

ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

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The Graduate School

Morehead State University

June 7, 2023

BARRIERS TO INCLUSION AT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

Abstract of Capstone

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
Ernst and Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education
At Morehead State University

By

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Shelbyville, Kentucky

Committee Chair: Dr. Michael W. Kessinger, Associate Professor

Morehead, Kentucky

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The purpose of this capstone was to investigate how the experiences and attitudes of educators at international schools and how they impact their perceptions of inclusive education. In this mixed methods study, 52 elementary teachers at an international school in China were surveyed on their demographics, attitudes, and experiences with inclusion of children with special needs. The primary themes explored were the need for ongoing education and professional development opportunities; the impact of teacher preparatory programs on teacher attitudes; and how the experiences of teachers vary based on their role within a school.

KEYWORDS: inclusion, learning support, international education, teacher attitudes

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BARRIERS TO INCLUSION AT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, friends, and students. First, to my grandmother, Margaret, whose many years in the field of education continue to inspire me to advocate for children with diverse needs. Next, to my siblings, Rachel and Nathan. Rachel, for being the guiding light in my life, giving me purpose, and for being the catalyst for my career in special education. Nathan, for providing me with balance and for being a soft-landing place when I need respite and care.

I also dedicate this work to my late grandfather, Carroll Hall, who passed before he could see me graduate from his alma mater. My grandfather dedicated his life to the education of children across Kentucky and continued to do so until weeks before his passing at the age of 91. His lasting impact on the lives of Kentucky youth serve as a model for my own life.

Next, I want to remember the unwavering support from my loving friends, Julianna and Angela. Thank you both for providing reason and understanding throughout my capstone journey.

I also want to dedicate this capstone to Calypso for her constant companionship and amity across three countries and two continents in the last eight years.

Finally, this capstone project is the culmination of the “heart” work that is working in education. I dedicate the hours spent researching and writing for this capstone to my students of the past, present, and future. My hope is that this work

will have an impact on making schools more inclusive environments in which all students are valued, invested in, and can thrive.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

International schools, as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), cater to the families of expatriates and diplomats. Clientele for international schools families living abroad that want their children educated in a system with a curriculum that aligns with their home country (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). These schools also appeal to families that may be dissatisfied with the quality of local schools or want their children to develop a global-mindset. International schools are characterized by a mission focused on international cohesion, environmental responsibility, and sustainable practices. These schools exist all over the world and offer a variety of curricula, including International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement programs. According to Hayden and Thompson (2008), the language of instruction at international schools is primarily English, although some are not mainly English-speaking. Teachers in these schools are predominately made up of expatriates fluent in the language of instruction.

In 2020, the Educational Collaborative for International Schools (ECIS) published its goals for cooperating schools. In its document, ECIS (2020) emphasizes a commitment to modeling inclusive practices and meeting the needs of students with physical, social, emotional, and learning special needs. In recent years, organizations like ECIS and the Council of International Schools (CIS) have made commitments to prioritize the diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) initiatives. These organizations encourage international schools to take a more proactive approach in

their actions and curricula to develop their DEIJ competencies. However, many of school efforts focus specifically on the racial and linguistic components of DEIJ rather than the inclusion of children with special needs. While this focus is valuable and a necessary part of creating a globally-minded program, there is a need for international schools to also examine how serving students of diverse abilities can support their DEIJ goals.

In 2018, UNESCO published its first in-depth analysis of education for people with disabilities across 49 countries. The study indicated that "on average, [people with disabilities] are less likely ever to attend school, they are more likely to be out of school, they are less likely to complete primary or secondary education, they have fewer years of schooling, and they are less likely to possess basic literacy skills" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 30). To meet the needs of marginalized groups worldwide such as people with disabilities, advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities is critical. But equally as important is funding for programs, understanding the cultural context, and ongoing training and education of the people that work directly with children with disabilities (e.g., teachers, administrators, and school personnel).

International schools have long been the source of solace for families and expatriates raising third culture kids. However, special education is a relatively new phenomena across the world. Not all international schools offer special education services, forcing some families to make difficult choices given the limited options for children with special needs. In addition, international schools providing special or differentiated education must balance ethnic and linguistic diversity with

neurodiversity in an inclusive classroom. This responsibility falls primarily on the teachers, as they set the tone for an open and inclusive environment in the classroom (Costello & Boyle, 2013).

Research on how different host countries approach inclusive education is an important consideration for international or expatriate families and teachers.

Analyzing how a host country views special education and inclusion gives educators at international schools the cultural context needed to understand their students and their backgrounds. Families of children with special needs also benefit from this research as it can provide context for special education in their current community and assist them in making the best educational decisions for their children.

Statement of the Problem

As international schools begin to fulfill their commitment to DEIJ initiatives like those endorsed by the CIS, the ECIS, and other accreditation bodies, student enrollment is becoming increasingly diverse, with enrollment of students with special needs on the rise. In addition, international schools are beginning to recognize that enrolled students with special needs need differentiated instruction. As a result, schools are intentionally creating learning support departments and exploring multi-tiered systems of support.

Although international schools are beginning to realize and fulfill commitments to inclusion of children with special needs, there is still a glaring gap in the training of the teachers supporting this population of students. Enrollment of students with special needs may increase, but the experiences and trainings of

seasoned international school teachers remain the same. International teachers come from all over the world, bringing varying educational experiences from teacher preparatory programs with them. Their level of exposure to children with special needs, their education related to research-based interventions, and teaching methods vary. This inconsistency may cause friction within international schools and frustration for teachers who may not be prepared to support students with special needs. Although there is no doubt that teachers want to support all students, the cultural attitudes and experiences of individual teachers affect how student needs are perceived along with ways to address those needs. The varying perspectives that teachers bring with them into the classroom may negatively impact the student learning, as well as undermine efforts to create a more inclusive school environment. This capstone examined the cultural attitudes and experiences of teachers at international schools in relation to their perception of special education and inclusive practices.

Significance of the Problem

Too often, children with special needs in international schools are put into classrooms and not given the support they need to succeed. Instead of benefitting from multi-tiered systems of support, this population of students is left to fail. They are usually either put off to the side of the classroom or shadowed by a teaching assistant. This practice does not embody the spirit of inclusion and creates further inequity within a school. Examining teacher perceptions of inclusion will positively impact student success in international schools.

If international schools can identify how teachers perceive inclusion and special education and understand how the impact of their experiences affect children with special needs, they can target and provide appropriate teacher support. For example, teachers that have not been exposed to differentiation during their teacher preparatory programs or did not have any experience working with students with specific learning disabilities, may have a poor perception of inclusion. In addition, teachers in this situation may not be confident about differentiating learning for students with disabilities. Teachers from communities in which people with disabilities have low visibility may not know how to create inclusive classrooms. The attitudes of teachers toward people with disabilities may be reflect the cultural attitudes toward disabilities in their home countries. Students placed in environments where teachers are unprepared or unwilling to support them will not succeed. The purpose of this capstone was to identify what teachers carry into their classrooms that impact their ability to adopt inclusive practices.

International schools can also benefit from this research. International schools are making progress with inclusivity in the admissions process, but they have neglected to prepare faculty and staff for the reality of supporting children with special needs. By examining how cultural attitudes and experiences held by teachers affect their perception of and ability to implement inclusion, international schools can focus on providing the kinds of support teachers need to create inclusive classrooms. Schools can see areas in which teachers need the most training and address these

areas directly by identifying the gaps in teacher preparedness, confidence, and comfortability with inclusion.

Ideally, the outcomes of this capstone will create positive perceptions of inclusion among teachers because schools will be able to select the most impactful professional developments and practices that will support teacher and student success. Students will also be positively affected as teachers receive direct training to address student needs. In addition, families of children with special needs will be comforted by knowing their children are learning in a positive and supportive environment that meets the needs of their child.

Background of the Problem

According to the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), all children are entitled to an education. Article 23 of the UNCRC specifically addresses the rights of children with special needs stating, that children with special needs are entitled to a full and decent life (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 1989). Article 23 of the UNCRC also states that children with special needs should have access to appropriate rehabilitation, education, and support for employment opportunities. This provision specifically about children with special needs was important to include because this population has historically been excluded from educational opportunities.

Beckman et al. (2016) discuss how negative perceptions of children with special needs exist worldwide. Many of these perceptions are rooted in indigenous beliefs that explain the source of problems. Under these beliefs, illness or disability is

considered a punishment or curse (Beckman, et al.). Some believe that people with disabilities are hosts to evil spirits. Communities with these attitudes have a history of abandoning or killing people with special needs. Families of children with special needs are often ashamed and keep these children locked away without access to the community or education.

International schools exist all over the world, even in communities that still cling to unfounded negative beliefs about people with special needs. Many international schools are rooted in Western ideals and have a progressive attitude toward children with special needs. However, children with special needs have not been enrolled in international schools due to the lack of services available to support them. With the attitudes of international schools about serving more diverse populations are shifting, more children who qualify for learning support enroll. However, there is a gap in the research regarding how prepared international schools are to serve children with special needs and how the attitudes and experiences of international schools affect teacher perceptions of inclusion.

Definition of Terms

Differentiation: Learning adapted to meet the individual needs of students; includes the adjustment of the content, process, product, or learning environment to support student access of material.

English as an Additional Language (EAL): School programming for multilingual children or English language learners to support their English language proficiency.

International school: A school that promotes a global education for children of a different nationality than the host country and follows a curriculum different from the host country.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): School framework designed to support children of varying needs and abilities across academic, social-emotional, and language domains; includes support for children performing above grade level to children with special needs.

Single subjects: Specialized teaching subjects including visual arts, performing arts, physical education, library, and technology and design; synonymous with specialist areas.

Special education: School programming designed for children with special needs; used interchangeably with learning support in international schools.

Specialized teaching assistant: Support staff who participate in and contribute to the planning of instruction with teachers and teams; typically work one-on-one with a child requiring significant learning support across one or more areas.

Teaching assistant: Support staff who assist teaching faculty in managing equipment and materials; and regularly work with individuals or groups of students as instructed and supervised by the teacher.

Summary

International schools are a melting pot of cultures, beliefs, and attitudes about the world from students, teachers, and the school community. Attitudes toward people with special needs vary around the globe. Many cultures marginalize people with

disabilities, excluding them from educational opportunities and society. Faculty and staff in international schools may not come from communities with a positive outlook toward people with disabilities. Teacher preparatory programs and professional development often lack the ability to prepare teachers to work in inclusive environments.

Teachers may have a positive attitude toward inclusion, but not have the experience to apply the principles of inclusion in their classrooms. As international schools embrace inclusion as part of DEIJ initiatives prioritized by many organizations, there is a discrepancy between inclusive admissions processes and the abilities of teachers to work with children with special needs. If student learning and success are at the center of the mission of international schools, then international schools need to take intentional steps toward meeting the needs of all students.

This capstone project focused on the experiences and attitudes of educators at international schools regarding special education and inclusive practices. Specifically, using a mixed-methods approach, the project investigated how these attitudes and knowledge impact teachers at international schools' perceptions of inclusion. Additionally, this research examined teachers' perceptions of inclusion related to their beliefs and experiences to determine what kinds of supports teachers need to create and maintain inclusive classrooms. Ultimately, this capstone will inform international schools about the attitudes toward and experiences with inclusion among international school personnel and how they affect teacher perceptions of inclusive educational practices.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Research across multiple countries indicates that teachers need support to implement inclusive practices and maintain positive perceptions of children with special needs. This research includes studies conducted across various countries on the effectiveness of current special education programming, teacher training programs, and professional development for teachers to support children with special needs. However, this research acknowledges that special education services and the inclusion of children with special needs in education is still a novel practice in many parts of the world.

There are factors affecting the adoption of inclusive approaches, like the cultural perception of people with special needs, the availability of training opportunities and high-quality preparatory programs for teachers, and an infrastructure that supports inclusion of students with special needs in education. Many countries have adopted legislation that calls for the inclusion of children with special needs but have not provided the supports needed for school personnel to make this shift effective. Successful inclusion can be accomplished through ongoing pedagogical skill development for teachers, beginning in pre-service and continuing throughout their career, administrative support, funding, and active cultivation of a culture of collaboration within the school community (Abbas et al., 2019).

International Inclusion Legislation

Legislation that ensures inclusive education internationally is scarce, with exceptions in some Western countries. However, there has been an increase in

legislation in educational systems worldwide calling for the equitable education of children with special needs. Many of these systems have discrepancies between the law and the practice. Legislation may call for more inclusion, but without proper funding or training for teachers, children with special needs will continue to face obstacles to receiving an education. A body of research illustrates how teachers' attitudes may favor inclusion, but in practice, they struggle due to factors beyond their control. Although it was beyond the scope of this capstone to review the special education systems of every single country in the world, several systems stand out in terms of making headway with providing services for children with disabilities.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong is in a unique situation culturally and geographically in terms of education and special education law. Geographically, Hong Kong is technically part of China, but culturally it is a melting pot of Mandarin, Cantonese, and European cultures. The school systems within Hong Kong accommodate children of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, reflecting British and Asian influence within their educational systems (Greenberg & Greenberg, 2014).

Inclusive practices for students with disabilities began in Hong Kong during the 1970s and 1980s. Specific policies outlining how to educate children with disabilities include the Disability Discrimination Ordinance published by the Equal Opportunities Commission's Code of Practice in Education (The Hong Kong Institute of Education, 1996). In addition, Greenberg and Greenberg (2014) described how children with special needs are sometimes served in mainstream public schools using

the pull-out model where children with special needs are sent to magnet schools with programs specifically designed to meet the needs of children with a particular label.

Hong Kong is an example of an education system trying to implement more inclusive practices through legislation supporting various special education models. However, Greenberg and Greenberg (2014) identify some major limiting factors within the Hong Kong education system. This includes a discrepancy between the learning needs of students and teacher training, and how social stigma against people with disabilities in Southeast Asia impacts school and parent communities (Greenberg & Greenberg).

Preparatory programs for classroom teachers and special education teachers in the region lack effective strategies for special education. If schools are to truly embrace inclusive education, the school system and teacher training programs must account for the attitudes and experiences of teachers. To support student achievement, the school system must analyze where the gaps exist and provide opportunities to close them.

Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea is an Asian country that a strongly prioritizes education. However, within the context of the culture, children with disabilities are a source of shame for families and the education system. In Korea, the education system does not seek to help children with diverse needs.

In 1977, Korea enacted its first special education legislation. The Special Education Promotion Act (SEPA) mandated that public schools have systems of

support and individualized education programs for children with special needs, taking the form of segregated classrooms (Kim et al., 2019). While in theory this legislation guaranteed children with special needs differentiated education, it was difficult to enforce. These individuals still struggle to find equitable educational opportunities in Korea.

The attitudes toward people with disabilities in Korea indicate how cultural beliefs and practices are one of the most pervasive factors contributing to social exclusion (Beckman et al., 2016). In Korea, children with special needs are often hidden away by families and home-schooled rather than face the shame of being enrolled in a local school. Therefore, if schools serving children with special needs are really going to support student achievement, then they must address how the attitudes of the school community impact instructional practices.

Schools need to acknowledge the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and how they impact a teacher's ability to address the diverse needs of students. When these attitudes are identified, schools work to address teacher perceptions and create experiences to enhance the positive perception of children with disabilities in the classroom.

Turkey

Turkey provides an example of an emerging inclusive education program. Attitudes toward special education law in Turkey are rooted in Islamic principles that promote the care and appreciation of people with disabilities. In 1983, the first law was implemented to ensure that children with special needs would be provided for in

the public school system (Hauwadhanasuk et al., 2018). Policies for special education and inclusion in Turkey have followed a similar timeline as the United States, evolving from segregated school facilities to more inclusive practices.

In 1997, Turkey passed a law expanding the initial legislation, making preschool compulsory for all children with special needs. The law also created learning standards for schools to support children with special needs in grade school (Yazicioglu, 2020). In addition, Turkish Rehabilitation and Research Centers provide diagnostic and placement services for children with disabilities and collaborate with schools to deliver differentiated services within public and private schools (Hauwadhanasuk et al., 2018).

