



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

By researching and sharing our findings with educators and relevant agencies across Canada and around the world, we can empower them to provide the best educational experience for all students, including those with exceptional needs.

Jacqueline Specht, PhD
Centre Director

Table of Contents

- A. Active Involvement of Members with Centre Work, 20222
- B. Value of Involvement for Members3
- C. Academic Impact3
- D. Knowledge Mobilization4
- E. Funding -Secured or Maintained, 20225
- F. Funding - Seeking, 2022:6
- Appendix A7
- Members of the Centre7
- Appendix B.....9
- Activities, Products, and Impacts of Collaborations.....9

A. Active Involvement of Members with Centre Work, 2022

Mission: The Centre's purpose is to create knowledge and disseminate it across Canada and around the world to ensure successful academic and social outcomes for **all** students, including those with exceptional needs. This is accomplished through research, and knowledge exchange or mobilization activities. Highlights of member involvement in these activities in 2022 are described in this section.

Note: A complete list of members of the Centre appears in **Appendix A**. In the Appendices, and throughout this Annual Report, faculty members' names are **bolded**, and graduate students' names are underlined.

Ongoing Research Projects. Refer to **Section E** in this Annual Report for a detailed list of Funding.

- *Beginning Teachers Study.* In 2022, concept-mapping analysis continued with interview data from the study that identified contributors to instructional practices, and to efficacy. This analysis complements the results of an examination of contributors to beginning teachers' beliefs about inclusive education which was published in the *International Journal of Inclusive Education* in late 2020. Graduate students who are participating in the analysis and writing are Jessica Delorey, Petra Owusu, and Evan Charles, supervised by **Dr. Jacqueline Specht**.
- *Collaboration with European Partners.* **Dr. Donna McGhie-Richmond** from University of Victoria and **Dr. Jacqueline Specht** have partnered with Dr. Susanne Miesera from Technical University of Munich in Germany to compare beginning teachers in Canada and Germany regarding their views on experiences that contribute to the development of inclusive practice.
- *Let's Chat...About Inclusive Education.* **Dr. Specht** and collaborators from Inclusive Education Canada, Inclusion Canada and Inclusion International continued work on this video series funded by a SSHRC Connection Grant. Graduate student Sydney Bota is working on this project under Dr. Specht's supervision.
- *School Leadership.* **Dr. Steve Sider** together with other Centre members have been investigating the experiences of school principals with inclusion over the last few years. The most recent SSHRC insight grant is led by Dr. Sider and includes centre members **Drs. McGhie-Richmond, Specht, Maich, and MacCormack** as co-investigators, with **Drs. Bennett, Rousseau, and Somma**, as collaborators. This grant builds on previous work and explores the "critical incident" experiences of principals as they support students with special education needs in inclusive schools in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador.
- *International Outreach – Haiti.* Western University, through the Centre, along with four other Canadian universities and three partner organizations from Haiti are developing a partnership between the two countries to strengthen research and teacher education on disability and inclusion. Led by **Dr. Sider**, project co-investigators from the Centre are **Drs. Specht and Maich**.

- *International Outreach – Ghana.* A team of Canadian and Ghanaian academics/stakeholders has assembled as part of a SSHRC Partnership Development Grant, sharing indicators of successful inclusive education in Ghana and providing resources to promote inclusive education for Ghanaian students. Led by Dr. Magnus Mfoafo-M'Carthy, project co-investigators from the Centre are **Drs. Specht, Sider, and Maich.**
- *International Outreach – St. Vincent and the Grenadines.* Four team members of the Centre are researching and consulting for the ministry of education in this country under a Human Development Service Delivery Project grant for in-service teacher training. They are **Drs. Sheila Bennett, Monique Somma, and John Freer.** The focus of this project is on strengthening pedagogy through in-service teacher professional development. Between 2019 and 2022 the team provided an inception report, training modules, regular progress reports, and a final evaluation report. These are listed in **Appendix B.**

