

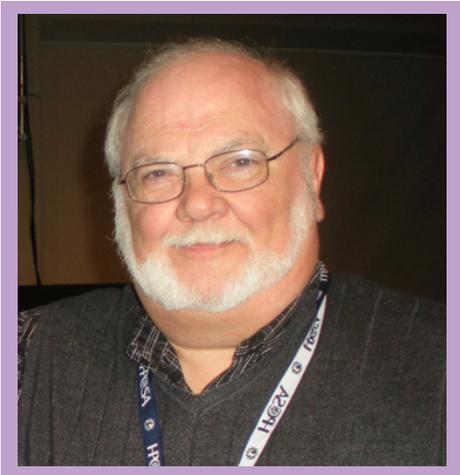
Let's Chat... *about*  
*Inclusive Education*  
Chat Session Guides  
Series 1, 2 & 3



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# Introduction from Gordon Porter, *Director of Inclusive Education Canada*



**Greetings. We trust you have found our “*Let’s Chat about Inclusive Education*” series both informative and interesting.**

The Chat sessions featured a conversation with guests who have experience and insights about inclusive education in Canada. We have been able to share the views of university researchers, school leaders, teachers, principals, parents, lawyers, and advocates. We want to thank all those who participated in the project. We trust the content of the sessions will help inform and advance the inclusion

of children with diverse learning needs, including those with intellectual disabilities, in Canadian schools.

All the sessions are available on our website – [www.inclusiveeducation.ca](http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca) – with both the link to the video and an individual Session GUIDE. Each GUIDE includes:

a) bio of the guest; b) description of a few of the issues/topics that are discussed in the session; c) several questions that might be posed before and after watching the session; and d) further material about the guests work including articles, chapters, books and more.

Each GUIDE will be helpful to anyone who might use a session or part of a session to inform or stimulate discussion for a training session, a class, or some similar purpose.

We want to thank Diane Richler and Jacqueline Specht for acting as co-hosts of the Chat sessions. They both brought extensive experience and knowledge to the conversations. A deep curiosity about our guests’ stories helped reveal many of the factors in play when schools and classrooms accept the challenge to be inclusive.

One of our CHAT session’s most loyal follower is David Towell, Director of the Centre for Inclusive Futures in London, UK. David has brought his keen eye and critical analysis to our Chat sessions and has generously shared his thoughts in a commentary that is included here. We are confident you will find it of interest. Thank you, David.

## Introduction from Gordon Porter, Director of Inclusive Education Canada

We want to acknowledge the support of Western University and the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education and the SSRHC of Canada for administrative and funding for the project. Inclusive Education Canada is an initiative of Inclusion Canada and the funding, administrative and communications support for the Chat sessions provided was essential.

A personal word of thanks to Sydney Bota, Sammantha Olson, Marc Muschler and Jesse Anthony for their work in producing the Chat sessions and the accompanying GUIDES. A special thanks to Charlotte Pyke for her dedication and consistent effort to make this project a success was exceptional.



**Gordon L. Porter, C.M., O.N.B., LL.D.**  
**Director, Inclusive Education Canada**



# Reflection On The Let's Chat About Inclusive Education Series

*By Jacqueline Specht,*

*Director of the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education at Western University*



Although inclusive education is the mandate of all provinces and territories within Canada, many children with disabilities do not experience the best learning environment due to inadequate classroom supports and other factors such as students not feeling valued for their contributions. This less than ideal outcome sets up inequity in our system where students who struggle to learn are not provided an optimal education. More needs to be done to equip and empower the education community with the skills and confidence required to teach students with diverse learning needs.

We created the Let's Chat About Inclusive Education video series as a media-driven initiative to turn this vision into a reality. We invited university researchers, parents of children with disabilities, advocates, educators, and leaders in education to share their extensive knowledge, experience, and recommendations on how to improve inclusive education systems.

The Let's Chat About Inclusive Education video series presents 30 video chats with important discussions on topics such as how to foster inclusive school culture, the importance of inclusive education, the collaboration required amongst specific groups of people to support a student with a disability, the education of the next generation of educators, and more.

For each video, we developed written content including a summary of the chats, key takeaways and action steps, reflection material, and questions to guide discussions based on research in the area of inclusive education. The audiences that will benefit from our outreach activities are practitioners/professional associations, students, the academic sector, parents of students with disabilities, and the general public. The resources will support the knowledge and skills needed to foster inclusive school environments.

It is our hope that this activity will help to grow current collaborations, foster new partnerships, and ensure future collaborations with guests in the Let's Chat About Inclusive Education video series. Additionally, it will highlight the research that is being conducted across Canada in inclusive education, which has the potential for creating new and larger partnerships amongst researchers and practitioners.

It has been an absolute pleasure working with all of the people that made this video series possible. I felt very privileged to be a co-host on the series with Diane Richler and Gordon Porter. It gave me the opportunity to hear from key people in the Inclusive Education movement across Canada. It illustrated to me how important it is to unite families, educators, and researchers to achieve the goal of fair and equitable education for all. I do hope that you get the chance to view some or all of these videos and to utilize the questions to spark discussions within the groups that you work.

**Jacqueline Specht,**  
Director, Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education,  
Western University, London, Ontario



***This Complete Series Guide  
includes Chat sessions with the following:***

### **Series 1**

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**Episode 1.1 – Gordon Porter** IEC, NB  
Jacqueline Specht Western University, ON  
**Diane Richler** Inclusion International, ON

**Episode 1.2 – Sheila Bennett**  
Brock University, ON

**Episode 1.3 – Marie-Élaine Desmarais**  
St. Boniface University, MB

**Episode 1.4 - Jody Carr**  
Lawyer, NB

**Episode 1.5 – Missy Pfaff and Amy Kipfer**  
Avon Maitland Public Schools, ON

**Series 1 Commentary** – *Let's Chat About Inclusive Education: Commentary on Series One: Trans-Atlantic Reflections* by David Towell, Director of the Centre for Inclusive Futures in London, UK.

**Episode 1.6 – Jess Whitley**  
University of Ottawa, ON

**Episode 1.7 – Bluesette Campbell (SK) and  
Anna McQuarrie (NS)**  
Parents

**Episode 1.8 – Lesley Eblie Trudel**  
University of Winnipeg, MB

**Episode 1.9 – Liz Baile**  
Yellowknife Catholic Schools, NWT

**Episode 1.10 – Gillian Parekh**  
York University, ON

## Series 2

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### Episode 2.1: Steve Sider

Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, ON

### Episode 2.2: Roberto Lattanzio

ARCH Disability Law Centre, Toronto, ON

### Episode 2.3: Gabrielle Young

Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. Johns, NL

### Episode 2.4: Tanya Whitney

Anglophone West School District, Nackawic, NB

### Episode 2.5: Genia Stephen

Parent, Presenter & Podcast Host, Brockville, ON

### Episode 2.6: Tim Loreman

University of Edmonton, Edmonton, AB

### Episode 2.7: Julie Stone

Inclusion New Brunswick, Nackawic, NB

### Episode 2.8: Cornelia Schneider

Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, NS

### Episode 2.9: Kimberly Maich

Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. Johns, NL

### Episode 2.10: Tiffany Gallagher

Brock University, St. Catherines, ON

**Series 2 Commentary** – *Let's Chat About Inclusive Education: Commentary on Series Two: Trans-Atlantic Reflections* by David Towell, Director of the Centre for Inclusive Futures, London, UK.

## Series 3

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### Episode 3.1: Donna Barrett

Inclusion Alberta, Edmonton, AB

### Episode 3.2: Lynn Aylward

Acadia University, Wolfville, NS

### Episode 3.3: Donna McGhie-Richmond

University of Victoria, Victoria, BC

### Episode 3.4: Ken Pike

Inclusion New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB

### Episode 3.5: Monique Somma

Brock University, St. Catherines, ON

### Episode 3.6: Zana Lutfiyya

University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB

### Episode 3.7: Marilyn Dolmage

Inclusion Consultant, Toronto, ON

### Episode 3.8: Vianne Timmons

Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NL

### Episode 3.9: Kathryn Underwood

Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, ON

### Episode 3.10: Cathy Montreuil

The Province of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS

**Series 3 Commentary** – *Let's Chat About Inclusive Education: Commentary on Series Three: Trans-Atlantic Reflections* by David Towell, Director of the Centre for Inclusive Futures, London, UK.



# Series 1 Chat Session Guides



# Commentary on Series One: Trans-Atlantic Reflections

*by David Towell,  
Director of the Centre for Inclusive Futures in London, UK*



When I am updating myself about current issues in inclusive education, a good starting point is always Inclusive Education Canada and its excellent website at [www.inclusiveeducation.ca](http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca)

I was very happy therefore to learn about the panel discussions with Canadian leaders in this field hosted by Gordon Porter in the excellent company of Diane Richler and Jacqui Specht. The first series just finished and I was not disappointed. I also know that there are at least two more series of similar discussions to come. Well done IEC!

I know Canada a little: I was privileged to spend some months of a sabbatical working as a volunteer with (what is now) Inclusion Canada in 1991 and I have kept in touch with some of the great people I met then, not least those involved in the leadership of Inclusion International. Looking across the Atlantic from London, what did I like about this first series and what are some of the issues that I hope will be developed further in the next series? Let me start with three compliments.

First, I liked the style of the panel discussions. Of course, that derives from the quality of the panelists and their many invitees. There is a great deal of wisdom and experience reflected in these discussions. But I also liked the format. Like most people during the pandemic, I have joined my share of webinars. Most of these, certainly the international ones, have been essentially wall-to-wall presentations. Let's Chat has been different: a chance to explore with key participants both what they are doing and what is driving their commitment to this field. This has been rewarding and I feel that now I know quite a lot about the first set of contributors as people as well as family members, teachers and researchers, etc.

Second, the ten discussions have been very rich in insights and examples. In my experience, if we are not moving forward with inclusion, we are probably drifting backwards. Inclusion is a process not an end point: we have to keep working at it. This series and the further ones to come do a lot to keep the inclusion flame burning bright in Canada and probably in other countries too.

## Commentary on Series One: Trans-Atlantic Reflections

Here are some of the key messages about strengthening inclusive education that I drew from these discussions:

- Parent and civil society advocacy are critical in gaining and sustaining societal -wide commitment to educating all students together. Bluesette Campbell and Anna McQuarrie exemplify effective family leadership, not with-standing the difficulties, and Jody Carr, a former Minister of Education, was encouraging on how civil society pressure impacts on elected politicians.
- Gillian Parekh, among others, argued the fundamental importance of ‘mind set’: believing all children belong, right from their start in life, and working to establish disability as a positive identity in communities that welcome diversity.
- In this context, Marie-Élaine Desmarais was persuasive in her examples of how Universal Design for Learning can be an effective orientation for teachers as well as a codified set of technical skills.
- Similarly, Sheila Bennett offered some great examples of the ways in which teachers can encourage peer support in their classrooms and promote social capital formation for all their students.
- All this means that a key priority is developing the capacity of teachers not least through ensuring ongoing support within the schools, space for reflection and opportunities for ‘teachers helping teachers’. Lesley Trudell and Amy Kipfer and Missy Pfaff offered excellent examples of how this is being organised in practice in different jurisdictions.
- As Jess Whitley reminded us, all these challenges have been magnified during the two years of Covid-19 restrictions in which we have all had to learn new tricks.
- And finally, but perhaps most impressively, we learnt from the personal stories in these discussions that the long journey to inclusion requires both commitment and persistence. Witness Liz Baile’s 34 years (so far) in Yellowknife in Canada’s north?

Third therefore, Series One and doubtless the series to come are demonstrating the strength-in-depth of informed leadership on inclusive education in Canada and the networks that link good people in different roles and places: networking that Inclusive Education Canada exists to promote. These resources are I think critical to future progress. During one of the lock-downs here I took the opportunity to review the more than twenty year journey towards community inclusion in the U.K. What struck me from this history is that we achieved most through what Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze call ‘scaling across’: creating communities of practice within which people exercising leadership offer each other support and share their experiences ‘laterally’ as part of a social movement, aspiring to value-based transformation.

All this raises important issues for our future efforts. Here are three that I am thinking about in the light of the ten sessions in Series One.

## Commentary on Series One: Trans-Atlantic Reflections

Probably the two most important international commitments to advancing inclusive education are found in the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (notably Article 24) and the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (notably Goal 4). The former calls for an 'inclusive system of education at all levels' as a human right and is focused on disabled people; the latter goal seeks to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education .... for all'. The convergence on inclusive education is very helpful to our national efforts but the differences here are also instructive.

First, SDG4 directs our attention to three axes defining progress: quality, equity *and* inclusion. I wonder if our discussions of inclusive education sometimes leave the other two axes too implicit. 'Quality' directs our attention to what education is for and what it means in the life of all students. The late British educationalist, Ken Robinson, offers this useful definition: education aims 'to enable students to understand the world around them and the talents within them so that they can become fulfilled individuals and active, compassionate citizens'. I think this definition can help us a lot in discussions of national curriculum, testing and other policies directed at standardization.

Second, SDG4 widens our focus from disability to ensuring access *for all* (and the targets specifically mention eliminating gender disparities and ensuring equal access e.g. for indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations). Interestingly the latest book by another well-known British educationalist, Mel Ainscow (because of his work on the *Index of Inclusion*) is entitled *Educational Equity*. He focuses on initiatives in Scotland, and seeks to review efforts to overcome the multiple kinds of disadvantage associated with poverty. 'Intersectionality' is a clumsy word dreamed up by academics, but it does draw our attention to the ways in which different threads of disadvantage are intertwined in the lives of children, something that of course teachers both experience and need to engage with, in the school and classroom.

Finally, Jacqui Specht wisely noted in the very first of these Chats that substantial research shows us that inclusive education works: the challenge seems to be in ensuring system-wide implementation, despite the forty of years of Canadian experience starting in New Brunswick. Clearly this message hasn't arrived everywhere yet.

Series One has demonstrated the strength and depth of knowledge and leadership about inclusive education in Canada. My final question then concerns what we are learning about how best to use both of these to achieve and sustain system-wide transformation across your great country. There were some important pointers here in the first series as I have noted above. I am hoping for a lot more in Series Two!

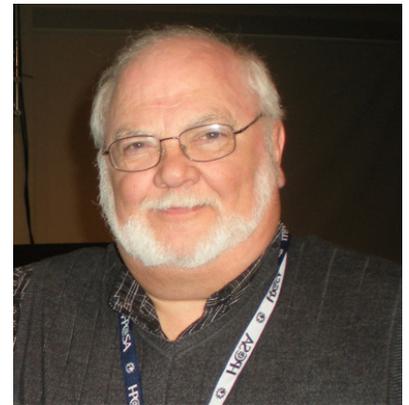
# Let's Chat... about Inclusive Education

## The Hosts of - *Let's Chat ... about Inclusive Education*

*Gordon L. Porter, C.M., O.N.B.  
Jacqueline Specht, Ph.D.  
Diane Richler, C.M.*

### **Gordon L. Porter, Director, Inclusive Education Canada.**

Senior policy advisor to the Education ministries in N.B., N.S. and the N.W.T in Canada and several countries including Spain, Portugal, Peru, Panama and South Africa. Teacher educator at universities in Canada and beyond; writer and editor of articles and two books on inclusive education. A former president of Inclusion Canada; Chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission; recipient of the Canadian Education Association's Whitworth Award for Research in Education and the UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize. Gordon has been a consultant to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, and the Inter-American Development Bank. Gordon Porter has been awarded two honorary degrees and is a member of the Order of Canada and the Order of New Brunswick.



### **Dr. Jacqueline Specht, Professor of Education, University of Western Ontario, London.**

Professor Specht is the director of the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education. The centre aims to empower educators with the knowledge they need to be effective with all students in the K-12 schooling system. Dr. Specht's research expertise is located in the areas of: inclusive education; teacher development; and psychosocial aspects of individuals with disabilities. She has worked with schools nationally and internationally to support their transition to inclusive education. Her recent book "Inclusion of learners with exceptionalities in Canadian schools" is a textbook that is used in initial teacher education programs across Canada.

### **Diane Richler, Chair, Inclusion International's Catalyst for Inclusive Education.**

Former chair of the International Disability Alliance; past president of Inclusion International; co-chair of the GLAD network Inclusive Education Working Group. Diane was a civil society leader in the negotiation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a Visiting Academic of the European Union Erasmus Mundus project on inclusive education and a member of the expert group reviewing the draft 2020 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report. As Director of the Roeher Institute and Executive Vice-President of Inclusion Canada she was involved in the early promotion of inclusive education in Canada. She is a Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation International Fellow and member of the Order of Canada and the Order of Manuel Guerrero of Panama.



## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1. **Diverse Perspectives:** The video chats included in this project, 'Let's Chat about Inclusive Education', include Canadian and International perspectives on inclusive education. Guests have varied areas expertise and include teachers, principals, parents, researchers, advocates, and politicians.
2. **Human Rights is the Bedrock:** Diane Richler and Gordon Porter have both contributed to the recognition of access to inclusive education as a human rights issue. They both stress not only the importance of the right to education for all, but the right to inclusive education. Attending school alongside one's peers is a crucial factor in preparing individuals for a life in the community. Through her experience working with the United Nations, Diane has come to recognize inclusive education as 'the bedrock' of human rights for people with disabilities. Gordon asserted the right to be included in school during his work as Chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission.
3. **Research Supports Inclusion:** Jacqui Specht expresses that her motivation for contributing to research on inclusive education is that previous research supports it! Even with evidence supporting inclusion, inclusive practices are not always followed in schools, highlighting the importance of projects, such as this one, that aim to understand the state of and perspectives on inclusive education across Canada.
4. **Inclusion is a Process:** Diane Richler and Gordon Porter discuss the progress that has been made over the last 3 decades in raising the status of inclusive education among university faculty and researchers. Progress in strengthening inclusive education in schools and classrooms requires constant evaluation, considering new strategies and approaches and sustaining the effort to improve the capacity of educators and support staff. In this sense, implementing inclusion is not an end, but a process.
5. **Collaboration is Key:** Sharing knowledge and resources between those involved in a student's education is critically important. Parents, teachers and others need to be included by schools in decision-making; parents must be valued as the experts on their child's needs.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. What does inclusion look like in schools today?
2. What should it look like?
3. Why does inclusion matter?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Diane Richler made the statement, "Inclusion is not an end, it's a process." How can this mindset be applied to your work?
2. Jacqui Specht touches upon the gap between research and practice and the goal of implementation. Has this gap affected your work in some way? Have you had any success with implementation?
3. If inclusive education is a "human rights" issue, does it need to be pursued through legal and legislative efforts? Or is it more properly considered an educational practice issue?

# More from the Hosts:

## Gordon L. Porter

- Cecilia Simón, Yolanda Muñoz-Martínez & Gordon L. Porter (2021) Classroom instruction and practices that reach all learners, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 51:5, 607-625, DOI: 10.1080/0305764X.2021.1891205
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- Yolanda Muñoz Martínez & Gordon L. Porter (2020) Planning for all students: promoting inclusive instruction, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 24:14, 1552-1567, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2018.1544301
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## Jacqueline Specht

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- MacCormack, J., Sider, S., Maich, K., & Specht, J. (2021). Self-determination and inclusion: The role of Canadian principals in catalyzing inclusive-positive practices. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, 17(2), <https://doi.org/10.22230/ijep.2021v17n2a969>

## Diane Richler

- Jennifer A. Kurth, Amanda L. Miller, Diane Richler, et al. (2018) Inclusive Education: Perspectives on Implementation and Practice From International Experts. *Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*, December 2018; 56 (6): 471–485. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1352/1934-9556-56.6.471>
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- Richler, D., MacQuarrie, A., Laurin-Bowie, C. "Hidden and Invisible: Children with Intellectual Disabilities Deprived of Liberty" in *Protecting Children Against Torture in Detention: Reflections on the Special Rapporteur on Torture's 2015 Thematic Report*, Centre for Human Rights and Humanitarian law, American University Washington College of Law, 2017



# Let's Chat... *about* *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**  
**Sheila Bennett**  
*Professor, Department of  
Educational Studies  
Brock University  
St. Catherines, ON*

Dr. Sheila Bennett is a Professor of Education and a member of the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education. She is also an active member of the Inclusive Education Canada Network of Associates. Professor Bennett began her teaching career in her native Newfoundland and Labrador after graduating from Memorial University in St. John's. Prior to and upon completion of her graduate work at the University of Toronto, Dr. Bennett held several classroom and school board positions prior to joining the Faculty of Education at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Her areas of research and practice include: special education policy, disabilities, local and international teacher education, parent participation in education and most importantly inclusion for students with diverse needs. Lead author of *Special Education in Ontario Schools*, Dr. Bennett continues to publish and lecture on rights based inclusive practices in education.

