Parents' Attitudes to Inclusive Education: A Study Conducted in Early Years Settings in Inclusive Mainstream Schools in Bangkok, Thailand

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the under researched area of parents' attitudes towards inclusion in inclusive mainstream early years settings in Thailand. The sample consisted of 71 parents: those with typically developing children (TDC) (50 parents) and children with special educational needs (SEN) (21 parents), residing in Bangkok, Thailand. Data was collected through the use of a mixed methods approach. The results of this study indicate that overall parental attitudes toward inclusion are positive. Parents of TDC identified social development of their children as the key benefit of inclusion but seemed to be concerned about the need for teacher training. Parents of children with SEN identified social acceptance and improved academic skills as advantages of inclusion for their children. Their concerns also focused on mainstream teachers having appropriate training to successfully integrate students with disabilities, and the deployment of special education staff in the regular classroom.

Keywords – inclusive education, parent attitudes, early years, Thailand, special educational needs, disability, mixed methods research

Introduction

The World Conference on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) (a global movement committed to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults) was held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, and the endorsement of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) recognized the inevitability of providing education for all children in 1994. Since then many countries have aspired to implement inclusive schooling (Leyser & Kirk, 2004) and brought about reforms to enable inclusive education. Inclusive education may be seen as the practice of educating children with SEN in the regular classrooms along with offering them the required services and support (Rafferty *et al.*, 2001). This form of education seems to have achieved prominence in more western (i.e. non-Asian) countries as compared to Asian countries, where well-developed policies prohibit discrimination in education and support implementation of Education for All (UNESCO, 1990). With a focus on Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO (2009) states that the "gap between the idea of inclusive education and the current provision for children with disabilities in most countries of the region is still too great, even in countries like Thailand, where policy and legislation mandate the right to education for every child with a disability" (p.144). In Southeast Asian countries like Hong Kong and Singapore where inclusive education is still developing, children with severe disabilities attend separate special schools whereas children with mild disabilities are included within the mainstream schools (Yeo et al., 2014).

A National Education Act was introduced in Thailand in 1999 (later revised in 2002) which had as key elements the provision of free education for 12 years and education for all (Fry & Bi, 2013). Furthermore, the Act mandated that every school should provide opportunities for children with disabilities to be included (Fulk et al., 2002). In 2004, the Ministry of Education of Thailand took the required steps to support the movement towards inclusion recognizing the need for all children to have an educational setting that helps to create and develop friendships, respect and understanding both in the classroom and society at large (Bevan-Brown et al., 2014). To enable this, it was mandatory to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each student with additional needs and for teachers to differentiate curriculum, instruction and evaluation to meet diverse needs of all students (Bevan-Brown et al., 2014). Subsequently in 2008, Thailand ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2019).

Vibulpatanavong (2017, p. 68) reports that the "number of students with disabilities in regular schools in Thailand had increased significantly from approximately 60,000 in 2012 to approximately 25,000 in 2015." Yet such progress in the inclusive movement in Thailand could be affected by inadequate funding and limited or insufficient resources to implement inclusion effectively (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). An additional influence is thought to be the understanding of the Buddhist mind-set of the people of Thailand which considers good and bad fortune in a current life as being based upon merit achieved in a previous life (Carter, 2006). Whilst some Chinese-Thai families are reported as believing that having a child with Down Syndrome can bring good luck, some families may believe they are being punished for wrongdoings in a previous life (Fulk et al.,2002). As a result, some families may feel a sense of shame about having a child with disabilities (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). This may result in parents being in denial regarding the differently abled condition of their child.

Parents can have a key role in the demanding and dynamic process of inclusion that begins with their decision to place their child in a mainstream setting (Dimitrios et al., 2008). Parents are now believed to be "integral partners in developing a more inclusive system", wherein they share the responsibility of decision-making and its consequences (Swart et al., 2004, p.81). Since parents promote significant changes in early childhood education (Tafa & Manolitsis, 2003) and affect both the process of transformation and standards of practice, it is essential to determine the perceptions of parents towards inclusion and what governs them. Parental support is perceived to be critical in ensuring that children with disabilities not only participate in educational experiences but also benefit from them (Shah & Priestley, 2010; Timmons & Walsh, 2010).

