Understanding Interprofessional Collaboration - A Case Study of Professionals in a Norwegian Primary School

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Abstract

Title: Understanding Interprofessional Collaboration - A case study of professionals in a Norwegian Primary School.

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Key words: Interprofessional collaboration, child participation, inclusive education, professional identity

In attempt to ensure equal education opportunities to all children, collaboration remains a fundamental best practice element of inclusive schools in Norway, usually referred to as "one school for all". Various professionals are employed to promote equity in education.

The aim of this study was to investigate how various co-located professionals, including ordinary teachers, special needs teachers, nurses, social workers, and social educators, collaborate in an inclusive school. Among the key questions are: How do they understand and consider child participation, and how do they negotiate their professional identity from collaborative work?

I employed a qualitative descriptive case study. Using open-ended and semi-structured qualitative interview method I explored their experiences of collaborative practices and child participation, in order to gain a deeper understanding of interprofessional collaboration. I interviewed teachers, social worker, milieu therapist/special needs teacher, social educator, nurse and one school leader (Principal). The interviews with professionals showed that they were positive about interprofessionalism. They seem to share a common goal of working together to provide equal education opportunity to all children.

The processes and practices that emerged showed that professionals base their work on interprofessional values such as shared responsibility, common goals, teamwork, mutuality and flexibility. Further, I found that professionals were confident and competent about involving children to participate in all aspects that matters to them and considered equal participation opportunities. However, I noted dilemmas of fully participation of children with special needs, although this clearly varied from one child to another. Another theme that I explored, were issues of power and status differentials among teachers and teaching assistants.

Interestingly, and somewhat neglected in the existing research on interprofessionalism, the experienced of the interviewed professionals revealed the activeness of informal networks. Such networks are often 'hidden' in a formal system based school. It was found that lot of positive informal interactions take place among collaborating professionals in the school.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1   Introduction

In the face of overwhelming children needs, collaboration remains a fundamental best practice element of inclusive schools usually referred as "one school for all" in Norway (Booth & Ainscow, 1998). In a previously published report (The Education Mirror 2012) it is stated that in the autumn of 2011, 52,972 students in primary and lower secondary schools received individual decisions on special needs education. Relating to the above, it seems like in a typical Norwegian school there are challenges related to social-cultural as a result of presence of newly immigrant minority children and learning difficulties, physical impairments, behavior disorders as a result of increasing special needs children. Given this circumstance it creates a situation of diversified needs of children that demands collaborative practice of teachers and other professionals. The implication of such situations for interprofessional collaboration might be obvious. Especially in attempt to recruiting various professionals such as teachers, social workers, special educational teachers, occupational therapists, nurses, psychologists, and others to collectively address the needs of the children. A study by Lawson, (2003) provides an interesting example. Indeed it recognizes collaboration of more professionals as an essential practice of meeting every child's need. The author concludes that collaboration may be the only way to effect positive outcomes for at risk children within schools. Similarly, Friend & Cook (1990) goes further and argue that in schools, there is a variety of configurations, both formal and informal, within which collaboration may occur. Friend & Cook's argument indicates that for example, ordinary and special education teachers may work collaboratively to meet the needs of students with disabilities to ensure equality and inclusion of all children to achieve education needs. Establishing teams of professionals to help students experiencing difficulties, to establish and discuss academic standards, and to create positive working relationships among professionals and parents is necessary (Friend & Cook, 1990, p.16). Therefore, the above empirical evidence indicate that the demand for interprofessional collaboration in Norwegian schools is very key to the success of inclusive education that require a professional team that collaborates to meet the unique needs of each child and provide equal education. In light of this, teachers, and other professionals are required to share responsibility and commit to ensuring the principle of equal and providing education that meets the needs of each child (Education Core Curriculum, Norway, 1997)

While it is evident that there is wide knowledge of interprofessional collaboration, this thesis builds upon others studies by particularly investigating interprofessional collaborative and child participation practices that emerge within practice professionals working in a Norwegian school.

1.2   The purpose of the study

Given the professionals' differences in education orientations, perceptions and their work influence on children (Hill, 2012), the purpose of this study was to investigate how various co-located professionals that include ordinary teachers, special needs teachers, nurses, social workers and social educators collaborate in Norwegian schools. How they understand and considered child participation as well as how they negotiated their professional identity from collaborative work. Given the fact that training for interprofessional collaboration is typically aimed at social and health service providers than it is to educational professionals, this study provides specific knowledge on how teachers, social workers, nurses, special needs teachers collaborate in an inclusive Norwegian school. The specific research questions were;

1. What are the processes and practices involved in inter-professional collaboration in Norwegian schools?
2. Does collaborative work influence the individual professional identities of professionals in Norwegian schools, i.e., of teachers, nurses, social workers, special education teachers? If so, (how) do they negotiate for their professional identities?
3. To what extent do these professionals involve children to participate in collaborative activities that affect their lives?

1.3   The design of the study

To answer the above questions, I considered a qualitative case study. Merriam & Merriam (1998) define a case study as "a unit around which there are boundaries". Given this definition of a case study, it's therefore important to note that as regards to this study I chose to use a descriptive study rather that explanatory. The descriptive case studies zoom in on producing a full description of a phenomenon, such as an organization or event within its context (Yin, 2003). In this regard, I chose to limit myself to only "professionals" because I wanted to set a boundary and limit my study to only those practitioners that attended a certain recommended education that certifies them as professional (Leathard, 2003). Further, in this descriptive study I was not seeking to answer the cause and effect of interprofessional collaboration. Rather, my primary aim was to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of how and over what inter-professional collaborative and child participation practices are taking place among professionals who are required to meet the diversified needs of all children in the context of equal and inclusive support. To reiterate, then, the conceptual structures and premises that describe this case study enquiry is a combination of the literature and research from community social service practice, collaboration, and education within the context of interprofessional collaboration in Norwegian schools. (*See methodology in chapter three*)

1.4   School case study context

In order to explore the practices of interprofessional collaboration, I looked at one school which for purposes of confidentiality I have named it Fjorden. The name simply refers to Norway being a country of Fjords and has nothing to do with the school its self. I chose Fjorden because it is a large school with a large population of children with special needs and integrative services.
It is both a primary and lower secondary school consisting of 1st to 10th grade. It has two major departments besides the ordinary education; the alternatively customized training (ATO) and after school service (SFO). The ATO provides an exceptional training program for pupils with major general and complex learning difficulties. This service is open to children and youth with special needs from all over the municipality. (*See methodology in chapter three*).

1.5   Data collection

Therefore, using qualitative open ended and semi-structured interviews, professionals were asked to describe their experiences of collaborative practices and child participation. To find out about how and what collaborative practices, how they involved children and how they negotiated their professional identity in collaborative work, I interviewed them in their respective convenient time and places at school (*see methodology chapter three*)

1.6 Outline of the study

Having given the introduction of the study within chapter one; what now follows is to undertake the exploration of other chapters.

1.6.1 Chapter two: This chapter explores the narrowness of the literature review related to the research relevant to the study and fits the aims of the research questions. Much focus was on the history of inclusion education in Norway, legal frameworks that embrace collaboration, literature of professional collaboration in social, health and education service area, and child participation. In the same chapter, I explored and limited myself to the three relevant theoretical perspectives of understanding interprofessional collaboration, functions, activities and professional identity.

1.6.2 Chapter three is about the methodology of the study. I explain the research strategy, methods of data collection and analysis and justify how they best fit my research needs. On the same note, I describe the school case study context and the specific participants; I also explain the recruitment process, ethical considerations and delimitations.

1.6.3 Chapter four: In this chapter I outlined the results and described how they emerged. Additionally, I present the school background, the professionals, physical environment and the two major departments that prompt collaboration practices.

1.6.4 Chapter five: This is the last chapter of the study. Findings and analyses of the seven interviewed professionals is discussed. It captures the participant's voices, my interpretation, and comments from the literature, and application of theoretical explanations. It is important to note that the chapter has two sections; the first is about inter-professional collaboration practice experiences, the second section regards professionals' practice experiences of child participation. The chapter ends with a conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature review

2.1   Introduction

This chapter starts with a brief historical account of the development of educational service for children and inclusion in Norway. An attempt will be made to identify the key events, elements and factors that have influenced the success of inclusive education in Norway. Attention was also put on being interprofessional and interprofessional collaborative practice as well as considering international and national perspectives of child participation. In attempt to correctly explore and understand interprofessional collaboration, in this chapter I also presented relevant theoretical frameworks that helps to understand the study.

2.2   The history of education and inclusion in Norway

It is stated that school life is a special kind of cultural and social practice in which tensions of inclusion and exclusion of students are embedded (Walraven, 2000). Considering compulsory schooling in Norway, it dates from 1739 (Booth & Ainscow, 1998). According to the literature a parallel special education system came about because of the law of The Education of Abnormal Children passed in 1881. This law created divisions between the 'normal' and the 'abnormal', which led to the latter being regarded as uneducable. In the literature it is indicated that it was not until 1975 that full time education became available to all children including those with disabilities. Still, divisions persisted that those who were considered uneducable were taken to special schools and special classes, meaning that they were separated from their fellows and hence inclusion and natural social interactions very difficult. However, in the course of the 1960s, the idea of normalization and integration came into force in Norway, and by the 1990s, the politicians had realized that embracing normalization and integration was the only way of achieving equity in sharing welfare. Consequently, the idea of having policies that embraced educating all children in the same school or institution in order to give every child or person education regardless of abilities and aptitudes, age, gender, skin colour, sexual orientation, social background, religious or ethnic background, place of residence, family education or family finances.

Booth & Ainscow (1998) show that by 1991 many changes had taken place in education system, the legislation relating to special education was repealed and the Norwegian Education Act took control of all children of school age. Equity education became a national goal and the overriding principle that applies to all areas of education (Directorate of education, 2015). Since 1991, the special education system was transformed into a network of competence centers where teachers from ordinary schools get help and advice to support their work with children who have special needs. Currently, in Norway there is no special school or special and mainstream school, there is 'one school for all'. In another sense, 'one schools for all' has been the guiding principle of Norwegian school system since 1800s. Except for the 'abnormal', it has been the ideal that children from different class backgrounds etc., should meet each other in schools, undergo the same curriculum – the school has as such been seen as the institution that could achieve integration across class divides, etc. All children attend their local school and local authorities have the responsibility to work with all stakeholders to ensure that there is quality education for all. Basically, in Norway majority of the schools are public and free for everyone. Private schools exist and are approved pursuant to the Act relating to state grants to private schools

offering primary and secondary Education (the Private Education Act) or Sections 2-12 and 3-12 of the Act relating to primary and secondary education (the Education Act). In a recent published report (The education mirror 2012) state that the number of private primary and lower secondary schools increased rapidly from 2001-2002 (101 private Primary and lower secondary schools) to 2005-2006 (155 private primary and lower secondary schools). Since 2005-2006, the increase in the number of private primary and lower secondary schools has levelled off. This change can be attributed to the change of policy under the non-socialist government in 2001 (Nilsen, 2010). However, the current reports show that the number of children attending private school areas are still few compared to those enrolled in public schools. On the average, the private primary and lower secondary schools have fewer pupils than the public Schools. 66 per cent of the private schools have less than 100 pupils, compared with 27 per cent of all of the primary and lower secondary schools in Norway (The education mirror 2012)

2.3   The distinctive features of a Norwegian primary school

In Norway, 'basic education' refers to compulsory 10-year schooling for children aged 6–16. Other countries may define 'basic education' differently. The Norwegian education system has four levels: primary school (years 1-7); lower secondary school (years 8–10); upper secondary school (years 11–13); and higher education. The above facts are based on what is regarded a school in Norwegian context. In a previously published report (the Education mirror 2012) it is stated that in order for a unit to count as a school in a year, there shall be at least one pupil at the school. In this regard, the school which is referred to in this study is a primary and secondary lower with grade 1-10 and at least it has more than one student who receive instruction throughout until they complete the levels.

According to the education curriculum of 1997, the Primary and lower secondary school are based on the principle of equal and adapted education and training for everyone. The curriculum states that, all children and young people shall share a common knowledge, culture and value base. Primary and lower secondary education and training is free and is mainly financed by the municipalities. To ensure this, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has the overall responsibility for supervising education and the governance of the education sector, as well as the implementation of Acts of Parliament and regulations. The Directorate is also responsible for managing the Norwegian Support System for Special Education (Statped), state-owned schools and the educational direction of the National Education Centres (Directorate for Education and Training, 2015)

As regards funding and supporting the schools, most of the resources for local services are transferred from the government through the national budget, and the local politician do distribute the scarce resources in compliance of with legal requirements. Additionally, in ensuring education achievement, learning is considered as the overriding objective of schools and education. Tuition is required to enable individuals to develop their abilities and ensure that their needs for appropriate education are met. As it is clear in the (Equal education strategy 2004-2009): it is stated that that education must give academic and social competence as well as conveying values such as democracy, tolerance, equality of status and shared international responsibility. Several recent surveys have shown that Norway faces a great challenge in providing good education for pupils, apprentices and adults with ethnic minority backgrounds. However, in comparison to other OECD countries studies (PISA survey) have shown that Norway performs about average (The Education Mirror 2014)

Furthermore, great emphasis is in other official frameworks and educational guidelines. For instance the national curriculum guidelines is an officially approved document, laying down principles for educational methods and the content of each other academic subject for each school year. In the curriculum it is stated that schools and teachers are expected to make local adaptations to the "National Curriculum" and ensure that local culture is part of the curriculum (Education Core Curriculum, Norway, 1997;Booth & Ainscow, 1998).

2.4   Special needs education

For children with special needs teachers work in cooperation with other professionals, parents and sometimes, the student, develop individual learning plans choose individual learning material and set individual aims for every child. In the study of *international inclusion education*, it is stated that the term 'special educational needs' or special needs are commonly used to categorize pupils with learning difficulties, physical impairments and behavior disorders (Booth & Ainscow, 1998). The terminology implies that there is a division to be drawn between "normal" and "less than normal" learners. Other studies show that, inclusion and exclusion are addressed differently and varies among countries. Walraven (2000) discovered that inclusion and exclusion are addressed under different conceptual frameworks, disciplines and headings. For example Walraven, (2000) note that in English speaking countries inclusion has in recent years replaced the term integration within the frame work of special education. The frame of reference takes 'one school for all' as a basis and focuses on inclusive education in terms of providing equity and justice. However, Booth & Ainscow (1998) assert that when referring to integration, teachers mean the presence in ordinary school of those children who used to be transferred to special schools or classes. The empirical literature suggest that the phrase integration still demonstrates the act of identifying one group normal and the other not, therefore, 'anti-segregation has been adopted to replace integration. It's claimed that anti-segregation has good connotation and nobody is segregated at the beginning and, therefore, the challenge is to see that everybody remains in the regular school. Booth & Ainscow, (1998) in their study preferred to use the phrase 'one school for all' to mean a school with a place for every child who is born and grows up in the school district; a school where nobody needs either integration or inclusion p104. In essence, this is what (Walraven, 2000) said before, that each country has its own phrase in their frameworks of attaining education for all. What really matters is not the terms used, but the possibility of ensuring that all children are full members of the education system with full equity and inclusion.

In Norway all schools are inclusive in nature and the number of children with special needs vary from school to another depending on its location and resources. In 'one school for all' every child has the right to be given equitable and suitably adapted education' (Likeverdig og tilpasset opplæring), usually abbreviated to adapted education. Special education is regarded as a natural part of the efforts made by the school to give suitable adapted education to all.(Booth & Ainscow, 1998). Adapted education has two equally important features. The first one is the right to belong irrespective of difference of mental or physical abilities. It also applies to differences in culture, race, or sex. The second one is about the right to learn, where by every child has to be given equal opportunities to develop abilities. However, according to the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training; adapted education does not mean that all teaching is individualized, but that all aspects of the learning environment take the variations among the pupils and

apprentices into consideration. We'll all these statement stand out clearly in the Education Core Curriculum, Norway, 1997 and Equal education strategy 2004-2009).

2.5   How the opportunity of inclusion education has been promoted

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, a responsible agency for the development of primary and secondary education states that Education should encourage everyone to take responsibility in their work and social life, and prepare them for an education and an occupation in accordance with their abilities and interests, independent of traditional patterns with respect to gender, functional disabilities and social or cultural background. The directorate works in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Research to ensure that education in Norway is of the best quality and equally meets all the needs of the society. According to the directorate website it's stated that it is the executive agency for the ministry of research and education, hence taking the overall responsibility for supervising education and the governance of the education sector, as well as the implementation of Acts of Parliament and regulations (Education Core Curriculum, Norway, 1997).

In attempt to have equal education for all, the directorate emphasizes the importance of equity in education. In this regard, it suggest that all children regardless of their race and abilities that may not have same qualities to equally access education are provided with opportunities to learn and pursue education throughout their lifetime. In achieving this commitment, the educational directorate emphasizes four areas: equity education, inclusion education, adapted education and special education.

All the four areas have been adopted in the Education Curriculum 1997, and according to the published document by the directorate of education the four concepts of understanding equity education for all are described below:

2.5.1   Equity education

The Directorate of Education and Training states that to attain equity education there should be means to provide equal opportunities in education regardless of abilities and aptitudes, age, gender, skin color, sexual orientation, social background, religious or ethnic background, and place of residence, family education or family finances. Equity in Education must therefore be understood on the system level. (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2015.

2.5.2   Inclusion Education:

That everyone should participate in society on an equal basis – academically, socially and laces demands on the education arena and on each individual, who must be able to build good relations while respecting individual differences and values. Inclusion is both a process and a goal, where the educational institution should accommodate the individual's aptitudes and needs in the best possible manner. Considering the education curriculum, one of the requirement is that all children should have the opportunity to attend the same school. This imply that when considering the enrollment of the child the principle of proximity must be put into consideration. In other words, children should attend schools that are in the locality for easy access. Consequently this justifies the concept of "one for all" school.

2.5.3   Adapted education:

The school owner (the local or county authority), and the administration and staff at the educational institution must undertake to provide satisfactory and adequate teaching based on the individual's abilities and aptitudes. In this regard, adapted education is considered as practice to ensure inclusion education specifically targeting those pupils who have been identified with difficulties that requires special attention support that matches their abilities.

2.5.4   Special education:

This a right guaranteed by the Norwegian Education Act which is intended to ensure adapted and equitable education for persons who do not, or cannot, gain satisfactory benefits from the regular teaching programme. While adapted education is for everyone, the right to special education is determined by an assessment of the individual by experts.

Considering the above concept areas that describe equity education for all, it indicates that the Norwegian education system recognizes the individual specific factors to every one's personal or child's conditions and ensures that they do not interfere with the potential of education success. The second concept area of inclusion, shows that education system considers comprehensive standard that applies to everyone in a certain education system and schools or education institutions as implementing agencies have the responsibilities of accommodating every individual in the best possible ways. Empirical research show that adapted education and special education, in some studies are considered to inseparable but in light of the Norwegian education system a distinction is made to ensure that the specificities are identified to leave no child behind. The two concepts vary in way that the former shows that its open to everyone based on individual abilities and aptitudes while the latter is specific to those only who have been identified, assessed by experts and considered to receive special support.

