

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**THE PILOT IMPLEMENTATION OF
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA:
A REVIEW**

A Thesis Presented in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

at

Massey University

Winnie Bosi

2004

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education was introduced into the Malaysian school system as a pilot scheme in 1994, involving a small number of elementary schools throughout the country. This study examines teachers' and principals' conceptions of inclusive education, their understanding of the Inclusive Education Policy and their attitudes towards the pilot implementation of inclusive education. Using individual interviews and surveys, the researcher explored the views of regular and special education teachers from pilot and non-pilot elementary schools. A total of 36 special and regular classroom teachers and six principals from six geographically representative pilot schools and 18 traditional classroom teachers from six matching non-pilot schools participated in this study.

Data examination showed that differences existed in the teachers' conceptions of inclusive education. Seven hierarchically ordered conceptions of inclusive education were identified. They ranged from the provision of educational opportunities in the traditional classroom for all students regardless of disability to the provision of enrichment for students with special abilities.

Teachers were found to have limited understanding of the educational policies related to inclusive education. Many principals and teachers, nevertheless, favoured inclusive education but the teachers were concerned about an increase in workload as a result of the inclusion of children with special needs in their classes. Class size was also seen as a barrier to implementing inclusive education.

It was concluded that principals and teachers were concerned about the inadequate professional preparation of teachers for inclusive education and the difficulties of coping with children with special needs when placed in the traditional classroom settings. These findings have serious educational implications and support the need for comprehensive inservice training programmes that are designed to meet the needs of teachers during pre-service programmes and in in-service training. The researcher also gave some attention to the process of change as it occurred during the pilot

implementation of inclusive education while her discussion of theoretical issues, related to the implementation, led to the development of an explanatory model to assist understanding of an approach to the further implementation of inclusive education in Malaysia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the following persons who have made the writing possible:

To Professor Wayne Edwards, my chief supervisor of my thesis, for the valuable suggestions and constructive criticism he has contributed to this study and to Professor Ian Evans for his willingness to be involved.

To Dr. Janet Burns, Dr. Roy Shuker and Dr. Yong Fung Lan, for their advice and suggestions which made my writing easier, especially in the earlier stages of the work.

To Ms Tracey Beattie-Pinfold for her great help with the final presentation of the thesis.

To the Malaysian Government and the people of Malaysia, who awarded me the scholarship, making it possible for me to complete my Ph.D studies.

To the Directors of Education of Sabah, Sarawak, Penang, Kelantan, Malacca and Federal Territory, for their support during the course of my data collection.

To the six principals and 54 teachers from the pilot and non-pilot schools of the six states for their contribution, cooperation and support during the interviews.

To Datuk Musa Aman, the Director of Sabah Foundation, Massey University Research Fund and the Department of Social Studies and Community Support for funding my trip to Seattle USA which made it possible for me to present my project paper in the 1998 TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps).

To Ron Thomas for his editorial comments, Angeline for her help in the computer, Ashmir for his encouragement, Roseanna Bourke and family for making my stay in New Zealand a memorable one, and to the 'Dinner Club' friends- Babar, Harumi, Saied, Sylvia and Dr. Wendy - for making my academic and social life a joy to remember; thank you so much.

To my brothers and sisters, brother and sisters-in-law for their love, support, encouragement and prayers.

.Finally, to my children Allen Pop-pop, Norbert Neo, and Juliet Andak for their patience and understanding during the course of my studies.

MINOR EMENDATIONS TO THE THESIS

. The Literature Review as the Study's Basis. This review provided a foundation for the study and was important in determining the aims for the study that also contributes to the wider available literature.

. Selection of Principals. One pilot school and its principal were selected from each of the six states shown in Table 3.2. Each non-pilot school and its principal was a neighbour of the pilot school.

. Review of Transcripts. Transcripts were not returned to principals due to the constraints of time while the transcriptions produced no answers that lacked clarity.

. A Comment on Sampling in the Study. Six schools from Malaysia's distinctly different regions were selected for the study in order to provide a national flavour to the study. Of course, further studies might well include larger numbers of schools and principals.

