Why Michel Foucault in Norwegian Special-Education Research?

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Abstract

This article seeks to identify what impact the works of Michel Foucault have had on special-education research in Norway. We also discuss what his writings may contribute to future research. Foucault's perspectives are far from dominant in special-education research today. We present research within the relevant social sciences which has been influenced by Foucault and which has had impact on special-education research. We aim to demonstrate that Foucault's genealogy of ethics may bring new insights and a new critical approach to special-education research. The ethics of inclusion are particularly constructive and productive in both pedagogy and special-education research. In the discussion of Foucault's relevance in special-education research, we focus on his texts on governmentality to conduct and govern a learner and the ethics of inclusion. The mode of subjectivity highlights the productive nature of disciplinary power – how it names and categorizes learners, the conduct of conduct or how learners govern themselves under education.

Keywords: special education, deviance, conduct, genealogy, ethics, Foucault, Norway

Introduction: Michel Foucault, a critical social philosopher

Traditionally, special education has centred upon the concept of the deviant, dubious or disabled child. Research has been based on traditions of knowledge that are rooted in long-standing labelling, as medical and psychological discourses. Therefore, not surprisingly, Foucault's critical writings about those systems of knowledge are far from dominant in special-education research in Norway today. In spite of their present modest position, we argue that Foucault's

perspectives – in particular, his genealogy of ethics – offer a constructive critical stance for probing special-education research.

Foucault's body of works is relevant for the analysis of social and political frameworks – how education could be organized, the ways the system expresses the optimal educational outcome at a particular time, and the ways people frame their views about a learner and what is good for the child. Foucault (1997) offers two lines of thinking about human beings, the philosophy of the subject and the genealogy of the subject. In Norway, Schaanning, a historian of ideas, argues that 'subjectivity is not only a product of disciplinary practices, but it gives premises and produces conditions, such as the expectation to conduct oneself and to conduct others in institutional practices' (Schaanning, 2000a; own translation). Foucault's perspectives indicate a critical concern about how special-education practices and research divide students by labelling them (Thomas, 2014; Harwood & McMahon, 2014). If we take these practices into account, it is reasonable to look at the structures of discipline from the perspective of Foucault's ethical genealogical approach.

The genealogy of the subject examines 'the constitution of the subject across history which has led us up to the modern concept of the self' (Foucault, 1993, p. 202). Foucault's genealogy points to the formative moments in modern history and the scope of discourses about the 'deviant' student. In this article we elaborate on how the deviant child is acknowledged as a learner with a subject positioning. According to Foucault, subject positioning is to become the subject of a particular discourse. We must locate the position from which the discourse makes sense, and thus become its subjects by subjecting' ourselves to its meanings, power, and regulation. Subject position highlights the productive nature of disciplinary power – how it names and categorizes people into hierarchies of normalcy, morality, and so forth.

Foucault assumes that genealogical research will result in the disintegration of the epistemic subject, because the continuity of the subject is broken up. The production of knowledge is linked to power, and traces how power is related to 'true' knowledge. According to Foucault, the construction of truth is not outside power, and systems of knowledge vary between different scientific fields, disciplines, and institutions. The structure of special-education systems facilitates control, observation, and discipline of the deviant, dubious or ambiguous child by expert regimes of knowledge. These expert regimes of knowledge offer measures to govern the politics of welfare and other policies and social formations. For example, one of these formations is the transfer of students from ordinary to special education. The referral process is closely related to students' academic outcomes, social adaptation, and personal development in ordinary education.

Foucault changes his perspective through his archaeological, genealogical, and ethical approaches. In this article, we begin by introducing Foucault's genealogy of ethics. Our argument is that his genealogy of ethics is particularly relevant and much needed in special-education research in relation to inclusion and the deconstruction of the deviant child. We then trace the impact and influence of Foucault's works on research in special education and the history of disability in Norway, focusing on work on the ethics of inclusion, constructions of the deviant child, and the conduct of conduct as a learning positioning.

