Models of Inclusive Education: One Size Does Not Fit All

Suchada Bubpha
Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat University,Thailand

Abstract

Inclusion primarily respects the human rights, and that every school has to enroll every child with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Education institutions are mandated to provide education in accordance with the 2007 Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, by which persons with disabilities are entitled to and supported by the government to receive education equally to others. Education provision thus now provides children with special need with opportunities to learn with their normal peers, upon their rights and equity in inclusive education. Education for all needs an entire change of school system in which school leaders are major contributors with their leadership role to create supportive atmosphere for children with special need to learn in inclusive setting. Successful inclusion requires active cooperation among all concerns including teachers, students, parents, and the community. It is thus a hard and challenging work for education leaders and staffs. This paper seeks to provide key issues in the development of inclusive model for Thailand, initiated with a transform from mainstreaming toward inclusion.   In addition, this paper suggests the significance of inclusion in Thailand and potential inclusive model, as practical guidelines for Thai inclusive schools. Details will be discussed in subsequent sections.

1. Introduction

Inclusion has now been accepted by countries worldwide in line with the Universal declaration of the Rights of Child.   The UNESCO emphasized that schools are to provide inclusive education for all children including both the disabled and the normal without discrimination.   Inclusion has increasingly gained attention internationally, and a number of schools and classrooms are under instructional transformation to become inclusive regardless of differences in learning, ability, and level of impairment [16].   "…Since disability is only one among diverse characteristics of human occurred in every society…" , supporting education rights for all children is thus the basic rights and it is the right of every single child to be treated in respect of human dignity.

The current definition of inclusion has been adopted from collective meetings with mutual agreement so called the World Declaration on Education for All Children.   Every child is entitled to education without distinction and that education is provided to children in absence of discrimination. Children are legally protected to access education irrespective to impairment, religion, language, gender, ability, and other reasons. Sandkull refers to inclusion as the provision of education on the basis of human rights underlying education management. It was initiated in the international conference on human rights following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 with a significant statement "…Every single child shall have the rights to equal education and shall acquire school education for as high as possible based on their potential and capacity.   Education should enable children to use and improve their capability and potential. Children should be taught to live their life peacefully, preserve environment, and respect the rights of others…" Apart from being provided by taking into account the human rights and legal provision, inclusion is also defined in terms of practical guides for schools. Stainback and Stainback defined inclusion as education provided by schools for all children regardless of their impairment, economic, social and cultural backgrounds. Schools seek means to facilitate children learning together and sharing learning benefits.   Similarly, Desai stated that inclusion in school setting is to provide education for all as it is a place participated by everyone, accepted and supported by peers and staff as well as the community, in response to the need for student development. Hence, inclusive management takes into account education that allows every child to learn together, to be recognized and provided with equal education opportunities.

Thailand has long been consistently and progressively providing education for children with disabilities for more than 70 years now, formally introduced in 1939.   In 1951 the first school for the blind was established by a blind American woman, Miss Genevieve Caulfield.   Later, the Ministry of Education (MOE) had extended education for children with disabilities of various types by establishing disability-specific schools under the execution of the Department of Formal Education, including schools for the delayed learning, the blind, the deaf, and those with physical impairment and

chronic illness. The program was subsequently expanded in 1986 by the Office of the National Primary Education Commission to implement the inclusion under the project on model development of mainstreaming primary education for disabled children by trying out mainstreaming children with hearing impairment and mental retardation in ordinary classes with normal children. Mainstreaming education had received much attention during the period of 1999 education reform in which the government declared the policy that "any disable persons wish to go to school, can do so", and to promote mainstreaming education under the mainstreaming school pilot project for basic education. In 2000, such policy was augmented to include the development of their quality of life to enable their self and social development, in line with the policy on education quality assurance. The whole-school approach was adopted to implement mainstreaming. It can be said that Thailand's education management is at the initial phrase of creating knowledge and understanding on universal inclusive education. Relevant literatures suggested that a number of problems exist in Thailand's such a movement which involve personnel, children classification and tools, measurement and evaluation, including monitoring and supervision, all of which hindering pedagogical management. Therefore, Thailand's efforts to provide education corresponding to the need of children with special needs originated by mainstreaming toward the universal inclusion is in harmonization with the Constitution and legal provisions for special child, and considered the practical guidelines as stated in the Education Management for Persons with Disabilities Act of 2008 [10] that:

" … the rights and equal opportunities to obtain basic education, and the rights to access facilities, media, service, and other forms of educational support including choices of education service, setting, system and type, and with education standard and assurance and management of appropriate curricula, learning process, examination, relevant to the need for each type of disabilities and individual …"

As noted earlier, inclusive education is intended for all children without distinction between special and normal children and in respect to the human rights and diversity rather than the differences in this globalization society.

2. Transformation from mainstreaming toward inclusive education

In the past, education management system originally lied on one form - regular education, excluding children with disabilities and special need from normal schools. Disability-specific schools were later established under special education program. After a period of time, a group of special children had demonstrated substantial development, it is thus considered to relocate this group in normal schools under the mainstreaming education management. It is convinced that this type of service at least offers them with opportunities to interact with their normal peers in normal system. Inclusion was then introduced to promote social recognition of and familiarity with children with special need and eventually increasingly accepting them. Transformation toward inclusion focuses on the change of major school system to allow education management for all children. This idea holds that recognizing individual differences should permit better values [2], consistent with the Whole-school Approaches introduced by Dessent cited in Alan Dyson and Alan Millward [2], noting that there should be school restructuring so that they are capable of educating all children. At a later period there are educators advocating the right to education of all children as a basic right and a human right that every single child is entitled to being treated equally with human dignity, the new trend of education thus emerged called inclusive education.

3. Significance of inclusive education in Thailand

Review of previous relevant literatures on management of mainstreaming schooling of special and ordinary children in Thailand suggested that school is a significant setting contributing to successful education management. Thailand has implemented in mainstreaming special children with normal children, however, problems existed in terms of personnel, children classification and instrument, measurement and evaluation, including monitoring and supervision, posing obstacles to effective learning and teaching management [17] revealed that school leaders in Thailand are still lacked of insights on ways to manage appropriate inclusive schooling and it requires fundamental reconfiguring of such as school size, and promoting and training teachers. Ineffective education management resulted by misconception and problematic mechanisms are impacted by either internal or external factors. Internal factor includes for instances the lack of education personnel with thorough understanding of education management for children with special need, while school leaders and teachers are incomprehensive of the different characteristics of disable children and pedagogical management, and embrace negative attitude toward mainstreaming schooling. Others include the lack of school readiness in terms of facilities, materials, personnel, and curriculum. External factor involves

parents' lacking of knowledge and understanding in caring and enhancing child potential, coupled with the fact that inclusion is disregarded by parents and the community [8], [20]. These issues prevented the success of transformation from mainstreaming toward inclusion. In my opinion, it is important to appreciate the differences between mainstreaming and inclusive approaches, with teachers and education administrators taking contributive roles in the success and efficacy of the program, and schools emphasizing on collective efforts among all concerns.

The above discussion illustrated the current status and problems of Thai inclusive management, suggesting the need for improvement especially in enabling both the special and normal children to meet their maximum potential. Inclusive management is apparent in its significance and value but requires substantial workload to attain quality and tangible outcome. In my own perspective however, the standpoint remains that it is worthy to extend inclusive education.

3.1. Guidelines for inclusive management

The important goal of inclusion is that school is a setting where everyone participates and enjoys equal importance. In 2001, the UNESCO defined the following means of implementing inclusive education.

1. Policy Development Some aspect of policy formulation are still up to certain group of authorities bearing no direct responsibilities for children, resulting in poor coverage of education to some groups of children, whereas for most countries, education policy makers are actually their respective Ministry of Education. The planning process for universal education opens for countries to manage education system and reflect on their policies to ensure that all obstacles are overcome and children can enjoy equal rights to education.