Hauwadhanasuk et al. (2018) discuss how one of the significant challenges affecting the implementation of special education in Turkey is the pessimistic perception of inclusive education held by homeroom teachers. These negative perceptions are attributed to minimal training for classroom teachers and few positive experiences with people with disabilities. The societal perception of disability and lack of exposure to people with special needs negatively impacts education systems.

As legislation becomes more progressive in Turkey, preparatory programs and professional development should adjust to match the policies put forth by the government. However, it is not enough that these policies exist. Access goes beyond regulations and includes the practices actually taking place in classrooms regarding inclusion of children with special needs.

Brazil

Chakraborti-Ghosh et al. (2014) conducted a study comparing the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion in the United States and Brazil. Brazilian federal law has mandated that all public schools must provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students and has adopted a policy of zero-rejection. Similar to the United States, Brazil's policy means that no child can be turned away from a public school due to disability. However, the study did say that participants contradicted this claim by citing anecdotal evidence of children being turned away from schools based on disability (Chakraborti-Ghosh et al.).

Research by Chakraborti-Ghosh et al. (2014) explores how a policy mandating inclusion may exist but the practices within the system do not meet the needs of children with special needs. The lack of funding for materials, equipment, and training impacts how children with special needs are perceived within schools. If teachers are expected to meet the needs of children with disabilities without the proper tools or training, their perceptions of inclusive programming will wane. If schools look at the specific needs of teachers working with this population of students, then schools can address factors limiting teachers' positive attitudes toward inclusion.

Universal Challenges and Research

Worldwide, special education legislation promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities is broad in terms of degrees of availability and cultural context. Many countries are following the lead of Western countries by making their school

systems more inclusive. However, even with budding legislation promoting inclusivity, there are universal challenges that affect schools across the world.

Research has repeatedly illustrated these challenges, including "the need for more training for teachers on how to individualize the curriculum for children with disabilities as well as the need for funding to support adequate amounts and types of materials" (Hardin & Hung, 2011, p. 111). Nevertheless, there is universally overwhelming evidence that school personnel value inclusive education and want to implement inclusive practices. However, these champions of inclusion face barriers in the form of funding, cultural beliefs, and lack of training that affect how inclusion is practiced (Hardin & Hung). Table 1 summarizes research methods and results of studies investigating inclusive special education, perceptions of inclusion, and barriers worldwide.

Table 1*International Research and Methodologies on Inclusive Education*

Study Author/Year	Identifier	Country	Methodology	Findings
Abbas et al. (2019)	Special education	Kuwait	Quantitative	There is a relationship between where administrators work and their knowledge of special education
Aksu et al. (2020)	Language; pre-service; teacher training	Turkey	Qualitative	Participants had positive attitudes toward children with special needs but did not believe they had the skills to support children with special needs.
Brown & Bell (2014)	Teacher training	Thailand	Qualitative	International schools can provide high-quality and effective instruction for children with dyslexia; cultural and language differences influence effectiveness; need training and support for educators.
Chakraborti-Ghosh et al. (2014)	Inclusive education	Brazil, USA	Mixed Methods	Few significant differences between inclusion practices and limitations; the primary difference is how inclusion is perceived for children with special needs.
Chitiyo et al. (2019)	Perceptions; inclusive education; teacher training	Malawi, Namibia, Zimbabwe	Mixed Methods	There were differences in the perception of special education and inclusive practices across the different nationalities. Teachers shared the need for ongoing professional development.
Costello & Boyle (2013)	Pre-service, inclusive practices	Australia	Qualitative	Training for pre-service teachers' understanding of how inclusion positively affects their future attitudes toward inclusive practices.
Güleç-Aslan (2020)	Early years; inclusive education; teacher training	Turkey	Qualitative	Early years teachers face obstacles with the school conditions, the school community's negative attitudes toward children with ASD, student needs, and lack of teacher training.
Hoadjli & LaTrache (2020)	ESOL; inclusive education; teacher training	Algeria	Qualitative	Algerian teachers had a positive attitude toward inclusion. However, teachers require more training on inclusive practices.

Table 1 (*Continued*)

Study Author/Year	Identifier	Country	Methodology	Findings
Ibrahim (2020)	Pre-service; perceptions	Jordan	Quantitative	Field experiences had a positive effect on pre-service teachers' knowledge and implementation of strategies for children on the autism spectrum.
Katitaş & Coşkun (2020)	Inclusive education; teacher training	Turkey	Qualitative	Turkish teachers have foundational knowledge about inclusive practices but require ongoing training.
Klibthong & Agbenyega (2020)	Early years; perceptions; inclusive education; administrator support	Thailand	Quantitative	Thai teachers are working toward using inclusive practices in early years programs. Challenges include time, training, and poor support from the administration.
Nouf et al. (2020)	Pre-service; perceptions; inclusive education	Kuwait	Quantitative	Pre-service teachers studying moderate learning disabilities have more positive attitudes toward inclusion than other groups; training affects teacher perception of inclusive teaching.
Nyarambi & Ntuli (2020)	Early years; teacher training	Zimbabwe	Mixed Methods	Early childhood teachers consider early interventions critical for a child's success but require more professional development to support children with disabilities.
Poon-McBrayer (2017)	Administrator training; inclusive education	Guam, Hong Kong	Qualitative	Guam school leaders are influenced by legislation when making school decisions—influenced by Confucian cultural principles.
Raguindi et al. (2020)	Inclusive education; perceptions	Philippines, Thailand	Quantitative	Teachers have a high level of efficacy when using inclusive practices but have varying positive attitudes and intentions toward inclusive practices.
Sheehy & Budiyanto (2015)	Inclusive education, collaboration, teacher training	Indonesia	Mixed Methods	Teachers working in inclusive schools adopted a social-constructivist perspective. Teachers use cooperative teaching practices but need more training on specific strategies for differentiation.
Sokal & Sharma (2017)	Pre-service; perceptions	Canada	Quantitative	Pre-service teachers with a background in special education had lower concerns about working with children with special needs. Experience predicts teachers' attitudes, concerns, and efficacy toward special education.

Training and Perceptions of Educators

Teachers' perceptions of inclusive practices vary based on their experiences. Teachers with more training in special education and inclusive practices have a more positive perception of these practices than those with little or no experience with them (Nouf et al., 2020). Research conducted by Nouf et al. found "that effective training programs and positive experiences of inclusion could increase positive attitudes and self-efficacy" (p. 17). In many studies, participants requested increased training opportunities to bolster their inclusive practices and cited undertraining as a significant challenge toward supporting children with special needs in their classrooms.

In a landmark study conducted in Turkey by Güleç-Aslan (2020), the researchers examined how preschool teachers in inclusive classrooms approach teaching students with autism. The primary conclusions of the study were (1) there needs to be an increase in pre-service teacher training and experiences with children with special needs, and (2) ongoing in-service teacher training is necessary that includes practice, counseling, and mentoring for teachers currently working with students with disabilities (Güleç-Aslan).

Pre-service Teachers

Perceptions of inclusive practices begin during teacher preparatory programs. Pre-service teachers' experiences, whether they are studying general or special education, are critical for laying the foundation for a willingness to implement

inclusive practices later in their careers. Ibrahim (2020) conducted a study that reinforced this assertion by examining pre-service teachers' experiences working with children with autism in Jordan. Ibrahim collected data on how pre-service teachers' perceptions evolved during their student teaching and weekly training on specific programs and strategies to support children with autism. The results of this research showed that training and experiences positively affected the perceptions of prospective teachers. However, the study cited limitations related to the participants needing ongoing training and full license to maintain positive perceptions and to have the ability to utilize strategies effectively.

Sokal and Sharma (2017) studied how pre-service teachers in Canada were influenced by coursework in inclusive education. They determined that experiences in high-quality and well-resourced inclusive settings increase pre-service teachers' positive perceptions of inclusion and challenge any pre-existing attitudes toward inclusion (Sokal & Sharma).

The attitudes and perceptions of prospective language teachers have toward inclusion are also essential to consider, as there is an increased number of language learners diagnosed with special needs. A 2020 study of fourth-year pre-service language teachers in Turkey confirmed that pre-service language teachers, like their general education counterparts in similar studies, had positive attitudes toward inclusive education (Aksu et al., 2020). However, participants expressed concerns that children with disabilities may take attention away from other students.

Participants called for more training to help them better balance diverse needs with their content.

A study by Klibthong and Agbenyega (2020) in Thailand found results that contradicted previous studies that asserted that teachers struggled with inclusive education due to challenges like lack of training and support. Instead, this study found that teachers took on leadership roles to foster support for inclusive teaching practices (Klibthong & Agbenyega).

Teachers shared that they had positive attitudes toward inclusion because they had pre-service experiences that prepared them to work with students with disabilities in an inclusive environment (Klibthong & Agbenyega). The training and opportunities provided to pre-service teachers in any country are critical for building the foundational knowledge and appreciation for inclusive teaching practices. They are also vital for producing positive perceptions of inclusive teaching and children with special needs.

In-service Teachers

Teacher training about inclusion cannot begin and end with university coursework. Teachers must be lifelong learners and continue to hone their craft throughout their careers as their perceptions and abilities fluctuate based on experiences. Successful inclusion is based on teacher knowledge and teacher attitudes toward the practice.

Sheehy (2015) conducted the first study of Indonesian teachers' pedagogical beliefs toward inclusive education. This study was conducted in schools designated

for the inclusion of children with disabilities, an anomaly compared to other schools across Southeast Asia. However, the research found that even within inclusive environments, perceptions and beliefs about how and where to serve children with disabilities varied depending on the participant's level of experience and training (Sheehy).

Participants with less experience favored pull-out or small-group instruction over inclusive whole-group teaching, drawing a direct connection between training and teachers' perceptions of inclusion (Sheehy, 2015). Schools have an obligation to prepare their teachers for the populations with whom they will be working. If schools are genuinely committed to the inclusion of children with disabilities, they need to ensure that their faculty receive training that aligns with their values and policies.

Chitiyo et al. (2019) addressed the need for qualified teachers in Malawi, Namibia, and Zimbabwe to implement inclusive practices effectively. Like the United States, the governments of these African countries are committed to increasing inclusive practices within their education departments, and teacher participants in this study indicated high favor toward inclusion. However, the results showed a unanimous call for professional development in inclusion and special education (Chitiyo et al.). Specifically, teachers called for training on adapting and modifying curricula for students with special needs in the inclusive setting. Training should include a wide range of topics, including curriculum, child development, special education, strategies, and assessment, to increase the quality of education and the positivity of teachers' attitudes (Nyarambi & Ntuli, 2020).

Similarly, Algerian middle school teachers participated in a study on their attitudes toward inclusion. Although teachers firmly believed that students with special needs are entitled to inclusive education, they cited the need for specific preparation, such as training and other ongoing professional development on implementing inclusive education (Hoadjli & LaTrache, 2020). Teachers in these communities were aware of how their lack of training negatively impacted the success of students with disabilities. They called upon their schools to support them in creating inclusive classrooms by providing training and experiences that will impact student success. School morale suffers when the needs of teachers are not met.

Research suggests that inclusive practices are gaining traction in Southeast Asian countries. In one study comparing the perceptions of inclusion between Thai and Filipino teachers, researchers found that while inclusion for students with special needs was growing, there seemed to be varying views of what it means for schools to be inclusive and what it means to implement inclusion (Raguindin et al., 2020). The study results found that teachers from both countries had positive attitudes toward inclusion but need ongoing training. In Thailand, the government emphasized equity for all students by requiring several courses focusing on differentiating learning for students with special needs for pre-service teachers. The Filipino government also responded by providing training and workshops for in-service teachers (Raguindin et al.). In the results of this study, it was recommended teachers be well-trained to promote a positive perception and successful inclusion.

In 2020, Katitaş and Coşkun examined Turkish teachers' perceptions of inclusive education. The results of the study concluded that Turkish teachers possessed positive attitudes toward inclusion and the foundational knowledge necessary to understand inclusive practices (Katitaş & Coşkun). Teachers understood inclusion and how it benefits students with special needs. However, participants noted that while foundational knowledge was essential, the implementation of inclusive practices was lacking. The theory behind inclusion may have been solid for these teachers, but in practice, some challenges required more training. Katitaş and Coşkun specifically called for pre-service and in-service training to help teachers grow their abilities to effectively implement inclusion for students with special needs.

Without a rich set of experiences and specific strategies, teachers struggle to differentiate learning for all their students. If schools examine the specific gaps in their teachers' experiences, they can design professional growth opportunities to meet those needs. Many teachers desire to be more inclusive and agree with the philosophy behind inclusion but do not possess the tools necessary to do it successfully.

In a study comparing teachers' perceptions in the United States and Brazil, researchers found that Brazilian teachers considered the inclusive model supportive of students with special needs and a way to support all marginalized students (Chakraborti-Ghosh et al., 2014). In this same study, Brazilian teachers from public and private schools had a more positive perception of inclusive education than teachers in the United States. However, when asked about each country's preparedness to implement inclusive education, all Brazil and United States teachers

agreed that their schools were not prepared to truly serve students with special needs using this model, citing training as a major concern (Chakraborti-Ghosh et al.).

International schools with a Western teaching philosophy, curriculum, and inclusive ethos also appear to struggle when implementing inclusive practices. Teachers' ability to adapt and modify the curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners was lacking, and recommended training for pre- and in-service teachers that went beyond the theory behind inclusive teaching and provided education on concrete practices to implement inclusion (Chan & Yuen, 2015). Brown and Bell (2014) conducted a study at an international school in Bangkok, Thailand, on how to support students with dyslexia. The researchers found holistic and inclusive support for students with special needs, like dyslexia, was possible when collaborating with outside agencies. However, teachers must continue to receive professional development from Western trainers to provide high-quality interventions. In addition, resources for special learners were limited in international schools, especially in areas where the host culture did not have the infrastructure to support students with special needs.

Outside families, teachers are typically the first responders for students with special needs. They are some of the first to provide learning opportunities for students with special needs. They rely heavily on their experiences and knowledge of childhood development to support students and their families. To ensure that students with special needs receive an inclusive education, teachers need to have a wide range

of expertise to support diverse learners, beginning in their teacher preparatory programs and continuing throughout their careers.

Although there is research on the needs of students and teachers across the world related to inclusion, there is not enough research specifically related to the international school experience. There is a need to examine how the attitudes and beliefs of teachers from many cultures impact inclusion in international schools. International teachers need to feel comfortable and confident in their inclusive practices if they are to be the first responders for students with special needs in their classrooms.

Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion

Teachers are not the only ones who need a positive attitude toward inclusive practices. Administrators must adopt inclusive values for students with special needs to be included in classrooms worldwide. The source of these values varies. Some administrators and school leaders are affected by legislation, while others are propelled toward inclusion by cultural values. Poon-McBrayer (2017) illustrated this difference when comparing the challenge of inclusive education for all Guam and Hong Kong students. School leaders in Guam, a territory of the United States, differ from other Micronesian countries because they put Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legislation at the forefront of their policymaking about special education. Principals and school leaders in Guam facilitate inclusion because it is the law, but they do not necessarily have experience or positive attitudes toward inclusion. The law does not always account for a leader's lack of training or mandate

support from administrators. If administrators do not consider their attitudes and experiences related to inclusion, they cannot successfully lead teachers toward a truly inclusive program.

In comparison, Hong Kong follows legislation, but the motivation behind it lies in the cultural prioritization of relationships as aligned with their cultural heritage (Poon-McBrayer, 2017). Cantonese culture is steeped in family values and taking care of the community. However, just because community values include caring for people with disabilities, it does not mean that they have the training, strategies, or infrastructure to implement inclusion in education. Poon-McBrayer's research affirms that experiences, cultural or otherwise, can affect how inclusion is accepted or perceived in different parts of the world. For example, some administrators have positive attitudes and beliefs about the inclusion of students with special needs in schools but may not have the experiences or training to implement the programming.

Administrators need ongoing training in best practices for special education, special education leadership, and inclusion. This extends to administrators in international schools. For example, if school leadership does not understand the vision of inclusion or have the attitudes and experiences to support it, the program will not be successful and will negatively impact student learning.

