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Student Inclusion in Traditional International Schools: an Examination of the Potential of Learning Support teachers as Agents for Change

Neubauer, Andrea Nichole

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Student Inclusion in Traditional International Schools: an Examination of the Potential of Learning Support teachers as Agents for Change

Andrea Nichole Neubauer

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Supervisors: Andrea Abbas and Rita Chawla Duggan

UNIVERSITY OF BATH

Department of Education

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Abstract:

Traditional international schools are institutions that exist in the 21st century yet carry within them structures of an early era. As globalisation continues, the mobile student population has come to challenge these structures and demand a more inclusive approach. International Learning Support (LS) professionals are trying to manage the balance between serving students and expanding to meet the needs of more learners. They are faced with regulating their agency in order to build and develop more inclusive environments or threaten the very goals they wish to achieve. Inclusion is a shared responsibility (Ainscow et al., 2004). This idea threatens such a bureaucratic system and leaves international schools with an extraordinarily difficult task of returning to a more inclusive mission (Bartlett, 2014). As international schools contend with the need for more inclusive environments, the realities of the influence of power within these structures poses a challenge to empowerment and to those who might will lead this change (Foucault, 1980a; Caffyn, 2007). This study looked at the barriers and challenges LS professionals face in meeting student needs and to expanding their influence on inclusion at their sites. The study found that LS teachers who engage in critical dialogue about how their practice and how to manage this change can influences their agency. By using technology to create virtual spaces a LS teacher's agency can be regulated to lead traditional internationals schools back toward a more inclusive future (Creese and Daniels, 2000; Wenger et al., 2011).

Table of Contents

1.0 Chapter I Introduction

Today there is a renewed call for teachers to use their agency to initiate change. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) want to "awaken the sleeping giant" and have teachers take the lead in initiating the change needed to engage all students in innovative learning targeted at their specific needs and thus improve student outcomes.

The concept of change is not a new area of study within education. Michael Fullan (2016), in his book, the New Meaning of Educational Change, traces the beginning of educational reform in the United States from the 1960s through to the present day. Initial reforms were driven by political challenge, such as the space race and civil rights movements, which demanded that education be more innovative. These reforms mostly failed, however, since many schools simply did not have the resources to implement them effectively (Fullan, 2016). Today, innovation continues to drive educational reform efforts and Fullan reminds us:

> Real change, then, whether desired or not, represents a serious personal and collective experience characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty; and if the change works out, it can result in a sense of mastery, accomplishment, and professional growth.
>
> (Fullan, 2016 p.21)

Villegas and Lucas (2002) suggest that global changes are making classrooms more heterogeneous than ever.

To have the confidence to deliver a timely and culturally appropriate response to the changes facing today's classrooms, teachers need to have the opportunities to learn (Hill, 1971; Villegas and Lucas, 2002, Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009, Lukacs and Galluzzo 2014, Fullan 2016). In much of today's Western world, teachers are facing classrooms that are multilingual, as well as socio-economically and culturally diverse. In today's classrooms a teacher needs to be:

> …both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students; understands how learners construct knowledge and are capable of promoting knowledge construction; knows about the

lives of their students, and designs instruction that stretches their students beyond the familiar…

<div align="right">Villegas and Lucas, 2002, p.20</div>

To stretch students in this way can be challenging in any context and supporting the learning of all students in an international environment has its own set of unique challenges (Lane and Jones, 2016). Meeting the learning needs of a diverse international learning community and supporting students and teachers may take on different forms and involve individual students, small groups and/or teacher to teacher. Working with students one on one or in small groups outside the general education classroom puts these students at a disadvantage. Students supported in this way may not have the appropriate amount of access to the curriculum, which can jeopardise their ability to pass expected grade level requirements (Connor and Ferri, 2007). Students being included in the general education environment requires a certain commitment to learning on the part of the teachers across a whole school. One solution to help teachers learn for inclusion has been through collaborative approaches (Creese and Daniels, 2000; van Der Heijden, 2015). Teachers learning together has been cited as an important part of developing a whole school approach to engaging all students and improvement (Creese and Daniels, 2000; Ainscow 2007; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018). To meet the educational expectations of the various policies set by governments around the world will take a collective approach (OECD, 2009). In a geographically disparate context such as international schools, virtual strategies may aid in bridging the distances between teachers to support the kind of collaboration that will lead to change (Boh, 2008; 2014;).

2.1.1 moved here

Globalisation has spurred the creation of international schools all over the world. According to the UNESCO report *International schools: growth and influence* (2008) "the number of such schools has grown throughout the twentieth century and early parts of the twenty-first century, with some recent estimates placing the number as high as 4,000" (Hayden et al., 2008 p. 20).

As a special education teacher in the United States from California I was trained specifically to serve a diverse range of students. After 11 years working in a comprehensive high school, I was asked to come to a long-standing international school to help support students and continue to develop an inclusive program there. It was there that my education about

international schools started as well as my journey toward agency and leadership for inclusion.

International schools typically serve families that are living in foreign countries because one or both parents have been contracted or are working on special assignments. This number has steadily grown and, in May 2015, as many as four million children were enrolled in English speaking international schools (Barnes, 2015, pp. 8-9). The families who populate these schools are a mix of expatriated families and local people seeking alternatives to their own national curriculum. This mix suggests a highly diverse population of children with different abilities, cultural and racial backgrounds. International schools are not necessarily nationally supported or publicly assisted and tend to have a unique process in which they select students. The set of criteria, on which they manage their admissions, results in a selective process. Despite these criteria, international schools have grown to have a diverse range of students which includes children with disabilities (Shaklee, 2007). With the constant march of globalisation and the proliferation of these schools, the need to understand trends is critical in developing international schools that, regardless of location, seek to meet the diverse needs of their learners. This requires the academic researcher to understand the role of empowerment, power and agency within these diverse and geographically dispersed schools.

Long standing international schools, which were established to meet the needs of the expat community, have long grappled with supporting these families and the wide range of their students' learning abilities (Hayden et al., 2007). These more traditional international schools may subscribe to an association such as the European Council of International Schools. They are not usually for profit and see it as a basic human right that families have access to an inclusive education (Bunnell et al. 2016; Powell and Powell, 2016). These traditional models of international schools are being joined by a host of other models usually for profit and with much more exclusivity in terms of admissions. The lack of inclusion of these newer models has the traditional models rededicating themselves to serving expat communities with its diversity of students. Traditional international schools, with their longer histories and established success, have a greater independence and autonomy in which to pursue a more socially just and inclusive model of education (Powell and Powell, 2016; Hayden et al., 2007 Bartlett, 2014; Bunnell et al. 2016; Powell and Powell, 2016).

To create the kind of change that will mediate social justice issues and provide effective inclusion, it is also necessary to understand the structures and discourse that flow through schools. The current literature that describes the type of leadership necessary to engage all learners neglects the strategies and social relations flowing in and around schools that influence them (Poekert et al., 2016).

1.1 International Schools as complex, evolving, loosely linking systems

In order to start to study agency in international schools it is helpful to understand the school as an organization. Schools, international and otherwise, are complex institutions (Hawkins and James, 2018). There seems to be a reluctance to acknowledge schools as "complex, evolving, loosely linking systems" or CELLS (Hawkins and James 2018, p.4). Looking at schools in this way allows for a view of the flow of power and how it might be experienced at the different levels and by different individuals and groups within a school (Hawkins and James 2018). By recognizing the multilayers of a human system such as a school, one might begin to track specific actions and how these outcomes can then be assessed for their impact on the school. Taking a CELLS perspective of schools also allows for outcomes to be assessed for how they might influence a greater community such as other individuals and schools working in conjunction with each other (Hawkins and James 2018). This perspective is critical to this study and to how it might be possible to understand the experiences of LS teachers in international schools and their ability to lead in creating greater inclusive environments.

Indeed, engaging all learners requires organisational change and leadership that understands the sensitive needs of not only the families and students served, but also the teachers and school structures that are constantly shaping the context for inclusion. It is within the "redistributions, realignments and convergences" of power that this research intends to uncover the realities of the challenges international Learning Support (LS) teachers face and the social relations they experience as they serve students with special needs in international schools (Foucault, 1980a, p.94).

It is the aim of this study to begin to uncover the realities of international LS teachers and how collaborative structures in and between schools might employ virtual tools to enhance these social relations to better meet the needs of all students and develop a shared

responsibility for inclusion (Foucault, 1980a, Creese and Daniels, 2000; Ainscow, 2007, Regnér, 2008, Silva et al., 2012; Poekert et al., 2016).

1.2 Learning support in the international school

> … inclusion is defined as not just the physical integration of a child with disability in the general education setting but rather it is the establishment of a school cultural which practices acceptance. Inclusive environments reflect patience, understanding, and compassion so that all children have the opportunity to learn.
>
> Lane and Jones, 2016 p. 288

Creating an inclusive culture means that administrators and educators will have to assess if all children have the same opportunities to develop in their settings. Although teachers are tasked with being effective and meeting the needs of *all* learners in their classrooms, LS teachers are specifically tasked in international schools with meeting the needs of students who require additional learning support, either extension or remediation.

Schools are traditionally hierarchical and can be organised in ways where prescribed policies and information are shared through heads of departments, assistant principals, principals, coordinators and directors. The CELLS perspective indicates that, within such hierarchical institutions, there are other "interactors" that can cut across distinct levels and play key roles in understanding how change might occur and scale within a school or between schools (Hawkins and James 2018, p. 7).

Teachers are one such group within the school system, as are staff, parents, students and outside individuals or groups who may interact with the school. In looking at a school as a collective of interactions within this complex system, leadership becomes less concentrated and more dispersed. In order to meet the demands of modern classrooms, teachers are seen as "leaders and intellectuals who can make a difference in their schools and profession" (Lieberman and Miller, 2005, p. 153). To lead, it is suggested that teachers need to research and reflect as they come to make decisions about how to meet the needs in their classrooms and influence school outcomes. Teachers are not simply researching and reflecting in isolation. They are being joined by their LS peers who are asked to team and collaborate to share their expertise in differentiation and building inclusive environments (Constantinou and

Ainscow, 2019; Murine and Huckvale, 2014; NFI, 2011; Ainscow; 2007; Creese and Daniels, 2000). As teachers are seen as front-line solutions to better meet the needs of students (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Hargreaves, 2003; van Der Heijden, 2015), there is a greater need to understand how this collaboration and leadership within a complex institution might be shared to create solutions that have the potential to impact the evolution of inclusion.

LS teachers are positioned to take on this leadership in international schools, as LS teachers are being asked to have a Master of Education, several years' experience, the knowledge to plan and implement Individualised Education Plans, the willingness and personality to communicate needs of students to families, students and staff and that they be supervised by their subject specific peers, who themselves may feel inadequate in supporting students with special needs (Haldiman and Hollington, 2004). LS teachers are therefore on the front lines of having to engage their colleagues in addressing their potential feelings of inadequacy. They are key to bringing about the kind of organisational change and leadership that will meet the needs of all students. Consequently, they are tasked with understanding how to support families, students and teachers as well as how to influence the flow of power within their school to be able to successfully engage their agency.

Fullan (2016), supports the idea of an iterative and recursive cycle of change, citing Cohen and Hill (2001), Huberman (1983), Lortie (1975), Rosenholtz (1989), Ball and Cohen (1999), Spillane (1999, 2004), Stigler and Hiebert (1999), Day et al. (2007) and Day and Gu (2010) to underscore the insecurity teachers feel, especially in the context of a dynamic environment with pressures stemming from inside and outside the classroom, leaving little time to reflect. "And…few intensive, ongoing learning opportunities for teachers individually or in concert to deeply acquire new learning concepts and skills" (Fullan, 2016, p. 22).

The discussion of teachers initiating change, especially LS teachers, therefore hinges on a premise that they have access to "ongoing learning opportunities … individually and in concert" and can use new skills (Fullan, 2016, p. 22). Gronn described this agency, "as a flow of influence in organizations which disentangles it from any presumed connection with headship" (Gronn, 2000, p. 334). If, as this assessment suggests, teachers are best aligned to meet the demands of initiating change and improve student outcomes, do they have the power to do so (Fullan, 2016; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Lukacs and Galluzzo, 2014; van Der Heijden, 2015)? Literature by Fullan and others concludes that it is necessary to understand

specific practices and environmental factors that can empower teachers to take on educational change to improve student outcomes. A better understanding of LS teachers' social relations and a greater awareness of the structures and strategies in which they work will assist educational organisations in creating supportive environments with the necessary knowledge, skills and beliefs that will awaken and empower teachers to improve their awareness and in turn improve organisational outcomes in engaging more students (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; van Der Heijden, 2015).

Collaborative models, as opposed to a one time or expert facilitated development, allow teachers to share expertise as they continually grow and adapt to meet students' needs. Examples of collaborative school-based models to support teacher development exist and have been taking on greater prevalence. This shared model is seen as a significant way in which to enhance working conditions for inclusion within a school (Creese and Daniels, 2000).

Furthermore, seeing schools as CELLS allows for the study of LS teachers as self-organising, self-correcting and self-sustaining solutions to the continually changing international environment (Hawkins and James 2018). Although CELLS theory is not a predictive model, it can explain how constraints might allow for small actions to have large impacts across systems (Hawkins and James 2018). International schools then offer an interesting backdrop to study how interactions can influence agency and the possibility for LS teachers to be agents for change.

Indeed, LS teachers are on the front lines of global teaching challenges. They face a myriad of constraints with multinational teachers and students located in a country outside of their national context. Currently, international schools serve more than four million children of temporarily displaced families who reside in foreign countries (e.g. families in which one or both parents have been contracted for special employment opportunities). There are expected to be some 12,000 international schools by the year 2024 (Barnes, 2015, pp. 8-9). Within this backdrop, Bartlett (2014) reports that international schools "Rising to the greater challenge of meeting more diverse needs has raised our (international schools) overall game, making us smarter thinkers, smarter problem solvers, and critically, smarter teachers" (p. 18).

Despite the vast array of students that international schools serve, including children with disabilities (Shaklee, 2007), it is *how* these schools serve students with disabilities that is an under researched area (Shaklee, 2007). Moreover, with little research about how the social relations and structures in international schools influence supporting diverse needs, it is difficult to know how LS teachers meet "the growing calls in some school systems for greater integration of special learning needs students in mainstream schools and classrooms and the growing emphasis in education policy on equity as well as quality to ensure that the learning needs of all students are provided for equally" (OECD, 2009, p.61).

The assumption is that the type of social interactions of teachers described by Ainscow et al. (2004) as "levers of inclusion": observing, questioning, and having dialogue regarding practices that can create an effective structure for inclusion and improved student outcomes (Ainscow et al., 2004, p.132). Little is known about the social interactions of LS teachers in international schools and how they might engage in these practises (Lane and Jones, 2016). This study intends to shed light on the types of social interactions and the collaborative learning of LS teachers in international schools and how they might be enhanced in order to meet the increasing demands for inclusion in international schools.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This study focuses on creating opportunities for collaboration in international schools to support inclusion, even as these schools are located beyond national support systems and teachers may be limited and unsure about how to connect with other educators and schools to share ideas. These uncertainties can be made doubly problematic as teachers all over the world face "professional individualism… as an obstacle to such collaboration [that] has been attributed to the organizational structure of schools… (Creese and Daniels, 2000 p. 308).

To better understand how to implement collaborative practices in international schools, the framework for this study will concentrate on the role of structure and agency in the school where LS teachers operate to support students.

Organisations are shaped everyday by the interactions within them. These interactions or "social practices" form the structures that determine what happens and how work gets carried out (Foucault 1980a, 2003a; Beach, 2010). Foucault theorised that these social relations are embedded in a context (i.e. a time and place) and they help to explain the actions and inaction

of the agents within the organisation (Foucault, 1980a, 2001; Silva et. al., 2012). In order to understand how action is taken or agency is used it is important to study these interactions in a way that "one can delineate the simultaneous ways of constituting what reality is for those who seek to think about it and to control it, as well as how subjects are able to comprehend, analyze, and modify it" (Silva et al., 2012, p.6).

Schools can be seen as places where the individuals inside them are established as "actors who are struggling to break free from the institutional restraints of prevailing underlying professional ideologies within restraining institutionalised orders of discourse" (Beach, 2011, p.574). Beach (2011) uses students within classrooms to illustrate this struggle and Foucault's (1980a) constructionist approach to describing power as relational agency, not simply of "dominator and dominated, of the individual within the "social, political, and regulatory structures of their environment" (p.574). It is within this framework that this study looks to describe how LS teachers in international schools manage the different relationships as they work toward making these institutions more inclusive environments.

To create these inclusive environments, international LS teachers would need to engage in critical conversations (Ainscow, 2007). To do this they will have to overcome agentic problems embedded in the structure of schools (Boh, 2014). How might this be accomplished across regions and borders? How might a virtual community allow international LS teachers to share knowledge and overcome structural and agency challenges with the use of technology?

In order to frame the challenges LS teachers grapple with, Muijs and Harris (2003) in their review of the literature, *Teacher leadership and improvement through empowerment,* give the historical context that much of the research focused on the individual aspects of leadership (power), centred around positions of formal authority (e.g. the principal or headship) rather than the collective view; newer studies increasingly seek to expand the concept of leadership beyond the figure of the head teacher:

> In direct contrast, one of the most congruent findings from recent studies of effective leadership is that authority to lead need not be located in the person of the leader but can be dispersed within the school in between and among people (Day et al., 2000; Harris 2002; Jackson, 2002). In this sense leadership

is separated from person, role and status and is primarily concerned with the relationships and the connections among individuals within a school.

Muijs and Harris, 2003, p. 437

Collective leadership can offer significant benefit if it is a model that can be expanded and replicated in schools (Muijs and Harris, 2003). The collective approach to development seems to offer a pathway in which to share the responsibility for inclusion in international schools. This shared development may be seen as a collective leadership that LS teachers might lead to meet the growing demands for inclusion in international schools.

If such a collective approach is going to take hold, how might LS teachers come to believe they are empowered and then act on their agency to initiate change? Empowerment is critical to the change process. This innovation within a political organisation, however, is subject to the hierarchical power structure and knowledge power discourses that run through all levels of the organisation as people and employees interact. In turn, this interaction, or lack of, of individuals and groups shapes the discourse and decisions of teachers, further affecting their perceptions of how they might influence individual and collective student outcomes.

Understanding this power discourse and its influence on a teacher's perception of collective efficacy and individual empowerment will allow for the regulation (i.e. increase or decrease) of their agency in order to organise resources and professional development to maximise LS teachers' influence on student outcomes in international schools.

1.4 Contribution

The study has outlined above the case for a collaborative leadership approach to inclusion and the need for LS teachers' increased agency for a greater chance to meet the needs of all students in international schools. Scholarship needs to go further in problematising the implementation of inclusive education in international schools. Using a Foucauldian approach to understand the process of empowerment and flow of power within these institutions, this study will explore how social relations can be used to address the micro politics within organisations that influence agency and specifically the actions of international LS teachers.

This thesis makes four contributions to the body of knowledge:

- it identifies the challenges and obstacles LS teachers face in providing LS services in an international setting;

- it informs policy and practice as the growth of international education demands that schools be able to engage a more diverse range of students;

- it offers recommendations supporting individual teachers (LS and subject area), collegially within and across departments and divisions and between international schools;

- it offers a path forward in supporting innovation and inclusion.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This study aims to provide insights into what is an international LS teacher, how their perceptions of empowerment might affect their willingness to take on change and how technology might be employed to support initiating change and more inclusive practices.

This study will begin with a review of the literature (chapter II) followed by a mixed-methods research design using a survey, semi-structured interviews and action research (Chapter III) to answer the following questions:

1. How might international school teachers' perception of empowerment and school efficacy create barriers to including students?
2. When do international learning support professionals perceive they are empowered to support inclusion?
3. What influence might virtual communities of practice have on a learning support teacher's agency and inclusion?

The review of the literature in chapter two will provide the theoretical, empirical and practical contexts of this study. In order to address the first research question, the chapter will determine the role of empowerment in agency. Then, it will outline the argument that teachers can be change agents to meet the needs of all students and examine the flow of power, within institutions such as schools, that influences their agency. The chapter will conclude with the

tools that help frame the context in which empowerment and agency can be furthered in order to advance inclusive practices, thus highlighting how collaboration, and specifically Communities of Practice (CoPs), can support teachers as change agent. It will investigate the implications of this type of collaboration, whether in person or virtually, on teacher agency and supporting LS teachers in creating a culture of inclusion in international schools.

Chapter three will present the rationale for the mixed-methods research design and the methodology used in this study to collect data that shed light on the experiences of the teachers in the field. Through both quantitative and qualitative tools, the greater context of teacher empowerment and school efficacy in international schools will be sharpened to create a backdrop for the more specific study of LS teachers and their agency within this context. This chapter will describe the rationale behind the research setting, participant demographics, and ethical considerations. It will explore the benefits and challenges of a researcher embedded in virtual trials, providing a detailed explanation of the collection tools, their specific strengths, weaknesses and limitations in relation to the aims of this study. This chapter will end with the model of the research design.

Chapter four will reveal that there is a strong collective sense of empowerment and school efficacy within international schools. It will then look more specifically at how this empowerment and efficacy is perceived by LS professionals in these schools. Using the social constructionist approach, this study will illustrate how students with special needs are served in international schools through the experiences of international LS teachers. These findings will highlight the challenges and tensions they face in meeting the responsibility left to them by their international school peers who feel empowered but inadequate in meeting all student needs. The findings from the virtual CoP as a collaborative structure constitute the contributions of the study as they have implications in supporting LS professionals and circumventing obstacles and barriers to serving students with special needs.

Chapter five will pull on the strengths of the iterative mixed methods process of this study to create the path through the findings and derive interpretations that will uncover where the tensions of empowerment and agency begin to emerge for teachers in international schools. The results from the LS professionals' interviews and the virtual CoP will be used to conceptualise the possibilities for change. The discussion will highlight common themes of time and collaboration as key to effective programs, however elusive they may be in

international schools. The busy picture of LS professionals will be revealed as they take on multiple roles to work around the challenges of structure and agency (Beach, 2010b). LS professionals go to great lengths to preserve the delicate balance of power (Foucault, 1980a) as they look to influence, promote more critical reflection and innovate. Finally, the chapter will address the issues of power (Foucault, 1980a), teacher development and critical reflection through collaboration for learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Boh, 2014; Pyrko, Dörfler and Eden, 2017) using a socio-cultural perspective as well as the social constructionist approach. The discussion will conclude with the analysis of the benefits and challenges of the use of technology to connect disparate groups of international LS teachers and allow them to interact, uninhibited by the structures in which they teach, to share experiences virtually and develop professionally (Boh, 2008; 2014).

Chapter six will consider the findings according to which inclusion in international schools is a desirable objective that is also compromised. It will explore implications for international LS teachers, international teachers, families needing international schools and students with special needs in the highly academic bureaucratic context of international schools. Recommendations will be made to address the current reality that inclusion in international schools remains largely the work of LS professionals. These virtual methodologies are designed to create a shared space and time, virtually and asynchronistically, to challenge the current structures that limit agency and learning, and to meet the growing demand for support for special needs in international schools (Connor, 2012).

This thesis will make visible the hidden labours of LS professionals that make inclusion possible in international schools and the limitations in which these dedicated professionals work. It will also highlight a shared, realistic and sustainable way forward to meet the growing need of inclusion in international schools.

2.0 Chapter II Literature review

This study is aimed at deepening an understanding of how to support LS teachers so they might act in ways that have the greatest influence on inclusion within the power relations of international schools. There are a number of collaborative methods to support inclusive practices (e.g. co teaching; classroom assistants, support teachers) this study will choose to focus on formal peer to peer collaborative staff development techniques to manage change (Foucault 1980a, 2001; Creese and Daniels, 2000, Ainscow et al., 2004; 2007; Muijs and Harris, 2003; Foucault 1980a, 2001; Beach, 2010).

The review will be in three parts. Firstly, it will explore the call for teachers to lead educational change and the types of leadership necessary to meet the needs of more students in international schools. In doing so, it will unpack the concepts of power, empowerment, agency, collaboration and CoPs. Secondly, it will discuss learning support, international schools and learning support in international schools as contexts. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the intention of this research study to address how power, empowerment and agency influence LS teachers in international schools to create a culture of inclusion.

2.1 Educational change: meeting the needs of more students in international schools

This part will start by explaining why teachers are on the front line of educational change. Then it will outline the social constructionist and socio-cultural theories framing the study: first, the Foucauldian view that power, formal and informal, shapes social interactions flowing through institutions, and second, the view that empowerment is a process and interface between the social and the activist theories of agency that call for teachers to act within schools. Finally, it will describe the social structures that can pull the levers of change and can create the space for innovative and inclusive environments (Ainscow et al., 2004; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018).

2.1.1 Leadership for change: why are teachers on the front line of educational change?

2.1.1 a Leading the change: teacher leadership

The call for innovation in education systems has been a consistent challenge facing schools and teachers. Generally, teachers are seen as change leaders rather than initiators (Katzenmeyer and

Moller, 2009). School improvement literature seems to suggest that the path to change is meant to happen one classroom at a time (Lukacs and Galluzzo, 2014). Few, if any, explicitly explain how teachers can approach creating a collective and socially just environment to engage all students, within authoritative and policy-driven institutions (Ainscow, 2007; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018). This begs the questions of *how* do teachers initiate change and, more to the heart of this study, *how* can LS teachers work collaboratively to create the kind of change that supports more inclusive environments.

Lukacs and Galluzzo (2014) describe two models of teacher leadership that dominate educational literature and suggest that neither adequately supports the continuous process of change that is necessary to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse and dynamically evolving society. In one model, teachers are asked to implement programmes largely directed by national policy. The second is a prescriptive approach, with districts and/or school administrators issuing directives to implement change. Lukacs and Galluzzo (2014) question both of these models as failing to acknowledge the proximity of teachers to the problems in their classrooms, and thus their ability to solve them.

Building on these observations, Lukacs and Galluzzo (2014) uncover the variables that could inform teacher education programmes, ultimately hoping this information would allow these to be enhanced to help more teachers be successful in making decisions about how to initiate change in classrooms and across schools. They believe the notion of teachers implementing change themselves has been seen as problematic or has been "misunderstood" (Lukacs and Galluzzo, 2014, p. 103). Lukacs and Galluzzo argue that, until now, while teachers have been seen as instruments to carry out change activities, their autonomy and authentic collegiality in making decisions about initiating change have not been fully embraced (Muijs and Harris, 2003; van Der Heijden, 2015). To address this gap in the research, this study intends to look at how authentic collegiality might be recognised as a form of leadership. It will do so by analysing the work of international LS teachers as critical members of the greater teaching CoP, which is being called on to initiate educational change in increasingly diverse environments such as international schools.

LS teachers are uniquely positioned to engage their subject teaching colleagues as they have been specifically trained and possess the specific knowledge and experience to support diverse learners. Research about collaboration suggests that CoPs created specifically for

problem solving would be beneficial in aiding LS professionals lead (Creese and Daniel, 2000). As the need arises for more inclusive environments in international schools, LS teachers, if given the chance to influence their fellow teachers, can enable them to act more confidently in supporting student outcomes, increasing the possibility of more students meeting expected results. Leadership in education is already more complex than in other organisations (Male, 2015). To achieve this collaborative educational leadership model, a high level of authenticity and autonomy will be required (Eldor and Shoshani, 2017). There is a need to recognise professional autonomy as these highly educated and experienced individuals within the international school will have ideas and will want to be able to make decisions on how to behave in order to meet expectations within their given context (Haldiman and Hollington, 2004; Male, 2015; Lane and Jones, 2016; Eldor and Shoshani, 2017). Achieving authenticity and autonomy within a school will not be an easy task, considering its formal structures that assign power, responsibility and accountability to individuals within the organisation. The role of formal leaders can be altered within this setting to support these drives and empower teachers rather than ignoring or smothering them (Male, 2015). Empowering teachers and fostering authentic agency would require that lines of formal and informal leadership be blurred, suggesting that ideas can come from anyone in the organisation, including LS teachers (Male, 2015). Within this collaborative model of leadership lies the potential for critical key partnerships between LS teachers and their colleagues to lead to greater engagement all students.