. Selected Quotes Presented in Two Languages. The quotes are presented in the Malay language as this was the original form of data collection. The quotes are presented in English which is the medium of this thesis. However, Malay readers will be able to read the quotes in their original form.

. A Note on Triangulation in the Study. This was largely confined to seeking the differing perceptions of participants towards the pilot implementation of inclusive education and, as ideas were generated during data analysis, to remain faithful to the data; hence, the grounding "in the data" as ideas were developed. The collection of data from principals and teachers, in both pilot and non-pilot schools, provided the differing perceptions that provided their possibly differing perceptions on similar questions.

. Terminology. The writer recognises that the use of raw numbers or %ages, when reporting the data in places (instead of, eg, "some" or "many") would strengthen the presentation.

. Addition to Bibliography.

Balshaw, M and H Lucas (2000) "Understanding the Development of Inclusive Schools in Harrow" Paper presented at the ISEC Conference, Manchester July
http://www.eenet.org.uk/theory_practice/development_harrow.shtml

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	v
Appendices	xiii
List of Tables	xiv
Map of Malaysia	xvi

Chapter One INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Inclusive Education.....	2
1.3 Introduction of the Present Research	3
1.4 Purpose and Aims of the Study.....	4
1.5 Research design: In Brief	5
1.6 Limitations of the Study	5
1.7 A Possible Contribution.....	7
1.8 Structure of the Study	7

Chapter Two REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction.....	9
2.1 Inclusive Education: An Introduction	9
2.2 Special Education: Its Nature and the Move Towards Inclusion	10
2.3 Development of Inclusive Education	15
2.4 Implementation of Inclusive Education	17
2.5 Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education	19
2.5.1 Community attitudes	20
2.5.2 Attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education	21

2.5.3	Influence of the type and severity of disabilities upon teachers' attitudes	23
2.5.4	Influence of class size and placement upon teachers' attitudes	24
2.6	Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Education	25
2.6.1	Pre-service training	26
2.6.2	In-service teacher training.....	28
2.7	Conditions for the Success of Inclusive Education.....	32
2.8	A Note on the Emergence of Inclusive Education in Malaysia	34
2.9	Consistency in the Use of Certain Terms.....	34
2.10	Conclusion	35

Chapter Three METHODOLOGY

3.0	Introduction.....	37
3.1	Reasons for Choosing a Case Study	37
3.2	Definitions and Approaches of a Case Study.....	38
3.3	Reliability of the Study	40
3.4	Validity of the Study	41
3.5	Population and Sampling	42
3.5.1	A brief introduction to the Malaysian school system and the place of inclusive education.....	42
3.5.2	How the schools were selected	43
3.5.3	Why the schools were selected	43
3.5.4	Sampling plan	44
3.5.5	Selection of schools and teachers	45
3.5.6	Reasons for selecting the states.....	47
3.6	Instruction ^{ment} Construction.....	47
3.7	Research Methods	48
3.7.1	Phenomenography of teachers' conceptions of inclusive education....	48
3.7.2	Use of interviews to obtain information	49
3.7.3	The conducting of the participant interviews.....	50

3.7.4	Elite interviews with principals	51
3.7.5	Administration of principal interviews	51
3.7.6	Informant interviews with classroom teachers.....	52
3.7.7	Principal interview schedules	52
3.7.8	How the sets of interview questions were developed	53
3.7.9	Examples of principal interview questions	53
3.7.10	Why some questions in the principals' interviews were not included in the results chapter	54
3.7.11	Why some questions in the teachers' interviews were not included in the results chapter	55
3.7.12	Teacher interview schedule.....	55
3.7.13	Examples of teacher interview questions.....	56
3.8	Using a Questionnaire: Advantages and Disadvantages.....	57
3.9	Administration of the Data Collection.....	59
3.9.1	Access to the research sites	59
3.9.2	Summary: Administration of interviews and questionnaire	60
3.9.3	Summary: Data collection.....	61
3.9.4	A note on the role of the researcher	61
3.10	Ethical Principals in the Research Context.....	62
3.11	Difficulties of Using Two Different Languages in Data Collection	63
3.12	Advantages of Using Two Different Languages in Data Collection	64
3.13	A Note on the Researcher's Language Background	65
3.14	Data Analysis	65
3.14.1	Grounded theory	65
3.14.2	Examples of codes that the writer had developed.....	66
3.14.3	Three processes used for data analysis.....	67
3.14.4	Transcription and analysis of data	67
3.14.5	Content analysis of government documents and seminar report	69
3.14.6	Triangulation of data.....	70
3.15	A Further Note on Limitations of the Study	71
3.16	Conclusion	72

