

**INFLUENCE OF HEADTEACHERS' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE ON  
IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
IN UASIN GISHU COUNTY, KENYA**

**\*Agen'go Ogony Maurice (PhD Candidate)**

**[agengomaurice@gmail.com](mailto:agengomaurice@gmail.com)**

**Masinde Muliro University of Science & Technology**

**Dr. Pamela Buhere**

**[pbuhere@mmust.ac.ke](mailto:pbuhere@mmust.ac.ke)**

**Department of Educational Planning and Management**

**School of Education,**

**Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology**

**Dr. Peter Jairo Aloba**

**[jairopeteraloka@yahoo.com](mailto:jairopeteraloka@yahoo.com)**

**Department of Psychology and Educational Foundations**

**School of Education,**

**Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology**

**ABSTRACT**

The most controversial issue currently regarding the education of children with disabilities and special education needs internationally is that of inclusive education. In Kenya, schools have been encouraged to the pressure of inclusion to embrace integration of all learners including those with disabilities. The problem is that, despite the adoption of this policy in Kenya (2009), realization of this noble idea remains dismal, with most schools hardly achieving the basic objective of inclusion. Unpublished report from Uasin Gishu County (2015) indicates a low level of implementation of inclusive education primary schools. The role of head teachers in the implementation of inclusive education remains crucial. They are undoubtedly the central person in all the leadership and team work exhibited in any inclusive school. The objective of this study was to examine the influence of transformational leadership style on the implementation of inclusive education in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Lewin's leadership theory. The study adopted Concurrent triangulation design within the mixed method approach. The target population for the study comprised 4909 teachers in public primary schools and 464 senior teachers totaling up to 5373. The sample size comprised 491 teachers stratified sampled, 10 senior teachers systematically randomly sampled and a sample size of 501 was used. Data collection instruments were questionnaires and interview schedules. Content, construct and face validity was ensured by expert judgment. Reliability was ensured by Cronbach Alpha method and reliability coefficients were all above 0.7. Quantitative data was analyzed by descriptive statistics and inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation and liner regression while Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The findings indicated a statistically significant though positive correlation between the head teachers' transformational leadership style and implementation of inclusive education ( $n=368$ ;  $r =.277$ ;  $p =.017$ ). Teachers Service Commission Human Resource department should sensitize head teachers on better leadership practices for primary schools that can enhance the implementation of inclusive education.

***Key words; Transformational, Leadership, Implementation, Inclusive, Education***

## **1.0: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Any discussion about definition of inclusive education takes us back to the Salamanca statement and framework for Action UNESCO (1994) as a reference point. The statement re-affirms the right to education of every individual as enshrined in the (1948) Universal Declaration of Human rights and renews the pledge made by the world community at the (1990) Jomtiem world conference on education for all to ensure the right for all children regardless of their individual difference. Mithaug (2003) argued that inclusion fosters institutional strategies to increase the participation and learning of children who are perceived vulnerable within existing educational arrangement. United States of America being a country of diversity has had a long tradition of research and practices in special education in the form of inclusion (Mokter, 2014). An overview of inclusive education in the United States of America by Mokter (2014) established that inclusion strategies for students with mild to moderate disabilities have been successful.

Malaysia's move towards inclusion was given impetus by its participation in workshops and conferences set up under the auspices of the United Nations, UNESCO (1994). Inclusive education was introduced in the Education Act 1996 as part of the continuum of services available for children with special needs. Zalizan & Manisha (2014) study in Malaysia recommended that at the national and local levels, public awareness and acceptance of the ideas of equal opportunities for all children need to be strengthened through the media and websites of educational and social institutions. While every single child can have access to education under the current framework in Japan, the law dictates children with disabilities to go to the specified type of school, and does not allow them to choose the ones of their preference (Kaneko, 2010). Enrolment in special schools often limits their opportunities to come into contact with non-disabled children. Forlin, Kawai & Higuchi (2015) in Japan added on that there is need for better teacher preparation due to the very low understandings of inclusion.