Interests: Rights based education, Parent engagement, Transition from school to workplace, teacher education, Transition from school to workplace, teacher education

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Lifelong Value of Inclusion:** In Newfoundland and Labrador, Sheila attended an inclusive school growing up and then worked as a teacher in an inclusive board. When continuing her education career in Ontario, Sheila worked in a self-contained behaviour classroom. This segregated learning, starkly different than her previous experiences, reaffirmed her value of inclusion and informed her professional goals and attention.
- 2. The Tipping Point:** While recently teaching a class of students nearing the end of their teaching degrees, Sheila was very impressed by the students' attitudes towards inclusion as a human right. Their passion inspired her, and she suggests that with more new teachers entering the workforce with these opinions, we could reach a tipping point in the movement towards inclusion.
- 3. Social Capital:** Sheila stressed the importance of social capital for everyone and shares an example from her family. The critical need for students who experience "barriers to learning" to acquire social capital is discussed. Sheila observed that teachers have incredible power and influence in either growing or reducing a student's social capital and it's important to have specific strategies for building social capital within the classroom.
- 4. Cognitive Dissonance Experienced by Teachers:** Cognitive dissonance occurs for many teachers who complete their training with a mind-set or intention to be inclusive. Since many schools and boards in Ontario continue to operate classes that are not inclusive, in the early stages of their careers, these teachers struggle to maintain their inclusive intentions that clash with their day-to-day experience in their school.
- 5. Legislation and Policy are Key:** Sheila asserts that a key factor in implementing inclusive education across Ontario is to have it clearly stated in the policy and legislation. She suggests that because the current legislation is vague, it's open to interpretation and therefore school boards can implement different models for educating students with barriers to learning. The consequence is a continuation of segregated classes and programs.
- 6. Inclusive Mindset:** Sheila believes that the most important factor in creating successful inclusive schools is mindset. A fundamental belief that all students belong goes a long way.
- 7. Intolerance towards Difference:** Sheila explained that segregated classrooms are a disservice to all students, not just those who are excluded. Inclusive classrooms provide students with the opportunity to meet others with diverse abilities, knowledge, skills and backgrounds. By engaging with individuals different than themselves they gain an understanding that it is possible for all people to belong in our society. In the absence of this experience, students may well develop an intolerance to difference.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. What is your current understanding of social capital and why is it important?
2. In what ways do school, and experiences within schools, model 'adulthood' and society at large?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. After starting her career in Newfoundland, Dr. Bennet said she was “shocked” and “astounded” by the degree of segregation she found in schools she moved to in Ontario. What practices contributed to this reaction?
2. Has your understanding of social capital and its importance changed after viewing this chat session? In what ways is the development of social capital particularly important for students with barriers to learning?
3. Dr. Bennett suggests that we hold segregated education to the same scrutiny as inclusion often is. How can we do this? What are the potential benefits to questioning the status quo?
4. Do you think it is feasible to motivate school leaders to question segregated education systems the way inclusive systems are questioned?

## More from Shelia Bennett:

Bennett, S., Gallagher, T., Somma, M., White, R. (2021) Transitioning Towards Inclusion: A Triangulated View of the Role of Educational Assistants. *Journal of Research in Special Education Needs* Vol..., 1-11 doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12508

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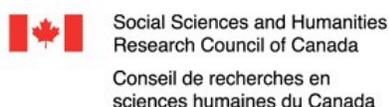
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Bennett, S., Specht, J., Somma, M. et al. Navigating School Interactions: Parents of Students with Intellectual Disabilities Speak Out. *Current Dev Disorders Rep* 7, 149–154 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40474-020-00203-z>

Bennett, S., Sabin, M., & Chadwick, C. (2019). Jake Case Study. In Calder-Stegemann K. & Aucoin A. (Eds.) *Inclusive Education: Stories of Success and Hope in a Canadian Context.* Toronto: Pearson. ISBN 978-13-418413-5.

Gallagher, T.L. and Bennett, S.M. (2018), "The six “P” model: principles of coaching for inclusion coaches", *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 19-34. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMCE-03-2017-0018>

Reid, L., Bennett, S., Specht, S. White, R., Somma, M., Li, X., Lattanzio, R., Gavan, K., Kyle, G., Porter, G. & Patel, A. If inclusion means everyone, why not me? (2018). ARCH Disability Law Centre, Community Living Ontario.



# Let's Chat... *about* *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**  
**Marie-Élaine Desmarais**  
*Professeure agrégée, Faculté d'éducation,  
Université de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, MB*

Marie-Élaine Desmarais is a Professeure agrégée at the Université de Saint-Boniface. She completed her doctoral degree as well as bachelor's and master's degrees at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR). She was a college remedial teacher for ten years at Cégep de Trois-Rivières, Quebec.

Marie-Élaine's doctoral dissertation focused on the appropriation and implementation of Universal Design for Learning in a Québec university context. She also has focused on developing a better understanding the transition from a paradigm of normalization to a paradigm of denormalization. She has collaborated on various research projects at the Normand-Maurice Research Chair at UQTR on subjects such as inclusion in childcare; the inclusion of students with learning disabilities in college; and, the contribution of assistive technologies to the success of these students.

Her current research focuses on well-being at school and universal design for learning. She is a researcher and head of the Voices of Young People and Their Families team at the International Laboratory on Inclusive Education (LISIS). She is also a co-researcher in the network promoting research on well-being and success (RÉVERBÈRE) and a member of the Inclusive Education Canada "Network of Associates".

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Authentic Inclusion Requires Support:** Marie-Élaine has come to understand both personally and professionally that inclusion in schools requires support. Her family's experience in Québec with her brother who has Down Syndrome was not good. She discusses the systems of support teachers need to ensure inclusion leads to student success.
- 2. Vision and Leadership:** Marie-Élaine discusses the difference between progress toward inclusion in schools in Québec and Francophone schools in Manitoba. The critical influence of vision reflected through legislation and policy as well as leadership in implementation are explored.
- 3. Insights as a Resource Teacher:** Marie-Élaine's professional experience as a resource teacher at a college in Québec led her to understand the need for support to teachers to implement practices that ensure student success in their classrooms. These insights have guided her work since that time.
- 4. UDL: Clear Outcomes, Flexible Methods:** Universal design for learning requires learning outcomes to be individualized but not lowered. Her experience is that teachers/professors are comfortable implementing UDL when they understand what it is. As a university teacher, Marie-Élaine determines learning outcomes but is flexible on how students demonstrate what they have learned.
- 5. De-Normalization:** Marie-Élaine discusses the concept of "de-normalization". She provides a definition and rationale for the concept and shares how it can facilitate inclusion in schools and classrooms. If we truly believe that everyone is unique, then there is no 'norm' to compare to. She stated that there would then be no 'average student', just 'student'.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. What is your current understanding of the 'principle of normalization'? (Wolfensberger, 1972) What change did the principle bring to policy and practices for people with disabilities?
2. What does inclusion in school really look like? What is the difference between labelling a system as inclusive and the system actually being inclusive?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. What do you think about Marie-Élaine's path to understanding and commitment to inclusive education practices?
2. UDL is a critical element in Marie-Élaine's professional practice. What do you find compelling about the case she makes for it?
3. In what ways do you think the concept of 'de-normalization' contributes to inclusive schooling and enhances the overall community?

## More from Marie-Élaine Desmarais:

Desmarais, M.-É., Kenny, A, et Carlson Berg, L. (2021). Le bien-être comme levier pour contrer la pénurie et faciliter l'insertion professionnelle du nouveau personnel enseignant : une recherche participative. Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC). 147 200\$. 2021-2022.

Desmarais, M.-É., de Moissac, D., Rocque, R. et Gueye, N. R. (2020). Mieux comprendre l'influence de la pédagogie universelle sur le bien-être des enseignants et de leurs élèves en contexte minoritaire franco-manitobain : une recherche-action. Université de Saint-Boniface, Subvention institutionnelle du CRSH. 5 000\$. 2020-2021.

Desmarais, M.-É., de Moissac, D., Rocque, R. et Gueye, N. R. (2020). Mieux comprendre l'influence de la pédagogie universelle sur le bien-être des enseignants et de leurs élèves en contexte minoritaire franco-manitobain : une recherche-action. Université de Saint-Boniface, Subvention aux programmes Université-Communauté Volet 1. 4 996\$. 2020-2022.

Desmarais, M.-É., Berthelot-Dilk, S. et Gagnon, J. (2018). S'ouvrir à l'autre pour une réussite commune. Subvention d'innovation pédagogique de l'Université de Saint-Boniface. 1 650\$. 2018-2019.

Rocque, J. et Desmarais, M.-É. (2020). Perception de l'efficacité de la formation initiale en enseignement reçue par les finissants des cinq dernières à la faculté d'éducation (2014 à 2019) : une étude de cas. Université de Saint-Boniface, Subvention au programme des subventions de recherche. 5 217\$. 2020-2022.

Rousseau, N., Bergeron, L., St-Vincent, L.-A., Desmarais, M.-É., et Ouellet, S. (2019). Répertoire de pratiques inspirées de la conception universelle de l'apprentissage. Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. 5 000\$. 2019.

Rousseau, N., Desmarais, M.-É. et al. (2019). Les connaissances scientifiques en soutien aux enseignants francophones du Canada : mieux faire ensemble (RÉVERBÈRE). Programme d'appui à la francophonie canadienne (PAFC). 150 000\$. 2019-2022.

Rousseau, N. et Desmarais, M.-É. (2018). Réseau de recherche et de valorisation de la recherche sur le bien-être et la réussite (RÉVERBÈRE) : Renforcement du réseau. Programme d'appui aux relations canadiennes (PARC). 10 285\$. 2018-2019.



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# Let's Chat... *about* *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**  
**Jody Carr**  
**Lawyer**  
**Former New Brunswick Minister of  
Education and Early Childhood  
Development**

Jody Carr is currently a lawyer in private practice in Fredericton and Oromocto, New Brunswick. He has more than 20 years of experience in political, legislative and government affairs. Mr. Carr was first elected to the New Brunswick Legislature in 1999.

He served as Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development between 2010-2013 and two terms as Minister of Post -Secondary Education, Training and Labour in 2006 and from 2013 to 2014. These mandates included responsibility for early childhood learning, public schools, universities and colleges, labour, training and the human rights commission.

He served as caucus chair and lead MLA on policy and platform development as well as chair of the Legislature's Standing Committee on Law Amendments. As Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Mr. Carr championed and directed policy and legislative changes that align education practices with the CRPD and human rights legislation.

Minister Carr issued Policy 322 on inclusive education in 2013 that was recognized as a global exemplar at the 2016 Project Zero Conference sponsored by the Essl Foundation, the World Future Council, and the European Foundation Centre at the United Nations Office in Vienna, Austria. Mr. Carr is particularly interested in the policy, leadership and human rights aspects of transforming school culture to embrace inclusion and diversity. In cooperation with ARCH Disability Law Centre he conducted a Canada wide jurisdictional review of legislation and policy mandates for inclusion.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Political interest in inclusive education:** Jody emphasized that he knew inclusion was important to his constituents when he heard from them about their concerns. While supportive of inclusion, they made clear there was a need for proper support to ensure success. This motivated him on the issue.
- 2. The challenge to advocates:** as an advocate, it can be difficult to get access to politicians and decision-makers. Jody discusses ways to reach them by having individuals with existing relationships make the connection to politicians. A parent of a child experiencing barriers to learning speaking directly to decision-makers makes a difference.
- 3. Frequent political leadership turnover:** Jody discusses the challenge of frequent turnover of elected leaders assigned to a specific department. Strategies for strengthening relationships are discussed including a) establishing relationships early in an elected official's term; and b) working closely with senior bureaucratic leaders who tend to remain in positions longer.
- 4. Being useful:** Jody shared advice that advocates need to suggest solutions not just identify problems to political leaders. It is a way to establish a positive and supportive relationship. He shared advice he received early in his political career: When you are on the outside of a group, you can still try to make yourself helpful.
- 5. Use multiple strategies:** The importance of using more than one strategy is discussed, as well as potential use of the courts, tribunals or human rights agencies while working on individual cases and advocating for systemic changes that support/protect minority groups. Policy changes that are 'wide in scope' will potentially stay in place even when leadership changes and will not be reversed as easily.
- 6. Education is at the provincial level in Canada:** therefore, it is difficult to have a national policy on inclusive education. Jody discussed the possibility of using federal funding to tackle inclusion on the periphery of schooling (e.g., early childcare; employment; transition planning). This may result in federal initiatives that support inclusive education but at the same time do not infringe on provincial jurisdiction.
- 7. Working with unions:** Jody discusses the challenge of working with unions that play a major role in the education system. He contrasts working with teacher unions and support staff unions. The focus of unions on "working conditions" rather than student learning or teaching, and how that connects to inclusion is discussed. The approach of union leaders as opposed to union members is elaborated.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. In what ways is advocacy for inclusive education challenging given the dynamic, ever-changing nature of political leadership?
2. What are the benefits and challenges of education being the responsibility of the provincial and territorial governments as opposed to the federal government in Canada?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. What strategies would be most effective in gaining support for inclusive education from elected political leaders?
2. New Brunswick has had great success in developing an inclusive education system. How can constituents of other provinces who support inclusion unite to advocate for policy changes within their local education systems?
3. What role do teacher unions play in making schools and classrooms inclusive?

## More from Jody Carr:

- Minister responsible for the report – **Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools**, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, Province of New Brunswick, 2012.  
<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/Inclusion/Inclusion.pdf>
- Minister responsible for **New Brunswick Policy 322**: This policy establishes the requirements to ensure New Brunswick public schools are inclusive. Effective September 17, 2013. This policy applies to all schools and school districts within the public education system in New Brunswick.  
<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/policies-politiques/e/322A.pdf>
- **A Conceptual and Legal Framework for Inclusive Education**, ARCH Disability Law Centre, Toronto, and Inclusive Education Canada. An analysis of the legal basis for inclusive education in Canada; a valuable addition to the research available of particular interest for the focus it provides on several jurisdictions in Canada.  
<http://inclusiveeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/03/Legal-Framework-Inclusive-Education-Jody-Carr-Dec-30-2016.pdf>



# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*

## *Teachers as Leaders with Guests: Missy Pfaff & Amy Kipfer Teachers and School Leaders/Administrators Avon Maitland District Schools Huron & Perth Counties, Ontario*



**Missy Pfaff** is an educator with 30+ years of teaching experience in the Avon Maitland District School Board located in Southwestern Ontario. She has taught most grades in elementary school, and has supported teachers and students as a resource teacher at both the school and system level. Recently, she moved into school administration as principal of Stephen Central Public School. Missy emphasizes the need for educators to keep learning. Pursuing inclusive education is both a choice and a passion for Missy. Her mission is to make school a joyful place to learn and grow. She believes in the hashtag **#choosin'inclusion**



**Amy Kipfer** is the vice-principal of Bedford Public School with the Avon Maitland District School Board. She has been a classroom teacher, a Learning Services Coordinator, Indigenous and Equity Education Lead as well as a Vice-Principal in their Remote Learning School. Throughout her career she has been an advocate and leader in Avon Maitland's move towards Inclusive Education K-12. Amy has shared her knowledge and experience with schools across Ontario. She has played a key roll in the progress her school board has made to include students with diverse needs of in the social and academic life of Avon Maitland schools.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1. **Segregation Doesn't Work:** Amy and Missy observed students with barriers to learning not only being removed from classrooms with their peers but having to change schools to be in the suggested special education classrooms. Leaving their neighbourhood schools meant these students did not have the opportunity to socialize with their peers.
2. **Inclusion and Equity:** When implementing an inclusive education framework, the Avon Maitland schools integrated equity training. This was useful in changing people's opinions of inclusive education.
3. **Belief or Practice:** It was originally thought that "belief" had to come before "practice". Amy and Missy found that in their work with classroom teachers, this was not always the case. In many cases teachers just needed to be willing to try the new ideas.
4. **Working with the Willing:** Partnerships were created between willing teachers and one or more inclusion facilitators. While trying out the inclusive model, these partnerships allowed "facilitators" to engage with teachers wherever they were in the process and collaborate on strategies that led to success.
5. **Researchers Help:** Collaboration between teachers and researchers was paramount to the success of the inclusive model in Avon Maitland schools. This collaboration informed teachers about best practices and allowed researchers to fine tune their research.
6. **Retrenchment – a Continuing Challenge:** Regrettably, not all teachers or parents are convinced that an inclusive model is best for students. Strategies to deal with the inclination to revert to a more traditional special education model when issues and problems come up are needed. This may seem as easier than to adjust the inclusion model and to continue to find new ways to solve problems.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. How important is socialization with peers for a student experiencing barriers to learning?
2. Does the concept of equity align with the goal of inclusive education?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. What do you think about the idea that you need to change 'belief before practice'?
2. Amy and Missy question whether the widespread assertion that 'belief before practice' is valid. They suggest that if you can convince a teacher to 'try', engagement in inclusion can later affect their beliefs. How might more teachers be encouraged to willingly try inclusion?
3. Missy and Amy observe that academic research does not often reach teachers working in PK-12 public schools. How can knowledge mobilization be improved to disseminate important findings to teachers, administrators, principals and parents?

# More from Missy Pfaff & Amy Kipfer:

- Pfaff, Missy. *Social Inclusion is Not Enough*. (2016). Commentary, Inclusive Education Canada. <https://inclusiveeducation.ca/2016/03/17/commentary-social-inclusion-is-not-enough/>
- Kipfer, Amy. *Secondary School: Inclusive Education's Final Frontier*. (2016). Commentary, Inclusive Education Canada. <https://inclusiveeducation.ca/2016/02/12/10-secondary-school-inclusive-educations-final-frontier-by-amy-kipfer/>

## Check out this resource on the IEC website



[https://inclusiveeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/01/Teachers-as-Leaders\\_pamphlet-2020.pdf](https://inclusiveeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/01/Teachers-as-Leaders_pamphlet-2020.pdf)

# Let's Chat... *about* *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



## *Guest:* *Jess Whitley*

*Associate Professor of Inclusive Education,  
Faculty of Education,  
University of Ottawa  
Ottawa, ON*

Jess Whitley's research and teaching are driven by a dedication to improving the school experiences of all students and teachers.

Her research focuses on mental health literacy, inclusive education policy, teacher preparation for inclusive education, and the wellbeing of children and youth with mental health issues. She conducts research in partnership with colleagues at universities across Canada as well as collaboratively engaging with community organizations.

Jess is part of the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education and an associate of the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services. In her teaching, she aims to best prepare future teachers of inclusive classrooms and further develop the skills and knowledge of graduate-level learners. Jess is co-founder of the Comprehensive School Health B.Ed. cohort at the University of Ottawa.

