



<b>Title</b>	<b>An investigation into the performance of students with special education needs (SEN) and teachers' inclusive practices in mainstream schools</b>
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**An investigation into the performance of students with  
special education needs (SEN) and teachers' inclusive practices  
in mainstream schools**

**by**

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**Dissertation presented in part fulfillment of the requirements of  
the degree of Bachelor of Language Education (Primary English)**

**The University of Hong Kong**

**May 2013**

## DECLARATION

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I hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has not been previously submitted to this University or any other institution in application for admission to a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

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Leung Wai Shan, Elyse

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14<sup>th</sup> May, 2013

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I would like to express my gratitude to all the teachers who had participated in this research. It was very nice of them to spare the time to conduct an hour long interview with me, despite their heavy workload and busy schedule. This research, with no doubt, would have been impossible without their generosity to share their experience and thoughts with me.

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The influence of this study is unknown, nonetheless, I was inspired by the earnest of all the interviewed teachers and their comments had given me new insights to the integrated education in Hong Kong while doing it. To the benefits of the students with SEN, the burdened teachers, the prospective teachers, the parents, the schools and the society as a whole, I dedicate this dissertation.

## ABSTRACT

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This small scale research investigated the performance of students with SEN from teachers' perspectives and teachers' inclusive practices in the mainstream schools in Hong Kong. Interviews were conducted with five language teachers from two primary schools which participate in the integrated education programme proposed by the Education Bureau, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Results showed that the academic performance of students with SEN was not improved and their learning motivation was further deteriorated in the inclusive settings. The improvement of their social relationship and classroom behavior was not promising either. Such findings revealed that schools had failed to cater for students with SEN under integrated education. Discussion on the factors leading such situation and improvement to be made to the programme are discussed.

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## CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

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### **Background to the Study**

The Education Bureau (EDB) has been promoting the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education in Hong Kong since 1997 with the aims “to develop the potentials of every student, to promote mutual respect of individual differences among teachers and students and to cultivate an inclusive school culture” (EDB, 2010, p.iv). The idea of integrating students with SEN in mainstream schools is believed to be beneficial to the academic and social development of students with SEN with the assertion that the involvement and inclusion in a considerate and caring community of learners with different abilities can help students with SEN overcome the risk for failure and that the presence of collaborative commitment and effort in ensuring each student’s success can lead to effective learning (Falvey & Givner, 2005). However, the benefits of integrated education that brought to students with SEN may not be as that great while in practices. There is disparity between concepts and context. As mentioned by Warnock, Norwich & Terzi (2010), “the concept of inclusion springs from hearts in the right place. Its meaning, however, is far from clear, and in practice it often means that children are physically included but emotionally excluded” (p.32). Lam & Yeung (2005) also questioned if the integrated education in Hong Kong is a social inclusion or exclusion of students with SEN since that they could not fit into the socially diverse environment in mainstream schools.

### **Significance and Objectives of the Study**

Most of the research done in Hong Kong on integrated education put focus on measuring teachers’ efficacy or on investigating teachers’ attitudes towards and understanding on it. Limited research was done on investigating the performance of students with SEN in the integrated settings. In addition to the scenarios mentioned in previous part,



this study is to be conducted to cast a light on what is happening in the integrated classrooms by interviewing in-service teachers who have experiences in teaching students with SEN in mainstream schools with integrated education. In-depth interviews would be done. Teachers would be asked to describe the academic performance, social relationships and level of disruptive behaviors of students with SEN and think of factors that contributes to the described performance. They would also be asked to describe their inclusive<sup>1</sup> practices and mention any difficulties or challenges encountered when trying to improve the performance of students with SEN. In-service teachers are chosen to be the participants as they are “are in a unique position to observe students on a daily basis, and thus provide an important viewpoint” (Waldron, McLeskey & Pacchiano, 1999) to the performance of students with SEN. They are also the knowledgeable front-line practitioners who have a clear concept on the implementation of integrated education. The findings of the research can possibly acknowledge the pre-service and in-service teachers with the situations in the integrated classrooms and help them to anticipate the challenges to be encountered when teaching in such settings. The findings can also provide teachers with new insights into the inclusive strategies or practices to be used. Furthermore, this research might convey ideas of improving the integrated education programme in Hong Kong.

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<sup>1</sup> Since that the terms “inclusion” and “inclusive” are used in many of the government documents when discussing issues related to integrated education (e.g. EDB, 2010; EDB, 2012), the terms “inclusive” and “integrated” might be used interchangeably in this paper.

## CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

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### **An Overview of Integrated Education in Hong Kong**

The concept of integrated education was initiated by the British government during the 1970s but the progress of its development was slow until 1997. In September 1997, the Hong Kong Government promoted the whole school approach to integrated education by launching a two-year pilot project on integration education. The integrated education project was then officially implemented from 1999 onwards and carried on up to now, since that the Government was determined to have integrated education in Hong Kong (Hui & Dowson, 2003). According to the guideline prepared by the EDB (EDB, 2010), there are eight types of learners with SEN who can study in the mainstream schools, namely specific learning disabilities, intellectual disability, autism, attention deficit and hyperactive disorder, visceral disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment and speech impairment. Under the whole school approach to integrated education, a school should harmonize its policies, culture and practices so as to build up an inclusive environment in school.

A three-tier support model is proposed by the EDB to show the degree of support that should be given to students with transient or mild learning difficulties, students with persistent learning difficulties and students with severe learning difficulties. To tie in with this model, funding has been offered by the Government to schools which participate in the integration project. In 2003, the funding exercise was further regulated and the New Funding Mode plan was introduced. Schools which participate in the project “were granted subsidies according to the number of students with SEN in each school and the severity of the problem of individual students” (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2013, p.5). The allocation of the subsidy is decided by the school itself to maintain the flexibility but is to be reported to EDB for it to evaluate and monitor the development of integrated education in each school. As suggested by the EDB, the subsidy can be used to support students with SEN and to develop

an inclusive environment by employing additional teaching staff and teaching assistants, purchasing additional teaching resources and aids, providing teacher training to enhance teachers' understanding of integrated education, and organizing programme to promote inclusive culture and peer acceptance (EDB, 2012).

### **Purposes of Integrated Education and Inclusive Education**

The underlying concept of inclusive education is that all people should have the access to education regardless of their social class, learning ability and physical ability. It is a philosophy of education that promotes social justice, democracy and equality (Cooper & Jacobs, 2011; Nes, 2003) and is “a part of a large world-wide human rights movement which calls for the full inclusion of all people with disabilities in all aspects of life” (Florian, 1998, p.13). The Hong Kong government implemented integrated education with the similar reasons. It stated that the aims of integrated education is “to enable every individual to fully develop their academic and non-academic potentials” and “to nurture a more humane community education which minimizes alienation among people and encourages every individual to develop humane inclination” (Education Commission, 1999, p.4-5). It added that integrating children with SEN in mainstream schools and mixing them with ordinary children can get ordinary students to “understand and accept people with different needs in the community”, and help building up a harmonized society (Education Commission, 1999, p.4-5). As stated by the EDB (2010), “the targets and beneficiary of integrated education are not only the students with SEN but all students, all school staff, parents, the school-sponsoring bodies and even the whole society” (p.2). With its statements, it is recognized that the Government is aiming to develop inclusion in Hong Kong though calling it the integrated education.

## **Controversies over Integrated Education**

Integrated education has long been criticized as it “had become too narrowly interpreted as a placement without any regard to the quality of that placement” (Florian, 1998, p.14) and hence, inclusion was introduced to urge for changes to the school system to provide full integration to students with SEN in the existing ordinary school systems (OECD, 1999). The Education Bureau recognized the inadequacy of integrated education in catering the students with SEN, and thus adopted the whole school approach which encourages schools to have curriculum accommodation, differentiated teaching, systematic peer tutoring, cooperative teaching, assistance from external professionals and assessment accommodation. Students are no longer expected to adapt to the school environments, but it becomes the school’s responsibility to adopt different strategies to cater for their SEN. Such approach should be known as a kind of inclusion though there are not many changes to the school’s original culture and environment (Cheung & Hui, 2007). Such change, in principle, should be bringing the integrated education in Hong Kong towards a successful inclusion which, as defined by Au & Leng (2003), “requires a radical reform of the school curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and grouping” and “is about changing schools to become more responsive to the needs of all children, not just those who are labeled as having SEN” (p.55).

However, it was often the case that there is a discrepancy between theory and practice of integration and inclusion. Warnock, Norwich & Terzi (2010) commented that “the concept of inclusion springs from hearts in the right place. Its meaning, however, is far from clear, and in practice it often means that children are physically included but emotionally excluded” (p.32). McLeskey and Waldron (2007) even suggested that it is very likely that inclusion in practice, is just “replicating special education services in the general education classroom” (p.163). Fergusson (1995) also concluded her three-year research in inclusive classrooms by indicating that the participation of students with SEN “often fell short of the kind of social and learning membership that most proponents of inclusion envision” (p.284).

A research conducted in Hong Kong by Lam & Yeung (2005) also revealed that the integrated education was indeed a kind of social exclusion, since students with SEN generally felt like they were rejected in the socially diverse environment. The reasons behind these scenarios, as suggested by Florian, 1998, are the possible barriers in implementing the integration or inclusion policy such as “other competing policies, the struggle over limited resources, and the prescriptive and centralized nature of special education” (p.14). To achieve a real inclusion in education is not easy. That might explain why the EDB has been holding a reserved position in implementing a veritable inclusion programme in Hong Kong, despite the urge of many scholars (e.g. Au & Hui, 2003). However, inclusion is a necessary. There is a need to obtain a full picture of the practical integrated classrooms by looking at the performance of students with SEN as well as the inclusive practices used by teachers, and thus, finding out what improvements are needed to be made to achieve full inclusion.

### **The Role of Teachers in Achieving Integrated Education**

Watson, Hester & Sandler (2003) wrote that, to make sure students with SEN “to receive an appropriate education in inclusive settings, teachers must be prepared to assume new collaborative roles and responsibilities” (p.296), stressing the fact that teachers play an important role in achieving integrated education. Teachers are the front-line practitioners and are needed to be equipped with the competencies in different areas like knowledge of the characteristics of students with SEN, skills to assess students’ strengths and abilities effectively, instruction strategies in the inclusive classrooms and ability to collaborate with teachers, parents and paraprofessionals like teaching assistants (Watson, Hester & Sandler, 2003). Teachers not only have great impact on academic performance of students with SEN, but also their social and emotional engagement (Cooper & Jacobs, 2011). Therefore, it is important to get to know their challenges when attempting to develop an inclusive

environment in mainstream schools and is worth to know their practical inclusive practices. Such knowledge has certain reference value to teachers, schools and education departments.

### **Past Studies in Hong Kong on Integrated Education**

The results of past studies in Hong Kong on integrated education were mostly disappointing. Despite the research done by Lam & Yeung (2005) which discovered a social exclusion of students with SEN in the integrated setting, a study done by Wong (2002) revealed that those students were having unpleasant experiences in mainstream schools as they had problems with their peer relationship and were burdened by the academic requirements. Research on studying teachers' efficacy in providing support to students with SEN also found that many of them had difficulties in or even failed to do so, since they did not make much adaption to their teaching strategies and materials and could not be able to manage the ambivalence and discipline of students with SEN (Wong , Pearson & Lo, 2004; Yuen, Westwood & Wong, 2005). Research are needed to be done to provide a much updated information on the situations and see if there are any improvements made from then on.

## CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

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### Study Design

It is a qualitative research which in-depth, semi-structured, one-on-one and face-to-face interviews were conducted with in-service teachers who are teaching classes with SEN students in mainstream schools in Hong Kong. They were asked to share their observation, experience and thoughts concerning with the performance of students with SEN in the integrated classrooms and to describe their inclusive practices and mention any difficulties or challenges encountered when attempting to improve the performance of students with SEN. The data collected shall able to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the performance of students with SEN (namely the academic performance, social relationships and classroom behaviors) in the ordinary schools?
2. What are the factors contributing to the performance of students with SEN?
3. What are the strategies used by the teachers to improve the performance of students with SEN?
4. What are the difficulties or challenges encountered by the teachers when trying to improve the performance of students with SEN?

Convenience sampling approach was adopted such that all the teachers interviewed in this research were whom the interviewer has easy access to.

### Instrument

Interview was chosen to be the instrument in this research to collect the data as to gather detailed and rich information such that participants would be much willing to provide confidential information in a face-to-face and one-on-one interview than in writing (Best & Kahn, 1993). Face-to-face interviews also allowed the interviewer to clarify questions to prevent the participants from misinterpreting them. All the interviews were semi-structured to

“allow creativity and flexibility to ensure that each participant’s story is fully uncovered” but with an interview protocol to “serves as a guide” (Knox & Burkard, 2009, p.3). All the questions designed for the in-depth interview were open-ended, allowing participants “to define and direct the significance of their responses and to share their individual perception, attitudes and experiences” (Waldron, McLeskey & Pacchiano, 1999, p.144).

