REACH

JOURNAL OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION IN IRELAND

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working together effectively

- **Multidisciplinary Collaboration in the Development of Individual Education Plans: Challenges and Opportunities for the Teaching Profession**
- **The Inclusion of Learners with Moderate General Learning Disabilities and Challenging Behaviours in School and Class Activities in Special Schools**
- **The Experiences of Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Irish-Medium Schools**

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Editorial

The publication of the 33rd volume of REACH in 2020 coincides with this time of global and national tumult as the world grapples with the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, the publication of the journal has been significantly delayed as a consequence of this disruption and for this we apologise to our readers. In Ireland no less than in other countries, healthcare professionals have been at the vanguard of the response to the pandemic and we are all indebted to them for their heroic and selfless commitment on behalf of all of us. All sectors of society continue to respond rapidly and flexibly to the challenges we are facing with worldwide education systems being very seriously impacted.

In March, at the time when then Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced the complete lockdown, few of us could have imagined the huge disruption to education. Inevitably much of the media attention focused on the graduating class of 2020 and the debates about the Leaving Certificate examination. However, throughout the hiatus enforced by school closures, teachers and other education staff found themselves faced with huge challenges in unfamiliar terrain. Those who support vulnerable children and young people with significant needs in mainstream schools and in special schools and classes had to respond rapidly and creatively in pivoting to online teaching and learning. The challenges faced by educators in this new professional context were highlighted at the recent conference of the National Council for Special Education.

Technology for online and blended teaching and learning is not always designed with the needs of learners with disabilities in mind. The relationships that are fundamental to education cannot be replicated through and may be difficult to maintain in online teaching and learning. Few teachers or other education professionals had prior experience of or professional development focused on supporting learners with additional needs in online or blended learning environments (Basham, 2020). At the same time it is encouraging to recognise the potential affordances of online learning in terms of enhancing accessibility and greater potential for personalised learning (Basham, 2020; Rice, 2020) and heartening to see initial teacher education institutions responding rapidly to the need to prepare student teachers to teach in online and blended environments.

In September, the reopening of schools, marked a very significant step forward in Ireland's response to the crisis. The efforts of school leaders and staff in keeping schools open have been widely recognised which perhaps demonstrates a renewed public awareness of the critical place of schools in Irish society and an enhanced appreciation of the work of school staff. The appointment of Ireland's first Minister of Special Education and Inclusion also marks a significant and welcome development.

REACH Volume 33.2 features diverse contributions but all share a unifying focus and purpose on furthering professional knowledge and understanding. Readers who have been seeking to address the challenges of supporting the inclusion of all learners in education in the midst of a global pandemic are likely to find the article on multidisciplinary collaboration in education (Travers, 2020) particularly timely. The author, Michael Travers sadly passed away on January 17th 2018. We are delighted to publish his work posthumously. At a time of crisis, collaboration assumes even greater importance and Michael's comprehensive, scholarly and insightful analysis of the challenges and opportunities for the teaching profession underpinned by his professional experience and huge contribution to special education as a teacher, principal and inspector will be of interest to many.

This issue also features two articles which report research focusing on inclusion in mainstream and in special schools. In the first of these, Colum considers the factors that facilitate and impede the inclusion of learners with moderate general learning disabilities and challenging behaviour in school and class activities in six special schools. Notably, leadership and collaboration are identified as key factors enabling inclusion. Nic Aindriú reports on the experiences of pupils with special educational needs in Irish-medium schools in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Conducted through pupil-led interviews, the study foregrounds the perspectives of children with SEN in immersion education contexts. As a group that has been significantly underrepresented in research, the voices of these young learners can inform practices and policies in immersion education.

The aims of the REACH Journal are to

- disseminate reliable, high quality, peer-reviewed information and act as a resource for teachers of pupils with special needs and for other professionals

- provide an opportunity for those involved and interested in special and inclusive education to publish articles based on their research, practice and experience.
- promote co-operation and understanding between teachers and other professionals across the spectrum of educational settings
- engage parents, service providers, policy makers and people with disabilities themselves in fruitful dialogue.

After careful deliberation and consultation with key stakeholders including the Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education which is the founding organisation of the Journal, the Editorial Board has decided to rename the journal as *REACH: Journal of Inclusive Education in Ireland.* We are of the view that this will more accurately reflect the national and international research and policy landscape and the scope of the journal.

A vision of REACH has for many years been to broaden and increase the readership base. Therefore we are delighted to announce that from Volume 34 onwards, *REACH: Journal of Inclusive Education in Ireland* will have a full online presence and will be freely available online in open access format. We are confident that this will improve awareness, recognition and circulation of the REACH Journal among teachers and other education professionals across the spectrum of education settings and among all those involved and interested in inclusive education, including parents, service providers, policy makers and people with disabilities. For the latest updates see www.reachjournal.ie and follow @ReachJournal on Twitter.

ANNA LOGAN
Editor

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Multidisciplinary Collaboration in the Development of Individual Education Plans: Crossing Boundaries - the Challenges and Opportunities for the Teaching Profession

Insights from the scholarly, research, and policy literatures are considered in the light of their relevance to the multidisciplinary development of individual education plans (IEPs) as required by the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 (EPSEN). While the knowledge base of teachers can enrich, and be enriched, by participation in a collaborative IEP process, teachers' professional knowledge, even when enhanced by the perspective of other professionals, does not translate directly into practice, and what emerges from an IEP meeting will not be a blueprint for the classroom. Teachers will need to reflect in action, and on action, guided, but not controlled, by the contents of the IEP document. If the introduction of statutory IEPs is to meet with more than surface level compliance, teachers must be open to a transformation of relationships, both among themselves and with other professionals and parents.

Key concepts and insights from the literature on communities of practice may provide a helpful lens through which to view issues surrounding IEP development, and may facilitate the design of IEP processes that can mitigate obstacles to collaboration, while being responsive to local circumstances.

Keywords*: *EPSEN, Collaboration, IEP, Teacher Professionalism, Communities of Practice

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The author, MICHAEL TRAVERS sadly passed away on January 17th 2018. Michael was a long time member of the Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (IATSE) and as a teacher, principal and inspector made a huge professional contribution to the field in Ireland. Following retirement Michael graduated with an M.Phil. from DCU and had written this paper based on his research following a recommendation from the external examiner for the programme. His supervisor has submitted Michael's paper for publication with minor edits.

INTRODUCTION

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 (EPSEN) (Ireland, 2004) requires home school, multi-professional, multi-agency and cross-sectoral collaboration, particularly in relation to the drawing up of an individual education plan (IEP) in respect of each child with special educational needs. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) stated that implementing EPSEN would involve a paradigm shift, from a disability deficit paradigm to an inclusive education paradigm (NCSE, 2006a, p. 97). It will be the standpoint of this article that such a paradigm shift can be fruitfully considered as part of a wider shift to a collaborative perspective, both within the teaching profession and across agencies, institutions and sectors of the public service in general. Such collaboration presents particular challenges for the teaching profession - a profession which has been characterised by a degree of professional isolation (Burke, 2002; Darling Hammond, 1990; Eivers & Clerkin, 2013; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The government decision to delay the commencement of the IEP provisions in EPSEN beyond the original target of 2010 (NCSE, 2008, 2012; Houses of the Oireachtas, 2015) has provided an opportunity for all involved to learn from existing good practice and from the difficulties that have been experienced in Ireland and elsewhere in adapting to the requirements of collaborative working. In the succeeding sections of this article, literature related to collaboration, to professionalism and to knowledge sharing across boundaries will be examined for its relevance to collaborative IEP development.

COLLABORATION: DEFINITIONAL ISSUES, MODELS AND OBSTACLES

The concept of a continuum of collaboration allows us to envisage teams and individuals collaborating in different ways in different situations. Ideally, the nature, extent, and duration of collaboration would be dictated by the complexity of the needs of the individual child at a particular time. The NCSE's definition of collaboration as "an interactive process where a number of people with particular expertise come together as equals to generate an appropriate programme or process or find solutions to problems" (NCSE, 2006b, p. xi) clearly falls on the *collegial/problem-solving/facilitative* end - as opposed to the *hierarchical/knowledge-imparting/ expert* end - of the continuum of collaboration described by Sheridan (1992).

Orelove and Sopsey (1991, cited in Lacey & Lomas, 1993) described three models of collaboration. Collaboration that involved members of different professions working

parallel to but in communication with each other was described as *multidisciplinary* collaboration. Where the professionals worked from the perspectives of their own disciplines, but met together to ensure that their respective inputs contributed to a coherent whole, the collaboration was described as *interdisciplinary.* At the most advanced level, where disciplinary boundaries were crossed in order to share information, knowledge, and skills, and where team members worked jointly on assessments, programme planning, and implementation, collaboration was described as *transdisciplinary.* This transdisciplinary model would seem to imply what Kabler and Carlton (1982) called democratic, non-specialised decision-making, which they recommended for use in complex cases, where acceptance of decisions was important, and provided that the team had the necessary skills. In an IEP context, it would appear that a transdisciplinary approach, incorporating democratically shared decision-making and shared implementation, may indeed be necessary and desirable where the child has complex needs, and where commitment to agreed goals by all participants is particularly important. (Notwithstanding this observation, the term *multidisciplinary collaboration* will continue to be used here as a general term to refer to all forms of collaboration involving more than one discipline or profession).

