most common measure in relation to behavioural difficulties in elementary school is specially adapted teaching in Norwegian, mathematics and English".

This conclusion is based on data about the dominant measure – the remedial lesson in

combination with lacking combined measures at various times during the Basic Course and of the Advanced Course. The analyses of the mass data reveal a strong segregating differentiation profile, one of *exclusion rather than inclusion*. The remedial and support lesson has become a routinely provided measure. This is far from the intention of special educational measures being tailor-made and is completely opposed to the aim of Reform 94 to develop inclusive programmes for specially adapted teaching and learning processes. But it is clearly compatible with the instrumental aim of qualifying the mainstream pupils into the labour force.

What picture do we get of the learning conditions for the 'special needs pupils' when we look behind the statistical figures and mass data in the mainstream classes, and instead ask pupils about their experiences in school?

Specially adapted teaching – a jigsaw puzzle?

To start at a particular upper secondary school 'pupils with special educational needs' must have their needs documented by assessment carried out by experts. As a consequence, they arrive at the new school with resources earmarked for the adaptation of their learning situation. Others have for a variety of reasons had their applications for extra resources turned down and enter the new learning situation as 'ordinary pupils'. A third category includes those who simply turn up or are contacted by schools that have vacancies in some of

their classes and courses at the beginning of term. During the first few months, a number of these pupils turn out to be in great need of specially adapted programmes according to their teachers. What happens to the pupils during the first term and from then on in their education? This is a question we have posed to those who are in the midst of just that situation (Kvalsund 1997a, 1997b, 1997c).

The interview data tell us that the schools are not in a position to have an overview or control over what happens during the transition to upper secondary school. The situation involves conflicting interests. The remedial lessons are not necessarily a measure planned simply with the pupils in mind. Heads of department and administrative staff who have knowledge of the extent of specially adapted teaching measures claim that the remedial periods are just as often a balancing item, in the efforts to fill up the teaching posts for all teaching staff - in other words, an administrative matter. Support lessons are a way of solving the problem of surplus teachers by establishing or closing down teaching courses – an important part of Reform 94 reducing the number of basic courses from 113 to 13. But the remedial lessons receive their social meaning from another process as well, namely the distribution of remedial lessons. The remedial lessons turn out to be tasks many teachers do not wish to accept. The lessons are therefore just as likely to be a solution to the administrative problem of distributing

the burden of remedial lessons as they are measures intended for the 'pupils with special educational needs'. Whether the teachers are qualified to handle the challenges of the remedial lessons is not a requirement during the planning of such measures. Administrative considerations determine the pedagogic approach. Pedagogic considerations vis-à-vis each individual pupil are either not recognised, or each pupil has to take second place (cf. Båtevik, Kvalsund & Myklebust, 1997:25ff).

The teaching of general studies has as a basic presupposition that these subjects are to be taught in a class that works its way through the material in steps and in accordance with a set mainstream pattern toward qualifying for the final exam. But this fact dictates the premises in the work of planning specially adapted teaching measures: can the pupil manage to keep abreast of the work? This is the all-important question in dealing with the challenge of pupil variation, since the subject matter to be taught is a fixed entity. It is the pupil who has to make adjustments. During several interviews with teachers and representatives for the administrative staff, a common attitude towards the 'pupils with special needs' becomes apparent: "They can't keep up!" or "They don't fit in!" And we might add: they don't fit in with the standardised teaching planned with the staff, the rest of the mass of pupils, and the dissemination of common teaching material, knowledge considered "in the interests

of the nation" to be taught. This indicates that the administrative considerations are given precedence over the pedagogical ones, not only for the sake of the teachers, but also for the mainstream pupils. In such cases, the teacher as a pedagogical expert has abdicated. The traditional pedagogical approach, where a subject is taught in a classroom by a single teacher, fits the main administrative concern like a glove: to solve the puzzle of getting the timetable to fit together and to carry out the teaching of all pupils other than 'those with special needs'. So we face a jigsaw puzzle of administrators and teachers trying to avoid specially adapted teaching.

The situation in vocational classes – 'Still more time behind a desk'?