## Participants

The participants of the research were in-service teachers who teach in the mainstream schools in Hong Kong which are participating in the integrated education programme funded by the Education Bureau. Five teachers from two different schools were chose to be interviewed by convenience sampling. All of them (namely Teacher A, B, C, D and E) are primary language teachers with teaching experience ranging from 7 years to 20 years and experience in teaching students with SEN ranging from 1 year to 20 years. All teachers were certified in language education. Two of them had taken courses on topic of teaching students with SEN while the other three teachers had never taken any relevant courses. Four teachers are female and one is male. Table 1 contains descriptive information about the interviewed teachers.

Teacher	A	B	C	D	E
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Female	Female
Years of teaching experience	15 years	21 years	7 years	15 years	20 years
Years of experience in teaching students with SEN	15 years	8 years	7 years	1 year	20 years
Taken course(s) about teaching students with SEN	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

*Table 1 - Information about the Interviewed Teachers*



The objective of the research is to cast a light on what is happening in the integrated classrooms and thus, one of the aspects to be investigated is the performance and behavior of students with SEN in the integrated settings. However, the data collected could be less accurate or knowledgeable if students, whose analytic skills could be less sophisticated than adults, are chosen to be the participants in the interview. Parents were also not preferred as they might not fully acknowledge of the performance of their children in the school or have clear concept of integrated education. In view of these, teachers were selected to be the participants in the research as they have on-going observation on the students and strong judgment. They can, as indicated by Gerber & Semmel (1984), provide the strongest empirical data of the performance and behavior of students.

## **Procedures**

Interview guide approach was adopted. An interview protocol (see Appendix B) was designed to outline the framework of the interview in advance, but “the sequence and wordings of questions are decided by the interviewer in the course of the interview” so as to “remain fairly conversational and situational” (Best & Kahn, 1993, p.200). The interview protocol was also given to the participants before the interview to get them prepared for it.

Before doing the interview, an overview of the research purposes was introduced to the participant and confidentiality of the information collected was reassured. Participant was then given a consent form (see Appendix A) to sign on. Demographic information about the participant was also collected before the interview. Face to face interviews were conducted with each teacher at a time at his/her school. The interviews lasted from 30 to 50 minutes and were audio-taped except one which the participants (Teacher C) refused to be verbally recorded and that the interview protocol was used to record responses. Four of the interviews were conducted in Chinese and one was in English.

All the recordings of the interviews were transcribed into English (see Appendix C, D, F & G) and the written interview protocol was transferred into a typed format (see Appendix E). All the interview comments were then reviewed, analyzed and categorized into different themes and sub-themes as classified in the interview protocol<sup>2</sup>.

### **Validity and Reliability of Data**

The content validity of the research is, in certain degree, maintained with the use of the interview protocol to ensure the questions initiated are more or less similar among all the interviews and that the “significant information is elicited” in each interview (Best & Kahn, 1993, p.254). The reliability of the data collected is upheld through the use of audio-tape recorder instead of the memory of the interviewer to record the interview comments (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2003).

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<sup>2</sup> As seen from the transcription, comments on learning performance were marked with “A”, on social relationship were marked with “B” and on classroom behavior were marked with “C”. Descriptions of the performance were marked as “1”, Factors affecting were marked as “2”, Teachers’ inclusive practices were marked as “3” and challenges encountered by teachers were marked as “4”.

## CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS

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This chapter presents the findings of the research which are generalized from the teachers' comments and shall answer the research questions. There will be three sections which talk about the learning performance, social relationship and classroom behavior of students with SEN respectively. In each section, description of each aspect of performance and factors contributing to the performance mentioned will be given. In addition, strategies used by the teachers to improve such performance and difficulties encountered when doing so will be listed.

### Learning Performance

**Description.** The interviewed teachers commented that the academic performance of students with SEN was generally unfavorable and that there were not much improvement found on them as they continued studying at the mainstream schools. The academic performance gap between students with SEN and ordinary students was always present. As described by Teacher B, those students were “always at the bottom” and their performance was “always below the average”.

The learning skills of students with SEN such as note-taking skills, study skills and examination skills were inadequate since that they were weak in comprehending and understanding the ways that others work on. Teacher C gave a metaphor to illustrate the situation. Those students were like the manual transmission cars who “need teachers to step on the clutch every time when transmitting different functions” while ordinary students were like the automatic transmission cars who “could automatically figure what needs to be done”.

With their poor academic performance and wide performance gap between them and ordinary students, the learning attitude and motivation of students with SEN worsen progressively and that adversely affect their learning, forming a vicious cycle. Such

unfavorable learning experiences also had negative effect on the personal development of those students. Teacher A mentioned that some may even get depression as they were always underachieving. Their low motivation affected their learning as it discouraged them from engaging in classroom activities. Teacher E illustrated that “they afraid of answering the questions wrongly and get mocked by their classmates”.

**Factors affecting.** Almost all the interviewed teachers pointed out that the curriculum and assessment system in mainstream schools were not tally with the integrated education and that had bad influence on the learning and motivation of students with SEN. Teachers argued that under the tightly scheduled curriculum, teachers had heavy workload and they found it hard “to give consideration to both students’ achievement in the exam and the needs of students with SEN”, as summarized by Teacher E. The time pressure discouraged them from adopting the student-centered learning approach and chose to have teacher-centered learning in order to catch up with the syllabus. Furthermore, such systems put great pressure and expectation on students in having high achievement and demotivated students with SEN from learning. Teacher A asserted that such system was like “telling and proving them how incapable they are”.

Teachers stated that although they would not explicitly tell their students who are with SEN and they would not make comparison between ordinary students and students with SEN, the practice of the school in segregating students into classes based on their academic performance or putting all students with SEN in one class was inexplicitly telling them they are underachievers. Most of the students with SEN felt like being looked down and, as described by Teacher C, developed “anxiety, extremely low self-esteem and confidence” which all these affected their motivation to learn.

**Teachers’ inclusive practices.** Unfortunately, given the heavy workload and tight schedule, many of the interviewed teachers reported that they failed to adopt teaching approaches that can be beneficial to the learning of students with SEN. Those approaches

included communicative approach which emphasizes interaction between students with SEN and ordinary students; and student-centered approach which stresses the importance of students' participation in lessons. With these constraints, teachers could only have few inclusive practices to improve students' learning performance which could not be said the best but had positive influence on those students. First is to differentiate the teaching and learning materials such that students would be given worksheets that with different difficulty levels and different amounts of homework. Second is to make use of peer support by assigning students with SEN to sit with ordinary students who are helpful and by allowing as much pair and group work in the lessons as possible. They should also be placed at the front row, so it would be easier for teachers to check on their progress in completing tasks during lessons. Third is to maintain a reasonable expectation on students with SEN such that high expectation could lower students' interest in learning and low expectation could make students feel like they are being neglected by the teachers and give up learning. Fourth is to slow down the pace of learning as much as possible since students with SEN may take longer time to understand a concept and to complete a task and same concept is needed to be drilled from time to time.

**Challenges encountered by teachers.** Besides the obstacles brought by the tight curriculum and heavy workload, the main obstacle for teachers to improve the learning performance of students with SEN was the insufficient support from students' family. All interviewed teachers stressed that even though teachers spend all their efforts on catering the education needs of students with SEN, the effect of the efforts spent will not be significant without home training. Unfortunately, it was often the case that parents do not catch up on the children's learning or help them revise on what the teachers taught.

Another challenge encountered by the teachers was the difficulty in giving consideration to the academic learning of both students with SEN and ordinary students. Some inclusive practices like slowing down the teaching pace or cutting down the curriculum

may indeed harm the interests of ordinary students as their learning opportunities would also be limited though they are capable of assimilating much knowledge. However, students with SEN may not be able to acquire the knowledge if such practices are absent.

In addition, most teachers claimed that they were not given enough support and resources from the schools, especially in the delivery of curriculum. They urged for the provision of paraprofessional which can give individual support to students with SEN during the lesson, since that the class size was usually big and they found it hard to cater for the needs of students with SEN during the lessons.

## **Social Relationship**

**Description.** The social life of students with SEN was in general quite desirable in the inclusive environment and their relationships with both teachers and classmates were quite positive. As illustrated by teachers, most of the students with SEN were quite eager to offer help to teachers as they would feel like being valued. They knew about how they should treat the teachers and most teachers treated them in suitable manner. Yet, the interviewed teachers mentioned that there were teachers who are strict, do not have much patient when dealing with students with SEN and would yell at them when they behave poorly. When facing those teachers, students with SEN would also tend to treat them impolitely and may challenge them.

The interviewed teachers responded that, in general, students with SEN did not have much problem in interacting with their fellows, and were accepted by them. Most of their fellows were willing to work with them during pair or group work in class. However, some teachers pointed out that most of them were only friends with those who are also with SEN or who are their relatives or who are in lower level; and there were some of them got mocked or even bullied and brought them obstacles in adapting the social life.

**Factors affecting.** According to the interviewed teachers, the integrated environment offered students with lots of opportunities to interact with others who are ordinary and these opportunities helped them acquire certain social skills. The attitude of teachers and their intervention in creating a harmonious atmosphere in schools also mattered. Many of the teachers mentioned that they would educate all students to be considerate and respectful to others. That greatly helped students with SEN to adapt to the social life. Teacher C commented that “the integrated environment would only lead to bitter memory if their peers begin to stereotype and isolate them”. Peer acceptance is the crucial factor in affecting their social relationship.

There was also internal factor. The interviewed teachers explained that the kinds of difficulties that students with SEN have influenced their ability to fit in to the social environment. Students with autism and intellectual disability may not have circle of friends as “they seldom talk and are not willing to express themselves” as pointed out by Teacher E.

**Teachers’ inclusive practices.** Indeed, many of the interviewed teachers stated that they did not have any specific inclusive practices in improving students’ social relationship as they did not see students with SEN have problems in this aspect. However, they implied that it is important for teachers to, as summarized by Teacher B, “teach ordinary students about accepting those students, getting them to know that there are different kinds of people in the world”. She also noted that teachers indeed, should not have much intervention on how students treat each other as this may have opposite effect. Ordinary students may think of students with SEN intimidating them to play with them by asking teachers to step in. Teachers should intervene in case of serious incidences like bullying; and if they happen, teachers should confront them and deal with the matters publicly through asking the class if such actions are appropriate.

**Challenges encountered by teachers.** As most of the interviewed teachers did not step in students’ social life, they did not bring up any challenges they have in improving

students' social relationship. However, Teacher D admitted that she did not have such strategies because she did not have such knowledge and skills. This indicated that teachers' incompetency could have hindered them from improving students' social development. In addition, Teacher B and C had stated that students with SEN were indeed quite stubborn and were not easily talked around, and hence, it was difficult for them to change the socially unfavorable actions of those students.

### **Classroom Behavior**

**Description.** The performance of students with SEN concerning with their classroom behavior is different among students with different kinds of difficulties. Teachers said that mostly those who were hyperactive had much disruptive behavior during lessons, while students with attention deficit or intellectual disability had much off-task behavior like day dreaming. The disruptive behaviors included leaving their desks without permission, asking unrelated and repeated questions, wandering around the classrooms and yelling without impulse. Those who are hyperactive were also less willing to obey classroom rules and to follow teachers' instruction; but for other types of students with SEN, they were obedient. Students with SEN in general were less able in expressing or controlling their emotion. But Teacher B added that those who were obedient might sometimes get mad or yell during lessons with impulse that unknown to the teachers; and when asking about the reason for such behavior, they might not able to tell. Yet, most teachers commented that students with SEN generally behaved quite well in class and the ones having the worst behavior problems in class were indeed ordinary students.

**Factors affecting.** Some of the interviewed teachers believed that as the inclusive environment facilitated the improvement of the classroom behavior of students with SEN since ordinary students could give a model to them of following instructions and classroom rules. Teacher B gave an example of a student who became obedient after sitting with a



well-behaved student. However, it should be noted that such peer influence may only be effective when students with SEN are in lower primary. As stated by Teacher E, when students promoted to upper primary and entered the adolescent period, some of them might be much resistant to obey rules. Teacher B added that whether their behavioral problems got improved or worsen also depended on the home training they received and the teachers they encountered.

