



Series 1 Chat Session Guides



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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 – 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.

This Series One Guide includes Chat sessions with the following:

Episode 1 – Gordon Porter, IEC, NB;
Jacqueline Specht, Western University,
ON; **Diane Richler**, Inclusion
International, ON

Episode 2 – Sheila Bennett
Brock University, ON

Episode 3 – Marie-Élaine Desmarais
St. Boniface University, MB

Episode 4 – Jody Carr
Lawyer, NB

Episode 5 – Missy Pfaff and Amy Kipfer
Avon Maitland Public Schools, ON

Episode 6 – Jess Whitley
University of Ottawa, ON

**Episode 7 – Bluesette Campbell (SK)
and Anna McQuarrie (NS)**
Parents

Episode 8 – Lesley Eblie Trudel
University of Winnipeg, MB

Episode 9 – Liz Baile
Yellowknife Catholic Schools, NWT

Episode 10 – Gillian Parekh
York University, 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.



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



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

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!

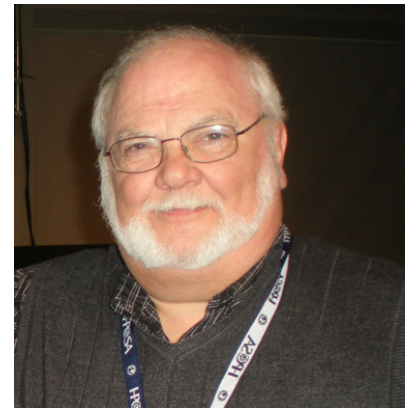
Let's Chat... about Inclusive Education

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
- Porter, G., Towell, D., & Sierra, G. (2021) Teachers as Leaders: Achieving Inclusive & Quality Education For All, *Inclusive Education Canada*.
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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
- Porter, G., & Towell, D. (2020) The Journey to Inclusive Schooling: Advancing School Transformation From Within. *Inclusive Education Canada*.

Jacqueline Specht

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- 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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- 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. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1862403>.
- 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



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

Bennett, S., Gallagher T., Somma, M., White, R. & Woldczyk, K. (2021). Transitioning from segregation to inclusion: An effective and sustainable model to promote inclusion through internal staffing adjustments and role redefinition. In T. Loreman, J. Goldan, & J. Lambrecht. *International perspectives on inclusive education. Volume 15: Resourcing inclusive education – perspectives on funding and professional development.* Emerald Publishing. ISBN 9781800434578.

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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>

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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.

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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:

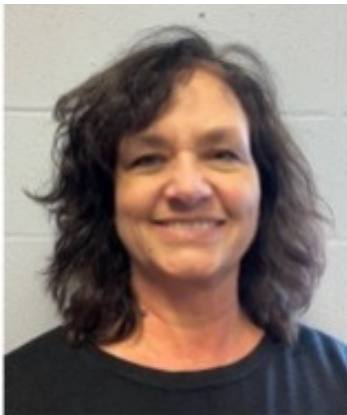
- Minister responsible for the report – **Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools**, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, Province of New Brunswick, 2012.
<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/Inclusion/Inclusion.pdf>
- Minister responsible for **New Brunswick 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?

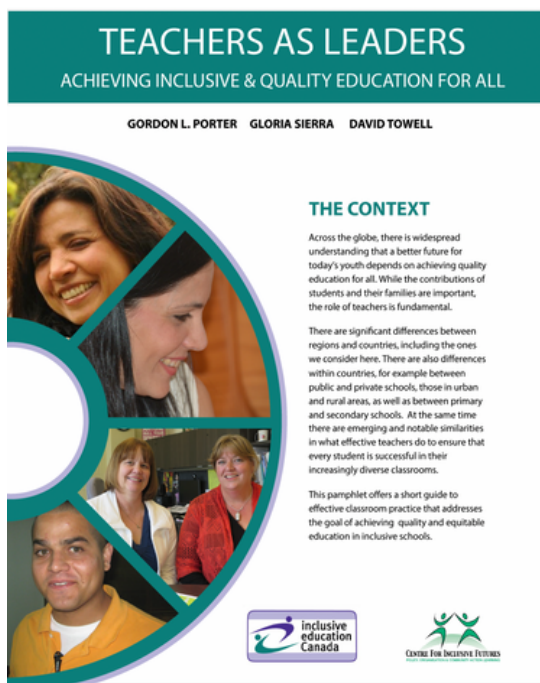
Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

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

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>.
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- 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/>
- Eblie Trudel, L., Sokal, L., & Babb, J. (2021). Planning for teacher recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic: Adaptive regulation to promote resilience. *Interdisciplinary Educational Psychology*. http://riverapublications.com/assets/files/pdf_files/planning-for-teacher-recovery-from-the-covid-19-pandemic-adaptive-regulation-to-promote-resilience.pdf
- Eblie Trudel, L., Sokal, L., & Babb, J. (2021). Teachers' voices: Pandemic lessons for education in times of uncertainty and change. *Journal of Teaching and Learning*. <https://jtl.uwindsor.ca/index.php/jtl/article/view/6486>
- Bradford, B., Eblie Trudel, L., Katz, J., Sokal, L. & Loreman, T. (2021). Promising practices for preparing Canadian teachers for inclusive classrooms: analysis through a transformative learning lens. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2021.1882058
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- Sokal, L., Eblie Trudel, L., & Babb, J. (2020). I've had it! Factors Associated with Burnout and low organizational commitment in Canadian teachers during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. *The International Journal of Educational Research Open*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666374020300236>
- Sokal, L., Eblie Trudel, L., & Babb, J. (2020). It's okay to be okay too. Why Calling out teachers "toxic positivity" may backfire. *Education Canada*, 60(3). <https://www.edcan.ca/articles/its-ok-to-be-ok-too/>
- Eblie Trudel, L. (2019). From Categorical to formula funding support: A report on the outcomes for students, schools and school divisions. Submission to the Manitoba Government K-12 Education Review. Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada. SSAAM - Submission to the Manitoba Government K-12 Education Review



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
5. Parekh, G., & Underwood, K. J. M. (2016). *Inclusion: Creating School and Classroom Communities where Everyone Belongs: Research, Tips, and Tools for Educators and Administrators*. Toronto District School Board.
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 Parekh & 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.





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.

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

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

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