

# **Effect of Knowledge, Readiness and Teaching Technique in Inclusive Practices Among Mainstream Teachers in Malaysia**

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## *Abstract*

*This study examines the knowledge, readiness and teaching techniques in Inclusion Program among mainstream teachers who teach special education students. The aspects of knowledge, readiness and teaching techniques are measured based on the teacher's experience and it was given a good effects to inclusion practices in Malaysia. This quantitative study was conducted on 276 samples. A set of questionnaires was used as the instrument in this study. The results of the analysis showed a greater acceptance in descriptive and differential variance in which null hypotheses formulated were accepted with  $p\text{-value} > \alpha$  value of 0.05. Therefore, there are no differences between knowledge, readiness and teaching techniques among mainstream teachers based on their experience. The result of this study can provide input to mainstream teachers, besides giving equal opportunities to special education students.*

*Keywords: : Inclusive, knowledge, readiness, teaching technique*

## **Introduction**

The education system in Malaysia is rapidly growing. This situation can benefit every category of students, including special education students. This paper discusses the

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involvement of special education students in mainstream classes with their teachers in the inclusion program. Inclusion means that several special education students with minimum academic achievement are placed in mainstream classes. This program is supported by the Education Act 1996 and the Education (Special Education) Act 2013 which state the requirement of equality education to all students. This is further supported by The World's Declaration on Education for All (1990) and The United Nations' Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Person with Disabilities (1993).

According to Allan (2008), Bauer et al. (1999) and Dragoo (2011), inclusive education gives students a challenge for their skills and learning purpose, in addition to the support and assistance needed by students to succeed. Inclusive program provides a platform where every student is accepted and supported by their friends and the school community (Stainback & Stainback, 1990).

The aim of this research includes the determination of knowledge, readiness and teaching techniques used by mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms. It provides information on how mainstream teachers have been exposed to the regulations, education acts, world acknowledgement and regulation in their practice of inclusion. In this study, several null hypotheses were proven, which include the significance of differences between teachers' knowledge, readiness and choice of teaching techniques in spite of their teaching experience of inclusive students in the mainstream classes.

Several studies have been conducted on inclusive education. It has shown positive improvement throughout its implementation. According to Singal (2006), Ballard (1995) and Clough et al. (2000), the understanding of the inclusive concept lead to the formulation other terms which later formed the concept of inclusion, integration and mainstreaming. Even though in many studies in western countries, it is shown a good mainstream teacher's knowledge among mainstream teachers about the implementation of inclusive compare to Malaysia studies made by Ali, et al. (2006) mentioned many of mainstream teachers are not well informed about inclusive implementation. It is also mention by Jelas (2010), there several studies was run and significantly found to Ali et al (2006) finding. Another study by Jelas (2012) many mainstream teachers are confused about the placement of disabled student the concept of mainstreaming is interpreted as an effort to put special education students with a moderate level of disability in mainstream classes and they teach just the same as mainstream students.

In this study we try to get more information about the knowledge of inclusive. The condition was that special education students need to be given some adjustment in advanced. After the implementation of mainstreaming, the public was introduced to another concept now known as integration. Anuar & Rahim (2014) said the concept understood by mainstream and special education teacher is also different. They said in many interviews, finding there are lack of knowledge about inclusion even though teacher with more experience involved in the inclusive classroom. In this study we try to prove the knowledge different via experience, in part of quantitative studies.

The term inclusive emerged in the early 1990s. According to Loreman et al. (2010), Ainscow (1989), Bayat (2012) and Kirk et al. (2012), academicians agreed that inclusive setting gives more academic and social learning opportunities for special education students. But it is proven in study, whereas teachers' readiness is one of the main factors. Both parts of teacher should be more alert about the special need of the students in the classroom. Teachers should be well known about the time management, subject of learning, content of the co-curriculum and many more (Friend (2008)). Few studies by Murawski (2008) shows there are lack of teacher readiness in implementation of inclusion and it is supported by Ali et al. (2006) they reported many teachers are giving full trustiness to mainstream teacher to manage the inclusive student. Anuar & Rahim (2012) also said teacher with less knowledge about the concepts of inclusion are also less in readiness of managing their students' requirement in inclusive classrooms.

