INCLUSION IN PRACTICE: SOFIA'S SITUATIONS FOR INTERACTION

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The aim of this article is to present findings from a study (Alexandersson, 2007) about how one student – called Sofia - with intellectual disability interacts and communicates with her classmates and her teachers in an inclusive setting. Furthermore, the aim is also to analyse in what way the interaction contributes to Sofia's social participation and learning process. This complex aim implies a theoretical framework that consists of complementary theoretical perspectives, a sociocultural perspective, a social interaction perspective and a special education perspective. Data were mainly collected through video observations and participant observations. The result from the study shows a continuum of varied situations for Sofia's learning where she becomes an active participant in the classroom. In general, there are three main categories of situations for learning: One where Sofia is beside the learning activity; one where she is in the learning activity and one where she is moving between to be beside and to be in the situations. In other words; Sofia can place herself in different positions in relation to varied learning situations. How she places herself depends on what support and scaffolding she gets. It is obvious that Sofia's own actions are of great importance for how successful her interaction will be as well as the affordances given. Sofia's strategy for interaction and communication with her classmates and her teachers is both verbal and nonverbal. Different bodily expressions in the classroom contribute to how Sofia gets involved in interaction processes. The teachers and the classmates' roles as mediators of social and cognitive skills are of central importance.

Interaction, Communication and Participation
In special education studies about children with intellectual disabilities and social interaction in preschool and school it is often discussed how children and pupils' relations appear and in which ways they interact. Ytterhus (2003) shows in her research about the social relations of children, how all children no matter their disabilities always seek friends to play with. She describes how the forced social relations between children with and without *differences* in preschool are full of ambiguities. On the one hand the children without disabilities want to be with the ones who are *different*, but not always. On the other hand the *different* children do not always want to be with the others. Ytterhus concludes that children with disabilities demand a clear response from an interacting partner, but they themselves contribute to some situations becoming ambiguous. *Still the children seem to learn to live with the ambiguities and are able to relate to each other as people* (2003, p. 181, translation from Swedish).
Other studies about social interaction between pupils with disabilities and the ones without show that what characterizes the pupils with intellectual disabilities and their behaviour on the school yard is that they vary between different attitudes towards different situations –active or passive participation, activities alone or interaction with an adult (Nordström, 2002). Many times they take a *between-position,* they look, listen and study, turn to the adults nearby or play by themselves. This position becomes the attitude the child with a disability chooses when the number of children, who interact at the same time in different ways, become too many and the difficulty to overlook the situation becomes too much. Nordström (ibid) names this pattern of interactions, partial participation or participation on unequal terms and she means that it is the disability that causes this increase in the participation. Her study shows that when a pupil with a disability does not manage the game or the activity, he or she walks away. The communicative skills limit the participation and give the pupil a minor role which becomes the price the pupil has to pay for being part of an unequal relationship.

In the interaction between children with disabilities, verbal negotiation is minimally manifested (Nordström, 2002). They rarely negotiate about what is to be done, if they have different ideas or different opinions. Solutions like a compromise or an understanding demands skills like understanding, overlooking and communicating, as well as a strategy for argumentation which can be hard to manage for pupils with disabilities. One way to handle the situations is to leave.

Several studies in research about intellectual disabilities focus on participation in different ways (Granlund, Almqvist & Eriksson, 2002; Molin 2004; Szönyi, 2005). The authors maintain that participation means that there is an interaction between the individual and the social and physical surroundings. Both the characteristics of the individual as well as the opportunities given from the surroundings are of importance. Molin (2004) describes two dimensions of participation in the form of one formal – and one informal belonging. To have a formal belonging, to be one in the class, does not necessarily lead to an informal belonging, which is the feeling of belonging and acceptance. Szönyi (2005) uses the terms belonging and partial belonging (cp. Nordström, 2002), but not as fixed positions, but refers to a gliding scale, a continuum.

In the present study of interaction and communication the following situation takes place, when Sofia and her classmates work with a theme.