Literature suggests that parents, with their positive attitudes (Miller & Phillips, 1992), and advocacy towards inclusion (Soodak, 2004), have been the stimulus behind the developments to include children with disabilities in mainstream education (de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2010; Palmer et al., 2001). Furthermore, children's attitudes and behaviour may be influenced by those of their parents and carried on later in life, thus implying that parents who are not in favour of inclusive education might unfavourably impact the formation of their child's attitudes (de Boer et al., 2010).

Parents of children with Special Education Needs (SEN) may determine whether their children study in a regular mainstream school or a special school (Engelbrecht et al., 2005). Additionally, since parents possess unique knowledge about their child's abilities and needs, they can facilitate a more effective delivery of education and support by collaborating with school staff and professionals (Green et al., 2007). Parents may also believe that inclusion promotes socialization of their children with their non-disabled peers (Scheepstra, Nakken, & Pijl, 1999). Several studies suggest that parents are supportive of inclusive practices (Leyser & Kirk, 2004; Seery et al., 2000) and highlight their opinion that their children will benefit from mainstream education with positive social and academic outcomes (Downing & Peckham-Harding, 2007).

It has been noted that while some parents are positive towards inclusive practices, others have reservations regarding the same. Bullying, victimization, social isolation and rejection are some of the key concerns in mainstream classes of parents for their children with SEN (Kasari et al., 1999; Leyser & Kirk, 2004). Parents of children with SEN are also concerned about the willingness and capability of mainstream schools to educate and cope with the needs of their child (Wong et al., 2015). Parents not favouring inclusive classrooms argue that regular education settings cannot accommodate their child and that the teachers could be burdened with inclusion of students with disabilities in their classes (Green & Shinn, 1994; Kavale & Mostert, 2004). These parents are primarily concerned with the class size and teaching capabilities of the teachers to meet the demands of a diverse range of students. Parents also tend to have their doubts about the kind of training and experience that teachers have handling children with disabilities, and the schools lacking the resources and provision to educate their children properly (Grove & Fisher, 1999). They have often expressed their interactions with school staff as being frustrating and non-supportive (Staples & Diliberto, 2010).

Generally, the attitude of parents of children without SEN towards inclusion of children is found to be positive (Purdue, 2006; Stoiber et al., 1998). Peck et al. (2004) states that parents of TDC prefer an inclusive setting as they observed a growth in personal development and improved self-worth in their child by helping others. Parents of TDC have also reported that exposure to diversity in inclusive education helps their young ones demonstrate more open-mindedness and

acceptance towards individual differences (Rafferty et al., 2001; Rafferty & Griffin, 2005; Ruijs & Peetsma, 2009). Additionally, most parents of children without disabilities may also believe that the availability of increased teaching resources within the inclusive classroom can benefit their children academically (Peck et al., 2004; Tichenor et al., 2000). It has been shown that with sufficient support and resources, typically developing students can achieve better academic results in an inclusive class as compared to non-inclusive classroom settings (Demeris et al., 2007; Rouse & Florian, 2006).

Nevertheless, Palmer et al. (2001) report that parents are concerned that the severity of the disabilities of children with SEN can preclude benefits of inclusion, and that the children with SEN are behaviourally disruptive and can hurt others. Parents may also be anxious about their child developing inappropriate behaviour in an inclusive setting (Rafferty et al., 2001). Studies have also revealed that parents of students without SEN are apprehensive that students with SEN monopolize teachers' time and attention (Kalambouka et al., 2005). Teachers are inclined to spend more time on students who have behavioural problems or those who work at a slower pace (Shipley, 1995), thereby resulting in the lowering of the general academic standards of education (Huber et al., 2001). Good students may also be at a risk of getting bored owing to the slow-paced teaching atmosphere in the classroom and they may be disappointed on discovering that other students, despite studying less, secure same or even better grades (Shipley, 1995).

