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The Role of Leadership in Changing the Culture of an International School to be Inclusive of Students with Special

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College of Education

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Simon Gillespie

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

The Role of Leadership in
Changing the Culture of an International School to be Inclusive of Students with Special
Learning Needs

by
Simon Gillespie

MA, California State University Northridge, 2007

BEd, University of Alberta, 1997

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

July 2017

Abstract

Educating a diverse student population is a core principle of international school education. Historically, many international schools have had admissions policies that excluded students with special learning needs. However, admission policies have changed to require more inclusiveness and school support for a wider range of students and for effectively meeting their needs. The study was based on change theory. Of interest was how school leaders best supported the change process to create the conditions for success in the context of changing admissions policies. Research questions targeted strategies that supported change and student success that were used to change the culture of a school to be inclusive of students with special learning needs. A bounded case study approach was used, selecting an international school that has successfully gone through this change. Interviews were conducted with a purposeful sample of 9 school leaders and teachers from those who volunteered and based on criteria to have a balanced group of types of positions and experience with inclusion. Findings were supportive of understanding the change process in context and were focused on ensuring common understandings among all stakeholders, creating systems and resources to support inclusive practices, ensuring ongoing and embedded professional learning, and understanding the diversity challenges inherent in the international school context. A project was developed to provide international school leaders with professional development based on the findings so they can effectively assist teachers and school personnel in making changes towards inclusion. The project contributes to social change by providing access and support to international schools for students who previously may have been excluded based on their special learning needs.

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Dedication

It is my honor to dedicate this piece of work to my wife, Kelly Arndt. For her support throughout the process to achieve this goal and to help me develop my passion and commitment to ensuring all children regardless of their learning challenges are being educated in the best possible learning environment in the context of our international schools.

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I am appreciative of my family who supported me throughout the process achieving my Doctor of Education degree. My wife Kelly Arndt, who has been by my side throughout the process and kept me on track to completion. To our extended families for understanding our passion to live internationally and travel the world and the sacrifices that came with needing time to study and therefore limiting time back home during holidays.

I would like to acknowledge the Next Frontier Inclusion organization and the work of William Powell, Ochan Kusuma-Powell, Kevin Bartlett, and Kristen Pelletier, who have provided me with inspiration throughout the process of my project study and my work as a leader in international schools attempting to make a significant impact in the lives of all of our students.

Thank you to my committee chair, Dr. Don Jones, and second chair, Dr. Christopher Godat, for the support and encouragement throughout the process and ensuring I stayed the course through to completion. The feedback received was always detailed and concise to ensure I was meeting the requirements and reaching a high level of quality work.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge all of the students who have challenged the work we are doing to ensure we are providing the best possible education. I am proud to stand up to the status quo and make significant changes to impact the lives of all students regardless of differences and challenges they may face.

Table of Contents

Section 1: The Problem.....	1
Description of the Local Problem.....	1
Rationale and Significance of the Local Problem.....	3
Rationale.....	3
Definition of Special Terms.....	6
Significance.....	7
Research Questions.....	8
Review of the Literature Addressing the Problem.....	9
Conceptual Framework.....	9
Current Research on Inclusion in International Schools.....	12
Research on Effective Inclusion Models.....	12
The Role of the Leader.....	14
Teacher Attitudes and Perspectives Toward Inclusion.....	19
International School Context.....	25
Implications.....	28
Conclusion.....	29
Section 2: The Methodology.....	31
Qualitative Research Design and Approach.....	31
Participants.....	32
Data Collection Methods.....	34
Data Analysis Methods.....	36
Data Analysis Results.....	39

Review of Process for Generating and Recording Data	40
Perceptions and Disconnect Between Teachers and Leadership	40
Common Understanding	42
Systems to Support Inclusion	45
Providing the Necessary Resources	48
Ongoing and Embedded Professional Learning	50
International School Context	52
Limitations	55
Conclusion	55
Section 3: The Project.....	57
Introduction.....	57
Rationale	58
Review of the Literature	59
Perceived Benefits of Professional Development.....	60
Understanding Participants Needs	61
Methods of School Leader Professional Development.....	63
Contextual Learning.....	64
Shared Leadership.....	65
Mentorships.....	65
Implications of Literature Review	67
Project Description.....	68
Project Evaluation Plan.....	71
Project Implications for Social Change	74

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions.....	76
Introduction.....	76
Project Strengths	76
Project Limitations.....	77
Recommendations for Alternate Approaches	78
Project Development.....	79
Reflection on the Importance of the Work	80
Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research and Social Change	81
Conclusions.....	82
References.....	84
Appendix A: The Project	95
Appendix B: Interview Questions.....	136
Appendix C: Document Review Protocol.....	137

Section 1: The Problem

Description of the Local Problem

International schools and the education they provide their students can be characterized as exemplars of learning about diversity; this includes being diverse in nationalities, cultures, ways of thinking, and ways of learning (Hayden, 2006; Shaklee, 2007). The inclusion of all students representing a diverse world, therefore, is a highlight of international schools. Many national systems in the past 20 years have developed policies and practices that include students with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms based on research and evidence in support of inclusion (Grima-Farrell, Bain, & McDonagh, 2011; Pijl & Frissen, 2009; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). However, barriers still exist in international schools with admissions policies that exclude students with a variety of special educational needs (Hayden, 2006; Shaklee, 2007; United States Office of Overseas Schools, 2014).

There is a movement to develop international schools towards being more inclusive, and with this have come a number of challenges (Powell, Kusuma-Powell, Pelletier, & Bartlett, 2011; United States Office of Overseas Schools, 2014). In some instances, becoming an inclusive international school has negatively impacted students and teachers because placement has happened in schools without the necessary support in place (Shaklee, 2007). As a result, international schools need to ensure resources are available, appropriate learning environments are created, and strategies are provided to ensure the success of all students (Shaklee, 2007). A possible contributor to this problem of lack of support for inclusion is that international school leaders are not prepared with

the skills and strategies to create a culture of inclusion that provides the necessary tools and support for teachers.

The students in any given international school comprise a diverse population, each with an individual cultural, linguistic, and family background. Students with special learning needs who have traditionally been excluded from international schools are those with moderate to intense needs (Shaklee, 2007; United States Office of Overseas Schools, 2014). These may include students with learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, cognitive and developmental delays, and behavioral based conditions (Shaklee, 2007). Inclusion in international schools is, therefore, defined as the inclusion of all students including those with special learning needs with appropriate support provided.

An international school in the Philippines, hereafter referred to with the pseudonym *ISP*, is the setting where this problem was identified and the premise for this study was established. The school has been on a journey toward becoming more inclusive and changing practices on admissions and how students with special learning needs are supported. During the last 5 years, the administration of the school has been challenged with the ethical dilemma of wanting to avoid turning away students, but at the same time, facing the realistic challenges that becoming inclusive mean to the education of all students, the learning environment, and the resources available. Looking back over the growth made in the area of inclusion of all students at *ISP* over the past 5 years, challenges have continued to exist and more steps need to be taken based on definitions of what being a fully inclusive schools means (Powell, Kusuma-Powell, Pelletier, &

Bartlett, 2013). Support is therefore needed so that ISP can further move ahead to becoming a truly inclusive school with an admissions policy that supports all students.

ISP has recently joined a network of similar international schools embarking on the same path toward implementing a more inclusive setting that are struggling with similar issues. This network, called the Next Frontier Inclusion (2013), has a mission to create a fully inclusive international school in each major city in the world to support expatriate families and children with special learning needs with a total of 100 member schools worldwide.

Rationale and Significance of the Local Problem

Rationale

The reason for selecting the topic of inclusion in international schools as a project focus was because practices of exclusion are not aligned with schools that celebrate and base their foundation on the concept of diversity (Hayden, 2006; Hughes, 2012; Shaklee, 2007; United States Office of Overseas Schools, 2014). For too long international schools have remained status quo and school leaders have let themselves accept the barriers to inclusion as the reason for not making the change (Hayden, 2006; Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2013; Powell et al., 2011). Challenges have included areas such as resources not being available in the host country or financial implications of hiring the necessary personnel (Hayden, 2006; Shaklee, 2007). Creating a culture of inclusion in all international schools would be significant based on the ideals of diversity. A priority of international schools should, therefore, be to better align with the values of diversity and the benefits to all students that being inclusive can offer. With families being more

globally mobile, they should not be limited where they can live and work based on the learning needs of their children (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2013). This study was in response to a change in policy towards being inclusive of all students in international schools. One international school was examined that has implemented change in inclusive policy.

There has been a large area of research on inclusion and inclusive practices in national systems (Grima-Farrell et al., 2011; Pijl & Frissen, 2009; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). However, this has not been the case in the context and setting of international schools, which have a unique history and set of challenges (Roberts, 2012; Shaklee, 2007). Researchers have examined the role of the school leader in implementing inclusive schools (Philpott, Furey, & Penney, 2010; Ryan, 2010; Schmidt & Venet, 2012; Waldron, McLeskey, & Redd, 2011); however, these studies were not in the context of international schools with different challenges and barriers. The studies also did not give specific strategies that school leaders can use to apply to their own school settings.

The number of international schools globally has increased over the past decade along with the different types and purposes of international schools (Roberts, 2012). Further data that demonstrated the degree of the problem in terms of numbers of international schools that are inclusive, in the process of becoming inclusive, or remain exclusive would strengthen support for the problem. These statistics are not readily available and have been inconsistent depending on the source and the definition used for what constitutes an international school. For example, the International School Consultancy group (as cited in Brummitt, 2014) identified 6,533 English medium

schools, while the International Baccalaureate Organization (2014) identified 3,659 member schools. The United States Office of Overseas Schools (2014) provided information to parents on what is available for students in terms of special education services at each of their affiliated schools; although there were over 400 schools listed, some had limited services, while few were identified as fully inclusive. The low number of schools indicated that the change in policy is needed, and this has begun to happen. However, to support schools, more information is needed and can be provided from the examination of an international school that is already implementing inclusive practices.

Along with the number of international schools that are not inclusive or in the process of becoming inclusive, specific international schools such as ISP could provide other potential evidence of this problem. These data include the admissions policy, which has been updated to be more inclusive, the updated learning support resources manual, and statistics from the admissions office with the numbers of students accepted and rejected, and the growth in numbers of students classified as receiving learning support. Data received from the admissions office indicated that in the school year 2013–2014 there were 122 new students in the elementary school with a total population of 707. Of the 122, 10 were accepted identified as needing learning support; however, 15 students were not accepted due to a higher level of support needed with the necessary resources not being available. The most recent accreditation report and self-study for ISP from the Council of International Schools and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges outlined the areas of growth and areas that still needed focus in order to become inclusive and fully support all students regardless of their special learning needs. At the time this

research took place, ISP had started to implement inclusive policies but it was at the beginning stages of implementation. With the research provided, ISP can continue to grow with more students with different learning needs being accepted and supported with the necessary resources and effective teaching strategies. International schools that are exclusive, on the same path as ISP towards inclusivity, or that are deemed as successfully implementing an inclusive program could also collect similar data as identified by ISP.

Definition of Special Terms

International schools have a number of different definitions and exist in many different forms (Hayden, 2006; Roberts, 2012). In the context of this study, I defined international schools as schools established in a country to provide an education for expatriate families who have relocated to the country for work (Hayden, 2006). These schools are an English language medium and they are not required to follow the laws of a specific country as laid out by education policy and guidelines. They are private, nonprofit institutions that generate funds to operate through tuition fees. Curriculum is set by the individual school, which is governed by a board of trustees (Hayden, 2006). The leadership of the school is some form of a head of school or director and principals of the elementary, middle, and high school, depending on the size of the school (Hayden, 2006).

Inclusion can be defined as the following: “Inclusion is described and defined as an approach focused on responding to the diversity of student needs in ways that are beneficial to students with and without disabilities” (Grima-Farrell et al., 2011, p. 118). Based on this definition, mainstream teachers are able to meet the needs of all students in the classroom using a variety of strategies along with models of coteaching, push-in and

pullout support by special education teachers, and other services such as speech and language, occupational therapy, and counseling services as needed (Powell et al., 2011).

Significance

The purpose of the study was to explore leadership from the perspectives of teachers and administrators in the context of one bounded case of an inclusive international school that provides guidance for implementation of inclusive practices at other international schools. This exploration of leadership applies to ISP, where the problem in the local context was established along with those schools associated with the Next Frontier Inclusion network of international schools striving to support each other on the path to becoming more inclusive. Providing support to school leaders has been achieved through the study of an international school that has successfully achieved fully inclusive status and learning how they became more inclusive of students with special learning needs that can now be applied to other international schools, taking into consideration their individual context. A school like ISP can now take the data collected and recommendations, reflect on the ongoing challenges, and then apply the results of the research to implement a more inclusive school program.

The ability to create strategies for school leaders based in research in the context of international schools is significant for reaching the goal of successfully including all students to achieve the characteristic of international schools being based on the principles of diversity. Further research should be conducted on the implementation of inclusive programs in international schools to strengthen and develop the education provided to all students.

Research Questions

Past research addressing the problem under consideration has shown connections to the purpose and importance of inclusion for students with special learning needs and how to implement inclusive programs in schools in terms of resources, professional development, and support structures. Scholars have researched extensively the role of the leader in creating change for addressing different problems and in some cases how to support the inclusion of all students. In the international school context, however, research in the area of inclusion has been lacking. A gap exists in specific strategies that school leaders can use to build a culture of inclusion in the context of a culturally diverse international school. More consideration is needed to support international schools in becoming inclusive to meet the ultimate goal of achieving and teaching with the values and benefits of a diverse school population.

A central research question that supported the problem under investigation was the following: What strategies support, and measures of success were used to change the culture of a school to be inclusive of students with special learning needs based on changing admissions policies that reflect the diversity of international schools? To further develop this question, supporting questions guided the research:

1. What are administrators' and teachers' perspectives of the challenges faced by the school in the process of implementing inclusive programs to achieve a cultural change?
2. What are administrators' and teachers' perspectives of how these challenges were overcome to achieve a cultural change?

3. What are administrators' and teachers' perspectives of strategies implemented that were supportive of teachers' work in creating an inclusive learning environment for all students?
4. What are administrators' and teachers' perspectives of how the school was able to determine their success in implementing an inclusive environment?
5. What are administrators' and teachers' perspectives of how the school community has supported the change to an inclusive school environment?

Review of the Literature Addressing the Problem

The search of literature for this study focused on peer-reviewed journals based on current research from the past 5 years. Electronic databases were used including Education Research Information Center, Education Research Complete, and SAGE Journals Online. The search terms included the following: *inclusion, special education, mainstreaming, integration, international schools, leadership, principal, and change*. These terms were used in combination using Boolean searches to narrow the available resources to those that pertained to the local problem, research question, and conceptual framework: *international schools and inclusion, international schools and special education, inclusion and leadership, special education and leadership, leadership and change, and leadership and change and inclusion*.