Ogba et al. (2020) conducted a study in Nigeria assessing the needs of teachers and administrators to implement inclusive practices in secondary schools. The study showed that teachers had many necessary skills to implement inclusive practices, but their attitudes were affected by the need for more training. Results for

administrators demonstrated that while they had the prerequisite knowledge for managing inclusive practices, there was a considerable need to develop their skills in meeting individual and diverse needs, assessing the progress of students with special needs, and learning how to coach and mentor teachers on inclusion (Ogba et al.).

Administrators in this study ranked their training needs, with the top three being inclusive resources and their distribution and utilization, meeting the needs of diverse learning, and curriculum design and development (Ogba et al.).

Administrators are still learning how to manage the diverse needs of students and how to support their school personnel so that students with special needs receive an appropriate education. Principals who lack experience working with students with special needs face challenges and require more training to help them understand how to select appropriate resources and curriculum that accounts for all needs. Principals set the tone for their building and lead by example. Increasing administrators' understanding of the challenges of inclusion and improving their skill set can help them support their teachers and community as they lead schools toward more inclusive programming.

Conclusion

In the global context, special education is still in its infancy in many parts of the world. Countries are still developing their education systems for typical students and working on making learning accessible for children of every gender, socioeconomic level, and geographic location. Creating a system that serves students

with varying needs is a part of that process and can be challenged by cultural perceptions of disabilities.

Globally, schools face challenges related to the training and cultural context of teachers and administrators. Overwhelming data shows that teachers have positive perceptions of inclusion and a desire to implement inclusive practices in their classrooms. Teachers across the world want to foster equitable education for students with special needs but are hindered by a lack of expertise and a need for training. Principals and school leaders are affected by legislation and the local culture. There is a universal need for more funding and collaboration to make true inclusion possible in all parts of the world.

International schools face a unique challenge when it comes to inclusion. Historically, special education services have not been offered by international schools. Many international schools exist in parts of the world where there are few to no resources for students with special needs and their families. Cultural beliefs and attitudes toward people with disabilities in a school's host country may not be positive. International schools offer education to students from all over the world who bring their cultural beliefs and attitudes with them. Teachers and staff at international schools have diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, each of whom carries their own attitudes and experiences with students with special needs and inclusion. However, there is very little existing research on the extent of how the attitudes and experiences of teachers at international schools impact their perception of inclusion. Research confirms that teachers need ongoing training and experiences to cultivate a

positive perception of inclusion. Still, international schools need to dissect what their teachers already know from what they need to know in order to maintain a successful inclusive model.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This capstone investigated how the cultural attitudes and experiences of international teachers impact their perceptions of inclusion. This research has the potential to help international schools select and support teachers working in inclusive environments and ensure high-quality learning opportunities for students with special needs. Theoretically, this research will help identify the factors essential for fostering positive perceptions of special learners in teachers and inform preparatory and professional development programming.

Local Context

This study was conducted at an international school in China. It is essential to qualify this institution as one of the most well-resourced international schools in Asia. Annual tuition ranges from approximately 19,400 USD for half-day preschool to approximately 50,000 USD for students enrolled in Grades 11 and 12. Student tuition rates make it possible for the school to maintain high-quality physical learning spaces and curricula. In addition, the institution is able to appropriately compensate and retain highly qualified educators. Very few other international schools can provide a comparable learning experience for students and working experience for faculty and staff, inside or outside of Asia.

The institution's resources are reflected in how much it has invested in differentiated programming for students. For example, all school levels have programs for English speakers of other languages and students with special needs. The school provides these services using multi-tiered systems of support. For

example, students receiving services may participate in an intervention plan or have diagnosed disabilities and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In 2019, the institution implemented an additional program to support students with more intensive needs. This program, referred to as Enriched Inclusion, provides one-to-one specialized teaching assistant support to students with severe cognitive disabilities, low-functioning (level three) autism, and conduct disorders. Specialized teaching assistants are trained and supervised by an enriched inclusion teacher and coordinator to ensure that students in the program are receiving differentiated support in the least restrictive environment per their IEP. Some students in the program spend most of their day receiving instruction in the general education classroom with the specialized teaching assistant. Others receive pull-out supports for varying subjects and amounts of time based on their abilities and areas of growth.

As of November 2022, the school served 1,296 students who either held foreign passports or had lived outside of China for a significant portion of their childhood. The school is made up of three levels. The early years and elementary schools operate as one level with 567 students. The middle school level has 349 students, and the high school level has 380 students. There are 53 countries represented in the student body, with 269 students holding Chinese passports (including students from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan).

Research Design

This study employed a mixed methods design to explore how the cultural attitudes of international teachers and their experiences with inclusion impact their

perception of inclusive practices. Using both quantitative and qualitative data made it easier to examine the impacts of experience and training on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Quantitative data revealed a relationship between experiences and attitudes, while qualitative data contextualized quantitative information.

Guiding Questions

This capstone investigated how the cultural attitudes and experiences of international teachers impact their perceptions of inclusion. By analyzing the beliefs and experiences of international school personnel, schools will be better prepared to adopt policies and training that support their goals of inclusion. The guiding questions of this research were:

- (1) What are international teachers' experiences with special education and inclusion?
- (2) What factors contribute to international teachers' attitudes toward special education and inclusion?

This research also examined the impact of the location of international teachers' preparatory programs on their attitudes and experiences related to inclusive programming.

Hypotheses

As international schools take steps to create more inclusive learning environments, these institutions need to recognize the needs of their faculty. Schools need to understand the experiences and perceptions of their personnel toward inclusion before taking action to build inclusive programming. By examining

teachers' experiences with students with special needs and taking stock of their diverse perspectives of inclusion, schools will be able to address areas of growth for staff with directed training and capitalize on the strengths they already possess. The null hypotheses of this study were:

- H₀ 1: There is no significant relationship between international teachers' general attitudes toward inclusive practices and the location of their teaching preparatory program.
- H₀ 2: There is no significant relationship between international teachers' attitudes toward collaboration to support inclusive programming and the location of their teaching preparatory program.
- H₀ 3: There is no significant relationship between international teachers' attitudes toward the effectiveness of their teaching training in relation to inclusive programming and the location of their teaching preparatory program.
- H₀ 4: There is no significant relationship between international teachers' attitudes toward administrator support of inclusive programming and the location of their teaching preparatory program.
- H₀ 5: There is no significant relationship between international teachers' attitudes toward training related to inclusive programming and the location of their teaching preparatory program.

Subjects and Sampling

Participants in this study included elementary school teachers, including teachers working in the early childhood center. Participants taught a wide range of subjects, including general education, language, single-subject, and learning support. Participants also included classroom, learning support, and specialized teaching assistants. The participants, like the school's clientele, came from a range of diverse backgrounds. For example, some held various passports, belonged to different ethnic groups, and spoke a variety of languages.

Since the research was conducted within a single institution, participants were selected based on convenience. All teachers within the elementary school were asked to participate voluntarily. Data were collected from teachers working in the early years program (preschool) through Grade 5. These participants represented a wide range of nationalities, cultures, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. Of the 117 participants, 68 were full-time teachers and 49 were either classroom or specialized teaching assistants. Participants represented 12 different countries, and all held at least a bachelor's degree, with many holding postgraduate degrees as well. In addition, 69 faculty members were Chinese nationals holding Chinese passports. The average tenure of teachers in this research setting was five to six years. Participants also represented a wide range of professional experiences. Some participants had worked exclusively in education, while others worked in a related field before becoming teachers. In addition, many participants had worked in other countries

before working in China. All participants were proficient in English but not necessarily native English speakers.

Instrumentation

Data were collected digitally using the Forms application of Microsoft Teams. All participants had access to this platform through the institution, making the Forms application an ideal tool for gathering data. Data collection included demographic information from each participant's country of origin, country of education, level of education, and teaching history. The demographics survey also gathered data about the location of their institution for higher education, teacher preparatory courses related to special education and inclusion, and how much exposure they had with students with special needs in their classrooms. In addition, the survey tool included a five-point Likert Scale questionnaire related to participants' attitudes toward inclusive practices, collaboration, effectiveness of preparatory programs, support from administration, and training opportunities. Participants also had the option to answer open-ended response questions about their experiences with inclusive practices within the institution. The Likert Scale questionnaire and open response questions were adapted from studies conducted by Harkins and Fletcher (2015), Kern (2006), and Walker (2012).

Procedures

Before beginning the research, this work was introduced to the head of school of the institution who would inform the school administrators about the project and its purpose and give permission to conduct the study. The study proposal was shared

with the elementary school administrators so they would have the opportunity to ask questions about the research, how it would be conducted, and how the results could be used to support future student learning. The head of school and elementary administrators gave feedback on how the data should be collected and the most efficient way to encourage participation from teachers.

After receiving permission from the head of school to conduct the study, the purpose of the study and data collection procedures to were presented to school staff via the school's communication platform, Microsoft Teams. The presentation included information about the study and how the research could be used to support teacher training and student learning.

Participants in the study used the survey tool (see Appendix A) to share demographic information (e.g., age, gender, nationality, nation of education, and native language) and answer a series of 5-point Likert Scale questions about their attitudes and experiences toward inclusion (e.g., preparatory training, professional development opportunities, previous inclusive experiences). At the end of the survey, participants were invited to give an open-ended response about their experiences with special education and inclusion, challenges with implementing inclusive practices, and the kinds of support they need to be more successful with inclusive practices.

The survey remained open for a three-week period to allow for optimal participation. Early years and elementary school principals included links to the survey in their weekly bulletins for teachers, per the administration's approval. Teachers and teaching assistants were also given weekly reminders via Microsoft

Teams about the opportunity to participate. After the three-week data collection period, all responses were exported to Microsoft Excel for coding and analysis. Each participant was assigned a number in lieu of identifying information. Quantitative data was separated from qualitative data for analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using an independent *t*-test to determine if there was a difference between the attitudes of participants educated within China and outside of China. The *t*-test was used for the five hypotheses to determine if there was a statistical difference between the two demographic groups and their general attitudes toward inclusion and attitudes toward collaboration, school administration, professional development, and preparatory programs.

Qualitative data collected from the open-ended response question about experiences with inclusion and special education were sorted based on the initial coding of themes. Then the data were coded a second time using the qualitative phenomenology. The data were then analyzed based on expected codes and surprising codes, with commentary on the findings and next steps.

Threats to validity in this study include the participant selection and sampling process. Participants were selected based on convenience, as they work at the same institution. Participation was voluntary, meaning that there was no guarantee that participants would be equally spread across grade levels, subject areas, or between teachers and teaching assistants. Therefore, there was no way to ensure that data

would be collected from a proportional number of people based on gender, age, nationality, or linguistic background.

Another threat to validity was language. The questionnaire was conducted in English and translated into Chinese. However, English or Chinese may not be the first language of many of the participants. As a result, participants may have misinterpreted questions, or the researcher may have misinterpreted responses to the open-ended questions. To ensure validity, two Chinese staff members within the institution checked the instrumentation and gave feedback on the understandability of questions and provided translation.

An important consideration was how the institution differs from other international schools locally and globally. Not all international schools are as well-resourced as the setting for this study. The school had already made a sizeable financial commitment to learning differentiation for students. In addition, systems to support students with disabilities and ensure their inclusion were in place before this study began. This study examined the next steps for inclusion in this setting, but findings may not be easily applied to other institutions. The data collected can help inform the steps for other international schools to become more inclusive but may not be truly reflect other institutions.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of the study was to examine international teachers' cultural attitudes and experiences at one institution and how those perceptions impacted their views of inclusion. After the data were collected, transferred to Excel, and coded, the hypotheses were analyzed by delving into the participants' demographic information, demographic group attitudes toward inclusive teaching practices, and common themes found in the qualitative data.

The first hypothesis posited that there was no significant relationship between international teachers' general attitudes toward inclusive practices and the location of their teaching preparatory program. The subsequent four null hypotheses asserted that there would be no significant difference between teachers' attitudes toward administrator support, collaboration, professional development, and effectiveness of their teacher training and the location of their teaching preparatory programming. These null hypotheses were tested using an independent *t*-test and content analysis of the qualitative data collected from open-response questions.

Demographic Information

Demographic information for the participants is summarized in Table 2 and Table 3. Of the 52 participants, seven individuals held dual passports, three completed their teacher preparatory programs in multiple countries, and one had served in multiple positions in the school. This variation impacted the total number of individuals represented in the demographic data for passport country, university country, and position held in the school. To analyze the demographic data more

effectively, university countries were categorized as "within China" and "outside China."

Table 2

Demographic Information of the Participants

<u>Gender</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Female	45	86.5
Male	7	13.5
<u>Age Range</u>		
25-29	2	3.8
30-39	26	50
40-49	17	32.7
50-59	6	11.5
60-69	1	2
<u>University Country</u>		
Within China	15	28.8
Outside China	37	72.2

Table 3

Demographic Information Accounting for Multiple Responses (N = 52)

<u>Passport Country</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Australia	4	6.8
Canada	4	6.8
China	16	27.1
France	1	1.7
Germany	1	1.7
Indonesia	1	1.7
Iran	1	1.7
Ireland	2	3.4
Japan	1	1.7
Mexico	1	1.7
New Zealand	10	5.9
Philippines	2	3.4
Portugal	1	1.7
United Kingdom	3	5.1
United States of America	11	18.6
<u>Teaching Position</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Homeroom (Early Childhood, K-5)	28	52.8
Learning Support	11	20.8
English as an Additional Language	6	11.3
Single Subject (Art, Music, Library, Design, Technology, Physical Education)	8	15.1

Note. Totals may not equal 52 due to respondents in multiple categories.

Quantitative Data

To collect quantitative data about the attitudes and experiences of international teachers related to inclusion, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with 44 statements using a 5-point Likert Scale. The Likert Scale items were grouped into categories related to participant experiences. The categories included: general attitudes toward inclusive practices, college preparatory programs, attitudes and experiences with collegial collaboration, training opportunities, and support from the administration. The results were analyzed based on two demographic indicators: the location of participant preparatory programs and current position within the school.

By Location of College Preparatory Program

The survey tool asked participants to provide information about their teacher preparatory programs, including the country of their training, the language in which they received instruction, and their highest level of education. These questions were asked under the assumption that the geographic location and influence of the local culture could impact the participants' attitudes toward inclusion. Generally, some countries and cultures have a more favorable attitude toward people with disabilities than other countries, as reflected in the country's national educational programming and civil rights legislation. Hypothetically, this demographic information could influence how participants feel toward inclusive programming within the institution.

Participants received their educational training in a wide range of countries. However, many were the singular representative of a country, making the sample size

too small to reasonably analyze. Therefore, to better analyze the impact that college preparatory programming had on participants' attitudes toward inclusive education, participants were categorized into two groups: participants educated within China and participants educated outside of China. Appendix B categorizes all Likert Scale items into groups based on their relevance to five general themes: general attitudes, preparatory program, collaboration, attitudes toward administration, and teacher training.

General Attitudes. As presented in Table 4, the survey tool included 17 questions related to the general attitudes of teachers toward the inclusion of students with special needs in their classrooms. While the combined data showed that teachers in this institution had mostly favorable attitudes toward inclusion, there were some discrepancies between teachers educated within China and outside of China.

