Proceedings of the International Conference on Special Education
Vol.2 (2017) / e-ISSN 2948-4731 (16-26)
SEAMEO Regional Centre for Special Educational Needs

INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS IN LOPBURI, THAILAND: THROUGH THE TEACHERS' LENSES

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Abstract: *Thai society became aware of Inclusive Education only through the influence of law and regulations. Schools and teachers played a significant role in supporting special educational needs (SEN) students. This research project aspires to learn more in-depth about how inclusive schools are run, through studying: 1) the teachers' complications when working with SEN students in inclusive schools; and, 2) the needs of the teachers to be supported while working with SEN students. This qualitative study was conducted in Lopburi Province by using SEAT framework to acquire the data. Eleven pilot-project inclusive schools in Lopburi Province were selected to be fieldwork sites for the research project. Paper documents, classroom observations and in-depth interviews with the teachers were completed in order to triangulate the source of data. The results from visiting school participants revealed four different main themes ranging from: 1) what teachers implemented for inclusive classrooms: teachers' training, screening process, individualized education plan (IEP) process, teaching process, and supervising; 2) the other stakeholders' backing off: supporting and funding; 3) how SEN students are being included in inclusive classrooms, being supported by the schools, their development, career paths, and referral for higher levels of education; 4) the teachers' suggestions for effective inclusive classrooms.*

Keywords: *inclusive education, SEN students, Lopburi Province, Thailand, teachers' lenses*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inclusive education has been discussed for more than twenty years. Both scholars and media brought up the inclusive education issue to bring awareness of it to society, and that momentum helps parents of SEN students to speak up for their offspring's rights. With the support from the law, legislation and society, drives or assists SEN students to equally access educational services, in the same way as students without disabilities (Bailey, D. B., McWilliam, R. A., Buysse, V. & Wesley, 1998). In 1989, the United Nations organized a world conference focused on the awareness of the world society towards children with disabilities. The unlimited goal is to encourage children with disabilities to be all included into society. With their developed potential and trained basic skills, they can live with pride and decency in their own community (United Nations, 1989). Moreover, the world conference in Salamanca, Spain held by UNESCO had representatives from ninety-two countries and twenty-five international agencies; those in attendance affirmed *Inclusive Education* to become the norm of society in each country that attended the conference (UNESCO, 1994). With this declaration, there was a believed that it would decrease attitudes of discrimination that might cause problems. Besides, Inclusive Education helps promote a collaborative society where everyone is included for the ultimate sake of everyone being equally able to access education.

Even though, inclusive education has widely been accepted into the society as a whole, the appropriated educational provision for children with disabilities has been controversial in the academia setting (Blenk, K., & Fine, D. L, 1995). The big argument appears to be Government-subsidies, the comprehension of inclusive education provision by the school administrators and the teachers (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). The teachers were questioned on how teachers could implement teaching techniques for each individual with different disabilities and how well the teachers in schools could work collaboratively for successful inclusion (Thaver & Lim, 2014). The teachers are known as key persons who could support the progress of SEN students, with skills as well as experiences, dedication, compassion and attitude of the teachers could predict successful inclusion. Even if there was a report that teachers held positive attitudes toward inclusion, feeling of unpreparedness to teach student with disabilities, as well as a lack of teacher training were the challenge of implementing teaching

DOI : https://zenodo.org/record/6900207
Published by https://publication.seameosen.edu.my/index.php/icse/issue/view/2

strategies to the students. Understanding the ways in which teachers can be supported to develop more inclusive practice demands that we accept that schools are not homogenous (Howes et al, 2009). Teachers need to access to professional development opportunities; they also need more support to enable their practice to change and develop in sustained inclusion (Grimes, 2013). Therefore, the training should be the top priority for policy-makers as it is the core component for development for inclusion in order to prepare future teachers with skills to work with SEN students (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Grimes, 2013).

Forlin (2010) explained that preparing teachers for inclusion requires teachers to gain the understanding of both theoretical and practical knowledge to develop positive values, high moral principles and strong ethical understanding regarding accepting responsibility for children with diverse backgrounds. Even in advanced countries where inclusion has been enacted for over a decade, some still claim that teacher preparation is inadequate to equipt teachers with appropriate attitudes, skill and knowledge to become inclusive practitioners (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). Teacher preparation programs for inclusive educational systems must develop teachers who have the skills, contextual awareness, and critical sensibilities to teach diverse groups of students (Kozleski & Waitoller, 2010). The study by Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis (2011) revealed that training the group of pre-service teachers in the U.S. undicaded that 81% felt using the universally designed lesson plan templates had a positive impact towards feeling prepared. The lesson plan templates attempt to assist pre-service teachers as they learn how to create universally designed lessons from the beginning of their careers. Preparing qualified teachers to take responsibility on improving the quality of SEN students was better than referring them to specialists because teachers‘ effort could ensure that all students are meaningfully engaged in the classroom. Teachers must replace new ways of thinking and working to supporting the students. Reforming teacher education is an essential activity in improving educational equity (Florain, L., Young, K. & Rouse. M., 2010). Teachers themselves feel unprepared and ill-equipped to carry out inclusive practices. As teachers progress through their training and careers, experiences will accumulate for confidence in working with SEN students (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Peebles & Mendaglio, 2014). A similar occurrence occurred in Singapore where research indicated pre-service teachers had little knowledge and experience with disability, and possessed negative attitudes toward people with disabilities. They were not favorable to include some types of SEN students in mainstream settings (Thaver & Lim, 2014).