Looking behind the figures and mass data in vocational classes, the interviews reveal that the twin-teacher or learning assistant approach is not necessarily an offensive attempt at individualising differentiation of teaching and learning. The arrangement is adapted to compensate for other problems, such as changes in the age-composition of a class and 'keeping the lid on' the problem, an effect of the reform giving priority to the pupils coming from lower secondary school. This is quite a different 'syllabus' from the one described in the plans. It offers clearly less training in the workshop compared to that of the vocational studies before the reform. It is more appropriate to refer to what happens as youth-cultural outcomes divorced from

the production. Before the reform, older pupils enjoyed a natural authority from the younger pupils. After the reform, the older pupils are no longer guaranteed a school place. So lessons have changed accordingly. Natural authority is replaced by having extra teachers in the class. Together these changes aggregate to a marked shift of emphasis, from self-discipline and learning to ones of external control and surveillance. The teaching is altered from being based on an emerging self-confidence to being designed on the basis of an outer mistrust. When this is the teaching context, the twin-teacher system emphasises the asymmetry between teachers and pupils, and turns workshop teaching into a struggle for hegemony and the power to decide what is to be learnt or what is to be the focus of the learning situation, for example themes from youth culture or topics from the National Curriculum (cf. Edvardsen 1979, 1983). In this version, the twin-teacher system becomes a defensive control measure aimed at preventing the lesson from falling apart, more than a measure designed to assist and promote meaningful learning. This reflects the difficult learning situation typical of vocational courses, with an accumulation of demanding challenges when it comes to specially adapted individualised teaching programmes (see Båtevik, Kvalsund & Myklebust, 1997:37ff).

Another measure employed is parallel periods for the classes involved, thus

allowing for greater freedom in using teacher resources. However, this is no guarantee that the specially adapted programmes will develop the more positive characteristics of the pupils administratively identified as having special educational needs. In most cases, measures are determined by an underlying issue: the automatic focus on the pupil's negative 'characteristics', 'his/her problems'. Gathering 'pupils with special needs' for remedial teaching in separate groups ensures in itself that attention is focussed on the deficiencies, the difficulties, and on what the pupil does not master in theoretical subjects (which have become more abstract as a result of the reform). This focus on deficiencies appears to be deeply rooted in the organisation. A study of the anonymous case lists, both those on paper and those electronically stored, reveals that, with very few exceptions, the focus is on problems and deficiencies, with no information acknowledging the pupil's personal resources, pointing to possibly inclusive activities, or of any systematic diagnosis of the learning conditions in question (Båtevik et al., *ibid.*).

The interview material also provides evidence of what type of information is handed over from teacher to teacher during the various stages of the pupils' school career. How does this happen? Information about pupils appears to be characterised by its being approximate and passed on orally.³ In this way, it is easy for new groups of teachers to use short-term measures in accordance with the usual pattern –

'a couple of remedial lessons'. The informants make the following claim on the basis of their experience: the vocational courses on offer are extremely split up and linked to the specialised qualifications of each individual teacher. This results in many actors who have to communicate about the learning progress of each individual 'grey-area pupil' and each 'pupil with special needs'. In addition, the teachers' experience is largely based on a professional tradition that puts little down in writing. The professional jargon related to work experience is more highly developed than the jargon of concepts from psychology and educational theory that were part of their professional teacher training. The emphasis is placed on a few brief labels for difficulties and problems such as 'difficulties in concentrating', 'behavioural difficulties', 'problems in reading and writing', after which it is left to the individual teacher to interpret the label into concrete implications. Interviews with school counsellors very often refer to the problems involved in getting teachers of vocational subjects to express themselves in writing precisely and in detail. Metaphorically speaking, it would appear that the vocational subject teachers 'drop the baton during the change-over' or transition between course levels (Båtevik et al., *ibid.*).

It is not unusual to find classes with an accumulation of 'grey-area pupils', in addition to 'those with special needs'. Usually, one does not become aware of this situa-

tion until a few weeks into the first term. Some pupils drop out early on, as in the case of general studies courses, where 'pupils with special needs' and 'grey-area pupils' often attend without ever being aware of why they are there. If they have been offered a place, they often tend to stay there even though that is not what they would really like to do. Our informants maintain that as early as the 4th grade of elementary school, they were in a position to forecast that these pupils would end up studying vocational subjects (Båtevik et al., *ibid.*). This would seem to indicate that a powerful system of indicators is functioning long before the pupils reach the upper secondary level, a typical self-fulfilling prophecy.

Almost 50% of the 'pupils with special educational needs' drop out of their courses before they finish two years in upper secondary school. Upper secondary education in vocational courses does not represent a new beginning for many pupils, who long before they reach upper secondary level have had more than enough of the abstract and 'still more time at a desk-school'. In upper secondary school they are asked to bear even a heavier burden.