2.1.1 b Policies, practice and culture

The traditional international school serves expatriate families and usually has a staff of teachers from western countries. Both of which will have an understanding and expectations that students with special needs should be served (Lane and Jones, 2016). The UNESCO Salamanca Act (1994), the US reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004), the UN Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the UK SEN codes of practice (2014) all outline that people with special needs are seen positively, that that they can and do contribute and that they be mainstreamed in society. However, how they are enacted vary greatly as not all countries or local educational environments have the same access to needed resources (OECD, 2009).

Despite the fundamental belief that all students have the capacity to learn *and* that a school can deliver, many schools fail to engage all learners. Some may employ selective practices that limit the type of challenges students face; others simply fail to review how their organisation and/or practices actually exclude students. Ainscow et al. (2004) propose that research typically ignores the complexity of a school and how this complexity defines a situation and influences the actions of the teachers within it. They suggest that it is imperative that "critical appraisal leads to understandings that can have an immediate and direct impact on the development of thinking and practice in the field" (Ainscow et al., 2004, p. 128). Creating access and the ability for a school to better meet students' needs requires an analysis of the obstacles that may limit access (Ainscow, 2007). This raises the question of who would do this analysis. Because teachers are closest to the day-to-day struggles in their classrooms and within their organisations, Ainscow (2007, 2018) maintains, inclusion can be fully realised only when teachers consistently collaborate and critically reflect.

Developed in the west the policies are at the core of the training of the majority of teachers in international schools. These teachers work under the shared belief that all students can learn and that they have a place in international school classrooms (Lane and Jones, 2016). These policies promote an outlook that it is a school's ability to serve *rather than* an individual student's ability, or more often dis-ability, to perform. This puts the onus on the school working to meet a student's needs, rather than on the student to fit the school. Key goals of international institutions working toward this model of inclusion are to create access to learning opportunities; believe building trust and developing key relationships is fundamental to the success of inclusion; commit to serving students with diverse needs and keep working at developing practices that allow more students to be served in their settings (Ainscow, 1994, 2007; Ainscow et al., 2004; Lane and Jones, 2016; OECD, 2009).

Ainscow et al. (2004) cautions that collaboration without the possibility for individual improvement can reinforce existing practices; if teachers cannot confront difficulties, then change may not be possible. The creation of networks of collaboration can bridge the gap between research and practice, if they are allowed to engage in open dialogue. These reflective practices can help teachers and schools work with researchers to look critically at beliefs and tailor practices to meet individual needs in a given school (Ainscow et al., 2004). Providing opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching and observe their environments is critical to understanding how agency might be engaged or not. Dedicated to

making educational policies and practices more inclusive, Ainscow (2007) has created the Improving Quality of Education for All framework (IQEA). One of the most important outcomes of this framework is "the importance of developing school culture that fosters positive attitudes towards the study and development of practice" (p. 149). With understanding *what* is informing agency within an individual and a school comes the ability "to further inform, refine or reconstruct the *how.*" (Fu and Clarke, 2017, p. 591).

The greatest possibility for change and improvement is within organisations that "develop a common language with which colleagues can talk to one another and indeed to themselves about detailed aspects of their practice. Without such language, teachers find it very difficult to experiment with new possibilities" (Ainscow, 2007, p. 149). Since activities are always ongoing in a classroom, it can be difficult to reflect, and thus actions are carried out almost habitually; therefore, the opportunity to observe and discuss colleagues' work provides teachers the chance to think about and challenge their own or culturally held beliefs about how best to serve students. Ainscow (2007) proposes that through these exchanges "the familiar can be made unfamiliar" and then used to stimulate discussion and reflection (p. 150).

Undoubtedly, these experiences can be uncomfortable and destabilizing; it is necessary to be aware of their potential to create stress. Inclusion, which is continual change, as it is meant to keep pace with the ever-changing needs of the learner, requires leadership that supports the pursuit of inquiry and reflection. It promotes a creative process, keeps work targeted and productive rather than excessive or destructive, which can lead to teachers feeling isolated, divided or ineffective. Ainscow (2007) warns that if this happens, teachers may look for ways to explain away difficulties by shifting blame back to the students, pointing to a student's personal limitations such as special needs or socio-economic status as the reason for any shortcomings in their performance. Placing blame can become the belief system within an institution and undermine even the best practices.

The IQEA reinforces the ideas that a school needs systems in place to manage change; that school improvement should be done in identified areas of priority; that evidence should be collected, considered and continually checked in ways that support improvement; and that collaboration should be undertaken within and between schools to provide a community of experts and resources to support change. These characteristics support the position of the

teacher at the centre of improvement and the development of a school's collective understanding and practice (Ainscow et al., 2007; Hadfield and Ainscow, 201).

Ainscow (2007) suggests that the push for inclusion not only requires collaboration within a school but also entails a new interdependence between schools (p. 154). He cites Lave and Wenger's (1991) CoPs where groups are joined in the pursuit of similar goals as a useful model that could be used within schools and between schools in the pursuit of effective practices. Although these types of interconnected communities may share only temporary bonds, they can be encouraging and provocative as schools work towards finding commonality. Ainscow et al., (2006) found that school-to-school partnership is a significant factor in helping raise expectations: when there is a clear purpose in place and ways of evaluating educational performance, these partnerships can have a positive impact on encouraging more inclusive practices. This could prove doubly provocative for international schools with a diverse learner population, different programmatic focuses (e.g., GCSE, A level or IB) and/or unique locations to pursue similar inclusive goals.

Ainscow (2007) believes that to create more inclusive communities, schools need to focus on three key areas: practices, policies and cultures. This will in turn create opportunities for individual and collective agency, which can lead to a process of dialogue and the possibility for change. The dialogue process includes those situated inside and outside the school and can take on many forms (e.g., data collection, visits, email and phone calls). It encourages an encompassing approach that includes all stakeholders and can be effective in helping to plan for improvement with substantial support.

2.1.2 Power and social influences on institutional structures

> These [subtle forms of power] then form a general line of force that traverses the local oppositions and links them together; to be sure, they also bring about redistributions, realignments, homogenizations, serial arrangements, and convergences of the force relations.
>
> <div align="right">Foucault, 1980a, p. 94</div>

A school is a multi-layered organization that can have a governing board or board of directors, an administration, parent's association and heads of department and evokes a hierarchical order of authority. A school however linearly organised is a complex system of social relationships (Foucault, 1980a; Silva et al., 2012). Influencing such an organization requires knowledge of the social structures and the intersections of power within them. In order to create the educational leadership necessary to establish an inclusive culture, it is crucial to understand the concept of power and its role in influencing how teachers might act or not within these school structures (Foucault, 1980a; McNay, 1992, Regnér, 2008; Silva et al., 2012).

Individuals are "…self-determining agents capable of challenging and resisting the structures of domination in modern society" (McNay, 1992, p. 4). It is the subtle forms of power which exist in social relations that shape an individual's action taken within an organization (Foucault, 1980a; Regnér, 2008; Silva et al., 2012). Silva et al., (2012) help to put Foucault's idea of power and social relations at the centre of understanding how social interactions shape individuals and institutions. They insist that bringing about change "requires recognizing these instances and the powers that influence them, while acknowledging the dynamics that permeate organizations" (Silva et al., 2012, p. 4).

Teachers cannot be separated from the social relationships in which they are historically embedded (Foucault, 1980a; Regnér, 2008; Silva et al., 2012). When asked who has the power and where it is used, obvious titles 'coordinator', 'director' or 'head of' and 'meetings' are referenced (McNay, 1992). The programs and the people, in addition to the historical context, all play a role in shaping an institution and the individuals within it; therefore, these forces within the formal and informal structures create a school's identity and guide a teacher's perceptions of their power within it (McNay, 1992; Besley, 2005).

Institutions diffuse power through practices at social levels that then come to control the professional lives of the people in them. Techniques of power become networked at the micro level and embed acts of self-regulation through self-surveillance and self-discipline as teachers begin to act or resist as they learn what is socially expected (Foucault, 1980a). The practices teachers engage in collectively (e.g., schemes of work, scheduling and assessment) either align or not with their values, and this informs both their actions individually and, ultimately, the working of the school. Foucault's theory sheds light on how teachers'

interactions might lead them to embrace or resist an inclusive culture of education. Indeed, this can explain how socially expected ideals, such as high achievement on standardised tests, might undermine and become a barrier to inclusion. As teachers gain greater understanding of the flow of power and how social relations influence actions, their regular interaction can create an ethos of inclusion to develop shared responsibilities and expectations.

Foucault's theories (1980a, 1988b, 2001) suggest that understanding how power flows and influences change can lead to a more inclusive environment in international schools. As the need for international schools grows and they become increasingly more diverse, the expectation for dispersing 'proper' knowledge to a broad range of students has created a growing tension: society and its institutions have created the power structures that control teachers and inform the future of curriculum development and pedagogical practice.

Knowledge is inextricably linked to power; it is impossible to have one without the other. However, simply possessing knowledge does not equal power, and even with more knowledge you do not have more power (Foucault, 1980a). If knowledge were power one might expect international LS teachers, with their advanced degrees and experience, to be some of the most powerfully influential people in school. In fact, they would be the best representation of Foucault's rejection of power as being dominating or emanating from above but instead coming from below. He believed power is wielded as individuals undertake their daily interactions, embedded with discourses and norms: that power is ubiquitous and is "exercised from innumerable points in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 94). Therefore, as teachers are at the crossroads of so many subsets within the school system, they have the opportunity to influence and be influenced by the power within the structure (Hawkins and James, 2018, Deacon 2006).

In collaborative action then, it is possible to take advantage of the variable relationship between knowledge and power; though one has to be aware of it and where one is situated in relation to it to best use it to influence actions (Burr, 1995). It can then be also possible to view actions that fall outside legitimate authority and investigate more deeply the complexity of power that plays on teachers in schools (Clegg, 2006). Even though the origin of the complex web of relationships within an organisation is not always clear, acknowledging its presence is essential to negotiating the complex world of educational change (Caffyn, 2007; Silva et al., 2012). Foucault's theory can help explain these multiple points of interaction and

resistance. His theory of power allows for the exploration of how they might shape individuals and groups within institutions.

The multitude of possible responses to these interactions help underscore the unpredictable nature of schools as CELLS. It is Foucault's ideas that help explain CELLS and why detecting where power lies and how to influence it is so difficult in education. It is his theories that shed light on why teachers cannot simply act as agents of change. Indeed, it is difficult for teachers to have the necessary knowledge at the many levels to face a number of responses to their agency. LS teachers work with a psychological set of internal values (e.g. of all students included) that may clash with other external values of the organization that do not align with this ideal (e.g. testing, specific subject matter or other school directives). These other values become sources of power that can be resistant to their agency (Hawkins and James, 2018; Foucault, 1980a).

Foucault's theories acknowledge the inherent social discourse and continue to develop a socio cultural and constructionist view of how teachers and their practice are shaped within schools. Tew (2002), in his book *Social Theory, Power, and Practice*, picks up on Foucault's sentiments and seeks not to "ignore the importance of power in influencing how human difficulties may arise and be resolved," giving us a glimpse of how power influences and shapes social experiences and how they "either open up or close off opportunities for individuals or social groups" to act (2002, p. 165).

Foucault (1980a) emphasises that individuals can develop their truth in relation to others; truth then "needs an audience—intimate or public—a form of performance that allows for the politics of confession and (auto)biography" (p. 111). In this view, therefore, it is important that structures and processes are in place to support critical partnerships between LS teachers and their subject matter colleagues to probe the beliefs and question how these beliefs influence power and practice at their schools. These partnerships become a form of self-categorization within the tradition of the "ontology of the present," which in turn helps to explain the importance of the concept of "habitations of thought" and the centrality of the discourse of truth in relation to instances of power as a form of critique (Foucault, 1980a, p. 111).

Foucault, believing in the Greek ethos of self-mastery versus a Christian self-renunciation, investigates the use of parrhesia, the classical Greek approach to transforming oneself through truth-telling. He concluded that speaking the truth about oneself is a way to turn oneself into a subject, making this an interesting theory in which to analyse education (Besley, 2005). This practice of reviewing oneself as a subject, in light of educational research, would allow for the interrogation of a teacher's beliefs and practices within an institution offering an opportunity for teachers to develop and lead to a greater sense of agency. Foucault (2001) highlights that education does not "…deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of truth-teller or truth-telling as an activity" (p. 169). He claims that education does not address its consequences in "relation to power" and argues that modern Western civilisation began to "problematise truth…the importance of telling the truth, knowing who is able to tell the truth, and knowing why we should tell the truth" (p. 170). In essence, education has not dealt with its practices, activities, routines or disciplines in a way that allows it to evolve. He urges that the Christian idea of self-renunciation has completely imposed itself on critical practices, making critical reflection an act of fault-finding (confession and self-repudiation) rather than self-improvement. In this scenario LS teachers become judges as they interact with their subject matter peers to support students with special needs in mainstream classes. By asking questions about the practices and processes within a mainstream classroom, the LS teacher could be perceived as asking the subject teacher to tell the truth about possibly not meeting the needs of a given student or finding fault in the student, rather than being seen as entering into a dialogue that might uncover conscious or unconscious barriers to a student's learning. It is important to recognise that the type of collaboration it will take to engage all learners will require the act of truth telling "without renunciation of the self but to constitute, positively, a new self…" (Foucault, 1988b, p. 49). This would require a shift away from fault-finding and problematizing individuals inside educational institutions who suggest change. Without critical reflection, the possibility of transformation to meet the evolving needs of a diverse student population may not be possible.

2.1.3 From power to empowerment: teacher agency and inclusion

2.1.3 a Generating teacher agency

Michael Apple's (2013) ideas about the role of micro politics is useful to the study of the work of international LS teachers and identifies the possibilities they have for agency. He

points out that an educational institution is situated within an economic, geographic and political context and argues that these issues cannot be overlooked when trying to understand what and who determine the programmes within these institutions. Central to this study is the belief that there are forces that permeate education, influence the development of programmes and have a serious impact on determining student outcomes (Apple, 2013).

As mentioned previously, subtle forms of power can influence how individuals use their agency, acting in alignment, resisting social expectations or working to manipulate their environment. International LS teachers can face and then wield power in three ways as they interact: they may choose to not act, no longer interact, or use their power to divert direct conflict and influence perceptions, promote their interests and persuade others (Isaac, 1987; Archibald and Wilson, 2011).

To illustrate more specifically how these different forms of power influence special education change in schools, Connor (2012) outlines how resistance to power created a liminal space that led to "the dismantling of certain institutional practices and the enactment of new ones…" (p. 25). Using Van Gennep's (1960) idea of liminal space—the spaces between different life transitions—to explain the specific experiences of special education administrators in New York City, Connor (2012) offers a glimpse into the process of how change and more specifically special education change can be enacted. It also helps explain the difficulty in capturing this change as it is happening; it is in looking back that liminal spaces are more recognizable. As international schools grapple with growth and begin to serve more students of diverse needs, their LS teachers may find themselves in the unenviable space of having to regulate their agency to influence and empower others to meet the demands of diverse learners.

2.1.3. b Structural and psychological approaches to teacher agency and inclusion

Empowerment is both critical to the change process and multi-layered. It can change over time for individuals, groups or an organisation. The term is used in many contexts and there have been many attempts to clarify its meaning. In the context of this study and its social constructionist lens, empowerment will be broken up into two approaches: structural and psychological.

The structural approach is characterised by its shared decision-making process, wherein information is open and accessible throughout the organisation and employees make decisions as they relate to their work. The psychological approach focuses on the beliefs of employees within an organisation; employees can make decisions as they align with the purposes and values of the organisation (Tengland, 2008; Cattaneo and Chapman, 2010). Creating a connection between the two approaches sets up the possibility of seeing how international LS teachers might begin to act independently in a liminal space in the belief that they have an influence on the organisation's outcomes (Cattaneo and Chapman, 2010). The psychological approach to empowerment is similar to engagement in that both concepts look to align employees with the values of the organisation in a way that allows them more choice: as they plan how much of their time and energy they will invest in completing their work, they experience greater empowerment (Bloom, 2013) and through this empowerment they begin to influence and engage others (Eldor, 2016) ultimately positively impacting student outcomes.

2.1.3 c Empowerment as a process for inclusion

This study will be working under the presumption that empowerment is a form of shared ownership and control that influences "managerial and organizational effectiveness" (Conger and Kanungo, 1988, p. 471). Also fundamental to this discussion of international LS teachers' agency is the idea that empowerment has variability, comes in degrees and can change over time (Tengland, 2008; Cattaneo and Chapman, 2010).

The definition of empowerment in the workplace that will be used to answer this study's questions acknowledges that it is not simply a state but should be considered a continuous goal or a process (Tengland, 2008; Cattaneo and Chapman, 2010). The discourses are a form of power flow through organisations and individuals, which leads to change. As this power flows through intersection within the oganisation individuals respond, they structure their thoughts, emotions and practices, which motivates action. Contradictory discourses enable us to make choices, although much of this process is unconscious. The process of empowerment leads to agency, and this study seeks to "clarify what the process of empowerment is and how international LS teachers work towards (or with) empowerment" (Tengland, 2008, p. 78).

This study keeps in mind the unique and positive implications of "empowerment" (Conger and Kanunga, 1988; Tengland, 2008; Cattaneo and Chapman, 2010). This positive perspective implies potential for both individual and collective change: teachers have the

potential to meet the individual needs of their students, and they can collaborate to determine intervention or enrichment strategies to create a more inclusive environment.

Tengland (2008) found that empowerment should consist of, or lead to, 1) an increase in control of the individual's (group's or community's) own health; 2) an increase in the individual's ability to control her life; and 3) an increase in the ability to change the world (p. 80). Tengland (2008) found that these criteria seem to be the most viable to test and help make reasonable assumptions about empowerment. He highlighted that it does not serve empowerment to simply define it as raising an individual's sense of control in any given situation. If one were to accept this as the definition, one would be faced with the possibility that, rather than actually having control, one might be manipulated into believing one has control.

In this study, empowerment will be explored as a process involving relational qualities, using social relational theories of empowerment to analyse the actions of international LS teachers (Conger and Kanunga, 1988; Tengland, 2008; Cattaneo and Chapman, 2010). Professional relational empowerment has two distinct qualities: "(1) to decide what 'problem' or 'issue' to deal with (sometimes involving increased understanding of how the situation arose), and (2) how to reach some desired state of affairs, be it a solution to a problem or some other important change" (Tengland, 2008, p. 91). In his relational model he explains that persons or groups identify the problem and then work together to solve it. He describes the process and its attributes in a health care environment, but this can apply quite easily to a group of teachers who might be working to create a more personalised approach to education (i.e., inclusion). He explains that relational empowerment is when an expert from one group offers support to another. Through this expert support, the group, or individual receiving it, develops a greater understanding and is able to achieve greater control over a situation (Tengland, 2008).

An example of relational empowerment might be when international LS teachers collaborate with their subject specific colleagues to evaluate expectations and create specific strategies to assist a student with special needs to remain in the mainstream classroom.

This study explores the relational process of empowerment and how it influences agency within the latent power plays of an organisation. Tengland's (2008) work opens the door to

examine a "way to work" with empowerment and to determine how to work consistently in this way. This aligns with Cattaneo and Chapman's (2010) definition of empowerment "as an iterative process in which a person who lacks power sets a personally meaningful goal oriented toward increasing power, takes action toward that goal, and observes and reflects on the impact of this action, drawing on his or her evolving self-efficacy, knowledge, and competence related to the goal (p. 647).

Understanding empowerment as a process is helpful in developing learning opportunities for international LS teachers that in turn lead to more inclusive international schools. This empowerment theory and the previous theories regarding power and agency create the framework for determining what structures might be used to support LS teachers in international schools.

2.1.3 d Empowerment, efficacy and teacher agency

Teacher empowerment has been defined "as investing teachers with the right to participate in the determination of school goals and policies and to exercise professional judgment about what and how to teach" (Bolin, 1989, p. 82). Teacher empowerment is important to educational reform as schools look for ways to increase decision-making authority and accountability and create more opportunities to engage more learners.

Baleghizadeh and Goldouz (2016) combined two tools, The School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and the Collective Efficacy, to better understand perceptions of empowerment and school effectiveness and its influence on teachers' sense of agency. Their findings supported previous studies showing a belief that teachers' perceptions of empowerment and self-efficacy have a positive role to play in agency (Goddard et al., 2004; Marks and Louis, 1997). The findings also supported the belief that "both individual and collective teacher leadership self-efficacy have been linked with successful school improvement and reform efforts, by creating a critical mass of empowered experts within the building" (Berry, Daughtrey, and Weider, 2010, p. 20).

Empowerment, along with the power to employ collective action, is thus important for any innovation that might take place in a school (Berry et al., 2010). In addition, collective

efficacy beliefs in school improvement are needed to cultivate the proper atmosphere for shared responsibility of student outcomes. Raising empowerment across all disciplines of a school is key to its organisational characteristic, which in turn makes possible a collective responsibility to bring about student learning (Marks and Louis, 1997).

The findings of this case study seek to corroborate the results of a study conducted by Baleghizadeh and Goldouz (2016), which surveyed EAL teachers in Iran to examine the correlation between empowerment and collective efficacy. They concluded that it is critical for teachers to believe that they are empowered and have power to act on those beliefs collectively to affect a "critical mass of empowered experts" (Berry et al., 2010, p. 20). Determining the levels of empowerment and efficacy is important, then, to identifying the possibility for change. More teacher empowerment studies such as this are needed to understand teacher agency and the potential for the growth of inclusive practices.

Understanding teachers' perception of empowerment and how it might influence their actions will certainly be informative to educational reform as it focuses less on bureaucratic controls and looks more to empowering teachers to raise their agency (Marks and Louis, 1997). The process of empowerment becomes "…an essential condition for building an intellectually focused school culture—that is, a school culture focused on teaching and learning" (Marks and Louis, 1997, p. 247). To be clear, when teachers participate in decision making that supports all individual student outcomes, they will be genuinely empowered to create more inclusive schools. "Whether teacher empowerment is nominal or genuine, therefore, depends on its enactment," which highlights the need for teacher agency to influence instruction and inclusion (Marks and Louis, 1997, p. 247). If teachers in international schools are on the front lines of inclusion, then it is important to identify their perceptions and whether they can be leveraged to increase their agency for the types of innovation that lead to maximising learning for more students.

2.1.3 e Who needs empowerment when a school is "good enough"?

Despite the potential of empowerment to enable an individual, such as an international LS teacher, to gain knowledge and skills and to prompt action, it can equally create paradoxes within institutions. As teachers begin to perceive they do have some control over decision

making, how might this fit into the functioning of the school as a whole? How might school policies and processes affect their actions and the process of empowerment (Eylon, 1998)?

James and Oplatka (2015), in their study of "Good Enough Schools," touch on the forces that affect a teacher's empowerment. They "explore teaching and organizing roles, the limitations of those roles, and what was permitted and what was forbidden in those roles (p. 81). They suggest that schools can provide a secure, contained educational environment that works to minimise undesirable outcomes and promote independence, wherein teachers learn to use what is available to them to create a positive learning environment and maximise the possibility of their students meeting desired outcomes. This would be like the mother who designs an environment for her children to maximise positive outcomes by limiting risk factors. In such an environment of best intentions, it is hard to find fault with wanting to limit negative outcomes. In schools, however, the aversion to risk can curb innovation and ultimately limit the process of empowerment (James and Oplatka, 2015, p. 81).

This concept gives power to designing risk-averse environments as a way to maintain high levels of student outcomes. Any discussion about teachers initiating change and their level of perceived empowerment will start when teachers deem it necessary (James and Oplatka, 2015). In a good enough school, teachers may not take on change when they do not see it necessary; for example, the power held in a school meeting or the school's exceeding adequate standards may limit the desire to innovate. Thus, there is a need to understand how the potentially limiting effects of "good enough" might influence the process of empowerment and the implications this has for LS teachers and inclusion in international schools.

What is engaged pedagogical and organisational (empowered) practice, and what is disengaged (disempowered) practice? Considering the conclusion of James and Oplatka (2015), it is possible to envisage situations where international LS teachers may be, albeit unconscious of their choice, helpless, as they follow practices carried out every day and maintain the routines that have been socially accepted and perpetuated to provide adequate care for students. It is also possible that they *choose* to be disengaged and not initiate change, even if the change may be best for a student, in order not to disrupt this subtle form of power and challenge the perceived adequate care of all students. These possibilities reinforce the idea of the "containing environment becoming the constraining environment…Nothing is left

to chance and no risk is taken" (James and Oplatka, 2015, p. 81). This theory highlights the relational socio-cultural and social constructionist process of empowerment and agency in a school and how any decision to initiate change becomes a potentially political one. Someone acting on empowerment may pose potential risks to agreed-upon outcomes, be thus excluded from collaborative social practices, and then have little opportunity to make changes within the school. In this scenario, international LS teachers may need to consider connecting with LS teachers outside their institutions to overcome any limiting factors to their agency.

2.1.4 Social interactions and teacher agency

2.1.4 a Managing agency and social relations: how teacher empowerment is shaped by social interaction

Examining the actions of international LS teachers and how they might engage with teachers inside or outside their institutions goes beyond the simplistic definition of "agency" as habits or actions driven by a single sense of purpose (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Fu and Clarke, 2017). Instead, agency is the "dynamic *interplay* among these dimensions and of how this interplay varies within different structural contexts of action" (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p. 963). This approach to agency "reconceptualize[s] human agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement…[that] can only be captured in its full complexity […] if it is analytically situated within the flow of time" (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p. 963). This liminal view of agency "is intrinsically social and relational since it centres around the engagement (and disengagement) by actors of the different contextual environments that constitute their own structured yet flexible social universes" studied in a particular context and time (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p. 973). Agency then is acting in a way that understands the social environment and the processes that allow one to act. Only by understanding the interplay of such things as habits, traditions, values and goals can one examine how agency is situated and, crucially, begin to plot ways of acting or not in a social context to bring more consistency and completeness (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Fu and Clarke, 2017). In this context, it is possible to study a group of LS teachers in similar institutions and to begin to create a picture of their social interactions and how those might influence their agency.

The study of the interplay of habits, traditions, values and goals of LS teachers in international schools marries classical and pragmatic theories to give a more holistic story of

agency organised around interrelated social communication. This makes it possible to explain action *and* inaction and has serious implication for change theory and the development of individuals and institutions like LS teachers in international schools (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Fu and Clarke, 2017). As teachers interact, they change (Hawkins and James, 2018). The smallest encounter cannot be discounted as it has the ability to influence. This happens all the way through the system as teachers work with each other, administrators, other teaching staff and students. As these different groups interact, the process is mutual and impacts the whole school system and potentially other school sites (Hawkins and James, 2018).

This perspective is in line with the social constructionist approach of this study and allows the researcher to ask what kinds of settings and situations provoke or facilitate new responses to change and which ones cause individuals to maintain habitual practices. As with Foucault's theory of power, this approach looks to create opportunities to review actions and then modify or change them to meet emerging challenges, such as including students with diverse learning needs in international school settings.

The theories referred to in this study imply that the keys to empowerment and unlocking agency are inherent in the social structure. The question then becomes the following: How can social structures be manipulated to support individuals to initiate the necessary changes to build more inclusive international environments (Hill, 1971; UNESCO, 1994; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Ainscow, 2007; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018)?

LS teachers may be the best candidates to outline how to accomplish this in an international context. They may provide the necessary definition of the problem or dissatisfaction of inclusion; have the experience to envision how to implement effective practices; and then create a shared path forward to a more effective, inclusive environment (Haldiman and Hollington, 2004; Lane and Jones, 2016).

Studying LS teachers' agency specifically in international schools might surface two major challenges to initiating change: the organisational structures and systems and the individualistic nature within them (Linden, 2010). Similarly, as in other insular bureaucratic systems, international schools may find it hard to see new challenges, or, to self-address potential barriers to meet changing demands (Goldsmith and Eggers, 2004).