Correspondingly, each country had enacted a law to entitle every child to have the rights to education including those with disabilities. Defining policy framework on inclusive education is thus important for moving the inclusion forward, however, might not reach the goal if children are discriminated and inaccessible to equality. Therefore, schools need to assure the quality of inclusive process through the whole-school approach, to educate all children.

2. Curriculum Development
Curriculum in education system is thought to be a key factor of inclusion. Some countries provide core curriculum without flexibility. Rather, developing curriculum for inclusive schooling is meant to be adjustable by teachers according to particular local context and need of individual child.

3. Teacher training
Existing problem is that teachers attach to traditional instructional approach such as directing students to read and transcribe from books though still applicable to the management of education for all. However, they need to be trained to become mastery in teaching while schools arrange stimulating environment that allows sufficient time for teachers to learn new things as well. This entire school improvement is thus serving as an effective means to facilitate changes for the betterment and in turn enable teachers' self development to teach students with disabilities.

4. Community Involvement
Another important task is that schools need to promote family and community involvement as they are regarded external supportive sources. In some localities, schools may receive support from community members to seek and supply information for child development.

To bring about quality in education management for all, it is recommended as practical guidelines that schools establish the following ways of implementation. Schools identify policies and strategies for education management that serve diverse needs of children. The government reinforces in terms of policy, management system, and publicizing the concept. Schools need entire changes most importantly the attitude of leaders and teachers, teaching and learning process, and allowing parents and community involvement. Next section covers inclusive management guides in brief.

3.2. Inclusive management principles

Dessent had introduced the Whole-school Approaches that acknowledges individual differences and offers inclusive schooling opportunities for ordinary and special children. It demands a radical restructuring of schools so that they are inherently capable of educating all students. Guidelines for transforming school toward whole-school approach lie on the inclusion assumption that all children learn together at maximum extent regardless of obstacles and difficulties or individual differences. Schools must acknowledge and respond the diverse needs of students including different types and levels of their learning. Quality assurance is in place by means of suitable curriculum, administrative organization, and pedagogical strategies. Community is encouraged to involve in education management. Consistent supports and services are provided corresponding to special needs of inclusive learners. Every child is regarded as a school member and entitled to equality and equity [1].

3.3. Model development for inclusion management in Thailand

Review of domestic literature provides interesting information of different inclusive models as follows:

Model 1: SEAT Framework Inclusive management

Benja Cholthanont developed an inclusion administrative structure utilizing SEAT Framework, which guides school leaders for effective integration and administration [6]. Today core leader schools adopt the SEAT Framework in accordance with the Thai Ministry of Education's policy, however with some situational problems and constraints as well as limitations. The guidelines suggested by SEAT Framework include:

1. S: Student
Preparedness of students with disabilities or physical, mental, and social impairments, including academic support. Immediate assistance and preparedness are suggested soon after such disabilities are observed so that their potential of all aspects are enhanced.

2. E: Environment
Students with disabilities or impairments should be accommodated to learn in the least restrictive environment (LER).   Schools should try to locate them to learn mostly in regular classrooms.

3. A: Activities
Teaching and learning activities include both of those inside and outside the classroom, as part of school pedagogy that facilitates either special or ordinary children to develop physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially.

4. T: Tools
A number of tools are used for inclusive management, enabling students with special need to learn and live most effectively, and supporting their acquisition of quality education. These tools include facilitating technologies, educational media such as Braille kits/printed material and media, audio books for the blind, and a range of services that support education of disable persons of each types, including other types of assistances such as therapeutic activities and physical therapy, and speech therapy.

Today mainstreaming has been transforming into inclusive education, however, most of the schools under the Office of the National Primary Education Commission remain traditional mainstreaming of prototype model so called SEAT Framework inclusive management. Efforts have been put to develop alternative models for inclusion education but not that much extent.