Implementation of inclusion is, required special teaching technique. According to Friend & Cook (2010) inclusion are significantly to co-teaching. In their research they found students with special need are more comfortable when their special education teacher be involved in the classroom. This is proven in Murawski (2008) mentioned, the performance of special education student are better when they receive appropriate teaching style rather traditional classroom method. Ali et al. (2006) found the lack of teaching technique in an inclusion setting need more special training on pedagogy. Hence, this study is trying to prove the assumption related to the teaching technique are significantly affecting the student performance by a teacher's experience. As mentioned by Friend (2008) co-teaching is the major treatment in inclusive classrooms. This study aims is to know about factors of knowledge, readiness and teaching techniques affected to the practice of inclusion in Malaysia.

### Methodology

This study quantitative study was conducted using a questionnaire with 5 levels Likert scale. This method was successful in obtaining information on the factors that affect the implementation of inclusive in three areas; knowledge, readiness and teaching techniques. There are 276 respondents are involved in this study whereas they are mainstream teachers who teach special education students. The three main aspects to be addressed by the researchers are the current knowledge, readiness and teaching techniques in mainstream classes. The experience of the teacher is also an important indicator about their level of expertise, apart from their academic performance. In this study teachers experienced was divided into four stages accordingly to '*Malaysian Time-Based Scale*'. The study also introduced and tested three hypotheses that have been made with respect to the degree of readiness, level of knowledge and teaching techniques involved in implementing inclusive program. To review this intention, the researcher used quantitative method which has questions about general information of respondents. The questions were divided into two parts. For this study there are two phases in data analysis. The first part is about demography information and the second part is the list of questionnaire. In the first phase, descriptive analysis is used to obtain

data and processed in the form of percentage and mean. In the second phase, data are processed using statistical differential by One Way ANOVA to determine the significant value that will be used to test the three hypotheses. The instrument was undergoing validity and reliability procedure which test, retest and pilot test. With the used of IBM SPSS 21.0 all items of every construct has achieve alpha Cronbach 0.857.

### Findings

Table 1 shows a descriptive analysis of the first objective.

**Table 1.**

*Response on Teachers Knowledge*

No	Statement	SNA	NA	N	A	SA	Mean
1	Teachers are requires training to teach inclusive students	5 (1.8%)	8 (2.9%)	24 (8.7%)	143 (51.8%)	96 (34.8%)	4.15
2	Should provide opportunities for students to be included in mainstream classes	4 (1.4%)	8 (2.9%)	31 (11.2%)	156 (56.5%)	77 (27.9%)	4.07
3	A better approach to carry out the teaching.	-	9 (3.3%)	31 (11.2%)	172 (62.3%)	64 (23.2%)	4.05
4	To meet students' needs and produce more meaningful learning.	-	10 (3.6%)	20 (7.2%)	159 (57.6%)	87 (31.5%)	4.17
5	Understanding of inclusive student placement.	-	8 (2.9%)	52 (18.8%)	169 (61.2%)	47 (17.0%)	3.92
6	Common inclusive teaching students	19 (6.9%)	61 (22.1%)	93 (33.7%)	79 (28.6%)	24 (8.7%)	3.10
7	Understand and respect the good impact of the implementation of inclusive.	2 (0.7%)	4 (1.4%)	75 (27.2%)	150 (54.3%)	45 (16.3%)	3.84
8	Know the strengths and weaknesses of inclusive students.	1 (0.4%)	12 (4.3%)	64 (23.2%)	157 (56.9%)	42 (15.2%)	3.82
9	Administrators need to understand the training needs of teachers who teach in the inclusive program.	1 (0.4%)	7 (2.5%)	13 (4.7%)	146 (52.9%)	109 (39.5%)	4.29
10	Believe that inclusive will provide more opportunities for students to progress.	1 (0.4%)	5 (1.8%)	28 (10.1%)	155 (56.2%)	87 (31.5%)	4.17
Total Mean							3.95

n=276

Analysis show total of 143 or 51.8% respondents agreed on the importance of an inclusive knowledge, and expressed their need for training in order to improve their knowledge on inclusive practices. About 62 percent respondents stated that inclusion is a good approach to improve education and provide an opportunity to special education students. As many as 169 or 61.2% respondents understood the importance given to the placement of special education students. Almost 57 percent respondents said they knew the weaknesses and strengths of inclusive special education students. As much as 146 or 52.9% respondents thought that administrators need to understand the training needs of teachers in an inclusion program. More than 56 percent respondents said they believed that the implementation of inclusive program would provide an opportunity for special education students to progress and improve their academic performance. In conclusion, the overall results show that all items have a high level score, from 3.10 to 4.29 mean value.

Table 2. shows a descriptive analysis of the second objective.

