



Series 3

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 Three Guide includes Chat sessions with the following:

Episode 1: Donna Barrett

Teacher & Education Administrator,
Edmonton/Northland School Division,
Consultant, Inclusion Alberta, Edmonton, AB

Episode 2: Lynn Aylward

Professor of Education,
Acadia University, Wolfville, NS

Episode 3: Donna McGhie-Richmond

Associate Professor, Educational Psychology
and Leadership Studies, University of Victoria,
Victoria, BC

Episode 4: Ken Pike

Lawyer & Director of Social Policy, Inclusion
New Brunswick, NB

Episode 5: Monique Somma

Assistant Professor,
Brock University, St. Catherines, ON

Episode 6: Zana Lutfiyya

Senior Scholar,
University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB

Episode 7: Marilyn Dolmage

Inclusion Consultant for
Families, School Boards and Community
Agencies, Toronto, ON

Episode 8: Vianne Timmons

President & Vice-Chancellor,
Memorial University of Newfoundland,
St. John's, NL

Episode 9: Kathryn Underwood

Professor,
Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, ON

Episode 10: Cathy Montreuil

Educational Administrator & Deputy Minister of
Education for the Province of Nova Scotia,
Halifax, NS

Series 3 Commentary – *Let's Chat About Inclusive Education: Commentary on Series Three: Trans-Atlantic Reflections* by David Towell, Director of the Centre for Inclusive Futures, London, UK.



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



Commentary on Series Three: Trans-Atlantic Reflections

*by David Towell,
Director of the Centre for Inclusive Futures in London, UK*



Let me begin by congratulating the three hosts of this important series of broadcasts and especially Gordon Porter who has organised and produced the whole series. Thirty broadcasts represents a lot of effort and the whole series continues to demonstrate the wealth of experience and expertise available across Canada to energise transformational change in education.

After the first 20 Chats, those in the third series were bound to involve some repetition of themes from earlier broadcasts - as indeed does my Commentary - but even where there is repetition, I found Series III contributors adding new angles and examples.

Overall, I think the cumulative story from these broadcasts paints a mixed picture of progress in Canada. On the positive side, the 40 years of experience to date has clearly given great depth to our understanding of inclusive practice and enriched the variety of instructional strategies and tools available to teachers and others - as, for example, Donna McGhee-Richmond describes. Moreover, the respondents who teach teachers mostly give a positive account of the willingness of those now entering the profession to think holistically and become (as Vianne Timmons puts this) detectives seeking to identify each child's unique gifts and possibilities. As a consequence, we have many more examples of students with disabilities belonging in regular schools and achieving success.

On the other hand, it sometimes seems - as Donna Barrett describes - that such individual success is not generalised to the school as a whole; parents still have to fight hard to gain and maintain school inclusion for their children especially in places where there is major investment in segregated 'special schools'; and some of the impetus to advance inclusion has been lost or at least become more diffuse as we have got further away from where this social movement started.

In the latter context, we should also note that while attention to diversity in its many forms and appreciation of intersectionality (the association between different types of disadvantage) broaden our understanding of inclusion/exclusion, it is important that disability is not lost from this complexity.

Commentary on Series Three: Trans-Atlantic Reflections

In my third Commentary therefore, I have sought to identify a small number of propositions that might inform our efforts to do better. Of course, I offer this list as no more than a trans-Atlantic stimulus for the conclusions that Canadian readers draw for themselves.

1. Maintain the utmost clarity about what inclusive education means

Marilyn Dolmage is a parent and has been industriously working to help other parents, students and schools for several decades. As she puts this, 'inclusion is a richly woven blanket and we must attend to all the threads'. It is well worth listening to what she says again: inclusive education is about welcoming all students with disabilities into neighbourhood schools alongside their brothers and sisters; it is about holding high expectations for their participation and contribution; it is about giving good support to both teachers and students so that everyone can learn; and it is about recognising that education with one's peers has important social as well as academic benefits - a point also emphasised by Zana Lutfiyya.

2. Stay in touch with the roots of our movement

Time moves on, new people enter this field, we can lose touch with what drove efforts to achieve educational reform. Using the important example of the 1980s legal fight (based on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms) by Luke Ellwood's family in Nova Scotia, Lynn Aylward makes a powerful argument - presented more fully in the film she has co-produced - about the need to remember the realities of segregation and the huge efforts ordinary families made to change this. We stand on the shoulders of these pioneers.

3. Make education the key element in ensuring people are included throughout the life-span.

In Series II, Genia Stephen talks eloquently about seeking to ensure her son was at the heart of community from his birth. In the latest Series, Kathryn Underwood reinforces this message in relation to the early years and pre-school education, where there is still a lot to be done. Equally, Ken Pike, who has a wide role as social policy lead at Inclusion NB, makes the point that the experience of inclusive schooling lays the foundations for successful inclusion in adult life, for example in employment and housing.

4. Strengthen family advocacy, individually and collectively

It may be disappointing to say this, but as already noted, in many parts of Canada school inclusion still depends heavily on the efforts of parents to make this the preferred option for their children with disabilities. Moreover, partnership between families and teachers is very important in ensuring that each student enjoys a positive educational experience. Ken Pike uses the work of Inclusion NB to illustrate how the multi-level work of family associations - informing and supporting individual families, helping teachers and schools, advocating for systemic change at the policy level - are together essential to making sustained progress.