Conceptual Framework

Scholars have described change as complex and inevitable (Fullan, 2011; Hargreaves, 2009). How a leader deals with change has been a key indicator of the success of an organization (Fullan, 2001). When examining change, there are reasons

why it happens, and it is how a leader responds to change that is most important (Fullan, 2001). By understanding the change, a leader can influence it or not, take action, or disregard the change (Fullan, 2001). A review of the literature revealed many proven, complex, and contradictory ways to manage change with different strategies and systems (Fullan, 2001, 2009). Fullan (2001) contended that change cannot be controlled, but it should be led. There is not a step-by-step approach, but rather approaches a leader must take to create a culture where change happens as part of the organization: “Leading in a culture of change means creating a culture, not just a structure of change...producing the capacity to seek, critically assess, and selectively incorporate new ideas and practices” (Fullan, 2001, p. 44).

Fullan (2009) and Hargreaves (2009) both examined change in the context of education and school reform. Based on their analysis, they did not find one factor to success, but several interacting together, which resulted in a greater impact of sustained change. When effective change is taking place, the following are considered: the role of the leader to inspire and to build capacity in others, connections made to pedagogy, and support given to teachers. Both authors noted that it was important to think about context, allowing for flexibility and innovation as opposed to a top-down approach.

Basing practice on theory and implementing change is important, but often researchers and practitioners do not explore key parts of how to make this happen (Fullan, 2011). To effectively lead change, Fullan (2011) stated that leaders must be learners, and to accomplish this, they must practice. Leaders should analyze good examples and practices; they should then practice in their own context and find strategies

that work. Finally, they should reflect on this process and develop the ideas and practices further.

The problem generated by this project is how to effectively manage change in international schools from having exclusive admissions policies to being inclusive schools for all students regardless of any special learning needs. In this context of applying the concepts and framework for leading change developed by Fullan (2001, 2009, 2011), I could approach the problem from the perspective of the leader in establishing conditions for sustainable change. For the school to successfully move to being inclusive, Fullan (2001) would challenge that the role of the leader is to understand the change and then approach it by creating a culture where the leader is embracing the change and directly involved in the implementation by building capacity in other school leaders and teachers. This approach will have the greatest impact for sustaining the change under development.

To justify the study supported by the conceptual framework of leading change developed by Fullan (2001, 2011), a case study examining the practices of the leader in the context of an international school would provide an example for other school leaders to examine. Fullan (2011) recommended that this example be practiced by other school leaders in their own context and further developed. This approach could then have the potential to lead to lasting and supported change towards inclusive practices in international schools.

Current Research on Inclusion in International Schools

A review of the current research literature on the topic of inclusion in international schools centered on four areas: research on effective inclusive models, the role of the leader in inclusive schools, the perspective of international schools and inclusion, and the attitudes and perceptions of teachers towards inclusion. Earlier research on the topic supported the idea of schools becoming inclusive, as Odom, Buysee, and Soukakou (2011) highlighted in their analysis of the research and the historical perspective of inclusion. More recent research has, therefore, focused more on the process of change towards becoming inclusive, challenges, and strategies to support inclusive practices.

Research on Effective Inclusion Models

Earlier researchers discussed the importance and value of inclusive school settings, while current researchers have explored models deemed successful with supporting data and rationale. These models include students' transitions from school to work (Bennett & Gallagher, 2013), coteaching models (Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010), and forms of student advocacy (Flynn, Shevlin, & Lodge, 2011). Along with identifying models that work, the literature has also focused on policies and guidelines that support inclusive practices (Huberman, Navo, & Parrish, 2012; Walton & Nel, 2012).

By examining the transition of students with intellectual challenges as they move from the school environment to work, Bennett and Gallagher (2013) demonstrated the benefits of inclusive school practices. All stakeholders of students diagnosed with

intellectual disabilities were surveyed in a quantitative approach to understand the impact of inclusion in the mainstream classroom and the transition to the workplace (Bennett & Gallagher, 2013). The responses of participants highlighted the benefits of inclusion, especially in an environment where all stakeholders support it and are proponents of the model (Bennett & Gallagher, 2013). Bennett and Gallagher noted the need for service delivery teams in both the school and workplace as important to ensuring individual student success along with communication systems among the various team members and stakeholders.

A critical analysis of Nichols et al.'s (2010) exploration of the coteaching model for addressing the needs of students with special needs further supported the concept of a team approach highlighted by Bennett and Gallagher (2013). The coteaching model is where a class teacher and a special education teacher work together in the same classroom (Nichols et al., 2010). While their study demonstrated teaching to be a successful model to support students with special needs, Nichols et al.'s findings raised concern that it did not increase the regular class teachers' skills towards inclusive practices. It is therefore not a long-term solution to ensure that all teachers are qualified to meet the needs of all students, and strategies used within a coteaching environment cannot be transferred to situations when the regular class teacher is alone. However, coteaching is effective in meeting the needs and providing the necessary resources for students when they are in the cotaught environment (Nichols et al., 2010). Twenty-four school districts participated in the study by completing a survey based on the implementation and perceived success of coteaching models (Nichols et al., 2010). For

success of the coteaching models, the authors recommended requiring proper staff development to maximize instruction and support provided to all students (Nichols et al., 2010).

Flynn et al. (2011) focused on understanding student perspectives and listening to their voices in order to improve inclusive programs for students with special needs. Students diagnosed having social, emotional, and/or behavioral challenges were interviewed in four schools to complete a narrative case study (Flynn et al., 2011). The key finding from the research highlighted by the students was the value they placed on teachers listening to them and being involved in their learning (Flynn et al., 2011).

Researchers have explored having clear policies, definitions, and procedures in place as an important factor in establishing inclusive schools (Huberman et al., 2012; Walton & Nel, 2012). Parents, teachers, and administrators all having a common understanding of what inclusion means and how it is being implemented is important to ensure the needs of students are being met (Walton & Nel, 2012). Scholars also identified that, in inclusive models, there is the need for strong partnerships between classroom and special education teachers (Huberman et al., 2012; Walton & Nel, 2012). Huberman et al. (2012) also highlighted identifying curricular programs and ongoing assessment as being necessary for the success of student learning.

The Role of the Leader

In the literature, researchers have described the role of principal with relation to implementing inclusive practices and creating a supportive environment for inclusion. Waldron et al. (2011) conducted a case study of a school in a national system focusing on

the role of the leader to create an effective inclusive school. Through interviews and observations, five key findings emerged that included having a vision and overall direction for the school, examining and readjusting how the school is organized, working together with teachers to support and develop the program, ensuring a high level of learning is taking place, and using data for decision making (Waldron et al., 2011).

A second study with a similar purpose examined the perspectives of principals faced with the challenges of creating inclusive schools (Schmidt & Venet, 2012). Each principal was recognized as having a different leadership style and approached the change in attitudes and practices towards inclusivity in their school setting. Schmidt and Venet (2012) determined that a focus on changing the culture of the school along with a transformational leadership style was most aligned with successful implementation of inclusion. Other factors influencing the effective implementation of inclusion were highlighted: the school size and environment, the teaching background of the principal, knowledge and attitudes of the principal towards inclusion, the prior culture of the school, and the personality of the principal (Schmidt & Venet, 2012). These studies provided examples that other school leaders could use in the context of their local environment (Schmidt & Venet, 2012; Waldron et al., 2011)

Researchers have considered other contexts and settings. An example of this is a case study exploring the role of the principal in the setup of a new school that was established as inclusive (Ryan, 2010). Ryan (2010) focused on the perceived benefits of starting an inclusive program in a school without prior history or different perspectives being barriers. The research determined whether having a school leader and teachers all

aligned with the principles of inclusion from the start would benefit the success of the program and overall student learning. The 3-year study was complicated by a change in leadership after 1 year affecting the outcome. Ryan concluded that there were influences from outside sources that were difficult to control and challenges that would make inclusion an ongoing process. It was recommended that future researchers look at ways to overcome obstacles. In this case, all the conditions were set for success, but the school was faced with challenges, raising the question of how these could be planned for and proactively considered.

Attitudes of school leaders and the impact that these attitudes have on implementation of an inclusive school have also been examined (Hadjikakou & Mnasonos, 2012). Through questionnaires and a follow-up focus group interview, Hadjikakou and Mnasonos (2012) concluded that participants reported positive attitudes, but school leaders raised concerns about challenges and difficulties of implementation. It was noted that prior research showed attitudes towards inclusion of principals were generally positive, and some suggested that this was due to limited contact with students and direct involvement with teaching (Hadjikakou & Mnasonos, 2012).

Angelides, Savva, and Hajisoteriou (2012) explored the role of special education teacher leaders in the context of developing inclusive schools. A qualitative case study approach was used in two primary schools using interviews and observations with the school leader, special education teacher, and six other teachers (Angelides et al., 2012). The findings highlighted the important role the experts on special education played in the school and the success of the inclusive program (Angelides et al., 2012). A team

approach among the various school leaders who worked together synergistically was shown to lead to more successful implementation of an inclusive program in a mainstream setting (Angelides et al., 2012).

Continuing with the notion of distributed leadership as identified by Angelides et al. (2012), Mullick, Deppeler, and Sharma (2012) surveyed teachers to find out from whom in their school they received support to help with students who were having difficulties. Quantitative data were collected using a survey of 79 teachers from 10 primary schools in one school district to identify who teachers recognized as being leaders they could go to for support and who were instrumental in creating effective change (Mullick et al., 2012). The findings suggested that not only positional leaders, but also other teachers without formal leadership positions were instrumental in bringing about change and supporting inclusive practices (Mullick et al., 2012). From both of these studies, it was suggested that distributed leadership was a main factor to the success of school development and reform in implementing inclusive education for all students (Angelides et al., 2012; Mullick et al., 2012).

Shealey, Sparks, and Thomas (2012) highlighted advocacy for students with special needs by school leadership in their case study of charter schools. The authors examined the value of charter schools (a) being able to target a specific mission, (b) bringing down barriers of social injustice, and (c) transforming school systems to respond to diversity by providing support for all students with special education needs (Shealey et al., 2012). The authors discussed the important role of school leadership in setting the school mission leading to better support for all students. Challenges emerged, and the

authors noted further research on the role of charter schools and their ability to overcome issues of social justice was warranted (Shealey et al., 2012).

The role of leadership and the impact of relationships built on trust between principals and families of children with disabilities led Shelden, Angell, Stoner, and Roseland (2010) to conclude that trust impacts and benefits the educational experiences of students. In a collective case study, the researchers selected mothers of children with special needs using purposeful sampling and conducted interviews (Shelden et al., 2010). The authors concluded that principals who built trust by relating to families with children who have disabilities with benevolence and with openness were more effective in meeting children's needs. These principals were more involved in the special education program and more active in making decisions that positively affected these students (Shelden et al., 2010).

Literature on the topic of effective leadership and supporting change in the school context forms a part of this study based on the alignment with the leading change conceptual framework considered. This topic is a further focus of the review of literature beyond the role of the leader in the articles above which focused on inclusion. Other researchers looked at topics such as the relationship between a principal's involvement as an instructional leader and the impact this has on teacher self-efficacy and the desire to improve practice in the classroom (Calik, Sezgin, Kavgaci, & Kilinc, 2012). The results from this quantitative survey based study showed that an increase in a principal's instructional leadership correlated with a teacher's self-efficacy and an overall move in the school to change practice in the classroom (Calik et al., 2012).

Through a mixed methods approach that examined teacher practices and the impact of change and innovation, Gather-Thurler and Maulini (2012) looked at the impact of advances in society and education on learning. They concluded that for change to be successful and sustainable, reorganization and change in attitudes must take place both at the leadership and teacher levels.

Teacher Attitudes and Perspectives Toward Inclusion

A teacher's perceptions and attitudes towards inclusion are an important area to consider in the research. A leader understanding how to support teachers has been demonstrated as one element towards effective implementation of inclusion (Obiakor, Harris, Mutua, Rotatori, & Algozzine, 2012; Odom et al., 2011; Waldron et al., 2011). Gavish and Shimoni (2011) studied elementary school teachers' perceptions towards special needs students being included in their classrooms after policy changes in Israel. Through interviews they determined that although there was overwhelming support for inclusion, a limited knowledge and understanding about policies and children with special learning needs led to a feeling of anxiety and lack of being prepared to meet the demands of all students. There was a perceived lack of direction and pressure from the different stakeholders. It was noted by Gavish and Shimoni (2011) based on earlier studies that more work needed to be accomplished in the area of teacher training and changing practices in the classroom. This study did not look at the role of leadership and the support provided to teachers.

Teacher and teaching assistants' thoughts on why inclusion may not be effectively implemented was the focus of a study by Glazzard (2011) based in the United Kingdom.

Examining the perceived barriers through qualitative interviews of school personnel, it was concluded that the areas of funding, resources, training, and parent support were barriers towards full inclusion. Through the interviews, Glazzard noted that some teachers were in full support of inclusion, and others were not. Their level of support of inclusion was also reflected in the teaching practices observed. It was suggested that teachers should all be able to commit to inclusion with practices given to achieve this to advance the effectiveness of inclusion by addressing the barriers identified (Glazzard, 2011). There were similar findings from other studies, which looked at teachers' experiences, and what they believed would create an effective inclusive school (Du Toit & Forlin, 2009; Goodman & Burton, 2010). The teachers interviewed had children with behavioral difficulties mainstreamed into their classrooms. The teachers, overall, believed that how they interacted with the children and their relationships had the greatest impact on student learning (Goodman & Burton, 2010). There was also a strong support for more training and the addition of more human resources to better support the students' overall development (Du Toit & Forlin, 2009; Goodman & Burton, 2010).

A trend that emerged from the literature and perceptions of experienced teachers is that they lacked preparation or the ability to address the different needs of all students. Studies have been conducted to explore student teacher feelings towards inclusion and how prepared they are after their courses (Beacham & Rouse, 2012; Fayez, Dababneh, & Jumiaan, 2011). Beacham and Rouse (2012) analyzed attitudes and beliefs about inclusion through surveys before and after their completion of course work on the topic. The findings showed positive and supportive attitudes towards inclusion, but a lack of

feeling prepared to implement an inclusive classroom. Similar findings were reported by Fayeze et al. (2011) through a qualitative approach interviewing student teachers. Overall there was a feeling of support for inclusion, but there was a level of dissatisfaction with their overall preparation from university courses.

Understanding the perceptions of teachers towards inclusion of children with hearing loss was a focus of Eriks-Brophy and Whittingham (2013), which concluded that general education classroom teachers would benefit from more specific and specialized training about the needs of children with hearing loss to provide the best possible learning environment. The study was based on a quantitative questionnaire centered on the attributes developed in research that best support inclusive programs (Eriks-Brophy & Whittingham, 2013). The study contradicted previous research and showed that teachers had positive attitudes and felt para-professionals gave appropriate support to themselves and students. Teachers were also in favor of the inclusion model (Eriks-Brophy & Whittingham, 2013). The questionnaire was developed for this study, and therefore, to solidify the findings, it is felt that it should be replicated in a different context (Eriks-Brophy & Whittingham, 2013).

Student teacher training for special education and inclusive models were examined by Melekoglu (2013). Teacher candidates were placed in a practice with students with special needs while taking a course on special education. Data were collected before and after the experience using mixed methods in the form of a course questionnaire and written records kept by the student teachers (Melekoglu, 2013). The course taken and interactions with students was found to improve attitudes and awareness

of student teachers towards the concept of inclusion and their ability to meet all students (Melekoglu, 2013). To further this research and the limitations of the study it is recommended to replicate with greater statistical analysis and focus group interviews to better understand how and what specifically caused the change in attitudes, and if they had an impact beyond the student teacher experience (Melekoglu, 2013).