International literature identifies a range of obstacles to the practice of collaboration, in general, including logistical difficulties (lack of time, difficulties in scheduling), factors related to the institutional structures of school and clinic, differences in professional cultures, deficits in training, and differences in understandings of collaborative processes and professional roles (Ashman, 1994; Lacey & Lomas, 1993; Osborne, Di Mathia, & Curran,1993; Stroggilos & Xanthacou, 2006). Similar constraints are noted in an Irish context; and here the position is exacerbated by the fact that access to support services is limited, uneven, and poorly coordinated (Day & Prunty, 2010; Travers et al, 2010; Ware et al, 2009). Implementing the type of collaborative practice that is now envisaged in policy and legislation will require the removal, or at least the mitigation, of these longstanding constraints.

Beyond the field of education, an examination of literature from medicine and related fields reveals the challenges involved in establishing and sustaining collaboration across professional boundaries (Atwal & Caldwell, 2005; Currie, Koteyko, & Nerlich, 2009; Oborn & Dawson, 2010). Issues of hierarchy, status and power emerge as a recurring theme. Professional boundaries may become harder rather than softer (Heldal, 2010), with doctors maintaining a dominant position and other professions failing to make a full contribution (Devitt, Philip, and McLachlan, 2010). Scholes and Vaughan (2002) cautioned that multidisciplinary team working, as experienced within Britain's National Health Service, posed

particular difficulties for members of professions such as nursing, whose roles were less clear and whose professional artistry and craft knowledge were not easy to make explicit – a point that may resonate with teachers. Robinson and Cottrell (2000) found that these difficulties were more marked where the professionals involved were employed by different agencies. Norwich and Eaton (2015, p.124) comment that while the literature has identified barriers and facilitators to multi-agency work "there has been no coherent framework that integrates these factors" in context of the introduction of Educational, Health and Care (EHC) plans in England.

In the light of the above it is not surprising that the Mental Health Commission, summarising a wide range of literature on multidisciplinary team-working, reported that the real barriers related not to resources, though resources were an issue, but to professional rivalry, mistrust, confidentiality issues, lack of management support, lack of knowledge of other professionals' unique skills, lack of training in team-working, and the fact that the different professions were trained separately (2006). Notwithstanding these difficulties, the Commission's report stressed that the essential justification and benefit of the multidisciplinary approach lay in the potential to combine diverse perspectives in a holistic manner (p. 26).

If then, as the Mental Health Commission has argued, the diverse perspectives that can be contributed by different professions constitute the raison d'être of the multidisciplinary approach, and yet, issues related to notions of profession and professionalism – issues of status, hierarchy and power - appear as recurrent and even intractable barriers, then a consideration of the concept of professionalism itself may be useful for those concerned with the promotion of collaboration in the EPSEN context.

PROFESSIONALISM

Freidson (2001) saw professionalism as one of three distinct *logics,* or ideologies, by which work, and the social and economic circumstances surrounding it, could be organised and controlled. Thus, *professionalism* involved the control of work by occupational groups, as distinct from control of work in a free market model - *consumerism* - and control by rational/legal bureaucracy - *managerialism.* Concerned particularly with the issue of balance among these three ideologies, Friedson argued that the strength of managerial and consumerist ideologies was increasing, while the influence of the professional ideology was declining and

professions' control over the purposes and ends of their work - for Freidson this was the "soul of professionalism" (p. 213) – was diminishing as they increasingly came to serve ends dictated by the state bureaucracy or by consumers.

Professionalism and the IEP

Applying Freidson's framework to the context of the introduction of an IEP regime in Ireland, what is the picture that emerges? In an exclusively professional approach, the teacher might define goals and select implementation strategies, albeit in consultation with the parent/consumer and in the context of overall accountability to the state bureaucracy. The IEP process as required by EPSEN, and elaborated by the NCSE (2006b), however, differs significantly from this purely professional approach, in ways which bear upon the relative influence of the respective ideologies. Thus, the legislative framework (EPSEN), the provision of national guidelines, and the role, envisaged in some cases for the NCSE reflect the influence of the state bureaucracy (that is, a managerialist approach), while the position accorded to the parent, in a partnership or collaborative role, including involvement in agreeing goals, reflects the consumerist approach. It seems then that the challenge of achieving an appropriate balance among the parties involved in an IEP process at local level is a reflection of the challenge which, in Freidson's view, faces society as a whole in achieving a balance between professionalism, managerialism and consumerism in the control of work.

Are teachers, in particular, ready for the challenges and opportunities involved? Will the multidisciplinary practice, and therefore the shared decision-making that will be required in the IEP process be seen as a threat to their professional autonomy and decision-making role? Will pooling of autonomy through collaboration across professional boundaries be perceived as a threat to a professional status that has only relatively recently been attained – a status in which, perhaps, many teachers still feel insecure (Burke, 2002)? The professional culture of teaching has been characterised by isolation (Burke, 2002; Darling Hammond, 1990) and low levels of collaboration (Eivers and Clerkin 2013). Organisational structures in schools do not readily facilitate collaboration with colleagues, not to speak of parents or non-teacher professionals.

There are, therefore, grounds for concern in relation to the readiness of the teaching profession to embrace the degree and type of collaboration that will be required in the implementation of EPSEN. A more optimistic view would see teachers, while cautious, being open to the advantages that the sharing of diverse perspectives through collaboration can bring (Eraut, 1994). This diversity of perspectives which, as has been noted earlier, is the rationale for multidisciplinary collaboration,

arises largely from the fact that different professions possess different, if often overlapping, knowledge bases.

The Knowledge Base of Teaching and the IEP

Possession of a distinctive knowledge base is an essential characteristic of professions (Burke, 2002; Freidson, 2001). It is not difficult to envisage the potentially beneficial synergies between the knowledge base of teachers and the knowledge bases of other professions, such as psychologists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists, that will be involved in the collaborative IEP process. Shulman (1987) outlined the knowledge base of teaching in terms of seven areas, three of which are particularly relevant here: knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of ends, purposes, and values of education. In these areas, the teacher's knowledge base can enhance and be enhanced by multidisciplinary engagement.

Ultimately, however, the resulting insights, and indeed the goals and priorities agreed in an IEP, must be realised in the real and immediate classroom situation. In the view of Hegarty (2000) good teachers have access to an extensive and expanding knowledge base, the sources of which include theory, research, pedagogic knowledge and subject knowledge, as well as other knowledge, skills, and experience. However, these areas in the teachers' repertoire become linked together in a cohesive whole, and are made selectively relevant to the specific pupil and classroom situation, only by the teacher's act of insight in what he called the *teaching moment.* Although Hegarty worked and wrote extensively in the field of special education, he did not apply his theory specifically to the IEP context. Had he done so, he might have suggested something along the following lines: When good teachers participate in the IEP process their engagement with other professionals, as part of a multidisciplinary team, has the potential to allow them to expand, and make new connections within, their repertoire of knowledge and skills. It may be that in a well-functioning team, through experience with joint problem-solving and decision-making, there will, over time, be a mutual exchange of knowledge and skills and the creation and development of a shared, team knowledge base. If Hegarty is correct however, it should not be assumed that what will emerge from an IEP meeting will be an exact blueprint that the teacher will implement faithfully in the classroom situation.

The concept of a blueprint to be followed faithfully is indeed one that forms a significant part of the discourse that surrounds IEPs in Ireland and elsewhere (Mitchell et al, 2010). This view of the IEP, influenced by behavioural psychology, fits comfortably within a technical-rational view of education: Learning goals are

based on assessments that focus on observable behaviours; needs are stated in terms of behaviours or skills and are linked to specific teaching actions; objectives or targets, it is insisted, must be SMART (specific, measureable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) (NCSE, 2006b, p.34; NDA, 2005, p. 61). Few educators will doubt that this approach can be effective in appropriate circumstances, and most will agree that competence in its use should be part of the repertoire of teachers, particularly teachers of children with special educational needs. However, to adhere rigidly or exclusively to this approach, would be to ignore the caution, urged by Hegarty, in relation to assuming that the course of teaching and learning can be fully pre-planned.

A broader, less prescriptive, less 'SMART' approach, might focus on more general, though clearly-stated, goals related to agreed priority learning needs. The task of linking these goals to specific learning activities, and to short-term targets and measurement systems, where relevant, would then be left to the professional judgement of the teacher in the light of daily classroom experience, and in collaboration, where appropriate, with those members of the multidisciplinary team who might have an ongoing involvement with the child. Such an approach would appear to be consistent with Hegarty's perspective and also with Schon's concept of the reflective practitioner (1993) and Eraut's concept of deliberative process (1994). Clearly, an IEP process in the case of a child with complex and multiple disabilities, with needs that require the input of different professionals and agencies working severally and together, in conjunction with the family, and where all parties involved may have competing, pressing and ill-defined priorities, could reasonably be described in terms of "uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict", (Schon, 1993, p.45), or as not amenable to a "single correct answer" approach (Eraut, 1994, p. 112). Schon's reflective practice and Eraut's deliberative process, therefore, can be instructive for those seeking a broader, less technical road to IEP development.