The government of Ethiopia is committed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and Education for All (EFA) goals. The main focus is on providing primary education of good quality for all children by 2015, (UNESCO 2013). However, Tizazu & Beyene (2011) indicated that teachers' attitudes are influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition, training of the teacher, experience, gender and availability of support devices. Tanzania's government as an exponent of EFA in its Education Act of (1978), the education and training policy (1995) and the Primary Education Development Plan is endeavoring in ensuring access and equity in the education arena (UNESCO, 2013). The government of Tanzania is implementing the policy of inclusive education to ensure that all children including those with disabilities are not denied their right to education (MOE, 2008). However, Tungaraza (2012) indicated that although Tanzania has set about establishing inclusive schools, the special needs of all children are not known.

Kenya is a signatory to several international conventions and agreements and has ratified a number of them thus committing herself to the implementation of the recommendations there in (MOE, 2008). Some of these conventions and declarations include convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2006) and Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All 'EFA' (2000) which was supposed to have been achieved fully by the year 2015 (MOE, 2008). However, Ngesu (2012) established that there was an acute shortage of teaching and learning resources to cater for learning disability students in inclusive settings in Kenya. Lack of required training and qualifications were also reported by the study as a major challenge for inclusive education. Mutuku (2013) revealed that implementation of Inclusive Education is faced by a couple of challenges ranging from psychological, teacher attitude, curriculum barriers, ministry of education support and teacher training. Wanjiru (2012) adds that, physical facilities in public primary schools are not adequate and appropriate to accommodate learners with special needs. Kabiaru (2013) revealed that school management committee role of procurement of teachings and learning resources was positively impacting on the implementation of inclusive education. The goal of inclusion has been not to erase differences but to enable all students to belong within an educational community that validates and values their individuality (Fakolade, 2009). However, Osero (2015) indicated that teachers faced such challenges as teacher lack of knowledge, indiscipline cases, heavy work load, teacher negative attitudes towards disabled children, lack of facilities and low self-esteem among the disabled children.

Mwangi (2013) in Kenya established that the inclusive education policy is difficult and ambiguous for teachers to implement. The study further indicated that the policy on inclusive education failed to include salient definitions to facilitate a common way of addressing children said to have special education needs. The influence leaders and managers have on the performance of their teams and ultimately their organizations cannot be understated. Leaders shape the way people think and behave. Leaders are viewed by others as role models and employees look around to see if their behavior is consistent with the organization's espoused values and philosophy (Boulter, 2010).

Head teachers task is crucial in inclusive education because of the central role they play in promoting participation among teachers to ensure that inclusion succeeds and to reduce underachievement particularly with children who might be perceived as having difficulties in learning (Lindsay, 2011). Schools, head teachers and teachers at large therefore need to commit to the transformation of their school community for the implementation of inclusive education to be successful (Savolainen, 2015). Head teachers should mobilize appropriate human, physical and material resources for the transformation of regular schools into inclusive schools. Inclusion provides dignity and personal empowerment (UNICEF, 2010). Inclusive education is therefore a policy that involves reforming and restructuring of the school as a whole to ensure that all pupils have access to a whole range of educational and social opportunities offered by school (Booth, 2008). The sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 underscored the importance of special needs education as human capital development that empowers those most likely to be marginalized to participate in mainstream education sector. The national special needs education policy (2009) provided a