> The children's task is to draw and paint stores located in the area where they live. Sofia's group sit on the floor with a large piece of paper in front of them, they are five pupils in the group. The teacher begins by asking the pupils which stores they know. Sofia immediately raises her hand and loudly says, *I know*. The teacher turns to her and nods. Sofia starts talking about *Lidl* (a local grocery store). The teacher asks if she uses to shop there, and Sofia answers that she does. The teacher continues to converse with Sofia and wonders if she would like to draw and paint Lidl. She wants to do that. The conversation about stores continues for a while in the group. Then the pupils get crayons and pairs of scissors. Sofia watches the others. She then gets crayons from a class- mate. Sofia sits by a table while her classmates are on the floor. When she is finished she cuts her picture out and brings it to the large piece of paper on the floor. She shows her picture and places it on the piece of paper. A classmate moves it and suggests that it should be in another place. No, Sofia says and moves it back. The classmates study Sofia's picture and talk about it. Sofia listens and watches the classmates. Then we will make a flight of stairs here, someone says. Sofia takes the glue and glues her picture where she wants it.

The situation described here is part of a special education research project with a focus on interaction and communication. The study aims to describe and analyze how Sofia, a girl with an intellectual disability, interacts and communicates *in* and *with* her surroundings. By interaction I mean social acts, which are fundamental for how we relate to each other, and the way we create social relationships. In this study I see interactions as a situation, which consists of acts between pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher, where communication (verbal and non-verbal) is a part of and a condition for interaction. In this study communication is used in the widest definition included nonverbal language as body language, gestures etc. Sofia's communicative skills are limited, which leads to her using non-verbal ways to express herself, contact and interact with others.

Sofia is accepted in the education for pupils with intellectual disabilities, which means that she follows the syllabuses of the education for pupils with learning disabilities, in this case the education for pupils with severe learning disabilities. The education for pupils with intellectual disabilities is according to the Swedish Education Act a form of education for pupils who are expected not to reach the goals in the compulsory school due to a intellectual disability, autism or similar conditions as well as an acquired brain damage (3 chapter § 3). In the education for pupils with intellectual disabilities there are two variations, one for pupils with a lesser to medium intellectual disability, and one for pupils with a medium to severe intellectual disability.

In Sofia's school there are no special classes for pupils with intellectual disabilities; instead she is educated among other pupils in the same age group in different constellations. This organisational model is a deliberate method in the municipality, where Sofia lives, where school politicians and school leaders want to work for inclusive schools. Through my experiences as a teacher for pupils with intellectual disabilities and as a mentor for teachers who educate pupils with intellectual disabilities in the

mainstream school, my interest and my curiosity has been awoken to what this might mean from a pupil perspective.

The research study focuses on the ways in which Sofia orients herself in the complex world of school. What characterize her interaction and communication and what does this lead to in terms of inclusiveness? During a few weeks when Sofia attends second grade I had the privilege to systematically follow her in her everyday school life, in everything from classes to breaks and eating situations. A description of the research process and analysis of the study with the theoretical and methodological tools used follows below.

Complementary Theoretical Perspectives
The theoretical frame used in this study comes from three related perspectives, a sociocultural -, a social interaction - and a special education perspective. The perspectives' central terms and their meanings, which are of importance for the study, will be presented in the following.

Firstly, the situation, which is presented in the introduction, shows that Sofia takes part in what is happening depending on how the teacher attends to Sofia, but also how the teacher leads her into work and how the classmates meet and support her. The situation can be understood from a sociocultural perspective with Vygotsky' (1981) and Wertschs' (1998) theories of thinking and language theory as a foundation. The form of co-operation which Vygotsky describes requires a pedagogical meeting between pupil and teacher, between pupil and pupil, to which both contributes activity and creativity to the social situation. He clearly stressed the teacher's importance to the learning process and meant that learning depends upon interaction between people and only through interaction people are able to develop further. How the teacher creates a social environment that develops the actions of the pupil and the possibilities for interaction are of great importance. Therefore it takes an active pupil, an active teacher and an active environment.

Bruner (1996), who coined the term *scaffolding*, means that the teacher momentarily supports the pupil's learning, until it grows so strong that the support is not needed anymore. It is about getting an adapted support, support which is adjusted both to the level of the child and the difficulty of the task. It then becomes central to focus on the initiative of the child in the tutoring, so the child manages the situation on its own after a while.

This supporting education, which teachers pursue in the closest zone of development (Vygotsky, 1978) can be described as communicative support, which means to define the problem and create necessary qualifications for learning (Säljö, 2000). Säljö also uses the terms co-operating and co-thinking to illustrate this in a learning situation between pupil and teacher. It is about a kind of co-operation where both parties affect each other and contribute their own abilities and experiences to the situation, and understanding other's points of view. Sofia's classmates try to see her point of view when they reason around the picture and its placement. In situations, which are defined by the understanding of others' point of view, there is a high level of communicative and cognitive coordination.