'It has just turned out this way' – the voices of informal groups of pupils

In upper secondary school, the specially adapted teaching outside the mainstream class gets its form and content by way of formal arrangements. What then about the informal aspects of the matter? In the first place, unique varie-

ties of specially adapted teaching can be found, cases of informal, organised differentiation. These arrangements 'have just turned out that way', as reported several times previously (see Kvalsund 1998b: 42-60). Suffice it to mention two of them briefly here, those I have referred to as "The eye of the needle" and "Tough nut to crack". In many ways, these two types represent two extremes when it comes to a basis for specially adapted teaching programmes. 'The eye of the needle' refers to the category of cases where a teacher attempts to create a 'functional handicap' and 'behavioural problems', even though there are no grounds for these, in order to get a pupil removed from a class. 'Tough nut to crack' is a category of cases in which the grounds for inclusion are obvious to everyone, but where even so, nothing is done. This often occurs indirectly, by no action being taken and without any formal decisions being made. In many respects, these categories can be characterised as exclusion on informal grounds, and they illustrate how weak the position of the pupils is in school, even though school is supposed to exist primarily with the pupils in mind.

However, such processes also exist in formalised versions. 'Classes with a reduced number of pupils' is the common name for the more or less permanent groups of pupils outside the mainstream classes, traditionally known as 'bands of four' or 'bands of eight'. (These are forms of specially adapted

teaching that are intimately woven into the history of the field of special education in Norway, not to be discussed in greater detail here).

In order to reveal the breadth in these variations on the theme of special adaptation outside the mainstream class, I have distinguished between various categories of cases in the analyses of the focus interviews that were carried out in the intensive part of the project over a period of a year and a half. They have been given semantically illustrative labels with the aid of metaphors in the same way as in the informal cases described above. Here, I briefly refer to some of these case categories, to illustrate the main points (see also, Kvalsund & Myklebust 1998a: 25-98). The first variation has been named '*Pas de deux*': the band of four may be further reduced in number a short while after it has been instigated. Initially, the whole arrangement may be intended as a plan to develop such as independence and a higher work rate in relation to school exercises. And the progress of the mainstream class is not slowed down. Those who remain – here two pupils with special needs – develop disqualifying dependent relationships and patterns of behaviour that isolate and screen them from the other pupils actually reinforcing the problems of learning. '*The moron group*' is another case category. This refers to bands of eight or four – not necessarily in a separate group – who have a case history from elementary and lower secondary school

that is such that in all earnestness it reminds the teacher of his/her own limitations when the challenges become a little more difficult than expected: "Yes, but teacher, remember we're a moron group". They have learnt with conviction to believe that they do not know anything within the context of schooling. As soon as something has been completed, the question is asked, "Can we go now, please, teacher?" They document creativity and the ability to solve problems, such as by cunningly managing to get time off school without it being registered as absence. The fact that these pupils are attending upper secondary school is a project initiated by their parents, guardians or teachers. These particular pupils often have their eyes focussed on the "fifth wall", the one way beyond the four walls of the classroom.

The third case category is *'Those assigned a place'*. These are often pupils administratively classified as having varying degrees of 'mental handicap' and various types of additional difficulties. They form bands of four in separate units of the building with teachers who have special qualifications. The pupils are involved in a combination of social training and subject learning. Attempts by these usually well-qualified teachers to involve the rest of their colleagues in a wider inclusion of these pupils in the social fabric of the school have failed. The protected environment means that they can react with unrest and fear of unfamiliar sound patterns and situations. Another example of other case categories is *'Master builder*

against his will'. This is a concrete example of a permanent offer of teaching on various basic courses in bands of eight, shared among the schools, without the pupils themselves having expressed any desire to attend the courses.⁴

All these categories are very different but are important parts in the overall picture because they share a fundamental common feature – they are all variations of segregated settings of differentiation. Claims for the pupils' need for help, protection, or concentration have traditionally been the key arguments in favour of these permanently segregated groups. The basic idea communicated to me in the interview is that in this way the pupils are offered help on the basis of their own prerequisites, based on the degree of the 'handicap'. These are pedagogical arguments that focus on the learning benefits the arrangement affords the 'pupils with special needs'. Whether this is the case in practice is, as I have discussed, altogether another matter. But the other side of the coin, that this separation has important advantages for the teachers and pupils in the mainstream classes, can be read between the lines of the interviews. The other pupils can be offered teaching at the usual rate of progress and the teachers can continue to teach pupils who march in step through the various modules. 'It has just turned out this way'. The mainstream arrangements and the associated conditions of teachers and administrators determine this excluding kind of 'inclusion' of 'pupils with special educational needs'.