**Teachers' inclusive practices.** To improve the classroom behavior of students with SEN, Teacher D advised to set rules in the classroom and be firm to those rules. Teacher C added the importance of establishing dominance and stated that "being too kind in the beginning would convey to them a message that you are easily controlled". He suggested that teachers who teach students with SEN must discipline the students with reasoning. Teacher B also pointed out that it is not a good idea to bawl against them when they have disruptive behavior, as they are emotionally unstable and this may provoke them. Indeed, most of the interviewed teachers stressed that teachers must be patient when managing those students; and to keep up such patience, what teachers should do is to get to know their personal lives and family background. Teacher A said that those who are with much behavioral problems were usually being neglected by their parents. Getting to know this could get the teacher sympathy for those students and would be much willing to spend much time and patience on disciplining them. Teacher B further concluded that "we should bear in mind that as a teacher, we integrated into students' lives and can greatly affect their self-perceptions and beliefs". Keeping such idea in mind is one of the significant inclusive practices that the teachers used.

**Challenges encountered by teachers.** The main challenge encountered by teachers when attempting to improve students' performance is the ignorance from parents who either neglected or spoiled their children. Teacher E illustrated the situation by stating that "even though we teach them about obeying rules, they are free from restraint when they are at home and there will not be any improvement in their behavioral problems". She indicated that

parents who neglected their children would avoid tackle the problem while those who spoiled would be partial to the children and regard teachers as being too critical. Either type of parents refused to cooperate with the teachers to discipline the students and make all the inclusive practices done by teachers meaningless.

## CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION

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All the teachers interviewed in this research, in certain degree, supported the philosophy of integrated education in Hong Kong and agreed that it is beneficial to students with SEN. However, there are numbers of factors hindering them to have effective inclusive practices and thus, affecting the development and effectiveness of the integration programme and leading to the disparity between concept and context of integrated education. Indeed, according to the description given by the interviewed teachers on the performance of students with SEN, those students were often left behind which revealed that not enough support was given to them and their needs were not catered. In this chapter, discussion on those factors that lead to the situation would be given and improvements to the integration programme would be pinpointed with references to the teachers' comments and relevant literature.

### **The Level of Parental Involvement**

Many of the interviewed teachers regarded the level of parental involvement in the life and learning of students with SEN to be the crucial factor in improving all aspects of performance of students with SEN. They believed that if parents can provide adequate support and guidance to students at home and are willing to cooperate with teachers, there will be positive influence on improving students' academic performance as well as their social life and behavioral problem through giving love and care to them. Their views are confirmed by many scholars (e.g. Cooper & Jacobs, 2011; Watson, Hester & Sandler, 2003; Forlin, 2007) who also stressed the importance of parent involvement in supporting the implementation of integrated education programme, especially when the whole school approach is adopted such that "genuine collaboration" shall be built "within the school and with families and the community" (Forlin, 2007, p.105).

Besides helping in supervising students' homework and revision at home as mentioned by the interviewed teachers, parental involvement includes much exhaustive work such as engaging in deciding the school policies for catering the needs of students with SEN, giving opinion on the direction of learning, school activities and interventions, and attending training programmes to acquire necessary knowledge and skills to look after their children with SEN (Cooper & Jacobs, 2011; Forlin, 2007). However, the interviewed teachers responded that the parents often neglected their children with SEN or spoiled them and refused to work with teachers to discipline the children. Indeed, there are research revealed that while teachers found it hard to involve parents or get response from them as they seemed to be disinterested in their children's learning, parents reported that they did not feel being included in the educational process as teachers often talked down to them and were not supportive (Watson, Hester & Sandler, 2003).

There are two ways to improve the situation. First is to build up a welcoming atmosphere in school for parents. Schools must put "parental involvement in children's education a top priority at every stage of service delivery" and value parents' "strengths and potential to make a difference" (Watson, Hester & Sandler, 2003, p,300). This can be done by having constant formal meetings with parents in discussing issues related to the students with SEN. By affirming and respecting parents' involvement and contribution in a determined manner, they would properly be encouraged to engage in the educational process. The collaboration between parents and schools can also be strengthened through outreach services and home visiting (Cooper & Jacobs, 2011). Second is to invite or even require parents to participate in training programmes which teach about the knowledge and skills in catering for children with SEN and the concepts of whole school approach to integrated education. Indeed, while reviewing the documents prepared by the EDB in suggesting the use of the funding for schools (EDB, 2012) or in giving guidance to parents (EDB, 2008), it was found that the provision of and engagement in parents' training programmes are not much encouraged.

However, it was believed that “programmes that are dedicated to the training of parents and carers can help promote positive outcomes” for students with SEN (Cooper & Jacobs, 2011, p.141). The EDB may have neglected the importance of parental involvement and overburdened the teachers to conduct the work in catering students’ needs. To be specific, parent training programmes could be in the focus of teaching parents behavioral strategies, providing advice and help, strengthening the relationship between children and parents, and building up cooperation between teachers and parents (Cooper & Jacobs, 2011).

### **The Design of the Curriculum and Assessment System**

The curriculum design has been the crucial factor in determining the inclusiveness of an integration or inclusion programme and whether or not it can support the development of students with SEN. Rose (1998) asserted that “a curriculum which meet the needs of all pupils are developing a vehicle for inclusion” but a curriculum which “attempt to fit pupils to existing structures are more likely to provide a lever for exclusion” (p.36). Unfortunately, the curriculum in Hong Kong schools seems to be the latter one according to the interviewed teachers. They criticized that the tight curriculum and the assessment system in Hong Kong education is indeed not tally with the integrated education programme.

Under integrated education, students with SEN are presented with the curriculum which is said to be too tight and difficult for ordinary students already. They are also being assessed with standardized tests which no differentiations are allowed. The pressure to teach according to the scheme of work so that all students will be able to meet the standard set by the assessment has hindered the teachers to deliver the curriculum effectively. Although teachers attempted to differentiate the teaching materials to meet the needs of students with SEN, the difficulty level of the curriculum content is still too high for those students. They also felt so frustrated when they wanted to adopt different teaching strategies in the inclusive classrooms, the limited time allowed for them to catch up with the scheme of work has

discouraged them from doing so. It is ironic given the fact that what students with SEN most needed in their development is further time to study and accommodate with the environment. Students with SEN are not necessarily having weaker ability and the intelligence of most of them is with no difference with or even higher than others as some of them are indeed talented. They could have remarkable achievements when their needs are fully catered. However, it was sad that the pressure from the curriculum and assessment system on both teachers and students has hindered this from happening.

Changes to the existing assessment system and curriculum are needed to be made. Those changes, as suggested by the interviewed teachers and scholars (Rose, 1998; Rose & Shevlin, 2010), could be allowing students with SEN to complete their studies within a longer period of time, using a variety of assessment methods like self-assessments instead of having examinations alone to assess the students and broadening the sort of subjects to allow students to study what they are interested in and talented with. The philosophy of integrated education is to maintain the equality. For this to happen, students “should all be provided with a curriculum which is relevant to their needs through a range of well-planned shared learning experiences”, but rather that they “receive the same curriculum diet” (Rose, 1998).

Besides academic learning, the personal and social development of students with SEN can also be fostered through a well planned curriculum policy and scheme of work (Byers, 1998) such that personal and social education shall also be immersed in the formal curriculum. One of the underlying principles of integrating students with SEN into mainstream schools is to prepare them for fitting into the society. They have to learn to follow rules and rituals, and learn to maintain relationships or to have interaction with others. Furthermore, as mentioned by the interviewed teachers, students with SEN are often found to have low self-esteem and this could result in severer behavioral problems in them. Yet, a proper personal and social education can help build up their confidence and make them to be self-aware, knowing about their own strengths (Byers, 1998). The focus of the curriculum of

Hong Kong schools is heavily put on the academic development of students while there shall be an overarching proportion of personal and social education in the curriculum. To be specific, a subject shall be set up especially for fostering students' personal and social development or fusion of this kind of education is made in the existing subjects like Chinese, History, General Studies and Religious Studies.

### **The Policies Adopted by the School in Achieving Integrated Education**

Under the whole school approach, schools are given the flexibility to deploy their resources and subsidies to cater for students with SEN. Therefore, the policies adopted by schools in achieving integrated education would be vary in content as well as in the effectiveness. In this research, the two schools that the participants teach in have different strategies to allocate the students with SEN. One school has put all the students with SEN in one class while one school assigns those students to different classes except the "elite class". The practice that concentrating all SEN in one class has been regarded as inappropriate to most of the interviewed teachers as they found it hard to manage the class and might neglect some of the students. Yet, they are not in a position to make changes to it and that adversely affected them in improving the performance of students with SEN.

Additionally, teachers are constrained by the inadequate resources and support given to them as assigned by the schools. Many of the interviewed reported that they found it hard to give consideration to both students' academic learning and behavioral problems and stressed the importance of having paraprofessionals in providing learning support to and in disciplining students with SEN in class and after class. However, this kind of support is not given to them. Indeed, the existence of paraprofessionals like teaching assistants in inclusive classrooms is accented by many scholars (e.g. Xin, 2003; Pickett & Gerlach, 1997; Thompson, Wickham, wehner & Ault, 1996). Their roles and responsibilities includes "facilitating appropriate communication and interaction between adults and student peers,

intervening in cases in which challenging behaviors occur and adapting academic materials to the special needs of individual students” (Xin, 2003, p.219). They, as described by Thompson, Wickham, Wegner & Ault (1996), are in a significant position in facilitating the teaching of teachers and the learning of students with SEN. Despite the fact that scholars emphasized the importance of having paraprofessional in the inclusive classrooms and that teachers are in need for this, schools do not allocate the funding received in hiring the paraprofessionals. Even if the school has hired the paraprofessionals, as disclosed by the interviewed teachers, they are not specializing in taking care of students with SEN at school but are providing general support to teachers. The lack of paraprofessionals in providing support to students with SEN in class or after class has made the teachers felt burdened during lessons and adversely affected them in delivering the lessons with inclusive practices effectively, hence leading to the undesirable performance of students with SEN as described by the interviewed teachers.

The discussion above shows the inadequacy of a school in making policies that truly cater the needs of students with SEN as well as the needs of the teachers has hinder a school from achieving full integration. The cause of such inadequacy is that teachers’ comments are not taken into consideration when making the policies. Therefore, the problem can be solved by maintaining cooperation between teachers and the school policy makers, allowing teachers to express their concerns and challenges when teaching in inclusive settings and planning the policies based on the comments received. It is to be remembered that a whole school approach to integrated education necessarily requires cooperation and coordination among different stakeholders in a school and none of them should be working alone.

The factors mentioned above are only those stressed by the interviewed teachers which, in their opinion, greatly affected the process of achieving full inclusion in Hong Kong education. There, with no doubt, are many other factors which shall also be considered in the



process such as peer influence, the perception and efficacy of teachers and the involvement of the community. After all, the implementation of true integrated education requires joint effort from teachers, ordinary students, paraprofessionals, parents, school boards, students with SEN, the community, the Government and so on.

## CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION

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### **Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

There are several limitations in this investigation and improvements shall be made for further research. First, the scope of the investigation was small. Only five teachers were interviewed. Convenience sampling approach was adopted such that all participants were chose based on their ease of access and proximity to the researcher. There was a limited variety of the background of the participants. All of them were teaching language subjects in primary schools. Problem of overgeneralization may be found in this research. For further research, qualitative data from a larger proportion of teachers in both primary and secondary schools shall be collected to increase the reliability and validity of the current findings.

Second, the reliability in data collection was not ensured enough. No third parties were involved in supervising the process of interviews or in reviewing the categorization and analysis of data. The results of this investigation were nonetheless influenced by the perspectives of the researcher. Member checking shall be done not only during the interview process, but also after completing the analysis of findings. There shall be a second researcher to analyze the categories and themes in the analysis of data and to check for any possible contradictions or inconsistencies. Furthermore, other qualitative methods like observation in the inclusive classrooms and review of school documents related to integrated education shall be conducted to examine the reliability and validity of the comment given by the teachers, and thus increase the trustworthiness of the investigation.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This research confirmed that there is a disparity between the concept and context of integrated education. The academic performance of students with SEN was not improved and their learning motivation was further deteriorated in the current inclusive settings. The social

development of them was not promising either, given the fact that teachers do not have any interventions or strategies to cater for their social. Indeed, the heavy burden on teachers resulting from the tight curriculum, the insufficient support from the school and the inadequate parental involvement had hindered them to cater for students with SEN and to improve their performances. The EDB shall be acknowledged with the scenario and take appropriate and necessary actions to change it. To conclude, I would like to quote a statement made by OECD (1999) which can reflect the state of integrated education in Hong Kong - "The main factors blocking reform to inclusion would seem to be a mixture of lack of political will and human beings' interminable resistance to change" (p.22). Full inclusion is not impossible in Hong Kong education, and that most students with SEN are talented in their own ways and could be the valuable human assets in the society if enough support is given to their development. The EDB shall stop covering their resistance to change and their indolence to carry out inclusive education by naming the programme integrated education.