A study of inclusion in international schools may be extraordinarily difficult as the bureaucratic structures and systems within these schools have not adapted to meet the dynamic demands of a modern educational setting, which can leave services and information disjointed and incomplete (Lane and Jones, 2016; Bartlett, 2014; Ainscow, 2007; Shaklee, 2007). This study intends to provide insight into how LS teachers manage their agency and how their empowerment is shaped by social relations within the liminal space of today's international schools (Foucault, 1980a, 2003a; Höijer, 2011; Silva et al., 2012).

By concentrating on historical objectives, international schools have tacitly consolidated existing organisational cultures, which previously have not had to consider such a wide diversity of students. This may make them inhospitable to collaboration and especially between learning support and the other domains on campus. By maintaining these business-as-usual routines, the "same old, same old" cycles of repetition continue to thwart a shared responsibility for student outcomes and the increasing student needs facing these institutions today.

2.1.4 b Reclaiming power: a new form of teacher agency

The search for an answer to what influences teacher activity is not new. Charles Hill (1971) wrote an article simply titled *Teachers as Change Agents,* in which he describes how teachers are dominated by external forces. Hill (1971) explains that, historically, teachers have been unimportant in the process of change in education and cites Thomas Woods (1967, p. 54) who summed it up this way: "The impetus for change originates from outside the educational system and within the system the pressure for change comes from the top down" (Hill, 1971, p. 424). Hill's article, although written over four decades ago, began to question how teachers might take a more active role in change: "But what about the Teacher? To what extent can he exert pressure to bring about needed change in the school system? Is the innovator destined for a frustrating head-knocking experience?" (Hill, 1971, Editor's note, p. 424). Hill's appraisal of teachers at the time was that they seemed to be highly educated individuals who had "cultivated their state of relative powerlessness" (p. 424).

Hill (1971) was one of the first to investigate teacher agency and developed a tool to seek to understand teachers' perspectives on initiating change. The findings from this small sample and quite simple survey suggest that teachers faced internal and external pressures in their

decisions to act or not. Teachers reported they were interested in initiating change but there was a general limiting belief that obstacles existed, including workload, individualization, principals' and district procedures, money and lack of training. Hill (1971) referred to additional pressures such as mortgages, time and energy involved in raising a family, fear of the unknown, as well as formal evaluation and seeking tenure, all which might lead teachers to refrain from engaging in the change process. Agency exposes teachers to "consequences that come with the accountability for one's actions, [the need for] courage to speak up, academic diligence and honesty, and premeditated application of the science of persuasion" (Hill, 1971 p. 427). These pressures have not gone away and are still cited as forms of internal and external power, examples of the complexity that teachers face as they engage with agency today (Ainscow, 2007; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018).

These complexities and social interactions can combine to form strong feelings about change that can influence the environment (Tye and Tye, 1993). Teachers who regularly feel confident and self-sufficient will create a more resilient and positive environment. Conversely, once teachers feel psychological stress, their unhappiness will create a certain type of atmosphere that equally can influence agency. Feeling undervalued, poorly treated or taken advantage of, teachers may resort to active resistance: not engaging with, or actually sabotaging, change efforts. Routinely feeling overwhelmed can negatively affect innovation or change (Tye and Tye, 1993).

The potential negative effects of imposed change must be understood by teachers if they are to take back the role of change initiator and heed Hill's 1971 call for teachers to reclaim their power. Fullan (2016) underscores this as he believes that "teachers will continue to be victimized by the relentless intrusion of external change forces" if they do not learn to find and implement their own solutions (Fullan, 2016, pp. 166–167).

Reclaiming this power will take a new form of teacher agency, one that reimagines the structures and tools that will allow teachers to direct their own learning and to work in collaboration with others, both inside and outside their schools (Toom et al., 2015).

Social pressures influence teacher agency and have two distinct sets of activities: those that maintain institutions and those that change institutions (Boronski and Hassan, 2015). The socialisation of change in peer learning can come from inside or outside a school. Words are

particularly important to how teachers respond to change. The stories told about change whether in formal meetings, informally over coffee or even virtually in blogs, can drive change or stop it (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2016).

The cohesion and diversity of community interactions allow agents to generate widely shared understandings about the technical and social requirements of work. These interactions support teachers' feelings of confidence or overwhelm as they use their agency or not (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2016). External social influences have an even greater impact than ever before through the use of technology. Change messages can easily be shared anytime and anywhere with an internet connection (Boh, 2008). This can greatly expand the social sources of influence on a teacher and there is much that needs to be explored as to how technology is used by international LS teachers to direct their own learning and share knowledge in potential resource deprived locations.

Teacher agency is active and intentional; it demands that teachers are constantly learning and adapting as they parse together information from colleagues, students and parents with formal and informal powers at play to influence student outcomes (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015). Teachers today, and there is no reason to believe that this would be different for international LS teachers, are negotiating multiple outlets of influence and interaction as they work to "reshape" the policy, working within the constraints of the social structure of their schools (Quinn and Carl, 2015 p.746). Social structures inside a school (e.g. working groups and departments), as well as outside the school (e.g. through associations and online forums), can help offer opportunities for a teacher to engage and act with intention to develop their sense of professional agency. Therefore, it is important to understand how international LS teachers undertake working within the structures and interplay of power in their daily work. The social context of their department and school along with external factors compound as they may contradict each other in an environment as diverse as an international school, making it difficult to predict the possibility of creating the kind of educational change that can lead to improved outcomes for students with special needs.

Teachers have personal feelings, multiple messages and interactions that they manage as they make choices as to whether to go along with or resist change. Thus, change can come about through peer collaboration or political contestation. What is constant is the necessity for a

teacher to interact within a social structure and seek to understand their actions in relation to improving student outcomes (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2016).

2.1.5 Collaboration: working together for change

Schools have many highly educated and qualified teachers with years of experience who are accountable to multiple stakeholders inside and outside their educational environments. Indeed, parents, local authorities and administrators all have a role in deciding what happens, or should happen, in schools (Male, 2015). Collaborative approaches to leadership in schools can allow for a cycle of engagement that empowers the highly able to deliver an educational experience which meets the increasingly diverse needs of students (Ainscow, 2007, Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018). It seems imperative then to understand how to structure and support collaboration to leverage this wealth of knowledge and experience.

2.1.5 a Collaboration for Inclusion

Ainscow (2004) recognises that careful attention has to be paid to the critical thinking elements of the process of collaboration as it relates to change and inclusion. He points out that, within communities, there may be "a degree of collusion amongst those involved, such that unwelcome ideas or evidence is overlooked" (Ainscow et al., 2004, p. 132). This has led to develop 'levers' that can be used to encourage those within a school to question their practices and, indeed, the assumptions behind these practices" (Ainscow et al., 2004, p. 132). These levers have teachers engaging in specific activities to encourage them "to 'make the familiar unfamiliar' in order to stimulate self-questioning, creativity and action" to support the critical practices of these communities (Ainscow et al.,2004 p. 132). Teachers can observe each other or a video of a colleague and then discuss the actions; they can review and discuss data from the school, collected from their classrooms, student interviews; they can engage in staff activities or curricular changes; they can also enter into partnerships with other schools. In short, teachers can seek out opportunities to discuss actions in a consistent and critical way (Ainscow et al., 2004).

These levers have great implications for institutional change within schools and between schools. Traditionally, serving students with special needs has inherently been the problem of the students (Ainscow et. al., 2007). They are the ones with difficulty or deficiency and so

schools begin the singular journey in solving the students' challenges. Ainscow's levers (2004; 2007) are meant to counter this deficit model or mentality by asking how might the environment or practices be barriers to learning. Flipping this belief allows for teachers to observe, ask question, dialogue and share practices in order to collect data and review it critically.

This new view is especially intriguing for international schools where different beliefs, backgrounds and educational philosophies come together and create or recreate barriers for students. Ainscow (2004) protocols offer a way to encourage schools to question the process, not just the pupil. Using these levers can improve the experience for more than just one child at a time. As schools evaluate their processes, they will have a greater impact on creating a culture of inclusion (Ainscow et al., 2007). Studying international LS teachers will help to address how international schools might address the two major challenges to initiating this kind of inclusive change: the organisational structures and systems and the individualistic nature within them (Linden, 2010). It might also prove specifically helpful to uncover the collaborative process for inclusion as internationals LS teachers are some of the highest qualified and experienced professionals in their institutions (Haldimann and Hollington, 2004).

2.1.5 b Empowered Collaboration for Self-Improvement

In order to evaluate the focus on the process not the pupil, Mark Hadfield and Mel Ainscow (2018) conducted a 4-year study on the change development challenge in Welsh education. They found links between collaboration and self-improvement, and how competition and collaboration can be used to enhance change and create self-improving schools (Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018, p. 442).

Hadfield and Ainscow. (2018) studied how creating networks and subsystems might make a system responsive and able to react sufficiently when they had "the capacity to problem solve independently, innovate, and engage in sustained collaborative reform efforts around specific issues" (p. 455). Communities were developed to support members' shared goals, offer professional autonomy in meeting the challenges they faced in their classrooms, and provided a space to see how their personal work fit with broader school wide improvement. This is an important difference with other communities where goals or objectives might be dictated by a

principal or a leadership team focused on school wide initiatives. By allowing communities to form around shared goals, they are empowered to pursue ideas and challenges personal to them, which in turns reinforces autonomy and motivation.

The study did find that when change is managed in this way, it can promote self-improvement and overcome "political and professional... [barriers] to stimulate collective efforts to explore new possibilities for addressing old problems" (Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018 p. 460). These findings confirm that change or policy implementation is… "best dealt with by those who are close to practice and, therefore, in a better position to understand local contextual effects, including the possibilities and problems presented by the existing patina of collaboration and competition" (Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018, p. 461). However, even with the positive effect of networks, change is hard and institutions may return to a more traditional top-down decision-making process, as they might see this as a more efficient process to implement major policy changes.

As previously stated, Hadfield and Ainscow (2018) also caution that educational systems that are wedded to powerful accountability systems, such as mandatory testing, inspection reports and ranking, may be reluctant or refuse to cooperate. Additionally, in schools that require that administration and faculty spend considerable time dedicated to comply with the authorities in order to maintain their status, there will be little to no time left for collaboration or networking between schools (Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018).

Within this context, international LS teachers will need to find creative ways to develop space and time to facilitate empowered communities, as agency is a product of networking not singular acts in isolation (Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018).

2.1.6 Communities of Practice: how critical reflection can leverage inclusion

 2.1.7 a Thinking together

If research is going to be successful in influencing international inclusive practices, there must be a clear understanding of what is being practiced and what outcomes are being produced (Burns and Ysseldyke, 2009). By studying teachers and their perceptions, it is possible to create a picture of what is happening in classrooms despite policy or local educational

authority initiatives. This approach begs many questions: How can teachers seek the truth Foucault (1980a) envisioned? Or engage in the dialogues Ainscow et al., 2006) demands to pull the levers of inclusion? How might school environments be developed to allow critical reflection? How might international LS teachers act within this context to better meet the needs of the learners in their classrooms?

One method that brings together critical reflection and dialogue is the CoP, which brings the notion of learning through practice: members share experiences and knowledge gained through practice (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Lave and Wenger, 1991). Orr (1996) in his study of service technicians as a CoP, observed that they shared tacit knowledge through a storytelling method, allowing them to arrive at solutions for the different challenges they faced. It is important, for the success of a CoP, that professionals are "thinking together" (Pyrkro et al., 2017, p. 390). Indeed, researchers argue that it is the thinking together that creates the change not the simple formation of a community (Pyrko et al., 2017). When people are thinking together and supporting each other through shared problems in areas of common interests, they then share knowledge, which can lead to innovation and change practice (Pyrko et al., 2017). Much of the research on CoPs focuses on learning in intimate groups that meet face to-face. In these groups, members share experiences and perspectives specialised to their field. Members "tend to share the same set of technical vocabulary, which serves as a shared code for facilitating a common understanding and an overlapping base of knowledge" (Boh, 2014, p.13).

2.1.7 b Virtual CoPs: leveraging inclusion in international schools

It is clear from the research that empowerment is not fixed and that collaboration influences empowerment (Gronn, 2000; Muijs and Harris, 2003; Tengland,2008; Cattaneo and Chapman, 2010; Priestley et al., 2012; Toom et. al.,2015). Virtual tools can seemingly be used to create access into international schools not before possible.

How might CoPs be implemented to leverage inclusion in international schools? Technology might be an answer. This discussion has the potential for even greater application but will be limited to the scope of this project and the focus on the international context. Using virtual communities might be a way for international schools to engage teachers and offer collaborative environments where they can be free from inhibitions and find support to meet

the challenges they face within their classrooms. Technology may allow for these schools to create communities that are not constrained by distance or time and could offer a place where teachers can reflect critically on their practices and the processes in their schools. These communities would be created similarly to the face to face communities, as a space for learning and improvement.

Research related to the usefulness of technology to create virtual knowledge sharing communities has predominantly been focused on how useful they have been in the business sector but these findings show promise for other sectors such as education (Markus, 2001). The possibility of creating a community of teachers in different international locations is supported by the theory of individual learning, where new skills are quickly assimilated if they share elements with already acquired knowledge (Boh, 2014). In a community of international teachers, the individuals will have shared knowledge (e.g. subject knowledge or specific program knowledge). This process of creating shared knowledge can help them to overcome challenges related to different locations or context allowing them to understand information shared even if pieces of this information do not match their exact context (Boh, 2008; 2014). Virtual communities then can serve two functions: knowledge creation, which is defined as research and new product development; and knowledge reuse, which is defined as sharing and solution finding.

In a virtual community, it is vital that members feel that they can establish enough contact to determine the reliability and credibility of the information. Knowledge meant to be transferred can also be difficult to understand or convey. To share information that can be reused may require more information to describe the idea (Boh, 2008). It is important to remember that the complexity of knowledge can be a significant deterrent for users to understand and reuse knowledge from virtual communities.

Even with these limitations, it remains possible for virtual repositories and forums to access a broad range of perspectives and increase the diversity of viewpoints, stimulating the possibility for critical reflection that can lead to the development of novel solutions (Boh, 2008). They can decrease the reliance on similarly located co-workers and the effects of situated thinking while offering improved creativity (Teigland and Wasko, 2003).

Further study of international environments and different collaborative platforms is vital to the promotion of teachers thinking together and can yield useful insights that will inform policy for effective inclusion internationally. This information is critical to the development of timely and effective professional support and teacher development. The next step to enhance the study of teacher agency, therefore, is to explore how virtual CoPs can be created to inspire teachers to think collectively and act locally to have a greater impact and engage all learners.

2.2 Learning support and inclusion in international schools

This section examines the specialised context in creating inclusive environments in international schools. It will establish the limited understanding of LS in an international context and outline suggestions for further research to advance a more comprehensive approach to inclusion in an international context.

2.2.1 Growth of international schools

International education has grown substantially in the 21st century. With 50 schools in the 1960s, it is now reported that 6000 international schools operate around the world. This number is predicted to expand to reach 10,000 by 2022 (Hayden et al., 2007; Bunnell, 2016). Different models of international school have emerged. The traditional not for profit model has now been joined by a demand for elite English-speaking schools, which are usually for profit. This contemporary style of international school has increased. They are predominantly competitive and prestige driven schools in centres of affluence such as Hong Kong and Abu Dhabi (Bunnell, 2016). In addition, 500 international schools are reported as providing programs to support children with learning needs, however, it is difficult to obtain accurate numbers of such schools (Lane and Jones, 2016). The difficulty stems from defining inclusivity and the idea that "Inclusion is a philosophy commitment that recognises a right to a sense of welcome and belonging in the education of all students" (Kusuma-Powell and Powell, 2004, para. 1).

2.2.2 Teachers in international schools: nature and characteristics

As the number of international schools increase, so does the need for expatriate teachers. There appears to be some consistency in relation to the teachers who pursue teaching in an international school. Though some may be from the host country, international teachers predominantly tend to draw from western cultures and are trained in countries such as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom (Hayden et al., 2007; Bunnell, 2016). These teachers often have the necessary pedagogical training but are rarely trained for international setting or to understand the context and the needs of the specific communities they join (Bunnell, 2016). In fact, there may not be enough teachers in international schools specifically trained to take on the ever-increasing needs of students in the global community (Lane and Jones, 2016). Key to the success of these schools is the support that teachers will need to

sustain their success and the success of the school to meet the range of needs of the international student (Hayden et al., 2007).

2.2.3 Inclusion and learning support in international schools

Next Frontier Inclusion (NFI), an organisation created to help international schools address the diverse needs of learners, highlights the growing need for specific training and development for learning support programs.

To address the challenge of inclusion, NFI promotes a collaborative approach to differentiated instruction as key to LS in international schools. They strongly defend the need for *all* teachers to be prepared for effective differentiated instruction for a wide range of learners and for all school leaders to create environments that foster a culture of inclusion (NFI, 2011). Without these crucial elements they believe that it is not possible to meet the needs of all students, let alone students with special needs. They also support a highly collaborative model, as meeting a diverse range of student needs is "just too complex for teachers to 'do it alone'" (NFI, 2011, p.6). They argue that only a team can identify, define, create and consistently update the kind of support many learners, specifically those with special needs, require. According to NFI, the team includes subject teachers, counsellors, school leaders, the student's family, the student and the LS specialist who has specific training and credentialing in differentiation and special education (NFI, 2011).

2.2.4 Learning support in international schools: meeting the needs of diverse students

To understand how LS teachers in international schools use their agency to influence inclusive practices, it is helpful to contextualise them as individuals who occupy a liminal space. Indeed, international LS teachers may have been trained in places like the UK or the US, and may find themselves trying to reconcile their experience from previous inclusive environments with a current and potentially less inclusive setting within the international school. International LS teachers may therefore be managing the present but also projecting to a future that is more aligned with past inclusive actions. An inability to reconcile these two experiences may have LS professionals feeling insecure as they try to manage their expectations of inclusion. This leaves questions as to how international LS teachers might

negotiate such environments and the flow of power within these institutions as they work to meet the special needs of students and strive to create inclusive cultures.

Delivering an appropriate model of learning support is made even more complex in international schools as emotional, social, cultural, linguistic and familial issues may be heightened for students and their families living as expats (NFI, 2011). In order to meet these needs, international LS teachers, by virtue of their positions, create and recreate opportunities based on the individual needs of their students. These opportunities may be in small group settings, in a one-to-one environment or may require teaming with subject specific teachers to assess appropriate accommodations to be applied in the mainstream classroom. LS teachers in international schools may be the only teachers with these responsibilities or work in an institution where the power and influence do not directly support their initiatives. By contrast, depending on the power structures within a school, subject teachers in international schools may feel the pressure to prepare students to meet programmatic requirements while the LS teachers need to work to support students who, by definition, will struggle to meet these requirements. To serve these students, resources of time and talent within the school can, at times, create competing goals: subject teachers working to meet parent and administrator expectations regarding student outcomes may feel pressured to cover the curriculum, where LS teachers may be competing for the same time to implement appropriate supports to serve learning differences.

NFI has found that being a LS teacher in an international school can mean that the responsibility for supporting students may fall solely on them (NFI, 2015). Qualified LS teachers have extensive knowledge of policies and practices and can outline support for students who struggle. They are steeped in the knowledge of this policy and how it is meant to be when applied in the domestic context in which they have been trained (Lane and Jones, 2016). What is difficult to understand is how they go about fulfilling these duties when the institution in which they teach is a private business and beyond their certification's borders.

This study intends to build an argument for mitigating these stresses with collaborative practices where all knowledge and expertise are shared to create individualised learning plans for students with special needs in international schools (NFI, 2015; Haldimann and Hollington, 2004; Lane and Jones, 2016). Teaming around the child can lead to creative solutions but such teams (e.g. LS teacher, subject area teacher, counsellor, educational

psychologist, physical or speech therapists) are not always available to serve a student's individual needs. NFI (2015) suggests a "tiered approach" that closely aligns with models from the United State, known as *Response to Intervention (RTI), Mild to Moderate or more Moderate to Severe.* RTI is an entry level response where accommodations are provided and monitored for a specific amount of time; as students progress, or not, more resources can be accessed and more professionals may need to evaluate whether another tier of support should be considered (NFI, 2015). This study aims to develop opportunities for these professional collaborations around student support between international schools.

2.3 A culture of inclusion in the international school context

This section examines how a culture of inclusion can be created in the context of international schools. It will highlight the need to investigate further the LS teacher's role in the international context. Then, it will explore the micropolitics of traditional international schools. Finally, it will suggest CoPs as a counter to micropolitics to create a culture of inclusion (Benjamin, 2002).

2.3.1 Teacher empowerment in international schools

The need to investigate a teacher's role in educational change and uncover the values that influence beliefs about empowerment is as fundamental to international school research as it is in any academic setting. Teachers' perceptions and beliefs can be seen as key elements of the empowerment process; consequently, the strategies teachers deploy to deal with diverse learning needs will have significant implications on their agency (Czander, 1993).

Diversity of experience, background and personal values influence teachers beliefs and actions, which seems overlooked in the research investigating international schools. Indeed, research into international school teachers' perception of empowerment and collective efficacy is relatively new. Further study is needed to explore the idea of empowerment, power and how international LS support professionals work to create opportunities for inclusion.

There is a significant gap in academic literature about the impact of micropolitics on international teachers' empowerment and agency. Indeed, the focus seems to be on the dynamics of leadership, focusing on headships and formal leadership more than on the

personal, professional and political forces that might be influencing teachers in these schools (Bates, 2011).

2.3.2 The micropolitics of international schools

In writing about the micropolitics of international schools, Caffyn (2007) builds on the Foucauldian view of power to define micropolitics "as the subversive interplay between individuals, groups and cultures, used for fragmented individualized goals" (Hayden et al., 2007, p.340). Caffyn uses Hayden et al. (2007) to underscore how the power of authority, which is intended to manage an organisation, is constantly up against the professional power within the organisation, especially in a school surrounded by highly educated professionals such as teachers, where principals can be torn between the economics of running an international school business and the professional pursuit of academic needs and accountability.

Micropolitics amount to a struggle for power between individuals, departments and interest groups within a school. How a teacher might use their perceived power to make decisions is complicated by this struggle. In his application of micropolitics in international schools, Caffyn cites Nia (1984)'s findings that "varying views on who should make decisions, suggest[s] that perspectives on power and who should wield it are important to consider" (Caffyn, 2007, p.48). This study intends to use Caffyn's (2007) investigation of micropolitics and the influence it has on decisions and agency to explain the challenges LS teachers navigate in the diverse landscapes of culture, background and experience of international schools to promote inclusion and meet students' special needs.

2.3.3 Countering micropolitics: Communities of Practice for inclusion

When part of a professional community, teachers engage in critical reflection and action that lead to the kind of collective responsibility necessary to improve student outcomes (Louis et al., 1996). CoP theory suggests a level of community that will promote dialogue and inspire action (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Lave and Wenger (1991) see a CoP as "an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge" (p. 98). They observe that learning is not simply situated in practice but is an integral part of practice: learning as "generative social practice in

the lived-in world" (p. 98). Marks and Louis (1997) cite the five essential features of an effective community: shared norms and values; a focus on student learning; collaborative activity; shared practice, and reflective dialogue to create a culture of inclusion (p. 248). In creating an effective community to bring about change, it is not enough to create a space and share dialogue (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2011). It is also imperative that the community understand the organisation and the flow of power in which it is situated. Considering Caffyn (2007) and returning to the intentions of Lave and Wenger (1991), CoPs are organised and "understood to be enabled and constrained by their embeddedness in relations of power…" (Contu and Willmott, 2003 p.283).

Therefore, the power structure within a given school can influence the development of a culture of inclusion, one where everyone is dedicated to the belief that all students are capable of learning and that each teacher is responsible for providing effective instruction. To achieve this goal, teachers engage with one another to share their professional expertise. It is in this context and social relations that practice can be shaped at their schools to improve instructional effectiveness toward inclusion (Creese and Daniels, 2000; Tengland 2008; Cattaneo and Chapman, 2010). As they engage in activities, such as reflective dialogue, the teachers and the institutions therefore "discuss curriculum, pedagogy, and student development; solve problems; and evaluate themselves and their schools' (Marks and Louis, 1997, p. 249). Where educational communities engage in these practices, collective responsibility for student learning is strong (Marks and Louis, 1997).

The LS teacher in an international setting may not find such an opportunity to communicate with others or to engage in such critical dialogue (NFI, 2011). Brown and Gray's (1998) extension of Lave and Wenger's definition of CoPs found in the Encyclopaedia of Communities of Practice in Information and Knowledge Management will inform this study as it creates ways for LS teachers in international schools to overcome micropolitical influence that may limit critical collaboration and therefore negatively impact student outcomes. It suggests that a possible way forward is for international LS teachers to engage in dialogues for learning inside and outside their sites to create pathways to the types of groups that will foster inclusion.

At the simplest level, they are a small group of people who've worked together over a period of time. Not a team, not a task force, not necessarily an authorized or identified

group. They are peers in the execution of "real work." What holds them together is a common sense of purposes and a real need to know what each other knows. At its simplest, then, a group has a common interest; is concerned with motivating each other; is self-generating; is self-selecting; can be geographically dispersed; the community might follow certain patterns but is not directive in its approach.

Coakes and Clarke, 2006, p.328

This study will use this more advanced idea of CoP to explore how creating a community of international LS teachers from different geographical locations might foster a discussion to boost their sense of empowerment and agency. This CoP will include international LS teachers at different schools who have similar job responsibilities and a common language in their goal of supporting students with a range of special needs in international school settings. The desire is to create a platform for "interorganizational discourse… [that can] lead to more critical discourse, formal equality, and purposeful search for alternatives, in contrast to the routine, hierarchy, and scripted forms of rationality that predominate inside organizations" (Emirbayer and Mische, p.1007, 1998). These criteria will serve as a foundation for the methods used to investigate LS in international schools and how a virtual CoP might influence a LS teacher's agency.

CoPs evolve over time and tell a story. They tell a story about what has transpired and what it is that the community is trying to do. It is through the telling of these stories that it is possible to see what is happening and what impact it might if value has been added or have goals been met.: "Framing value creation through narratives emphasizes the importance of audience and perspective…" (Wenger et al., 2011 p. 13).

Wenger et al., (2011) suggest two kinds of narratives arise from CoPs: "ground" narratives which include the who, what, when, where and how that make up the formative events of the CoP and the "aspirational narratives" which constitute a story about what networking or communities should be, which evolves over time (pp. 16-17). Studying the tension between the two narratives can highlight a space and give value to what is worth learning to the CoP.

Wenger et al., (2011) have identified five cycles that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of communities and networks as a way to monitor their value.

Cycle 1. Immediate value: the activities and interactions between members have value in and of themselves

Cycle 2. Potential value: the activities and interactions of cycle 1 may not be realized immediately, but rather be saved up as knowledge capital whose value is in its potential to be realized later.

Cycle 3. Applied value: knowledge capital may or may not be put into use. Leveraging capital requires adapting and applying it to a specific situation.

Cycle 4. Realized value: even applied new practices or tools are not enough. A change in practice does not necessarily lead to improved performance, so it is important to find out what effects the application of knowledge capital is having on the achievement of what matters to stakeholders.

Cycle 5. Reframing value: this happens when learning causes a reconsideration of how success is defined. It includes reframing strategies, goals and values.

The cycles elevate this collaborative model from a discussion to an evaluative tool that determines how these collectives can shape practice. They pair well with Ainscow's IQEA framework (2007) that calls for teachers to reflect critically to develop more inclusive policies. The cycles can identify where institutions are not sharing key information or how information is shared and may not be evaluated for purpose. This is where a critical collaborative forum can be useful in and between international schools as the highly skilled and experienced LS teachers explore a school's practices. With expert teachers such as international LS teachers, the CoP's self-organising and evaluative nature makes it possible for LS teachers to meet the constantly evolving needs of inclusion (Argyris and Schon, 1996; Cohen et al., 2018).