Another similar study focused on teacher training towards mathematics pre-service teachers at the secondary level (Thompson, 2012). Comparative data were collected between two groups: one that took the course, and one that did not. The mixed method approach using field observations, written reflections, and a pre/postsurvey showed that student teachers of mathematics who were given specific training about students with learning difficulties felt more confident and able to accommodate all students in the mathematics classroom (Thompson, 2012). It was recommended that pre-service teachers be provided specific training and opportunities to observe and interact in inclusive classrooms (Thompson, 2012).

A further study of the same topic found that a positive attitude by teachers towards inclusion of all students leads to a willingness to adapt and learn more to ensure students are successful (Swain, Nordness, & Leader-Janssen, 2012). A quantitative survey instrument previously used by administrators and teachers was adapted to the pre-service teacher participants (Swain et al., 2012). The survey measured attitudes towards inclusion and was used before and after an introductory course and field practice experience on special education (Swain et al., 2012). The most significant change in attitude noted was about the feasibility or practicality of being able to meet students'

needs through changing routines and differentiating lessons modeled by experienced teachers (Swain et al., 2012). Further research was recommended on following up with pre-service teachers about the long-term impact of the course and change in attitude (Swain et al., 2012).

Preservice teacher self-efficacy towards educating students with special education needs was measured by Leyser, Zeiger, and Romi (2011). Data were collected and analyzed for statistical significance from 992 pre-service teachers representing 11 education college programs (Leyser et al., 2011). The variables of years of education, experience, and specific special education training were used to identify the impact on teacher self-efficacy (Leyser et al., 2011). The results showed that higher self-efficacy was achieved by pre-service teachers who had more practical experience working with special education students and detailed course training (Leyser et al., 2011).

To understand why some teachers resist inclusive education practices, Sadioglu, Batu, Bilgin, and Oksal (2013) conducted semi-structured interviews in a qualitative study. Primary school teachers were interviewed, and 21 of 23 had a negative perception of students with special needs being included in the mainstream classroom (Sadioglu et al., 2013). The reasons given by the teachers included an unsuitable physical environment for students, lack of support from specialized teachers, and a lack of own ability to adapt curriculum and assessment effectively (Sadioglu et al., 2013). Teachers in the study made suggestions for more training and the availability of experts in the school providing different services depending on the needs of the child (Sadioglu et al., 2013).

Examining the success of how an education system is integrating all students led to the need for the importance of understanding what inclusion is (Starczewska, Hodkinson, & Adams, 2012). New practices in Poland led the researchers to question how successful inclusion is by interviewing teachers in this qualitative study (Starczewska et al., 2012). The most significant finding from this research is that all levels of involvement in education would benefit from a common understanding and definition of inclusion including government officials, parents, teachers, and administrators (Starczewska et al., 2012). This has led to different forms and levels of implementation, leading to inconsistent interpretation, resources, and types of support (Starczewska et al., 2012). A limitation of the study was the small sample size used and need for more time for implementation of inclusive practices in the country (Starczewska et al., 2012).

The factors that support or prevent teaching assistants from effectively helping students with autism spectrum disorders was explored by Symes and Humphrey (2011). Previous research on the effectiveness of teaching assistants led Symes and Humphrey to look further at what impact a school culture towards inclusion has on the teacher assistant role. Quantitative interviews were used with 15 teaching assistants from four secondary schools (Symes & Humphrey, 2011). Through analysis of the interviews, it was felt that being in a school where everyone is valued is important along with teacher assistants having access to expertise to facilitate their role with classroom teachers (Symes & Humphrey, 2011). Awareness by all teachers of strategies to support students was felt to be important along with time to support this through collaboration and communication

systems (Symes & Humphrey, 2011). A final highlight was the strong support of school leadership, especially in situations where the leader is actively involved with students and decisions being made for those students (Symes & Humphrey, 2011).

Professional development and ongoing training has been a need highlighted in many of the studies outlined above by teachers. O’Gorman and Drudy (2010) examined the role of professional development of special education teachers and the alignment with inclusive school practices. The premise of the study was that traditionally, special education teachers have received professional development to increase their expertise. However, in an inclusive model, all teachers should receive the training so everyone can support students with special needs (O’Gorman & Drudy, 2010). This study was based on a larger study, which surveyed 816 schools using a quantitative questionnaire analyzed with statistical measures (O’Gorman & Drudy, 2010). The findings demonstrated the need for professional development to be focused on specific strategies to support students. The need was also highlighted for sustainable and ongoing professional development experiences to ensure long-term change and implementation of learned practices with all teachers who are teaching children with special needs (O’Gorman & Drudy, 2010).

International School Context

Literature and research on inclusion based in the context of international schools is limited. Of the current research only one study was found specifically about special needs students in international schools. Gabor (2010) completed a study on students with dyslexia and whether or not their needs could be met in an international school setting. A

school was selected, and quantitative data from student reading scores were collected before and after implementation of a specific program. The results supported the hypothesis that with effective intervention and a specific program, scores would increase. The school selected did not have policies in place for students with special learning needs and were inclusive by default but not based on planning. The limitation of the study was a small sample size in terms of validity of the results with many external factors possible.

A second study found in the international school setting looked at the concept of pedagogy in international schools and internationalism (Hughes, 2012). Although not specifically about inclusion or inclusive practices, the study focused on the fundamentals of an international school in one area, which was diversity. It can be argued that a school curriculum founded on diversity should, therefore, support a diverse student population, including students with different learning needs. This case study of an international school examined the curriculum used and set out to define what an international curriculum was and how it supported student learning (Hughes, 2012). The findings recommended that international schools should strive to achieve the following principles: learning of international values, language development; and international content and concepts in curriculum with a focus on global issues (Hughes, 2012).

Another study that examined cultural differences and perspectives impacting inclusion and special education practices impacting the international school context was explored by Ferko, Jung, and Kim (2010). The study looked at the Korean view of children with disabilities as making parents seem inferior and the impact of this in other national settings when Korean families move to another country. In Korean education, it

is noted that there are not provisions in place in schools or laws protecting children with disabilities (Ferko et al., 2010). The quantitative study used a survey instrument and determined that Korean American views towards inclusion were different than traditional Korean views. However, further education was needed for Korean American parents in understanding the education system in the United States children in regard to children with disabilities (Ferko et al., 2010). The results showed that after exposure, Korean American parents were open to understanding and supportive of inclusive practices (Ferko et al., 2010). This study brought up interesting implications for schools to ensure they understand the opinions and cultural backgrounds of their families in moving towards inclusive practices (Ferko et al., 2010).

Enhancing international schools and student engagement was explored by Jabal (2013) in a mixed methods study. Having a clearly defined and institutional identity and culture of the school was demonstrated to have an impact as to whether students and teachers were engaged with their learning and the school in general (Jabal, 2013). How a leader acts towards and about the institutional identity sets the tone for the community (Jabal, 2013). This study looked at the unique attributes of international schools in the context of diversity and the influence of the host country culture and how these can have a positive impact on student learning and the direction of programs implemented along with the change process (Jabal, 2013).

A final article in the context of international schools focused on leadership styles that support change (Murakami-Ramalho & Benham, 2010). This qualitative study using observations and interviews explored the unique challenges faced by international

schools such as the transient population of students and teachers. With these conditions, the leadership styles that best support this environment were considered (Murakami-Ramvalho & Benham, 2010). Being flexible, open to different perspectives, the ability to listen, and setting a clear direction were highlighted as key skills needed by international school leaders (Murakami-Ramvalho & Benham, 2010).

The review of the current literature has focused on successful approaches to inclusion, areas of leadership related to inclusion in schools in general, teacher perceptions towards the implementation of inclusion models, and an examination of what is available on international schools specifically. It is noted that the methodology of the studies collected have been qualitative mainly with some analyzing different perceptions with only a small number identified using quantitative data collection and statistical analysis. As inclusive programs further develop over time, there will be more opportunities to track student progress long term along with data collection involving student test results and analysis of the impact of inclusive models on learning.

Implications

Based on the local problem, rationale for the study, conceptual framework, and the literature review, the anticipated findings of the data collected and analyzed may lead to a possible project of professional development for international school leaders. This professional development could use the established Next Frontier Inclusion network to support its growth and development to increasing the availability of inclusive schools for globally mobile families with children who have special learning needs.

This project highlighted the findings from this study, previous research, and strategies to be used to implement change in a workshop format. This project is supported by change theory as presented by Fullan (2011) with leaders working through change together to support each other, which would be the nature of the workshop bringing participants together from other international schools. The nature of the Next Frontier Inclusion group is that it is built on a network of collaboration. Leaders would be able to observe each other's schools in action based on the culture that has been created, and analyze together models of success and then how to implement this in their own school concept. The networking and collaboration could extend beyond the traditional workshop model by creating connections, conversations and support that lasts beyond a professional development activity. This would build capacity through a workshop model that creates a collaborative model of leaders working together supporting change theory (Fullan, 2011) and having lasting implications through ongoing dialogue beyond the initial workshop. Research from the literature review also supports the need for greater and more specific professional development for teachers and school leaders (Calik et al., 2012; Hadjidakou & Mnasonos, 2012).

Conclusion

Supporting international schools to live up to their purpose of being diverse and meeting the needs of all students including those with special learning needs is the goal of this study. Understanding the role of leadership in changing from an exclusive to an inclusive admissions policy in the context of international schools will provide greater success for students and will provide strategies for other schools looking at making a

change towards inclusion to be able to take effective steps to enhance the learning of all students. After an overview of the methodology for the study in the form of a case study, a narrative will be provided highlighting the themes that emerge from the interview data collected to inform the research questions and provide school leadership with strategies to support inclusive practices. Based on these findings, a project was developed to provide professional development to school leaders supported by the data found in the study and further literature reviewed.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

The research method selected for the study was a qualitative case study. This approach aligned with the problem identified and the stated research question. A case study provides a description and analysis of a specific environment (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2014) described a case study as understanding a problem in a holistic way to further gain perspective. Yin further described case study methodology through a comparison of different types of research, highlighting that the exploratory nature of a case study allows a researcher to describe a situation that is occurring.

Case study research has been conducted on the role of school leadership in changing a school to be inclusive (Ryan, 2010; Schmidt & Venet, 2012; Waldron et al., 2011); however, this has not been the case in the context of international schools. International schools provide challenges and barriers to inclusion, which are different from national systems in which prior studies have been conducted. The conceptual framework identified for the study on leading change supported the case study design in that Fullan (2011) promoted the idea of leaders observing others to gain insight and ideas for how to implement change in their own context. This bounded case study has provided an example for school leaders to explore and then find aspects that they can apply in their own international school setting. In this case, the research question addressed strategies to provide how inclusion can be implemented. This type of question was more aligned with qualitative than quantitative research, and was intended to explain a present circumstance, which is a feature of a case study approach (Yin, 2014). The results

provided strategies that can be implemented as opposed to only finding out quantitative answers such as how successful the inclusion was being implemented. Results are bound by the case and might inform similar contexts in international schools.

Qualitative data provided perceptions from those directly involved in the change process of an international school moving towards inclusion. Perceptions form the basis for analysis in a qualitative study, providing the researcher with data to analyze and to find trends, strategies and recommendations, for use by others (Creswell, 2012).

Participants

The strategy for selecting a case from the population identified is the first step in the process in a qualitative case study (Merriam, 2009). Creating criteria to use in selecting the case is important to ensure that there is an aligned match with the research question (Merriam, 2009). The second step involves deciding whether to use the whole case in the study or to take a sampling from the case (Merriam, 2009). The most common form of sampling in a case study is purposeful to ensure that those participating in the study match with the criteria identified for conducting the research (Merriam, 2009).

The population for this study was international schools as defined in the opening section of this project overview. From the population, one school was selected for the case study. The criteria for selecting the school was an international school as defined previously that has changed its admissions policy in the past 10 years from exclusive to one that includes students with special learning needs in an inclusive approach. The selected school was deemed to be implementing an inclusive program based on identified criteria and recommendations made by the Next Frontier Inclusion organization, the

Council of International Schools, the United States Department of Overseas Schools, and researchers in the area of international schools (Hayden, 2006; Shaklee, 2007). Three potential schools were identified: two in Europe and one in Africa. The school in Africa was used based on fitting the criteria and my accessibility as the researcher to this particular location. A letter requesting use of the school for the purposes of this case study was sent to the school director and approved in advance of the data collection.

Based on the size of the school and the number of teachers and school leaders, a sample was selected for the purpose of interview. Ten participants were selected using purposeful sampling techniques and criteria identified for those to be interviewed. This number was determined based on the ability to reach saturation with the data collection (Creswell, 2012). The school director, one school principal, and eight teachers were identified based on the criteria of their length of time at the school and their overall experience with inclusion. The teachers were selected by asking for volunteers through an e-mail that I sent explaining the research, confidentiality, and the criteria of participants sought. I then selected from those who volunteered based on teaching roles and length of time at the school to ensure a balance along with the need to have participants from which the greatest amount of insight could be gained (Merriam, 2009).

Prior to the interview, a written letter was given to the participants identifying the purpose of the study, their role, how confidentiality will be maintained, and a request for consent to participate. The interviews took place at the selected school, during which I also took notes and made an audio recording, approved by the participants, for transcripts of the conversations recorded for analysis. I made the introduction in advance to begin

the process and to establish a researcher-participant relationship. Time was spent at the school the day before to tour and to review documents. Documents included the admissions policies, learning support guidelines and procedures, curriculum documentation, accreditation reports from the past 10 years including the school's self-study reflections and action plans, and student testing and assessment data. I was introduced to the participants in advance. At the start of each interview, rapport was established by reviewing the value of the research project and their participation.

The consent letter outlined the measures for ethical protection of participants. Informed consent, an important part of case study practices involving human subjects, was accessed through the use of the consent letter (Yin, 2014). Privacy and confidentiality will be maintained by keeping all recorded interviews, consent letters, and participant names secured in a password-protected computer file in my home for 5 years. Names of participants will not be referenced at any time throughout the study. A pseudonym was created for each participant. The list of pseudonyms and their matching participant will be kept with the other records in the password-protected files in my residence and will be kept for a period of 5 years.

Data Collection Methods

Based on the research questions, a set of interview questions was established and can be found in Appendix B. These questions were open-ended to be able to have some flexibility based on each conversation (Creswell, 2012). The questions were written based on the literature review and the conceptual framework identified for the study. Specifically, the findings and discussion from the similar study by Waldron et al. (2011)

were used, which was conducted in a public school context. Using the findings, questions were aligned to ensure that similar areas were probed in the interviews. Prior to conduction the interviews and approaching the participants, Walden Institutional Review Board approval was granted with reference # 01-21-16-0301576.

Each interview took approximately 30 to 45 minutes and happened in the school in a private conference room. The space used was not the individual teacher interview participant's own classroom. The interviews took place over the period of 2 days, which allowed time for collection of other archival data described below and a review of the interviews with follow-up questions that were needed. The scheduled time for each teacher took place when they were not teaching a class either during their planning time, before or after school depending on the preference of the teacher participant. A laptop computer was used with recording software to provide an audio file of the interview to be used for transcription. At the start of each interview, a test of the software took place to ensure it was in full working order.