Attempts at understanding and explanation

As I stated in the beginning of this article, ‘pupils with special needs’ wander back and forth, alternating one year in special needs arrangements and the next year in ordinary conditions. Even so, the basic pattern is that a great many drop out of school during the first two years. Only a few of them return to school. Above we have analysed and described details of the situation and identified patterns of what happens for formal and informal groups of pupils. A more detailed attempt at understanding and explaining the patterns is necessary. It is also essential that we analyse the changes outside classrooms and schools in order to understand what happens inside them. This is the starting point of an attempt to understand, as the following sections discuss.

‘Educationalising’ the process of qualifying – reducing and eliminating variation?

An ever-increasing number of children and young people experience school as the dominate arena for interaction, not least as a result of the various educational reforms of the 1990s in Norway. For some, this represents an indisputable guarantee of quality in their adolescent environment. But at the same time, the reforms have led to a narrowing of the field of experience from cultural work and play for those who are growing up today. Reform 94 has therefore less apparent limitations that alter the approach

to a number of the problems associated with growing up and qualifying for a school-pedagogical project – a project within the four walls of the classroom, facing the blackboard, sitting at desks. Reform 94 is, in other words, part of a tradition of restrictive transformations - from qualification by way of interaction in production, the local community and the growing-up environment to one of teaching, the classroom, and a desk. An alternative understanding of Reform 94 may therefore be what we could call the ‘educationalising’ of society’s problems by way of reforms.

An example of this tendency is the reduction of the number of foundation courses, which in turn makes the remaining basic courses more abstract, which then results in differentiation problems in the classroom at the basic course level. Education at the upper secondary level in Norway lacks alternatives to attending school as a standard arrangement. This is a deficiency of the educational sector of Reform 94, one that creates problems. The ‘educationalising’ of the process has thus, without doubt, been instrumental in young people being given status as ‘pupils with special needs’, in the ways in which departures from the norm are understood, and in the fact that these pupils react towards the specially adapted teaching they are offered by dropping out of school. They have had the chance to try their luck together with the other ‘ordinary pupils’ without succeeding. Possible academic or social

defeats are therefore something they themselves have responsibility for, ones that are therefore somehow 'just' and 'deserved'. The school seems to want them to believe that they had an opportunity, but did not use it. And it is a short distance from this situation to an incipient exclusion from one's feelings of self, from one's positive sides, those dimensions that might have been developed into something greater with a little support. Solid contributions to the belief that one cannot succeed become for many of the 'pupils with special needs' a likely consequence of the restrictive educational arrangements that the educational sector of Reform 94 represents for this category of pupils. These pupils are not assisted by the school to come to know their strengths in contexts outside the school. Institutionalising by means of the abstract school represents a considerable negative contribution in the handling of pupil variation. This is clearly the gate keeping or sorting function of the upper secondary school. This is done by a major process of transforming external structural conditions of schooling into disabling learning conditions at classroom level – under the label of inclusion and educational differentiation.

Strategies of educational differentiation - an instrumental mechanism

On the background of this 'educationalising' of the terms of apprenticeship, the empirical analyses provide a basis for identifying two radically opposed patterns of differentiation and special

adaptation of the school situation, when the extensive and intensive data are seen as a whole. The one pattern I have chosen to call *Competence-oriented differentiation*, indicating that the main concern is the fundamental areas of knowledge, that is the theoretical school subjects, the knowledge that is considered permanent and seen to be in the nation's interest to communicate as competence to new cohorts about to enter adult society as labour force. This variant of differentiation is based on an essentialist view of knowledge. This is upper secondary education seen as an instrument in the maintenance and development of society. Part of that project is to carry out a diagnosis focussed on each individual 'pupil with special needs' (Kvalsund & Myklebust 1998a: 161-169). The pattern has been summarised briefly in the table below. The content includes more systematic answers to questions about aims, basic knowledge, the relationship between learning and teaching, an understanding of time, the role of the teacher, making diagnoses, and an understanding of the relationship between normality and deviation, among other things. Pedagogically relevant terms are thus empirically rooted in findings that are documented above (Kvalsund 1997c, 1997d; 1998). This also applies to the second pattern of differentiation, called *Valuation-oriented differentiation* and referring to specially adapted learning activities based on existential considerations of the pupil combined with a diagnosis of the system and conditions. Valua-

tion-oriented differentiation focus on pupil self-understanding, formation of an identity, and the development of competence in the pupil on his/her own terms. This represents a constructivist view of knowledge. These aspects are virtually non-existent in the principles on which specially adapted teaching is based in Reform 94, ones which in actual practice are found only as exceptions to the rule. (See Kvalsund & Myklebust 1998:118-126, Kvalsund 1999). And the arenas of qualification are of-

ten outside the school, in society and the larger culture. What this implies is that school is designed to achieve the *instrumental* goals of qualifying a mobile labour force by means of de-contextualized abstract knowledge designed for a chosen range, 'the main stream pupils'. The dominant way of educational differentiation, *the Competence-oriented differentiation*, is part of a disability-focused and deficit-driven programme of qualification, one which is dominating the reform.