The study of Vorapanya and Dunlap (2014) narrated that the poor attitude of Thai teachers came from being underpaid and under-trained to accomplish the required tasks. The teachers had to cope with substantial paper work, especially in accommodating their SEN students—the paperwork does more to serve the bureaucratic system rather than focus on improving the child. Teachers did not have sufficient training, they had difficulty guiding students in understanding the subject matter. The training should be done as ‗whole school training‘ so that the entire school staff know the basics of how to facilitate the educational experiences of SEN students. Similar to a research found that inclusive pedagogy recognized that learning difficulties pose challenges for teachers and that it is important to work with others to enhance the inclusive environment of the classroom. Thus, teamwork within a school is a critical element of the inclusion of SEN students so that everyone is aware and sensitive to their needs (Florain & Black-Hawkins, 2011), where teachers work with others such as parents, paraprofessionals, other staffs in school to develop new ways of supporting children (Lindsay, S., Proulx. M., Scott, H. & Thomson, N., 2014). Inclusive classrooms are difficult to achieve when the teachers are poorly prepared to work in multidisciplinary teams on behalf of their students (Pugach & Blanton, 2009). Schools are the stage where teachers, administrators, families, students and others come together to enact a script called schooling. Teachers are a crucial characters in the schooling script. Teachers need to be conscious of their roles in choosing what to deconstruct, conserve, and transform (Kozleski & Waitoller, 2010). There are many barriers when collaborating with people, barriers can include misunderstandings about the meaning of disability, unexplored assumptions about values and belief that undergird goals for students and differences in views about roles and caregivers (Harry, 2008). Teachers see needs and value, but sometimes are unable to make it work when practicing with SEN student. Teachers expressed that time and teamwork were the key factors. They suggested that it is important for planning processes to be structured with procedures and models and supported by school leadership in order to avoid disintegrated relationship between general and special education teachers (Nilsen, 2016; Cater, N., Prater, M.A., Jackson, A. & Marchant, M. 2009).

Although teaching assistants are a necessity in the classroom when there are SEN students, some schools were unable to provide teaching assistants because of budget shortage. Rutherford (2012) revealed the role of the Teaching Assistant: as a facilitator, a helper, a teacher‘s assistant and as a link between students, teachers, and peers. TA should be a highly valued member of the school. While Slee (2006) supported TAs as an effective mechanism for inclusive classrooms where TAs work in partnership with teachers and where all students are supported. In contrast, there was other research asserting TAs are unqualified to support students with disabilities; rather than promoting inclusion for SEN students, the classroom teachers felt TAs created a barrier to inclusion (Butt, 2016; Roffey- Barentsen & Watt, 2014). Blatchford, P., Webster, R. & Russell, A., 2012 reported similarly that in the UK: support provided by TAs can result in negative learning outcomes, and

students who received the most TAs support made significantly less progress than students who receives less TAs support.

Co-teaching involves a collaborative relationship between a general education teacher and a special education teacher (Solis, M., Vaughn, S., Swanson, E. & McCulley, L. 2012). The study on teachers' attitudes and experiences with co-teaching is well considered by general education and special education teachers as helpful to students' outcomes and to the overall professional development of teachers (Hang & Rabren, 2009). Co-teaching was associated with attitudes of the teachers (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013). The teachers reported that: the more opportunities to co-teach, the more confident in their co-teaching practices; and presented higher levels of interest and more positive attitudes than those with less opportunities (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2016). Professional development opportunities should promote the use of specific collaborative co-teaching approaches that are fitted to students needs and the instructional content Beyers-Brown, N., Howerter, C. S. & Morgan. J. J. 2013; Ploessi et al, 2010). Teachers must use effective strategies to promote task engagement and student learning (Simonson, B., Fairbanks, S., Briesch, A., Myers, D. & Sugai, G. 2008). This proves particularly true in inclusive educational settings in which teachers must meet the academic needs of diverse student groups. In co-taught classroom, teachers have unique opportunity to share the workload and provide increase level of support and service to all students (McKenna, J. W., Muething. C., Flower, A., Bryant, D. P. & Bryant, B. 2015).