B. Value of Involvement for Members

Note: References and additional co-authored publications and presentations appear in **Appendix B.**

Faculty Research Collaborations: Many of the members of the Centre are renowned for their expertise in specialized areas of inclusion and inclusive education research. For this reason, they were invited to collaborate on research projects such as the *Beginning Teachers Study*. Some researchers have established a relationship with the Centre to expand the scope and reach of their expertise. Their expertise provides a multi-perspective approach to addressing policy and practice. Research collaborations within the Centre expand knowledge on a variety of topics and issues concerning the provision of an optimal educational experience for all students. The following are some examples of these collaborations, and the value of these for members:

- *Coping with Covid-19.* Providing insight and resources during Covid-19. **Drs. Whitley, Specht, Matheson and MacCormack** researched the experiences of parents of students with special education needs and navigating at-home learning during COVID-19. Their findings are reported and discussed in a chapter in a book by Turok-Squire (2022) concerning COVID-19 and education in the global north. **Drs. MacCormack, Whitley and Sider** published an article in the journal *Leadership & Policy in School* concerning their research with parents' and principals' perspectives on home-school collaboration during emergency remote teaching in Canada. See **Appendix B** for details of these publications.
- *International perspectives on inclusive education.* Through the outreach activities, and the comparative study with Dr. Miesera at the Technical University of Munich, members of the Centre team have gained insight through sharing knowledge and perspectives with the global community of inclusive educators and researchers.

C. Academic Impact

Open access journal hosting. The Centre publishes an online journal titled *Exceptionality Education International* (EEI). Centre members, **Drs. Specht and de Lugt** are editors, and **Dr. Monique Somma** is an associate editor. *Exceptionality Education International* provides a forum for research and dialogue on topics relevant to the education of people with exceptionalities and how barriers to the full participation

of all people in education can be reduced or removed. Journal articles are available through open access after one year. More information about EEI may be viewed [HERE](#) .

National and International Reports. In 2022 **Drs. Specht and Sider** were contributing authors to Chapter 3.6 titled “Identifying and Supporting Children with Learning Disabilities”, part of the report for the UNESCO International Science and Evidence-based Education (ISEE) Assessment. International Science and Evidence based Education Assessment | Science of learning (unesco.org).

International Outreach. **Drs. Specht, Sider, Maich** continued their partnership with academics and stakeholder groups in Ghana, Haiti and in Canada to share knowledge and to provide resources for educators to promote the inclusive education of students. **Drs. Bennett, Freer and Somma** provided their expertise to the ministry of education in St. Vincent and The Grenadines on strengthening pedagogy through in-service teacher professional development.

Media. The SSHRC-funded video series, *Let’s Chat...About Inclusive Education* aired as a webcast production in 2022. The series presents informed and diverse perspectives on the challenges, the progress and the issues related to the development of inclusive education in Canada. Guests include researchers, educators, parents and advocates who are engaged in a specific aspect of inclusive Canadian schooling. The series consists of 30 one-half hour chats, which are available at <https://inclusiveeducation.ca/2022/01/14/lets-chat/> . The series was advertised nationally via the websites and social media of the Centre and project partner Inclusive Education Canada. **Dr. Specht’s** graduate student [Sydney Bota](#) transcribed and coded the chats to create themes that pertain to her research question, “*How do experts in the field conceptualize the current state of inclusive education across Canada?*” The themes identified will provide clarity on best practices in the classroom, implementation strategies based on the views of these experts, and areas of future research.