Table 1. Identified patterns of educational differentiation of teaching and learning in relation to the 'time-table culture'

	Competence-oriented: Excluding	Valuation oriented: Including
Content	Basic knowledge in abstract subjects	Development of identity and knowledge
Methods	Collective traditional classroom teaching – pupils in step through teaching modules	Teaching methods eventually selected and combined by their contribution to pupil learning
Teacher role	Standard procedures – controlling assignments, explaining new subject matter	Problem-solving, supportive and counselling
Orientations of goals	Predefined end points	Turning points of the process
Perspective of deviance	Focusing on individual characteristics, diagnosing the person	Focus on the situation (person, conditions and processes)
Conception of time	Linear – as times goes by	Circular – when now is the time
Focus of measures	Pupil with special needs	System, situation, pupil with special needs
Educational priority	1. administration, 2. teaching, 3. learning	1.learning, 2. teaching, 3.administration
Power and authority	According to position	According to contribution to pupil learning
Dominating organisational characteristics	Bureaucratic according to 'time-table culture'	Organic

The competence-oriented form of differentiation enjoys a very dominating place in upper secondary education in Norway. The way the pupils categorised as having special educational needs experience this narrow form of differentiation and the lack of communication and special adaptation are more than reason enough in their own right for choosing to drop out of school. But alternatively, such experiences can weaken the pupil's attitude to learning and training to such a degree that what under normal circumstances would be external factors too weak to be tempting may now result in the pupil deciding to quit school. It is difficult not to conclude that the dominating competence-oriented differentiation results in exclusion. These are the didactical features of the 'system-diagnosis' that has been presented above and will be examined in more detail in what follows.

The variants of differentiation are grounded in the core values of a joint organisational culture of upper secondary schools.

'The timetable culture' – Core values

Several excluding mechanisms are identified that are active in the course of the educational training that takes place in upper secondary school. There are no marked differences between general study and vocational courses in this respect. These mechanisms are not something that the 'pupils with special needs' choose to be exposed to. The mechanisms are pedagogically, and not

least administratively, deeply rooted in the school system. The 'special needs pupils' can therefore hardly avoid experiencing them. No matter how the data set is viewed in the analyses, the same underlying factors can be seen: 'the rules of behaviour' for *the adult world of the upper secondary school*, in particular the timetable and the fact that all the pieces must fall into place, create very special conditions for learning. At the core one can find specially adapted teaching programmes provided on the adults' terms, but with certain nuances between general studies and vocational courses.

I have chosen to call the mechanism *the timetable culture*. This culture is thus deeply rooted in the administrative arrangements and routines that are linked to the timetable, such as the sharing of the workload. The timetable expresses the teacher's understanding of him/herself as the mentor responsible for dispensing knowledge, the one who is responsible for the periods in the class as a collective. (cf. Monsen 1999). Specially adapted, individualising teaching is not the point of departure for this way of thinking. It is this plan that dissects the qualification project into small pieces, such as subjects, periods, classes, rooms, breaks, holidays, tests, in such a way that the teachers only in exceptional cases focus on the learning of each individual pupil as their point of departure. The ways the pupil learns and qualifies for the work he/she is to do after leaving upper sec-

ondary school is therefore also rarely part of the explicit agenda. The timetable is primarily a tool that ensures that the school subject is taught according to the agreed plan. Schools, which are intended to be a place for learning, in this way become first and foremost a place for teaching. The timetable is drawn up by the administration long before questions regarding content-oriented differentiation for individual pupils can be raised, whether they are mainstream pupils or pupils on special conditions. Deadlines and work schedules are more important than the pupils' current learning processes. The order created by the plan also involves limitations that often lead to the specially adapted teaching programmes being handed over to specialists such as specialist groups, specially qualified teams of counsellors and teaching experts, thus out of the hands of the regular teaching staff. In this way a number of conflicts are subdued, and responsibility is transferred from the teacher to the specialists. A key feature of the timetable culture is thus not simply the timetable in itself, but the many patterns of action that are 'a matter of course' and are based automatically on the timetable. Thus, they become 'impossible to do anything about' and socially just as solid as a brick wall (Barth 1994).