In summary, the foregoing reflection on collaboration and IEPs in the light of the work of some writers on professionalism and teaching has prompted the suggestion that their own knowledge base can enable teachers to contribute positively to a multidisciplinary collaborative process and that, in turn, the teachers' knowledge base can itself be enhanced by involvement in such a process. It has also cautioned, however, that teachers' professional knowledge, even when enhanced by the perspective of other professionals, does not translate directly into practice, and that what emerges from an IEP meeting should not be seen as a blueprint for the classroom. The IEP process will not obviate the need for flexible, creative, intuitive thinking and action in the teaching moment. The formal structures of a

school's IEP process can provide periodic opportunities for the teacher to reflect *on* action, as part of a deliberative process of ongoing planning and collaborative decision making. Teachers will also need to reflect *in* action, guided, but not controlled, by the contents of the IEP document.

Professionalism: A Critical Stance

Professionalism informed by the thinking of such as Friedson, Hegarty, Schon and Eraut can be seen as consistent with, and facilitative of, collaborative IEP**s.** Skrtic (1991), however, took a more critical stance with regard to the benefits of professionalism, a stance that raises questions in relation to the prospects for success of policy initiatives such as the introduction of mandatory IEPs. Taking Mintzberg's (1979) work on organisational configurations as a framework, Skrtic rejected both *machine bureaucracy* and *professional bureaucracy* as appropriate configurations for educational institutions and school systems. Equity and excellence in education would only, in his view, be achieved through the alternative configuration which Mintzberg had called *adhocracy* - a configuration that would facilitate collaboration and active problem solving in a way which was not possible in the other configurations.

In a professional bureaucracy the worst effects of machine bureaucracy's separation of theory and practice, and its construction of teaching as simple work requiring little professional judgement, were avoided, and the professional was afforded the flexibility and autonomy to respond to individual needs and circumstances. However, in Skrtic's view, this flexibility was exercised only within the limits of the profession's existing repertoire of programmes. Faced with unfamiliar contingencies, the professional would respond from within that repertoire rather than acting as a problem solver. Difficult cases were expected to fit into the programmes available within the repertoire or be moved on to a different professional specialist. Thus, for example, in an Irish context, a child with special educational needs who appeared not to benefit from classroom programmes as modified through the teacher's limited range of differentiation strategies, might be transferred to a special class or special school or become the responsibility of a support teacher.

Furthermore, Skrtic argued, the 'real' professional work of schools was done within an inner, professional-bureaucratic core which was embedded within an outer machine-bureaucratic configuration. Thus, the teacher professionals preserved a degree of professional autonomy in return for outward compliance with the bureaucratic demands of local management and the broader school system. Schools signalled change through their outer structure. Such change was,

however, symbolic or ceremonial and did not penetrate the inner working core (p.165). Could this then be the fate of the IEP policy initiative? Will schools go through the motions in a ritualistic way in order to be seen to comply with what some may regard as an externally imposed administrative and legal requirement (Mitchell, Morton & Hornby, 2010)? Will the IEP meeting and the IEP document be largely symbolic, involving little substantial collaborative engagement and having little relation to the work of the classroom?

Advocates of increased collaboration may find much of Skrtic's critique of professionalism and professional bureaucracy disheartening. However, Skrtic himself found reason for optimism in the changing work practices that he saw as accompanying the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society. If bureaucracy was, historically, a concomitant of industrial society then he saw adhocracy as a necessary concomitant of a post-industrial society. If industrial organisations depended on the machine bureaucracy form of organization, then post-industrial organizations would require the adhocratic form, relying for effectiveness on collaboration, mutual adjustment among actors, and control through coupling based on reflective discourse.

Future Prospects for Professionalism

Skrtic's view of the challenges and opportunities facing teacher professionalism as the millennium approached were taken up by Hargreaves and Fullan. Hargreaves (2000) saw teacher professionalism as having arrived at a stage of significant, if still emerging, collegiality. However, collaboration was often narrowly focused on practical arrangements for the implementation of externally determined policy initiatives. To the extent that such collaboration can be regarded as largely an attempt to satisfy external pressures, it may be seen, in Skrtic's terms, as symbolic or ritual compliance. Hargreaves argued that teachers needed to move further, towards a postmodern professionalism, in order to avoid being driven backwards by contemporary forces threatening de-professionalisation. Creating a postmodern professionalism, "pushing professionalism further" (p.171), would require that teachers be both internally collegial and externally open and inclusive. "If teachers want to become professionally stronger they must now open themselves up to become more publicly vulnerable and accessible" (Hargreaves, 2000, p.176). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), while they were particularly concerned with collaboration within teaching staffs, saw such internal collaboration as a necessary precursor to external collaboration.

The linking of internal and external collaboration in this way prompts questions in relation to the capacity of schools and teachers to meet the challenges involved in

the introduction of statutory IEPs in Ireland. This issue of capacity was explored by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) in terms of building *professional capital*. Professional capital they saw as composed of *human capital*, *social capital* and *decisional capital* (p. 89). Human capital (the calibre of entrants to a profession and their professional education) enhanced and magnified by social capital (quality and quantity of interactions and social relationships, enabling sharing of human capital) builds the capacity of professionals' decisional capital (the form of capital that enables professionals to make discretionary judgements in "situations of unavoidable uncertainty when the evidence or the rules aren't categorically clear" (p. 93).

If the identifying and prioritising of the needs of a pupil with complex disabilities, and the means by which those needs can best be met, is a challenge that requires decisional capital that is beyond the capacity of the isolated autonomous professional, then a multidisciplinary, collaborative, IEP framework can provide the context within which that challenge can be addressed. An appropriately constituted team, representing the range of professionals relevant to the particular case, will bring together the requisite knowledge and skills (human capital). In Hargreaves and Fullan's terms, mobilising this human capital, and making it accessible to all those involved, in order to make appropriate decisions, will require the use the group's social capital to convert its human capital into decisional capital (p. 113). Clearly, it should not be assumed that simply bringing a "team" of professionals together in one place will result in the type of collaboration suggested here – collaboration that, as Hargreaves and Fullan put it, involves talking together, planning together and working together (p.114). Such advanced, formal collaboration will not be necessary in all cases; Hargreaves and Fullan accepted that weaker, more informal forms of collaboration would often be adequate. Their point was that the weaker, or informal, versions of collaboration were prerequisites if teams were to successfully engage in stronger, formal collaborative activities. A team that could collaborate in the more advanced way would have already built a collaborative culture through the creation and sharing of social capital, underpinned by "social relationships, conversations, expressions of interest, provision of support" (p.114).

The flexibility that is afforded by the NCSE's IEP guidelines in relation to the degree of formality and the sequencing of the consultative/collaborative process (2006b, pp.19-20) is to be welcomed. However, in situations that are likely to require high levels of decisional capital, bringing together, for formal consultation, professionals who do not work together or consult together regularly, and therefore have not had the opportunity to develop social capital through informal

collaboration and interaction is, if we accept Hargreaves' and Fullan's views, likely to be less than fully effective. Overcoming the social capital deficit will require that schools and related support structures be organised in such a way as to facilitate sustained, ongoing interaction among the professionals involved. Even in the case of teachers within a school there is a difficulty: The class teacher involved in an IEP may vary from pupil to pupil and therefore the opportunities afforded to any one teacher to build social capital with the non-teacher professionals are limited. In these circumstances, the contribution of a person in a coordinating role, for example, a principal or special needs coordinator, who is in a position to build up the necessary informal relationships, becomes important.

It is being suggested here that a multidisciplinary team that has the capacity to make good decisions (decisional capital), in complex, uncertain situations that involve conflicting values, will not only be one whose members possess, in aggregate, the requisite range of professional expertise (human capital), but one whose members share sufficient social capital to enable them to gain access, across professional boundaries, to the knowledge and expertise of other professionals. It is to this concept of accessing knowledge across boundaries, and the ways in which such boundary crossing may be facilitated or blocked, that the attention of this article will now turn.

KNOWLEDGE ACROSS BOUNDARIES

Communities of Practice

A situative/pragmatist-sociohistoric perspective (Greeno, Collins and Resnick 1996), is helpful in thinking about knowledge as developed within and across the boundaries of social groups and communities. The focus in this perspective is on "the knowing of communities in their social practices" (p. 20), and the ability of individuals to participate meaningfully in such social practices. Many of the ideas that are central to this perspective have been elaborated by Etienne Wenger and his collaborator Jean Lave in their work on *communities of practice* (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Through *participation* in a shared enterprise, members of a community of practice shape both their own experience and the community itself. Through *reification* – "producing objects that congeal experience into thingness" – they "provide points of focus around which the negotiation of meaning becomes organised" **(**Wenger, 1998**,** pp.56-58).

Boundary objects and brokers. Through the dual processes of participation and reification, members of communities of practice share "histories of learning"

(Wenger, 1998, p.103) which sustain and develop the community but also create boundaries with other communities and with non-members in general. However, participation and reification can also facilitate connections across those same boundaries. Objects that are created through reification in one community of practice can cross boundaries into other communities. Such objects are referred to as *boundary objects*. A second source of connection across boundaries, related, in this case to the participation dimension, arises from the fact that individuals can participate in several communities of practice at once. Such individuals may act as *brokers*, "who can introduce elements of one practice into another" (p. 105); they can "make new connections across communities of practice, enable co-ordination and, if they are good brokers, open new possibilities for meaning" (p.109).