In addition to the interviews conducted, I reviewed documentation that aligned with the study. This documentation included admissions policies, guidelines for inclusion, curriculum documentation, and accreditation reports from the past 10 years including the school's self-study reflections and action plans. Further documentation referred to by the participants in the interviews was gathered to support the analysis of the data. Based on the research questions, a document review protocol was used to guide what was being identified in the documents (Appendix C). The protocol lists the general

themes from the research questions so that areas supporting the themes were identified for use as part of the analysis of the data.

I used a notebook to record written notes during the interview process to assist with probing questions that were needed and to refer back to during the transcription process. Notes made on the review of documentation were also recorded in the notebook for reference during the analysis stage and to assist with emerging understandings that began to develop during the data collection process.

I have not previously worked or visited the selected international school. There was no prior relationship with the leadership team or teachers at the selected school, which did not affect data collection. I identified bias based on previous experiences working in the context of a similar school and therefore did not make any comparisons throughout the interview process or data analysis. By identifying this bias and being open to understanding the findings as they emerged, this was reduced (Yin, 2014). My biases are embedded in my own experience leading a school and the values and practices employed. Therefore, I did not judge any systems and practices used in the school, but instead focused on the strategies used regarding implementation of inclusive practices.

Data Analysis Methods

During the interview process, responses were reviewed and the questions reflected on. After each interview, I summarized the notes and made a transcript of the exact words of participants. Decisions were made during the interview process on alterations to the questions. Some interviews questions were modified based on the respondent already answering the subsequent question. There were instances of the need

for rewording the question or asking a probing question to encourage the participant to answer in more detail. Notes were made on the potential themes that emerged during the interviews (Merriam, 2009).

After the completion of the interviews and the documentation collection, all data were reviewed. Transcripts were made of the interviews and notes taken on the documentation review. The notes from documents followed the review protocol, which listed the themes being identified from the research questions and the conceptual framework. All data were read, and after I established a general sense of the information, the data were coded using a labeling system to discover the themes emerging from the data (Creswell, 2012). This was done using the NVivo software analysis program, which allowed for changes to be made throughout the process (Merriam, 2009). NVivo supported data analysis by helping to organize the information and to search for specific words, phrases, or themes that were emerging. The coding system was based on identifying a color for each theme that emerged based on the answer to the interview questions. The data that connected with a theme were highlighted in the given color. A key was used to keep track of the themes and colors, and this involved the emergence of subthemes.

After the coding took place, the data were organized under each heading, and a summary for each theme was written with specific examples taken directly from the data. Part of this process included comparing the different responses under each theme to see what recurring trends showed a consistent response to the questions (Merriam, 2009). Having responses given by more than one interviewee showed a trend and support for the

findings, increasing the validity of the findings (Merriam, 2009). The interview transcripts and coding were compared with the documentation collected to support the findings and the examples given in support and evidence of what was communicated in the interviews. The analysis of the coding also involved comparison and support from the conceptual framework and the literature review to demonstrate alignment with previous studies conducted.

To ensure credibility of the findings, triangulation was used to demonstrate validity in the interpretation of the data. Triangulation was done by ensuring that different perspectives were captured by the people selected for interview (Merriam, 2009). The sample selected included people with different roles in the school including teachers and administrators. The participants selected also included teachers with different backgrounds, including number of years of experience, and their background working in an inclusive setting.

To further ensure credibility, there was a check for logical development of themes and trustworthiness of the data and findings through having a second person independently analyze the interview data collected (Merriam, 2009). A colleague who has a research background with doctoral-level qualifications was identified to review the data and the results identified to give feedback and their own perspective on the interpretation of the findings. This reviewer signed a confidentiality agreement to ensure protection of the participants and data. A draft also went through member checking to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of findings and data. To achieve member checking,

a draft was presented to selected participants in the case for a review of the findings to check for accuracy of their own data that they presented (Yin, 2014).

Data Analysis Results

The central research question of the study was as follows: What strategies support, and measures of success were used to change the culture of a school to be inclusive of students with special learning needs based on changing admissions policies that reflect the diversity of international schools? As a result of the data analysis six themes emerged. The themes are supported by data across interviews with patterns and relationships that were aligned with the research questions. The following themes will be described in detail under each heading and include:

- Understanding and acknowledging different perspectives and a potential disconnect between views of leadership and views of teachers.
- Ensuring there is common understanding of what inclusion means amongst all stakeholders.
- Creating systems that support inclusion and an overall plan to ensure accountability.
- Providing the necessary personnel and resources to implement a successful inclusive program.
- Ongoing and embedded professional learning.
- Addressing, acknowledging and overcoming challenges inherent in the international school context.

Review of Process for Generating and Recording Data

To arrive at the six themes, data were collected through a series of interviews with nine teachers and leaders in the case study school. Ten were initially identified, but at time of the interview only 9 were available. The audio of each interview was recorded and then transcripts of each interview were made. Each interview was reviewed and coded using NVivo software with the six themes emerging. The evidence for each theme was then compared across the interviews to show the patterns and strength of the theme. For the purpose of this data analysis section, each theme is presented along with the supporting evidence from the interviews where the theme was highlighted by the person being interviewed.

Perceptions and Disconnect Between Teachers and Leadership

It was evident in the interviews that it was important for the leadership as it moved along the journey towards inclusion that understanding and acknowledging different perspectives and a potential disconnect between views of leadership and views of teachers was necessary. Being able to openly recognize and acknowledge any perceived disconnects in where people thought everyone was at in the process was important for achieving the end goal of inclusion. Knowing there may be a disconnect, it was then highlighted as being important to have monitoring steps and opportunities to reflect and assess throughout the process of implementing change. The monitoring piece also highlighted the need to carefully consider the pace of implementation to ensure the right balance of time for successful implementation. Monitoring where people were at in their support and understanding of change was also considered by Fullan (2011) in the

conceptual framework of this study. When a leader is aware better decisions about next steps can be made (Fullan, 2011).

At one stage in the process three interview participants shared a moment when a disconnect between leadership members and teachers was discovered. Interview Participant 1 recollected being in a meeting together with leadership members and teachers looking at a rubric together which assessed how inclusive the school was. “Oh gosh, we’ve done that, we’re here, you know, we’re here, and then the other teacher went, oh we’re here, we’re not there.” This led to the recognition that “there was a disconnect in terms of perceptions as how far along the way we were on the journey.” Interview Participant 5 mentioned “leadership thought they had explained it very clearly, they thought that everyone was on board. They realized that not everyone knows the direction that we were headed in. It was quite useful that we could then come back and have a big meeting and discussion.” Interview Participant 4 commented, “Administrators have to realize that teachers may need more support than others.” This participant went on to say, “The perception is that we are currently moving in the right direction, but we need to be open to conversations about how we are actually doing.”

Recognizing the disconnect led to the creation of monitoring strategies and more conversations between leadership and teachers, which is also acknowledged as an important strategy in the change process (Fullan, 2011). Interview Participant 6 noted that leadership state that they want to hear teachers and teachers feel they are being heard. This participant stated that “there’s still a lot of conversation and leadership need more data to make the necessary changes.” Finding ways to collect data and feedback became a

priority of leadership team members. Interview Participant 1 mentioned rubrics that are used to assess progress which has been tracked over time to show growth. The admissions process and data have been a key area to monitor and have structured conversations around student needs and if they are successfully being addressed. Another area of monitoring was reviewing hiring practices, making sure everyone was committed and willing to adapt and learn, and having criteria embedded in the retention decisions of teacher contracts as highlighted by Interview Participant 9.

Aligned with disconnect and having monitoring procedures was looking at the pace of implementation. Waldron et al. (2011) recognized the need for the leader to be aware of the context and culture including timing and pace of implementation. Interview Participant 1 acknowledged that “we’re really trying to do a lot and we may be trying to do a bit too much too quickly.” This feeling was echoed by teachers as indicated by Interview Participant 6: “it takes time. Something that could happen in a year or 2 may take 3 or 4 to hopefully have in place where we are doing the right thing.”

Acknowledging that there may be a disconnect and assessing what the issues are and how to then communicate effectively is important for leadership team members. Creating systems to monitor progress and assess perceptions and realities along with making sure there is a balanced pace are all identified as important steps towards implementing successful inclusion of all students.

Common Understanding

The second theme that emerged from the interview process was ensuring there is common understanding of what inclusion means amongst all stakeholders. It was evident

that all interview participants believed in inclusion and a common definition has been developed across the school. Interview participants discussed how this was achieved, including all members of the community, the importance of continual communication and going deeper from just having a common definition, but a common understanding and a culture supporting inclusive practices. The theme of common understanding was also supported by the literature, Schmidt and Venet (2012), demonstrated successful inclusion emerged when the leader understood inclusion and there was common understanding and support amongst teachers in the school.

First it was evident that there was support for inclusion. This was demonstrated in the mission and vision of the school and in documentation describing school practices, the admissions policy and on the website. Comments were made by interview participants that the board and the director supported being an inclusive school. Interview Participant 1 said “we’ve had support from board members, from the very beginning”, and Interview Participant 2 commented “the board here is very supportive of inclusion and then that gets passed throughout the community.” Interview Participant 3 highlighted that teachers felt supported and that there was little resistance from leadership and teachers. Interview Participant 7 stated that “here in this school, I think the administrators value who we are and allow us to take our ideas towards being inclusive of all students.” Another comment that was made to demonstrate the levels of support across the community was made by Interview Participant 8: “The other children are very inclusive of all students, they help them out, they understand them. The parents reach out, when their child is having a birthday party, they invite the child with autism.”

Having a strong level of support for inclusion by all members of the community was acknowledged as being the first step. How was this achieved and maintained was the next area to explore along with establishing a common understanding so that it moved beyond supporting the concept to having understanding for how it would be implemented. This area is connected to the theme of having systems in place. There was a need to develop a philosophy of inclusion. The school underwent an audit review over the course of a year and then together with input from all members of the community: board, leadership, teachers, parents and students, a philosophy and definition of inclusion were created. Interview Participant 1 commented, “We all really needed to be on the same page and have a common understanding of each child and inclusion” further it was stated by this participant that “having a clear admissions policy and a clear philosophy that everybody is aware of and knows is critical.” When participants were asked what their definition of inclusion was there was cohesion and commonality across all responses. This demonstrated that the process the school leadership went through to develop a common definition was successful and aligned with similar approaches found in the literature (Ryan, 2010).

After the process of creating a common definition was established the next step was communicating and ensuring everyone had a similar level of understanding so that effective and aligned systems and resources could be put in place. Leadership team members regularly presented at board meetings and parent forums were held to not only communicate and share, but to seek input and to have workshops to train and further educate parents. One of the leadership members commented that their role was to build

cohesion across the three divisions of the school and amongst all teachers through workshops, regular communication and individual meetings. Interview Participant 5 made the point “coming next year, we have very few turnover of staff, that’s good because it means everyone is already aware of it.” This demonstrates the importance of a common understanding and the benefit of having everyone committed to the philosophy to be able to move forward with implementation.

The findings support that leadership team members need to ensure there is support for inclusion by all members of the community. The conceptual framework on change supports the need for the leader to have a strong vision, which is known and understood by all members of the community (Fullan, 2011). With this support the next step is to develop a clearly articulated definition and then ensure that this is communicated effectively to all stakeholders and using the philosophy to guide decision making pertaining to developing systems and resources.

Systems to Support Inclusion

One of the findings demonstrated the need for creating clearly articulated systems that support inclusion and an overall plan to ensure accountability. It was clear from the interviews that the systems needed to be clearly communicated and created in collaboration with those that will be implementing the systems. Four different types of systems were identified: an initial review or audit of the program; planning strategically; practices and procedures; and some form of ongoing assessment. The leadership members that were interviewed and one teacher involved in the review process were the only ones who made reference to the need for a review and the implementation of a long-

range plan. All participants interviewed discussed systems for practices and procedures, which shared commonality, and also the need for continuous assessment, reflection and improvement. Walton and Nel (2012) found that policies and procedures were necessary further supporting the importance of the finding of the importance of having systems from the research interviews.

The system that started the whole process came from the director through research and knowing the current state of the school acknowledging the need for a change to be more inclusive of students with learning needs. The director then formed a team to conduct a review or audit of current systems and other models of schools that were on a similar journey. Examining other models in action is an important part of identifying the necessary changes needed as outlined in the conceptual framework of this study (Fullan, 2009). This took place over the course of a school year with a report and recommendations made. Three of the interview participants described this process and highlighted the usefulness of having tools to complete the review like rubrics or continuum of development. These could then be referred to later in the process to demonstrate growth. Being open and honest was another feature of the review process and making sure people were not feeling threatened. To achieve this clearly communicating what was happening and the outcome was necessary.

The end result of the review process was creating a 3-year plan for change and implementation. The plan included a rewritten admissions policy with managed numbers and plans for professional learning and developing common understanding amongst all stakeholders. Different teams formed to start implementation and the creation of practices

and procedures to implement the plan emerged under the direction of the divisional principals and the learning support coordinator. The plan had overarching goals, but it also had a place for input and development by collaborative teams. This led to greater buy-in and eventual success at the implementation level.

The next level of systems that were developed were practices and procedures for implementation. The system of admissions was articulated by two leadership members and three teachers as being one of the most significant systems to have in place. Knowing what types of student needs could be supported along with screening procedures, collecting data on standards and initial assessments so that student needs could be met and resources available. Interview Participant 1 noted that “student support system operations manual was created that has a clear description of the program, philosophy, the data piece, the individual education plan (IEP), the student support team meeting, and the record keeping piece” were all established and implemented with clear communication of each component. The teachers involved in inclusion explained how students are supported with their IEP. A model has been created with a learning support teacher at each grade level providing resource room support and coteaching with the classroom or subject teacher. Systems were created for collaborative planning time, and for discussing individual student needs. An example of how teachers were involved in the process of creating systems was highlighted by Interview Participant 7: “I recognized we needed to do something about collaborative planning time, so I was able to join a committee to look at the schedule and I was able to help create a common meeting time each week for each team.” Leadership members allowing for creating thinking and

collaboration in the planning process was recognized by teachers as leading towards successful implementation “administrators value who we are and allow us to use our ideas” was stated by Interview Participant 7.

The final system was having the ability to continually assess and review the practices and procedures that were established. Interview Participant 1 described “using the strategic plan to see what we are doing over time and to check off those boxes.” Referring back to the continuum from the original audit has been an important part of the assessment process. There was a sense from all participants that the school and leadership are continually looking at improving and ensuring the systems are effective.

Having systems has led to the successful implementation with buy-in through ensuring the involvement of both leadership members and teachers. Communicating effectively and thoroughly along with having systems for assessment and review has been highlighted as important parts of the process.

Providing the Necessary Resources

From having common understanding and a plan in place with identified systems the next piece was ensuring the necessary and effective resources were in place. From the interviews the changes in personnel and physical facilities were crucial in making the change towards being an inclusive school. It was important to align the philosophy, the systems and the resources. Having adequate and the right resources was a finding in the literature on necessary strategies for building an inclusive school (Sadioglu et al., 2013).