In a sociocultural perspective, communication and use of language are central terms and the link between the child and its surroundings. It is through communication the individual becomes part of knowledge and skills (Säljö, 2000). Support for learning and development are given through physical and intellectual tools, artefacts, in the surroundings. Säljö uses the term *mediating* to describe this process. The teacher can be seen as an important mediator, which Feurstein and Klein, among others, describe in their theory of Mediated Learning Experience, MLE (1991). Some of the parameters for MLE are mediation of feelings of competence; mediation of intentionality and reciprocity; mediation of transcendence; mediation of meaning; mediation of challenge and mediation of feeling of belonging. The grownup then works as a mediator between the surroundings and the child. The teacher leads the pupil in the learning process verbally as well as nonverbally, for example through pointing out or in other ways focusing on the same thing. Several of the studied situations in Sofia's classroom show how the teacher is the one to mediate through questions, focusing and attention (Alexandersson, 2007).

The social interaction perspective that has been a tool in the analysis of the empirical data is Mead's theory about the forming of the Self through the social interaction with the surroundings (Mead, 1934). The child experiences itself through *the special other*. The foundation of the theory is that we relate to each other and the surroundings from the meaning the other and the surroundings have to us, which

shows itself through interaction with others. A human being is born to a social world and therefore become somebody, but without getting access to interaction and communication we can also become nobody (von Wright, 2000).

If there is to be a learning process it is necessary, according to Mead (1995), that the pedagogical situation that frames the learning itself is marked by communication. The teaching situation then is a relation where those who are included in it create meaning together. In some ways everybody participates in the social interaction, some more actively, others in what appears to be a more passive way. Maybe the pupil first participates in the periphery through observation and then gradually is included in the activity. To obtain learning an emotional dimension is also necessary, and therefore the teaching must apply to the pupils themselves, their experiences and attention. A taking of point of view is also needed in the teaching. This means a development of the ability to see the other's point of view by getting to experience variation as a pupil rather than doing the same thing over and over again.

According to Mead the pedagogical meeting is *inter-subjective* where the intervening space, something that takes place between people, is of great importance. Von Wright (2000) describes two perspectives, punctual and relational, which are of importance to how we understand the subjectivity of the individual. The punctual perspective describes the individual as independent and isolated from the surroundings. Who another human being is can be determined independently from the context. The relational perspective sees human beings in relation to others, which means that the subjectivity of the individual must be understood from the actions, which appear between people in time and space. Here people are participants in the relation and in the social interacting process. From a relational perspective the attention of, for example, the teacher is focused on *who the pupil is and who she can be*.

Hundeide (2006) argues that an inter-subjective atmosphere must be applied in a classroom, so that children can feel that they can and are counted with. Inter-subjectivity means an emotional climate in the classroom, which is created by intentionality and reciprocity. He also means that everybody needs support in his or her learning. In the situation where the pupils work with stores (described in the introduction) Sofia gets help and support from the classmates. When she stops being active, a classmate gives out his crayons and a pair of scissors and Sofia continue to work. She gets a fast response through insuring nods and then a mutual learning takes place. With individualized working method there is a risk that situations for interaction disappear. Possibilities for mutual learning are lost and important knowledge about other people's perspective is lost. A group-oriented working method is, in this perspective, important to help those who cannot through their own strength and abilities join the mutual learning, to support and give strategies to qualify as one who takes part and contributes to the group.

Education that rests on communication between a pupil and a teacher is a good breeding-ground for learning. Starting from a communicative relationship-based perspective Ahlberg (2001) shows that participation, communication and learning are linked together in the social practice of the school. What and how a pupil learns depend on a number of different aspects which must be considered at the same time; for example organizational aspects, democracy and equality aspects, socio-cultural aspects, communicative aspects, socio-emotional aspects and didactical aspects all joined together. The interaction between the individual and the surroundings as well as an integrating view on participation, communication and learning are central to this perspective. How we are to understand Sofia's actions therefore depends both on the social practice and Sofia's abilities and needs (Ahlberg, 2007).