Boundary objects and brokers can be more effective when they operate together - "when artefacts and people travel together" (p. 111) - as happens in *boundary encounters,* such as meetings or visits. Where such encounters are sustained over time, they may develop into another form of practice - a *boundary practice* - the goal or purpose of which is to sustain boundary connections between communities.

Communities of practice and IEPs. Several of the key concepts associated with communities of practice may be applicable to the process of multidisciplinary IEP development. The collaborative work of those involved can be seen as participation, and particular participants, such as a school principal or a non-teacher professional who works regularly in the school, may act as brokers, spanning disciplinary boundaries. IEP documents, along with other artefacts and activities that are generated as part of the process, can be seen as reification, and may function as boundary objects, facilitating communication across disciplinary boundaries.

There may be several communities of practice involved, for example, the teaching staff of the school, the clinical professionals as a group, particularly if they are employed by a single clinical agency, or the individual professional disciplines/ departments within a clinical agency (psychology, physiotherapy etc). Where a stable group of professionals, from across these communities, acts as the *IEP team* for a particular school over an extended period, that team may itself take on the characteristics of a community of practice, functioning as a "boundary practice" (Wenger,1998, p.114) – facilitating and sustaining relationships among the several communities of practice mentioned above. Mortier et al. (2010, p.346) outline a promising community of practice model in inclusive education drawing on data from three Flemish schools. The team meetings only included those with the "most direct interest and value in solving the day-to-day challenges" of the child's

participation in class. The success of the teams rested on having an open attitude and creating a safe group environment with relationships of trust.

Facilitating or Constraining Boundary Crossing

Star and Griesemer (1989) concluded that the creation and use of boundary objects that were flexible enough to carry different meanings in different social contexts, while still remaining recognisable across those contexts was central to the process of "developing and maintaining coherence across intersecting worlds" (p. 393).

Bechky (2003) argued that individuals make sense of organisational events from within the unique contexts and cultures of their work and, therefore, "bring very different perspectives to their collaborative efforts" (p. 313). Studying the boundaries between three occupational groups - design engineers, technicians, and assemblers - in the information technology industry in California, she suggested that misunderstandings between the groups were linked to their work contexts, which differed on the basis of "their language, the locus of their practice, and their conceptualisation of the product" (p.312). Boundaries were successfully crossed when differences in the work context were brought to the surface and acknowledged, and when "informal interaction … resulted in transforming the local understandings of the groups to create richer and more broadly-shared understandings" (p. 321). In the setting studied by Bechky, difficult issues of communication, requiring the creation of *common ground,* were successfully addressed by the use of *tangible definitions* of problems, which functioned as boundary objects in a way in which, given the nature of the boundary faced, more abstract, decontextualised boundary objects such as engineers' drawings, could not. Choice of boundary object was therefore important. Use of an inappropriate boundary object for the particular boundary circumstances would constrain the creation of shared understanding (p. 326).

Bechky's technicians occupied an intermediate position between the design engineers and the assemblers, in effect, spanning the boundary between these two occupational groups. The engineers had a conceptual, static, schematic understanding of the machine to be produced, whereas, in contrast, the assemblers had a physical, spatio-temporal understanding. Occupying a middle ground, the technicians had both a conceptual and a physical understanding and "were conversant in both the language of drawings and that of the machine". Thus the technicians could "smooth the relations in the production process and ease the transition of the machine from an abstract idea to a concrete finished product": they spanned the boundary or, in Wenger's terms, they acted as brokers (pp. 319-320). In addition to this boundary spanning work of the technicians,

Bechky observed that informal interactions, and meeting "around the product" were also necessary and important factors in allowing the respective occupational groups to broaden their knowledge and share their understandings (p. 328).

The settings within which multidisciplinary IEPs are developed are indeed quite different to that studied by Bechky: The product is not tangible, goals are harder to define and the occupational groups come from the personal service, professional arena. Nevertheless, some of Bechky's insights may be relevant. First, concrete objects and tangible definitions may have a valuable part to play: Examples of this might include direct observation, samples of work, videos of pupils and, at a level once removed, observational checklists, charts, graphs, and standardised recording forms. Second, it is possible for members of the different occupations to "meet around the product" by, for example, visiting the classroom, carrying out joint, in-situ observations and assessments and, in other ways familiarising themselves with each other's locus of practice. Third, it is possible that where clinical professionals, such as speech and language therapists or physiotherapists, deliver some of their face-to-face work on site in the school setting, they may be in a position to function in a manner similar to Bechky's technicians - spanning and brokering between the conceptual, schematic ways of understanding the pupil's capacities and needs, which may sometimes characterise the perspective of clinical professionals whose involvement is intermittent and formally structured, and the, arguably, more concrete, contextual, spatio-temporal understanding that may be more typical of the teacher's day-to-day perspective. It is not being suggested here that teachers do not utilise conceptual, schematic ways of understanding but rather that in the teaching moment their perspective may be more concrete and contextual.

Writing from a perspective similar to Bechky, Carlile (2004) outlined a conceptual framework that can be helpful to those involved in boundary management. Boundaries of different complexity, he argued, required boundary management processes of corresponding complexity. Mismatches could occur in different directions, for example, using a more complex process where only simple transfer of information was required, or, conversely, using a process that facilitated only transfer of static knowledge where common meanings could not be assumed and actors' interests were likely to be a barrier. Heldal (2010) outlined how, in the context of multidisciplinary collaboration among health professionals, objects could either facilitate or block relationships at boundaries; an object might be either a boundary object ("belonged to each discipline at once with various meanings") or a *boundary-blocking object* (used in an inflexible manner and remaining the property of its discipline of origin"). A successful boundary object needed to be

at once flexible and stable: "plastic enough to fit into different contexts yet stable enough to establish a shared context" (p.21).

The flexibility which the NCSE guidelines (2006b) afford to schools in the ways they might structure their IEP collaboration can be seen as highly valuable in the light of the above ideas of both Carlile and Heldal. A school might design an IEP process and indeed an IEP document (Wenger's participation and reification) to meet the needs and circumstances of the school and the capacity of the participants, in the light of Carlile's framework. Potentially disruptive difficulties could be identified, analysed and addressed. To what extent do the participants share a common professional language? If participants come from different social/ professional worlds do they share enough common knowledge to enable them to interpret each other's input, and to take it into account in formulating their own? Are there novel factors and uncertainties, or conflicting values and interests that require acknowledgement and political negotiation (Carlile, 2004)? Do different participants see the IEP process as serving different purposes – educational, legal, planning, accountability, resource allocation (Mitchell, Morton & Hornby, 2010)? Consideration might be given, for example, to whether the professionals will collaborate in a *pooled*, *sequential* or *reciprocal* manner. This threefold distinction (Carlile, 2004) is somewhat similar to the distinctions, made in NCSE guidelines (NCSE, 2006b), in the ways schools might choose to structure their IEP collaboration. Will it be sufficient for the inputs of the various professionals involved to be prepared in advance and compiled (pooled) by a designated individual or individuals in order to produce an IEP document? Alternatively, will a sequential approach be preferred - where observations, assessments, or reports are passed through the hands of the respective professionals, each commenting or adding their own input? Or will the complexity and uncertainty be such as to require a more fully reciprocal approach, requiring participants to develop their input "in-the-round" at plenary meetings, and/or through ongoing interaction on the ground - an approach that would involve mutual adjustment.

Following Heldal's insights schools will be wise to consider whether their IEPs will embody both sufficient flexibility in use and variability in meaning to allow them to function successfully as boundary objects - mitigating rather than blocking boundaries - and thus facilitating multidisciplinary collaboration. This again, of course, raises questions in relation to the appropriateness of the expectation that IEPs should conform to the requirements of the SMART acronym - specific, measureable, attainable, realistic and time-bound.

The foregoing discussion in relation to communication and collaboration within and across the boundaries of communities of practice has identified a number of concepts, perspectives and insights that may be helpful in the context of multidisciplinary IEP development. The IEP process, it has been suggested, may be located within a community of practice, or at the intersection of a number of communities of practice. IEP documents and other artefacts may be viewed as boundary objects. Some individual participants may take on the role of broker, facilitating collaboration across boundaries. The conceptual framework outlined by Carlile might be used as a tool to guide the designing of a collaborative IEP process to suit specific local circumstances. It might also prove useful in problem solving when, as seems inevitable, difficulties and conflicts arise – and so might be a help in avoiding the unproductive attribution of difficulties to the perceived shortcomings, or indeed ill-will, of particular professions or professionals. An important message, and one that has also emerged in earlier sections of this article, was the need for, and benefits of, informal interaction and the building up of relationships among the professionals involved.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

At the outset of this article it was suggested that, for the teaching profession, EPSEN could be viewed as part of a paradigm shift towards a more collaborative professionalism. Questions were raised in relation to capacity to meet the challenges involved - capacity within the education and health sectors, and the capacity and readiness of teachers.