Norwegian society has been committed to the ideals of education for all in inclusive settings, and there is a close connection between ordinary and special education and the concept of inclusive special education. However, the volume of special education is growing, and excluding mechanisms in the school

learning community are increasing (Bakken & Elstad, 2012; Nes, 2013, 2014). After the presentation of selected studies within the Norwegian context, we discuss what use can be made of Foucault's ethical genealogical writings in future special-education research. We ask how his texts on governmentality, conduct of conduct, and subject positioning may contribute to the ethics of inclusion in future special-education research.

Foucault on the genealogy of ethics

Taking care of oneself requires knowing oneself. Care of the self, is knowledge of the self, but also knowledge of a number of rules of acceptable conduct or of principles that are both truth and prescriptions. To take care of the self is to equip oneself with these truths: this is where ethics is linked to the game of truth. (Foucault, 1997, p. 285)

The politics of inclusive education, dating from the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), have made Foucault's perspectives on the genealogy of ethics highly relevant for special education. Inclusion is thus seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth, and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion (UNESCO, 2009). The educational system in Norway has moved from a disciplinary notion of normalizing conduct to one of governing students' own conduct of conduct (Knudsmoen, 2015). Student's subject positioning to become a learner ought to be a main concern in special-education discourses.

The enrichment perspective emphasizes how the individual learner in inclusive education can contribute in a fruitful way to the school community (Befring, 1997; 2014). Children with special needs bring new dimensions to the learning community of the classroom, enhancing diversity and possibilities for learning for all participants. The enrichment perspective means that each subject is being included as an agent in its own learning and development. Befring (1997; 2014) highlights how the medical model has led to great attention on diagnosis with the subsequent highlighting of problems and weaknesses in the individual, labelling and its attendant stigmatization, and an overreliance on the identification of problems rather than a focus upon teaching and learning. The ethics to include all students as active participants in educational society presupposes acceptance for various subject positioning.

Foucault draws 'three axes of genealogy' concerning ethics and subject positioning First, there is a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge, for example, a learner or professional as the subject positioning. Secondly, there exists a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power. Through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others and ourselves. Thirdly, there is a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents as professionals, students, and learners (Foucault, 1982, p. 237). Foucault argues that it is not possible to examine a subject's relation to itself without referring to experience, and he does that by considering the subjective experience from the point of view of practices and self-technologies.

Self-technologies, such as self-mastery, is a way of being active – for example, adapting to schooling – in relation to what was passive by nature and ought to remain so (Foucault, 1990b). The concept of self-mastery can be the idea of

becoming a learner in school, gaining the agency to become a learner and having a will to conduct oneself (Knudsmoen, 2011). Foucault's concept of self-mastery is the degree of control one can exert over oneself, as if at a certain level and in particular, institutions or contexts, certain modes of determinism and free will coexist and circulate. Foucault describes a concept of coexistence between necessity (rules, norm, and constraints) and freedom (agency, initiative, choice); that is, in an institutional practice, one is both free and constrained. In an interview about the ethical concern of the self as a practice of freedom, Foucault argued that 'freedom is the ontological condition of ethics, but ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection' (Foucault, 1997, p. 284). One result may be that a learner provides a basis for developing self-regulatory skills, with the learner willingly conducting self-discipline as a learner. School is an important arena for building community, from Foucault's perspective; school is a system of power techniques and relationships, involving a range of agency inside and outside schooling.

The learning willingness to adapt and normalize oneself is where certain abilities and characteristics will be perceived as good, expected or worth striving for under particular conditions. The will to learn and the willingness to conduct oneself seem to reflect the conduct of conduct in educational practices (Knudsmoen, 2011). Today we have moved away from disciplinary techniques towards normalizing a learner, creating students who have the agency to utilize self-technologies by being adaptive, autonomous, and engaged in what is going on in school.

The concept of genealogy

Foucault's notion of genealogy in *Discipline and Punishment* from 1975 was concerned with the power of normalization to impose homogeneity (Foucault, 1995, p. 184). Normalization is understood as a system of graded and measurable categories, indicators, and intervals in which subjects can be distributed across a norm relating to expected conduct of the students. According to Foucault's archaeology, the construction of disability can be to divide the Other from the Same in the way that Foucault describes the discourses on madness in *Madness and Civilization* (Foucault, 1961). The history of madness could be considered as the history of the Other. Foucault changed the investigation from 'the history of the Other' to 'the history of the Same' in his genealogical writings (O'Farrell, 1989) and made the subject position apparent. Today, inclusiveness means involving all children in education, rather than developing knowledge about the disability and deviancy of a child within education.