An Ethnographic Case Study
The main purpose of this study was to describe and analyze situations for interaction and communication with a focus on how a pupil with intellectual disability communicates and interacts in a teaching activity that aims to include her In this study, 'inclusive learning activity' is used, in line with Haug (2001), as an activity characterised by democratic values where all participates in the common goal/community on the basis of each and every body's condition/prerequisites, which means that context, situations and group affect or interact with one another as well as with the individual person. The focus of the study is on processes in the teaching activity that the pupil is a part of. The study, which is a case study, is ethnographically inspired and the methods for collecting data, which are used (conversations, participating observations, field notes, video documentation) are usually used in socio cultural studies. In case studies a defined group or a specific occurrence is often studied when processes and problems in applied parts of an activity are to be examined (Merriam, 1988). An aim of case studies is to make a clearly defined complex situation understandable. Case studies might be of a describing character, but

are seldom only describing. They often consist of a combination of description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation. In the study at hand there is a combination of description and analysis – a so-called analytical case study (ibid).

An ethnographic study focused on finding meaning in human acts in different situations. The ethnographical element here consists of being present and looking for the meaning of the acts that occur. I assume that Sofia is an active individual who acts according to the situation she finds herself in. How Sofia responds to her surroundings also depends on her own personal resources and intentions, and the nature and outcomes of the meeting is the result of characteristics from both the individual and the surroundings. In a relational perspective the subjectivity of the individual is understood from the actions that come from the relations between people in time and space (von Wright, 2000).

Video Documentation as a Method
Video documentation has proved especially valuable in classroom research and ethnographic studies of interaction and communication. Researchers who have studied interaction between disabled children and other children find many advantages with the method (Andersson, 2002; Nordström, 2002; Ytterhus, 2003). One of the advantages of video documentation is that you are able to come back to the same situation during the analysis to find more details or nuances from the material. When creating research data when it comes to studies where interaction processes and communication are the focus the video enables detailed analysis and microanalysis, which are hard to obtain in other ways. Another advantage is that you catch body language and intonation. Since Sofia often uses nonverbal communication video documentation together with participating observations became an important source of information.

There is always a selection of procedure in the documenting process. When a specific process is documented another process is always lost. A video recording can never show the *true situation* or as Alexandersson (1994, page 81) says *the recording cannot catch the width or the depth the way the human senses can*. Furthermore, the recording limits aspects and occurrences into a whole. When you use the camera, if it is not stationary, you are somewhat distant; you are outside of the situation. During a number of longer sessions I therefore placed the camera at a certain position and only sometimes adjusted the angle a little bit to be able to focus on Sofia and the situation at hand.

However, there are many other dilemmas to be dealt with when using video documentation. How is it to be used as *natural* as possible, is it going to interrupt what's going on in the classroom, how do you place the camera? In which way are the pupils and the staff affected by the video camera? Do the pupils lose their concentration and their focus on what is to take place in the education? How are you going to eliminate or lessen this effect? In what way does the staff react? Does it create stress? Are they going to do things, which they normally would not do: that is, does it lead to unnatural situations? Through letting both the pupils and the staff get used to the video many of these dilemmas can disappear. To make the filming less dramatic the pupils got to film each other and see some sequences I had shot. In the beginning Sofia was a bit reluctant and did not want me to film her. When she too had used the camera and seen herself she did not mind anymore. A letter of consent was sent to the pupils of the class, where both parents and pupil signed and gave their consent or not to participate. Vetenskapsrådet's, the Swedish Research Council's, guidelines (1990) were followed in every way. Two pupils, whose parents did not give their consent to video filming, reminded me of this all the time the camera was on. They crawled pass the camera or asked me to turn it off to be able to pass. At the same time they were very interested in what was going on. The teacher helped my filming through placing the two pupils far from Sofia's desk.

Video documentation can function very well as stimulus, so called stimulated recall, to make it easier for the pupil to narrate what is happening in the class, in the work that is done. To many pupils with a learning disability visual support in communication and interaction is crucial. My experiences of digital pictures and video recordings in education are that pupils in general find it much easier to talk about their actions and thoughts when they see themselves in an experienced situation. Furthermore there is a positive aspect of recognition, which Sofia shows at one occasion when we looked at a filmed sequence and talked about it. Sofia however had trouble seeing and focusing on the picture any length of time and answered my questions very sporadically. Mostly she was focused on herself.