framework for the planning and implementation of special needs education devoid of all barriers that inhibit access to quality and relevant education. However an unpublished report by Uasin Gishu Curriculum Support Officers in charge of Special Needs Education (2015) indicates that there are quite a number of challenged children who are out of school in Uasin Gishu County and this has derailed the achievement of EFA as enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals that was to be achieved in Kenya by 2015. This indicates that there is low level of implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. Effective head teacher leadership is critical to the successful implementation of inclusive education. The study therefore sought to establish the influence of head teachers' transformational leadership style on the implementation of inclusive education.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The mandate to achieve inclusive schooling implies that head teachers are expected to ensure that their schools are both excellent and equitable. Head teachers leadership has a direct cause and effect relationship upon schools' and their success. The National Special Needs Education Policy (2009) provided a framework for the planning and implementation of special needs education devoid of all barriers that inhibit access to quality and relevant education. However Uasin Gishu County experiences a problem of low access of children with special needs in regular public primary schools. An unpublished report by Uasin Gishu Curriculum Support Officer in charge of Special Needs Education (CSO, SNE), (2015) indicates that there are quite a number of challenged children who are out of school in Uasin Gishu County and this has derailed the achievement of EFA as enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals that was to be achieved in Kenya by 2015. It is against this background that the researcher was compelled to investigate the influence of head teachers' transformational leadership styles on the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County.

### **1.3: Theoretical Framework**

The study was anchored on behavioral leadership theory. Proposed by Kurt Lewin and his colleagues in (1939), behavioral leadership theory identified three different styles of leadership, in particular around decision making. Autocratic leadership style, in this style the leader takes decisions without consulting with others. The decision is made without any form of consultation, in Lewins' experiment he found that this caused the most level of discontent. An autocratic style works when there is no need for input on the decision, where the decision would not change as a result of input, and where the motivation of people to carry out subsequent actions would not be affected whether they were or were not involved in the decision making (Lewin, Lippit & White 1939).

Democratic leadership style, here the leader involves the people in decision making, although the process for the final decision may vary from the leader having the final say to them facilitating consensus in the group. Democratic decision making is usually appreciated by the people, especially

if they have been used to autocratic decisions with which they disagreed. It can be problematic when there are a wide range of opinions and there is no clear way of reaching an equitable final decision (Kendra, 2016). Laissez-Faire leadership style, this minimize the leaders involvement in decision making , and hence allowing people to make their own decisions, although they may still be responsible for the outcome. Laissez-faire works best when people are capable and motivated in making their own decisions, and where there is no requirement for a central coordination. (Dixon & Hart, 2010).The theory is appropriate for this study as it captures most of the variables of the study. In Lewin's experiment he discovered the most effective style was democratic. Excessive autocratic styles led to revolution, whilst under Laissez-faire approach, people were not coherent in their work and did not put in the energy that they did when being actively led. (Root, 2015).

As adopted in the study leadership theory view implementation of inclusive education as a process that all teachers must be intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to undertake. The head teachers should transform their followers (teachers) through their inspirational nature and charismatic personalities to enhance the implementation of inclusive education in their respective schools. Transformational leaders raise the bar by appealing to higher ideals and values of followers. In doing so, they may model the values themselves and use charismatic methods to attract people to the values and to the leader (Ayman & Korabik 2010).

## **2.0: Literature Review**

Transformational leaders inspire followers to accomplish more by concentrating on the followers' values and helping the followers align the values with the values of the organizations (Rogers, 2013). In Pakistan, Krista & Rosecrane (2014) conducted a study on the differential effects of transformational leadership facets on employee safety. The study used relative weights analysis to examine the facets on 5 employees' safety outcomes. The results suggested that leadership development programs in construction should address multiple individual elements of leadership such as core values, as well as concrete skills and behaviors. The above reviewed study focused on a small sample hence its findings were prone to a large margin of error unlike the current which used a sizeable sample size thereby filling gap in literature. The study also focused mainly on pipefitters and plumbers leaving a gap on teachers.

A study conducted in Canada by Leithwood & Jantzi (2013) on effects of transformational leadership on organizational condition and student engagement with school used a population of 5800 students and 10000 teachers. A sample size of 1762 teachers and 941 students was used. The study employed a descriptive survey design to explore the relative effects of transformational leadership practices on selected organizational conditions and students' engagement. The result of the study indicated that transformational leadership effects are significant, albeit weak on the affective or psychological dimensions and the behavioral dimensions of students' engagement. The above reviewed study employed a descriptive survey design hence it lacked qualitative aspect. The current study bridged this gap by employing a mixed method approach which explores both quantitative and qualitative aspects thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge.