In his *Abnormal* lectures at the Collège de France 1974–75, Foucault (2003) focuses upon the double codification of madness throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. First, disability and deviancy were concerned with the codification of madness as illness, pathologizing disorders, errors, and illusions and undertaking analyses to bring public hygiene, or the social safety it was responsible for, as close as possible to medical knowledge. Secondly, madness had to be codified in the same manner as danger. Psychiatry produces madness as a danger – a bearer of risk – and as a result, the knowledge of mental illness could be found in public hygiene (Foucault et al., 2003). Rather than producing discourses about children's learning and development, the medical system has had a controversial influence on special-education diagnostics labels (Befring, 2014). The idea of the norm is not only a discriminating social, economic, and moral constraint; it is also written into the social contract right from language (Kristeva, 2013). Shifting practices of

labelling 'the deviant student' reflect Kristeva's notion of the relation between language and the social contract. It is evident that when the least advantaged individuals are humiliated, cast out, or neglected, there is an abuse of power, a lack of solidarity, insecurity, and a jockeying for the higher, better positions in the social order. In contrast, the enrichment perspective engenders more positive expectations of all students' potential and gives impetus to creating a more diverse and inclusive learning environment (Befring, 1997; 2014).

In his genealogical approach, Foucault deconstructs knowledge systems such as *episteme*, which was a concept developed throughout his archaeological approach. The referral process that moves students from ordinary (or no education at all) to special education has changed throughout history, alongside the ideas of upbringing, education, and childhood. The process from ordinary to special education creates a link between particular systems of power in the production of professional knowledge about a student's learning and development. The limitations of students' autonomy and freedom as learners are constituted by demands of adaptation to existing norms and expectations of the educational system at a historical time. It is important to develop critical discursive strategies in order to emancipate the student as a learner (Knudsmoen, 2011; Befring, 1997; 2014).

Throughout his ethical works, Foucault locates two main strategies of power that dominate modernity. The first is the anatomy-politics of humans that are directed towards making the human body docile through normalized conduct, which is an effect of the power that characterizes various disciplines. Anatomy-politics focus on the body, biological processes, birth and mortality, the level of health, and life expectancy and longevity, and 'the question of anomaly permeates the whole of biology' (Foucault, 1998, p. 476). After the anatomy-politics of the human were established in the eighteenth century, the second strategy, 'bio-politics of the population', emerged at the end of that same century. Bio-politics are no longer the anatomy-politics of the human body, which were effected through a series of interventions and regulatory control, primarily as discipline (Foucault, 1990a). Bio-politics have become prominent in social and humanistic sciences, and have shaped special-education understandings of deviancy, disability and impairment, with regard to the medicalization and diagnosing of student conduct in special education today (Hamre, 2013; Harwood & McMahon, 2014; Knudsmoen, 2015). In addition, forms of bio-politics are associated with the construction of a biological citizenship in global governance through the normative regimes of rights and responsibilities (Nguyen, 2015). The professional boundary work indicates various systems of judgement of disability and deviancy. The ethical concern of the students' subject position as a learner can be to adapt – to take care of oneself or the conduct of conduct (Foucault, 1997).

Foucault's writings in a Norwegian context

> *What we call 'discipline' is something really important in this kind of institutions; but it is only one aspect of the art of governing people in our society. (Foucault, 1997, p. 177)*

This quotation refers to Foucault's ethics where we find various possibilities for the subject to become a learner within education, rather than to discipline a learner's conduct. In Norway, both Sandmo (1999) and Schaanning (2000) argue that Foucault's genealogy is concerned with the ethical relationship between knowledge and power. Ulleberg (2007), writing in the field of education,

maintains that one of the most important contributions of Foucault in this respect has been the discursive analysis of various social interactions and institutions.