Jess is currently co-investigator on a 3-year (2019-2022) project conducting a review of the implementation of a new Inclusive Education policy of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. From Policy to Reality:** Jess discussed the project analyzing the implementation of Nova Scotia's new policy on inclusive education (2019). She noted that this research is evaluating how effectively the policy is being implemented, not the policy itself. She notes that there are always gaps between intentions and how they play out in actual schools and classrooms. In this case, the Department of Education will respond to the evaluation and feedback and consider steps to improve implementation.
- 2. Professional Learning:** Jess noted the importance of engaging teachers and principals with cohesive and well-planned professional development in both knowledge and skills. Jess has found that this is essential for teachers to understand how the different facets of inclusion come together to ensure success in the classroom.
- 3. The Challenge of Scaling Up Change:** Jess stated that scaling up the implementation of new policies, like the inclusion policy in Nova Scotia, is a significant challenge often failed. In Ontario, for example, the over-arching policy on inclusion concedes diverse interpretations and approaches which has resulted in many different approaches in schools and district school boards. As a result, it would be very difficult to scale-up an inclusive policy in that province.
- 4. Change Takes Time:** Policy changes require both time and continuous effort to ensure effective implementation. Jess discusses the Ontario policy, "Learning for All", which was initiated in 2013, but remains incomplete in terms of the recommendations that have been implemented and are not fully realized in schools to date.
- 5. Issues in Virtual Learning:** Student success with virtual learning is a major issue in Canadian schools. Outcomes vary widely depending on the profile of the student. The effect on students who experience barriers to learning has been a particular challenge. She has found that training students and their families on how to navigate online learning platforms greatly improves virtual learning outcomes.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Do you think inclusion can be incorporated within the virtual learning context? Why or why not? If yes, then how so?
2. How long do you think it might take to implement a new inclusive policy in a school that has no prior experience with it?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. What kind of professional learning do you consider critical to ensuring teachers can be successful with inclusion? Does it encompass both school and classroom practices?
2. Do you think virtual learning can be incorporated within the practice of Canadian schools and still maintain a commitment to equity and inclusion?
3. How can training for online learning platforms be provided to families and students successfully? Can this be done remotely? Do you think the training would be more effective if done in person?

## More from Jess Whitley:

- Whitley, J., Matheson, I., Specht, J., & MacCormack, J. (In Press). Perspectives of parents of children with SEN: Supports and strengths during COVID-19 school closures. *Exceptionality Education International*.
- 2019-2022: Developmental Evaluation Services of the Implementation and Preliminary Outcomes of an Inclusive Education Policy Framework in Nova Scotia, Co-Investigator: Andy Hargreaves
- 2019-2020: Partnering to promote children's emotional well-being and educational outcomes Co-Investigators: Maria Rogers, David Smith, Crossroads Children's Mental Health Centre
- Whitley, J., Duquette, C., Gooderham, S., Elliott, C., Orders, S., Klan, A. (2021). Implementation of a differentiated instruction initiative: Perspectives of leaders. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 196, 49-64
- Sider, S., MacCormack, J. & Whitley, J. (2021, Winter). Schools as an Equalizing Force: What the pandemic has taught us about school leadership and inclusive education. *Canadian Association of Principals Journal*. <https://cdnprincipals.com/moving-forward-despite-uncertainty-leading-schools-during-a-pandemic>.
- Whitley, J., Klan, A., & D'Agostino, B. (2020). Narratives of funding related to Inclusive Education: Canadian news media from 2014-2019. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1821446>
- Whitley, J. (2020). Evidence-based practices for teaching learners with emotional and behavioral disorders.
- Lloyd, R. J., de Montigny, J., & Whitley, J. (2019). Comprehensive School Health in Teacher Education and Schools: Becoming a Champion of Health.
- Whitley, J., Smith, D., Vaillancourt, T. & Neufeld, J. (2018). Promoting Mental Health Literacy among Educators: Critical in School-Based Prevention and Intervention.

# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*

## *Guests: Bluesette Campbell & Anna McQuarrie Parents & Advocates for Inclusive Education*



**Bluesette Campbell** and her family reside in rural Northwest SK. When her son Andrew was born in 2002, Bluesette's focus was shifted to the world of disability. Andrew lives with diagnoses such as DiGeorge Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorder among others. While the road has been bumpy, Bluesette sees much potential as Andrew finished high school, is employed full time and has dreams of moving to the big city of Saskatoon. Much of this potential may have been missed if not for the support of Inclusion Saskatchewan. Bluesette co-founded a not-for-profit organization in the Meadow Lake area that supports families with exceptional children, PACE Inc. in 2009. PACE made inclusive education a priority and had been committed to increase the quality of inclusive education by partnering with their school division for the past four years. She has been SK's rep at Inclusion Canada for three years and is honored to be part of INSK and the national federation and is committed to supporting it in whatever capacity she can.

**Anna MacQuarrie** has worked in the disability rights movement for almost two decades. Based in Halifax, Canada, Anna is a mom to three kids with disabilities. As a parent of children with disabilities, she understands the important role families play in fostering inclusion and the need for families to have a strong voice. She has worked with Inclusion International and Inclusion Canada to advance and promote the rights and inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities and their families around the world. Anna was actively involved in the development of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and has worked extensively on its implementation internationally.



# Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1. **Inclusive schools for an Inclusive Society?:** Bluesette describes the classroom as a microscopic version of society. She stresses that to create the society we envision, inclusion must happen within the school and classroom.
2. **Resources and Supports:** To support students, Anna asserts that teachers and schools need supports and assured access to necessary resources. Sometimes this means that parents need to advocate for their child by advocating for supports for the teacher and school.
3. **Policy Vision to Classroom Reality:** Policy changes are critical, but do not always lead to inclusive education. Translating policy into practice takes a great deal of effort and attention, as is the case for Anna in Nova Scotia.
4. **Partnerships and Communication:** Bluesette and Anna share their experience of poor communication between parents and schools leading to inconsistencies and deficiencies in the level of inclusion for students.
5. **Strengthening Communication:** In Bluesette's Saskatchewan community, a group of parents, and the local school authority cooperatively facilitated a partnership by funding a “communication support associate” to build and sustain effective communication between families and the school. Strategic planning enabled the development of strong partnerships between families and the school, resulting in better outcomes for the students.
6. **Strategic Support for Parents:** Anna and Bluesette both state the importance of support for families as they navigate through the structures of the school system. Parent networks are extremely valuable for sharing knowledge and building confidence for this task. Sharing knowledge and building community resources are both critical steps in sustaining inclusion in schools.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Do you think parents of children who experience barriers to learning encounter similar challenges with schooling? How are they the same? How might they be different?
2. Do parents need to be strong and assertive advocates for their child to be included? Should this be necessary?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. What factors do Bluesette and Anna both experience in the effort to ensure inclusion for the child(ren)? What do you consider the most promising approach to accomplish this?
2. What role can parent networks play in helping families struggling to make inclusion work well?
3. Do you think teachers and school leaders fully appreciate the stress and anxiety parents experience when their child's progress in school is problematic? How might this be improved?
4. Do you think a “Parent-School” communication role would be a helpful addition to the education team if it would bring stronger partnerships to ensure student success?

# More Resources:

- Inclusion: Myths and Misconceptions, Catalyst for Inclusive Education  
<https://bit.ly/3H60362>

## Inclusion: Myths and Misconceptions



CATALYST  
FOR INCLUSIVE  
EDUCATION

## Essential Elements to Promote Inclusive Education

Fighting for the right of children with intellectual disabilities  
to be included in the schools of their communities



CATALYST  
FOR INCLUSIVE  
EDUCATION

- Essential Elements to Promote Inclusive Education, Catalyst for Inclusive Education  
<https://bit.ly/3H4v5Lm>

# Let's Chat... *about* *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



## **Multiple Perspectives** ***Guest: Lesley Eblie Trudel*** ***Associate Dean, Faculty of Education*** ***University of Winnipeg*** ***Winnipeg, Manitoba***

Lesley Eblie Trudel has been successfully involved in public education for over thirty years. Her most recent role is as an Assistant Superintendent of Schools with the Sunrise School Division in Manitoba, Canada. She has held positions ranging from an instructor to administrator, working with diverse populations in both urban and rural settings. In January 2019, she joined the Faculty of Education at the University of Winnipeg as an Assistant Professor.

Currently Lesley is Associate Dean in the Faculty of Education, University of Winnipeg. She is a collaborative leader and interdisciplinary researcher, with a keen interest in organizational learning and systemic change as it pertains to diverse, inclusive educational communities.

On a personal basis, Lesley has made a commitment to support issues related to mental health and well-being and has volunteered for a number of years on the regional Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Board.

Areas of Professional Expertise: Educational Leadership, Staff Development, Diversity and Inclusion, Instructional Practice, Educational Assessment, Classroom Management, Student Behaviour and Social Emotional Learning.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1. **Personal Motivation:** Lesley's early experiences as a teacher working to meet the diverse needs of her students in both rural and city classrooms were at first frustrating and, in the end, a motivating factor in developing an inclusive vision.
2. **Learning About Inclusion:** Lesley learned about inclusion as both a teacher and a support teacher and subsequently transitioned to school district leadership; she found a career-fit in supporting inclusion through building classroom, school and system structures.
3. **Teacher-to-Teacher Mentorship:** Lesley reflects on the vital role teachers play in supporting and collaborating with each other and has been a highly valued strategy in the school systems where she has worked in Manitoba.
4. **Look for commonality:** the common goal of student success depends on collaborative engagement between teachers and their colleagues as well as between parents and students.
5. **Support Team Collaboration:** the staff members who provide support to classroom teachers - educators, clinicians, specialist consultants, and more - must collaborate and work as a team to deliver effective support to teachers and schools.
6. **Resources and Inclusion:** Lesley observes that schools in rural communities with fewer specialists are often inclusive by necessity, as opposed to those in urban areas which have greater access to services and specialized supports.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. What effect does beginning a teaching career in a rural or remote community have on the teacher's development?
2. In what ways do you think the wellbeing and mental health of teachers affects their ability to meet the unique needs of students in their classrooms?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Lesley discussed the importance that mentorship programs have for new teachers who are learning how to meet the needs of students. How can the idea of mentorship be incorporated within school systems and community services to facilitate inclusion?
2. Lesley identified co-operation as a strength of Manitoba's approach to education. How can co-operation be interwoven through education systems to create inclusive classrooms (e.g., between teachers and parents, teachers and school administrators, educators, and the greater community)?

# More from Lesley Eblie Trudel:

- Eblie Trudel, L. (2019) Commentary: What Can Ministries of Education and School District Leaders Do To Improve Inclusive Education? Inclusive Education Canada, <https://inclusiveeducation.ca/2019/02/25/what-can-ministries-of-education-and-school-district-leaders-do-to-improve-inclusive-education/>
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- Sokal, L., Eblie Trudel, L., Babb, J. (2020). Supporting teachers in times of change: The job demands-resources model and teacher burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Contemporary Education*, 3(2). <http://redfame.com/journal/index.php/ijce/issue/view/243>
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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



## Northern Inclusion

### Guest: *Liz Baile*

*Director of Student Services and  
former Principal & Teacher  
Yellowknife Catholic Schools  
Northwest Territories*

Liz Baile is the Director of Student Services for Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YKS) in the Northwest Territories.

Liz has held many positions in school and district administration. She has been a teacher and resource teacher as well as a principal and vice-principal and has led several initiatives with the NWT Department of Education. In 2015/16, she played a key role in the drafting of a major revision of the *NWT Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling*.

Liz coordinates of all YKS's Inclusive Schooling services as well as professional learning and the development of collaboration through school-based teams. She is the facilitator of the district Self-Regulation Initiative and oversees implementation of *Jordan's Principle* supports. Liz is committed to student well-being, inclusion and *Indigenous Ways of Knowing*.

Liz is a creative, collaborative problem solver and lifelong learner. Originally trained as a teacher in Ontario, Liz has a master's degree in Diverse Learners from UBC and is currently working on Women's Transformational Leadership (Social Justice) through a program at St. Paul's/Ottawa University.

She has served on many community, territorial and national committees and boards among them Inclusion NWT and Inclusion Canada.

Liz Baile is an NWT Hall of Fame Educator recognized by her peers for her passionate commitment to the north and to the children and youth who live there.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1. **Diverse Curriculum:** while the NWT does not have their own curriculum for schools, schools generally follow the Alberta curriculum. However, since teachers come from across Canada to teach in the NWT, they bring their own perspectives on programming; this results in diverse application of curriculum in classrooms. Although a challenge in practice, schools in the NWT attempt to have each student achieve unique goals based on their ability.
2. **Geography and Demographics:** small and isolated communities limit the programs offered in many schools and “specialists” or “experts” are always in short supply. Consequently, the special education system that developed in the NWT could be considered ‘primitive’ compared to urban areas in Southern Canada. Accommodating diversity and supporting inclusion was a clear way to address this reality.
3. **Program Support Teacher:** every school in the NWT is allocated one or more ‘program support teacher’ whose role is to collaborate with classroom teachers to develop strategies that are effective with diverse learners. Cooperation and teamwork among school staff is highly valued.
4. **Professional Learning:** the education system in the NWT makes significant investments in the professional learning of teachers, school leaders and other staff; often this training is targeted to the unique challenges students and their teachers face in the North.
5. **Respecting Indigenous Culture:** schools put high priority on acknowledging the values, languages, and ways of living of indigenous people and their communities. Practical elements of schooling include language instruction, providing experiences on the land and sharing the stories of elders. The values of elders align with accommodating diversity and inclusion.
6. **Strengthening Self-determinism and Agency of Students:** this is particularly important in the NWT based on the high proportion of Indigenous students and their histories of forced assimilation and ensuing intergenerational trauma.
7. **Partnership with Families:** parent and family involvement in a student’s learning is very important target in the NWT education system. A community/family liaison role has been created to address difficulties accessing students’ families.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

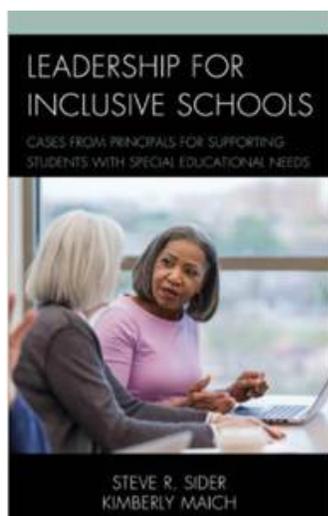
1. What do you think about when considering education and schooling in Canada’s North?
2. Are there unique factors that make inclusion challenging in Northern schools?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Catholic schools in Yellowknife, NWT are fully inclusive even though they employ few specialists. What is your reaction to this? Does this seem reasonable? Possible?
2. Liz Baile notes success is about how a student feels about their learning, more than what they are learning. To what extent might this be the case?
3. Liz emphasizes the value of autonomy for all students several times in the discussion. How can teachers adapt instruction to strengthen and support autonomous learning?
4. Liz states that NWT schools mandate that it is a teacher's job to teach ALL the students in their classrooms. During this chat session she provided some examples of how the schools she works in support teachers to do this. What additional strategies and practices might be used to aid teachers in successfully accomplishing this?

## More from Liz Baile:

- Baile, L. (2016, February 2). Turning a corner. Inclusion Canada. <https://inclusiveeducation.ca/2016/02/02/2-turning-a-corner-by-liz-baile/>
- Baile, L. (2018, March 1). Sharpening our northern inclusive schooling lens. Inclusion Canada. <https://inclusiveeducation.ca/2018/03/01/sharpening-our-northern-inclusive-schooling-lens/>



**2022 Book from Steve Sider and Kimberley Maich, members of IEC's Network of Associates**

# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**

***Gillian Parekh***

***Associate Professor and Canada  
Research Chair (Tier 2) Inclusion,  
Disability and Education  
York University, Ontario***

Gillian Parekh is an Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in the Faculty of Education at York University in Toronto, Ontario.

Gillian is a former special education teacher and research coordinator with the Toronto District School Board. With a doctorate in Critical Disability Studies, Gillian has conducted extensive research with the Toronto District School Board in the areas of structural equity, special education, and academic streaming. Gillian is a member of Inclusive Education Canada's Network of Associates. She has written commentaries for the IEC website and served as a facilitator and speaker at sessions organized by IEC. Gillian is also a member of the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education. Her work explores how schools construct and respond to disability as well as organize students across programs.

# Key Issues in this Chat Session:

**1.What Next?** Gillian observed that early in her career, when visiting “special schools” or “self contained sites for special education”, there was great emphasis on developing social relationships among students. However, while this may occur in the “self-contained” setting, the longer-term outcomes for far too many students who attend these programs are dismal when they transition to post-school life.

**2.Redirecting a Large Ship is Challenging:** The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is a challenging case study for the successful adoption of inclusive practices. It is difficult to redirect a big ship (i.e., the TDSB) when it is set on a specific path. Historically, the TDSB has been grounded in the special education model, so moving towards inclusion requires undoing the separations among students and teachers that have been made. Many who work in the TDSB have high levels of anxiety about this matter.

**3.The TDSB Cares about Research:** The TDSB conducts research on its practices. In Gillian’s experience, the TDSB both supported the research and seriously considered the recommendations made.

**4.Inclusion Into What?** Gillian discusses the negative effect the ableist frameworks, structures, and attitudes found in classrooms and schools have on achieving inclusive education.

**5.Representation Matters:** Representation of people with disabilities within schools is important. For example, having teachers with disabilities in the school and ensuring that the history of people with disabilities is included in the curriculum, helping to challenge ableism.

**6.Celebrating Differences:** Gillian stresses that inclusion does not equal assimilation. She says that sometimes educators think this is the goal, but really, it’s about celebrating the unique identities of each student.

**7.Spotlight on the Positives:** The news media seems to cover what is going wrong, but perhaps change can come about by highlighting what is working well in the movement towards inclusion. This sort of positive attention might help to build momentum and demonstrate the possibilities of inclusion to other educators.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Can schools help to challenge the current stereotypes of people with disabilities? If so, how might this be done?
2. In your own experience with education/at school, did you ever notice the representation of people with disabilities?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Do you think recognizing positive stories of inclusive education could help to move more schools in the direction of inclusive education? Or would it be more effective to demonstrate that the current, segregated models are not working as they are supposed to therefore inclusion should be implemented?
2. What do you think about the idea of creating gay/straight alliance type groups for students with barriers to learning in schools? Is this something you believe would help to foster inclusion?

## More from Gillian Parekh:

1. Parekh, G. (2013). A case for inclusive education. Toronto, Toronto District School Board.
2. Parekh, G., & Brown, R. S. (2019). Changing Lanes: The Relationship between Special Education Placement and Students' Academic Futures. *Educational Policy*, 33(1), 111-135.
3. Parekh, Gillian (2017) The tyranny of "ability", *Curriculum Inquiry*, 47:4, 337-343, DOI: 10.1080/03626784.2017.1383755
4. Parekh G., Gaztambide-Fernández R. (2017) The More Things Change: Durable Inequalities and New Forms of Segregation in Canadian Public Schools. In: Pink W., Noblit G. (eds) *Second International Handbook of Urban Education*. Springer International Handbooks of Education. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40317-5\\_43](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40317-5_43)
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6. Parekh, Gillian (2018) Exploring Inclusion in Ontario, *Inclusive Education Canada*, <https://inclusiveeducation.ca/2018/03/16/exploring-inclusion-in-ontario/>
7. Reid, Luke, Parekh, Gillian Parek &, Lattanzio, Robert (2020) A Relic of the Past: Identification, Placement and Review Committees in Ontario's Education System, *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, Issue 194.





# Series 2 Chat Session Guides



# Commentary on Series Two: Trans-Atlantic Reflections

*by David Towell,  
Director of the Centre for Inclusive Futures in London, UK*



Inclusive Education Canada (IEC) previously posted my commentary on the first series of ***Let's Chat About Inclusive Education***. Gordon Porter thought this brief overview was a useful complement to the depth of ideas and discussion available in the first ten broadcasts and encouraged me to do the same for ***Series Two***. I think the second series builds intelligently on many of the themes in the first, offering new perspectives and examples, so my two commentaries are probably best read together. Mostly I have tried not to repeat myself, but I think it worth saying again that together I think these broadcasts provide a very rich collection of insights on the journey to inclusive education, expressed in engaging and accessible ways. I know that IEC is repackaging them with

guides for each session as a collection of resource materials. I hope that these will be widely used in Canada and elsewhere.

To repeat another point, the ***second series*** continues to demonstrate the strength-in-depth of informed leadership on inclusive education in Canada. I think that **Gordon Porter** and **Diane Richler** will forgive me if I describe them as '*first generation*' leaders in this social movement, albeit still very active ones. What impressed me now with all twenty broadcasts is the wealth of '*second generation*' leadership (including Jacqui Specht) and indeed the evidence of an emerging '*third generation*' to take this work forward in the coming decade and beyond.

We need to remember that all these discussions were conducted in the shadow of the pandemic. Students, families and teachers (and those who teach teachers) all had to deal with the challenges of Covid 19 and learn how best to adapt to widespread school closure. On the one hand, home schooling certainly strengthened attention to the importance of families as partners and there was rapid growth in both internet access and the availability of useful assistive and instructional technologies for all students, well-described by **Gabrielle Young** and **Tiffany Gallagher**. On the other, both the pandemic and school closure damaged physical and emotional health, disrupted learning and undermined efforts to advance inclusion. Judging from these discussions, the jury is still out on whether we will learn from all this in order to *build back better*.

