IEP Process from Theory to Practice: A Case Study in an Inclusive Public School in Dubai.

عملية الخطة التربوية الفردية من النظرية إلى الممارسة: دراسة حالة
في مدرسة عامّة تطبق سياسة الإندماج في دبي

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
Masters in Education

Faculty of Education

Dissertation Supervisor
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March-2012

Abstract

The dissertation examines how IEP is used to support the education of students with disabilities included in public schools in Dubai. Although the Federal Law 29/2006 aimed at including children with disabilities in all public schools, the law did not materialize before May 2010 when the Ministry of Education adopted the implementation of this law and issued General Rules for the Provision of the Special Education Programs and Services for Public and Private Schools. Since IEP (Individualized Education Plans) are considered the 'cornerstone' of special education and the process that ensures quality education of students with disabilities, the researcher uses this paper to focus on the history, development and the implementation of IEPs. The researcher triangulated her data by carrying out interviews with different participants, conducting classroom observations and analyzing relevant documents.

The study found that the IEP did, in fact, play a crucial role at the heart of the special education process. The school strived to adhere to the main components of the IEP process, but many pillars needed to be strengthened. The IEP team did not function as a cooperative unit and parents were not involved. This might be due to the recency of the process and the lack of trained human resources available. Although the study found that there was a gap between policy and practice, it was found that the schools are taking the proper steps to get there.

تفحص الرسالة كيفية استعمال الخطط التربوية الفردية لمساعدة الطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة المدمجين في المدارس الحكومية في دبي. ومع أن القانون الإتحادي 2006/29 هدف لدمج الأطفال ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المدارس الحكومية والخاصة، إلا أن هذا القانون لم يطبّق فعلياً قبل أن تتبنى وا زرة التربية والتعلم تطبيقه فعلياً وذلك بنشر القواعد العامة لتطبيق برامج وخدمات التربية الخاصة في المدارس الحكومية والخاصة في سنة 2010. وبما أن الخطة التربوية الفردية تعتبر "حجر أساس" التربية الخاصة التي تؤمن نوعية التعليم الذي يتلقاه الطلبة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة، قررت الباحثة بالتركيز في هذا البحث على تاريخ وتطور وتطبيق الخطط التربوية الفردية. تمت عملية جمع البيانات عن طريق عقد مقابلات مع أفراد مختلفين، بالإضافة إلى إجراء الملاحظات الصفية وتحليل الوثائق ذات الصلة.

وجدت الدراسة أن الخطط التربوية الفردية تلعب دوراً حاسماً في العملية التعليمية في التربية الخاصة. كما و وجدت أن المدارس تسعى للإلتزام بالمكونات الأساسية للخطة الفردية، لكن هناك حاجة لتعزيز العديد من ركائز هذه الخطة. فقد وجد أن فريق برنامج التعليم الفردي لا يعمل كوحدة تعاونية كما وأن دور أولياء الأمور كان شبه معدوم وهذا قد يعزى إلى حداثة هذه العملية ونقص الموارد البشرية المدربة المتاحة. وعلى الرغم من أن الدراسة وجدت فجوة بين السياسات والممارسات، إلا أنه قد تبين أن المدارس تتخذ الخطوات اللازمة للوصول إلى الممارسات الموصى بها.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been possible without the unfailing support and guidance of several individuals who have contributed-in different ways- to the preparation and completion of this work.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dean Eman Gaad for her loving guidance and support throughout this process. Her valuable advice, sincerity and constant encouragement made this difficult task easy.

My Aunt and cousin who have been my 'rock' it times of desperation. My husband and son whose smiles and support got me through it all. and finally my Mom who was my source of inspiration.

I would like to thank The British University of Dubai for the opportunity to pursue my studies, for providing all the means to insure our success and for creating an environment conducive to learning for all of us.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures and Tables

1.   Introduction

The proceeding introduction provides essential background of the context within which the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process emerged and became known as one of the essential tools for successful inclusion and intervention in the educational field for children with disabilities. After a brief snapshot of the evolution of inclusion movement, there will be an overview of significance, objectives, the specific research questions pertaining to this research paper which aims at shedding a light on the role the IEP process plays within the UAE context namely in Dubai elementary public schools which have a mission to provide inclusive services to children with disabilities by 2020 in regular classrooms.

1.1   Background: A Snapshot of the Evolution of Inclusion in the World

There is a growing consciousness around the world that all children must have the right to be educated together in inclusive schools where every person is accepted and supported by their peers, teachers and community members (Bevan-Brown 2006). This consciousness takes its roots in the late 1800s in the United States of America (USA) when parents of children with disabilities voiced their concern regarding the education of their children. There were a significant number of students with disabilities who were excluded from public education. They had a restricted choice between two realities: either to join a specialized charity institution completely excluded, or be kept at home without any specialized care (Apollos 2010). According to Yell in 2006 (cited in Hill 2010), 1.7 million students with disabilities did not obtain educational services and 3 million other students who were, in fact, admitted to public schools did not receive an adequate education that serves their needs.

It was not until 1971 when the world of education saw a beam of light after issuing the Declaration of Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons by the United Nations stating that individuals with disability had the same rights as any other human being in all aspects that

facilitate the development of their capacity and ability to the maximum degree feasible (United Nations 1971, cited in Goodman & Bond 1993). In response to the aforementioned Declaration, some attempts to include children with disabilities were made in the USA but in vain and professionals in the world of the education were still feeling frustrated. In some instances, they attempted to educate them in separate homogeneous classes and at other times included within the regular classes. Nevertheless the results were the same; in both cases progress was 'disappointing' (Goodman & Bond 1993).

Hill (2010) further elaborates on the major issues during those earlier times. She argues that identification of children with disabilities was random, inconsistent and most frequently inappropriate; professionals and educators were against parental participation; the main goal of providing special programs was to minimize disruption in the general classroom; and to top that all, general educators and special educators did not cooperate and were rather seen as competitors, a point further elaborated on in the literature review. Hence, there was a great push by parents to obtain an appropriate education for their children in public schools which, in turn, led to the enactment of Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) -otherwise known as Public Law 94-142. EAHCA is describes as the "pinnacle of Special Education advocacy", the "legislative heart of special education", and "the single most important piece of legislation" regarding children with disabilities (Gargiulo 2003; Hulett 2009, cited in Hill 2010, p. 20). In explanation of the purpose of EAHCA, Zettel states that

> the specific purposes of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act are fourfold: 1) to insure that all handicapped children have publicly funded special education and related services made valuable to them no later than 1978; 2) to insure the rights of handicapped children, their parents and their guardians; 3) to relieve the financial burden placed on state and local governments to accomplish the above-mentioned purposes; and 4) to assess and insure effectiveness of efforts to educate handicapped children.
>
> (1977, p.10)

As a result, in order to ensure compliance with the law, and protect the right of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for children with disabilities, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) became an essential part of the law mandating that every child needing a special education program is entitled to an IEP (Goodman & Bond 1993), and it became a "*sine qua non*" of EAHCA (Smith 1990, p.6). Using an IEP as an 'effective' measure to give 'specialized education' for students with disabilities is grounded on the work of the French physician, Itard during the eighteenth century. He designed the nucleus of what is referred to in the field of education today as 'IEP' for a twelve year old boy found in the woods unclothed and showing animal behaviour to help him gain needed social and self-help skills. Other educators like Seguin and Maria Montessori also contributed to development of IEPs by designing an instructional plan with sensorimotor exercises based on a comprehensive assessment of children and youth with mental retardation (Garguilo 2003, cited in Hill 2010).

However, the EAHCA did not successfully grant children with special education needs access to the 'general' classroom or the 'general' curriculum and unfortunately after more than a decade of implementation, research unveiled that the reality of the IEP has been significantly less than its promise and the intent of the law remains unfulfilled (Smith 1990; Whitworth 1994). In response to the general dissatisfaction of the status of special education and the implementation of IEPs, the EAHCA was reauthorized in 1990 and became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The changes it brought about were beyond the name it carried, the most important of which was giving the children with disabilities 'access' to the general curriculum with an emphasis on transition services to help them better prepare for postsecondary life (Craparo 2003), which made it a 'brilliant' IDEA.

In 1994, the dissatisfaction with the education of children with disabilities and the call for inclusion became a universal phenomenon. More than 92 governments and 25 international organizations met together in Salamanca, Spain to discuss the framework of action to include children with disabilities, which led to the declaration of the Salamanca

Statement by the United Nations calling upon all the governments of the world "to give the highest priority to inclusive education" (The Salamanca Statement, 1994). During the same year, in 1994, following the Salamanca Statement, inclusion "crossed the Atlantic" to Britain and where IEPs became a requirement for students identified disabilities (Tod 1999, p. 184).While in 1997 in the USA, IDEA underwent yet another reauthorization to increase the emphasis on educational results and post school outcomes for children with disabilities, in other words enhancing liability for student's performance, and expanding the content of the IEP and the members of IEP team where parents' participation became mandated by the law (Huefner 2000). And finally in 2004, IDEA was reauthorized to align with the 'No Child Left Behind Act' underlining the requirement of every child to pass the state's standardized tests before advancing to the next grade level, in addition to having the children fully included in the regular classroom, which influenced service delivery and put more emphasis on the IEP to adequately serve their needs (Hill 2010).

Shaddock et al. (2009) points out that "research confirms educators throughout the world are getting better at including more students with special education needs in mainstream schools in classrooms and many parents favour inclusion". More specifically, IEPs are now a universal phenomenon as a strategy for successful inclusion and countries who adopted special legislation for special education consider IEP as a 'key element' (Mitchell et al. 2010). Whereas the world narrative between legislation and practice for inclusion ranges from 100% inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools like in Italy where there are "no special schools" and countries like Finland, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal where "less than 1% of their students are in special schools" (Shaddock et al. 2009, 77) to disheartening situation of children with disabilities in Africa where even basic education for all is a challenge considering the financial and political reality. Only 5% of children with disabilities attend school in Africa and "parents may send disabled children out to beg rather than enroll them is schools" (Hillman & Jenkner 2004, p.3). In some countries of the world like Eastern Europe and the Gulf Arab States

inclusive education remains very much limited to special needs education, and in some instances, to integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools that provide physical access and equipment to these children without implying a systemic change of educational structures.

(UNESCO 2008, p. 16)

No research was conducted to examine the IEP process in terms of development, implementation or existence in law provisions in the Arab world. However, what we do know is that elaborate strategies will need to be implemented gradually to reach the goal of inclusive education for all in all Arab countries (UNESCO 2008). ElZein points out that

in collaboration with UNESCO, … namely Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates signed an agreement in1991 to adopt the basic principles of special education for children with special needs. It was meant to recapitulate what was more of baby step towards special education in the 1960 and 1970.

(2009, p. 165)

Gaad upon examining inclusive education in 9 different countries in the Middle East (Palestine, Tunisia, Egypt, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and UAE), demonstrated that "there is a kind of a 'will' to proceed with the inclusive process…, however, the 'way' is far from agreed or achieved" (2010, p.94). She further elucidates that it is one thing to protect the rights of people with disabilities on a policy level and a completely different scenario of how these policies unfold in practice. Gaad further cautions that most of the regions' policies "exist in response to a worldwide global movement and to deflect any international criticism, rather than being part of a genuine plan for a carefully examined long term inclusive process." (2010, p. 96). As for the UAE, the focus of this research paper, its educational system has evolved in a relatively short span of around 40 years. It transformed from being, at the onset of the union in 1971, "immature and inaccessible to many cities and villages" (MOE 2012) to trying to adopt policies

and practices "to ensure that all learners in the country achieve the best possible levels of education" (Al Ateeqi 2009, p. 87).

Today, the UAE government considers education one of its top priorities and has taken some significant steps in the past few years towards catering for the needs of people with disabilities, namely children with disabilities. It started with charitable organizations under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Affairs to provide services to children with disabilities in exclusion from the 'general' education, and the Ministry of Health watching over students with disabilities who are permanently hospitalized or frequent visitors of the physiotherapy department. Moreover, the literature argues that student, who do not have obvious physical features that gives away their disability, might go through the whole educational system undetected (Gaad 2004, 2010).   Bradshaw et al. further elaborate that "identified students" with relatively mild learning difficulties were catered for in resource rooms or special classes within public schools, while the ones with "obvious" disabilities had no public access to educational facilities and "the onus is on the parents to find appropriate programs and services. Many parents of children with disabilities choose to keep their children at home" (2004, p. 52).

It was not up until 2006 when there was a turning point in the management of individuals with disabilities albeit on a legislative level after 12 years from the Salamanca Statement of 1994. The Federal Law No. 29 of 2006 which

> aims to guarantee the rights of the person with special needs and to provide all the services within the bounds of his abilities and capacities. The special needs may not be a reason to hinder the person with special needs from obtaining such rights and services especially in the field of welfare and social, economic, health, educational, professional, cultural and promotional services.
>
> (MSA 2006, p. 3)

Although it took a while for the government to provide needed policy for the education of children with disabilities, in spite of this, schools did not embrace that change as swiftly as it was hoped. Although there were some attempts to implement the Federal Law 29/2006, like Indemaj, which is an organisation that was established with the goal of supporting the Ministry of Education's mission in ensuring that all children attending public schools obtain quality education. Indemaj started some attempts in including children with disabilities in public schools by preparing an equipped resource room for their service. Although this concept does not fully carries the spirit of the law, it can be perceived as a step towards inclusion (Gaad, n.d). It wasn't until 2010 that the Ministry of Education gave the schools the 'know-how' of inclusion by developing some guidelines and provisions of special education in the UAE under the motto 'School for All'. It is evident that improving services for students with disabilities is targeted by the Ministry of Education which is ensured by developing Individualized Education Program as seen in MOE strategy 2020 where under the theme "Student Equality", it states that it will "ensure that students with special needs receive extra and individualized support to integrate them into the educational system." (MOE 2010)

1.2   Rationale, Purpose & Significance of the Study

Several steps are taken in the world scene whether on a policy level or translated to 'best practices' in relation to the education of children with disabilities. The right of these children to education is reflected in most cases in official laws whether local, regional or international. The trend now is the establishment of free public inclusive schools with regular least restrictive classrooms for everyone including children with disabilities no matter what the severity of their disability is. To ensure compliance with the spirit and procedures of the law the IEP process was created and applied in most parts of the world as the best known strategy for now to reach to that desired goal of successful inclusion within the regular classroom. As great as this process sounds and as happy as it made educators initially thinking they found the "magic wand" to solve all the complex issues in the field of education, namely inclusion; yet in practice (after 37 years) it proved to be mired in

controversies and did not so far live up to its initial promise due to many issues; either procedural, financial, pedagogical, or conceptual in nature.

In the Arab world, including children and youth with disabilities is still nascent, in fact in the UAE it only started 2-3 years ago as was discussed earlier. Although the IEP has been in use since 2009 at least, there are no official published studies on the effectiveness of the IEP process, its key team members or its effectiveness for that matter in spite of the fact that IEP has become the 'critical instrument' to comprehend the mechanism of including children with disabilities in the general classroom and was perceived as the cornerstone of special education that portrays the quality of special education services provided in schools. This study will attempt to shed a light on this contemporary phenomenon in the UAE to put it under the spot light in its earlier stages.

The objective of this study is to look into the IEP process, understand it both on a theoretical level as reflected in the UAE policy and in practice as it unfolds in an inclusive public school.   Since the IEP team is quintessential as the developer, implementer, and evaluator of the IEP, this research aims at exploring their roles to identify issues and gaps once the IEP is carried out by them in the field. Furthermore, through an exploration of the literature review, the researcher aims to conclude by "learning from the past and starting from where others have stopped" which is indispensible if the UAE is to advance in inclusive practices (Gaad 2010, p. 97) where there are many important lessons to learn, and many mistakes to avoid.

1.3   Research Questions

The study aims at answering the following research questions:
1. How does the IEP process unfold:
    a.   as intended in the "School for All"
    b.   as reflected in practice in a Public School in Dubai?
2. What is the role of IEP team in the IEP process:
    a.   As intended in the "School for All"

1.4 Limitations of the study

There were several factors that might have affected the quality of the presented research; some of these challenges can be identified as follows:

1. Cultural Limitations: although the researcher is familiar with the Emirati culture, but It was difficult to understand the Emirati accent during the interviews and observations. Moreover, in two interviews with the parents, the fathers were the main speakers, and due to the male-female sensitivity in the culture, the participants had a sense of unease while conducting the interview and therefore limited their answer to the minimum possible.

2. Missing IEP Documents: upon obtaining the parental approval to conduct the research, the parents did not permit the researcher to have copies of the students' IEPs due to some confidential information regarding the family's income and level of education. Therefore a substantial piece of data that could be of use in the research findings and discussion could not be obtained.

3. Discrepancy: Since the researcher is bilingual, upon examining the "School for All" document, a great discrepancy was found between the English version and the Arabic one. The English had many missing parts that were either not included at all or translated very briefly. As for the Arabic one, it was found to be inconsistent in the information it offers.

2.   Literature Review

This chapter examined the literature to provide the groundwork for answering the research questions. It explored the IEP process as part of the bigger process of special education, how this process unfolds theoretically and issues that occurred in practice. Furthermore it investigated the role of the IEP team in implementing the IEP process both in theory and in reality upon implementation. The last section looked into research conducted in the UAE which although not directly relating to the IEP process nor to the role of the IEP team since no published research was found, yet research about inclusion in the UAE was reviewed to find general trends and deeper understanding of special education in this country. It is timely to point out that most of the research is – not surprisingly- conducted in the West more particularly the USA the birthplace of the IEP process.

2.1   IEP Process at the Heart of Special Education Process

The IEP process has three "fundamental purposes: They offer all those involved the opportunity for input, provide each child a program tailored to his or her individual needs in the least restrictive environment, and enhance accountability through periodic evaluation reviews" (Goodman & Bond 1993, p. 410). Before examining the IEP process, it is important to note that it unfolds within the broader framework of special education process and is considered its"centerpiece of service delivery and accountability" (Shriner & Destefano 2003, p. 147). According to Hulett in 2009 (cited in Hill 2010, p. 21) the special education process is built on "six pillars":

> The first "pillar", a free appropriate public education (FAPE), is based upon
> a "zero reject" philosophy in which all children despite the extent of the
> disability cannot be denied the right to an education. The second "pillar",
> least restrictive environment (LRE), refers to placement in which a student
> with disabilities receives instruction … with their non-disabled peers to the
> maximum appropriate extent. The third "pillar", the individualized

education program (IEP), is the document developed by an IEP team that is tailored specifically for the student with disabilities … The fourth "pillar", procedural due process, is the requirement that affords the student and parents/guardians safeguards pertaining to the student's education … The fifth "pillar", nondiscriminatory assessment, refers to the process of evaluating a student with disabilities … using tests that are neither racially, culturally, nor linguistically biased. Finally, the last "pillar", parental participation, refers to "meaningful parental involvement" … in the decision-making process that affects the child's education."

Albeit these pillars are symbolic in nature, the IEP since its initiation under EAHCA was 'intended' to be at the heart of special education process. In 1978, Senator Robert Stafford emphasized this point when he identified the IEP as "the central part of this Act as we wrote it and intended it to be carried out" (Christle & Yell 2010, p.109). Under IDEA 10 steps portray the special education process in a clear, simple and linear fashion as illustrated in Figure 1.

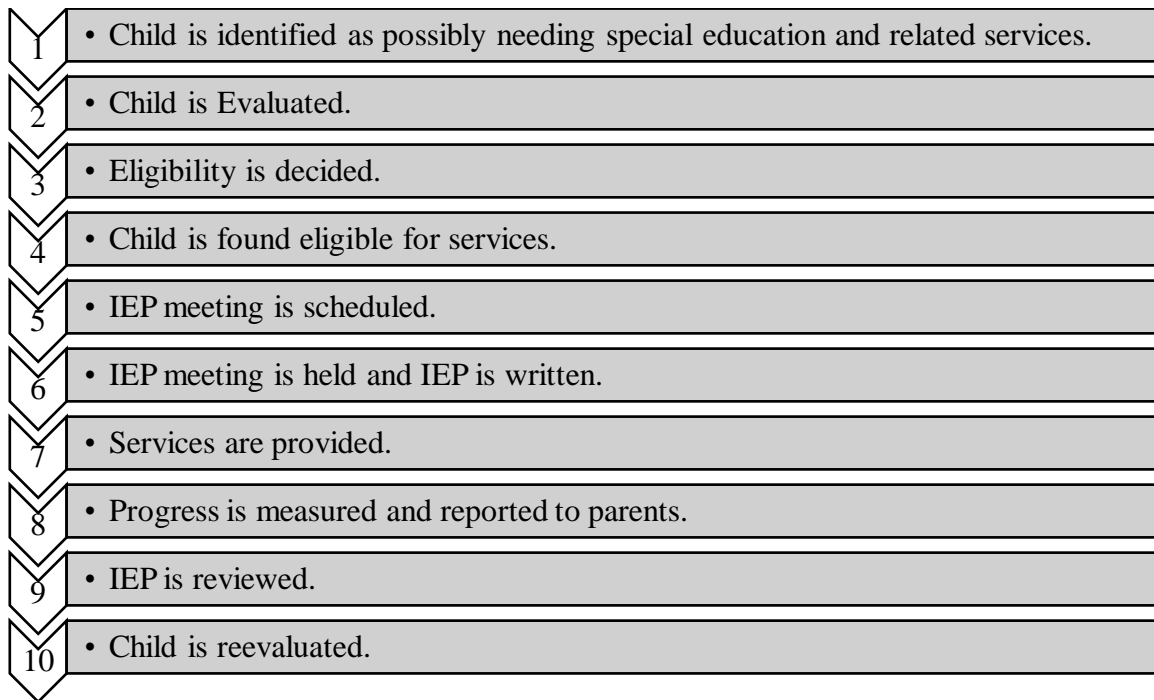| 1 | • Child is identified as possibly needing special education and related services. |
2	• Child is Evaluated.
3	• Eligibility is decided.
4	• Child is found eligible for services.
5	• IEP meeting is scheduled.
6	• IEP meeting is held and IEP is written.
7	• Services are provided.
8	• Progress is measured and reported to parents.
9	• IEP is reviewed.
10	• Child is reevaluated.

Figure 1 The 10 Steps of Special Education Process

(Adapted from OSERS 2000, p. 2-4)

It is evident from these steps that the greater part of the intervention for students with disabilities has to do with the IEP process. The initial steps 1-4 in Figure 2, revolving around identification, assessment and determination of eligibility of the student to require special education, provide the groundwork for the start of the IEP process. Steps 4-9 describe the steps that directly relate to the IEP process within the larger framework. This involves designing, directing, monitoring the needed educational interventions and services to the students with disabilities and inherent within is a total reviewing of the IEP at least once a year. (Heufner 2000; Drasgow et al. 2001) Finally, step 10 is a total re-evaluation of the whole process, in order to redesign - if need be - the whole intervention based on the changes that occurred after implementing the IEP for a maximum of 3 years (OSERS 2000).

2.2   IEP Process in Theory

The IEP process should be on-going, dynamic, and flexible. Granting that the details within the IEP process might slightly differ in different countries, yet they are influenced by IDEA and most countries' have the IEP as "a key element to its provisions for students with special educational needs" (Mitchell et al. 2010 p. 18). The IEP process basically unfolds within "five phases". These phases are illustrated in Figure 2 and following is a general exploration on the nature of each phase.
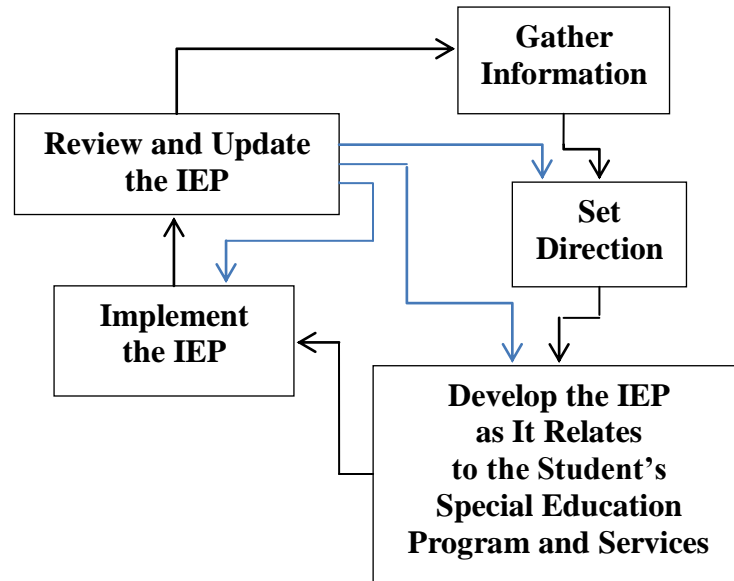
Figure 2 The Five Phases of the IEP Process

(Adapted from MOE-Ontario 2004, p. 10)

The 'Gather Information' phase provides the crucial multifaceted information needed to formulate a holistic understanding of the student's "learning profile and programing needs" in order to develop the IEP. This information is collected through: reviewing of important documents such as past IEPs, school records, etc.; consultation with key individuals such as parents, teachers, the student, etc; conducting student observations; deciding on further assessment if need be; and this all culminates with recording the information and consolidating it as a foundation for the next step (MOE-Ontario 2004, pp. 12). Next in line is the 'Set Direction' phase characterized by the formation of the IEP team whose role will be discussed in section 2.4 of this chapter. This team is mainly composed of educators, parents, and the student (when possible) working together in a true spirit of 'collaboration'. According to Reiman and Copolla (2010, p. 1) "the quality of this collaboration is a significant determinant of effectiveness of special education programs".