Over two decades ago Buysse and Bailey (1993) advocated inclusion during the preschool years as they believed that (a) young children have maximum probability of accepting their peers with SEN as they do not form stereotypes about individuals; (b) the early interaction between young children who have disabilities with their typically developing peers increases the possibility of acceptance of people with disabilities in the future; and (c) the integration of children with SEN in mainstream classrooms promotes the conviction among parents and professionals that inclusive environment provides a foundation for the child to successfully function in a typical environment. Inclusion in the early-years settings has been recognised as the best practice in education where young children with SEN learn together with their typically developing peers (Wolbery & Wilbers, 1994, as cited in Brown et al., 1996, p. 364).

Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes of parents of TDC towards inclusive education in Early Years Settings of inclusive mainstream schools in Bangkok?
2. What are the attitudes of parents of children with SEN towards inclusive education in Early Years settings in inclusive mainstream schools in Bangkok?

The mixed methods approach of quantitative and qualitative analysis is not only compatible but also complimentary (Sale et al., 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). It involves collecting, analyzing and interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or a series of studies targeted to investigate the same underlying phenomenon (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Surveys allow for flexibility including a variety of mixed questions to gather data and provide standardized information (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, despite being a tool typically used for gathering quantitative data, a survey was used in this study to elicit the attitudes of the parents. Furthermore, the survey allowed the respondent to remain anonymous and this benefitted some

Thai parents, in particular, who may feel embarrassed in admitting that they have a child with SEN (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014).

The research used a purposive sampling approach which ensured that the participants were included because they possessed the characteristics required for the study (Cohen et al, 2011). A purposive sample of six schools which had both typically developing children and children with SEN attend were approached, of which two schools agreed to participate in the survey. Additionally, network groups of parents who were acquaintances of the first author were approached and asked to distribute the survey to the target population. This sampling approach which started as purposive, transformed into "snowball" sampling (Cohen et al., 2007; Visser et al., 2000), a method wherein a small number of individuals having the characteristics required for the survey were identified, and each person was requested to suggest other members of the subpopulation for the first author to contact.

The final web based questionnaire was a mix of closed and open-ended questions. The highly structured closed-ended questions encouraged a higher rate of response and facilitated comparisons to be made across groups in the sample (Oppenheim, 1992). They also facilitated quicker analyses than qualitative data (Bailey,1994). Open-ended questions, on the other hand, were particularly appropriate for investigating this study's complex issues, to which simple answers could not be provided in the exploratory questionnaire (Bailey, 1994). Subsequently, a process of thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data whereby relationships between different parts of the data and similarities and differences where elicited and explored (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

Ethics

Ethical guidelines for educational research issued in 2011, by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) were implemented in this study. In any research, it is paramount to address confidentiality (Cohen et al., 2000; Robinson & Lai, 2006) and to inform the participants of their rights (Cohen et al., 2000; Winter, 1996). Particularly in a web-based research, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality are fundamental ethical considerations as online survey requests are identified as more intrusive (Cho & LaRose,1999). The purpose of the research was fully explained to the intended participants at the start and they were made aware of the fact that participation in the survey was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any given time. An information sheet along with the consent form that explained the purpose and the benefits of the research while guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents was included and distributed with the survey.

Results

Most of the questions that asked the parents to express their attitudes towards inclusion were in 5-point Likert scale format. There were three sets of questions in the survey:

1. Questions meant to assess attitudes towards inclusion that would apply to both group of parents – parents of TDC and parents of children with SEN.
2. Questions presented only to the parents of TDC because these covered potential benefits and concerns applicable for parents of TDC
3. Questions presented only to the parents of children with SEN because these covered potential benefits and concerns applicable for parents of children with SEN.

The responses to the 5-point Likert scale questions were assigned values 1 through 5, with 5 representing the response of "Strongly Agree" and 1 representing "Strongly Disagree" response. The responses to the open-ended questions – participants' understanding of inclusion, their statements about two advantages, and two disadvantages of inclusion -- were also reviewed in context of the three research questions.

Findings from parents of typically developing children

The biggest benefit of inclusion agreed upon by 80 percent of parents was that it would help their children to be more sensitive towards others' needs and individual differences. The other benefit to which 50 percent of the parents agreed was that an inclusive environment had helped their children become more helpful and supportive of other children with special needs. 90 percent of the parents agreed that inclusion was socially advantageous for children *with* disabilities.