Model 2: Collaborative Inclusion Model: CIM

Nongluck Virajchai [18] developed an inclusion model for disable children with family and the community involvement corresponding to the substance in the 1999 National Education Act. The concept was derived from exploring the situation and trend of inclusive management for children with abilities both in Thailand and in overseas, document research and review of relevant literature, including case study research of the community-based rehabilitation project, Foundation for Children with Disabilities. Summary results of the research are as follows:

1. Education management model in overseas is inclusive class oriented and community-base rehabilitation. The focus is on occupational training.
2. Legal provision related to management of education for persons with disabilities in Thailand mandated that the government shall support to ensure that everyone is entitled to all forms of education. The number of individuals with disabilities to be educated is substantially increasing, and the government needs to implement inclusive education.
3. The project was aimed at educating on the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation for disable individuals, in collaboration with concerned organizations.   It contains 12 sub-projects, each of which demonstrated expected achievement.   The personality and capacity of the chief of rehabilitation unit is key factor to successful project, with less budget and assistance from related agencies.
4. Instructional approaches conducive to inclusion involve community-based and home-based rehabilitation, functional approach, individualized approach, teamwork, collaboration and counseling.

The model focused on project initiation for rehabilitation of disable children in the community and by the community, and the foundation for children with disabilities. Subsequently, researchers have applied research and development through participatory action research that involves community in school inclusive management.

Model 3: APACP Model

Supaporn Chinchai had studied a model development for inclusive management for children with special needs: a case study of inclusive schools in Chiangmai province, using participatory action research among personnel in inclusive schools and in communities. Participants include school leaders, staffs, normal children, special children, families, and related GOs' personnel.   Each of these is

involved in development procedures: 1) Identifying problems and need about school inclusive management; 2) Defining ways and plan for solution; 3) Implementing the plan with formative evaluation and consistent adjustment; 4) Sharing the outcome of either positive or negative brought about by project implementation. Participatory problem solving utilizes the technique called Future Search Conferences: F.S.C. by which participants analyzed together the idea of each of them to develop or to solve problems, leading to actual practice. They consider the past problems, examine the real situation of problems at present, suggest ideas for resolution or development in the future, find practical conclusion, and in the end plan for actual practice, and a summary document is prepared for each activity. This F.S.C. technique entails collaboration among all sectors. Activities were run in a cyclical manner. It brings about projects from collective ideas that would affect improved inclusion and success.

Model 4: Inclusion on need and suitability

Padung Arayavinyu et al. conducted a research and development of prototype inclusive school for the ordinary and special children, and it was found to well serve this inclusive purpose. The researcher suggested that the research result be applied for managing inclusion in schools under the Ministry of Education and other ministries in their management of basic education. It is also recommended that relevant ministries define common regulations for effective implementation by offering services corresponding to particular impairment of students and readiness of each school. Children are classified in any one of the following 3 types of services.

- Full Inclusion No more than 1 child with less learning disability is accommodated to learn with normal children in each regular classroom.
- Partial Inclusion Children with special need are scheduled to learn in academic assisting classroom so called Pull-Out Program only for Thai and mathematics subjects. They learn other subjects in regular classroom with normal children.
- Full Inclusion is aided by so called Teachers Assistant Program with teacher assistants to help children with significant disabilities.

Application of this inclusive model to suit particular condition and context of each school would be beneficial. The model was used in model inclusive schools for further expansion of inclusion. Professor Dr. Padung Arayavinyu is a Thai specialist with high expertise in special education and well recognized in academic community. This model can be used to substitute the SEAT Framework inclusive model developed by Benja Choltanont for mainstreaming setting widely used and accepted.

Model 5: Multilevel Inclusive Education

This model was developed by Kingphet Songserm in her study to develop multilevel inclusive education for children with special needs in small primary schools where personnel, educational instrument, and budget support are very limited. The model includes concept, purpose, content, educational activities, material and learning resource, measurement and evaluation method. Multilevel inclusive education is co-learning in regular classes of students with different classes, ages, and abilities, to serve the diverse characteristics of students. This will broaden their learning range, development stage, aptitude, interest, personality, and experience. Hence, the classroom is not of a single type serving any particular characteristic of students. Multilevel inclusive classroom follows these management guides.