Once IEP team gathered the information and set the direction, it is time for phase three of the IEP process which is to 'Develop the IEP as it Relates to the Student's Special Education Program and Services'. This phase allows the team to consult in order to

produce what is coined by Kaye & Aserlind (1979) as the 'product' of the IEP process –
the IEP document. This document should include the following:

> Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance;
> measurable annual goals; method for collecting and reporting student
> progress; special education and related services; extent to which student will
> not participate in general education classroom; student's participation in
> statewide or district-wide assessments; projected date for beginning
> services, anticipated frequency, location, & duration; [and] transition
> services (Chrislte & Yell 2010, p. 110)

Upon the completion of the IEP document, the team decides on the mechanism of
implementing the IEP and assign "responsibilities for implementing and monitoring" and
making sure that the key individuals "directly responsible for instruction, as well as parents
and the student, have a copy of the IEP" (MOE-Ontario 2004, p. 44).

'Implement the IEP' phase starts when the IEP document is put into effect and "the
magnitude of the process becomes apparent when the time comes to implement all the IEP
requirements" (Kaye & Aserlind 1979, p. 141). "Continuous", "on-going" and "multiple"
assessment of the student should characterize this phase to allow teachers on a regular
basis to "adjust daily instruction to maintain optimal learning conditions for the student"
(MOE-Ontario 2004, p. 45). In the "development and implementation" phases, according
to Kaye & Aserlind (1979, p. 140), "there must be room … to address the issue of 'not
knowing' ... The product must be viewed as representing the best thinking at one point in
time, and it should be subject to both scepticism and trial". The final phase and which can
be considered another gathering of information phase is the 'Review and Update the IEP'.
According to IDEA this phase has to happen at least once a year in order to update the IEP
document based on a whole year's intervention and implementation. This final phase is "an
intrinsic step in the dynamic phenomena of a child, learning, growing and changing" (Kaye
& Aserlind 1979, p. 141). Having explored the theoretical framework of the IEP process

the next section deals with the major 'problematic' features of IEP process upon implementation.

2.3   IEP Process in Practice

What seems to be a straight forward process, and while researchers perceive that "the underlying concepts of the IEP are philosophically and educationally sound"; however, upon implementation there was "far-reaching consequences on the education of students placed in special education – consequences not always in the students' best interest" (Smith 1990, p. 8). Whitworth (1994, p. 12) also believes that the IEP process "although an excellent concept in theory", yet it "has largely failed to live up to its promise. This failure, however, should not be laid at the feet of the concept itself. Rather, it is primarily a result of the way it has been operationalized".   Upon personal communications with leaders who were identified by Goodman & Bond (1993) as 'knowledgeable' and 'critical' to the passage of EAHCA and the IEP, they demonstrated that these leaders

> in retrospect … are very disappointed with the IEP, J. Gallagher … called it a "disaster." F. Weintraub … explained, "it was never supposed to guide day to day classroom activities," and A. Abeson confirmed, "Nothing turned out the way it was intended." … These leaders believed the IEP has come to dominate rather than support the teaching process and done little to promote children's welfare." (Goodman & Bond 1993, p. 413)

Dudley- Marling (1985, p. 67) further warned that "unless the IEP as a document and a process actually makes a qualitative difference in the education of handicapped students, it is probably not worth the effort". Furthermore, Tod points out that if this document is not "translated into practice - it thus becomes a cumbersome paperwork exercise which results in a little educational benefit for the pupil" (1999, p. 184). Looking at the IEP as a document it is clear that it covers the particular needs, requirements, services, and accommodations. It is perceived as the 'vehicle' by which students with

disabilities may have positive educational experience (Trach & Sheldon 2000). Hill demonstrates how this document is a tool with multiple roles stating that the IEP is

> the document which directs all educational aspects for students with disabilities… a communication vehicle between parent and schools … a management tool with a set of procedures … a list of resources needed … a compliance/monitoring tool … Finally … a tool in which the student's progress is evaluated according to the extent in which IEP goals are met. (2010, p. 28)

Research indicates that the challenges faced in implementing the IEP process lies in the above mentioned multiple roles assigned to the 'product' of the process – the IEP document which on a theoretical level was developed to be the "keystone" of special education law (Hulett 2009 cited in Hill 2010, p. 28) and the "blue print" for service delivery (Huefner 2000, p. 195). In a review of special education in Australian Capital Territory (ACT) public and private schools, Shaddock et al. (2009, p. 69) states that the IEPs "tend to serve multiple roles and this could be part of their problem". Mitchell et al. (2010, p. 15) explain that "the challenge facing education policy makers" is to ensure that "the IEPs serve all their roles without distorting the primacy of acting as an educational planning document". Nevertheless, they recommend that "the IEPs should not be expected to serve so many diverse purposes and that their focus should be exclusively on generating improved learning for students with special educational needs". Failing to do so will result in using IEP documents as an "instrument for securing increased resources" (Tod 1999, p. 184), or allowing it to become only "a mechanism for ensuring accountability" (Mitchell et al. 2010, p. 15). No wonder that Shaddock et al. believes that research is yet to determine "the effectiveness" of IEP "for improving student learning outcomes" (2009, p. 68).

IEP process although identified by some research as crucial for special education especially inclusion within regular classroom, but it also caused a major shift in pedagogy - a shift not always positive in nature (Goodman & Bond 1993). Mitchell et al. (2010, p. 51)

explains that for the "curriculum" to be "accessible" to students with disabilities in regular classrooms, changes have to occur "in relation to content, teaching materials, and the responses expected from the learners". This could be achieved through

> (a)   Modifications (e.g., computer responses instead of oral responses, enlarging the print), (b) substitutions (e.g., Braille for written materials); (c) omissons (e.g., omitting very complex work); and (d) compensations (e.g., self care skills).

These are all a reflection of what is decided in the IEP. The law has intended that "classroom practice … be guided by the IEP", yet Smith points out that "data support the contention that IEPs are not functioning as designed, including being inept at structuring 'specifically designed instruction'" (1990, p. 6). To ensure better compliance, the IEP process has procedural and substantive requirements. Procedural requirements "obligate" the IEP team "to follow strictures of the law" during the development phase. (Christle & Yell 2010, p. 111). Witworth (1994) and Pretti-Frontczak & Bricker (2000) suggested that evidence from research demonstrate that IEP documents have missing information and not always compliant to the law nor procedure. In contrast, Dudley-Marling explains that

> the IEP has failed to become a working document, something that influences the instruction of handicapped children on a daily basis. Perhaps this is because special educators have focused too much on fulfilling what they perceive to be their legal obligations with regard to the IEP process. (1985, pp. 66-67)

Hill identifies the discrepancy between compliance on 'paper' and compliance in 'implementation' to be "one of the more controversial issues concerning special education" (2010, p. 23).

Kaye & Aserlind suggest that while the IEP document is a "static notion in time", the IEP "process is dynamic" (1979, p. 141). Lee Tarver explains that this dynamism of

the process results in "quality education" when it "reflects the uniqueness of the child, the environment, and the resources available" (2004, p. 270). Yet, Christle & Yell consider it quite unfortunate that "too often school district personnel assume that procedurally compliant IEPs result in substantive compliance (i.e., improved education and services and better outcomes for students)" with the law. While "in fact" they believe it is the total opposite stating that "a perfectly procedural compliant IEP can be substantively useless if the IEP does not provide meaningful educational benefit to a student" (2010, p. 121). Goodman & Bond further illustrate that "the art of successful teaching lies in finding an ingenious method intervention after considerable trial and error", however, the IEP constraint the teachers and does not allow for this desired flexibility or for the teachers to use their imagination and "take detours when a child become restive". (1999, p. 415)

To reach the desired progress, substantive procedures require the specification of goals and objectives within the IEP document considered by Christle & Yell to be "the most challenging task" because it calls for the IEP team to "include measureable annual goals" (2010, p. 112), and what Tod believes forces "an adherence to an objectives model of teaching via writing of clear (SMART) targets" (1999, p.184). But then again "the problem" as explained by Goodman & Bond is

> how to honor the original ambitions of the IEP … while allowing for greater flexibility in the establishment and promotion of goals and objectives. Adherence to strict behavioral guidelines has advantages … But these advantages also restrict the range and pacing of goals, forcing teachers to predetermine instructional decisions, deemphasize methods of instruction as useful goals, and limit modes of evaluation to the clearly measurable. (1993, p. 418).

To conclude, it is essential to understand that the IEP process proved to be knotty and complex when carried from the theoretical policy realm into action. Yet it has its "positive features"; it still gave special education and inclusion within regular classrooms "the provisions of a vehicle for the development of collaboration and involvement with

parents, and a mechanism for enabling pupils to become more involved in their own learning" (Tod 1999, p. 184). In order to understand better the gap between policy and practice, we have to understand that "the function of the IEP product" as stated by Kaye & Aserlind "represents the multiple dimensions of a child as well as the multiple realities of its developers" (1979, p. 27). The subsequent section explores the role of the IEP team the developers of the IEP and the implementers of its process as intended in theory.

2.4   IEP Team Role in Theory

The formation of the IEP teams in the IEP process is mandated in "all jurisdictions were IEPs are employed" (Mitchell et al. 2010, p. 19). Figure 3 shows the IEP team composition as it appears in Ministry of Education Guidelines on IEP process which is more or less similar to the rest of the world where IEPs are applicable.   Kaye & Aserlind believe that "change is inherent when people work together" (1979, p. 142). The collaborative work of the IEP team is identified by Lee et al. as "one of the most critical components" of successful inclusion (c. 2006, p. 3). On a theoretical level, it is expected that "each team member brings important information and adds to the team's understanding of the child and what services the child needs" (OSERS 2000, p. 7). Moreover, what is vital in inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classroom is the IEP teams' "active involvement" throughout the process and not just physical presence in the IEP meeting (Lee-Tarver 2004, p. 264).
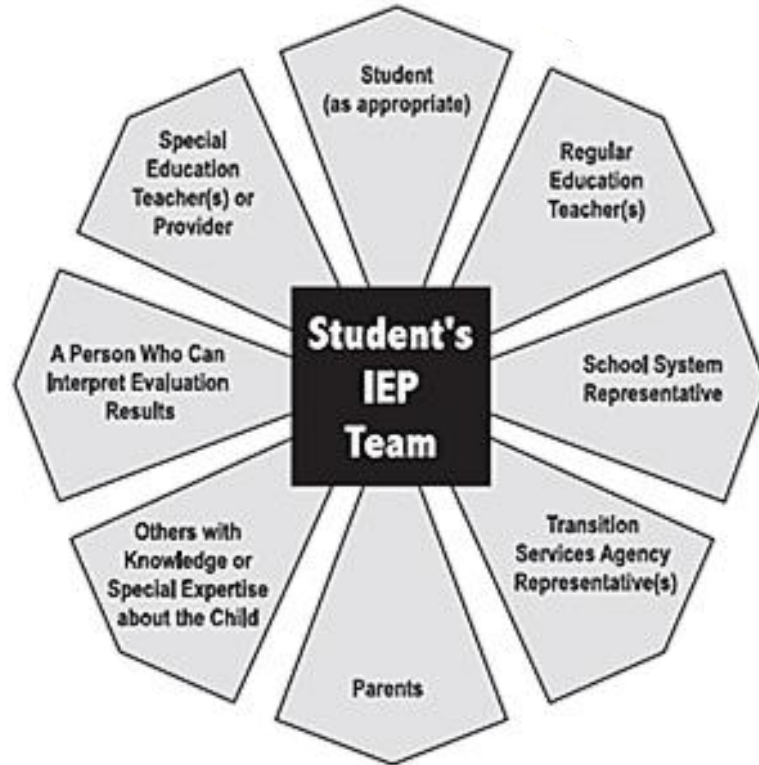
Figure 3 Members of the IEP Team (OSERS 2000, p. 7)

Mitchell et al. explain that the IEP team must be "premised on an atmosphere of collaboration and partnership among a range of participants" (2010, p. 19). Defined by Idol et al. in 1994 (cited in (Mitchell et al. 2010, p. 19), collaboration is "a process that enables groups of people with diverse expertise to combine their resources to generate solutions to problems over a period of time". Research further argues that this spirit of collaboration is so essential in special education and no other area in education requires as much collaboration. "In fact", according to Brownell et al. (2006) (cited in (Hill 2010, p.30), "the best practice in servicing students with disabilities in developing (writing) and implementing IEPs is through a team of professionals". This collaboration as well as "the partnership between parents and education providers is essential in overcoming barriers to learning" (Mitchell et al. 2010, p. 24).

The whole IEP process revolves around the needs of the students with disabilities. In many countries such as USA, UK, Ireland, Czech Republic and New Zealand student

participation is considered "always appropriate … students are expected to be involved in the development and implementation of their [IEP] plans" (Mitchell et al. 2010, p. 36). On a theoretical level the participation of students in their IEP process as part of the IEP team should enhance "value-added benefits and validates the usefulness of student participation" (Hill 2010, p. 32). Barrie & McDonald (2002) believe that student-led IEP process is valuable and helps students gain a deeper understanding of their abilities. In the IEP guidelines, MOE-Ontario state that "students must understand that they can participate in the IEP process and that it is important for them to take an active role in their learning" even though "the nature and extent" of their participation "will vary" (2004, p. 19). It is essential to note that the participation of students in their IEPs

> • helps the team identify his or her preferred learning styles and modalities;
> • understands what accommodations are to be …;
> • assists in setting annual program goals and learning expectations;
> • demonstrates an understanding of the IEP and works actively to achieve goals and expectations;
> • monitors progress towards goals and maintains awareness of how grades and/or marks will be generated …;
> • considers the information in the IEP when developing and reviewing his or her annual education plan (in Grades 7–12). (2010, p. 19)

As for the role of parents of children with disabilities in the IEP process, it is considered by researchers and policymakers alike as chief element in the success of educational intervention. As mentioned earlier parental participation is one of the 'six pillars' of special education process which the IEP process is at its heart. Fish states that parents "should possess equitable roles" and for the success of the IEP process they "should be acknowledged as experts on the team" (2004, pp. 21-22). The information they provide for the rest of the team in relation to their child characteristics at home and within the community, his/her needs, strengths, social skills, talents, preferences, learning styles contributes significantly to have a more holistic understanding of the child. Their role is also important as advocates for their child's rights and giving their child a voice when the

situation hinders child participation in the planning and decision making process. Parents also work closely with educators to provide feedback on the success of inclusion and its impact on the child's life. As well as extending the intervention beyond the classroom and providing more practice and consolidation of learning at home (OSERS 2000; MOE-Ontario 2004; Mitchell et al. 2010).

Other key members of the IEP team are the special education teachers. Their role is fundamental in the IEP process both in writing the document, implementation, reviewing, and evaluation. The special teachers most of the time have major administrative functions such as acting as the chairperson of the IEP meeting and handling all the paperwork. Nonetheless, it is the knowledge, education, and training they underwent that are of paramount importance to the education of children with disabilities; especially, when it comes to setting objectives and goals and suggesting needed modification in the curriculum, assessment strategies, and the environmental accommodations and services which will aid the student both at school or at home. One of the main roles they play is providing training to regular teachers for the students included within regular classrooms and helping them to individualize the instruction and maintaining open communication between the teachers and the parents of the student. In some cases resource teachers are also in charge of resource rooms where they use them for specialized instruction to cater for specific needs and skills (Tod 1999; OSERS 2000; MOE-Ontario 2004; Mitchell et al. 2010; & Hill 2010).

McKellar in 1995 (cited in Tod 1999, p. 269) explains that "traditionally, IEPs were viewed as an exclusive domain of special education teachers"; however, this changed with the rise of IEPs as a tool for inclusion in regular classrooms. Today the role of regular teachers is identified as 'integral'. Their participation in the meeting itself offers the rest of the team insights into the general curriculum and the much needed first-hand knowledge and understanding of the student. Beyond actively participating in the IEP meeting it is their job to deliver the 'appropriate' education unique to the student's needs and just like special education teachers, they help in contributing to the modification and alterations needed to the curriculum and assessment. Since the regular teachers are directly involved

with the student on a daily basis they are key monitors to the IEP process and should work closely in reviewing and updating the IEP and maintaining open channels of communication with parents, other teachers, administrators, and support staff in the school to provide them with professional training if need be (OSERS 2000; MOE-Ontario 2004; Mitchell et al. 2010).

School system representative of the local education agency (LEA) is mandated in some special education laws such as IDEA to participate in IEP process. This role is played most of the time by the school principal. Researchers agree that this member of the team is "responsible for the administration and supervision" of the IEP process (Hill 2010, p. 30), he or she ensures coordination and compliance with procedural and substantive requirements of special education (MOE-Ontario 2004, p.17). The value of the LEA representative increases when "this person knows a great deal about special education services … and have the authority to commit resources and be able to ensure that whatever services are set out in the IEP will actually be provided" (OSERS 2000, p. 9). Dickson & Moore further acknowledge the importance of the role of the school principal to bring about "effective change" by him or her through making sure to

> … keep the group on task, encourage others to participate, resolve conflicts in opinions, critique members actions. Administrative activities include: determine team membership, structure meeting agenda, delegate team tasks to members, establish meeting dates, assign responsibilities for implementation of the student's special education program, disseminate the team decisions to appropriate personnel, communicate team decisions to parents. (1980, p. 5)

Depending on the country that IEP process is unfolding within, and laws and requirements for special education, IEP team membership can also extend to include other professionals such as assistant teachers and other professionals who can help in training staff, supporting parents, conducting assessment, developing whole school strategies to facilitate inclusion, etc. (MOE-Ontario 2004, p. 18). Mitchell et al. also talks about the

role of the Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) a "uniquely UK" position (2010, p. 38). Their role is mainly identifying students with SEN, coordinating special education and monitoring its "effectiveness", "liaising with" parents and students, advocating for increased access to regular curriculum through inclusion, and training both special education, regular education and in-service teachers at the school (Mitchell et al. (2010, p. 39).

The above theoretical exploration of the role of IEP team, demonstrate that "in theory, IEPs should foster a greater line of communication between staff members, teachers, parents, and students to better serve the child educationally" especially in inclusion within regular classrooms (Apollos 2010, p. 2). However, "It is only when time for planning is provided, when professional development is assured, when labor recognized as important, and when an *esprit de corps* is achieved", as Goodman & Bond so accurately affirm, "that educators, parents, and children will believe that the IEP is valuable-and will invest to make it more valuable" (1999, p. 143). The following section explores some of the issues that arose in the field in relation to IEP team and its role in the IEP process.

2.5   IEP Team Role in Practice

Setting up an IEP team aims at increasing the acceptance for inclusion and fosters a culture of collaboration, equity and reciprocity and achieving "a balance of power between parents and professionals" which was the "spirit" intended to be reflected in the EAHCA (Mitchell et al. 2010, p. 20). Although research results speak about the benefits of this collaboration, for example in the research conducted by Martin et al. in 2004 (cited in Fish (2009, p. 1) "the significance that IEP participant participation played towards effective positive dialogue and positive outcomes" was demonstrated. Regrettably in practice this was not always the case, this team work gave rise to "a clash of values" and the positive features of inherent in collaboration was veiled under the burden of educational administration (Mitchell et al. 2010, p. 20). In the words of Skrtic (2010) as cited in (Mitchell et al. 2010, p. 20) the IEPs are considered to be "more symbolic and ceremonial

than real" and in no way "actualize the intent of the law". Although this was said reflecting the experience in the USA, but similar problems were also found in UK and Greece (Mitchell et al. 2010).

Following is a discussion of the many factors explored in research demonstrating the reasons hindering the success of IEP team to perform their roles towards the success of IEP process as a strategy for successful inclusion in regular classrooms. The focus will primarily be on the role of students with disabilities, parents, and educators (special education teachers, regular education teachers, and school principals) in terms of their perception of their role and each other's roles, and their understanding of and involvement in the IEP process.

With regard to student participation and role, "there is quite a substantial body of research … painting a somewhat negative picture" of their role in the IEP process (Mitchell et al. 2010, p. 37). Danneker & Bottge conducted a research study with a twofold purpose "to develop a training package aimed at developing the leadership skills of elementary students during their IEP meeting and to uncover the benefits of and barriers to implementing elementary student-led IEPs" (2009, p. 231). The significance of this research lies in the fact that few research looked into the participation of 'elementary' students in IEPs. Usually research if looking into student participation investigates their participation above the age of 16 during transition since before that their participation is not mandatory by law or is exempted upon decision of the team that the student participation is not possible. The study identified the following barriers to student's "active engagement"

> (a) the special educator being the person viewed as most responsible for the
> IEP, (b) lack of awareness of the importance of self-determination skills,
> and (c) lack of special educators' knowledge of how to prepare students to
> participate in the IEP meeting. (Danneker & Bottge, p. 228)

Furthermore, one other valuable contribution of this research is demonstrating that training elementary students with learning disabilities "to lead their IEP meeting in a relatively short amount of time—as little as 120 minutes" results in boosting their collaboration and raising the effectiveness of IEP meetings, whereas "prior to the intervention, adults considered students incapable or unwilling to be more independent with regard to their academic efforts" (Danneker & Bottge, p. 231).

Although parental involvement was not encouraged historically but since EAHCA it became one of the 'six pillars' of special education law. Furthermore, in IDEA it was made mandatory and gave parents "the right to school records and mandated that they have full participation in the design and evaluation of special education services for their children" (Apollos 2010, p. 1). As noble as this gesture is in nature, yet in practice many factors contribute to hindering the full participation of parents upon implementation of the IEP process. Hamond et al., after interviewing 212 families, reached to a conclusion that since the 1970s "extending to the present day" research has been consistent" in noting that "parent involvement in the special education process has been problematic" (2008, p. 42). What was 'alarming' is that most of the family "were not able to fully communicate during the initial IEP meeting" due to either feeling a level of 'emotional trauma' or being unfamiliar with the educational jargon being used by the educators. On a positive note, upon interviewing 51 families, Fish (2008) found that most parents were generally satisfied with the IEP process but they believed that they need further education to enhance the IEP process, and educators should give them more time in the IEP meetings and can create a more welcoming atmosphere. An interesting study by Apollos "to examine the discourse that takes place between the parents and the school's … (IEP team)" (2010, p.11) indicated that parents

> … were unable to explain the disability … were unable to recall specific information that was presented in the IEP meetings and/or explain the meanings of the special education jargon that was used in the meetings.
> … were passive participants and were limited to the role of receiver of information and none of the parent participants contributed to the decision making in their child's IEP. (Apollos 2010, p. 180-183)

Several studies were conducted to investigate and explore the educators' perception of their role and of the IEP process and their work in the field. Dudley-Marling (1985) and Mitchell et al. (2010) explained that many teachers whether regular or special and administrators feel that the IEP takes a great deal of extra time, increases their workload, and entails a lot of paperwork although they believe that the IEP process is beneficial. Yet Dudley-Marling concluded that the IEP is perceived by educators as "fulfillment of a legal requirement" and does not affect the "day-to-day instruction" (1985, p. 66-67). According to Whitworth many school staff do not have a clear understanding of the IEP and had a "great deal of hostility and negative perceptions" and believed it "is an administrative and bureaucratic process with no basis in sound educational practice" (1994, p. 10). As for school principals reserach found that they feel "a distinct disadvantage due mainly to their limited background in special education" and "had minimal training and no teaching experience" in special education (Dickson & Moore 1980, p. 10). In a more recent study conducted by Lee Tarver, he noted that "the majority of teachers believed that the time spent in developing the IEP was justified" and that "regular education teachers are becoming active and vocal participants in the IEP process" (2004, p. 269). On a more positive note, Tike & Kargin made and interesting observation that "as teachers participating in the IEP development process live through the process and learn how to implement the program, challenges faced may be reduced" (2009, p. 1968).