Table 4

Likert Scale Responses: General Attitudes

General Attitude	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
LS02: All students who have special needs need to receive their education in a special education classroom.											
China	0	0.00%	8	57.14%	3	21.43%	2	14.29%	1	7.14%	14
Outside China	18	48.65%	17	45.95%	2	5.41%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	37
LS06: Inclusion of children with special needs at my school has been a positive experience for students without disabilities.											
China	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	3	21.43%	7	50.00%	3	21.43%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	1	2.70%	3	8.11%	23	62.16%	10	27.03%	37
LS10: Students who perform 2 or more years below grade level should be in separate learning support classes.											
China	1	7.69%	0	0.00%	3	23.08%	5	38.46%	4	30.77%	13
Outside China	8	21.62%	15	40.54%	9	24.32%	4	10.81%	1	2.70%	37
LS12: Students with moderate to severe disabilities should be in separate learning support classrooms.											
China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	6	46.15%	7	53.85%	0	0.00%	13
Outside China	6	16.22%	20	54.05%	8	21.62%	3	8.11%	0	0.00%	37

Table 4 (Continued)

General Attitude	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
LS18: General education teachers (including single Current Positions and language teachers) should not be responsible for teaching children with special needs.											
China	2	14.29%	8	57.14%	4	28.57%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	19	51.35%	13	35.14%	2	5.41%	3	8.11%	0	0.00%	37
LS20: Students who display speech and language difficulties should be in special education classes.											
China	0	0.00%	3	21.43%	6	42.86%	5	35.71%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	16	43.24%	15	40.54%	6	16.22%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	37
LS22: Maintaining order in the general education classroom that includes students with special needs is more difficult than in a general education classroom that does not include students with special needs.											
China	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	3	21.43%	6	42.86%	4	28.57%	14
Outside China	1	2.70%	6	16.22%	8	21.62%	20	54.05%	2	5.41%	37
LS26: Students who are physically aggressive toward others can be maintained in general education classrooms.											
China	2	14.29%	4	28.57%	7	50.00%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	6	16.22%	19	51.35%	12	32.43%	0	0.00%	37
LS28: Both general education teachers and special education teachers should teach students with special needs.											
China	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	5	35.71%	8	57.14%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	1	2.70%	1	2.70%	1	2.70%	19	51.35%	15	40.54%	37
LS31: Students diagnosed with autism need to be in self-contained learning support classrooms.											
China	0	0.00%	5	35.71%	7	50.00%	2	14.29%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	14	37.84%	19	51.35%	2	5.41%	2	5.41%	0	0.00%	37
LS33: All efforts should be made to educate students with disabilities in the general education classroom.											
China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	28.57%	10	71.43%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	1	2.70%	4	10.81%	21	56.76%	11	29.73%	37
LS35: Learning Support teachers should teach students with disabilities.											
China	0	0.00%	2	14.29%	6	42.86%	5	35.71%	1	7.14%	14
Outside China	1	2.70%	8	21.62%	16	43.24%	12	32.43%	0	0.00%	37
LS37: Students who are one year below grade level should be in learning supported classes.											
China	0	0.00%	2	14.29%	3	21.43%	7	50.00%	2	14.29%	14
Outside China	3	8.33%	17	47.22%	9	25.00%	6	16.67%	1	2.78%	36
LS39: Inclusion of children with special needs at my school has been a positive experience for students with disabilities.											
China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	28.57%	8	57.14%	2	14.29%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	1	2.70%	7	18.92%	27	72.97%	2	5.41%	37
LS41: Students with special needs can be best served in the special education classroom.											
China	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	3	21.43%	9	64.29%	1	7.14%	14
Outside China	6	16.22%	15	40.54%	14	37.84%	2	5.41%	0	0.00%	37
LS42: My colleagues will try to place all the students with special needs in my classroom if my classroom is inclusive.											
China	0	0.00%	4	28.57%	8	57.14%	2	14.29%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	1	2.70%	13	35.14%	17	45.95%	6	16.22%	0	0.00%	37
LS44: Students with special needs included in the general education classroom, require additional time and attention which can be a disadvantage to students without disabilities.											
China	0	0.00%	4	28.57%	5	35.71%	5	35.71%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	1	2.70%	9	24.32%	8	21.62%	17	45.95%	2	5.41%	37

In response to Likert Scale item 02, participants educated in and outside of China responded unfavorably:

- *All students who have special needs need to receive their education in a special education classroom.*

Responses to Item 02 supported the notion that students with special needs are not best educated in self-contained classrooms. However, there was a discrepancy in the severity of these attitudes. On average, participants educated outside of China strongly disagreed that self-contained classrooms are most appropriate for students with special needs ($M = 1.568$, $SD = 0.603$). Conversely, participants educated within China responded more favorably ($M = 2.714$, $SD = 0.994$).

The same trend appears when responding to Likert Scale item 10:

- *Students who perform 2 or more years below grade level should be in separate learning support classes.*

Participants educated in China answered more favorably ($M = 3.846$, $SD = 1.144$) toward a separate learning space for students in these categories than their colleagues educated outside of China ($M = 2.324$, $SD = 1.029$). This discrepancy means that there is evidence to suggest a difference between the attitudes of participants educated inside and participants educated outside of China toward regarding the best learning environment for students with disabilities.

Discrepancies between the responses of participants educated within and outside of China continue in responses to the following items related to students with autism, behavior disorders and speech-language disorders:

- Likert Scale item 20: *Students who display speech and language difficulties should be in special education classes.*
- Likert Scale item 26: *Students who are physically aggressive toward others can be maintained in general education classrooms.*
- Likert Scale item 31: *Students diagnosed with autism need to be in self-contained learning support classrooms.*

Participants educated within China had more neutral attitudes toward separate learning environments for students with special needs than participants educated outside of China. The discrepancy in responses from each group could be attributed to the typical teaching model used within China in which students with special needs are isolated from their peers within schools or excluded from school altogether. Historically, inclusive education has not been a visible practice in China.

In response to Likert Scale item 06:

- *Inclusion of children with special needs at my school has been a positive experience for students without disabilities.*

participants educated within China indicated that they have neutral attitudes ($M=3.786$, $SD=1.051$). Participants educated outside of China responded more favorably ($M=4.135$, $SD=0.673$). The discrepancy between these two groups could be attributed to little exposure for participants educated within China to the benefits of inclusion. Inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms is a relatively new practice in Asia and still not widely adopted. Participants educated

outside of China may have had more opportunities to observe the long-term benefits of inclusion for all students.

With respect to the responses to the 17 statements related to the general attitudes of inclusion (Table 5), participants educated in China reported an overall mean of 3.292 (SD = 0.947) on the Likert Scale compared to those respondents in the Outside China subgroup whose mean was 2.838 (SD = 1.194).

Table 5

General Attitudes Analysis Between Subgroups

	N	M	SD	df	t	p	d
China	236	3.292	0.947	862	5.399	0.000	0.42
Outside China	628	2.838	1.194				

An independent *t*-test was performed to compare the collective general attitudes of participants educated in and outside of China toward inclusion, and to test the first null hypothesis:

H₀ 1: There is no significant relationship between international teachers' general attitudes toward inclusive practices and the location of their teaching preparatory program.

The results support the rejection of *H₀ 1*, $t(862) = 5.399$, $p = 0.000$, $d = 0.42$. There is statistically significant evidence that there is a relationship between participants' country of education and their general attitudes toward inclusive practices.

Collaboration. One of the most common codes in the qualitative data was the need for more effective collaboration. Naturally, this sentiment is also reflected in the quantitative survey responses. Collaboration at this institution refers to an education

team that consistently works together to design authentic learning experiences and engagements through co-planning, coteaching, and co-assessment to meet the diverse needs of students. Collaboration is a fundamental component of the elementary school teaching model, making it a critical area to include in this study.

Based on the survey responses included in Table 6, participants in this study viewed themselves as teachers of all learners, recognizing that their classrooms are places for students with or without special needs:

Table 6

Likert Scale Responses: Collaboration

Collaboration	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
LS04: I welcome collaborative teaching when I have students with disabilities in my classroom.											
China	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	8	57.14%	5	35.71%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	2.70%	11	29.73%	25	67.57%	37
LS07: My colleagues are willing to support me with issues which may arise when teaching students with disabilities.											
China	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	3	21.43%	7	50.00%	3	21.43%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	1	2.70%	3	8.11%	23	62.16%	10	27.03%	37
LS08: I feel comfortable working collaboratively with learning support teachers to create an inclusive environment and program of study for students with disabilities in my classroom.											
China	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	6	42.86%	6	42.86%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	1	2.70%	0	0.00%	22	59.46%	14	37.84%	37
LS14: I like being the only teacher in the classroom.											
China	2	14.29%	6	42.86%	6	42.86%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	11	30.56%	16	44.44%	8	22.22%	1	2.78%	0	0.00%	36
LS16: Collaborative teaching of students with disabilities can be effective when students are placed in general education classrooms.											
China	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	8	57.14%	2	14.29%	3	21.43%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	23	62.16%	14	37.84%	37
LS24: I should only be responsible for teaching students who are not identified as having special needs.											
China	2	14.29%	5	35.71%	5	35.71%	2	14.29%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	24	64.86%	12	32.43%	1	2.70%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	37
LS25: I can approach my colleagues for assistance when needed if I have students with special needs in my classroom.											
China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	5	35.71%	9	64.29%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	2.70%	27	72.97%	9	24.32%	37
LS27: My colleagues are approachable when I ask for their advice when I teach students with special needs.											
China	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	5	35.71%	7	50.00%	1	7.14%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	5.41%	25	67.57%	10	27.03%	37
LS36: I feel comfortable in approaching my colleagues for help when I teach students with special needs.											
China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	28.57%	10	71.43%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	1	2.70%	1	2.70%	29	78.38%	6	16.22%	37

All participants, regardless of the geographic location of their preparatory program, had positive attitudes toward coteaching and collaborating to support students in their classrooms. In response to Likert Scale item 04:

- *I welcome collaborative teaching when I have students with disabilities in my classroom.*

the mean for respondents educated within China ($M = 4.214$, $SD = 0.802$) and outside China ($M = 4.649$, $SD = 0.538$) were similar to each other. These responses were also similar to statements related to participants' comfortability planning and teaching with learning support teachers. However, according to responses to Likert Scale item 25,

- *I can approach my colleagues for assistance when needed if I have students with special needs in my classroom.*

teachers educated outside of China ($M = 4.216$, $SD = 0.0479$) feel more comfortable approaching their colleagues for support regarding students with special needs than teachers educated in China ($M = 3.643$, $SD = 0.497$).

One of the primary teaching models within the elementary school is coteaching, meaning that two or more adults work together to deliver and differentiate instruction. The coteaching model varies by group of students, grade level, and content area, but teachers of all levels and subjects can coteach during the day. Sometimes this means that two homeroom or single subject teachers work together to deliver a lesson. Coteaching can include instruction given by a teacher and

a teaching assistant. At the grade level, coteaching also consists of learning support and English as an Additional Language teachers.

There were nine Likert Scale statements related to participants' attitudes toward collaboration and its relationship with inclusive practices (Table 7). Of those educated in China, there was an overall mean of 3.484 (SD = 1.026) on the Likert Scale compared to respondents in the Outside China subgroup whose mean was 3.711 (SD = 1.249).

Table 7

Collaboration Analysis Between Subgroups

	N	M	SD	df	t	p	d
China	126	3.484	1.026	456	1.818	0.070	0.19
Outside China	332	3.711	1.249				

An independent *t*-test was performed to compare participants' attitudes toward collaboration, as related to inclusion, educated in and outside of China, and to test the second null hypothesis:

- *H₀ 2: There is no significant relationship between international teachers' attitudes toward collaboration to support inclusive programming and the location of their teaching preparatory program.*

The results support the rejection of *H₀ 2*, $t(456) = 1.818$, $p = 0.07$, $d = 0.19$. These results indicate that the second null hypothesis cannot be rejected. There is no statistically significant evidence that there is a relationship between participants' country of education and their attitudes toward collaboration to benefit the inclusion of students with special needs.

Training. Nine survey items, defined in Table 8, were related to ongoing professional development and training opportunities for participants working in the elementary school. It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions in China greatly impacted the availability of high-quality professional development opportunities for all schools. Before COVID-19, international schools could bring in consultants and trainers to support the ongoing education of faculty and staff. In addition, the institution would regularly support teachers as they traveled to conferences and trainings outside of China. During the pandemic, the school still provided internal and virtual professional development opportunities but as expected, these trainings may not have had the same impact as in-person opportunities.

Table 8*Likert Scale Responses: Training*

Training	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
LS03: I need more training to appropriately teach students with disabilities.											
China	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	1	7.14%	6	42.86%	6	42.86%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	2	5.41%	4	10.81%	28	75.68%	3	8.11%	37
LS15: My school provides me with sufficient training opportunities in order for me to appropriately teach students with disabilities.											
China	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	10	71.43%	3	21.43%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	2	5.56%	14	38.89%	13	36.11%	7	19.44%	0	0.00%	36
LS19: I am provided with sufficient trainings through my school that allows me the ability to teach students with special needs.											
China	0	0.00%	4	28.57%	6	42.86%	4	28.57%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	1	2.70%	13	35.14%	14	37.84%	9	24.32%	0	0.00%	37
LS23: I am provided with enough time to attend professional development on teaching students with special needs.											
China	1	7.14%	4	28.57%	8	57.14%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	1	2.70%	11	29.73%	14	37.84%	10	27.03%	1	2.70%	37
LS29: I am provided with sufficient materials to make appropriate accommodations for students with special needs.											
China	0	0.00%	6	42.86%	3	21.43%	5	35.71%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	5	13.51%	14	37.84%	17	45.95%	1	2.70%	37
LS32: I need more training to appropriately teach students with behavioral difficulties.											
China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	14.29%	6	42.86%	6	42.86%	14

Outside China	0	0.00%	2	5.41%	6	16.22%	26	70.27%	3	8.11%	37
LS40: General education teachers at my school have been adequately prepared and are provided with enough training, experiences and supports to include children with special needs in the general education...											
China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	8	57.14%	6	42.86%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	2	5.41%	17	45.95%	9	24.32%	9	24.32%	0	0.00%	37
LS43: Teaching assistants (serving in any role) at my school have been adequately prepared and are provided with enough training, experiences, and supports to include children with special needs in the ...											
China	0	0.00%	3	21.43%	8	57.14%	3	21.43%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	7	18.92%	15	40.54%	11	29.73%	4	10.81%	0	0.00%	37

Regarding adequate training opportunities, the cumulative data reveals that participants possessed unfavorable attitudes toward the amount and quality of professional development related to inclusive practices. All participants acknowledged that they require more professional growth and training to adequately support students with special needs in their classrooms. Participants indicated that they would like to increase the number and length of training to better learn how to differentiate material and make better use of the resources that are currently available to support students with disabilities.

When comparing responses to Likert Scale item 03,

- *I need more training to appropriately teach students with disabilities.*

participants educated in China ($M = 4.214$, $SD = 0.893$) desire training more than their foreign-educated colleagues ($M = 3.865$, $SD = 0.631$). Similarly, on Likert Scale item 32,

- *I need more training to appropriately teach students with behavioral difficulties.*

participants educated in China ($M = 4.286$, $SD = 0.726$) rated themselves as needing more training to support students with behavior disorders than participants educated outside China ($M = 3.811$, $SD = 0.660$).

Overall, attitudes of participants as reported on the eight Likert Scale statements related to training showed that the respondents educated in China had an overall mean of 3.330 ($SD = 0.914$). For respondents educated outside of China, the mean response was 3.071 ($SD = 0.961$).

A two-sample t -test was used to compare the attitudes of participants educated in and outside of China toward teacher training related to inclusion (Table 9). These results, $t(405) = 2.462$, $p = 0.014$, $d = 0.27$, indicate a significant difference between the two subgroups. Therefore, the rejection of the third null hypothesis was warranted:

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between international teachers' attitudes toward the effectiveness of their teaching training in relation to inclusive programming and the location of their teaching preparatory program.

There is statistically significant evidence that there is a relationship between participants' country of education and their attitudes toward teacher training.

Table 9

Training Analysis Between Subgroups

	N	M	SD	df	t	p	d
China	112	3.330	0.914	405	2.462	0.014	0.27
Outside China	295	3.071	0.961				

Administrator Support. Administrator support is a critical component of the success of any school program. While many programs are championed through a grassroots organization of teachers and students, it is difficult for any project in a school to be successful without the championship from administrators.

The institution used for this study is led by the head of school, who fulfills the same function as a school superintendent in the United States. The head of school oversees the school's educational leadership with the support of sectional principals and the director of innovation in learning and teaching. In addition, school leadership includes the chief financial officer and chief officer of operations, the director of marketing, communications, and admissions, and the school board of directors. All school levels are also led by "middle managers," or learning leaders, including grade-level leads and heads of departments.

All participants in this study work at the elementary school level. Regarding "administrators," participants included the elementary school principal and two vice principals. In this context, "administrator" refers to the head of school and the director of innovation in learning and teaching.