Chapter Four FINDINGS: DOCUMENTS

4.0	Introduction	73
4.1	Education in Malaysia	73
4.1.1	Education structure and the school system in Malaysia: A short introduction.....	73
4.2	The National Education Policy.....	74
4.3	National Education Philosophy	75
4.4	Special Education Philosophy	76
4.5	Inclusive Education Policy	78
4.6	Status of the Implementation of Inclusive Education.....	78
4.7	The Development of Thinking which Underpinned the Implementation in Malaysia.....	79
4.8	The First National Seminar on Inclusive Education at Langkawi (1994): The Writer's Presentation	82
4.9	Details of the First National Seminar on Inclusive Education at Langkawi (1994).....	83
4.10	The Writer's Role Following the First Seminar on Inclusive Education	88
4.11	Idea for Developing or Piloting Inclusive Education in Malaysia.....	89
4.12	Conclusion.....	90

Chapter Five FINDINGS: PRINCIPALS' INTERVIEWS

5.0	Introduction	91
5.1	Purpose of the Principals' Interviews.....	91
5.2	A Brief Description of Each School Selected for the Study.....	92
5.2.1	SK Bahang Penampang	92
5.2.2	SK Bukit Padang Kota Kinabalu	93
5.2.3	SK Tanah Liat Bukit Matajam Penang.....	93
5.2.4	SK Bukit Minyak, Penang	94
5.2.5	SRK Hishammudin, Jalan Sultan Salahuddin, Wilayah Persekutuan KL	

.....	94
5.2.6 SR Pengkalan Cepa Kelantan	94
5.2.7 SK Taman Maluri Jalan Wirawati 6, Kuala Lumpur	94
5.2.8 SRK Lanang Melaka	95
5.2.9 SRK Datuk Hashim (1) Kota Bharu Kelantan	95
5.2.10 SRK Air Baruk Melaka.....	95
5.2.11 ARK Astana Kuching Sarawak.....	95
5.2.12 SRK Buyung Sarawak	96
5.3 Analysis of Principals' Interviews	96
5.4 The Seven Main Topics of the Principal Interviews.....	98
5.4.1 Topic 1: School aims	99
5.4.2 Topic 2: Students with special needs in the school.....	99
5.4.3 Topic 3: How special needs children relate to others	100
5.4.4 Topic 4: Implementation of inclusive education.....	101
5.4.5 Topic 5: How principals felt about inclusive education	104
5.4.6 Topic 6: The success of the inclusive education programme	106
5.4.7 Topic 7: Parents' attitude towards inclusive education	108
5.5 Summary.....	108

Chapter Six FINDINGS: TEACHERS' INTERVIEWS

6.0 Introduction.....	111
6.1 Teachers' Conceptions of Inclusive Education.....	111
6.1.1 Range of conceptions: Lower to higher ends.....	112
6.1.2 Conception A: Achievement of academic excellence.....	114
6.1.3 Conception B: Computer-enhanced learning.....	116
6.1.4 Conception C: Catching up for slow learners	117
6.1.5 Conception D: Independent learning for students with basic skills...119	
6.1.6 Conception E: Intellectual rights of academically screened students who are physically challenged.....	120
6.1.7 Conception F: Socialisation for students with special needs	122