As students in public schools are becoming increasingly diverse, and SEN students are being included with increasing frequency, there is a growing need to plan lessons that are differentiated and universally designed to meet the needs of a wide array of learners (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2011) in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand, organize, engage and remember (Bowe, 2000; Danielson, 1999). As reported by the teachers in Norway: curriculum planning for general and special education is not coordinated; cooperation between general and special education teachers is limited. While special education teachers felt that general education teachers get less involved with IEPs of each SEN student, general education teachers revealed that special education teachers were careless while developing work plans for SEN students. Teachers seems to be weak in putting an effort to work with SEN students as they have insufficient knowledge therefore there was a need for more extensive support for students' learning (Nilsen, 2016).

In Thailand the Educational Provision for People with Disabilities Act became law in 2008. The act made it clear that inclusive education was to be the service delivery option in the education of people with disabilities. People with disabilities have the right to be included in every level of education and in various forms, it was unlawful to deny the admission to SEN students and SEN students must be provided an IEP with at least yearly-updating (Rajkijjanubaksa, 2008).

Research framework and Research Questions

This research study was conducted based on the SEAT framework advocated by a Thai scholar who has been national-known in the field of inclusive education. Dr. Benja Cholatanon began to implement the SEAT framework for basic education in Thailand while she was serving the Ministry of Education (MOE). In this research, the research used the framework as a platform to investigate the school subjects. The framework are composed of four aspects ranging from Students: S means SEN students and students without special needs; Environment: E including building, classroom, school location, school atmosphere, stakeholders etc.; Activities: A comprising of screening process, classroom management, curriculum design for SEN students, teaching process, teaching techniques, IEP process, evaluation process, school assurance, students' progress reports etc.; Tools: T containing with policy, budgeting, assistive technologies, teaching materials and more. (Chonlatanon, 2003). Building from the SEAT framework as a foundation, the researcher meant to acquire the information through in-depth interviews with questions regarding what the current practices of inclusive schools in Lopburi Province are and what arethe needs of the teachers for successful inclusive education? The reseacher hope that the findings would allow readers to know the direction of problem solving, to learn about appropriate methods used to support successful inclusion, as well as to network people in the community to better serve inclusion for the sustainable benefit of their children.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Location

Lopburi Province is located in the central region of Thailand. It is about a two hour drive north, from Bangkok. It was the ancient capital-city about four-hundred years ago under the reign of The Great King Narai (Maharaja). The study focused upon the basic education level, meaning that the primary inclusive schools in Lopburi Province were the subjects of this project. The researcher designated eleven inclusive school participants out of the pool of all regular public schools in Lopburi Province as: _the pilot project inclusive schools'. The schools are known as including students with mild disabilities, ranging from Learning Disabilities (LD), Attention Deficit Hyper Activity Disorder (ADHA), Emotional and Behavioral Disorder, and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to their school system. Other types of physical disabilities were not included in this study because students were in the special institutes of the province, and they were not the focus of the research. The four school participants came from the first school district and the seven school participants came from a second school

district. Lopburi Province is a center for higher education in the lower central region of Thailand where the university educationally serves student-populations from seven surrounding provinces in the area, and is the work-base for the researcher. The Government grant that the researcher received, destined us to conduct a research study in the service area of the university.

SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS

The eleven school participants were from small and medium sized schools. They average around three-hundred students with about twenty-seven students with special needs from each school, which means that: close to 10% of students have special needs, in each school. As public schools, the only budget channel originates from a government subsidy. During fieldwork visits, researchers witnessed seven schools appearing in clean environments, providing appropriate buildings and facilities, had a screening process, equipped teaching materials, suitable assignment sheets, after school tutoring for in-need students and adequate teaching assistants to support classroom teachers. The remaining four schools need to improve service provisions in terms of appropriate facilities, trained teachers and teaching assistants to better serve SEN students. The representatives to be interviewed from each school were classroom teachers who had worked with SEN students. They were eleven classroom teachers out of eleven schools: all of them were female, with ages ranging from 36-55 years old and have 3-15 years of working experience with SEN students.

INSTRUMENTS

The triangulation method was used as an inquiry. After determining the school subjects, the researcher scheduled for fieldwork visits. Mostly, the researcher spent a day in each school to obtain all day activities data. The in-depth interview was first implemented by one researcher. Each eleven classroom teachers whom selected by school were interviewed for ninety-minutes. The teachers who were chosen to be interviewed were the most involved with SEN students; while a research assistant observed classrooms and wrote what was seen to cross check with the interview data in the checklist and descriptive prepared forms. Another researcher documented all of the papers used in the classroom related with the needs of SEN students ranging from lesson plans for inclusive classrooms, teaching materials, assignment sheets, IEPs, home visiting reports, to doctor appointments for each student with special needs.