It is with these cycles and within this framework that this study intends to tell the story of how international LS teachers might or might not overcome the power within their institutions to inspire agency and influence inclusive practices while participating in a virtual CoP. Capturing the stories of international LS teachers will help outline the types of dialogue they have about their professional identity, their values and the challenges they face. Evaluating

the CoP will help frame what they aspire to, individually and collectively, as they share their experiences and practices.

2.4.4 Linking it all together

This literature forms the foundation for analysing the phenomenon of LS teachers and their ability to leverage their agency to promote inclusive practices in international schools. The literature calls for additional research to be conducted to understand more deeply the flow of power in schools, where teachers might lead as they engage in CoPs to critically review and reflect on their practices and the change process to build more inclusive environments (Foucault, 1980a; Creese and Daniels 2000, Ainscow et al., 2004; 2007; Wenger et al., 2011; Hart, 2012, Hawkins and James, 2018).

To address the significant gaps in the research and literature on international schools as CELLS and how virtual CoPs in international schools might influence international LS teachers' agency, this study addresses the following questions.

1. How might international school teachers' perception of empowerment and school efficacy create barriers to including students?
2. When do international learning support professionals perceive they are empowered to support inclusion?
3. What influence might virtual communities of practice have on a learning support teacher's agency and inclusion?

3.0 Chapter III Methodology

3.1 Aims and objectives

This study has three main methodological features: it is a mixed-methods approach that aims to investigate the experiences of international LS teachers as they take on the challenges of supporting a diverse range of students in an international setting. Its theoretical perspective is socio-cultural and social constructionist in that it acknowledges the contextual and dynamic influences of social structures on how we make meaning of our worlds and learn through social activity (Fu and Clarke, 2017). The social relations of teachers are the micro level of the macro school and will be the main focus of this study.

This study offers sociological insight and is explanatory in function in its concern for understanding the multiple and layered forces influencing inclusion in international schools (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Yin, 2014)

Agency is relational and can be interpreted as opening/closing or action/resistance depending on the perspective of the researcher. This may have a significant influence on what data are collected and how that data are analysed and interpreted. Bearing this in mind we understand that ethnography is an iterative process with each step informing the next (Beach, 2010). It is then with this view I begin to unpack how power works to influence and shape LS teachers in international schools. These observations are the basis for a socially structured view of power in schools and becomes the lens through which I begin my study of teacher empowerment and agency.

The three research questions helped to guide the methods for understanding key elements related to analysing the phenomenon of LS teachers and their ability to leverage their agency to promote inclusive practices. Teachers engaging in review of and reflection on their practice is important to implement the proper supports to engage all learners (Hart, 2012). Through social practice, we determine how we interpret social actions. Our social lives and our working lives are filled with assumptions; it is then helpful to see practice in different settings as a way to reflect and review on our practice, and this is useful to educational research (Dunne et al., 2005).

There are significant gaps in the research and literature on international LS teachers' agency and CoPs in international schools. This study provides an opportunity to deepen knowledge about LS teachers' agency and inclusive teaching in international schools.

3.2 Research strategy: mixed methods and case study methodology

This study, like Education, is a process and requires a research approach that can mould to this dynamic context (Cohen et al., 2018). The complexity and overlapping nature of understanding social phenomena was summarised by Cohen et al. (2018):

> People have long been concerned to come to grips with their environment and to understand the nature of the phenomena it presents to their senses. The understanding of phenomena can be broken down into experience, reasoning and research. These are considered "complementary and overlapping, features most readily in evidence where solutions to complex problems are sought (p. 3).

In a mixed-methods study, both qualitative and quantitative data are collected but may not be used to answer all the research questions. For example, quantitative data might be collected to answer one question while qualitative data may be collected to answer others (Cohen et al., 2018).

In order to answer the questions related to social relations it is necessary to employ different strategies that uncover the subtle forces at work between individuals within organisations. Studies of empowerment, agency, and the social relations necessary for change need a technique that "breaks with the traditional vision that social representations are static, and instead offers a dynamic reference to contextualize social practices in investigations of organizational strategy as practice" (Silva et. al., 2012, p. 12).

Research can take many forms and combine different techniques to describe the processes and practices found in education. It is important to use the proper tools in order to accurately identify and explain the phenomena in a way that will be valuable to others (Cohen et al., 2018). Being able to capture the perceptions and processes from multiple participants at different schools substantiates the use of mixed methods in this study. Taking this approach

will provide a deeper analysis of the work of LS teachers in order to describe their role and the challenges facing inclusive practices in international schools today.

3.2.1 Mixed-method case study

Methods provide the course of action in a research study. They are not simply a list of tools or techniques but rather a reasoning as to how and why a tool or technique was used. By conducting a case study, a researcher is able to incorporate a number of methods, hence creating a design frame that will guide the research (Thomas, 2011). By conducting a survey first, the researcher can quantify and concisely identify topics in a group. This identification can then lead to pinpointing how these topics impact subgroups and lead the researcher to carry out more qualitative measures to probe these subgroups further and devise a more descriptive picture of what is happening at different points of a given process and how this may influence practice within an institution (Cohen et al., 2018).

Case study as a methodology has seen much debate, the questions tending to focus on its epistemological status, its generalizing "power," and on various aspects of study construction (Thomas, 2011, p. 512). In education, the case study is seen as an interpretivist framework, allowing the researcher to be guided by observation or interaction and not driven by hypothesis testing.

Case study is defined by Simons (2009) as "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a 'real life' context" (p. 2).

Both Simons (2009) and Thomas (2011) urge that defining *case study* in this way will allow it to be used as a design framework, enabling the integration of a number of methods. It fits well with a mixed-methods approach that endorses the use of different samples: "different sizes, scope and types (cases: people; materials: written, oral observational; other elements in social situations: locations, times, events etc.) within the same piece of research" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 44). More importantly this approach tolerates the reality of conducting research, which does not always follow a cleanly laid out design plan and recognise the need for adaptation as data emerge and lead to modifications of even the best predetermined plans (Yin, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018). In this study, the role of international LS teachers'

empowerment and agency in creating inclusive environments in international schools emerged as the area of focus.

Regardless of what might have been predetermined or any modifications, the design plan must be defensible (Cohen et al., 2018). For instance, instruments can be developed to identify quantifiable data that will lead the researcher to investigate a particular context and/or possible participants. To this end, a survey may be used as a tool leading to a particular sample of a given context from where the researcher devises more qualitative measures that will allow for deeper understanding on the given topic. Conversely, quantitative measures may also be used to triangulate qualitative data and as a way to refine and make data more generalisable (Cohen et al., 2018). It is in the strength of the mixed-method approach that the case study emerges as a particularly useful framework for educational research.

3.2.2 Justifying the mixed-method case study: an exploratory sequential design

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in a mixed-methods design. Using both methods has been found to be useful to the study of education (Punch, 2009). Employing mixed methods combines the strengths of qualitative and quantitative techniques to identify reliable data and build a more complete picture of the educational situation being studied. Using both modes makes it possible to apply a "dual perspective"—using numbers as well as words to generalise and to contextualise findings that show the practical relevance of macro research findings at the micro level (Hesse-Biber, 2015, p. 776).

The figure below (figure 3.1) charts the transformative design process from quantitative to qualitative research methods and the approach used in this case study. This method was selected for its appropriateness for research with a social intention to create change for the benefit of a specific group (Cohen et al., 2018).
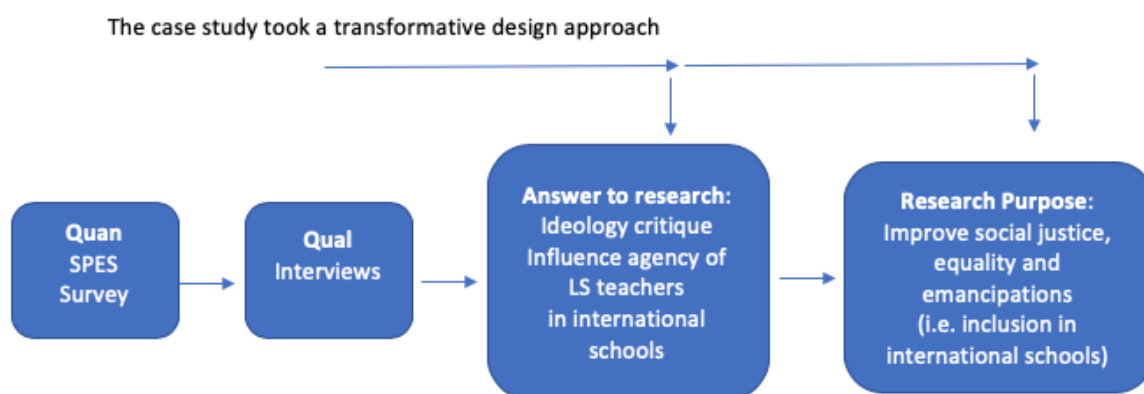
The case study took a transformative design approach

| Quan SPES Survey | → | Qual Interviews | → | Answer to research: Ideology critique Influence agency of LS teachers in international schools | → | Research Purpose: Improve social justice, equality and emancipations (i.e. inclusion in international schools) |

Figure 3.1 Adapted from mixed-methods research typologies (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 40).

International schools face the rising challenge of inclusion and engaging a diverse range of students, as mentioned in the previous chapters. This case study has allowed the analysis of the role of LS teachers in the context of facilitating inclusion in international school settings. Using mixed methods addresses "both the 'what' (numerical and quantitative data) and 'how or why' (qualitative) types of research questions" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 42). From here, the methodology will be referred to as the case study.

The first phase of this study set out to collect key data and answer the first question about international school teachers' perceptions of empowerment and school efficacy. As outlined in the literature these perceptions are important to understand the possibility for agency and change. If international school teachers did not perceive themselves as empowered, that would have great consequences for the possibility of change or the shared responsibility for inclusion (Creese and Daniels 2000, Ainscow et al., 2004; 2007). The results from a survey of international school teachers informed further data collection about agency and was critical in the development of research questions and the path of this research.

The survey makes it possible to determine if international teachers perceived themselves as empowered and where they felt empowered as they work in international communities. The survey also gathered information about how they felt about how effective their schools are in

meeting students' needs. Once perceptions of empowerment and efficacy could be determined then further information was needed. After gathering this data, decision needed to be made about how to move forward. The data about international teachers was broad and further narrowing needed to happen to understand empowerment and inclusion in international schools. Ultimately the data needed to be probed further and focus on international LS professionals. This data answered the second question specifically about LS professionals and their perceptions of empowerment and agency and their experiences with inclusion in international schools.

This case study aims to employ an exploratory sequential design known as the transformative approach (Cohen et al., 2018). With a mix of methods, the approach is sequential and starts with collecting quantitative data as a way to explore and inform subsequent stages in answering the research question or questions. This data lead to a research purpose, an action taken in order to study how a technique might influence improvement (Cohen et al., 2018). This approach is classified as a Pragmatic approach as it supports the idea that research requires tools that will best answers a study's questions, where the questions guide the research, not the method. Pragmatism uncovers what is currently believed to be reality (Cohen et al., 2018). This philosophical theory constructs a viable foundation for the unbiased observation of LS teachers and their perceptions of agency within an international school context.

The exploratory transformative model allowed this study to commence with a survey of international school teachers to better understand the context of empowerment in international schools. The survey used in this research originates from a survey conducted among English as Additional Language (EAL) teachers in Iran to investigate their sense of empowerment and collective efficacy and how these perceptions might influence agency (Baleghizadeh and Goldouz, 2016). Similarly, in this study, the SPES and the Collective Efficacy survey were combined to collate information about international teachers' perceptions of empowerment and of their school's effectiveness.

The originally published reliability of this scale cautioned that, due to the changing nature of a teacher's perception of empowerment, a test retest can be misleading (Short and Rinehart,1992). Additionally, the scale was reported to have a total Cronbach's alpha of .94. The subscales came back with .83 for professional growth (items 1 to 6), .86 for status (items

7 to 12), .84 for self-efficacy (items 13 to 18), .81 for autonomy (items 19 to 22), .82 for impact (items 23 to 28), .89 for decision-making (items 29 to 38).

The survey in this study helped to establish a baseline for international teachers' perceptions of empowerment and school efficacy which could help to determine their potential for agency. It provided critical information about international school teachers, their roles, and their perceptions of empowerment and efficacy which showed whether they can be considered empowered and therefore possible change agents.

The next step in the case study was to narrow the scope of the survey findings from the broad range of topics, conditions, and contexts possible regarding empowerment and agency in international schools to more specifically how they might influence the growing need for inclusion in international schools. To do this a dialogue was opened with LS directors, LS coordinators, and LS support teachers—hereafter collectively referred to as LS professionals—to pinpoint how these professionals perceive the process of empowerment and how this might influence their agency in developing inclusive practices in international schools. This dialogue uncovered the perceptions of LS professionals and different discursive challenges they face in sharing the responsibility for inclusion at their sites.

The data made it possible to envision a scenario that could support LS teachers in improving a sense of agency and leveraging the perceived empowerment to transform inclusion in international schools. To test the possibilities of working in and between schools to support LS teachers sense of agency a virtual CoP was created to offer a closer examination of the empowerment process and the experiences of international LS teachers who have the responsibility of supporting students with specific needs. By employing these different methods, this case study further establishes how an exploratory transformative model is useful to the study of inclusion in international schools (Yin, 2014).

3.2.3 Investigating power: social representations theory

The social representations theory (SRT) makes it possible to operationalise the ideas of Foucault and investigate the power of social relations and how they might influence the process of empowerment (Silva et al., 2012).

Introduced by Serge Moscovici in 1961, SRT helps make sense of social interactions within organisational contexts. This method without specific techniques can be used in mixed-methods studies to make meaning of the interactions of a particular group and how this shared reasoning drives organisations (Silva et al., 2012). To determine what qualifies as a social representation, Moscovici classifies them in three categories: hegemonic representations, emancipated representations, and polemic representations (Silva et al., 2012).

This study focuses on what he classifies as hegemonic representations, which are the social representations that are common to a structured macro unit and allow a researcher to make meaning of the organisation or group. (Höijer, 2011; Silva et al., 2012). This approach establishes how current strategies exist and allows for future review to see how inclusion might evolve in international schools. Additionally, studying social relations in this way allows for understanding whether strategies align or not and how these strategies shape an organisation (Höijer, 2011). By using this theory this study aims to identify certain social discourses and their influence on inclusion in international schools. This will be a critical contribution to the study of international LS teachers' empowerment and agency.

3.3 Ontological and Epistemological position

This study intends to outline the reality of LS teachers in international schools. Young (2008) suggests knowledge is not simply what we know or how we know it but our relationship to the world around us and the tools we use to make sense of it. He encourages that research in education be "conceptual and practical if we are going to progress…and stimulate debate about educational questions that are important and too often not asked" (Young, 2008, p. xvii).

In the view of social science, there are different ways of looking at reality and the construction of reality (Cohen et al., 2018). Believing the researcher can share a frame of

reference that makes them uniquely capable of understanding individuals and their world is an anti-positivist or post-positivist interpretation. Anti-positivism and post-positivism are examples of modern theories that see research as subjective rather than objective: that is, the direct experience of the researcher with the people in specific contexts can best understand and explain the "social reality through the eyes of different participants; the participants themselves define the social reality (Beck, 1979)" (quoted by Cohen et al., 2018, p. 17). Cohen et al. (2018) continue by saying that the task of social science, then, is to understand people in the light of "the systematic and painstaking analysis of social episodes…and can only be understood by knowledge of the specific organizational background and context in which it is embedded" (p. 18).

Currently a LS teacher in an international school, I take this anti-positive and post-positive approach. Taking this approach makes the research subjective; however, as an international LS teacher I am in a unique position to interpret the complex social structure of an international school and able to give perspective on how social interactions have influenced the actions of the LS teachers in this study.

3.4 Qualitative approaches, socially constructed realities, and naturalised setting

In alignment with the social anti-positivism and post-positivism theories, the constructionist view establishes that knowledge is constructed and accessed through language, actions, and behaviour. In constructionism, people "actively and agentically seek out, select and construct their own views, worlds and learning" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 23).

Constructionism means that what a person knows is essentially created. Social constructionism then adds a layer that this is always done in relation to others in a social context. Social constructionism offers an interesting lens in which to study how perceptions of agency may be influenced by critical conversations in a social setting as it aligns with the literature previously reviewed (Maxwell, 2013).

In endeavouring to capture and manage data in a socially constructed world, I recognise that "values and interests become part of the research process" (Holloway and Wheeler, 2016, p. 26). I acknowledge that each individual has values and interest biases, which guided the

research process and influenced this thesis. Originally trained in the United States and teaching in LS for over 20 years with nearly a decade in international schools, I acknowledge the challenge of separating my own practical experiences from the knowledge and interpretations about LS teacher agency in international schools. My experience is subjective and biased yet affords close access to the issues and the ability to recognise the subjects' positions in a way that leads to a deeper understanding of the individual realities these teachers and international schools face in serving a diverse range of student needs. To make it possible to offset potential bias throughout this study, LS professionals were interviewed from multiple schools and represented a range of different responsibilities. Interviewing professionals from different schools and different divisions (e.g. primary school or intensive learning support) made it necessary for me to listen and to ask questions that would help me understand their positions and not simply confirm my own experience. Acting as facilitator during the action research phase continued to allow for questioning and clarification. Triangulating the survey and semi-structured interviews with evidence from the action research would continue to provide credibility and reliability (Thomas, 2011).

The research was conducted in functioning international schools, and the methods used were designed to capture the perceptions of the participants in the field. "Ordinary events and behaviours are studied in their everyday context… by interviewing them and observing the setting. Rather than removing people from their settings, qualitative researchers go to the people…" (Given, 2008, p. 2). This type of interaction is seen to be useful in environments that are complex and interactive, such as schools, making it appropriate for the purposes of this case study (Given, 2008).

In conducting observations in a natural setting, a researcher is rightly cautioned by Cohen et al. (2018, quoting Rex, 1974):

> Whilst patterns of social reactions and institutions may be the product of the actors' definitions of the situations there is also the possibility that those actors might be falsely conscious and that sociologists have an obligation to seek an objective perspective which is not necessarily that of any of the participating actors at all… We need not be confined purely and simply to that … social reality which is made available to us by participant actors themselves (p. 23).

I concluded that, based on the concepts of mixed methods allowing for both qualitative and quantitative data, these techniques and setting were an appropriate methodology to study LS teachers' perceptions of agency in the broader context of inclusion in international schools.

3.5 Access and selection: designing and implementing the research

This section will outline the study design for analysing LS teachers' perceptions of agency in the broader context of inclusion in international schools. Background investigation around empowerment, agency, inclusion, and international schools was carried out and case studies were chosen for their ability to share the necessary information to answer the research questions. Access to the research setting is important to keep in mind in order to gain the proper acceptance that allows for the gathering of necessary data (Cohen et al., 2018). A researcher cannot simply demand or expect access to a research setting such as in international school. Indeed, these environments are sensitive and subject to the power flowing through them, which needs to be considered when investigating empowerment and efficacy (Foucault, 1980a; Cohen et al., 2018).

Each of the schools chosen had an established inclusion policy as well as knowledgeable and experienced personnel who could talk with authority about their programs and the evolution of inclusion at their sites.

In order to make the case for analysing the perceptions of LS teachers' agency in the broader context of inclusion in international schools, it was necessary to select participants and schools with programs that would provide sufficient context to understand empowerment, agency, and process of inclusion in the international schools. The population consisted of LS teachers in international schools in Western Europe with learning support programs that had been established for more than 10 years.

Several factors were considered when developing a sampling strategy:

1) the school's history of inclusive practices and the experience of the LS staff leading the departments within the school;

2) the range of students accepted at the school (a broader range of students means greater potential for understanding the programmes and range of services available to students and their families in international schools);

3) whether the schools have an established program for providing inclusive opportunities for students and allowing their LS teachers to share their experiences and to highlight the programmes and range of services available in international schools (three of the schools selected had provisions for intensive support programs);

4) the participants' extensive experience and knowledge of LS (each professional had over five years of experience and were able to describe the history of inclusion at their schools with authority; the selection of these schools and the LS participants gave a complete picture of inclusion in international schools [Yin, 2014]); and

5) My location (central France) and access to selected schools with the greatest experience within a convenient distance (some schools were relatively close in proximity to where I am based as an LS teacher, and investigating their programmes could have been interpreted as threatening; this was minimised by the fact that all the studied schools have specific curriculum programs—e.g., middle school only or International Baccalaureate—which are different from my school's curricular objectives).

3.6 Data collection methods

Three methods of data collection using multiple data sources were used for this study. Semi-structured interviews and the interaction of teachers within a virtual CoP were the main sources of data. The participants—international school teachers and international LS directors, coordinators, and teachers—provided different perspectives on perceptions of empowerment, agency, and inclusion in international schools. A survey was conducted to stimulate questions for the interviews and to define the scope of the case study.

3.6.1 Stage one: survey

Before analysing the perceptions of LS teachers' agency in the broader context of inclusion in international schools, a survey was conducted to determine the perceptions of empowerment and efficacy of teachers in these schools. This first stage of data collection was devoted to seeking to understand the extent to which the sample participants determined a sense of empowerment and collective efficacy regardless of the subject they taught. As outlined in earlier chapters, empowerment and a sense of school efficacy is highly correlated to teacher agency (Gronn, 2000; Muijs and Harris, 2003). The survey was administered as an attempt to gather data describing the empowerment and collective efficacy of teachers in international schools. As a first step, the survey sought to determine whether international school teachers' perceptions of empowerment and efficacy might be lacking and, if so, how this might influence inclusion in international schools.

A review of literature revealed two tools that can measure empowerment and efficacy: the Collective Teacher Efficacy Scale (Goddard et al.,2004) and the School Participant Empowerment Scale (Short and Rinehart, 1992). The first iteration of the Collective Teacher Efficacy Scale had 21 items before later being shortened to 12. This shortened version adjusted for balance, clarity, and reliability (Goddard, 2004). The School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) was a tool developed by Short and Rinehart and used in two separate studies in 1992. The instrument was tested on a much larger sample by Klecker and Loadman (1996) in their analysis of the SPES (Short and Rinehart, 1992) based on data from 4,091 teachers in 183 schools. They found the scale is reliable in assessing teachers' perceptions of empowerment. It is important to balance these results, however reliable, with caution due to the transient nature of empowerment.

The use of a questionnaire at this stage of the study made it possible to efficiently reach a substantial number of international school teachers, more than would have been possible had interviews been used, in a relatively short period of time, which supports the idea that questionnaires are a cost-effective and timely way of gathering data (Dunne et al., 2005).

The questionnaire (Appendix A) was administered over the internet, which has several advantages: it takes less time to distribute and manage data; the population size and sample can be accessed relatively easily, making it possible to get larger data sets and increase the possibility for generalizability; it can reach across geographically disparate locations; participants can complete it at a time that suits them; response rates may be higher; its design

made it easy to respond with drop-down menus and short answers; it is environmentally friendly as no paper is used; and the accuracy and anonymity of participants is higher (Cohen et al., 2018).

There are also disadvantages to internet surveys: the recipients may not receive the survey if it is diverted to junk mailboxes; participants may not have access to internet or computer expertise to fill out the survey; they may not fill out the survey completely or may drop out as there is no personal connection to the researchers; if instructions are unclear participants are unable to ask for clarification; complicated questions and structure can reduce the rate of response; respondents could leave false information or simply put anything in the response box to finish the survey (Cohen et al., 2018).

Aside from these disadvantages and risks, it was determined because of the geographical location of necessary respondents that an internet survey was an appropriate tool to collect information regarding the perceptions of empowerment and school efficacy of international school teachers for this case study.

3.6.2 Survey sample

This section explains how participants were recruited for the first stage of the study. The study was conducted during the school year and excluded holidays or school breaks. The survey was sent out to international schools, which were selected from the Coalition of International Schools (CIS) membership online database, forwarded through the English Language Schools Association (ELSA) and distributed by international schools and their staffs. The survey was open to anyone teaching in an international school regardless of ethnicity, cultural background, age, gender, sexuality, nationality, and any other demographic. These factors could all influence perceptions of empowerment and agency. The aim of this study was to capture data that could be representative and generalizable to a broad international school context, which would be limited if data were demographically specific.

Participants were currently employed in an international school. Any participants who held multiple nationalities had the autonomy to decide whether they were working in an international context. All stages of the study were open to any teacher that met the criteria above.

3.6.3 Survey process

An invitation to participate email was sent to schools from the CIS membership list and forwarded through ELSA. Schools and teachers who agreed to participate were forwarded an email that explained their voluntary informed consent. It also stated the process, the use of their responses, and the possibility for participants to withdraw at any time. To secure anonymity, email addresses were not collected by the online survey itself, which was issued through Google Forms. In all, 133 teachers completed the survey using this link. Participants could choose to identify themselves if they wished to continue in the study by participating in follow-up interviews. To ensure all data was recorded in a single database for analysis, one online link was created and shared with participants for the purposes of this study. Once contact was made and consent given (appendix B), international school teachers filled out the survey via the online platform, and the survey remained open for two months.

3.6.4 Stage two: interviews

Narrative and biographical methods inspired by the tradition of oral history have evolved to help research participants to tell their own stories. This narrative approach in the social sciences has increased the role and power of participants in research (Cohen et al., 2018), validating participants to act as experts in their own lives (Chamberlayne et al., 2000).

3.6.5 Interview sample

In multi-phase designs, the process is an iterative one, and at each step, information is analysed to inform the next phase (Cohen et al., 2018). The survey data were used as a starting point to determine levels of empowerment and efficacy of international school teachers. The quantitative data informed the narrowing of the scope of this study. The data from the survey were the foundation in which to devise questions for the semi-structured interviews in stage two.

After the survey, it was possible for a case to be made to specifically analyse the perceptions of LS teachers' agency in the broader context of inclusion in international schools. It was necessary to identify schools where there was sufficient professional expertise to participate.

Five professionals were selected for their potential to uncover the necessary information connected to the research questions. These schools have similar contexts and student populations, and the participants had substantial profiles of experience, roles, and responsibilities to allow them to accurately and authoritatively discuss issues related to inclusion in international schools.

3.6.6 Interview process

There are three types of interviews, each with their own structure and need for expertise. Structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews all help to gather descriptive data and are useful tools in case studies for educational research (Cohen et al., 2018).

Semi-structured interviews offer more opportunities than structured and unstructured interviews for the researcher and the interviewee to explore emergent themes and ideas (Cohen et al., 2018; Yin, 2014). For this reason, semi-structured interviews were the selected method for the second stage of this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with LS professionals.

During the interviews field notes were taken to help the reflective process after the interviews (Atkinson, 1990). These field notes consisted of observations about the emergent themes and emotional dynamics of the conversations. This co-creative approach recognises the subjective feelings of the researcher and acknowledges that these feelings enhance their ability to interpret the situation and create meaning from the data (Lucey et al., 2003).

The interviews were conducted through a combination of in-person and video conferencing. Although availability was often the factor in selecting the venue for the interview, I requested to conduct the interview in a location where the interviewee would feel comfortable. The interviews took place in participants' places of work or at their homes. Questions were crafted to elicit a combination of descriptive and reflective responses about the participants' experiences around inclusion within their school sites. This style of questioning was an important factor that brought a deeper level of insight as it sought to go beyond superficial accounts of the programmes available at a school and highlight the more obscure interactions that take place behind the scenes when creating and developing inclusive opportunities.

The challenge with semi-structured interviews is capturing a complete and reliable picture of a participant's experience. There are methods that would have allowed for continuous data collection such as diaries, or ethnographic observation, along with the interviews, creating a more robust set of data. However, the practicalities of accessing a group as geographically disperse as international school teachers required a more pragmatic approach (Cohen et al., 2018). Furthermore, although the flexibility of interviews is practical for educational research, the validity of responses may be influenced by the interviewee's own bias, accuracy of memory, misperceptions, and possible desire for social acceptance. Although these possibilities exist and some may be unavoidable, most can be taken care of with careful planning and design (Punch, 2009).

3.6.7 Stage three: CoP

The purpose of the virtual CoP was to investigate how international LS teachers might begin to engage in and between schools to grow shared knowledge toward the greater goal of sharing the responsibility for inclusion (Creese and Daniels, 2000).