**Table 2.**

*Response on Teachers' Readiness*

No	Statement	SNA	NA	N	A	SA	Mean
1	Confident with the ability to teach inclusive students.	12 (4.3%)	27 (9.8%)	100 (36.1%)	121 (43.8%)	16 (5.8%)	3.37
2	Ready to run additional teaching	10 (3.6%)	18 (6.5%)	73 (26.4%)	148 (53.6%)	27 (9.8%)	3.59
3	Motivation not easily deterred	4 (1.4%)	7 (2.5%)	39 (14.1%)	182 (65.9%)	44 (15.9%)	3.92
4	Excited by the presence of an inclusive student	4 (1.4%)	7 (2.5%)	60 (21.7%)	161 (58.3%)	44 (15.9%)	3.85
5	The principle is not to distinguish between students.	4 (1.4%)	7 (2.5%)	38 (13.8%)	158 (57.2%)	69 (25.0%)	4.02
6	Teach using class resources.	21 (7.6%)	39 (14.1%)	98 (35.5%)	94 (34.1%)	24 (8.7%)	3.22
7	Need help from special education teacher	5 (1.8%)	12 (4.3%)	48 (17.4%)	129 (46.7%)	82 (29.7%)	3.98
8	Teach weak students individually.	2 (0.7%)	15 (5.4%)	48 (17.4%)	166 (60.1%)	45 (16.3%)	3.86
9	Carry extra coaching classes.	5 (1.8%)	12 (4.3%)	70 (25.4%)	157 (56.9%)	32 (11.6%)	3.72
10	Ensure socialization occurs.	2 (0.7%)	4 (1.4%)	36 (13.0%)	184 (66.7%)	50 (18.1%)	4.00
Total mean							3.75

n=276

Table 2 shows that there were 121 or 43.8% respondents who are confident with their ability to teach inclusive special education students, and 148 or 53.6% respondents expressed their willingness to undertake additional teaching if needed by the students. About 66 percent respondents confirmed that their motivation would not be easily deterred by the presence of special education students because they believe in their ability to assist these students even though the students came from different backgrounds, level of disability and level of ability to receive instructions. Another 161 or 58.3% respondents said they were excited about the persistence of special education students to compete with mainstream students regardless of their disability.

From the aspect of principle, about 158 or 57.2% of respondents said they could not agree with the suggestion to make no distinction between special education students and mainstream students while 69 or 25.0% of them think they should. There were 21 or 7.6% respondents that strongly disagree with the suggestion that their special education students performed in the resource class and while 24 or 8.7% indicated otherwise. Another 129 or 46.7% respondents said they need the help of special education teachers to facilitate their teaching in the classroom. About 60 percent respondents said they are willing to carry out individual instructions for groups of special education students who are weak. Approximately 57 percent respondents gave the opinion that additional guidance classes should be given to the students to ensure students have a better understanding about any other subject. A large percentage of respondents (66.7%) indicated that the teachers need to emphasize the process of socialization among mainstream students and special education students. The conclusion of the group stage of the overall findings shows data at high levels for all items that is from 3.22 to 4.02 mean value.

Table 3 shows a descriptive analysis of the third objective.

**Table 3.**

*Response of Teaching Technique of Inclusive Teaching among Mainstream Teachers*

No	Statement	SNA	NA	N	A	SA	Mean
1	Inclusive facilitate the achievement of the best students.	5 (1.8%)	3 (1.1%)	58 (21.0%)	169 (61.2%)	41 (14.9%)	3.86
2	Help from the resource teacher in the classroom.	5 (1.8%)	9 (3.3%)	59 (21.4%)	178 (64.5%)	25 (9.1%)	3.76
3	Provision of special timetable	3 (1.1%)	12 (4.3%)	65 (23.6%)	173 (62.7%)	23 (8.3%)	3.73
4	Collaboration of expertise	2 (0.7%)	7 (2.5%)	46 (16.7%)	205 (74.3%)	16 (5.8%)	3.82
5	Co-teacher necessary for subjects less expertise.	2 (0.7%)	21 (7.6%)	121 (43.8%)	114 (41.3%)	18 (6.5%)	3.45
6	There was discussion among teachers of mainstream and special education.	8 (2.9%)	11 (4.0%)	69 (25.0%)	170 (61.6%)	18 (6.5%)	3.65
7	Ready to substitute teachers.	6 (2.2%)	16 (5.8%)	119 (43.1%)	119 (43.1%)	16 (5.8%)	3.45