If the teaching profession is indeed at a cross roads, as suggested by Hargreaves (1994), then EPSEN is a signpost pointing forward over difficult terrain. The NCSE (2006a) has provided some direction for the way ahead, identifying resource implications and pointing to the need for professional training, improved support systems and cross-sectoral working. However, teachers will be required to go beyond the addition of specific technical competencies to their professional repertoire. They must be open to a transformation of relationships, both among themselves and with other professionals and parents. They must be prepared to uphold the professional logic of their work while seeking a balanced accommodation of the legitimate requirements of the consumer and the state bureaucracy. Such a response will be required from teachers if the major policy development represented by the introduction of statutory IEPs is to meet with more than surface level, technical/procedural implementation, or mere ritual compliance. If teachers are prepared to go down this road, and if policy makers

and administrators are prepared to encourage and support an expansive vision for the profession, rather than fall back on top-down policy implementation prescriptions, then the thinking which this article has tried to highlight may be helpful, particularly the insights that can be gained by viewing the IEP process and context through the lens provided by the community-of-practice literature. The result might bring closer to reality an educational system in which all teachers "work in a collaborative manner with pupils/students, parents/guardians, school management, other members of staff, relevant professionals and the wider school community, as appropriate, in seeking to effectively meet the needs of pupils/students" (The Teaching Council, 2012, p.8).

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The Inclusion of Learners with Moderate General Learning Disabilities and Challenging Behaviours in School and Class Activities in Special Schools

Challenging behaviours (CB) are common among learners with special educational needs and can impact on inclusive practices in educational settings. The current study highlights some factors that support staff in the inclusion of learners with Moderate General Learning Disabilities (ModGLD) and CB in school and during class activities. The research focus is on the perspectives of teachers and principals in six midland and west of Ireland special schools for learners with ModGLD. The research question is "What are the factors that facilitate the inclusion of pupils with ModGLD exhibiting CB in school and during class activities in special schools". Findings suggest that while some barriers exist such as training, other factors such as school setting, leadership, teacher confidence and competence, collaboration and the support of Special Needs Assistants (SNA) serve to facilitate the inclusion of this cohort of learners.

Keywords: *inclusion, special schools, moderate general learning disability, challenging behaviours, barriers to inclusion*

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INTRODUCTION

Challenging behaviour (CB) is defined as "culturally abnormal behaviour(s) of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit the use of, or result in the person being denied access to, ordinary community facilities" (Emerson, 2001, p.3). CB encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviours including self-injury, aggressive behaviour, non-compliance, disruptive behaviour, socially inappropriate behaviour, ritualistic / stereotypical

behaviour, inappropriate sexual behaviour, destruction of property, absconding, psychological disturbance, substance and alcohol abuse, temper tantrums and passive challenging behaviour (Nicholls, Hastings and Grindle, 2020; Benson and Brooks, 2008; Grey and Hastings, 2005, Kelly, Carey and Mc Carty, 2004). CB is common amid learners with special educational needs (SEN) (Nicholls et al 2020; Hastings, Allen, Baker, Gore, Hughes, McGill, Noone and Toogood, 2013). Within education settings, the threat of social exclusion for learners with SEN is a reality because of CB (Nicholls et al, 2020; Emerson, Kiernan, Alborz, Reeves, Mason, and Swarbrick, 2001), therefore placement in special schools can be the optimal choice (Colum and Mc Intyre, 2019; Mc Conkey, Kelly, Craig and Shevlin, 2016; Inclusion Ireland, 2009). There are 134 special schools in the Republic of Ireland of various categorisations with 46 designated as schools for Moderate General Learning Disabilities (ModGLD) (Department of Education and Skills, (DES), 2020).

A cognitive functioning range from a 35 to 49 Intelligence Quotient (IQ) indicates the presence of ModGLD (World Health Organization International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision (ICD-10) (2020). Learners with ModGLD may exhibit significant delays in reaching developmental milestones and impairment in language, communication, literacy, numeracy, social and personal development, motor co-ordination, mobility and leisure activities (National Council for Special Education (NCSE), 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a high frequency of CB among individuals with SEN with research suggesting a prevalence ranging from 10% to 60% (Rauf, 2012), in Sweden, for example, 18.7% of the population of adults with SEN exhibit CB (Lundqvist, 2013). From a UK perspective, Emerson et al (2001) reported that 10 to 15% of individuals with SEN known to local education, social and health care services displayed CB. In South Wales, Deb, Thomas and Bright (2001) found that 60.4% of adults with SEN between 16 – 64 years of age presented with CB. Jones, Cooper, Smiley, Allan, Williamson and Morrison (2008) indicated that 22.5% of adults, out of a population of 1,023, with SEN also presented with CB.

The most recent studies in relation to CB and special school settings in Ireland is from Kelly *et al*. (2004, 2007) who noted that "One in three pupils presented with challenging behaviour" (2004, p.53) in the school year 2004 and out of 66 special schools, more than half (56%, n=37) observed an increase in CB (p.55).

Managing CB can impact negatively on the learning environment (Nicholls *et al*, 2020), taking up a disproportionate amount of time (Sugai, Sprague, Horner and Walker, 2000) as well as being a cause of anxiety for teachers (Male, 2003). A Finnish study by Hameenaho (2016) reported that CB was a concern for teachers, they felt frustrated at the level of support available. Other scholars capture how staff absence rates is higher in SEN settings than in mainstream (Ervasti, Kivimaki, Pentti, Suominen, Vahtera and Virtanen, 2011) and Nicholls *et al* (2020) suggest that CB may be the cause as CB is associated with work-related stress. In Ireland, staff burnout is impacted by consistent CB (Kelly, Carey, Mc Carty and Coyle 2007). Considering these factors, the current study sought to elucidate what might aid staff in special schools to effectively include learners in school and class activities. The definition of inclusion underpinning the current study seeks to capture this perspective:

> "Inclusion is seen as a process of: Addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through enabling participation in learning, cultures, and communities and removing barriers within and from education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her attendance at school" (NCSE, 2011, p. 13-14)

This view of inclusion as a *process* recognises that inclusion should not be viewed as simply a question of location, placement or integration. Therefore, in the context of this article inclusion is considered in terms of engagement, participation and learning in whole school and classroom activities. This is a key concern of *all* education staff in all schools whether mainstream or special as CB poses a particular challenge in both settings (Nicholls et al, 2020).

Despite a commitment to inclusion, research found that exclusion is often considered a 'necessary' response to CB (Orsati and Causton-Theoharis, 2013; Kerr and Nelson 2009). Male (1996) (cited in Kelly et al, 2004, p.23) reported that approximately 72.5% of schools for ModGLD had "at some time excluded pupils permanently or temporarily because of challenging behaviour". Typical consequences for pupils with ModGLD exhibiting CB in special schools comprise being put out of the classroom or being sent to another classroom (Orsati and Causton-Theoharis, 2013), isolation from peers within school, suspension or a reduced school day, loss of privileges or one to one time with a special needs assistant (Kelly *et al*, 2004). While Kelly *et al* (2004) also note that special schools may respond by involving parents or guardians, or engaging in consultation

among staff and/or with other professionals, nevertheless many of the typical and immediate responses seem likely to impact negatively on the process of inclusion. According to Mand (2007, p.7) "the rejection of pupils with behaviour problems is a serious problem for inclusive education in schools".

More than a decade and a half after Kelly et. al's (2004) seminal study, this article considers the perspectives of staff on support for the inclusion of learners with ModGLD and CB in a sample of special schools.

METHODOLOGY

The primary research question is "What are the factors that facilitate the inclusion of pupils with ModGLD exhibiting CB in school and during class activities in special schools". Six special schools were identified in the midlands and west region of Ireland (DES, 2016). The schools chosen had a 'specific designation of ModGLD, ease of access and proximity to the researcher' (Colum, 2016, p.32).

A qualitative and quantitative approach to gather views in multiple ways to obtain a more complex impression of the subject investigated was employed (Denscombe, 2008; Robson, 2002). 'Mixed methods research addresses both the 'what' (numerical and quantitative data) and 'how or why' (qualitative data) types of research questions' (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2013, p.25).

Self-completion questionnaires were sent to the teaching staff in the six special schools, followed by semi-structured interviews with two Principals to get the voice and insights of leadership. Due to time and word count limitations, the researcher chose two Principals for this purpose. Questions were reviewed based on feedback from the pilot. Out of 43 questionnaires sent, there were 30 respondents. The questionnaire had five sections. Section One garnered personal details such as age, gender and educational profile, one of the aims here was to ease the participants into the questionnaire process (Cohen et al, 2013). Section Two asked participants to describe the school and class activities that are common to the school day in their setting (for responses see Table 1).

Table 1: School and class activities

Class / Group teaching	• Curriculum delivery • Practical tasks (woodwork / art / cooking) • Pair work • Buddy system • Individual work
Whole school activities	• Assembly Band / music • Tours • Visitors to the school • School plays / concerts
Community Access	• Park • work experience • field trips
Community facilities	• Swimming • Café / restaurant • Church
Dinner time / feeding	No further detail offered
Playground / yard activities	No further detail offered
Transport	No further detail offered

Section Three focused on types of CB and their prevalence. A list of types of CB was delineated, as per literature, and participants were asked to determine if any type of CB was evident among learners in their class. Section Four focused on the factors for inclusion with a Likert scale measuring awareness in all activities. This 26-item scale included items such as:

- *I am supported by the leadership (Principal, Deputy Principal, in school management team) of the school to ensure inclusion of the learner with CB in my class*

- *I collaborate with other teachers for inclusion of learners with CB*
- *I have adequate SNA support to assist with inclusion of learners with CB*

For the Likert scales participants were required to indicate the extent of their agreement by selecting either Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Undecided (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). A composite score was calculated for each section.