Parents expressed similar benefits in their written statements for the open-ended question about listing two key advantages of inclusion. Most of them expressed that inclusion provides the environment for their child to understand individual differences. Typical statements included: *"My child has learnt to understand that some children learn at a different level and might require more help - not that they are different from others"; "My child will learn that each person has his/her own unique behavior".*

Compassion and kindness towards others was the other key benefit of inclusion pointed out by the parents, as indicated in the following written statements: *"My child has learnt to be compassionate towards SEN and developed an understanding of certain behaviours and has learnt to exercise patience when interacting with a SEN child."; "They realise how to be sensitive, understanding and accept the difference even in their future making a world a better place for all special need people"*

Ninety percent of the parents expressed the need for the mainstream teachers to have specialized training in order for an inclusive program to be successful. Thirty three percent of the respondents indicated that they felt it was difficult to maintain discipline in an inclusive classroom. A similar percentage of the parents expressed the concern that their child may be frightened by the strange behaviour of children with special needs. In terms of how they felt about the academic environment in an inclusive setting, 33% of the respondents expressed the concern that children with SEN could monopolize teacher's time at the expense of their child's learning.

In response to the open-ended question of identifying two key disadvantages of inclusion, the majority of them identified that children with SEN will or can prove to be a distraction, slowing down the pace of teaching and learning in the classroom. Some of the written statements highlighting this concern were: *"Disruption to the class and that my child's objectives are not met"*; *"Having (child/children with) SEN in a classroom can disturb the other children and affect their concentration".*

The parents of TDC were positive about inclusion, in spite of their share of concerns. 60 percent of the parents agreed that benefits of the inclusion outweigh its disadvantages, while 70 percent of the parents agreed students with SEN have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing children, with the same percentage agreeing that they would re-enroll their

child in an inclusive school. Thematic analysis of the qualitative responses to the open-ended questions suggests that parents identify social development of their children as the key benefit of inclusion.

Attitudes Parents of Children with SEN

Thirty percent of the parents (n=21) who completed the survey had children with special needs, ranging from mild to severe disabilities.

Parents were extremely supportive of inclusive education settings and unanimously agreed (i.e. 100% of the responses were either "Strongly Agree" or "Agree") on the following 3 benefits of inclusion:

1. Inclusion is socially advantageous for their children
2. Inclusion helps prepare their children for the real world
3. Inclusion helps their children develop self-help skills

Furthermore, the majority of the parents (90%) agreed that their children will develop increased self-esteem in an inclusive setting and that they will have good role models to follow in an inclusive classroom. 70% of the parents agreed that their child would develop academic skills more rapidly in an inclusive setting and that their children have the right to be educated in the same classroom as TDC.

Parents responded with similar benefits when asked to state two key advantages of inclusion. Social acceptance and improved academic skills were the two advantages identified by majority of the parents, as indicated in the following written statements: *"My child is accepted socially for who he is, this will impact on his happiness and comfort at school and his ability to learn"; "She will relate with her age mates (academically and socially) and make friends".*

Parents of children with SEN also had their share of concerns and needs too. There was an overwhelming agreement between the parents (more than 90%), that mainstream teachers need to be trained in order to successfully integrate students with disabilities. 75% of the parents expressed the need for a special education teacher to be present in the regular classroom to help assist their child to learn. Thirty three percent of the parents expressed the concern that their child may not receive an appropriate implementation of an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) while 20% of the parents expressed social exclusion as a concern.

Analysis of the responses to the open-ended question asking the parents to express disadvantages of inclusion revealed some additional insights. Social exclusion emerged as one of the key disadvantages of inclusion, as suggested in the following written statements: *"Other children being young may not accept the child and make the child feel excluded"*; *"Unless well managed some kids can be subject to bullying".*Two other significant concerns emerged in the analysis of the written statements – difficulty of the children with SEN to keep up with the learning pace, "*My child may not be able to handle the fast-paced academics due to his limitations and learning difficulties*", and the likelihood of them getting labelled, "*My child would be labelled stupid and slow by others*".