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## APPENDIX A – LETTER TO TEACHER

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Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Investigating the performance of students with special education needs (SEN) and teachers' inclusive practices in mainstream schools.

To meet part of my B.Ed. degree requirement, I am required to conduct a small-scale study for my dissertation. This will involve teachers who have experience in teaching students with SEN in mainstream schools. They will be asked to describe the academic performance, social relationships and level of disruptive behaviors of students with SEN in mainstream schools based on their own observation and experiences; and think of factors that contribute to the performance described. They will also be asked to describe their inclusive practices and mention any difficulties or challenges encountered when attempting to improve the performance of students with SEN. The details of the interview are as follows:

Target interviewees:	Approximately 5 teachers for the whole project
Length of the interview:	Approximately 1 hour each
Format:	Participant will be asked to participate in a face-to-face and one on one semi-structured interview. Participant will only be interviewed once. The interview can be conducted in English and/or Chinese depending on the participant's preference and it will be audio taped.

According to the university's policy on the ethical conduct of research I am writing to ask your consent for these procedures.

I will make sure that the information you provide to me will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. No names of students, teachers or schools will be mentioned in any parts of my dissertation. Further, you have the right to review and/ or delete your part in the audio-tape, or not to be included in my analysis. If you do not wish to be included, I will act according to that wish and not include your part and/ or the information you provided. The information collected will only be used for the dissertation and stored in my personal USB device with password protected; they will be destroyed after the dissertation grade has been approved. You can choose to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences.

If you understand the contents described above and agree to participate in this research, please sign on the reply slip and kindly return it to me. If you have any concerns about this aspect of my work, please feel free to contact me at 6189 0560, or my dissertation supervisor, Miss Rhoda Wang at 2857 8398. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties, HKU at 2241 5267.

Yours sincerely,

LEUNG Wai Shan  
BEd (Lang. Ed.) Year 4  
Faculty of Education  
The University of Hong Kong



AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH SEN

Reply Slip

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

I \*\* will / will not participate in the research. (\*\* Please delete as if inappropriate.)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

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**Title: An investigation into the performance of students with special education needs (SEN) and teachers' inclusive practices in mainstream schools**

### Interview Protocol

#### **Part A: Learning Performance**

1. Description of the learning performance of students with SEN

- How is their **academic performance**? (Do they have continuous improvement in the subject? Is the academic performance gap between the non-SEN students and SEN students progressively narrowed or widened?)

- How are their **learning skills**? (Such as their note-taking skills, study skills, examination skills, problem-solving skills, ability to use technology/ library materials/ other learning materials like dictionary to support learning?)

- How is their **learning attitude/ motivation**? (Do they prepare for lessons, revise after lessons, initiate questions in or after class, complete assigned tasks (classwork and homework) on time, work independently, adjust smoothly to the changes in daily school routine?)

2. Factors (which are provided by the integrated environment) contributing to the learning performance mentioned (i.e. How does the integrated environment help improve or disprove their learning performance?) e.g. higher expectation for student achievement in mainstream schools

3. **Strategies** used by the teachers to improve their learning performance

4. **Difficulties or challenges encountered** when trying to improve their learning performance

**Part B: Social Relationship**

1. Description of the social relationship of students with SEN

- How is their **relationship with teachers**? (How do they treat the teachers and how do teachers treat them? Do they volunteer to assist teachers?)

- How is their **relationship with peers**? (Are they being accepted? Are the peers willing to work with them during pair or group activities/ tasks in class? Do they have a circle of friends?)

- Do they **adapt to the social life**? Do they treat others with courtesy and show love and care to their peers?

2. Factors (which are provided by the integrated environment) contributing to the social relationship mentioned (i.e. How does the integrated environment help improve or disprove their social relationship?) e.g. increased opportunities for interaction with same-age peers

3. **Strategies** used by the teachers to improve their social relationship

4. **Difficulties or challenges** encountered when trying to improve their social relationship

**Part C: Classroom Behavior**

1. Description of the classroom behavior of students with SEN

- How is their **level of disruptive behavior** during lessons? What are disruptive behaviors?

- Are they **willing to obey** classroom rules and follow teachers' instruction?

- How is their **level of self-discipline**? Do they able to express and control his/ her emotion properly?

2. Factors (which are provided by the integrated environment) contributing to the classroom behavior mentioned (i.e. How does the integrated environment help improve or disprove their classroom behavior?) e.g. good classroom model

3. **Strategies** used by the teachers to improve their classroom behavior

4. **Difficulties or challenges** encountered when trying to improve their classroom behavior

**APPENDIX C – INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER A**

I	Generally, how is the performance of students with SEN?
T	<p>To teach SEN, you must first get to know their lives. It is important to have full knowledge of their family background. It's because you need lots of patience when dealing with them. If you have no ideas about their family background, you will have less patience to take care of them. You must have sympathy to them, so you will be willing to spend much time on taking care of them. This is what a teacher should do to "adjust" themselves. You must have the feeling that "I really want to help them" or "he is really pity" when facing those students. Otherwise, you cannot hold on to it. So, the first thing you should do is to "adjust" yourself. So, you have to know about the background of the student. Generally, their family conditions are quite undesirable, in the aspect of financial as well as the family relationship. In the financial aspect, the problem is that their parents have low income or need support from the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance. And you know the amount one can receive under Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (it is not much). Some may not even have enough food. You have to urge them to pay the fees. They don't even have \$100 in their pockets. You have to urge for payment for weeks. Under this circumstance, you can imagine how poor their living condition is. The parents can't even afford their own living, how they can manage the life of their child. It is the key factor (to hinder the learning of the students). Children are supposed to have education since they were born. As if they only receive education when they enter primary schools, they will waste the learning opportunity during the six-year pre-school stage. That's the main reason why they learn poorly because they have poor foundation.</p>
I	Then do you think the integrated education (IE) can help them?
T	With this scenario, you have to first define what IE is. IE means integrating students who



	<p>are disable or emotional in the ordinary classrooms. But now, what our school does is to put all the SEN in one class in each level. The rationale behind implementing IE is to allow SEN to study with ordinary students and with the hope that the ordinary students can help those SEN. However, under the education system in Hong Kong, students are required to do lots of work and the curriculum is tightly scheduled. For the present, teacher-centered learning is commonly adopted by the teachers as we have heavy workload and no time for student-centered learning to take place. I am not saying that we don't allow student-centered learning, but that takes time and we don't have the time. Therefore, the existing education system cannot really facilitate the learning of students with SEN. Classes are teacher-centered and it becomes meaningless to have integrated education (as students with SEN are not given chances to interact with others). The schedule of curriculum is really too tight and is not tally with the philosophy of integrated education. IE do have little positive influence on students since SEN still have some opportunities to learn with their classmates. But then, is it necessary to have the so-called IE? Learning takes place in this way anyway. Before, like in the 70s or 80s, SEN are pulled out and would not study with ordinary students. But...I don't really know if it is good to have IE. Still, we try our effort to let the better ones to help the less capable ones. We give them support when they need it. We do help them. Indeed, no matter one is a SEN or not, we help with each other. That's how we interact with people.</p>
I	<p>Does SEN have improvement in their learning performance? Does the gap between SEN and ordinary students narrowed as they promote to different levels?</p>
T	<p>Actually they are still kids. They are emotional but they have no problem in living. They do make friends. But for their academic performances, as I said, it is related to their background. It does no good to their learning if they don't do the revision or the homework after school even the teacher has taught all the things, except those what have</p>

	<p>higher competency. Otherwise, it is impossible that they would learn. The curriculum is tight and we would assume students to have acquired the knowledge after two lessons. So, it is important that they do revision at home. For those who have parents to monitor them, they may be fine. But for those whose parents do not have much attention on them, it would be impossible for them to catch up with the syllabus which the knowledge covered is too difficult for them. It is utterly important to have the parental support on students' learning. It is impossible for teachers to spend much time on teaching the same topic. Therefore, generally speaking, there is not much improvement in their academic performance. SEN are always at the bottom. They may learn more words, but their performance is always below the average.</p>
I	<p>Would that affect their learning attitudes?</p>
T	<p>We would encourage them. But they are constrained by their competencies and we cannot do much to help them. Their family problems, which cannot be easily solved, also constrained them. A harmonious family is needed to cultivate a child. You can see that many of the SEN are being neglected by their family. They may not even have a healthy meal. With this kind of family support, it is likely to have a child like this (which has poor academic performance).</p>
I	<p>So when implementing IE, one of the challenges that you face is that the parents do not cooperate with you?</p>
T	<p>Yes. There are several kinds of SEN: ADHD, dyslexia, etc. It is impossible for teachers to pay much attention on SEN in the lesson as the class size is not small. For the SEN class, there are 16 students in the smallest class and 19 students in the biggest class. If every of them has certain problem, how can the teacher teach effectively? So even the teacher spends most effort in helping those students, not much can be benefited from it, if the parents do not cooperate with us. It took us much time just trying to urge them to</p>

	<p>submit the homework. Therefore, much resource should be put on those students. Our school does provide them with remedial classes, but their level of learning motivation is really low and not much change can be made on them, unless one-on-one and daily remedial class is provided.</p>
I	<p>So they always submit their homework late?</p>
T	<p>Yes, many of them cannot submit their work on time and need the class teacher to urge them every single day. It is mostly because they have low motivation. Some homework is really easy to do like penmanship, they only need to copy the words, but still, they fail to finish them. It is obvious that it is not their ability that hinders them for doing the work but their attitude. The attitude of the students as well as of the parents is the key factor. It is actually related to the social problems. If we want to support SEN with IE, we should first deal with their family problems. Given that it is a social problem, there is not much we can do as a teacher.</p>
I	<p>Then how about their social relationship?</p>
T	<p>Actually, there is not a single problem with their social relationship. They have problems with their learning but not with social skills even those who have autism. At least in my classes, I don't see any problems with their social relationship. All my students who have autism would have a circle of friends. They may not have many friends, but surely there is no problem with their social relationship, at least in this school. It may be because they are still children. The problem may be much obvious in secondary schools. But for kids, they don't make fun of others and would be willing to help each other as they are still obedient to teachers. But when they enter secondary schools, they would have their own thoughts and dare to express themselves. So I believe they will be facing much challenges in meeting friends when they grow up. But in the primary stage, I seldom see that their problems have hindered them from making friends.</p>

I	How about their relationship with teachers? Are they obedient?
T	It depends. They have different attitudes towards different teachers. They are good at this. When they found that the teacher is a soft-hearted person, they may not be obedient. But as if the teacher is kind of strict, they would behave well. Actually, this kind of attitude is no difference with the ordinary students. They are actually kind of smart in this aspect. Indeed, the only problem that they have is their laziness. They see other being lazy and they model it, or their parents neglect them.
I	How is their performance during the lessons? Do they have much disruptive behaviors?
T	Some of them do, but this is not much related to the fact that they are SEN. But they are just naughty. The naughtiest students in my class are not the SEN. It is about their characters and their parents. One cannot have great achievement if they don't receive proper discipline from their family.
I	How about their self-discipline? Is it also a matter of how the family disciplines them?
T	I think so. Because when they are at school, they, in certain degree, are obedient, though there is problem with their punctuality in submitting the work. But it was because they have leave school and don't have teacher to monitor. So, I can say it is the problem with the discipline they received from family. They slept during lessons because they have played the computer games till late. It is possibly showing that parents don't supervise them. Those students spend much time on computer games but not on study, and do not have the motivation to learn.
I	Do you have any strategies to arouse their interest towards the lessons?
T	If have time, I would play online videos to teach them about phonics. And the use of e-book also helps. But I don't support using all these to motivate them. Because when they enter university, there will not be such kinds of things. Most of the knowledge is presented literally. Under this circumstance, it is not good to motivate their learning