## Commentary on Series Two: Trans-Atlantic Reflections

I ended my first commentary with a question - what are we learning about how best to use this in-depth knowledge and leadership to achieve system-wide transformation across your great country? I use this question as a focus for my overview of **Series Two**. Here are seven key messages:

- Visionary leadership is key to creating and sustaining value-driven change. The first discussion in this new Series - with **Steve Sider** - makes the point that while schools (and other important structures like school boards) require good management, they also need *inspirational leadership*, capable of building widespread commitment to the belief that *every child belongs* in their local school and providing the support required by teachers and others to develop the attitudes and skills required for everyone to succeed in diverse classrooms.
- Steve also argues convincingly, as does **Kimberley Maich**, that leadership in this sense is not something that can mostly be learnt on a course: rather leadership development requires that people like school principals have the opportunities and support in *learning communities* to reflect on their own experiences and learn from peers, some of whom will be more established champions for inclusion.
- The ten discussions provide many detailed examples of this kind of visionary leader at work. Julie Stone and Tanya Whitney are two of the most experienced. New Brunswick is a global pioneer in inclusive education and **Julie Stone** was a pioneer in achieving this. She demonstrates the importance of *one-to-one mentoring* of classroom teachers (including through an illuminating story about 'Sarah') as a core means of helping them design pedagogical strategies addressed to individual students experiencing barriers to learning. **Tanya Whitney** has also had a long-term leadership role in New Brunswick, notably as a school principal. She emphasizes that inclusion has to be a *foundational* aspect of educational improvement (not just another 'project') in which we continually invest in learning how to do better. At the school level, her experience suggests that this means building strong commitment to inclusive values, investing in skilled support to practitioners, working collaboratively so that everyone learns from each other and genuinely valuing parent engagement in problem-solving.
- Informed leadership is just as important among families and the wider community. (Of course, people offering system leadership are also family members.) Building inclusive education and indeed social inclusion more generally can only be achieved when public agencies and civil society work together. **Genia Stephen** is a parent and a sibling who is working hard, not least through the popular *Good Things in Life* podcasts, to strengthen disability awareness especially among new parents and help families engage positively with the struggles that seem to be an inevitable part of getting the best for their children. She argues powerfully that children with disabilities should be at the *heart of their communities* right from the start and families need to share high expectations for the quality of their lives. In turn, we need to ensure that education is inclusive throughout the life-cycle: pre-school, primary, secondary and post secondary.

## Commentary on Series Two: Trans-Atlantic Reflections

- Much of these discussions rightly focuses on the experience of students and families and the local delivery of education. But of course it is the *law and policies* established provincially and nationally and the resources invested in their implementation that provide important conditions for local success. This point is most clearly reflected in the discussion with **Roberto Lattanzio**, Director of the Arch Disability Law Centre. Canada has long had an impressive *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and government has been strong in ratifying global human rights conventions, including the *Convention on The Rights of Persons With Disabilities*. However Roberto argues - and many families will agree - that these principled commitments are only given limited recognition in the archaic frameworks and procedures that characterize much legal practice. **Cornelia Schneider** offers one illustration (in relation to the recent Accessibility Act in Nova Scotia) of the importance of inclusive education advocates to actively seek to shape these frameworks and their implementation.
- In the two series to date, more than half of the discussions have been with people with important roles in *Universities*. Together they are undertaking a lot of great work. Even so, there was recognition - notably in the discussion with **Tim Loreman** - that there is often a significant gap between Universities and the field, between research and practice. Tim is the President of Concordia University (in Edmonton) and so well placed to argue that one part of closing this gap is to ensure that Universities are themselves *model* inclusive institutions, not just in their welcome to student and staff diversity and inclusive pedagogy but also in establishing an organizational culture of mutual respect ('be kind to each other').
- Beyond this, Universities remain privileged institutions in our countries with the status, independence and expertise to be a *resource to their communities* through scholarly engagement with societal challenges (going well beyond traditional conceptions of teaching and research) and certainly the potential to offer a trusted base for supporting and sharing learning about achieving visionary social change.

In Canada, there has already been a 40-year journey towards achieving quality and inclusive education for all. Elsewhere on the IEC website, **Gordon Porter** tells the story of this always evolving journey in New Brunswick (available here: <https://bit.ly/3BEtfQN>). This case study makes clear that real transformation requires a partnership between the education system and civil society to deliver changes in thinking and practice at all levels from the classroom to the Ministry.

In the ***Let's Chat conversations***, we see many of the contributing elements in this *whole system* reform. Returning to my starting question, it seems that these efforts still need to be linked together better to achieve our goals. *We have promises to keep.*

# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



## *Guest: Steve Sider*

*Professor & Associate Dean  
Director, Centre for Leading Research in  
Education, Faculty of Education  
Wilfrid Laurier University,  
Waterloo, ON*

Dr. Steve Sider is a professor and associate dean in the Faculty of Education at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, where he teaches courses in school leadership and inclusive education.

He was a school administrator, special education teacher and consultant, and classroom teacher for 15 years before joining the university faculty. He received his PhD in Educational Studies from Western University in 2006 after earlier academic study at Brock University and Laurier University. He is the inaugural director for the Centre for Leading Research in Education (CLRiE), an interdisciplinary research centre at Laurier. He is a Fellow at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and an associate of the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education.

Dr. Sider currently holds three Canadian national research grants examining inclusive leadership practices of Canadian school principals. He is the 2019 winner of the Laurier Donald F. Morgenson Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence in the category of Excellence in Internationalization. He travels regularly to Haiti, Ghana, and Egypt where he is involved in school leadership and special education training and research.

Dr. Sider's research focus is at the intersection of inclusive education and school leadership in international contexts. Dr. Sider recently co-authored the book *Leadership for Inclusive Schools*. He holds multiple national and international research grants exploring competencies for inclusive school leadership. He is past-president of the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada and a member of Inclusive Education Canada's "Network of Associates".

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1. **The Soft Skills of Leadership:** Dr. Sider points out that “values and attitudes” are important factors in ensuring principals can be successful with inclusion. Principals who have had direct experience with students with disabilities appear more able to demonstrate these values and attitudes.
2. **Nurturing Principals’ Skills:** Leadership with a commitment to inclusion is critical and research must continue to be done on how principals develop their attitudes towards inclusion. Both “technical skills” (instructional strategies & individual planning) and “soft skills” (values, vision and attitude) are needed.
3. **Collaboration Between Leaders:** collaboration with school leaders from different schools and school districts can enable sharing and skill development and produce positive outcomes.
4. **Intersectionality:** Steve asserts that inclusion must not operate in silos related to a student’s particular challenge or barrier in learning. It is a grave error to consider a student’s needs from just one aspect of their identity (e.g., academic deficits, physical, behavioural). Effective inclusion strategies address a student’s unique and diverse needs.
5. **Segregation in Ontario Schools:** Special classes - and in a few cases special schools - are still far too prevalent in Ontario. In most respects it would seem to be related to a “failure of vision” or a lack of commitment by those in leadership positions.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. What role do principals play in creating an inclusive school?
2. What skills or experiences does a principal need to be successful with inclusion?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. How can networking and professional learning communities be established for school principals?
2. What strategies can be used to strengthen the “soft skills” of principals who have not had personal experience engaging with students with disabilities and other diverse learning needs?
3. What strategy might advocates use to move inclusion ahead and reduce segregation in schools?

## More from Steve Sider:

Sider, S., Maich, K., Morvan, J., Vilella, M., Ling, P., & Repp, C. (2021). Inclusive school leadership: Examining the experiences of school principals in supporting students with special education needs. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 21(2). <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12515>

MacCormack, J., Sider, S., Maich, K., & Specht, J. (2021). Self-determination and inclusion: The role of Canadian principals in catalysing inclusive-positive practices. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, 17(2). <https://journals.sfu.ca/ijep/index.php/ijep/issue/view/213>

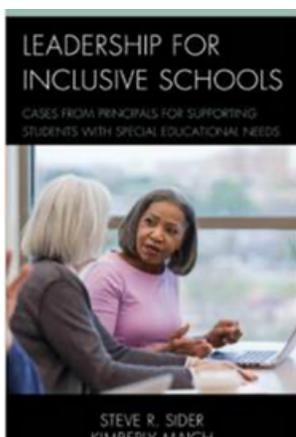
Sider, S. (2020). School principals and students with special education needs in a pandemic: Emerging insights from Ontario, Canada. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 48(2), 78-84.

Sider, S. & Ling, P. (2020). Setting the context for a conference to explore intersectionalities for school leadership and inclusion. *Exceptionality Education International*, 30(2), 4-11.

Maich, K., Sider, S., Morvan, J., & Smith, D. (2020). Making the unknown or invisible accessible: The collaborative development of inclusion-focused open-access case studies for principals and other school leaders. *Exceptionality Education International*, 30(2), 68-79.

Sider, S., Maich, K., & Morvan, J. (2017). School principals and students with special education needs: Leading inclusive schools. *Canadian Journal of Education*. 40(2).

Sider, S. (2016). Supporting a student with a vision impairment in secondary school. In K. Stegemann, & A. Aucoin (Eds.) (2016). *Inclusive education: Stories of success and hope in a Canadian context*. Toronto: Pearson



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sciences humaines du Canada

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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**  
**Roberto Lattanzio**  
*Executive Director  
ARCH Disability Law Centre  
Toronto, ON*

Roberto Lattanzio is the Executive Director of ARCH Disability Law Centre. He first joined ARCH in 2003 and was appointed Executive Director in 2015. Roberto has acted as legal counsel in test case litigation at all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada, and has made law reform submissions to various levels of government, committees, and administrative bodies. Rob has been appointed to numerous advisory committees and has written and guest-lectured on diverse topics including equality and human rights law, administrative law, education law, capacity and supported decision making, disability rights, legislative reform, and social science evidence. He also has delivered extensive rights education training to diverse communities of persons with disabilities and continuing legal education to the legal profession. Robert received his LL.B and B.C.L. law degrees with distinction from McGill University in 2003. Robert has a long-standing interest in disability rights and social justice, with extensive work and volunteer experience within disability communities and other equality seeking communities. He has supported initiatives to promote inclusive education in cooperation with Community Living Ontario and Inclusive Education Canada. Roberto Lattanzio is a member of IEC's Network of Associates.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Supporting Families:** It is important for families to understand their options and potential strategies for gaining access to the type of education they want for their child. ARCH provides summary advice and referral services to persons with disabilities (and their families) regarding education.
- 2. Lawyers Need the Help of Experts Too:** ARCH provides education to the legal community on the rights of persons with disabilities in general and in relation to education.
- 3. Communication is Key:** When families are seeking assistance from ARCH, often there is a breakdown in communication between a student/family and the school. In many instances, there is a lack of transparency, or accountability and structural issues in the school that are causing disputes that lead a family to seek legal support.
- 4. Inconsistencies in Policy:** There are major inconsistencies on policy and practices in the education system at both the provincial and local level. Canada, and in our case Ontario, has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Article 24 of the Convention provides an individual the right to inclusive education, yet the Ontario education act does not explicitly consider students as rights holders thus creating a dilemma for parents and advocates.
- 5. Ground Swell Needed for Change:** The law is a critical factor in addressing segregated education for students with disabilities. However, the opinions of parents and community members matter as well, and they are not always supportive of inclusion. A true ground swell of advocacy is needed to educate stakeholders on both the legal and educational reasons for our schools to be inclusive.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. What role can the law play in the movement towards inclusive education?
2. What types of issues do you think people seeking legal advice pertaining to inclusive education are dealing with?
3. What agencies or support groups support parents with the legal issues they encounter in advocating for inclusion?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. How do you think the provisions of Article 24 of the CRPD align with the perceived inconsistencies in education policy and practice connected to the inclusion of students with barriers to learning?
2. What do you consider the most important aspect of the work of agencies such as ARCH Disability Law Centre? Should they engage in individual or systemic advocacy? Which do you think should be given priority?
3. Do you know of other agencies that provide similar services as ARCH?

# More from Roberto Lattanzio:

- Reid, L., Parekh, G., Lattanzio, R., A Relic of the Past: Identification, Placement and Review Committees in Ontario's Education System, (2020) No. 194 CJEAP.  
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- Reid, L., Bennett, S., Specht, S. White, R., Somma, M., Li, X., Lattanzio, R., Gavan, K., Kyle, G., Porter, G. & Patel, A. If Inclusion Means Everyone, Why Not Me? (2018). ARCH Disability Law Centre, Community Living Ontario.  
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- Kerri, K., Lattanzio, R., Inclusive Education: Opportunities for ReDesign, in Roderick C. Flynn ed., CAPSLE 2010: The Rocky Road Ahead: Balancing Competing Interests at 85. Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for the Practical Study of Law in Education, held in Calgary, Alberta, April 25-27, 2010, (Toronto: CAPSLE, 2011). <https://archdisabilitylaw.ca/resource/inclusive-education-opportunities-for-redesign-2010/>



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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

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**Guest:**

**Gabrielle Young**

*Associate Professor*

*Memorial University of Newfoundland  
St. John's, NL*

Gabrielle Young, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, at Memorial University in Newfoundland and Labrador where she works with graduate and undergraduate students of education. She completed doctoral studies at Western University in London, Ontario.

Gabrielle teaches courses that build skills in understanding and supporting students with specific learning disorders such as the *Nature and Characteristics of Learning Disabilities and Inclusive Practices for Students with Learning Disabilities*.

Gabrielle's research interests surround the use of assistive and instructional technology in inclusive classrooms. She has focused on applying the principles of universal design for learning and differentiated instruction to support students with exceptionalities in the general education classroom. Other research interests include ensuring quality childhood education and care and building pre-service teachers' efficacy to support students in inclusive classrooms. Gabrielle has also worked to facilitate the positive mental health of students and teachers.

She has been active as a volunteer in the Learning Disabilities Association. Gabrielle is a member of the Canadian Centre for Inclusive Education based at Western University and is a member of Inclusive Education Canada's "Network of Associates".

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

**1. Technology for All:** Ideally, teachers should introduce assistive technology for all students. Not only will this improve academic outcomes for all students, but it will also help reduce the stigma that surrounds technology when it is only used by some students.

**2. There Is Still A Lot to Learn Re: Technology:** With an abundance of assistive technologies available, there is still a long way to go in terms of teachers being aware of and comfortable using technology. Gabrielle states that this is even the case for newer teachers who are considered 'digital-natives'. Regular teacher training on assistive technologies may help improve awareness and the comfortable and effective use of assistive technology.

**3. No Student Left Behind:** Classroom activities using assistive technologies can be altered to meet the needs of all students. Gabrielle provided an example for teaching Shakespeare in high school classes. Students may have access via technology to different versions of the text, or even access to videos performing the plays to accommodate all learning levels.

**4. Leadership Matters:** Gabrielle noted the importance of leadership in schools when it comes to inclusion. Principals do the hiring of teachers and staff so they set the expectations for inclusive practices within the school. The province of Newfoundland does not have school districts anymore, thus leadership at the school level is even more pertinent.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Do you have any experience with assistive technologies? Was this experience positive? Did you feel that you had a strong understanding of the technology used?
2. What are some benefits of removing school districts and instead having one board for an entire province?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. How do you think introducing assistive technologies for all students would reduce the stigma surrounding the use of technology when it is only given to some students?
2. What priorities would you set for using assistive technologies with students in the classroom?

# More from Gabrielle Young:

- Young, G. (Ed.) (2019). Linking Quality Early Child Education and Special Education Needs: Special Issue. *Exceptionality Education International*, 29(3), 1-153. Accessible online at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/eei/>
- Young, G., Philpott, D., Bertrand, J., & McCuaig, K. (2019). Linking Quality Early Child Education and Special Education Needs: Introduction to the Special Issue. *Exceptionality Education International*, 29(3), 1-5. Accessible online at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/eei/vol29/iss3/1>
- Young, G., Philpott, D., Butler, E., Maich, K., & Penney, S. (2019). Exploring the impact of quality early child education on special education: Can we prevent placement in special education? *Exceptionality Education International*, 29(3), 6-21. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/eei/vol29/iss3/2>
- Young, G., & Careen, C. (2019). Examining the literature on assistive technology. *Knowledge about Literacy (Viden om Literacy)*, 26, 14-21.
- Young, G., de Lugt, J., Penny, S., & Specht, J. (2019). *Exceptionality Education International: Responding to change and promoting dialogue on inclusive education for all. Scholarly and Research Communication*, 10(2): 1001307, 8 pp. <http://doi.org/10.22230/src.2019v10n2a307> <https://src-online.ca/index.php/src/article/view/307/599>
- Young, G., & Specht, J. (2015, October). Supporting school participation: Lessons learned from a youth with a mild intellectual disability. *The Inclusive Educator Journal*, 1(1), 7-12.
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- Ball, J. Penney, S., Young, G., Harris, G., & Joy, R. (2019). Teacher readiness: Teacher attitudes, opinions, and perspectives towards facilitating positive mental health in the classroom. Article written for Inclusive Education Canada. Retrieval from: <https://inclusiveeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/02/Ball-Article-MHLJBall-1.pdf>
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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**

***Tanya Whitney***

*Principal, Nackawic Middle School  
Educational Leader,  
New Brunswick Anglophone Schools  
Nackawic, NB*

Tanya Whitney is a highly regarded and experienced leader of education in anglophone schools in New Brunswick. She served as the Project Executive for Inclusion for the Ministry of Education and coordinated the implementation of the goals identified in the Porter-Aucoin report, *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools* (2012). Throughout her career, Tanya's professional focus has been a commitment to equity issues and inclusive schools. This has set her apart as a leader in these areas. Currently principal of a school in the Anglophone West School District in New Brunswick, she has served in a variety of system leadership roles including Director of Schools, Learning Specialist for Professional Learning and School Reviews, as well as Leadership Lead for a school district. She is a Qualified Mediator and certified Human Synergistics coach and has been called on to use those skills in NB.

Tanya began her career working in First Nations communities and continues to support the work of reconciliation as an active ally and is a trained KAIROS Blanket Exercise facilitator. Tanya is a member of the executive committee of the New Brunswick Association for Community Living and an active volunteer for Sexual Violence NB. She has led critical work in her district developing a policy and module on Sexual Violence prevention and response. Tanya has been a school administrator in many schools and enjoys her role as principal of Nackawic Middle School.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1. **Inclusion as the Scapegoat:** Based on Tanya's experience, inclusion is often asserted as the reason that something has gone wrong in New Brunswick's education system. She believes these assertions are misinformed and that inclusive practices are challenged more than other aspects of the education system in New Brunswick.
2. **Leadership Matters:** A reoccurring theme during this chat is the importance of having school leaders who are committed to inclusion. Commitment means continuing to learn ways to enhance inclusive practices, even when inclusion is thought to have been achieved.
3. **Inclusion is Foundational:** Sometimes, inclusive practices are treated like other 'new' curriculum programs or education packages delivered to teachers when in fact they are more than that – inclusive practices must be foundational in the public education system.
4. **Collaboration Leads to Superior Outcomes:** Tanya asserted that thriving schools are most often highly collaborative. Discussions among teachers surrounding student support, co-teaching and including families in problem solving are all examples of collaborative practices Tanya has observed in prospering schools.
5. **Smaller Communities and Inclusion:** In smaller communities where people know their neighbours, Tanya has noted higher tolerance towards inclusion. In cities and urban areas, this sense of community is often missing, and this disconnect from other families seems to influence people's attitudes towards inclusion in schools.
6. **Siloed Arms of the Education System:** A challenge many principals face is accessing the disconnected social, health and educational services targeted at students experiencing barriers to learning. Even with her extensive experience, she has found it difficult to access and navigate these services. She attributes this disconnect to middle management level communication issues in the education system. Better integration of student services with other parts of the service system and increased collaboration can make this task more manageable.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. How might schools foster community acceptance of diversity and inclusion?
2. What does inclusion do to strengthen success for all students in schools?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Can you think of an example where a family's involvement in problem solving challenges that are arising for a child in the classroom may be beneficial for both the child and the school?
2. What factors support the assertion that inclusion must be a foundational factor of our public education system?