RESULTS

The results from visiting school participants showed four different main themes, ranging from: 1) what teachers implemented for inclusive classrooms: teachers‘ training, screening process, IEP process, teaching process, and supervising; 2) the other stakeholders‘ backing off: supporting and funding; 3) how SEN students are included in inclusive classrooms: being supported, potential development, career paths, and referral for higher levels of education; 4) the teachers‘ suggestions for effective inclusive classrooms. The following are the reported findings:

i. What teachers implemented for inclusive classrooms

The teaching activities and other services that the teachers helped collaborate with SEN students to be part of their inclusive classrooms and to meet each individual‘s goal according to each IEP.

a) Teachers’ training

None of the interviewed teachers had special education degree background. Their training to work with SEN students came from having SEN students included in classes. Training here meant in-service training by working directly with SEN students daily. Without a background in special education, most of the interviewed teachers said they worked with SEN students without confidence, but for humanitarian reason they must do it. They explained that there were in service trainings that they could attend for their advancing their understanding to work with SEN students. The trainings could be divided into two types; primarily, it is two-hundred hours training offered for the teachers responsible for teaching inclusive classrooms of the schools. The trained teachers received 2,000 baht (around 57 U.S. dollars) a month as an extra compensation after passing the training. It was reported that there were only four school participants that received this type of training. The second type of training was a week of training that was offered to all teachers of inclusive schools. For this type of training, all eleven school participants sent teachers to attend. Each year the training themes would be altered to fit national policy for inclusive education. This year for example the training focused on inclusive education policy, types of student disabilities, screening tools and processes, including teaching techniques for the SEN students. However, one school reported that their school had a budget allocated for training at their school, for each teacher to learn about SEN students and how to support their learning.

b) Screening process

As students came from different types of cares and understanding families, under this topic, we explained the screening process in three steps that the schools oversaw their SEN students. The screening process prior attending the schools means potential SEN students received the screening process from the community hospital prior to attending inclusive schools. Students demonstrating special-needs at a very young, should have already been screened by doctors and have the condition

listed in their medical records, before beginning school; however, some students never been examined by the doctors—so teachers observing the beginning of the process must continue onward with them, while being admitted to the schools. Observation was done for the whole academic year, and later all the teachers, together, would make conclusions for student screening results.

During the screening process, all eleven school participants reported the screening persons in schools were: Thai language teachers, math and other regular classroom teachers. After a long academic year observing the 1st grade, five schools reported that they screened the students late in the second semester, while the remaining six schools started the screening process early during the 2nd grade. The permitted screening tool used in Thai public elementary schools is called KUS-SI (a rating scale screening tool for administering students with ADHD, LD, ASD from ages 1-6 and 6-13 years. The screening test was completed with the collaboration of Kasetsart University Laboratory School, Center for Educational Research and Development: KUS and Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital (SI) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) Screening Form. It was schools‘ choices to either administer both tools for cross checking or choosing only one of those to screen the students. Moreover, nine schools revealed that their schools referred SEN students to the upper tier hospitals for some complicated disabilities, and the other two schools did not report their screening referral. The referral issue involves hospitals taking their time over the screening process, the doctors or clinical psychologists manage full workloads, most school participants were located in provincial rural areas, commuting between schools and the hospital ate up a considerable about of daily time and caused trouble to teachers and parents.

After the screening process, the schools described that they had meetings with parents for reporting and had parents‘ agreements for the next IEP process. One school out of the ten stated that some parents did not accept the screening results and denied to sign the IEP-process paper—causing trouble to some schools to promptly help their SEN students.

c) Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process

Each school explained the process of IEP differently; in sum, those schools looked at the IEP process as a system used to help SEN students to develop. IEP mostly focused on the Thai language subject and Mathematics subject. IEP is based upon the centralized curriculum, but erased some lessons to properly adjust towards the level of each student, ranging from easy to challenging lessons, depending upon the students‘ progression towards reaching their monthly development goal towards the next level of advancement. The schools reported that Thai IEP was an online form initiated by the Bureau of Special Education for schools to download, as a guideline. Principals, classroom teachers, teachers, teaching assistants and parents were mainly the ones who were responsible for the IEP writing process. However, only two schools had parents included in the full process of IEP. As reported that most parents were in a low Social Economic Status (SES), they work for daily wages, missing work for only a day meant that their income would be insufficient to support their families. Some schools, where the community well involved with them, the chair of school board would sign or help with the IEP writing. Without writing an IEP, a submission to the Special Education Office of the Province would mean the individual with disabilities could have not registered to be SEN students under the Thai office of the Basic Education Commission.