	<p>through those things, as it may further lower their interest in reading. We need to train them to write and read to prepare them for the way they learn in secondary schools. Otherwise, it would just be a vicious cycle. I think that the development of e-learning actually worsen their problem with learning.</p>
I	<p>Under the IE, the learning materials like the books that given to SEN are in the same level with those given to the ordinary students. Do you think such practice can foster their learning?</p>
T	<p>Their word bank is small and their memory is rather short term. No matter how many times you have taught about the meanings of a word, they forgot about it, unless you help them to check the meanings of those words before they read the book. That may help. But they are not interested in memorizing the meaning of those words. They only wanted to memorize things that they like, and they are fully occupied with those things which are mostly playful stuff. Especially the boys. It leads to low level of learning motivation. Even though you have delivered a lesson that gives much fun to them, they forgot all the things they learnt in that lesson, unless you give them a quiz about it immediately.</p>
I	<p>Do you mean those quizzes or tests can motivate them to study?</p>
T	<p>They don't really do the revision. Only 10% of them. For others, they just take the tests using what they could remember.</p>
I	<p>How about their self-study skills? Would they take notes or check the dictionary? Do you think the inclusive environment help them in making improvement in their self-study skills?</p>
T	<p>We don't really teach them these under IE. IE is just about putting them with other ordinary students. There is not much difference on the way that a teacher teaches. They learn in the same way with other students. But they do have improvement in their</p>

self-study skills as they practice more throughout the school years, not much related to IE. The key factor of IE is peer influence. They see other students can do it, and thus they want to be able to do this to. So, IE may do have little influence on their acquisition of social skills in this way. But they may do better when they enter special schools. It is hard to tell as we cannot make comparison. Indeed, the main problem with IE is that same syllabus is used to teach the SEN and ordinary students, even though the competency level of SEN is lower than the ordinary students. Because of this, I do try to tailor the learning materials. However, they are also being assessed in the same way. They may then have poorer results as I tailored the materials and they learn less. Both teachers and students are in a position that has no say. It was said that IE is to help SEN, but the system is indeed not tally with this. It is already unfair to them that they have poor family background, and now you require them to have the same standard with those ordinary students who have good background is worsening the problem. There is a need for them to lower the requirement for SEN. For example, students in primary three learn about knowledge in the primary one and two level. They may have primary three and four level when they graduate. That is already better than knowing nothing as this is what happen in the present situation. They are pushed to absorb lots of knowledge, but indeed they learn nothing at all. What they need is time. Normally, students graduate from university at the age of 26. But they could be at the age of 28. Though they take longer times, they at least can graduate. They are not incapable to learn. They are just learning slower than the others. They would just ever be the losers if you require them to learn in the same pace with other ordinary students. We can have adjustments to the system. For example, allowing them to complete the study in 8 years while other makes it in 6 years; and have a less tight curriculum. In this way, I believe they are able to promote to university study and are the valuable human capital to the society. Otherwise,

	<p>under the present system, they may quit schools at the age of 16. Inadequacy is found in the IE programme. It is also unrealistic and not thorough enough. the name falls short of the reality. The resources that they allocate to IE, indeed can support them to have two more years of study, but the resources are not used wisely now. SEN are not retarded, they are just slow learners. If you have the same expectation on SEN and ordinary students, it would just deteriorate the confidence of SEN. They would have the perception that they cannot achieve anything and give up. Many of my primary six students are like this. As they promote to next level and the syllabus gets harder, the gap between them and ordinary students become bigger and bigger and they become to have no motivation to learn. They may even have depression. We are given them too much to learn, and educating them with such system is like telling and proving them how incapable they are. This is pathetic.</p>
I	<p>You have mentioned the funding provided by the government. What kinds of funding is it? How they were used?</p>
T	<p>Different schools would have different amount of the funding. I know that the funding is given according to the number of SEN in the school. But how the school spend the money is vary. I think it needs to be specific (on how the money should be spent). What SEN needs is individual support, but not general support.</p>
I	<p>What are the supports that the school actually gives to students?</p>
T	<p>We have social workers at school to take care of them. They are prior to be selected when have other learning experience like outing. We do put much attention on them. But all along, we can neither intervene in their family matters, nor to change their parents. That is what we concerned the most and the reason why there is no improvement made. What students needs is on-going attention, especially those who always behave poorly. It is important there is someone to discipline them all the time. Otherwise, their progress</p>

	may just turn backward even you have improve them a bit at school.
I	Is it that you cannot cater for every student during the lessons?
T	Yes. I teach really slowly. I only teach them the focal points; and that the knowledge would be taught again and again and in a slow pace. It is crucial to teach in a slow pace. I may not catch up with the syllabus, but what's the point of it? I bear in mind that what important is the depth of their knowledge but not the amount. Otherwise, you are just wasting time in covering all the stuff in the syllabus without students fully acknowledge them. When doing tasks that require thinking, you have to scaffold them. That's why, sometimes, I may do the homework in class with them. They are only required to do easy work at home like copying. This can help build up their confidence as they would have less mistake made in their work. Also, if you give them work without providing enough scaffolding to them, they may just mess about it and it would be meaningless to do the work. Such practice would also encourage them to do works carelessly.
I	Would you have group work or pair work in the lessons?
T	Yes. I sometimes ask them to do presentation. This can encourage them to think. For example, I ask them to tell what something is about instead of me telling them directly, and this can be done through having group work and pair work. To be specific, I would ask each group to answer one question on the worksheet, and they need to present their answer after discussion. It doesn't matter if they give the wrong answer but at least they tried.
I	How would you group the students?
T	High-achievers are mixed with low-achievers in each group.
I	Does it work?
T	Yes. Peer influence is important. It is hard for the teacher to supervise each student but we can achieve this with the help from students.



AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH SEN

I	Do they often have emotional problems?
T	Not much in my class. Their problem is that they are too lazy. Some classes may have students who have emotional problems but not in my class.
I	How are their examination skills? Do they able to understand what the questions are about?
T	Whether they are able to understand the questions is not concerned with their examination skills, but their word bank.
I	Would you read the questions during the exam?
T	To lower levels but not to the upper primary.

## APPENDIX D – INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER B

I	Can you describe the academic performance of students with SEN?
T	<p>We are supposed to tailor-make or make modification on the syllabus for the SEN. We attempted to do so. For example, in our school, we have ability grouping which students with SEN are put in the same class. Those classes have smaller class sizes and teachers can be able to cater for every student and have different scheme of work for them. However, we have the public exam and summative assessment. With such assessment, SEN would always be those who are in the bottom. It's because they are not given any support during the exam. Those assessments are just pushing them down. But there is nothing we can do to change such practice. We feel helpless about this. What we can do is to make sure the learning experience of SEN is pleasurable. Try not to make them feel frustrated. But there is nothing we can do to support them for the exam. They must compete with those ordinary students and inevitably obtain a poor result. However, I don't think that all SEN have poor academic performance. They are many kinds of SEN. I once taught a student who have autism but with high English proficiency level. He may not give much response when you ask him a question. But when you speak to him with English, he can response very well in English. We guess that he has certain training at home like having a domestic helper (who speaks English). He was the top 10 in the level. So, it is not a must that SEN are those who perform poorly. I think if they can be identified as early as possible, they can do really well in certain subjects.</p>
I	Do you think the inclusive setting which SEN are given their same level of materials can help push them have improvement or have adverse effect on them?
T	I support to put them in the inclusive setting, as they are indeed not having many problems and they just have special needs. Besides, IE can teach SEN how they can fit in the social environment and learn about the so-called social norms. Second, it can also

	<p>teach ordinary students about accepting those students, getting them to know that there are different kinds of people in the world. Although implementing IE is hard like the difficulties in tailoring the curriculum, the philosophy of IE is good. Although our school has put SEN in one class, they are still offered opportunities to interact with ordinary students during lunch time or recess or competition, and they get along well. Students don't look down on them. I think we taught them quite well in this aspect. They don't discriminate others.</p>
I	<p>Can you describe their learning skills? Do they take notes? Do revision? How are their examination skills?</p>
T	<p>My practice is that I arrange all SEN to sit at the front, so I can monitor them, see if they can catch up. Besides that, we would enlarge the text paper and give them more time during exam. Such that we need to report students' academic results for the school place allocation system, we actually consider not reporting the dictation marks of those students. Because they cannot do dictation. I think how the teacher views on SEN is important. Some teachers may put them aside, but for me, I must put them at the front row. I think SEN are happy about it too. Other students show understanding on it too. They don't mind if those students are always put in the front row. Though support is given to them during internal exam, they are assessed in the same way in the public exam, and that's the challenge for them.</p>
I	<p>Such that they need to take the exam. Would you have high expectation on them and push them to improve?</p>
T	<p>The expectations of the parents on SEN are realistic. There would not be much pressure on them. But they do learn from each other. They don't have much pressure but they learn from peers. I think that's the philosophy of IE. The importance of peer influence. The teacher cannot really put much attention on SEN in a short lesson, and we will leave</p>

	the classroom as we finish the lesson. But their classmates are always here.
I	Any other support given to students?
T	I know we have arranged after school remedial classes for them. We also provide them with training and workshop which some involve the parents. However, parents do not really participate in them. Of course, it is beneficial to student's learning if they are much willing to get involve in children's school life.
I	What students do in those after school remedial classes?
T	We help them to do revision and do homework.
I	Do you have any in class inclusive strategies?
T	I make sure everyone would involve in the lessons, especially speaking lessons. I required everyone to read aloud. I also make use of peer influence. I grouped SEN students with ordinary students and ordinary students would always help those SEN. For example they would whisper to guide SEN to read. And I would complement those who helped. I think we should avoid excluding SEN in tasks. What we should do instead, is to have different standard on them. Like others may need to write 100 words but they only need to write 30 to 40 words. From my experience, SEN do not like being excluded from the tasks. But just to make sure they know the teacher would not punish them when they perform poorly. The inclusive environment allows for learning from each other.
I	Do you differentiate the teaching materials?
T	Yes, for lower primary but not for upper primary. For example, they can do less for correction. I would also give them model answers which others don't have for them to do revision. But all these are for lower primary. They indeed know how to do things as they grow up. When they were young, they depend on the teachers. But now they can do things on their own. The gap is narrowed. They can do what others do, is just the standard is lower. Therefore, we should have different measure sticks.

I	What are your difficulties or challenges encountered when trying to improve their learning performance?
T	What so special about SEN is that they would stick to the same mistake. For example, there is one student who has messy handwriting. She likes to write words with bold lines and different colors. I told her not to do this as it would be hard for her to do revision. But she did not listen to that. And I don't want to make it too explicit as it may hurt her feeling. They are indeed quite stubborn. That's the main difficulty. They stick to the way they do things and not willing to make changes. We then need to accept this because no changes would be made no matter you have told them about this for many times.
I	Would you try to cooperate with other teachers to solve the problem?
T	No. We just need to accept this. Bear in mind that they are unique. It is indeed not a big deal. But I do find this a difficulty. We have to accept that getting 50 marks in their tests is already desirable for them though we have pressure on achieving a high passing rate.
I	Any other difficulties? Like the resources allowed?
T	Resources are not enough especially in my class which most students are with strong learning ability. SEN can still catch up when they are in lower primary. Things are easy and I can slow down my teaching. But when they promote to upper primary, as I have students with stronger competency in my class, I cannot slow down my teaching. In western countries, there are the so-called supporting teachers which they would come to the classroom and assist SEN once a week. They sit with SEN. But we do not have such practice in HK even we have the funding. I think it is possible for us to have such practice but we just do not spend the spending in this aspect. The school rather spends the money in organizing workshops. But I would recommend having supporting teachers in schools. They could be those retired teachers or those qualified teachers who just graduate. They can facilitate the learning of SEN as they provide one on one support to

	them and follow them.
I	Does this mean that you find it difficult to cater for SEN in class?
T	Yes, it is really hard especially in my class. But it may be easier to handle them in the class that all are SEN and can have the same learning pace. It is much possible for teachers to talk about the same topic again and again. But in my class where there are students who have stronger competency, it would be boring for them to listen to the same topic again and again. The big difference between students' ability is the main difficulty while teaching.
I	How is their relationship with teachers? How they treat them? Are they willing to obey?
T	Their relationship with teachers is quite well. They indeed like to be close with teachers. They just like other children who enjoy being taken care by the adults.
I	But do they have any disruptive behaviors in class?
T	Not in my class. Sometimes, they may have emotional problems as they get punished by other teachers. So I need to comfort them after class. I always think that students should not leave the school or the classroom with hard feelings. We should deal with their problems when they are at school. I don't see any tension on their relationship with teachers.
I	Do you think the inclusive environment help them to be much obedient?
T	Yes, to some of them, but I also see students getting worse. The reason for that are vary. Could be because the family factor and the teachers that they encountered. We cannot assume that all teachers are nice and patient. And even those patient teachers have emotional and cannot be always patient. Some, some students may have turned better but also some turned worse. And there are many factors affecting it. Could also be peer influence, whether they are accepted by their classmate. Some grow better as they are well supported by their family.