2.6   Research on Inclusion in the UAE

As mentioned earlier on in this chapter, there is no research that has been conducted in the UAE regarding IEP process or the role of the team members. Yet some studies were conducted to examine and analyse inclusion policies in the UAE and investigate parents' and educators' perceptions, attitudes, roles towards inclusion of children with disabilities and the special needs provisions they receive. This is not surprising since UAE has a scarcity in literature in education "due to UAE's relatively short history" (Alahbabi, 2009, p. 42). It is worth mentioning that the IEP process which started in 1975 is almost as old as UAE which was established in 1972. Following is a brief exploration of some research

work that could shed a light and provide some background to answer the research questions for this study at hand.

Special education services namely within the public schools in UAE were investigated by Bradshaw et al. (2004), Gaad (2004) & Dukmak (2010). Theses researchers had similar conclusions stating that special education services in public schools started in the beginning with a focus on 'early intervention' trying though the a school based team process to identify children at an early age who will need additional support either in a 'special class' setting or in the 'resource room' working closely with special education teachers. This process usually is targeted towards children with mild disabilities whereas the ones with more challenging conditions are serviced within specialized centres under the jurisdiction of the MSA. Later on the process of special education saw a shift towards inclusion of children with disabilities within the regular classrooms especially those with visual and hearing impairments.

Gaad & Thabet (2009) upon conducting a needs assessment for effective inclusion identified many significant issues that might impede successful inclusion within the regular classrooms in UAE such as teachers' unfamiliarity with the concept of inclusion, limited training and resources, lack of specialized therapists, lack of parental involvement, poor modifications of the curriculum, and the absence of individualized plans to meet the students' abilities. Moreover, Gaad (2010) identifies priority issues that must be addressed towards better inclusion, such as: the scarcity of data, the need for proper evaluation of included students and their progress, and closer collaboration between the MOE and MSA for more effective interventions. Although with the introduction of the Federal Law 29/2006 which give the right of access to children with disabilities to public schools in a least restrictive environment, yet according to Gaad (2010) and Usman (2011) what was lacking is the tool, mechanism, guidelines to materialize the 'intent' of the Law. This tool was formalized with the issuance of "School for All" which delineates the "general rules for the provision of special education programs & services" within public and private schools. A detailed discussion of this document will be analysed in chapter 4.

Crabtree identifies the "ultimate goal" that parents hope will be achieve for their child with disability "to have an accepted place within the immediate family and community, rather than entertaining plans for their child to be launched into the wider society" (2007, p. 59). This is quite interesting since inclusion in the wider society is what parents in other countries usually call for. Similarly, Gaad (2010) explains that the reason might be embedded in the parents' culture where they perceive children with disabilities as "a divine test and therefore may not fight for his rights and are contended with hiring a help that attends to the child's needs instead of teaching him self-help skills".

When it comes to regular and special education teachers, Alghazo (2002) found that the attitudes of teachers both special and regular were negative with special teachers being more positive towards inclusion due to being better trained. Similarity, both Alghazo & Gaad (2004) and Gaad & Khan (2007) believe that most teachers favour children with disabilities to be catered for in special classes or resource rooms within the school than fully included in the classroom. Usman (2011) further elaborates that even if teachers had favourable opinions towards inclusion yet when it comes to severe disabilities like Autism and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties they felt either inadequate to handling such cases or felt that they are better served in special classes or specialized centres. Gaad & Thabet (2009) concluded that general education teachers believe that inclusion is a demanding task and argue that they feel under pressure to finish the curriculum and therefore cannot give too much time for the children with disabilities which could be due to their lack of training. Gaad also found that some teachers care for and others against inclusion especially when resources and training is not available. What is interesting to note is her finding that the teachers themselves identified "their own prejudice, beliefs, and cultural practices which culminate in negative attitudes to persons with disabilities could hinder their ability to manage inclusive classes" (2004, p. 162).

Gaad (2004), Gaad & Thabet (2009) and Usman (2011) looked into the school principals' attitudes towards inclusion. Gaad (2004) believed that although administrators feel that inclusion is beneficial, yet within an environment characterized by teachers having a negative attitude towards inclusion, lack of facilities and equipment and concern

of overloading the staff with extra work, the principals' fears that the whole process is on their shoulders. While Gaad & Thabet (2009) identifies that the school budget is not enough to cater for the needs of children with disabilities, and there is a scarcity in trained and experienced special education teachers. Usman (2011) demonstrates that principals in general are fully supportive of inclusion yet just like teachers they are more accepting of physical disability and find intellectual disabilities more challenging to include and they need to be trained in how to better provide inclusive services.

Following this literature review which clearly portrayed the major issues with regard to the research questions presented in this study, the methodology chapter will discuss the way the research questions will be answered to try and fill in the gap in the existing research in the UAE with regard to the IEP process and the IEP team both in theory and in practice.

3.   Methodology

This chapter will discuss the methods and procedures performed to carry out the current study. Topics of discussion will include research approach and strategy, site selection, participants, procedure and data analysis. This chapter will then tackle validation and ethical considerations that will further support and confirm the research findings.

3.1   Research Approach

The purpose of qualitative research, as Creswell (2007) describes, is to investigate a complex picture of a problem. He further points out that it is used when an issue needs to be explored rather than using "predetermined information from literature or rely on results from other research studies" (2007, p.39). Using a methodology qualitative in nature, allows the researcher to study the phenomena in their natural settings and develop a better understanding through looking into people's perceptions (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). Qualitative methodology was utilized in this study, in an attempt to further explore and understand the IEP process in a public inclusive school and the roles and the perceptions of concerned participants being studied in their natural settings.

3.2   Research Strategy

Due to the nature of this research, Stake (1995) recommends using case studies as they are the common method to carry out qualitative inquiry. Richards (2003) further confirms the dynamic overlapping relationship between qualitative research and case studies stating that "some would use the term case study as almost synonyms with qualitative research" (2003, p.20). For Thomas case studies are analyses of people, events, phases, programs, policies, decisions, institutions or any other systems which are examined holistically by one or more methods, he further elucidates that in a case study the reader should "be able to smell human breath and hear the sound of voices" (2011, p.7).

Using the case study strategy allowed the researcher to view the IEP process and its implementation in an objective view-point that joins the experiences of the sample involved with the researcher's understanding. (Thomas 2011).

3.3   Site Selection

'Screening' strategy was used in order to select a public school that implements the "School for All" guidelines and provisions for including students with disabilities in regular classrooms. Yin (2003) recommends using this strategy because it enables researchers to choose sites that could provide rich information. Prior to this study, the researcher approached five public inclusive schools to request their participation in this study, however only two showed interest. One school was, then, chosen based on a couple of factors:

1) The school attained 'outstanding' rating in the 2009 inspection report of the KHDA in relation to providing provisions for students with special educational needs in special education classes.
2) It is located in Dubai, in close proximity of the researcher.

The chosen school is an all-boys public school located in Northern Dubai that provides education for children between Grades 1 to 5, ages 5 to 11. It follows the Ministry of Education curriculum. The school has 350 students of mainly Emirati nationals. Although it has been offering special education classes since the academic year 2008-2009 this is the first year, however, that it is including children with special education needs in the general classroom in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

3.4   Participants

The selection of participants for this study was based on what Creswell (2007) referred to as 'purposeful sampling'; as they can 'purposefully' inform the researcher of the issue or subject of exploration. For Creswell (2007) 'purposeful sampling' works when participants represent people who have gone through a particular phenomenon. The

sampling frame for this research consisted of students diagnosed with a disability by the Ministry of Education, who are receiving special education services in that school. Four students met the sampling criteria. Three of the students were receiving special education services at the same school in previous academic years and the fourth is a new enrolled student was included in the regular classroom since the current academic year 2011-2012 and did not receive any special education services prior to that. Following is a profile of each student as recounted by the special education teacher.

A. J. is a seven year old boy. He was diagnosed with learning difficulties and mental delay by the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET). His language skills are below level, he has a general weakness in basic skills (i.e. reading, writing, mathematical skills). The MET recommended that he would join Grade 1 and an IEP should be developed in addition to getting extra support classes in the resource room. Furthermore, it was recommended to provide speech therapy and psychological therapy for the student to be able to be successfully included in the general classroom.

O.H. is an eight-year-old boy. He was diagnosed with mental delay. He stayed for two years in the special education classroom but did not achieve any progress. In two years he could only understand the letter 'B'. His coordination skills are weak in addition to poor self-help skills. It was recommended to place him in Grade 2 with an IEP along with additional support obtained through the resource room facilities. He also gets support from the special education teacher in the general classroom. The student had a hard time settling in the general classroom initially. During the first term of this academic year, the intervention consisted of helping him accept his new environment. In his IEP, there is an emphasis on acquiring basic academic skills to develop his reading and writing.

S.A. is an eight year old boy. This is his first year attending school. He was continuously denied access to other schools because he was diagnosed with ADHD. He does not have any reading, writing or any other skills that students normally acquire in Kindergarten and Grade 1. He was included in Grade 2. After observations by the special education teacher, she felt that he needs the support of the special education class prior to

including him in the general classroom. An IEP was developed for him that mainly focused on behaviour modifications, and then after two weeks he was included back in the regular classroom.

H.A. is a ten year old boy. He is included in the fourth Grade. He was initially diagnosed my MET with learning difficulties, but after observations from the general education teacher and the special education teacher he was referred to a private institution where they diagnosed him with Autism Spectrum Disorder and a slight mental delay. His evaluation showed that his skills are below Grade 1. His intervention included an IEP that focuses on basic skills and extra support from the resource room.

In order to gain multiple perspective of the IEP process in school, how it functions and how it is perceived by people involved, the sample had the maximum variation that could be achieved; it included the school principal, general education teachers who are currently actively involved in the students' IEPs, teaching grades 1, 2 and 4, the special education teacher who supports the students with special educational needs, assists and trains the general education teacher, and parents as can be seen in Table 1 below:

Sample	Number	Age
School Principal	1	42
Special Education Teacher	1	57
Regular Education Teachers	4	28-40
Parents	3	Not obtained
Students	4	6-10
Total	13	

Table 1 Sample General Information

The aim of selecting the participants for this study was in no means to 'generalize a phenomenon' as Marshall (1996) theorise, it was in fact to explore a contemporary issue at hand for further understanding.

3.5   Data collection

The following three data collection methods were utilized to answer the research questions: Interviews, document analysis, and observations.

3.5.1   Interviews

The primary source of data in this study was a series of interviews. Kavale & Brinkmann (2009) highlight the significance of using interviews in qualitative research study in order to understand people's perception and listen to their views to uncover certain realities that cannot be found in the literature. The selection of participants and interview questions were derived from the literature review models as well as studies that addresses similar issues. All interviews were semi-structured in order to encourage the participants for open dialogue and gain understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and feelings with regards to the research questions.

Based on this method, the researcher prepared a set of questions to be covered and allowed freedom to follow up as necessary. Questions varied from one participant to another and were specific to their role and responsibilities as perceived from the "School for All" guidelines and provisions; questions for the principal, for example, revolved around policy application, her role in the IEP team, and her perception of the IEP process in order to understand the role of leadership in this process. The teachers' interviews focused on the technicalities of the IEP application; the process of IEP, the teachers' role and challenges. Parents were also interviewed to shed more light on their perception of their rights and their role in the IEP process. On the other hand, other questions were posed to all participants similarly in an attempt to investigate different views over the same topic like their understanding of the IEP document, the challenges they face and their recommendations for better practice.

The interview consisted of a combination of different types of questions as suggested by Kavale & Brinkmann (2009) such as: introductory questions which include demographic background of the participants, direct and open-ended questions to allow the participants to respond in further details and depth rather than yes or no answers; moreover, probing questions were also employed to encourage participants to elaborate on their answers when the previous answer was not fully understood and was in need for clarification.

Most interviews were audio-recorded to ensure analysis and interpretation of everything said at a later stage. Researcher was not allowed to audio-record in some instances, in such cases notes were taken "as extensively as possible" and were expanded immediately after the interview as recommended by Boyce & Neale (2006).

3.5.2 Document Analysis

The main documents used for the data analysis and structuring the research study are the UAE Federal Law 29/2006 in respect of the rights of people with special needs, the "School for All" document which determines the mechanism, policies, procedures and guidelines for including children with special needs in public and private schools.

3.5.3 Observations

The researcher carried out non participant observations, which aim at studying focused aspects of a particular issue in order to answer certain questions within a study. The researcher observed and recorded chronicle events as they happened in the scene. A data observation chart adapted from Apollos (2010) was employed to keep a running record of each class attended to document the class layout, starting and ending time, persons present, progression of events in class focusing on teaching strategies, resources used, students' participation, teachers' responses and reactions. The observations were conducted within 10 days. The researcher attended two classes for 3 students; one in Arabic language class

and another in Math as they are the only subjects that are included in the IEP as mentioned in the interview with teachers. However, only one Arabic class was attended for the fourth student as he was exempted from Maths.

3.6   Overall Data Analysis

Collected data was analysed through 'qualitative content analysis' to help the researcher organise data in coding categories. Key authors in qualitative content analysis such as Berelson (1952), Kripperdroff (1980) and Weber (1990) define it "a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories" (cited in Stemler 2001, p. 1). Content analysis includes various types of applications, of which the researcher made use of the 'direct type' that focuses on application of conceptual categories to a new context. Categories of study were predetermined through research questions as this type best suited the study.

Data gathered from observations, documents and interviews yielded extensive details. Therefore, they were examined in a search for patterns which were categorised to cluster around each research question, then examined and reviewed. Interviews, both audio-recorded and noted, were transcribed. Descriptive narrative notes were used to expand reflection of the interviews and observation notes to be incorporated in a later stage of analysis and findings.

3.7   Validity and Reliability

The methodology in this research study is based on methodological triangulation of data collection as recommended by Creswell (2007), Stake (1995) and Yin (2003). Methodological triangulation refers to the mixing of methods and data types in an attempt to validate the research claims (Olsen, 2004). This specific study was triangulated with various forms of data collected through interviews, observations and documents in order to get two or three viewpoints upon the issues being researched and give a more balanced picture of situation being investigated.

3.8   Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research, ethical principles were addressed based on the Ethical Considerations Form approved by the British University in Dubai. Initially, the Ministry of Education was approached to seek its permission to carry out the study in public schools. They were presented with a letter from the university asserting the aims of my research. The Ministry, accordingly, provided the researcher with a letter of permission addressed to the school principal.

When visiting the school, the principal and the teachers were given the aforementioned permission letter, along with a consent form which included the purpose and the objective of the study, assurance of the voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity of the school and the participants as well as their right to withdraw at any time during the research process without any penalty. A different consent form was offered to parents through the principal when inviting them to participate in the study.

The participants were asked for permission and consent verbally prior to the interviews. Amongst those who granted their permission to record and agreed to participate in the study, the researcher recorded their consent at the beginning of each interview. Interviewees were informed in the consent form that the recorded tapes will be stored securely and destroyed once the research is completed. Furthermore, the interview was conducted in a setting of the participants' choice in order to allow them to stay within their comfort zone.

The main purpose of this study was to explore the IEP process in practice in a public inclusive school that follows the 'School for All' provisions and guidelines, and to further investigate the role of each member of the IEP team in its design, implementation and evaluation. In order to address the research questions, a combination of methods were used to explore and examine the gap between what was intended for the IEP process by "School for All" and the actual practice in a public school. The findings and discussion of this study will be discussed in Chapter Four.

4.   Findings & Discussion

As discussed earlier in the literature review there was a need in the UAE to specify the guidelines and operationalize procedures discussed in the Federal Law No. 29/2006 to protect the right of education for children with disabilities and include them within the public schooling system. The second chapter of the Law, articles 12-15 deal with the education of people with special needs. Article (12) addresses the spirit of inclusion embraced in the law when stating that "special needs do not constitute in themselves an impediment in seeking affiliation or enrolment or admission to any educational institution, whether public or private" (MOE 2010, p. 93). In Article (13) the Ministry of Education is designated to "take appropriate measures in cooperation with concerned authorities to provide educational diagnosis and curricula, easy methods and techniques for teaching purposes" as well as "alternative strong communication methods" and "alternative strategies for learning and accessible physical environment" to safeguard complete participation of students with disabilities (MOE, p. 93). It took the UAE a while to operationalize these articles but finally in 2010 a complete "General Rules for the Provision of Special Education Programs & Services (Public & Private Schools)" was issued under the title of "School for All". According to the MOE,

> these guidelines for the provision of special education in the UAE have been
> prepared to serve as a common framework for the "work in progress" that
> educators and other professionals, parents and individuals with special
> needs in the UAE must undertake to ensure that we strive to achieve "best
> practices" in the process of inclusion (2010, p. 13)

It is important to note that the term 'special education' in the UAE refers to educational services provided to students with disabilities and those with gifts and talents. Where students with disabilities receive IEPs, students with talents and gifts, receive an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) (MOE 2010). However, the focus of this research is students with disabilities and the use of IEPs for including them in regular classrooms within public schools. For this reason while analysing the

"School for All" guidelines this study will look into the aspects pertaining to students with disabilities and their special education provisions. The following sections will provide the answers found for each of the research questions both as intended in the "School for All" in theory and demonstrated in practice in an elementary public school in Dubai.

4.1   How does the IEP process unfold: a. as intended in the "School for All"?

Just like the literature review portrayed the IEP process as being at the heart of the special education process (Shriner & Defestano 2003), this is also true in the case of the UAE. Figure 4 shows the Flowchart for the Special Education Process as illustrated in "School for All" with the IEP process being at the heart of the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases. The only modification on Figure 4 was adding the blue, orange, green and purple frames to colour code and differentiate between the different phases within the special educational process. It is important to note that while special education process is built on "six pillars" as explained in chapter 2 (Hullet 2009 cited in Hill 2010). Theses pillars are not clearly stated in "School for All" in the section designated to explain the philosophy, vision, and mission of special education in the UAE.

The pillar of FAPE is not clearly indicated in the law where the "zero rejection" policy is a bit vague (MOE 2010, 15). As for LRE, the MOE states that "in many cases, the least restrictive environment is the regular education classroom, though not all the time" (Moe 2010, 14). However, the trend albeit in theory is to try and achieve inclusion of all students with disabilities within the regular education classrooms. Only two scenarios were identified as being "acceptable reasons for placement in special education classroom", one of which is the student's disability is too severe to benefit within the regular classroom; and the second is having "a large group of students enrolled in the school with a similar disability … and the student would benefit from education and social interaction in the special education classroom" (MOE 2010, 25).

The blue frames in Figure 4 highlight the prereferral phase of the special education process, in which the School Support Team (SST) which meets "once a week to discuss the academic performance of students who are experiencing learning problems" and are not receiving any special education intervention (MOE 2010, p. 27). However, if within 4 weeks no progress was detected the SST "may refer the student to the Zone Coordinator for the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation and determine eligibility for special education programs and related services" (MOE 2010, p. 28). The second step marked in green frames in Figure 4 is the "Referral, Evaluation and Eligibility Determination" step where by the MET chaired by the Special Education Zone Coordinator and including the "special education teacher, teacher, the guardian, the school principal, psychologist, social worker, and other specialists who are required according to the condition of student such as a speech therapist, physical therapist, physician, nurse and the student himself, if appropriate" within 30 days of referral to conduct the necessary evaluation to determine the student's eligibility (MOE 2010, p. 28). So far both stages are almost identical to the process in IDEA and other countries' guidelines (Dasgow et al. 2001; OSERS 2000; MOE-Ontario 2004, Huefner 2000,).

The IEP process is marked in orange frames in Figure 4. It seems that it is a "key element" of the special education process as identified by Mitchell et al. (2010) in all provisions investigated in the western world. Once eligibility is determined by MET, the "IEP meeting is held and an IEP is developed" (MOE 2010, p. 28). While the process starts with a 'gather information' phase and a 'set direction' in MOE-Ontario (2004), as reflected earlier in Figure 2, nevertheless; these 2 phases are not clear in "School for All" and no process is explained on how the MET comes up with the goals and objectives, accommodations and modifications that are needed to meet the needs of the student with disability. The responsibility of implementing and monitoring the IEP lies mainly on the shoulder of the special education teacher and other school personnel while in the USA and other countries in the world parents and the students with disabilities themselves along with educators are 'key' in implementing and monitoring the IEP (MOE-Ontario 2004; Mitchell et al. 2010). Whereas special education teachers after implementation are requested according to the flowchart to conduct an annual review of the IEP at the end of the

academic year, yet the progress of the child should be reviewed "during each regularly scheduled card marking period" or upon the request of other school personnel or parents (MOE 2010, p. 31). Again no details are provided on the nature of assessment that needs to take place, although the need for continuous, ongoing and multiple assessment was identified by Kaye & Aserlind (1979) as a must for teacher to be able to modify their daily instruction. Just like recommended in the international literature and marked in purple frames in figure 4 every 3 years the students with disabilities is completely re-evaluated in order to diagnose all over again the needs of the child of disability to determine proper intervention (MOE 2010, OSERS 2000).
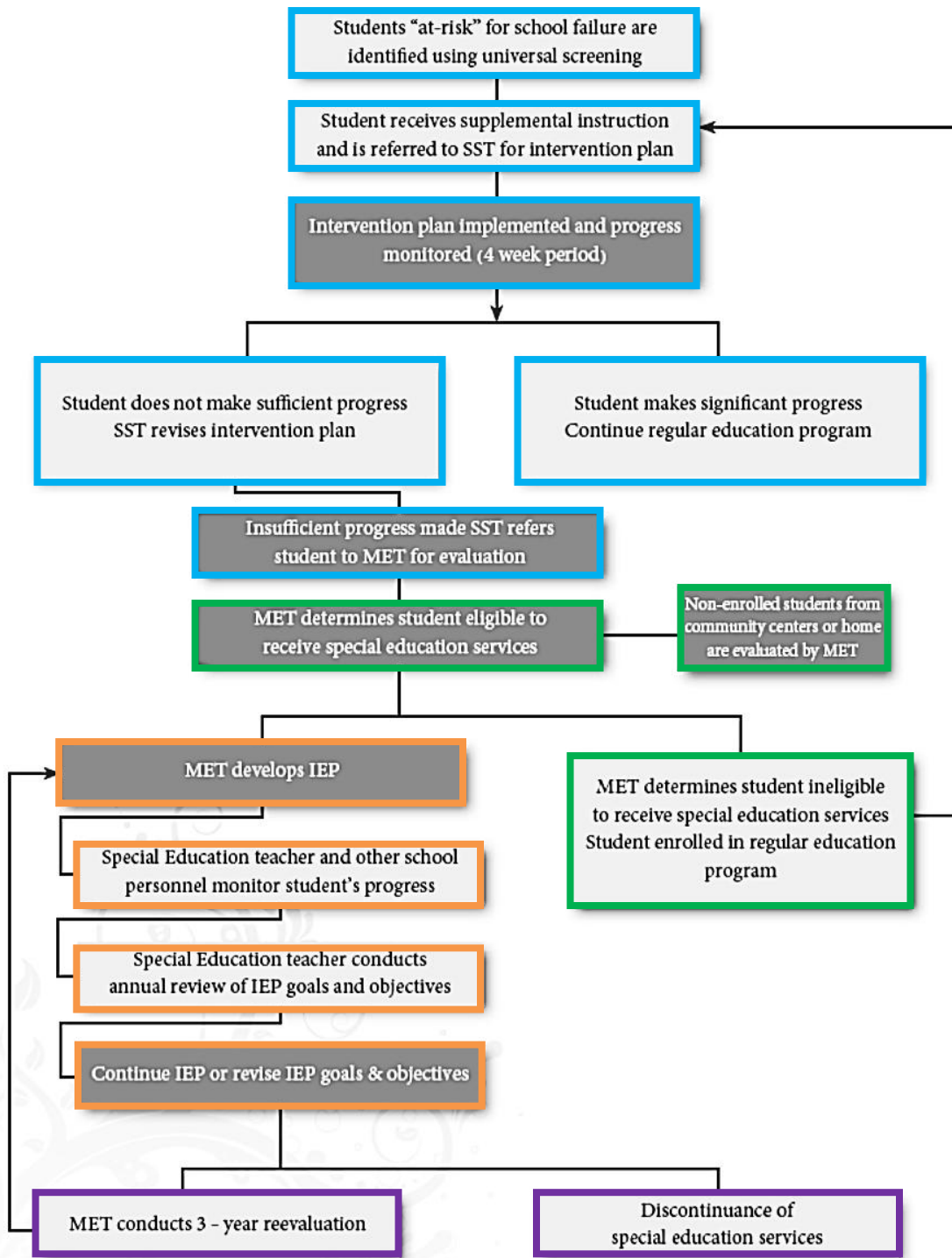
Figure 4 Flowchart for the Special Education Process

(MOE 2000, p. 32)

4.2 How does the IEP process unfold: b. as reflected in practice in a public school in Dubai?

The public school, the focus of this case study, is a primary all-boys school established in 1988 and has 350 students in the first cycle (grades 1-5). Upon interviewing the principal, special education teacher, 4 general education teachers (GT1, GT2, GT3 & GT 4), and 3 parents (P1, P2 & P3), the following was found to portray how the IEP process is carried out in reality within this school. According to the principal, the school was chosen in the academic year 2011-2012 by the MOE to start inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms. Prior to that the school had some experience but only in providing special education to students with disabilities in a more restrictive way attending the special education classroom full-time, and being taught away from their peers by the special education teacher. Though this was not discussed in the interview, but the KHDA in their evaluation report of 2009 reported that the school gives 'outstanding' provision for students in Grade 1 who were identified as having special educational needs. According to the principal "the Ministry liked what the teachers were doing and how they were offering their services".

