Challenging behavior at students is highly correlated to increased rates of poor school achievement and school dropout throughout the Western world. These youth are at high risk of later unemployment, social problems, criminality and to the development of psychiatric diagnoses (Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008; Barriga et al., 2002; Ek, Westerlund, & Furmark, C. & Fernell, E., 2012; Greene, Ablon, & Goring, 2003; O'Connor, Dearing, & Collins, 2011). Schools fail to teach these students all over Europe, a fact that strongly contributes to extended demands for exclusive solutions in education (Lindqvist & Nilholm, 2011).

Two contradictory ways to understand challenging behavior (often referred to as “behavior problems” or behavior disorders) are commonly seen; within a medical, or categorical, perspective challenging behavior is perceived as caused by “in-child-reasons”, and in family-oriented perspectives challenging behavior instead has been associated with weak training or other within-family problems. In both paradigms schools may regard the problem as external, as something they can’t influence and something exterior of school responsibility (Greene, 2011).

In an emerging third perspective, an “ecological special educational perspective”, researchers and educators include the whole system of individual-school-family, and its interaction with the social and cultural environments to which it belongs, in their analyses of student´s challenging behavior (Conroy, Sutherland, Haydon, Stormont, & Harmon, 2009; Farrell, Dyson, Polat, Hutcheson, & Gallannaugh, 2007). All the interactions, relations and expectations (social as well as curricular) that our students meet at school are highly relevant factors of concern for the understanding of students behavior trajectories, alongside with knowledge of individual characteristics and the varieties in family resources (O’Connor et al., 2011).

Allover Europe there’s a lack of evaluated interventions towards schools´ work with challenging behaviors in educational practice and there is an extended research asking for models that extend abilities at schools to teach all students, and that such models must incorporate an inclusive perspective (Ainscow, Dyson, Goldrick & West, 2012; Giota, Lundborg, & Emanuelsen, 2009; Ruijs, Van, & Peetsma, 2010).

In the present ongoing Swedish school development project one model to approach challenging behavior, at teacher-team level, that combines knowledge about compensation of individual
special needs and disabilities (the categorical perspective) with a systemic and relational set of interventions is performed in inclusive school settings and evaluated.

The research questions, framed within a *mixed design*, concern to one part *qualitative aspects of the school development process*; the development process in the participating teacher-teams, and the teachers´ and students´ appreciations of the implemented collaborative teacher-student talks (see below) are explored. Another area of interest is whether the students who belong to the participating teacher-teams benefit from the ongoing school development work, in measurable ways? (*quantitative aspect*)

**Method**

Two domains of students´ perceptions of their own schooling, which are identified by international research as critical both to individual achievement and general outcomes (Hattie, 2009), were chosen as main parameters in a quantitative student survey administrated to students in the project schools, at three different occasions over the project period of two years: Student Self-Efficacy (students´ self-believes and self-judgment on their own chances in various aspects of schooling) (Giota, 2006; Klassen, 2010) and students appreciated Quality of Teacher-Student Relation (Baker et al., 2008; Hughes, 2011). The main objective at school level to participate in the project is to start a locally grounded and participatory run school develop process (Gergen & Gergen, 2008), aiming to establish increased, and new, competences at school to approach challenging students in ways that keep the students at school, and help them to achieve better results. A school development process based on and directly connected to educational research (Brannick & Coghlan, 2005). The American model “Collaborative Problem Solving approach (CPS), (Greene, 2011; Greene et al., 2003), in later years highly noticed by special needs teachers for instance in Scandinavia, contains a model of collaborative teacher-student talks that has been adopted into the project and implemented by the participating teacher-teams, alongside with a given framed further education course (on challenging behavior, NPD and other disabilities of relevance, relational perspectives and inclusion), and as well together with an over-time reflective and supportive process through group supervision within the teacher-teams, on a regular basis of one 90 minutes supervision session fortnightly. Video-recall methodology is used to strengthen the intervention; teachers and students videotape their "collaborative talks" and afterwards they watch the videos together while reflecting upon the process. These videos are also used in the supervision process, aiming to strengthen the teachers appreciations of the students´ perspectives of the problems dealt with. The group supervisors in the project are external in relation to the schools and they are well familiar with the project model. The educator of the further education course is the author/researcher. The project model as a whole, composed by the three elements - further education course and group supervision for the participating teacher teams, and the collaborative teacher-student talks - was shaped by the author in collaboration with college professionals within the field of school development and school counseling in the City of Stockholm, and together with colleges at the Stockholm University, Department of Special Education.

**Expected Outcomes**
This paper presentation is aimed to present the backgrounds, settings and theoretical underpinnings of the emergence of the school development model and to report on the process in action during the first year of the project at the five project schools. A second purpose is to give a brief view over the earliest outcomes from the qualitative and quantitative data collected and analyzed, so far.

References


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