Therefore, for the purpose of promoting equity education, has implication for meeting all the education needs of the children which may be impossible to be handled by only single person or profession. In this regard, it requires variety of professionals that will plan and perform together to meet the national educational aim of furnishing children, young people and adults with the tools they need to face the tasks of life and surmount its challenges together with others. For this to happen (Booth & Ainscow, 1998) in their international study of inclusion education- case study of Norway; suggested that a teacher must set different for the varied abilities of pupils within one classroom, use variety of materials, differentiate the content of teaching, organize work flexibly and adapt assessment procedures. However, this may not be effective if it's only done by a single teacher, it requires several of them who are working as collaborators and partners with a shared responsibility and goal. Considering the complex needs of children with special needs, it requires other experts with specialized training to provide special attention to such children. In other words it requires interprofessional collaboration practice.

However, (Willumsen & Hallberg, 2003) argue that professionals often have to obtain agreements on mutual solutions and co-ordinate competence and resources among themselves and from a variety of agencies.

Thus, for effective service delivery it will depend on how professionals collaborate among themselves, and it will further depend on the personal attitude, experience, and the will to work together. This is further articulated by (Bolin, 2011) in her study of shifting subordination; the author found that the practice ideology in the resource school illustrated a common understanding of the task of co-located collaboration around children and young people in need

of social and educational support. That there was an agreement of the social, behavioral objective based on the value that social learning is a prerequisite for subject knowledge acquisition in the school. It indicates that professional's collaborative practice was based on their shared understanding of children and young people's needs, and how they can collaborate to meet such needs. However, (Hallet, 1995; Willumsen & Hallberg, 2003) points out the dangers of interprofessional junction and consensus. That the existence of routines may mean that there is only a limited capacity to respond when an exceptionally difficult or unusual case occurs, and this may fundamentally challenge the value of consensus and require an essential form of coordinated response. Consequently, flexibility is a requirement for sometimes when things don't go as planned, professionals collaborating and the agency need to open up and find other possible ways to effect the desired change.

In addition, (Alberto & Herth, 2009) note that, this flexibility in interprofessional collaboration should go beyond transdisciplinary to include not just traditional discipline boundaries but also nontraditional disciplinary boundaries in that professional identities and traditional roles are no longer prescribed but are actively worked out and negotiated. Other authors concur that it is this partnership that creates an interprofessional team designed to work collectively to improve outcomes (Bridges, Davidson, Odegard, Maki, & Tomkowiak, 2011). For this reason it promotes a continuous process of engagement that reinforces commitment and recognizes relationship building as fundamental to the success of interprofessional collaborations where there are no losers per se but a 'win-win' relationships (Bolin, 2011).

2.6   Legal frameworks that support collaboration to ensure education for all

Particular pieces of legislations in place requires service agencies like schools to work together and improve quality and better service delivery to all groups of people in the society. Considering education in particular, some of the relevant legal policy frameworks include the Core Education Curriculum 1997, the Norwegian Education Act, 1998 and the Children Act, 1992. Both structures suggest collaborative acts among practitioners and all stakeholders in the education system.

2.6.1   The Norwegian Core Education Curriculum, (1997)

In particular, the curriculum provides an education framework for all people in Norway and ensures that education is structured in such a way that the learners themselves can take part in the further development of inherited practices and in the acquisition of new. To attain this, it suggests teamwork for contemporary teaching and learning. It requires specialized instructors to share the responsibility for teaching the individual learner, groups, and whole classes. For this reason professionals have obligations towards both the school and towards the entire course of schooling where their contribution is a necessary part of the whole. It further obligates other professional groups to work collectively together and increasingly play an important role in the education of young people, through supervised after-school activities, youth clubs, sport and other organized endeavors. More so, for purposes of mproving learning, the educational curriculum suggest schools and professionals to create working environment that facilitates everyone to appreciate each other's contribution, working with parents and the authorities who together form essential elements of the school's broad educational environment. Considering the perspective of interdisciplinary approach, the curriculum guides coordination and collaboration among professional groups to ensure good results. Besides promoting interprofessional collaboration, from a systems perspective, it requires professionals to work with parents, other

professionals outside the school and the authorities, who together form essential elements of the school's broad educational environment.

The curriculum creates an operational framework that encourages professionals with complementary skills to interact and build a shared understanding and knowledge to reach every child. In this regard, it acts as a vehicle for successful collaboration because it guides professionals and provide a leeway for commitment, teamwork, mutual goals, trust, cooperation, and others.

This aspect confirms (Kozlowski & IIgen, 2006) assertion that a collaborative team will thrive if there is a suitable environment for information sharing, communication, participative decision-making, and addressing new ideas and practices.

According to (Alberto & Herth, 2009), a suitable environment is essential for professionals who work together, with intention, mutual respect, and commitments for the sake of an adequate response to the human problem. The argument here is that, outcomes of interprofessional collaborative endeavors are produced quicker and to be of a higher quality than solitary efforts of individual professionals.

Additionally, the empirical literature shows that better environment is useful for creating teams, and teams touch our lives every day, and their effectiveness is essential to the well-being across a wide range of societal functions. For example, in a previously published report (Government White Paper, 2012) the Norwegian government seeks collaborative efforts in schools anticipating that schools with a well-functioning professional community seem to be more able to achieve good education for the pupils than schools where professionals work more individually. It is understood that school owners and school administrators facilitate room for professionals to reflect, assess and discuss with colleagues, pupils and others on how education can become more practical and varied while remaining relevant and challenging for the students. That is to say, benefits will mount up to the school, professionals, the children, and the entire community if there is a healthy environment that facilitates collaboration. Professionals working at school will gain boosts in morale, heightened engagement in their work, and a feeling that their work will net results when they collaborate.

2.6.2   The Norwegian Education Act 1998

Also again another legal framework that supports collaboration is the Norwegian Education Act, 1998. It recognizes the practice of collaboration among professionals, schools, and homes as a significant contributor to the child's education. The Education Act requires schools to formulate coordinating committees that act as an advisory body. It requires proper representation of parents, local authority members, staff, and children. Hence, it provides frameworks for professionals and other stakeholders collaborative and address the needs of the children. Chapter 9a of the Norwegian Education Act concerning the pupils' learning environment stipulates that schools must work actively and systematically to promote a healthy psychosocial environment where each student experiences security and social fellowship. However, to achieve this, the Act requires schools to come up with plans that involve collaboration within the school community where professionals are cooperating well among themselves, with children and parents. This measure implies that real education environment requires a strong team of professionals that consistently negotiates to remain focused to the common goal.

2.6.3   *The Norwegian Children Act 1992*

Following the guidance of the Norwegian Children Act 1992, schools are encouraged to put much emphasis on the rights of children. The law requires schools to collaborate with the parents, child welfare services, police and the entire community to jointly promote the rights of children and protect them from abuse. Just like the curriculum, the Children Act challenges professionals to work together and create a friendly environment that promote child rights as well as integrating child participation in care and support services. The Act suggests that for children to be able to participate, there must be good communication and collaboration between children and staff, and between staff and parents

Given the above brief description of policies and legal frameworks, they show that there must be efforts from all stake holders especially professionals to implement education in a manner that it benefits everyone. On that account, it is worth to note that both legal frameworks call for inter-professional and inter-agency approaches to promote equal education opportunities for every child and adults. These standardards demonstrates that the Norwegian government has put more general measures to promote good collaborations in education service delivery and have been prompted particularly by the concerns of societal demands such as cultural rights, equality and the inclusion of all children.

2.7   Understanding collaboration

Several definitions have been put forward by different authors explaining collaboration from different perspectives. However, according to the Oxford English Dictionary (2008), the words collaboration and collaborate derive from the Latin word, *collaborare*, with *col* meaning together and *laborare* meaning to work. According to (Alberto & Herth, 2009), described collaboration as "a mutually beneficial relationship" that is well-defined and entered into by more than one organization or individual to achieve mutual goals. To (Scmalenberg, Kramer, King, & Krugman, 2005, p. 450) collaboration is best viewed as a relationship, a process consisting of ongoing interactions, and (Mckay & Crippen, 2008, p. 110) noted that collaboration is an interdisciplinary process of problem solving, shared responsibility for decision making and the ability to carry out a plan of care while working toward a common goal.

Given the above definitions, collaboration in school can may regard having safe school environment that facilitates broad vision of professional roles, understanding of shared values and responsibilities and a set of acquired skills that professionals recognise to work collectively for the common goal.

Collaboration, then, is not reflected to be an individualistic attempt, as only a set of skills received. Rather, from a holistic perspective collaboration is regarded as knotted to participation within a community of practice. In school it is a shared journey of commitment to effective practice among professionals and improved learning for all children (Carr, Herman, & Harris, 2005). Because of changes in the population, schools are adjusting to ensure all needs of children are addressed and the authorities are working closely to supervise and ensure that better service approaches are sustained. This may not be possible without promoting collaborative practices among professionals in the school. Consequently, work is practically done in pairs, in groups and in collaboration with the entire school. In a school setting, collaboration is considered to be very important for the education of pupils with special educational needs especially to those with

severe disabilities (Friend & Cook, 1990). This practice requires engaging various specialized professionals into world of interprofessional collaboration.

2.8   Understanding inter professional collaboration and its related terminologies

Often the term interprofessional has been used interchangeably with other terms such as, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, which further delineate and describe teams, teamwork, and collaboration. Alberto & Herth, (2009) explained the terminologies and noted that there is a distinct difference between them, and lack of clarity can create confusion. According to the authors above, the earliest and most commonly used term is interdisciplinary which is used to indicate the combining of two or more disciplines, professions, departments, or the like, usually in regard to practice, research, education. While the term multidisciplinary refers to independent work and decision-making, such as when disciplines work side-by-side on a problem. The premise here is that, under multidisciplinary, individuals in different disciplines work independently or sequentially, each from his or her disciplinary perspective, to address a particular topic or problem and it's more of shared communication rather than a collaborative communication. Another term is transdisciplinary where efforts come from multiple disciplines sharing together their knowledge and skills across traditional disciplinary boundaries in accomplishing tasks or goals.

Summarizing the author's views, a selection of keywords used variously for interprofessional work denote learning and working together among professionals are as follows;

Concept-based	Process-based	Agency-based
Interdisciplinary	teamwork	Inter-agency
Multidisciplinary	Partnership working	Multisector
Trans-disciplinary	Joint working/Planning	Forum
Transdisciplinary	collaboration	
Holistic	Integration	
	Coordination	

From the above selection of words, the present study demonstrates the process based type of interprofessional collaboration, where the investigation focuses on what constitutes the collaboration between professionals at the school.

As discussed before, the focus is on "interprofessional collaboration" the act where there are two or more professionals working and interacting together in cooperation for mutually shared goal (Alberto & Herth, 2009). It is important to note that two or more professionals working together can entail or cover an array of different customs. Therefore, understanding interprofessional practices makes it clear to know what exactly occurs within the interprofessional collaboration.

According to (Geva, Barsky, & Westernoff, 2000, p. 3) interprofessional practice refers to a highly integrated framework for collaboration among professionals. Thus, the collaborative practices are the actual procedures or activities that are being pursued by the professionals and it is the interest of the present study to find out what are they, how they done, what are the influences and how do they involve the child.

2.9   Being interprofessional

(Hammick, Freeth, Copperman, & Goodsman, 2009) argue that being interprofessional should be a practice that starts with an individual during training and continues as a practitioner. Chiefly, it indicates that, it should always be part of our regular professional lives. The (ibid) show that, ideally, being interprofessional should be routine and regular part of how we work, an active rather than passive practice related behavior. Relating to child education service, professionals should remain professionally open and should not only become active because of a particular problem that needs to be solved, but they should keep interprofessional values even when they are not at work place. However, the literature review informs that, it is something that does not happen by itself, it involves knowing what to do, how we feel and what we can do. Three aspects (thinking, feeling and doing) were considered to explain being interprofessional (Hammick et al., 2009).

Figure 1: An Illustrative figure of being interprofessional
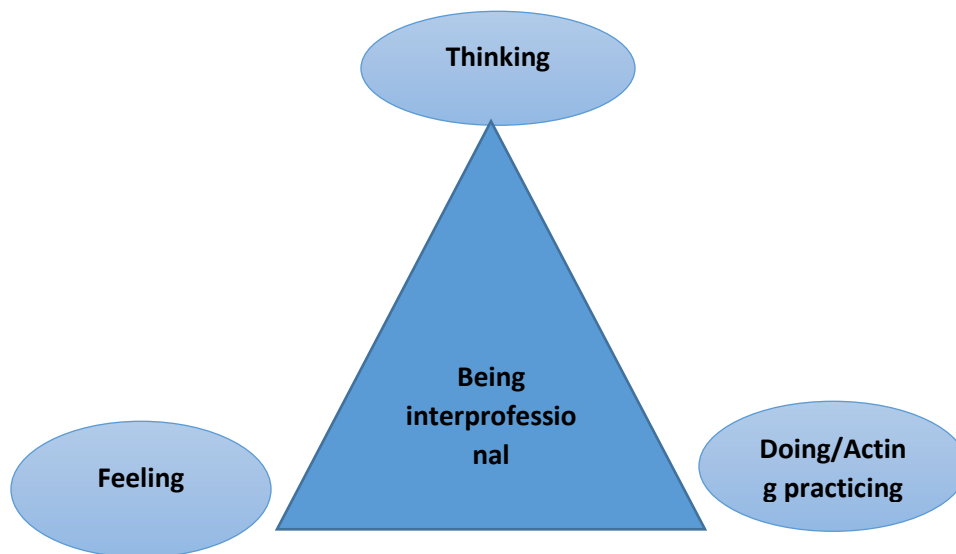
To know what to do. Hammick et al., (2009) note that, individuals need to think about actions of particular setting and how to do what is needed. This statement implies that when individuals get to know the right things such as roles and responsibilities, and interprofession values of relating with others, they can be able to be professionals.

Having the skills to do what needs to be done is another aspect of being professional. This requirement means that individuals need to be competent enough with specific skills that will be used to behave and relate well with others and do things correctly. Relating to Norwegian context its understood that higher training institutions train educational professionals with school-based skills and competence development to work with others and understanding children needs.

Individuals' attitudes, they should conduct themselves in a right way when carrying out a particular action. Meaning that, they should have proper acceptable values, beliefs and showing

passion in what they are doing. For example teachers, need to love their work not just to do it for the sake of fulfilling given obligations but with love and passion.

In summary, being professional means endless, it does not have an end point where a professional ceases to be professional. Therefore, for professional working is school, should regard it a continuous practice that seeks to utilize the available resources to ensure that needs of the children are addressed.

2.10   Reasons for interprofessional collaboration

Research show that, there are a number of reasons why individuals or organizations collaborate. However, it varies, and it may come in all shapes and sizes but meaningful collaboration may be what an individual or group is seeking. Huxham & Vangen, (2005) listed generic reasons why organizations go into collaboration; For example, the issue of limited resources to fulfill set goals, organizations seek for collaboration in order to share risks as means of insurance, develop efficiency by better use of shared resources.

With trends of social problems and the changing population, collaborative practice is regarded as a strategy to for a coordinated and continuous service provision hence leading to collective efforts rather than the individual. For example having one stop service for with multiple service needs can lead to an interprofessional collaboration among professionals (Bolin, 2011). Another argument for the need interprofessional collaboration is that professionals learn from each other as they cooperate, interact and depend on each other. For example, learning partnerships, whereby multi-professional groups visit each other with the aim of learning by seeing someone else's practice, may be regarded as particularly desirable. Bronstein, (2003) argue that trends in public education require more collaboration between educators and social workers to educate "the children of today" This argument reflects the presence of various professional groups in Norwegian schools where combined efforts are needed to adress the diversified needs of the children.

The line of reasoning and general research finding indicate that when professionals in a school team up there is an associated positive impact on student achievement and behavioral and social outcomes. In the studies conducted by (Erb 1995;Bronstein, 2003), they show that when teachers work together, they are not only less isolated, but they are also more focused on academic and behavioral outcomes for students than when they work alone. Similarly, (Pounder, 1998) concur that when teachers work together on formal teams, there is a "tighter connection between teachers' work and student outcomes" (p. 66). These argument are echoed in a recently published report (The Education Mirror Norway, 2012) that collaboration and teacher to pupil relation is necessary for pupils' learning outcomes. In essence, it's through such relations that professionals get to know children very well which gives them an opportunity to work with them and outsource further help in case of special needs or care. Similarly, in another study by (Langerock, 2000), an ordinary teacher with four students with disabilities in her classroom, studied collaborative and co-planning processes between herself and the special education teacher. She noticed improvement of education achievement and social skills for all her students as a result of collaborative work. Additionally, Brabeck, (2003) note that, as professionals learn to work together to meet the needs of children and youth, they are drawn into partnership and effective communication among themselves, with schools and children negotiating the barriers of trust,

problem definition, and goals. All in all, such kind of support is important for all children and especially important for pupils who for various reasons are struggling in school.

It's important to note that these studies consider collaboration in a wide contexts that goes beyond collaboration in the classroom to the entire school between many professionals. However, despite these efforts, other studies have highlighted presence of critical issues of interprofessional collaboration that relate to differences in training, functions, values, expectations and so on. For example, (Hill, 2012) argue that, working with children who have a wide variety of needs it's challenging as it requires commitment, professionalism and professionals' confidence so that they can work together with a willingness to engage children at different levels of intervention. Besides that, (Scheuermann, Webber, Boutot, & Goodwin, 2003) note that, inclusive/special education teachers reported that their teacher training did not effectively prepare them to collaborate with diverse stakeholders. In this regard, presence of various professionals can certainly impact individuals' preparation and professional development as they learn from each other.

In addition, interprofessional collaboration is one of the ways people learn from themselves and others through thinking loud. This practice allows co-workers and colleagues to see the thought process around of making decisions within organizations. From a common saying "No man or woman is an Island" it is understood that complex issues that are of great concern to the public, such as child abuse poverty, special needs, emergency, health provision cannot be handled by only one individual, hence making interprofessional collaboration inevitable.

Interprofessional collaboration can take place in schools, hospitals, and other service organizations and it is regarded as an important modern way of organization growth, however sometimes, seen as a challenge for management practice (Chankook, 2007). In this study, however, the focus is not on the importance of interprofessional collaboration, rather on how and what practices constitutes interprofessional collaboration among professionals in an inclusive school.

As regards to professional and interprofessional identity, (Hammick et al., 2009) argue that interprofessional team working relies on the team members working with a range of shared principles and values; and acknowledging and accommodating some difference. Respect is key in interprofessional team working, individuals need to respect each other views. Barker (2009) argue that, interprofessional collaboration does not erode professional roles and identities to disorganize professionals, but it preserves the benefit of a balance provision of services that make the most use of resources as a whole and specialist services in tandem. For this reason, if teachers and other practitioners seek interprofessional collaborative opportunities and maintenance of interprofessional identity with due respect to every one's profession needs and requirements, the benefits and challenges associated with those efforts merit collaborative practice for better achievements.

2.11 Child participation

A school is seen as an institution designed to educate students (or"children"). However, it can only be considered relatively important if the students or children are given the opportunity to participate in activities that matter to them, especially by the practitioners working in the school. Ensuring more participation and further influence for children is an important part of the effort to improve their quality of life. This requires professionals and other practitioners working with

children to ensure that the services offered are closely related to children's interests and needs. Having considered this practice, it increases opportunities for children to participate, state their views and make constructive contributions in all the rings where they spend their time and develop. In recent published circular for child participation (Ministry of children and Equality, Norway 2006) it is stated that giving children opportunity it promotes and encourages the commitment, responsibility and innovative thinking of children and young people. Listening to and acting on their opinions may also help to strengthen their self-confidence.