All participants interviewed highlighted how important it was to have a coordinator of learning support as a leader in addition to the divisional principals. Having

someone oversee the whole program ensuring alignment and effective use of resources was important. From there the number of learning support teachers in each division was increased to ensure adequate number of teachers to match the admissions policy and those students enrolled. Each grade level has a learning support teacher. Interview Participant 4 along with two other participants noted the use of other resources found in the community “drawing from the community not seeing the school in isolation. Using speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, and psychologists from the community and consulting on our campus.” This made for more efficient and effective use of time and the ability to communicate together in support of individual student needs. Additional resources included employing and training locally hired teachers as one-on-one assistants for students with more intense needs, and identifying consultants to come in as resources for ongoing professional learning opportunities.

It was indicated by three interview participants that it was perceived numbers of students with learning support needs was increasing and therefore continual review of staffing was needed to ensure adequate coverage and accessibility for all students in need of support.

Facilities development has been another area of need. Physical accessibility has been lacking with recent improvements including the installation of an elevator, a sensory integration room and other working spaces. Further review of all areas for accessibility was noted as a need by three interview participants if students with physical impairments will be admitted which is a goal of the inclusion plan.

Ongoing and Embedded Professional Learning

Ongoing and embedded professional learning came across in the interviews as being important to the process of becoming an inclusive school and supporting individual student needs. This included professional learning of leadership members, teachers and parents. This finding supports previous research in the area of shifting towards being an inclusive school (Du Toit & Forlin, 2009; Goodman & Burton, 2010) and the need for continuous professional learning as a component of ongoing practices at the school level.

All interview participants acknowledged the importance of professional learning and that it was provided at a high level meeting individual teacher needs. As leadership looked at reviewing practices interview participants stated that “they ended up with children in their classroom that had special needs but they didn’t have the tools or the support to be able to provide an adequate program.” From there they recognized the need for ongoing professional learning. A coordinator of professional learning was hired and regular consultants have been employed to travel to the school for professional learning workshops. Interview Participant 3 highlighted that having a “cycle of repetition” with consultants returning to review, follow up and dig deeper each time has been useful. Interview Participant 4 stated, “The entire faculty is trained in what inclusion looks like and how you support children who have learning issues.”

Apart from having consultants, interview participants described how effective embedded professional learning was in the form of team coaching, coteaching and team planning. Having time set aside weekly for planning and professional learning ensured that this happened. Interview Participant 7 commented “my growth as an individual

teacher has grown exponentially. It is the professional development that we get in school regularly, bringing in consultants and giving money for us to attend other outside workshops.” In addition teacher rubrics for professional growth and appraisal have been created and aligned with professional learning and inclusion. These are used as part of self-reflection, and also appraisal by leadership of teachers to monitor growth and effectiveness of professional learning and implementation of inclusive practices.

Another aspect of professional learning was highlighted by one divisional leader having a special education background with training and the impact this has had with moving the program forward, knowing what teachers needed and being able to also provide professional learning and coaching to teachers.

The importance of professional learning throughout the process to help establish common understanding and then to develop skills for teaching and supporting students was supported by the interviews. It was felt that having consultants visit the school on a regular basis and also having job embedded professional learning were the most effective ways of supporting the implementation of growth in inclusive practices. The process of change in the conceptual framework of this study emphasizes the need for leaders and those implementing change to have knowledge, skill and understanding in the area being changed acquired through ongoing professional learning (Fullan, 2001; 2011).

Professional learning to enhance the change process further supports the findings from the case study interviews.

International School Context

A theme that emerged connected to the context of the local problem highlighted for the research was international schools. This was explored by all participants in the interview process with a strong connection to the importance of being inclusive because of the diverse nature of international schools. Aligned with the research by Hayden (2006) and Shaklee (2007) because of the diversity we must not only celebrate cultural differences, but also provide for all types of students learning needs. This came across when participants spoke about the definition of inclusion and if there are any factors that are unique to international schools. One interview participant commented, “I think that people know when they come here that differences are appreciated. It doesn’t matter if it is cultural, linguistic, or in terms of physical or emotional challenges.” Acknowledging that everyone is included and should be included because international schools “reflect all of the whole world’s society” was a comment made by another interview participant. It was evident that all participants both leadership members and teachers all felt strongly that inclusion should happen in international schools and it was supported by everyone.

A second area that was explored by the participants under the theme of the international school context was the challenges faced by having a high transient student and teacher population. Expatriates move, for some it is every 2 to 3 years, and for others they stay longer. Interview Participant 2 noted the challenge of taking time to get to know a child, setting up the best program with the resources available, and then the child is moving on. Interview Participant 8 commented that the high turnover is a challenge because “it could also be seen as an inconvenience or an advantage having one pool of

resources needed for a couple of years, and then it changes, and we have a different set of needs, resources and different perspectives” teachers then have to figure out and learn how to support a different type of student. Another aspect of movement and new people coming from different countries was noted by Interview Participant 7 “you get the best practices from Australia, England, Canada, and the United States so you can get a much broader view of what inclusion is.”

In this particular case study the participants shared the challenges that they faced living in a volatile country where threats and attacks from terrorism were a reality. After a recent major attack in the city near the school there was a significant drop in enrollment reducing the resources available. The challenge for leadership became finding a balance for keeping to the admissions policy and the need to increase enrollment and accept more students. Interview Participant 4 stated that “I felt some of the students we say yes to it could be just being able to make sure that space is filled in the school,” this perception was commented on by two other teachers, and two of the leadership members. One school leader noted that the admissions number caps for accepting students with learning differences were not always being followed and this was one aspect that needed to be addressed more carefully to ensure standards were being met and there continued to be a balance of students’ needs and resources available.

A final aspect of the international school context that was discussed by four participants was how the school was being perceived in the community and the delicate balance of making sure this perception was positive and not negative. “We are now the inclusive school and some people assume that this means our academic standards are

lower” was noted by Interview Participant 2 who went on further to comment on the need to carefully market the school when there are other schools available to ensure that all families see the benefits of being inclusive for all children and the positive impact this has on academic levels and developing characteristics of empathy and acceptance.

Interview Participant 9 also shared the need to show data that demonstrate the benefits of being inclusive both anecdotally with student growth and changes in attitudes along with assessment data.

The findings from the interviews in this case study demonstrated unique factors for the international school context as compared to studies done in the public school setting (Philpott et al., 2010; Ryan, 2010; Schmidt & Venet, 2012; Waldron et al., 2011). The findings show areas that need to be considered as a result of the context by leadership team members. First the need to celebrate the diversity that makes an international school unique and capitalizing on the fact that most community members hold the ideals and want to support all students including those with learning difficulties. Second, acknowledging the transient nature of the expatriate population that the school serves and therefore being able to figure out systems for transitioning students into the school and onto the next school. Building networks within international schools for the ease of sharing information on individual students to improve the transition period and making sure resources and support are in place as soon as possible. This also demonstrates the need to be flexible with resources available and being open to make changes as needed with new students and teachers. The networking concept is also a factor considered in the conceptual framework on the change process with the need for

leaders to learn from other experienced leaders (Fullan, 2009). A third area is knowing that instability may occur and having systems in place to respond to decreases in enrollment while at the same time ensuring the integrity of the learning support program is maintained. A final area was in how the inclusive aspect of the school is marketed to demonstrate the benefits of being inclusive when there are other schools available that may not be inclusive.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this case study due to the small sample size of nine teachers and leaders, with one school, in one region of the world. This could potentially illicit different responses from those being interviewed in another region of the world with different perspectives and available resources.

Conclusion

The participants in the case study school demonstrated the successes and challenges of changing an international school from exclusive to inclusive of students with special learning needs. The findings provide strategies that were articulated consistently across the different participants interviewed by telling a story of the schools journey towards inclusion.

It was noted that it is important for leadership to understand and acknowledge different perspectives and a potential disconnect between views of leadership and views of teachers. Along with ensuring common understanding of what inclusion means amongst all stakeholders, leadership can create opportunities for dialogue and focus groups throughout the process to ensure everyone is united.

Systems that support inclusion and an overall plan to ensure accountability were important and successful when established through collaborative methods and at the same time backed up with the necessary personnel and resources. The importance for ongoing and embedded professional learning was discussed as necessary for leadership, teachers and parents to continually improve and up skill everyone for implementation of support services and working together collaboratively.

The final important outcome that was stated was the context of international schools. The change towards inclusion was highlighted as important due to the fundamental beliefs of diversity embedded in international schools. However, challenges emerged with making sure cultural differences and understanding were acknowledged and supported. In addition there were challenges noted due to the volatile nature of some regions of the world effecting resource acquisition and enrollment stability.

The findings have provided clearly articulated strategies for leadership as steps are taken towards building inclusive international schools which is an achievable goal aligned with the importance of social change and ensuring all students regardless of their learning challenges are supported in the context of international education. To achieve this goal and to further support the development of leadership in building an inclusive school a professional development workshop has been designed based on the findings of the study and outlined in the next section of the project study.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The project study addressed the question of what strategies support and measures of success were used to change the culture of a school to be inclusive of students with special learning needs based on changing admissions policies that reflect the diversity of international schools. The findings from the case study interviews provided clear factors that contributed to successful inclusive practices and strategies that can be implemented by school leaders. Therefore, a direct outcome is to share and develop these findings in the form of a professional development training for international school principals.

The conceptual framework of change leadership identified for the study aligned with providing a professional development training for principals. This is based on Fullan (2011) identifying school leaders examining other examples and school leaders in their own context as an approach that lends itself to successful change. Therefore, the professional development training will take place in an international school that has successfully transitioned from exclusive to inclusive practices of accepting and supporting students with special needs similar to the case study school. The professional development training will bring together a group of principals in workshops exploring the concepts derived from this study and the research literature, and then participants will observe the school in action to then reflect on what is happening and why. With this format, the participants have the opportunity to hear firsthand from experienced leaders and teachers to understand further the inclusive practices that are in place and how they have been achieved.

The goals of the professional development training will be for school leaders to develop the strategies necessary for moving a school towards inclusion of students with special needs. Participants will identify their individual place on a continuum towards inclusion (Powell et al., 2013) and then map out a plan to achieve this goal. The participants will work together to support each other and to learn from a successful case study example to apply the ideas, concepts, and strategies into their own context and build networks of support.

This section provides a rationale for the selection of the project aligned with the findings of the study along with a review of the literature demonstrating why the project was selected. A full description of the project is given and a plan for implementation and evaluation of the professional development training.

Rationale

The professional development project genre was chosen because the purpose of the study was to identify strategies and methods for school leaders in the international school context to become inclusive of students with special needs. The strategies and ideas elicited in the case study interviews detailed areas that led to success of inclusive practices, which now can be shared with other school leaders. Based on research and change theory (Fullan 2001, 2009, 2011), the best way to make the change happen in another context and with another leader is for them to observe and work together with other leaders before applying in their own context.

A professional development training allows the findings to be clearly presented and for the participants to observe the findings in action and engage with other school

leaders who have had success with the process of change towards inclusion. Participants will learn the challenges other school leaders have had, such as the potential for their being different perceptions and a disconnect between teachers and leadership in where everyone was in the change process and developing a common understanding.

Participants will then also learn strategies such as ongoing and embedded professional learning for all stakeholders, which was a factor identified in the findings for successfully moving towards inclusion.

Review of the Literature

To plan the best possible professional development training to support school leaders in the change process towards inclusion, a review of the literature is needed. Understanding the best methods for professional development of school leaders, the perceived benefits, and understanding participants needs will lead to a better developed and aligned learning experience.

For this review of the literature, I used the following key words: *professional development, adult learning, leadership training, principal training, models of professional development, and designing professional development*. These terms were used in combination using Boolean searches to narrow the available resources to look specifically at professional development in the context of school leadership training. The search of literature focused on peer-reviewed journals based on current research from the past 5 years. Education Research Complete, and SAGE Journals Online were the databases selected for the search.

Perceived Benefits of Professional Development

Blaik-Hourani and Stringer (2015) highlighted the perceived benefits of professional development for managing school change and reforms by principals. Through interviewing principals, they showed that professional development is essential based on the transfer to the participants' context and ability to make the change. They noted the need for there to be individualized goals and standards to measure success in context after the professional development training (Blaik-Hourani & Stringer, 2015). Principals benefited when professional development included implementation strategies and process along with flexibility built in for new changes. The importance of having clear standards and goals to measure the success and benefits of professional development was also noted by Williams and Szal (2011) through the use of a pre- and postassessment.

Professional development was more beneficial when the local context was taken into consideration, which Bush (2012) explored in the international context. Bush found that development opportunities led to creating good leaders, but the approaches did not have an impact as they were based on the local context and specialized training. Kin, Kareem, Nordin, and Bing (2014) also demonstrated the importance of individualized professional development based on a personalized needs analysis leading to increased benefits and outcomes of the professional development experience.

When the principal is engaged and developing self-efficacy towards their learning and applying it in context, Fisher (2011) noted that change was then observed in practice and implementation. The benefits of professional development when the principal had

purpose and the will made for an increase in transfer of their learning and application of the skills and strategies.

Gumus and Ballibas (2016) studied contemporary versus traditional professional development activities and found that there were significantly more benefits to contemporary design including professional networking, mentoring, and research activities. When principals were more active and engaged in their professional development, it had an impact on the outcomes in their context.

Researchers have studied the benefits and necessity of professional development for principals when set against standards and individualized goals (Blaik-Hourani & Stringer, 2015; Williams & Szal, 2011). Having clear standards and goals supports the professional development project in that it will facilitate leadership development in moving towards inclusion and clarify the importance of having individualized goals for participants to be able to transfer into their own context to actively make the necessary change.

Understanding Participants Needs

To achieve the goal of ensuring that professional development is individualized (Bush, 2012; Kin et al., 2014) and supported by goals (Blaik-Hourani & Stringer, 2015; Williams & Szal, 2011), the research suggested the importance of understanding participants' needs for successful professional development training and transfer.

Determining needs for principal training in one context was achieved by the superintendent assessing the training program and actual preparedness once the principal was in situation. This confirmed the success of training programs by Boyland, Lehman,

and Sriver (2015) using a qualitative survey instrument of perceived needs and what was accomplished by the principal after training. Reardon (2011) looked at the success of professional development based on aligning the needs of learning-centered leadership with reading assessment scores. When focused on specific identified areas of growth, professional development was shown in the study to have an impact on achievement scores.

Gravani (2012) focused on the importance of applying adult learning principles, or *andragogy*, to professional development training. When adult learning principles were applied to the training, it demonstrated an increase in transfer and feedback from participants that they could apply the concepts and learning to their own context. Specifically, they looked at the adult learning principles of aligning learning outcomes, formats, and objectives of a program.

Vogel, Weiler, and Armenta (2014) noted that knowing the needs of teachers to create professional development for school leaders to support changing policies was important for school development. Furthermore, Webber and Lupart (2011) found that specific contextual needs should be mapped out as a key factor in developing successful professional development programs.

Based on a review of prior research that suggested school leaders needed more training to lead inclusive education, Bai and Martin (2015) conducted a needs assessment to ensure professional development was meeting the needs of principals in developing inclusive school programs. The authors noted that having specialized knowledge in the area of special education improved the implementation of the program. This was also

highlighted in the case study interviews of this project study; when the school leaders had background in special education, they were more supportive and had a better grasp of implementation.

Having a clear understanding of the needs of participants along with clearly aligned goals highlighted in the literature then leads into the design and implementation of professional development training and recommended methods and approaches for school leaders.