I	Are they being accepted by their classmates?
T	Of course not. But I won't drag those SEN out. Their relationship with other classmates may also be bad even if they are not SEN. I see students would prefer to play with those in lower levels. Because they are easy to get along with. SEN may have slower thinking than the ordinary students such that they cannot be friends long. So, some of them prefer to play with the younger ones. But then they may complain to me that those younger ones do not play with them. I told them that because they have their friends in the same age. It is quite hard for them to make friends. From my observation, SEN would mainly play with SEN, as there are activities for them to interact with each other.
I	Do SEN and non-SEN able to work together during group work in lessons?
T	Quite hard. If all students are in the same level, they may work together as the task level is low. But as in my class which the task level could be too high for SEN, it is inevitably that they are the passive ones or the followers in the group work.
I	But are the non-SEN willing to work with SEN?
T	Yes, they are. I will tell them that in order to truly complete the task, everybody in the group shall understand what they are doing.
I	Do they adapt to the social life? Do they treat others with courtesy and show love and care to their peers?
T	It depends. Some of them do. Because for my class, they have been each other classmates since primary one. They like brothers and sisters. Same situation for the SEN class. I don't see any problems with their social relationship, and they do respect and care. I don't think students have looked down on SEN as the number of SEN in this school is not small, such that SEN also won't feel like they are minority. SEN behave quite well indeed. They are slow learners, but have no problems in their behaviors.
I	Do you have any strategies to improve their social skills?

T	<p>There was bullying in my class. And I chose to deal with the problem by making it public. I asked them who don't treat him well and students would criticize themselves and admit that they don't. And when I ask the SEN who didn't treat him well, he said everyone treat him well, making other classmates feel guilty about it. The problem of bullying must exist in the inclusive setting. But those are not severe but in the format like not playing with them, not taking initiatives to include them in their circle of friends. And that may need our intervention. And my practice is to discuss about the matter in class and let students think about how they should treat others. But don't have too much intervention like telling them that they must play with them, as this may have opposite effect. Students may think that those SEN are babies and need to report everything to the teachers. So I would not have much intervention but let students to reflect on the ways they treat others. If one changes his attitude, others will follow. That's how I deal with the problem.</p>
I	<p>How is their level of disruptive behavior during lessons? What are disruptive behaviors?</p>
T	<p>Not all of the SEN in my class have disruptive behavior, depending on the kind of SEN they have. Some are with motor incoordination, some are with speaking problems, some are with intelligence problems and some are with attention deficit. Most of my students are with attention deficit and they don't have much disruptive behaviors. But I heard there are students who may get mad and yell in class because something has stimulated them. Those things could be small like they failed in dictation even though they always get a failing mark in dictation. As a teacher, it is hard for us to fully understand why the SEN get mad. Some may even fight. When I have such situation, I would isolate the student immediately by placing him at the corner of the classroom. This is to give him to time to cool down himself and think about what they want to do like if they want to go back to the lesson. But don't push him to tell you why he get mad as he may even know</p>



	<p>why himself. You may ask for the reason after the lesson in a sincere way. But at that moment, just let him cool down himself, drink some water and don't even let the classmate intervene and he will get better in 2 to 5 minutes. But the teacher should never yell back at him like saying "if you continue do so, I would kick you out of the classroom". Indeed, under this circumstance, teacher must not allow the student get out of the classroom. That could be dangerous as you don't know what they would do in this emotional state. They may jump down or whatever.</p>
I	<p>Though the students in your class don't have severer disruptive behavior. Do they have other types of disruptive behavior?</p>
T	<p>Yes, they daydream a lot. When they daydream, what I do is to have some dramatic move to draw back their attention. Indeed, asking students to study whole day is not a good idea. Because for those students with attention deficit, they need medicine to make them focus. We need to be flexible. But of course, there are lots of matters that we need to deal with like we have to identify if one need such arrangement like they are incapable to study whole day which could be a burden to them and burden to the school. For example, the attention of those SEN may get worsen in the afternoon. Then we should allow them not to go back school in the afternoon. That's easy.</p>
I	<p>But would there be a concern that they cannot catch up with the curriculum?</p>
T	<p>They cannot catch up with the curriculum with poor attention during lessons even they are at school. It just like they are trapped in the classroom but no learning takes place at all. Their minds are always not there in the afternoon. So, we should reconsider if it is a necessary for them to attend whole-day schooling. But that is a complicated matter.</p>
I	<p>But at this moment, what would you do to improve the situation?</p>
T	<p>Talk with their parents about their dose of medicine. Sometimes, it could be because they have taken too much medicine. Or talk with the social workers. Or ask them to wash</p>

	their face. But after all, there is not much we can do.
I	Are they willing to obey classroom rules?
T	I think they are willing to. I think for children, they will naturally obey rules.
I	How is their self-discipline?
T	It depends. But many of them have taken medicine and are mostly fine.
I	Besides the help from medicine, do you think the inclusive environment improve their self-discipline?
T	From my point of view, it is not important if inclusion can improve their performance but it is a necessary to have inclusion. Because those kids are needed to fit into the society when they are getting older. There isn't any workplace that would cater their needs. You need to prepare and equip them with the skills to adapt to future lives. There is a need to have IE. Whether IE can improve their performance greatly depends on the resources available and how the funding is allocated and used. For our school, we used the money to hire social workers. But the social workers can help with the curriculum design. She only helps provide consultancy. There is no much funding out on the aspect of teaching and learning. Like we don't have a teacher who specialize in teaching SEN or a supporting teacher. All the work are done by the general teachers. There is not much we can do with the limited resources. For our school, to cater for SEN, our focus is not on their academic performance. So I don't think IE has facilitated their learning.
I	So you think the school practice is crucial in determining if IE really support the SEN?
T	Yes. It is crucial. I know there are schools which would hire teachers specializing in catering SEN. But the practice in this school is not like this. General teachers are taking the responsibility to cater the need of SEN.
I	Do you have any other strategies to discipline the SEN?
T	Peer influence. I have a student who behave poorly before but get better recently. I found

	<p>that it is because the one sitting next to him has positive influence on him. He would model the action done the good student. Peer influence or support from classmates helps or even are the best way to improve performance of SEN. And to do so, it is important that we teach students to respect and accept each other. If we don't have enough external support, we can utilize the resource that we have already and that's the students. SEN are much willing to follow their classmates than teachers. Indeed, whether the student is SEN or not, you want the student to be happy and try not to give them the feeling of failure.</p>
I	<p>But after all, their learning ability may not be as great as other classmates. Do you think it affects their confidence?</p>
T	<p>Of course, but it is inevitable. We cannot change the situation but we can change our views toward the situation. We have to accept that there are people who would left behind.</p>
I	<p>Is that you would tell students about this too?</p>
T	<p>Yes. I tell them that everyone has its own strength. If you do well, I would reward them. If you perform poorly, I would punish you. But I punish you not because you are incapable, but because you don't try your best. It is just like drawing a picture; some may have talent and can draw perfectly while some may not be able to do so. We should not assess the students purely by the result but by the effort they have spent. We should bear in mind that as a teacher, we integrate into students' lives and can greatly affect their self-perceptions and beliefs.</p>

**APPENDIX E – INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER C**

I	How is their academic performance? Do they have continuous improvement in the subject? Is the academic performance gap between the non-SEN students and SEN students progressively narrowed or widened?
T	SEN students generally perform less favorably academically than non-SEN students. This is due in part by many factors consisting of poor funding, teachers' working environment, poor parenting, and etc. There should be little expectation that the knowledge presented in class is learnt by SEN students. With use of communicative approach in teaching, teachers could narrow the gap between their counterparts; however, there is no guarantee that the approach would work on all types of SEN students. Comorbidities and diversities in SEN students in a class pose as a major challenge to teachers. Eventually, their performance will be widened without proper, needed assistance provided for teachers.
I	How are their learning skills? Such as their note-taking skills, study skills, examination skills, problem-solving skills, ability to use technology/ library materials/ other learning materials like dictionary to support learning?
T	SEN students have little to none in any types of learning skills. Teachers are required to teach them every method in detail as much as possible. Every work must be told and taught to the very core when their counterparts could automatically figure what needs to be done. If one is familiar with cars, there are the automatic transmission cars and the manual transmission cars. SEN students fall on the latter whereby the operator (teacher) needs to step on the clutch every time when transmitting different functions. The only difference is that manual transmission cars will do as they are told, and SEN students, even if they want to, could not.
I	How is their learning attitude/ motivation? Do they prepare for lessons, revise after

	<p>lessons, initiate questions in or after class, complete assigned tasks on time, work independently, adjust smoothly to the changes in daily school routine?</p>
T	<p>Teachers may do their best to tell and guide SEN students what needs to be done although without much result. One thing peculiar in regards to some SEN students are that they excel in what they like but falls terribly behind in those that they do not. As a result, their learning attitude and motivation really depends on the course and tasks teachers give them. However, in language courses, SEN students will usually show a lack of interest in the subject and with very short attention span. The completion and submission of work are a major issue surrounding SEN students; however, their inability to do work properly does not only reside in their mental illness, but could be heavily influenced by possible external factors, such as, the lack of familial care and support.</p>
I	<p>What are the factors (which are provided by the integrated environment) contributing to the learning performance mentioned? (i.e. How does the integrated environment help improve or disprove their learning performance?)</p>
T	<p>Idealistically speaking, the integrated environment was to help SEN students cope and learns in a normal classroom environment so as to reduce social stigma and help improve academic performance. However, under school-based management the ideal has been undermined in some schools whereby students are segregated into ability classes. Consequently, it is quite obvious in which ability class SEN students will be put into. Alas, SEN students are not mentally disabled; they know they are being put into a class filled with their “kind”, possible “rejects” and academic underachievers. Therefore, most of them will develop anxiety, extremely low self-esteem and confidence. Even if SEN students are put into a normal classroom, their peers would soon find out that there are something wrong with them, and would thus, isolate,</p>

	humiliate and discriminate against them.
I	What are your strategies to improve their learning performance?
T	If communicative approach could be fully exercised in practice and when teachers could have less administrative work and lessons, then could SEN students' performance be improved. However, in the current situation, spoon feeding SEN students with knowledge and how to obtain them became the primary object of some schools. Occasional activities would be given if teachers have more time at hand. In general, having activities that they could interact with are SEN's most effective means of learning.
I	What are your difficulties when trying to improve their learning performance?
T	Generally, classroom management is extremely important. If they are not willing to listen to you or when activities could not arouse their interest, then some of them would wreak havoc and distractions to their peers. Furthermore, expectation should never be too high even when you have thought you have prepared the easiest methods to learn and apply the knowledge (target language) as their disabilities are severely affecting them. Moreover, their learning performance is also affected by poor foundation in their earlier years in school either by the lack of familial support or inadequate lessons and activities provided by their teachers.
I	How is their relationship with teachers? How do they treat the teachers and how do teachers treat them? Do they volunteer to assist teachers?
T	Most SEN students are enthusiastic children who are eager please the people around them. In terms of volunteering, SEN students are quite active. I guess one possible reason is that they feel that they are being valued. Since teachers are professionals, most of them would realize their disabilities and treat them in a suitable manner. Active encouragements should be used to communicate with SEN students. However, newer

	teachers may not have grasped in dealing with these students which results in a bitter and discouraging classroom environment for both parties.
I	How is their relationship with peers? Are they being accepted? Are the peers willing to work with them during pair or group activities/ tasks in class? Do they have a circle of friends?
T	As I have mentioned previously, their disabilities and destructive behaviors may be frowned upon by their peers. Their peers usually develop an antagonistic relationship with them. Teachers' intervention at this point is important albeit with little long term effect. To exacerbate the condition, some are grouped into a lower ability class. In this scenario, the previous information offered in this survey is quite self-explanatory. The environment would be chaotic and they would not be able to provide assistance to each other.
I	Do they adapt to the social life? Do they treat others with courtesy and show love and care to their peers?
T	Their social life is conflict-ridden though they do develop strong bonds with some of their peers. However, I do not believe their development and behaviors in general are apt for a healthy social life as they may have aggressive and emotional tendencies.
I	What are the factors (which are provided by the integrated environment) contributing to the social relationship mentioned (i.e. How does the integrated environment help improve or disprove their social relationship?)
T	The integrated environment would only lead to bitter memory if their peers begin to stereotype and isolate them. However, it does allow them to realize their weaknesses and tackle them in time.
I	What are your strategies to improve their social relationship?
T	Consistent guidance from teacher is necessary. Try to help them identify what behavior

	is more acceptable in a given situation. They would understand teachers' reasoning; however, it may nevertheless be ineffective in future conflicts with their peers as they are quite emotionally controlled by their disabilities.
I	What are your difficulties or challenges when trying to improve their social relationship?
T	They can be stubborn, impulsive and refuse to listen.
I	How is their level of disruptive behavior during lessons? What are disruptive behaviors?
T	Their level of disruptive behaviors varied between lessons and subjects. The disruptive behaviors include (1) Asking (unrelated, repeated) questions under impulse (2) Asking undesirable questions in hopes to make peers laugh and cause disruption (3) Not listening attentively and asking questions that were previously answered (4) Asking multiple questions without following the class rule of putting up one's hand (5) Multiple students asking different questions without allowing teachers to finish (6) Leave their desks suddenly and do silly acts (7) Other unwarranted behaviors, such as, touching private parts and calling out "JJ", harassing neighboring peers.
I	What are your strategies to improve their classroom behavior?
T	You must establish dominance in the classroom. Being too kind in the beginning would convey to them a message that you are easily controlled. Teacher must use as much reasoning as much as possible and take immediate action when unacceptable behaviors arise.
I	What are your challenges when trying to improve their classroom behavior?
T	They may show that they are indifferent. They may sometimes challenge teacher's reasoning. Without medication, most efforts are in vain as you reason with one, the other stirs trouble.