Graduate Student Research Awards 2022. The Inclusive Education Research Award is funded by Foundation Western and administered by the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education. Each year, up to three awards of \$750 each are granted to graduate students in education to recognize exemplary research that addresses an issue concerning the inclusion of students who represent a diversity of backgrounds or learning needs. A committee of Centre members reviews the applications and selects the recipients. In 2022, awards went to:

Shamiga Arumhathas: *Is there adversity in diversity? Racialized international students’ experiences at Ontario universities.*

Jessica Delorey: *Looking beyond the “What”: An exploration of how experiences influence the development of beliefs related to inclusive education.*

Julia Ranieri: *An exploration of the facilitators and barriers of inclusion and participation for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities in informal educational settings.*

D. Knowledge Mobilization

Knowledge exchange and mobilization. Despite the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, Centre members were able to collaborate to share research in a variety of formats:

- **Book Chapters.** Team members **Whitley, Specht, Matheson** and **MacCormack** extended their research on the impact of COVID-19 on parents and a publication in the *Canadian Association of Principals Journal* in late 2021, by collaborating on a chapter in a book in 2022 edited by Ruby Turok-Squire. Also in 2022, team members **Sider** and **Maich** edited a book of cases highlighting leadership for inclusive schools. The authors invited nine members from the Centre to provide case commentaries, including **Drs. Bennett, MacCormack, McGhie-Richmond, Parekh, Rousseau, Somma, Specht, Villella, and Young**. **Dr. Timmons** served as a reviewer. Citations for book chapters such as these and others published collaboratively by team members appear in **Appendix B**.
- **Professional Journals.** Team members collaborated on several articles which were published or submitted in 2022. See **Appendix B** for details of these articles in these journals.
- **Website.** The site was revamped and re-launched in late 2021, featuring key information about the team, the research projects underway, and some useful resources for parents, educators, and school leaders. In 2022 it was maintained by **Dr. Specht's** graduate student **Petra Owusu**. Visit www.inclusiveeducationresearch.ca
- **Twitter.** Graduate student **Petra Owusu** also maintained the Centre's twitter account @inclusived. Through this medium the Centre was able to promote its research through links to articles and information, and to recruit participants for research project participation, such as sharing COVID-19 experiences, and concept mapping activities for beginning teachers. The Centre has established and maintained contact with active stakeholders in inclusive education. Currently the Centre is following 538 such groups or individuals and has 407 followers.

E. Funding -Secured or Maintained, 2022:

Mfoafo-M'Carthy M., (Principal Investigator), **Specht, J.**, Grischow, J., **Sider, S.**, Mprahn, W., **Maich, K.**, Ashun, M., & Imoro, S. co-investigators (2019-2022). *Fostering equitable education systems for those with disabilities in Ghana*. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Partnership Development Grant. \$199,818

- A team of Canadian and Ghanaian academics and stakeholders will determine indicators of successful inclusive education in Ghana.

Sider, S., (Principal Investigator), **McGhie-Richmond, D.**, **Specht, J.**, **Maich, K.**, & **MacCormack, J.**, Co-investigators; **Bennett, S.**, Cobb, C., Morvan, J., **Rousseau, N.**, & **Somma, M.**, Collaborators (2019-2024). *Canadian school principals' support of students with special education needs: An examination of critical incidents as a form of professional learning*. SSHRC Insight Grant. \$215,569

- To explore the experiences of principals as they support students with special education needs in inclusive schools in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Sider, S., (Principal Investigator), **Specht, J.**, & **Maich, K.**, Co-applicants. (2021-2024). *Supporting inclusive education in Haiti: Developing a Canada-Haiti partnership for research and teacher education on disability and inclusion*. SSHRC Partnership Development Grant. \$200,000

- This project brings together a Haitian and Canadian team of researchers, teachers, and those from disability rights organizations to build inclusive education training networks in Haiti.

Specht, J., (Principal Investigator), with **23 faculty members of the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education as Co-investigators** (2015 –2022). *The development of inclusive educational practices for beginning teachers* (Beginning Teachers Study). SSHRC Insight Grant. (**Note:** This study was extended into 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.) \$488,800

- We follow beginning teachers throughout their program and into their first years of teaching to determine how new teachers develop their practice to teach in diverse classrooms.