The CRC considers age and maturity of the child as critical factors for participation, but the confidence and competence acquired by the teachers and other professionals who directly work with children is necessary as well (Hart, 1992). Therefore, professionals at school require to have the right skills and knowledge of involving children in all activities. However, research in child partcipation show that its not only a matter of knowledge and competence of practictioners but, personal attitude as well. In light of this, it is therefore, the reason why there are international, regional and national laws of children rights for practitioners working with children to follow and ensure that there are increasing opportunities for children to participate in all matters that affect their lives. The availability and applicability of these laws have of late increased participation of children; children's have expressed their views and opinions in programs both at local and national levels (Hart, 1992;Marit & Strandbu, 2006). However, the progress is on different levels across the world, child participation in developing countries is relatively lower compared to developed countries. Norway being one of the countries that has advanced a lot in child rights and child participation in particular In this current study, I was interested to know how professionals in a primary and lower secondary school consider children to participate in all activities that matter to them.

2.11.1   International perspective

From the global perspective of child participation, children's rights are a political priority for the (UNICEF) and many Western nations through the CRC have provided children right to participation and freedom of speech (Marit & Strandbu, 2006). This thought has led to increasing opportunities for children and young people to learn to participate in projects and programs that directly affect their lives. According to (Hart, 1992), participation helps every child learn to struggle against discrimination and repression and to fight for their equal rights in solidarity with others, and hence it is a fundamental democratic right.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has enabled participation of children to become an important issue in legislation and political programs in Norway and internationally (Marit & Strandbu, 2006). According to the United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Children, as of December 2008, 193 countries have ratified the CRC, including every member of the United Nations except the United States and Somalia. When a country ratifies the UNCRC, it is bound to it by the international law. It adapts the articles in the national legislation to fulfil UNCRC requirements and allocate sufficient funds for implementing UNCRC policies (Johansson, 2013). However, because of varying reasons countries like United States and Somalia have not yet ratified the UNCRC. United States signed but did not ratify it, while Somalia does not have the sovereignty to ratify conventions.

The UNCRC aims to protect and promote the rights of all children around the world. It makes it clear to all that children are independent subjects and hence have rights to participate in family, cultural and social aspects of life. It emphasizes the right to survival, development, and protection against abuse, neglect and exploitation. It also addresses issues of education, health

care, juvenile justice and the rights of children with disabilities. The concept serving as the foundation of the UNCRC is that children are independent, knowledgeable individuals and capable agents in their right (Johansson, 2013).

Article 12 of the Convention makes a strong, though very general, call for children's participation: *States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*

It goes on to argue in Article 13 that:
The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

2.11.2   National perspective

Localy, in Norway, the child's right to participate has been enshrined in the children Act, the child welfare Act, Programs for school and day care, and children's citizens projects in municipality (Marit & Strandbu, 2006). Relating to educational policy programs in Norway, the Education Core Curriculum acknowledges child participatory approaches and requires municipalities , private parties, and organizations to take responsibility to support, monitor and supervise child right based initiatives (Education Core Curriculum, Norway 1997). In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research, the Norwegian Board of Education has put measures to respond to the multicultural needs in school and in particular to consider the cultural rights of immigrant children and other minority groups. Recent studies show that children from minority language backgrounds are under-represented in day-care institutions. Consequently, their representation is inadequate hence leaving them with minimal chances to participate in activities and events that matter to their life. Research show that the provision of better facilities for minority language children in day-care centres has a positive effect on the child's school start.
Because of such challenges the ministry of education and research has implemented several measures through the strategic plan. The strategy places emphasis on an integrated approach to the education of children and young people from minority language backgrounds – from day-care institutions to colleges and universities (Equal education strategy, Norway, 2004 -2009).

For purposes of better learning among minority immigrant children, the multicultural reality is reflected in school curriculum and teaching aids. In a recently published report from Vestfold University College concludes that teaching aids published in recent year indicate multicultural Norway in the sense that they contain pictures of children whose appearance is different from the majority (Skjelbred & Aamodtsbakken, 2003). However, the study showed that most of the projects in the survey conclude that the possibilities offered by a multicultural perspective in teaching aids are barely utilized. Neither do the teacher guidance sections give teachers the help they need to tackle the challenges represented by working in classes with children from diverse minority cultures. As mentioned before, professionals need skills and knowledge to involve children. Otherwise the instruments in place will only stay as published document on the shelves.

It all also requires robust systems in place to ensure that these legal documents are read, understood and utilized by the practitioners.

In addition to child partcipation in Norway, (The Ministry of Children and Equality,2006) published information, educational materials about child participation which provide ideas about how to increase the participation of children and young people in in day care institutions, schools, youth clubs and youth councils, and in connection with various municipal projects. It published a *circular on the participation and influence of children and young people in municipalities and a manual on youth councils*. According to the circular, brochures are published to guide practitioners how to improve in child participation and young people in various municipal areas. These publications complement other existing legal guidelines such as the Children Act and Education Act. In particular, Article 11-2 of the (Norwegian Education Act, 1994) emphasizes the right of children to participate in matters that affects them through pupils' councils at primary and lower secondary schools. The goal is not only the child's right to education but also ensuring accessing further rights to full development.

Having reviewed the Norwegian policies and guidelines of education and child rights legal instruments, the guidelines inform professionals to provide a continuous mechanism that the children themselves can work towards and maintain full participation in all activities that are being planned for them. For this reason, professionals are required by policies and laws to work together but also explore how they involve children in the decision-making and ongoing practices that matter to them. In essence, communication is vital to collaborative practice as well as to listening to the children needs. Conversely, it is argued that contemporary opinion on children and childhood emphasizes that children are individuals and are competent to participate in discussions and decisions concerning their well-being (Johansson, 2013). This implies that, professionals in schools are challenged to indiscriminately ensure that children and young people get better opportunities to participate, state their views and make constructive contributions about matter that concern them in the school.

However, emerging research shows that not all children are involved to participate in matters that affect their lives, it varies from case to case and child to child depending on age, maturity and competence skills, and also professionals' attitudes towards children. Young, McKenzie, Schjelderup, & Omre, (2012) note that, additional issues arise when practitioners are working with children who have in the past exhibited behaviors inconsistent with self-motivated, self-directed activity. In light of this, it implies that professionals are challenged to consider diversity and initiate broad approach and stregthen the wide perspectves of understanding children behaviours. Knowing children background matters a lot for practitioners to understand the children's present behaviours. For this reason, knowledge and consideration of child's life history is essential and absence of it may affect children's opportunity to participate in apects that matter to them. Further, (Marit & Strandbu, 2006) note that, there are always difficulties adults encounter to understand children opinions and interests. This justifies the requirement for professionals to be competent and knowledgeable about processes and possibilities of involving children because child participation is the fundamental right of citizenship.

However, the empirical literature show that much as professionals are informed about the importance of child participation, practicing it varies from one individual to another depending on personal attitudes, knowledge base and communication skills of understanding children language. These views indicate that many children are left non-active. For example, in a recently

published report, (The Education Mirror Norway, 2012), a professional in a day care center said that; *"the children's involvement is necessary, but individuals misunderstand it, we allow children to take part in making decisions, but there are no intention of letting there be a lot of little princes and princesses to do whatever they want"*. This account matches what is stipulated in the legal instruments of child rights, which stresses that the right of the child to participate does not mean relinquishing adult control. However, practitioners need to be cautious about their over possessions. Hart, (1992) argue that adult involvement should not be underestimated, not only for the guidance they can offer, but also for the lessons they need to learn from the actions taken.

The Kindergarten Act Chapter II Section 3, encouarges Children's right to participate. It states that, children in kindergartens shall have the right to express their views on the day-to-day activities of the kindergarten and children should have the opportunity to take active part in planning and assessing the activities of the kindergarten.. This guideline is clear and requires full participation of the young ones, but it remains a challenge in practice for professionals to ensure that they do not cause a threat to adult's possession of children. However, the argument is that children are likely not to have same competences as adults but this does not mean that their perceptions are invalid. Therefore, professionals need to be sensitive to children's development and find methods that maximize their ability to speak about issues that concern them in a manner that is most comfortable for them (Hart, 1992).

Article 13 of the UNCRC challenges professionals to use their professional knowledge base, skills, and experience to ensure that children participate and make sure that their views are considered. As teachers collaborate with other professionals, the processes and practices must ensure that fit the interests and needs of the children and if they are not given an opportunity to participate accordingly, children will be unable to escape being objectified as a 'human becoming'(Young et al., 2012). Additionally, (Johansson, 2013) note that, to avoid violation of child rights, the UNCRC articles can serve as a tool for social workers and other professionals to increase the visibility of children and allow children to participate in discussions and decisions concerning them. The convention is a very instrumental guideline; it offers a judicial framework for professionals and other actors to rethink child care policies in the direction of ensuring children's dignity.

The point here is that, when children participate, it promotes and encourages their commitment, responsibility, and innovative thinking. However, Johansson, (2013) argue that, children's participation in decision-making depends on the balance in the power structure. On the same note. (Healy, 1998) add that despite the popularity of notions of participation and partnerships, still professional are reluctant to relinquish their power so that they can engage well children as service users. Thus, in interprofessional collaboration, professionals need to check these power imbalances and give children opportunities to form their opinion, express their viewpoints and consider them seriously. This can be through joint analysis based on a more equal power relationship between collaborating professionals and children, meaning that, the role of such an adult support person should counterbalance the inequality of power expertise between the child and adults.

2.12   Theoretical framework

This chapter provides theoretical frameworks of understanding processes and practices of interprofessional collaboration among professionals working in school. The empirical literature shows that various theoretical frameworks have been used to present interprofessional collaboration and interagency cooperation from diverse sources. However, some draw on general understandings of organization's and organizational change, whereas others are specific to interprofessional collaboration. Under review, the Activity Theory (AT), General Systems Theory (GST), Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Interdisciplinary Collaboration Model (ICM) have been considered as interdisciplinary in nature to understand interprofessional collaboration practice in a school. At least both theories help to understand how individuals negotiate their professional identity from collaboration work. For the purpose of understanding child participation, I considered Hart's ladder of participation to analyze the degree of child participation (*see chapter five, Child Participation analysis*)

2.12.1   Interdisciplinary Collaboration Model (ICM)

The model was developed by Bronstein, (2003), and was adopted by authors such as Debra Parker Oliver, Elaine M. Wittenberg-Lyles, and Michele. Bronstein used four theoretical frameworks in the development of the model, including a multidisciplinary theory of collaboration, services integration, the program development model discussed most frequently in conjunction with collaboration, activity/role theory and ecological theory. It shows that it is integrative in nature, and it captures elements of ecological theories.

The model consists of two parts (see Figure 2): the first part describes the generic components of optimum interdisciplinary collaboration and the second part places the model in context by analyzing various influences on collaboration.

In the present study, both parts of the model were considered to understand how profesionals in the primary school work together. Part one gives a generic depiction of the characteristics of a true collaboration between professionals using its five core components : (1) Interdependence; where professionals dependent on each other's to accomplish their goals and tasks, (2) newly created Professional Activities; this can be structures that amount to more than what is created when the same professionals act independently hence these enable higher outcomes than individual efforts by the same persons, (3) flexibility; reaching productive compromises in the face of disagreements and the alteration of role as professionals respond creatively to what is called for , (4) collective ownership of goals; this includes shared responsibility in the entire process of reaching goals, including joint design, definition, development and achievement of goals, and (5) reflection on process; where collaborators think and talk about their working relationships and process and where collaborators incorporate feedback into their process to strengthen collaborative relationships and effectiveness .

The second part helps to understand what supports and what presents barriers to effective collaboration. In this regard it helps to understand factors that facilitate good interprofessional collaborative practices. In this part, the model show that the presence of these aspects support inter-professional efforts and their absence may negatively affect the efforts. It has four aspects; (1) *The professional role*; Bronstein, (2003) note that usually a strong sense of professionals role is about holding values and ethics of professionals and they tend to pay allegiance to the agency settings, respect for professional colleagues and a perspective that is similar or complementary to

collaborators' perspectives. Consequently, this helps to understand how socialization into professional role occurs and how professionals or individuals interact and negotiate his/her role with others. The author argue that each profession socializes its members differently with regard to role, values and practice and its such differences that individuals consider when they want to maintain their professional identity. In light of this, it creates autonomy, professional identity and skills professionals' develop skills through the process of professional socialization. Thus, it's from this background that this model helps to under how various collaborating professionals interact and negotiate their professional roles to form an interprofessional identity. Additionally the model acknowledges the influence of (2) *organizational structures,* the empirical evidence show that they have great influence on interprofessional collaboration. In this model the aspect of structural characteristics helps to understand how for examples the formal and informal structures in the school aid interprofessional collaboration. For example the role of school leadership and management structure and their influence to an enabling environment of interprofessional collaboration. Bronstein, (2003) note that the importance of structural factor in interdisciplinary collaboration is very key, and the act of maximizing the benefits and minimize the constraints influences interprofessional practice. Therefore in this study, understanding such factors helps to understand how for example the principal, and administrative support affect interprofessional collaboration. Additionally, in the model the influence of (3) *personal characteristics* is considered important to understand how professionals view each other as people outside of their professional role. In this regard characteristics such as respect, trust, understanding and informal communications means will be important to understand how professionals' behaviors influence collaboration. Lastly, another aspect is the (4*) is the history of collaboration.* In fact this helped to consider the influence of professionals' backgrounds such as working experiences in an interprofessional settings with.

However, I remained open to other relevant elements of other theories that depict aspects of collaboration. For example (Friend & Cook, 1990) alluded that, in a school, for educators to be able to use meaningfully a collaborative style, it is always important to highlight the conditions that must exist for collaboration to succeed. Therefore together with the components of the model, other conditions for collaboration that describe the mutual goal, parity among participants, shared accountability, shared resources, and volunteerism were considered where necessary.

Figure 2: Interdisciplinary collaboration model (Bronstein 2003)
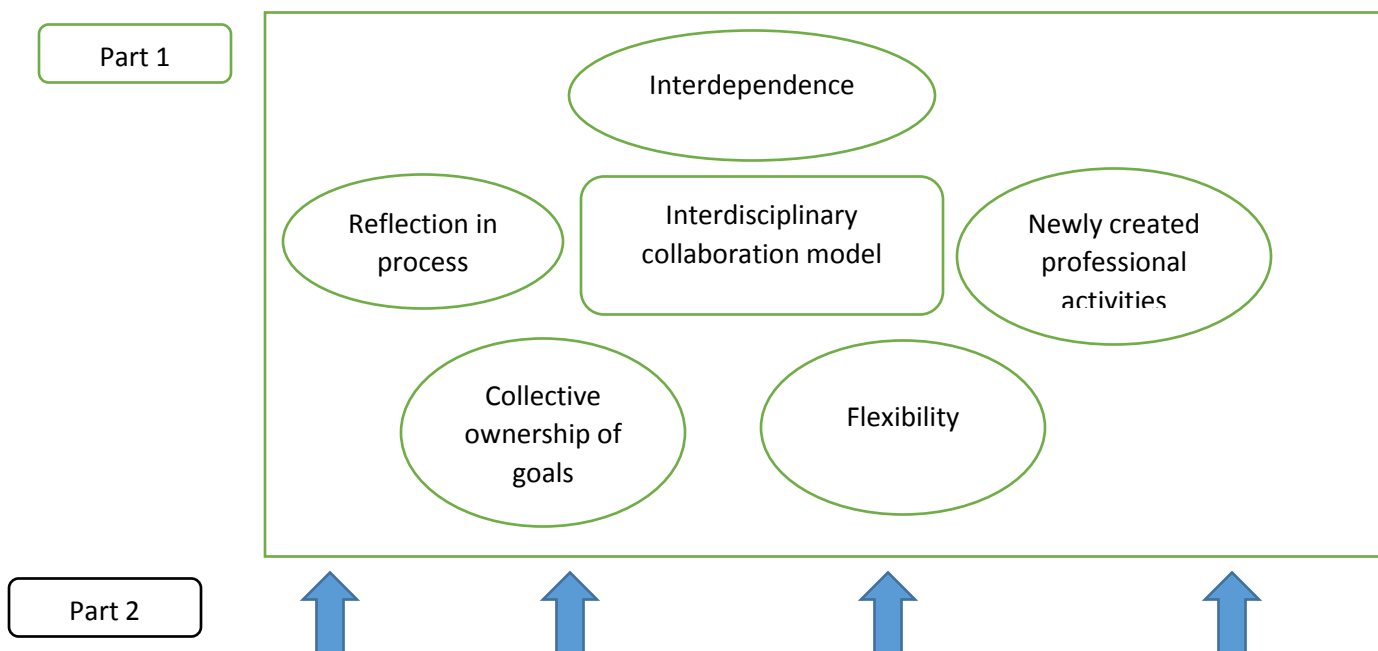
2.12.2   The General Systems Theory (GST)

The use of the phrase 'general system theory' suggests that there are entities in our world called 'systems' and that all of them, or at least all belonging to a particular types, have some properties in common (Rapoport, 1986). Further, it was founded on the assumption that all kinds of systems had characteristics in common, regardless of their internal nature. Skyttner, (2005) noted that it can be seen, that it is the relationships between components in the system and not the nature of its individual components, that affect its properties and behaviors (p. 40).

Given these explanation, in light of the current study it helped the author to understand how members of organizations and collaborative networks negotiate their positions to view how the whole enterprise operate, and understanding all the main perspectives of other members. It recommends respecting the expertise of all participants, whatever their status or qualifications and helping others understand their aims and reasons for actions (Hill, 2012; Pratt et al. 1999). Applying the systems theory in understanding interprofessional collaboration, I was able to understand the links, interconnections, and views, interactions and influences of group members and the whole group. Additionally, the systems theory helps to explain boundaries. White & Klein, (2002) defined boundaries as borders between the system and its environment that affect the flow of information and energy between the environment and the system. From this point of contact I was able to understand how professionals in school setting related to each other as regards to sharing knowledge and experiences with other professionals that are not of the same profession. In other words when the boundaries are open it allows information between systems and closed boundaries may not give a chance. The literature show that boundaries play a key role in important in understanding social and collective identity and suggest ways for further developments focusing on the relationship between social and symbolic boundaries (Lamont & Moln´ar, 2002). Consequently provides attributes that helped to understand profession boundaries within collaborating professionals.

2.12.3   Activity Theory (AT)

Activity theory is an interdisciplinary approach that has its roots in the child psychology of Vygotsky and his followers, and great emphasis was on purposeful and the active role of children (Hill, 2012). As the use of Hart's ladder to explain child participation, activity theory has also

been expanded and applied to adult behavior and learning. Essential elements of activity theory include individuals and their motive; community influences including rules and divisions mediating tools and signs. Therefore, applying the theory to interprofessional collaboration, it involves analysis of the various objectives of participants, roles, commitments and tools as a dynamic activity system. The theory also provides means for assisting organizational learning and change by means of workshops, meetings and other forms of communication that can help professionals understand and improve interprofessional working. The theory considers entire work system (including teams, organizations, etc.) beyond just one actor or user. It takes into account the environment, history of the person, culture, motivations, complexity of real life action. It main focus is directed at the goal. A crucial point in activity theory is that conflict is inevitable, so it needs not be hidden. Instead it should be openly addressed and a good satisfactory change should occur. The value of team building should be key to all participants, and it should be developed from shared practices or responsibilities, which affect professional identity. In summary, the activity theory, illuminated the understanding of how professionals practiced collectiveness and shared values and how individuals in the light of professional identity adapted to the new shared.