5. Value and support teachers in their journey to inclusive practice

It is well understood in these broadcasts that continuing education and support for classroom teachers is the key investment required to advance inclusive education. Monique Somma, a teacher educator, argues persuasively that (like students) teachers need to be life-long learners, always seeing each new student as unique and seeking to understand how they learn best, within a school culture that prioritises reflective practice.

6. Promote effective school and system leadership

Extending this last point, school principals and their deputies are critical in defining the purpose and culture of schools: they make the difference in places where policy is ambiguous as to whether inclusive education advances or otherwise. Undoubtedly positive leadership at this level is influenced by personal biographies, especially previous successful experience of inclusive practice, but - as Steve Sider suggested in Series II - developing genuinely inspiring school and system-level leadership, mostly using experiential methods, needs to be another key investment in achieving system-wide change.

7. Build inclusive policies through inclusive processes

As Cathy Montreuil argues most fully from her influential provincial role, this means embedding inclusion in the centre of law and policy-making so it is not vulnerable to changing political winds and priorities. It also means establishing processes that ensure policy-making is itself an inclusive process, for example by ensuring we hear the voices of the people most affected by our decisions and by disaggregating available data so as to tease out differential impacts on different sub-groups. Even in small provinces, there can be a long distance from the classroom to the Minister's office: we have to ensure that the educational enterprise becomes a learning system, mobilising multiple feedback loops so that we 'see' the whole system at work.

Concluding Thoughts

Finally, these broadcasts and other work of Inclusive Education Canada exemplify another critical proposition: there has certainly been 'top down' change in Canada, driven by progressive law and policy; there has also been 'bottom up' change stimulated through the efforts of local innovators. But perhaps more important than either in achieving wide progress towards inclusive education has been what in my Series I Commentary I call 'scaling across': sharing ideas and experiences through lateral networks - especially those that cross boundaries through including students, families, teachers, other educational leaders and researchers - and building advocacy coalitions that enhance the momentum for reform. The "Let's Chat" series produced by Inclusive Education Canada offers an impressive set of resources for renewing these efforts in 2023 and beyond.

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

Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler



Guest:

Donna Barrett

*Teacher & Education Administrator
Edmonton/Northland School Division*

*Consultant, Inclusion Alberta
Edmonton, AB*

Donna Barrett has advocated for inclusive education throughout her career as a teacher, consultant, principal. She served as assistant superintendent in the Edmonton Public School Division and later as superintendent of the Northland School Division serving communities in northern Alberta where 95% of the students are of First Nations, Métis and Inuit descent.

As a parent of an adult son with development disabilities, she appreciates the value of inclusive education and the challenges that parents sometimes face in accessing inclusive schooling for their son or daughter.

Donna holds a doctorate in Education from the University of Alberta and her classification is Education Administration. An active member of Rotary, Donna is a Paul Harris Fellow. She participated in a Rotary Belize Literacy Project, working with a team of school administrators from Canada to offer leadership development programs to school principals in 6 different communities in Belize. "I really enjoyed the opportunity to work with school leaders from other countries."

Donna provides professional development and coaching for educators to enhance quality inclusive teaching and leadership to support learning for all students. Among the priorities Donna has in her work are: a) professional development, consultation and coaching for teachers and school and division leaders; b) sharing successful practices related to inclusive education; c) strengthening links between inclusive education and school improvement.

Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Advocating for Inclusion is Necessary:** Donna explains that in order for parents to have their child educated in an inclusive environment in Alberta, they must advocate for an inclusive option. Inclusive practices are usually not the first option provided by Albertan schools to parents of students with barriers to learning.
- 2. Urban Centres Remain Committed to Special Education Models:** In Alberta, many urban centres devoted substantial time and resources to the development of special education models. Subsequently, overcoming ties to special education in urban centres is a challenge. Rural and remote communities did not have the same resources as urban centres for special education models and therefore have always used and continue to use more inclusive practices.
- 3. Best Practices for Parents:** Donna explained that when advocating for their children, parents have the most success when they are clear about what they want for their children without being prescriptive. For example, parents explaining that they want their child in the classroom, supported sufficiently, may be more effective than explaining how exactly they want their child supported in the classroom.
- 4. Quality Experiences with Inclusion are Valuable:** To increase the number of leaders in education with an appreciation for inclusion, Donna notes the importance of having quality experiences with inclusion. Encouraging leaders to realize that their positive experience with inclusion can be extrapolated to enhance the learning experiences of all students can then help grow their appreciation for inclusion.
- 5. EAs as an Extra Set of Hands:** Instead of attaching an educational assistant (EA) to a specific student in the classroom, Donna promotes the idea of EAs acting as an extra set of hands in the classroom. EAs can help teachers so that inclusion can successfully occur within classrooms, with all students supported.

Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. How do you think we can encourage those around us to have an appreciation for inclusion?
2. Why do you think inclusive education is not the default option for educating students with barriers to learning in Alberta? How about across Canada?

Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Do you have any thoughts on Donna's suggestion to have EAs function as an extra set of hands in classrooms? How might this improve the peer connections of students with barriers to learning?
2. How do you think the ties to special education models in urban centres can be loosened or cut altogether?