The regular form teachers and school counsellors, however, make it clear that general studies classes can have up to thirty pupils, of whom three or more are grey-area pupils and with a correspond-

ing number of 'pupils with special needs'. With such frame factors, specially adapted teaching programmes designed with the individual pupil in mind are virtually impossible to put into effect. Reforms with a pedagogical content aimed at individualisation have for a number of years been the subject of discussion on the basis of the analyses of co-initiated frame factors. The reforms are over-ambitious because they have not been given the frame factors that make it possible to realise the intention of individualisation (cf. Dahllöf 1967, 1971, Lundgren 1987). The standardisation for the teaching collective or class is put in place before the individually adapted special programmes. This claim is supported by the pupils' interviews about how long they have to wait before getting an answer or help. Also, in the interviews both teachers and form teachers assess these learning conditions in the same ways. But the interview material shows that there are also other factors that help to force the type of measures selected in the direction of being restrictive *competence-oriented*.

What becomes apparent is a sort of pattern of indifference, or "a matter of course" approach, on the part of the administration and the teachers, one which they slip into when it comes to the specially adapted teaching programmes, mainly characterised by remedial periods and the lack of combined differentiation measures. The sharing of the workload among the

teachers is balanced using this mechanism, and the work situation for the teachers is also thereby clarified. A key question is how many remedial periods there is room for in the timetable. Whether or not remedial periods are the arrangements that can best function in relation to the aim of aiding the learning process for each individual 'pupil with special needs' is of secondary importance. In the planning process, priority is given to the issues of administration and effective use of time, rather than to the pedagogical substance of the measures involved. In the timetable culture, teaching is readily understood to automatically guarantee learning. The administrative forms or the teaching structures and the work situation of the adults come first. Taking consideration of all pupils' ('mainstream', 'grey-area' or 'with special needs') communication and learning also have a secondary status. Their desire to live their young lives and find out about vital existential questions are seen as of little relevance in determining the course of teaching – 'the pupils with special needs' have been allotted a maximum time allowance.

The *valuation-oriented perspective* is relevant in a special way within the timetable culture. This perspective becomes an example of what Argyris (1982) calls "espoused theory", a Sunday-best theory that school would like to dress up in and be a supporter of, in principle. The pedagogical rhetoric fetches its range of ideas from this ap-

proach to differentiation. But it is *the competence-oriented differentiation* strategy that is actually put into practice. I have illustrated that this pattern of action is stable over time, both in the general study and into vocational study courses, and has become a set routine with a distinct taste of being "automatic". It is the active everyday theory in operation in the organisation in the vast majority of cases, and has been empirically documented by way of the methodical approach with a three-point anchoring, the statistical figures, time and spoken words, as discussed earlier.

The mechanical features (Burns & Stalker 1961) of the timetable culture are the result of what Weick (1995) calls "sense-making" in organisations. The timetable, the periods, the breaks, the allocation of rooms, the subjects, and not least the teaching, all mean that events resemble something that has happened before, become recognisable, and give meaning, that is "make sense". This removes anxiety and insecurity about the coming day. This timetable culture creates security for the staff. Even so, this does not prevent the organisation from creating unintended consequences that are very negative for various actors. The pupils are thrown head-on into a system that has been administratively reformed to facilitate the effective flow of the mainstream pupils. The meaningful component at the core of this system, deciding the pattern of "what makes sense" according to Weick (1995:170), is what I have

chosen to call *the timetable culture* which most probably is not recognised as such by the members of the organisation. It is therefore the timetable culture with its many routines that is 'the most demanding special pedagogical case for treatment' in the school sector of the upper secondary education system. Changing the perspective from a pupil-focus to a system-focus, the 'priests' of this organisational culture have definitely 'special educational needs', but without their being conscious about it.

The training of the mainstream pupils and thus *the instrumental considerations* that are given to the vast majority of the pupils, is the key element in the reform process, at the expense of taking account of a teaching content that can give *a meaningful life and identity* also for the 'pupils with special needs'. The emphasis on a theoretically abstract educational content in the interest of the nation wins the day, at the expense of the principle of specially adapted teaching based on individual characteristics with a focus on the pupil's learning conditions and process. Reform 94 has general aims of achieving a greater flow tempo and higher theoretical demands. The origin of the problems that 'pupils with special needs' meet in their upper secondary education is simply this flow tempo and the theoretical demands, and not least in how tempo and abstraction are handled by the schools as organisations at subject, pedagogical, and administrative levels.