In India, Ngang (2011) conducted a study to investigate the effects of transformational leadership on schools culture in primary schools. The study adopted a quantitative survey design using questionnaire as data collection tool. The method of analysis used were mean score, standard deviation, Pearson Correlation and multiple regression were employed. The findings revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between transformational leadership and school culture. The reviewed study adopted pure quantitative approach hence it lacked in-depth information from qualitative data that would have provided a detailed description of the problem under investigation. The current study bridged this gap in literature by employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

In Nigeria, Obiwuru (2011) conducted a study on effects of leadership style on organization performance. Transformational and transactional leadership styles were considered in the study. The study followed a survey design and employed evaluative quantitative analysis method. Analysis was based on primary data generated through a structured multifactor leadership questionnaires administered online. The results showed that while transactional leadership style had significant positive effect on performance, transformational leadership style was more appropriate in inducing performance in small scale enterprises than transactional leadership style. The above reviewed study was purely quantitative hence it lacked the rich in depth information from qualitative data. The current study bridged this gap by employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches thereby filling gap in literature.

In Egypt, a study was conducted by Metwally (2014) on transformational leadership and satisfaction of Egyptian academics. Questionnaires and interviews were used as data collection instruments. Data was collected from three Egyptian universities. The results of the study indicated that transformational leadership is significantly correlated to subordinates' satisfaction. Regarding the relationship between gender and leadership style, gender was found to be insignificant in determining the leadership style as difference existed across males as well as females. The above reviewed study was conducted in universities where students are young adults unlike the current study where learners are primary school children. The current study bridged this gap in literature thereby adding literature to the existing body knowledge.

In Tanzania, Nguni & Denessen (2011) conducted a study on transformational and transactional leadership effects on teachers' job satisfaction in primary schools. Primary school teachers in Tanzania were the target group. Regression analysis showed that transformational leadership dimensions have a strong effect on teachers' job satisfaction. The above reviewed study focused on primary school teachers who have no leadership experience unlike the current study where both teachers and head teachers were targeted. The current study bridged this gap by involving both the primary school head teachers and teachers thereby filling gap in literature.

Ayiro (2014) study on transformational leadership and schools outcomes in Kenya adopted questionnaire which were completed online. The study established that leaders need more than just technical and traditional managerial skills they need well-honed transformational leadership competencies which require having emotional intelligence. The above reviewed study was

conducted in secondary schools where most of the students have no special needs education unlike the current study where learners with special needs are found. The current study addressed this gap thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge.

Mbithi, Kabonyo and Awino (2016) investigated transformational leadership, employees' outcomes and performance of universities in Kenya. The study collected data from 52 full -fledged universities using questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was adopted to obtain a general understanding of the universities while regression and correlation analysis was used to analyze data and test hypothesis. The results showed positive and statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership and universities performance. The reviewed study was conducted in universities where students are young adults unlike the current study where majority of learners are generally primary school children.