Specht, J., (Principal Investigator), Carr, K., Porter, G., & Richler, D., Collaborators (2021-2022). *Let's chat about inclusive education*. SSHRC Connection Grant. \$33,697

- Production of a series of 30 video discussions with researchers, parents of children with disabilities, advocates, educators, and leaders concerning how to improve inclusive education systems.

F. Funding - Seeking, 2022:

Specht, J. (Principal Investigator); **Maich, K., McGhie-Richmond, D.**, Mfoafo-McCarthy, M., Morvan, J., **Parekh, G.**, Preston, J., Shah, V., **Sider, S., Somma, M.**, Co-applicants (2022-2025). *Collaboration for inclusion*. SSHRC Race, Gender, and Diversity Initiative. \$448,175.

- *Collaboration for Inclusion*. The objective of this partnership is to capitalize on the lived experiences of the stakeholders within the special education system as we work to remove the barriers of ableism, racism, and classism that continue the inequity of outcomes for those who are not within the normative cultural standards and are therefore seen as deficient (Annamma et al., 2013). DeMatthews et al. (2021) and Parekh and Brown (2019) illustrate the importance of an intersectional approach to disability which addresses aspects of racism and other forms of discrimination.

The overall goal of this research partnership is to harness the expertise of our partners across Canada to foster inclusive education. We will work collaboratively to produce and mobilize research-informed knowledge that enables educators in Canada to implement the most powerful tools to teach all learners about including and valuing every member of our diverse Canadian society.

In 2022 this application was not successful. Collaborators reviewed the assessment results from SSHRC; a decision is pending concerning re-submission of the funding application at a future date.

Appendix A
Members of the Centre

Faculty and Staff at Western University, ON

Jacqueline Specht	Professor and Director of the Centre
Nicole Neil	Associate Professor, Associate Dean, Research
Grace Howell	Assistant Professor (LD/PT), Centre Co-ordinator

Graduate Student Research Assistants at Western University, ON (unless otherwise noted)

Sydney Bota	M.A. candidate
Evan Charles	Ph.D. candidate
Jessica Delorey	Ph.D. candidate
Tsz-Wing Zita Lau	Ph.D. candidate (Awarded December 2022)
Petra Owusu	Ph.D. candidate

Research Centre Associates at Post-Secondary Institutions across Canada

Angèle AuCoin	Associate Professor, University of Moncton, NB
M. Lynn Aylward	Professor, Acadia University, NS
Sheila Bennett	Professor, Brock University, ON
Jenn de Lugt	Associate Professor, University of Regina, SK
Tara Flanagan	Associate Professor, McGill University, QC
John Freer	Professor, St. Clair College, ON
Tiffany Gallagher	Professor, Brock University, ON
Nancy Hutchinson	Professor Emerita, Queen's University, ON
Linda Ismailos	Professor, Niagara College, ON
Jennifer Katz	Associate Professor, University of British Columbia, BC
Mireille LeBlanc	Professor, University of Moncton, NB
Tim Loreman	President and Vice-chancellor, Concordia University of Edmonton, AB
Jeffrey MacCormack	Assistant Professor, University of Lethbridge, AB
Kimberly Maich	Professor, Memorial University, NL
Ian Matheson	Assistant Professor, Queen's University, ON
Donna McGhie-Richmond	Associate Professor, University of Victoria, BC
Jamie Metsala	Professor, Mount St. Vincent University, NS
Gillian Parekh	Assistant Professor, York University, ON
Sharon Penney	Associate Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland, NL
Nadia Rousseau	Professor, University of Québec at Trois Rivières
Steve Sider	Associate Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University, ON
Linda Siegel	Professor, University of British Columbia, BC
Monique Somma	Assistant Professor, Brock University, ON
Scott Thompson	Professor, University of Regina, SK
Roberta Thomson	Educational Consultant
Carolyn Thorne	Assistant Professor, University of Prince Edward Island
Vianne Timmons	President and Vice-Chancellor, Memorial University, NL

