

# 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 McGhie-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
- Hook, D. & McGhie-Richmond, D. (2016). Expert Commentary in *Inclusive Education: Stories of success and hope in a Canadian context*. Calder Stegmann, K., & Aucoin, A. (Eds.). Newmarket, ON: Pearson Canada.
- Loreman, T., McGhie - Richmond , D., Crocker, C., Petryshyn, R., Konkin, Y., Mazin, D., Naida, Y., Kolopayevna, A. (2016, January). A Canada-Ukraine collaborative initiative for introducing inclusive education for children with disabilities in Ukraine: Participant perspectives. In *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 27(1), 24-44.
- McGhie-Richmond, D., de Bruin, C. (2015). Tablets, tweets and talking text: The role of technology in inclusive pedagogy. In J. M. Deppeler, T. Loreman, and R.A. L. Smith (Eds.). *Inclusive Pedagogy Across the Curriculum: International Perspectives on Inclusive Education*, Volume 7, (pp. 211-234). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Loreman, T., McGhie-Richmond, D., Cizman, J., Lupart, J., Irvine, A., McGarva, R., Craig, S., Sharma, U. (2015, November). A Canadian collaboration on inclusive education: Reflections on a six-year partnership. *Desenvolve: Revista de Gestao do Unilasalle, Canoas*, 4(3), 33-52.
- Specht, J., McGhie - Richmond , D., Loreman, T., Mirenda, P., Bennett, S., Gallagher, T., Young, G., Metsala, J., Aylward, L., Katz, J., Lyons, W., Thompson, S., & Cloutier, S. (2015). Teaching in inclusive classrooms: Efficacy and beliefs of Canadian preservice teachers, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20(1), 1-15.
- Waugh, M., McGhie - Richmond , D., & Anderson, J. O. (2015). School context matters: Learning disabilities and U.S. adolescent support choices from Latino-majority communities. *Journal of the International Association of Special Education*, 16, 58-67.
- Jordan, A., & McGhie - Richmond , D. (2014). Identifying effective teaching practices in inclusive classrooms. In C. Forlin & T. Loreman (Eds.) *Measuring Inclusive Education: International Perspectives on Inclusive Education*, Volume 3, (pp. 133-162). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.
- McGhie -Richmond , D., & Howrey, K. (2014, January). Program planning and student diversity. In J. Andrews, & J. Lupart (Eds.), *Understanding and addressing student diversity in Canadian schools*, (pp. 248-292). Nelson Education Ltd./Cengage Learning.
- McGhie-Richmond, D., Irvine, J., Loreman, T., Cizman, J., & Lupart, J., (2013). Teacher perspectives on inclusive education in rural Alberta, Canada. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 36(2), 195-239.
- McGhie - Richmond , D., & Sung, A. (2013, January). Applying universal design for learning to instructional planning. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 9(1), 43-57.