The final section comprised some open-ended questions focusing on the views of participants in relation to improving the experience of including learners with CB in all school activities and any potential challenges / barriers. Examples include:

- *What supports would you like to see in place in order to enhance inclusion for learners with CB?*
- *Do you feel that you would benefit from in service training/courses/professional development in relation to CB? How? (If already completed, please give details).*
- *What are the main challenges in relation to including learners with CB in all school activities?*

The Principal's interviews focused on the identification, prevalence and inclusion of learners with CB, if they felt they had adequate supports and resources, and as school leaders, what challenges they faced for inclusion of learners with CB in their school.

Ethical approval was sought and received from the Research and Ethics Committee of the third-level institution involved. Each participant was made aware of the purpose and objectives of the study and were assured of the right to anonymity, non-traceability and confidentiality and the right to withdraw at any stage.

Limitations such as the restriction of the sample to a specific geographical area may impact on the generalisability of the findings to other regions. In summary, the study is small scale and concerned with the opinions of teachers (n=30) and principals (n=2). The views of other school personnel are not included, therefore not reflecting a wider stakeholder opinion.

Data from the questionnaires was analysed through using the statistical software package SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics 21). Qualitative data from the interviews and some of the open-ended questions in the questionnaires were thematically

categorised, and these formed the basis of a coding scheme for analysis (Rose, Spinks, and Canhoto 2015).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher participants in this research study were aged between 20 and 50 years of age and were 90% female and 10% male. The pupils involved were aged between 4 and 19 years and were 34% (n=27) female and 66% (n=53) male**.**

Prevalence of Students Presenting with ModGLD and CB

The questionnaire specifically asked teachers to identify learners in their class who were formally assessed and / or receiving behaviour support regarding CB. In response to this, participants indicated that out of 151 pupils presenting with MoDGLD across the six schools, 80 were assessed and receiving behaviour support for CB (53%, n=80). Other studies concerned with prevalence of CB were in contexts that differ from the current study; they also used different research methodologies, so comparison is difficult. The literature highlighted that over a period of 25 years, findings in terms of prevalence in studies vacillated from 12% (Harris, 1995), to 82% (Murphy, Healy, and Leader 2009) to 53% (Nicholls et al, 2020). From an Irish perspective, Kelly et al (2004) reported 31% of pupils in the 70 participating schools from September 2002 to June 2003 in their study presented with CB. Nicholls *et al* (2020) found that the incidence of Autism Spectrum Disorder and lower adaptive skills increased the presence of CB, in line with previous CB research (Bowring, Totsika, Hastings, Toogood and Griffith, 2017; McClintock, Hall, and Oliver 2003; Felce and Kerr 2013).

In the schools sampled in the current study, CB appears more common in boys (59%, n=62), than girls (32%, n=18) mirroring previous studies (Kelly *et al.*, 2004; Emerson, Robertson, Gregory, Hatton, Kessissoglou, Hallam and Hillery, 2000; Kiernan and Kiernan, 1994; Male, 1996) who found that there was a preponderance of males presenting with CB.

Types of CB

Participants were asked to identify types of CB encountered in the school and reported that learners could exhibit more than one of the CBs listed; some learners presented with three or four types of CB. Disruptive behaviour was common in 71 out of the 80 students exhibiting it. One principal noted that '*disruptive behaviour can come in many forms, it can be aggressive or it can be non-compliance and this can impact negatively on classwork as well as community activities*' (Principal 2).

Sixty-three students were described as exhibiting self-injurious behaviour (SIB) and this is in line with a study by Nicholls *et al* (2020) who found that SIB was a common form of CB for learners with SEN. In their study, they stated that 95% of participants exhibited SIB. High rates of stereotypical behaviour (STB) was recounted in the study (n=60, 75%) and some studies indicate a link between SIB and STB (Barnard-Brak, Rojahn, Richman, Chesnut, and Wei, 2015). Potentially this is an area for further research (Nicholls *et al*, 2020).

Across the six schools, the number of students presenting with socially a) inappropriate behaviour, b) ritualistic/temper tantrums, c) destruction of property, and d) passive challenging behaviour were 51, 47, 23 and 17 respectively. While a comparison to other studies can be difficult, as they all use different variables, these figures resemble a study by Karasu, Sert, Demirtas, Atbasi and Aykut (2019) who carried out an investigation to ascertain CB across primary and post primary settings in Japan. Their investigation found that 30 out of 54 of the participants presented with inappropriate and destructive behaviours that disturb the school order.

Factors for Facilitating Inclusion in Special Schools

Key factors identified by school staff as facilitating the inclusion of students with ModGLD and CB in school and class activities included the nature of the special school setting, leadership, teacher training and confidence, collaboration and SNA support.

1. Special school setting

All teachers surveyed (100%, n=30) indicated that the schools were accessible for all pupils, that they had a policy on inclusion and that school policy was an important factor for driving inclusive practice for pupils with ModGLD and CB in the school and during class activities. Twenty-seven participants (90%) felt that special schools have suitable layouts and proper lighting. In relation to acoustic levels, 21 participants (70%) strongly agreed or agreed that their special schools were suitably laid out for students. Both Principals stated that the physical structure of their special schools was adequate to include pupils with ModGLD and CB in school activities such as music, school plays and concerts. One Principal referred to the fact that the main hall had five different exits so if a student felt overwhelmed, they could step out. This contrasts with literature that found physical limitations of schools are barriers to inclusion (Drudy and Kinsella, 2009; O'Connor, 2007; Avramidis, 2000). Again, comparison may be skewed as these studies consider mainstream settings and not special schools as is the case in this study.

2. Leadership

All participants (100% n=30) strongly agreed with the statement that they had effective support from school leadership. This is in keeping with literature that calls on school leaders to 'create a collaborative positive context within which leadership functions can be spread throughout the staff group and inclusive practices can be developed' (Angelides et al 2010, p.332). This ideology was acknowledged very positively in the study and suggests that leaders of special schools felt confident in their leadership. This is reflected in other studies, namely, O'Mahony (2011) who explored the leadership of special schools in Ireland and found that leaders perceived themselves as facilitating 'quality learning for both students and staff within their schools' (p.118).

3. Teacher Education and Confidence

Teachers were asked to indicate if they felt that some type of specialised training is essential when including learners with ModGLD and CB and all (100%, n=30) strongly agreed.

In response to the open-ended question, 'Do you feel that you would benefit from in service training/courses/professional development in relation to CB?' comments included:

> '*Yes, if you have training in SEN or challenging behaviours you know how to help the children be part of all school activities, you know how to include the child in the class or help them access community activities"*. Teacher 13

Twenty-five participants (83%) either strongly agreed or agreed that they had adequate specialised training and skills to teach pupils with ModGLD and CB with only three participants (10%) disagreeing and the remaining two teachers strongly disagreeing (7%).

> *"Doing the post graduate diploma in SEN has definitely helped me in this job. I know that in my class teaching, I find it easier to include the children in my class and have strategies ready for when we go swimming or to the coffee shop. I have my social stories and behaviour cards in my pocket at all times"* Teacher 7.

In relation to confidence, the same 25 participants (83%) strongly agreed and agreed that they felt confident that they had sufficient skills to address CB in the classroom, could design an individual education plan (IEP) and could differentiate adequately for learners with ModGLD exhibiting CB.

Both school Principals identified various differentiated approaches to support learners with CB. These comprised shorter and achievable tasks, reward systems, movement breaks, buddy systems, timetabling and use of individual and pair work. It appears that there is a strong link between training and confidence, and this is echoed in literature explicitly O'Gorman, Hastings and Grindle, (2009). Likewise, one principal detailed:

> *'Many of our teachers have completed post graduate diplomas and masters in the area of SEN and these are confident teachers who assist colleagues in the area of CB'.*

4. Collaboration

All teachers (100%, n=30) strongly agreed on the importance of collaboration when engaging in school and class activities. Staff specified that they '*felt prepared for inclusion'* (T21) when they planned together. Principals commented:

> *"... the parents are the experts, we rely so much on parents to inform our planning, organisation and how to include the children in all activities."* (Principal 1)

> *"Collaboration is vital– with colleagues, the school and wider community"* (Principal 2)

> *"We work fully with multidisciplinary teams to ensure best practice for our children"* (Principal 2)

The value of collaboration with support services, colleagues and parents as a facilitating factor for inclusive practice is evident in a wide body of literature (Travers, Balfe, Day, Dupont, Mc Daid, O'Donnell, Butler and Prunty, 2010; Ware, Balfe, Butler, Day, Dupont, Harten, Farrell, McDaid, O'Riordan, Prunty, Travers, 2009; Lindsay, 2007; Smith and Leonard 2005). The DES (2017) Guidelines also call on schools to ensure collaborative practice with external agencies for effective inclusive practice.

