



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



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



**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



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada  
Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