Methods of School Leader Professional Development

The current research on methods of professional development focused on improving models to be more aligned with current practices of pedagogy. Brooks and Gibson (2012) explored the misalignment of traditional professional development models and contemporary ways of learning. They looked at the benefits of technology-mediated professional learning. The focus was on participants experimenting on more personalized approaches and the flexibility to make more authentic connections in context by being able to practice. The research showed the importance of having systems for collaboration and the active engagement of participants for there to be an impact on learning.

Retna (2015) supported the idea of changing methods to using technology, coaching, and observations as part of professional development through an analysis and comparison of two national systems. Zepeda, Parylo, and Bengston (2014) completed a cross-case analysis of principal professional development examining application of adult learning theory. They concluded that self-directed learning was rarely a feature, but it is a key element of adult learning, a claim also supported by Gravani (2012).

With regard to improving or changing methods of professional development, Labone and Long (2014) completed a case study of a system-based professional learning model that highlighted the six elements that are necessary for effective implementation of professional development training: “focus, learning components, feedback, collaborative practices, temporal elements, and coherence” (p. 65).

These studies on changing methods to support self-directed learning and using platforms such as technology have been recommended (Brooks & Gibson, 2012; Labone & Long, 2014; Retna, 2015) and are aligned with the previous sections on the necessity of knowing the needs of participants (Boyland et al., 2015; Reardon, 2011; Vogel et al., 2014). With these practices in mind, the need to contextualize the learning and make it an individualized experience for the participant has been further explored in the research on adult learning.

Contextual Learning

A number of recent studies have focused on the benefits of professional development taking place in the context of real-world problems, situations, or in one’s own environment where action can be taken and skills practiced. Arlestig (2012) conducted a program evaluation study using authentic problems and situations as part of the training program, which resulted in participants’ perceptions of their learning and application increasing after this type of activity. Shapira-Lishchinsky (2015) employed a similar approach using simulations as a learning activity in principal training to help understand and solve ethical dilemmas. This study showed that the constructivist

approach combined within organizational learning theory allowed participants to demonstrate skill transfer to their own context.

A different approach using contextual learning was having leaders practice in their own context and then using these situations in a course context to learn from and reflect, as outlined in a study by Devin, Augustine-Shaw, and Hachiya (2016). University professors were interviewed and highlighted the impact of having authentic partnerships and situations incorporated into the learning where leaders could practice and implement skills as opposed to traditional models where learning took place in the classroom only.

Shared Leadership

Holtzman, Dukes, and Page (2012) researched the interdisciplinary training of school leaders. They examined the concept of shared leadership between principals, psychologists and counselors to benefit student emotional needs. This concept aligns with the findings of the project study and other research (Bai & Martin, 2015) highlighting the benefits school leaders having special education knowledge to support the change towards inclusion. The ability for the different roles in a school context to be able to support and learn from each other's expertise is a benefit to the overall change process (Holtzman et al., 2012).

Mentorships

There are a number of studies that demonstrated the strength of mentorship programs to enhance principal professional development. Bartee (2012) completed a program study in response to the need to improve and change school leadership programs. The redesign included using multiple design systems such as mentorships and

internships. Strengths of the program were captured through interviews of participants and quantitative data collection used to demonstrate effectiveness of the program. A similar approach was used by Davis and Darling-Hammond (2012) to conclude that the program incorporating problem-based experiences and mentorships trained leaders more effectively.

Another model similar to the concept of mentorship is in the form of feedback through a clinical supervision model as researched by Farhat (2016). The study determined a positive impact of clinical supervision with observation and feedback of teachers' performance in selected classroom management skills. This could also be applied in the context of school leaders receiving feedback from a mentor as a direct improvement was found.

Having strong networks and partnerships or mentorships to improve leadership capacities and to ensure renewal and prevent burnout through support was studied by Drago-Severson (2012) and Leithwood and Azah (2016). The findings showed the most effective strategy was peer to peer reflective practice to support individual development and renewal.

The concept of mentorship and building networks is an effective component of professional development and growth (Bartee, 2012; Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Drago-Severson, 2012; Leithwood & Azah, 2016). This is aligned with the work of Fullan (2011) outlined in the conceptual theory supporting this project study who noted that a component of change is learning from other successful principals in their context after going through the change process.

Implications of Literature Review

Using the professional development genre to address the problem outlined in the project study as a way to use the findings and as a potential solution to the problem is supported by the literature reviewed. The research question and case study design focused on finding or understanding strategies used by principals towards successfully changing an international school towards inclusion of children with special needs. Therefore, what is the best way to share the strategies and to provide support to other school leaders who are in the same process of change towards inclusion?

The purpose of professional development training is to improve learning and provide opportunities for growth (Zepeda et al., 2014). The problem emerged from a need to change international schools to be more inclusive of all students. Based on the literature review on inclusion and the theoretical framework of change explored to support the research questions of the study there is a connection between providing professional development training and a leader implementing change in international schools to be fully inclusive of all students. The literature on inclusion highlighted the need for more professional development of teachers and school leaders (Du Toit, & Forlin, 2009; Gavish & Shimoni, 2011; Glazzard, 2011; Goodman & Burton, 2010). In order to implement successful professional development training programs the literature highlighted that the needs of the participants must be known (Boyland et al., 2015; Reardon, 2011). The needs in this particular case were uncovered through the findings from the case study in the form of strategies that led to successful implementation of a change towards inclusive practices.

The methods for professional development should also be considered in terms of what is most effective and what should be included in the design of the proposed professional development program. Based on Fullan (2011) and the change theory learning from a principal in action supports the successful implementation of change. The case study provided a context and therefore the professional development program should also provide a context and opportunities to connect with other school leaders who have effectively implemented the change process towards inclusion as recommended in the literature on methods of professional learning (Bartee, 2012; Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Drago-Severson, 2012; Leithwood & Azah, 2016).

The next section explains the project description in detail with the links to the findings from the study, the literature review and the change theory explored. This is followed by a project evaluation plan and project implications. Supporting social change and the importance of the project to those involved in the original local problem and in a larger context.

Project Description

The professional development project for principal training is titled *Strategies for School Leaders in Supporting the Change Towards Inclusive International Schools*. A complete overview of the training can be found in Appendix A.

The proposal is for a 3-day workshop located at an international school that has successfully gone through the change process towards inclusion using the same criteria developed for selecting the case study school. Previous researchers recommended providing contextual opportunities (Arlestig, 2012; Devin et al., 2016; Shapira-

Lishchinsky, 2015) and to work with other school leaders. Choosing a specific location and using a school in action allows for these interactions to take place and form a part of the planned activities. The target audience is international school leaders who are on the journey towards being an inclusive school or considering this option.

Permission and arrangements need to be considered by contacting the selected school director in advance and having an alternative location selected. The maximum number of participants is set at 25 and communication to advertise for the event needs to be set up in advance, including the purpose, goals, outcomes, an overview of the agenda, resources, and registration costs. Advertising the learning opportunity will be through online platforms and e-mail listservs available for international school leaders.

Costs for participants vary based on their individual location. Each participant will travel to the workshop location, which will be in an international location. These costs include visa, flight, hotel, and transportation to and from airport and to and from hotel to workshop location. There will be a registration fee, which will depend on the costs incurred to the host school for refreshments and lunch, the costs incurred by the trainer for travel and expenses, and for the resource materials. A fee needs to be considered and negotiated with the school in terms of space rental fees if applicable, meals, and presenting resources (flip charts, technology, other stationary). There may be additional costs for the individual teacher such as fees incurred by their school for substitute replacement while the participant is away from school. A potential barrier for participants could be the location and additional travel costs and expenses. However,

most international schools have allocated funds for professional learning, which often include travel costs.

Participants will complete a registration form with background information and the link to a pre-survey questionnaire to find out the needs of the participants and where their individual school is at in terms of inclusive practices. This will need to be submitted 2 weeks before the workshop dates so that it can be incorporated into the training by the trainer. The tool used is from the resource “Towards Inclusion Planning Our Path: An Inclusive Audit Protocol” (Powell et al., 2013). This resource will be required for participants and included in the registration fee along with the book “A Practical Guide for School Leaders” (Powell et al., 2011) and “An Inclusive Toolkit” (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015). These resources will be used as part of the planned activities during the workshop days and for the follow up work after the training.

As the trainer I will incur costs, which will be absorbed in the registration fee. I will plan to arrive 3 days in advance to coordinate with the school director and assigned personnel coordinating the event space and additional resources such as meeting with the leaders and teachers that will be part of the panel discussions and preparing the required materials that will be used throughout the 3-day workshop.

The format for the 3 days is detailed in Appendix A. The program includes an opening introduction session in which the findings of the study are presented in a mixture of lecture presentation and interactive format using a protocol to generate discussion and understanding amongst the participants. There is an opportunity for structured class visits using an observation and debrief protocol to see inclusive practices in action. There are

two different panel discussions one with teachers from the inclusive school and one with school leaders to hear firsthand the successes and challenges with changing towards inclusion. There is time assigned for reviewing the required resources using discussion protocols and then problem solving scenarios and simulations to practice the strategies used.

A main focus of the workshop is time for creating individual school plans for implementation using the inclusion continuum and planning tools (Powell et al., 2013) which explores different aspects of building and implementing inclusive programs. Participants are partnered at different times to provide feedback to each other. There is also an individual consultancy time with one of the school leaders or the trainer to discuss and receive feedback on their plans.

An online platform has been created for participants to access, which will include a place for sharing resources and a space for online discussion. Participants before the workshop will access the online platform, during and after as a follow up to ensure networking and support is included. Participants are able to post their action plans to receive feedback from the trainer and other participants. The trainer will regularly engage with the online platform to make sure it is interactive and used by the participants.

Project Evaluation Plan

In order to determine the success of the professional development training time there are two types of evaluation. One is summative to determine the individual success of the principal as they transfer their learning back to their own context. The second is in

the form of feedback from participants on the overall design of the training based on the outcomes of the program and will have both formative and summative components.

The outcomes of the professional development training are

- for school leaders to develop strategies necessary for moving a school towards inclusion of students with special needs;
- for school leaders to identify their individual place on a continuum towards inclusion and map out a plan to achieve the goal; and
- through building networks of support, for participants to work together to support each other and apply this learning in their own context.

The participants will submit their completed action plan for implementing change towards inclusion to the trainer at the end of the workshop, after 1 month with updates and reflections, and then again after 4 months. To demonstrate effectiveness of the professional development training the expectation would be that all participants submit their plan that is aligned with the strategies presented in the course and will see evidence in the action plan and written reflections demonstrating growth. Feedback will then be provided by the trainer in written form on the submitted action plans with comments and a summative statement with recommendations and support for continued implementation.

In addition a survey will be sent for participants to complete at the end of the workshop and after 1 month and 4 months. The questions focus on effectiveness of the training in helping to transfer strategies learned into context, if the networking with participants and the personnel at the school was maintained and useful and progress towards their individual action plan was achieved. The same survey will be sent each

time to see if growth has occurred and if with time the training was still effective or if use of the strategies was discontinued.

The second part of the evaluation is a formative survey given at the end of each training day to ensure effectiveness of the training. The daily survey will be used by the trainer to note any changes that need to be made during the implementation of the training and then a final summative survey will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the training towards the outcomes. The survey uses a Likert scale and provides opportunity for written comments. This evaluation will be completed anonymously, the questions are included in Appendix A.

A summary of the results of the evaluation will be shared with the participants and the leadership of the onsite school used for the professional development training. It will be used to evaluate effectiveness and to make improvements for further implementation of future offerings of this professional development training. An article written by the trainer and quoting participants will be written on the outcomes of the training for an international schools publication.

This type of evaluation is justified in the research literature as described by Goldring, Preston, and Huff (2012). Using a tool to measure expertise and practices of a program are one area necessary for measuring success as planned for in the summative survey evaluation tool. The other area the research by Goldring et al. focused on was the opportunities to measure participants' efforts to improve practice which is demonstrated by the action plan tool, reflections and survey on individual success of implementation.

Project Implications for Social Change

The implications of the findings from the project study and the professional development training program have the potential to provide learning opportunities for children with special learning needs in the context of international schools. The description of the local problem described the international schools historically having exclusive admissions policies (Hayden, 2006; Shaklee, 2007; United States Office of Overseas Schools, 2014). The description then went on to demonstrate how there is movement towards the inclusion of children with special needs (Powell et al., 2011; United States Office of Overseas Schools, 2014), but there is the necessity of helping school leaders to facilitate the change process needed.

This study identified strategies for school leaders to use and the design of a professional development training to move schools towards inclusivity. The direct impact on this is changing admissions policies and students with special needs successfully being included in international schools with the required support. The implication for social change is that international schools can live up to their key characteristic of diversity by moving beyond only being diverse in terms of cultures, but also in the way students learn.

The greatest benefit is to students of families who are globally mobile or seeking the benefits of international mindedness found in international schools who before were limited based on special learning needs preventing them from the opportunity to apply and be educated appropriately. Additionally teachers in schools moving towards inclusion will have better equipped leaders with strategies and skills to help support those in the school environment as they undergo the change process. Effectively putting in

place systems and resources along with developing common understanding and purpose will help create an effective inclusive school environment.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

As a conclusion to this project study, this section provides a place for reflection. The purpose of the study was to examine the role of leadership in changing the culture of an international school to be inclusive of students with special needs. This section explores strengths, limitations, and recommendations of the qualitative case study approach and design of the professional development training as a result of the findings. As the researcher, I explore what I have learned about this process and my growth as a scholar practitioner. Implications, further applications, and direction for future research are discussed with a final look at the importance of the work that has followed from this project study.

The findings led to the creation of the professional development training based on a review of the literature on this genre of project. The 3-day learning experience for school leaders was based in the context of an international school to learn directly from their experience to help school leaders develop action plans based in the context of an international school to learn directly from their experience, to help school leaders develop action plans based on the strategies developed from the findings, and to build networks of support and mentorship amongst leaders.

Project Strengths

The theoretical framework of change leadership (Fullan, 2001,2009, 2011), as a focal point aligning the study throughout all components from the local problem, research questions, methodology, analysis of findings and project study design, was a strength of

this project. Knowing from the literature review that effective leadership was a crucial factor in making a change in an individual leaders school context towards inclusion (Calik et al., 2012; Mullick et al., 2012; Waldron et al., 2011) demonstrated the need to develop research around the role of leadership and understanding for the strategies used to be successful. The role of leadership in leading change was correlated to the study design, and, having found strategies, the natural connection was to then make sure other leaders were understanding the strategies and learning how to implement them through a professional development training.

The strengths of the professional development training are that the outcomes are embedded in the needs of the school leader participants (Boyland et al., 2015; Reardon, 2011) and in a context that allows for participants to learn from experienced leaders and a school that has gone through the change process (Bartee, 2012; Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Drago-Severson, 2012; Leithwood & Azah, 2016). The project allows for the findings to not only be read by participants in the form of a report or article, but to learn about them, discuss with others, and apply them through problem solving simulations. In addition, school leaders are using the strategies in the findings to build an action plan and then to implement the action plan with support of mentorship through the trainer, other participants, and school leaders, understanding the process through their own direct experience.

Project Limitations

The limitations in the project are that the findings developed from one case study school, and each international school has different characteristics and resources.

Therefore, it is important that the professional development training be individualized and allow for a great deal of discussion where participants have the opportunity to listen to each other, to share ideas, and then to apply back to their own context.