2.12.4 Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Regarding this theory, it's noted that the core of identity is said to be the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role, and the incorporation, into the self , of the meanings and expectations associated with that position and its performance(Pollard, Miers, & Thomas, 2010). It assumes that each professional does not have one personal self, but rather negotiation all the time to acquire several selves that correspond to the group that he/she belongs. Hill argue that, each group has its social identity and uniqueness as opposed to each person's unique identity. Therefore, its application helps to understand that collaborating professionals have many different social identities as there are groups to which they feel they belong.

The premise here is that, working within these theoretical frameworks, I was able to explore and analyze interprofessional collaboration in a school. It is rather important to note that, the components of the interdisciplinary model overlap and complement each other, and with the systems and activity theory to build effective collaborations.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Methodology

This chapter presents the framework of the thesis. It begins with a brief description of the use of a qualitative approach and a case study design. I give reasons why a qualitative and case study design was chosen considering applications to the study. There after, I explain the school case study context, recruitment process, assumptions, data collection methods, data analysis, ethical consideration, and delimitations. Research can be conducted using different methods strategies, either qualitative, quantitative or both the two which is defined as mixed method. The qualitative method of research was chosen as the best fit to understand the study and reasons are explained below.

3.2 Reasons for choosing a qualitative research approach

In an attempt to understand deeply interprofessional collaboration among professionals working in a school, the study was descriptive with a qualitative methodology (Bryman, 2012). Bryman note that, using a qualitative approach gives the researcher rich and detailed information compared to a quantitative approach (2012). One of the main reasons why I used qualitative method against quantitative and mixed method of research methods it because I wanted to get considerable descriptive details that typically emphasized the contextual understanding of interprofessional collaboration. Through critical analysis of of the views, perceptions and experieces of the participants, I understood the collaborative processes in terms of individual and collective events, actions and activities that were unfolding as processes and practices from the participant's explanations. I chose a qualitative research approach to deeply understand professionals' views about collaborative processes and practices of providing equal education opportunities to all children, and since I was targeting professionals as a single case a qualitative case study emerged as the appropriate design.

3.3 The case study

Merriam & Merriam, (1998) defines a case study as "a unit around which there are boundaries. (Bryman, 2012) explained it as a case that entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case. Therefore the case then could be a person such as a student, a teacher, a principal; a program; a group such as a class, a school, a community"(p. 66) . Similarly, Stake, (1995) describes a case study as a bounded system, ″a specific, complex functioning thing″ (p. 2). Given the definitions of a case study, it's therefore important to note that in regard to this study I chose to use a descriptive study rather that explanatory.

The descriptive case studies zoom in on producing a full description of a phenomenon, such as an organization or event within its context (Yin, 2003). In this regard, I chose to limit myself to only "professionals" because I wanted to set a boundary and limit my study to only those practitioners that attended a certain recommended education that certifies them as qualified professionals (Leathard, 2003). Further, in this descriptive study I was not seeking to answer the cause and effect of interprofessional collaboration as it is in explaratory. Rather my primary aim was to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of how and what collaborative practices are taking place among professionals. What do they do exactly and how do they do it.

Given the nature of this research (understanding interprofessional collaboration in a Norwegian school) where a variety of professionals are required with specific focus on how to collaborate to meet the diversified needs of all children in the context of equal and inclusive support, and

where the underlying research philosophy was based on an interpretive understanding of the world: a strategy that meets the needs of this research was a case study. Biggan, (2011) discovered that a case study approach provides the focus that is required, emphasis depth of the study, is based on the assumption that reality can only be understood through social constructions and interactions. Indeed these facets of the case study fitted perfectly to the aims of all the research questions (1, 2, and 3). Accordingly, I was able to obtain the professional views about interprofessional collaboration and how they involved children within the context of a school setting.

3.4   School case study context

In order to explore the practices of interprofessional collaboration, I looked at one school which for purposes of confidentiality I named it Fjorden. In addition to the previous description of Fjorden school (see chapter one). The professionals who work in major departments of ATO and SFO have special training instructions. The professionals who teach and provide ATO training have different professional backgrounds, and hence making specialized support to the children. The SFO is an after school program offer before and after school for students from 1st to 4th grade and for pupils with special needs from 1st to 7th grade.

It has a school management that consist of, the principle, two inspectors, assistant rector, two SFO leaders and an ATO professional manager. Fjorden School has professionals staff that include; teachers, occupational therapists, social workers, nurses, social educators, who form a strong interdisciplinary team. The principle heads the school and works with the inspector, heads of department and planning group to coordinate all school programs.

3.5   Recruitment of participants

A purposive sampling technique was used and particpants were selected basing on a particular purpose rather than randomly (Teddlie & Tashkkori 2009). Additionally, purposive sampling is also called convenience sampling which allows reserachers to select a sample from which they can adequately understand, and gain new insights about the subject investigated (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). In this regard, I considered only 'professionals', and were purposively selected basing on (Leathard, 2003)'s definition of professionals. Leathard defined professionals as persons associated with control of entry to a particular profession who are required to undergo a recognized length of training, accredited and in some cases, licensed, by an acknowledged professional body.

In partnership with the thesis supervisor, an information letter requesting authorization was written and sent to the principal of the school describing in details about the study. Upon acceptance, the principal took the lead and recruited the participants accordingly. (*See information letter in appendix I*)

3.6   Data Collection

In-depth interview method and an interview guide that contained open-ended, semi-structured questions were used to elicit rich description using the participant's words. This form of questioning helped me and participant to engage in a discussion and modified initial questions in light of the participants' responses. As a result, I was able to probe interesting and important areas of interprofessional collaboration, child participation, professional identity and that arose.

For example, in response to the participants' views I asked more questions for clarifications. And I gave participants a leeway to express and convey experiences relative to their individual perceptions while being prompted to remain within the scope of the interview topics. Additionally, the method was used to keep more open minded about the contours of what to know, and hence concepts unfolded (Bryman, 2012).

The interviews were facilitated in a convenient place. Seven professionals participated in the interviews (n = 7) Three males and four females comprising of two teachers, one social worker, one special needs educator, one social educator, one nurse and one school leader (principal). All participants were interviewed in their ordinary working places. Finally I also studied some information from the school website and other literature such as books, articles, reports and other documents.

Before the start of each interview, each participant completed a consent form for participation in the study. Responses to the highest level of education achieved indicated bachelor's degree and higher learning diplomas. However, it varied from one profession to another depending on the years of education and the education system of their study times. The range of career experience was between 3 months and 34 years.

Finally, each interview lasted between 40-50 minutes and were carried out following the interview guide. The guide was thoroughly discussed and adjusted to the needs of the research by considering more specific questions linked to the aim of the study. Interviewees were asked to give examples and their views on the way how collaboration took place, how they maintained their professional identity, and how they involved children in practice. Audio recording was used and subsequently transcribed verbatim and checked for accuracy. All interviews were held at the school, in a quiet place chosen by participants as convenient to express their views freely.

3.7   Data Analysis

I used thematic analysis as the analytic framework of the study. This comprised of three steps of analysis. The first analytical step of analysis included a thourough engangement with the transcripts. I read and re-read carefully, word by word, line by line and case by case in order to become as familiar as possible with the participant's accounts. Carefully, all the seven interview transcripts were read to achieve a sense of what themes that were emerging from the narratives of professionals. I considered their experiences, perceptions and opinions on interprofessional collaboration, professional identity, and child participation of all children. In this process, coding was done by labeling words, sentence, phrases about activities, actions, opinions, among others.

The second step of analysis involved developing themes based on the codes that described the narratives. The codes were always compared with each other and across interview transcripts, to draw connections. Then they were combined and transformed into emergent themes. During the search of the of the themes, I primarily looked for repetitions and established patterns among the codes and focusing on topics that occurred again and again (Bryman, 2012). However the focus was on the words that were relevant to the study. On creating themes, emphasis was on acts, activities, meanings, participation, relationships and settings (Lofland & Lofland, 2006), strategies and conditions.

After getting the themes, connections between them was done. The third step involved a more analytical or theoretical ordering, as I tried to make sense of the relationships between themes

that were emerging. Some of the themes were clustered together to create categories, and some emerged as superordinate concepts. Finally, a conceptual model that depicted processes and practices of professionals' experiences about interprofessional collaboration emerged (See figure 1). The model (Figure 1) evolved through an iterative process of reading the transcripts and listening to the audio files of interviews as well as on-going interpretation and analysis of memos and notes taken throughout the analytic process.

3.8   Trustworthiness and Credibility

Peer debriefing about the whole process of the study and discussion of tentative analysis was done at the university (Presentation of methodology and analysis). My supervisor was actively involved and gave advice accordingly.

To ensure rigor and methodological soundness, trustworthiness measures were used to ensure reliability, replication, and validity. As the clustering of themes emerged, it was cross checked in the transcripts to make sure they connected with the primary source material. The goal was to get results by identifying important themes and categories within a body of content and to provide a rich description of the social reality created by those themes/categories.

Before the interviews, I started with an icebreaker of my own biographical and brief career background. I explained to them the school context in my home country Uganda, and I shared with them my 2 and 4 years' experience of working as a teacher and a social worker respectively. I explained to them that a typical public primary school in Uganda has teachers as the only single professional group. The majority of Ugandan schools are also not inclusive. Schools don't have a nurse, but the school head teacher can provide pain killers. On average the pupil-teacher ratio is 46 (Worldbank data, 2013). Indeed, this worked well as an icebreaker. Participants opened up and we had a good brief conversation, which led way to a good production of knowledge about their experiences in a Norwegian school. Being an outsider, I felt that they provided me with enough information for me to understand the context of how they collectively work as a team in an inclusive school.

Interviews were done in English and we all understood each other. However, some participants started by expressing a concern of not speaking English well but surprisingly they turned out to be good at it.

3.9   Ethics approval and considerations

The Privacy Ombudsman / Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), an ethics Committee approved the methodology and ethics of the study. Participants were informed and signed consent forms for participation. They were free to withdraw from the study at any point in the process; they were assured that withdrawal would not influence their position in any way. Confidentiality and anonymous was assured.

3.10   Delimitations

The professionals referred in this study were those whom (Leathard, 2003)'s definition of professional described. Other staff such as receptionist, and assistants that contribute in any way to education achievement and wellbeing the children were left out. Focus was on professionals employed and working at the school.

The study only obtained information by interviews, as explained before, I had less time to conduct the study and getting accounts of the professionals was efficient compared to observation. I also wanted to be less intrusive in professional's work. It is argued that participant observation can be very intrusive in people's lives in that the observer is likely to take up a lot more of their time than an interview. However, this restricted me to view proceedings of interprofessional collaboration and how professionals involved children in all aspects of school life. With observation, more data would have been obtained to match the interview data.

It took almost five weeks to get a school and all the first five schools turned us down with reasons that they are busy. Finally, with a help of my supervisor I received a positive answer from Fjorden School. Indeed it seemed that even at Fjorden everyone was busy and at least two of the seven interviews did not last long as expected. Participants had other commitments that required their presence.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1   Results

The results comprises of two sections;
Section one describes the processes and practices of interprofessional collaboration taking place in the school (*see figure two, next page*). The focus was primarily on typical activities conducted by professionals. On the same note it captured the question of how they negotiated their professional identity in group work. Finally, in the same section I described the school background and setting.

Section two focuses on the critical issues for consideration of child participation. How, what and when did the professionals allow children to participate in activities that affect their lives? Hart's ladder of participation was used to study the subject of child participation (Hart, 1992). (*See child participation chapter five*).
Through qualitative interviews, rich information was obtained from narratives of professionals concerning their professional experiences in a school. By asking open ended questions: they were able to think back over and again on what and how particular activities of interprofessional collaborative and child participation practice took place as well as how they negotiated their professional identity.

There were eight major themes that emerged from the data analysis. These included;

1. Collective responsibility to all children,
2. Service integration,
3. Reflection in process,
4. Professional partnership,
5. Flexibility,
6. Interdependence and mutual autonomy,
7. Confidentiality and professional identity and
8. Status deferential and power relations.

The themes are elaborated and clarified with sub themes. This processes led to the development a conceptual model that evolved through an iterative process of reading the transcripts and listening to all accounts of participants as well as on-going interpretation and analysis of memos and notes taken throughout the analytic process (*See figure two*).

Therefore, uncovering these stories, it is hopeful that the study will be an additional knowledge that would help further to understand interprofessional collaboration in a school setting.

Figure 3: Experiences of interprofessional collaboration-a conceptual model

4.1.1 The school

The school has a primary and lower secondary school sections consisting of 1 to 10 grades. The Principal mentioned that the primary school's enrollment doubles that of lower secondary school. On the same note, he said that the school has two major departments; the alternatively customized training (ATO), and after school program (SFO). The latter department provides services to all children in 1st through 4th grade. According to its website, on a governance level, it has an operating board that consists of guardians, student representatives, a politician, commissioner, worker directors and the rector who acts as a secretary. It shows that parents' involvement and participation are ensured mainly through parent's teachers association. Additionally, the Principal mentioned that the school has a management that consist of, a principal, inspectors, assistant rector, SFO leaders and an ATO professional manager. In addition to the Principal's accounts, the school has skilled department managers and stage managers, where the principal heads the school and works with the inspector, heads of departments and planning group to coordinate education programs. He expressed that the school embraces school developments that focus on learning well at school and considers having respectable adults, a safe and effective learning environment. Lastly, on the school website, it claimed that the school is rooted firmly in ethical principles that put great emphasis on the curriculum that promotes the formation of the whole human being.

4.1.2 The professional staff

When I asked about the professionals working at the school, the Principal mentioned several of them that included; teachers, millieu therapist nurses, social educators. The Principal's accounts matched the list of staff on the school website, but with additional of others that include librarians, IT managers and caretaker services, all together forms a strong interdisciplinary team. In his explanation about collaboration, all staff work together to ensure each child receive is customized to meets their needs. Further more, the Principal explained that the school recognizes professional development as a key to having excellent professionals that are necessary for the school's mandate of providing students with quality education and self-belief for upright future. Indeed, this matched the information on the school's website. In a related development, the Principal asserted that transparency is a value highly considered to all partners, such as; The Educational and Psychological Counselling Service (often referred to as PPT or PP-tjenesten in Norwegian), child welfare service, police, and others. In his view, he blieves that professionals are happy with their work, further is confirmed on the school's website that surveys carried out at school, show that job satisfaction among staff is high.

4.1.3 The physical environment

I found that the physical environment of the school very striking, and as an outsider from a developing country it impressed me very much. It's very attractive and comprises of ample space that enables many recreation activities for all children in the school including those with special needs. The reception is very fascinating with an active and friendly receptionist who ensured that I got what I wanted in time. While I was waiting to meet the interview partcipants, I was impressed with how she used the her office phone to connect children who were waiting to go home to their parents and she kept connecting to the Pricipal and other practioners in school. Perhaps one would argue that's merely her job. Still, it impressed me because I related personal

attitude and position to a "working hub" that works tirelessly to ensure everything working as planned. In other words she interconnected practioners and children within and outside the school.

As I moved to the interview venues, I observed that the environment in the classroom too is good and seemingly challenges every child with a better learning environment. In one of the classes, which I guess belonged to a lower grade, I noticed a lot of visual aids which probably stimulate good learning to young children. Children with disabilities can easily access facilities because the pathways makes it possible to wheel for example into a classroom. According to the Principal, the school size and the physical extent of the building structures accommodate each department with a workroom that provide practitioners with opportunities to meet and reflect, and every Friday they meet at the joint staff rooms for *Fredagslunchen* prepared by their canteen.

4.1.4 The ATO and SFO departments

On the school's website it is indicated that the ATO department is one of the five departments at School. According to the principal and special needs teachers, this unit provides an exceptional training program for students with major general and complex learning difficulties. The ATO is open to students with special needs from all over the municipality. The staff who teach and provide ATO training have different professional backgrounds, and hence making specialized support to the children. It consists of educators with a bachelor's degree in special education with training in pedagogy and others with bachelor's in psychology. It also has environmental workers, swim coach and ART trainers. They tailor the learning goals according to the individual student's needs.

According to the principal and information on the school's website, SFO department is an offer before and after school for students from 1st to 4th grade and for pupils with special needs from 1st to 7th grade. The Directorate of Education 2015, states that such facilities allow children to play and have cultural and leisure activities that are suited for their age, functional level and interests. They also provide good conditions for development for children with disabilities.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1   Findings and Analysis

5.2   Section A. Experiences of Interprofessional collaboration practice

Unique to my study was its consideration of professionals' experiences about the processes and practices of interprofessional collaboration, professional identity and inclusion of all children in the school. I found that the professionals' experiences of working in an inclusive education school setting shaped their thoughts of interprofessional collaboration. Overwhelmingly, the professional's responses focused on collective practice to all children, the practice of integrating services, reflection in process, profession partnership, flexibility, adapting to new practices and roles, interdependency and mutual autonomy, confidentiality and professional identity, and status differentials and power relations

I discuss the findings in headlines considering the participant's views, the literature and theoretical perspectives that emerged as the theoretical foundations of the study.

5.2.1   Collective responsibility to all children

Overwhelmingly, the professional's responses focused on a sense of collective responsibility practice with an aim of addressing every child's need somewhat related to what is referred as Every Child Matters agenda, or Living No Child Behind and One School For All: concepts that have been used in many studies to refer to equity and inclusion support. The majority of professionals repeatedly said that the act of collective responsibility to all children led to productive practices of working interprofessionally. In deed the partcipant's expressions tended towards equitable practices on ensuring that regardless of children's needs and abilities children had equal opportunities of support. For example, in the teachers' accounts various categories of interprofessional collaboration emerged, providing input to the ways different professionals tend to share responsibilities and working alongside each other to support every child. They mentioned identifying individual cases and bringing them to the attention of special needs instructors (comprised of a close team of social educators, special needs educators). As a team, they discussed and put plans on how they will work together and help the child. Considering their accounts on this collaborative practice, in light of early problem identification, they showed presence of cooperation and collective measures of joint needs assessments and hence early interventions to support the child. Take for example this quote from the teacher:

> I had one child who had a lot of social problems that did not find a place in the classroom and needed help from the special teachers. Others, have attention problems and look tired throughout the lessons. Then I inform the special teachers and we decide that the special needs teacher follows the child in the classroom to help and assist the child to learn. We do a lot of talking to think about ways of helping, how we address the problem and how the child is involved.