There are 4 students with disabilities who are included within regular classrooms. It is interesting to note that other than these 4 cases, there are to date 6 students with disabilities who are enrolled in this school and are attending as full-time students in the special education class and were not included in regular classrooms and no attempt was made to do so. According to the principal "these students were here from before and didn't come to us through the MET … their cases are a bit more severe and the general education teachers are refusing to have them in their class". This is consistent with the findings of Alghazo (2002) who indicated that general education teachers in the UAE have negative attitudes towards including students with more severe disabilities. This shows that the school is not fulfilling the required as specified in "School for All", although, the special education teacher understands this process in theory and mentioned that they should their abilities, "refer them to the MET … and they decide their need".   Trach & Sheldon (2000) warns that if schools want to achieve successful inclusion they should be compliant with

the IEP process, the principal seems to be aware that this process needs to be strengthened and expressed that "little by little" they will refer the other cases in the school that need intervention "to the Ministry and start including them. But I don't think this will happen this year".

In the development phase of the IEP process, an IEP team is formed and the principal is aware of its membership as identified in the "School for All" guidelines. Sections 4.3 and 4.4 of this chapter will discuss in detail the IEP team membership and their role both in theory and in practice within the context of this study. The first step the IEP team undertakes is to produce the document "as soon as the child enters the school" which is not very pleasing to the teachers as they claim that "it is modified again as the student gets his evaluation". In a very short span of time the IEP team studies the case, "identifies strength and weakness and then formulates goals and objectives". It was evident that the special education teacher was not happy about developing the IEP as soon as the student enters the school but claims that they have to comply with the MOE regulations that demands from the school to send them the formulated document within two weeks from the beginning of the year in order to revise it, although it is very clear in the "School for All" guidelines that the IEP should be developed within 30 days from diagnosis and put into effect no later than two weeks from its development (MOE 2010).

The interviews with the principal, the GTs and the special education teacher demonstrated that the responsibility of developing the IEP document falls on the IEP team in general and on the general education teacher specifically in collaboration with the special education teacher. According to the IEP template provided by the MOE to public schools, the IEP document should include: general information regarding student's name, date of birth, diagnosis, sex, academic year and the date of the IEP; a summary of evaluation and assessments and the names of the evaluation team members; the goals and objectives to be accomplished by the student within the IEP's time frame (annual/per term/ monthly… etc.). Ideally the goals have to specifically indicate the time frame of the accomplishment for each objective; and different teaching methods and environment modifications to be applied by the school and teachers. Compared to what Chirstle & Yell explained as

components of the IEP there are minor differences but one important component is missing in the IEP document in the UAE which is "method for collecting and reporting student progress" (2010, p. 110).   This might be missing due to the fact that "promotion to the next grade level commensurate with the student's age level is automatic for students with special needs" therefore no real need is felt to monitor progress (MOE 2010, p. 34).

Prior to exploring how the school develops the IEP document, it is worth noting the participants' perception of the IEP since this will affect the development and implementation of the program. The answers varied between calling the IEP "a plan" and referring to it as "a document" which are different in nature. Smith (1990) explains that "a plan" reflects a dynamic process while the IEP when perceived as only a document implies a static piece of paper that can be filed away and forgotten about. Nevertheless all participants got the understanding that it is above all developed for the student. It is worth mentioning that there is a general understanding that the IEP is developed to meet the academic needs of the student rather than the functional and the social needs. This is similar to the finding of Krom & Prater in 1993 (cited in Shriner & Destefano 2003, p. 148) that the IEPs "focused primarily on academics and were lacking in objectives for social, behavioural, vocational, or life skills".

In formulating goals and objectives for the IEP document which is what the whole process upon implementation depends on, the general education teachers explained that these are developed in collaboration with the special education teacher who further gives detail that the goals and objectives are "based on his [the student's] evaluation, it might also depend on his diagnostic test". She elaborates that, "initially, the goals and objectives of the program are revised, so we either develop some basic goals to reach to the grade level goals or we just reduce the number of goals in the curriculum and increase the timeframe to perfect them".   All GTs revealed use "modelling clay", "games", "transparencies", "power point presentations", "songs', "dances" and "figures" to assist them in their teaching.

For example, GT1 extends the time required to finish the skill and chooses basic objectives from the general curriculum and "keep repeating them". During the Arabic class observation, she asked the students to write a whole word but asked the student with disabilities to just circle a letter he knows. This was the only modification observed as the student was more or less left alone throughout the whole class. On the other hand, during the Maths period, the teacher gave the student a different worksheet and an abacus to solve some Maths problems and modelling clay to shape the number.

As for GT2, she declared that she eliminates the challenging objectives of the curriculum and keeps the ones suited to the student's level in addition to including some functional objectives that "teach him how to sit down and listen properly". She also mentioned that she tries "to be as involved as possible", but, as she argues, "it is not easy" as she has a lot to prepare and does not have enough time to spend on the planning process. That reality was evident from the observations, it was seen that the teacher is not doing many modifications for the student with disabilities, he was left alone in class with little follow up and eventually did not finish his work. On top of that, the child does not attend Maths classes because the teacher thinks he is too disruptive and hinders other students' progress. This brings to mind the question raised by Kaye & Aserlind "will the result of the implementation of the IEP component be to decrease the quality of educational service to children? (1979, p.138). Obviously for GT2 it does and that is why she opted not to include him in the Maths lessons.

GT3 on the other hand adds additional support material. She states that, "he has a gap in the basic skills needed for reading and for Maths, so we try to give him extra support classes". When observed it was obvious that the teacher was quite efficient. During the Arabic class the teacher engaged the student with disabilities with a worksheet that focuses on some basic skills while she explained another lesson for the rest of the class. Once the student finished the required work, she successfully managed to include him in the general class by allowing him to come to the board to copy a sentence. As for the Maths class, she provided the student with disabilities with additional exercises and an abacus while the class was doing multiplication exercises and successfully managed to help the child solve

problems independently. It is worth mentioning that having excellent classroom management as observed by the researcher and by spending plenty of time for planning and preparation as mentioned by the teacher were important factors in successfully including the student. This is contrary to the finding of Dudley Marling were teachers believed that "the IEP preparation was time consuming and made little difference in the quality of education students received" (1985, p. 65)

GT4 stated that in terms of modifying the curriculum, she omits the skills and exercises that are too challenging. The goals and objectives were chosen mostly to compensate for the lack of basic skills demonstrated by the student. She pointed out that because of time constraints she opts to achieve academic goals which are more important than functional skills. Although the teacher's attitude was positive during the interview, that was not reflected during the class observed. Both in Arabic and Maths lessons the teacher made little effort in meeting the needs of the student with disabilities. The student depended frequently on his classmate to follow the teacher's instructions and copied his answers from his classmate while oblivious to that; the teacher praised him on his work.

Another important step in the IEP process that follows setting the goals and objectives is monitoring the students' progress. Most teachers measured the progress by doing a written evaluation with the material taught. It includes the targets set for the student to achieve. Teachers also assured that these tests are usually short and up to the students' abilities. GT1 is the only exception; she argues that while she does not compel the student to sit for a written test, she measures the progress through observations. The aforementioned evaluations represent only one part of types of assessment named by the MOE in the IEP template where it mentions that the teachers have to do three types of assessments, the on-going assessment done at the end of each class, an assessment done upon the completion of each objective, and another one at the end of each term. What was perceived from the interviews is merely the last part of the evaluation process. The relationship between assessment and instruction is emphasized in literature since it helps the teachers understand the progress of the student in order to modify the instructional

methods to reach the desired goals and objectives. However it seems that in this school the teachers failed to do so similar to the findings of Huefner (2002).

After testing the child's progress, an evaluation of the IEP document is in place. GTs, special education teacher and principal all confirmed that they have an IEP meeting at least once a term to review the goals and objectives. Some also mentioned that the meeting may also increase to twice or three times a term depending on the need, just like the "School for all" guidelines. Most meetings are conducted in the presence of the principal, the GT, the special education teacher and the therapist if applicable again there was no mention of the student nor his parents' participation as required in the guidelines.

To conclude this section it is important to note that the interviewed participants from the school personnel stated that they develop the IEP in compliance with the MOE's policy. The principal further explained that the school is under the provision of the MOE and therefore, it is only natural that they comply with the MOE's policy. The special education teacher on the other hand rationalize the school's compliance with the developing the IEP stating that it is part of the Federal Law to develop an IEP to each student with disabilities. When the principal and teachers were asked whether they will still develop an IEP if they were not obligated to do so, the principal, special education teacher and GT3 answered positively. GT3 was, in fact, exceptionally supportive in her attitude towards the IEP. She expressed that she "can't move without it. It is like my guide book". She further confirmed her satisfaction with the IEP results saying, "If it was for me, I would do it for every child because I have seen with my own eyes how it works." Conversely G1 and G2 had negative attitudes towards the IEP. They both confirmed that it is time consuming and is totally unusual and they rarely return to it. This is similar to Morgan & Rhode finding when they found that the special education teachers "think that they could teach just as effectively and children would learn at least as well without the use of IEP's" (1983, p. 66).

4.3   What is the role of IEP team in the IEP process: a. as intended in the "School for All"?

In the "School for All" guidelines there are many key individuals whose roles were clarified in detail when it comes to their contribution towards the bigger framework of the special education process. The IEP team in the "School for All" is sometimes referred to as 'IEP team' and other times as 'MET' quite inconsistently especially in comparing both the Arabic and English versions of "School for All" guidelines. For the purpose of this research 'MET team' will be used to refer to the team in charge of the diagnosis, determination of eligibility, development of the IEP, and the re-evaluation process of the special education intervention that needs to take place every 3 years.   MET includes other than the members mentioned hereafter, the Zone Coordinator of Special Education and professionals working in the special education on the zone level such as speech and language pathologist and occupational therapist (MOE 2010, p. 64); whereas the 'IEP team' is that team within the school level which includes representatives of the MET along with members from within the school in charge of the implementation and annual evaluation of the IEP process as depicted in Figure 5.

In this study, only the role of the IEP team will be discussed in relation to their contribution in the IEP process and merely in relation to students included fully or partially in regular classrooms. The analysis will exclude their general responsibilities as staff members within the school or in their capacity to cater for the needs of students with disabilities attending full-time in the special education classroom located in the school or services targeting students with gifts and talents. The focus will mainly be on the roles of the school principal, special education zone coordinator, special education teacher in regular education classroom, resource room special education teacher, subject teacher in regular education classroom, parents, and the student with disability. Figure 5 shows the IEP team membership in the UAE as understood from "School for All".
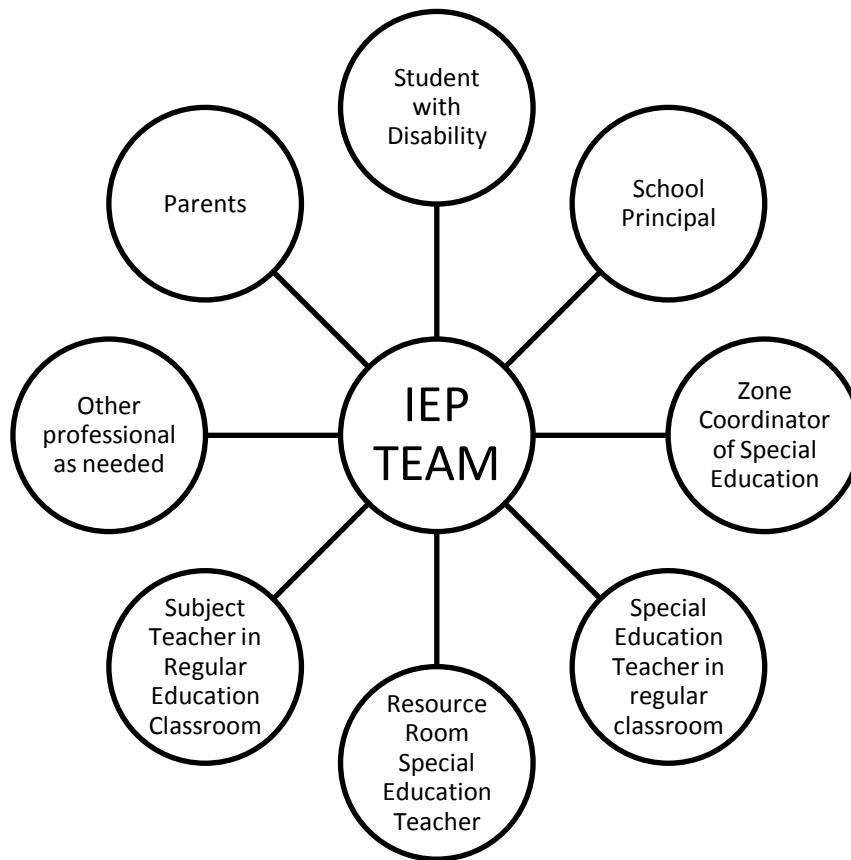
Figure 5 IEP Team Membership in the UAE According to "School for All"

When it comes to the role of the student with disability in the IEP process in the UAE, it is quite interesting that although the international literature argues the necessity of this participation and its benefits (Hill 2010; Mitchell et al. 2010; MOE-Ontario 2004; & OSERS 2000). Yet the role of the student with disabilities as identified in "School for All" is to oblige and "to follow the program prepared for him according to his educational plan to demonstrate his interest in his educational progress" (MOE 2010, p. 49). Compared with the MOE-Ontario 2004 which is firm in stressing the importance of active student participation albeit varying in nature and extent, the "School of All" guidelines do not seem to emphasize that role at all.

As for the role of parents, on a theoretical level the "School for All" emphasizes the "importance of cooperation with parents" and believes that this cooperation should be "ongoing and effective" (MOE 2010, p. 51). Yet when explicitly specifying their role in

the IEP process it sounded so minimal where it is stated that they "should share relevant information about their student with teachers and other school staff that will help promote the student's growth and inclusion in the school" (MOE 2010, p. 49) Furthermore, ironically it is stated that as part of their 'rights' they are to "accept and support the IEP developed" and they should, as part of their duties, give "full briefing on the academic capacity of the student not setting expectations which are not commensurate with their abilities" (MOE 2010, p. 52).

The language to describe the role, rights and duties of parents in the IEP process is quite different in what exists in other provisions for inclusion where their involvement is highlighted as one of the 'six pillars' of special education (Hill 2010), and their role should be as essential and on equal footing as the rest of the team members whether in developing, implementing or monitoring the IEP process; or in advocating for the rights of their children (Mitchell et al. 2010; MOE-Ontario; and OSERS 2000). When comparing Figure 3 which shows the IEP team membership as specified in IDEA with Figure 5 which illustrates the IEP team membership in the UAE, one can see that 'a person who can interpret evaluation results', whose role is mainly to explain to parents and students the condition of the child with disabilities to ensure their active contribution to the IEP process, is missing from the UAE team. This indicates that more effective measures need to be taken in order to ensure better parent and student participation in the IEP process.

As for the role of professionals and educators in the IEP process as specified in the "School for All", it came quite similar in nature to the guidelines examined earlier in the literature review (MOE-Ontario 2004 & OSER 2000) and in some ways more poetic than operational. There are some roles that are expected to be fulfilled across all the educators of the IEP team. For example, they should all develop an attitude of 'acceptance' to students with disabilities and ensure they have "full opportunity to learn". Furthermore, all the educators are expected to collaborate strongly with parents and build a strong 'partnership' between the members of the team and the parents a partnership that was considered by Mitchell et al. (2010) as indispensable. Mostly this is to be ensured by the principal whose duty is also to raise awareness of the parents, the school staff and the wider

community about the rights of, as well as programs and services for children with disabilities. This also entails promoting the benefits of a culture of inclusion and facilitating the process of acceptance and integration of students with disabilities (MOE 2010).

Developing the IEP is a collaborative role played by the special education teacher in regular education classroom, resource room special education teacher, and the subject teacher in regular classroom. When it comes to the implementation of the IEP, they also partake in that role while the special education teacher in regular classrooms is to supervise the implementation process as well as co-teach along with teachers of regular education classes. Furthermore, the resource room special education teacher also collaborates with all teachers to encourage inclusive education and implement the IEP. The principal is expected to monitor the implementation of the IEP while the zone coordinator should carryout field visits to observe the implementation of inclusive education and is expected to be the facilitator of the implementation of all special education programs within the zone. On top of these roles played by the teachers, they are further required to conduct evaluations of the students with disabilities either in the beginning for diagnostic and eligibility purposes, or periodically to evaluate usefulness of the IEP and monitor the students' progress. The principal has to submit detailed reports and 'document pros and cons' to the Directorate of Special Education in the Ministry (MOE 2010).

As part of the "School for All", most of the educators are expected to engage in "ongoing professional development" with regard to special education. It was interesting to note that only the resource room special education teacher was not given the duty to undergo any training. This could be dropped by mistake from the guidelines since as demonstrated in the next section all the teachers underwent training especially the special education teacher.

4.4 What is the role of IEP team in the IEP process: b. as reflected in practice in a Public School in Dubai?

According to the principal, the special education teacher and the GTs, the IEP team in practice in the school consists of the school principal, the special education teacher, the concerned regular education teacher and the psychologist/speech therapist if applicable. None of the regular class teachers interviewed nor the special education teacher included the zone coordinator of special education nor the parents and students as being an active part of the team in practice. The principal explains the excuses the absence of the zone to "having too many schools and not enough people" to do the needed implementation and follow-up as specified in "School for All" and although they do not attend the IEP meeting they review the paperwork and send feedback if needed. According to previous research this will affect the quality of the IEP process especially when it comes to effective parental and student participation in the IEP because as identified in MOE-Ontario (2004) the role of the representative of the local governmental agency representative is crucial to advocate parents and students with disabilities rights and ensure their full participation.

As for not including the parents in the IEP, the special education teacher indicated that their role is limited to agreeing or disagreeing on the developed IEP. The principal clearly stated that "we try our best to exclude them. We rarely communicate with them and we try to avoid them" because some of them are not educated … but illiterate. And others are not interested and only stand in the way". This is similar to the findings of Vaughen et al. (cited in Fish 2004, p. 2) when he identified one of the factors of lack of parents' participation the IEPs to be the "discouraging" attitudes of educators. Only GT3 expressed that parental involvement can help gain insight about the student's activities at home and collaboration helps accomplish goals and objectives more quickly and efficiently. This difference could be due to the attitude of GT3 who seems to believe in the importance of parental participation therefore she is more welcoming to their contribution and as both Smith (1990) & Fish (2009) indicated, parental participation can have a positive impact on the educational process while Gaad & Thabet (2009) warned that one of the factors that leads to unsuccessful inclusion in the UAE is the lack of parental involvement. Parents

themselves seemed not to believe in the import of their own participation, P1 believes that the educators are professionals and "they know what they are doing". This is akin to Rock (2000 cited in Shaffer 2010) where parents perceive themselves as being inferior to educators. P2 was completely oblivious of his role or the fact that there is an IEP process. Only P3 who was encouraged by GT3 was active in the IEP process as mentioned above. Although this cannot be determined as a factor, but she is the only educated parent within the sample interviewed. Although this finding is in congruence with Hamond (2008) finding that parental involvement seems to be quite problematic in practice.

Although Tod (1999) found that a guaranteed benefit of IEP is that it enabled parents and students to get actively involved. However in the case of this school, the student with disabilities does not seem to have any role but to oblige in the IEP process. Teachers found that the majority do not seem happy and did not form any kind of friendship with the other students, in fact in one case, as mentioned by GP2, the student is called 'lazy' and often blamed for any troublesome behaviour he might exhibit. The special education teacher confirms this fact and says, "the other children look down at him and all included and special education needs students…the awareness is very low and needs to be raised by schools, parents, media and teachers". This reinforces what Danneker & Bottge that student participation in practice is really negative and educators don not really believe in the value of self-determination skills necessary to be honed in the student.

The role of principal seemed to be in accordance with what is stipulated in the "School for All" in terms of following up, monitoring, evaluating, the IEP process. The special education teacher believes that the principal is the animator of the whole process and encourages teachers to perform their duties. The GTs described her as "the captain of the ship" and the liaison between the school and the MOE on one hand and with the parents on the other hand. She is the one making sure that an IEP is developed for every child with disabilities and is perceived by the teachers as an advisor and mentor. However the principal herself has expressed positive attitudes towards inclusion; nevertheless, she is torn between catering for the children and their parents, complying with the MOE requirements and pleasing the overworked teachers which is "exhausting". This is in congruence with the

findings of Gaad (2004) indicating that although school principals believe in the benefit of inclusion yet they feel the burden of its implementation heavily laid on their shoulders.

As for the general education teachers, they understand their role in developing the IEP and keeping progress reports about the student. They also know that their role is to modify the curriculum to better serve the special needs of the student. The principal had a similar understanding of the role of the general education teacher in the IEP process, while the special education teacher perceives the role of the general education teacher to be key in developing the IEP document which in reality this is not carried out efficiently by the teachers and they perceive it as a burden. This finding id interesting since in the international literature the special education teacher in the earlier days was considered the most important contributor to the education of children with disabilities while by time, this has changed and the role of the general education teacher is now considered 'integral' since she play a primal role on a daily basis in educating children with disabilities who are included in the regular classroom (Mitchell et al. 2010) This is similar to the finding of Tod (1999) when she found that the special education teachers plays a major administrative role and is mostly valued for the extensive training they undergo and share with the rest of the team.

The special education teacher plays in the school 2 roles specified in 2 different capacities in the "School for All" this might be because there are only 4 cases of included children. There are 2 types of special education teachers for children included within regular classrooms: one that teaches in the resource room when pull-out support activities are called for, the other is the special education teacher in regular classrooms who helps the students while he attends the regular class. In reality within this school the special education teacher perceives herself as the organizer and director of the IEP team. She works closely with the teachers to set the goals and objectives and perform the needed curriculum modifications. Since she is the only one who received all the trainings especially the comprehensive "training kit", in turn, she trains the educators in the school and helps them successfully include the student. For the child with disabilities the special education teacher works on the behaviour modifications needed. The principal sees the

special education teacher as the supervisor of the whole process and the general education teachers expressed their understanding of the role of the special education teacher as she portrayed herself without any discrepancies.

5.   Conclusion & Recommendations

Exploring the IEP process and the role of the team both as delineated in the "School for All" and as it was reflected in practice in a public school in Dubai was quite interesting and shed a bright light on its contribution as the best identified practice for inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classroom. It is important to note that this study examined one school and it does not aim to generalize its findings but more importantly it left the researchers with many questions on the nature of the IEP process, the role of the team members, and suggestions on how to make this process more effective as an inclusion strategy recently adopted in the UAE. The findings were quite beneficial and can be considered as indicators worth investigating into more in depth in different settings and across a larger sample.

To live up to the true spirit of the Federal Law 29/2006. The IEP process was found to be, as expected, in the heart of the special education process in the "School for All". Yet, the pillars it is built on need to be strengthened in order to achieve successful inclusion in the least restrictive environment. This will entail a gradual shift from what now looks more like integration to full inclusion with a 'zero rejection' policy and where the full collaboration of all is a must. From policy makers to teachers in the field, parents and students alike have to have a lot of dialogue to properly evaluate the process and what each party has to contribute towards bridging the gap between the policy and practice.