5. SNA support

A significant number of teachers (67%, n=20) agreed and 10 teachers (33%) strongly agreed that they had adequate SNA support in their classrooms to ensure learners with ModGLD and CB were included in school and class activities. In response to the open-ended question 'What supports would you like to see in place in order to improve inclusion for learners with CB?' teachers commented:

'SNA support is the most important. They help include the children in activities such as band, school tours or dinner time' Teacher 7

'I think all schools should have more SNAs. The girls in my room help the children in the class by having their timetables ready and then off for a movement break. Also, when we go to the park or on field trips, the SNA is the one who supports inclusion. Teacher 24

While some literature notes how the SNA scheme was *'... resource sensitive at multiple levels'* (Flatman-Watson 2009, p.278), there has been an increase of over fifteen thousand SNAs in the school system with figures increasing from 100 SNA posts in 1993 to 15,950 posts in 2019 (NCSE, 2020). The sample of schools surveyed identified adequate SNA support for the inclusion of learners in all activities. Principals commented that SNA support:

"*……. concentrates on feeding, mobility, administration of medication to name but a few and these factors ensure the child has support and can be included in activities that may otherwise exclude them. By this I mean, for example, a child with CB can join the school tour as the SNA can administer the medication.*" (Principal 1)

Barriers to Inclusion

School staff identified several barriers to the inclusion of learners with ModGLD and CB including insufficient time to plan and collaborate with colleagues, gaps in access to multidisciplinary support services, and there was mention again by some of the lack of specialist training in CB. All participants (100%, n=30) strongly agreed that inadequate time to plan and collaborate with colleagues is a barrier. One Principal concurred with these findings:

"Time to meet and plan is a challenge in this school. To ensure pupils are included in all activities, lessons need to be differentiated appropriately and pupils need to be supported through a range of specialised, well thought out and planned resources". (Principal 2)

Twenty-seven participants (90%) strongly agreed that inadequate access to services such as occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and behaviour specialists pose a challenge to effective inclusion.

Nine teachers (30%) commented on the lack of training opportunities specifically in CB:

"There is not much opportunity for training in challenging behaviour". (Teacher 6)

"I definitely think a barrier to inclusion is the lack of specific training courses in CB. We don't know how to include the children with CB properly or even if we are doing it the right way. A simple trip to the shop can be stressful for the child unless we know how to manage certain situations". (Teacher 17)

Travers et al, (2010) suggest that barriers to inclusion can be overcome at school level, teacher / class level and family / community level by a range of interventions and approaches including robust leadership, effective planning and collaboration, adequate time and specialised resourcing. These must be taken into consideration to ensure effective inclusive practice.

CONCLUSION

Challenging behaviour is common among learners with SEN in both mainstream and special school settings and impacts on the teaching and learning experiences of the students. This study explored factors that facilitate the inclusion of learners with ModGLD and CB in school and class activities in six special schools for ModGLD. The data suggests that these special schools have adequate resources and relevant support to enable learners with ModGLD and CB to participate with their peers in school and class activities. While some barriers exist, in particular the need for more focused training in CB and support from outside agencies, factors such as a well-organised special school setting, professional leadership of the school, targeted teacher training and confidence, efficient collaboration and SNA support all contribute to effective inclusive practice in school and class activities for learners with ModGLD and CB.

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The Experiences of Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Irish-Medium Schools

This study investigated the experiences of nine pupils with special educational needs (SEN) enrolled in Irish-medium (IM) schools in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland through pupil-led interviews. Four pupils had a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, three had a diagnosis of dyslexia, and two had a diagnosis of specific speech and language disorder. These categories of SEN were chosen as children with these diagnoses often experience language and communication difficulties. Therefore, it was interesting to investigate the experiences of these pupils when learning through Irish as a second language. The data gathered was analysed using thematic analysis. In IM schools, pupils are immersed in Irish as a second language as most come from homes where English is their first language. Internationally, limited research has been conducted on pupil voice in terms of children with SEN. However, even less research has been undertaken on pupil voice in terms of pupils with SEN in immersion education contexts. Therefore, the findings of this study will add to the limited research available in this area and provide an overview of the experiences of pupils with SEN in IM education. Pupil voice is important in educational research for pupils with SEN, as their experiences and perspectives can inform practices and policies.

Keywords: *pupil voice, Irish-medium education, special educational needs, immersion education*

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INTRODUCTION

Recognising the voice of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) for the purpose of educational policy, planning, and intervention development has been increasingly promoted (Porter, 2014; United Nations, 2006). Nevertheless, limited research has been conducted on pupil voice in terms of pupils with SEN. This

is particularly the case in relation to pupils with SEN in immersion education contexts. This study investigated the experiences of nine pupils with SEN enrolled in Irish-medium (IM) schools in the Republic of Ireland (RoI) and Northern Ireland (NI) through pupil led interviews. The pupils had a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), specific speech and language disorder (SSLD), or dyslexia. These categories of SEN were chosen due to the language and communication difficulties these pupils face. The research question being addressed was, what are the experiences of pupils with SEN learning through Irish, as a second language, in an IM school? At the time of this study there were 145 IM schools in the RoI. In NI, there were 35 IM schools, 28 of these were stand-alone schools and seven were Irish language units attached to English-medium host schools (Gaeloideachas Teo, 2017). In these units the curriculum is delivered through Irish even though they are under the governance of an English-medium host school. In IM schools, all curriculum subjects are taught through the medium of Irish, except for English (Cummins, 2009). Pupils receive up to two years total immersion in the Irish language in IM schools in the RoI and up to three years in IM schools in NI, before they commence English as a curriculum subject (McKendry, 2006; Ó Duibhir, Nig Uidhir, Ó Cathalláin, Ní Thuairisg, and Cosgrove, 2015; NCCA, 2019). This allows pupils to develop greater proficiency in Irish (NCCA, 2019). Early total immersion programmes are provided by these schools to those living mainly in cities and small towns outside of the heartland Irish-speaking areas known as the Gaeltacht (NCCA, 2019; Údarás na Gaeltachta, 2017).

PUPIL VOICE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION RESEARCH

Several studies have been undertaken incorporating pupil voice to assess the school experiences of children with SEN (Gaona, Palikara, and Castro, 2019; Howard, Katsos, and Gibson, 2019; Norwich and Kelly, 2004; Prunty, Dupont, and Mc Daid, 2012; Sellman, 2009; Squires, Kalambouka, and Bragg, 2016; Travers et al., 2010). Pupils have been given an opportunity to have their say on different aspects of their schooling through interviews or questionnaires. Within these studies, common themes have been identified. Friendship is a theme, which has emerged as a positive aspect of school for pupils with SEN, as it provides an informal support system for them (Gaona, et al., 2019; Norwich and Kelly, 2004; Prunty et al., 2012; Ring, O'Sullivan, Ryan, and Burke, 2018; Sellman, 2009). Travers et al. (2010) found that pupils received support from their friends through playing together, talking, and listening to each other. There were references made by the pupils in that study to playing games together, and to how this helped them

to feel included. The quality of school experiences and friendships was also cited as being central to student happiness in school in a more recent study of 38 primary and post-primary children with SEN in the RoI (Prunty et al., 2012).

Accessing additional teaching support outside of the mainstream classroom has been listed as a positive aspect of school by pupils with SEN (Norwich and Kelly, 2004; Prunty et al., 2012). In a large study of post-primary pupils (N=272), Squires et al. (2016) reported that withdrawal to the resource room enabled pupils with SEN to focus better, it provided them with an emotional sanctuary, and helped them to develop a positive relationship with the teacher. This was due to several factors, such as, less noise, less distraction, more attention, and more appropriate work. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that there were negative aspects of withdrawal cited by these pupils, such as, being without their friends and the work being too hard. Interestingly, research has shown that specific subjects, such as, art, computers, and physical education are preferred by pupils with SEN due to being more inclusive in their pedagogy (Howard et al., 2019; Riley, 2004, Travers et al., 2010). These subjects may be perceived to be more inviting and engaging due to offering a range of pupil-centred teaching techniques, such as, group work, practical work, guided learning, and individual work (Howard et al., 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Pupils were asked to bring the researcher on a tour of their school. An adult from the school whom the pupil trusted accompanied them on this tour. Before the tour, the pupils' parents were provided with a plain language statement regarding the nature of the research and they had signed an informed consent form for their child to participate in the study. The pupils were given a child-friendly plain language statement, a visual timetable, and an assent form. These were read by the child or to the child by the adult accompanying them on the tour. The pupils were asked whether they had any questions and were assured that if they decided not to participate in the study at any stage they could withdraw. All pupil interviews were conducted through the medium of Irish and all the pupils, except one, spoke Irish during the interview. The interviews were recorded and transcribed with permission. Direct quotes in the Irish language provided in the findings are also accompanied by an English language translation. During the tour, pupils were asked to take photographs of different areas of the school using an instant camera. The content of these photographs was described and discussed

as part of the interview; pupils were not asked direct questions from an adult's perspective. However, as mentioned previously the interviews were pupil-led guided by the following topics and questions.

- Areas of the school where different activities take place
- Their favourite place in the school
- What they like most about the school?
- What they think is the most important area in their school?
- What is their least favourite place in the school?
- Where in the school they feel proud/good?
- Where in the school they feel included?
- Where in the school they feel least included?

This research method was chosen as the use of photography gave the pupils, who had varying levels of language and communication skills, the opportunity to express themselves both verbally and non-verbally (Einersdóttir, 2007). Short narrative notes were taken by the researcher during the tour, which included references to non-verbal communication. For example, it was noted that one pupil chose to change the setting of the camera from colour to black and white when they were taking a photograph of an area in the school that they did not like. The data gathered was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Participant Profiles

Table 1 provides further details in relation to the pupils' (i) school, (ii) SEN diagnosis. (iii) class level, (iv) home language, and (v) the stage at which their SEN was identified. Pupils were enrolled in four mainstream IM primary schools, three in the RoI and one in NI. Participating pupils were selected by the schools based on their availability and willingness to partake in the study.