The professional development training takes place at a school in the international context, and the follow-up taking place online has potential to lead to participants not following through on their action plans and the evaluations. Ideally, having more than one meeting spread out over time with the ability to apply the learning in context with in-person follow-up would be ideal. However, costs incurred and time for travel could be a limiting factor in participants taking part in the training opportunity.

Recommendations for Alternate Approaches

Based on the limitations, an alternative to the professional development training could be a more personalized approach with the identification of school leaders who have effectively gone through the change process towards being inclusive of students with special needs and partnering them with a school leader who is seeking support. This partnership could involve school visits combined with online tools for connecting, which would ensure that the experience is more contextualized. Findings, strategies, and resources could be stored in an online space accessed by both the participant and the mentor.

In terms of the study itself, a wider perspective could have informed the study by having a mixed methods approach using a quantitative survey designed to get input from more schools that have gone through the process of change to strengthen the findings through analyzing a wider range of data.

The problem itself could have been examined from the role of the leaders, but also the role of teachers in strategies or contributions they have made towards successful implementation of inclusive programs in the context of international schools. The problem could then be defined as strategies teachers are using to implement inclusive practices as opposed to the role of leaders in supporting the change process towards implementing inclusive practices in the context of international schools.

Project Development

As a scholar practitioner, I have grown in my abilities as a researcher and as a leader in my own professional context through this process. From the start, I was able to identify a problem by reflecting on my values and then find a passion in the topic of inclusion that I could support through research and action. I learned early in the process that in order to complete this project to a high level it needed to be a topic that held significant importance to me and that I really wanted to understand more about and support the development of in my school, and in international schools in general, which I am committed to in my career. One of the reasons I selected Walden University and the project study was because of the focus on social change and completing a project that would have an impact on a greater cause.

I learned my strengths as a researcher were in the qualitative area because of my desire to listen to people and understand what they are saying and build connections. I think through interviewing during different projects during coursework, I was prepared to conduct interviews in my case study research to a higher degree, and then analyze them. One of the challenges throughout that process was keeping my own experiences to the

side and not letting this influence how I was asking questions, the types of questions I was asking, or the conclusions I was drawing from the data. Using software and coding strategies helped me focus only on the data and not the assumptions or the unspoken pieces that can play into analysis.

In my role as a school leader and member of the international school community, I have been involved in creating and presenting a variety of professional learning workshops; however, this has not been embedded in my own research. I think developing a professional development training based on research I have conducted and supported by other resources makes me as a trainer and presenter more credible as an expert and allowed me to go deeper in the preparations of a workshop, ultimately creating a better learning experience for the participant. Grounding the professional learning in research-based practices and understanding how the topic and purpose connects to the activities has helped me to grow as a trainer and as a school leader.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

The work generated from this project study has had an impact on me as a leader and trainer as described in the previous section, but also on the school where I work, and I believe in the long run it will have an impact on other international schools. More and more, the topic of inclusion has been at the top of the agenda at international school conferences and in international school publications. School leaders are seeing the need ethically and to truly live up to our celebration of diversity to support the inclusion of all students. One significant area emanating from this study is supporting school leaders, and this body of work provides a piece of research that can be used and built upon to support

the change needed in schools to be inclusive of all students regardless of learning difficulties.

I personally learned strategies as a school leader from the case study interviews and findings that I have been able to apply into my own school context to facilitate change and growth of our own learning organization. Specifically, I have taken more time to ensure there is common understanding when we are making a change or going through the change process. In addition, I have developed a stronger passion for the topic of inclusion and advocating for students with special learning needs that I hope to share as a result of my research and the study findings.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research and Social Change

The potential impact for positive social change is at the international school context level. When families from any nationality make a decision to move overseas, they should not be limited by their options if they have a child with special learning needs. The values of an international education are wide reaching and should be accessible to everyone. Schools built on diversity and developing values of international mindedness are an important part of society and developing future world leaders with strong ethical and moral purpose (Hayden, 2006). This study supported the development of inclusive international schools by providing leaders with strategies to successfully support change, and therefore this supports a strong commitment to positive social change.

The case study school allowing themselves to be part of the study opens up the opportunity to create connections amongst schools and further networking opportunities

for educators to be able to learn from and support each other, which is another area of growth in support of social change. The more schools and leaders that work together, the greater the impact will be towards change.

Future directions for future research include building on the findings from this study and replicating the case study and developing further research aligned with the questions developed here to gain more data and evidence in support of the strategies to develop inclusive schools. Quantitative research would also be useful on the impact of student learning in inclusive schools to support the change and development of the strategies explored here. Other research to support teachers and their implementation of teaching strategies and models that best support international school students would be beneficial to the overall growth and development of inclusive schools.

Conclusions

Change is often described as a journey, and in order to effectively make successful change leaders need to understand the process and clearly map out the steps to take towards successful implementation of the change they seek (Fullan, 2009). This study has provided strategies to help other school leaders to map out their journey towards making a significant and worthy change towards the inclusion of all students in the context of international school education. If this change can take place, international schools will live up to their vision of being places where diversity is celebrated and truly lived.

The project study allows for the opportunity for a wider audience beyond only reading the findings; through the development of a professional development training,

school leaders can benefit directly by learning, practicing, and applying the findings from the study in their own school context to make a significant change, which will lead to the effective implementation of inclusive schools supporting all students with their individual learning, growth, and success in life.

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Appendix A: The Project

Professional Development Training Title

Strategies for School Leaders in Supporting the Change Towards Inclusive International Schools.

Goals

The main goal of the professional development training is to provide participants with the answer to the project study research questions: What strategies support, and measures of success can be used to change the culture of a school to be inclusive of students with special learning needs based on changing admissions policies that reflect the diversity of international schools?

Outcomes and Objectives

1. For school leaders to develop strategies necessary for moving a school towards inclusion of students with special needs.
2. For school leaders to identify their individual place on a continuum towards inclusion and map out a plan to achieve the goal.
3. Through building networks of support participants will work together to support each other and apply this learning in their own context.

Targeted Audience

International school leaders who are working through the process of change towards being an inclusive school or who are considering being an inclusive school of students with special learning needs.

Resources for Participants

1. Online learning platform created for the training (using Google applications)
2. Fullan, M. (2004). *Leading in a culture of change: Personal action guide and workbook*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
3. Powell, W., & Kusuma-Powell, O. (2015). *An Inclusive Toolkit*. Next Frontier Inclusion.
4. Powell, W., Kusuma-Powell, O., Pelletier, K., & Bartlett, K. (2011). *Inclusion in international schools: A practical guide for school leaders*. Next Frontier Inclusion.
5. Powell, W., Kusuma-Powell, O., Pelletier, K., & Bartlett, K. (2013). *Towards Inclusion*. Next Frontier Inclusion.

Projected Costs

Costs for participants will vary based on their individual location. Each participant will need to travel to the workshop location which will be in an international location. These costs will include visa, flight, hotel, and transportation to and from airport and to and from hotel to workshop location. There will be a registration fee, which will depend on the costs incurred to the host school for refreshments and lunch, the costs incurred by the trainer for travel and expenses and for the resource materials. There may be additional costs for the individual teacher such as fees incurred by their school for substitute replacement while the participant is away from school.

Preparation for Participants in Advance of the Training Days

Once registered for the workshop, participants will be given access to the online platform and will be able to download a copy of the three resources books. They will be instructed to complete a survey found in the resource “Towards Inclusion: Planning Our Path An Inclusive Audit Protocol (Powell, Kusuma-Powell, Bartlett, & Pelletier, 2013, p. 31-32). Once they have completed the survey they will e-mail it to the trainer no later than 2 weeks before the start of the training. In addition participants will complete their profile in the online platform to introduce themselves to the other participants, and to read the profiles of the other participants. They will also write a comment in the discussion section of the online platform with the following prompts:

1. What is your definition of an inclusive school?
2. Why did you register for this training, and what do you hope you will get out of attending?
3. Where is your school at on the journey towards being an inclusive school?

The information from the survey results of participants and the discussion prompts will be collated by the trainer and shared at the start of the workshop. The individual survey results will be used by the participants as a tool throughout the training and after the training to see growth in their strategies and implementation of skills.

Outline of 3-Day Training

The 3-day training will take place on location at a selected international school which was chosen because of its successful transition to being an inclusive school of students with special needs. The workshop will take place in a multi-purpose space and

set up with tables to allow for five groups of five participants. Participants will bring their laptops for use of resources and the online platform throughout the training days. The trainer will have a projector and flipchart stands to record discussions and share resources.

Day 1 will include an introduction and overview of the key findings from the study. Activities will take place to introduce participants to each other and to build connections that will become a part of the network building throughout the 3 days and then after the training for support and follow up.

The findings will be presented along with a detailed description and then an opportunity for participants to discuss using the *Chalk Talk* protocol from the National School Reform Faculty website (<http://www.nsrffharmony.org>)

1. Understanding and acknowledging different perspectives and a potential disconnect between views of leadership and views of teachers.
2. Ensuring there is common understanding of what inclusion means amongst all stakeholders.
3. Creating systems that support inclusion and an overall plan to ensure accountability.
4. Providing the necessary personnel and resources to implement a successful inclusive program.
5. Ongoing and embedded professional learning.
6. Addressing, acknowledging and overcoming challenges inherent in the international school context.

Participants will spend time on Day 1 assessing where their school is at on the audit protocol found in “Towards Inclusion: Planning Our Path An Inclusive Audit Protocol”. They will spend time individually, then in partners, and then in groups of five to understand the different areas, how they are aligned with the findings from the study presented, and looking at commonalities and differences amongst schools.

After an initial look at the audit protocol, participants will then go through a series of learning experiences based in the context of the international school the workshop is located at. Participants will go in small groups to visit classrooms where inclusive practices, systems, resources and structures are in place. Before the class visits students will brainstorm questions for what they will be looking for in the classroom observations, which will be the basis for the debrief after.

Participants will be led through an admissions simulation using the guidelines found in “An Inclusive Toolkit” (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015, p. 14). Three students will be profiled and a group simulating an admissions committee will have to decide whether the student will be accepted or not based on the admissions policy and the resources available at the school.

Participants will use the overview of service-delivery models and co-teaching found in “A Practical Guide for School Leaders” and take part in a Jigsaw Reading Protocol (<http://www.nsrffharmony.org>).

Two different panel discussions will take place one with a group of selected teachers from the host international school, and the second the leadership team from the host international school. Participants will prepare questions to be asked in advance, and

then trainer will facilitate the discussion to learn about the strategies being used and the change process.

Using the learning from the above outlined learning experiences and the resources provided participants will review their original ratings on the audit protocol and have discussions with a learning partner. They will then start to complete an action plan template for how they will start the change process.

An overview of the conceptual framework from the study on change using the work of Fullan will be provided through a presentation of key areas. Participants will be given a copy of the book “Leading in a Culture of Change: Personal Action Guide and Workbook” (Fullan, 2004) to support the work they do in their schools after the training workshops. After the presentation table groups will spend time discussing their understanding of the five components presented.

Participants will use the problem-based simulations presented in the Fullan (2004) resource to practice with a small group of other leaders the skills presented towards leading effective change.

During the course of Days 2 and 3 each participant will be assigned to one of the school site leaders or the trainer for a 15-minute consultation based on the start of their action plan. Feedback will be given, and then follow up will take place at the end of the workshop, after 1 month and after 4 months with this assigned leader.

At the conclusion of each training day a formative evaluation will be given to provide the trainer with feedback to be able to make any adjustments for the participants or to add necessary components to the workshop based on the individual needs of the

participants. The following questions will be rated with a 5 point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. An opportunity for comments in the form of a written response to give suggestions will also be provided on the online survey form.

1. The learning activities were appropriate and varied?
2. Opportunities were provided to build strong networks amongst the participants and with the school leaders present?
3. The training was effective in providing skills and strategies to support the work in my school towards becoming inclusive?
4. The resources used today were effective and supported the overall goals of the training?
5. The online platform is useful in accessing resources and building networks with the other participants?

Day1 Overview

8:30 – 9:00	Registration and Refreshments as participants arrive
9:00 – 9:30	Introductions and Group building activities to get to know the other participants to begin to build connections
9:30 – 10:30	Overview of the Findings from the Project study by the trainer and Chalk Talk discussion to build common understanding of the strategies
10:30 – 10:45	Break time provided
10:45 – 11:30	Introduction to the audit protocol and time for individuals to assess where there school and leadership is at on the different continuum.

11:30 – 12:30	Work in partners and then in small groups to discuss the audit and share individual experiences.
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch will be provided
13:30 – 13:45	Participants will prepare questions for the teacher and leader panel
13:45 – 14:30	Teacher panel discussion and debrief from what was shared by the teachers and how this applies to the findings from the study
14:30 – 15:15	Leader panel discussion and debrief from what was shared by the leaders and how this applies to the findings from the study
15:15 – 15:45	Summary of the day, opportunity for questions and review of the strategies for school leaders
15:45 – 16:00	Formative evaluation to provide feedback to the trainer on the day and input for Day 2 and 3

Day1 Trainer Notes

9:00 – 9:30	Start with sharing presenter background introducing myself, tell the story of student that changed my perspective on inclusive education from first year of teaching. Have participants at table groups introduce themselves with their name, a one-word concept describing how they are feeling now, and a sentence to describe their role at their school without using their position title. Have groups share with each other and then come together as a whole group to hear some of the best role descriptions from the groups. Finally have participants stand up and complete an exercise where
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they line up on a continuum based on how they feel about a statement shared with the group on inclusive education.

9:30 – 10:30

Use slides to present the goal of the workshop, the objectives and outcomes and the agenda for the day. Then introduce the research process that was conducted for the doctoral study using a qualitative case study design. After discussing the research questions and interview protocol, share each of the findings from the study and describe with anecdotal evidence from the interviews and found in the study data analysis. Have each of the six themes from the study each on the middle of an individual chart paper. Have participants complete a “chalk talk” where they go around and comment and connect on each theme without talking. Once everyone has a chance to visit and write comments on each other have a gallery walk to see what everyone is thinking. Conclude with a whole group discussion on the reactions everyone is having to the strategies suggested from the research study and the connections they are making.

10:45 – 11:30

Introduce participants to the audit protocol and time for individuals to assess where their school and leadership is at on the different continuum. Let participants know that this is an initial look at the continuum and their thoughts on where they are at may change as

- the workshop proceeds. Walk around and be available for individual conversations as needed.
- 11:30 – 12:30 Have participants work in partners first and then after about 30 minutes have two partnerships form a small group. Have participants discuss the audit and share individual experiences to allow them to start building networks and connections to build in support.
- 13:30 – 13:45 Introduce the purpose of the panel discussions as an opportunity to hear first hand anecdotally from teachers and leaders who have been involved in the transition towards successful inclusion. To personalize the experience have participants take a few moments to think about questions they would like asked during the two different panels. Provide index cards for the participants to write their questions on.
- 13:45 – 14:30 Meet with the selected teachers in advance to build rapport and to explain the process and the types of questions that will be asked. As the facilitator of the teacher panel begin by asking each teacher to introduce themselves, what they teach and their experience with inclusion. Then start by selecting relevant questions from the participants and guide the discussion accordingly based on the response. Once finished lead a reflective exercise to debrief from what was shared by the teachers and how this applies to the

findings from the study. Allow for some small group time to reflect and then lead a whole group discussion.