The gap between the IEP process as stated in the "School for All" and how it is implemented in the school which this study investigated is apparent. The reason for this is manifold, but it is safe to say that one definite reason for this gap is the fact that the school has just adopted this policy recently in September 2011and it takes time to get trained and gain the much needed at hands experience in the successful inclusion of students with special needs in regular classroom. The policy itself is quite new to the UAE too. There are vague areas in the document that if written more clearly would solve many hiccups in implementation. Though this might have been left unspecified intentionally in order to

gradually define it as more insight and experience is gained and allowing some flexibility for experimentation in the field. Furthermore, some procedures to ensure compliance of schools need also to be put into effect. But will adding mechanism for procedural requirements affect the substantive requirements and the quality of instruction within the classroom like it did in other places. More research is needed to determine that within the UAE context.

It is vital to realize that In all the literature review and in this study too, there is always a gap between the intent of the IEP process and how it unfolds in practice to some varying extent. Could that be though because of the nature of the IEP process itself? Is the IEP the best tool to ensure successful inclusion? Potentially it has many benefits as discussed earlier on, but upon implementation no major shift occurred in the management of inclusion. In an age moving towards unity in diversity is it not safe to say that it is better to remodel the whole education system and the curriculum to cater for all students no matter what is their capacity, rather than patch-working or trying to tailor the students with disability to the curriculum. Is individualization the way to go, again this needs further examination. There is for sure different models of a process to cater to the needs of students with disabilities a more inclusive model that allows the curriculum to have inherently within it a more profound methodology to cater for all the needs of students wherever they are in the broad spectrum of their capacity for learning.

This does not mean that the IEP is 'worthless', in fact, until more fundamental changes occur they are still the best available practice and this study recommends the following in order to strengthen it in the UAE:

1- Conducting more research to explore the IEP and make the "School for All" guidelines more comprehensive and aligned with the best practices in the world.
2- A conscious strategy should be developed to bridge the gap between policy and practice stemming from the grassroots rather than a top down approach. It is understandable that this process will take longer but it will guarantee the

empowerment of all the team members and a sense of ownership to the inclusion spirit in the society.

3- Strengthening the roles of all members of the IEP team since their collaboration and each of their contributions is essential to the success of the IEP. Especially the role of the parents and the students. Although training usually targets the educators, but parents and students with disabilities need to be the centre of the training process to ensure their feedback on an equal footing.

4- The role of the team members and the process needs to be revisited, since including only 4 students in the school caused so much tension and people feeling overworked, overwhelmed, and not qualified to do what is needed.

5- Evaluation procedures and constant assessment of the IEP document and process should take place to actually allowing to see whether the IEP is benefiting the student or is it really what some teachers perceive it to be as only extra paper work?

6- Working out a way to make the IEP process to flexible as a tool that helps both the students and educators and not restrict or force the teachers to assign goals and objectives they feel are 'safely' achievable rather than challenging the students to reach their highest potentials. It is their abilities we are nurturing as educators not fixing their disabilities.

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APPENDIX 1

SUMMARIZED ACCOUNT OF INTERVIEW WITH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Summarized Account of Interview with School Principal

Name : SP	Venue: Principal's Office	Previous post: science teacher
Duration: 1h 15 min		

1.   N: When was the school established?

SP: in 1988

2.   N: When did you start following the 'School for All' guidelines?

SP: This academic year in September 2011. Preparations, however, stared last year by the Ministry of Education

3.   N: How was did the Ministry of Education choose your school for 'School for All'?

SP: To tell you the truth, I wasn't here last year. It is my first year as a principal but from what I hear, the school had a Special Needs class that catered for students with disabilities. The Ministry liked what the teachers were doing and how they are offering their services and though that we have enough resources and teachers to start 'School for All'

4.   N: How many children does the school have?

SP: 350 students

5.   N: How many are included?

SP: 4 are fully included

6.   N: I noticed that you still have the special education class, what is it about?

SP: As I mentioned before, the school already has a special education class. These students were here from before and didn't come to us through the Ministry (لجنة الدمج).

7.   N: And how many are they?

SP: 6

8.   N: And why aren't they included like the other 4?

SP: It is a bit more complicated than this. Their cases are a bit more severe and the general education teachers are refusing to have them in their class.

9.   N: And what does the administration have to say about it?

SP: I think they can't handle them either, but inshalla little by little we'll present the cases to the Ministry and start including them. But I don't think this will happen this year. They need specialist and we don't have that.

10.   N: What is the Individualized Education Program?

SP: It is a plan... mmm done by the school… or… the school team, to find out what are the needs of the student…mmm… so that the team would work on it to help the student progress academically.

11.   N: So the IEP only targets academic progress?

SP: No, and other things too, but mainly academic.

12.   N: What are the purposes of developing IEPs in school?
SP: The Ministry's new policy states that it is the right of each student with special needs to have an IEP, I mean it is part of the policy and since we are a part of the Ministry then we have to follow that policy

13.   N: so if it wasn't a policy, would you still develop it?
SP: I think, it is so good to the student

14.   N: What is the role of the principal in the IEP process?
SP: following up on the IEP, evaluating the plan and its efficacy, how adequate it is for the student, the implementation of it.

15.   N: so you monitor each case?
SP: Honestly, I don't have much time. I try to give them to Ms. H. she is the one who follows up. She just refers to me if there were problems.

16.   N: how about the general education teacher?
SP: She participates in … in putting the goals of the program and the adequate activities for the child and evaluating the child.

17.   N: Do you think the general education teacher is trained enough?
SP: The Ministry conducts workshops to تأهيلهم, every Tuesday they take 2-3 teacher from each public school to the Ministry to train them.

18.   N: do you feel it is good. Are the teachers becoming trained?
SP: Yes, definitely. They feel so empowered after it. The exposure to other teachers in other schools also plays a role.

19.   N: how about the special education teacher?
SP: she follows up on the child, assists the teachers, takes the children for support classes and supervises the whole experience.

20.   N: how about the parents?
SP: we try our best to exclude them. We rarely communicate with them and we try to avoid them

21.   N: and why is that?
SP: well, some of them are not educated… not only not educated but illiterate. And others are not interested and only stand in the way.

22.   N: do you think they understand their child's needs and their rights?
SP: some of them do to some extend but mostly they don't.

23.   N: Do you feel each is playing their role to the fullest potential?
SP: the teachers are doing their job with great potency, or is trying hard to get there

24.	N: How often do you hold an IEP meeting?
SP: Once per term or sometimes twice. And we might have emergencies where the child needs immediate intervention.

25.	N: and do you attend them all?
SP: yes. But sometimes if it is an emergency the teachers might sit together and talk.

26.	N: who attends them as well?
SP: the zone coordinator, the school principal, the social worker, parents and teachers

27.	N: who is the zone coordinator?
SP: a representative from the Ministry… or a sometimes a committee from the Ministry.

28.	N: and do they attend the IEP meeting?
SP: not really. The problem is that there are too many schools and not enough people. So no, they don't attend the meeting, they just review the reports.

29.	N: do you think that inclusion with the use of the IEP works?
SP:	we haven't seen the results yet since it is the first year we apply it. But I can say we are seeing beautiful things happening. Not without challenges of course. Everything new faces challenges at the beginning, but we are overcoming them day by day.

30.	N: what are the challenges you are talking about?
SP: challenges in general…I mean we have lots of teachers who are against the principle of inclusion and are refusing the concept of IEP saying that it is time consuming a causes lots of pressure.

31.	N: how about you, what do you think of inclusion in general and IEP specifically?
SP: we cannot deny that the children with disabilities are an integral part of our society. And since they are with us in our society, then they have to be with us in schools. And IEPs are the tools that help us provide them with good education.

32.	N: What is the part that you like most in the IEP process?
SP: the collaboration between the IEP team… mmm… specially the special education teacher and the general education teacher. They have been working separately for so long and it is nice to see them working together now. Everyone has something to offer to the other.

33.	N: you have financial support from the Ministry?
SP: the Ministry gives us a budget, and within the budget we have a whole section for special needs.

34.	N: do you feel this budget is enough?
SP: yes, and there is also correspondence between us in case we want something. For example, during the past month they came and installed an elevator in the school because next year we are expecting students with physical disability.

35.   N: Do you think you need any training?

SP: I have never worked with special needs before. This is my first year. In terms of the process of writing the IEP I'm OK. I'm used to writing strategies and so. What I need to know is how to deal with children with special needs.

36.   N: what is your overall satisfaction with the IEP process?

SP: as a start it is ok, we need so much to do, but we are getting there.

37.   N: What are the challenges that exist in the IEP process?

SP: the ability to work with students with disability. Providing the appropriate resources. The curriculum also is another challenge. There isn't a 'special' curriculum to cater for their needs. The teachers struggle to create or modify the curriculum for them.

38.   N: how about challenges for you as a principal?

SP: mmm… at the beginning I took inclusion as a challenge because I believe in it. But now I feel it is exhausting. I don't know whom to please, if I want to only look at the children's needs, the teachers will be upset. A also need to report to the Ministry and keep everything up to their expectation. And there are the parents as well who sometimes stop in our way and are in denial.

39.   N: what do you recommend to improve practice?

SP: -   To make special curricula to students with special needs
-      Teachers need assistant to help them in the general classroom
-      Provide resources (which something that the Ministry started with)
-      To begin with training the staff (which is something they have done as well)

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARIZED ACCOUNT OF INTERVIEW
WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

Summarized Account of Interview with Special Education Teacher

Name: ST	Venue: Resource Room	Previous post: Science Teacher
Duration: 1h 30 min		

1. N: What are your qualifications?
   ST: BA in Sociology

2. N: How long have you been in the field of special education?
   ST: 24 years

3. N: What categories of children with SEN are present in your school?
   ST: We have mental delay, behavior disorders (also he has ADHD), Autism. We also have many others like visual impairment, Asperger, Williams Syndrome, but they are included.

4. N: What educational services, programs, and service delivery options are designed to meet the educational needs of your students with disabilities and special needs?
   ST: We have speech therapy (supposedly three time a week but the only comes once, resource room equipped with all kinds of assistive materials. But we still need a psychologist, an occupational therapist to modify behavior, in addition to Braille specialists.

5. N: What is the process for students entering special education at this school?
   1. We do tests to measure their abilities, after seeing that their abilities are behind we send them to the multidisciplinary team
   2. The multidisciplinary team do comprehensive tests to see their needs and then they are sent to a public school with special recommendations for each child
   3. Then they are finally included in schools.

6. N: How would you define an IEP?
   ST: It is a document prepared by the IEP team which consists of the school principal, the general class teacher, the psychologist (if needed), speech therapist (if needed) and the special education teacher.

7. N: When do you start the IEP process?
   ST: As soon as the child comes to school. But then it is modified again as the students gets his evaluation, first the case is studied then they identify strength and weakness and then identify the goals and objectives.

8. N: What is the purpose of developing IEPs?
   ST: according to the Federal Law that is concerned with people with special needs, our school was chosen as an 'inclusion school' that included children with special needs whether it was learning difficulties or disabilities or mental delay or whatever

the evaluation team send their recommendations that this student is to be included in a certain class according to his age, to his level and ability and his educational achievement. So in one of the sections in the law they specify to develop an Individualized Education Program for the student.

9. N: So you develop it because it is mandated by the law?
ST: Yes.

10. N: So let's assume that the Ministry doesn't oblige you to develop an IEP, would you still do it?
ST: Yes, we will because it is very helpful.

11. N: You are within the IEP team, right?
ST: Yes.

12. N: How do you perceive the role of the principal in the IEP process?
ST: The principal is the leader. She is the one that animates all the parties involved. She asks the teachers to prepare samples of test and assessments, each teacher in the subject that she teaches. That assessment aims at measuring certain skills in specific subject areas. So the principal is the leader and director of this process.

13. N: How about you as a special education teacher?
ST: I serve as the organizer since I'm the only one who had all the trainings, especially a comprehensive training called "the training pack" (الحقيبة التعليمية) and within these trainings was a special training on the IEPs, and another about the framework of special education, speech therapy, and many other general topics. And also behavior modification, and so many other things. So I took these trainings in order to apply them and do them at school or in case any teacher wants any help in any area I can help her. So my role can be summarized in being the director of the group. I check the IEP and modify some points that I see inappropriate or discuss it with the teacher and see what are the strengths and weaknesses of the student and accordingly the teacher and I together formulate the goals and objectives and the behavior goals.

14. N: So as I understand from you, the classroom teacher is the one who is responsible of putting the IEP together.
ST: Yes that's right

15. N: Do you feel she has enough training and experience to go so?
ST: No, not really. She doesn't have enough experience because… I mean, she never worked in the field of special education before. Maybe in some cases she would have week students and challenging students, but she wouldn't know what is the cause of these issues, she doesn't know how to identify them. She doesn't have any experience at all. But she tries, she tries to help the students and actually the IEP does help the student because it has so many sections including information

about the student, for example, his diagnosis, like what is his problem exactly and that helps the teacher in getting to know the student.

16. N: Does she get any training though?
ST: Yes, the Ministry has initiated a project called "The Training Pack". The project is based on having the special education teachers train the regular education teachers within the school and other schools as well.

17. N: and do you think it is beneficial?
ST: Yes, as the only ones that have the experience are the special education teachers. In addition to the fact they are our colleagues so they might be able to communicate better with us.

18. N: What is the general education teacher role as stated in the law?
ST: The law states that the IEP is considered the curriculum for the student and the general education teacher is the one who is responsible of developing it in consultation with other parties as well.

19. N: But do you see that happening in the field?
ST: With all honesty, for me it is considered very easy and doable, I can do and execute any IEP for any student because I have done this for so long but the general education teacher considers it a burden to him and they protested a lot at the beginning. It wasn't their specialty at the end of the day, they are classroom teachers and not special education teachers.

20. N: How about the parents? What is their role of the IEP process?
ST: They are in fact in the IEP team, but at this stage, his role is still passive. He doesn't have a say. So he either agrees on the plan and say 'I agree' and signs it or he rejects it because of his ignorance and says 'I don't want my son to be in the special education program, I want him to be a regular student at school and follow the general curriculum. So he considers the IEP as if it is a stigma 'وصمة عار' on the student. Although it is the opposite, it is beneficial for both the student and the teacher to be able to work with the student according to his ability.

21. N: What instructional modifications-accommodations and adaptations are made for students with disabilities?
ST: The repetitive skills are omitted in every lesson and also the order of the lessons. We start from the small particles and the easiest and then increase the dose. And we might also increase the time frame in which he needs to accomplish a skill.

22. N: What testing accommodations are made for students with disabilities?
ST: The accommodation happens in the test paper that is given to the children. It will include only material studied by the student. The report card will also mention that the student has an IEP

23. N: How do you formulate your goals and objectives?

ST: Based on his evaluation, it might also depend on his diagnostic test. So it is based on the student's needs.

24. N: Are the goals and objectives related to the curriculum?
ST: Initially, the goals and objectives of the program are revised, so we either develop some basic goals to reach to the grade level goals or we just reduce the number of goals in the curriculum and increase the timeframe to perfect them.

25. N: Do you use the curriculum according to his real age or you use one according to his mental age? For example if the child is in Grade 3 and he has a mental delay, do you still use the curriculum for Grade 3 or for you use the curriculum for Grade 1 for example?
ST: At the beginning we conduct some diagnostic tests to determine the level and through those tests we can conclude what skills are missing and which level he really is. So if he is in Grade 3 but his level is Grade 1, the IEP goals and objectives will be based on Grade 1's curriculum. But that does stop the child from being with his peers at the same class but as an individualized plan, it needs to be according to his level.

26. N: And what about the functional and the behavior goals.
ST: Those will be done in notes.

27. N: How many subjects are included in the IEP document?
ST: The main four subjects are: Arabic language, Maths, Science and English. But currently we develop it only for Arabic and Maths and this is the case in most schools. Actually we only have the forms for Arabic and Maths from the Ministry, we don't have a form for Science or English. Hypothetically, the Science teacher can use the form since it is in Arabic, but the English teacher will need a different one.

28. N: How often do you refer back to the IEP?
ST: At the end of each term we refer back to it and evaluate the content and the goals.

29. N: How many times do you hold an IEP meeting?
ST: Every time we have the chance, we do. Supposedly, we are, every term, we are supposed to meet twice. But if we have an emergency and a problem occurred we could meet.

30. N: And you attend them all?
ST: Yes

31. N: Who else attend them?
ST: The concerned teacher, a representative from the school's administration or the principal, the special education teacher and the resource room teacher.

32. N: Does anyone come from the Ministry?
    ST: Yes, yes, they do.

33. N: And they attend all the meetings?
    ST: No they don't attend any meetings. But they might have a look at what happened in those meetings

34. N: Do you feel that the IEP is useful?
    ST: Yes, it is useful for the students and for me because I determine what are the skills I teach

35. N: How do you see the child? Is he happy to be included? Or you feel he would have been better in the resources room?
    ST: I see the general classroom is much better that his exclusion. I am with inclusion and not against it. Not because I am a member of the IEP team and the School Support Team and the evaluation team. It is just that even if the child didn't get many educational benefits, he will gain behavior modification and participation in the extracurricular activities.

36. N: Is he happy?
    ST: He is happy, he is happy. It doesn't mean he is completely happy. At least he tries to participate, he tries to take his right and grab the chance to be able later on to deal with the outside world, with work. When he grows up and tries to work.

37. N: How do the other kids look at him?
    ST: They look down at him really and all inclusion and special needs students in general. They look down at them and they label them as 'special needs student'. Even if he was his colleague in the general classroom and then was moved to special education he is pointed out and treated as if he does not exist. Student awareness is still very low and needs to be raised by schools, parents, media, and teachers.

38. N: Do you think everyone is doing his best potential to apply the IEP process?
    ST: Yes. They do their best so that the IEP may contain goals that might help the student.

39. N: What kind of training do you think you'll need?
    ST: Me, as a teacher?

40. N: Yes, in any specific area?
    ST: Well, of course. The human being is always in need for training and to develop and improve his performance. Of course, I will always need more training. We even had a paper that the principal sent us to write down the number of workshops that each of us did. I had 10 trainings

41. N: But you do not need a specific area. Like, for example, in developing the goals and objectives, or in curriculum modification?
ST: No, no because I don't deal with the curriculum, as a special education teacher I deal with skills only. My goal and my aim is to let the student acquire whatever skills he is missing. And I should know the skills needed in every level. What are the skills of Grade one, the skills of Grade2…

42. N: But where do you get these skills from?
ST: Those skills are of course based on my previous work in special education. I put a combination of skills inspired from the curriculum. The general curriculum. Then I categorize them, these are for grade one, then grade two. They are known what these skills are.

43. N: Do you understand the cases of each student scientifically?
ST: Not completely scientifically, but based on my research from books and references or websites or cases I have seen and dealt with or training courses I attended, I can identify the disability or difficulty

44. N: And do you prefer them to be with the general education or in the resource room?
ST: Personally I prefer them to be in the resource room. There are some cases that need to be included in the general classroom, but there are other cases that need to be, not in the resource room, but in the special education class. Because the resource room is here to serve the students that are in the general education. But there are cases that I personally prefer it to be in the special education class.

45. N: What about the financial support you get from the Ministry?
ST: It does not exist, not at all. For example, we asked for so many things but we never get them. We need so many things… stationary, and so many things. There is nothing especially for students with SEN. The support is in providing machines, like the projectors, data shows, printers, and computers. We have some students at school that need a magnifying instrument but they didn't provide it for us. We also asked for curriculums in Braille but we didn't get any response.

46. N: What is your overall satisfaction with the IEP process?
ST: I'm very satisfied. Although some teachers reject it because they did not look at it and learn about it but if they know what is it and consider it the curriculum for the child with special needs, it is considered a simplified curriculum.

47. N: Are there any issues concerning the IEP?
ST: There are so many… so many… firstly the negativity of the parents and their objection on IEP, and his objection is because of his ignorance, he doesn't know that the IEP is development for the welfare of his son, and another kind of parents object because he thinks that if his child as an IEP he is considered 'abnormal' so he withdraw his consent. Also from the difficulties is convincing the general teachers to accept a child with special needs and on top of that to develop a plan for him. The teacher refuses without even discussion. In some instances we sit with her and show

her how simple filling the plan is, and we promise her to help her, in that case, she sometimes agrees. Other difficulty is the high expectations of the administration and some parents. One last thing is that the Ministry requires us to write the IEP as soon as the child arrives, but that in fact is not practical, because we cannot identify the child's need from the beginning, so we change it within a month time after he comes

48. N: What do you recommend to improve practice?
    ST: I recommend that maybe before they start with the inclusion they should start with accommodating the environment, the school wasn't prepared adequately. And also prepare the parents for the concept of inclusion. Inclusion was supposed to find a fertile soil to operate well, but we were surprised that the children were included and then we started working on their needs and the needs of the school environment and the teachers.
    And also I suggest that the media gets involved in raising awareness of the issue of inclusion.

APPENDIX 3

SUMMARIZED ACCOUNT OF INTERVIEWS
WITH GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Summarized Account of Interview with General Education Teacher 1

Name : GT1	Grade: 1	Subjects: Arabic, Science, Maths and Islamic Studies
Duration: 45 min	Venue: Resource Room	Students's Name: A.J.

1. N: What are your qualifications?
   GT1: BA in education/ major in Classroom Teacher (معلم صف)

2. N: How long have you been in the field of education?
   GT1: 12

3. N: Have you ever taught in an inclusive school before?
   GT1: No, this is the first time

4. N: What categories of children with SEN are present in your classroom?
   GT1: I have one student in my class. He came here diagnosed with general weakness but later on through assessment he seems to have mental delay and his speech is poor, which might be due to the fact that his mother is not Arab. But his papers never officially made it to the Ministry to change his diagnosis.

5. N: Who made the assessment for him?
   GT1: The boy has a speech therapist coming once a week to see him. In addition to a psychiatric who comes upon request. So we called them and asked them to come do an assessment.

6. N: What are the steps taken by you to include him?
   GT1: First I needed to know his condition; I needed to sit with Ms. H. to explain to me how to include him. Then I started doing the IEP and creating a curriculum for him.

7. N: What do you mean by creating a curriculum for him?
   GT1: You see, he can't cope with the pace that we follow in class, so make another curriculum for him based on the general curriculum.

8. N: Like what? Give me an example?
   GT1: For example, instead of taking one alphabet letter per week, he takes it in a month.

9. N: And what do you do when the other children are taking another letter?
   GT1: I just give him exercises on his own.

10. N: What do you mean by IEP?
    GT1: IEP is a plan we make for students with disabilities for inclusion.

11. N: Developed by whom?
    GT1: By a team. The team consists of me and the special education teacher, the principal and the speech therapist.

12. N: Do you use any teaching aids?
    GT1: I use modeling clay, lots of illustrations of card board and also games.

13. N: And do you do it only for the included child or all the children?
    GT1: No, for all the children. You know I teach Grade 1. It is difficult not to include teaching aid even for regular students.

14. N: And do you feel that the child benefits from these measures?
    GT1: Yes, of course.

15. N: How involved are you in the IEP development process?
    GT1: It is up to me to develop the IEP for the student so I'm very much involved.

16. N: How do you formulate your goals and objectives?
    GT1: I just choose the easy basic ones from the curriculum and keep repeating them.

17. N: Are the goals and objectives only related to the curriculum?
    GT1: No, we also have speech therapy.

18. N: How about the functional ones?
    GT1: No, we don't include them.

19. N: And why is that?
    GT1: I don't know, I didn't think of it. Maybe because I don't know how to deal with that aspect.

20. N: What testing accommodations are made for students with disabilities?
    GT1: They are still in grade 1, they don't do much testing. But when they do, H. is exempted from it. I don't think he's ready, and I don't think he understand what is a test.

21. N: Then how do you test the child's progress?
    GT1: just through observations, whether he accomplished the objectives or not.

22. N: What is the role of the principal in the IEP process?
    GT1: The principle is the 'captain' of the ship. She is the channel from the Ministry to the school. She supervises us and checks on the student's progress.

23. N: How about the special education teacher?
    GT1: She is our only resource in the school. The poor thing we all attack her with our questions and demands. But she helps us all.

24. N: And the parents?
    GT1: The parents, now that's another story.

25. N: What's that story?
    GT1: We tried very hard to talk to them to involve them, because you know, O. is still young and maybe his condition can get better, but it has to be supported at home. But they are not interested.