Table 10 includes the responses to the five Likert Scale statements related to administrator support of teachers and the use of inclusive practices on this survey. The results indicated little difference between the attitudes of participants that had been educated within China or outside of China toward administrator support concerning students with special needs. Generally, both groups feel neutral about administrator support for attending training related to inclusion. These attitudes are

fitting as the availability of professional development within China was not limited by the actions or attitudes of school administrators.

Table 10

Likert Scale Responses: Administrator Support

Admin	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
LS05: I am encouraged by my school to attend workshops and other trainings to support my teaching of students with disabilities.											
China	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	3	21.43%	7	50.00%	3	21.43%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	6	16.22%	11	29.73%	17	45.95%	3	8.11%	37
LS09: I feel supported by my administrators when face with challenges presented by students with behavioral difficulties or disorders in my classroom.											
China	1	7.14%	1	7.14%	3	21.43%	6	42.86%	3	21.43%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	8	21.62%	7	18.92%	16	43.24%	6	16.22%	37
LS13: I can approach my administrators with concerns I have regarding children with special needs.											
China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	14.29%	8	57.14%	4	28.57%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	3	8.11%	3	8.11%	24	64.86%	7	18.92%	37
LS21: My administrators provide me with sufficient support when I have students with special needs in my classroom.											
China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	6	42.86%	7	50.00%	1	7.14%	14
Outside China	2	5.41%	6	16.22%	12	32.43%	15	40.54%	2	5.41%	37
LS34: I feel supported by my administrators when faced with challenges presented by students with learning difficulties in my classroom.											
China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	6	42.86%	7	50.00%	1	7.14%	14
Outside China	1	2.70%	4	10.81%	12	32.43%	19	51.35%	1	2.70%	37

Both groups are generally neutral toward school administrator support for including students with special needs in their classrooms. These attitudes apply to the use of strategies related to Likert Scale items 21 and 34 in reference to supporting student learning,

- Likert Scale item 21: *My administrators provide me with sufficient support when I have students with special needs in my classroom.*

- Likert Scale item 34: *All efforts should be made to educate students with disabilities in the general education classroom.*

and the support of teachers when faced with the behavioral or learning needs of students in their classrooms on Likert Scale item 09,

- *My colleagues are willing to support me with issues which may arise when teaching students with disabilities.*

Interestingly, as demonstrated in response to Likert Scale item 13,

- *I can approach my administrators with concerns I have regarding children with special needs.*

participants educated in China felt more comfortable approaching their administrators regarding students with special needs when compared to their colleagues educated outside of China. However, both groups still rated the approachability of their administrators favorably. Based on the responses related to administrator support of inclusion, it is reasonable to assume that administrators are not at the root of any inclusion-related issues.

Based on the five Likert Scale items (Table 11) related to the attitudes of participants toward administrator support for inclusion, there was a significant difference between the attitudes of participants educated in China ($M = 3.771$, $SD = 0.854$) and outside of China ($M = 3.519$, $SD = 0.921$).

Table 11*Administrator Support Analysis Between Subgroups*

	N	M	SD	df	t	p	d
China	70	3.771	0.854	253	1.992	0.047	0.28
Outside China	185	3.519	0.921				

A two-sample *t*-test was used to compare the attitudes of participants educated in and outside of China toward the support of school administration in creating an inclusive learning environment. There is statistically significant evidence that there is a relationship between participants' attitudes toward support of administrators and their country of education. Furthermore, the results, $t(253) = 1.992$, $p = 0.047$, $d = 0.28$, indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between participants' country of education. These results warrant the rejection of the fourth null hypothesis:

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between international teachers' attitudes toward administrator support of inclusive programming and the location of their teaching preparatory program.

Preparatory Program. Participants' experiences with their teacher preparatory programs vary based on the year they attended university, the location of their university, and the focus of their preparatory program. Some teacher preparatory programs included coursework related to learning differentiation for students with special needs regardless of the degree track. Other programs specifically focused on the content area being taught (e.g., music education, English as an Additional Language, primary education). The inclusion of differentiation for students with special needs in the college curricula may also vary based on the values of the

country. Countries that have formal special education programming and services embedded into a public education system are more likely to include courses related to differentiation.

As illustrated in Table 12, participants generally possessed unfavorable attitudes toward their college preparatory programs' ability to prepare them to support students with special needs. Participants educated in and outside of China felt that their college preparatory programs did not adequately prepare them for the wide range of disabilities they would encounter in the classroom. Participants from both groups indicated that they were not equipped with concrete strategies or scaffolds to support them in content differentiation and instruction delivery for students with disabilities. These sentiments are highlighted by Likert Scale item 01:

My teacher preparatory program(s) prepared me to effectively teach students with disabilities (including learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and intellectual disabilities).

In response to this statement, participants educated within China ($M = 2.857$, $SD = 0.949$) rated themselves similarly to participants educated outside of China ($M = 2.703$, $SD = 1.175$). Participants rated their preparedness to teach students with special needs neutrally or unfavorably across level of need including speech-language disorders students performing one year below grade level, and students performing two or more years below grade level on the statements listed below:

- Likert Scale item 11: *My education background has prepared me to effectively teach students with speech impairments/disorders.*
- Likert Scale item 30: *I am provided with sufficient materials to make appropriate accommodations for students with special needs.*
- Likert Scale item 38: *Students who are one year below grade level should be in learning supported classes.*

Table 12*Likert Scale Responses: Preparatory Program*

Preparatory Program	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
LS01: My teacher preparatory program/s prepared me to effectively teach students with disabilities (including learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and intellectual disabilities).											
China	1	7.14%	4	28.57%	5	35.71%	4	28.57%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	7	18.92%	10	27.03%	8	21.62%	11	29.73%	1	2.70%	37
LS11: My education background has prepared me to effectively teach students with speech impairments/disorders.											
China	0	0.00%	3	21.43%	7	50.00%	4	28.57%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	4	10.81%	23	62.16%	5	13.51%	5	13.51%	0	0.00%	37
LS17: My education background prepared me to teach students with special needs.											
China	0	0.00%	4	30.77%	5	38.46%	4	30.77%	0	0.00%	13
Outside China	5	13.51%	12	32.43%	4	10.81%	14	37.84%	2	5.41%	37
LS30: My education background has prepared me to effectively teach students whose performance is a year below grade level.											
China	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	5	35.71%	9	64.29%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	0	0.00%	4	10.81%	6	16.22%	20	54.05%	7	18.92%	37
LS38: My education background prepared me to effectively teach students who are two or more years below level.											
China	0	0.00%	4	28.57%	4	28.57%	6	42.86%	0	0.00%	14
Outside China	1	2.70%	13	35.14%	6	16.22%	13	35.14%	4	10.81%	37

The attitudes of participants toward the Likert Scales regarding their preparation showed that the respondents within China ($M = 3.145$, $SD = 0.809$) had a slightly more favorably response level from those in the outside of China group ($M = 2.973$, $SD = 1.163$). To determine if there was a statistically significant difference

between the attitudes of participants educated inside and outside of China toward their preparatory program, responses were examined with an independent t -test. The results presented in Table 13 indicate that the rejection of null hypothesis $H_0 5$ was not supported, $t(252) = 1.130$, $p = 0.260$, $d = 0.16$:

There is no significant relationship between international teachers' attitudes toward training related to inclusive programming and the location of their teaching preparatory program.

Despite participant attitudes toward their preparatory programs, there was no statistically significant difference between the attitudes of the two groups regarding the program that prepared them to become teachers.

Table 13
Preparatory Program Analysis Between Subgroups

	N	M	SD	df	t	p	d
China	69	3.145	0.809	252	1.130	0.260	0.16
Outside China	185	2.973	1.163				

Qualitative Data

The extended responses to the open-ended questions revealed several categories that further illustrate elementary school teachers' attitudes toward inclusive practices. The resulting categories included: training, modeling, and coaching

opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants; the impact of teacher attitudes and openness toward inclusion; and coteaching and collaboration between colleagues. The open-ended questions were:

1. How do you define inclusive education?
2. What does inclusion look like in your classroom?
3. What challenges have you encountered in implementing inclusion?
4. What is the most important factor you would attribute to the success of inclusive practices?
5. What suggestions do you have to make the inclusive classroom more successful for both the teachers and the students?
6. In which areas would you like to receive additional training regarding inclusive education? Why?

Definitions of Inclusion

The first question asked: *How do you define inclusive education?* In response, a vast majority of respondents defined inclusion as a system that includes all learners and not one that exclusively benefits students with special needs. As illustrated in Table 14, equality was the most popular code, with 33 respondents citing inclusive education as synonymous with equal educational opportunities for all students. A common narrative in these responses was that "all" students have equal access and support in the general education classroom. "All" connotes more than just students with special needs. Respondents also referred to multilingual students and students exceeding grade-level expectations. Inclusion does not exclusively refer to students with disabilities but is instead a broad term used for students of any ability or

linguistic background. This distinction is critical as it aligns with the schoolwide values and commitment to DEIJ work in schools.

Table 14

How do you define inclusive education?

Theme	Frequency	Examples
Equal access and opportunities	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "All students have access and can participate in mainstream class with appropriate support." • "Education that is accessible to ALL, regardless of learning needs and styles." • "Providing equitable opportunities for all to learn and to embrace differences."
Valuing and supporting all students	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "All students feel they are valued members of the community and are proud of their success in life and learning." • "Education that values all learners, teaching them in the way that works for the individual and meets students where they are at." • "An environment that is welcoming, safe and supportive for all students, irrespective of their learning needs, gender, culture, language."
Accessibility and Accommodations	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Accommodations and modifications are made for students with disabilities in a non-obtrusive manner." • "Inclusive education provides appropriate support for individual needs." • "Education that is accessible to all, regardless of learning needs and styles." • "Providing opportunities, supports, and environments for all students to reach their full learning and social potential."

A surprising theme was a discrepancy between the responses of some participants in understanding the difference between equal learning opportunities and equitable learning opportunities for students with special needs. It is important to note that "equal" is defined as being "the same" for all. Equity, comparatively, implies fairness and justice in which individuals receive supports based on their needs. While some responses to the questionnaire explicitly stated that inclusion means "the same" learning opportunities for all students, many responses referred to learning opportunities that are "just," "differentiated," or "meeting students where they are."

This interpretation is reinforced under another common code, "accessibility and accommodations." Twenty participants referred to inclusion as equitable by creating learning environments and opportunities that are appropriate for all students and have need-based support and scaffolds.

Additional themes for the definition of inclusion include a school culture that values student diversity and is a supportive place for all students. Participants specifically referred psychological safety for students with special needs, diverse linguistic backgrounds, nationalities, and varying gender. One participant defined inclusion as "rejecting and working to reverse education's history of exclusion and oppression." It is significant that the term "inclusion" extends to include more than just one marginalized group and that teachers recognize that inclusion is a universal term within an educational context.

Inclusion in the Classroom

The second question was: "*What does inclusion look like in your classroom?*" Responses indicated that the most common theme was the importance of fostering authentic relationships with students. According to participants, inclusion hinges on the relationships created between educators and students to promote a sense of value and support cited in participant definitions of inclusion. A strong understanding of student needs, interests, and strengths is the foundation upon which teachers can differentiate learning. Teachers that model authentic relationships in the classroom also show appreciation for the diversity of their students. Another frequent theme in response to this question was how the adults in the classroom embrace student

differences. The "whole child" approach aligns with the school's mission to support students academically and social-emotionally. This is a clear reflection of the work that the school has done to make the institution a more inclusive environment.

As presented in Table 15, participants cited the differentiation of the pace, process, and product of learning tasks based on individual needs. Differentiation is a key component of inclusion and can include changes to the instruction, environment, task, and outcome. There was some discrepancy in the responses related to the physical location of student learning and its relationship to inclusion. Some participants describe inclusion in their classrooms as where all students receive their instruction in the general education classroom. Others noted that inclusive learning spaces can be flexible based on student needs. However, it is unclear whether references to the "mainstream" classroom were made by single subject teachers who have limited opportunities to create breakout spaces for student learning. Typically, single subject classes include all students, regardless of need. Students with significant disabilities are accompanied in single subject classes by a specialized teaching assistant to help maximize their participation.

Table 15

What does inclusion look like in your classroom?

Theme	Frequency	Examples
Authentic Relationships	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Inclusion is having authentic relationships with all students and making sure they feel supported and seen." • "Building relationships with students and knowing them as learners."

Table 15 (*Continued*)

Theme	Frequency	Examples
Differentiation and Personalization	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "All students studying and completing tasks based on their level." • "Differentiated instructions, environment, tasks, and outcomes." • "Differentiating and scaffolding to support students with special needs."
Positive Learning Environment	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Promoting positive behaviors and creating a positive learning environment." • "Having a predictable timetable, clear and structured sections in the classroom, and simple instructions." • "Consistency in the classroom and creating a supportive community."
Valuing Diversity and Embracing Differences	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Same expectations for all students and valuing individual strengths." • "Recognizing and embracing differences, sharing of values and cultures." • "Students from different parts of the world with different languages and abilities given an equal chance for success."
Collaboration and Community	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Students collaborating, participating in group work, and discussions." • "Collaborating with colleagues to co-plan and coteach for all students." • "Creating groups that benefit all learners and are specific to their learning needs and styles." • "Welcoming other adults into the classroom to coteach or work with small groups or students."

Classroom management was also a common theme in response to the question about inclusive classrooms. The systems and structure within the classroom support the successful implementation of inclusion, including the school timetable providing consistent opportunities for coteaching, support, and positive behavior supports. In addition, universal supports to address student behavior benefits all students as all children respond to consistent and clear expectations.

Collaboration was another theme that emerged in response to the second question. This included both collaboration among students and collaboration among teachers. Participants cited opportunities for children of different abilities to

collaborate as an example of inclusion. Student collaboration tends to lead toward appreciating diversity and valuing differences within the classroom. Participants also shared the importance of collaboration among teaching staff as a key component of classroom inclusion. Co-planning, co-teaching, and co-assessment allows teaching teams to create appropriate learning opportunities for students. Co-planning helps teachers place students in heterogenous or homogenous groups that best support their learning. Co-teaching allows teachers to work with smaller groups of students, maximizing the time students receive direct instruction and get constructive feedback. Co-assessment ensures that teachers are aligned on how they measure student success and how to plan next steps to support student learning.

Challenges

The third question was: *What challenges have you encountered in implementing inclusion?* While participants had similar definitions of inclusion and examples of what inclusion looks like in the classroom, major challenges were shared in their responses to this question (see Table 16). Seventeen participants felt they had not received enough training or professional development to adequately support students with special needs in their classrooms. This sentiment was reinforced by responses to the Likert Scale questions related to teacher training. Participants had a strong desire to meet the needs of all students but did not possess the tools or knowledge to do so with confidence. Six participants specifically cited the role that challenging behaviors play in the success of inclusion. Teachers do not feel adequately prepared to support students with behavior disorders or students that

demonstrate aggression in the classroom. Participants want more professional development specifically related to emotional-behavior disorders and executive functioning.

Participants reported that managing individual students with special needs in a classroom with multiple students needing differentiation and specific scaffolds has also been challenging. In addition, it is difficult for teachers to manage a classroom with a wide range of needs, including students with disabilities, multilingual students, and students exceeding learning expectations. Participants attributed some of these challenges to staffing resources—thinly spread learning support teachers and teaching assistants who may not have had adequate training to support a wide range of needs.

Table 16

What challenges have you encountered in implementing inclusion?

Theme	N	Examples included in extended responses
Lack of training/support	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I feel I do not have the education and knowledge I need to support students who have specific needs." "Not enough training or support. Other staff not on the same page with inclusiveness or unwilling to understand or help." "Even though I want to provide effective support to special needs students, I do not understand them very well."
Behavior management	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Behavior management, especially when students find it difficult to follow a group plan or when students need significant support with executive functioning." "Aggressive student whose behavior consistently interrupts teaching." "Students who are a danger to other students. How can you explain to parents that their child may be hurt by another child and it is part of the learning process?"
Time constraint	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I think the biggest hurdle is that a strategy or procedure may not work for the entire school year. It can sometimes be a bit exhausting to find a new way to support the student." "Not enough time to plan effective lessons that will support all learning abilities."