Five schools were informed that after the IEP writing had been completed, they were to submit online to the Special Education Office of the Province for receiving the Government subsidy. Each SEN student received up to 2,000 baht—in the form of learning materials, according to what were written in IEP and some other supplies that that SEN students need. Often, during online submission, there was network trouble causing delays with submission, resulting in lateness to receive the materials and supplies to use for SEN students in time.

d) Teaching process for inclusive classroom

All the school subjects have planned the teaching schedule according to both SEN students and students without special needs. Six schools reported: extra study hours that the SEN students received daily was extra hours after school time. Another five schools revealed that they used lunch break to provide extra help for an individual with special educational needs. Also, some teachers would pull-aside SEN students during school activity periods, and make them go to the resource center—assisting them in a small group. Similarly, teaching techniques in all eleven schools had to be done alike. Their teaching was based upon ‒student centered‖ principle to bring out the best possible of each individual. Repetitions and slowly teaching were what the teachers believed could support learning even though it was a time consuming process—they have to follow these outlines. The teachers showed student work progress after allowing time for them to study for longer hours, and were given more time than other students without special needs—SEN students could do better. Besides, the teachers modified the course to fit with each one‘s needs at the beginning and coached them up to more complicated tutorials, including lowering the numbers of practice items for SEN students. *“Of course the class was going real slow”,* one teacher said; *“…but, the kids in*

class learned that this was how we could help other friends [with special educational needs] to go together. Everyone in class not only learn the lesson, but learning humanity in the same time", another teacher supported. The two schools reported using a peer coaching technique to support some friends with SEN. Teaching materials for those school subjects documented using similar procedures for teaching simple to complex lessons. The materials varies, ranging from: paper based materials such as practice books, assignment sheets, flash cards, maps; to technological materials: CAI supported lessons, CD for each tutorial, learning through internet searching, etc.

Seven out of the eleven schools stated the same thing about the evaluation process. They leaned on the _authentic assessment method', which is based upon the IEP of each individual. Of course, there was a paper-based test provided; but as mentioned above, there were fewer items for assistance and more time was given for them to work on the tests. Teachers also made observations to see the progress of the SEN students and how much they had accomplished through their portfolio during the academic year. For the developmental report, teachers and teaching assistants would report through the classroom teachers. The classroom teachers gave the next report to the school principals and later to parents; however, three schools reported that they declared student development to school board members, the school district where they belonged, the hospital where each individual was identified being SEN students, and the Special Education Office of Lopburi Province.

e) Supervising

Each school reported two ways of teaching supervision. The first way was supervised by the school's academic-affairs office and the school principals. Only one school reported the lack of supervising because no one in school understood teaching SEN students. The second way, each eleven schools would receive supervision from coaches of the school district affiliated with the Special Education Office of the Province, twice a year.

ii. Backing from other stakeholders'

As known in school systems, teachers are the key people helping students' learning; however, the supports from other stakeholders in and out of schools are importance in promoting the students' success, as well. Stakeholders include: school principals, school board committee, teaching assistants, and parents.

a) Supporting roles of the other stakeholders

The school principals played the key role for successful inclusion. Teachers from eight schools explained that the principals of their schools put policy into practices by encouraging the teachers in schools to cooperate through working and supporting SEN students to take part in all activities in the schools. By law, schools cannot deny Thai children to be included in the school system; therefore, it becomes an awareness of the stakeholders to integrate and work for backing the principles of inclusion. However, three schools showed ignorance of the leaders in inclusive schools. Government funding for inclusion was used inappropriately. They accepted that the leader is the essential factor to lead organizations, towards meeting goals: *"Therefore, principals' training was as important as teachers' training"*, teachers stated.

The school board came from communities therefore, in terms of their role, they ensure collaboration between homes and schools took place to support the inclusive system. Information could be shared for the benefit of students. The eight schools reported that the board played an important role in helping the schools in terms of extra financial support for school activities; but the other schools did not portray the involvement of the school board members in this study.

Teaching assistants helped classrooms run smoother, the seven teachers agreed. Policy determined that in one school, one teaching assistant must be hired to support inclusive classrooms. What helped classroom teachers was providing extra hours for teaching reading and mathematics for SEN students during lunch hours or right after school; and they helped prepare materials for teaching and lesson plans or assisting along with classroom teachers during the class period. Other schools, on the other hand, used teaching assistants to work on what they were not responsible for.