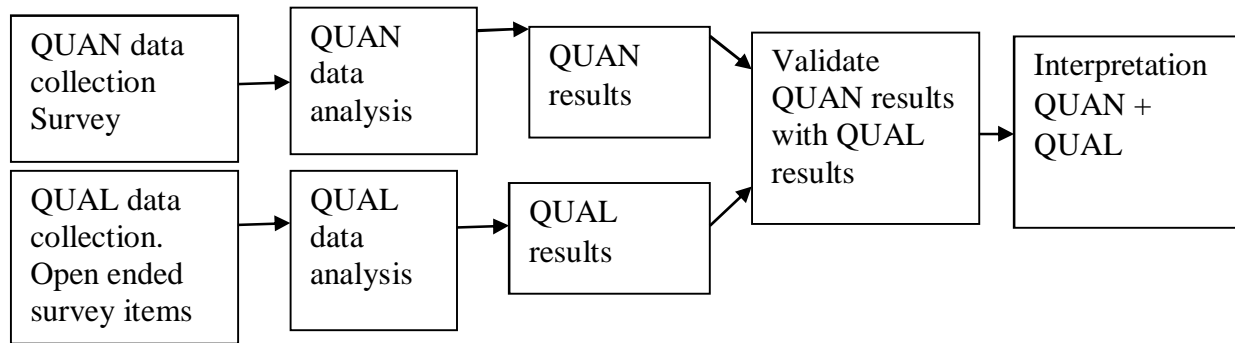
Ndiritu (2012) in Kenya investigated the effect of principals' transformational leadership style characteristics on students' academic performance. The study was conducted in both private and public secondary schools. Stratified random sampling was used to sample 242 students. The findings revealed a positive correlation between transformational leadership style characteristics and student academic performance. The reviewed study was conducted in secondary schools where students are a bit mature unlike the current study where learners are predominantly primary school children.

From the reviewed studies, most of them were carried out in contexts that were different from the primary school level contexts. Moreover, in majority of studies, the approaches used were either qualitative or quantitative. The present study filled in these gaps in literature by focusing on influence of head teachers transformational leadership style and implementation of inclusive education.

### **3.0: Research Methodology**

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (Kothari, 2011). It is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions. The study adopted concurrent triangulation design within the mixed method approach. The design converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. In this design, the investigator typically collects both forms of data at roughly the same time and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results (Creswell, 2014). Contradictions or incongruent findings are explained or further probed in this design. The purpose of this design is to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic. The intent in using this design is to bring together the differing strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses of quantitative methods with those of qualitative methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The design was found appropriate for this study because the study directly compared and contrasted quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings. The design is presented in Figure 3.0





**Figure 3.0: Concurrent Triangulation Design: Source; Creswell, 2014)**

### 3.1: Study Participants

Population means all objects and people who share one or some common quality in a special geographical scale, Cooper and Schindler (2009). It is a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with some common characteristics that differentiate it from other population, while target population is the population to which the researcher wants to generalize the results of the study (Orodho, 2005). The target population for the study was 5373 teachers consisting of 491 primary school teachers and 464 senior teachers in primary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

### 3.2 Research Instruments

Both Questionnaire and Interviews were used to collect data. A Questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire were administered to the primary school teachers since they are directly involved in the implementation of inclusive education in classroom. Likert's scale was used where the respondents were asked to make a choice based on their opinion whether they Strongly Agreed, Agree, Neutral Disagree or Strongly Disagree based on the question asked. The questionnaires had two parts; the first with closed questions which sought to gather demographic information, and the second with closed questions which sought to establish opinions from respondents and gather more of the quantitative data about the influence of head teachers transformational leadership style on the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools. In addition, semi structured interviews was used to collect qualitative data from some senior teachers. This was because the number that was sampled under this group was manageable. The interview schedule was appropriate for the study as it provided in-depth information and a detailed understanding of the issue under research. The information on the interview schedule was tape recorded for validity purposes. The researcher ensured validity of questionnaires through expert judgment that is with the help of experts from Masinde Muliro University. Moreover, the items in the questionnaire were made clearer and also arranged from simple to complex. In this study Reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha. In the interpretation of the reliability results, the closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. According to (Oso and Onen, 2014), a questionnaire has good

internal consistency if the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of a scale is above 0.6 but not more than .9. All the subscales reached a threshold and were within the range and therefore considered reliable.