## More from Tanya Whitney:

### Sexual Violence Policy Awareness module: Author

<https://pedex.nbed.nb.ca/pl/sv/#/id/co-05>



Hosts *Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



## Guest: *Genia Stephen* Parent, Presenter & Podcast Host: *Good Things in Life* Brockville, ON

Genia Stephen, RM, MSc., is a mother and sister to individuals with intellectual disabilities and medical complexities. Having a younger sister and son with disabilities has involved her in a lifetime of experience and training in the disability field under premier thought leaders and mentors. Genia notes that the early experiences of parents as they discover that their child has a disability is a difficult one. When her own mother found out more than 40 years ago that her sister had a disability, she had never met anyone with a disability. Her mother was worried and afraid. Fortunately, she was introduced to another parent further along the journey and that made a real difference. When Genia's own son has a disability, she started her parenting journey at a much different place than her mother.

Genia is a practicing midwife and medical advocate currently completing her MSc. in Evidence-Based Health Care at the University of Oxford. Based on her experience in this role she observes that things haven't changed much in the more than 40 years since her mother began that journey. This led Genia to create her highly regarded podcast.

Founder and host of the *Good Things In Life For Kids With Disabilities* Podcast, Genia provides an alternative to the typical social media and web resources that focus on diagnosis and treatment. Genia challenges parents to come together around a shared vision of a positive and inclusive life for their sons and daughters with disabilities.

"Genia Stephen helps kids with intellectual disabilities build inclusive lives at home, at school and in the community. With more than 37,000 downloads, her podcast now gives other parents access to her world-class disability parenting education, complete with courses and membership.

Featured in *Travel Without Limits Magazine*, *Citizen Network*, *Toronto Summer Institute*, *Inclusive Education Canada*, *Community Living Ontario*, *Don't IEP Alone Podcast*, and *Inclusive Education Podcast*, Genia speaks about creating a positive vision for kids with disabilities. Her goal is to help them get "the good things in life" through lives with valued social roles and social capital, and medical safeguarding."

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Closing the Gap:** Genia has found that most people have limited experience or interaction with people with barriers to learning. Thus, when parents find out they have a child with a disability, they immediately google it and don't always get appropriate information. Genia grew up with a sister with disabilities and has a son with disabilities. She created her podcast – *Good Things in Life* - to close the gap between what she has learned from experience and what parents just discovering they have a child with a disability know.
- 2. Remaining in the Heart of the Community:** Since he was very young, Genia has made sure her son has remained in the heart of the community. Genia recommends that parents prevent segregation and isolation from happening. Back-peddling and trying to reintegrate him with his peers in the community after it happens is difficult.
- 3. Integration from a Young Age:** Genia explained that her son's experience transitioning into school was relatively smooth because he had been enrolled in the daycare program adjacent to the school prior to kindergarten. Genia notes that integrating her son within the school and community as early as possible was key to his teachers being aware of his needs. Because her son met his peers when he was very young, he has maintained strong social connections with them.
- 4. Setting Higher Expectations:** We live in an ableist society. With many people having limited interaction with and awareness of people with disabilities, expectations of achievement for people with disabilities are often set very low. Genia found herself doing this with her son before he entered school. She challenges us to question the expectations our society has for people with disabilities.
- 5. Growing Your Community:** Genia recommends that parents ensure that their child with a disability is involved in the community, especially so if things are not going well in school. She also reminds us that community is not necessarily geographically limited – online spaces may provide valuable opportunities for belonging and building relationships as well.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Share a meaningful interaction you have had with an individual with disabilities or someone who is experiencing a barrier to learning?
2. How does our ableist society limit the opportunities for interaction between people with and without disabilities?

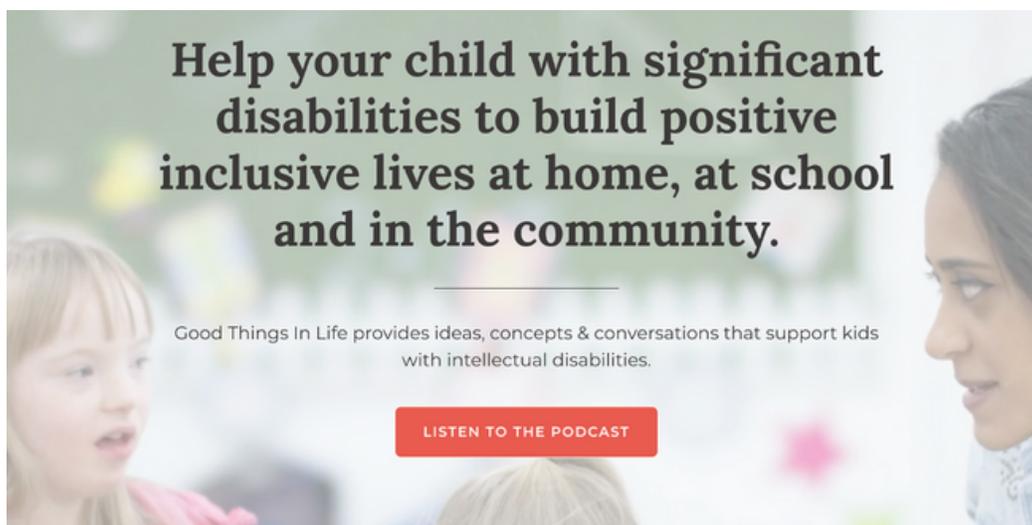
## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. In what ways have you developed your expectations for people with disabilities? How would you describe them?
2. How might you change your expectations of people with disabilities after listening to this chat with Genia?

# GOOD THINGS IN LIFE

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**Email:** [intouch@goodthingsinlife.org](mailto:intouch@goodthingsinlife.org)



**Help your child with significant disabilities to build positive inclusive lives at home, at school and in the community.**

Good Things In Life provides ideas, concepts & conversations that support kids with intellectual disabilities.

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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**  
**Tim Loreman**  
*President & Vice-Chancellor  
Concordia University of Edmonton  
Edmonton, AB*

Tim Loreman is Concordia University of Edmonton's President and Vice Chancellor and a Professor in the Faculty of Education. Before joining Concordia in 2003, Dr. Loreman was at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, where he completed his PhD. Prior to that he was an elementary and junior high school teacher in Melbourne, Australia and Edmonton, Alberta.

Tim Loreman, PhD., is Concordia University of Edmonton's 8th President and Vice Chancellor, taking on the role in January of 2017. He has been at CUE since 2003 as a Professor in the Faculty of Education, and during this time served in various roles including Dean of Research and Faculty Development, and Vice-President Academic and Provost.

He is widely published, and his research interests include inclusive education, teacher education, and pedagogy. His research work has attracted funding from major local and international granting agencies and has been recognized with awards from academic publishers and community groups. He was the recipient of Concordia's *President's Research Award* (now the Gerald S. Krispin Research Award) in 2016. In 2010 he was a *Senior Visiting Research Fellow* at the University of Bologna in Italy, and since then has also held visiting professorships at the Hong Kong Institute for Education and Queens University, Belfast.

President Loreman was founding editor of the *International Journal of Whole Schooling* and completed a term as co-editor of *Exceptionality Education International*. He has been active in supporting inclusive education in Alberta and is a member of ***Inclusive Education Canada's Network of Associates***.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. We Can Do Better than Special Education:** Through firsthand experiences teaching within the special education model, Tim began to question the “watered-down” curriculum and lack of social interaction provided to students with barriers to learning. With exposure to inclusive education, Tim became aware of the potential beyond the special education model and has been involved in research and the movement towards inclusion since then.
- 2. At a Stand Still:** In Tim’s opinion, little progress has been made toward inclusive education on a systemic level in the province of Alberta (and beyond) in the last thirty years. There has been a preoccupation with defining inclusion and this has hindered the strides that could have been made towards inclusive education.
- 3. Inclusion is the First to Go:** During the pandemic, schools in Alberta let go many of the staff who provided classroom support to students experiencing barriers to learning. These staff members were the first to go when the boards faced operational challenges. Consequently, students with disabilities were disproportionately affected by staff cuts during the pandemic. It will take some time for this to be corrected.
- 4. Disconnect between Research and Practice:** Tim points to the lack of communication between researchers and practitioners. This failure of university-based researchers and teachers in elementary, middle, and secondary schools to work together is one of the reasons why inclusion has not improved significantly in recent years. Tim asserts the need for researchers to do a better job of getting into schools and conducting research while collaborating with practitioners.
- 5. Kindness is Key:** In his role as the President and Vice Chancellor of Concordia University of Edmonton, Tim promotes the importance of kindness and respect. They are critical factors in fostering inclusion and student success in an institution of learning, including at the post-secondary level. As the leader, Tim expects all members of the university community to be kind and empathetic to one another and he accepts nothing less!

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. How do you define inclusion and more specifically, inclusive education?
2. In your opinion, do you think students experiencing barriers to learning were disproportionately affected by the pandemic and the resulting disruptions to education delivery?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Do you think collaboration between inclusive education researchers and practitioners is possible? If so, how might it be strengthened?
2. Do the organizations you are involved in promote the importance of kindness and respect in the way Tim does at Concordia University in Edmonton? How can you promote this through your day-to-day actions? How can teachers and students enhance these values in schools?

## More from Tim Loreman:

- Goldan, J., Lambrecht, J. & Loreman, T. (Eds.). (2021). Resourcing Inclusive Education. International perspectives on inclusive education (Vol. 15). Bingley, UK: Emerald.
- Sharma, U., Sokal, L., Wang, M., & Loreman, T. (2021). Measuring the use of inclusive practices amongst pre-service teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 107, 10356. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103506>
- Bradford, B., Trudel, L. E., Katz, J., Sokal, L., & Loreman, T. (2021). Promising practices for preparing Canadian pre-service teachers for inclusive classrooms: Analysis through a transformative lens. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2021.1882058
- Lim, C.Y., Loreman, T., Majid, R.A., & Alias, A. (2019). The Dispositions Towards Loving Pedagogy Scale: Instrument development and demographic analysis. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 86, 102884. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102884>
- Loreman, T. (2017). Pedagogy for inclusive education. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.148 <http://education.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-148>
- Loreman, T., McGhie-Richmond, D., Kolopayvea, A., Tarenchenko, O., Mazin, D., Crocker, C., & Petryshyn, R. (2016). A Canada-Ukraine collaborative initiative for inclusive education in Ukraine: Participant perspectives. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 27(1), 24-44. DOI: 10.1080/09243453.2015.1018912.
- Deppeler, J., Loreman, T., Smith, R., & Florian, L. (Eds.). (2015). *Inclusive pedagogy across the curriculum. International perspectives on inclusive education*. Bingley, UK: Emerald.
- Forlin, C., & Loreman, T. (Eds.). (2014). *Measuring inclusive education. International perspectives on inclusive education (Vol 3)*. Bingley, UK: Emerald.



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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**

**Julie Stone**

*Educator, Advocate, & Inclusion  
Consultant, Inclusion New Brunswick  
Nackawic, NB*

Julie Stone is a retired educator who has spent much of her over 50 years in the field working to support inclusive education. During this journey, Julie has played many roles including classroom teacher, method and resource teacher, inclusive education consultant, and director of student services. She has also served as an adjunct professor teaching inclusive education courses at universities in New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba, and the State of Maine in the USA. She has been a trainer and consultant in several countries including Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Spain.

Julie developed and taught an on-line course on Inclusive Education for the University of Maine and for the University of New Brunswick. She developed and taught a course on Teaching to Diversity for the New Brunswick Community College system. This course was part of an Instructor Development Program (IDP). She has also co-authored several articles and chapters in various publications over the years. Julie Stone is the author and compiler of an e-book for teachers entitled, *Teaching All Children in the Inclusive Classroom: From Theory to Practice*.

Julie has also been a volunteer leader in the community living movement serving as president of the New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL) and the president of Inclusion Canada, then known as the Canadian Association for Community Living. Julie served as a board member of the National Volunteer Organization a group that provides national leadership and expertise on volunteerism and community service.

Julie continues to work for Inclusive education and serves on the Inclusive Education Committee of NBACL.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Having a Vision is Helpful:** When Julie first supported teachers with inclusion as a resource teacher, she and the school principal were fully focused on making it work. As a result, when challenges arose during implementation, teamwork enhanced the effort to continue and developed a shared sense of resolve to be successful with inclusion.
- 2. Changes in Attitudes Towards Inclusion:** Over the course of Julie's career, she has noted positive changes in the public's perception of and attitudes towards people with barriers to learning and inclusive practices. She no longer encounters teachers or school leaders in New Brunswick who overtly question why a particular student is in their classroom or school. Instead, they centre their effort on developing more effective practices.
- 3. Making the Jump from Theory to Practice:** In recent years, Julie has worked on a one-to-one basis with teachers to improve their capacity to accommodate their curriculum and lesson plans so that all students could participate in classroom activities and learning. Supporting them in this way enabled teachers to tangibly acquire knowledge and skill on how to have success with students with diverse needs in their classrooms. Support in building capacity led to teacher empowerment.
- 4. Teachers Need More Support:** Part of what made Julie's one-on-one work with teachers so effective was that each teacher was given time during the school day to work with her. A colleague or substitute teacher replaced the teacher in the classroom. As a result, the work session was not interrupted, and the support provided was tailored to the needs of the specific teacher. Time was devoted to what the teacher wanted, and success was achieved when the teacher could take meaningful strategies back to the classroom. Schools need to ensure that teachers receive this kind of support and in far too many cases they do not.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

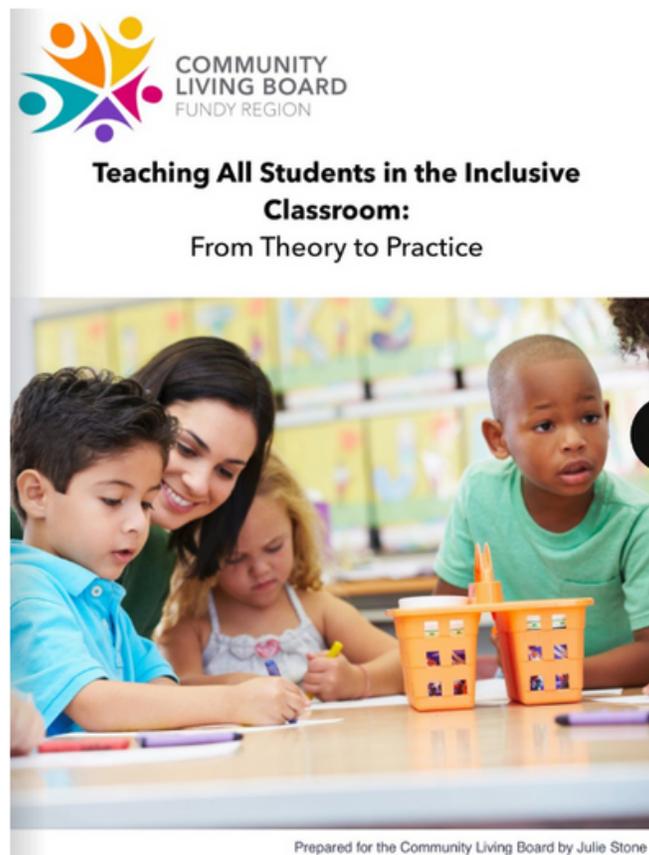
1. In what ways do you think a shared vision can contribute to the movement towards inclusive education?
2. Are personal experiences working with people with barriers to learning necessary for developing a teacher's commitment to inclusive education?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Have you encountered more positive attitudes towards inclusion over time, just as Julie mentioned?
2. What are some additional strengths of the one-on-one mentoring model that Julie facilitated in New Brunswick schools?
3. How might schools use existing staff to enable collaboration on strategy development for inclusion to occur?

# More from Julie Stone:

- Porter, G. & Stone, J., (1998) An Inclusive School Model: A Framework and Key Strategies for Success. Chapter 11 in Cooperative Learning and Strategies for Inclusion, Second Edition, Edited by JoAnne Putnam, Baltimore: Paul Brookes Publishing.
- Stone, Julie, & Campbell, Charlotte, (1991) Student to Student: Curriculum and the Development of Peer Relationships; Chapter 13 in Porter & Richler, Changing Canadian Schools. Toronto: The Roeher Institute.
- Stone. Julie, (2016), Teaching All Children in the Inclusive Classroom: From Theory to Practice, New Brunswick: Fundy Community Living Board.



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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**

**Cornelia Schneider**

**Associate Professor &  
Director of Teacher Education,  
Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, NS**

Cornelia has a strong European background. Born and raised in Nuremberg, Germany, her first academic studies were at the University of Würzburg in Bavaria where she completed Special Education Teacher Training in 2001. She completed her Master's degree in Educational Sciences from University René Descartes in Paris, (Faculté des Sciences humaines et sociales – Sorbonne, 2002). In 2002 Cornelia began lecturing in Sociology of Education and Disability at the University René Descartes in Paris. She completed her Ph.D. in 2006 – her dissertation was an examination of – *'Peer Relationships in Mainstream Classrooms Between Children With and Without Disabilities'*.

Cornelia Schneider has been at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia since 2007. She is currently an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education and the Director of the Teacher Training Program. In 2015 she co-founded MountAbility (IPSE – Inclusive Postsecondary Education) which allows young people with disabilities to engage in academic undergraduate studies using a participatory audit model. The program is continuing to grow and thrive on the MSVU campus.

Dr. Schneider's research and teaching focuses on the people who are involved in the educational processes, especially the children themselves. This is done from the perspective of the sociology of childhood and disability studies, recognizing children as actors. Cornelia utilizes a comparative approach to issues in educational and inclusive policies, strategies and practices. Cornelia publishes in English, French and occasionally German. She has been involved in research about inclusive education in Canada and several European countries including France, Germany, Portugal, Hungary, and Sweden. She has also been involved in work in the Central American nation of Honduras.

Dr Schneider is currently involved in the development of education accessibility standards in a project coordinated by the Accessibility Directorate at the Nova Scotia Department of Justice in connection with the implementation of the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

**1. Policy Changes Can Make a Difference:** With the introduction of the Accessibility Act in Nova Scotia, there is a lot of work being done to make all public sectors accessible for and inclusive of people with disabilities. Cornelia is excited about this momentum and is assisting in figuring out how to implement the specifics of this act within the education sector.

**2. Changing What We Teach Teachers:** Throughout Cornelia's time teaching at Mount Saint Vincent University, she has seen teacher education in Nova Scotia move away from the special education model and toward inclusion. This has put the focus on inclusive instructional practices such as universal design for learning and culturally responsive teaching. She believes great strides are being made to ensure newly graduated teachers believe in and understand how to implement inclusion.

**3. Thinking in New Ways:** Cornelia explains how multi-age classroom models that some schools in Germany are using can make it possible for inclusion to occur naturally and effectively. Canadian educators have been hesitant to consider and try out multi-age classrooms, but perhaps it should be considered a means of implementing inclusion.

**4. Young People Want to Make a Difference:** Many of the students entering teacher training at Mount Saint Vincent come into the program with a social justice lens. They have attended schools that are inclusive, as Nova Scotia has incorporated inclusive practices since 1996, and they believe it is the right way to educate students. They are passionate about teaching inclusively, though they might not know how to do that just yet! Their training must emphasize inclusion and the schools they go to need to reinforce their commitment.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Do you think young people today think differently than older generations about inclusion? What about those going into teacher training programs?
2. How does inclusion of students relate to teachers using culturally responsive instructional methods?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. In what ways do you think multi-age classrooms might facilitate inclusion of students with barriers to learning?
2. How important is it for beginning teachers to apply a social justice lens to their work?