26. N: How about the child, does he have any role?
    GT1: No, he's too young and he doesn't speak.

27. N: Do you think he is happy?
    GT1: He doesn't react or communicate much, so I don't know.

28. N: What about his classmates? How do they look at him?
    GT1: They don't interact with him at all, they act as if he's not here

29. N: And what do you do about that?
    GT1: I try to ask them to go and help him or play with him. They do but then after the task they go back to their friends.

30. N: Do you feel each is playing their role to the fullest potential?
    GT1: Yes, I see everyone so busy at school and trying to learn or attending workshops.

31. N: How often do you hold an IEP meeting?
    GT1: Three times a year, once a term.

32. N: How often do you refer back to the IEP?
    GT1: Not often. May be once or twice a year. I mean I know what is in there, there is no point to go back to it.

33. N: Why do you develop the IEP?
    GT1: Because the Ministry wants us to!

34. N: So the Ministry didn't want you to develop an IEP, would you still do it?
    GT1: Of course not. It takes so much time and we do without it.

35. N: Do you understand the case of the included child? I mean scientifically?
    GT1: no, not scientifically, no. but I asked Ms. H. every step of the way.

36. N: Do you feel he is better off in the general classroom or in resource room?
    GT1: No I think he is making a good progress in the classroom, although in the resource room he will get more attention which might be good for him.

37. N: How many subjects do you include in the IEP?
    GT1: Arabic and Maths, but the English teacher is also doing some kind of an IEP on her own for him.

38. N: What about the other subjects?
    GT1: No, we don't have that.

39. N: Do you have financial support from the Ministry?
    GT1: I guess so, we don't know for sure. The principal asks us to write whatever materials we need on a paper and give it to her.

40. N: So is there anything you need that isn't at school?
    GT1: You know we have the big fancy things like the projector and the data show, but we don't have enough card board or colors or things like that.

41. N: Do you feel that the IEP is useful?
    GT1: Inclusion, yes. IEP, I don't think so!

42. N: Do you have a daily lesson plan?
    GT1: Yes, I do.

43. N: And do you specify any activities for the included child?
    GT1: To tell you the truth, I don't have the time to fill it daily, I just do that every once in a while and I do not specify in details what will I do in class, just the objectives.

44. N: Did you get any training?
    GT1: Sometimes during the week, the principal sends us to some workshops done by the Ministry, but not every week.

45. N: And what is the training about?
    GT1: I talks about inclusion and its importance. Sometimes about multiple intelligence theories and some other times about curriculum modification. Things like that.

46. N: Are there any issues and challenges concerning the IEP?
    GT1: Yes, I feel it is irrelevant to our classes. I don't think we need it.

47. N: What do you recommend for better practice?
    GT1: maybe have assistant in the classroom which will allow us to spend more time on students with special needs.

Summarized Account of Interview with General Education Teacher 2

Name : GT2	Grade: 2	Subjects: Arabic, Science, Maths and Islamic Studies
Duration: 45 min	Venue: Resource Room	Student's Name: S. A.

1. N: What are your qualifications?
   GT2: BA in education.

2. N: How long have you been in the field of education?
   GT2: 11 years.

3. N: Have you ever taught in an inclusive school before?
   GT2: No I haven't.

4. N: What categories of children with SEN are present in your classroom?
   GT2: My class is a bit complicated. I have a child with ADHD and a bit of general weakness.

5. N: Tell me their story
   GT2: I have one student with ADHD. He was referred by the Ministry. He never attended school before, so he does not know anything.

6. N: What are the steps taken by you to include them?
   GT2: We developed an IEP that matches his mental capacity. The special education teacher took him for two weeks to modify his behavior and then he returned back to the class.

7. N: What do you mean by IEP?
   GT2: It is a document that serves the student with special needs.

8. N: Developed by whom?
   GT2: Developed by the general education teacher number 1, and then the special education teacher.

9. N: Do you use any teaching aids?
   GT2: Yes, I do. I use the transparencies and the data show to catch his attention. I also use lots of physical action to allow him to move around.

10. N: Do you do it only for the included child or all the children?
    GT2: Depends on the lesson, sometimes I can afford to do it for all the kids and sometimes I just don't have time.

11. N: And do you feel that the child benefits from these measures?
    GT2: yes, they do.

12. N: How involved are you in the IEP development process?
GT2: I try to be as involved as possible, but it is not easy. I have to prepare my lessons and check the notebooks and correct them, which doesn't give me a chance to focus on the IEP.

13. N: so you don't have an IEP?
GT2: Yes, I do for the child with ADHD only.

14. N: How do you formulate your goals and objectives?
GT2: I sat with Ms. H. and she helped look at the curriculum and choose what will work with S. and what would be challenging.

15. N: Are the goals and objectives only related to the curriculum?
GT2: Only some, the others are more of teaching him how to sit down and listen properly.

16. N: What testing accommodations are made for student with disabilities?
GT2: I just have to make it much shorter than the normal one may be three questions maximum and includes the material he studied.

17. N: What is the role of the principal in the IEP process?
GT2: the principal has a monitoring role. She makes sure that every child has an IEP.

18. N: How about the special education teacher?
GT2: she tells us what to do, without her I wouldn't know what to do.

19. N: And the parents?
GT2: the parents are not involved at all.

20. N: Why is that?
GT2: Maybe because they are not educated and they don't know their child's needs.

21. N: Have you tried talking to them?
GT2: No, but the administration has.

22. N: How about the child, does he have any role?
GT2: No, not at all.

23. N: Do you think he is happy?
GT2: He doesn't seem unhappy. He is playing the whole time.

24. N: What about his classmates? How do they look at him?
GT2: They keep calling him lazy and blame him for everything bad that happens in school.

25. N: And what do you do about that?
    GT2: I make sure I praise him for the good things. He goes in front of the children so that they know that he is very capable of doing good things.

26. N: Do you feel each is playing their role to the fullest potential?
    GT2: No, I don't think so. I think there is way too much paper work for us to do instead of focusing on the teaching.

27. N: How often do you hold an IEP meeting?
    GT2: Almost twice or three times in a year.

28. N: How often do you refer back to the IEP?
    GT2: not at all, I just give it to the administration whenever they request it.

29. N: Why do you develop the IEP?
    GT2: Because I have to.

30. N: Who makes you do it?
    GT2: The administration so that they send it to the Ministry.

31. N: So the Ministry didn't want you to develop an IEP, would you still do it?
    GT2: No, I wouldn't for sure.

32. N: Do you understand the case of the included child? I mean scientifically?
    GT2: I think so, it means that he has to move a lot and cannot pay attention for a long time.

33. N: Do you feel he is better off in the general classroom or in resource room?
    GT2: I think he doesn't belong in the general classroom. He is very disruptive to the class which make it harder for the other students to pay attention, and due to the lack of attention at home, we've seen that there is little, if any, progress at all.

34. N: How many subjects do you include in the IEP?
    GT2: Mainly Arabic and Maths.

35. N: What about the other subjects?
    GT2: No there is no place for them in the IEP.

36. N: Do you have financial support from the Ministry?
    GT2: The administration says we do, but honestly we've been asking for Braille since the beginning of the year but we still didn't have anything.

37. N: Do you feel that the IEP is useful?
    GT2: No, not at all. I think we only do it to show the Ministry our plan.

38. N: Do you have a daily lesson plan?
    GT2: Yes, I do.

39. N: And do you specify any activities for the included child?
    GT2: No, I just write few lines about what I intend to do during class.

40. N: Did you get any training?
    GT2: Yes, I went to the training by the Ministry last year.

41. N: And did you find it useful?
    GT2: At the beginning yes, we thought that we can do it. But when it came to reality, it proved to be much harder than it looked.

42. N: Are there any issues and challenges concerning the IEP?
    GT2: Yes, I think that it is too long and it doesn't help us in practice. I don't like theoretical things, I like things that will help me on the ground, but I didn't find that in the IEP.

43. N: What do you recommend for better practice?
    GT2: More ground work practice maybe.

Summarized Account of Interview with General Education Teacher 3

Name : GT3	Grade: 4	Subjects: Arabic, Science and Islamic Studies
Duration: 45 min	Venue: Resource Room	Student's Name: H. A

1. N: What are your qualifications?
   GT3: BA in Arabic Literature.

2. N: How long have you been in the field of education?
   GT3: 5 years.

3. N: Have you ever taught in an inclusive school before?
   GT3: No I haven't.

4. N: What categories of children with SEN are present in your classroom?
   GT3: I have one child that has a slight mental delay and ASD, but on his diagnosis report it only mentions that he has learning difficulties.

5. N: and how did you find out that the diagnosis was wrong?
   GT3: at the beginning of the year, the boy was hiding behind his disk putting his hat on his face the whole time. He would not respond when I talked to him. I contacted his mother to gather some information about him and she told me that he always acts like that around strangers. I talked to Ms. H. about the matter, and she came to observe him in class. She told me that he's exhibiting the typical characteristics of Autism. We called for a meeting with the principal who in turn called the parents and asked for another meeting. We advised them to go seek a proper diagnosis and they did.

6. N: How did they react when you told them?
   GT3: Oh they were devastated, the mother started crying and the father was quiet and didn't say a word.

7. N: so how did you react? What measures did you take to include him?
   GT3: I started going to Ms. H almost every day to tell me what to do. We took it step by step. But step one was to get him to trust us.

8. N: When did you develop his IEP?
   GT3: we asked the principal to give us more time to observe him and see how he cooperates and responds with us. So in a month time it was done.

9. N: How do you define an IEP?
   GT3: The IEP is something we develop to accommodate the needs of the student with disabilities.

10. N: Who develops it?

    GT3: A team in the school does. It consists of the teacher, the special education teacher, the principal. And in H. A. case, a psychologist.

11. N: What is the role of the principal in the IEP process?

    GT3: The principal works as our advisor and mentor. She guides us and gives us advice. She is also the liaison between us and the parents.

12. N: How about the special education teacher?

    GT3: Awww. Ms. H., I don't know what I would do without her. She has helped every single teacher in school. She educated us about the concept of inclusion and helped us the whole way. She is the only reference in school.

13. N: And the parents?

    GT3: The parents helped us in gaining insight about his activities at home. They also reinforce his goals and objectives at home so we'll accomplish them faster.

14. N: Do they voice their opinion during the IEP meeting?

    GT3: Yes and they are very interactive, especially the mom. She does lots of reading and research about teaching strategies and gives me ideas since I don't have the time to do so myself.

15. N: So do you like this interaction?

    GT3: Yes I love it, I don't think we would have achieved much improvement without it.

16. N: How do you view your role then?

    GT3: My role is to develop the IEP for him and record his achievements and development. Also to modify the curriculum as deem appropriate.

17. N: How do you formulate your goals and objectives?

    GT3: At the beginning we started targeting basic skills and concepts like reading 3 letter words and knowing the shape of the letter in different positions along with strong behavior modification. We were basically following the targets from Grade 1, but he accomplished these targets in 6 weeks thanks to the parents cooperation, so afterwards we moved to Grade 2's targets and so on.

18. N: And how do you test the progress?

    GT3: I set targets and he has to achieve them. I make him small exams and he passes them.

19. N: Do you use any teaching aids?

    B: Yes, lots of them. I do lots of games and songs and dances.

20. N: And do you do them for the included child or for the whole class?

    GT3: No, honestly most of the time I do it for the child only because of the big gap in their level.

21. N: How do you think it is affecting the quality of your lessons?
    GT3: I admit I'm not spending much time on my mainstream student as I normally do, but it is making them more independent. It made me find creative ways to find 10 min per class to spend with just this child. I assign them a 5 min revision sheet at the beginning and let them do some exercises at the end. They got used to that routine and allows me to spend more time with H.A.

22. N: How often do you refer back to the IEP?
    GT3: All the time. As I said, H.A. is responding very well and he's accomplishing his objective much sooner than expected, so we add new ones.

23. N: How much time does it take you to prepare all that?
    GT3: It takes me almost 1 hour every day, sometimes a little bit more.

24. N: Do you think it is worth it?
    GT3: Yes of course. Especially when you see it that it is working and its bearing fruits.

25. N: Do you think the other teachers will do it though?
    GT3: As I said before it is time consuming and I don't know if teachers can afford to do that. I'm a single woman and I have all the time in the afternoon to prepare, but I don't know if a teacher that has a family to look after can do that.

26. N: Do you feel each is playing their role to the fullest potential?
    GT3: Yes, I do. Everyone is doing what they can do

27. N: Do you understand the case of the included child? I mean scientifically?
    GT3: Not scientifically, no. but I understand his needs and try to cater for them.

28. N: Do you think the child is happy?
    GT3: The thing is, he does not interact much with others. He tends to like to be left alone. I think he is happy?

29. N: What about his classmates? How do they look at him?
    GT3: They don't communicate or interact. I try to ask some of them to help him, but there is no friendship.

30. N: Do you feel he is better off in the general classroom or in resource room?
    GT3: I think he fits perfectly in the general classroom but to be honest, he does need the extra attention. So maybe he should have more pull out classes. But it is really good for him to learn how to socialize with his peers

31. N: How many subjects do you include in the IEP?
    GT3: For now it is just Arabic and Maths

32. N: What about the other subjects?
    GT3: I don't think the other subjects are as important as Arabic and Maths. They will come with time.

33. N: How often do you hold an IEP meeting?
    GT3: Officially three times a year. But personally I hold a meeting with Ms. H. once every two weeks, maybe because I'm new in the field so I keep feeling that I need the support.

34. N: Why do you develop the IEP?
    GT3: Initially I did it because the administration asked is to do. But now, I follow up because I can't move without it. It is like my guide book.

35. N: So the administration didn't want you to develop an IEP, would you still do it?
    GT3: 100%. And if it was for me, I would do for every child. Because I have seen with my own eyes how it works.

36. N: Do you have a daily lesson plan?
    GT3: Yes, I do

37. N: And do you specify any activities for the included child?
    GT3: No, not really. I use the IEP for that. And to tell you the truth, I don't complete the lesson plan all the time. I feel it is a waste of time since I don't even refer to it.

38. N: Do you have financial support from the Ministry?
    GT3: I think so. But I don't think it is enough. Personally, I don't need financial support, I need human support. We need occupational therapist and psychologists.

39. N: Did you get any training?
    GT3: Yes, I go some Tuesdays

40. N: And did you find it useful?
    GT3: Yes, very much so. I get the chance to meet up with other teachers from other schools and discuss our cases together. We hear new ideas that might work for us

41. N: Are there any issues and challenges concerning the IEP?
    GT3: As I mentioned before, I don't know how practical it is for other teachers to spend as much time doing that work. Also, we need more special education teachers. Ms. H. is barely catering for us. If we have more number next year then Ms. H. will definitely not have the time.

42. N: What do you recommend for better practice?
    GT3: I wish the Ministry would consider asking some experienced teachers from different schools that had success stories to come help other schools for a week ot few days, so that we learn from each other.

Summarized Account of Interview with General Education Teacher 4

Name : GT4	Grade: 2	Subjects: Arabic, Science, Maths and Islamic Studies
Duration: 1h	Venue: Resource Room	Student's Name: O.H

1. N: What are your qualifications?
   GT4: BA in Arabic Language.

2. N: How long have you been in the field of education?
   GT4: 7 years.

3. N: Have you ever taught in an inclusive school before?
   GT4: No, this is the first time.

4. N: What categories of children with SEN are present in your classroom?
   GT4: I only have one child diagnosed with mental delay

5. N: What does that mean?
   GT4: He looks like the other children only he acts and understands like a 4 year old.

6. N: What are the steps taken by you to include him?
   GT4:   1. I developed an IEP for him with the help of Ms. H.
      2. I modified the curriculum to meet his needs.
      3. I added some teaching aids when explaining the lesson to help him better understand the information.

7. N: What do you mean by IEP?
   GT4: It is a plan used to help the child function in the regular classroom.

8. N: Developed by whom?
   GT4: By me as the classroom teacher and the special education teacher Ms. H.

9. N: How do you modify the curriculum?
   GT4: As a mentioned before, the child's mental age is much lower than the other children and so he has a gap in the basic skills needed for reading and for Maths, so we try to fill these gaps by giving him extra support classes. And in many cases I omit skills and exercises that I feel are difficult for him.

10. N: What are the teaching aids used?
    GT4: I use the transparency to project the lesson and the exercises on the board. I also use figures and games that support the concept of the lesson.

11. N: And do you do it only for the included child or all the children?
    GT4: No, I mostly do it for all the children. But in some instances, the children will be doing an exercise that is considered challenging for the included child so I give

him a game, a simplified worksheet or I just let him play a game on the computer-educational game of course.

12. N: And do you feel that the child benefits from these measures?
GT4: Yes, in fact they do. It made the class much more fun than before and the children are enjoying learning.

13. N: How involved are you in the IEP development process?
GT4: I'm the one who is responsible of developing the IEP, so I go to the IEP meeting, discuss the child's weaknesses and strength, then decide the goals and objectives, of course with the help of Ms. H.

14. N: How do you formulate your goals and objectives?
GT4: According to the curriculum's objective and with consultation with the special education teacher; she is the one who tells us whether these goals are appropriate or not.

15. N: Are the goals and objectives related to the curriculum?
GT4: Yes.

16. N: How about the functional ones?
GT4: The functional ones are included in the IEP but as notes rather than objectives.

17. N: And why is that?
GT4: The fact is, in the general classroom we don't have time to work on any area other than the academic. The children need attention, I cannot give all my time to the student with disability.

18. N: What testing accommodations are made for students with disabilities?
GT4: We do not give the child the same test as the other students. We make another sheet based on the material he studied and in many cases it is shorter.

19. N: What is the role of the principal in the IEP process?
GT4: The principal supervises us and follows up with us.

20. N: How about the special education teacher?
GT4: The special education teacher is the only one who has experience in dealing with these students. So she works as our guide. She attends our classes and helps us modify the lessons.

21. N: And the parents?
GT4: The parents don't have a role at all.

22. N: Why is that?
    GT4: They are not interested. And to tell you the truth, it is better that way. At the beginning of the year we tried to involve them but every time they come, problems happen.

23. N: What do you mean?
    GT4: They do not accept the fact that their child has a mental delay, they do not want to discuss his disability, and they don't want him to even have an IEP.

24. N: And what did you do about it?
    GT4: The principal talked to them and made them understand that this is the only choice they have.

25. N: How about the child, does he have any role?
    GT4: No, not really.

26. N: Do you think he is happy?
    GT4: Yes, he is. And he is well loved by his peers.

27. N: Do you feel each is playing their role to the fullest potential?
    GT4: I can't speak about the others and judge them. I personally am doing everything I can to help in this process.

28. N: How often do you hold an IEP meeting?
    GT4: Once a term and sometimes twice, depends.

29. N: on what?
    GT4: Depends on whether the child needs a change or not. Sometimes he would be progressing and needs to advance his objectives and sometimes he would be going too slowly.

30. N: Who also attends those meeting?
    GT4: The principal sometimes, and the special education teacher.

31. N: How often do you refer back to the IEP?
    GT4: At the end of each term.

32. N: Why do you develop the IEP?
    GT4: So that we know how to teach the student with special needs.

33. N: What else?
    GT4: And because the administration wants us to.

34. N: So if the administration doesn't, you would not do it?
    GT4: I don't know, maybe I will because it helps us a lot.

35. N: Do you understand the case of the included child? I mean scientifically?
    GT4: No, to tell you the truth I don't. Ms. H. tells me about his characteristics and advices me on techniques I should use with him.

36. N: Do you feel he is better off in the general classroom or in resource room?
    GT4: I think he is OK in the general classroom, but I think he should have more support from the resource room since, as I said; he has many gaps in his skills.

37. N: How many subjects do you include in the IEP?
    GT4: Only Arabic and Maths.

38. N: What about the other subjects?
    GT4: No I don't think he needs it.

39. N: Do you have financial support from the Ministry?
    GT4: Yes, financial support we have but not human support.

40. N: What do you mean?
    GT4: We need more professionals to teach us and train us on how to use the resources that we have.

41. N: Do you feel that the IEP is useful?
    GT4: In lots of cases I cannot commit to what is written in the IEP and just go with the needs of the child. I feel that the IEP is only for the administration. I can say that only the part of goals and objectives could be useful.

42. N: Do you have a daily lesson plan?
    GT4: Yes, I do.

43. N: And do you specify any activities for the included child?
    GT4: No, I don't have the time really

44. N: Did you get any training?
    GT4: Last year we had two training from the Ministry about inclusion and how to apply it. This year we only had one workshop for two hours which wasn't enough. There is also the 'training pack' program where special education teachers in each school train and support the general education teachers.

45. N: Are there any issues and challenges concerning the IEP?
    GT4: Developing it is a very daunting task. We don't have much experience and we have to put objectives for the end of the year, and it is so difficult for us to predict how the student will respond.

46. N: What do you recommend for better practice?
    GT4: Maybe give us more training on practical techniques that we can use inside the classroom. And also make the IEP shorter, it is too long and takes too much time.

APPENDIX 4

SUMMARIZED ACCOUNT OF INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS

Summarized account of Interview with Parent 1

Parent's Name: P1 (father)	Grade: 1	Child's Name: A. J.
Occupation: Employer	Number of children: 4	Duration: 45 min
Education: High school degree	Venue: Vice principal's office	

1. N: What type of disability or learning problem does your child have?
   P1: A slight mental delay.

2. N: How long have been in this school?
   P1: This is the first year.

3. N: Which school did your child attend last year?
   P1: He didn't, he stayed at home with my wife. We don't really believe in kindergarten. I think he is better off at home.

4. N: How did you find out about your child's disability?
   P1:When we put him a school, they had an assessment for him and he was below level. They concluded that it might be a result of him not attending Kindergarten. After a couple of weeks they contacted us to tell us that they want to do an evaluation for our son because they suspect that he might have a disability.

5. N: And did you approve?
   P1: Of course not, I was furious.

6. N: But then how did they do the evaluation?
   P1: They told me that they cannot have in the school unless I do so. I tried to take him to other schools but they all turned me down so I had no choice.

7. N: Were you there at the IEP meeting?
   P1: Not at the IEP meeting. I was there in a meeting before they put the IEP.

8. N: How active were you in determining the goals in your child's IEP?
   P1: My wife and I were there, but we were merely listeners. They saluted us then started talking to us about the importance of the IEP and stated the goals for us.

9. N: How did you feel?
   P1: I didn't feel good, I was very upset that they are accusing my son to be a retard. I know that my son isn't very smart but I didn't feel he needed to be in a special needs class.

10. N: How about now?
    P1: I still feel that they are not doing my son justice by calling him a special needs student.

11. N: Did you feel that you were viewed as an equal partner in the meeting?
    P1: Not really, they are specialists and professionals and they know what they are doing. They would tells us what they wanted to do and we would agree or say "whatever you see".

12. N: Was the IEP written during the meeting or was it completed prior to your meeting with the IEP team?
    P1: No, it was not. As I said it was a pre-meeting just to get my consent.

13. N: Is this what you would have preferred?
    P1: I don't know, I don't mind.

14. N: Tell me what you remember about what is written in your child's IEP?
    P1: I remember that he has to memorize the "Fatiha" and some alphabets.

15. N: Do you feel that the goals in your child's IEP will improve his learning?
    P1: Inshalla.

16. N: Have you seen any improvement yet?
    P1: Well, not really, no. They still complain that my child isn't good enough.

17. N: And what do you tell them?
    P1: At first I used to tell them that Im not happy, but now Im afraid that they will kick him out and I will not find a school for him anymore.

18. N: How about now?
    P1: Now I try to keep my distance, whenever there is a meeting to talk about the progress I try to give my suggestions.

19. N: And how often is that?
    P1: We were invited twice from the beginning of the year.

20. N: How do you feel about IEP in inclusion?
    P1: I don't know how I feel, in a way I thank God that the school accepted him not like the other school, but some other times I feel that my child is not getting what he needs and he doesn't have friends because everyone looks down to him.

21. N: What do you suggest to improve practice?
    P1: I suggest that the school sympathizes with the parents and be sensitive to their needs. Maybe also they shouldn't announce in the school that those students are special needs so that the other children will keep respecting them.

    Note: (only the father was was talking. The wife was sitting next to him and was veiled so I couldn't see her facial expressions. The mother is illiterate and the father has a high school degree. The husband and wife are cousins)

Summarized Account of Interview with Parent 2

Parent's Name: P2 (father)	Grade: 2	Child's Name: S. A
Occupation: jobless	Number of children: 3	Duration: 30 min
Education: High School	Venue: Vice principal's Office	

1. N: What type of disability or learning problem does your child have?
   P2: ADHA and a slight mental delay.

2. N: How long have been in this school?
   P2: My child has been coming to this school since Grade 1.

3. N: How did you find out about your child's disability?
   P2: At the beginning I had no idea since S. is our eldest. When he came to school they couldn't do an assessment since his mother is Pakistani and so he does not speak Arabic. But then later during the year the teachers noticed that the problem is more than just the language, and so they sent us to see a specialist for diagnosis.