Table 1. ***The profiles of pupils with special educational needs in IM schools who participated in the research.***

	School/ Location	SEN Diagnosis	Class Level	Home Language	SEN Identified
Pupil 1	School B RoI	ASD	4th Class (9-10 years old)	English	IM primary school
Pupil 2	School C RoI	ASD	3rd Class (8-9 years old)	English	IM preschool
Pupil 3	School C RoI	ASD	6th Class (11-12 years old)	English	IM preschool
Pupil 4	School D NI	ASD	3rd Class (8-9 years old)	English	IM preschool
Pupil 5	School A RoI	Dyslexia	5th Class (10-11 years old)	English	IM primary school
Pupil 6	School B RoI	Dyslexia	4th Class (9-10 years old)	English	IM primary school
Pupil 7	School C RoI	Dyslexia	4th Class (9-10 years old)	English	IM primary school
Pupil 8	School A RoI	SSLD	2nd Class (7-8 years old)	English	Before preschool
Pupil 9	School D NI	SSLD	Senior Infants (5-6 years old)	Irish/ English	Before preschool

FINDINGS

The findings discussed below relate to different locations and activities that took place in the schools, which pupils either liked or disliked. The themes included in the findings are outlined in Table 2, along with a breakdown of the references made.

Table 2. ***A summary of the findings of the study.***

Area/Activity	Liked	Disliked	No Reference
The Mainstream Classroom	**4**	**1**	**4**
The Special Education Teacher's Classroom	**2**	**0**	**7**
The School Hall	**7**	**0**	**2**
The School Yard	**7**	**2**	**0**
The School Kitchen	**4**	**0**	**5**
Extra-Curricular Activities (Music/Sport)	**5**	**0**	**4**
Other Areas in the School (Library, Garden, Quiet Room, Computer Room)	**7**	**0**	**2**

The Classroom

Five of the pupils brought the researcher to their mainstream classroom on the tour. Four of these pupils reported positive feelings towards their classroom. The four pupils who liked their classroom spoke about how this was a place where they had friends and did schoolwork, a place where they felt included. Two pupils from different schools (pupil 3 & 5) described how they enjoyed using a laptop in their mainstream classroom for their schoolwork. However, one pupil (pupil 7) said that this was an area that they disliked but they did not elaborate further on the reason for this. Two of the pupils who attended the same school in the RoI (pupil 5 & 8) also reported that they liked to go to the special education teacher's classroom for additional learning support in English and mathematics, both individually and in small groups.

Seo seomra Múinteoir X. Ba mhaith liom dul isteach agus bheith ag obair. (Pupil 5)	This is Miss X's room. I like to go in and do work.

The School Hall

Seven pupils who took part in the interviews spoke about how they liked going to the school hall and how they felt included in activities that took place there. The activities that they enjoyed in this space were playing games, physical education, and assembly.

Taighdeoir: Cén fáth ar roghnaigh tú an halla?	*Researcher*: Why did you choose the hall?
Dalta 1: Mar is maith liom spórt	*Pupil 1*: Because I like sport.
Taighdeoir: Cén saghas spórt?	*Researcher*: What type of sport?
Dalta 1: Aon saghas sport!	*Pupil 1*: Any sport!

The two pupils in schools in the RoI, who did not refer to the school hall, had no hall in their school (pupil 5 & 8).

The School Yard

Almost all of the pupils (n=7) discussed how they enjoyed going out to the school yard to play. All of these pupils said that they enjoyed playing with their friends. Two of the pupils (pupil 1 & 6) spoke about some of the games that they played in the yard, for example, marshmallow, cops and robbers, and tag.

Bulldog, thall anseo le rang a dó agus uaireanta gafa. (Pupil 6)	Bulldog, over there with second class and sometimes tag (chasing).

However, two pupils with ASD (pupil 3 & 4) spoke about areas in the school yard that they did not like. One of these pupils did not like the area where pupils line up.

Ní maith liom an líne agus uaireanta tá an talamh fliuch agus tá sé fuar. Níl mé ag iarraidh é seo (an grianghraf) chun féachaint go maith. (Pupil 3)	I don't like the line and sometimes the ground is wet and cold. I don't want this (picture) to look good.

Due to this, accommodations were made by the school for this pupil to go straight into the school building and there was no need for them to line up. The other pupil did not like the yard because it was busy and had too many people in it. Due to this, their school had also made accommodations. For example, the pupil sometimes stayed in at break time and did some work on a laptop or did jobs for the teacher.

Ní mhaith liom sin, see an píosa sin, cos tá daoine síos ansin. Suím sa seomra agus úsáideann mé an computer le obair a dhéanamh. (Pupil 4)	I don't like that, see that piece there, 'cos there are people there. I sit in the class-room and I use the computer to do work.

The School Kitchen

In two of the schools (school C&D), the pupils spoke about how they liked going to the school kitchen or canteen. In the school in NI, the pupils got a hot lunch in the school canteen. Both pupils interviewed in that school (pupil 4 & 9) spoke

about how they liked going there for lunch. However, the pupil with ASD said that they were often felt uncomfortable in this area due to its small size and the high volume of noise.

Tá sé píosa beag ró-ghlórmhar agus ró-bheag. (Pupil 4)	It is a little bit too noisy and too small.

In a school in the RoI, two pupils with ASD (pupil 2 & 3) talked about how they used the school kitchen for practical activities like making hot chocolate, cooking, and baking. For example, one of these pupils had been learning about Spain and had used the kitchen to cook Spanish dishes. This was an activity that they enjoyed greatly. "This is the kitchen. We like bake stuff and everything!" (Pupil 2).

Other Activities

Pupils from all of the schools spoke about how they had the opportunity to participate in team sports at school. This was something that they enjoyed and made them feel included.

Taighdeoir: An bhfuil áit ar bith a bhraiteann tú bródúil?	*Researcher:* Is there anywhere that you feel proud?
Dalta: Ag imirt iománaíochta.	*Pupil:* Playing hurling.

The school in NI had a library, unlike the schools visited in the RoI, and both pupils interviewed from this school enjoyed going to the library (pupil 4 & 9). One of these pupils had limited verbal abilities and was not able to elaborate further on the reasons for this, whilst the other pupil spoke about how they liked reading non-fiction books in English in the library. Four of the pupils enjoyed doing art in school (pupils 2, 4, 8, & 9). A pupil in one of the schools in the RoI (pupil 5) said that they had the opportunity to learn musical instruments in their school. They were learning how to play the recorder and the clarinet. A school garden was in place in one of the schools in the RoI and all the pupils from that school spoke about how they liked to go to the school garden and do some planting. They enjoyed this area because it was quiet and calm. They also had a quiet room that they liked to go to.

Bíonn sé ciúin, níl sé mar an seomra ranga. (Pupil 7)	It is quiet, it isn't like the classroom.

Two pupils (pupils 4 & 6) explained how they liked to go to the computer room in their schools. The activities that they undertook in this room included maths/ literacy games and learning about PowerPoint.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

It is clear from the findings above that the pupils participating in the present study enjoyed attending IM education for a number of reasons. The pupils in this study had made friends in their school and their viewpoints reflect those of pupils with SEN in international and national research, where school engagement and enjoyment was defined by the relationships they had with their teacher and peers (Ring and Travers, 2005; Sellman, 2009; Squires et al., 2016; Travers et al., 2010). This suggests that, regardless of the language of instruction in a school, pupils with SEN have the ability to make friends and enjoy/engage in school due to these friendships (Gaona et al., 2019; Prunty et al., 2012; Travers et al., 2010). Similar to international research, two pupils in this study also enjoyed accessing additional teaching support through withdrawal to the special education teacher's classroom (Norwich and Kelly, 2004; Squires et al., 2016). Pupils in this study also enjoyed using computers and partaking in a full range of activities in school, such as, art, sport, and baking, which made them feel included (Howard et al., 2019; Prunty et al., 2012; Squires et al., 2016; Travers et al., 2010). The findings also show that the IM schools made adaptations to promote the inclusion of all pupils, for example, the students who did not like lining up in the yard.

Overall, the participants in this study had a very positive experience of IM education. Nevertheless, there are limitations to take into consideration when reviewing the findings of this study, for example: (i) the small sample size, (ii) the limited range of SEN categories included, (iii) the small number of geographical locations included, (iv) the subjective nature of pupil-led interviews, and (v) the lack of quantitative data to reinforce the anecdotal references made by pupils. Not alone does this research contribute to the limited data available in this area, it also gives pupils with SEN in IM schools a chance to be heard and this in turn may have implications for future educational practices. Similar to other studies, pupils discussed how they enjoyed more practical subjects, such as, cooking/baking, art, physical education, and ICT. Going forward, it is important for educational practitioners in IM education to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in these activities and to learn using child-centred approaches. This 'hands on' practice should be extended to other subject areas, for example, languages, maths, and science. It would also be beneficial for teachers in IM schools to extend the use of ICT across all subject areas to further promote curriculum accessibility. Pupils also felt proud and that they belonged when they were included in extra-curricular activities, for example, team sports and music groups. It is therefore recommended that IM schools continue to offer all pupils opportunities to be included in activities such as these. It is also recommended

that IM schools should continue to offer special accommodations to include pupils with SEN, such as those implemented by the schools in this study to further promote inclusion.

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