Undertaking studies of social interactions can promote a teacher's professionalism by creating a space that can validate their experience and support their reflection on their practice, which will in turn empower them to act more intelligently. Simply, it affords a group of teachers the possibility to share and understand their experiences in a social context that assists in self- or institutional improvement (Argyris and Schon, 1996).

The simplicity and general positive acceptance of such a collaborative method hides its complexities. In the collaborative forum, subjects can explore the potential undermining aspects embedded in practices. This type of study can help identify efficiency, recreating institutional norms, accepted values, and goals that may be influenced by authoritative and institutional biases (Argyris and Schon, 1996). The CoP's self-organising nature makes it possible to generate outcomes that honour the dynamic, non-linear, co-created, and adaptable nature of educational settings (Cohen et al., 2018) and the pragmatic approach of this case study.

The diagram in figure 3.2 shows the conceptual framework of a CoP and the intended progression of the group in creating a shared knowledge that will lead to improvement. In this case study, the CoP was used to create a process in which LS teachers could interact in a way that is intended to change inclusive outcomes in international schools.
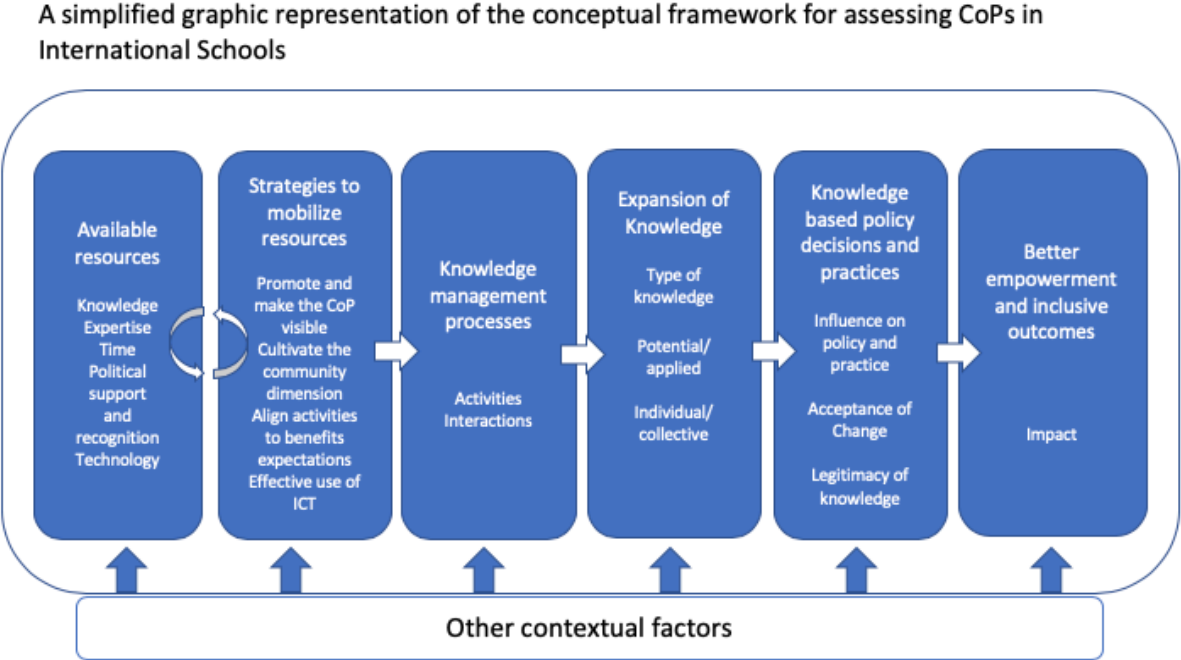

Figure 3.2 The conceptual framework for assessing CoPs in International Schools (adapted from Bertone, M. et al., 2013, p.7).

3.6.8 CoP sample

In the third stage of this multi-phase design, the process remains an iterative one. The qualitative data of stage two shed light on the perceptions of international LS professionals and revealed themes related to the growth of inclusion in international schools and the role of LS teachers' agency in implementing such practices. The data from the interviews were the foundation on which to devise a CoP project to further explore these issues.

After the interviews, it was possible to make a case to establish a group dedicated to international LS teachers to further explore their perceptions and experiences with agency in the broader context of inclusion in international schools. The LS specialist brings specific understanding of differentiation, accommodations, and modifications that will support the

team in the development of an appropriate plan that will show that the student is making personal and academic progress toward expected outcomes (NFI, 2011). Five professionals were selected for their potential to uncover the necessary information to answer the research questions. The teachers' profiles determined that their experience, roles, and responsibilities allowed them to accurately and authoritatively discuss issues related to inclusion in international schools. The teachers were asked during or shortly after the interview process to participate in the follow-up group. All agreed in theory to the idea of participation; however, as the time came to initiate the group, two did not take part in the study. One of the teachers who declined to participate cited time as the major factor for not participating, while the other did not cite a reason. Although this was disappointing as the group was reduced to four participants at two different school sites, this did not diminish the ability of those teachers to form the community and carry out the goals of the study.

3.6.9 School backgrounds

Both schools have over 60 years of serving families in their respective international communities. Each is dedicated to inclusion and has a history of offering support to students with mild to intensive needs.

School A is located in central France and is an international school serving 780 students representing over 50 nationalities and a broad range of student profiles. The description of the program suggests it serves high-achieving students from pre-school through secondary education. The school provides educational support as well as a programme for those with more specific learning needs and a host of extracurricular opportunities (e.g., drama, art, sports, and clubs).

School B is located in Belgium and is an international school serving 1,500 students representing over 70 countries and an extensive range of student profiles. The description of the program suggests it serves students from pre-school through secondary education and provide high achieving, educational support and intensive educational support programmes. The school also offers an extensive list of extracurricular opportunities (e.g. drama, art, sports and clubs).

3.6.10 CoP process

This CoP is intended to be a social construction to allow for a deeper understanding of the actions of international LS teachers, giving them a space to comprehend, analyse, and modify their actions and understand how this might lead to greater opportunities for inclusion (Creese and Daniels, 2000; Silva et al., 2012, p.6). The data collected seek to highlight international LS teachers' shared knowledge and perceptions of empowerment, and to offer new ways to leverage their agency.

The CoP group was created in the spirit of establishing "common objectives, taking-on risks and demonstrating initiative, creativity, and an ethical attitude that comes from the social commitment one takes on collectively" (Franco and Lisita, 2004, p. 23). The initial design influence for stage three was provided by a 16-week virtual community consisting of coaching and collaboration delivered by Roy Leighton at the British School of Paris in 2016-2017. The programme brought together volunteer teachers who engaged in group meetings, 1:1 discussions, and a virtual platform to support creativity, collaboration, and reflection on the change process and self-improvement. In this group, the combination of in-person meetings, virtual real-time discussion, and online documents and forums provided a space that was available 24 hours a day and encouraged engagement and reflection as members could share ideas, post resources and articles, or comment regardless of the time of day or the availability of other members. This virtual tool showed the power of online platforms as spaces for influence, regardless of physical contact or proximity, and made it possible to envision a way in which to engage LS teachers currently working in international schools.

This study's CoP met during the first term of the 2018-2019 school year and ran for 16 weeks. The teachers were individually contacted by email and asked if they still wished to join the group; the goals and process of the group were explained. Those members who agreed signed consent forms, filled out a short pre-survey, and were invited to introduce themselves on the virtual community platform. Once all members had posted to the community and introduced themselves, it was determined that all the participants could engage with the tools and that no further training was needed to contribute to the process.

Pre and post surveys were administered online before and after the 16-week trial to capture the LS teachers' thoughts and determine shared social constructs that might support the unity

of the group. The responses of the pre-survey acted as a base line for the definition of inclusion and gathers information regarding the inclusive goals each teacher had hoped to accomplish that school year. The surveys were intended to capture the feelings of the teachers as the trial began and ended to see how the shared experience might have influenced their perceptions of agency and empowerment in regards to inclusion. The social construct of the CoP allowed them to reflect collectively on inclusion and determine common understandings and language that would help them discuss inclusion (Creese and Daniels, 2000; Wenger et al., 2011).

Initial posts on the virtual community consisted of short personal histories and goals. As a participant, I acted as the community facilitator, posting articles and encouraging discussion and feedback via the online platform. Field notes were taken during each virtual meeting and all posts were left visible on the virtual community, capturing each interaction between the teachers throughout the 16-week trial. After two weeks, a virtual meet-up was proposed, where three of the four members were available to participate. The group was encouraged to post resources, articles, ideas, questions, and comments as well as to self-organise by inviting other international LS teachers to the platform. All posts served as documentation of communication within the community. All of these virtual interactions have been archived to serve as data for further analysis.

An online meeting was held shortly after the first two weeks where participants were given the opportunity to reintroduce themselves and share any goals they had set at the opening of the school year. After this first meeting, virtual meetings were held approximately once a month to check in and connect with the group. I took notes during the virtual meetings and after each meeting as a form of documentation and self-reflection (Atkinson, 1990). These notes were meant to capture observations about the dynamics and emergent themes coming from the group and to enhance interpretive meaning (Lucey et al., 2003).

In between these virtual meetings, participants could communicate through the online community platform to access and respond to articles, resources, questions, videos, and audio files. I would also check in with participants via email or 1:1 virtual sessions between the group meetings. These check-ins allowed for further information to be gathered about a participant's understanding of the expectations of the group and their overall impressions of the experience.

At the conclusion of the 16 weeks, a post-survey was administered, and participants were thanked for their participation.

This virtual community was an attempt to use continuous data collection techniques and generate more sustained and as-it-happens insight. The virtual platform allowed for a disparate and time-strapped group of teachers to share ideas and communicate in a practical way, which was in line with the pragmatic case study design (Boh, 2008; 2014).

3.7 Data analysis

In a mixed-methods exploratory transformational study such as this, there will be large amounts of data needing to be analysed. It is imperative to have an operational strategy to manage the data in order to build an appropriate and reliable understanding of the situation studied (Patton, 2002). This section will lay out the procedures used to approach the handling of data from 133 survey responses, five semi-structured interviews, and 16 weeks of CoP communication, including all corresponding memos and field notes.

The strategies used to analyse this data were inductive as I sought to uncover how emerging themes might be pieced together to explain how an international LS teacher's perceptions of agency may or may not influence inclusion at international schools.

The goal of this analysis was to contribute a situated overview of the role of international LS teachers' perceptions of agency and their approaches to inclusion that is not found in the literature. As student diversity in international schools grows (NFI, 2015; Lane and Jones, 2016) and there are more calls for teachers to be agents of change (Ainscow et al., 2004; Ainscow et al., 2006; Bartlett, 2014; Fullan, 2016; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Lukacs and Galluzzo, 2014), a situated understanding is necessary to develop strategies to support teachers to engage more learners.

It is possible to conceptualise a situated understanding of international LS teachers that is consistent with an interpretivist research approach and constructionist research ethic. This study employed an inductive analytical strategy that allowed themes to emerge from the data

and to offer what Dey (2007) describes as a "plausible interpretation rather than producing a logical conclusion" (p. 92).

3.7.1 Survey analysis

Analysis of the survey data relied on software from Google Forms, an online survey and data analysis tool. This tool allowed for the data to be seen in percentages and raw totals. The data were then separated and categorised to test the relationship between an individual's perception of empowerment and their perception of the collective efficacy at their school.

The survey consisted of seven demographic questions, 51 SPES and Collective Efficacy questions, and three open-ended questions regarding teachers' perception of empowerment and influence. All of the questions in the SPES were positively worded and were coded (1= Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). Six of the 12 items in the Collective Efficacy scale were negatively worded and reverse-coded (1=Strongly Agree, 6=Strongly Disagree). The reliability, or internal consistency, of the items was measured using a Cronbach's alpha to test the strength of consistency within the responses. Cronbach's alpha is computed by correlating the score for each scale item with the total score for each observation (usually individual survey respondents or test takers) and then comparing that to the variance for all individual item scores.

All three measures of reliability for both scales are excellent. The correlation between the scales is .547. With Cronbach's alpha, anything above .7 is considered acceptable.

The means of the results are all above the midpoint of each scale, indicating that, on average, the participants agreed with the positively worded items and disagreed with the negatively worded items in the Collective Efficacy scale. (Note: the negatively worded items were reverse-coded in order to produce the Collective Efficacy figure.)

These quantitative results made it possible to begin to see the level of perceived empowerment and efficacy for international school teachers. The data ultimately determined the scope of this paper by beginning to outline the liminal space international LS teachers are situated in as the need for more inclusive practice grows in international schools.

3.7.2 Interview analysis

To probe further the role empowerment plays in inclusion in international schools, a small exploratory sample of LS teachers was selected and interviewed. Their interviews provided interesting examples of how inclusion has evolved in international schools situated in Western Europe (Denscombe, 2014). In order to analyse these interviews, recordings were made, which were replayed and transcribed on a word processor. I read the written transcripts several times, noted responses, and created a list of terms and phrases that described the perceptions and practices of LS professionals in international schools. These were organised, grouped, and labelled into emergent themes and subthemes depicting the types of progress, barriers, and challenges to inclusion LS professionals had faced in an international school setting. An analysis of the transcripts led to the creation of a database that allowed for comparison of the quotes for similarities and differences in the emerging themes. This allowed for further categorization of sub-themes and allowed for clearer understanding of the knowledge, experience, and practices that influence inclusion in international schools and led to the formation of the international LS teachers' CoP.

3.7.3 CoP analysis

Bertone et al. (2013) outline a methodological approach to analysing CoPs using both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Quantitative measures related to level of activity, quality of interactions, and level of engagement would be taken throughout the time of the CoP; qualitative data would be collected through documentation, discussion, and interviews with participants (Appendix D, Appendix E).

This analysis provides insights into the activities organised by the CoP and the interactions it fosters. Bertone et al. (2013) argue that assessment of a CoP should focused on both the quantity of activity and interactions as well as the quality of the members, the objectives, the level of interactions, and how these interactions influence the institutions the members are a part of.

By using these indicators, a liminal space began to emerge between the international LS professionals' ideals and the challenges they face implementing inclusion in their school.

3.7 Reflexivity and Confirmability

Throughout the study, after each stage of data collection it was necessary to reflect (Cohen et al., 2018). During and after the different data collection phases I needed to determine how personal bias as an international LS teacher might influence my conclusions and next steps. At every step of the case study, I needed to review the research questions, my perspective and feelings as they related to the data. It was important to consistently ask how my experience and situation might influence and impact the data collection and interpretation. In addition to this internal reflection I also engaged with colleagues to ask questions, check, and confirm their understanding and invited them to read and scrutinise the thesis at various stages. This feedback was used to strengthen the confirmability of this study.

3.8 Validity and reliability

Researchers use triangulation to increase validity and decrease researcher bias; to achieve this they may use many ways to collect data. This study employed survey, interviews, and a CoP as the basis for the research. The survey data provided a global picture of teachers' perceptions of empowerment and efficacy in international schools. Its findings led to questions that helped refine areas of investigation. The interviews of LS professionals were used to provide specific viewpoints into the processes and practice related to inclusion in international schools. Finally, the CoP was designed to capture international LS teachers' perceptions and thoughts through extended conversations about the processes and practices of inclusion in international schools. As a teacher and researcher, I did not include my responses as a way to not bias the final analysis. Instead, as a facilitator, I used this role and my understanding of teachers and international schools to ask follow up questions for clarification.

It is not the intention of this study to determine the 'right' way to implement inclusion in international schools, but as LS professionals and teachers are pivotal in serving diverse populations, they are indeed a group with authoritative knowledge about the needs and the barriers to inclusion at their sites.

As a resource specialist and international school LS teacher, I have first-hand knowledge of the processes, practices, and even some of the sites studied. Having this experience is helpful

as in determining a common language and knowledge with those involved. However, the quest for new and valid knowledge means that for every stage, additional steps are taken to reduce researcher bias. I have worked to explain every stage of the research and how it was used as a way to validate the data collected. Triangulating the data from the varying sources (i.e., survey, interviews, and action research) establishes and defends the results. The case study allows for multiple sources of information and these sources increase the credibility of the data and in turn can lead to true acquisition of new knowledge in the field (Thomas, 2011).

Credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability are all necessary in determining the rigour of any research. It is critical that it be understood that any conclusion is highly subjective and personally influenced, which is unavoidable in any qualitative interpretation of data analysis. Therefore, steps such as including participants' views and keeping a record of events are taken in order to defend against the biased observations of the single researcher (Cohen et al., 2018).

Bryman (2008) favours the idea that trustworthiness and authenticity are the most appropriate evaluation criteria in subjective interpretations of experiences and for qualitative research of this type. The research can reach a high level of credibility if the researcher can prove, through interpretation of data and evidence, an intimate understanding of the topic. Furthermore, originality can be demonstrated when new insights not only reflect the lives of those studied but can also be used in a broader context. The experiences of international LS teachers represented in this study are not assumed to be those of all international LS teachers. I have taken care to honour the subjects with a responsible and credible depiction that adds to the understanding and body of knowledge related to the international LS profession.

3.8.1 Dependability

Dependability is the trustworthiness of a study that uses qualitative approaches and refers to how consistent the findings are and whether they could be repeated (Cohen et al., 2018; Yin, 2014). This demands that the researcher ensure that readers of this case study are able to clearly see how the interpretations and subsequent conclusions were drawn. The outline of this study and the care taken to document the steps in the development of this research's design and implementation support the dependability of the outcomes reported.

3.8.2. Transferability and sample size

Non-probability sampling was used to ensure that the expertise of the participants could provide interesting data. The sample was selected for their expertise and understanding of inclusion. Although this sample is small, their experience lends a historical perspective to how inclusion has evolved in the time they have been in their programs (Denscombe, 2014). The data bore out common themes, which suggests that transferability might be achieved as other international school teachers and LS professionals might empathise with the stories shared by the participants (Denscombe, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018). In this case study, there is "similarity of contexts between the research and the wider contexts" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 320). In addition, I employed triangulation in capturing the different perspectives of LS professionals in two international school settings, which provides evidence to conceptualise inclusion in international schools.

3.9 Ethical considerations: informed consent, confidentiality, and exploitation

Cohen et al. (2018, p. 540) cite ethical considerations that must be maintained: a) informed consent must be obtained; b) confidentiality, anonymity, non-identifiability, and non-traceability must be guaranteed; and c) the study must be conducted in an appropriate, non-stressful, non-threatening manner.

A note should be made about the importance of "informed consent, anonymity, privacy and confidentiality, non-traceability, protection from harm, the precautionary principle and data security." Security is always an issue as no one can completely secure data against hacking or data miners who may be fishing for information to then track participants (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 367).

The names and identifying features of participants have been changed throughout for reasons of confidentiality. To protect the anonymity of the teachers, I used pseudonyms such as teacher A, B, C, D, and E as a means for their identification. Job titles and professions are given in general terms for confidentiality, such as LS teacher, LS coordinator, and LS director. For brevity I use the term 'international LS teachers' and 'international LS professionals' consistently throughout the thesis.

The Council of British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011) states that all educational research should be conducted with the highest ethical standards and promote respect for all those engaged with the research. This study was conducted within the principles underpinning the guidelines, which state that "the Association considers that all educational research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for: The Person, Knowledge, Democratic Values, The Quality of Educational Research and Academic Freedom" (BERA, 2011, p. 4) (Appendix C).

4.0 Chapter IV Findings

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents the findings both from the quantitative data about the "Perceptions of Empowerment and Collective Efficacy in International Schools" survey and from interviewing international LS professionals. The second section presents findings from the data derived from the virtual community of LS teachers, which was the final phase of the case study.

The survey data were collected to understand the relative context of international school teachers, their perception of empowerment and school efficacy, and address the first research question: How might international school teachers' perception of empowerment and school efficacy create barriers to including students? The survey collected baseline data in order to better understand the perceived levels of empowerment and efficacy of international school teachers and how these perceptions might influence agency.

Building on the survey data and narrowing the scope to better understand the reality of International LS professionals, semi structured interviews were conducted in four traditional international schools. The interviews allowed for the collection and analysis of perceptions of those professionals who are most directly responsible for inclusion in these schools and how they perceived empowerment, school efficacy and their ability to influence inclusion at their sites.

The data from the interviews shed light on the actions and relationships LS professionals engaged in as they described their agency at their schools. This critical data led to the development of a CoP that was designed to further understand the possibilities of influencing international LS teachers' by devising a space that maximised critical thinking and networking to influence agency.

The data collected answered the following research questions (RQ) and will be referred to by number for the remainder of the thesis:

    1. How might international school teachers' perception of empowerment and school efficacy create barriers to including students?

    2. When do international learning support professionals perceive they are empowered to support inclusion?

3. What influence might virtual communities of practice have on a learning support teacher's agency and inclusion?

4.1 Setting the stage: empowerment and efficacy in International schools

The purpose of the survey was to gather data to answer RQ 1 by exploring empowerment of international school teachers, to understand the levels of perceived empowerment and to highlight the possible ways in which perceptions influence agency. Empowerment is an important component of teacher agency to implement inclusive practices. The empowerment data from this stage informed the design of the interview questions as it is critical to understand how the empowerment process can continue to influence inclusion and engage more students.

4.1.1 Findings from the survey

In the present case study, surveys were completed by 133 international school teachers. The teachers who took part in this survey are considered to be typical international teachers from western cultures who have the necessary educational training and do not necessarily come from the community in which they are teaching (Hayden et al., 2007, Bunnell, 2016). All participants responded to each survey question, making all surveys available for complete analysis.

Analysis of the data presented below relied on software from Google Forms, an online survey and data analysis tool. Table 1.1 presents the data in percentages and raw totals. The data were separated and categorised to test the relationship between an individual's perception of empowerment and their perception of the collective efficacy at their school.

97.7% of the respondents of this survey had three or more years of experience and their age range fell in four major categories: 51+ (30 %); 46-50 (21%); 41-45 (17%); 36-40 (16%) with the remaining 16% under 35.

The results show 43% received their teaching certification in the United Kingdom, 26% in the United States, 5% in Canada, while 27% were certified in other countries (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Scotland). Two respondents reported that they were not certified teachers.

The data indicate a 53% of the respondents stated that they held full teaching posts while the 47% reported having other responsibilities in addition to teaching (e.g. Head of School, Head of Year, Team Leader, Instructional Tech Coach, Tutor).

Data Table 1.1: results of the survey - Reformatted

Table: Frequency of the belief of empowerment to influence student outcomes presented by percentage and totals

Empowerment: I feel empowered to influence student outcomes.	%	Count
Strongly Agree	30.08%	40
Agree	63.16%	84
Neither Agree or Disagree	3.76%	5
Disagree	1.50%	2
Strongly Disagree	1.50%	2
Total	100%	133
Perceived self-confidence: I believe that I am good at what I do	%	Count
Strongly Agree	26.32%	35
Agree	66.17%	88
Neither Agree or Disagree	6.76%	9
Disagree	0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.75%	1
Total	100%	133
Perceived impact: I perceive that I have an impact on other teachers and students	%	Count
Strongly Agree	14.29%	19
Agree	60.15%	80
Neither Agree or Disagree	20.30%	27

Disagree	3.76%	5
Strongly Disagree	1.50%	2
Total	100%	133

Perceived Effectiveness: I believe that I am very effective	%	Count
Strongly Agree	11.27%	15
Agree	68.42%	91
Neither Agree or Disagree	18.05%	24
Disagree	2.26%	3
Strongly Disagree	0%	0
Total	100%	133

Perceived collective efficacy: Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students	%	Count
Strongly Agree	26.32%	35
Moderately Agree	41.36%	55
Agree slightly more than Disagree	21.05	28
Disagree slightly more than Agree	9.02%	12
Moderately Disagree	2.25%	3
Strongly Disagree	0%	0
Total	100%	133

Perception of collective efficacy and teacher skills: Teachers here do not have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning	%	Count
Strongly Agree	.75%	1
Moderately Agree	.75%	1
Agree slightly more than Disagree	8.27%	11

Disagree slightly more than Agree	8.27%	11
Moderately Disagree	37.59%	50
Strongly Disagree	44.36%	59
Total	100%	133
Perceived collective efficacy and student learning: The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn	%	Count
Strongly Agree	21.05%	28
Moderately Agree	46.62%	62
Agree slightly more than Disagree	19.55%	26
Disagree slightly more than Agree	9.02%	12
Moderately Disagree	2.26%	3
Strongly Disagree	1.50%	2
Total	100%	133

%=Percentage, count = number of respondents per item.

Scale reliability Estimates for SPES	
Cronbach Alpha	0.932
Split Half Correlation	0.813
Split Half (Speraman Brown)	0.899

Scale reliability for Collective Efficacy	
Cronbach Alpha	0.878
Split Half Correlation	0.829
Split Half (Speraman Brown)	0.907
Correlation Between SPES and Collective Efficacy	

	r=.547
Sig. (Two tailed)	p<.001
	N=132

Means and Standard Deviations	Mean	SD
SPES	3.822	0.458

According to the responses from the "Perceptions of Empowerment and Collective Efficacy in International Schools" survey, international school teachers positively perceive themselves to be empowered and see the schools they work in as collectively effective in supporting student learning.

The survey found that 74.44% of all international teachers agree that they have an impact on students and fellow teachers and 79.69% believe they are effective. Teachers express a strong sense of empowerment: 93.24% believe that they influence student outcomes and 92.49% see themselves as good at what they do.

In addition to these strong perceptions of empowerment and efficacy, 87.22 % perceive their school to offer opportunities that help ensure students will learn and 90% disagree that teachers at their schools don't have the skills needed to ensure meaningful student learning. These responses have implications for the study of agency. They suggest a high level of empowerment which can be built on to create the necessary teacher to teacher collaborative approaches that can encourage the kinds of social relations within and between schools in order to further influence agency toward greater student outcomes and inclusion (Louis and Marks, 1998; Creese and Daniels, 2000; Ainscow 2007; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018).

4.1.2 Limitations and next steps

The results from the "Perceptions of Empowerment and Collective Efficacy in International Schools" survey are to be considered carefully as they do not imply a direct correlation between teachers' perceptions and their readiness or ability to take on initiatives and influence inclusion. Teachers in the study stated clearly that they felt a high level of empowerment within their individual classrooms but it is not clear from this study how they engage socially in ways that would increase their agency in terms of inclusive practice. Although some teachers mentioned inclusion or students with special needs in their open-ended questions, it cannot not be presumed that they feel empowered to initiate inclusive practices. The few responses related to supporting6 students with special needs tended to align with the findings that teachers do not feel fully prepared to address inclusion (OECD, 2009).

Stage one findings suggest that individual empowerment and collective efficacy levels are in place in an international school setting. These findings were helpful in setting up the next stage of the study where further questions could be raised about agency: if international teachers perceive that they are effective and that their school is also effective, how might these beliefs influence their agency to act collectively to engage all students? Is it possible that these international school teachers' perceptions keep them from fully understanding what it takes to meet the needs of all students in a complex international setting? Indeed, they may not be aware of the power of collaborative practices to learn and develop themselves in ways that would better meet the needs of more students. They may not be familiar with how effective a dialogue process (e.g. data collection, visits, email and phone calls) could be to fostering a shared responsibility for inclusion (Ainscow et al., 2006). As the number of international schools grow and serve an increasing number of families, there is a greater need for international schools to provide services that include more students. As a starting point, LS professionals can offer important insights on inclusion that may further inform how expertise might be shared collaboratively to further develop effective inclusion practices.

4.2 Interviews - Delving deeper into empowerment and efficacy

The purpose of interviewing international LS professionals was to gather their perceptions of empowerment and collective efficacy in relation to inclusion. Their unique perspectives may shed light on how to advance a shared responsibility for inclusion (Creese and Daniels, 2000; Ainscow, 2007). Semi structured interviews were held with five LS professionals and took place in June 2018. The subjects were selected for their relevance and availability and were specifically chosen for their experience at various levels of LS in both domestic and international schools. They were willing to share their challenges facing inclusion in their current schools. Interviews were conducted in face to face and via video conference sessions that lasted roughly 60 minutes. The interviewees were LS professionals from four different international school settings. Three of the five interviewee represent the typical international professional as they were expats and trained as special education professionals in western countries. The remaining two were local hires who had a background in supporting students. One of the two was a trained clinical psychologist, the other, after starting as a teacher, went on to be trained in a western country specifically in supporting students with special needs. After each session, interviews were transcribed.