Table 16 (*Continued*)

Theme	N	Examples included in extended responses
Individualized needs, insufficient staffing	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Each student's needs are unique and diverse, and it is sometimes impossible to help everyone." • "Numerous students with high learning needs requiring more support than I can manage on my own and support staff being thinly spread..." • "Can't make me in half or third to students needed me at the same time." • "Not enough staffing to support the needs of the students."
Inclusive mindset	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Other staff not on the same page with inclusiveness or unwilling to understand or help or dedicate their time to up skilling themselves on what they do not or may not know." • "It's not schoolwide. Some people believe that students should be farmed off to other specialists instead of keeping the students in the community. Until we all have the same language and same understanding, we won't be able to make progress."

A surprising code that emerged in response to this question was the role that teacher mindsets may play in making inclusion challenging. Some participants referred to a lack of common understanding of inclusion within the school and a lack of buy-in to the inclusive model amongst school staff. The lack of unity from the teaching staff may negatively impact student success across all class environments. One participant stated that a major challenge for them has been that other teachers have a primary goal moving through the curriculum to cover all subject standards, leading some students to fall through the cracks. This is interesting as it does not align with the attitudes toward inclusion found through the Likert Scale responses, or the definition of inclusion as shared in response to the first the open-ended question. However, there is no way to determine whether teachers with negative mindsets regarding inclusion participated in the study.

The Likert Scale responses showed an overwhelmingly favorable attitude toward the importance of collaboration concerning inclusion. Collaborative meetings

were also cited as being an example of what inclusion looks like in some classrooms. However, in the open response questions, time to collaborate was included as a challenge to the successful implementation of inclusion. Some participants found the current collaboration model to be too focused on the curriculum and less focused on adapting the curriculum for diverse needs. Participants also felt that there is not enough time embedded into meeting structure to focus on the student experience. Instead, teachers debate "what" to teach rather than "how" to teach to a wide range of students.

Successful Inclusion

The fourth open-ended question was: *What is the most important factor you would attribute to the success of inclusive practices?* In response, participants most frequently cited the importance of positive relationships and collaboration (see Table 17). Positive and professional relationships between faculty and staff were identified as being crucial for successful inclusion. Communication between all stakeholders working with a student was mentioned multiple times. It can be difficult for grade level teams to have the opportunity to share specific information about student needs with single subject teachers, language teachers, and those working with students in after school activities. However, when student needs are fully and clearly communicated, teachers can better respond and support their learning.

Table 17

What is the most important factor you would attribute to the success of inclusive practices?

Theme	N	Examples included in extended responses
Collaboration and relationships	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Collaboration and willingness to problems solve, grow and learn together as professionals." • "Understanding each individual in the classroom and their needs and build relationships with students."
Teacher Training and Professional Development	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Mandatory upskilling and training to meet the needs in the class and/or Grade level/school." • "For teachers, more in person training for specific strategies for specific students." • "Ongoing high-quality teacher training (offered as PD)."
Open-mindedness and positive attitudes	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Open hearts and open minds." • "Help teachers to empathize with families and students."
School and classroom culture	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A school that actively promotes inclusive practices and stands by their words and values."
Support and Resources	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Extra support for students and staff." • "Effective staffing. Adequately trained and passionate staff. Support staff available and collaboration in teams."

Responses to this question also identified a need to build positive relationships between teachers and students with special needs. Participants found a high level of empathy to be necessary for a classroom to be successfully inclusive. Teachers can more effectively support a student with special needs in their classroom if they have a trusting relationship with the child. This makes it easier to identify the student's strengths, areas of growth, and strategies that work best with that child. Students who work with a trusted adult feel more empowered to take ownership over their own learning and become an active member of their own learning team. Student-teacher relationships are critical for developing a student's ability to self-advocate and accept support from their teachers.

Like the responses to previous open-ended questions, most participants identified teacher training and resources as a major area of need for the school. Teachers specifically asked for more professional development opportunities to upskill all staff members—including teaching assistants and single subject teachers. The need for teacher enrichment in learning support does not solely apply to those that teach reading, writing, and mathematics. Teachers of all subjects could benefit from learning how to apply strategies to support students with special needs. Once again, participants called for mandatory on-going professional development for all faculty and staff working with diverse groups of students.

Participants also stated that teacher mindsets and attitudes play a crucial role in the successful use of inclusive practices. Participants that felt confident in their ability to cultivate a culture of inclusion listed their mindset as one of the reasons for their success. Some participants attribute their positive mindsets to specific trainings or their college preparatory program supporting their inclusive attitudes.

The fifth open-ended question was: *What suggestions do you have to make the inclusive classroom more successful for both the teachers and the students?* In response, the most common theme was additional training for teachers to better support students with special needs (see Table 18). Respondents specifically asked for training related to emotional and behavioral regulation, fine motor skill development, attention disorders, and dyslexia. Responses also included requests for training related to making small group instruction effective for all students. Participants called for additional training on Tier 1 or universal practices that can help students of all

abilities. Some responses requested training for school faculty and staff to ensure a common understanding amongst all stakeholders and a common language to support collaborative conversations.

Table 18

What suggestions do you have to make the inclusive classroom more successful for both the teachers and the students?

Theme	Frequency	Examples included in extended responses
Teacher Training	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialized training for teachers; more training on specific strategies for specific students
Collaboration	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong communication and collaboration with colleagues; collaboration between learning support teachers and classroom teachers, standardized norms of collaboration, genuine sense of shared responsibility for students with special needs
Student-Centered Approach	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect student input; find opportunities to see from the perspective of students; create comfortable and safe learning spaces for students; provide differentiated learning materials for students
Resources and Support	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of learning support teachers to support inclusive classrooms, smaller class sizes
Building Relationships and Trust	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build strong relationships between teachers and students; help teachers empathize with families and students, foster professional trust between teachers

Collaboration within teams and across the school continued to be a recurring theme. Many respondents referred to fostering a shared responsibility for the learning of all students. However, it is clear from the language used in the responses that some teachers felt that students with special needs are seen as "belonging" to the learning support teacher. Ideally, all students would "belong" to all teachers, contributing to the school's shared goal to create an inclusive learning community. Respondents also stated that communication between teachers and staff should be increased to ensure student needs are met across learning environments. This could be accomplished

through increasingly protocolled collaborative planning meetings that put student needs and differentiation at the forefront of conversations about teaching and learning.

Another theme emerging from suggestions to make inclusive classrooms more successful was creating a more student-centered learning environment. Responses called for increased empathy for students, putting them at the forefront of planning and collaboration. Materials and resources need to be purchased or designed with the specific needs of students in mind. Physical spaces need to be aligned with the student experience so that students feel safe and comfortable in their learning environment.

Several participants called for more learning support personnel within the school in order to make learning more inclusive. This included a reduction in student-to-teacher ratios. One response focused on ensuring that the caseload of each learning support teacher is reasonable and that grades with increased numbers of students needing support have a proportional number of learning support teachers. There does appear to be a discrepancy between the call for more personnel and the sentiment that current personnel should be upskilled to better support the increasingly diverse student population. With or without more personnel trained in learning support, the needs of incumbent teachers remain the same. Hiring additional teachers will not change any of the issues described in participant responses without increased opportunities to learn more about effective inclusive practices.

Additional Training

The sixth question asked was: *In which areas would you like to receive additional training regarding inclusive education? Why?* The most common theme among responses (see Table 19) was a specific request for training related to emotional-behavior disorders and supporting challenging behaviors in an inclusive classroom. Participants also cited the need for more training on how anxiety presents and functions in young children. In the wake of COVID-19, students have had a disrupted learning journey in the last three years. The impact of COVID-19 regulations in China, families being separated for up to years at a time, and the effect of isolation has left many children presenting with anxiety symptoms. Many children missed opportunities for foundational play skills, including gross and fine motor skill development. Being isolated, children had fewer opportunities to play with peer groups and practice skills related to attention, flexibility, and problem-solving. This has led to increased social-emotional learning concerns in students, including anxiety, poor self-regulation, and behavior issues. Teachers have been attempting to cope with these social-emotional concerns and closing the academic gap caused by interrupted learning in the last few years. These trends were reflected in teacher responses about student needs and inclusion.

Table 19

In which areas would you like to receive additional training regarding inclusive education? Why?

Theme	Frequency	Examples
Social-Emotional Needs	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I would really benefit from training on more social-emotional and ways to ease anxiety." • "Training with emotional and behavioural regulation." • "Behaviour regulation. I'd love to know more about the connectedness between anxiety and ADHD and how our students (and families) can be supported with this."
Specific Learning Disabilities and Disorders	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "PD on students with mild/moderate disabilities, ASD and Dyslexia, behaviour issues." • "About Autism intervention" • "behavioural and speech disabilities." • "Speech and language, Social/Emotional- Behaviour regulation strategies, Autism and ADHD." • "A better foundational understanding of dyslexia, autism, Asperger's and similar conditions that are being identified with greater regularity within our learning community."
Inclusive Education	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I would like receive any further training in inclusive education to better accommodate all students in my classroom." • "There are many models of inclusive education for students with special needs or who are neurodiverse. I would like training on best practices and strategies for individual teachers and for schools."

Participants requested ongoing and specific training to approach a wide range of issues. Responses included requests specific to the kinds of needs frequently appearing in classrooms, like mild to moderate cognitive disabilities, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia, and autism. In addition, as the admissions process has become increasingly inclusive and the availability of diagnostic testing has grown in China, more students with disabilities are enrolled. Therefore, it's no surprise that participants requested training that reflects the changing student demographics.

In addition to specific training, participants shared a desire to build a toolbox of strategies and scaffolds that can be applied across classroom settings to make

learning more inclusive. Responses included requests for models of inclusive classrooms in order to have a tangible example of what inclusivity could look like for all classes. Teachers strongly desire the most up-to-date research on education and best practices for students with special needs.

Ongoing professional development and training was a common theme across all the collected qualitative data. Overall, participants felt strongly about the need for additional training and support to enhance their pedagogical practice and understanding of differentiation, in addition to training on specific disabilities and supports. There was a strong sentiment that teachers and staff need opportunities to develop a common understanding of inclusion and what it means in the context of this institution. Responses included the participation of teaching assistants in these trainings to better hone their skills and define their roles. Another common theme across the qualitative responses was the need for better communication and a shift in focus during collaborative meetings. Specific training and a common understanding of inclusion would support more effective communication and collaboration. Teaching teams would have the same foundational knowledge of learning support and be better equipped to keep students' needs and differentiation at the center of planning.

Summary

The collected quantitative data revealed that null hypothesis $H_0 1$ was rejected as there is a statistically significant difference between the general attitudes of participants educated in China and outside of China. Null hypotheses $H_0 3$ and $H_0 4$

can also be rejected as there was a statistically significant difference between these two groups in relation to teacher training and professional and administrator support of inclusive practices.

Null hypotheses $H_0 2$ and $H_0 5$ were not rejected as there was no statistically significant difference between the attitudes of those educated in and outside of China in relation to collaboration to support inclusive practices or the effectiveness of teacher preparatory programs.

The qualitative data collected indicated that participants generally have a positive attitude toward including students with special needs in their classrooms. However, participants also indicated that there are several areas of growth to support inclusive practices, including increasing professional learning opportunities and resources available to support students of diverse needs. The results indicate that participants welcome collaboration and coteaching to support students with special needs regardless of demographic information. Participants felt comfortable approaching their colleagues for support with using inclusive practices. Generally, participants have neutral attitudes toward the support they receive from their administrators in relation to inclusion.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Actions, and Implications

This study was designed to investigate whether the experience and attitudes of teachers at international schools impact their perception of inclusive education. This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to help answer the guiding questions for this capstone:

- (1) What are international teachers' experiences with special education and inclusion?
- (2) What factors contribute to international teachers' attitudes toward special education and inclusion?

Summary of Results and Findings

Inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom is a relatively new development in international schools. Teachers at international schools represent a diverse range of nationalities, languages, cultural attitudes, and experiences within a single institution. Diverse teaching staff is an asset for schools committed to instilling a global mindset and inclusive values in their students. However, variations in the content and quality of international teachers' preparatory programs impact their level of expertise and comfortability with some school initiatives, including inclusive education. As inclusion of students with special needs in international schools gains more traction, teachers may find themselves unprepared by their training programs. Through data on the attitudes and experiences of teachers with inclusion, international schools may be able to better cultivate inclusive learning practices and support teachers in implementing their inclusive pedagogy.

The institution in which this study was conducted has a history of providing differentiated instruction to a diverse population of students, but the attitudes and experiences of teachers in the inclusive learning environment had not been explored. To assess the attitudes and experiences of international teachers working at the elementary level, faculty and staff were asked to participate in an optional survey. The survey tool included 44 Likert Scale items related to teachers' general attitudes toward inclusion, collaboration, training, administrator support, and preparatory programs. Responses were grouped by participants that had been educated within China and participants that had been educated outside of China. Responses were then compared using an independent *t*-test to determine if there statistically significant differences between the two populations were present.

Statistical analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the general attitudes of participants educated in China and outside of China. There was also a statistically significant difference between the two participant groups in relation to teacher training and professional development and administrator support of inclusive practices. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the attitudes of those educated in and outside of China in relation to collaboration to support inclusive practices or the effectiveness of teacher preparatory programs.

The questionnaire also included six open-ended questions for participants to share their definitions of inclusion and experiences with inclusive practices. These responses were then coded using content analysis, producing themes related to participant experiences, challenges, and need to create more inclusive learning

environments. The most common theme that emerged through the responses to all six questions was the need for ongoing high-quality training related to inclusion.

Participants called for training about specific needs, as opposed to more general trainings, related to specific strategies and scaffolds for students with learning disabilities, behavior disorders, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and autism spectrum disorders. Participants also requested training related to the behavior regulation and social-emotional learning of all students, regardless of learning support status. Another common theme found in the qualitative data was improved usage of collaborative planning time. Participants cited the need for more collaborative and student-centered planning opportunities related to curricula and teaching strategies.

Interpretations

The faculty and staff at the institution participating in this study came from diverse backgrounds. They inevitably brought their previous experiences and understandings with them to the school. While diverse perspectives and experiences are an asset to the teaching and learning experience, it can create challenges when there are differences in understanding pertaining to inclusion. Misunderstandings or concepts literally lost in translation can negatively impact individual perceptions of inclusion. In addition, the design and implementation of learning support models vary by country, culture, and context. Conflict and frustration can arise when perceptions of best practices in teaching students with special needs and inclusion are involved.

To improve the perception of inclusion by the faculty and staff within this institution, it is recommended that the school provide opportunities for teachers to

develop a common language for and understanding of inclusion. This could be accomplished through ongoing training for all instructional staff to ensure that all stakeholders are working with a shared definition of relevant terms and practices like inclusion, co-teaching, co-planning, differentiation, accommodations, and modifications.

Additionally, attitudes toward inclusion could be improved if the faculty and staff observed exemplar models of inclusion in similarly diverse environments. Professional development that includes concrete examples of productive collaborative meetings and inclusive teaching would support inclusion within this context. These examples and practices would also provide a blueprint for vertical alignment in inclusive practices and approaches to instruction for the entire school.

Implications

Previous studies related to the preparatory training of teachers and their attitudes toward special education highlighted the need for more targeted instruction related to differentiation. Greenberg and Greenberg (2014) specifically discuss how the cultural attitudes toward people with disabilities in Asia has hindered inclusion efforts. Teachers are exiting their preparatory programs without the skills necessary to support students with special needs. However, research shows that positive experiences and preparatory programming predicts teachers' attitudes, concerns, and efficacy toward special education (Sokal & Sharma, 2017).

While many teachers in Asian countries believe that inclusive programming should be compulsory for all schools, teachers feel unprepared and ill-equipped to

support students with diverse needs (Raguindin et al., 2020). There is a direct correlation between the quality and focus of preparatory programs and the positive attitudes of teachers toward inclusion (Costello & Boyle, 2013). While the literature supports that many teachers in countries with developing special education programs have positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with special needs, they also require ongoing training (Katitaş & Coşkun, 2020; Nouf et al., 2020).