#### 4.0 Findings

The study examined the influence of head teachers' transformational leadership style on the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County. The assessment was done using a five point Likert scaled transformational leadership indicators questionnaire for teachers. The items of the questionnaire rated the indicators of transformational leadership indicators. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed to test null hypotheses, with the level of the head teacher's transformational leadership style orientation as the independent variables and level of inclusive education implementation as dependent variable. Transformational leadership scale was measured in continuous scale ranging between 2.75 to 3.00 computed from the teachers' ratings on transformational leadership orientation. Equally, the level of implementation of inclusive education was measured in continuous scale, in the continuum of 1 to 5. The SPSS output Table 4.0 shows the correlation results.

**Table 4.0:** *Correlation between the Level of Transformational Leadership Orientation and the Level of Implementation.*

		Transformational Leadership Score	Level of Implementation of Inclusive Education
Transformational Leadership Score	Pearson Correlation	1	.277*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.017
	N	368	368
Level of Implementation of Inclusive Education	Pearson Correlation	.277*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	
	N	368	368

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The output indicates a statistically significant though weak but positive correlation between the head teachers' transformational leadership style and implementation of inclusive education ( $n=368$ ;  $r = .277$ ;  $p = .017$ ). Therefore, given that the p-value was less than .05, the null hypothesis which stated that "*There is no statistically significant relationship between the level of transformational leadership style and implementation of inclusive education*" was rejected. It was therefore concluded that there is significant positive relationship between the level of transformational leadership style and the level of implementation of inclusive education, with higher level of transformational leadership associated with higher level of implementation of inclusive education in primary schools and vice versa. This finding is contrary to Qzaralli (2012) study in Turkey whose finding revealed that transformational leadership does not contribute to the prediction of subordinates' self-reported empowerment and that the more a team's members experience team empowerment the more effective the team will be

Qualitative findings investigating the influence of transformational leadership style on the implementation of inclusive education revealed that the higher transformational a head teacher is the higher the implementation of inclusive education. One senior teacher reiterated;

*“I think our head teacher is really trying on the implementation of inclusive education, only that there is no support from the government. If only teachers can well be trained on this noble idea, then implementation of inclusive education can be very smooth.....SNR TR. 8*

The implication of this finding is that head teachers who practice transformational leadership style create conducive environment where the inclusive education can be practiced. This implies that schools whose head teachers practice higher level of transformational leadership style are likely to have better implementation of inclusive education than the schools whose head teachers practice lower transformational leadership style, assuming other factors constant. This finding concurs with Harold, (2010) in Malaysia which found transformational leadership to be more strongly related to followers change commitment than change specific leadership practices, especially when the change had significant personal impact.

However, to estimate the level of influence of the level of transformational leadership style on implementation of inclusive education, a coefficient of determination was computed. This was done using of a regression analysis and the results were as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1:** Model Summary on Regression Analysis-Level of Transformational Leadership Style and Implementation of Inclusive Education

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.277 <sup>a</sup>	.077	.064	.45848

a. Predictors: (Constant), Level of Transformational Leadership Style

The model shows that the Level of Transformational Leadership Style of the head teacher accounted for 7.7% ( $R^2=.077$ ) of the variation in the level of implementation of inclusive education. This was a fairly low amount of effect by the predictor on the dependent variable. This finding is in agreement with leadership theory which argues that transformational leadership is a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2011).

## 5.0: Conclusion and Recommendation

The study sought to examine the influence of head teachers' transformational leadership style on the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County Kenya. The study concluded that some of the head teachers had moderate transformational leadership style. This means that this group of head teachers engages in mutual process of raising their teachers to a higher level of implementation of inclusive education. Hence Head teachers who practice transformational leadership style demonstrate commitment to the implementation of inclusive education. Moreover, there was a statistically significant though weak but positive correlation between the head teachers' transformational leadership style and implementation of inclusive education. Based on these findings the study recommended that; Head teachers should be encouraged to practice transformational leadership style for effective implementation of inclusive education since transformational leadership was found to have a statistically positive correlation to implementation of inclusive education. The ministry of education should enhance the training of head teachers on transformational leadership style for the implementation of inclusive education

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