



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
- Porter, G., Towell, D., & Sierra, G. (2021) Teachers as Leaders: Achieving Inclusive & Quality Education For All, *Inclusive Education Canada*.
- AuCoin, A., Porter, G.L. & Baker-Korotkov, K. New Brunswick's journey to inclusive education. *Prospects* 49, 313–328 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09508-8>
- 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
- Porter, G., & Towell, D. (2020) The Journey to Inclusive Schooling: Advancing School Transformation From Within. *Inclusive Education Canada*.

Jacqueline Specht

- Specht, J., Mc-Ghie-Richmond, D., Loreman, T., Aylward, L., Bennett, S., Gallagher, T., Katz, J., Lyons, W., Metsala, J., Miranda, P., Thompson, S., Young, G., & Cloutier, S. (2016). Preservice teachers' self-efficacy for teaching in inclusive classrooms: A cross Canada perspective. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20, 1–15. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2015.1059501>
- Young, G., Specht, J., Hunter, F., Terreberry, S., McGhie-Richmond, D., & Hutchinson, N. (2018). "The first day he kicked shoes at me, the last day he brought me a picture of himself": Investigating the practicum experiences of preservice teachers. *Exceptionality Education International*, 28(3), 83-101. <https://ojs.lib.uwo.ca/index.php/eei/article/view/7773/6389>
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- Bennett, S., Specht, J., Somma, M., White, R. (2020). Navigating school interactions: Parents of students with intellectual disabilities speak out. *Current Developmental Disorders Reports*. <https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.1007/s40474-020-00203-z>
- Sider, S., Maich, K., & Specht, J., Treadgold, C., & Winger, H. (2021). Choose your own adventure": Web-based case studies of inclusive education as a form of professional learning for school principals. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/194277512111046978>
- 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/ijepl.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>
- Richler, D. "Inclusive Education: Inertia or Tipping Point? <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/including-children-disabilities-education-inertia-or-tipping-point>, GPE blog, 2017
- 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



Our 30-minute chat sessions from **Inclusive Education Canada** are found on our website:

[inclusiveeducation.ca](https://www.inclusiveeducation.ca)

Check IEC's website for new sessions weekly