Jessica Whitley
Gabrielle Young

Professor, University of Ottawa, ON
Associate Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland, NL

Appendix B Activities, Products, and Impacts of Collaborations

Selected Journal Articles

- Charles, E., Metsala, J., & Specht, J.** (submitted). Gains in pre-service teacher efficacy for inclusive education: contributions of initial beliefs and practicum length. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*.
- MacCormack, J., Fitzgerald, C., Whitley, J. & Sider, S.** (2022). "Listen, adjust and repeat": Principals' and parents' perspectives of home-school collaboration during emergency remote teaching in Canada. *Leadership & Policy in Schools*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2022.2081217>
- Specht, J., Delorey, J., & Puka, K.** (2022). The trajectory of inclusive beliefs in beginning teachers. *Frontiers in Education*, 7:928505. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.928505>
- Specht, J., Fairbrother, M., Gallagher, T.L., Ismailos, L., Villella, M., & MacCormack, J.** (submitted). Learning from what my mentor teachers were doing in the classroom to include diverse learners: Experiences that contribute to inclusive instruction in pre-service teachers. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*.
- Specht, J., Miesera, S., McGhie-Richmond, D., & Haider, F.** (2022). Experiences that shape the development of inclusive instruction in preservice teachers: An international comparison. *European Journal of Special Education Research*, 8(4). <http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejse.v8i4.4436>

Books and Book Chapters

- Bennett, S.** (2022). Commentary on Chapter 8, Case 3: The early years. In **S. Sider and K. Maich** (Eds.), *Leadership for Inclusive Schools: Real Cases from Real Leaders* (pp.81-88). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Jahnukainen, M., **Maich, K., Penney, S., & Young, G.** (2022). Current trends in inclusive and special education in Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada, and in Finland. In T.M. Christou, R. Kruschel, K. Merz-Atalik, & **I.A. Matheson**, (Eds.), *Inclusion in education: European and Canadian perspectives on diverse learners in schools* (pp. 77-96). Routledge, UK.
- MacCormack, J. & Parekh, G.** (2022). Commentary on Chapter 10, Case 2: Overstepping boundaries. In **S. Sider and K. Maich** (Eds.), *Leadership for Inclusive Schools: Real Cases from Real Leaders* (pp. 105-116). Rowman & Littlefield.
- McGhie-Richmond, D., & Bell, J.** (2022). Commentary on Chapter 25, Case 2: "Bethany". In **S. Sider and K. Maich** (Eds.) *Leadership for Inclusive Schools: Real Cases from Real Leaders* (pp. 255-264). Rowman & Littlefield.
- St. Vincent, L. A., & **Rousseau, N.** (2022). Commentary on Chapter 13, Case 2: Overheard in the staff room. . In **S. Sider and K. Maich** (Eds.), *Leadership for Inclusive Schools: Real Cases from Real Leaders* (pp.8139-146). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Sider, S. & Charles, E.** (accepted). Despite the best of intentions: A case of mental health in a fragile context. E. Keith & **K. Maich** (Eds.), *Mental health case studies in K-12 schools: An international perspective*. Rowman & Littlefield.