1. Schools play role in enhancing students' self learning capacity.
2. Each student takes consistent and progressive step with which the delayed learning and the effective student are without any pressure.
3. Curriculum and instructional adjustment are made flexible by which students can learn from situations.
4. Setting the learning plan responsive to individual differences.
5. Using instructional approach suitable for each student's learning nature.
6. Students can learn together. Suitable instructional approaches involve peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and group projects.
7. Students are to be assessed on their potential not grade since their achievement relies on effort and perseverance.
8. Curriculum planning, evaluation, and teaching record are undertaken on the real situation.
9. Parents, students, and teachers share responsibilities in the teaching and learning.

Summary review of relevant literature on inclusive education in Thailand suggested that management of education for children with special needs is necessary at all levels. Major focus is model and instructional development. The model demonstrated high to very high level of effectiveness. It was found that previous mainstreaming was faced with various problems in terms of personnel, children classification and tools, measurement and evaluation, including supervision and monitoring, all of which obstructive to learning and teaching management. These have to be improved especially for children with special need to obtain quality education and are able to develop their full potential.

In comparison with inclusive education literature in overseas, the models are in some ways similar and different from those in Thailand. These include class instructional adjustment, development of teaching and learning activities to include, for example, learning activity based on multiple intelligence theory, research on instructional approach for students of different classes uses co-teaching, multiple instructional approaches, and peers tutoring approach. Research results reflected that development of inclusive model yields positive effect on teaching and learning management under inclusive philosophy, that is, the teaching is more individualized to meet the need of each child. Teachers believe that ordinary students and students with special needs are either classroom members to be equally educated. Multilevel inclusive classrooms widen the scope of disable children's better learning and development alongside their peers. Wood, Stuart and Tontaleya explored students' perspective and attitude and found that those with special need held positive attitude toward impairments, and they preferred the classroom and assistance received from school staffs. In addition, they interacted positively with their classmates. However, inclusive management is still problem and challenging issues of success. A number of studies suggested education management problems raised from teachers. Lyndsay R. Clark [15] and Beth Ann Smith [7] noted that teachers are not ready to teach children with special need in inclusive classroom and these children were not successful in regular classroom taught by co-teachers. Major problems with teachers are that they failed to plan and need to learn new teaching methods, and pose disciplines more on normal than disable children. It is thus apparent that the problems or challenges of inclusive management are rooted from teachers' experience and history, and each type of children's disabilities had make it more complicated to manage education differently [5], [16].

4. Conclusion

Despite the global awareness of managing inclusive education and that every county respects the need to provide education to every child without discrimination but regard the diverse characteristics of children particularly their right and equity on the notion of education for all ranging from the western to the eastern worlds, inclusion is still subtle and complicate to truly reach its inclusive philosophy. In particular, the development of inclusive model for Thailand is in need of better understanding and considerable time. So far however, consistent efforts have been put to develop inclusive models. Advanced research process and statistics are employed to seek potential solutions and create new body of knowledge in this field of inclusive education. More studies have been carried out to develop suitable model and conceptualizing systematically to define inclusion more clearly, and to obtain the model suitable to different contexts, as well as to explain phenomena, leading to new findings and knowledge. My worldview through this lens shows my concrete standpoint as the one concerned in this special education boundary, coupled with this article reflecting my intention that education management for both the special and normal children should be universal, and at least to guide the management of inclusive education. This is to open our heart to accept individuals regarded burden and incapable by the society so they have a place in this society, and that the society appreciates and recognizes their identity and offer them with the right, value, and equal education.

To conclude, inclusive education in school setting is thought of as a crucial step of education management in this new millennium where, based on the human rights, every single child can learn together. Management of education for children with special needs builds on the notion that every one of them is capable to learn and develop if offered with suitable learning opportunities. One important means of managing inclusive education for this group is to locate them in regular schools to learn with their normal peers so they live their social life in happiness.

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