- 14:30 – 15:15 Repeat the process as done with the teacher panel, but for the debrief have participants complete a “so what/now what” discussion in small groups and chart on paper to share out with the whole group.
- 15:15 – 15:45 Summarize the learning from the day. Provide participants with an opportunity for questions and review of the strategies for school leaders.
- 15:45 – 16:00 Provide participants a link to online form for a formative evaluation to provide feedback to the trainer on the day and input for Day 2 and 3.

Day 2 Overview

- 8:30 – 9:00 Refreshments and time to connect with each other from yesterday
- 9:00 – 9:30 Overview of the agenda for the day, feedback from formative evaluation and incorporation of any changes, summary from yesterday
- 9:30 – 11:30 In groups of three participants will write questions that will guide the class observations. Groups will go out and observe classes based on the schedule and location of visits provided to each

group. Groups will write a summary of observations and findings to share with the whole group.

- 11:30 – 12:00 Summary of class visits with groups sharing their observations and how they applied to the strategies and findings presented
- 12:00 – 13:00 Lunch will be provided
- 13:00 – 14:00 Admissions simulation together with the school admission director and the protocol found in “An Inclusive Toolkit” (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015). Table groups will use the profile of three students and the schools admission policy to make decisions on which students to accept based on the resources available and the school context provided.
- 14:00 – 15:00 Jigsaw learning activity on service delivery models and co-teaching
- 15:00 – 15:30 Summary of the day, opportunity for questions and review of the strategies for school leaders
- 15:30 – 16:00 Formative evaluation to provide feedback to the trainer on the day and input for Day 2 and 3

Day 2 Trainer Notes

- 9:00 – 9:30 Use the slides to provide overview of the agenda for the day, feedback from the formative evaluation and incorporation of any changes, summary from yesterday. Also give participants a brief

review of the research strategies and also the connections that emerged from the teacher and leadership panels.

- 9:30 – 11:30 Have participants form groups of three and have them write questions that will guide the class observations. Provide some examples as needed and make connections to the teacher and leader panels of the comments they made about the school and the changes. Groups will then go out and observe classes based on the schedule and location of visits provided to each group. Instruct groups to write a summary of observations and findings to share with the whole group on the template provided to them.
- 11:30 – 12:00 Bring the groups back together. Using the observation templates have groups share out their findings to their questions and chart a summary of the key points from the class visits. Lead a discussion on how the observations connect to the six themes from the study. Have participants spend the last 10 minutes of the discussion looking at the “chalk talk” chart paper from yesterday with their reflections on each of the themes from the research study, and add other connections and comments based on the class visit observations.
- 13:00 – 14:00 Have participants take part in the admissions simulation together with the school admission director and the protocol found in “An Inclusive Toolkit” (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015). Begin by

having the school admission director give a presentation on the admissions process at the school. Then have table groups use the profile of three students and the schools admission policy to make decisions on which students to accept based on the resources available and the school context provided. These will all be written up on a series of cards with group members considering the perspectives of the various stakeholders that take part in the process. Debrief the activity, first by listening to the decisions and rationale made by each group. Then reflect on the admissions process at the workshop school, and then make connections to participants own individual schools and what changes they may see as necessary to improve the process.

14:00 – 15:00

Divide participants into groups of five for a jigsaw learning activity and then have them number off from 1 to 5. Assign each group a section of reading on service delivery models and co-teaching found in “An Inclusive Toolkit” (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015). Read individually and then discuss summarize as a group. After 30 minutes then have groups reform by number. Each person in the new group will share there summary of reading and then discuss and make connections to the class visit observations from the morning and their own school context.

15:00 – 15:30 Summarize the learning from the day. Provide participants with an opportunity for questions.

15:30 – 16:00 Provide participants a link to online form for a formative evaluation to provide feedback to the trainer on the day and input for Day 2 and 3.

Day 3 Overview

8:30 – 9:00 Refreshments and time to connect with each other from yesterday

9:00 – 9:30 Overview of the agenda for the day, feedback from formative evaluation and incorporation of any changes, summary from yesterday

9:30 – 11:30 Using the audit protocol participants will work on creating their action plan using the template. They will start individually, then work with a partner, and finally share what they are working on with feedback from their table group. During this time participants will have the opportunity to consult with the school leaders from the school and the trainer.

11:30 – 12:30 Review of change theory based on the work of Fullan (2004) and using the resource “Leading in a Culture of Change: Personal Action Guide and Workbook”. A presentation will be provided and then time for table groups to explore the five components of change leadership presented.

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch will be provided

- 13:30 – 14:30 Participants will use the problem-based simulations presented in the Fullan (2004) resource to practice with a small group of other leaders the skills presented towards leading effective change
- 14:30 – 15:00 Whole group discussion on the change process facilitated by the trainer
- 15:00 – 15:30 Discussion on how to stay connected and the expectations for implementing action plan, writing reflections and submitting after today, in 1 month and 4 months with feedback provided
- 15:30 – 16:00 Final comments and time for the course evaluation

Day 3 Trainer Notes

- 9:00 – 9:30 Use the slides to provide overview of the agenda for the day, feedback from the formative evaluation and incorporation of any changes, along with summary from Day 2.
- 9:30 – 11:30 Refer participants back to the audit protocol they reviewed and rated themselves and their schools on from Day 1. Instruct participants that they will now work on creating their action plan using the template “An Inclusive Toolkit” (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015). Have them first start individually, then work with a partner, and finally share what they are working on with feedback from their table group. During this time participants will have the opportunity to consult with the school leaders from the school and the trainer.

- 11:30 – 12:30 Review of change theory based on the work of Fullan (2004) and using the resource “Leading in a Culture of Change: Personal Action Guide and Workbook”. A presentation will be provided and then time for table groups to explore the five components of change leadership presented in the Chapter 1 overview as a starting place. Participants will use the workbook, which is part of the resources used in the course as an introduction now, and then to use alongside their action plan when they go back to their own schools for implementation. As they review in small groups have them answer the following three questions: 1. What connections did you make to your own leadership style and the components of change leadership? 2. How can you apply the components of leadership to the action plan you are creating for moving towards inclusion? 3. How can a network of leaders support you through the change process?
- 13:30 – 14:30 Participants will use the problem-based simulations presented in the Fullan (2004) resource at the end of each chapter which describes a component of leadership change to practice with a small group of other leaders the skills presented towards leading effective change. Divide into five groups and give each group one of the five components. After they have gone through the

simulation have them summarize the process, outcome and skills used. Then have each group share with the whole group.

- 14:30 – 15:00 Whole group discussion on the change process facilitated by the trainer based on the discussion from the section above, personal experiences and connected to the research study.
- 15:00 – 15:30 Discussion on how to stay connected and the expectations for implementing action plan, writing reflections and submitting after today, in 1 month and 4 months with feedback provided.
- 15:30 – 16:00 Final comments and time for the course evaluation

Slides to be used in workshop



LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE

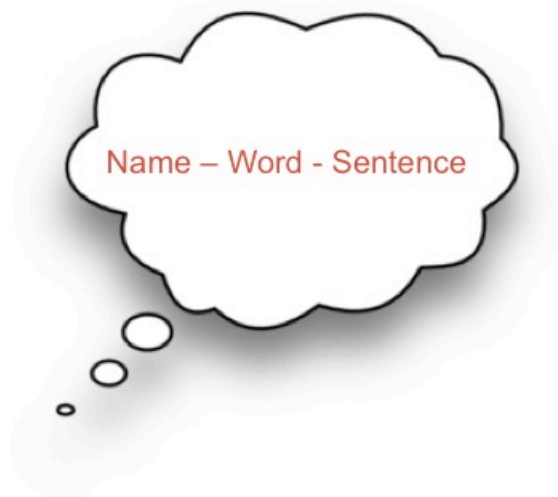
*Strategies for School Leaders in Supporting the Change
Towards Inclusive International Schools*

Presented By: Simon Gillespie

Day One Agenda

- Introduction and group building
- Research Findings on Leadership and Inclusion
- Audit protocol and self-evaluation
- Teacher panel to find out more about successful strategies towards inclusion
- Leadership panel...
- Reflection on teacher and leadership panels
- Summary and Formative evaluation for feedback...

Introductions and Group Building



Goal of Workshop

The main goal of the professional development training is to provide participants with the answer to the project study research questions:

What strategies support, and measures of success can be used to change the culture of a school to be inclusive of students with special learning needs based on changing admissions policies that reflect the diversity of international schools?

Outcomes and Objectives

- For school leaders to develop strategies necessary for moving a school towards inclusion of students with special needs.
- For school leaders to identify their individual place on a continuum towards inclusion and map out a plan to achieve the goal.
- Through building networks of support participants will work together to support each other and apply this learning in their own context.

Research Findings

1. Understanding and acknowledging different perspectives and a potential disconnect between views of leadership and views of teachers.
2. Ensuring there is common understanding of what inclusion means amongst all stakeholders.
3. Creating systems that support inclusion and an overall plan to ensure accountability.
4. Providing the necessary personnel and resources to implement a successful inclusive program.
5. Ongoing and embedded professional learning.
6. Addressing, acknowledging and overcoming challenges inherent in the international school context.

Chalk Talk <http://www.nsrffharmony.org>

- Each theme from the research study can be found on a piece of chart paper around the room.
- Visit each paper and write a comment, a reflection, a question or a connection you have.
- You can also comment on what other participants have written. Ask questions, draw connections to your comments...
- You may not talk with each other during this activity!

Towards Inclusion Audit Protocol

- Powell, W., Kusuma-Powell, O., Pelletier, K., & Bartlett, K. (2013). *Towards Inclusion*. Next Frontier Inclusion.
- Use the protocol to determine where you are on your individual and school journey towards inclusion.
- After you have assessed yourself, find a partner, share and discuss.

Teacher and Leadership Panels

- We will have an opportunity to listen to, learn from and ask questions first of a group of teachers and then a group of leaders from the workshop school that has gone through the process towards inclusion.
- What questions do you have? Write each question on the index card provided.
- The panel will be facilitated and after we will have the opportunity to reflect on the learning.

Day One Summary and Feedback

- Summary of the learning from Day One
- Overview of Day Two
- Please take five minutes to complete the online form to give me feedback to incorporate into Day Two

Day Two Agenda

- Overview and feedback from formative evaluation
- Create questions for class observations
- Class observations
- Reflection on class observations
- Admissions simulation
- Jigsaw learning on service delivery models and co-teaching
- Summary and Formative evaluation for feedback...

Class Observations

- Find a group of three
- Write questions that will guide your class observations, what will you be looking for? How will the observations support your own action plan for implementation?
- Follow your groups schedule to visit classes and record observations.
- Spend time debriefing on the observations and reviewing your questions. Summarize your discussion and observations on the protocol provided.

Admissions Simulation

- Review the admissions protocol from “An Inclusive Toolkit” (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015).
- Use the profile cards provided to work in a group to determine whether to admit the student or not to admit.
- Provide rationale for your decision and be ready to share with the whole group.

Jigsaw Learning Activity

- In group of five number off 1-5
- In your group review the section assigned on service delivery models and co-teaching from “An Inclusive Toolkit” (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015).
- Write a summary of your discussion.
- Move into your new group with the number assigned to you. Each member of the new group shares the summary of the section they reviewed. Discuss as a group after each section.

Day Two Summary and Feedback

- Summary of the learning from Day Two
- Overview of Day Three
- Please take five minutes to complete the online form to give me feedback to incorporate into Day Three

Day Three Agenda

- Overview and feedback from formative evaluation
- Using audit protocol create an action plan
- Review action plan for feedback from peers
- Change theory and connections to action plan implementation
- Applying change theory with problem-based simulations
- Reflecting on using change theory in practice
- Networking and how to stay connected
- Expectations for implementing action plan and receiving feedback
- Closing comments, reflections and evaluation

Action Planning

- Based on the audit protocol from Day One work on creating your individual and school action plan.
- Use the template found in “An Inclusive Toolkit” (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015).
- Begin individually, take time to consult with the leadership of the workshop school and the trainer.
- Work with a partner to share and give each other feedback.

Change Theory

- “Leading in a Culture of Change” (Fullan, 2004)
 1. Moral Purpose
 2. Understanding Change
 3. Relationship Building
 4. Knowledge Creating and Sharing
 5. Coherence Making

Change Theory Discussion

1. What connections did you make to your own leadership style and the components of change leadership?
2. How can you apply the components of leadership to the action plan you are creating for moving towards inclusion?
3. How can a network of leaders support you through the change process?

Problem-Based Simulations

- Each group will be given a different case study problem based on one of the five components.
- Work through the problem and come to a solution.
- Summarize the problem, the steps you took and the solution found.
- Each group will share
- Whole group discussion

Networking and Staying Connected

- Strategies to stay connected with your peers
- Steps for continuing your action plan and submitting for feedback and accountability
- Sharing your next steps

Post Training Follow up and Evaluation

Following the training the online platform will be accessible by participants to continue communicating with each other and to access the resources used and shared throughout the 3-day training. At the end of Day 3, participants will submit a draft of their action plan to the trainer by e-mail. They will follow up with an updated action plan and written reflection after 1 month, and again after 4 months. The purpose of this will be to hold the participants accountable for applying their learning in their own context. The second reason will be to provide feedback to the participants from the trainer and the school leaders in the training school. The third will be to assess the impact of the professional development training. In addition participants will be asked to submit the original survey with new ratings that was used in the preparation for the training materials.

At the end of the workshop a link will be sent to participants to complete a survey with the following questions and an opportunity to provide written comments on the quality of the professional development training, and areas to improve for future development and implementation. The following questions will be rated with a 5 point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

1. The trainer had knowledge and expertise in the topics presented?
2. The learning activities were appropriate and varied?
3. The trainers style of presenting was effective?
4. The trainer had enthusiasm and passion for the content of the training?

5. Opportunities were provided to build strong networks amongst the participants and with the school leaders present?
6. I will continue to stay in contact and support the work towards inclusion together with the other participants?
7. The training was effective in providing skills and strategies to support the work in my school towards becoming inclusive?
8. The resources used were effective and supported the overall goal of the training?
9. I will be able to apply the action plan created in the course to my own school context?
10. The online platform was useful in accessing resources and building networks with the other participants?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What is your definition of an inclusive international school?
2. Does your definition of an inclusive international school align with what you see happening at this school?
3. What is your role in the school and explain how this role supports inclusive practices.
4. What does inclusion look like when it is being successfully implemented?
5. What role did the leadership of the school play in creating an inclusive school culture?
6. What structures or systems have been established by the leadership of the school to support inclusive practices?
7. How did the strategies implemented by the leadership of the school support the teachers work in creating an inclusive learning environment?
8. What were the greatest challenges that were faced at the beginning of introducing inclusion and how were they overcome?
9. How does the school measure the level of success in being an inclusive school?
10. Are the strategies being used by leadership aligned with the inclusive policies in place?
11. What impact has being inclusive had on the school community?

Appendix C: Document Review Protocol

Documents collected from the case study school will be reviewed by identifying relevant information that has content supporting the themes identified from the research questions, which include the following areas:

1. Implementation of inclusive practices
2. Data to support changes in inclusive practices
3. Indicators of success in implementing inclusive practices