The interview phase intended to probe more deeply RQ questions 1 and 2 related to empowerment and agency. More specifically, these interviews sought to uncover themes and notable sub themes related to international LS professionals' perceptions of empowerment and collective efficacy as well as their agency in serving students with specific learning needs at their school. The interview responses were analysed and compared for similarities and differences related to their perceptions of empowerment, collective efficacy, micro politics and obstacles to inclusion in the international schools in which they work.

During the interviews, international LS professionals were asked about their role and responsibilities within their school and their length of employment. They describe the reasons why their programs exist and how these programs have evolved over time. They were asked about the type of interactions they have with fellow teachers and or with teachers at other schools. These responses are organised around emerging themes relating to their perceptions of empowerment and agency.

4.2.1 Findings from the interviews

The interviews with LS professionals allowed for further probing of the potential source of LS professionals empowerment. To start, interviews opened with asking each interviewee to describe their background and how they came to work in the international school setting. The responses show that these LS professionals have varied backgrounds which may influence their perceptions of personal empowerment. They all cited previous training programs or experience with programs rich with inclusive values as foundational to their current views and agency toward developing inclusive programs at their schools.

> "It started in the French system with a couple of colleagues – we were clinical psychologist by training and we worked with a population of students with autism. Trying to work toward inclusion, we were getting increasingly frustrated with the French system because nothing was very defined…what we were trying to do was mainstream these children, working with the teachers there, the aides the school children the general classroom setting to make sure that these students felt comfortable and that the other students felt comfortable with them too. We could ask questions and demystify their different types of learning. But it was very hard to get into classrooms and very hard to get our students into various schools

because often times, instead of being included 35 hours a week it was one hour here one hour there." (LS Professional A)

"… I always wanted to be a teacher so I went to a college, to university in France and then I decided to go to the US because I wanted to visit something else. I got a job in therapeutic day care and it was in a hospital. So, I was working with very little kids and I was not a special ed trained teacher at that time but I thought it was really exciting. I didn't have all this theoretical approach that I got later – that's why I did the master's degree [in the UK]. This is what I thought I missed. As a teacher, yes, I was a teacher but teaching special ed is pretty different…I think." (LS Professional B)

"I fell into teaching when I was getting my masters in English literature. I was working as a classroom assistant in a hearing-impaired school … [even though] I didn't have the education, I got a reputation as being the person who would take the kids with special needs. I eventually became the student study team coordinator. I was first an EAL teacher [in an international school] and then after a year the person who was in the resource centre left, she found out that I had this specialty in California and they proposed that I take over for her full-time...." (LS Professional C)

"It's not that interesting but you know… I started out teaching in special education a long, long time ago. My mother taught children who were deaf and hard of hearing so I guess I was always kind of exposed to that. I was a special education coordinator and director and then I became an elementary school principal and I kind of fell in love with that for about 11 years, then I came back to special education because I felt I learned what I needed to learn from being a principal, which is extremely important I think, because that's where it all starts." (LS Professional D)

The interviews of LS professionals allowed for a more specific and descriptive explanation of inclusion in the international school setting. The responses of the LS professionals show a range of inclusive models within these international schools. Some of the responses show the

underlying values of their given programs that might have an influence on their empowerment and agency (e.g. culture, policy, or lack of policy).

> "There is a community here that really wants to include these children and it's not just about including them. [The school] actually has professionals that are going to work with them consistently." (LS professional A)

> "Because I was trained in the UK, it is not true inclusion for me; it is more a model between integration and inclusion. Truly inclusive would be a specific policy of inclusion: everyone knows about our students and it takes work to create inclusive practices. I don't think we are 100% inclusive but I think we are going in that direction. Some of the things [personal belief] are so ingrained, like the assumption that everyone has the right to be here. Coming from The States, it's a law and you have that behind you in terms of asserting your advocacy for all of it." (LS professional B)

> "It's gotten even more rigid with the way they see their self and exam scores and we got a 99% pass rate. There's too much emphasis on testing: we're supposed to be very open and thinking about the kid and a better person and learning new things but there's a lot of 'let's get ready for exams.' (LS professional C)

> "That's the other thing: resilience in the face of adversity. Sometimes when I talk about [previous work setting], it's easy to put it up on a pedestal. It's not easy: I fought discrimination, I fought all of it so it's never easy and so talking the way we did makes it sound 'oh that's easy, if we can just do that', none of that's easy." (LS Professional E) check this quote

In an effort to understand how inclusion in international schools may be influenced by perceptions of empowerment and collective efficacy LS professionals were asked to describe the types of policy and structural features that were used to 'manage' inclusion. In all of the interviews LS professional described characteristics of their specific programs that helped determine the type of student included or how a student might be supported.

"[the kind of students we served] when I first started was mild. It still is, except that we do have some moderate students. We have gone much deeper into these questions because it is about who we are and what we do: who do we serve and how?" (LS professional A)

"It's totally 'à la carte', adapted to the students. That's how we make this screening process. For some students we can't: their needs are so severe that we know we are not going to be able to serve them. We tell the parents we can't do that. It's rare but it happens." (LS professional B)

"The LS programme is an additional cost to the standard tuition. A family is usually billed for an entire year and this makes adjusting a student's programme difficult because once the family is billed and the program is in place with specialist classes and teacher aid support, it is not changed. This is a problem for the student as it does not allow for supports to be reduced when progress is made. It is a problem for the families as they are billed for the greatest levels of support. It is really not helpful to the department as it does not allow any flexibility within the staff to be responsive to the different changes [progress or lack of] that can happen throughout the year…Do they turn anyone away'? No, I don't think so. The only thing I've ever seen is if a student has really bad behaviour. But they say they're nonselective. In the beginning, it was very much a situation of whether they could meet or not meet the needs. I think they've learned their lesson now [about accepting students and if] we can meet their needs later on. But that being said they did adapt as best as they could to what we had and everything." (LS professional C)

"Besides the fact that I really want to help these parents find local resources, it's just a huge challenge in terms of supporting students in an inclusive setting. We don't do one to one support, [we only accept] students who can manage some level of independence." (LS professional D)

"The other barriers are financial because being inclusive is more expensive, there's just no way around [the extra cost]. We might as well not pretend [inclusion is] the same because it's not. In order to do it well, you need to invest and its mostly human resources that are the costs there." (LS professional E)

Differently than the surveys may have suggested the interviews with LS professions described their specialised knowledge of students and inclusion. Their comments suggest that they perceive the challenge of serving students in their international schools and community as situated with them.

> "I would say sometimes my students could be intimidating, especially the students who have significant social emotional difficulties: they can have a short fuse, they can be very unpredictable, they can have a tantrum, they go from 1 to 5 in 2 seconds. That could be intimidating for a homeroom teacher who doesn't necessarily have a relationship with them that is close enough that you can see the warning signs. So that would be a barrier and we really have to do a lot of work to tell them "it's OK, you can have him or her in your class." (LS professional B)

> "Find[ing] local resources is just a huge challenge; there isn't a mindset in [the area] or [in the country] at large in terms of supporting students in an inclusive setting. We do such an amazing job of just taking care of it that we don't spread that knowledge and skill level: that's one of the challenges that we need to address." (LS professional D)

Delving deeper into the perceptions of empowerment and efficacy the responses of all but one of the LS professionals describe the challenges to sharing the responsibility and engaging in discourse about inclusion.

> "If the teachers are not embracing it [inclusion] or the teachers don't know how or they are too afraid to ask [for help], it can be rather threatening: we're talking about inclusion too much." (LS professional A)

> "I would say [it's easier in] elementary school and early years, it gets a little bit more difficult in middle school because sometimes we have such a gap between the students' learning, between their level of functioning academically or even behaviourally and the expectations of middle school where it becomes a lot more academic." (LS professional B)

"[Regarding accommodations and modifications] teachers may have forgotten that a test [needs to be] modified, that students have to take it here with us, or we're going to scribe, or we're going to explain the questions. Then they get a grade like everyone else. Let's say they get a D and the parents will say 'Oh my gosh he works so hard, he has a D.' Yes, but the accommodations and modifications were not put in place, it can be very anxiety triggering. English speaking families from England or America understand, but for other families from countries where culturally they don't have modification and accommodation, it is a big stress." (LS professional B)

"Some [teachers] just humoured me, others were 'whatever' and others say 'oh no, no, no, no.' So, I quickly knew who [not] to waste my time with but, if I found a teacher, and I have found teachers over the years who were willing and open, I sought them out and I continued working with them." (LS professional C)

"It isn't one person's job. I think that it's my role to challenge people when things by default land under student support services and I do that in a way that will help them build their own capacity." (LS professional D)

"We are basically making the change happen regardless. Obviously, when you want to collaborate with a specific teacher, what we're trying to do is to co teach. So, the learning support staff has multiple roles now: we do student support in small groups, we do some co teaching and we do PD for teachers on differentiation and whatever topics they want to know about: strategies, modifications whatever it takes." (LS professional A)

 "I think the rigidity of the school schedule is one thing. I understand that's how high school is, there's not even a section of the week where the whole school's off. [we need to] reschedule where we can alternate some things: there's no communication or little communication between people because there's no time for it." (LS professional C)

"It took a long, long time. I worked more with teachers within their own areas of interest: going on school trips with them or participating in an event that they were organising. I created those bonds so that I could have those conversations in a

neutral area where they could see the student evolve, because I also try to integrate my students in all those kinds of areas." (LS professional A)

"I will [make suggestions] to the teachers I know will respond. Teachers before were much more negative. I think now they're used to me and will come to me more to say 'I noticed so-and-so is doing this and it made me wonder …' It's taken 16 years." (LS professional C)

Supporting the ideas surfaced through the initial survey all of the LS professionals mentioned policy structures that they felt fostered a shared responsibility for inclusion. Some of them mentioned programmatic processes within the schools that they thought helped create opportunities for discourse, while others remarked about national policies that supported the discourse of inclusion.

"Once the audit happened and we got the report, we were able to identify where we absolutely needed to work harder as a team. We need to pursue these conversations in different forms, which means we need to get more people into this committee. We need to make sure that what we say we do is what we do and that what we say our mission is, we follow. In order to do that, we need to make some changes." (LS professional A)

"We're going through the CIS accreditation and we know that programme evaluation is a piece that we are going to focus on. It's nice to have CIS helping us in that way." (LS professional D)

"I've worked in several countries where the law of the country dictates that if you admit a student you cannot expel them. So those are things that are prompting some of the interest in inclusion. The IB has also done a lot of work in terms of inclusion but it continues to be one of the big myths that it can't be inclusive because kids won't make it. It is just not true. Kids with intellectual disabilities will need something different but on the whole, they should be able to have access to the IB. And they do." (LS professional E)

"We could have done so much more for him had we had the administration behind us and someone going to that teacher saying 'look pal, it doesn't work that way'. But no one did and I didn't feel like I could go to anybody and complain." (LS professional C)

"In international schools, you don't have a national policy behind you. You have schools that decide what kind of school they are going to be and their mission does then dictate what they're doing. So, schools have an identity decision to make in terms of whether they're inclusive or not and they're fully within their rights to make those decisions. There are some shifting laws happening around the world, which is really interesting. I think over the next 10 years, this topic is going to continue to expand. I honestly think identity is the biggest barrier because if you know who you are and you're committed to something, then all your resources and your heart go right into making that happen." (LS professional E)

4.2.2 Limitations and next steps

The interview stage of this case study is limited in its small sample size. In addition, it was constrained by the limits of being a single researcher. Despite their small number, they represent decades of experience and a vast knowledge of the development of inclusion, in Western European traditional international schools.

The findings suggest that these international school professionals have a specific understanding of the schools and the contexts in which they feel responsible for the inclusion of students. The finding also show that they are experienced and empowered at their sites and perceive themselves as effective in creating inclusive opportunities for students who have been accepted even with policy and resource constraints. The evidence they provide is situated with them and within their sense of agency. These findings give some perspective to how inclusion might be implemented by LS professionals. Their responses also show a shared language and understanding of the process and procedures of inclusion. They seem to suggest some similar struggles in using their agency in ways that expressly shares the responsibility of inclusion. However, they do not provide clarity as to the perceptions of how inclusion might be a shared responsibility in an international setting.

These findings lead to and were helpful in determining how to approach setting up the next stage of the study to address how might virtual CoPs influence agency and inclusion.

4.3 Findings from the Virtual CoP – leveraging empowerment for agency

The virtual CoP began with the shared definition that 'all students in international schools can learn' (Creese and Daniels, 2000; Ainscow, 2007). This definition was the basis for sharing knowledge between teachers in and between different schools and to determine if it is possible to influence the agency of international LS teachers.

The virtual CoP helped to determine if it is possible to engage international LS teachers at different schools in conversations about the key levers for inclusion and emergent themes from the interview stage of this study (Ainscow, 2007):

1) all students should have access to learning even in international schools;

2) building trust and developing key relationship is fundamental to the success of inclusion;

3) their [LS teachers] role implies a commitment, from their institution, to serve students with diverse needs;

4) they feel compelled to keep working at developing practices that allow more students to be served in the international setting.

The starting point for this trial sought to identify the immediate, potential, applied, realised The virtual CoP was created in response to the interviews of international LS professionals that suggest they believe more can and needs to be done to break down the obstacles and share the responsibility of inclusion in an international setting. To address the findings from the interviews, the CoP built on the previously identified perceptions of the LS professionals and gathered more information in order to further inform the strategies needed to develop more inclusive practices and programmes in international schools. The CoP created a space for critical awareness of the structural and political landscape that can intentionally or unintentionally affect empowerment. The intent was to study the interactions of international

LS teachers in and between international schools and how this might lead to a greater understanding of the micropolitical discourses that complicate growing a sense of shared responsibility for inclusive practices. The community was created as a tool for LS teachers to transform, influence or reshape how their schools engage all learners in international schools (Wenger et al., 2011; Yin, 2014).

The five international LS teachers from four international schools in the west of Europe (France and Belgium) were invited to take part in a 16-week virtual CoP. At the time the study was about to commence two teachers withdrew. This narrowed the number of teachers participating to four (including myself) and the schools participating in the study to two.

Two of the international school teachers taking part in the CoP were secondary school learning support teachers charged with including students with mild to moderate difficulties. The fourth teacher was responsible for including students with more moderate to severe needs in primary grades. As the researcher, I acted solely as the facilitator and did not count my contributions in the results. This stage of the study sought to form a virtual CoP which connected international LS teachers in different geographical locations in order to answer RQ 2 and 3.

On the virtual CoP pre-survey, teachers were asked to define inclusion. Their responses show a shared belief that appropriate and engaging learning opportunities are made available to all students.

> "Providing appropriate education for all pupils, no matter their needs, background or experiences." (Teacher A)

> "Inclusion means that students of a variety ability level are all able to access the learning taking place in school and develop at their own pace." (Teacher B)

> "Authentic experiences within the larger school community where social, academic, and life skills are generalized across environments, benefitting all students." (Teacher C)

Their responses to the pre-survey also suggested that they shared a belief that reflective interactions with colleagues are needed to better support students. Their responses revealed

how they might use their empowerment by acting to create opportunities for inclusion and share the responsibility with others at their sites:

> "I would provide much more flexibility in how subjects were approached, assessed and even which subjects were offered." (Teacher A)

> "Be more of a practical advocate for my pupils who other teachers could (do) find difficult to teach." (Teacher A)

> "I would encourage more conversation and times for reflection for faculty to consider the choices they make for their students and how they can better support learners who struggle." (Teacher B)

> "Continue fostering conversations about students with different learning profiles." (Teacher B)

> "Shift from as much intensive learning support teacher shadowing to more meaningful methods of differentiation." (Teacher C)

> "Continue to hold professional conversations, collaborate with homeroom and specialist teachers, and push-in to classes as much as possible where appropriate." (Teacher C)

In the first post to the virtual community (figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3), the teachers introduced themselves and shared their hopes for their experience.

Since I am at school only two days a week, my biggest challenge is keeping in the loop of the school's activities and the weekly challenges that my pupils face. My goal has always been to make sure that I can find the best ways to help my students learn and help the general content teachers to meet their needs as well, both in the classroom and in outside work.

I find face-to-face communication sticks with me and the other teachers better when discussing students. It is more immediate, personal and more vibrant. However, I am all for using technology to document what we will work on--this helps us remember and have a resource with which to refer at a later date.

I am very pleased to be a part of this community, and look forward to learning many things with and from all of the other members of the community.

Cheers all!

Figure 4.1 Teacher A (Post to the virtual community).
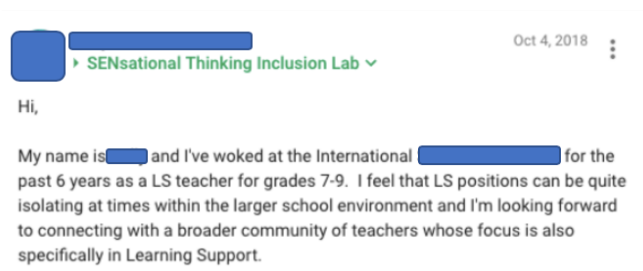
Figure 4.2 Teacher B (Post to the virtual community).
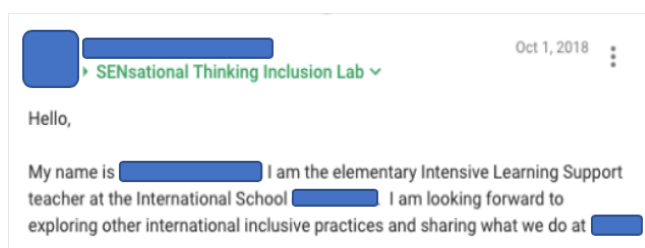
Figure 4.3 Teacher C (Post to the virtual community).

The nature of each teacher's initial post was a brief introduction to who they are and their general view and ideas around inclusive teaching. All participants successfully completed their post, demonstrating that they could successfully access and use the platform. During the following weeks, I posted articles and asked questions to prompt contributions.

After everyone joined the CoP an initial virtual meeting was conducted to introduce the members. During the initial meeting, three out of four teachers introduced themselves, shared their own philosophies of inclusion and described their responsibilities regarding the implementation of inclusion at their sites. The fourth teacher could not participate in the group and was interviewed separately. In these first virtual contacts teachers introduced themselves to each other, talked about their respective sites and the challenges they perceived in carrying out their responsibilities in their role as support, as opposed to subject teachers. Teachers were advised that the group was 'self-organising': they could post relevant material and invite other international school teachers to participate in the forum. The initial virtual meetings opened a pathway for teachers to listen and ask questions about a variety of different systems and procedures, find similarities and differences in their teaching responsibilities, ages taught and previous experience. In their comments issues of common interest emerged

such as defining inclusion and strategies of working with colleagues to support students in mainstream classrooms would be helpful areas for discussion.

> I find it difficult to engage my colleagues to create new opportunities for my [Intensive Learning Support] students. I am looking forward to having conversations about how other schools define inclusion and create opportunities for students to engage in authentic ways…We have the 'Special O's' and this helps but I find it difficult sometimes to grow new opportunities to get my students integrated… It would also be nice to have other teachers join the group…
> It seems like at our school that we need to create a definition for inclusion that we all know and can refer to…
>
> Teacher C from field notes

> I am in the senior school and we too struggle to find meaningful opportunities for some of our students. We are left to create different opportunities but it can feel like we are left on our own to do this and that we don't really have anyone saying this is something that all teachers have to think about. As a teacher, I have a mix of responsibilities. Sometimes I am in classroom acting more like a TA [teaching assistant] and other times I am working with students one on one. I do not really feel like I can always talk to [subject] teachers about how to support students. Some are more open to it than others…
>
> Teacher B from field notes – virtual meeting #1

> I am excited about this community. I am very interested in how other schools do inclusion. I feel like I know a lot about how my school does it and we do a lot but I would like to see how inclusion works in other international schools…I feel like we have lots of students who have executive functioning issues. I would really like to know more about how other teachers support students to manage the tons of information they have to process for exams…How many teachers will there be? I might be able get my friend in Singapore to join us.
>
> Teacher A from field notes- separate virtual meeting

These comments from the initial virtual community post and virtual meetings were used to develop a shared language, identify shared areas of concern and shared practices at their schools these posts will be evaluated for the collective value of the CoP (Wenger et al., 2011).

Over the 16-week period, teachers from the CoP interacted with the facilitator via the virtual platform by adding contributions – resources, articles, exchanges – concerning inclusion in all of its facets as highlighted during the initial meeting.

The posts consisted of both academic and media articles which covered a broad range of topics from educational research to teaching and inclusion, to leadership in business settings. Figure 4.4 offers examples of such materials posted on the virtual platform.
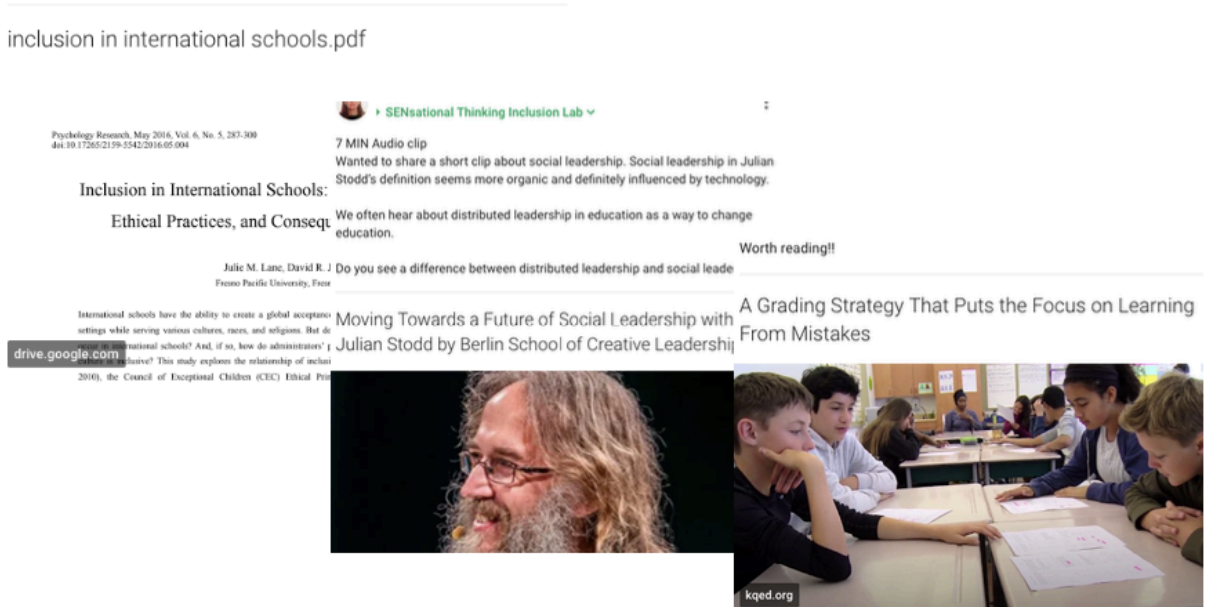
Figure 4.4 Types of materials shared on the virtual platform.

All posts, including comments, articles, resources, video and audio files, shared on the virtual platform remained available until March 31, 2019, when the platform no longer offered the service. Before the discontinuation of the platform, this accessibility acted as a library where materials could continue to serve as a support to the LS teachers and those invited to join the community.

I participated as the community facilitator and posted 19 of the 27 posts, the eight other posts were added by the other three participants. There was a total of 41 comments: they broke down as 17, 7, and 1 between the three teachers and 16 from the facilitator (Figure 4.5)
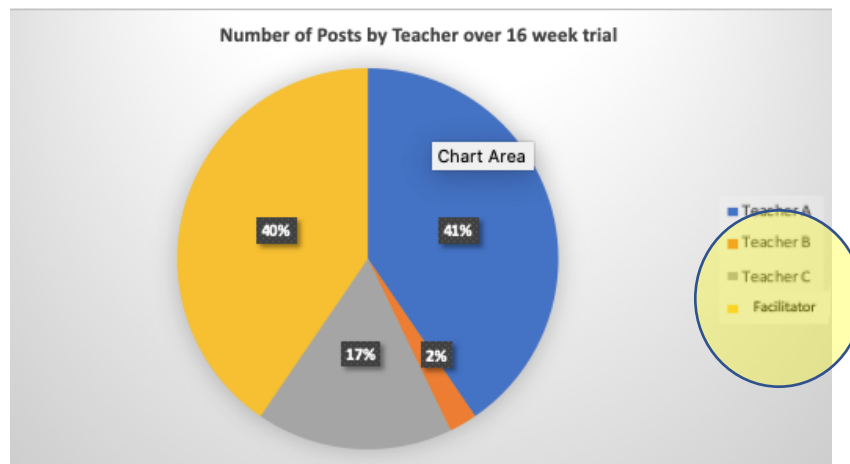
Figure 4. 5 Number of posts by teacher over the Virtual CoP 16-week trial.
Teacher C had limited posts in the virtual community: they reported that they had to take on additional responsibilities that kept them from interacting with the community as they had hoped.

In the first two weeks of the trial teachers were asked to respond to prompts related to training, PD, and the lack of available resources specific to LS (figures 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10).

The PD at the [   ] was interesting--and it was the FIRST time the school ever presented the CEM testing in a way that brought in SEN issues so directly, and encouraged the teachers to view the results as one part of the evaluation process--and not just as another test score to ignore.

Figure 4. 6 Teacher A about training, PD, and the lack of available resources specific to LS.

I copied and pasted some quotes from the conclusion here and added a comment in parentheses at the end...just a few meandering thoughts!

1. The correlation of care and virtue with the CEC Ethics and consequentialism may reflect an international school administrator's willingness to converse with others regarding a child with disabilities prior to making decisions which will impact the child and/or the entire student body. (This does not happen enough at our school. Lots of programs are created after the fact of accepting a student whose needs we may not be able to really meet.)

2. The current study did reflect a lack of teacher training for those serving children with disabilities. (Out school relies too much on Teaching Assistants and often does not best utilize the trained teachers they have.)

3. Insight as to training expectations as related to host country special education practices, types of disabilities served within a given international school, and school administrator expectations of special education professionals may provide further insights. (Would like to see how this compares to the UK practices.)

Figure 4. 7 Teacher A about training, PD, and the lack of available resources specific to LS.

The general content teachers often feel that if a TA is in the class, that the teacher doesn't really have to do much with the LS student.

If you are talking about the SEN teachers, I feel our school has the TAs carrying a lot of the teaching load (though they are not supposed to). A lot of this is due to scheduling issues, but I think, overall, having many TAs prevents the school from utilizing best practice in the classroom...

REPLY +1

Figure 4. 8 Teacher A about training, PD, and the lack of available resources specific to LS.

I feel like there's a huge gap in well-researched articles and resources available for LS teachers specifically working in international schools. Professional development is another area we struggle with. We used to attend NFI conferences but as many are geared towards schools encouraging inclusion, Leadership at ▮ hasn't been as supportive in sending us. There are also programs through Ochan Powell's EAF organization but these are quite expensive.

Figure 4. 9 Teacher B about training, PD, and the lack of available resources specific to LS.

Figure 4. 10 Teacher B about training, PD, and the lack of available resources specific to LS.

The two topics that garnered the most comments during the 16 weeks related to grading of students with learning needs and leadership; participants asked questions about how these responsibilities were approached and managed at the respective schools (figure 4.11).

Figure 4. 11 Teacher A and teacher B *about grading students with learning needs.*

Teacher A and B

The topic related to grading raised questions about how to evaluate students enrolled in a learning support programs and about the criteria and goals of any evaluation. This then led to sharing a process that was being initiated at one of the schools (figures 4.12, 4.13, 4.14)

For our learning conferences, we have the students fill out a self reflection with their own thoughts on their current standing, current challenges and next steps. This has been really helpful in promoting more student voice within the process and it's a valuable tool for student advocacy. Ideally, we then discuss their progress working towards ILP goals (student dependent- some have just determined their goals) and how we can continue making progress. Our learning conference process has been something that's evolved greatly over the 6 years I've been here and is something we'll continue to adapt. I'd be curious to know if anyone has any other structures in place for Learning Conferences that they find helpful. I know some at my school would like to radically change the whole process.