Parents were the great supporters for their children and the schools. Ten schools admitted that parents collaborated well with the schools in lifting up their SEN students' capabilities. They helped work on homework with their children at home if they were able, while some parents who were illiterate allowed the SEN students to stay for after school tutoring, as the teachers requested. Some parents financially supported this group of students. For parents who payed attention to their SEN students, the children appeared to be more developed. Conversely, for those with ignorance, their children seemed to be stagnant with their development.

b) Funding for SEN students

Schools were delegated Government-funding from two different sources. The first one was delegated by the school districts where schools were under priority-hierarchy, in the form of money for inclusive school management; and another source came from the special education center of the

province in the form of a 2,000 Thai-baht coupon for each SEN student. The coupon was used to trade for teaching materials and supplies from the center according to each individual IEP the teachers submitted. Each SEN student may have needed different types of teaching materials. All the teachers found similar troubles of receiving improper teaching materials for each student and explained how obtaining the proper material types could be more supportive the SEN students' learning. The problems were: the budget from the school district was not adequate, and yet the teaching materials delegated from the special education center did not fit with each SEN student; the teachers did not receive what they had requested.

Private funding is another source of money supporting schools and SEN students. Six schools reported similarly that they were funded by parents in the form of student-scholarships, improving school facilities for SEN students, including attending activities with the schools. Moreover, in the five schools mentioned, supported by the community - some local government administrations provided an extra budget for schools in the form of scholarships, a food allowance, recreation activities, career path promotion; but the other six schools reported no support from the community. Additionally, many schools reported that they benefited from the extra professional support, from: physicians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, etc., from local hospitals. The six teachers impressively explained what the local hospital supported, ranging from students' screening, health care provisions, students' vaccinating, while the other five schools had bad impressions toward the professionals who came in to help the schools.

iii. How SEN students are included in inclusive classrooms.

SEN students are supported by the teachers, students in classrooms and other members of the schools to help them maximize their potential, assist them to the higher level of education and guide them to their career paths.

a) SEN students being supported by the schools

The school layouts and facilities were similar. Only three schools provided specific restrooms for students with special needs, while just one school had a ramp for assistance. Other schools reported budget shortages because they had to have support facilities for SEN students, included into the schools. In class, the researcher witnessed a seating-assignment system as done by the teachers, by paring the SEN student with a regular-student willing to assist a friend, and placed them in the classroom's front row. Once, they broke into groups for activities, at least one SEN student was put into each group—teachers said they could never pair up SEN students together as they would be lost along the way of learning, in class.

A home visiting program was done as a school-routine, as mentioned by teachers. Documentation showed that each student received a home visit, for the home and school connection. Four schools reported the home visit program was done twice a year and the other seven schools had home visits once a year. Some schools brought donated items to low SES families. Visitations allowed teachers to comprehend the family background of the SEN students, and could reciprocally exchange students' information with parents. Teachers said that during the period that parents send their children to schools in the morning and picked them up from schools in the afternoon, there was never enough time to speak about their children.

Understanding peers without special needs is essential for SEN students, for classroom integration. The teacher in the selected-schools were the ones who helped create the atmosphere of inclusion. Some reported that they gradually assimilated information of SEN students to their students in classes. Some teachers spoke in front of the students during the school assembly time for the sake of students' living together. Some teachers provided inclusive activities in schools. Every place in schools, the teachers created an awareness of the need for loving-kindness amongst humanity, compassion to peers, respectfulness to each other, and dignity in mankind. Once inclusion awareness was cultivated in schools, the students would have been prepared to understand the idea of living among diversity before going out to live in a real inclusive community.

Even with some other teachers in schools, it was revealed that some teachers were upset when teaching SEN students. Most schools accepted the fact that it was not easy to have every teacher accept the idea that every student would not be segregated. Some who started to work with SEN students learned how to be more sympathetic towards them, while some who never experienced teaching SEN students avoided the responsibility of teaching them. However, there were techniques that schools tried to create for the teachers to accept inclusion, for example setting up a meeting regarding having SEN students being including into school issues, sending out some teachers to get trained in teaching SEN students, and the principal communicated with the teachers to be prepared for teaching SEN students once they moved to higher levels. The interviewed teachers agreed: when promoting inclusive education, the responsibility to SEN students was not only for special education teachers, it must be an obligation of every teacher in school.

Parents were another key factor for inclusion. The schools organized an orientation with all the parents having SEN students in schools for the possible understanding among the diverse background parents. Additionally, parents of SEN students would gather in group to converse about their children. Most schools reported that parents of students without special needs had a better point of view to SEN students comparing with what has happened in the past; but, a few schools reported a show of avoidance from parents of students without special needs to have their children be with SEN students.

b) Full potential development-career paths fostering-referral for higher levels of education

SEN students were encouraged to get involved in all activities with students without disabilities. To help SEN students reach their full potential, teachers reported that finding out each individual outstanding ability promoted their ability, as what teachers had done: –*The students should not be judged only on academic competency",* one teacher stated. Many teachers went on to claim implementing principles of Multiple Intelligences, as promoted by Dr. Howard Gardner, encouraging students‘ competency, for example: many SEN students were promoted to be skillful in playing sports, playing music instruments, working on arts, dancing, and computerizing, etc.