4. N: What was his diagnosis?
   P2: They found that he has Attention Deficiency and mental delay.

5. N: What does that mean to you?
   P2: It means that he cannot pay any attention or understand things properly.

6. N: And do you do anything at home to help him?
   P2: Well, I don't know what to do. I try to play with him or study with him but he doesn't listen to me. And my wife doesn't know Arabic so she cannot study with him.

7. N: Did the school invite you to the IEP meeting?
   P2: What is the IEP meeting?

8. N: The IEP meeting is where the principal, the general education teacher, the special education teacher, the parents meet together to discuss the child's IEP.
   P2: No I didn't know about it.

9. N: But do you know whether your child has an IEP or not?
   P2: Yeah, Yeah. They told me about it.

10. N: what do you think the IEP is?
    P2: It's a plan that says what he needs to do in class.

11. N: Do you know what your child's goals are?
    P2: No, I don't.

12. N: Do you think you have some goals that you personally want your child to achieve?
P2: Yes, I would like him to learn how to sit down and listen to me. I would like him to learn how to read and write. Maybe learn some verses from the Holy Quran.

13. N: Why didn't you tell the teacher about your ideas?
P2: I guess I never thought of it. I mean, no one asked me.

14. N: Do you feel that the goals in your child's IEP will improve his/her learning?
P2: As I said before, I haven't seen much improvement. I see my child going to school every day, he likes it and I'm happy he does. One thing I can say is that he is learning more Arabic.

15. N: So the improvement is only in Arabic?
P2: It might be in something else but I don't know because my child does not communicate with me.

16. N: How do you feel about IEP in inclusion?
P2: I feel it is good. It certainly helped us. We felt very bad when other schools did not accept my child. At least socially I know it is good.

17. N: Do you know what your rights are as a parent?
P2: You mean other than my child being included?

18. N: Yes, I mean you as a parent.
P2: No, I don't.

19. N: What do you recommend for improving practice?
P2: I suggest that the Ministry or the school conducts a workshop for the parents to teach us how to deal with our children.
(The father came alone. When asked about his wife he dismissed her saying that she doesn't understand Arabic and is fed up with the child and doesn't want to deal with him)

Summarized Account of Interview with Parent 3

Parent's Name: P3 (mother)	Grade: 4	Child's name: H.A
Occupation: Housewife	Number of children: 2	Duration: 1 hour
Education: English Language	Venue: Vice principal's office	

1. N: What type of disability or learning problem does your child have?
   P3: It says in his report learning difficulties but at a later stage we discovered that he has Autism.

2. N: How did you find out?
   P3: they diagnosed him at the beginning of the year as learning difficulties but I knew because he wasn't communicating with anyone. His teachers kept saying that he would hide his face if he saw anyone new. His special education teacher then told me that she suspected that he has something more than learning disability and she advised me to take him to special needs center for a proper diagnosis. I went back home devastated but it was as if everything made sense. Then after few days I took him to the center and they diagnosed him with ASD.

3. N: how about your husband, how did he react?
   P3: we were both extremely sad. He started blaming himself for not spending enough time with him. But thank God, when we took H. to the center, they talked to us and taught us some strategies. We still go there once a week.

4. N: what do you think about inclusion?
   P3: I think it is the best thing that happened to our education system. Last year my son attended a special education class, and he didn't improve as much as he did this year when he is included in the regular classroom.

5. N: how long has your son been in this school?
   P3: since Grade 1.

6. N: and has he always been in the special education class?
   P3: no, he has been in the regular education until grade 2, but then he couldn't cope with the material no matter how hard I tried to teach at home.

7. N: did he have an IEP?
   P3: yes he did, but it was a very short one and different of the one he has now.

8. N: what is an IEP?
   P3: an IEP is a plan that the school puts in order to help the child in reaching his goals.

9. N: what is your role in it?

P3: prior to writing it, the principal contacts me and tells me what his teachers decided in terms of what goals should he accomplish during the term and she asks me whether I'm OK with it and to give a consent.

10. N: How active were you in determining the goals in your child's IEP?

P3: I didn't suggest some points, I thought that they underestimated him. H. can do more than what they have planned and I told them that I'm working with him.

11. N: and did they change them?

P3: yes, they added the points that I mentioned. They were in fact very cooperative.

12. N: Do you feel that you were viewed as an equal partner in the meeting?

P3: not a completely equal partner, but let's just say… I was respected.

13. N: Was the IEP written during the meeting or was it completed prior to your meeting with the IEP team?

P3: no it wasn't written, but they had every teacher had her ideas about some goals that should be included.

14. N: Is this what you would have preferred?

P3: yeah, I didn't mind it.

15. N: Tell me what do you remember about what was written in your child's IEP?

P3: the normal objectives for Grade 4 students. For example, he has to learn how to find the subject and the object in Arabic. How to multiply and do the fractions in Maths and so on.

16. N: but how about the social skills?

P3: I've suggested that they include them in the IEP but they added it as a note since the IEP is specified for academic goals.

17. N: do you feel these goals and objectives are improving his learning?

P3: yes, of course. We've come a long way. Now my son reads and writes and communicates. Of course we still have a lot to do but we are getting there.

18. N: Do you think the IEP helps in your child's education?

P3: I do not know if it has a direct effect on him. I just know that it makes it easier for me to know what is expected of him so that I help him more at home. It also helps im communicating with his teacher.

19. N: do you think everyone is doing his full potential?

P3: yes, I think the teachers are working hard to meet the needs of my child. I meet with them quite often and we always discuss what to do, how to teach him and his improvement. I think that the teachers and the administration are pretty cooperative.

20. N: are they any challenges for you?

    P3: the only challenge is how I can get my child to same level as the regular child so that when he moves to a cycle 2 school he will not need special education services because I don't know if he will get cooperative teachers like this school. And also not having specialists within the school who can address the behavior and social problems.

21. N: What do you recommend for better practice?

    P3: Maybe ask the good teachers to train other ones from other schools so that we get the same quality of services when we move from cycle to cycle. And also have more trainings for parents.

APPENDIX 5
CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION DATA CHART 1

Case: A.J.   **Teacher:** GT1
Date: 21/11/2011
Start Time: 7:45   **End Time:** 8:30
Location: Grade 1
Lesson: Arabic Language

Classroom Description:

The classroom is located on the first floor. There is one bulletin board but the walls are filled with illustrations as well. There are the Arabic alphabets, children's worksheet, science illustration and some Maths addition problems. The children have their bags outside the classroom in a big box. There are two computers for students' use. There are also two bookshelves; one of them has copy books and text books (very disorganized) and the other has baskets. There is also a small easel board next to the teacher's desk. The class consists of 18 children. The child with special needs is number 18 seated closely to the teacher's desk. The class layout was as follows

Classroom Layout

Chronicle events of the class

Time	Observation
7:45	- Children start coming inside the classroom. They are running all around the place. The teacher is standing by the door yelling and asking them to come in. in takes about 7 minutes for the children to settle down.
7:55	- The teacher greets the children properly. She pulls her chair next to the easel board and sits. She asks the children about the first thing they have to do. They say prayer. So she reminds them to sit down properly and they start reciting a 'Sura' from the Holy Quran. The children were sitting very reverently. She then asks them what day of the week is it. They answer "Monday". She asks one of the boys to come and write it on the board. The boys are trying to give him the answer; the teacher asks them to be quiet. A.J. is sitting quietly by his desk looking at the board and rocking his body. She then asks the children if the answer is right and they answer positively. She asks A.J. to come and circle letter (ث) in the word (الإثنين) he comes and does that successfully. She asks them then about the date in both Gregorian and Hijri. Volunteers come and do it. She asks A.J. to read the numbers for her. He does.
8: 10	- She asked the children to get their text books from the bookshelf and open a certain page. A.J. is sitting in his place. She goes next to him and gives him instruction individually. He them goes towards the bookshelf. Most of the children by then were done by then. A.J. goes quietly waits for the other children to finish, he pick up his book and comes sits down. The other children already opened the page. He looks at the child next to him to see which page and flips the pages of his book. The teacher starts the lesson and A.J. still did not find the page. He still looks at his friend's book and tries to find it. He gives up and closes his book. The teacher continues reading. The lesson consists of reading 2 sentences.
8:20	She then asks the children who wants to read. She chooses one and he starts. She then notices that A.J.'s book is not opened. She goes to him, opens the book and points to where the other student is reading. She then points to different words and asks him to read them but he doesn't know. She tells him the answer and he repeats after her looking at her not in his book. She asks him to pay attention and goes to walk around the students.
8:25	She asks another boy to read. He does so quickly. She then asks each two to face each other and to one another by turn. She goes to A.J. and monitors how he reads. He only read the first two words of the sentence.
8:30	Bell rings

OBSERVATION DATA CHART 2

Case: A.J.   **Teacher:** GT1
Date: 22/11/2011
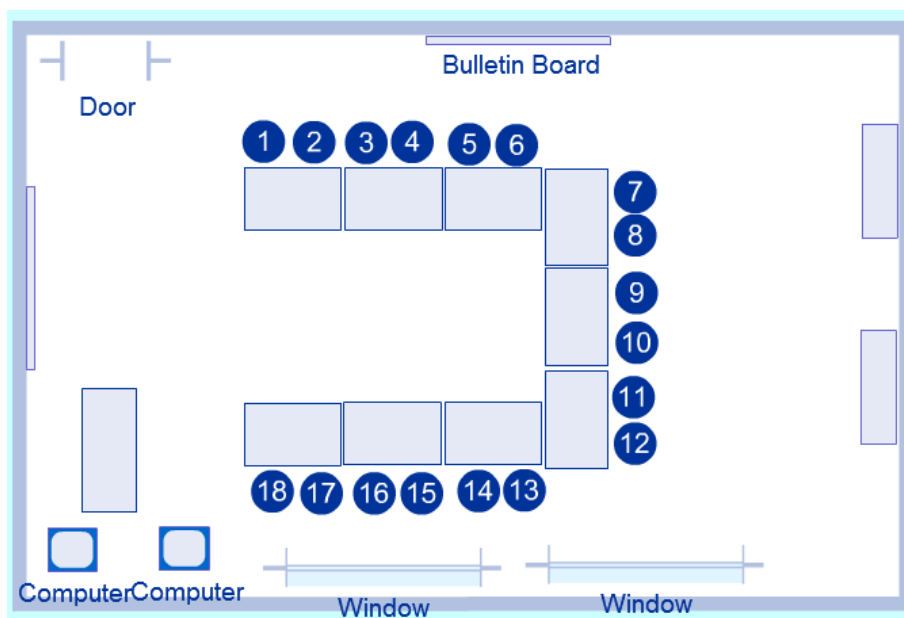**Start Time:** 9:30   **End Time:** 10:15
Location: Grade 1

Lesson: Maths
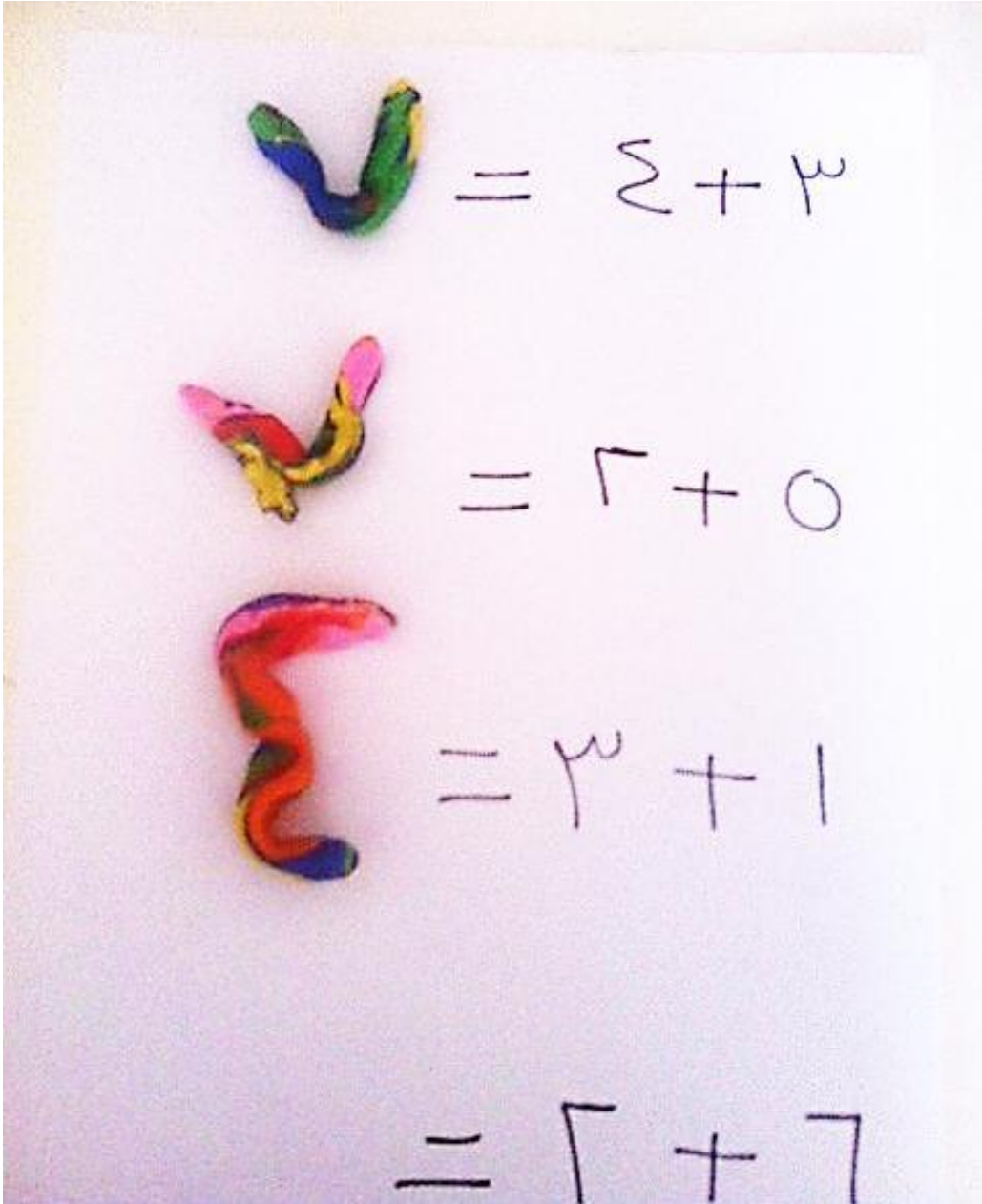
Classroom Description:

The classroom is located on the first floor. There is one bulletin board but the walls are filled with illustrations as well. There are the Arabic alphabets, children's worksheet, science illustration and some Maths addition problems. The children have their bags outside the classroom in a big box. There are two computers for students' use. There are also two bookshelves; one of them has copy books and text books (very disorganized) and the other has baskets. There is also a small easel board next to the teacher's desk. The class consists of 18 children. The child with special needs is number 18 seated closely to the teacher's desk. The class layout was as follows

Classroom Layout

Chronicle events of the class

Time	Observation
9:30	- The children come back from the break. They are tired. Some come inside the class while others are outside drinking water. - The teacher goes outside to gather the kids. She has a stick in her hand and keeps banging it on the floor asking the kids to hurry up inside. (she uses a loud and angry tone) - A.J. is sitting alone by himself. No one is talking to him
9:40	- She greets them more calmly now and tells them that they have Maths. - She puts some addition and subtraction problems on the board. - She turns around and asks for volunteers to come to the board one by one. She reminds them not to shout out the answer. - She chooses one to come to the board then she goes sits next to A.J. - She goes over the technique used between addition and subtraction with him. - She chooses another student after the first one finishes. - She goes back to A.J. and gives him a problem on a sheet of paper to do it. - She then goes back to the other students choosing another volunteer - A.J. is looking at the paper but he doesn't know what to do. - Students finish the problems on the board
9:50	- Teacher praises them, and ask them to open their exercise book on a certain page. - She goes to A.J gives him a sheet of paper, modeling clay and a counter - She gives instructions to the children as to which exercises to do and tells them that they have 15 minutes to do them. - She pulls a chair next to A.J. and sits next to him. She goes over the exercises with him using the counter. When he knows the answer she asks him to do it with the clay. - A.J. was very engaged in the process.
10:05	- The teacher leaves him with a task and goes around to help the other children - the child next to A.J. looks at him and start helping him (rather giving him out the answer) - another group of children are around A.J. now asking him if they can play with the play dough -A.j. does not finish his work but he is happy and talking to the other children -teacher is going around correcting for the students and calling their names if they had mistakes to come and correct them.
10:15	Bell rings

$$= 2 + 3$$

$$= 2 + 0$$

$$= 3 + 1$$

$$= 2 + 7$$

Sample of Student's Work

OBSERVATION DATA CHART 3

Case: S.A   **Teacher:** GT2
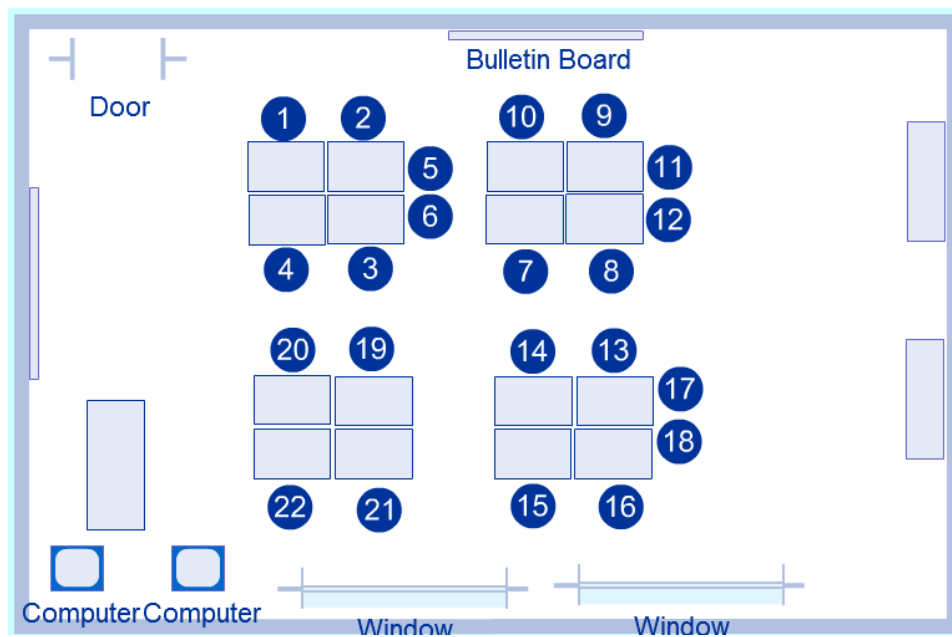**Date:** 27/11/2011
Start Time: 7:45   **End Time:** 8:30
Location: Grade 2
Lesson: Arabic Language

Classroom Description:

The classroom is located on the first floor. There is one bulletin board but the walls are filled with illustrations as well. There are the Arabic alphabets, verses from the Holy Quran children's worksheet, science illustration and some Maths addition problems. The children have their bags outside the classroom in a big box. There are two computers for students' use. There are also two bookshelves; one of them has copy books and text books and the other has baskets. The class has 22 students. The child with special needs is number 22 seated closely to the teacher's desk. The students around him are the quietest boys in class (according to the teacher). The class layout was as follows

Classroom Layout

Chronicle events of the class

Time	Observation
7:45	- Children are coming to their classroom led by their teacher. - They quickly sit down in their places - She writes the date on the board - She gives a quick revision of the past lesson "المقطع الممدود بألف". S.A. is jumping from his table to participate, when she chose him to answer, he stopped to think for a second then gave the same answer as the previous student. The teacher scolded him telling him that if he doesn't know an answer he shouldn't raise his hand. - The teacher introduces the topic of the lesson as "المقطع الممدود بواو"
7:55	- Teacher wrote the following words on the board "ربوع" "مكسور" "نورة" "يونس" مفقود" "خرطوم" "سطور" "قلوب" "يصوم" "محمود" - She asked each volunteer to read one word stressing on the "الواو". - After the fourth word, she asked the volunteer to find the syllable himself. In the meanwhile S.A. was running in the classroom playing with his pencil as if it is an airplane. Teacher shouts at him and ask him to sit in his place. He does not respond. She goes to him takes him roughly by the hand and asks him to sit down - She tries to sit with him but the class goes out of hands so she goes to the middle of the class and yells asking them to be quiet. S.A continues to play with the pencil case but this time while seated in his place. - Teacher continues to choose students until all the 10 words are done.
8:15	- T gives student a worksheet and gives the same worksheet to S.A - She asks the children if they are capable of sitting quietly, and if they do she will give them stickers - S.A. yells that he wants stickers as well. The teacher tells him that he will get them only if he sits down. - Students start working and the class becomes very quiet - Teacher sits next to S.A and helps him through the exercise occasionally leaving him to answer a student's question. - 4 students finish in 5 minutes and hurry quickly to the teacher to correct their answers. She does. She then gives each a sticker and asks them to go help a friend. The class starts getting noisy again and she reminds them of the stickers. - She goes back to S.A again and check out his answers. He goes to the end of the room to play with his friends
8:30	- teacher gives each one of them a sticker and leaves

Note: S.A doesn't take Maths period in class. Instead he goes to resource room. Teacher says that he is too disruptive to join him during Maths and that she cannot handle him

Sample of Student's Work

OBSERVATION DATA CHART 4

Case : H.A. **Teacher:** GT4
Date: 29/11/2011
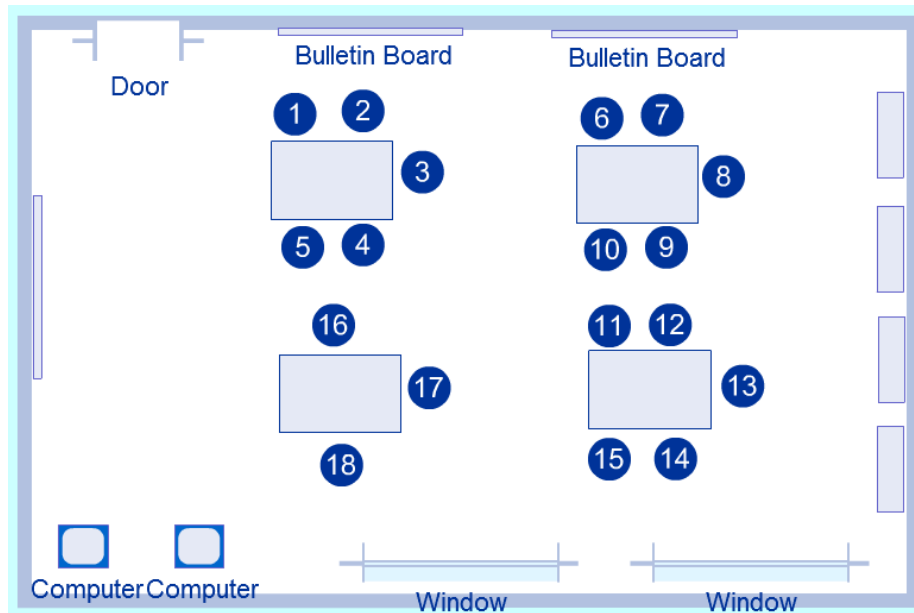**Start Time:** 10:15 **End Time:** 11:00
Location: Grade 4
Lesson: Arabic Language

Classroom Description:

The classroom is located on the second floor. There are two bulletin boards and the walls are filled with illustrations as well. There are the verses from the Holy Quran, children's worksheet, science illustration and projects Maths multiplication tables. The children have their bags outside the classroom in a big box. There are two computers for students' use. There are four bookshelves; one of them has copy books and text books 2 have baskets with balls, blocks, puzzles, and another shelf has stories and stationary. The teacher has no desk. The class has 18 students. The child with special needs is number 18 seated closely to the teacher's desk. The students around him are the quietest boys in class (according to the teacher). The class layout was as follows