REPLY   +1

I actually really like it when teachers don't put on a grade immediately and instead have students review test corrections. We have a few teachers who do this in the MS and I think it really does extend the learning where often once a kid gets a test back, they completely forget about it and move on. The step about discussing "favorite mistakes" is a good one- it puts a bit of a positive spin on the idea and is a great opportunity for class discussion.

REPLY   +1

Figure 4. 12 Teacher B about evaluation criteria and goals.

Watching the Key Stage 3 pupils do their Learning Logs at the brought this whole idea to mind. They were so focused on their grade, but they struggled to describe their actual skills and any weaknesses. Very little reflection went on. If they had the same comments without a grade, I am sure there would be a lot more reflecting going on...

REPLY   +1

Figure 4. 13 Teacher A about *evaluation criteria and goals*.

We're actually preparing to transition to a new grading system where instead of attaching a number grade they receive a level such as "beginning, applying, transferring" etc. There's one more category but I've forgotten it at the moment. The idea would be that with a number, you don't know what that actually tells you about your learning and words would be more descriptive. Such as, you can apply your understanding to problems you're given, but can you transfer it to novel scenarios. We'll be starting this next school year I think- will be interesting to see if there's a shift in students focusing on grades primarily rather than comments.

REPLY   +1

Figure 4. 14 Teacher B about *evaluation criteria and goals*.

After the trial a post-survey was conducted in order to compare the LS teachers' previous perceptions of agency and empowerment with perceptions after having taken part in the virtual CoP. The teachers reported that they did have chances to share their knowledge of inclusion through conference presentations and staff meetings during the 16 weeks. Teachers from two schools presented workshops at their sites and at educational conferences to discuss inclusion and teacher teaming (e.g. Learning by Design 2019, ELSA Teacher Development Day 2019) With additional presentations planned to be given at their sites after the trial.

The participants also shared in the final survey the value they gained from participating. They reported that they were better able to understand their own school's inclusion context. The LS Teachers also reported the variety of activities they engaged in to promote inclusion while engaging in the virtual community which would have had an impact on the stakeholders:

"Speak with my colleagues about my experience via the virtual community and try to organise opportunities to meet with other inclusion specialists in Europe." (Teacher B)

"Define more clearly how I felt inclusion is in my own particular school setting." (Teacher A)

"I was able to compare my school's practices with another schools. I also realized that the difficulties I face are not just at my school--that other teachers face the same problems." (Teacher A)

"I realized that it changes everything when you can talk to someone about it!!" (Teacher A)

"Hold an 'inclusion day in the elementary school, hold a workshop about inclusion at the Learning by Design conference, and work towards improving collaboration in my school surrounding inclusive practices." (Teacher C)

4.3.1 Limitations of the virtual CoP and next steps

Since the CoP was a 16-week trial, it is limited in its ability to show a long-term impact. Although these posts imply that these international LS teachers perceive they can develop inclusion and have been empowered, they do not show a continuation or comprehensive comparison between sites. In addition, determining if international LS teachers will feed ideas from the CoP back to their own sites will also need further research.

It is not clear if the participants were more or less engaged because of my participation or if this biased the discussion, reflection and outcome in anyway. There seems, however, to be reliability and possibilities of generalizing the findings (Boh, 2014).

At the conclusion, teachers suggested in the post-survey how to improve the collaboration process for future virtual CoPs:

> "It would be helpful to have prompts to further help the discussion(s) flow and develop-- we all get so busy with life that we forget to participate. However, whenever I was reminded, or offered something to ponder, I enjoyed sharing my ideas." (Teacher A)

> "Being able to meet other participants earlier in the process." (Teacher B)

> "It would be interesting to have more participants (but I understand how difficult that can be!)." (Teacher C)

There is the possibility for future exchanges as participants have requested site visits and continued collaboration between the schools. These visits and ongoing contact could serve as a further opportunity to share knowledge, continue discussion, comparison and reflection that will serve to positively influence student outcomes.

5.0 Chapter V Discussion and Implications

This chapter discusses the findings of the study and further analyses the themes related to LS teachers' agency for inclusion in international schools. The main purpose of the discussion chapter is to explain the findings as a whole though the theoretical lens of social constructionist and socio-cultural perspective in order to address the question of developing agency in LS teachers toward the development of effective inclusive practices in international schools.

5.1 Empowerment and efficacy

The "Perceptions of Empowerment and Collective Efficacy in International Schools" survey was distributed to schools found in the CIS database and also through the ELSA organization. The findings are generalisable in that they can be considered relative when looking at international teachers around the world. They can be used to form a foundation for understanding the regulation of international teachers' agency. Indeed, international school teachers feel particularly capable in their classrooms to serve the students they teach and feel confident that their colleagues and school have the skills and offer the opportunity for students to learn. This suggests teachers in international schools are ready to initiate change and take on reforms (Berry et al., 2010). It also implies that, while international school teachers may be capable of sharing their expertise, they may not be sharing the responsibility of creating a culture of inclusion with their LS colleagues (Marks and Louis, 1997; Muijs and Harris, 2003; Ainscow, 2007). In fact, the survey results do not shed light on realities of teaching in an international school or address key understandings: do these teachers understand the complexity of an international school context for inclusive education? Do they understand how to tap into the expertise that seems to be all around them and could be developed through cooperative experiences?

The survey findings suggest that more information is needed to understand how to positively influence international teachers' empowerment toward inclusion. Research implies that more opportunities would need to be created for them to socially interact in ways that opens them up to sharing the responsibility for inclusion with their LS peers (Creese and Daniels, 2000; Ainscow, 2007). It is not clear from the survey findings if all international teachers are engaging in the types of social relations that would allow them to meet the needs of the diverse learners in their schools. Moreover, it does not allow for an accurate understanding for

how the expertise of LS teachers might be shared. Indeed, it does uncover the specific empowerment of LS teachers and how they might view the collective efficacy of inclusion in international schools. It is therefore necessary to ask more questions and gather more details about the reality of practices teachers are engaging in and if they understand how their individual and collective agency plays a role in influencing student outcomes and inclusion.

The data from the interviews bring forth the reality of these LS professionals who work in more traditional international schools. They describe feeling empowered to use their agency to create opportunities to meet more students' needs on their campus through a variety of social interactions. As LS professionals discussed their dedication to uphold their inclusive values through social interactions, a reality of the social construction of the schools they operate in began to emerge: one where their non-LS colleagues may seek to maintain their perceptions of self-empowerment and school efficacy by looking to their LS colleagues to serve students with diverse learning needs (Czander, 1993). The LS professionals described how their previous training was a driver, regardless of location or resources, to create inclusion and how they continued to find alternative interactions despite difficulties to achieve a shared responsibility to serve students' needs. The resistance they experienced from non-LS colleagues may be a result of the disappointment of not being able to meet the needs of all of their students. As international school teachers, especially those not prepared for this environment may look to project the sole responsibility of supporting students with learning needs externally to the LS teachers within their international school (Czander, 1993, Haldiman and Hollington 2004). Some of the LS professionals in this study talked about engaging in different types of social interactions as a way to try to thwart these external projections. The length to which LS professionals engaged with their non-LS peers outside the academic setting shows how deep this void might be and how difficult creating a shared commitment to inclusion might be. Therefore, more needs to be done to understand how social interactions can be created to realign and redistribute power in ways that shape teacher agency so that all teachers can share in the responsibility of inclusion (Foucault, 1980a; Ainscow et al., 2004, 2007; Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; 2016; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018).

The iterative design of this study led to the final transformational phase and the findings of the virtual CoP are encouraging. As international LS teachers engaged in more conversations with colleagues in other international schools via the virtual platform, they could start to understand better the similar obstacles and barriers that exist within schools. They felt

validated in realizing they were not alone in facing these challenges. By participating in the virtual community, the participants reported greater motivation to interact with colleagues and thus potentially increase their agency for implementing inclusive practices at their own sites.

Interacting via a virtual platform still felt novel as participants post surveys remarked that they wished they could have met sooner, that they might meet in person or that they group be big enough to meet more people. They may appreciate more prompts to help guide the discussion and their thinking. These may help them to think about their agency and how they might address particular concerns or resistance in their settings. The shared language and experiences regardless of location or grade level make these findings promising and potentially generalisable when thinking of other teachers in traditional international schools.

5.2 The growing role of LS teachers in international schools

The study made it possible to identify current discourses within certain international schools and how these might influence the process of empowerment and teacher agency for inclusion (Ainscow et al., 2007; Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018).

The international LS professional's depiction of their experience in international schools begins to outline how their empowerment may differ from their colleagues. Their responses show a strong commitment they have toward finding inclusive solutions for their students and families (Ainscow, 2007). Their commitment can sometimes be out of alignment with their colleagues and their school's model of inclusion. This can have serious implications on the process of empowerment and the agency needed to create inclusive environments (Tengland, 2008; Cattaneo and Chapman, 2010; Bloom, 2013; Eldor 2016).

LS professionals in international settings may feel empowered to find opportunities to include students but the structures within these schools do not always allow for them to act in ways that would lead to positive inclusive outcomes or to bottom up or collective leadership called for to meet more student needs (Caffyn, 2007, Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Fullan, 2016; Bridwell-Mitchell, 2016). Indeed, the responses show the different difficulties, both structural and political, LS professionals might face as they try to share the responsibility of inclusion or take the lead in creating necessary change. Where these obstacles exist, they will have an

impact on the growth of the role of international LS professionals (Tengland, 2008; Bloom, 2013; Eldor 2016).

To overcome barriers and to create room for different discourses, international LS professionals are taking on new roles to overcome power dynamics inherent in international schools (Foucault, 1980a, Silva et. al, 2012). In an effort to get around the homogenization and serial arrangements schools can produce and create new discourses about students, LS professionals seem to use their agency or participate in a form of bottom up leadership as they encourage their students to participate in school trips and other activities in order to establish new social constructs that can lead to more opportunities for discourse in an academic classroom (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2016).

These professionals are feeling compelled to overcome resistance from teachers by showcasing students to encourage dialogue and opportunities for "redistributions, realignments, homogenizations, serial arrangements, and convergences of the force relations" (Foucault, 1980a, p.94). Developing such connections outside of their LS roles is time consuming and does not develop direct programmes. The LS professionals in this study see these actions as ways to avoid resistance and use their agency to lead toward more social interactions that are directly related to academic inclusion.

The perceptions shared by these LS professionals are important to note as they begin to outline the reality in traditional international schools. They feel they have to try harder, or give up trying if they cannot see a way to support students within the structure of international schools. Currently, inclusion seems to be situated with the international LS professional in their schools. Documenting this reality makes it possible to address the necessary pathways that will allow LS professionals to be seen as leaders and how they might create opportunities to increase agency toward inclusion.

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Gathering more data about the reality of LS professionals and how they use their empowerment will highlight how power is shaped and aligned by the interactions they have on their campuses (Foucault, 1980a; Silva et al., 2012). As more information is gathered about how LS professionals interact in international schools, more can be done to help grow their influence in these institutions.

It could be said that developing networks of professionals who might share the responsibility for inclusion as outlined previously in this study requires opportunities to share knowledge that will lead to new discourses between and across schools (Creese and Daniels, 2000; Ainscow, 2007). These social interactions could further empower all teachers and lead to more opportunities for agency and inclusion in international schools (Foucault, 1980a; 2003; Creese and Daniels, 2000; Muijs and Harris, 2003; Ainscow et al., 2006; Ainscow, 2007).

This study has shown how a collective empowerment may prove difficult if international teachers are not aware of its potential and do not create spaces for dialogue that lead to learning opportunities for teachers to implement inclusive opportunities for students in international schools (Foucault, 1980a; 2001; Muijs and Harris, 2003; Ainscow et al., 2006; Ainscow, 2007).

To develop inclusion, it will be necessary to identify resistant discourses within in a school community. The dialogues from this study show how institutional power needs to be understood in order to facilitate change that includes more teachers across the school to break down resistance (Priestley et al, 2012, Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; 2016; Caffyn, 2007, Foucault, 1980a, Silva et.al., 2012). Developing ways that would allow more international subject teachers to also undertake the responsibility for realising the potential of students is necessary for the growth of teacher agency across schools. This would offer consistency and is key to developing cultures of inclusion. Steps need to be taken to implement supports for the sharing of practices that break down barriers and obstacles so that a shared responsibility for student outcomes is fostered (Ainscow, 2007). The actions taken in the forum constitute a form of leadership as the LS teachers engaged with others from other sites to share experiences, ask questions and reflect on practice (Fullan, 2016; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018). This form of leadership can be replicated in other schools to help LS teachers engage in meaningful dialogue and lead to a shared responsibility for inclusion. Moreover, LS teachers need to be involved in the creation of these important dialogue structures that help all teachers engage in discussions and reflect on practices that will help to support students with learning needs in mainstream classrooms (Argyris, 1997; Creese and Daniels, 2000).

The roles LS teachers took on is a type of leadership and can circumvent the flows of power by taking on more roles: club adviser, field trip leader, coach as well as teacher, co teacher,

professional developer, counsellor and family advisor they have sought to create networks inside and outside classrooms. These networks may be able to circumvent power but may not be the direct leadership LS teachers need to share inclusion. These roles require that they take on more responsibilities in other duties not in direct dialogue about inclusive practice.

Similar to typical educational literature related to inclusion, this study acknowledges long-standing barriers to inclusion such as time, money and resources. It does not seek to discount these barriers; instead, in accepting these realities, it seeks to uncover how the perceived empowerment of LS teachers might be used to build responsive programs and mitigate such barriers through a shared responsibility for inclusion across a school (Muijs and Harris, 2003; Ainscow et al., 2006; Ainscow, 2007).

5.3 Agency and international LS teachers leading change

International LS teachers have strong perceptions regarding the ability to initiate change and meet students' needs within their classrooms and across their schools (Lukacs and Galluzzo, 2014). As they seek to influence inclusion, this should include taking on greater leadership roles in international schools and correspond to Lukacs and Galuzzo (2014) "archetypal teacher leader (or teacher change agent)" (p.2).

All LS participants in this case study mentioned that, despite their frustrations, they could imagine collective opportunities to overcome the challenges to inclusion. They were hopeful that connections beyond their schools would allow them to foster innovative ways to lead inclusive practices back at their sites. International LS professionals reported they wanted to make connections that would help them move beyond their willing colleagues and broaden their sphere of influence to initiate inclusive practices more consistently across their school. As some of the most experienced and qualified professionals in international schools, LS teachers should be tapped to develop ways to include a breadth of teachers and school leaders in partnering more fully with inclusion in mind.

The remarks offer insight into a shift from believing in the administrations' or LS department heads' as the bearers of advancing inclusive practices to a more distributed leadership supporting teachers' agency in sharing responsibility for inclusion and engaging all students.

As international LS teachers engaged in the virtual CoP, they discussed and questioned micropolitical topics such as decision making and leadership (Caffyn, 2007; Bridwell-Mitchell, 2016). They specifically referred to how decisions about programming and admissions are made and if this process could be shared. They also discussed making decisions specific to student engagement (e.g. accommodations).

Using virtual platforms to construct community builds on the Social Constructionist perspective of creating spaces where teachers can engage and connect with others, thus fostering a shared responsibility for meeting student needs. On these platforms, teachers can actively engage in sharing their feelings about the increased pressures they face in meeting the needs of the diverse student population of international schools. One can see the potential for virtual CoPs, whether in a school or between schools, to create a space where classroom practices can be shared, posted and reviewed under a teacher's own time frame where they can be included in discussions, without physical presence (Creese and Daniels, 2000; Wenger et al., 2011).

5.4 Implication for further research

The data in this study shed an important light on how international school teachers and LS teachers perceive their role and the role of their school in the process of pulling levers for inclusion. It seems that the strong perceptions of empowerment and efficacy experienced by the international school teachers can be both a positive starting point for sharing responsibility and may also be an obstacle to overcome. This study highlights how international LS teachers perceive that they work from outside the mainstream classroom to influence their subject specific peers and cultivate inclusive practices at their schools. It begins to fill a gap in the literature relating to international school teachers' perceptions of empowerment and efficacy, how this might influence international school teachers' agency and leadership.

As teachers engage in a virtual platform outside of their usual circles of power and influence and in their own time, they can circumvent the power structures of their immediate environment. Therefore, a virtual space might be used to allow teachers to trial ideas, question beliefs, discuss potential benefits or pitfalls before introducing or challenging process and procedures at their schools (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; 2016; Ainscow et al., 2004; Ainscow, 2007; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018). The data from this short trial show the potential for

teachers to influence each other as they share practices and process. The findings, in the light of previous studies on the influences of power and micropolitics in schools, offer interesting insights as to how teachers can overcome obstacles as they share knowledge in ways that could lead to new visions and pathways forward (Caffyn, 2007). As teachers start to explore areas such as decision making and leadership in such virtual CoPs, it could help them share empowerment between schools and lead to increased agency and inclusive practices.

Time to collaborate is a key element of sharing the needed knowledge for learning between professionals. Without time to discuss students and practices it is difficult to see how a shared responsibility of inclusion might grow on a given site (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Besley, 2005; Ainscow, 2007; Wenger et al., 2011; Pyrko et al., 2017). LS teachers report that they spend a vast proportion of their time communicating with the subject teachers who teach students with special needs. They say this focus leaves them little time to develop further relationships or broaden their influence across the schools they serve. This isolation might feed the belief that the school is effective in meeting student needs as LS teachers dedicate themselves to this work and struggle to share their knowledge with others.

Another way that international LS teachers might develop opportunities to lead in creating shared responsibility for inclusion could be by offering specific workshops, host open door days and give presentations. Research would be valuable for measuring how using agency in this way might increase perceptions of empowerment and how through regular contact, such as these with their non-LS counterparts, they might begin to create a shared responsibility for inclusion.

International schools and their teachers participate in inspections and accreditations, which usually focus on measurable student outcomes within subject areas or exam results. It is in these times where there might be the chance to initiate a collective conversation about a school's ability to serve a broad range of students. Studying these formal cycles of reflection may lead to opportunities for teacher to teacher training that could allow international LS teachers to interact with their non-LS peers and colleagues at other international schools to share expertise (Creese and Daniels, 2000).

In preparation for inspections, corresponding research can be conducted to study the perceptions of school efficacy and how this influences inclusion at a school. Additionally, studying how an accreditation report might influence a teacher's perception of empowerment

and a school's collective efficacy. This research could probe teachers' perceptions and formal reports for ways to encourage more reflection for inclusion.

Further research is also needed to determine how educational leaders can consider scheduling when making decisions about the necessary time for students and staff to discuss and evaluate progress. Insufficient time results in fewer opportunities for inclusion and teachers' continued perception that they hold no responsibility for programme performance, which remains with LS teachers.

This study attempted to avoid the two reasons why virtual communities of practice might fail: one, they "may not [be] designed to support the actual practice of the profession" and two, the potential that "inadequate attention is paid to the way in which participants need to develop trust in order to fruitfully share personal practice and knowledge" (Hara, p.5, 2009). This study showed that even when the group was designed to support the profession of international LS teachers, it still struggled with developing the trust needed to share more consistently. Participants did meet after the conclusion of the trial and reported that the process inspired them but still maintained that they would have liked to meet in person early on in the development of the virtual group. Virtual platforms do not necessarily replace the trust that can be built in face to face relationships.

This study suggests that both virtual tools and CoPs are useful in inspiring international LS teachers. More research can be done to further these findings and determine best practices in implementing virtual communities in international schools. The research evaluating effective CoPs by Wenger et.al (2011) advances and helps to ensure that regardless of the platform, effective CoP practices such as critical dialogue, reflection and the sharing of practice are bringing about the intended goals and aims of a community.

5.5 Inclusion, a LS responsibility

As a teacher participant and researcher of inclusion, these investigations and interpretations will have been influenced by my own perceptions and experiences. The participatory manner in which this study was conducted allowed for a clearer understanding of the role of LS teachers in an international school setting, thus lending authenticity to this report. With respect to the interpretation, my participation does not suggest with definitiveness the

influence these actions have had on inclusion at these sites. It is important however, to consider that, as a teacher participant, I was able to personally connect with the situation that LS teachers face in international schools and to articulate ways forward.

This study was undertaken with a personal and professional desire to understand potential obstacles and barriers to inclusive teaching within international schools. As a learning support teacher working internationally, I have faced many of these challenges when working to implement inclusive practices. My interests lie in examining ways to support international school teacher agency and lead in creating more inclusive practices. This led to the design of this study and its research aim: analysing the possibility of regulating learning support teachers' perceptions of influencing student inclusion in international schools.

My analysis concludes that inclusion in international schools can be found, is desired and yet often a compromise. LS teachers in international schools continue to shoulder the bulk of the responsibility for supporting students with special needs in this highly academic bureaucratic system. This reality remains at odds with their Special Education training and previous domestic experiences.

5.6 Creating space for social interactions for inclusion

Serving students with special needs requires dedicated time and accessible resources, as well as critical conversations about student outcomes. Senior leadership and management would see improvements in this domain if they included themselves in developing this focus across a school (Ainscow, 2007; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018). International school leaders would benefit from understanding how teachers' perceptions of empowerment and efficacy might influence their agency in regards to inclusion. As international teachers, supported by their administrators, engage in self-critical activities, they are better able to participate in identifying how certain discourses might be impacting student outcomes. Without self-reflection it is difficult to determine internal and external factors that can influence inclusive practices in international schools. As international school teachers engage in probing these discourses they are better able to regulate their agency in ways that will meet the demands of a dynamic and diverse learning environment (Foucault, 1980a; Cook-Greuter, 2004; Caffyn, 2007; Silva et al., 2012; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018).

International school leaders may lack previous experience and therefore an understanding of how to create the supports teachers need to serve students with special needs in the international school context (Lane and Jones, 2016). More research needs to be done about how to help international school leaders create the necessary space to support to promote inclusion. (Lane and Jones, 2016).

Inclusion as a continuous process will take an innovative mindset. LS professionals and teachers can be the agents that initiate this. In order for schools to adapt and meet the growing needs of learners in specific international school contexts, LS professionals have key knowledge to share. Simply creating space adds immediate value; it holds potential to store knowledge, later to be applied, or not, to meet the organizations' goals. As this knowledge is applied, it offers a space for continual review, to determine if new practices are having the necessary impact and, lastly, to reframe values such as a collective responsibility for inclusion (Wenger et al., 2011).

Virtual CoPs can provide the necessary space for supportive and challenging interactions, which, as Ainscow (2007) suggests, make a difference in student outcomes and can reshape schools (Wenger et al., 2011). The data collected in this study demonstrate how a virtual community can help LS teachers to develop a real sense of empowerment, collaboration and leadership. Using a virtual platform for discussion among LS teachers is possible because they share a core professional understanding and similar responsibilities. This shared knowledge made it possible to interact and to discuss sensitive issues within the short 16-week trial (Chiu, Hsu, and Wang, 2006). Teachers can tackle topics such the role of leadership, decision making, feedback and grading practices, which are not always openly discussed. Discussion can be free flowing and free of potential constraints that might have be triggered if face to face.

My findings of empowerment and agency on inclusion in international schools offer educational leaders solutions for creating space, time and a culture of inquiry for improvement. LS professionals can become the agents of change to meet inclusive needs in internationals schools as they work to employ the methods outlined here to engage others. My study provides a starting point for further exploration of the use of virtual CoPs and how they might lead to more opportunities to reflect and develop an awareness of how beliefs may be consciously or unconsciously affecting practice, sense of agency and collaboration in sharing

the responsibility for innovation and inclusion. The results have significant implications for the agency of teachers inside and outside of their school settings. As interaction increased and critical conversations can be engaged greater opportunities for inclusion in international schools can emerge.

5.7 The liminal space between leadership and LS teachers

The data do not suggest, however, that there is a consistent approach to sharing leadership in establishing a shared responsibility for inclusion. This inconsistency is likely to hinder the overall inclusion effort as LS teachers work to develop relationships, one teacher at a time.

The role of the LS professional and subject teacher in international schools requires ongoing review as these settings come to terms with, react and try to expand inclusion opportunities and choices. The international LS teacher's agency is forcibly boundaried by resources and relationships, expectations and aspirations of families, the support of the school administration and their own beliefs about how to engage all learners (Muijs and Harris, 2003, Mark and Louis, 1997).

Inclusion and serving diverse learning population demand a global and shared knowledge of inclusion. This requires teachers and administrator to better understand their specific role and the part they play within the broader context of culture of inclusion. To remain isolated is counter intuitive to professional learning and development (Hargreaves, 2000). The findings from this study strongly suggest that future research is needed and that qualitative approaches can identify how teachers and school staff view themselves and their schools. CoPs can be conducted, engaging international school teachers in practices that actively challenge perceptions and promote agency toward a shared responsibility for engaging all learners (Cook- Greuter, 2004).

Currently, international LS professionals are working to expand inclusive practices; when doing so, they reposition themselves and demonstrate, albeit one relationship at a time, how they exercise their agency and lead inclusion. These teachers work hard to maintain high levels of trust with their non-LS counterparts. They foster opportunities for inclusion using their agency over a wide range of settings in order to develop deeper relationships across academic and extra-curricular departments. Using their agency in these ways shows how they have become accustomed to making the best of their situation. This adaptation draws attention

to the boundaried circumstances they find themselves in and helps to define the liminal space in which they operate currently in the international school setting.

The original contribution of my study offers a detailed account of the obstacles, barriers and boundaries international LS teachers face as they try to lead change to more inclusive environments. These boundaries to agency emphasise that a shared responsibility and dispersed style of leadership could support inclusion has yet to be achieved (Creese and Daniels, 2000; Muijs and Harris, 2003).

International school teachers' perception of empowerment and efficacy has a substantial influence on their agency and serving student with diverse needs. My study found that international school teacher's perceptions of school efficacy is still an external belief and implies that they see the school as responsible and capable of meeting the needs of students with special needs. If the belief remains that inclusion is an external responsibility (i.e. the responsibility of others) for serving students with special needs, a shared responsibility will not take root and this will continue to limit the opportunities for inclusion (Czander, 2003; Höijer, 2011; Silva et al., 2012).

To address this current belief that they shoulder the full responsibility to find solutions for students with special learning needs, international LS teachers are looking for ways to collaborate and share resources across geographically disperse locations. In order to more appropriately serve a more diverse student population, strategies and professional development for inclusion in international schools remain a growing need (TALIS, 2009). Effective inclusion programmes require a collaborative approach where the involvement and participation of all stakeholders provide a solution-driven method for positive changes (Ainscow, 2007; Bartlett, 2014).

Technology has made it possible to connect and interact in a variety of ways. Virtual tools allow interactions such as tours, observations, feedback and coaching. They can open distant pathways and overcome the power structures in place. Teachers can meet virtually to discuss organisational practices and outcomes with peers from other schools, allowing them freedom to discuss topics and any results that may otherwise be hindered by the micropolitics at their actual school site. In the case of my study, the virtual platform was able to offer opportunities for critical conversation. Constraints of time and scheduling, can impede critical conversations and inclusion (Ainscow et al., 2004; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018). The virtual

space was an effort to mitigate these constraints and create a space allowing information and resources to be shared and used to support and evaluate progress (Boh, 2008; 2014).

The use of the virtual Cop is significant as it identifies how virtual spaces can be leveraged to influence agency and reshape international schools. As teachers continue to share their knowledge, this experience can continue to promote agency well beyond the conclusion of the 16 weeks. The community serves to uncover the challenges LS teachers face in international schools and the dedication of such professionals to champion inclusive practices.