The two Norwegian criminologists Ericsson (1974; 1977) and Stang Dahl (1978) were the first academics to introduce Foucault's perspectives to social-science research in Norway. Their work has influenced special education, historical research, and disability studies. Thuen (2001), a historian in the field of education research, states that the idea of the child as a particularly vulnerable and worthy category among the poor led to the establishment of the first children's asylums and 'rescue institutions' from about the nineteenth century. Thuen makes no direct references to Foucault. In their works, Ericsson, Stang Dahl, and Thuen each demonstrate how the establishment of institutional practices required measurements in order to differentiate between the 'normal' and the 'abnormal' children. During this process, students were inscribed through a regime of discipline and truth was produced as part of the system of knowledge production. Thuen (2001) demonstrates how discourses of discipline influence the whole body, which was inscribed as expectation of the actions or conduct of a learner. The subject itself is a product of the process, as the modern subject is constituted by the internalization of the norm of discipline. Discourses ought to be concerned about the students are bearers of diverse subject positions of agency and identity in relation to various forms of knowledge and practice.

Reindal (2010) argues that today the basic question to be addressed from a Foucauldian perspective is an ethical one regarding the meaning of disability and deviancy. The conceptualizing of disability within the context of a social-relational model opens up for ethical consideration and the possibility of revealing unjust ideologies, practices, and structures. She discusses the interplay between impairment, impairment effects, and disability, stressing the ethical elements of each (Reindal, 2010, p. 113). Reindal underscores the importance of coming to terms with the purpose of inclusion: to conduct and participate within education. Furthermore, Hausstätter (2011) refers to Foucault's ethical arguments in his analysis of the professional in special education. The relation between the normality and morality of the professionals' recognition of a learner is also central to discussions regarding the relationship of a student in between ordinary and special education (Hausstätter, 2011).

Concept of institutional knowledges: disciplinary practices and the deviant child

Ericsson (1974), in *Ambiguous Care*, used Foucault's archaeological approach from *Madness and Civilization* for her analysis of how the knowledge of mental illness was integrated with public hygiene. Her main thesis is that the history of the system of psychiatric care in Norway fits the pattern of 'the great confinement in Europe': mass poverty resulted in social upheaval, which led to mass institutionalization accompanied by a specific ideology that pointed to the individual as the origin of massive social misery, constructing the deviant and dangerous citizen. Ericsson (1997) has updated her analysis to include contemporary political mechanisms of the marginalization and exclusion of disabled people and people with chronic illnesses from the labour market (Simonsen, 2015). Stang Dahl (1978) has made an innovative contribution to the history of child welfare in her analysis of ambiguous motives in the construction and institutionalization of the deviant and dubious child. Influenced by Ericsson, Stang Dahl applied the concept of the disciplining asylum as an analytical approach to the double scope of the child welfare system in Norway – social control in the name of upbringing and saving the child. Other children

were included in special educational institutions or in medical institutions, or they were simply left at home and labelled as not teachable. Today these children are included in mainstream schooling in Norway.

Steinsholt (2011), a professor in the field of education, focuses upon the Enlightenment with reference to Kant's epistemological project and Foucault's critical perspective on discipline and normalizing. Foucault points out that the normative judgement of human nature is engraved with the hallmark of the Enlightenment (Hacking, 2008; Steinsholt, 2011). Foucault (1997) identifies the Enlightenment as a modern history of thoughts about humanity. In his genealogical approach, he considered power in relation to different domains, such as the structures of knowledge, rationalities, disciplines, and punishment (Olssen, 2006). In his ethical writings, Foucault does not simply reject the Enlightenment's values, as he does in his archaeological approach. Instead, he reworks some of its central categories, such as notions of the self, freedom, and emancipation. In Foucault's version of the Enlightenment, the individual subject's rational autonomy and choice are dependent on how we interact with our circumstances. Such critiques cannot be grounded in universal reasoning of satisfactory learning outcomes, because this would ignore individual differences and the elements of rational disintegration within the subject itself and reasoning about a norm such as educational outcomes. The concern about the subject positioning of a learner seems to be an ethical consideration between ordinary and special education to achieve education and upbringing and to become a learner today. Steinsholt (2011) emphasizes how the modern subject will invent itself.