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Following the teachers excerpt, it indicates that their collaborative practice status, as co-located professionals, emerged from some of the identified issues that need collaborative attention. The teachers used terms such as pupils who do not do well in class, pupils with attention problems, those who look tired in class and those who were affected by domestic violence. Professionals tended to describe their collaborative practices according to individual characteristics and in relation to their home background. Indeed, these kind of expressions did not only come from teachers but from majority of the professionals. Another similar situation came from the nurses: they mentioned children with overweight problems, adolescents talking a lot about physical appearance, nervous and being afraid all the time. In addressing such problems the professionals indicated the concern of consulting and referring to other professionals for technical support. Considering all together, professionals showed that they cooperated as a team, consulted each other and together as a team took collective responsibilities of meeting children's needs. Although nearly all professionals agreed that they collectively shared responsibility and worked well with each other, notably, the teachers and special needs teachers appeared to work more collaboratively than their colleagues. Perhaps the teacher spoke about the importance of sharing responsibilities with special needs teachers as very important in their interprofessional collaboration. Indeed, it seemed to be very important as regards to their collective responsibility of ensuring equity in education for all children. They mentioned that working in an inclusive school made them focus on the whole being of the child, and their attention kept around providing equity education services based on how to improve the entire social, mental and physical being of the child. Thus the teachers mentioned that taking a collective responsibility for children's learning is considered an essential function of the professionals' collaborative teaching practice. Consequently, helping the child as a whole made it a greater collective demand for interprofessional collaboration and thus the collective responsibility as an aspect of interprofessional collaborative practice is linked to teacher and special needs teacher's views of cooperation and shared responsibility. For example the special needs teacher mentioned:

> On a weekly basis I collaborate with the teacher, we set guidelines for what to expect. For example I know what a child want to learn and I have to talk to the teacher that the child wants to learn this and then the teacher cooperates and give assistance.

Likewise the special needs quotation alludes what the teacher said before, it acknowledges the importance of collaboration and shows that both the special needs teachers and teachers seek support from one another, and are both interested in understanding their roles abilities and functions. Doing so, fosters an understanding of how the teacher – special needs teacher collaboration could be harnessed to build a shared vision and goal of promoting equity education.

Approaching the professionals' accounts from the interdisciplinary collaboration theoretical perspective, my analysis of the data suggest that their practice of collective responsibility signifies high awareness of the value of shared responsibility and that both professionals took responsibility of providing necessary support. Their accounts show that they are accountable for the children's learning and joined-up efforts to teach them well. This practice highlights levels of commitment to client-centered care whereby professionals of different discipline engage in the entire processes including joint design, definition, development and achievement of goals (Bronstein, 2003). While as the professionals talked how important they were to each other, it

was impressive to hear from them that their willingness to support is not only a professional requirement, but also a moral obligation of them to take the adult responsibility. According to (Barrett, Sellman, & Thomas, 2005), they proved a moral obligation of acceptance, considered the needs of the children, as well as a concern for others in the community. In the study of being interprofessional the author mentioned of having proper acceptable values: that individuals need to show passion in what they are doing (Hammick et al., 2009). In deed, majority of the professionals' accounts showed that they loved their work and respected each other's contribution.

Another important outcome related to collective resiponsibility was acknowledging their co-existence and its importantance to the children in school. Since all professionals were cocurrently working in the same school targeting the same children, majority of the professionals agreed that they used the co-existance opportunity and talked about the schools programs, their practices strategies of improving children performance. This seemed more than seeking casual support from one another it basically indicated that it is part of the whole organisation of working in a inclusive school.

Seemingly, basing of the professionals' accounts collective responsibility is more likely to happen when core practices such as attention to special needs , reflective dialogues and when issues that impact majority of the children at school happen. On the same note, they also felt that the inclusion education facilitated better use of joint specialized skills, experience, and training. They described it as a "catalyst for close cooperation" as it provided them with morale, impetus, will and motivation to collectively work to achieve better results for every child. According to their views, it was understood to have given them a framework for service provision in the school and a base for monitoring progress and evaluating their collective efforts. Emerging research show that once this collective competence develops within the circles of community support, it can be recreated more quickly in other cases, hence leading to more support for student learning (Hill, 2012). In the words of one professional (Special needs educator)

> With inclusion education , I am responsible for making running plans for the special needs child, and also responsible for integration in the classroom, I cooperate with teacher daily, we have meetings every week, we sit and modify whatever subject we are teaching. And have additional meetings with a parent, so that we can formulate the plan together, okay what does this particular child need, in terms of education social skills learning, practical skills and behavioral.

According to the quotation, the collective responsibility is vital and very promising in addressing complex individual needs and ensuring equal support to all children. Consequently, the views expressed in the quotation indicate presence cooperation, awareness, and clarity of roles and shared responsibilities. Several of the professionals' accounts drew on the notion of having good intentions, will, and interest in collaboration and pointed out several examples of how everyone understood his/her role to finish a collective task. For example, the voice of saying "*if we do not know our roles and presence, children will miss the opportunity to enjoy the services of our presence*" was a common voice among nurses, teachers, special needs teacher and social worker.

Snapshot of roles and responsibilities of professionals

There were five groups of professionals interviewed.

Professionals	Description of their roles and responsibilities as per their responses.
Teachers	Their focus was education class. They are the majority professional group and taught subjects in class; English, maths, craft making, biology, etc.
Social educators	According to their explanations: In addition to regular school subjects; they work to maintain and establish social skills and ADL skills (Activities of Daily Living) of the individual pupil. This is everyday skills such as getting dressed, tying shoes, retaliate zipper, general hygiene, cover tables and follow simple recipes and others that emerged.
Special needs educators	Theirs roles are much similar to social educators, but specifically they attended children with special needs like autistic children. They provide a special training program for students with major general and complex learning difficulties. They worked as teaching assistants in classrooms with teachers. The one interviewed worked as a milieu therapist and is regarded a special needs teacher or educator.
Social workers	One interviewed and had a training background of the teacher and social work. The social work role was to focus on early intervention and preventative measures to all children. Support to children with emotional problems.
Nurses	They are tasked to conduct health promotion and prevention in schools. According to the participant's account, they attend to general wellbeing of the children; illness, overweight, adolescent sexual education, etc.

The matrix above gives an impression of various professionals working in the school. All professionals are school-based and worked as individuals and together as a team to meet the needs of the children. According to their practice experiences, it indicated levels of cooperation,

and hence forming good opportunity for interprofessional collaborative practice. The teachers are the majority in the school, and the rest formed the minority professional group. As expected, teachers focused on teaching classroom subjects and partnered with assistants and special needs educators to attend individual cases.

The social educators and special needs teachers showed a lot of overlapping roles and formed the educational department (ATO). Their work is to provide a unique training program for students with major and complex learning difficulties. According to their experieces they stressed that the learning goals of ensuring equity education were tailored to the individual child with an aim of strengthening students' personal development to access equal opportunities in classroom and entire school. One of the social educator who was only three months old in the school expressed that she works with special needs teachers to improve quality of life for the individual pupil in relation to master daily activities such as interacting with others, tieing shoe laces and teaching social skills. In contrast, social workers focused on preventative and reactive work. For example, one said that he was supporting a child diagnosed with emotional problems, and also worked with a psychologist at the municipality for referral support.

In fact the practice of collective responsibility was more stressed by teachers and special needs teachers than any other profession. A justification of describing the above scenario as a contextual feature of interprofessional collaboration in school is provided by (Kruse & Louis, 2009) who succinctly state the connection as;

> The essence of professional community is that all adults in a school are presented with the opportunity to work with other to grow and change – and that meaningful and sustained connections are necessary for that to occur. This occurs when teachers take collective responsibility for improving pupil's learning (p. 8)

All in all, much as the professionals agreed and strongly showed that they actively engage each other in a collaborative practice, it appeared more a common practice that took place in a classroom between the teacher and special needs teacher usually regarded as teaching assistants.

5.2.2 The practice of integrating services

In addition to understanding interprofessional collaboration at school, majority of the professionals mentioned integrating services as a collaborative practice of equally helping children of different needs in the same setting. In light of this, they expressed that the presence of diversified professions influenced the modes of service delivery, and hence the development of integrated approaches. With integrated service provision approach, they mentioned that they considered effective ways of providing various services together in the same time, same setting for all children. Take, for example this quotation from the nurse:

> Children do not only come to school to receive education but also have other concerns such as; being victims of domestic violence, overweight, which requires more than one professional support. Since we are all togther combining some services becomes easy to deliver. The school has enough facilities such as conference halls to meet majority of children.

The above quotation acknowledges that children issues or needs are not only limited to individuals but entire class or grade and school, neither are limited to a single profession. They do attract majority professionals to give necessary advice and support all children in same time

and place. Several of the professionals' accounts drew on the importance of using the school's facilitities such as conference halls, private rooms and classrooms to conduct services together to all children rather than dividing them or targeting specific group yet the services to deliver aim at majority of the children in the specific age group, grade and sometime the school. The professionals strongly stressed that its important for children sometimes when they meet in one place by several professionals. It helps to build relationships with those that do not belong in the same class and also build confidence to those who are shy, frightened, nervous of being with others. Besides, the nurses said that integrating sevices is interesting and a learning opportunity to them because they do not often talk to many children as teachers do, and through such practices they learn from each other how to communicate and handle big groups. In fact they appreciate the teachers for inviting them to partcipate and also to share experiences. They mentioned extended programs such as ATO and SFO services as other opportunities of meeting children as a team and hence increases children'accessibility to a range of services.

Despite their training differences, the professionals believed that their presence in inclusion education setting provided a suitable environment for interprofessional collaboration practice, and service integration practice in particular. Majority of the professionals believed that when they combine their experiences and skills to meet children in one class or combination of grades, it builds a community of children and facilitates achieving the inclusive goal of providing equity education. Additionally, they also believed that it also recognizes their professional identity because during the event they introduce themselves as nurses, teachers, and social workers, and also reflect their identity in their roles during service delivery.

While other professionals stressed that the integrating services strengthened they professional identity, teachers believed that it provides them a shared understanding of values of interprofessional collaboration as well as building interactional relationships between professionals and children and between children themselves. In another field note the nurse said that:

> We are lucky here that we can walk around to other professional and talk,discuss and do things together about how to help children. Here the adavantage is we can organise something together as professionals to help the children. For example, as nurses we have collaborated with teachers and social workers to educate on adolescent and sexual reproductive health, overweight, hygiene and general health to the same group of children.

The excerpt indicates appropriate opportunities of answering the question of of meeting the increasing needs of children and perhaps inclusive practice. The nurse aknowledges the presence of others and show that they endvour to consult and join-up to to support all children to advance equity and inclusive support. They mentioned that service integration could take place anywhere in the school, and professionals would find it easy to collaborate and efficiently deliver different services to many children in a particular period. This practice enhances professionals' chances of cooperating and conducting several services together, and hence building a community of service delivery as well as a community of children who are learning and sharing together. Being in the same school with diversified needs of children provided professionals with easy access to all children. Conversely, majority of the professionals strongly stressed that with integrating services, children have equal chances to access same services and the services are provided in a familiar place which makes it belonging and friendly environment.

Chiefly, the professional's expressions indicate that inclusive educational practices connects professionals and gives them several opportunities of creating best practices. Integrating services is among other best practices mentioned that professionals use to provide equal education opportunities and assess their effectiveness in relation to bridging gaps that affect attainment of equity education. This action confirms some of the national policy requirements stipulated in the national educational guidelines and frameworks. The education strategy, Norway 2004-2009 acknowledges interprofessional collaboration with integrative approaches to respond to the unique needs of all children. This policy requirement reflects what the professionals mentioned before that the needs of children at school are beyond educational and requires collaborative and integrative approaches to ensure equal opportunities for all children.

Impressively, the professional mentioned that integrative service eliminates dangers of labeling that cause stigma and discrimination. The services are provided to all but only if there are special cases tailored to specific needs of individuals. While integrative service was widely accepted by majority of the professional as a best interprofessional collaborative practice, teachers and special needs teachers specifically stressed that its crucial in building children relationships in classrooms because its brings together all categories children. According to their accounts, integrating services means inclusion because it involves fully all aspects of schooling regardless of individual differences. Since children with special needs are the minority in schools it means that other classrooms may not have special needs children and through integrative services there are chances of children learning together. However, the majority of professionals mentioned that to respond adequately, it takes the whole team with a full commitment to achieve the common aim of inclusion and equality.

The core curriculum states that education shall inspire an integrated development of the skills and qualities that allow one to behave morally, to create and to act, and to work together and in harmony with nature(Education Core Curriculum, Norway, 1997, p. 39). In light of this,the participants strongly agreed on the importance of collaborative practices such as service integration, and this showed encouraging signs of professionals appreciating and opening up to each other, at least in terms of using their abilities, recognizing their efforts and considering other available resources to meet the needs of the child as a whole.

Applying the general systems theoretical perspective, my analysis of the professionals' accounts on integrating services helps to understand the links and connections that takes place among professionals in practice. Seemingly, their respect to one another and interactions have much influence to the success of the whole group. This reflects to the common phrase of "united we stand, divided we fall". Meaning that when keep the interprofessional collaboration values they will keep united, and hence work to the common goal of providing equity services to all children in the school. However, in spite the good impression shown on integrative service practice, there were some voices of considerable differences in ethical consideration. Although it did not come from the majority of the professionals, at least the nurses expressed that it was barrier to their smooth collaboration with other professionals especially sharing particular health information. The accounts of the nurse indicated that sometimes they concealed information that is deemed sensitive even when they know it is important for the whole team to address some issues in the school. The nurse's accounts illuminates what (Hammick et al., 2009) noted: that effective interprofessional team working requires that ethical differences are recognized and worked with

for an effective outcome of the team's goals and purpose. The above authors' notification highlights the need for clarity about the roles and, ethical values among professionals to lessen differences, and hence promote the notion of interprofessional identity. While the nurse rightly expressed the concern of accessing sensitive information, the special needs teachers too stressed the importance of having process structures that can help to give clarity about ethical values, processes and procedures of close partnerships and collaboration. They strongly agreed that such guidelines would help improve interpersonal relationships, and hence make informed choices of actions among professionals. However, while some studies note the need to build effective interprofessional team values to address ethical issues other studies show that standards of confidentiality are particularly complex, and confidentiality is never absolute in the school system (Franklin, Harris, & Paula, 2006). Indeed, this was reflected in nurse's expressions about not giving sensitive information; they mentioned that other professionals like social workers wanted all information for holistic assessment but they (nurses) remained skeptical to release sensitive information.

5.2.3 Reflection in process
Developing reflection processes for coordination; this theme had two sub-themes: "prescribed meetings" referred to well planned formal networks and communications and and "regular conversations" referred to informal networks and communication.

5.2.3.1 Formal networks and communication
Most of the participants overwhelmingly mentioned the importance of formal networks in effective interprofessional collaboration. Since all professionals were concurrently stationed in the same school, they expressed awareness of the role communication in reflection processes to the providing of equity education to all children. The idea of attending staff and departmental meetings to reflect on practice was mentioned often. The special needs teacher mentioned:

> We have meetings with all grades in the school. Professionals go through what they are supposed to do for a week. I and the group that work with special needs children we also have meetings, we discuss what will happen next. We also have small meetings of consultations with one another about some issues. Every Friday we also have reflection meetings on guidance and talk about what has happened, what could have done better, what we should have done.

Considering the above quotation it shows that there are quite a number of formal meetings that take place in the school. From the accounts of majority professionals, they all agreed participating in formal meetings scheduled according to the school calendar and also those that emerge during the course of the school term. Some of the meetings are organized by departments with departmental members participating to review and reflect on successes and what needs to be improved. As it's clearly mentioned that departmental meetings take place, it was also noticed that other formal meetings and communications of one to one basis take place. According to their expressions, in meetings they talk about general issues that happen in school such as bullying and other antisocial behaviors that are adverse and need collective solution. One of the professionals added on that such meetings do not only address general issues , but also are important to individual professionals because they help to refresh minds by reflecting and sharing challenges, successes and learning best practices from one another. There was a

common voice among professionals that formal meetings promotes general exchange of ideas in pursuit of finding answers to the common problems and ethical dilemmas. For example a nurse added that:

> That when the pricipal invite us to meet , it means that there is a general problem or concern that need to be collectively adressed or delivering a message for us all. we get genral information and learn new ideas of improving our relationships, we open up and talk about personal and general challenges. Some times we meet to prepare for upcoming events, such as; selection and recruitment of new special needs children, elections, and event like Christmas parties for children and others.

In another similar expression about the practice of formal Meetings: the principal said that;

> We have just concluded a meeting of selecting new six special needs children for next year school in August. In the meetings, we discussed and planned about the kind of staff will be responsible for the selected children.

The above expressions gives the impression that in such formal meetings they do not only reflect on achievements and challenges but also plan for the future programs of finding resources that will support in the upcoming commitments.   On the whole, majority of the professionals' accounts on formal meetings illuminates reflections on successes, dissemination of information and improving, barriers that impede children learning and collaborative practice at large.

Additional to formal reflection meetings, all professionals agreed that they also attend formal meetings that aim at providing technical support. In such meetings they overwhelmingly agreed that they gain interprofessional learning and acquire new practical knowledge, skills and guidelines especially from the technical team within the school and from the municipality. The principle noted:

> Every department has a team leader under me; we meet every Tuesday for meeting, and we talk about a student in each department and the teachers meet every Tuesday at 2 o'clock to talk about the students. Every second week of the month, a resource team comprised of all professionals meet and give advice on how to work with each student. Then we also get PPT professionals from the municipality who provide technical support to staff about special needs support.

Additionally, as professionals expressed the presence of formal staff meeting and its importance to effective collaboration, they also acknowledged the importance of having technical meetings from PPT. They agreed that such meetings updated them about new trends in service delivery. Trends such as new reporting formats, tools of capturing data and tracking progress. In their accounts, they revealed that PPT does not only give advice but also has a statutory responsibility for contributing towards the development of competencies and organizational development in schools. Prior to PPT support, the special needs professionals agreed that as a team, they discussed and assessed the needs of the special children and made particular notification concerns in the form of a written report to PPT experts.

The interview findings on formal networks and reflections reinforce ideas previously explored in the literature on practices of interprofession collaboration. First, the professionals' accounts on formal meetings reflects what Norwegian Directorate of education and Training requires: that all staff should function as a community of colleagues and share responsibility for the children development. Additionally, the curriculum suggests that such meetings should ensure great efforts of coordination and collaboration among all members is decisive to good results

(Education Core Curriculum, Norway, 1997). While the education directorate and the national curriculum clearly states the value of formal meetings, it quite well expressed by majority of the professionals that indeed the meetings helped shape understanding of interprofessional activities such as interprofessional learning, reflections, sharing of best practices, collective practice which may positively contribute to the development of the skills and knowledge related to interprofessional teaching to achieve equity education.

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While majority views on formal meetings showed significant importance in interprofessional practice, their also mentioned that they critiqued each other's ideas and practices and give way new perspectives of supporting children. Quite surprisingly the professionals expressed great character of interprofessionalism, according to their accounts on how they overcome such differences in views and perspectives, and they mentioned that they do not view differences of perspectives as necessarily barriers to overcome. Rather they take it as a right of expression to be respected. Indeed this demonstrates a strong interprofessional value of respect mutual agreement. One of the profession said that;

> "we respect for the views of others which may be opposing or different from another and perspective, what matters is willing to share what you know with others"

However, they expressed that it's important that in formal meetings everyone should be present. For example they agreed that in meetings to understand special needs children,all professionals such as teachers, nurses, psychologist, special education teachers, social workers team up and engage with technical resource teams from the kommune and critically discuss every child's needs. This practice concurs with (Hill, 2012)'s explanation; that when professionals in school carry out the expected tasks and meet to decide they make a better learning environment for the learners.

Approaching the formal meeting reflections from activity theory persective, my analysis of the professionals' accounts give an impression that meetings help professionals with add-on knowledge through cross-training, in which they learn about new skills and roles of implementing particular activities. The theory considers entire work system including teams and organizations, and this is evident in the professionals' accounts on team reflections to discuss and critique, but with intentions of getting the best possible solutions of ensuring equity in service support and inclusion of all children. By embracing such reflective processes of involving critical conversations it exposes personal beliefs about collective teaching and enables collaborating teachers examine the quality of instruction in relation to meeting the gaps in student's achievements (Whalan, 2012).