More from Donna Barrett:

- **From the Inclusive Education Canada Website**
 - Determination And Partnerships: Keys To Successful Inclusion For Secondary Students
- Barrett, Donna (2014), "Resourcing Inclusive Education", Measuring Inclusive Education (International Perspectives on Inclusive Education, Vol. 3), Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 75-91. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-363620140000003020>
- Barrett, Donna S. (2007). Leadership: Being in rooms. Edmonton : Alberta, Canada Proquest Information and Learning.



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

Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler



Guest:
Lynn Aylward
*Professor of Education
Acadia University
Wolfville, NS*

Lynn Aylward is a teacher educator and researcher at Acadia University in Nova Scotia. She has expertise in intercultural teacher development, community schooling and has been involved in inclusive education since her first days as a teacher in the mid-1980s.

She recently co-produced the documentary film *"The Case of Luke Elwood"* - Frictive Films (2020). It documents an historically significant chapter in the journey toward inclusive schools in Canada. The link to the film is <https://bit.ly/3Abi934>

Lynn Aylward is an activist teacher educator, curriculum designer, and researcher with expertise in intercultural teacher development, community schooling, and inclusive education. She has researched, taught and consulted across Canada (living and working in 4 provinces and 2 territories) as well as internationally through collaborative projects with colleagues in Chile, Malawi, Tanzania, China, Dominica, and Guyana. Capacity building and reciprocity form the cornerstone of her professional and research practice. Dr. Aylward's research projects examine equity as it intersects with; culturally responsive pedagogy, indigenous education, disability studies, technologies for accessibility, place - based curriculum, rurality and gender diversity. Dr. Aylward is a Professor at Acadia University.

Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Keeping the Mission Front and Centre:** In 2017, tension was growing between teachers and the government in Nova Scotia with inclusive education as a central topic of debate. Lynn felt like both parties had lost sight of the goal, providing inclusive education to all Nova Scotian students, and decided to undertake a project to remind those involved in education of their mission. This project was a film on a Human Rights Charter challenge, involving the Ellwood family who wanted their son to be included in his neighbourhood school.
- 2. Students Should Not Have to Earn Their Place in Classrooms:** Lynn expressed that although there have been major improvements in inclusive education since the Ellwood case, students must still earn their place in regular classrooms through mainstreaming practices. Lynn explains that often, students with barriers to learning who are deemed as disruptive are not included in classrooms with their peers.
- 3. Structural Changes:** Lynn explained that inclusion is more than just inviting students into schools and classrooms as they have always existed, but instead altering educational structures to accommodate all learners.
- 4. Valuing Families' Input:** In Lynn's opinion, a major progression in inclusive education in Nova Scotia since the Ellwood case is that schools seem to value families' input on their children's learning. This is critical because parents are the experts when it comes to their children!
- 5. The Next Generation of Teachers:** Through her experience working with Bachelor of Education students, Lynn has noticed that these students approach teaching holistically, considering the whole child and their multiple identities. Lynn believes the next generation of teachers will look more deeply into inclusion rather than focusing on inclusive classroom placements.

Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Are you familiar with the Luke Ellwood case in Nova Scotia? If so, what can you remember about it?
2. What do you think about mainstreaming practices? Do you see any inherent problems with mainstreaming students with barriers to learning?

Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Considering Lynn's input on changing structural aspects of education to facilitate real inclusion, what are the critical elements of inclusive education?
2. How do you think the idea of intersectionality plays into inclusive education? Can embracing diversity add momentum to the movement towards inclusive education?

More from Lynn Aylward:

- Jacqueline Specht, Donna McGhie-Richmond, Tim Loreman, Pat Mirenda, Sheila Bennett, Tiffany Gallagher, Gabrielle Young, Jamie Metsala, Lynn Aylward, Jennifer Katz, Wanda Lyons, Scott Thompson & Sarah Cloutier (2016) Teaching in inclusive classrooms: efficacy and beliefs of Canadian preservice teachers, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20:1, 1-15, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2015.1059501
- Lynn Aylward & Gregory Mackinnon (1999) Exploring the use of electronic discussion group coding with pre-service secondary teachers, *Journal of Information Technology for Teacher Education*, 8:3, 335-348, DOI: 10.1080/14759399900200065
- MacKinnon, G. & Aylward, L. (2000). Coding Electronic Discussion Groups. *International Journal of Educational Telecommunications*, 6(1), 53-61. Charlottesville, VA: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). Retrieved May 16, 2022 from <https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/8016/>.
- Citation: Aylward, M. L. (2007, June 26). Discourses of cultural relevance in Nunavut schooling. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 22(7). Retrieved [date] from <http://jrre.psu.edu/articles/22-7.pdf>
- Aylward, M. Lynn; Bruce, Cynthia. (2014). Inclusive Post-Secondary Education in Canada: Transition to Somewhere for Students with Intellectual Disabilities. *Journal of the International Association of Special Education*. Fall2014, Vol. 15 Issue 2, p42-47. 6p.
- Bruce, Cynthia, and M. Lynn Aylward. "Disability and self-advocacy experiences in university learning contexts." *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* 23, no. 1 (2021).
- Aylward, Lynn. "Promising Practices in Indigenous Teacher Education." *Teachers College Record*. Teachers College Record, Date Published: December 06, 2018
- <https://www.tcrecord.org> ID Number: 22597.