Classroom Layout

Chronicle events of the class

Time	Observation
10:15	- The teacher greets the class. - Reminds them of the previous lesson "خط الرقعة" and asks some revision questions. - She asks each child to write in his note book his name, school and neighbourhood and show it to the person sitting next to him.
10:25	- Teacher comes and sits next to H.A. gives him a worksheet. He had to read words and find the missing alphabet. She helps him with the first two then she goes around the children giving them individual instructions. She reminds them that they need to be very quiet to concentrate. - She then comes back to H.A praise for doing his work alone and corrects a mistake for him. - That being done, she went back to the board and she asked about writing certain letters in "خط الرقعة". She asks volunteers to come to the board and show her how to write them. She quickly comes to H.A and checks on his work. She claps for him because he did one on his own and it was right. - She corrects the words on the board and gave them other examples. The class is very quiet and the children raise their hands quietly.
10:45	- She asks two volunteers to come to the board and each write the same sentence on his section of the board. Then the class has to compare them. H.A. leaves his work and looks very interested. - In the next run, she wrote a simple sentence on the board "من غشنا فليس منا" and asked H.A and another boy (below level) to come to the board and copy that same sentence using "خط الرقعة". Both of them did. She stands in between them correcting them. Once they were done she clapped for them - Other volunteers come and she dictates them a sentence. - she goes to H.A and finish a little bit of work with him
10:55	- Teacher writes three sentences on the board and asks students to copy them in their notebooks. - She then sits with H.A and goes over the exercise with him correcting his mistakes and explaining the right thing
11:00	Bell rings

التحليل والتمييز البصري للحروف

ضع دائرة حول الحرف المناسب الذي يكمل الكلمة من بين الحروف الأربعة الموجودة أمام كل كلمة كما في النموذج الأول:

				الكلمة
ض	ـس	ـ	ص	حصان
ـ	ح	خ	ـ	تفاح
ـر	د	ر	ز	أحواب
ـر	ن	ث	ب	عنب
ـث	ش	ص	ـ	يستغرب
د	ز	ر	ـر	يفسر
ك	ـق	ف	ق	تسلم
ـك	ك	ـك	ك	كتاب
ـد	د	ذ	ـذ	يشرب
ل	ا	ث	ا	عاشت
ـت	ب	ث	ـ	لبست
ث	ب	ـت	ت	حوت
ب	ث	ة	ـ	بيت
ث	ـت	ب	ت	تين
ـت	ـث	ب	ت	كتب

إعداد معلمة غرفة المصادر

Sample of Student's Work

OBSERVATION DATA CHART 5

Case: H.A.   **Teacher:** GT3
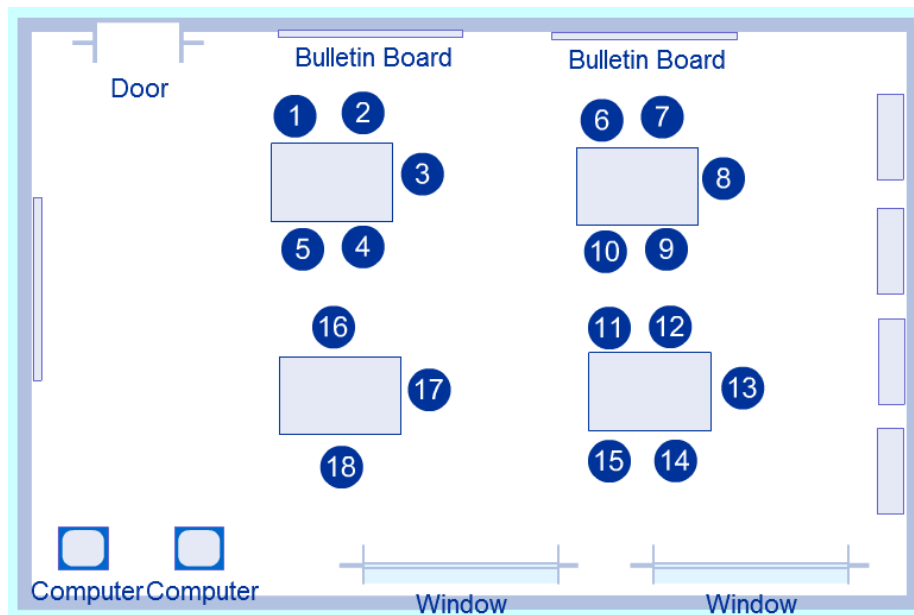**Date:** 4/12/2011
Start Time: 8:30   **End Time:** 9:15
Location: Grade 4
Lesson: Maths

Classroom Description:

The classroom is located on the second floor. There are two bulletin boards and the walls are filled with illustrations as well. There are the verses from the Holy Quran, children's worksheet, science illustration and projects Maths multiplication tables. The children have their bags outside the classroom in a big box. There are two computers for students' use. There are four bookshelves; one of them has copy books and text books 2 have baskets with balls, blocks, puzzles, and another shelf has stories and stationary. The teacher has no desk. The class has 18 students. The child with special needs is number 18 seated closely to the teacher's desk. The students around him are the quietest boys in class (according to the teacher). The class layout was as follows

Classroom Layout

Chronicle events of the class

Time	Observation
8:30	- Teacher greets the children - She asks them to sit down and prepare their pencil cases - She revises the previous lesson with them "multiplying two-digit-numbers" - She gives each one of them an empty paper and asks to write the following problems from the board: 42×7, 26×5, 11×9, 19×8, 71×15, 82×11
8:45	- She sits with H.A, she brings blocks and sheets of paper. She does addition (two digits) problems with him - She explains to him using the blocks what tens are and what ones are. - Teacher asks him to put 10 blocks on top of each other and goes to check a student's work. - Then she comes and asks him to make to other 10-towers. And goes check students work.
8:55	- When students finish she asks them to stand quietly and come to the board. She divided them into four groups. And she places different things on each table; one table had worksheets, another had counters and blocks, another activity sheets. She also switched on the 2 computers and put a Maths game on them. - she gave the students instructions; she placed each group of student on a table and the last one on the computers, she told them they had five minutes on each station and once they here the bell ring (her bell) they need to move to the next station whether they finished or not. And also they cannot make any noise. She went to every station explaining what they had to do and then came back to H.A.
9:05	-Using the blocks, she explained to him the ones and the tens. She gave him oral problems and he would do them with block - She then went to the board with him and gave him one problem. She left him, rang the bell and helped the children move. -H.A. finished the problem on his own and waited for the teacher to come back. - teacher came, praised him and gave him 2 problems - She rang the bell again and they shifted - the routine continued until they all finished, she asked to be seated back to their places
9:15	The bell rang

OBSERVATION DATA CHART 6

Case : O.H.   **Teacher:** GT4
Date: 23/11/2011
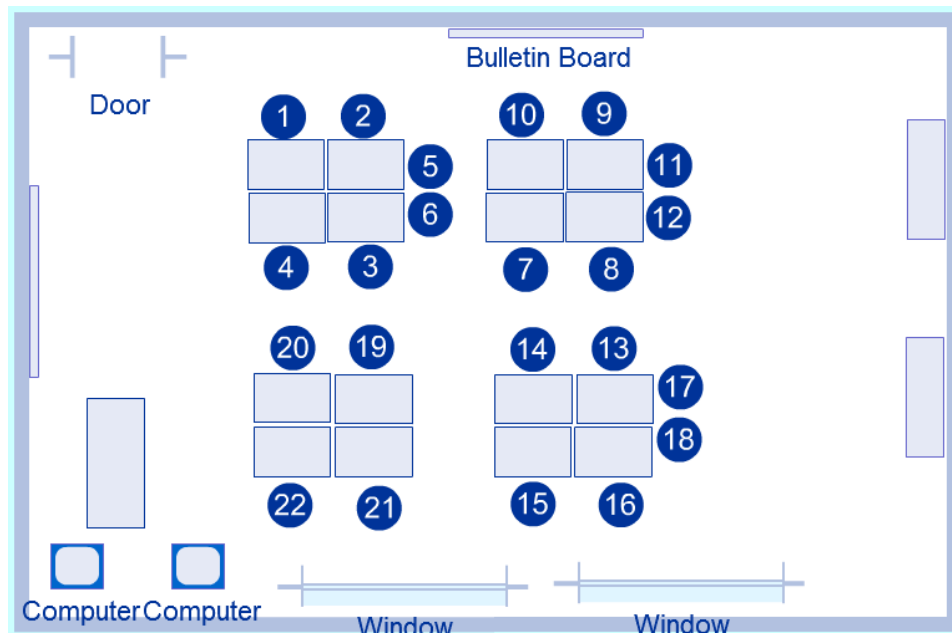**Start Time:** 7:45   **End Time:** 8:30
Location: Grade 2
Lesson: Arabic Language
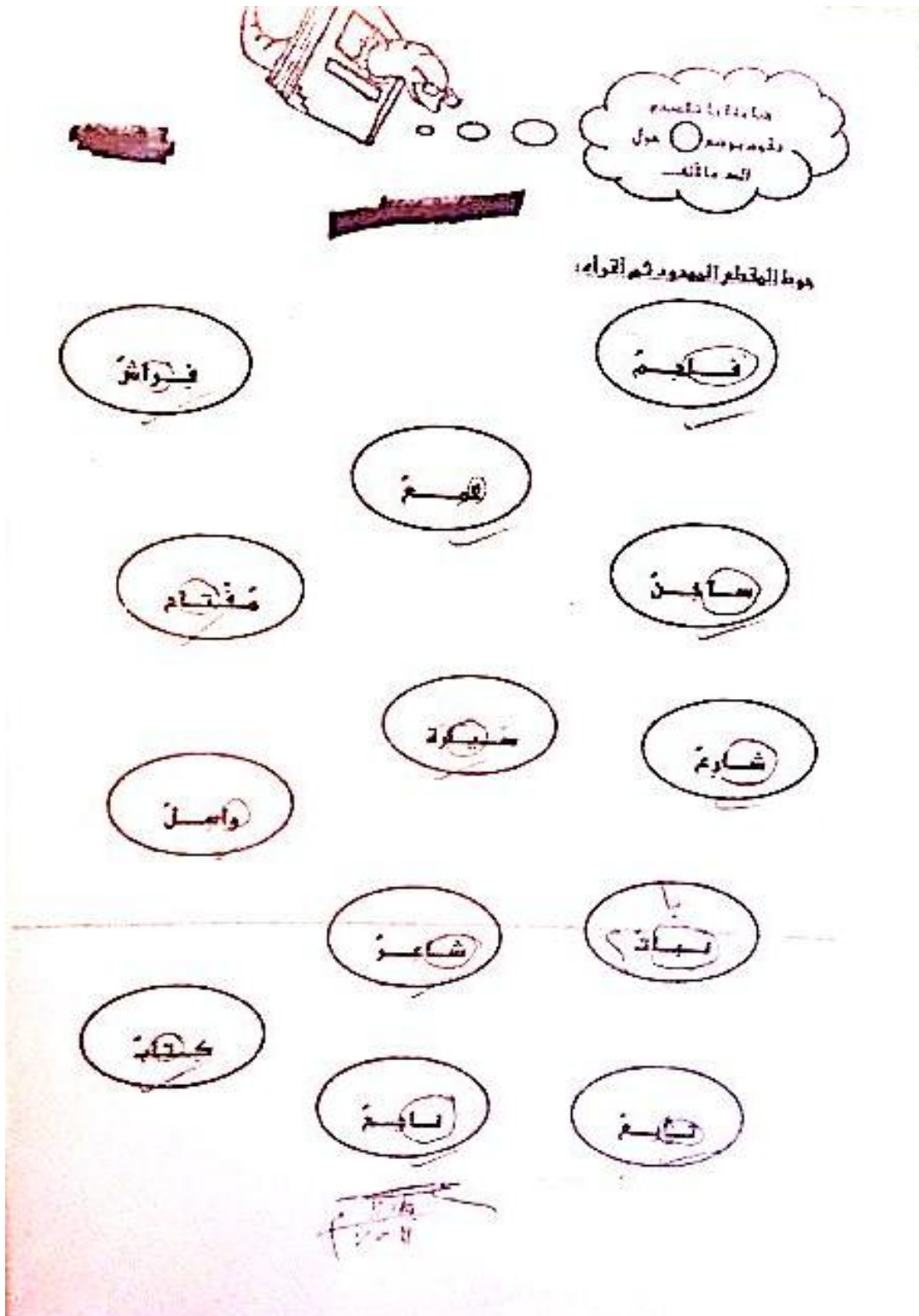
Classroom Description:

The classroom is located on the first floor. There is one bulletin board but the walls are filled with illustrations as well. There are the Arabic alphabets, verses from the Holy Quran children's worksheet, science illustration and some Maths addition problems. The children have their bags outside the classroom in a big box. There are two computers for students' use. There are also two bookshelves; one of them has copy books and text books and the other has baskets. The class has 22 students. The child with special needs is number 20 seated closely to the teacher's desk. The students around him are above level students. The class layout was as follows

Classroom Layout

Chronicle events of the class

Time	Observation
7:45	- Children are coming to their classroom led by their teacher. - They quickly sit down in their places - She writes the date on the board - She gives a quick revision of the past lesson. O.H. is sitting on his desk, he is not participating - The teacher introduces the topic of the lesson as "المقطع الممدود بألف"
7:55	- Teacher sat on her computer to prepare the presentation; she then turns the lights off and start. - The slide show has some words like "سيارة"هاتف" "لامع" "وفاء" "غاب" - She asks the students which letter is in common with all of them. The students are quite for a second, then hands began to rise. Some students blurted out the answer. O.H is sitting in his place without participating. The teacher still didn't do any contact with him. - One of the students from O.H's table was chosen to answer that "ا" is in common. - The teacher asked some students to read the words from the slide. After saying each word, the "ا" becomes read. The teachers stresses on the "ا" every time a word is read. O.H didn't get a turn - After reading the words, she then explains that this "ا" is "المقطع الممدود بألف
8:15	- T asks the children to open their Arabic text books and open a certain page. - O.H. is lead by his classmate. The teacher still didn't interact with him - Students open the page and start talking to each other. - T shouts at them to be quiet and asks them again to sit down and open the requested page - O.H is again helped by his classmate. - Students start working as teacher is sitting on her desk. She starts talking to me and I tell her politely that I need to observe the students. - She then starts walking around the students asking them to concentrate. O.H copies everything from his classmate.
8:20	- The teacher goes around correcting. She reaches O.H and corrects his paper and tells him that he is "شاطر" because he has done everything correctly - she comes and shows me the paper very proudly - O.H is very happy and smiles.

Sample of Student's Work

Case: O.H   **Teacher:** GT4
Date: 23/11/2011
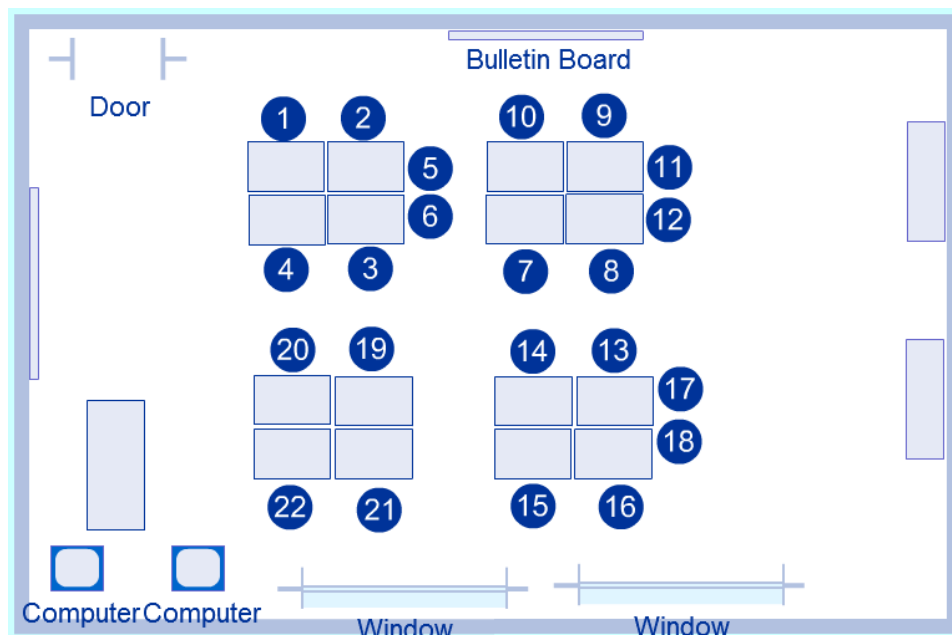**Start Time:** 8:30   **End Time:** 9:15
Location: Grade 2
Lesson: Maths

Classroom Description:

The classroom is located on the first floor. There is one bulletin board but the walls are filled with illustrations as well. There are the Arabic alphabets, verses from the Holy Quran children's worksheet, science illustration and some Maths addition problems. The children have their bags outside the classroom in a big box. There are two computers for students' use. There are also two bookshelves; one of them has copy books and text books and the other has baskets. The class has 22 students. The child with special needs is number 20 seated closely to the teacher's desk. The students around him are above level students. The class layout was as follows

Classroom Layout

Chronicle events of the class

Time	Observation
8:30	- The teacher gives the children a quick water break before starting the Maths lesson - She explains that today they will take a new lesson which is addition with two digits
8:40	- Teacher writes on the board (13+22=) vertically. She covers the tens digit with her hand and asks students to tell her what is 3+2. Students answer collectively. She then uncovers the tens and asks them what is 1+3. They answer collectively. O.H is not asked and he does not answer with the children. - The teacher writes 10 problems on the board and asks 3 students to go to the board, each with a whiteboard marker, and solve 3 problems - The students in the meanwhile were jumping up and down raising their hands asking for the teacher to choose them. O.H. did not raise his hand, nor did she choose him throughout the whole exercise.
8:50	- She then asks the students to go get their books on a certain page. - She switches on the computer and asks O.H. to come and play on the computer. She then approaches me and tells me that he can't do Maths and instead she lets him use the computer to strengthen his hand muscles and train his brain hand coordination. - While she is talking to me, the children copy the exercises from each other and some of them were throwing the pencil cases to each other. Two boys held their chairs and went to sit with O.H on the computer.
9:10	- She shouts at them telling them to sit down quietly. - She takes a red pen and started correcting for the students.
9:15	The bell rings

APPENDIX 6
CONSENT LETTER

نور رياض أردكاني

ardekanin@gmail.com

السيدة مديرة المدرسة / المعلمات المحترمات

تحية طيبة وبعد،

أود أن أبدأ هذا خطابي بالتعريف بنفسي، اسمي نور رياض أردكاني، طالبة في برنامج الماجستير في التربية الخاصة في الجامعة البريطانية في دبي، وأعمل حاليًا على إعداد أطروحة التخرج تحت عنوان: "*عمليّة البرنامج التربوي الفردي في المدارس الحكومية في دبي: دراسة حالة*". أتطلع من خلال دراسة هذه الحالة إلى استكشاف عملية البرنامج التربوي الفردي في إحدى مدارس دبي الحكومية، ودور أعضاء فريق البرنامج التربوي الفردي في إعداد البرنامج وتطبيقه وتقييمه ومتابعته.

سأقوم خلال بحثي هذا بإجراء مقابلات مع مديرة المدرسة، ومعلمي التربية الخاصة، ومعلمي الصف، وأهالي الطلاب المُدمجين، علاوة على حضور بعض الصفوف لمشاهدة كيفية تطبيق البرنامج التربوي الفردي على أرض الواقع. وأتطلع إلى مساعدتكم في توفير المجال لي للوصول إلى المعلومات اللازمة لإجراء هذا البحث.

من الجدير بالذكر أن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة تطوعية واختيارية، ولا توجد أية عواقب نتيجة عدم المشاركة، ويمكنكم سحب مشاركتكم في أي وقت تشاؤون. كما أن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة لن تعرضكم أنتم أو مدرستكم لأية مخاطر، ولا توجد أية مخاطر محتملة أو متوقعة نتيجة مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة تتخطى ما نعايشه في حياتنا اليومية. كما إن مشاركتكم لن تعود عليكم بأية منفعة مباشرة. ونؤكد لكم أن جميع المعلومات التي نجمعها ستستخدم في لأغراض البحث العلمي فقط وستعامل بسرية تامة. وسيقوم الباحث نفسه بترجمة نتائج المقابلات إلى اللغة الإنجليزية، وسيتم تخزين المعلومات الكاملة (العربية والإنجليزية) بصورة شخصية لدى الباحث ولن يتمكن أحد آخر من الوصول إليها قبل الحصول على الموافقة المسبقة من الباحث. ومن جهة أخرى، فإنه وبمجرد جمع النتائج ستُستخدم البيانات لإتمام الأطروحة وسيتم بعدها إتلاف الأوراق والبيانات ذات العلاقة. ونؤكد لكم أنكم أنتم المشاركون في الدراسة لن يتم الإشارة إلى شخصكم الكريم أو إلى مدرستكم. وفي حال رغبتكم بالوصول إلى الأطروحة النهائية فيمكنكم التواصل مع الباحث مباشرة عن طريق عنوان التواصل الموجود أعلاه.

يمكنكم في أي وقت توجيه تساؤلاتكم إليّ عبر الهاتف المحمول 8747127 (055). وإذا كانت لديكم أية أسئلة حول حقوقكم كمشاركين في البحث فيمكنكم التواصل مع مكتب الجامعة البريطانية في دبي على الهاتف: 3913626 (04).

أتقدم بالشكر لكم مقدّمًا على مشاركتكم القيمة، وأتطلع إلى لقائكم والاستفادة من آرائكم ومعلوماتكم التي ستُسهم في إضفاء صبغة من الجودة على أطروحتي ونتائج دراستي التي آمل أن تساعد في تحسين وتطوير برنامج الدمج في مدارس دبي الحكومية.

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام والتقدير ،،،

نور رياض أردكاني

APPENDIX 7
PARENTS' CONSENT FORM

رسالة موجهة إلى أولياء الأمور

عزيزي السيد.................،

أنا طالبة ماجستير في الجامعة البريطانية في دبي. كما تعلم حضرتك، إن طفلك مُدمج في مدرسة حكومية وتم تطوير خطة تربوية فردية لمساعدته في تحصيله العلمي. إن هدف البحث الذي أقوم به هو التّفحص في كيفية تطبيق هذه الخطة الفردية.

أود أن أتوجه لحضرتك بطلب المشاركة في البحث الذي أقوم به. سيتضمن البحث قضاء بعض من الوقت مع الأطفال والاطلاع على خططهم الفردية، بالإضافة إلى عقد مقابلة مع حضرتك أو مع زوجتك الكريمة (أو كلاكما) لمدة لا تزيد عن 10–15 دقيقة. جميع المعلومات التي سيتم الحصول عليها ستخضع لسرية تامة بحيث لن يذكر اسم الطالب أو المدرسة، كما وسيتم إتلافها فور الانتهاء من البحث. إن المشاركة تطوعية وكما وبإمكانكما، كأهل، سحب مشاركتكم في أي وقت تحسون به بالانزعاج.

للمزيد من المعلومات أو الاستفسارات، يرجى الاتصال بي على الرقم 8747127 055
راجية منكم مشاركتكم.

الباحثة
نور أردكاني

APPENDIX 8
LETTERS OF APPROVAL

الجامعة البريطانية في دبي
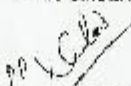
The British University in Dubai

25 April 2011

The Director
Ministry of Education
United Arab Emirates

This is to certify that **Mrs Nour Ardekani** (Student ID: 90089) is a registered student on the Master of Education programme in The British University in Dubai since January 2010.

As part of her course Dissertation for "Inclusion and Special Education" module, Mrs Ardekani is expected to conduct a case study "Scholl for All". We would be grateful for your help and support for her study.

This letter is issued on Mrs Ardekani's request.

Yours sincerely,

Nandini Uchil
Head of Student Admin

الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة التربية والتعليم
مكتب وكيل الوزارة

الرقم: ع/125/.... 1341
التاريخ: 15 /5 /2011م

السيدة / ناديني يوشل   المحترمة

الجامعة البريطانية – دبي

تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،،

الموضوع: تسهيل متطلبات التخصص الطالبة/نور أرديكاني

ردا على رسالتكم الواردة إلينا بتاريخ 2011/4/25 حول تسهيل مهمة الآنسة/ نور أرديكاني وهي طالبة الماجستير لدى الجامعة البريطانية بدبي .

نود إفادتكم بأنه لا مانع لدينا من قيامها بالبحث (المدرسة للجميع) والتعرف على برامج الدمج المطبقة في المدارس.

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الإحترام والتقدير ،،،،

علي ميحد السويدي

وكيل وزارة التربية والتعليم بالإنابة

نسخة إلى :
– مكتب الوكيل لمساعد للعمليات التربوية .
– مديرات المناطق التعليمية .
– بدرة التربية الخاصة .

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