In fact, when professionals publically critique their views and perspectives on collaborative practices in my opinion it may lead to a better understanding of what is good and what need to be improved. Brabeck, (2003) proposes that its from such ways that professionals learn to work together to meet the needs of children and youth, when they are drawn into partnership and effective communication among themselves.

Therefore, in the context of reflection, the present study illuminates that critical reflection is part of interprofessional collaboration, it requires strong values of being interprofessional with strong commitments, time, trust and openess to adress complex issues that may affect the main goal of providing equity services in inclusion school.

5.2.3.2 Informal networks and communication

In additional to formal networks, professionals' accounts strongly pointed out the importance of informal meetings and communication in interprofessional collaboration. This was consistent throughout their expressions about how they collaborate among themselves to find better ways of addressing every child's needs in the school. According to their accounts, professionals often communicated to each other using informal ways such as face to face meetings in the corridors and hall ways, during coffee break, through short phone texts and others. Impressively, they accounts on informal networks indicate that professional share knowledge across their professional boundaries in attempt to find better ways of getting innovative ideas to address the needs of the Take, for example, this quote from the special needs teacher:

> We talk together, it happens on an informal basis, during break time, having coffee, we text to each other, and sometimes it's in the corridors, and you meet someone and says…hey, there is this, and that…you going to do this, and I will do that…

Following the above quotation, it indicates that professionals constructed possible and suitable communication means and used them effectively between individuals and groups as a vital means of working inter-professionally. For example the teachers added by saying:

> That it is vital for a child and the special needs teacher to develop routines for the exchange of information because special needs children have a number of individual needs including but not limited to learning disabilities, attention disorders, emotional disorders, cognitive disabilities, and autism which requires us keep notifying each other about their status.

The above expressions indicate that these informal means of communication have their own strengths to the collaborating partners and it seemed that for the teacher and special needs teacher it is inevitable because it is through such ways that their collaboration in classroom becomes meaningful. These quotations show that the interviewed professionals often communicate through informal ways in order to update each other about the needs, the status of the child and how they would conduct an effective teaching partnership that ensures equity in learning. As if that was not enough, the teacher's expression was echoed by a social worker who said that:

> Children with high emotional behaviors required the responsible professional to keep close with other professionals and the possible ways of maintaining the closeness was through using informal ways of communication.

Through such informal ways they reflected, consulted, and discussed means of handling these children. Additionally, the social worker's expressions showed concerns about children with severe emotional disorders; they said that sometimes they exhibited threats of violence to both adults (staff) and other children. Failure to keep other professionals informed would thus affect the progress of children's recovery because unfriendly or hostile environments that may be caused by unfair treatment from both children and adults cause setbacks to these children (with emotional disorders). The interviewees also mentioned that emergencies would come up, and the only possible ways to inform all the relevant professionals, is either through a phone call, physical conversations or any informal means.

These practices show a strong value of informal means of reflections that are often neglected by the management and information systems that are in place to monitor and evaluate the role of professionals working in inclusive schools. At least in the literature reviewed, including government policies and guidelines, it seemed that much emphasis is put on formal means such as staff meetings, briefings, government memos which often have records such as meeting minutes, reports, letters, and makes it easy for evaluators to base their assessments to understand progress. However, somewhat striking, in this current study the role of informal reflections appeared slightly more important than what most other studies seem to have documented. Although not significantly recognized as very important, the current study reveals their importance in an inclusive setting where there are various professionals collaborating with an aim of providing equity education and general inclusion. Research suggest that each form of communication has its own conventions, strengths and weaknesses and practitioners must become skilled across spectrum (Hammick et al., 2009) Though there is no question about the formal ways, in the current study professionals' accounts about informal reflections indicate that the central purpose of communication is to progress the sharing of information to help the service users and through informal ways of communication it seemed appropriate to them. The special needs teachers' expressions showed that it was vital for them to develop the regular exchange of information because they served important purposes for the rest of the team and the children as well. On a whole, professional's expressions revealed that, they had high regards for brief corridor and coffee break conversations because these kind of conversations helped them to clarify positions, follow-ups, receive quick feedbacks, inquire about resources and seek opinions about decisions. However, the interviewed professionals agreed that trust was very key and that trust improved their communication. Diallo & Thuillier, (2005) found that trust improved the quality of communication between different professionals working together. Additionally, other studies have shown that co-locating professionals enables informal communication and facilitates the creation of shared understanding, and increases cohesion between collaborative professionals (Project Management Institute, 2013).

While the professionals' expressions in the interviews did show the importance of regular conversations in interprofessional collaboration, my findings further indicate that most informal reflections happened between close team members who had frequent overlapping roles. For example the ordinary teacher and special needs educator, social educator and ordinary teachers expressed frequent interactions. Their closeness were not intended to exclude others, but served useful to those who had overlapping roles and who were in regular contact with the special needs children. Research have shown that effective communication skills are critical for collaborating professionals in inclusive education especially among co-teachers who share teaching and behavior management responsibilities (Friend & Cook, 1995). These authors note that verbal communication is the primary mode of interaction and information sharing during collaboration. As the interviews indicated, teachers and special needs teachers' demonstrated openness, trust, and used direct verbal communication methods to share information about children's behavior as they found ways of providing equity education. On a whole, it shows that knowledge among collaborating professionals in an inclusive is not only based on formal network, informal networks is equally important as professional's' accounts indicate.

5.2.4 Professional partnerships

5.2.4.1 Co-teaching

Professional partnership was another expression that was strongly emphasized by the professionals. However, this was repeatedly said by the ordinary teachers and special needs teachers because quite often they are together in the classroom. They both agreed having particular collaboration that required them to form an active partnership especially during teaching. Technically they referred it as co-teaching. Co-teaching has been defined as two professional educators delivering substantive instruction to a diverse group of students, including students with disabilities, within a single space typically a shared classroom (Friend & Cook, 1995). There were a number of expressions mentioned by the teacher and special needs teachers with that highlights (ibid)'s definition of co-teaching. Take, example, from the teacher's comment:

> The special education teacher follows the student in the classroom because the student cannot take care of him/herself alone, they work together with the teacher as assistants. It's too much work for the teacher alone. So we are always together helping each other and the special needs teacher acts as an assistant to the special needs children…

Considering the teacher's remarks, it indicates that the teacher and special needs teacher have a common role that requires them to share ideas and strategies in an interprofessional way with a focus on meeting the diverse and unique needs of all students. Seemingly, it indicates that their collaboration and partnership is based on proper coordination, communication and shared responsibility at all every stage of practice to ensure that the educational content met the learning needs of all children and there is equity.

In another related development of co-teaching the teacher added that:
> When we are two in the classroom, then, I take responsibilities of the general children and the special needs teacher assist those with learning disabilities such autistic children. Sometimes it's very hard to work with special needs children who have 'very special 'problems…Then we can change because we have different ways of talking to children, we try to use each other qualifications, sometimes we interchange and I take the responsibility of assisting special needs children as well.

Considering the above excerpt, it shows that co-teaching is a typical collaborative practice of interprofessional collaboration as expected in an inclusive school setting. The excerpt shows that it requires a strong interpersonal relations ships and shared responsibilities that facilitate good learning environment for all children as well to professionals in exchanging ideas and responsibilities to produce better outcomes. As the quotation indicate, co-teaching professionals strongly agreed that working with special children is demanding and challenging and impressively they showed that they are aware and sought effective means of dealing with the challenges. Their response measures show that   they cooperate in planning, presenting the lessons, assessing student learning to ensure that learning is benefiting all children equitably.
Additionally, both the teacher and the special needs consistently talked about using the same language to understand each other, mutual agreement on plans, setting of guidelines of expectations and making adaptations and modifications to lesson materials that assist those

children that have been identified with special needs. All in all, the teacher and special needs teachers' accounts indicates high levels of collaboration with a common focus of increasing opportunities of providing equity education to all children. It was further noted that in attempts to ensure equity education, both the teacher and special needs teacher talked a lot about efforts for ensuring that the education content, matched individual abilities, age and maturity as well as the entire needs of the class. This reflects their earlier comment of modifying lessons for special needs children. Their practice is highlighted in the National Education Curriculum's requirement of formulating a friendly pedagogical design that permits to meet the children's differences in ability and rhythm of development. Vividly, the interviews show that both the teacher and special needs teacher expressed actions of choosing teaching material, methods and structures to ensure that each individual develops the basic skills and satisfies the competence objectives which reflected adapted teaching stressed by the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2015.Consequently, both the teacher and special needs teacher expressed that their teaching methods considered the unique needs of individuals and group and hence embracing adapted teaching.

Approaching the teacher and special needs teacher's accounts on co-teaching from the interdisciplinary collaborative perspective, my analysis suggests that the co-teaching professionals shares responsibilities which creates a friendly environment that enables learning opportunities for all children. This is highly recommended by the interdisciplinary collaboration model that collaborating partners should share all responsibilities and create an enabling environment that facilitates good collaboration. Consequently it was highlighted in the professionals' accounts which indicated that they exchange roles and share responsibilities to support children especially when one get challenged to do better with the child.

However, much as their views demonstrated good collaborative practices of co-teaching, they also expressed signs that can lead to interprofessional collaboration failures. For example the special needs educator mentioned that other assistants fail to fully integrate in the classroom. In his accounts special needs teacher note that:

> The most important challenge is being integrated into the classroom situation. From my point of view, it is quite okay for people like me but some other member of my department feel that it's awkward, they say they do not feel part of the classroom because there are clear guidelines and no enough preparations.

Considering the above quotation, seemingly it appears that there are concerns about integration of special needs teachers who work as assistants to classroom. Somewhat surprisingly, it appeared slightly more a concern to other members other than the above participant.. When asked why others and not the current interviewee, mentioned that there is no time given for preparation especially to those who have just joined the practice and are lacking experience. In the special needs teachers' accounts further narrated that that not all who collaborate with teachers in the classroom are professionally trained like him (he has a degree in psychology). Others are less trained and sometimes are employed for short term and it's not always easy for them to get fully integrated in class. Quite surprisingly, later the special needs teacher admitted that is not immune from other challenges, he mentioned that sometimes teachers are defensive about another *add on* in the classroom. He added by saying that:

" it depends on the teachers and I have a couple of times when I think I have to be in that classroom but it is going to be hard to work with…some teachers would rather wish the child wasn't there"

Relating special needs teacher's accounts to the reviewed literature and policy frameworks of inclusive, it underscores the recommendations of co-teaching in inclusive schools. Especially those that suggest adapted teaching, special needs and equity in education (Directorate of Education and Training, Norway 2015; Booth & Ainscow, 1998)). The literature and policies show that it is very important for collaborating professionals or teachers to nurture their relationships with the people with whom they work most directly. However, this wasn't the case in the previous quotation of the special needs teacher. The accounts show that the possibilities for support, creativity, reflective dialogue, teamwork, and personal feelings in collaborative teaching as stressed by education policies are silenced and disrespected. In other words when the teacher regard partnerships as add on responsibilities in any way it becomes hard for collaborative practice and chances of providing equity education will be negatively affected.
Much as the accounts of the   teacher and special needs teachers' demonstrated good co-teaching collaboration, on the other hand, the special needs teacher's expressions indicate that it is not necessarily the same across all teaching assistants. In fact the special needs comments were representative to those assistants who feel not integrated and not well prepared into classroom.
In attempt to understand why such a challenge occurred, recent research has shown that many teachers have been socialized to work alone, and collaborative work requires different types of communication and people skills (Danforth & Smith, 2005). Other studies add that, many teachers are asked to collaborate in inclusion classrooms but receive inadequate or specific direction on how to go about the process(Friend & Cook, 1995). In avoiding such scenarios, a recent research recommends teacher familiarity, comfort and competence in using all of the strategies is essential to maintain parity and to ensure that each teacher uses her or his specific areas of expertise (Kroeger, 2012)

5.2.5 Flexibility
Two themes emerged from the professionals' accounts on explaining flexibility in interprofessional collaboration. One was about in adapting to interaction and communication methods and another on adapting to new practices and roles.

5.2.5.1 Adapting to interaction and communication styles
Professionals strongly emphasized the importance of adapting to the communication methods used. Their expressions showed that accepting and adapting to the prevailing communication styles, were able to explain and clarify roles and concepts to their team members, and hence improved their communication processes in collaborative practices. This finding contributes to what was explained before in informal networks under reflection processes. While the previous finding highlighted the importance of informal networks this specifically refers to how professionals interacted and adapted to communication styles. In the majority of the professional's accounts they was consistently mentioned on how they understood each other's ways of communication. Basically in their accounts, by saying adapting to communication methods they were actually referring to familiarization of different communication methods used during collaboration. For example the teachers mentioned that:

They are always in position to detect early defects such as attention disorders, and other social issues among children in class and through phone calls, SMS, chats and shot notices they inform nurses and social educators and others to follow up those children. To deliver such messages need to use the suitable means that will fit individuals and groups preferences otherwise you may not get the feed back.

The above quotation shows that professionals did not informally communicate anyhow. They have communication values that they consider very important to ensure exchange and sharing of knowledge. It shows preferred ways of communications which everyone had to adapt. Majority of the professionals agreed that it is every one's responsibility to ensure that communication is delivered, understood and feedback is given in a suitable way. While stressing interactions and adapting to communication styles the special needs educator stressed that:

"Though it does no harm to receive a text or a phone call from the teacher about any issue on special needs child, I prefer meeting in person and talk about it because sometimes people are not clear when they text you".

Regarding the special needs teacher's accounts it shows that if collaborating professionals don't understand and recognize the preferred suitable methods among collaborating professionals at the end of it affects the child whom most the communication is all about. The special needs educator added that one time he went to the classroom but only to find out that the students had gone for a study trip without informing him and the special needs child. When he inquired why they were not informed, the message was *you know we have gone!* He expressed that it was not clear to him and wished that it would have been better if they had talked about it. The special needs teacher expressed great concern because he was with the special needs child when he went to the classroom. He wondered how the child felt.

The special needs comments do not despair the importance of informal communication styles that both professionals praised in the previous explanation. Accordingly, it was evident in their accounts that adaptation of interactions among the professionals were in the wider circles of ensuring effective informal communication styles used. In their accounts they expressed through informal ways they updated and exchanged quick innovative ideas but concerns raised by the special needs teacher show that failure to adapt to the suitable communication methods can affect the effectiveness of interprofessional collaboration.

Relating to research about communication in interprofessional collaboration in schools, (Hammick et al., 2009) note that choosing a suitable means of communication and using it effectively is a vital part of working interprofessionally. However, the author argues that each method of communication has its advantages and disadvantages and most times collaborating partners have preferred ways of being communicated to and the onus is about how professionals adapt and choose the suitable styles that will deliver the message and get understood. Further, empirical literature suggests that to manage this effectively in the team setting professionals should think about these transferable communication skills and how they may adapt them. Relating to previous comments of the special needs teacher, it shows that for effective informal communication methods among professionals in inclusive schools where are required to effectively collaborate and provide equity education; (Hammick et al., 2009) suggestions should

not be overlooked. Considering the special needs teacher not being informed well about the study trip; there should have been a suitable communication style giving explanations and clarification why they were not informed in advance.

5.2.5.2 Adapting to new practices and roles
Additionally, majority of the professional's expressions highlighted that team members learned a lot from each other. In the accounts of the teacher and special needs teacher, at least they agreed that they keep their professional boundaries open and made their roles overlap. This imply that indistinct of roles to allow shared responsibility. They claimed to have shared responsibilities and knowledge among themselves which operated as a tool of learning and helping each other to reach the common goal of ensuring equity education. Take, example, a quotation from the teacher:

> I work with special needs education teachers because they take care of the special need child in the classroom as I focus on the rest of the class. But sometimes the special needs teacher is not there. I step in and work with the social educator or by myself to ensure continuity.

The above excerpt show that collaborating educators have the will and interests in learning from each other, and hence promoting interprofessional learning. It was evident among teachers and special needs teacher's accounts that they complimented each other and shared responsibility during absence of one. Following the comments of the teacher likewise the special needs teacher added that it requires good interpersonal relationships and being able to adjust to each other's teaching philosophies and perhaps formulating common new ones. Regarding their expressions on adapting to new practices they strongly acknowledged that their partnership usually starts often when both have little knowledge of each other's philosophies, teaching methods and skills, and goals but through adjustments and flexibility they support and learn from each other, and when is one is absent they stressed that at least they both knew what to do and hence continuity of activities. However, they indicated that where special skills are required consultation are always made.

Additionally, when they were asked how they manage changes such as working with new partners. Overwhelmingly, both the teacher and special needs teacher agreed that before the lessons start they spend enough time talking about their experiences and look for best practices. They expressed that when the new partner has come with new methods and philosophies, they discuss them and also let the children know about the changes. In the remarks of a teacher: "*we give it time and we let the children know, you know when you involve them they feel respected and besides that you don't want to confuse them because they need to know the changes*". These excerpt indicate that even though the partnering professionals have different experience, they are flexible and willing to learn from them. Rather than leaving them to despair their collaboration and importantly they respect the children right to know.

The most common interesting opinion that emerged from the teacher and special needs teacher was collective ownership of their outcomes. It was impressive to hear how they responded to hardships and failures. Both agreed that it's all about collective thinking and when one fails they find ways of doing it better next time. "Okay you have failed we all fail" was a common expression among them.

While it was evident in the teacher and special needs teachers' expressions that they adapted to new practices and learned from each other, on the other hand, some individuals thought

otherwise. This opinion came from a social educator who had spent less than three months in the school. She says:

> I have to choose how much I work on this and how much I will work on my particular role because that is my job. But then I work in a school so I have taken my self-thinking that I should be working on my work more in order to follow all children. I think I have to make my stand on what I do, where my job is and what it requires me to do

In the social educator's accounts it came out that she wanted to keep close to her job and role because she felt that she had a lot to do with special cases of children struggling to learn basic social skills. However, this was not what the majority wished. They believe it's a collective responsibility and if everyone decides to do work alone it may jeopardize the common goal of providing equal opportunities to all children. Indeed, the behaviors of individuals committing to their specific roles may not necessarily improve such personal goals in inclusive school setting. This was was expressed by all professionals in the current study and confirmed by the previous n research that the children's problems are not limited to only one professional support, they require other professional's input as well. Consequently, it shows that since the social educator had just taken up the job, she is still adjusting to the system or may be she is closing boooundaries to prove her professional identity. Such accounts indicate that effective adapting to communal work take a great deal of time as well as establishing personal commitment to group work. For this reason new partners need to be given time to integrate into systems and if it is not the time factor, they should be flexible to new changes.

Barrett et al., (2005) note that, demands of interprofessional collaboration and other changes to the working environment can cause a great deal of anxiety which often lies beyond the conscious awareness of the individual (p .30). Therefore, in a school with inclusive education, it needs "a village of all professionals" to meet the needs of children, (*an expression ofAfrican vocabulary that it takes the whole village to raise a child*"). In light of this expression, professionals need each other if there are to make better changes in the lives of the children and flexibility is key in all collaborative activities. Studies have shown that an individual who sticks to their roles bar agencies and professionals in linking connections for knowledge exchange and decision-making (Hill, 2012).
Thus, flexibility is a requirement for sometimes when things don't go as planned, professionals collaborating and the agency need to open up, and find other possible ways to effect the desired change. As professionals, they have obligations towards both the school and towards the entire course of schooling where their contribution is a necessary to the whole child.