**APPENDIX F – INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER D**

I	Can you describe the academic performance of students with SEN?
T	It's hard for them to have improvement in academic performance. I only expect them to be able to write and do not make mistake when copy writing. You can't require them to think. Their performance would be better when learning vocabulary, as it can be drilled. Some students seem to be hardworking, but still they cannot learn much as constrained by their intellectual disability. I have one student who is able to answer question verbally, but when asking him to point the word by scan reading, he failed to do so. He just cannot find the word.
I	Is he identified as having what kind of SEN?
T	Actually, I do not receive any information about what kind of SEN they are. I only know who are SEN. For example, I only know that for this year, all students in my class are SEN. They may have different level of SEN, but I don't have much information about this.
I	Is that the school intentionally not to tell teachers?
T	No, not intentionally, but also do not specifically informing us.
I	Do you think they can catch up with the learning progress set by school?
T	No, they cannot. So for doing dictation, I have to cut it down to several times while other classes will just do it once.
I	So you will make adjustment based on their level?
T	Yes.
I	Besides dictation, how about homework? Do you make any adjustment?
T	I will guide them how to do. For non-SEN, I may just do one question with them. But for SEN, I will do more questions with them. They cannot understand and answer the questions, but copying the answers from teachers.

I	So how is their homework?
T	Only ask them to do multiply choice questions. For example, they cannot write a text on their own. But give them choices, let them decide which to be include in their writing and then they only need to fill in the blanks when doing writing task. But sometimes, they would just copy out all the choices, even I have given the instruction in Chinese. They are not able to process these.
I	How are their learning skills? Do they know how to read questions?
T	They don't have learning skills. You must read the questions for them verbally. They cannot interpret the questions on their own. It would be easier for them to grab the idea when verbal instruction is given to them. They are familiar with the sound of the words but not their written forms. More importantly, they do not receive any support when they back home. Their knowledge is mostly based on what I have taught. They have impression on the words as I read them before and may able to recognize the words. But indeed, only few can do so. Most of the students cannot do.
I	Do they know how to check dictionary?
T	No. They may be capable to do so when they get into higher level like primary three and four. But now they are in primary two, and are not yet know how to use computer. When they get home, there is no one to teach them to use computer.
I	So for the after school remedial class...
T	It is to teach them how to do homework.
I	Does it really help them academically?
T	Not for writing, but for homework, it does little help on it. But not everyone is required to attend the remedial class. Some parents may not want their kids to attend even we encourage them to do so. For those who do not attend, they often submit their homework late. Those parents do not let them attend remedial class and yet do not help them with

	the homework.
I	What is the main reason for submitting the homework late?
T	They do not have the ability to finish it. You have to give them much support. For example, when having PLPR lessons, the class would be broken into different groups and they learn in small groups, they can receive much support in this way, but still, the progress is slow. So when asking about if they have improvement, they do have but not significant as they improve really slowly.
I	Is that different classes have different kinds of homework?
T	Yes. For my class, students would have less homework. I would make adjustment.
I	How about assessments? Are they the same among classes?
T	Yes. But we have two kinds of assessments. One is class based and one is level based. For the level based one, it is the same among classes. For class based, it would be simpler so that they could have some sense of achievement.
I	How about their learning attitude? Will they prepare, revise, take initiative to give response?
T	No, they will not revise but will answer questions. Few of them would revise for the dictation, like 3 to 4 students. For all the others, they would not do revision. It's because their parents do not help them do revision and they don't have the time to do revision in remedial class.
I	What strategies do you use to increase their participation in lessons?
T	Stamping (a kind of reward system). One student becomes so aggressive because of this. He would eager to give responses. But it doesn't work on everyone. Some are attracted by the prizes.
I	Are they many off-task behaviors?
T	Not really. They are attentive, but they may not understand what they are paying

	attention at. Half of the class does not understand the instruction. The situation would be better if we do not need to work against time and according to schedule set. Because they are willing to learn when having games in the lessons.
I	Do you mean that in order to catch up with the schedule, you cannot have much interactive activities in the lessons?
T	Yes. It would be better if it is not a must for all classes to be in the same progress and to do the same amount of task. It would be hard for them to learn the same things as other students do since that they are weaker in learning.
I	Do you have any strategies to help them do revision
T	No, maybe by using rewards.
I	What challenges do you encounter when trying to improve their academic performance?
T	They have poor understanding and weak learning ability. Students with severer disability like those who like medication may disturb the lessons and I can't teach.
I	Do they have other off-task behavior? Like daydreaming?
T	There must be some students daydreaming. Because they are weak and easily get bored. They may only be attentive when having physical activities in the lessons.
I	Are they willing to obey classroom rules or follow teachers' instruction?
T	Quite well. Because they are still young and are quite obedient. The situation may not be like that when they get older. For my class, I also taught them last year, and they clearly know what my rules are.
I	How you teach them the rules?
T	Just to teach them the rules at the beginning and then stick to it.
I	How is their self-discipline?
T	It depends of what disability they have and greatly depends if they have taken the medicine. They are more able to control and manage themselves if they have taken it.

I	Do you think SEN will behave well when they see other students are obeying rules?
T	Yes, it would be a disaster if no one in the class is obedient.
I	Do you have any strategies to improve their classroom behavior?
T	Actually no, I don't have. Because most of them are willing to obey rules and don't need much strategies, except those who have several disability and do not take any medication.
I	How is their relationship with teachers? Do they treat teachers with courtesy? Do they take the initiative to help teachers?
T	Yes, they do.
I	How is their relationship with peers? Do ordinary students willing to work with students with SEN? Will they play with them? Do they have friends?
T	Yes, they will. As I observed during lessons, they do. Moreover, we have a scheme called "one teacher on student" which each teacher will in charge of one SEN. And the student told me that he doesn't have friends, I don't know if it is because he has poor social skills or what. He only plays with his relatives who are also in the same school. When I asked why he didn't find other to talk to, he said they have nothing to talk about. It may also because their self-esteem is low, and that their family does not given enough support to them, they have poor communication skills.
I	But do they have any interaction with non-SEN students?
T	Some have. Indeed, it is not because whether they are SEN or not. But may because students from other class would think that they are cleverer.
I	Do you think their social skills become stronger as they grow in the inclusive environment? Do they adapt to the social life? Do they treat others with courtesy and show love and care to their peers?
T	They do become better when they promote to upper primary. As I can see students in

	upper primary don't have much problem in their social relationship.
I	Indeed, now all students in your class are SEN, do you think it would be much beneficial to their social life if they are assigned to different classes?
T	It is not necessarily better, as they may get discriminated, given the fact that they learn slower than others. Students in the past might be willing to help their classmates, but nowadays kids are realistic and are not that helpful.
I	Do you think integrating students with SEN into ordinary school beneficial to them?
T	If they are not required to take the public exam. It is true that they are expected to learn all the things if those students need to take the TSA, but they do learn slower than others. If you push them to meet the standard, it could be a torture for them.
I	Do you think pushing them to meet the standard can help them make improvement?
T	Indeed it cannot. Because the difficulty level of the tests is getting higher and higher, even the ordinary students found it hard to do if they don't receive enough parental support, let alone those with SEN. Indeed, I support having prevocational schools. If we have known that those students cannot learn well, why don't we train them with certain skills and may be able to contribute to society when they grow up.
I	You talk about 'one teacher on student' scheme. What you do specifically?
T	We have to write a report every two months. We will talk with them constantly.
I	What do you talk about?
T	I will not talk about academic results, but just chitchatting, let them share their lives and then try to lead them to talk a bit about their academic performance. They may talk about their classmates. Indeed, to them, peers do not help them much. For those who are a bit capable, it is mainly because they have support from family. Their family may help them revise dictation, and they can get high marks. But they perform poorly in exam. It may be because they rely on rote learning and are not able to analyze or comprehend.

I	Can you think of some reasons for why those low-achievers perform poorly? Is it purely because of their ability or related to the level of parental support?
T	Both. But actually, if they are really weak, they cannot perform well even there is parental support, except for dictation.
I	You mentioned that you do not have any strategies to improve the social skills of SEN. Are there any factors hinder you?
T	It is because there is not much things I can help. I may just try to break things down so students will find it easier to handle the tasks. But it takes time and we don't have such time. They need to attend remedial class after school and no time left for me to do revision with them. So, if parents do not help with the revision, it is hard for me.
I	So sometimes, you cannot help them because you don't have the time?
T	Yes, I don't have the time and they don't have the time too.

**APPENDIX G – INTERVIEW WITH TEACHER E**

I	Can you describe the academic performance of students with SEN? Do they have continuous improvement in the subject? Is the academic performance gap between the non-SEN students and SEN students progressively narrowed or widened?
T	<p>Actually there are different kinds of SEN, and different SEN have different characteristics. There are nonetheless some improvements in the academic performance of some students, as they come to school, learn and do tasks every day. But for the academic performance gap, whether it will be narrowed or widened depends of the kind of SEN they have. For those have intellectual disability, they would have improvement but there are always great academic performance gap between them and non-SEN students. For those who have hyperactive disorder, their gap with non-SEN is narrow when they are in lower primary. But since they have low self-discipline and attention span, the gap will gradually be widened with those who are attentive. Since they cannot sit properly and always get punished by the teachers, they are also regarded as having poor discipline. For those who have hearing impairment, there is not much influence on them as our school has provided with certain exception. For example, their marks obtained in the speaking and listening tests are not counted. Therefore, their impairment did not really affect their academic results. Also, we would provide them with speech therapy. Therefore, if those with hearing impairment perform poorly academically, it is not really related to their disability but their learning attitude. Among all students with SEN, the academic performance of dyslexia is rather poor as they congenitally learn slower than others. So generally, there are certain wide academic performance gap between SEN and non-SEN who study hard. Therefore, for those have dyslexia, if they really can't catch up, we would just let it be. Even their parents would also let it be, otherwise, it would also be a torture for those students. The expectations from parents</p>



	and teachers on those students are low.
I	How about their learning skills such as note-taking skills, study skills and examination skills?
T	Not really good. There will be improvement if their parents pay much attention on them. Teachers do take courses and learn about inclusive practices, but we still find it hard to cater for the SEN since the class size is big. The situation will be better if teacher-students ratio is smaller. Our school will provide those students with remedial classes to improve their attention and memory. So it also is depended on the effectiveness of those classes. If school has much money to spend on organizing those classes, their learning skills would be improved. If they only take those classes eight times a year, the effect on them is small. Support form family also matter. If their parents don't know how to teach them or guide them to apply the knowledge learnt, the effect will be insignificant.
I	So it is important to have parental involvement?
T	Indeed, it is crucial. Some parents may have accepted that their children are like this...are slow learner, and just let it be. Under this circumstance, the situation may get worsen. Indeed, parents are like this because they have to work and do not have the time to take care of their children. When teachers told them about the academic problems of their children, they regarded us as putting too much pressure on their children.
I	Then how about their learning attitude? Do they prepare for lessons, revise after lessons, initiate questions in or after class?
T	Some of them do. For those who are hyperactive, they would only give response when the question is interesting to them. But usually, for those who are the low-achievers, they have low self-esteem and hence have low participation during lessons. They afraid of answering the questions wrongly and get mocked by their classmates. They generally

	<p>have low self-esteem and that affected their learning. Support from parents also matter, like in helping them to prepare for lessons and checking dictionary. If parents do not help, then they probably will not do preparation.</p>
I	<p>Do you think the inclusive environment, where there may be comparison between SEN and non-SEN, bring positive or negative influence on students with SEN?</p>
T	<p>Actually, in our school, either SEN or non-SEN have low learning motivation. So, they will not be any significant difference between them indeed. But those who study in schools which most students are good at studying, there may be negative influence. But in our school, non-SEN students also perform poorly or are lack of parental involvement, so seldom do we compare SEN with non-SEN.</p>
I	<p>So you mention students with SEN often found to have low self-esteem, what are possible reasons for that?</p>
T	<p>Mainly because their academic results are poorer, except the students with Asperger syndrome. For them, they are too confident and won't listen to others. But for others, in general, they have low self-esteem as there are many things they don't understand and that lead to two consequences. One is that they shut themselves off and do not take initiatives to give responses in class. Another one, which worried us the most, is that they conduct disruptive behavior like playing during lessons, irritating the teachers, yelling at the classmates, to draw attention. They think that they would be superior by doing so, but indeed they have low self-esteem.</p>
I	<p>Would you have high expectation on them?</p>
T	<p>We would only have reasonable expectation on them. For example, if they have poor academic results, we would just expect them to have higher level of learning motivation and be willing to learn. We know clearly that it won't be impossible for them to obtain outstanding result, so we won't have high expectation on them. But we are not having no</p>