While existing literature reinforces the correlation between teacher preparatory programming and attitudes toward inclusion, it does not specifically address the experiences of international school teachers. Many studies exist comparing the attitudes of teachers within a single country or the attitudes of teachers across multiple countries. International schools are an anomaly. These institutions are designed to appeal to a diverse clientele and diverse faculty and staff. It cannot be assumed that the faculty and staff in an international school have similar experiences, possess similar attitudes, or have a common education background.

This study addresses how variations in attitudes and experiences can exist within a single institution and statistically significant differences between groups of teachers. This study reports on how contrasting preparatory experiences can affect how teachers perceive inclusion and factors that impact inclusion like collaboration, administrator support, training, and education backgrounds. The qualitative data collected in this study reinforces the quantitative findings, providing important context on what international school teachers need to successfully implement inclusive practices.

While existing literature addresses the needs of teachers applying inclusive programming in specific countries, the findings of this study could support the needs specific to international teachers. International schools could use the results of this study to better inform their selection of professional development related to inclusion for their faculty and staff. By selecting trainings that are specific and practical for differentiation, students would be more successful, and teachers would become more confident in their practice. In addition, information gathered in this study could help school administrators design effective collaborative planning meetings and collaborative teaching opportunities for their teachers.

Because the make-up of each international school is different, with varying ratios of faculty and staff from different countries, schools could replicate this study or adapt the survey tool for their needs. The data gathered could inform practices specific to individual schools and support other schools' commitment to inclusion.

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

Limitations

This study was not without limitations. One significant limitation was the sampling of participants. Participation in the study was optional and limited to a single school level at a single institution. Typically, an elementary school's teaching faculty and staff are predominately female. However, over 90% of participants in this study were female, meaning that male teachers have been underrepresented. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the results of convenience sampling across other environments.

The testing instrument itself could have been limiting. The questionnaire included 44 Likert Scale statements and six open-ended questions. It's conceivable that the length of the assessment could have contributed to a mental fatigue among participants, affecting the quality of responses. Many Likert Scale statements were repeated and rephrased, making the survey long. Although it is assumed that participants answered each question thoughtfully, it is possible that the mental load of the survey impacted their attention to and investment in the responses.

Another limitation of the study is the context of the institution itself. The institution in which data were collected is widely considered to be in the "top tier" in international education. The institution is one of Asia's best-resourced and staffed schools. It would be inappropriate to compare this institution's strengths and growth to other, less-resourced international schools. The results of this study cannot be fairly generalized across other international schools that do not have a similar level of resources.

This study intended to examine the relationship between the demographic information of its participants and their attitudes toward inclusion. However, many participants were the single representative of their passport country or country of education. The insufficient sample sizes for these domains made it impossible to determine if the differences between demographic groups were statistically significant. Therefore, the results of the study had to be manipulated by categorizing participants as being educated within or outside of China in order to reflect any differences between demographic groups.

Delimitations

This study was limited to the attitudes and experiences of elementary school teachers in a single international school in China. This study did not include input from middle and high school teachers or administrators within the same institution. Involving all teaching faculty and staff in this study was not feasible at this time. The scope of the study was limited to the elementary school because it best aligned with the school's strategic goals and priorities for developing thriving learning communities at each grade level. The teaching model at the other school levels is structured quite differently.

The study also excluded input from other key stakeholders: parents and students. The scope of this study did not consider the impact of family backgrounds on acceptance of inclusion or differentiation for their children. While the input of these parties is valuable, it was not directly relevant to teaching practices and attitudes of the teaching faculty and staff.

Assumptions

It is assumed that participants in this study answered each question honestly and factually. Presumably, participants were introspective and thought critically when responding to the Likert Scale statements and open-ended questions. Another assumption is that the participants have a similar understanding of or definition for common terms like inclusion, special needs, and learning support. It is assumed that participants have some baseline knowledge of these terms, as well as the meaning of collaboration, co-teaching, and levels of support. All participants were trained in the

last school year on multi-tiered systems of support within the context of the institution, which is presumably why teachers volunteered to participate.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is that the institution where this study took place continue to invest in ongoing high-quality professional development for all teaching staff working with students with special needs. An overwhelming number of participant responses called for training related to the kinds of disabilities they encounter in the classroom and specific scaffolds and strategies that can be applied to support student learning. Regardless of participants' demographic information or experiences with inclusion, ongoing training opportunities would ensure that all teachers would rely on a shared understanding specific to inclusion and apply similar approaches to support student learning across classrooms.

It is also recommended that collaborative conversations and planning within the institution shift focus from the curricula to addressing specific student needs. If students were at the center of collaboration and planning, teachers could support each other in developing differentiation and scaffolds in real-time. Most participants indicated that they felt comfortable approaching their colleagues for help with supporting students with special needs. If conversations about student support and teaching needs were embedded into collaborative planning practices, then support for teachers would occur more authentically and, ultimately, better support student learning. Ideally, collaborative planning conversations would include all stakeholders in student learning, including teaching assistants. Within this institution, the role of

teaching assistants varies based on the grade level and subject area. While some teaching assistants serve in secretarial roles, others are responsible for small group instruction or primarily work with students with special needs. Instructional teaching assistants should be intentionally included in collaborative planning and receive the same level of collegial support for planning content differentiation.

If learning support teachers become facilitators of collaborative conversations related to differentiation and scaffolding, the learning support team should receive additional training and support for effective middle manager leadership. This should include training on facilitating collaborative conversations and positive discourse. In addition, learning support teachers would need opportunities to continue to hone their professional practice to best support the needs of their teams and students.

All participants agreed that teaching assistants, including specialized teaching assistants, had not received enough training to be able to best support students with high needs. Most of the school's teaching assistants are Chinese nationals, meaning they work with students in their second or third language. As a result, teaching assistants often work with the highest needs students with the least specialized training. Teaching assistants would benefit from additional training to support their practice as well as support with the English academic language associated with learning support. By empowering teaching assistants with the language, concepts, and practices to support students with special needs, their instruction would be more effective and they would be more confident in their pedagogy.

Future Actions

Recommendations for future studies include expanding this research to other grade levels and across multiple international schools. Gathering the input of teachers across all grade levels would result in a clearer picture of the perceptions of inclusion across the institution. Currently, this study provides just an illustration of the attitudes, perceptions, and needs of teaching staff in the elementary school. However, the journey of inclusion does not end with the elementary school level. There are challenges unique to secondary school that should be acknowledged and addressed when implementing an inclusion program. If a school wants to take concrete steps to support inclusivity, the changes should be schoolwide.

If the study was expanded to include multiple international schools within or outside of China, then international school stakeholders would better understand the overall state of inclusion. In addition, this data would inform accreditation bodies and cooperatives on the kind of training and support that schools want in order to create more inclusive learning environments. Finally, the information would also benefit school branding by advertising as being more inclusive to prospective parents.

Reflections

In reflecting on my capstone journey, I realized that this research is a product of the experiences I had in my final semester of my undergraduate studies. I completed my student teaching for my BA in Elementary Education in Thessaloniki, Greece at the Pinewood International American School. While there, I was immersed into the world of international education, the benefits and challenges of a multilingual classroom, and living as an expatriate. I am incredibly grateful for my student

teaching experience as it launched me into the next phases of my academic and professional journeys.

While working in Greece, I experienced the challenges that international schools face with inclusive education. Children with obvious special needs were not admitted, as the school (at the time) was not equipped with the personnel or the resources to support them. Children with less apparent disabilities, like dyslexia or specific learning disabilities, either fell through the cracks or were supported solely by their general education teacher. Some teachers were more prepared than others to differentiate curriculum, scaffold learning, and provide interventions to support student learning. My colleagues in Greece did what all good teachers do—they invested in every child as best they could. But without formal training or resources available, some students continued to struggle.

The lack of a formal learning support program with designated teachers and training for all faculty deeply affected me. Having grown up with a sister with significant special needs, I remembered the impact that her special education teachers had on her learning and on her quality of life. I returned to Kentucky to pursue special education and English as an Additional Language certificates with the intention of returning to teach abroad. I knew that I would return to international school teaching as a learning support teacher and be better equipped to support students of any ability than I was while student teaching.

I began this capstone with the hope of shining a light on the challenges that teachers in international schools face when working with diverse learners. I wanted to

highlight ways in which schools could better support teachers in the design and implementation of inclusive programs. Like any learning support teacher, I desired to find the gaps and identify interventions best suited to close them. I believe that in many ways, I accomplished my goal. But I also learned so much more.

My research was designed to identify differences in the attitudes and perspectives between demographic groups. While there were statistically significant differences, there were many more areas in which people shared common beliefs. I learned that my colleagues and I shared the same values regarding inclusion, the value of a high-quality and personalized education, and that all children are entitled to learn, regardless of ability.

Similar to my observations of international educators in Greece, my research has reinforced the belief that my colleagues in China will do their best to invest in the success of each child. My hope is that this research will provide a blueprint for next steps that will ensure each teacher is prepared to support diverse learners. I hope that the great work of my colleagues will be celebrated and that the challenges they face are acknowledged and acted upon. I hope that any trainings or approaches to teaching and learning stemming from this research has a positive impact on the inclusion of students with special needs in international schools.

Conclusions

This capstone sought to investigate how the cultural attitudes and experiences of international teachers impact their perceptions of inclusion. The findings from this study highlight a relationship between teacher demographics, specifically their

country of education, and their attitudes toward inclusion. Teachers in international schools indicated that they were not adequately prepared by their teacher preparatory programs to support students with special needs. The study findings indicate that teachers generally have positive attitudes toward including students with special needs in their classrooms. However, teachers require ongoing high-quality professional development to support their inclusive practices.

To foster a more inclusive school culture, institutions should prioritize training for all teaching staff on learning support, disabilities, and strategies to support inclusion. In addition, ongoing professional development opportunities would support the effective teaching of students with diverse needs and the comfort and confidence of the teachers working with this population.

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Appendix A

Survey – Demographic Information, Likert Scale, Open-Response Questions

Demographic Information

Gender Identity:

I identify as

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Nonbinary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Age range:

- ☐ Under 25
- ☐ 25-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60-69

Nationality/Ethnicity/Language:

Passport country/ies: _____

Ethnicity/ies:

I identify as _____. (*i.e., I identify as Mexican-American.*)

My native language/Mother Tongue is: _____

I am proficient in the following languages: _____

Education:

Higher education: (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Associates Degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree
- ☐ Fifth-year/Additional certification

Country/ies in which I obtained my teaching certification/s and/or degree: _____

Primary language/s used in my teacher education program/s: _____

Teaching certifications held in the following subject areas: (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Early childhood education (preschool and/or kindergarten)
- ☐ Elementary education (K-5, K-6)
- ☐ Middle education, any subject area (Grades 6-8)
- ☐ High school education, any subject area (Grades 9-12/13)
- ☐ Art Education

- Music Education
- Drama/Performance Education
- Physical/Health Education
- Technology
- Library Sciences
- Language Education (i.e., Chinese Language)
- Special Education/Learning Support (Learning and Behavior Disorders, Moderate and Severe Disabilities, Emotional-Behavior Disorders)
- English as an Additional Language/English for Speakers of Other Languages
- School Counseling
- Education Curriculum
- Math Concentration/Intervention
- Literacy Concentration/Intervention

Professional Experience:

How long have you been teaching?

- 0-1 year
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 15-20 years
- More than 21 years

How long have you been teaching at this school?

- 0-1 year
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 15-20 years
- More than 21 years

I am currently serving as a: (Check all that apply)

- Homeroom teacher
- Homeroom Teaching Assistant
- Grade Level Teaching Assistant
- Learning Support Teacher
- Specialized Teaching Assistant (STA)
- Literacy Teaching Assistant (LTA)
- Learning Support Teaching Assistant
- English as an Additional Language Teacher
- Single Subjects Teacher (specializing in performing arts, visual arts, physical education, design, and swimming education)
- Language Teacher (i.e., Chinese of any level)
- EdTech or Library Sciences
- Single Subject Teaching Assistant (including all single subjects, EdTech, and Library)

I am currently working in: (Check all that apply)

- Early childhood education (preschool and/or kindergarten)
- Elementary education homeroom (K-5, K-6)
- Art Education
- Music Education

- ☐ Drama/Performance Education
- ☐ Physical/Health Education
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Library Sciences
- ☐ Language Education (i.e., Chinese Language)
- ☐ Special Education/Learning Support (Learning and Behavior Disorders, Moderate and Severe Disabilities, Emotional-Behavior Disorders)
- ☐ English as an Additional Language/English for Speakers of Other Languages
- ☐ School Counseling
- ☐ Literacy Intervention

I have experience teaching in the following grade levels: (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Early Years/Preschool (ages 3-5)
- ☐ Kindergarten/Reception (ages 5-6)
- ☐ Grade 1
- ☐ Grade 2
- ☐ Grade 3
- ☐ Grade 4
- ☐ Grade 5
- ☐ Grade 6
- ☐ Grade 7
- ☐ Grade 8
- ☐ Grade 9
- ☐ Grade 10
- ☐ Grade 11
- ☐ Grade 12/13

I have experience working in the following areas: (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Early childhood education (preschool and/or kindergarten)
- ☐ Elementary education homeroom (K-5, K-6)
- ☐ Art Education
- ☐ Music Education
- ☐ Drama/Performance Education
- ☐ Physical/Health Education
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Library Sciences
- ☐ Language Education (i.e., Chinese Language)
- ☐ Special Education/Learning Support (Learning and Behavior Disorders, Moderate and Severe Disabilities, Emotional-Behavior Disorders)
- ☐ English as an Additional Language/English for Speakers of Other Languages
- ☐ School Counseling
- ☐ Literacy Intervention
- ☐ Other: _____

Likert Scale Survey Questions

All questions paired with a 5-point Likert Scale:

- 1- Strongly Disagree
 - 2- Disagree
 - 3- Neutral
 - 4- Agree
 - 5- Strongly Agree
-
1. My teacher preparatory program/s prepared me to effectively teach students with disabilities (including learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and intellectual disabilities).
 2. All students who have special needs need to receive their education in a special education classroom.
 3. I need more training to appropriately teach students with disabilities.
 4. I welcome collaborative teaching when I have students with disabilities in my classroom.
 5. I am encouraged by my school to attend workshops and other training to support my teaching of students with disabilities.
 6. Inclusion of children with special needs at my school has been a positive experience for students without disabilities.
 7. My colleagues are willing to support me with issues which may arise when teaching students with disabilities.
 8. I feel comfortable working collaboratively with learning support teachers to create an inclusive environment and program of study for students with disabilities in my classroom.
 9. I feel supported by my administrators when face with challenges presented by students with behavioral difficulties or disorders in my classroom.
 10. Students who perform 2 or more years below grade level should be in self-contained learning support classes.
 11. My education background has prepared me to effectively teach students with speech impairments/disorders.
 12. Students with moderate to severe disabilities should be in self-contained learning support classrooms.
 13. I can approach my administrators with concerns I have regarding children with special needs.
 14. I like being the only teacher in the classroom.
 15. My school provides me with sufficient training opportunities in order for me to appropriately teach students with disabilities.
 16. Collaborative teaching of students with disabilities can be effective when students are placed in general education classrooms.
 17. My education background prepared me to teach students with special needs.
 18. General education teachers (including single subjects and language teachers) should not be responsible for teaching children with special needs.
 19. I am provided with sufficient trainings through my school that allows me the ability to teach students with special needs.
 20. Students who display speech and language difficulties should be in special education classes.
 21. My administrators provide me with sufficient support when I have students with special needs in my classroom.
 22. Maintaining order in the general education classroom that includes students with special needs is more difficult than in a general education classroom that does not include students with special needs.
 23. I am provided with enough time to attend professional development on teaching students with special needs.