5.2.6 Interdependence and mutual autonomy
Professionals emphasised strongly that through regular interactions and formal meetings, they were able to have a clear understanding of the distinction between their own and their collaborating professionals' roles. They used them appropriately to find solutions for the common goal of providing equal education opportunities. In the majority professionals' accounts they claimed to have depended on each other's abilities, through referrals, follow-ups, assessments and work partnerships to complete specific tasks. Their views showed signs of interdependence that relied on good communication, healthy interpersonal relationships and respect for each other's job to reach particular goals of providing equity education, joint needs

assessments among others. For example as earlier shown in co-teaching, teachers and special needs teachers showed significant practices of interdependence, where the success of meeting the teaching and learning goals for all children in class actively related to their working relationships. In one of the quotation, the special needs commented:

> We have individual plans but those plans must fit in other people's plan. If you work alone sometimes it affect the majority of the people you are working with. For example I make my own plan and the teacher makes her plans but most time were are together sharing how our plans will meet collaborative goals. This does not happened between I and the teacher I guess it is across all other professionals. One individual's activity must depend on another. So you know it's more interdependence…

The above accounts indeed indicate awareness of interdependence, it is evident that at least the special needs teacher know that his plan or group plan need to respect other people's plans. In so doing, it creates opportunities of systematically working together as group to ensure effectiveness and integration of services. From the above accounts it shows that professionals are exhibiting professional interdependence which comes as a result of respecting other people's contribution to collaborative work. Such claims indicate awareness of responsibilities and specific roles between their own and their collaborating professionals. It was widely expressed among all professionals that in such a co-locating setting one's job depended on the success of another one's job. For example the nurses appreciated the role of the principal in keeping them together as a team. They expressed how he coordinated and supported them in some areas like reporting and improving interpersonal and communications skills. In this regard, it shows that leadership is a key factor in interprofessional collaboration and a predictor of success. Thus without good leadership it may affect their success towards helping all children as required by national standards.

As it was widely accepted among collaborating professionals, the interviews showed that the complex on children' needs created a great interdependence among all professionals in the school. For example, in their expression, it was clear that all professionals depend on the principal to provide necessary resources for instruction in teaching and for health care in the school clinic and the principal depend on all professionals in such a way that they collaborated to provide better education to all children. This makes it very important and it illustrates how interdependent professionals are in Fjorden School.

Relating to the professionals accounts on interdependence to National guidelines such as the Directorate of Education and Training, The National Core Educational Curriculum's requirements, the interviews reflect these national requirements of professionals using their experience, time, and skills and complement each other to ensure sufficient support for every child. Indeed, the practice of interdependence illustrated by the professionals\ accounts highlights common values of interprofessional collaboration and interdependence. For example they demonstrated that they trusted each other and believed that all individuals worked hard to the common goal of providing equal opportunities to all children. Research has described this as interdependence of groups whose efforts are indispensable to succeed in all task.

While interdependence was widely accepted by majority professionals others felt somewhat like that differences in perception affected better interdependence. Take, example, from one of the professionals:

> Sometimes you have a case, and it's like we don't know what to do yet, but we contact each other for help. We all have thoughts, but you don't agree, but maybe things have worked well before, and someone thinks it's the best way because they have been working for a long time.But I see things from a different point of view but at the end we agree.

In spited of the differences, still the above professional's comments highlights that mutual agreement always exist. It was evident generally among all professionals that differences were more health than destructive and led to wider perceptions that gives the group options of acquiring best practices. Studies have referred this kind of practice a mutual autonomy as opposed to individual or traditional autonomy(Royeen, Jensen, & Harvan, 2009). According to the authors, the concept of mutual autonomy is considered as imperative in interprofessional collaboration practice. This empirical research show that it includes mutual understanding and acceptances of how much sharing of time, space, daily decisions, with whom and how much they arrived at the activity. From this point of view, the interviews showed that professionals regarded themselves interdependent with and also dependent on other people in the circles of operation, such as; the school administration, parents, children, and resource team from the kommune.

Hill, (2012) note that, it needs professionals to recognize each other's competencies and reliance on each other's work to achieve the child wellbeing. However, if mutual autonomy grows into individual or traditional autonomy, it may increase the risk of maintaining a false sense of unity in the group, hence affecting interdependence and the collective efforts towards achieving the common goal (Royeen et al., 2009;Hill, 2012).

The premise here is that, research shows that professionals need to relate their opinions to other's and respect their viewpoints other than being individualistic leaving it to desolate teamwork. Other authors described this, as a process where individuals or groups come to sense that there is difference, problem or dilemma and thus, begin to identify the nature of their differences of belief or action (Achinstein, 2002, p. 425).

5.2.7 Confidentiality and professional identity

Most convincing evidence in the interviews with professionals indicated that accepting interprofessional values operated as a guiding principle for effective collaboration. They emphasized that accepting values enabled them as professionals of different training background to focus on the common goal of providing equity education and inclusion of all children. For example the nurse said that;

> "We endeavor to work outside our profession boundaries and accept other groups of professionals for the betterment of helping children in need. I think that is why we are all here. But sometimes we get challenged when it comes to sharing of information…"

This was further emphasized when the nurse expressed that during reflection meetings everyone is welcomed and respected, however there are challenges. She mentioned that when other professionals are freely expressing and demanding more information from collaborating professionals, for them (nurses) cannot do so. She appreciates partnerships but it is not comfortable when it comes to the demands of sharing sensitive information. Basically, the

nurse's accounts indicate willingness to be part of interprofessional collaboration but their strong professional identity still matters a lot.

In further explaining the difficulties faced in collaborating with other professionals, the nurse narrated that; "*other professionals do not always see that we have this strong confidentiality value, they want us to tell everything but that is not according to our professional*". However, the nurse was clear about when to reveal the sensitive information. She accepted that when confidentiality creates a risk that can be saved by the information held, she reconsiders her profession stand. She quoted "our *confidentiality is working until it is a risk for life*". However before the information is revealed she mentioned that they inform children that holding the information is no longer important when the situation of the child becomes life threatening. The nurse's accounts indicate that she respect interprofessional practice but face ethical dilemmas of concealing sensitive information from other professionals. This implies that the nurse keep running back and forth to protect her professional identity in what she called defending *my profession practice* in the premise of honoring the value of confidentiality. In her expression, she well stipulated that the point of concern is not to isolate from interprofessional collaboration. Rather it is a challenge of working with other professionals of different profession training. Though the nurse thinks that it affect their smooth interprofessional collaboration on the same note she feels that sometimes the professionals do understand their profession demands.

Considering the professional's accounts on professional identity it seemed more a concern to the nurse than other profession group members. Perhaps it indicates that professional identity is centered on professional roles and professional training background. Professionals like the teachers and special needs teachers who forms the majority profession group in school share related education training background. Quite indeed, nurses have a distinct profession and being few in school coupled with their profession demand and unique roles, profession identity became a concern to them more than any other group.

Approaching the issues of professional identity from the the social identity theory perspective ,my analysis informs me that each group has its social identity and uniqueness as opposed to others or each person's unique identity. This idea was evident in the interviews, the nurses as a particular group of professionals highlighted the risks and vulnerability which meant that sometimes they positioned themselves outside the established circles of collaborative practices in the name of keeping their profession identity and also saving their careers. Similarly, Hammick et al., (2009, p. 48) noted that, each profession is defined, bounded by its practices, its knowledge base, its philosophies, and values.

Data from the interviews shows that much as the professionals acknowledged the effectiveness of interprofessional collaboration, particulars that arise from the traditions of separate education and training for different profession groups can be barriers to individuals from being interprofessional. Hill, (2012) comments that, it is common for professionals to fear that joint working requires the loss of identity and status or working beyond familiar areas of competence. Therefore, the school leadership should not ignore such incidences instead it should take advantage of them to streamline and create a friendly environment with desired values that can help professionals understand and accept each other's profession requirements. However, there might not be universal ethical guidelines, but the bottom line can be, professionals should continue with their central functions, but with a willingness to modify and align practices with others.

5.2.8 Status differentials and power relations

In practical terms, majority of the professional's experiences illustrated that they negotiated their individual professional role with group work by understanding other people's functions and how the roles overlapped into collaborative work. They accepted that working in a co-located inclusive school setting naturally led to the adaptation of typical values for optimal collaboration. However, despite the fact of taking common values of collaboration, minority professionals did not hide their bad feelings about power and status differentials. In particular, special educators who have special individual cases expressed that still they do not consider themselves as "professionals in partnership" especially when their input targeting individual cases is overlooked and not valued by teachers who control majority of the children. Take, example, the social educator's note:

> We can have different views on what is the best way because some professionals are in a position to think about all the children. Then you have me with a small perspective on one child, yes I know that is their job as well, but it becomes difficult because you don't have enough for all but a few.

Considering the above excerpt, it indicates that the status of different professionals seems to determine their role, functions and whoever has bigger roles and functions has much power over those with less roles and functions. Although all professionals agreed that they have the capacity to engage in interprofessional collaboration and contribute to the better education achievement of all children, power and status differentials looked to be a stumbling block in some group collaboration.

In other words, the presence of such incidences can impede communication and disrupt efficient interprofessional collaboration which threatens earlier discussed note of learning from each other and working together in a sound and good interprofessional community

Emerging studies note that if such beliefs continue to conflict, one or more of the team may find it difficult to continue to work together (Barrett et al., 2005). In examining the views of those who felt isolated and considered as unequal in interprofessional collaboration the affected persons felt the loss of confidence and sense of interprofessional responsibility which may later affect their morale and motivation. The special needs teacher argued that may be it could be the reasons why some assistants come and go quickly. Therefore, such none developmental powers need to be checked if professionals in a school are to work collectively to address every child's educational needs. The school as an organization that uses interprofessional collaboration as a strategy to provide equity education may find it essential to ensure mechanisms that enable equality among all professionals. Giving individuals platforms to express their grievances and also providing regular support supervision to let individuals recognize their potential for effective interprofessional collaboration can be helpful.

Studies have shown that confidence is very imperative in interprofessional collaboration and if it is not raised and addressed it can lead to what (Miller 2004; Barrett et al., 2005) termed as an attack on professional identity and autonomy and seen as part of a process to de professionalize workers.

However, it is worth to note that the individual professionals expressed support from the principal which show real signs of creating good interprofessional collaboration environment. They acknowledged his presence as he endeavored to engage them in reflection meetings with

attempts to support and nurture collaborative practice. This was widely expressed among majority of professionals' and they expressed that his contribution to interprofessional collaboration in an inclusive school environment empowers their personal value and experiences within a communal context. However, according to (Frost & Robinson, 2007)'s research on safeguarding children in multidisciplinary teams, stated that managers should be able to address operational, and identity issues in a skillful and sensitive manner. In this regard, professional's expression of power relations and status differentials challenges the school leadership's role. The Principal may need to look into this as well to ensure stability of interprofessional collaboration. The school leadership needs to acknowledge and be proactive to avoid being caught unaware of barriers to interprofessional collaboration. Other studies suggest that there should be a less hierarchical organizational structure among the collaborating team where power is more diffuse for purposes of limiting power related problems that may lead to high divisions (Willumsen & Hallberg, 2003).
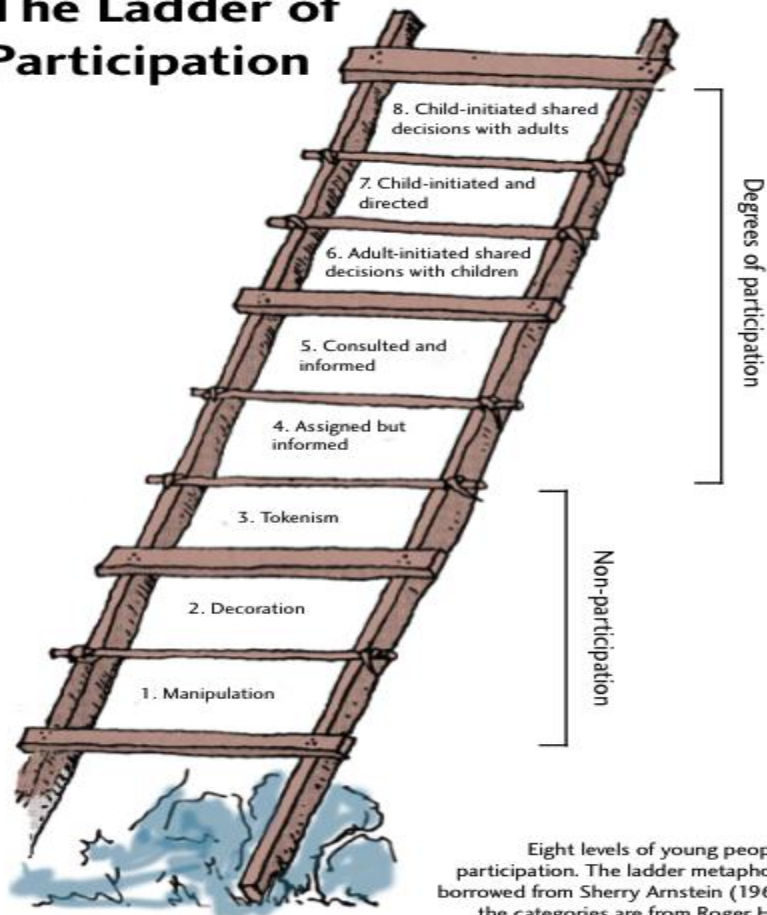
Therefore, these concerns shows that collective decisions cannot be made if one professional group declares its self to be superior to others, the obligation is on the leadership to ensure respect for each other's abilities and contributions. Studies have shown that power relations or struggles hinders interpersonal relationships which affect collaboration. Bronstein, (2003) note sharing responsibility in collaboration is very key in interprofessional collaboration and this can only happen when power is shared too.

5.3   Section B: Professionals' practical expriences of Child Participation

There was compelling evidence of child participation. Roger Hart's (1992) ladder of participation provides an insightful understanding on how professionals in the school allowed children to participate. The participation ladder was chosen because most often it has been used as analysis to understand children's participation in projects. Therefore, it seemed useful for this study to understand how collaborating professionals in the school considered child participation in their routine work. However, it should be noted that in this area of the study I did not consider all the eight rungs to explain child participation. Focus was on relating the rungs of the ladder that seemed relevant to explain the participant's views on practices and how they considered involved all children.

Figure 4: Ladder of participation

The Ladder of Participation

8. Child-initiated shared decisions with adults

7. Child-initiated and directed

6. Adult-initiated shared decisions with children

5. Consulted and informed

4. Assigned but informed

3. Tokenism

2. Decoration

1. Manipulation

Degrees of participation

Non-participation

Eight levels of young people's participation. The ladder metaphor is borrowed from Sherry Arnstein (1969); the categories are from Roger Hart.

In understanding child participation in an inclusive school, a special focus, however, in this current area of the study was put on how did professionals involve or consider child participation of all children in equal basis while respecting their individual differences.

There were two major themes that emerged from the data analysis. First, professional's experiences and practices focused on *academic participation*. This was more evident among teachers and special needs teachers or professionals who are involved in co-teaching. Second, the participant's highlighted experiences and practices social *participation*.

5.3.1 Academic participation

Regarding academic partcipationa, most compelling evidence of partcipation came from the teacher and the special needs teacher compared to other professional group. This imply that their roles and functions allows them be in contact with children all the time unlike other professional. However it is important to note that it does not necessarilly mean that other professionals did not contribute to the educational achievement of the children. As indicated before in this current study, both professionals either directly or indirectly made significant contributions towards provinding educational opportunities to children.

5.3.1.1 Opportunity of choice among special needs children

Take, example, from the quotation of special needs teacher on academic child partcipation:

Child partcipation in class depends on the children' statuts, we have one or two children who may not be comfortable with situation. When I ask them their expectation and what we are going to work on etc…it is too much to engange , it is difficult for them to comprehend. If I ask them what do you like most? Is it Math or english . We give them a lot choices…. in terms of certain aspects of the day still it difficult for them to comprehend…

Considering the above comments of the special needs teacher, it suggest that special needs children are given opportunities to partcipate in choosing what and how they want to learn but because of their levels of competence it becomes hard for them to fully partcipate. And even when their partcipate still it is more adult oriented than the child itself. Regarding the special needs teacher's accounts, the idea of including special needs children in activities that require their choice and expression is well considered across all children with special needs. However, the professionals expressed that, depending on their abilities some participated in choosing how they wanted to spend their break time, choosing learning methods and sitting positions in class and others relied on adult's assistance.

5.3.1.2 Participation in classroom

When I asked the professionals how they ensured participation in learning especially during discussion and class work. Two experiences were raised. One regarded the special needs children and and the other reflected the majority of children in the classroom.

First, regarding special needs children participation in class, the special needs teacher mentioned that children with autism hardly participate in classroom discussions. This view imply that whatever is discussed in the classroom does not necessarily capture the views of these children yet they matter to them most. It indicates that participation is determined by the child's ability or competence and those who have poor cognitive skills or cannot at all express their opinions their degree of participation is very poor or none.

Further more, according to the special needs educator's explanation about classroom work or exercise, the views expressed indicate that whilst the rest of the children could do their work, the special educators are always busy helping special needs children to complete their work. In their accounts special teachers mentioned that it becomes hard for these children to process answers in time when asked questions and by the time they figured out a possible response, the teacher and the class have already moved to another question. Hence, it is hard for them sometimes to participate in class discussions and so their participation is adult oriented.

The explanations indicate that, the kind of help varied from one child to another depending on the levels of disability. This support is seen as great input from the special needs educators because they worked to ensure that these children are equally getting education just like their counterparts. The special needs teacher narrative show that as an educator he plays his professional role of letting the children to participate and the consistent assistance indicates encouragement and sustaining the child's interest to help focus on the goal of learning. Together the as a team the teacher and special needs indicted collective responsibility to ensure that all children participate in classroom. However, research has shown that for the effectiveness of this support there must be social engagement before children can learn and gradually take more responsibility (Harcourt, Perry, & Waller, 2011).

Indeed from child participation perspective, it is understood that the frequent presence of the special needs educator is a gradual process that facilitates participation through interactions with the student. However, it indicates that this kind of support will continually remain the same and the child will get used with the hand held support and continue expecting the adult's support which affects the degree of participation. Having said that, this may not only depend on the child's competence, but also on the confidence and competence acquired by the teachers and other professionals who directly work with these children. This being the routine role, it therefore, matches the argument of (Ainscow, 1999) that the existence of the adult's support will affect the possibility that the demands of these children could stimulate a consideration of how practice might be changed in an attempt to facilitate their participation.

5.3.1.3 General participation in class

Second, in understanding how the entire class participate, the teacher and special needs teacher emphisized that they provide opportunities to children to choose how they prefer to learn partcicular topics. The co-teaching professionals believed that the practice of involving children encourages cooperation among children to create a learning environment of their choice and maximizes chances of partcipation, as well as learning for all children. In fact, this showed significant evidence that co-tecahing profesionals have considerable knowledge of involving children and such practices can yield high outcomes in terms of academic and social developments among children. Their expressions indicate child centered methods such as groups, role plays, debate, and children collaborate among themselves do individual projects of their choices. Additionally the teachers expressed that there are also out of class events like sports, celebrations, competions among others. This implies that children partcipated in planning and were given opportunities to manage their actvities accordingly. However, adult supervision is considered important. These accounts show that children are provided opportunities to participate in their self-initiated activities of their choice and get opportunity to demonstrate the competencies they possess. However, relating this kind of participation to to the participation ladder, it shows that the children are informed by the teachers and can understand the intentions of the activity and reasons why they are participating hence reflecting the assigned but informed rung on the participation ladder. Though it indicates participatory practices, it is important to note that it is the teachers giving instructions. From the power relation perspective, teachers use their positions, which leaves children with no choices other than to follow the teacher's instructions and hence affecting their degree of full participation.