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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):

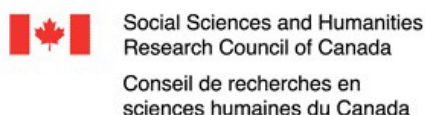
1. Are you optimistic about the progress toward inclusion in Canadian schools?
2. If school policy allows an option for segregation, does that in itself mean children will be segregated?

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 McGhee-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.



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

Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler



Guest:

Ken Pike

*Lawyer & Director of Social Policy
Inclusion New Brunswick
Fredericton, NB*

Ken Pike has served as Director of Social Policy for the Inclusion New Brunswick for over 25 years and has been an advocate in the Community Living movement for over 30 years.

Ken completed a B.A at Mount Allison University and a M.A. at Queen's University before receiving his LL.B. (Law) at Dalhousie University in Halifax. Ken is a retired member of the Law Society of New Brunswick and a member of the Canadian Bar Association.

Through his work with NBACL, Ken has worked on many issues facing people with an intellectual or developmental disability and the consequence for their families. He has also worked extensively on public policy issues affecting people with a disability including social assistance reform and poverty, disability support programming, housing, employment, health and inclusive education.

Ken has also authored or co-authored several books, resources, discussion papers and policy briefs on disability issues. He is the recipient of the 2008 New Brunswick Human Rights Award. In 2017 he was inducted into the Bertha Wilson Honour Society at the Dalhousie University Schulich School of Law for his work on promoting a more inclusive society for people with a disability. In 2021, Ken was inducted into the Order of New Brunswick, the highest civilian recognition in the province of New Brunswick.

Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1.Law Contributes to Inclusion: Ken asserts that legislation that mandates inclusion makes a significant difference and is the foundation on which school inclusion has been built in New Brunswick. He shares his personal involvement in that process in the 1980s.

2.Legislation is Crucial, But Policy is As Well: When New Brunswick introduced legislation (Bill 85 in 1986) that mandated inclusive practices within schools, it was not accompanied by clear policy guidelines. As a result, each of 42 school districts developed their own approach to implementation. While similarities did exist, they were a source of uncertainty and confusion. Ken explained that community and parent advocacy groups can help close the gaps between legislation and the policy and practices needed. New Brunswick's first system wide ministerial policy (N.B. Policy 322) was signed in September 2013, more than 25 years after the legislation was passed.

3.In Canada, Legislation and Case Law Have Not Delivered Inclusion: While legislative changes in New Brunswick were instrumental in producing the movement towards inclusion, the same has not been the case in other Canadian provinces and territories. Ken reviewed several of the key legal cases in which court decisions failed to support families who were challenging schools to be inclusive. This failure, along with the time and cost of litigation have discouraged advocates of inclusion to use the courts to push for inclusive practices in Canadian schools.

4.Monitoring Inclusive Practices: Ken explained that even when inclusion is mandated, meaningful inclusion of students does not always occur. Inclusion requires leadership, hard work and resources, and there are too many occasions when there is a gap between what is needed, and what actually happens in the school or classroom. Parents and advocates must monitor and assess practices to ensure that learning happens for every child.

5.Inclusive Schools as a Model for an Inclusive Society: Ken connected inclusion in New Brunswick schools to improvements that have been made in community and society. The experience in schools serves as a foundation of inclusion in employment, housing, post-secondary education, and more. Community and parent organizations are able to use this success as they advocate for greater change and equitable outcomes.

Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1.How can lawyers play a role in the movement towards inclusive education?

2.What are the gaps between inclusive education legislation and inclusive education policy and practices? What stakeholders can help close these gaps?

Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. To what degree do you think legislation and policy should mandate programs and practices that ensure inclusion is a reality in communities across Canada?
2. What kind of accountability would be feasible to ensure that schools that have not become inclusive do so. Might specific consequences and penalties for failure to be inclusive be possible?
3. Might teacher education programs that result in new teachers with better training for inclusion diminish the need for legislation and policy?
4. What does the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms offer to the effort to make schools inclusive?

More from Ken Pike:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Summary on: *General Comment Number 4 - Article 24: Right to Inclusive Education and New Brunswick's Progress on Meeting Treaty Expectations*. New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL). December 2019.
- **Resources created for Inclusive Education Canada**
 - Some Thoughts On The Moore Decision: <https://bit.ly/3xqNZdG>



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

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Guest:

Monique Somma

*Assistant Professor
Brock University
St. Catharines, ON*

Monique Somma is an assistant professor and scholar in the Department of Educational Studies at Brock University. Currently, she co-develops and teaches courses to teacher candidates on topics

including child development, cognition and the inclusion of students with exceptionalities, in order to help prepare future teachers to effectively meet the needs of diverse learners in the classroom. As an elementary school teacher herself, having taught special education and inclusive classes for 15 years, she understands firsthand the challenges and the successes of working with children with exceptionalities in the 20th century. Her research focuses on preschool to secondary educator preparedness for inclusive education, from attitudes and beliefs to learning and practice, best practices for creating inclusive classrooms and schools for students with exceptionalities, and how peer involvement can enhance inclusion.

Monique and several of her colleagues at Brock University collaborated with Inclusive Education Canada to support strengthening inclusion in Montessori schools. The project resulted in a publication documenting key strategies to enhance the success of teachers in Montessori schools and making inclusion a reality.

Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1. Successful Experiences with Inclusion Matter: Monique speaks to her personal experience teaching in self-contained special education classrooms. When she used integration strategies in regular classrooms with her students, she saw them flourish. Observing inclusive education practices work changed her view. These experiences led her to commit to inclusive education and may help other educators do the same.

2. Formal Assessments have their Pros and Cons: Although formal assessments can help identify students eligible for access to resources and supports, Monique has serious concerns about their effect. She cautions educators to use information from an assessment as a starting point when working with a student. Students are so much more than what their formal assessments reveal about their abilities and challenges.

3. All Teachers are Special Education Teachers: When working with teacher candidates, Monique stresses the importance of using *universal design for learning* as a starting point. Inclusive classrooms result in all teachers working with a diverse student population where every child is unique and as a result the teacher is a special education teacher.

4. Experimenting is Crucial for Success: During teacher training, Monique encourages her students to be innovative and to try new instructional strategies. She believes that using this training period to attempt to make learning accessible for all learners is important for new teachers' future success with inclusion.

Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. What benefits and drawbacks can you identify with the use of formal assessments of a students' barriers to learning? Can the results of these tests cause students harm?

2. Reflect on inclusive experiences you have had throughout your lifetime. In what ways did these experiences shape your values, commitments, and career or personal goals?

Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Do you agree with Monique's assertion that all teachers need to consider themselves special education teachers? Does inclusion make this inevitable?

2. How can new teachers be supported to sustain their commitment to inclusion as they leave teacher training and enter actual schools and classrooms?

More from Monique Somma:

- Bennett, S., Gallagher, T. L., Somma, M., White, R., & Włodarczyk, K. (2021). Transitioning from segregation to inclusion: An effective and sustainable model to promote inclusion, through internal staffing adjustments, and role redefinition. In *Resourcing Inclusive Education*. Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Bennett, S., Specht, J., Somma, M., & White, R. (2020). Navigating school interactions: Parents of students with intellectual disabilities speak out. *Current Developmental Disorders Reports*, 7(3), 149-154.
- 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 Educational Needs*, 21(3), 187-197.
- Somma, M., & Bennett, S. (2020). Inclusive Education and Pedagogical Change: Experiences from the Front Lines. *International Journal of Educational Methodology*, 6(2), 285-295.
- Somma, M. & Marini, Z. (2020). A Bully and a Victim: The Bullying Experiences of Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders. *Exceptionality Education International*, 30 (1), 25–41 I.
- Bennett, S., Dworet, D. Gallagher, T. & Somma, M. (2019). *Special Education in Ontario Schools* (8th ed.). Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON: Highland Press
- Bennett, S., Gallagher, T., & Somma, M. (2019, February). The Inclusion of Students with Intellectual Disabilities: Parent Perspectives. In 2019 Conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education.
- Maich, K., Somma, M., Hill, R. (2018). *Canadian School Programs for Students with Emotional/Behavioural Disorders: A Decade of Programs, Policies, and Practices*. Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.
- Somma, M. (2018). From Segregation to Inclusion: Special Educators' Experiences of Change. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. Online. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2018.1464070
- Bennett, S., Gallagher, T., Shuttleworth, M., Somma, M. & White, R. (2017). Teen dreams: Voices of students with intellectual disabilities. *Journal on Developmental Disabilities*, 23 (1), 64-75.
- Somma, M., (2017) The Case of Drake. In Kim Calder Stageman & Angèle AuCoin (Eds.). *Inclusive Education: Stories of Success and Hope in a Canadian Context*. Toronto: Pearson
- Somma, M. (2015). Changing the Spots of Leopards: A Look into the Process of Teacher Change and its Impact on Inclusive Pedagogy. *Teaching and Learning* 10 (1). (16 pgs)
- Włodarczyk, K., Somma, M., Bennett, S., & Gallagher, T. (2015). Moving Towards Inclusion: Inclusion Coaches Reflections and Discussions in Supporting Educators in Practice. *Exceptionality Education International*. (30 pgs)



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

Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler



Guest:

Zana Lutfiyya

Senior Scholar

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, MB

Zana Marie Lutfiyya is a native of Winnipeg and has long associated with equality efforts for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Following completion of a B.A. from the University of Manitoba she completed she completed her graduate training and postdoctoral work at the Center on Human Policy, Syracuse University. Zana joined the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba in 1992.

Her longstanding research interest has been identifying and examining the factors that help or hinder the valued social participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities in community life. This has included where individuals live, go to school, work and take part in recreational activities. She was part of a multi-disciplinary team that studied vulnerable people and end of life care. She has facilitated the participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities in the research process, both as participants and in helping determine research goals and questions. Zana conducted research that focuses on how individuals with intellectual disabilities understand the concept of human rights, and how they are supported to learn and exercise these rights.

Zana taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels in inclusive education and qualitative research methods. She retired at the end of 2020. Her ongoing research interest has been the social participation of individuals with an intellectual disability in everyday community life.

Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Change Can Come from the Bottom:** In Manitoba, much of the progress in inclusion can be attributed to the work of parent and educator advocacy groups. While change must also engage those in positions of power, self-organized advocacy groups can make a critical difference.
- 2. Training, Supports and Clear Expectations:** Zana identified three key components that she believes are required for school divisions/districts to be inclusive. Educators must be provided with both professional training to build capacity as well as support that is adequate to address specific challenges and problems that need to be dealt with for teachers to create and sustain inclusive classrooms. Additionally, those overseeing the education system must provide clear expectations of what inclusion looks like in a school or a classroom and the things that should not be seen.
- 3. Differences Between School Divisions/Districts That Are Inclusive and Those That Are Not:** The size of a school division/district, both its geography and its student population, can be seen to make a difference in terms of the level of inclusion achieved. In Manitoba, smaller school divisions have been more inclusive and have supported students and families more successfully. Zana speculates that this could be because smaller divisions have fewer resources and must simply do their work with fewer special programs and services than larger divisions. The result is positive since students are more likely to attend class in their community school with their siblings and neighbourhood peers.
- 4. Learning to Live Together:** Zana asserts that a major goal of schooling is that children gain the social benefit of learning to live with people different from themselves. Inclusive schools result in children with diverse attributes, including those with disabilities, learn to live in communities that provide both inclusion, opportunity and equity.

Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. What are the social benefits of inclusive education? How valuable are these benefits compared to academic achievement?
2. Have you ever participated in an advocacy group? If so, what did you learn from that experience?

Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Based on what Zana shared about current inclusive education parent advocacy groups in Manitoba, do you think that smaller parent advocacy groups should join forces to create a larger impact? Why or why not?
2. Do you think consolidating school districts in Manitoba will result in less inclusive practices? Can you think of ways to ensure that inclusive practices are sustained when this consolidation occurs?

More from Zana Lutfiyya:

Articles (peer reviewed)

- Schwartz, K. & Lutfiyya, Z.M. (2017). Place, space and justice: Considering people with intellectual disabilities. *Annual Review of Interdisciplinary Justice and Research* v6 15-39.

Articles (non peer reviewed)

- Lutfiyya, Z.M. (2018). Making it work: School administrators support all students and their teachers. Invited commentary for National Inclusive Education Month. www.inclusiveeducation.ca/news/
- Lutfiyya, Z.M. (2013). No one ever said it would be say: Closing Manitoba's institutions for individuals with intellectual disabilities. *Institution Watch* (7)2. A publication of People First of Canada and the Canadian Association for Community Living. www.Institutionwatch.ca

Contributions to edited books

- Lutfiyya, Z.M. & Bartlett (2020). Inclusive societies. In Umesh Sharma and Spencer Salend (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Inclusive and Special Education* (print) and *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education* (on-line). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. <http://DOI:10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1022>
- Lutfiyya, Z.M., Kendel, D. & Schwartz, K. (2018). The community inclusion project in Manitoba: Planning for the residents of the Pelican Lake Training Centre. In Nancy Hansen, Roy Hanes & Diane Driedger (Eds.). *Untold Stories: A Canadian Disability History Reader*. 345-355. Canadian Scholar's Press. Toronto, ON.
- Freeze, T.B., Freeze, R., & Lutfiyya, Z.M. (2013). Attending university: An emerging pathway to devalued employment and social participation for young adults with intellectual, developmental, and multiple disabilities. In *Way on Way: Supporting people with intellectual, developmental, and multiple disabilities in employment*. 185-216. American Association on Intellectual and Development Disabilities. Washington, DC.



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

Hosts Gordon L. Porter, Jacqueline Specht and Diane Richler



Guest:

Marilyn Dolmage

***Inclusion Consultant
Families, School Boards and Community
Agencies, Toronto, ON***

Marilyn Dolmage has worked alongside people with disabilities, their families and communities to end segregation and create new supports and relationships for over 50 years. As an inclusive education consultant, Marilyn assists schools and families to work together to improve education.

She was project coordinator for the Ontario Coalition for Inclusive Education and its member associations.

Marilyn communicates with a broad network of allies across Ontario, Canada concerning the law, provincial policies, educational practices, and advocacy strategies. Since 1995, she's been inspiring school communities to work for change to welcome, accommodate and celebrate individual differences among their students, assisting families to improve individual educational planning so that their sons and daughters get the support they need to learn as members of regular classrooms in their neighborhood schools, connecting special education advisory committee representatives to promote effective inclusive education in their school boards, gathering information from across Canada about innovative career development for students with disabilities leaving high school, and leading research funded by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Faculty of Education at Western University.

Her family struggled to ensure that all three of her own kids attended school together and to assist her older son who had significant disabilities to have the education, medical treatment, employment, and community life that he wanted. Matthew's sudden death in 2004 at the age of 29 has heightened her resolve to improve policy, promote effective inclusion, and strengthened families, schools, and communities.

Marilyn has a BA from McMaster University, a BSW from the University of British Columbia and Master of Social Work degree from York University in Toronto.

Marilyn is a valued member of Inclusive Education Canada's Network of Associates.

Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1. Inclusive Education is Paramount to Leading Inclusive Lives: Marilyn asserts that for people experiencing barriers to participation in the ordinary activities of their communities, specifically individuals with disabilities, inclusion in school can make a critical difference. Inclusive schooling with the social and academic benefits that result provides the foundation for meaningful life in the community.

2. Inclusive Education is About More Than Education: Marilyn explained that, in her view, the social aspect of education is often overlooked. Inclusive classrooms make it possible for students with disabilities to feel accepted and valued by their peers and their teachers.

3. Person Power: Over the course of Marilyn's career, she has learned how valuable it is for persons experiencing barriers to learning to gain a sense of power over the decisions made about their lives. Students and parents are too often denied the option of inclusion in schools and classrooms with little regard for the lifetime effect of this. We need to ensure they can choose placement in an inclusive classroom if that is what they consider best.