Data Production and Analysis
Field notes, which are based on observations, demand a great deal of systematization (Merriam, 1988). In the study at hand observations and video documentation were processed in a similar way. The field notes from the observations were then written on the computer. The video documentation was first transferred to DVD, six hours in all, and transcribed into text. The finished analysis is based on transcripts of both observations and video documentations. The printed transcripts consisted of 55 A4 sheets, of which 35 sheets from the video documentation.
The analysis of the collected material took place in three steps. The first step was to write the whole course of events in different situations, both when it came to the observations and the video documentation. Every situation was named after the activity that took place or where the situation took place, like for example *own work* or *at the special education teacher's*.

The second step was to select situations which were frequent and contained information which could answer the research questions of the study. Furthermore I looked for variations when it comes to different content of the situations. One aim of this principle of selection was to identify general and typical patterns in Sofia's interaction and communication so as to be able to create certain representatives in the material. The situations which were selected here were described with support of some key terms so that what characterizes the situation itself appears in an unambiguous way – for example *the teacher initializes interaction*, *Sofia knocks on the desk*, *classmate says hello to Sofia*.

In the third step the empirical descriptions from step 2 were related to the theoretical frame and the central terms created for the study. During this analysis process some terms have been reevaluated and new ones emerged. These – both the already chosen and the new ones – were tested against the empirical data. The analysis process therefore meant a movement between empirical data and theory, which gave a sort of woven pattern on the whole (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 1994).

To be in, between, and beside the learning process
In the analysis of the study, a general structure takes form concerning Sofia's *acting and acts* in different situations. This can be considered as quality differences in the interaction pattern between her and the surroundings. There are situations, which show that she participates in what is taking place; she is then a co-creator of the situation. In those situations she gets a clear support from teacher and classmates, and the teacher clearly shows what is going to happen and what the aim of the work is, the teacher functions as a mediator (Feurstein et al, 1991). The situations are characterized by given affordances for interaction and communication and are grouped under the category *To be in*.
In several situations it is however clear that Sofia has a hard time becoming a part of the interaction. She then ends up next to or on the side of the activity that takes place. The social gathering in which she takes part does not encourage interaction despite Sofia's eager attempts through both verbal and nonverbal expressions. The adapted support fails to appear and the classmates find it hard to understand Sofia's situation and therefore the reciprocity, which is needed for intersubjectivity, fails to appear. These situations are categorized as *To be beside*.

There are also situations, which indicate that Sofia is on her way to being a co-creator of the interaction situation. Here you notice insecurity and doubt in her actions. It looks like she is having a discussion with herself and wonders if she is going to participate in the interaction or stand at the side of it. She tries to read the situation and understand what is happening, but does not really understand what the classmates are doing. These situations are characterized by her getting an ambivalent or insufficient support for possible interaction. She is in a kind of movement, in a crossroad, toward one or the other interaction pattern. In the analysis this process is named *To be between*.

Figure 1. Three different interaction patterns

The categorizations of the different interaction patterns are in no ways *waterproof*, which means that some of the described situations might be closer to another category than the one they have been placed inside. To be able to communicate the result of the study, three distinct categories have emerged.

In add to the main categories, different dimensions of the three categories developed. An overall dimension concerns *interaction*, interaction that is classmate related or teacher related. Classmate related or teacher related interaction means that classmates and teacher respectively matter more or less when it comes to how the situation is formed. Another dimension is *communication.* In the analysis, it became clear that Sofia interacts both through verbal and nonverbal communication with her teacher and classmates. This is central in all the situations but has different importance when it comes to one or another communication form. Since Sofia's verbal skills are limited other communication forms are especially important to study in relation to her classmates and teacher. Gestures, facial expressions and other body language are what she uses in social interaction. The structure of the analysis work described above is illustrated in the following figure.

	TO BE *IN*	TO BE *BETWEEN*	TO BE *BESIDE*
Interaction - Classmate related - Teacher related			
Communication - Verbal - Nonverbal			

Figure 2: Analysis structure

The figure can be seen as a web where the warp consists of the categories To be in, To be between and To be beside of, while the dimensions interaction and communication are the part of the web which are important to how the situations will turn out, that is how Sofia interacts and communicates in and with her surroundings, how and which ways of expression she uses to relate to her classmates and her teacher to become a co-creator of the social practice.