The empirical analyses reveal organisations that have come a great deal further in accommodating the staff's teaching and administrative efforts than in facilitating their pupils' learning. This is particularly apparent in the case of the 'pupils with special needs', which is contrary to key presuppositions in Reform 94. The frame factors and processes that lead to these results are as unexpected as they are clear. Through their management, administration and professional activity, schools first and foremost ensure that teachers can carry out, and that the administration can administer, 'competence-giving' teaching, in accordance with the weighty traditions of 'the timetable culture'. By way of this mechanism, Reform 94 is interpreted according to the norms for 'pupils with special needs'. Therefore many schools continue to organise segregated teaching in bands of four and eight, and the remaining differentiation resources are mainly channelled towards measures outside the mainstream class, all of which is interpreted to be in accordance with the presuppositions of Reform 94. The pupils categorised as having special educational needs concentrate on a hidden curriculum, learning how to accept that defeat is just and fair, and learning to accept that they lack the qualities necessary to be successful. The features in Reform 94 that were intended to benefit the majority, that is the mainstream pupils, emphasise the difficulties in the learning circumstances for those who experience the most demanding learning situation.

The question is whether the differences in learning circumstances between the mainstream pupils and 'pupils with special needs' are so great that we can speak of a conflict of interests that is serious. But just as important is the fact that the lack of specially adapted teaching programmes for 'the pupils with special needs' at the same time represents *specially adapted teaching circumstances and needs for the staff*, based on the organisation's understanding of workload. Perhaps we can speak of a redefinition of special educational needs on behalf of the staff? One cannot ignore the fact that the large number of pupils who drop out of school may represent an attempt by some 'pupils with special needs' to maintain a reasonably positive self-image and regain their power by escaping from the system. And as shown above, the study intermission can also be a measure for pupils to regain power over own life course. The schools are in this sense reinforcing disabilities and learning difficulties of the pupils in general and especially the 'pupils with special needs'.

Upper secondary education in Norway – inclusion in disabling schools?

Are effects such as dropouts and exclusions purely the result of the upper secondary education offered under the auspices of Reform 94? In an attempt to provide a more conclusive answer, the following fact must be acknowledged: Reform 94 has bold aims in accordance with the uniform national school's way

of thinking about inclusion and individualisation. But this is to be implemented for all young people, as a general rule, embarking on the school-based first stage of training (the first two years, the school-based part of upper secondary training). This represents a considerable structural change, but it has closed the normal routes to qualification that go directly from lower secondary (comprehensive) school to professional training at work and involvement in the production process. The abstract school context is therefore ascribed extremely great importance at the commencement of upper secondary education. Neither the total number of pupils allowed per teacher in the classes nor the teacher resource per class has been altered by the introduction of Reform 94. The number of grey-area pupils and pupils with special needs in each class is high. Overall, this has increased the pressure for differentiation considerably. The content in the teaching modules for the various subjects contain few guidelines that tell the teachers anything more concrete about alternative methods of tackling the challenges that differentiation represents. My evaluation of this is that Reform 94 and the ideas of special educational provision based on the principle of inclusion has not influenced teaching practice in a way that can be registered by the data as inclusion. In addition to changes, reform also means decisions being taken concerning what is to remain as before, for example the timetable arrangements. These are also key

aspects of Reform 94. What have been described above are therefore limitations that are specific to Reform 94, with consequences for ‘the pupils with special needs’. The fact that Reform 94 does not alter the reality that the segregating differentiation just as much reflects a desired adaptation of the work situation for the staff, that in itself is also a feature that is specific to this reform.

With its increased emphasis on abstract knowledge also in the field of vocational studies, Reform 94 has strengthened the timetable culture, resulting in negative consequences for ‘pupils with special needs’. I have attempted to give social-scientific significance to these patterns by constructing both pedagogical and organisational concepts in an attempt to understand and explain the situation. With a broad base in empirical data, I have constructed the concept of the ‘the timetable culture’ in order to throw light on and explain the significant core of the training context. In this way, the organisation’s concepts of knowledge and theories of pedagogical activity are administratively rooted, with school as an organisation with bureaucratic characteristics. In this way, ‘the timetable culture’ is the work of adults. But this also indicates that administrative concerns receive priority over matters relating to pupil power, learning, subjects, and not the least special educational provision. The timetable culture goes hand in glove with the instrumental educational project in Reform 94 regarding the

Reform 94 regarding the transfer of knowledge said to be “in the nation’s interest”, at least as this is interpreted in far too many cases by those who are responsible for implementation of the reform in practice – as subject matter for one-way communicative teaching and for competence-oriented differentiation. It may feel safe, but that feeling of security for the staff comes at a price. After all, inclusion has multiple aims: to qualify and at the same time build the identities of ‘pupils with special needs’ and to qualify mainstream pupils to interact across their differences, and in this way to promote general qualities of life and inclusion in society.