School is a place where observation, treatment, and training is implemented in order to alter conduct, to train the body or to correct an individual's mind or conduct (Foucault, 1995). Within education, discipline can be a normalizing practice, for example, making the body docile and teachable (Hoskin, 1990; Knudsmoen, 2011). The conduct of conduct and practices of the self were also linked to 'the way individuals were led to assign meaning and value to their conduct' (Foucault, 1990b, p. 4). Concern about a learning subject as a conduct of conduct, with the construction of the deviant, dubious or ambiguous student, seems to be a focal point in special-education research (Knudsmoen, 2015). Most important is grasping the cultural, social, special pedagogical, and political contexts that produced such discourses about satisfactory learning outcomes from an ethical perspective. Collectively, this research identifies the local struggles and points of articulation of specific forms of knowledge, power, and governmentality. They can unmask the contingencies and consequences of systems of power-knowledge and demonstrate the ways that power acts on subjects (Yates, 2015).

Concept of ethics, bio-politics, and professional knowledge

Bio-politics influenced special education in Norway from the first part of the twentieth century (Simonsen, 2000). Social Darwinism and social hygiene interacted, establishing a biologically founded paradigm of normalcy. The disabled or the deviant child was defined as a child with no or very limited chances of intellectual or social development. Kirkebæk, a leading scholar in the Nordic countries since the mid-1990s, has introduced bio-politics as a topic in Nordic special education and has explored Foucault in an influential way in Nordic disability history research. In her doctoral thesis on the emergence of a medical discourse on intellectual disability in Denmark. Kirkebæk (1994) has placed this discourse within the eugenic paradigm of western society at the turn of the twentieth century. The influence of Foucault, her writings is particularly

prominent in Nordic research on the history of disability, which is a joint venture based on networking, conferences, and publications (Simonsen, 2005). This influence can be traced to the work of, for instance, Simonsen (2005; 2015) and the historical construction of the deviant child as a dimension of bio-politics and eugenics in special education in Norway.

Schaanning (2005), a principal Foucault reader in Norway, identifies Kirkebæk as a researcher who has greatly influenced both disability-history research in Norway and Nordic special-education research since the 1990s. On the basis of Foucault, her discourse analyses of the shifting historical, social, professional, and political processes of constructing intellectual disability include the concept of the deviancy in the shape of the 'mentally retarded child', the 'feeble-minded', and the 'morally deficient woman'. Introducing the politics of eugenics as part of the history of special education, Kirkebæk influenced our research with regard to how medical, psychological, and special-education discourses intertwine and are embedded in professional struggles for jurisdiction (Simonsen, 2000). The detrimental discourse on individuals at the very bottom of a hierarchy of disability was introduced, with people identified as being in need of extensive care. From a bio-political point of view, they were creatures with little or no human qualities or value. From Foucault's perspective of power-knowledge, they were of so little value that the professional interest to control them was absent (Kirkebæk, 2007). To society, these individuals were literally dispensable.

Bio-politics advances another understanding of the norm in the face of the development of democracies and the quality of life. The norm is no longer an a priori fixed concept but a dynamic one (Kristeva, 2013). Sirnes (2005), a political scientist in Norway, draws on both Foucault (1990a; 1990b) and the adapted concept of bio-politics and Agamben's (1995) concept of 'bare life' in order to analyse how human life within a modern biotechnological paradigm is uncategorized, unrecognized, and thus unprotected in times of prenatal diagnostics, research, and therapy. Disability differs from nonconformity, which is the matter at hand in the singularity of the disabled subject. The gap between biology and the social norms and expectations may be perceived as a deficiency or disability. As Kristeva (2013) writes, 'The idea of a norm, of a typical form, of a suitable rule is as indispensable in biology as it is for the social bond. Politics advances another understanding of the norm' (p. 226). From an ethical perspective on disability and deviancy, how to govern a learner or to govern oneself during one's education should be an important concern in special-education discourses.

In recent decades, neuropsychiatric diagnoses have become more widely used as explanations of school problems. Student conduct in education and the conceptualization of challenging conduct in school has been interpreted as individual deficits and categorized within the system of medical diagnostics (Potts, 1983; Ravneberg, 1999; Simonsen, 2000; Bakken & Elstad, 2012; Harwood & McMahon, 2014). Knudsmoen (2015) discusses the importance of viewing the construction of deviant students within education from a learner's subject positioning, as an interpretation of Foucault's (1997; 2007) ethics. Categories of disability and deviancy that have been constructed in medical discourses have greatly influenced special-education research, strategies, and discourses about the inclusion of the ambiguous, deviant or disabled child. Norms, problematization, marginalization, and exclusion are the results of diagnostic practices rather than from a desire to govern a learner in inclusive setting (Knudsmoen, 2015).