	<p>expectation on them, but just in a reasonable level. For example, to them, we would just expect them to submit their homework on time, to behave well during lessons, to attempt to answer questions, etc. It is our practice that we call on the students with SEN to answer the questions first if they put up their hands and complement them when they give a good answer. These are to encourage them to speak in class.</p>
I	<p>Do having reasonable expectation on them help improve their performance?</p>
T	<p>I believe it is. And it is important to complement them when they meet the expectation, so as to maintain their learning motivation and to prevent them from lacking interest in studying.</p>
I	<p>Will there be any differentiation made for them in the examination?</p>
T	<p>No, but we may allow longer time for them to finish the paper and to give more reminder to them on the time when doing it. We would not have different sets of paper.</p>
I	<p>Are there any other support given to them?</p>
T	<p>We have remedial classes after school which is small-class based; and some special classes which aim to help them overcome their weakness classes to improve their social skills, emotion control, difficulties in writing, memory, etc.</p>
I	<p>What strategies do you adopt to improve students' motivation and self-esteem?</p>
T	<p>Um...like having a reward and punishment system. Give reward when they behave well and ask them to stay at school after class to finish the homework when they behave poorly. Indeed, we would have adjustment such that students with dyslexia can do less when doing copying work.</p>
I	<p>Does the reward and punishment system work on them?</p>
T	<p>Indeed, how they perform greatly depends on their learning motivation. If one is interested in learning, he or she will try to perform well and get things done. But those who have low motivation and poor learning attitude, their work are always messy and</p>

	<p>they submit the work late. For this reason, whether the system works on them also depends on their motivation and attitude. If they have positive attitude, the reward can further motivate them. But for those who have negative attitude, it is hard to motivate them with prizes. Especially kids nowadays are quite affluent and only expensive prizes can motivate them, but it is hard for us to prepare them with expensive prizes. But still we try to use the reward system to motivate them to behave well in class. Sometimes, it may help.</p>
I	<p>Are there any difficulties when trying to improve their learning performance?</p>
T	<p>We need to learn some techniques and need to spare our time, but we don't have enough time. You need to use your spare time to take care those students. The willingness to learn also matters. For some students, especially those are hyperactive, even you learn about how to cater for them, those techniques may not work on them. It's because to manage them, medication is the main method but it does not work sometimes or the parents stop dosing them if they think that the children have improved. Those children bring us the most challenges. They not only affect their own learning but also the learning of other classmates. So among all SEN, those with attention deficit and hyperactive disorder are the key headache for us. Indeed, we don't find managing those who have low incentive to learn troublesome, but those with attention deficit and hyperactive disorder are really hard to be managed and controlled.</p>
I	<p>Now I want to ask about their social skills. How is their relationship with teachers?</p>
T	<p>Most of them would treat teachers politely. There may be some exceptions when they face teachers who are too strict to them, but that's normal as even non-SEN behave in this way. Indeed, there is no big difference between their social relationship and others'. Students' relationship with teachers may get worse when they often behave poorly in class and do not obey the teachers, and then teachers may yell at them and develop a</p>

	poor relationship. Indeed, for some, they may intentionally challenge the teacher so as to make other students worship them.
I	Do they learn about rules and ritual as they promote?
T	It varies. Some students do, some do not. But generally, they will obey teachers, except those who have poor relationship with teachers. But it is not really related to the fact that they are SEN. All students are like this, especially for those who are in upper primary and in a stage that they like to rebel adults. Usually, low-achievers are much unwilling to obey rules or teachers. But for others, in general, they behave quite well.
I	So in general, SEN do not have problem in maintaining relationship with others?
T	It depends on their disabilities. Those who have autism have poor social skills. But no social problem for those with dyslexia, they have close relationship with their classmates. They work happily with others while playing football. But those with autism or intellectual disability may have poor social relationship, as they seldom talk and are not willing to express themselves.
I	Do you have any strategies to help with their social skills?
T	Encourage them to attend classes that teach them about social skills or after school activities which they can have more opportunities to interact with classmates and learn about skills. Social workers also help train their social skills.
I	Do the students accept students with SEN? Are they willing to work with them during pair or group activities in class?
T	Yes, they do. They do not bully or look down on others because they perform poorly academically.
I	Are the SEN willing to help people? Do they treat people with courtesy? Do they have improvement in these areas as they grow?
T	They treat people well. I can see those in upper primary will take the initiative to help

	those in lower primary. They are kind.
I	Do you think it is a good idea or it is beneficial to SEN to integrate them in classroom with non-SEN?
T	<p>I think it is fine they study together, but the reality is...they all need to take the public exam, and SEN nonetheless may have pulled down the overall academic performance of the school and affected the learning of non-SEN. It is because in order to cater for SEN, we have to simplify the curriculum and slow down the teaching pace. Indeed, in a class where there is only one SEN who receives adequate parental support, there will not be any problems. But in a class where there are three to five SEN students, you got to lower the difficulty level of the curriculum and affect the learning of non-SEN. In the aspect of their personal development, IE do have positive influence on the confidence building of SEN, especially those who are with intellectual disability as they don't need to study with those who have several intellectual disabilities. It is also good to those non-SEN as they learn about the diversity in society. The only problem came from the assessment system. It is not tally with integrated education. The system expects students to have high achievement, but in the reality, time is not given enough and class size is big while teachers need extra efforts to cater for SEN. It is hard for teachers to give consideration to both students' achievement in the exam and the needs of students with SEN. It lead to a situation that both SEN and non-SEN students have poor academic performance such that non-SEN can learn about complex ideas and knowledge but in order to cater the needs of SEN, their opportunities are taken away. I support the philosophy of IE. But the education system in HK does not tally with it. I agree that we need to fit SEN in the society through IE, but the competitive and brutal education system hinder the development of IE.</p>
I	Do you school put all the SEN in one class or assign them to different classes?

T	It is impossible to put them in one class. We would assign them to different classes, except the “elite class”. It is not because we do not allow them to enter the “elite class”, but because their academic performance does not meet the requirement to enter it. We tried to put all SEN in a class. The result was undesirable or even terrible. Teachers couldn’t handle such a classroom and failed to manage all. They couldn’t teach as there was high level of disruptive behavior.
I	Do SEN often have disruptive behavior?
T	Only those who are hyperactive. They couldn’t sit properly, and disturb the lesson seriously. One in a class is enough to create disturbance to the lesson. Those who have emotional problem also greatly disturb the delivery of lesson.
I	What are those kinds of emotional problems?
T	Easy to get agitated. Always think that people treat them not well. Complain a lot. Actually, the child's bad behaviour reflects on his poor home training. Especially for child who is hyperactive. We learn from the parents that they cannot discipline the child since he was a little kid. If there is better home training, the problem will not be that bad.
I	Then how is their self-discipline? Are they able to manage their emotion?
T	They have no problem with that. They don’t have much emotional problem. Only those in upper primary and are hyperactive may have problem. For those who are dyslexic, they are quiet, obedient and don’t have much disruptive behavior. Those hyperactive are clever but they cannot be patient and like to talk. That’s why they are hard to be managed.
I	Does the child’s disruptive behavior become less as they grow?
T	No, some may even get worse. As they enter the adolescence period, they start to rebel against adult. We seldom see students who are naughty when they are young become better when they grow up. Contrarily, students who are obedient when they are in lower

	<p>primary become hard to be disciplined when they get older. But they may get better when they enter secondary schools, it may be because they have stronger self-discipline.</p>
I	<p>Is that besides those who are hyperactive, other students with SEN are willing to obey rules and teachers?</p>
T	<p>Dyslexia may not submit their homework on-time as they cannot handle the task, but they do not have behavioral problem. Indeed, whether they behave well or not greatly depend on their personality instead of their disability.</p>
I	<p>Does peer influence help in improving their behavioral problems? Such that they see other non-SEN would follow rules, do they model them and follow rules?</p>
T	<p>No, they would just mock those who obey rules. They regard them as stupid. Indeed, as a teacher in the mainstream, it is hard for us to discipline them as well as to cater their needs in academic learning. We tried sending those students to special schools to study few weeks, and they have great improvement in their discipline when they came back. I think it's mostly because the teachers in those schools do not to manage their learning but only focus on their behavioral problems. Besides, teachers in special schools may use techniques that are not allowed to be used in mainstream schools to discipline the child like corporal punishment.</p>
I	<p>But have you tried any strategies to improve their behavioral problems?</p>
T	<p>Also by using reward and punishment system. Like they will get a sticker when they behave well. But to be honest, it did not work really well. They always failed to achieve the standard and failed to get the reward, and soon they are no longer motivated by the reward system to behave better. The effect of reward system is short term. Indeed, those students do know they need to obey rules, but they are just unwilling to obey. Some of them may even take advantages of their SEN and not follow teachers' instruction. Furthermore, ordinary students may complain about it and ask why they can get a reward</p>



	<p>when they are doing something that they should do. They think that everyone should pay attention in class, but why those students can get a reward because of that. They also complain about why those students have the privilege of not getting punished when they behave poorly, or why teachers are much patient to them. They think that teachers are treating students unfairly. So, teachers need to explain to students that it is because they have disability when SEN are not here. Sometimes, parents may also question about it such that students with SEN are given much longer time when doing assessment and afraid that it as unfair to their children who are ordinary. Indeed, when developing IE, we are not only dealing the problems with SEN, but also other matters.</p>
I	<p>Other strategies to improve their behavioral problems?</p>
T	<p>The use of cooperative learning in lessons. Provide students with a variety of after-school activities so as to develop the other strength of students and to give them opportunity to perform in front of audience to extend their social experience. This can also help develop their confidence, compensating their frustration got from academic learning.</p>
I	<p>Do those activities that require team working help train their self-discipline?</p>
T	<p>Yes but the effect does not last long. For example, they may perform well and follow the rules set during PE lessons, but they forgot about those rules when the lesson ended.</p>
I	<p>What are your difficulties when trying to improve their social skills?</p>
T	<p>Indeed, it is hard to improve as it is related to their congenital problem like those with autism. For other students with SEN, they do not have much social problem. Indeed, students' learning difficulties do not hinder them to social or make others not willing to talk to them or make friends with them. They do have circle of friends.</p>
I	<p>How about the difficulties in trying to improve their behavioral problem?</p>

T	<p>They are not willing to obey. Some are spoiled by parents. When we tell them about the problems with their children, they tend to endorse their children and do not work with us to tackle the problem. It is important that parents work with teachers to discipline the children. Even though we teach them about obeying rules, they are free from restraint when they are at home and there will not be any improvement in their behavioral problems. If parents give support to the way that the school deal with things and not regarding the school as criticizing their child but doing for their sake, teachers can help improve the performance of students in a larger extent.</p>
I	<p>Does the school organize talk for parents?</p>
T	<p>Yes, we do.</p>
I	<p>So, as a whole, what improvement shall be made in the IE programme?</p>
T	<p>The assessment system. Training for teachers. More social workers. Though we have two social workers, it is still not enough. Because dealing with the problems of SEN takes time. It is not just about discipline, they may also have emotional problem and we need to spend time to talk with them, it may take a whole morning. And after that, we need to talk with their parents. There is a great burden. Also, more funding should be provided to schools to hire more teaching assistants, who can be responsible for taking care the SEN when having lessons, at least once a week. And the assessment system is not tally with the concept of IE. It requires them to meet the same standard as ordinary students do, but without giving enough support. That just crack down their confidence. They can never catch up and ever be the low-achievers.</p>
I	<p>Do you have any suggestion to improve the system?</p>
T	<p>Don't put too much focus on subject learning but to develop different strengths of the students. Develop a curriculum that allows them to learn different things, like the prevocational curriculum. I don't think it is a good idea to push those students to study</p>

	things or have exam on things that they cannot handle well. It is important that we help those students find their own strength and help them develop it.
I	So you think that we should not put much focus on students' academic results but other area of development?
T	Yes. Though we have the slogan (Learning: It's more than scoring), the system in HK is exam-oriented and not tally with the IE programme at all.