Continuing the virtual CoP model would help international schools take up the recommendation of Ainscow (2007), Hadfield and Ainscow, (2018) and NFI (2011) in meeting the growing need for inclusion. Creating virtual access to consistent opportunities to engage in these conversations outside the power struggles of schools can inspire teachers and increase their agency for including and serving students with special needs. My study provides evidence that CoPs, and in particular virtual CoPs, can provide teachers and school leaders with effective environments to engage in timely and critical conversations that inform inclusion programmes and services (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Creese and Daniels, 2000; Boh, 2008; 2014; Pyrko et al., 2017). However, facilitating these critical conversations with care will help; grow collective perceptions of efficacy and shared responsibility for improving student outcomes not simply reinforcing the status quo (Wenger et al., 2011).

This research has potential for practical applications in the future as traditional international schools work to address barriers and obstacles to education (Bartlett, 2014). It will be especially interesting to research how these communities can support LS teachers in more remote areas or areas with limited access to resources and professional development related to serving students with diverse needs.

A complement to my study would be to include a greater number of international school teachers. This would provide a broader picture of inclusion and a greater perspective concerning the barriers and obstacles within international schools. A qualitative perspective would show how international school teachers navigate the similar and varying expectations of stakeholders, the perceptions of their interactions with their LS colleagues and how these perceptions would be complimentary to the growing body of research regarding inclusion in international schools (Caffyn, 2007; Lane and Jones, 2016).

The literature suggests how collaborative approaches which include observing, questioning, and dialogue regarding practice, are more effective in pulling the levers for inclusion (Ainscow, 2007; Wenger et al., 2011). Consequently, my study contributes to that body of knowledge and can inform educational leadership literature, suggesting a collaborative approach to leadership can foster inclusion and school improvement (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Cook-Greuter, 2004; Ainscow, 2007; Wenger et al., 2011); Pyrko et al., 2017; Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018). International LS teachers and school leaders can therefore focus on understanding the perceptions and power along with the opportunity and constraints that influence teacher agency and inclusion at their schools. Such understanding should be used to break down the barriers to implementing collaborative strategies that will lead to the necessary culture of inclusion.

Currently, teacher learning is generally geared toward classroom techniques and practices and is rarely the opportunity for critical reflection with peers (OECD 2009). Professional learning with opportunities for self-exploration, and challenging beliefs and perceptions can be created and be studied with the use of SRT to determine ways to improve learning for inclusion. Increasing such opportunities in international locations will address self-improvement, teacher agency and collaboration, all critical components of creating a shared responsibility of inclusion (Hill, 1971; Creese and Daniels, 2000; Ainscow et al., 2004; Ainscow, 2007; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Silva et al., 2012; Lukacs and Galluzzo 2014; Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; 2016).

Current international school leaders can be encouraged by these findings. They can work to implement these collaborative practices to leverage the agency of all their teachers. These techniques can foster the consistent support and practices that can inform the school as a whole of its effectiveness in inclusion. This will create a greater sense of shared responsibility and create the shared leadership practices that can support critical conversations necessary to meet the increasing needs of students in international schools. It will promote the development of an equitable, sustainable and stable approach as teachers work together to meet the growing demands for inclusion in international schools.

6.0 Chapter VI: Conclusion

My study first set out to identify the perceptions of empowerment and efficacy as these are key elements in determining if individuals will act and engage in activities that will lead to change. Then it explored the perceptions further by interviewing international LS professionals to capture their understanding of the challenges they face and the change they feel is needed to create a more shared responsibility for inclusion. Finally, the study concluded by conducting a 16-week virtual community trial to collect data on the social relations of international LS teachers to see how this model might be used to leverage shared knowledge and influence agency in an and between international schools (Foucault, 1980a, Creese and Daniels, 2000; Ainscow, 2007, Regnér, 2008, Silva et al., 2012).

After an initial investigation and a review of the literature it was possible to provide a theoretical foundation for understanding how social relations influence empowerment, agency and inclusion. This review made it possible to formulate the specific research questions that guided my study:

1. How might international school teachers' perception of empowerment and school efficacy create barriers to including students?
2. When do international learning support professionals perceive they are empowered to support inclusion?
3. What influence might virtual communities of practice have on a learning support teacher's agency and inclusion?

The first question looked to get a global understanding of the perceptions of empowerment and collective efficacy that might affect the agency needed to meet the growing demands of the diverse student population in international schools. The following questions were used to narrow the scope of my study and understand the experiences of LS professionals and how their perceptions might inform current inclusion practices. The final question set out to explore the possibilities of a virtual environment to support a collaborative approach to inclusion and LS teachers' agency in developing a shared responsibility for inclusion in and between schools.

The theoretical perspectives of my study affirm the important contribution to the development of academic knowledge. Indeed, these lenses provide ways for altering practices and developing capacity for inclusion in and between international schools. My study recontextualises inclusive education and shows how an effective and continuously developing system can be employed to support students with diverse learning needs.

The study answers the first of its three research questions by offering clues as to how international school teachers' perception of empowerment and school efficacy might create barriers to the shared responsibility of including students. It suggests that teachers who feel empowered, and sense that their schools are effective, may not feel responsible for inclusion. Empowerment and efficacy must then be added to the list of resistant dialogues, which includes time, access to resources, scheduling conflicts and exams. The survey serves as a foundation to guide further research to explore how to engage teachers in more critical dialogues in order to create a shared responsibility for inclusion across schools and better meet the needs of the diverse international student population.

In answering the second research question, it becomes clear, as international LS professionals shared their insight, that their values underpin their empowerment in creating ways to support inclusion in their schools. The findings suggest that LS professionals possess a psychological empowerment, which is limited as they seek ways to pull the levers of inclusion. Indeed, they work within a liminal space that is marked out by the powerful discourses running through the school. These act on each teacher's agency as they interact and react to the power that different discourses hold within a school. LS professionals would be more effective if they could engage directly with their peers in critical conversations about practices and learning to directly affect inclusion (Foucault, 1980a, Creese and Daniels, 2000; Ainscow, 2007; Regnér, 2008, Silva et al., 2012). The findings from my study suggest that the power that flows through international schools creates barriers to these more direct conversations and there is little opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practices. This reality highlights the need for more collaborative practices to leverage a shared responsibility for inclusion. International LS teachers are critical in bringing about this shared responsibility. Through a virtual CoP, they can work together with other LS professionals to identify how they might engage their agency more effectively to initiate and lead change towards more inclusive practices.

An effective way to address resistant dialogues and to influence agency is to have educational communities engage in reflective dialogue to solve problems and evaluate themselves and their schools' focusing on curriculum, pedagogy, and student development, collective responsibility for student learning is strong (Mark and Louis, 1997). This type of engagement will also allow international school communities to learn from each other in ways that will enable them to meet the specific needs of their geographical and cultural contexts.

A major contribution my study makes to education and beyond is the success of implementing a virtual CoP to strengthen learning and transform organizations. It establishes not only the possibility but the probability that virtual CoPs are a way forward in addressing the inclusive needs in international schools. The success of this community was made possible by the common language, understanding and experience these professionals shared. They were able to come together and begin to relate quickly, which helped them to activate their agency. As teachers interact in virtual CoPs, they engage in a critical environment that allows them to question each other and themselves, delving deeper into issues and unpacking resistance outside the powerful discourses running through their own schools. As these teachers gain insight, they also gain confidence that can lead to increased agency. Indeed, the interactions in the virtual CoP gives rise to a shared sense of inspiration and support. After engaging with peers outside their school, LS teachers can head back into their institutions and act. CoPs have the power to transform a school as professionals engage in critical reflection and dialogue that has the power to change values and practices in an institution. With the power of technology behind a CoP, these become exponentially valuable (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Creese and Daniels, 2000; Boh, 2008; 2014; Pyrko et al., 2017). Evaluation, critical reflection and dialogue are key to the transformation. Without these aspects, these powerful tools will only spread efficiency and maintain the unsustainable status quo. It will be critical to develop spaces, virtual or otherwise, that promote a cycle of social learning and shared leadership built on the premise of critical reflection that inspire experimentation and innovation (Wenger et al.; Ainscow, 2020).

It is in collaborative communities that social interactions are influenced and power can be shifted. It will be in these spaces too then that LS teachers can take the lead in sharing their knowledge in and between schools to promote the necessary dialogues that will lead to more inclusive practices. As LS professionals lead these communities, they can then shift from the psychological forms of empowerment they feel about inclusion to more structural

empowerment where they are involved in the decision making that will further break down barriers to inclusion.

My study has uncovered a complex relationship between institutional power, educational expectations and individual intentions and practices. LS professionals contend with this as they seek to engage in collaborative practices in international schools. The survey of international school teachers, LS professional narratives and LS teachers' reflections around agency reveal the variety of interactions and exchanges that they navigate to foster the necessary relationships and develop inclusion in an international setting. These pressures force LS professionals to regulate their agency within the liminal space between learning support and mainstream classrooms. Working within this space, and not with the greater social structure of the school or wider teaching community, led to a general sense that inclusion was a LS responsibility and not a collective responsibility (Quinn and Carl, 2015). This is a message that needs to be corrected.

The yearlong data collection, through survey, interviews and CoP, provide a wealth of quantitative and qualitative information which leads to a deeper understanding of the many complexities that shape actions and interactions within the context of international schools. The analysis gives specific insight into the experiences of LS teachers during a current period of growth that demands for more inclusive educational opportunities in an international setting. The examination of social and political influences on teacher agency is a contribution to international educational research. It gives a detailed account of international LS teachers' engagement with collaborative practise and their potential to lead the change to a shared responsibility for inclusion.

Research is consistently coming out to support the development of relationship in and between schools to support teachers leading for inclusion (Ainscow, ahead of print; Azorín and Ainscow, 2020). The next step is to share my data along with these recent findings as an article for the Journal of Research in International Education (JRIE). The article would promote virtual CoPs between international schools to build the necessary relationships to support LS professionals as they lead critical dialogue about power and practice. As these LS professionals collaborate to understand the context and the power that flows within in their particular institutions, they can work to support each other as they reshape their schools toward more inclusion. The article would be based on the current understanding from these

findings that LS professionals are leveraging their psychological empowerment to implement effective, yet limited, inclusive programs. In order for traditional international schools to get back to their original mission of meeting the diverse needs of their growing student population, a shared leadership could be developed: one where LS professionals would lead and engage in CoPs within their school and between schools with the goals of informing decisions and leading to structural empowerment and sustainable innovation toward inclusion.

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← **International School Survey**
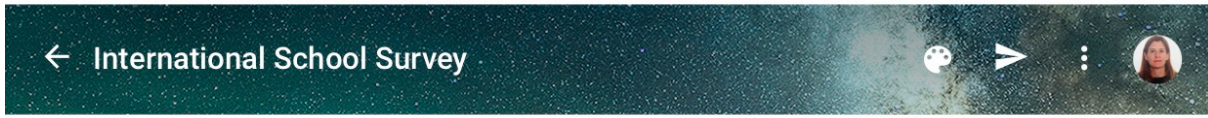
QUESTIONS

RESPONSES 133

International Teacher Efficacy and Empowerment Survey

Thank you for taking the time to be a part of this survey of collective teacher efficacy and teacher empowerment!

This survey has been created as part of a research project, which aims to contribute to the understanding of the effects of group efficacy and perceptions of empowerment on teachers. The survey is open to anyone teaching at any level in an international school.

It is critical to gather teachers' opinions and beliefs about how they influence student outcomes within their school setting. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete and all information will be kept confidential. Your participation is strictly voluntary and your responses will be completely anonymous.

You may at any time opt out of the study. If you have any questions, or would like more information about the project, you can get in touch with Andrea Neubauer at A.Neubauer@bath.ac.uk.

⠿

General Background

Description (optional)

What is your age? *

◯ 21-25

◯ 26-30

◯ 31-35

◯ 36-40

◯ 41-45

◯ 46-50

What is your gender? *

◯ Female

◯ Male

◯ Other

How many years of teaching experience do you have? *

◯ 0-2 years

◯ 3+ years

I obtained my teaching certification in the *

◯ UK

◯ USA

◯ Canada

◯ Other

If you answered other to the previous question could you please give the country where you were certified

Short answer text

What is your position *

1. Teacher

2. Head of department (or equivalent)

3. Head of year/ team leader

Other

If you answered other to the previous question, please describe your job title

Short answer text

I feel empowered to influence student outcomes.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or D...	Agree	Strongly Agree
Row 1	○	○	○	○	○

Based on your experiences in your most current position, please select the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements   *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor ...	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am given the resp...	○	○	○	○	○
I function in a prof...	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that I have...	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that I am ...	○	○	○	○	○
I have control over ...	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that I have...	○	○	○	○	○
I make decisions a...	○	○	○	○	○
I am treated as a p...	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that I am ...	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that I am ...	○	○	○	○	○
I am able to teach ...	○	○	○	○	○

I make decisions a...	○	○	○	○	○
I have the opportu...	○	○	○	○	○
I have the respect ...	○	○	○	○	○
I feel that I am invo...	○	○	○	○	○
I have the freedom...	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that I am ...	○	○	○	○	○
I am involved in sc...	○	○	○	○	○
I work at a school ...	○	○	○	○	○
I have the support ...	○	○	○	○	○
I see students learn.	○	○	○	○	○
I make decisions a...	○	○	○	○	○
I am a decision ma...	○	○	○	○	○
I am given the opp...	○	○	○	○	○
I am given the opp...	○	○	○	○	○
I have a strong kno...	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that I have...	○	○	○	○	○
I perceive that I ha...	○	○	○	○	○
I can determine my...	○	○	○	○	○
I have the opportu...	○	○	○	○	○
I perceive that I am...	○	○	○	○	○
Principals, other te...	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that I am	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagr...	Moderately Dis...	Disagree Slight...	Agree slightly ...	Moderately Agr...	Strongly Agree
I perceive that I ha...	○	○	○	○	○	
My advice is solicit...	○	○	○	○	○	
I have an opportun...	○	○	○	○	○	

Based on your experiences in your current institution, please select the extent to * which you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly Disagr...	Moderately Dis...	Disagree Slight...	Agree slightly ...	Moderately Agr...	Strongly Agree
Teachers in this...	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers here a...	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in this...	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a student doe...	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers here d...	○	○	○	○	○	○
These students ...	○	○	○	○	○	○
Home life provi...	○	○	○	○	○	○
Students here j...	○	○	○	○	○	○
The opportuniti...	○	○	○	○	○	○
Learning is mor...	○	○	○	○	○	○
Addiction in the...	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in this...	○	○	○	○	○	○

Experiences of empowerment

The following questions will ask you to describe your personal experiences where you have had the freedom to influence student learning.

desired change or influence student learning?

Long answer text

Describe where you feel that you affect the most change or have the most *
influence on student learning in your school (e.g. classroom, department or
across school)?

Long answer text

How do you make change or influence student learning beyond your classroom? *
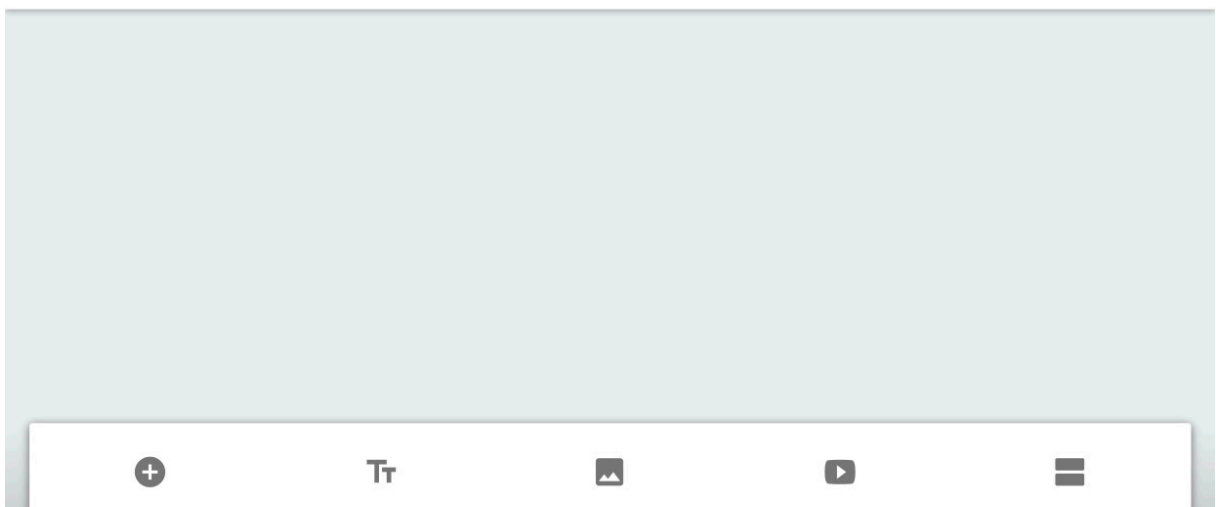
Long answer text

Do you have anything you would like to add?

Long answer text

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you would be willing to be
contacted for follow up research please leave your email address below

Long answer text

Appendix B

Interview Participant Consent Form and Proposed Questions

CONSENT FORM FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Dear participants,

My name is Andrea Neubauer and am conducting interviews as a part of my Education Doctorate at the University of Bath.

I am self-funding the following research project under the working title: Close encounter with power: analysing the possibility of regulating learning support teachers' perceptions of influencing inclusion in international schools.

Your participation is anticipated to bring meaningful insight and make a significant contribution to the very important topic of inclusion in international schools.

I agree to take part in the above research project. I have had the project explained to me. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Be interviewed by the researcher
- Allow the interview to be audio taped

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of any individual or workplace in the reports on the project, either by the researcher or by any other party.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with in accordance to the University of Bath strict research guidelines.

Name: _____

Signature _____

Date: _____

LS Professional Interview Questions

Is it ok to record this for the purposes of my study?

Can you tell me who you are - Job title - Your current school – have you taught at any other schools?

Why (how) you came to teaching? What brought you to teaching? International Schools?

How did you get into/learning support/Special education?

What tension if any exists between your ideas/views about teaching and the requirements of your job?

      How do you manage these tensions?
      Different in an international school setting?

How many learning support staff are at the school? (TA, teachers, coordinator)

Types of students you serve (gifted, mild to moderate…)?

How many students would you say you serve? Has this changed or been consistent in your time at the school?

Can you describe how you determine who to serve? Why? Are there parameters?

Who determines who to serve?

Can you describe your program for students with academic needs?

What are the classroom practices that you use to promote participation?

Describe how these practices are put in place – tell me a little about why the values and beliefs of the school promote serving all students.

How do you (or not) keep track of progress or changes to the program? Why or Why not? What are ways you formally or informally document progress?

Do you see any practices that might serve as barriers to participation? Can you tell me a little about why the values and beliefs might make it harder to serve all students?

How often do you get to talk with others? Who do you talk with to discuss ideas about your work? Why do you have these conversations?

Who do you interact with about this- inside/outside your department - what do you talk about?

Are there topics and ideas you talk about a lot? Any that might not get talked about - some words ideas avoided? Do your colleagues respond to "inclusion, differentiation or accommodations?

How do you feel about that? Does this arrangement work for you? Align with your views?

Do you have a favourite book or books that you recommend for teachers? Why?

Do you have any other resources that you use or would recommend?

When was the last time you attended PD? Can you recommend a conference or PD program? Why this one?

If you could design or had a chance to discuss ideas and concerns – what would you want it to include? Why?

Do you have contact with other schools to talk about inclusion – serving students with academic needs? Who, how often? Would you be open to discussion with someone outside - why or why not

Anything you would like to add?

Outline of research enquiry to willing participants

To:
From: Andrea Neubauer
Date: August 2018

TITLE OF STUDY
Student inclusion in international schools: an examination of the potential of Learning Support teachers as agents for change

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Andrea Neubauer
University of Bath
andreaneubauer5@gmail.com
+33 6 78022256

PURPOSE OF STUDY
The purpose of this study is to critically explore how engaging in critical enquiry related to inclusive practices influences learning support teachers in international schools. This study aims to better understand how virtual techniques can support the creation of a specific learning support community devised of teachers at different schools and its influence on teachers implementing inclusive practices at their schools.

STUDY PROCEDURES
First, participants will be interviewed individually to gather information about their perception of inclusive practices at their school. Participants will be asked for consent and may decline to take part in any or all questions. They may also terminate involvement at any time. Then, during the 16 weeks of the study they will be asked to share resources and continue to discuss topics related to implementing inclusive practices virtually in an online community. Once consent is granted the participants will be given access to an online community created by the researcher. The participants will be asked to engage with the community by introducing themselves, sharing their goals for the upcoming school year and sharing resources related to the practices of inclusion. In addition to the community, participants will be asked to participate in virtual meetings and to keep an online log of their experience during the 16-week study period.

The analysis of the online documents will seek to identify themes and reoccurring issues individuals face as they initiate inclusive practices in their specific environments. Lastly, data will be analyzed and compared across the sites to determine similarities and differences in each of the different contexts. This analysis will be used to draw conclusions about how inclusive practices are being carried out and how learning teachers might be supported in international schools as they work to develop inclusive practices.

RISKS
It will be important to safeguard the identity of each participant, school and workplace. All measures will be taken to protect their identity. The research will not use any names or pseudonyms that would allow identification of the participants, schools or workplaces directly.

As these will be small working groups, anyone who has knowledge of the group may be able to make a direct link to the participants if tags such as gender, school site or department are used. Additionally, as the tools in this study will be virtual and there is a risk that the environment might be accessed by individuals outside the specific working group. All steps will be taken to maintain the integrity of the environment and access limited to individuals taking part in this study.

BENEFITS

The outcomes of this study may not aid the organizations taking part directly but the stories shared will allow for a deeper understanding of how individuals teachers perceive how specific activities (e.g. critical reflection, knowledge of human development, collaboration and self-organization) influence them as they work to implement inclusive practices at their sites. It will document participants' stories as they share the challenges they face and their perception of support. From these stories, connections will be made about learning and the similarities and differences international school teachers encounter as they work to include students at their schools. By engaging in critical reflection and discussion through the virtual environment, they will allow access and gain understanding of practices and procedures that could help to identify factors that support or hinder individuals within the organization to initiate and engage in implementing inclusive practices in international schools.

CONFIDENTIALITY

For the purposes of this research study, your comments as a participant will not be anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in the personal possession of the researcher and password protected

Data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. These incidents include, but may not be limited to, incidents of abuse and suicide risk.

CONTACT INFORMATION

As a participant, if you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.
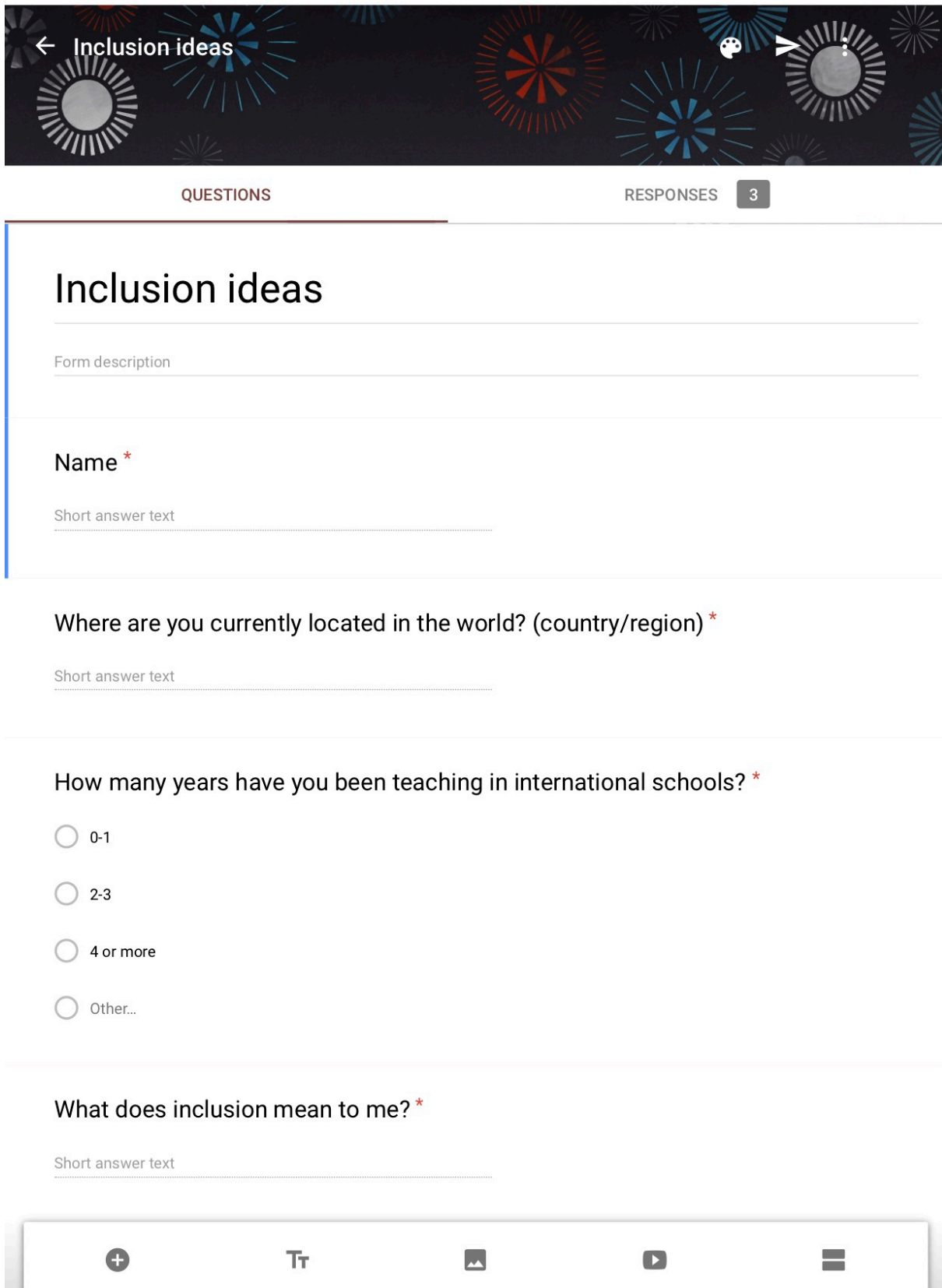
CONSENT

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's signature _____ Date   11.8. 2018

Pre-Virtual Community of Practice Survey

Inclusion ideas

Form description

Name *

Short answer text

Where are you currently located in the world? (country/region) *

Short answer text

How many years have you been teaching in international schools? *

○ 0-1

○ 2-3

○ 4 or more

○ Other…

What does inclusion mean to me? *

Short answer text

Short answer text

I believe I can influence inclusive practices at my school? *

○ Strongly disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

If I could do one thing to change inclusion at my school I would?

Short answer text

I have colleagues I talk to about inclusion *

○ at my site

○ through a website

○ I do not usually talk about inclusion

○ Other…

I plan to _____over the next 16 weeks to promote inclusion at my school? *

Long answer text

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Post Virtual Community of Practice Survey

Post Virtual Inclusion ideas

Form description

Name *

Short answer text

Where are you currently located in the world? (country/region) *

Short answer text

How many years have you been teaching in international schools? *

○ 0-1

○ 2-3

○ 4 or more

○ Other...

What does inclusion mean to me? *

Short answer text

Short answer text

I believe I can influence inclusive practices at my school? *

○ Strongly disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

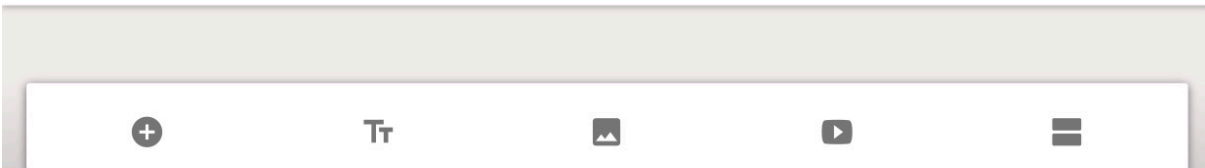## If I could do one thing to change inclusion at my school I would?

Short answer text

I have colleagues I talk to about inclusion *

○ at my site

○ through a website

○ I do not usually talk about inclusion

○ Other…

I plan to _____over the next 16 weeks to promote inclusion at my school? *

Long answer text