Since Sofia's actions are the main subject of the study the teacher's and the classmates' actions will be less focused on. Naturally both the teacher and the classmates are of importance to the processes, interaction and communication that a single student finds herself in or gets her into, but the focus of the study has been to study Sofia's strategies for interaction and communication in a school situation. In the analysis you might however say that the teacher and the classmates together with the educational environment are the context in which Sofia's actions must be understood.

The Complex Web

The context of which Sofia is a part offers situations for interaction in different ways. Sofia participates in a variety of social practices. She is for example a part of the whole class, or a group of students, she is with some classmates in the special physical education and she works with the teacher alone. This means that there are different conditions for interaction and communication. When there are more equal conditions (Nordström, 2002) Sofia more easily participates directly. In these situations there is a shared learning through the communicative actions, where Sofia's own activity as well as the classmates' or the teacher's are of importance. When Sofia for example participates in *the special physical education* with other pupils with intellectual disabilities she varies between being the one teaching and the one learning.

When the conditions are more unequal, it requires support and attention from classmates or teacher. When that is not there, Sofia positions herself on the side of the situation, losing concentration and focus. The following situation is an example of how the situation develops from *to be in to beside*.

> The pupils sit on the floor in front of the teacher. Sofia sits behind them, on the side. The teacher asks about letters and the pupils raise their hands to give suggestions. Sofia looks around and also raises her hand. The teacher acknowledges Sofia and she answers A. That is wrong; the teacher says and turns to another pupil. Sofia again raises her hand, looking attentively at the blackboard and the teacher. She eagerly waves her hand. She gets to answer again and says A. You already

said that, says a classmate. It does not matter, many of you have said the same letter twice, the teacher says. Sofia turns her eyes away from the blackboard and the game. She starts to twiddle her fingers. She looks away, looks around and moves away from the classmates.

When it takes a certain amount of arguing for Sofia to assert herself, it is also hard to interact, which can be the reason for Sofia to sometimes give up and close down all interaction. In an *independent work* situation Sofia's work is interrupted when another student sitting next to her suddenly takes the pair of scissors from her without commenting. She sighs and looks at him, but says nothing. She looks out of the window and waits.

In this sequence of the situation no verbal negotiation or argument takes place, and instead Sofia become subordinate and waits. But she manages to communicate through her sighing, which draws the attention of the classmate.

> The classmate sees that Sofia is waiting and quickly returns the pair of scissors, knocking her shoulder and showing her the pair of scissors. Sofia continues to use them. The classmate comments on her work, *good*, *that is right*, and points when she stops.

The situation on the whole is an example of how a movement takes place between *to be in* and *being beside* of and then participating again with the support of the classmate. The interaction pattern is characterized as being *between*.

The more unequal conditions might, on the other hand, become a challenge and lead to an expansion of the pupil's learning. Through challenging the pupil in a situation of shared learning with important peers, with the help of suitable support, (Bruner, 1996) and mediating (Feuerstein, 1991 & Säljö, 2000) the pupil is given the tools to develop faith in his or her own abilities and better self-esteem. These factors in their turn affect the participation in the school situation (Eriksson & Granlund, 2004). Sofia is involved and a part of what is taking place within the context of the class to a lesser or greater extent. She can be said to be socially participating as well as participating in a more or less task-oriented way (Szönyi, 2005). In the situation described initially Sofia is both participating socially – and participating in a task-oriented way. Other situations, like when the class come together, shows that Sofia's participation can be expressed in terms of social gatherings (Ytterhus, 2003) or formal belonging (Molin, 2004). She is then physically and spatially together with the others in the class, which can be seen as a condition for participation.

The study shows that there are a variety of situations that offer different conditions for interaction and communication. This in its turn leads to a greater or lesser degree of participation, which is one of the main results of the study. An important and clear condition for participation is that the teacher sees the pupil that is really close to the pupil in both a social and didactical sense. In several of the situations in the category *To be in* the teacher is the one who invites Sofia into the interaction. This does not mean that the teacher is the one who always gives the direct support; she can also stand by the side of the pupil and wait for a direct action from the pupil. You could say that the teacher moves between two positions in relation to the pupil; one where the teacher interacts actively and one where the teacher interacts passively. By passive I mean a conscious tactic from the teacher that is meant to encourage a direct action from the pupil. The teacher's seemingly passive act is therefore really pro-active; it is supposed to encourage action from the pupil. According to Vygotsky (2001) it is essential to make the pupil participate by expecting activity. The teacher's or the adult's task is to support independent actions within the closest development zone. It is in this way that conditions for interaction are created for Sofia and classmate interaction.