## More from Cornelia Schneider:

- Schneider, C. (2019). From the margins to the centre: Educational Assistants as inclusion facilitators. In: Harber, M., Rao, A., The Role of the Education Assistant (p.5-18), Canadian Scholars Press, Toronto
- Schneider, C. (2017). Between children's rights and disability rights: inclusion and participation of children with disabilities. In: Xiaobei, C., Raby, R., Albanese, P., The Sociology of Childhood and Youth Studies in Canada: Categories, Inequalities, Engagement (p. 361-377), Canadian Scholars Press, Toronto
- Schneider, C. (2011). Une étude comparative de l'éducation inclusive des enfants avec besoins particuliers en France et en Allemagne: Recherches dans onze salles de classe = A comparative study of the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools in France and Germany : case studies of eleven classrooms. Lewiston, N.Y: Edwin Mellen Press.
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- Schneider, C., Hattie, B. (2016). Exploring the social lives of young adults with disabilities. ALTER – European Journal of Disability Research 10 (3), 236-247, doi: 10.1016/j.alter.2016.02.003
- Schneider, C. (2016). Recognizing and Respecting the Rights of Children with Disabilities in the Classroom. International Journal of Education 8(3), 119-133, doi: 10.5296/ije.v8i3.9444
- Schneider, C. (2015). Social participation of children and youth with disabilities in Canada, France and Germany, International Journal of Inclusive Education (19) 10, 1068-1079, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2015.1037867>



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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

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**Guest:**

***Kimberly Maich***

*Professor & Researcher*

*Memorial University of Newfoundland  
St. John's, NL*

Kimberly Maich is a professor, researcher, author, trainer, certified teacher, special education specialist, board-certified behaviour analyst (doctoral)—specializing in autism spectrum disorder in inclusive classroom settings.

She began her position in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University in December 2016 and is now a tenured full professor.

Kimberly has studied, taught, and lived from coast-to-coast in Canada from Vancouver, B.C., to St. Anthony, NL, and many places in-between. She spent most of her early career as a resource teacher, supporting students with exceptionalities from Kindergarten to Grade 12. She has also been a clinical coordinator with McMaster Children's Hospital's ASD School Support Program (Hamilton, ON) and a tenured Associate Professor at Brock University (Niagara, ON).

I am a special education specialist, a certified teacher, a registered psychologist (provisional, master's level), a professor and Newfoundland and Labrador's first board certified behaviour analyst.

Kimberley's primary interests lie in disabilities and special education, with a focus on autism spectrum disorders in inclusive school environments. She also works in the areas of emotional/behavioural disorders, problem behaviour, applied behaviour analysis, assistive technology, inclusive school leadership and the early years. One of Kimberley's greatest joys in the professorship role is mentoring graduate students in research, writing, presentations and publications.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Moving Away from Labels:** A major stride that Newfoundland and Labrador has made towards inclusion in recent years is implementing a tiered approach to accessing resources. It is no longer necessary for students to obtain formalized identification of barriers to learning or “labels”, to access resources they would benefit from in schools. This means that more students across a broader spectrum of needs can access the supports they need to be successful in the classroom.
- 2. Distance Learning – Proceeding with Caution:** Long before the pandemic, Newfoundland and Labrador has been interested in distance learning. Due to the geographic vastness and low-density population of the province, distance learning has many advantages. Kimberley recognizes that distance learning works very well for some students, but stresses that for other students we must be careful it does not foster greater exclusion in schools. Using distance education when teachers feel that a student is not “a good fit” in a classroom is not acceptable.
- 3. Celebrating Uniqueness:** Kimberley believes that principals play a major role in fostering inclusion within schools. This can be done by destigmatizing disability and celebrating difference and diversity in classrooms and can be especially effective when students are just starting their educational journey.
- 4. The Early Years are Critical:** Educators who work with students in their first few years of school require more support to promote inclusion. Professional development on topics related to inclusive education should be made available and encouraged for this group of educators. This is a critical stage for fostering inclusive attitudes because students at this age are just starting to notice differences between themselves and others.
- 5. Increased Awareness:** The most notable positive change related to inclusive education Kimberley has witnessed during her career is the increased awareness of different barriers to learning an individual student might experience. For example, when Kimberley began her career, parents often told her they had never heard of Autism. She seldom hears this in her current work, and believes the public has an increased awareness and understanding of student diversity.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. How do you celebrate uniqueness or diversity in your daily life? Consider both your personal and professional lives when discussing this question.
2. What are the key benefits of distance learning?
3. Can you identify limitations of distance learning related to students experiencing barriers to learning?

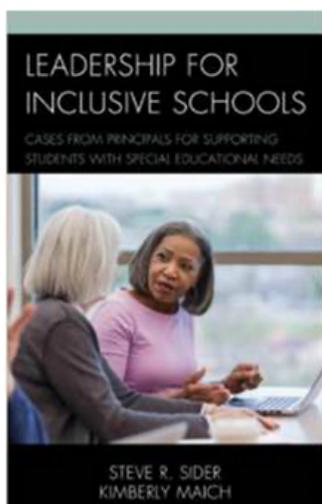
## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. What are the most critical actions a principal can take to foster inclusion in a school?
2. Do you agree that awareness and understanding of different barriers to learning students experience have increased in recent years?
3. What factors do you believe are contributing to this increased awareness and acceptance of diversity among students?

# More from Kimberly Maich:

- Sider, S.; Maich, K.; Morvan, J. (2017). School principals and students with special education needs: Leading inclusive schools. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 40(2). Retrieved from [https://cje-rce.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/07/Regular-2417-Sider.Final\\_June\\_21.pdf](https://cje-rce.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/07/Regular-2417-Sider.Final_June_21.pdf)
- Maich, K., Sider, S., Morvan, J., Specht, J., Smith, D. (2020). Making the unknown or invisible accessible: The collaborative development of inclusion-focused open access case studies for principals and other school leaders. *Exceptionality Education International Special Issue*, 30(2), 68-79. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/eei/vol30/iss2/7/>
- van Rhijn, T., Maich, K., Lero, D., & Irwin, S. H. (2019). Assessing inclusion quality: The SpecialLink Early Childhood Quality Inclusion Scale. *Exceptionality Education International: Special Issue on Quality Early Childhood Education & the Need for Special Education Services*, 29(3).
- Fairbrother, M., Maich, K., & Sider, S. (2019). School principals and inclusive schools: A case study of complex contexts and competing perspectives. *International Journal of Case Studies in Business, IT, and Education*, 3(2). doi: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3519497>.
- Maich, K., Rutherford, C., & Bishop, C. (2019). Phones, watches, and apps: Engaging everyday mobile / assistive technology for adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. *Exceptionality Education International*.
- Maich, K., & Sider, S. (2019). Special education needs and disabilities in secondary education (Canada). *Bloomsbury Education & Childhood Studies*. doi: 10.5040/9781474209441.0054
- Van Rhijn, T., Osborne, C., Ranby, S., Maich, K., Hall, C., Rzepecki, L., & Hemmerich, A. (2019). Peer play in inclusive child care settings: Assessing the impact of stay, play, and talk, a peer-mediated social skills program. *Child Care in Practice*. doi: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13575279.2019>

- Sider, S. & Maich, K. (2022). *Leadership for inclusive schools: Cases from principals for supporting students with special educational needs*. Rowman and Littlefield. <https://amzn.to/3IDkSq3>



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# Let's Chat... *about* *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**  
***Tiffany Gallagher***  
*Professor, Faculty of Education  
Brock University  
St. Catherines, ON*

Tiffany Gallagher is a Professor in the Department of Educational Studies at Brock University in Ontario. Prior to this role, Tiffany taught in two school boards in Northern Ontario. Then, for 13 years, she was an administrator in private practice supplemental education providing remedial instruction for students with learning difficulties.

She is recognized for her research that aims to enhance the learning of students with literacy difficulties and learning challenges. She specializes in survey design and case study methods. Within the past few years, she has worked closely with two school boards in the Niagara region of Ontario as a consultant researcher for projects that these school boards were implementing in the areas of professional development, and literacy for struggling students. Supporting the professional learning of teachers through instructional and inclusion coaching are also a focus of her work.

Longitudinal, multi-varied participant perspectives are the cornerstone of Tiffany's research projects. Her work seeks to inform targeted audiences such as students, teachers, administrators, and policy makers. She has published more than 60 refereed articles/chapters, as well as eight books. Tiffany is also the Director of the Brock Learning Lab that offers community-based tutoring for K-12 students and mentors undergraduate volunteer tutors.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1.Leveling the Playing Field:** Tiffany views educational technology as a way of leveling the playing field for students. All learners can use technology so that they have what they need to learn effectively.
- 2.Embracing the Technology:** A major change Tiffany has noted in the past five years is that teachers are more eager to learn about the technology that is available to them that can be incorporated into their lessons. The current increase in online learning has contributed to a significant decrease in teacher hesitancy towards new technologies.
- 3.Technology is for All Students:** Tiffany asserts that the pandemic has taught us that technology is helpful for the learning of all students. Tiffany remarks that using technology is, “just how we learn now”. This will decrease the sense that students who use technology are “different” from their peers with the negative effects this implies.
- 4.Making Resources Known to Parents:** There is an abundance of instructional resources available for learners, however Tiffany has come to realize that far too often, parents are not aware of them. Tiffany has been working towards creating a guide for parents that includes current and appropriate information about resources for students experiencing barriers to learning.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

- 1.What do you understand educators mean when they refer to “assistive technology”?
- 2.Have you or one of your classmates been provided with “assistive technology” to facilitate learning? Please describe what that involved.
- 3.What has been your personal experience using instructional technology? In what ways has the increased use of technology affected you?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

- 1.Do you think the changes to educational practice that occurred during the covid pandemic will be sustained in the medium and long term?
- 2.Should schools ensure that every student has access to a full range of instructional technology to help “level the playing field”?
- 3.Do you believe it is possible for there to be too many technologies or too many resources for learners? Do you have any ideas on how best to get the right resources to the right students?

## More from Tiffany Gallagher:

- Bennett, S., Gallagher, T.L., Somma, M., White, R., & Wlodarczyk, K. (2020). Transitioning from segregation to inclusion: An effective and sustainable model to promote inclusion, through internal staffing adjustments, and role redefinition. In J. Goldan, J. Lambrecht & T. Loreman (Eds.), *International perspectives on inclusive education. Volume 15: Resourcing inclusive education*. Emerald Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-800043-457-8  
<https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/>
- Delorey, J., Specht, J., Fairbrother, M., Ismailos, L., Villella, M., Charles, E., Vanderloon, M., Gallagher, T., Howell, G., & Whitley, J. (2020). Experiences that shape pre-service teachers' inclusive practice beliefs: A group concept mapping study. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1862403>
- Bennett, S., Gallagher, T.L., Somma, M., & White, R. (2020). Transitioning towards inclusion: A triangulated view of the role of educational assistants. *Journal of Research in Special Education Needs*, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12508>
- Ismailos, L., Gallagher, T.L., Bennett, S., & Li, X. (2019). Pre-service and in-service teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs with regards to inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 22(2), 175-191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1642402>
- Bennett, S., Dworet, D., Gallagher, T., & Somma, M. (2019). *Special education in Ontario schools (8th Ed.)*. Highland Press.
- Gallagher, T.L., & Bennett, S. (2018). The six 'P' model: Principles of coaching for inclusion for inclusion coaches. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, 7(1), 19-34. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMCE-03-2017-0018>
- Gallagher, T.L. & Ciampa, K. (2020). *International perspectives on teacher candidates and in-service literacy teachers' self-efficacy and collective efficacy*. Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-3-030-47820-9 DOI 10.1007/978-3-030-47821-6. <https://www.palgrave.com/gp>

## Checkout this Special Commentary from Tiffany Gallagher and her daughter Victoria Gallagher:

- Gallagher, Victoria, & Gallagher, Tiffany (2018). Victoria and Tiffany Gallagher: Our Story, in *Inclusive Education Canada*, <https://bit.ly/38xy8QI>



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# Series 3 Chat Session Guides



# Commentary on Series Three: Trans-Atlantic Reflections

*by David Towell,  
Director of the Centre for Inclusive Futures in London, UK*



Let me begin by congratulating the three hosts of this important series of broadcasts and especially Gordon Porter who has organised and produced the whole series. Thirty broadcasts represents a lot of effort and the whole series continues to demonstrate the wealth of experience and expertise available across Canada to energise transformational change in education.

After the first 20 Chats, those in the third series were bound to involve some repetition of themes from earlier broadcasts - as indeed does my Commentary - but even where there is repetition, I found Series III contributors adding new angles and examples.

Overall, I think the cumulative story from these broadcasts paints a mixed picture of progress in Canada. On the positive side, the 40 years of experience to date has clearly given great depth to our understanding of inclusive practice and enriched the variety of instructional strategies and tools available to teachers and others - as, for example, Donna McGhee-Richmond describes. Moreover, the respondents who teach teachers mostly give a positive account of the willingness of those now entering the profession to think holistically and become (as Vianne Timmons puts this) detectives seeking to identify each child's unique gifts and possibilities. As a consequence, we have many more examples of students with disabilities belonging in regular schools and achieving success.

On the other hand, it sometimes seems - as Donna Barrett describes - that such individual success is not generalised to the school as a whole; parents still have to fight hard to gain and maintain school inclusion for their children especially in places where there is major investment in segregated 'special schools'; and some of the impetus to advance inclusion has been lost or at least become more diffuse as we have got further away from where this social movement started.

In the latter context, we should also note that while attention to diversity in its many forms and appreciation of intersectionality (the association between different types of disadvantage) broaden our understanding of inclusion/exclusion, it is important that disability is not lost from this complexity.

## Commentary on Series Three: Trans-Atlantic Reflections

In my third Commentary therefore, I have sought to identify a small number of propositions that might inform our efforts to do better. Of course, I offer this list as no more than a trans-Atlantic stimulus for the conclusions that Canadian readers draw for themselves.

### **1. Maintain the utmost clarity about what inclusive education means**

Marilyn Dolmage is a parent and has been industriously working to help other parents, students and schools for several decades. As she puts this, 'inclusion is a richly woven blanket and we must attend to all the threads'. It is well worth listening to what she says again: inclusive education is about welcoming all students with disabilities into neighbourhood schools alongside their brothers and sisters; it is about holding high expectations for their participation and contribution; it is about giving good support to both teachers and students so that everyone can learn; and it is about recognising that education with one's peers has important social as well as academic benefits - a point also emphasised by Zana Lutfiyya.

### **2. Stay in touch with the roots of our movement**

Time moves on, new people enter this field, we can lose touch with what drove efforts to achieve educational reform. Using the important example of the 1980s legal fight (based on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms) by Luke Ellwood's family in Nova Scotia, Lynn Aylward makes a powerful argument - presented more fully in the film she has co-produced - about the need to remember the realities of segregation and the huge efforts ordinary families made to change this. We stand on the shoulders of these pioneers.

### **3. Make education the key element in ensuring people are included throughout the life-span.**

In Series II, Genia Stephen talks eloquently about seeking to ensure her son was at the heart of community from his birth. In the latest Series, Kathryn Underwood reinforces this message in relation to the early years and pre-school education, where there is still a lot to be done. Equally, Ken Pike, who has a wide role as social policy lead at Inclusion NB, makes the point that the experience of inclusive schooling lays the foundations for successful inclusion in adult life, for example in employment and housing.

### **4. Strengthen family advocacy, individually and collectively**

It may be disappointing to say this, but as already noted, in many parts of Canada school inclusion still depends heavily on the efforts of parents to make this the preferred option for their children with disabilities. Moreover, partnership between families and teachers is very important in ensuring that each student enjoys a positive educational experience. Ken Pike uses the work of Inclusion NB to illustrate how the multi-level work of family associations - informing and supporting individual families, helping teachers and schools, advocating for systemic change at the policy level - are together essential to making sustained progress.

### **5. Value and support teachers in their journey to inclusive practice**

It is well understood in these broadcasts that continuing education and support for classroom teachers is the key investment required to advance inclusive education. Monique Somma, a teacher educator, argues persuasively that (like students) teachers need to be life-long learners, always seeing each new student as unique and seeking to understand how they learn best, within a school culture that prioritises reflective practice.

### **6. Promote effective school and system leadership**

Extending this last point, school principals and their deputies are critical in defining the purpose and culture of schools: they make the difference in places where policy is ambiguous as to whether inclusive education advances or otherwise. Undoubtedly positive leadership at this level is influenced by personal biographies, especially previous successful experience of inclusive practice, but - as Steve Sider suggested in Series II - developing genuinely inspiring school and system-level leadership, mostly using experiential methods, needs to be another key investment in achieving system-wide change.

### **7. Build inclusive policies through inclusive processes**

As Cathy Montreuil argues most fully from her influential provincial role, this means embedding inclusion in the centre of law and policy-making so it is not vulnerable to changing political winds and priorities. It also means establishing processes that ensure policy-making is itself an inclusive process, for example by ensuring we hear the voices of the people most affected by our decisions and by disaggregating available data so as to tease out differential impacts on different sub-groups. Even in small provinces, there can be a long distance from the classroom to the Minister's office: we have to ensure that the educational enterprise becomes a learning system, mobilising multiple feedback loops so that we 'see' the whole system at work.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Finally, these broadcasts and other work of Inclusive Education Canada exemplify another critical proposition: there has certainly been 'top down' change in Canada, driven by progressive law and policy; there has also been 'bottom up' change stimulated through the efforts of local innovators. But perhaps more important than either in achieving wide progress towards inclusive education has been what in my Series I Commentary I call 'scaling across': sharing ideas and experiences through lateral networks - especially those that cross boundaries through including students, families, teachers, other educational leaders and researchers - and building advocacy coalitions that enhance the momentum for reform. The "Let's Chat" series produced by Inclusive Education Canada offers an impressive set of resources for renewing these efforts in 2023 and beyond.

# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**

**Donna Barrett**

*Teacher & Education Administrator  
Edmonton/Northland School Division*

*Consultant, Inclusion Alberta  
Edmonton, AB*

Donna Barrett has advocated for inclusive education throughout her career as a teacher, consultant, principal. She served as assistant superintendent in the Edmonton Public School Division and later as superintendent of the Northland School Division serving communities in northern Alberta where 95% of the students are of First Nations, Métis and Inuit descent.

As a parent of an adult son with development disabilities, she appreciates the value of inclusive education and the challenges that parents sometimes face in accessing inclusive schooling for their son or daughter.

Donna holds a doctorate in Education from the University of Alberta and her classification is Education Administration. An active member of Rotary, Donna is a Paul Harris Fellow. She participated in a Rotary Belize Literacy Project, working with a team of school administrators from Canada to offer leadership development programs to school principals in 6 different communities in Belize. "I really enjoyed the opportunity to work with school leaders from other countries."

Donna provides professional development and coaching for educators to enhance quality inclusive teaching and leadership to support learning for all students. Among the priorities Donna has in her work are: a) professional development, consultation and coaching for teachers and school and division leaders; b) sharing successful practices related to inclusive education; c) strengthening links between inclusive education and school improvement.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Advocating for Inclusion is Necessary:** Donna explains that in order for parents to have their child educated in an inclusive environment in Alberta, they must advocate for an inclusive option. Inclusive practices are usually not the first option provided by Albertan schools to parents of students with barriers to learning.
- 2. Urban Centres Remain Committed to Special Education Models:** In Alberta, many urban centres devoted substantial time and resources to the development of special education models. Subsequently, overcoming ties to special education in urban centres is a challenge. Rural and remote communities did not have the same resources as urban centres for special education models and therefore have always used and continue to use more inclusive practices.
- 3. Best Practices for Parents:** Donna explained that when advocating for their children, parents have the most success when they are clear about what they want for their children without being prescriptive. For example, parents explaining that they want their child in the classroom, supported sufficiently, may be more effective than explaining how exactly they want their child supported in the classroom.
- 4. Quality Experiences with Inclusion are Valuable:** To increase the number of leaders in education with an appreciation for inclusion, Donna notes the importance of having quality experiences with inclusion. Encouraging leaders to realize that their positive experience with inclusion can be extrapolated to enhance the learning experiences of all students can then help grow their appreciation for inclusion.
- 5. EAs as an Extra Set of Hands:** Instead of attaching an educational assistant (EA) to a specific student in the classroom, Donna promotes the idea of EAs acting as an extra set of hands in the classroom. EAs can help teachers so that inclusion can successfully occur within classrooms, with all students supported.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. How do you think we can encourage those around us to have an appreciation for inclusion?
2. Why do you think inclusive education is not the default option for educating students with barriers to learning in Alberta? How about across Canada?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Do you have any thoughts on Donna's suggestion to have EAs function as an extra set of hands in classrooms? How might this improve the peer connections of students with barriers to learning?
2. How do you think the ties to special education models in urban centres can be loosened or cut altogether?