SEN students must believe to be independent in the future. Schools only support their learning through vocational based learning. The researchers could categorize from observations, three projects that SEN students were working on. First was an agricultural based learning project growing mushrooms from planting mushrooms—learning to be a producer until the end goal as a supplier. Through the process, they learned to work hard, take care, collaborate with peers, solve problems, and finally learn to harvest and engage into marketing their product. The second project was producing handmade handicrafts. SEN students were taught how to make brooms from grass, weave mats and other weaved products from locally sourced materials. The third project was cooking based learning. SEN students could develop skills though making Thai food, Thai desserts, and baking. Parents and people in the communities were invited to impart local wisdom and resources to SEN students.

It was difficult to refer SEN students to higher levels since all the teachers committed. Many of them were required to stay in the same grade for a few years as they needed repetition: many students with LD, with their forgetfulness, they could never move beyond into the next steps for the next lessons. Referral within school seems easier than a referral outside of school. Teachers found troubles when SEN students graduated from 6th Grade and no middle schools wanted to accept them. Most of the SEN students then dropped out of the education process and went onward towards their career paths. That is why career paths are taught in school during their life at the elementary school level.

iv. The teachers’ suggestions for effective inclusive classrooms

The teachers in the study confessed that teachers nowadays should be well prepared for working with diverse students and SEN students who were increasing in population numbers in schools. Teachers should be trained to holistically understand working in inclusive institutes. All the teachers in the study, despite their training, spoke about similar training provisions for the other stakeholders, ranging from school principals, parents, to the community members. They recommend broadening basic knowledge, and this should be provided to everyone towards understanding and awareness of SEN students, since they belong to the community. Training that focused on lifting up stakeholders‘ awareness promotes inclusion. From our observations, teachers contributed greatly to their SEN students. Even though some were short of material support, their loving-kindness was shown through the time spent with SEN students.

DISCUSSIONS

In this discussion section, the results of the research will be presented for the purposes of examining: 1) the teachers‘ complications when working with SEN students in inclusive schools and 2) the needs of the teachers to be supported while working with SEN students. As reported by the teachers in this study, many complications emerged in working with SEN students as found similarly in international literature. The subjects in the study revealed that they all do not have degrees or a background in special education, and never trained to work with SEN students prior to working in schools–a crucial factor towards successful inclusion. Their preparation merely includes in-service training by directly working with SEN students, daily at schools. Without a background in special education, most of the interviewed teachers consented: they worked with SEN students without confidence, but they work with loving-kindness and humanity—similar to the research of Avramidis and Norwich (2002) that explained that even if there was a report that teachers held positive attitudes toward inclusion, there were feelings of unpreparedness to teach student with disabilities. Similar to the literature from Norway and Singapore that explained that the pre-service teachers had little knowledge and less experience working with people with disabilities (Nilsen, 2016; Thaver & Lim, 2014). The previous study of the researcher found that teachers did not have sufficient training, they had difficulty guiding students to understand subject

matters. The poor attitude of the teachers came from their underpaid socio-economic condition and being under-trained to accomplish the required tasks. Teachers should be prepared for SEN students in their pre-service training program before being posted to schools, since it was difficult for schools to send all of their teachers for in-service training Vorapanya and Dunlap (2014). Other literature supported: preparing teachers for inclusion requiring teachers to understand both theoretical and practical knowledge that develops positive values, high moral principles and strong ethical understanding regarding accepting responsibility for children with diverse backgrounds. Teacher preparation is inadequate to equip teachers with appropriate attitudes, skill, contextual awareness, critical sensibilities and knowledge to become inclusive practitioners (Forlin, C. 2010; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009; Kozleski an& Waitoller, 2010). Therefore, teacher training is a core component for developing inclusion (Grimes, 2013), especially among the diverse school populations nowadays who came from different abilities, backgrounds and cultures (Howes, Davies, and Fox, 2009). Being prepared before working with SEN students made teachers able to plan, understand, realize, gain awareness—while possessing a diverse range of learners in the classrooms (Bowe, 2000; Danielson, 1999; Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis, 2011). Not only being trained in necessary skills; but the idea of replacing new ways of thinking and working to support all students would help teachers reform their rationality to improve their sense of education-equity towards SEN students (Florian et al, 2010). For the issue of writing IEPs, the study found that Thai teachers had trouble with time to write and post it on time, while research from Norway found special education teachers felt general education teachers got less involved with IEPs of each student with special needs—this situation caused weakness in teamwork towards putting in efforts for SEN students (Nilsen, 2016). Even though there is a lot of supports for teachers to work with SEN, Thai teachers in the study found challenges in teaching SEN students. Training is the key factor they need to be prepared for the sake of promoting student-development. Thailand is similar to other countries, which appear to fall into the same situation of making inclusive classrooms aspiring to become successful.