The history of special education has to be understood less as an example of human progress and humanitarian effort than as part of a strategy for social control (Tomlinson, 1982; Simonsen, 2000) and develop knowledge in the research field. According to Schaanning (2005), Kirkebæk turns the records from the institutions around: they do not tell the truth about the patient; rather, they tell the truth about their authors. Analysing how professionals develop their knowledge, language, and concepts of their students can bring new light to the understanding of their beings as learners, their voice, development, learning, and conduct within education. An ethical genealogy can help us to understand how 'to govern a learner', or governmentality as a way to understand a learner or student's possible subject positioning between ordinary and special education and the ethics of inclusion. This has been taken up in work on disability studies, with, for example, critical commentary on medicalization and a critique of normalizing practices within special-education research (Slee, 2001; Harwood & McMahon, 2014). The role of medical discourses, however, is not the main focus of debate within special-education research in Norway.

Why (not) Foucault in special-education research?

Foucault's genealogies are political, and as a critical social philosopher, he is a contested scholar. The weak position of Foucault in special-education research in Norway can be interpreted as a consequence of his contentious standing, but there are also other important considerations. Steinnes (2007) suggests that special-education research places itself too close to practice and practical aims. Because of the focus on empirical research with results that can be directly applied in practice, meta-theoretical thinking and reflection are ignored or regarded as more or less irrelevant. This near-sightedness may be compensated for with more descriptive research, than with theoretical and philosophical analysis. Steinnes, however, does not argue for the use of Foucault's perspective in special education in particular, but calls for an epistemological and ontological concept of special-education research. Others who have made an effort to apply his perspectives have been criticized for offering superficial interpretations of Foucault's thoughts and writings.

According to Schaanning (2013), some authors in the field of inclusive education have used Foucault's concepts simply as ornamentation, wrapping their empirical work in impenetrable academic jargon. Being met by such denunciations may, of course, discourage some scholars from pursuing and applying Foucault's perspectives. Nonetheless, we argue that Foucault's critical and theoretical perspectives, in particular his genealogy of ethics, ought to be accepted as an invitation to special education, not as the name on the door of an exclusive club (Simonsen, 2015).

There is another interpretation of why Foucault's influence in special-education research has been so restricted, where the dichotomy between the orientation towards practice and theoretical and philosophical reflection may not be the core matter. The image and self-understanding in special-education research constitute a main obstacle for an increased interest in critical social philosophers such as Foucault. To start, interest in modern European philosophy in special-education research is limited. Disability studies has included meta-critical perspectives on the construction of disability, but the interaction between special-education research and disability studies has been almost non-existent. Foucault's critical approach to the constructions of normalcy and deviancy may be perceived as being too critical.

Special education represents a brand that is designed as 'doing good': historically delivering, meeting, and adapting to shifting political aims (Skrtic, 1991; Thuen, 2001; Arnesen & Simonsen, 2011). In Foucault's view, critique begins with questioning the demand for absolute obedience and subjecting every obligation imposed on subjects to rational and reflective judgement. In various educational contexts obedience is required. Foucault locates the desire that informs the question, 'how not to be governed?' The subject desires to govern oneself and the institutional practices govern the participant, which is the central impetus of critique (Butler, 2000). However, educational society expects the subject to govern as a conduct of conduct, and we recommend that special-education research should redirect its orientation on the subject's conduct of conduct, ability to participation and experiences of well- being.

Disability history demonstrates the shifting historical constructions of the deviant, ambiguous or disabled child in special education (Befring & Tangen, 2012). With reference to Foucault, it seems appropriate to look at the construction of the disabled and deviant child from a new angle. Inclusive special education represents the societal and political assignments of our time. Inclusive education can also be exclusion if we do not shift the discourses about abnormality, deviances, and disabilities towards a focus upon the resilience of a learner and governing as the conduct of conduct within education. Some students have trouble adapting to life in school, and some schools face problems and challenges with other students (Nordahl et al., 2012). Schools continuously have to handle students' diversity. Inclusive special education and institutional strategies have been the current response for preventing school failure and for handling various concrete dilemmas that will inevitably occur for some students.