8	Teaching in groups is required.	5 (1.8%)	9 (3.3%)	52 (18.8%)	189 (68.5%)	21 (7.6%)	3.77
9	Can guide new teachers and collaborate.	4 (1.4%)	24 (8.7%)	114 (41.3%)	122 (44.2%)	12 (4.3%)	3.41
10	Teaching groups should follow the requirements.	5 (1.8%)	1 (0.4%)	74 (26.8%)	183 (66.3%)	13 (4.7%)	3.72
11	Understand the needs of collaboration and group teaching.	2 (0.7%)	8 (2.9%)	49 (17.8%)	200 (72.5%)	17 (6.2%)	3.80
12	Has extensive experience in conducting group teaching and collaboration.	15 (5.4%)	43 (15.6%)	135 (48.9%)	75 (27.2%)	8 (2.9%)	3.07
13	Specific skills and are willing to teach certain subjects only.	10 (3.6%)	19 (6.9%)	99 (35.9%)	123 (44.6%)	25 (9.1%)	3.49
14	Collaboration and teaching aids to facilitate an understanding of teaching techniques	5 (1.8%)	17 (6.2%)	49 (17.8%)	181 (65.6%)	24 (8.7%)	3.73
15	Lesson plans developed through discussion.	4 (1.4%)	16 (5.8%)	44 (15.9%)	192 (69.6%)	20 (7.2%)	3.75
16	Interest in teaching individuals than others.	6 (2.2%)	24 (8.7%)	114 (41.3%)	110 (39.9%)	20 (0.7%)	3.43
17	Collaboration and group teaching cause interference.	5 (1.8%)	20 (7.2%)	127 (46.5%)	100 (36.2%)	24 (8.7%)	3.43
18	The presentation of teacher collaboration and teaching aids will cause stress teaching.	6 (2.2%)	28 (10.1%)	140 (50.7%)	85 (30.8%)	17 (6.2%)	3.29
19	Collaboration and group teaching needs through discussions and conformity title.	4 (1.4%)	2 (0.7%)	48 (17.4%)	200 (72.5%)	22 (8.0%)	3.85
20	Always need the resource teacher in the classroom.	11 (4.0%)	19 (6.9%)	128 (46.4%)	98 (35.5%)	20 (7.2%)	3.35
<b>Total Mean</b>							3.56

n=276

The use of inclusive teaching techniques as shown in the above table shows that 169 or 61.2% respondents believed that the implementation of inclusive program would help improve student's achievement to the highest degree. This will be possible if teaching is supported by a special education teacher or by using teacher resources as agreed by about 65% respondents. As many as 173 respondents strongly agree that a provision of special time schedule will help them become more effective. More than 74 percent respondents said that collaboration needs to happen and it should be based on the skills and expertise of the teacher. They should be assisted with technical teaching aids and 114 or 41.3% respondents strongly agreed with the suggestion.

Discussions between mainstream teachers and special education teachers need to be carried out as strongly agreed by 170 or 61.6% respondents. As many as 189 or 68.5% respondents said that teaching groups are needed to avoid other complicated issues while 200 or 72.5% respondents said they need to better understand the need for collaboration and teaching group exercise. Up to 44.6% respondents have only specific skills and are only willing to teach subjects in the same field of expertise. The effective teaching plan

should be implemented through discussions and 192 or 69.6% respondents strongly agreed that mainstream teachers could provide opportunities for special education students studying in the same class.

However, 100 or 36.2% respondents said that collaboration and teaching aids might cause disruption to the instructional session. On the other hand, 200 or 72.5% of them stated that they need to discuss the suitability of a title with the content before starting their teaching. A very small number of respondents, (4.0%) indicated that they require the presence of special education teachers to be in the class during lessons. There are data that showed 15 or 5.4% respondents who strongly disagree with the suggestion that a long teaching experience can create an impression that someone who is more experienced should be elected to lead an institution. The overall conclusion gathered from data obtained from the 20 questions show high levels for all items, with mean scores from 3.07 to 3.86.

#### *Mean Difference of Teacher's Experience on knowledge, Readiness and Teaching Technique*

There are three hypotheses to be tested in order to determine the knowledge, readiness and inclusive teaching techniques in this study. Here are the results of the data analysis:

#### *The null hypothesis 1: Level of Teacher' Knowledge*

Null hypothesis: There is no significant mean difference of knowledge of mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms based on teaching experience.

**Table 4.**

#### *Level of Teachers' Knowledge*

Source	SS	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig. (p)
Between Group	0.013	2	0.006	0.028	0.972
Within Group	62.360	273	0.228		
Total	62.372	275			

$\alpha$ : 0.05

The results in Table 4 shows the  $F = 0.028$  and  $p = 0.972$  greater than  $\alpha 0.05$  ( $p = 0.972 > 0.05$ ). Therefore the results of the analysis of variance failed to reject the null hypothesis. In conclusion, there was no mean difference in the knowledge of mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms by teaching experience.