# More from Donna Barrett:

- **From the Inclusive Education Canada Website**
  - Determination And Partnerships: Keys To Successful Inclusion For Secondary Students
- Barrett, Donna (2014), "Resourcing Inclusive Education", Measuring Inclusive Education (International Perspectives on Inclusive Education, Vol. 3), Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 75-91. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-363620140000003020>
- Barrett, Donna S. (2007). Leadership: Being in rooms. Edmonton : Alberta, Canada Proquest Information and Learning.



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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**  
**Lynn Aylward**  
*Professor of Education  
Acadia University  
Wolfville, NS*

Lynn Aylward is a teacher educator and researcher at Acadia University in Nova Scotia. She has expertise in intercultural teacher development, community schooling and has been involved in inclusive education since her first days as a teacher in the mid-1980s.

She recently co-produced the documentary film *"The Case of Luke Elwood"* - Frictive Films (2020). It documents an historically significant chapter in the journey toward inclusive schools in Canada. The link to the film is <https://bit.ly/3Abi934>

Lynn Aylward is an activist teacher educator, curriculum designer, and researcher with expertise in intercultural teacher development, community schooling, and inclusive education. She has researched, taught and consulted across Canada (living and working in 4 provinces and 2 territories) as well as internationally through collaborative projects with colleagues in Chile, Malawi, Tanzania, China, Dominica, and Guyana. Capacity building and reciprocity form the cornerstone of her professional and research practice. Dr. Aylward's research projects examine equity as it intersects with; culturally responsive pedagogy, indigenous education, disability studies, technologies for accessibility, place - based curriculum, rurality and gender diversity. Dr. Aylward is a Professor at Acadia University.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Keeping the Mission Front and Centre:** In 2017, tension was growing between teachers and the government in Nova Scotia with inclusive education as a central topic of debate. Lynn felt like both parties had lost sight of the goal, providing inclusive education to all Nova Scotian students, and decided to undertake a project to remind those involved in education of their mission. This project was a film on a Human Rights Charter challenge, involving the Ellwood family who wanted their son to be included in his neighbourhood school.
- 2. Students Should Not Have to Earn Their Place in Classrooms:** Lynn expressed that although there have been major improvements in inclusive education since the Ellwood case, students must still earn their place in regular classrooms through mainstreaming practices. Lynn explains that often, students with barriers to learning who are deemed as disruptive are not included in classrooms with their peers.
- 3. Structural Changes:** Lynn explained that inclusion is more than just inviting students into schools and classrooms as they have always existed, but instead altering educational structures to accommodate all learners.
- 4. Valuing Families' Input:** In Lynn's opinion, a major progression in inclusive education in Nova Scotia since the Ellwood case is that schools seem to value families' input on their children's learning. This is critical because parents are the experts when it comes to their children!
- 5. The Next Generation of Teachers:** Through her experience working with Bachelor of Education students, Lynn has noticed that these students approach teaching holistically, considering the whole child and their multiple identities. Lynn believes the next generation of teachers will look more deeply into inclusion rather than focusing on inclusive classroom placements.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Are you familiar with the Luke Ellwood case in Nova Scotia? If so, what can you remember about it?
2. What do you think about mainstreaming practices? Do you see any inherent problems with mainstreaming students with barriers to learning?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Considering Lynn's input on changing structural aspects of education to facilitate real inclusion, what are the critical elements of inclusive education?
2. How do you think the idea of intersectionality plays into inclusive education? Can embracing diversity add momentum to the movement towards inclusive education?

# More from Lynn Aylward:

- Jacqueline Specht, Donna McGhie-Richmond, Tim Loreman, Pat Mirenda, Sheila Bennett, Tiffany Gallagher, Gabrielle Young, Jamie Metsala, Lynn Aylward, Jennifer Katz, Wanda Lyons, Scott Thompson & Sarah Cloutier (2016) Teaching in inclusive classrooms: efficacy and beliefs of Canadian preservice teachers, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20:1, 1-15, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2015.1059501
- Lynn Aylward & Gregory Mackinnon (1999) Exploring the use of electronic discussion group coding with pre-service secondary teachers, *Journal of Information Technology for Teacher Education*, 8:3, 335-348, DOI: 10.1080/14759399900200065
- MacKinnon, G. & Aylward, L. (2000). Coding Electronic Discussion Groups. *International Journal of Educational Telecommunications*, 6(1), 53-61. Charlottesville, VA: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). Retrieved May 16, 2022 from <https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/8016/>.
- Citation: Aylward, M. L. (2007, June 26). Discourses of cultural relevance in Nunavut schooling. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 22(7). Retrieved [date] from <http://jrre.psu.edu/articles/22-7.pdf>
- Aylward, M. Lynn; Bruce, Cynthia. (2014). Inclusive Post-Secondary Education in Canada: Transition to Somewhere for Students with Intellectual Disabilities. *Journal of the International Association of Special Education*. Fall2014, Vol. 15 Issue 2, p42-47. 6p.
- Bruce, Cynthia, and M. Lynn Aylward. "Disability and self-advocacy experiences in university learning contexts." *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* 23, no. 1 (2021).
- Aylward, Lynn. "Promising Practices in Indigenous Teacher Education." *Teachers College Record*. Teachers College Record, Date Published: December 06, 2018
- <https://www.tcrecord.org> ID Number: 22597.



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# Let's Chat... about Inclusive Education

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**

**Donna McGhie-Richmond**  
*Associate Professor, Educational Psychology  
and Leadership Studies University of Victoria  
Victoria, BC*

Donna McGhie-Richmond is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. She is an advocate for diversity in classrooms and promotes research on inclusive education policies and practices. Prior to UVic, Donna taught at OISE, Toronto, and was a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Special Education at the University of Alberta. She completed her doctoral studies in adaptive instruction from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/ University of Toronto.

Her teaching and research focus on teacher development and the intersection between teacher knowledge, beliefs, pedagogy, and student learning outcomes in inclusive classrooms. She has extensive teaching, clinical, and research experience using instructional and assistive technologies to enable student engagement, participation, and achievement.

Donna's key interests include: a) the role of assistive and mobile technologies in teachers' instructional practice and student engagement and achievement; b) interrelationship among teacher epistemological beliefs, efficacy, and instructional practices and student learning outcomes; c) instructional practices supporting all learners.

Donna has expertise with students who have multiple and significant disabilities and who use assistive technology and augmentative and alternative ways of communicating. She worked for many years as special education consultant in augmentative and alternative communication at the Bloorview Kids Rehab Centre in Toronto, providing support to families and schools concerning children who have complex and multiple needs.

Donna was an early adopter of online learning technologies and have been using them in her teaching. She is a strong proponent of Universal Design for Learning principles to support all student engagement and achievement. She was instrumental in designing and developing the online Professional Special Education Certificate and Diploma Programs in EPLS and teaches in the programs. She is a member of the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education, Western University and a researcher on the federally funded Beginning Teacher Study.

Donna asserts: *"I am passionate about understanding and meeting the needs of children who challenge us; multi-disciplinary team processes; the role of assistive technologies; and foremost, inclusive education."*

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

**1. Openness to Diversity:** Donna explained that she believes communities are more open to diversity today than ever before. This attitude towards otherness helps to champion the inclusive education movement in her community, Victoria, BC - and beyond.

**2. Options for Segregation Lead to Segregation:** Donna explained that although she is optimistic about the way Canadian schools are moving towards inclusion, when school systems have the option for segregated classrooms or schools, educators will try to segregate students with barriers to learning. If the option is there, it will be used.

**3. British Columbia Needs Policy Improvements:** Donna explained that a 2016 British Columbia policy gives schools an 'out' from implementing an inclusive education program. This policy must be changed to ensure an inclusion mandate in B.C. schools. We need to ensure that all students can learn alongside their peers.

**4. Principals Provide the Foundation for Inclusion:** School principals can and must lay the foundation for what kind of school they lead. The principal's attitude toward diversity and commitment to accommodate the needs of students is decisive. When policy encourages but does not require inclusion, individual school leaders are critical to the effort.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Are you optimistic about the progress toward inclusion in Canadian schools?
2. If school policy allows an option for segregation, does that in itself mean children will be segregated?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Do you agree with Donna's opinion that communities today are more open to diversity? Why or why not?
2. Do the improvements regarding inclusion Donna has witnessed during her career in British Columbia occurred where in your community?

# More from Donna McGhee-Richmond:

- Irvine, A., McGhie-Richmond, D., Loreman, T., Lupart, J., McGarva, R., & Craig, S. (2015). Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada-Funded research Briefs, Pembina Hills Regional District, AB. Investigating Inclusive Education in Pembina Hills Regional Division No. 7 (Alberta)
- The Scholarship of Inclusive Education Podcast Series (prepared by Dr. Tim Loreman) Episode 12: Donna McGhie-Richmond on technology and inclusive education
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# Let's Chat... *about* *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**

**Ken Pike**

*Lawyer & Director of Social Policy  
Inclusion New Brunswick  
Fredericton, NB*

Ken Pike has served as Director of Social Policy for the Inclusion New Brunswick for over 25 years and has been an advocate in the Community Living movement for over 30 years.

Ken completed a B.A at Mount Allison University and a M.A. at Queen's University before receiving his LL.B. (Law) at Dalhousie University in Halifax. Ken is a retired member of the Law Society of New Brunswick and a member of the Canadian Bar Association.

Through his work with NBACL, Ken has worked on many issues facing people with an intellectual or developmental disability and the consequence for their families. He has also worked extensively on public policy issues affecting people with a disability including social assistance reform and poverty, disability support programming, housing, employment, health and inclusive education.

Ken has also authored or co-authored several books, resources, discussion papers and policy briefs on disability issues. He is the recipient of the 2008 New Brunswick Human Rights Award. In 2017 he was inducted into the Bertha Wilson Honour Society at the Dalhousie University Schulich School of Law for his work on promoting a more inclusive society for people with a disability. In 2021, Ken was inducted into the Order of New Brunswick, the highest civilian recognition in the province of New Brunswick.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

**1.Law Contributes to Inclusion:** Ken asserts that legislation that mandates inclusion makes a significant difference and is the foundation on which school inclusion has been built in New Brunswick. He shares his personal involvement in that process in the 1980s.

**2.Legislation is Crucial, But Policy is As Well:** When New Brunswick introduced legislation (Bill 85 in 1986) that mandated inclusive practices within schools, it was not accompanied by clear policy guidelines. As a result, each of 42 school districts developed their own approach to implementation. While similarities did exist, they were a source of uncertainty and confusion. Ken explained that community and parent advocacy groups can help close the gaps between legislation and the policy and practices needed. New Brunswick's first system wide ministerial policy (N.B. Policy 322) was signed in September 2013, more than 25 years after the legislation was passed.

**3.In Canada, Legislation and Case Law Have Not Delivered Inclusion:** While legislative changes in New Brunswick were instrumental in producing the movement towards inclusion, the same has not been the case in other Canadian provinces and territories. Ken reviewed several of the key legal cases in which court decisions failed to support families who were challenging schools to be inclusive. This failure, along with the time and cost of litigation have discouraged advocates of inclusion to use the courts to push for inclusive practices in Canadian schools.

**4.Monitoring Inclusive Practices:** Ken explained that even when inclusion is mandated, meaningful inclusion of students does not always occur. Inclusion requires leadership, hard work and resources, and there are too many occasions when there is a gap between what is needed, and what actually happens in the school or classroom. Parents and advocates must monitor and assess practices to ensure that learning happens for every child.

**5.Inclusive Schools as a Model for an Inclusive Society:** Ken connected inclusion in New Brunswick schools to improvements that have been made in community and society. The experience in schools serves as a foundation of inclusion in employment, housing, post-secondary education, and more. Community and parent organizations are able to use this success as they advocate for greater change and equitable outcomes.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1.How can lawyers play a role in the movement towards inclusive education?

2.What are the gaps between inclusive education legislation and inclusive education policy and practices? What stakeholders can help close these gaps?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. To what degree do you think legislation and policy should mandate programs and practices that ensure inclusion is a reality in communities across Canada?
2. What kind of accountability would be feasible to ensure that schools that have not become inclusive do so. Might specific consequences and penalties for failure to be inclusive be possible?
3. Might teacher education programs that result in new teachers with better training for inclusion diminish the need for legislation and policy?
4. What does the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms offer to the effort to make schools inclusive?

## More from Ken Pike:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Summary on: *General Comment Number 4 - Article 24: Right to Inclusive Education and New Brunswick's Progress on Meeting Treaty Expectations*. New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL). December 2019.
- **Resources created for Inclusive Education Canada**
  - Some Thoughts On The Moore Decision: <https://bit.ly/3xqNZdG>



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# Let's Chat... *about* *Inclusive Education*

3.5

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



*Guest:*

***Monique Somma***

*Assistant Professor  
Brock University  
St. Catharines, ON*

Monique Somma is an assistant professor and scholar in the Department of Educational Studies at Brock University. Currently, she co-develops and teaches courses to teacher candidates on topics

including child development, cognition and the inclusion of students with exceptionalities, in order to help prepare future teachers to effectively meet the needs of diverse learners in the classroom. As an elementary school teacher herself, having taught special education and inclusive classes for 15 years, she understands firsthand the challenges and the successes of working with children with exceptionalities in the 20th century. Her research focuses on preschool to secondary educator preparedness for inclusive education, from attitudes and beliefs to learning and practice, best practices for creating inclusive classrooms and schools for students with exceptionalities, and how peer involvement can enhance inclusion.

Monique and several of her colleagues at Brock University collaborated with Inclusive Education Canada to support strengthening inclusion in Montessori schools. The project resulted in a publication documenting key strategies to enhance the success of teachers in Montessori schools and making inclusion a reality.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

**1. Successful Experiences with Inclusion Matter:** Monique speaks to her personal experience teaching in self-contained special education classrooms. When she used integration strategies in regular classrooms with her students, she saw them flourish. Observing inclusive education practices work changed her view. These experiences led her to commit to inclusive education and may help other educators do the same.

**2. Formal Assessments have their Pros and Cons:** Although formal assessments can help identify students eligible for access to resources and supports, Monique has serious concerns about their effect. She cautions educators to use information from an assessment as a starting point when working with a student. Students are so much more than what their formal assessments reveal about their abilities and challenges.

**3. All Teachers are Special Education Teachers:** When working with teacher candidates, Monique stresses the importance of using *universal design for learning* as a starting point. Inclusive classrooms result in all teachers working with a diverse student population where every child is unique and as a result the teacher is a special education teacher.

**4. Experimenting is Crucial for Success:** During teacher training, Monique encourages her students to be innovative and to try new instructional strategies. She believes that using this training period to attempt to make learning accessible for all learners is important for new teachers' future success with inclusion.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. What benefits and drawbacks can you identify with the use of formal assessments of a students' barriers to learning? Can the results of these tests cause students harm?

2. Reflect on inclusive experiences you have had throughout your lifetime. In what ways did these experiences shape your values, commitments, and career or personal goals?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Do you agree with Monique's assertion that all teachers need to consider themselves special education teachers? Does inclusion make this inevitable?

2. How can new teachers be supported to sustain their commitment to inclusion as they leave teacher training and enter actual schools and classrooms?

# More from Monique Somma:

- Bennett, S., Gallagher, T. L., Somma, M., White, R., & Wlodarczyk, K. (2021). Transitioning from segregation to inclusion: An effective and sustainable model to promote inclusion, through internal staffing adjustments, and role redefinition. In *Resourcing Inclusive Education*. Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Bennett, S., Specht, J., Somma, M., & White, R. (2020). Navigating school interactions: Parents of students with intellectual disabilities speak out. *Current Developmental Disorders Reports*, 7(3), 149-154.
- Bennett, S., Gallagher, T., Somma, M., & White, R. (2021). Transitioning towards inclusion: a triangulated view of the role of educational assistants. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 21(3), 187-197.
- Somma, M., & Bennett, S. (2020). Inclusive Education and Pedagogical Change: Experiences from the Front Lines. *International Journal of Educational Methodology*, 6(2), 285-295.
- Somma, M. & Marini, Z. (2020). A Bully and a Victim: The Bullying Experiences of Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders. *Exceptionality Education International*, 30 (1), 25–41 I.
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- Somma, M. (2018). From Segregation to Inclusion: Special Educators' Experiences of Change. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. Online. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2018.1464070
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- Somma, M., (2017) The Case of Drake. In Kim Calder Stageman & Angèle AuCoin (Eds.). *Inclusive Education: Stories of Success and Hope in a Canadian Context*. Toronto: Pearson
- Somma, M. (2015). Changing the Spots of Leopards: A Look into the Process of Teacher Change and its Impact on Inclusive Pedagogy. *Teaching and Learning* 10 (1). (16 pgs)
- Wlodarczyk, K., Somma, M., Bennett, S., & Gallagher, T. (2015). Moving Towards Inclusion: Inclusion Coaches Reflections and Discussions in Supporting Educators in Practice. *Exceptionality Education International*. (30 pgs)



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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

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**Guest:**  
**Zana Lutfiyya**  
*Senior Scholar  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, MB*

Zana Marie Lutfiyya is a native of Winnipeg and has long associated with equality efforts for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Following completion of a B.A. from the University of Manitoba she completed she completed her graduate training and postdoctoral work at the Center on Human Policy, Syracuse University. Zana joined the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba in 1992.

Her longstanding research interest has been identifying and examining the factors that help or hinder the valued social participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities in community life. This has included where individuals live, go to school, work and take part in recreational activities. She was part of a multi-disciplinary team that studied vulnerable people and end of life care. She has facilitated the participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities in the research process, both as participants and in helping determine research goals and questions. Zana conducted research that focuses on how individuals with intellectual disabilities understand the concept of human rights, and how they are supported to learn and exercise these rights.

Zana taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels in inclusive education and qualitative research methods. She retired at the end of 2020. Her ongoing research interest has been the social participation of individuals with an intellectual disability in everyday community life.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Change Can Come from the Bottom:** In Manitoba, much of the progress in inclusion can be attributed to the work of parent and educator advocacy groups. While change must also engage those in positions of power, self-organized advocacy groups can make a critical difference.
- 2. Training, Supports and Clear Expectations:** Zana identified three key components that she believes are required for school divisions/districts to be inclusive. Educators must be provided with both professional training to build capacity as well as support that is adequate to address specific challenges and problems that need to be dealt with for teachers to create and sustain inclusive classrooms. Additionally, those overseeing the education system must provide clear expectations of what inclusion looks like in a school or a classroom and the things that should not be seen.
- 3. Differences Between School Divisions/Districts That Are Inclusive and Those That Are Not:** The size of a school division/district, both its geography and its student population, can be seen to make a difference in terms of the level of inclusion achieved. In Manitoba, smaller school divisions have been more inclusive and have supported students and families more successfully. Zana speculates that this could be because smaller divisions have fewer resources and must simply do their work with fewer special programs and services than larger divisions. The result is positive since students are more likely to attend class in their community school with their siblings and neighbourhood peers.
- 4. Learning to Live Together:** Zana asserts that a major goal of schooling is that children gain the social benefit of learning to live with people different from themselves. Inclusive schools result in children with diverse attributes, including those with disabilities, learn to live in communities that provide both inclusion, opportunity and equity.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. What are the social benefits of inclusive education? How valuable are these benefits compared to academic achievement?
2. Have you ever participated in an advocacy group? If so, what did you learn from that experience?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Based on what Zana shared about current inclusive education parent advocacy groups in Manitoba, do you think that smaller parent advocacy groups should join forces to create a larger impact? Why or why not?
2. Do you think consolidating school districts in Manitoba will result in less inclusive practices? Can you think of ways to ensure that inclusive practices are sustained when this consolidation occurs?

# More from Zana Lutfiyya:

## Articles (peer reviewed)

- Schwartz, K. & Lutfiyya, Z.M. (2017). Place, space and justice: Considering people with intellectual disabilities. *Annual Review of Interdisciplinary Justice and Research* v6 15-39.