As an organisational culture, ‘the timetable culture’ is a construction welded together of many strong girders. And, as its foundation, there is a set of agreements that regulate school as a place where the adult staff do a job of teaching. My attempts at understanding the pattern of dropout and quitting school for the ‘pupils with special needs’ are deeply rooted in school as an organisation giving priority to the macroeconomic values of economic growth, technological development and international economic competition. Values and interests reflected in the concepts of pupils’ self-identity, agency, life space, cultural identity, meaning of life, quality of life are scarcely visible as premises of the reform. Therefore one has to go further than introducing new concrete methods in the classroom and

altering the attitudes of the staff to effect changes. Attitudes and values do not float around freely; they originate and are rooted in social relationships and processes, socio-material arrangements, which are in turn formed by economic and cultural factors through what I have called the process of 'educationalising' upper secondary school. Thus, at the school level within Reform 94, the pupils are hardly understood as individuals, a view acknowledging and respecting the fact that differences of impairment, experience and culture create and develop the uniqueness of each pupil. Rather, our attention is on mass-produced, deficit-driven, disability-focused teaching programmes and the associated administration of resources according to 'needs' such as giving all pupils 'equal opportunities to succeed or fail'. And this happens mainly because upper secondary level is designed for a selected band of pupils, namely the mainstream. This produces the paradoxical "excluding inclusion", exclusion within the system and exclusion in the form of breaking out of courses and dropping out of school.

These results point in the same direction as other research studies. Schools often generate failure among pupils and consequently develop a kind of special needs provision to manage or compensate for that failure (cf. Fulcher 1989, Vlachou 1997, Skrtic 1991, 1997). Skrtic refers to the traditional psycho-medical paradigm (seeing special needs as arising out of factual characteristics

of children), creating a false picture of special education as a rational response to the needs of children. According to Skrtic, 'special needs' are constructed within a social context which plays an active part in constructing what is regarded as 'needs' and 'special needs'. He argues for deconstructing the relationship between special education and mainstream education. Then we can understand what lies 'behind special education': a discriminatory education system serving primarily the interests of those who are already well resourced and socially advantaged, including the mainstream education system itself as well as teachers, administrators and special educational professionals. The reason for this is that they benefit most by having access to segregated alternatives for children that otherwise threaten the status quo of the mainstream.

Thus, changing the pattern of exclusion requires steps that go far outside the four walls of the classroom. In this way, the large dropout percentage of 'pupils with special needs' is governed by excluding frame factors and processes established deeply in the school-based part of upper secondary level and in the culture of the training under Reform 94. My analysis of the pupil's transitions between courses shows pupils quitting school to avoid the disabling mechanisms of schooling. As a risky consequence, he/she regains the power of his/her own life course for some time, perhaps also a quality of upper second-

dary school's reinforcing and creating disabilities. So far, upper secondary education under Reform 94 is hardly valuing pupil variation within an inclusive education perspective. On the other hand, we can certainly speak of inclusion in disabling schools – within a false one track system taking into consideration first and foremost the interests of the nation, the staff and the mainstream pupils in upper secondary school.

Notes

¹ This article reports research from the national evaluation of the Norwegian reform of upper secondary education focusing on the school situation for 'pupils with special educational needs'. The research is funded by the Department of Culture and Science. Møre Research Foundation and Volda University College have got the assignment to follow up pupils who are administratively categorized as 'pupils with special educational needs' under the auspices of Reform 94 and to analyse the learning situation along the way. The in-company training section of vocational upper secondary education has been taken up as a continuation of this research work and was initiated at the turn of the year 1998-99 based on the cohorts starting upper secondary school in 1994 and 1995, the 1994 and 1995 cohorts of our data. This extension of the research project is mentioned specifically in the Report to the Storting, White Paper no 32, 1998-99. From 2001 we have got funding from the Research Council of Norway (RCN) to follow these young adults out into society and try to trace and understand the patterns of family life, work, further education and spare time activities.

² The most central Reports to the Storting (St.meld) and Norwegian Public Committee Reports(NU) are: St. meld nr 37 (1990-91) *Om organisering og styring i utdanningssektoren*, NOU 1988: 32 *For eit lærerikt samfunn*, NOU 1991:4 *Veien videre til studie- og yrkeskompetanse for alle*, St.melding nr 43 (1988/89) *Mer kunnskap til flere* og St.meld. nr 33 (1991-92) *Kunnskap og kyndighet. Om visse sider ved videregående opplæring*.

³ In addition to the interviews, this was investigated by way of a study of work notes and case documents (all

made anonymous) from this type of special adaptation work.

⁴ Cf e.g. the Study Handbook for upper secondary education in Oslo.

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