Thus, to ensure full participation, professionals need to check this power imbalance and give children an opportunity to form their opinion, express their viewpoints and consider them seriously. However, this full participation will depend on the children language skills, age and maturity (Marit & Strandbu, 2006). It comes a challenge for teachers to avoid illustrations because by virtue of their professional role they are obligated to communicate to children in order to learn and through their communications they explain and give assignments which children have to follow. All in all the accounts of teachers illustrates everyday situations in the classroom and it's a challenge for them to totally avoid adult control. However, studies show that for power relations, it can be through joint analysis based on a more equal power relationship between collaborating professionals and children, so that, the role of such an adult support person should counterbalance the inequality of power expertise between the child and adults (Johansson, 2013;Marit & Strandbu, 2006).

5.3.2 Social participation
5.3.2.1 Children with social emotional problems participation
Furthermore, having asked the professionals about how they encourage participation of special needs children, I also inquired how children with social problems such as emotional behaviors participate as well. In the accounts of a teacher who has social work experience mentioned that such children are always under their surveillance. They are allowed to socialize with their peers and participate in classroom activities only if they are not dangerous to others.

Because of their aggressive behaviors, they are controlled and do not participate freely with their peers. Neither do they express their views freely with other professionals. The professional's explanations indicated that adult engagement is very high, and possibilities of the child's participation in social activities are limited to almost non-participation.

The child control decision can be seen as strict and affecting child participation, but on the hand the professional said it served as a measure to protect them from being provoked to violence and also protecting other children and practitioners from being victims of their violent acts. This seemed to be a dilemma for the professionals, but the social worker expressed that it was a right decision based on the best interest of the child and do not harm principles of child protection. Furthermore, the expressions of the social worker indicated that the measures did not intend to isolate the child, but technically to protect the child from being confronted at early stages of treatment.

Studies have shown that, professionals need to use their expertise and give these children opportunity to reflect and act upon their lives (Marit & Strandbu, 2006). Hart, (1992) argues that if young people are not involved themselves in matters that affect them, they are unlikely to demonstrate the high competence they possess. Involvement fosters motivation, which fosters competence, which in turn encourages motivation for further participation. This practice is extremely important from a preventive point of view, as regards both violating others and being violated. But the views of the social worker considered it as a dilemma of isolating the child and respecting the do no harm principle of protecting the child and others.

5.3.2.2 Participation in school politics
The professionals expressed the existence of student body that comprises of different student representatives according to their grades. They repeatdly said that, children partcipate as informers by giving in their views on how they wish certain projects to be run within the in classrooms and school level. This is always done through their leaders and through disccussions in small groups, classes, grades and clubs, children contribute their views and give proposals on specific cases. A teacher gave an example that children of upper grade wished to spend their break time playng and listening to music on loud speakers and their views were respected and music was provided. In fact, I observed this practice during my visits to conduct interviews. Indeed teenagers played while listening to loud music outside in the grounds. However, teachers said that children have to follow conditions and rules , such as keeping a moderate sound. This implies that adult involvemet is inevitable through out school based actvities.

In the words of the majority professionals it was impressive to hear that every grade has representative and children participated in electing their leaders. This indicated that all age groups participate equally in elections because usually grades represent certain age group.

According to the professional's explanations, at least all age groups are represented at every level hence provding equal opportunities of partcipation.

In Fjorden School, the professional's views indicate that they base their work on the philosophy of ensuring participation for all children. Regarding representation it was evident that all children are provide opportunity to promote a culture of democracy where from the time when they are small. Giving children the right to participate means encouraging involvement and strengthening their skills and self-confidence. This builds children's capacities and make them actors in their own lives with a choice of taking responsibility to define their future.

However, it remained unclear how special needs children equally participated, but professionals explained that the issue to participating and not participating depended on the competence levels of special needs children. Those who can, usually participate. However, as regard to the right of child participation, the views of the majority professionals indicated knowledge and competence of involving children. Participation in school leadership elections did not only show participation of children, it did also indicate high levels of democracy and citizenship.

Additionally, majority of the professionals mentioned that children did not only represent and participate at school levels, but they also represented the school at the municipal council where they engage in different topics of discussions and forums. However, the views expressed by the professionals, still showed that children with special needs struggled to be on same level of participation like others that do not have disabilities. The issue of competence remains a barrier for them through out any competitive social event.

Following an interpretation of the Local Government Act, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development reached the conclusion that young people may be given the right to attend and speak at meetings of the municipal council/county council *(Government Circular Q-27/2006).* This statement confirms the views spoken by the majority professionals about children participation in school and at municipal level. The local Government Act, further states that no-one other than the elected representatives may be allowed the formal right to present proposals in publicly elected bodies. This position therefore justifies the school's democratic processes of allowing children to elect their leaders because if they don't they may lose the chance to participate at the municipal council.

However, it was further noticed that roles and responsibilities depended on age and maturity. For example, a child leader from grade two would not take a responsibility of a grown up child leader of grade ten. This consideration gives an impression that age and maturity in participation is crucial and act as a guideline to avoid incidences of manipulation, decoration and tokenism that are rungs of none participation on the participation ladder.

About children participating in meetings and other forums to decide on their school; the social educator mentioned that:

> We have a student body comprising of elected leaders and during council meetings children state their views, and we have a suggestion box people can use whenever they wish.

Relating the above quotation to the Norwegian Education Act (1994), it indicates that Fjorden school recognises child parcipation opportunities, which profeesionals consider and promote them in their collaborative actvities with children. The accounts of the professionals are in respect of the national policies of child partcipation, particularly section 11-2 of the Education

Act. It states that the right of children to participate in matters that affects them through pupils' councils at primary and lower secondary schools. Considering all national and local policies on child participation it is evident that municipalities have made child participation in schools an important agenda on the school programs and professionals' views of Fjorden School indicate that indeed there are collective efforts to promote children's right to participate in all activities that matter to them.

Additionally, the child participatory practices in the school also confirmed the UNCRC's Article 13; wish for children to have the right to freedom of speech and participation in decision-making processes that are relevant to their lives. All in all, the professionals agreed that these practices are enshrined in the school's program and collectively work to ensure that children are given freedom to express their views and perceptions. However, (Marit & Strandbu, 2006) argues that, it is not sufficient that children are invited to participate can express themselves. Therefore, school and professionals in particular need to consider the way they view children and gain proper understanding of their opinions, as well as ways in which adults can facilitate their participation.

6.1 Conclusion

Statements of majority of the professionals that participated in the interviews suggest important features of interprofessional collaboration in an inclusive school environment. Their experiences highlights that collective collaboration strengthens their relationships, builds trust, openness and allows professionals to support one another work toward a common goal of providing equal education opportunities for all children.

Regarding their interprofessional experiences, relations and actions that takes place between them indicate the collective collaboration goal of providing equal education to all children. Their accounts indicate distinct interprofessional collaboration features of shared norms and values, cooperation, reflective dialogues, interdependence, partnerships and collaboration. Their accounts suggest that collaboration is constantly in use in the classroom and throughout the entire school whether between teachers, nurses, social workers, environment workers or combinations of the four. This implies that they are connected in a way that they join-up efforts to produce better results for all children. For example through co-teaching, teachers collaborate with special needs teachers in classroom share knowledge and responsibility to improve practice in order to provide equal opportunities to all children. Other collaborations stressed joint needs assessments between teacher's nurses, social workers and special needs teachers to identify special needs children in the school. Consequently, all professionals in the school utilize their unique expertise and form collaborative structures such as referrals, co-teaching and reflective dialogues as it was discovered from their experiences. Seemingly professionals achieve more than what it would be achieved when the same professionals act independently. In fact, the professional's experiences highlight high levels of interdependence across all professionals. Again the success for collaboration seemed to be influence by the school ability to create an enabling environment. In fact all professionals recognized the role of the Principal in keeping them together. This has a good implication of addressing the National standards that focus on making the school relevant to meeting the educational needs of all children regardless of abilities, age, gender and socio-cultural background.

Although the interviews captured exciting experiences of interprofessional work, they also reported incidences of power and status differentials, and ethical dilemmas of accessing and

sharing sensitive information. Specifically about power and status differential, the special needs teachers who partner with teachers as assistant in the classroom, expressed partnership concerns of power relations. It indicates that the status differential among professionals seemingly determines their role, functions and whoever has bigger roles and functions has much power over those with less roles and functions. For example this was revealed as in issue between teachers and assistants. Studies have shown that in any agency that needs collaborative practice, knowledge of team dynamics is important. In an inclusive school that requires collaborative practice to provide children with equal education opportunities there should be a less hierarchical organizational structure among the collaborating team where power is more diffuse for purposes of limiting power related problems that may lead to high divisions (Willumsen & Hallberg, 2003). This should not be different from Fjorden School. The leadership of Fjorden School holds the potential solution to initiate and enable good balance of power relations and enable effective collaborations. The leader can have a great impact on the development of good attitudes among professionals through support supervision and enhancing professional development opportunities. However, professionals too need to adjust and develop communal responsibility for good working relationships.

Further, in the accounts of professionals, this study highlights child participatory practices that give children opportunities to express their perceptions and ideas concerning aspects in the classroom and the entire school. The descriptions of participatory practices show that at Fjorden school professionals allow children participate in classroom activities such as initiating individual and group projects, choosing methods of learning, selecting topics of interest. Additionally, they participate in social activities like games, sports, and competitions within the school. Further the professionals' accounts showed how children voices and expressions are considered. In this regard, they participate in school elections, write letters through suggestion box and also participate in school meetings and municipal council meetings through their representatives.

The implication is that professionals have great considerations of child participation, and as well demonstrated great confidence and competence. Their actions fulfil the Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines the right of children to express their views in all matters that affect them. In particular they also embrace, Article 11-2 of the (Norwegian Education Act, 1994). This article emphasizes the right of children to participate in matters that affect them through pupils' councils at primary and lower secondary schools. The professionals 'accounts of providing all equal opportunities to all children to participate, are also endorsed by Article 7 of the UNCRC 1989, which upholds the right of children with disabilities to express their views freely on all matters that affect them.

However, the professionals accounts on inclusiveness, illustrate that the need for inclusion of all children still remain a challenge in this regard. The special needs educators mentioned that it's a big challenge to ensure full participation of children with special needs to them because participation is sometimes based on ability (competence). Some children, i.e., children with special needs, might not have such skills. One special needs educator added, that even if you do involve them, they sometimes do not understand, and when they do participate, their participation is close to none because they depend on adult assistance.

Although Inclusive education means that everyone should participate in society on an equal basis academically, socially and culturally, efforts to make this right a reality among children with special needs to participate in all aspects that affect their life still remain a challenge. This does

not only pertain to professionals at Fjorden School but to all practitioners working in inclusive schools. Indeed, the point of view that the special needs teacher whom I interviewed expressed, was that they endeavor to involve children in all activities. However, if children lack that competence, it is hard for them to participate in activities that matter to them. Studies have shown that children with special needs are not a homogenous group but are more different than similar (Harcourt et al., 2011). For example the empirical literature show that while some children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have very severe communication difficulties, others who are diagnosed with the same disorder are able to communicate and interact effectively with a wide range of people (ibid). Therefore, given the accounts of the interviewed professionals, they provide equally all children opportunities to participate in all activities but their differences in abilities makes it that some can and others cannot participate at all.

Lastly, and somewhat surprisingly, it appeared that much emphasis of knowledge of collaboration across public organizations is put on the importance of *formal* structures such as functional teams, departmental meetings, training workshops among others as the important formal networks and communication means where knowledge among professionals can be shared (Al-Bastaki, 2014). Indeed, in this study the professional's views confirm the empirical evidence given about the importance of formal meetings and their contribution to towards effective interprofessional collaboration environment. For example, my interviews with the principal of the school, highlight the importance of formal meetings as mechanisms that connect colleagues from different professions. He mentioned departmental meetings, general school meetings, board meetings, staff meetings as formal mechanisms for learning, monitoring and, evaluation. His accounts were echoed by other interviewed professionals who said that through such meetings, they reflect on achievements and challenges, acquire new information from resource teams, principal, PPT and among themselves. Most of the explanations about the importance of formal meetings characterize Fjorden School as much formalized agency with many formal systems.

Their suggestions are supported by empirical evidence that formal structures connect individuals across groups and structures and provide an environment to interact and share knowledge (Al-Bastaki, 2014).

However, despite that fact that Fjorden School is a much formalized system, it was striking that the majority of professionals also emphasized strongly the *informal* structures of communication. Much as they expressed a lot about formal networks and system of communication, it was clear that informal networks can be equally important and contributed much toward addressing individual child needs. In the interviews, they talked about consulting each other in corridors, hall ways, during coffee breaks, through phone texts, short notes, among other informal settings. Indeed, they mentioned that most of the communication is about collaborative work, updates, referrals and feedbacks of finding better ways supporting each other. The interviewees stressed that because of limited time they find themselves updating each other about practices more through informal networks. This implies that there is a lot of informal interactions taking place in the interprofessional community where professionals update each other and get relevant assistance that most often is not documented as it is usually done in the formal network structures. In view of this, it indicates that there is informal knowledge nets among professionals that advance through individual interactions.

To conclude, in understanding interprofessional collaboration in an extended school, the experiences of the interviewed professionals indicate that a formal organization like Fjorden School has informal networks that can be equally important as the formal ones. The municipality and school authorities that monitor and evaluate the impacts basing on formal records and structures should understand that informal structures are important not only to informal settings, but also to a formal setting organization like Fjorden School. Research show that informal channels bring together individuals who hold mutual interest to share knowledge for new ideas and problem solutions (Al-Bastaki, 2014). In a school like Fjorden where professionals are collaborating to provide equal education to all children, the impact of these informal communication networks should not be underestimated.

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8.1 Appendix

8.1.1 Information Letter

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Date 02.02.2015

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Information regarding a research project

My name is Raymond Tumuhairwe, a graduate student of Mfamily masters course, studying social work of working with families and children at University of Stavanger. This letter regards about the study and your request to participate in research interviews. My research interest is about inter-professional collaboration practice between professionals in a school. The purpose of this study is a requirement to be fulfilled for the award of a master' degree in social work of working with families and children.

Being a foreign student coming from a developing world, Uganda in particular I wish to take this opportunity to study the Norwegian school from an exterior gaze, and thus produce very different perspectives than say a Norwegian researcher. As a social worker, I am concerned with questions of why a Norwegian school has several occupations / professions, how they work and what they do. Am interested to further find out how further collaboration is, in which cases it is most appropriate? What has extensive collaboration between different professions has to say for professional identity of the individual professional representatives? As well as how are children involved?

I have already notified the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) and I have been granted permission. I am working hand in hand with my supervisor Mr. Anders Vassenden, an associate professor at inst. For social care Uis. For more details about the reserach he can be reached by phone on *51831512*. As a professional working in this school, I look forward hearing from you about your work experience. I hope we shall both find it interesting to work together.

As regards to participation in the research, I will conduct 4-6 interviews with employees, respectively. The interviews will be held in a quiet place, tape recorded to capture interviewee's exact words and will not take more than 45 minutes. The language will be English.

All information will be kept confidential. This means that only the student and supervisor involved in the project have access to the information. All data will be anonymous. That no personal and school identity will be revealed, and that no statements will be reproduced in ways that make it possible to identify individuals. The study maintains common ethical obligations and are reported to the Privacy Ombudsman v / Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). Participation is of course completely voluntary. The participant may withdraw their consent as long as the project is in progress, without stating the reason. The study is scheduled to be finished before summer and all data will be destroyed upon finishing the report.

Yours sincerely,

Raymond Tumuhairwe

8.1.2 Informed consent

The following is a presentation of how I will use the data collected in the interview.

In order to insure that projects meet the ethical requirements for good research I promise to adhere to the following principles:

- Interviewees in the project will be given information about the purpose of the project.
- Interviewees have the right to decide whether they will participate in the project, even after the interview has been concluded.

- The collected data will be handled confidentially and will be kept in such a way that no unauthorized person can view or access it.

The interview will be recorded as this makes it easier for me to document what is said during the interview and also helps me in the continuing work with the project. In my analysis, some data may be changed so that no interviewee will be recognized. After finishing the project, the data will be destroyed. The data I collect will only be used in this project.

You have the right to decline answering any questions, or terminate the interview without giving an explanation.

You are welcome to contact me or my supervisor in case you have any questions (e-mail addresses below).

Student name & e-mail   Supervisor name & e-mail

Interviewee

8.1.3 Interview guide
In-depth interview method and an interview guide that contained open-ended, semi-structured questions were used to elicit rich description using the participant's words. This form of questioning helped me and participant to engage in a discussion and modified initial questions in light of the participants' responses. Questions did not follow exactly in the way outlined on the schedule. Questions that are not included in the guide were asked as I picked up on things said by interviewees. But, by and large, all of the questions were asked and a similar wording was used from interviewee to interviewee.

Target group one: Principal.

1. Tell me about your school?
   -Population of students/Boys and girls

-Population of staff and their disciplines or profession/ level of education/ male and female

-Number of students under special education/ categories/boys and girls

2. What kind of professional group do you employ in your school?
3. What are their specific roles?
4. Can you give me an example when they collaborate?
5. What do they do exactly?
6. As a supervisor, how do you ensure that there is good collaboration among staff?
7. As a head of school, if you would get anything you requested to improve collaboration practice, what things would you ask for?

Target group two: Teachers, special need teachers/milieu therapist, nurse, social educator and social worker

1. Tell me about your work experience?
2. When do you collaborate with the social worker, nurse and others?
3. How does it happen, like how do you reach them?
4. What do you do exactly?
5. Tell me an experience where you collaborated with teachers, nurses and others?
6. As an individual what big difference does it bring to you by working with others and how do maintain your professional identity?
7. What are some of the tricks or methods you use to ensure successful collaboration?
8. What are some of the challenges of working with teachers, nurses and others
9. Say you have a child who needs extra attention over health or any social issues, I assume you would probably involve a nurse or a social worker. In this case can you tell me how you involve the child? What do you do exactly to ensure the views of the child are considered?
10. Can you think of a time in your collaborative work when a decision was made or a problem was addressed but the child was not a participants in its creation? What happened as a result? Was the decision or solution

8.1.4 Non-plagiarism declaration

I hereby declare that the Dissertation titled: **Understanding Interprofessional Collaboration**

- A Case Study of Professionals in a Norwegian Primary School: submitted to the Erasmus

Mundus Master's Programme in Social Work with Families and Children:

- Has not been submitted to any other Institute/University/College

- Contains proper references and citations for other scholarly work

- Contains proper citation and references from my own prior scholarly work

- Has listed all citations in a list of references.

I am aware that violation of this code of conduct is regarded as an attempt to plagiarize, and will result in a failing grade (F) in the programme.

Date: 1st/06/2015

Signature: ....…...….

Name: RAYMOND TUMUHAIRWE