24. I should only be responsible for teaching students who are not identified as having special needs.
25. I can approach my colleagues for assistance when needed if I have students with special needs in my classroom.
26. Students who are physically aggressive toward others can be maintained in general education classrooms.
27. My colleagues are approachable when I ask for their advice when I teach students with special needs.
28. Both general education teachers and special education teachers should teach students with special needs.
29. I am provided with sufficient materials to make appropriate accommodations for students with special needs.
30. My education background has prepared me to effectively teach students whose performance is a year below grade level.
31. Students diagnosed with autism need to be in self-contained learning support classrooms.
32. I need more training to appropriately teach students with behavioral difficulties.
33. All efforts should be made to educate students with disabilities in the general education classroom.
34. I feel supported by my administrators when faced with challenges presented by students with learning difficulties in my classroom.
35. Learning Support teachers should teach students with disabilities.
36. I feel comfortable in approaching my colleagues for help when I teach students with special needs.
37. Students who are one year below grade level should be in learning supported classes.
38. My education background prepared me to effectively teach students who are two or more years below level.
39. Inclusion of children with special needs at my school has been a positive experience for students with disabilities.
40. General education teachers at my school have been adequately prepared and are provided with enough training, experiences and supports to include children with special needs in the general education classroom.
41. Students with special needs can be best served in the special education classroom.
42. My colleagues will try to place all their students with special needs in my classroom if my classroom is inclusive.
43. Teaching assistants (serving in any role) at my school have been adequately prepared and are provided with enough training, experiences, and supports to include children with special needs in the general education classroom.
44. Students with special needs included in the general education classroom, require additional time and attention which can be a disadvantage to students without disabilities.

Open-Ended Survey Questions

1. How do you define inclusive education?
2. What does inclusive look like in your classroom?
3. What challenges have you encountered in implementing inclusion?
4. What is the most important factor you would attribute to the success of the inclusive practices?
5. What suggestions do you have to make the inclusive classroom more successful for both the teachers and the students?
6. In which areas would you like to receive additional training regarding inclusive education? Why?

Appendix B

Responses to Survey – Likert Scale Portion

	1-SD		1-D		3-N		4-A		5-SA	
Likert Scale Items by Category	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Admin	5	1.96	28	10.98	65	25.49	126	49.41	31	12.16
LS05: I am encouraged by my school to attend workshops and other trainings to support my teaching of students with disabilities.	1	1.96	6	11.76	14	27.45	24	47.06	6	11.76
China	1	7.14		0.00	3	21.43	7	50.00	3	21.43
Outside China		0.00	6	16.22	11	29.73	17	45.95	3	8.11
LS09: I feel supported by my administrators when face with challenges presented by students with behavioral difficulties or disorders in my classroom.	1	1.96	9	17.65	10	19.61	22	43.14	9	17.65
China	1	7.14	1	7.14	3	21.43	6	42.86	3	21.43
Outside China		0.00	8	21.62	7	18.92	16	43.24	6	16.22
LS13: I can approach my administrators with concerns I have regarding children with special needs.		0.00	3	5.88	5	9.80	32	62.75	11	21.57
China		0.00		0.00	2	14.29	8	57.14	4	28.57
Outside China		0.00	3	8.11	3	8.11	24	64.86	7	18.92
LS21: My administrators provide me with sufficient support when I have students with special needs in my classroom.	2	3.92	6	11.76	18	35.29	22	43.14	3	5.88
China		0.00		0.00	6	42.86	7	50.00	1	7.14
Outside China	2	5.41	6	16.22	12	32.43	15	40.54	2	5.41
LS34: I feel supported by my administrators when faced with challenges presented by students with learning difficulties in my classroom.	1	1.96	4	7.84	18	35.29	26	50.98	2	3.92
China		0.00		0.00	6	42.86	7	50.00	1	7.14
Outside China	1	2.70	4	10.81	12	32.43	19	51.35	1	2.70

Likert Scale Items by Category	1-SD		1-D		3-N		4-A		5-SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Collaboration	41	8.95	45	9.83	54	11.79	212	46.29	106	23.14
LS04: I welcome collaborative teaching when I have students with disabilities in my classroom.		0.00	1	1.96	1	1.96	19	37.25	30	58.82
China		0.00	1	7.14		0.00	8	57.14	5	35.71
Outside China		0.00		0.00	1	2.70	11	29.73	25	67.57
LS07: My colleagues are willing to support me with issues which may arise when teaching students with disabilities.	1	1.96	1	1.96	6	11.76	30	58.82	13	25.49
China	1	7.14		0.00	3	21.43	7	50.00	3	21.43
Outside China		0.00	1	2.70	3	8.11	23	62.16	10	27.03
LS08: I feel comfortable working collaboratively with learning support teachers to create an inclusive environment and program of study for students with disabilities in my classroom.	1	1.96	1	1.96	1	1.96	28	54.90	20	39.22
China	1	7.14		0.00	1	7.14	6	42.86	6	42.86
Outside China		0.00	1	2.70		0.00	22	59.46	14	37.84
LS14: I like being the only teacher in the classroom.	13	26.00	22	44.00	14	28.00	1	2.00		0.00
China	2	14.29	6	42.86	6	42.86		0.00		0.00
Outside China	11	30.56	16	44.44	8	22.22	1	2.78		0.00
LS16: Collaborative teaching of students with disabilities can be effective when students are placed in general education classrooms.		0.00	1	1.96	8	15.69	25	49.02	17	33.33
China		0.00	1	7.14	8	57.14	2	14.29	3	21.43
Outside China		0.00		0.00		0.00	23	62.16	14	37.84
LS24: I should only be responsible for teaching students who are not identified as having special needs.	26	50.98	17	33.33	6	11.76	2	3.92		0.00
China	2	14.29	5	35.71	5	35.71	2	14.29		0.00
Outside China	24	64.86	12	32.43	1	2.70		0.00		0.00
LS25: I can approach my colleagues for assistance when needed if I have students with special needs in my classroom.		0.00		0.00	6	11.76	36	70.59	9	17.65
China		0.00		0.00	5	35.71	9	64.29		0.00
Outside China		0.00		0.00	1	2.70	27	72.97	9	24.32
LS27: My colleagues are approachable when I ask for their advice when I teach students with special needs.		0.00	1	1.96	7	13.73	32	62.75	11	21.57
China		0.00	1	7.14	5	35.71	7	50.00	1	7.14
Outside China		0.00		0.00	2	5.41	25	67.57	10	27.03
LS36: I feel comfortable in approaching my colleagues for help when I teach students with special needs.		0.00	1	1.96	5	9.80	39	76.47	6	11.76
China		0.00		0.00	4	28.57	10	71.43		0.00
Outside China		0.00	1	2.70	1	2.70	29	78.38	6	16.22
General Attitude	102	11.81	219	25.35	215	24.88	266	30.79	62	7.18
LS02: All students who have special needs need to receive their education in a special education classroom.	18	35.29	25	49.02	5	9.80	2	3.92	1	1.96
China		0.00	8	57.14	3	21.43	2	14.29	1	7.14
Outside China	18	48.65	17	45.95	2	5.41		0.00		0.00
LS06: Inclusion of children with special needs at my school has been a positive experience for students without disabilities.	1	1.96	1	1.96	6	11.76	30	58.82	13	25.49
China	1	7.14		0.00	3	21.43	7	50.00	3	21.43
Outside China		0.00	1	2.70	3	8.11	23	62.16	10	27.03
LS10: Students who perform 2 or more years below grade level should be in separate learning support classes.	9	18.00	15	30.00	12	24.00	9	18.00	5	10.00
China	1	7.69		0.00	3	23.08	5	38.46	4	30.77
Outside China	8	21.62	15	40.54	9	24.32	4	10.81	1	2.70

Likert Scale Items by Category	1-SD		1-D		3-N		4-A		5-SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
LS12: Students with moderate to severe disabilities should be in separate learning support classrooms.	6	12.00	20	40.00	14	28.00	10	20.00		0.00
China		0.00		0.00	6	46.15	7	53.85		0.00
Outside China	6	16.22	20	54.05	8	21.62	3	8.11		0.00
LS18: General education teachers (including single Current Positions and language teachers) should not be responsible for teaching children with special needs.	21	41.18	21	41.18	6	11.76	3	5.88		0.00
China	2	14.29	8	57.14	4	28.57		0.00		0.00
Outside China	19	51.35	13	35.14	2	5.41	3	8.11		0.00
LS20: Students who display speech and language difficulties should be in special education classes.	16	31.37	18	35.29	12	23.53	5	9.80		0.00
China		0.00	3	21.43	6	42.86	5	35.71		0.00
Outside China	16	43.24	15	40.54	6	16.22		0.00		0.00
LS22: Maintaining order in the general education classroom that includes students with special needs is more difficult than in a general education classroom that does not include students with special needs.	1	1.96	7	13.73	11	21.57	26	50.98	6	11.76
China		0.00	1	7.14	3	21.43	6	42.86	4	28.57
Outside China	1	2.70	6	16.22	8	21.62	20	54.05	2	5.41
LS26: Students who are physically aggressive toward others can be maintained in general education classrooms.	2	3.92	10	19.61	26	50.98	13	25.49		0.00
China	2	14.29	4	28.57	7	50.00	1	7.14		0.00
Outside China		0.00	6	16.22	19	51.35	12	32.43		0.00
LS28: Both general education teachers and special education teachers should teach students with special needs.	1	1.96	2	3.92	6	11.76	27	52.94	15	29.41
China		0.00	1	7.14	5	35.71	8	57.14		0.00
Outside China	1	2.70	1	2.70	1	2.70	19	51.35	15	40.54
LS31: Students diagnosed with autism need to be in self-contained learning support classrooms.	14	27.45	24	47.06	9	17.65	4	7.84		0.00
China		0.00	5	35.71	7	50.00	2	14.29		0.00
Outside China	14	37.84	19	51.35	2	5.41	2	5.41		0.00
LS33: All efforts should be made to educate students with disabilities in the general education classroom.		0.00	1	1.96	8	15.69	31	60.78	11	21.57
China		0.00		0.00	4	28.57	10	71.43		0.00
Outside China		0.00	1	2.70	4	10.81	21	56.76	11	29.73
LS35: Learning Support teachers should teach students with disabilities.	1	1.96	10	19.61	22	43.14	17	33.33	1	1.96
China		0.00	2	14.29	6	42.86	5	35.71	1	7.14
Outside China	1	2.70	8	21.62	16	43.24	12	32.43		0.00
LS37: Students who are one year below grade level should be in learning supported classes.	3	6.00	19	38.00	12	24.00	13	26.00	3	6.00
China		0.00	2	14.29	3	21.43	7	50.00	2	14.29
Outside China	3	8.33	17	47.22	9	25.00	6	16.67	1	2.78
LS39: Inclusion of children with special needs at my school has been a positive experience for students with disabilities.		0.00	1	1.96	11	21.57	35	68.63	4	7.84
China		0.00		0.00	4	28.57	8	57.14	2	14.29
Outside China		0.00	1	2.70	7	18.92	27	72.97	2	5.41
LS41: Students with special needs can be best served in the special education classroom.	7	13.73	15	29.41	17	33.33	11	21.57	1	1.96
China	1	7.14		0.00	3	21.43	9	64.29	1	7.14
Outside China	6	16.22	15	40.54	14	37.84	2	5.41		0.00
LS42: My colleagues will try to place all the students with special needs in my classroom if my classroom is inclusive.	1	1.96	17	33.33	25	49.02	8	15.69		0.00

Likert Scale Items by Category	1-SD		1-D		3-N		4-A		5-SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
China		0.00	4	28.57	8	57.14	2	14.29		0.00
Outside China	1	2.70	13	35.14	17	45.95	6	16.22		0.00
LS44: Students with special needs included in the general education classroom, require additional time and attention which can be a disadvantage to students without disabilities.	1	1.96	13	25.49	13	25.49	22	43.14	2	3.92
China		0.00	4	28.57	5	35.71	5	35.71		0.00
Outside China	1	2.70	9	24.32	8	21.62	17	45.95	2	5.41

Likert Scale Items by Category	1-SD		1-D		3-N		4-A		5-SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Training	14	3.44	98	24.08	131	32.19	144	35.38	20	4.91
LS03: I need more training to appropriately teach students with disabilities.		0.00	3	5.88	5	9.80	34	66.67	9	17.65
China		0.00	1	7.14	1	7.14	6	42.86	6	42.86
Outside China		0.00	2	5.41	4	10.81	28	75.68	3	8.11
LS15: My school provides me with sufficient training opportunities in order for me to appropriately teach students with disabilities.	2	4.00	15	30.00	23	46.00	10	20.00		0.00
China		0.00	1	7.14	10	71.43	3	21.43		0.00
Outside China	2	5.56	14	38.89	13	36.11	7	19.44		0.00
LS19: I am provided with sufficient trainings through my school that allows me the ability to teach students with special needs.	1	1.96	17	33.33	20	39.22	13	25.49		0.00
China		0.00	4	28.57	6	42.86	4	28.57		0.00
Outside China	1	2.70	13	35.14	14	37.84	9	24.32		0.00
LS23: I am provided with enough time to attend professional development on teaching students with special needs.	2	3.92	15	29.41	22	43.14	11	21.57	1	1.96
China	1	7.14	4	28.57	8	57.14	1	7.14		0.00
Outside China	1	2.70	11	29.73	14	37.84	10	27.03	1	2.70
LS29: I am provided with sufficient materials to make appropriate accommodations for students with special needs.		0.00	11	21.57	17	33.33	22	43.14	1	1.96
China		0.00	6	42.86	3	21.43	5	35.71		0.00
Outside China		0.00	5	13.51	14	37.84	17	45.95	1	2.70
LS32: I need more training to appropriately teach students with behavioral difficulties.		0.00	2	3.92	8	15.69	32	62.75	9	17.65
China		0.00		0.00	2	14.29	6	42.86	6	42.86
Outside China		0.00	2	5.41	6	16.22	26	70.27	3	8.11
LS40: General education teachers at my school have been adequately prepared and are provided with enough training, experiences and supports to include children with special needs in the general education classroom.	2	3.92	17	33.33	17	33.33	15	29.41		0.00
China		0.00		0.00	8	57.14	6	42.86		0.00
Outside China	2	5.41	17	45.95	9	24.32	9	24.32		0.00
LS43: Teaching assistants (serving in any role) at my school have been adequately prepared and are provided with enough training, experiences, and supports to include children with special needs in the general education classroom.	7	13.73	18	35.29	19	37.25	7	13.73		0.00
China		0.00	3	21.43	8	57.14	3	21.43		0.00
Outside China	7	18.92	15	40.54	11	29.73	4	10.81		0.00

Likert Scale Items by Category	1-SD		1-D		3-N		4-A		5-SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Preparatory Program	18	7.09	77	30.31	55	21.65	90	35.43	14	5.51
LS01: My teacher preparatory program/s prepared me to effectively teach students with disabilities (including learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and intellectual disabilities).	8	15.69	14	27.45	13	25.49	15	29.41	1	1.96
China	1	7.14	4	28.57	5	35.71	4	28.57		0.00
Outside China	7	18.92	10	27.03	8	21.62	11	29.73	1	2.70
LS11: My education background has prepared me to effectively teach students with speech impairments/disorders.	4	7.84	26	50.98	12	23.53	9	17.65		0.00
China		0.00	3	21.43	7	50.00	4	28.57		0.00
Outside China	4	10.81	23	62.16	5	13.51	5	13.51		0.00
LS17: My education background prepared me to teach students with special needs.	5	10.00	16	32.00	9	18.00	18	36.00	2	4.00
China		0.00	4	30.77	5	38.46	4	30.77		0.00
Outside China	5	13.51	12	32.43	4	10.81	14	37.84	2	5.41
LS30: My education background has prepared me to effectively teach students whose performance is a year below grade level.		0.00	4	7.84	11	21.57	29	56.86	7	13.73
China		0.00		0.00	5	35.71	9	64.29		0.00
Outside China		0.00	4	10.81	6	16.22	20	54.05	7	18.92
LS38: My education background prepared me to effectively teach students who are two or more years below level.	1	1.96	17	33.33	10	19.61	19	37.25	4	7.84
China		0.00	4	28.57	4	28.57	6	42.86		0.00
Outside China	1	2.70	13	35.14	6	16.22	13	35.14	4	10.81
Grand Total	180	8.04	467	20.87	520	23.24	838	37.44	233	10.41

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