#### *The null hypothesis 2: Teachers Readiness*

Null hypothesis 2: There is no significant mean difference on readiness of mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms based on teaching experience.



**Table 5.**  
*Readiness of Teachers*

Source	SS	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig. (p)
<b>Between Group</b>	0.301	2	0.151	0.619	0.539
<b>Within Group</b>	66.465	273	0.243		
<b>Total</b>	66.766	275			

$\alpha$ : 0.05

The results in Table 5 shows the  $F = 0.619$  and  $p = 0.539$  greater than  $\alpha 0.05$  ( $p = 0.539 > 0.05$ ). Therefore the results of the analysis of this variant accept the null hypothesis. In conclusion, there was no difference in the level of preparedness of mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms by teaching experience.

*The null hypothesis 3: Teaching Technique of Inclusive*

Null hypothesis 3: There is no significant mean difference of teaching techniques mainstream teachers in inclusive classes based on teaching experience.

**Table 6.**  
*Teaching Technique of Inclusive*

Source	SS	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig. (p)
<b>Between Group</b>	0.293	2	0.146	0.978	0.378
<b>Within Group</b>	40.867	273	0.150		
<b>Total</b>	41.160	275			

$\alpha$ : 0.05

The results in Table 6 shows the  $F = 0.978$  and  $p = 0.378$  greater than  $\alpha 0.05$  ( $p = 0.378 > 0.05$ ). Therefore the results of the analysis of this variant accept the null hypothesis. In conclusion, there was no difference in the teaching techniques of mainstream teachers in inclusive classrooms by teaching experience.

## Discussion

Data obtained from the questionnaires show that the majority of teachers responded that they desperately need training regarding how to teach special education students in inclusive program. The level of knowledge should be increased to obtain the maximum awareness of inclusion. This is significant because several different approaches need to be practiced in inclusive classroom (Murawski, 2010; Musil, 2011; Schmidt et al. 1998). According to Holdsworth (2005), McLesley et al. (2011), and Obiakor et al. (2010), teachers who taught students in an inclusive classroom should knowledgeable to inclusion idea even though they are senior or past training teacher. Experience is related to service, but not to the knowledge level, so teacher who involves in inclusion must

have an opportunity to gather more knowledge on how inclusion should be implemented.

Data also showed that teachers would strive to understand the special needs of students in an inclusive setting. They also understood that by placing special education students in mainstream classes, then there would be no student placement error issues. According to this study, it is proven, teacher with years of experience are not significantly receiving enough information about inclusive implementation. They need to now more required information so then they could perform better as shown in this study.

In this study readiness is one of the factors in line with teachers' knowledge and it is proven not significantly to experience. Study by Conderman et al. (2012), and Isherwood et al. (2008) are reflected in the finding. Meaning teacher without proper knowledge are lack of readiness. Meaning they are suggested to have well trained coursed before accepting such responsibility to make them sensitive to the needs of special education students. In considering the strengths and weaknesses of students, most respondents understood that the situation is temporary and more than half of the respondents do not rely on students' weaknesses as a sign of a lack of interest in learning.

The finding of this study shows, special attention should be given on teaching technique. This is because the number of successful inclusive students is increasing year by years. This is a good achievement and related to how teachers been taking responsibility to improve their teaching techniques. This finding is supported by Abbott (2006), Gilles (2007) and Leicester (2008) who stressed that the academic achievements of students in an inclusive institution, is part of a learning and teaching process. According to Friend & Cook (2010), teacher should implement co-teaching to help the student in the classroom. In this study it is proven that co-teaching is on the selected item. Teachers are tending to choose another teaching techniques rather than traditional classroom practiced.

### Conclusion

Inclusive program is an approach in the teaching and learning of special education students that should be undertaken. Level of knowledge, readiness and teaching techniques should be emphasized in the implementation of this inclusive program. This can be carried out systematically in order to achieve a high level of acceptance from mainstream teachers responsible for making sure inclusive is practical. This approach will provide many benefits to students and public members. The society needs to be more sensitive towards people with disabilities because they also have a place in this society. Opportunity should be given directly to them to guarantee we meet the needs of these students. A successful implementation of inclusive schools and execution of the responsibilities of relevant parties, can reduce the dependence of special education students on their teachers and friends. This study was limited information only on three based areas. According to this finding hopefully there are more research will be conducted to cover more significant issues especially in the practice of inclusion.

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