4. Schools as Active Learning Spaces: Marilyn has promoted change and innovation in schools and maintains that schools do not have to be static institutions. School leaders and teachers can adapt and change their practices based on the needs of students. All learners benefit from schools being active learning spaces.

5. Loving and Caring for All Children: Marilyn believes that inclusive education boils down to loving all children, regardless of their ability. All students and all families deserve the love and support they need for them to be successful during their school years and beyond.

Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Do parents have the kind of power and control they need to ensure their child with a disability is included in schools in your community? What, if anything, needs to change?
2. How important is it for families to be supported by an advocacy group to overcome barriers blocking inclusion in neighbourhood schools?

Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. Do you have any experience or knowledge of groups or networks that connect people who are committed to inclusive education? Do these networks play a role in strengthening and supporting a commitment to inclusion?
2. Do you agree with Marilyn's belief that inclusion comes down to caring for and loving all children?

More from Marilyn Dolmage:

- Evidence of High School Inclusion: Research, Resources and Inspiration, Marilyn Dolmage, Jacqueline Specht, Janice Strickland, Heather Stuart and Gabrielle Young; Principal investigator analyzing how selected secondary schools develop and sustain their motivation and strategies to teach students with significant disabilities as members of regular classes.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279961938_Evidence_of_effective_high_school_inclusion_Research_resources_and_inspiration
- The What, Why and How of Inclusive Education –a series of training podcasts for families and educators through The Inclusion Academy at
<https://goodthingsinlife.mykajabi.com/inclusion>
- **Inclusion Action in Ontario**
 - Inclusive Education: From political correctness towards social justice – a film to support advocacy, dedicated to the memory of Matthew Dolmage at
<https://inclusionactionontario.ca/why-inclusive-education/>
 - Blog post honouring Orville Endicott to support family advocacy at
<https://inclusionactionontario.ca/the-life-and-contributions-of-orville-endicott/>
- **Resources created with The Ontario Coalition for Inclusive Education:**
 - History of the Coalition http://www.inclusive-education.ca/resources/documents/Coalition_summary_2005.pdf
 - A Tale about a Test: more questions than answers” – a parable challenging standardized testing http://www.inclusive-education.ca/resources/documents/tale_test.php
- Resources created for Inclusive Education Canada
 - Inclusive Education - Aiming Higher <https://bit.ly/3QPkeKr>
 - Getting an Inclusive Start: The Critical Need for Inclusive Pre-school Education: <https://bit.ly/3Li2XrY>
- “Students Learning Together” - Marilyn Dolmage and Nancy Rother -from Accommodation to Universal Design



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

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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
- 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



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

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Guest:

Kathryn Underwood

*Professor,
Toronto Metropolitan University,
Toronto, ON*

Kathryn Underwood, Professor, School of Early Childhood Studies, Toronto Metropolitan University investigates how society responds to and constructs childhood in social institutions. Kathryn's interests are in human rights and education practice, particularly with regard to disability rights and inclusive education.

The focus of her research has been on how constructions of disability in education and early childhood program contexts are used to organize children, with particularly interest in intersectional identities of all disabled children. Dr. Underwood has conducted a number of studies that focus on parent viewpoints and the work of families to engage with institutions.

Kathryn Underwood is the Principal Investigator for the Inclusive Early Childhood Service System Project. This collaborative partnership project, funded by the County of Wellington, the Social Sciences and Humanity Research Council (SSHRC), and Toronto Metropolitan University, aims to better understanding experiences of disability in early childhood from diverse cultural, geographic, and community perspectives.

Her areas of expertise include a) inclusive curriculum, teaching and learning; b) disability studies in education and childhood; c) special education policy and practice; d) early years service planning and delivery.

Key Issues in this Chat Session:

- 1. Inclusion and ECE are Related:** Kathryn explained that when she began working in early childhood education, she found that many of the important themes strategies that play a role in inclusive education are central to ECE. For example, parental involvement and a focus on each child's development are critical in ECE, just as they are important in inclusion in primary and secondary schools.
- 2. Moving Away From 'Ready to Learn':** Kathryn emphasized that there is so much more to ECE than preparing children for learning within the formal school system. Both academic and social learning can begin in the ECE years. Additionally, some of the ideas of 'ready to learn' are non-inclusive. For example, requiring a student to be toilet trained to be ready for school is exclusionary as some students may never achieve this ability.
- 3. Cautions Surrounding the Professionalization of ECE:** Although there are so many benefits to having ECE recognized as a professional career, Kathryn cautions against the exclusion of family involvement in ECE as it professionalized. Family expertise should be valued in the same way as the expertise of professionals trained in ECE.
- 4. Blurring the Line Between ECE and School:** Kathryn asserts that a child's ECE years and school years do not need to be as divided as they are now. ECE teachers and other professionals can share many valuable insights gained about student success from their experiences during the child's ECE.
- 5. Safe Spaces for Students and Families:** Provision of services for students experiencing barriers to learning need to take place in safe conditions and an appropriate manner. Kathryn has worked with families who have had harmful strategies used on their child. Programs and policies need to ensure that these negative practices are not used or tolerated.

Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. How do you assess the ECE concept of 'ready to learn'? What do you think about it in relation to inclusive education?
2. In what ways do you think having multiple minority identities (e.g., being part of a racial minority and as well as a disability) impacts the experiences of students and their families?

Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. What do you consider the most helpful lesson(s) to be drawn from Kathryn's experience working with indigenous families of children with disabilities or other special needs?
2. Should access to high quality ECE be considered an essential human right in Canada just as access to education for school-age children is a human right? Why or why not?

More from Kathryn Underwood:

Chapters

- Davies, K., Doucet, G., Atwal, A., & Underwood, K. (2021). Systemic knowledge at school entry: Learning from disabled children and their families. *Community, Work & Family*, 1-5.
- Underwood, K., Chan, C., Koller, D., & Valeo, A. (2017). Understanding young children's capabilities: Approaches to interviews with young children experiencing disability. In B. Kelly & B. Byrne (Eds.), *Valuing disabled children and young people: Research, policy, and practice* (pp. 72-89). Routledge
- Underwood, K., Church, K., & Van Rhijn, T. (2020). Responsible for normal: The contradictory work of families. In S. Winton & G. Parekh (Eds.), *Critical perspectives on education policy and schools, families, and communities* (pp. 89-106). Information Age Publishing Inc.
- Frankel, E. Underwood, K., & Goldstein, P. (2017). Principles and practices of early intervention. In M. L. Wehmeyer, I. Brown, M. Percy, K. Shogren & A. Fung (Eds.), *A comprehensive guide to intellectual and developmental disabilities* (2nd ed., pp. 495-508). Brookes Publishing.

Articles

- Underwood, K., Frankel, E., Spalding, K., & Brophy, K. (2019). Is the right to early intervention being honoured? *Canadian Journal of Children's Rights*. 5(1), 56-70. <https://doi.org/10.22215/cjcr.v5i1.1226>
- Frankel, E., Chan, C., & Underwood, K. (2019). Inclusion is an experience, not a placement. *eceLink*, 3(1), 24-34.
- Underwood, K., & Snoddon, K. (2021). Deaf childhoods and inclusive early childhood education and care (Policy Brief No. 10). The Inclusive Early Childhood Service System Project.
- Underwood, K., & Parekh, G. (2020). Inclusion in early childhood: Difference, disability, and social justice. *Education. excel* [filehttps://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756810/obo-9780199756810-0265.xml](https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756810/obo-9780199756810-0265.xml)



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Guest:

Cathy Montreuil

*Educational Administrator & Deputy
Minister of Education
Province of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS*

Cathy was appointed to the position of Deputy Minister of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as of March, 2018. She brings a wealth of experience having worked in education for over 30 years.

During her career, Cathy has had teaching experience in both elementary and secondary schools, special education, care and treatment and custody programs, and has been a vice-principal, principal, superintendent, and Director of Education in Ontario school boards.

She served as a system leader for Special Education where she was instrumental in her board's achievement of the Ontario Award for Inclusive Schools and collaborated with the Canadian Association for Community Living on an Inclusion Education tool for school communities.

Cathy has also written and taught Special Education Additional Qualifications courses for teachers. Prior to accepting the position of Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development in Nova Scotia, Cathy served as the Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Student Achievement Officer for the Province of Ontario.

Key Issues in this Chat Session:

1. **Society is Better with Diversity:** Cathy asserted that inclusion is a critical element within schools because society does better by embracing diversity and inclusive schools are necessary for creating and sustaining an inclusive, diverse society.
2. **Putting Inclusion at the Core:** In Cathy's current work on educational policy, she and her team focus on having inclusion at the core of policies. She explained that if inclusion is viewed as central to a policy, then it cannot be considered an add-on and rolled back when things get challenging.
3. **Advocates Should Build Coalitions and Common Ground:** Cathy explained that in her experience individual groups that advocate for change should connect with one another and thus grow their reach and enhance their ability to see that the changes they want happen. Groups fighting for equity can help one another and refrain from competing for attention and resources.
4. **Connecting Innovators:** In Cathy's experience, change to inclusion in schools does not occur solely from the school in a bottom-up manner, nor from the board or ministry level down. What matters is connecting individuals and groups who are doing good work in inclusion at all levels. She has found that given the space and support, people will connect and learn inclusive practices from each other, resulting in the kind of change we need.

Potential Discussion Questions (before viewing):

1. Do you believe there is competition between different groups advocating for inclusion in schools and beyond?
2. What do you think of when you hear the phrase, 'all means all' when applied to inclusion?

Potential Discussion Questions (after viewing):

1. How important do you believe policy and policy changes are in the movement towards inclusive education? At what level does it matter most – Ministry? District/Division? School?
2. Do you think effective coalitions between advocacy groups could lead to better results for all? How might you go about building these coalitions?

More information about Deputy Minister Montreuil's work on inclusive education policy and programs can be located on the website of the Department of Education, Province of Nova Scotia: <https://bit.ly/3ScjFer>



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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/>

Learn more about inclusive education in Canada by checking out the links below!

Inclusive Education Canada

Website: www.InclusiveEducation.ca

Facebook: [@InclusiveEducationCanada](https://www.facebook.com/InclusiveEducationCanada)

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YouTube: [@InclusiveEd](https://www.youtube.com/InclusiveEd)

Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education

Website: www.InclusiveEducationResearch.ca

Inclusion Canada

Website: www.InclusionCanada.ca