The second statement of the teachers in the study was the needs of the teachers to be supported while working with SEN students. Teachers reported that they were in need of having stakeholders as part of the support team for SEN students. Teachers hope all stakeholders have chances to be trained to understanding SEN students; they themselves wished to be appropriately trained and prepared, from the government subsidies used within inclusive schools. Comprehension of inclusive education provisions by school administrators and teachers, as suggested in previous research, illuminates argumentation rooted from proper usage of government subsidies. The training should be done as _whole school training‘ so that the entire school staff knew the basics of how to facilitate the educational experiences of SEN students (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). As similar to research finding that inclusive pedagogy recognizes learning difficulties pose challenges for teachers and that it is important to work with others to enhance the inclusive environment of the classroom. Thus, teamwork within schools is a critical elemen of the inclusion of SEN students so that everyone is aware and sensitive to their needs (Florain & Black-Hawkins, 2011), where teachers work with others such as parents, paraprofessionals, other staff in school to develop new ways of supporting children (Lindsay, S., Proulx. M., Scott, H. & Thomson, N. 2014). Inclusive classrooms are difficult to achieve when poorly prepared teachers populate classrooms, unable to work in multidisciplinary teams on behalf of their students (Pugach & Blanton, 2009). Kozleski and Waitoller (2010) well said that schools are the stage where teachers, administrators, families, students and others come together to enact a script called schooling. Teachers are crucial characters in the script for the education process, as shown through the work of Harry (2008): teachers need to be conscious of their roles in choosing what to deconstruct, conserve, and transform. There are many barriers when collaborating with other characters, such as families- barriers can include misunderstandings about the meaning of disability, unexplored assumptions about values and belief that undergird goals for students and differences in views about roles and caregivers.

Even though the idea of co-teaching has not been widely introduced to the Thai inclusive school system, the needs of having integrated schools, to help, has never gone away from teachers who run inclusive classrooms. Due to the shortage of qualified teachers who work collaboratively, co-teaching hasn‘t been implemented across Thailand yet. As reported above, the country has a short-supply of special education teachers, therefore putting them together to work with general education teachers seem currently impossible. Still there is a need of having another person in class to co-teach or assist. The idea of hiring a TA is more demanding, teachers are in need of being supported. International literature reports decent aspects of having this technique implemented into inclusive classrooms, as we know: co-teaching involves a collaborative relationship between a general education teacher and a special education teacher (Solis et al, 2012; Hang and Rabren, 2009; Pancsofar and Petroff, 2013). The teachers reporting more opportunities to co-teach, the more confident they become in their own co-teaching practices and presented higher levels of interest and more positive attitudes than those with less opportunities (Pancsofar and Petroff, 2016; Simonson et al, 2008). Professional development opportunities should promote the use of specific collaborative co-teaching approaches that are fitted to students needs and the instructional content (Beyer-Brown et al, 2013;

Ploessi et al, 2010). This proves particularly true in inclusive educational settings in which teachers must meet the academic needs of diverse groups of students. In co-taught classrooms, teachers have unique opportunities to share the workload and provide increase level of support and service to all students (McKenna et al, 2015). Because some classrooms in the study were filled with a number SEN student, the teachers expressed that Teaching Assistants can be great helpers for them to effectively run the classrooms. All of the schools in the study could not provide a TA for their classrooms, the interviewed teachers expressed a value towards a TA, which paralleled the research of Rutherford (2012) and Slee (2006), explaining the role of the TA as a facilitator to help connect between students and teachers, utilizing the support, and improving learning outcomes for all students. Thai teachers in the study also considered TA as a necessity in the classroom and believe that TA helped classrooms run smother. Some international literature found poor attitudes towards TA—being unqualified to support students with disabilities. Rather than promoting inclusion for SEN students, these classroom teachers felt TA created a barrier to inclusion (Butt, 2016; Roffey- Barentsen and Wall, 2014), as a result of negative learning outcomes, students made significant less progress with the support by TA (Blatchford et al, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Putting inclusive education into practice is very challenging for schools‘ stakeholders, particularly for the teachers who expect to make the students maximize their full potential. They are in need of support and should help each other to raise up attitudes towards SEN students, create joint awareness for people with disabilities of people in the society, and should train teachers to be ready for working with SEN students. It is not just an easy task, but Thailand has shown growth through trying to help SEN students to become part of the school system, promoting knowledge and skills to maximize their full potential in order to live within the regular community and make a living for their own pride and happiness.

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