Chapter Seven **DISCUSSION**

7.0	Introduction.....	166
7.1	Principals' Data: An Introduction	166
7.2	Teachers' Conceptions of Inclusive Education.....	166
7.3	Principals' and Teachers' Views of Inclusive Education	169
7.4	Cultural and Religious Beliefs.....	171
7.5	Teachers' Experiences in the Implementation of Inclusive Education	172
7.6	Theories, Assumptions and Principles of Inclusive Education.....	176
	7.6.1 Problems related to inclusive education	176
7.7	Impact of the Policy Environment on Inclusive Education.....	178
7.8	Vagueness of Principles	178
7.9	Theories of Change	178
7.10	The Process of Change in the Malaysian Pilot Implementation of Inclusive Education.....	179
7.11	Advice on the Process of Change in Implementing Future Inclusive Education	185
7.12	Theorising about Inclusive Education.....	188
	7.12.1 The theoretical work of Clark et al (1999).....	188
7.13	The Dilemmatic Perspective.....	190
	7.13.1 A recent application of the work of Clark et al (1999)	192
	7.13.2 Towards a theory of effective inclusive education	194
7.14	Summary	198

Chapter Eight **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

8.0	Introduction.....	199
8.1	The Six Aims of this Study: A Summary	199
8.2	Implications of the Findings of the Study.....	201
8.3	Recommendations.....	202
8.4	The Place of the Study in Relation to the Literature.....	204

8.5	The Methodology of the Study Reconsidered.....	205
8.6	Implications for Further Research.....	206
8.7	The Concept of Inclusive Education Revisited.....	207
8.8	What Should Happen in the Future to Make Better Inclusive Education in Malaysia.....	208
8.9	Conclusion	209
REFERENCES		210

APPENDICES

Appendix A:	Structure of the Education System in Malaysia	224
Appendix B:	Schools Involved in the Research Study	225
Appendix C:	Teacher Interview Schedule	226
Appendix D:	Principal Interview Schedule	230
Appendix E:	Teacher Background Information	233
Appendix F:	Research Application to Ministry of Education Malaysia	236
Appendix G:	Research Application (Primary Schools): Ministry of Education Malaysia	239
Appendix H:	Research Application Reply: Ministry of Education Malaysia ...	241
Appendix I:	Interview Consent Request	243
Appendix J:	Permission to Conduct Research in Federal Territory	244
Appendix K:	Permission to Conduct Research in Sarawak	245
Appendix L:	Permission to Conduct Research in Malacca	247
Appendix M:	Permission to Conduct Research in Penang	249
Appendix N:	Teacher Information Sheet	251
Appendix O:	Principal Information Sheet	253
Appendix P:	Teacher Consent Form	254
Appendix Q:	Principal Consent Form	255
Appendix R:	Interview Consent Request	256
Appendix S(i):	Sample: Teacher Interview Transcription (Pilot School)	258
Appendix S(ii):	Sample: Teacher Interview Transcription (Non-Pilot School) ...	263
Appendix S(iii):	Sample: Teacher Interview Transcription (Pilot School Special Education Teacher)	269
Appendix T:	Sample: Principal Interview Transcription	276

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1	
Sample Population of Inclusive Schools in Pilot Inclusive Education Programme, Malaysia.....	43
Table 3.2	
Sample of Schools and Teachers	46
Table 3.3	
Reasons for the Selection of the Identified States	47
Table 4.1	
Document Analysis: Summary	80
Table 4.2	
The First National Seminar on Inclusive Education: In Summary	86
Table 4.3	
The First National Seminar on Inclusive Education: Strengths and Weaknesses	89
Table 5.1	
Summary of Principal Interviews	97
Table 6.1	
Teachers' Conceptions of Inclusive Education	112
Table 6.2	
Number of Teachers in Different Category of Descriptions.....	128
Table 6.3	
Teachers' Understanding of the Inclusive Education Policy.....	129
Table 6.4	
Teachers' General Attitudes Towards the Introduction of Inclusive Education	132
Table 6.5	
Teachers' Attitudes about Children with Special Needs in the Traditional Classroom	138
Table 6.6	
Teacher Education and Training.....	159

Table 6.7

Numbers of Teachers who had Received Training of Inclusive Education160

Table 7.1

Observations on Neville's (1992) Features of Effective Change183

Table 7.2

Towards a Theoretical Understanding of an Approach to the Further Implementation of
Inclusive Education in Malaysia.....195

MAP OF MALAYSIA