## Articles (non peer reviewed)

- Lutfiyya, Z.M. (2018). Making it work: School administrators support all students and their teachers. Invited commentary for National Inclusive Education Month. [www.inclusiveeducation.ca/news/](http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca/news/)
- Lutfiyya, Z.M. (2013). No one ever said it would be say: Closing Manitoba's institutions for individuals with intellectual disabilities. *Institution Watch* (7)2. A publication of People First of Canada and the Canadian Association for Community Living. [www.Institutionwatch.ca](http://www.Institutionwatch.ca)

## Contributions to edited books

- Lutfiyya, Z.M. & Bartlett (2020). Inclusive societies. In Umesh Sharma and Spencer Salend (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Inclusive and Special Education* (print) and *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education* (on-line). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. <http://DOI:10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1022>
- Lutfiyya, Z.M., Kendel, D. & Schwartz, K. (2018). The community inclusion project in Manitoba: Planning for the residents of the Pelican Lake Training Centre. In Nancy Hansen, Roy Hanes & Diane Driedger (Eds.). *Untold Stories: A Canadian Disability History Reader*. 345-355. Canadian Scholar's Press. Toronto, ON.
- Freeze, T.B., Freeze, R., & Lutfiyya, Z.M. (2013). Attending university: An emerging pathway to devalued employment and social participation for young adults with intellectual, developmental, and multiple disabilities. In *Way on Way: Supporting people with intellectual, developmental, and multiple disabilities in employment*. 185-216. American Association on Intellectual and Development Disabilities. Washington, DC.



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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



## **Guest:** **Marilyn Dolmage** *Inclusion Consultant Families, School Boards and Community Agencies, Toronto, ON*

Marilyn Dolmage has worked alongside people with disabilities, their families and communities to end segregation and create new supports and relationships for over 50 years. As an inclusive education consultant, Marilyn assists schools and families to work together to improve education.

She was project coordinator for the Ontario Coalition for Inclusive Education and its member associations.

Marilyn communicates with a broad network of allies across Ontario, Canada concerning the law, provincial policies, educational practices, and advocacy strategies. Since 1995, she's been inspiring school communities to work for change to welcome, accommodate and celebrate individual differences among their students, assisting families to improve individual educational planning so that their sons and daughters get the support they need to learn as members of regular classrooms in their neighborhood schools, connecting special education advisory committee representatives to promote effective inclusive education in their school boards, gathering information from across Canada about innovative career development for students with disabilities leaving high school, and leading research funded by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Faculty of Education at Western University.

Her family struggled to ensure that all three of her own kids attended school together and to assist her older son who had significant disabilities to have the education, medical treatment, employment, and community life that he wanted. Matthew's sudden death in 2004 at the age of 29 has heightened her resolve to improve policy, promote effective inclusion, and strengthened families, schools, and communities.

Marilyn has a BA from McMaster University, a BSW from the University of British Columbia and Master of Social Work degree from York University in Toronto.

Marilyn is a valued member of Inclusive Education Canada's Network of Associates.

# Key Issues in this Chat Session:

**1. Inclusive Education is Paramount to Leading Inclusive Lives:** Marilyn asserts that for people experiencing barriers to participation in the ordinary activities of their communities, specifically individuals with disabilities, inclusion in school can make a critical difference. Inclusive schooling with the social and academic benefits that result provides the foundation for meaningful life in the community.

**2. Inclusive Education is About More Than Education:** Marilyn explained that, in her view, the social aspect of education is often overlooked. Inclusive classrooms make it possible for students with disabilities to feel accepted and valued by their peers and their teachers.

**3. Person Power:** Over the course of Marilyn's career, she has learned how valuable it is for persons experiencing barriers to learning to gain a sense of power over the decisions made about their lives. Students and parents are too often denied the option of inclusion in schools and classrooms with little regard for the lifetime effect of this. We need to ensure they can choose placement in an inclusive classroom if that is what they consider best.

**4. Schools as Active Learning Spaces:** Marilyn has promoted change and innovation in schools and maintains that schools do not have to be static institutions. School leaders and teachers can adapt and change their practices based on the needs of students. All learners benefit from schools being active learning spaces.

**5. Loving and Caring for All Children:** Marilyn believes that inclusive education boils down to loving all children, regardless of their ability. All students and all families deserve the love and support they need for them to be successful during their school years and beyond.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Do parents have the kind of power and control they need to ensure their child with a disability is included in schools in your community? What, if anything, needs to change?
2. How important is it for families to be supported by an advocacy group to overcome barriers blocking inclusion in neighbourhood schools?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Do you have any experience or knowledge of groups or networks that connect people who are committed to inclusive education? Do these networks play a role in strengthening and supporting a commitment to inclusion?
2. Do you agree with Marilyn's belief that inclusion comes down to caring for and loving all children?

# More from Marilyn Dolmage:

- Evidence of High School Inclusion: Research, Resources and Inspiration, Marilyn Dolmage, Jacqueline Specht, Janice Strickland, Heather Stuart and Gabrielle Young; Principal investigator analyzing how selected secondary schools develop and sustain their motivation and strategies to teach students with significant disabilities as members of regular classes.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279961938\\_Evidence\\_of\\_effective\\_high\\_school\\_inclusion\\_Research\\_resources\\_and\\_inspiration](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279961938_Evidence_of_effective_high_school_inclusion_Research_resources_and_inspiration)
- The What, Why and How of Inclusive Education –a series of training podcasts for families and educators through The Inclusion Academy at  
<https://goodthingsinlife.mykajabi.com/inclusion>
- **Inclusion Action in Ontario**
  - Inclusive Education: From political correctness towards social justice – a film to support advocacy, dedicated to the memory of Matthew Dolmage at  
<https://inclusionactionontario.ca/why-inclusive-education/>
  - Blog post honouring Orville Endicott to support family advocacy at  
<https://inclusionactionontario.ca/the-life-and-contributions-of-orville-endicott/>
- **Resources created with The Ontario Coalition for Inclusive Education:**
  - History of the Coalition [http://www.inclusive-education.ca/resources/documents/Coalition\\_summary\\_2005.pdf](http://www.inclusive-education.ca/resources/documents/Coalition_summary_2005.pdf)
  - A Tale about a Test: more questions than answers” – a parable challenging standardized testing [http://www.inclusive-education.ca/resources/documents/tale\\_test.php](http://www.inclusive-education.ca/resources/documents/tale_test.php)
- Resources created for Inclusive Education Canada
  - Inclusive Education - Aiming Higher <https://bit.ly/3QPkeKr>
  - Getting an Inclusive Start: The Critical Need for Inclusive Pre-school Education: <https://bit.ly/3Li2XrY>
- “Students Learning Together” - Marilyn Dolmage and Nancy Rother -from Accommodation to Universal Design



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# Let's Chat... about *Inclusive Education*

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**Guest:**  
***Vianne Timmons***  
***President & Vice-Chancellor***  
***Memorial University of Newfoundland***  
***St. John's, NL***

Dr. Vianne Timmons is President and Vice-Chancellor, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. She is a nationally and internationally recognized researcher and advocate in the field of inclusive education. During the course of her work, she has actively participated in the work of Inclusive Education Canada and is a valued member of IEC's Network of Associates. She has also collaborated on research projects with several members of the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education.

She holds a B.A. from Mt. Allison University, a B.Ed. in Special Education from Acadia University, a M.Ed. in Special Education from Gonzaga University, and a Ph.D. in Education Psychology from the University of Calgary.

A teacher by training, she maintains a wide-ranging research program emphasizing family literacy and inclusive education. Her credits include nine books, 12 book chapters, 40 peer-reviewed articles, 30+ funded research projects (as principal or co-investigator) and more than 200 invited lectures. She has served as chair of the Education Department at St. Francis Xavier University, as well as Dean of Education and Vice-President, Academic Development at the University of Prince Edward Island. She was President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Regina from 2008 until 2020.

An active volunteer, Dr. Timmons has served various postsecondary and other organizations, including as president of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, chair of Universities Canada's Standing Committee on International Relations and member of the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

Dr. Timmons research interests include, a) studying the factors that affect the retention of Aboriginal students in university; b) exploring the connections between inclusive education and children's health; c) evaluating the effectiveness of Canadian education policy in the area of inclusive education; and d) developing family literacy programs for rural families, Aboriginal communities, and newcomers to Canada.

In 2017, was named an Officer of the Order of Canada for her lifetime contributions to inclusive education, family literacy, Indigenous post-secondary education and women's leadership.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Every Child and Classroom is Different:** Vianne emphasized that we need to remind ourselves that each child and each class of students a teacher will encounter is unique. It is not possible to prepare them for every challenge they encounter. Teacher training programs must help their graduates become lifelong learners who seek new and innovative ways to ensure inclusion happens within classrooms.
- 2. Teachers and Families Working Together:** Teachers benefit from the experience of working with families who have a child with disabilities or experiences some other barrier to learning. Opportunities to work with families who have children who need support should be welcomed. As a parent herself, Vianne considers this one of the many gifts she has been enriched by.
- 3. A Case Study Approach to Teaching:** Collaboration among teachers and with other professionals allows for sharing experiences as well as strategies that have proved to be successful. Vianne suggests that teachers use a case study approach to dealing with challenges and to generate more effective strategies to achieve success with inclusive practices.
- 4. A Commitment to Values and Principles of Inclusion:** Vianne shares her thoughts on the results of a research project she carried out when she worked in Saskatchewan. Looking at school success with inclusion, she learned the critical role an institutional commitment to the values and principles of inclusion plays in ensuring that both schools and classrooms are inclusive.
- 5. Find Networks of Support:** In her experience, parents of children who need accommodation and support to be included in school with peers have the greatest success fighting for the inclusion of their child when they connect with other parents and advocacy networks. Vianne has found that there are people doing amazing work in advocacy and if you look, you can find them.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. To what degree do you think teachers and parents can work together so students can be included and have the best learning outcomes? How do you think collaboration between schools and families can be strengthened?
2. Do you think teacher training programs in special education should be continued or should prospective teachers focus on knowledge and skills needed for inclusion? How might the knowledge of special education teachers be utilized to support inclusion?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. How do you evaluate Vianne's suggestion of the potential benefits of teachers using a case study approach to resolving instructional challenges?
2. What steps can parents take to get connected to other parents or advocacy groups to build networks of support? How might this be strengthened in your community?

# More from Vianne Timmons:

- Phyllis E. Horne & Vianne Timmons (2009) Making it work: teachers' perspectives on inclusion, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 13:3, 273-286, DOI: 10.1080/13603110701433964
- Timmons, V. (2008). Towards Inclusive Education in Canada. In: Barton, L., Armstrong, F. (eds) *Policy, Experience and Change: Cross-Cultural Reflections on Inclusive Education. Inclusive Education: Cross Cultural Perspectives*, vol 4. Springer, Dordrecht. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-5119-7\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-5119-7_10)
- Alur, Mithu, and Vianne Timmons. 2009. *Inclusive education across cultures: crossing boundaries, sharing ideas*. Los Angeles: Sage. <http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=453681>.
- S. Anthony Thompson, Wanda Lyons & Vianne Timmons (2015) Inclusive education policy: what the leadership of Canadian teacher associations has to say about it, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 19:2, 121-140, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2014.908964
- Wanda E. Lyons, S. Anthony Thompson & Vianne Timmons (2016) 'We are inclusive. We are a team. Let's just do it': commitment, collective efficacy, and agency in four inclusive schools, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20:8, 889-907, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2015.1122841
- Timmons, V., & Wagner, M. (2008). Inclusive education knowledge exchange initiative: An analysis of the Statistics Canada Participation and Activity Limitation Survey. Retrieved from Canadian Council on Learning website: <http://www.cclcca.ca/CCL/Research/FundedResearch/201009TimmonsInclusiveEducation.html>.
- Vianne Timmons (2006) Impact of a multipronged approach to inclusion: having all partners on side, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 10:4-5, 469-480, DOI: 10.1080/13603110500392726
- S. Anthony Thompson & Vianne Timmons, *Authentic Inclusion in Two Secondary Schools: "It's the Full Meal Deal. It's Not Just in the Class. It's Everywhere."* (2017). *Exceptionality Education International*, Vol. 27 No. 1 (2017)
- Phyllis E. Horne, Vianne Timmons, and Rosalyn Adamowycz, *Identified Teacher Supports for Inclusive Practice*, *Exceptionality Education Canada* 2008, Vol. 18, No.3, pp. 82-94



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# Let's Chat... *about* *Inclusive Education*

*Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler*



**Guest:**

***Kathryn Underwood***

*Professor,  
Toronto Metropolitan University,  
Toronto, ON*

Kathryn Underwood, Professor, School of Early Childhood Studies, Toronto Metropolitan University investigates how society responds to and constructs childhood in social institutions. Kathryn's interests are in human rights and education practice, particularly with regard to disability rights and inclusive education.

The focus of her research has been on how constructions of disability in education and early childhood program contexts are used to organize children, with particularly interest in intersectional identities of all disabled children. Dr. Underwood has conducted a number of studies that focus on parent viewpoints and the work of families to engage with institutions.

Kathryn Underwood is the Principal Investigator for the Inclusive Early Childhood Service System Project. This collaborative partnership project, funded by the County of Wellington, the Social Sciences and Humanity Research Council (SSHRC), and Toronto Metropolitan University, aims to better understanding experiences of disability in early childhood from diverse cultural, geographic, and community perspectives.

Her areas of expertise include a) inclusive curriculum, teaching and learning; b) disability studies in education and childhood; c) special education policy and practice; d) early years service planning and delivery.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Inclusion and ECE are Related:** Kathryn explained that when she began working in early childhood education, she found that many of the important themes strategies that play a role in inclusive education are central to ECE. For example, parental involvement and a focus on each child's development are critical in ECE, just as they are important in inclusion in primary and secondary schools.
- 2. Moving Away From 'Ready to Learn':** Kathryn emphasized that there is so much more to ECE than preparing children for learning within the formal school system. Both academic and social learning can begin in the ECE years. Additionally, some of the ideas of 'ready to learn' are non-inclusive. For example, requiring a student to be toilet trained to be ready for school is exclusionary as some students may never achieve this ability.
- 3. Cautions Surrounding the Professionalization of ECE:** Although there are so many benefits to having ECE recognized as a professional career, Kathryn cautions against the exclusion of family involvement in ECE as it professionalized. Family expertise should be valued in the same way as the expertise of professionals trained in ECE.
- 4. Blurring the Line Between ECE and School:** Kathryn asserts that a child's ECE years and school years do not need to be as divided as they are now. ECE teachers and other professionals can share many valuable insights gained about student success from their experiences during the child's ECE.
- 5. Safe Spaces for Students and Families:** Provision of services for students experiencing barriers to learning need to take place in safe conditions and an appropriate manner. Kathryn has worked with families who have had harmful strategies used on their child. Programs and policies need to ensure that these negative practices are not used or tolerated.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. How do you assess the ECE concept of 'ready to learn'? What do you think about it in relation to inclusive education?
2. In what ways do you think having multiple minority identities (e.g., being part of a racial minority and as well as a disability) impacts the experiences of students and their families?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. What do you consider the most helpful lesson(s) to be drawn from Kathryn's experience working with indigenous families of children with disabilities or other special needs?
2. Should access to high quality ECE be considered an essential human right in Canada just as access to education for school-age children is a human right? Why or why not?

# More from Kathryn Underwood:

## Chapters

- Davies, K., Doucet, G., Atwal, A., & Underwood, K. (2021). Systemic knowledge at school entry: Learning from disabled children and their families. *Community, Work & Family*, 1-5.
- Underwood, K., Chan, C., Koller, D., & Valeo, A. (2017). Understanding young children's capabilities: Approaches to interviews with young children experiencing disability. In B. Kelly & B. Byrne (Eds.), *Valuing disabled children and young people: Research, policy, and practice* (pp. 72-89). Routledge
- Underwood, K., Church, K., & Van Rhijn, T. (2020). Responsible for normal: The contradictory work of families. In S. Winton & G. Parekh (Eds.), *Critical perspectives on education policy and schools, families, and communities* (pp. 89-106). Information Age Publishing Inc.
- Frankel, E. Underwood, K., & Goldstein, P. (2017). Principles and practices of early intervention. In M. L. Wehmeyer, I. Brown, M. Percy, K. Shogren & A. Fung (Eds.), *A comprehensive guide to intellectual and developmental disabilities* (2nd ed., pp. 495-508). Brookes Publishing.

## Articles

- Underwood, K., Frankel, E., Spalding, K., & Brophy, K. (2019). Is the right to early intervention being honoured? *Canadian Journal of Children's Rights*. 5(1), 56-70. <https://doi.org/10.22215/cjcr.v5i1.1226>
- Frankel, E., Chan, C., & Underwood, K. (2019). Inclusion is an experience, not a placement. *eceLink*, 3(1), 24-34.
- Underwood, K., & Snoddon, K. (2021). Deaf childhoods and inclusive early childhood education and care (Policy Brief No. 10). The Inclusive Early Childhood Service System Project.
- Underwood, K., & Parekh, G. (2020). Inclusion in early childhood: Difference, disability, and social justice. *Education. excel* [filehttps://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756810/obo-9780199756810-0265.xml](https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756810/obo-9780199756810-0265.xml)



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**Guest:**

***Cathy Montreuil***

***Educational Administrator & Deputy  
Minister of Education  
Province of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS***

Cathy was appointed to the position of Deputy Minister of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as of March, 2018. She brings a wealth of experience having worked in education for over 30 years.

During her career, Cathy has had teaching experience in both elementary and secondary schools, special education, care and treatment and custody programs, and has been a vice-principal, principal, superintendent, and Director of Education in Ontario school boards.

She served as a system leader for Special Education where she was instrumental in her board's achievement of the Ontario Award for Inclusive Schools and collaborated with the Canadian Association for Community Living on an Inclusion Education tool for school communities.

Cathy has also written and taught Special Education Additional Qualifications courses for teachers. Prior to accepting the position of Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development in Nova Scotia, Cathy served as the Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Student Achievement Officer for the Province of Ontario.

## Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1. **Society is Better with Diversity:** Cathy asserted that inclusion is a critical element within schools because society does better by embracing diversity and inclusive schools are necessary for creating and sustaining an inclusive, diverse society.
2. **Putting Inclusion at the Core:** In Cathy's current work on educational policy, she and her team focus on having inclusion at the core of policies. She explained that if inclusion is viewed as central to a policy, then it cannot be considered an add-on and rolled back when things get challenging.
3. **Advocates Should Build Coalitions and Common Ground:** Cathy explained that in her experience individual groups that advocate for change should connect with one another and thus grow their reach and enhance their ability to see that the changes they want happen. Groups fighting for equity can help one another and refrain from competing for attention and resources.
4. **Connecting Innovators:** In Cathy's experience, change to inclusion in schools does not occur solely from the school in a bottom-up manner, nor from the board or ministry level down. What matters is connecting individuals and groups who are doing good work in inclusion at all levels. She has found that given the space and support, people will connect and learn inclusive practices from each other, resulting in the kind of change we need.

## Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Do you believe there is competition between different groups advocating for inclusion in schools and beyond?
2. What do you think of when you hear the phrase, 'all means all' when applied to inclusion?

## Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. How important do you believe policy and policy changes are in the movement towards inclusive education? At what level does it matter most – Ministry? District/Division? School?
2. Do you think effective coalitions between advocacy groups could lead to better results for all? How might you go about building these coalitions?

**More information about** Deputy Minister Montreuil's work on inclusive education policy and programs can be located on the website of the Department of Education, Province of Nova Scotia: <https://bit.ly/3ScjFer>



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*Let's Chat... about Inclusive Education* is a webcast series produced by Inclusive Education Canada (IEC). Let's Chat is hosted by 3 of Canada's leading experts on inclusion of students with disabilities in the classroom, Gordon Porter, Diane Richler and Jacqueline Specht.

Our hosts are joined by researchers, educators, parents and advocates who are engaged in the effort to make Canadian schools inclusive. The *Let's Chat... about Inclusive Education* series brings you informed and diverse perspectives on the challenges, the progress and the issues related to the development of inclusive education in our country.

IEC has been supported in this project by Western University in London Ontario, and with funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada – SSHRC.

**You can watch the entire *Let's Chat* series on the IEC website here:**

<https://inclusiveeducation.ca/2022/01/14/lets-chat/>

**Learn more about inclusive education in Canada by checking out the links below!**

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### **Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education**

Website: [www.InclusiveEducationResearch.ca](http://www.InclusiveEducationResearch.ca)

### **Inclusion Canada**

Website: [www.InclusionCanada.ca](http://www.InclusionCanada.ca)