It is in relation to others and the surroundings that Sofia's actions and subjectivity must be understood. The relational perspective described by von Wright (2000) means that to be able to see who another human being is one needs to experience a *meeting* as well as a sense of relation to the other. Without such a relation, according to von Wright the human being is reduced to becoming a *What*, that is the human being is attributed with general characteristics without a possibility for the uniqueness to come through. In this study I am, after my meeting with Sofia, letting her unique course of action stand out in comparison with the classmates.

The result of the study can be seen as a contribution to the discussion about the need of special classes for pupils with intellectual disability because it shows the potential for possible interactions and a range of conditions for handling diversity in the mainstream school. One of the conditions then is that the teacher has the ability to see *who* the pupil is. Only then the teacher can support and stimulate the pupil so that she by herself can and dares to express herself. At the same time the teaching must allow for a variety of interaction situations to be able to fulfil every pupil's need for social interaction. Sofia is given an opportunity to participate and take part in different situations based her needs and conditions within a school system that is supposed to include all pupils. I argue that Sofia's school in different ways offers solidarity, interaction, mutuality and participation, which according to Haug (2001) define an inclusive school system. This is the most important conclusion of the study, which can be generalized and be applied to school situations in general, that is to all children/pupils and thereby be a guide for educators and teachers.

Concluding Remarks
In this study the aim has been to describe and analyze parts of Sofia's everyday school life. By going into her *world* and be there through her everyday school life it has become possible to reach an understanding and get insight into the context Sofia belongs to. When representing this as accurately as possible and by describing the methods used, qualifications for credibility are created, which is an important criterion for the quality of a study (Merriam, 1988). Among other things this applies to the selection of situations. Are there situations, which haven't been seen; and would the results be different if this data was collected at some other time? Of course this is the case but by thoroughly describing the research process the trustworthiness and the factuality aspect can be fulfilled. In ethnographic studies you talk about empirical generalization. The researcher then reflects upon his or her population that you try to generalize (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). This study however is not meant to draw generalizations from, but is an attempt to take a student perspective and contribute to an understanding on how a student with a learning disability orients herself in the practice of school in the situations and contexts, which have been studied. What the student communicates and participates in also dependent on which other students act within the context. In another context the student probably is offered other interaction and communication possibilities.

Taking a pupil perspective is not without problems. No matter what theoretical starting points or methods are used within such perspective it is never possible to experience the world in the same way the subjects studied experience their world. One can only describe the experiences made by Sofia in her everyday school life as credibly as possible. Those are my experiences of Sofia's possible experiences.

Only one student is focused upon in the study, which of course limits the possibility to make general assumptions. Is it possible to make general assumptions based on Sofia's interaction and communication with other students, other students with learning disabilities? Maybe not, but it is still possible to see a pattern in how the school and the teachers of the school create opportunities for participation and learning in a variety of interactive situations based on the needs of the pupil.

The study here presented is a single-case design study and it refers to a family of research designs. Single-case design offers an alternative strategy to the more usual methodologies based on between group designs (Polit & Beck, 2008). Single-case design is *idiographic* rather than *nomothetic* (Kazdin, 2001) and there are two major types of single-case designs; case study and single-subject experimental designs. In the present study the case study design were used. It is an intensive and idiographic description and analysis of a single individual (Sofia in the present study). The unique feature of *single-case* designs is the capacity to conduct investigations with the single case, that is, one subject or one group. Typically, observations are conducted on a daily basis or at least on multiple occasions each week to produce data about the single individual. However, a limitation is the extent to which the results with one single individual can generalize to others not included in the study. But, the limitation of single-case designs is not generality of the effects but identifying the dimensions or categories which may influence the extent to which the intervention exerted impact (Kazdin, 2001). Single-case designs have been used extensively in educational settings, from preschool through college. There is a special role for these designs in schools because school is often a place in which diverse programs are implemented and at different levels (Kennedy, 2005; Riley-Tillman & Burns, 2009). The single-case, here presented, was a possible challenge to theoretical assumptions about inclusion.

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