- Sider, S., & Maich, K.** (Eds.). (2022). *Leadership for inclusive schools: Real cases from real leaders*. Rowman & Littlefield. **Note:** Contributors include nine additional members of the Centre. See citations.
- Sider, S., Morvan, J., Maich, K., Specht, J., & McGhie-Richmond, D.** (in press). Between, betwixt, and amongst: Intersectionalities where school leadership and inclusive schools meet. In C. McGregor & S. Bedi (Eds.), *Diverse leadership landscapes: Exploring the terrain*. Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Somma, M. & Young, G.** (2022). Commentary of Chapter 9, Case 1: Elementary school field trip. In **S. Sider and K. Maich** (Eds.) *Leadership for Inclusive Schools: Real Cases from Real Leaders* (pp. 91-103). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Specht, J.** (2022). Commentary on Chapter 3, Case 1: "Charles". In **S. Sider and K. Maich** (Eds.) *Leadership for Inclusive Schools: Real Cases from Real Leaders* (pp. 31-39). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Specht, J., & Thompson, S.A.** (2022). Inclusive Education in Canada: An Overview. In T.M. Christou, R. Kruschel, K. Merz-Atalik, & **I.A. Matheson** (Eds.), *Inclusion in education: European and Canadian perspectives on diverse learners in schools*. (pp 61-73) Routledge, UK.
- Villella, M.** (2022). Commentary on Chapter 4, Case 2: "Albert". In **S. Sider & K. Maich** (Eds.), *Leadership for inclusive schools: Real cases from real leaders* (pp. 41-49). Rowman and Littlefield.
- Whitley, J., Specht, J., Matheson, I., & MacCormack, J.** (2022). Holes, patches, and multiple hats: The experiences of parents of students with special education needs navigating at-home learning during COVID-19. In R. Turok-Squire (Ed.), *COVID-19 and education in the global north: Storytelling as alternative pedagogies*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-02469-6_3

Reports

- Bennett, S., Somma, M., Shuttleworth, M., Freer, J.** (May ,2022). *Structured Teaching and In-person mentorship*. Human Development Service Delivery Project: Consultancy for in-service Teacher Training St. Vincent and The Grenadines: Special Education Teacher Training (Final Report).
- Bennett, S., Somma, M., Shuttleworth, M., Freer, J.** (December, 2021; January, March, 2022). *Mentorship Sessions: Understanding and tracking behaviour*. Human Development Service Delivery Project: Consultancy for in-service Teacher Training St. Vincent and The Grenadines: Special Education Teacher Training. (Progress Reports).
- Specht, J., & Sider, S.** (2022) Contributing authors to Chapter 3.6 titled "*Identifying and Supporting Children with Learning Disabilities*", part of the report for the UNESCO International Science and Evidence-based Education (ISEE) Assessment. [International Science and Evidence based Education Assessment | Science of learning \(unesco.org\)](#) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56383/RFDB2422>

Theses

- Lau, T. Z.** (2022). *Beginning Teachers' Development of Inclusive Practices: A Longitudinal Multiple-Case Study Approach*. [Doctoral dissertation, Western University]. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/9078/>

Selected Presentations

Freer, J., Somma, M., Miklas, E., & Menard, D. (2022, December). *Examining barriers to social inclusion: Students' attitudes and conceptualizations of disability*. Poster presentation at the 66th Annual Ontario Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference, Toronto.

Freer, J., Somma, M., Miklas, E., Menard, D., Scibetta, L., Bergeron, S., & Kaefer, T. (2022). *Students' Conceptualizations of and Attitudes Toward Disability: A Determinant Study*. Research Session presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) Conference. Virtual

Freer, J., Somma, M., Scibetta, L., Kaefer, T., Miklas, E., & Menard, D. (2022). *Junior students' conceptualizations of disability and psychological factors associated with their attitudes toward disability*. Lecture and Poster Presentation at the 66th Annual Ontario Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference, Toronto.

Maich, K., Sohrabi, T., Specht, J., Belcher, C., & Sider, S. (2022, December). *Examining children's picture books to understand representations of disability in Ghana*. Presented at the Ontario Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference, Toronto.

Shuttleworth, M., **Somma, M., Bennett, S., & Freer, J.** (2022, May). *Transitioning to inclusion: One country's journey*. Poster Presentation at the 66th Annual Ontario Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference, Toronto.

Whitley, J. & Specht, J. (2022, May). *Stress, skills, and squeaky wheels: Parent advocacy for students with special education needs in the context of COVID-19*. Presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) Conference. Virtual.