

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.
- Schneider, C. (2017). Teachers' perceptions of disabilities on the island of Roatan. Disability, CBR and Inclusive Development 28 (2), 5-22; doi 10.5463/DCID.v28i2.573
- Schneider, C., Chahine, S., Hattie, B. (2016). Examining Life Course Transitions of Young People With Disabilities: The ACEE Alumni Study. Journal of Education and Training Studies 4 (10), 126- 138, doi: 10.11114/jets.v4i10.1768
- 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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