In summary, quantitative analysis of the closed-ended questions showed that 75% of parents of children with SEN agreed that the benefits of inclusion outweighed its disadvantages with 95%

agreeing that they would re-enroll their child in an inclusive classroom. Qualitative analysis of the responses to open-ended questions indicated that parents are convinced that inclusion will be beneficial to their children, both, academically and socially, so long as the teachers were adequately trained to develop IEPs and manage the classrooms effectively to prevent their children from getting socially excluded and labelled.

Discussion

Inclusion is perceived to be a desired education practice by parents (Guralnick, 1994; Hilbert, 2014; Leyser & Kirk, 2004; Palmer et al., 2001; Peck et al., 2004). Studies suggest that parents of TDC favour inclusion (Jung, 2007; ElZein, 2009; Bradshaw et al., 2004). This finding was also confirmed in this study. The parents were in agreement to enroll their children in inclusive classrooms, further affirming their support for inclusion and consistent with other studies (Bradshaw et al., 2004; ElZein, 2009; Gallagher et al., 2000; Guralnick, 1994; Hilbert, 2014; Leyser & Kirk, 2004; Palmer et al., 2001; Peck et al., 2004; Rafferty & Griffin, 2005; Salend, 2008).

The key benefit pointed out by the parents was that inclusion allowed their child to be more understanding and compassionate of children with special needs, respecting their individual differences leading to greater acceptance which aligns with findings from other studies (Gallagher et al., 2000; Miller & Phillips, 1992). Research supports that genuine inclusive education permits children to build and foster friendships that they may not encounter otherwise (Finke, McNaughton, & Drager, 2009; Green & Stoneman, 1989; Peck et al.,1992).

While the parents agreed that children with special needs have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing children, they were concerned that their children may be frightened by the strange behaviour of the children with SEN. Rafferty and Griffin (2005) also reported that parents felt that their child would be frightened by behaviours of children with disabilities. Parents also expressed that being present in the same classroom as children with disabilities would expose their children to the risk of injury. Elkins et al. (2003) found similar concerns for parents who felt that peers would be impaired by the presence of a student with special needs in a general classroom. Research conducted by Palmer et al. (2001) also indicates that in inclusive settings many children can be behaviourally disruptive and could hurt others.

Children tend to emulate behaviour of peers. This survey confirmed that parents were also apprehensive of their children picking up undesirable behaviours from other children. Similar observations have been observed by Rafferty et al. (2001) and Reichart et al. (1989) who found that parents were anxious about their child developing inappropriate behaviour in an inclusive setting.

Parents identified the need for the mainstream teachers to have specialized training in order to effectively integrate students with disabilities, as the most important criteria for inclusion to be successful. Multiple studies have revealed the same concern about adequacy of teacher qualification (Green & Stoneman, 1989; Reichart et al., 1989; Seery et al., 2000; Turnbull & Winton, 1983) and preparation of staff (Peck et al., 1989, as cited in Rafferty et al., 2001, p. 280; Turnbull et al., 1983). Teaching staff are crucial when considering development of inclusive education practices (Ainscow, 1994; UNESCO, 2005). It is essential for all teachers to have the abilities and self-confidence to help children with SEN achieve their aptitude (DfES and QCA, 2004).

Parents were concerned that children with special needs would slow down the academic pace and monopolize teachers' time. Several studies have confirmed similar concerns (Huber et al., 2001; Kalambouka et al., 2005). A reduction in individual time with the classroom teacher was one of the main apprehension discovered in a study conducted by Peck et al. (2004). They assessed concerns of parents of TDC and found that the parents had two major concerns – a) the teachers concentrated more on the children with disabilities compared to those without disabilities and, b) children with disabilities caused behavioural disruptions. This study also affirmed that 33% of the parents shared a similar concern of difficulty in maintaining discipline in inclusive settings.

Sometimes an additional adult may be present in the classroom to support the children with SEN and this role in Thailand is often termed 'shadow teacher'. Manansala and Dizon (2008) suggest there are five strands to this role, namely: curriculum planning, direct teaching, behavior management, social skills management and team working. The parental observations identify the need for the teachers to be professionally trained in managing and supervising inclusive classrooms. Potentially therefore having shadow teachers for children with special needs in the classroom may serve in some way to address this concern (Balachandran, 2014). Both, the Bullock Report (D.E.S., 1975) and the Warnock Report (D.E.S., 1978) recommend more in-class support for children with special needs. Teachers should address such concerns in the parent-teacher meetings as there is evidence that greater partnerships between teachers and parents is essential in alleviating the concerns of parents for a successful inclusive education system (Salend, 2008).