Allan (2005), using Foucault's framework of ethics, phrases the purpose of inclusion as the *telos*. Democracy and inclusion are closely interconnected. Educational community, participation, complicity, and outcomes are a central benefit of education as a means of creating democratic participants in inclusive special education (Reindal, 2010; Haug, 2014; Nes, 2014; Simonsen, 2015). Inclusiveness in ordinary and special education is an approach that allows children with disabilities and deviances to benefit from education. More broadly, education's purpose is to support diversity among all learners, with the aim of eliminating social exclusion (Peters & Besley, 2014; Allan, 2005; Nes, 2013; Reindal, 2010).

Foucault's ethical perspective on governmentality provides a critical 'ontology of ourselves' as professionals in special-education research. A critical ontology means that professionals reflect upon their ethos and attitudes towards the students' educational outcome in inclusive special education. Discursive practices are about the capability to participate, a way of understanding differences and achieving inclusion as an ethical concept of participation during education. The purpose of inclusion is to achieve interrelations and interaction between ordinary and special education for each student. Power is not homogeneous, but it constructs and creates regimes of rationality about the disabled or deviant child. By analysing theses regimes as micro-regimes of truth, we may explain and understand rationality 'as the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject' (Foucault, 2000, p. 327). The agency of a learner or the subject positioning to become a learner in inclusive special education presupposes opportunities to contribute and participate (Knudsmoen, 2011; Haug, 2014; Knudsmoen, 2015). Foucault emphasizes how power is not homogeneous but creates regimes of how we can explain and understand knowledge, such as the subject positioning as a learner's satisfactory learning outcomes in between ordinary and special education. Rationality is replaced by

an analysis of micro-regimes of truth as various systems of knowledge and how a learner benefits from schooling during education. The student's willingness to become a learner and to conduct and participate seems to be the crucial point of being included.

Concluding remarks

Foucault's influence in Norway has been quite extensive in social science in general, but his impact is limited within special-education research. In this article we have presented Reindal and Hausstätter as two exceptions when it comes to his genealogy of ethics. Their concern, among others, has been the ethics of inclusion and the conceptualizing of disability. Knudsmoen has applied Foucault's thinking in her analyses of learners and conduct of conduct in relation to the construction of the deviant child. In addition, we add the noticeable, but not explicit, influence of Foucault's genealogy of ethics on scholars within special education such as Thuen (2001) and Simonsen (2000, 2005, 2015). One may speculate about the origins of this lack of attention. We have mentioned a certain element of self-satisfaction within the field of special education, which leads to a lesser demand for new critical perspectives (Arnesen & Simonsen, 2011). Or are we talking about squeamishness or fear of contact? Or is there a fear of going wrong in interpreting Foucault's shifting complex and somehow elusive concepts and writings?

What we argue is that Foucault's genealogy of ethics may contribute to new understandings of 'the deviant child' or satisfactory learning outcomes in inclusive education discourses regard special education. It gives attention to the concept of governance as conduct of conduct, self-mastery, and the subject position as learners within education discourses about satisfactory outcome. Participation, inclusion, equity, democracy, equal rights, and bio-politics are complex and pressing issues in special-education research today.

Consequently, special-education professionals need to reconsider the learner as a subject in context, meaning students within education with respect to governance and subjectivity. As a further exploration of critical ethical reflection and work, we put forward Foucault's reminder that we require *parrhesia,* professional and personal courage (Foucault, 2002; Raaen, 2005). Parrhesia requires being critical towards the discourses in which one participates as a professional and towards oneself as researcher in the field.

Foucault's critical and theoretical perspective ought to be accepted as an invitation to explore and examine these matters of inclusion between ordinary and special education critically. Foucault's writings of the subject could potentially lead to a widening of perspectives in special-education research. We have demonstrated how the practices of categorization, medicalization, discipline, and normalization inter-connect and how they may be critically and constructively scrutinized from his perspectives. Foucault's ethics need to be explored further in order to understand students' conduct in inclusive settings, which will develop new forms of norms and normative judgements of students' conduct as learners and subjective beings within education.

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