Parents of children with SEN were positive about the impact of inclusion on their child's social emotional growth. This observation resonated with findings from other existing studies. Nakken and Pijl (2002) found that integration of children with SEN in regular classrooms led to a positive effect on their social development and that inclusive settings inspired higher levels of interaction than isolated settings (Anita et al., 2011; Baker-Ericzén et al., 2009; Odom et al., 2011; Theodorou & Nind, 2010). Studies by Blacher and Turnbull (1982), Guralnick (1994), and Turnbull and Winton (1983) concluded that inclusion provides greater preparation of the children with disabilities for the real world.

Parents of children with SEN further highlighted that inclusion provided for an environment wherein their children had good role models to follow. Results of the study by Downing and Peckham-Harding (2007) support this observation in which parents of children with disabilities advocated the need of students with moderate to severe disabilities to have mainstream students as role models for cultivating desirable social and academic behaviours. Bennet et al. (1997), and Guralnick (1994) reaffirmed that inclusive settings provided the opportunities for modelling age appropriate skills.

Parents highlighted some concerns about having their child with special needs in an inclusive classroom with other children. Parents of children with SEN in this study feared that in an inclusive setting, their children would get labelled and could be socially excluded. Studies have also indicated that assigning a label can result in social disadvantage and exclusion from the mainstream society (Sutcliffe & Simons, 1993; Gillman et al., 2000). While labels can offer people a social identity and a sense of belonging to a group, it may also lead to harassment, bullying and low self-esteem *(*Dimitrova-Radojicic & Chichevska-Jovanova, 2014).

Children with additional needs who are included in mainstream schools are offered opportunities

to be involved at higher academic levels and achieve success, that may not be possible otherwise (Finke et al., 2009). Parents in this study were also in strong agreement (with more than 90% agreeing) that children have better learning outcomes in an inclusive setting. Studies suggest that this could be due to the fact that children become more motivated to succeed when they are placed in regular classrooms where the focus on academic achievement is more (Cole et al., 2004; Myklebust, 2007). However, parents identified two key concerns which must be addressed in order for inclusion to be more academically conducive as compared to special schools.

Parents of children with SEN expressed that mainstream teachers need better training to ensure smooth implementation of inclusive practices. Seventy five percent of parents were of the opinion that a special education teacher or a shadow teacher should be present in the classroom. The majority of the parents were convinced that proper inclusion can only be realized when teachers have the expertise and the experience in effectively dealing with the needs of children with disabilities (Buysse et al., 1999; Crane-Mitchell & Hedge, 2007). Successful implementation of IEPs was the other key concern identified by the parents in this study. IEPs are inherently a collaborative effort, where teachers and parents need to work together to determine the educational goals of children with SEN (Eccleston, 2010; Reio & Forines, 2011).

Conclusion

Thailand supports policies and legislation that command the right to education for every child with a disability in the country but gaps continue to exist between the current provision and the ideal for inclusive education. Assessment of parents' attitudes toward inclusion is vital in order to have an effective inclusion program (Salend, 2008; Lewis et al., 1994). The results of this study indicated that the parents of both TDC and children with SEN, were supportive of inclusion and its implementation in the early-years settings in Thailand. Similar rates of agreement were found between the parents of TDC and parents of children with SEN that inclusion was socially advantageous for their children. However, inclusion is at a relatively nascent stage in Thailand, as compared to Western nations, and again a similar percentage of agreement was found for parents of TDC and parents of children with SEN that mainstream teachers needed to have specialised training to effectively manage inclusive classroom settings. It may therefore be seen as important to provide training to equip teachers with effective inclusion practices (Rafferty, 2002, as cited in Rafferty & Griffin, 2005, p. 190) in order to support children with different needs in inclusive settings. Thus, focussed strategies need to be developed by schools in Thailand to warrant that the education systems are well equipped to meet the individual needs of a diverse population of students, treating them equally.

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