

Beginning Teacher Study: The Development of Inclusive Practice



Issue 4 || Spring 2018

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Why is the Beginning Teacher Study important?

The Beginning Teachers Study, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), investigates the self-efficacy, beliefs and instructional practices of beginning teachers, identifying the factors that shape their development over time and in the context of their initial teaching experiences.

How new teachers develop their practice to teach in our increasingly diverse classrooms is vital. In Canada, the majority of students with learning exceptionalities are educated in regular classrooms in neighbourhood schools where the classroom teacher takes responsibility for the learning of all students.

We know that many of the effective teaching practices for students with exceptionalities are good for all students. Indeed, inclusion is the recommended teaching practice in Canada and is mandated by educational jurisdictions across the country. Research shows that teachers are positive about the right to an inclusive education but are concerned about their ability to deliver. The Beginning Teachers Study is designed to respond to their request and to equip and empower them with the competence and confidence required to teach students with exceptionalities in the regular classroom.

Through the Beginning Teachers Study, researchers across Canada are collaborating on the important issue of developing competent and confident teachers for the inclusive classrooms of today.

Honouring our Research Team Member



Reflection by Jacqui Specht

In memory of a dear colleague on the Beginning Teachers Study who left us all too suddenly August 1, 2017 at the age of 61.

Dr. John Freeman was a Professor in the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University. I first met John at the Canadian Society for Study in Education when he was a discussant on a presentation that my graduate student presented. It was evident to me at the time that he was a bright scholar who worked thoughtfully to provide good nurturing advice to students. When I had the idea to develop the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education and submit a grant proposal, it became very clear that he provided sound advice to colleagues, too. He dove right into the grant providing expert opinion on grant writing. He worked tirelessly to help our grant be successful. Through the process of the grant and the years that have followed, we developed a friendship. I remember travelling to Portugal with him for the ISEC 2015 conference. His sarcastic wit always kept me laughing. He was a great person and I miss him as do many other colleagues and friends across Canada and internationally.

Thanks John for leaving your mark in the world. You mattered.

Communicating Inclusion Visually

Our research team is committed to facilitating reflection on inclusive education practices and preparing evidence-based tools that require images. Yet, we find that many images of “inclusion” offer stereotypical visions of different abilities and disabilities. Images can perpetuate outdated and inappropriate ways of depicting diversity in today's classrooms. For the Beginners Teacher Study, we are using a few newly designed icons to represent some key concepts in our work.



We thank graphics designer Kristin Wiens for her contribution to our work.



TEACHER CONFIDENCE



TEACHERS COLLABORATION



CLASSROOM DIVERSITY / INCLUSION



Research Update

We have been busy with the recruitment of new teachers and the continuation of those who have been in the study since the beginning of their teacher education program. To date, we have 22 Beginning Teachers participating in the survey and interviews from BC, AB, ON, and NB. We have approximately 100 follow-up surveys from the teacher candidates who started in 2016 with approximately 40 having agreed to an interview. For the group that began in 2015, we have had about the same number of follow-up surveys and also about 40 interviews conducted or in progress. We have a symposium panel planned at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education Conference that is being held in May in Regina, SK. Thank you to all of the people that have participated in the research to date. We have some interesting work that is happening and look forward to sharing the results in our next newsletter. We could not do it without the time commitment from our participants.



Research Team

Here is the cross Canada Beginning Teacher Study Research Team meeting in Toronto at the annual Canadian Society for Studies in Education Conference held last year in Toronto. We will meet again this year in Regina.



Inclusion Resources

Find commentaries on Inclusive Education issues in Canada and internationally on the news page of Inclusive Education Canada:

<http://inclusiveeducation.ca/news/>

Take a look at the recent Commentary #25: The Inclusion Lottery: A Game of Chance With a Child's Education by Bruce Uditsky, Chief Executive Officer, Inclusion Alberta

Understanding Learning Disabilities:

<https://www.ldatschool.ca/york-waterfall-chart/>

Understanding Learning Disabilities: How Processing Affects Mathematics Learning

<https://www.ldatschool.ca/math-york-waterfall-chart/>

Recent Publications from Our Researchers

A selection of recent publications from researchers connected to the Beginning Teacher Study:

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. (2016). Teaching in inclusive classrooms: Efficacy and beliefs of Canadian preservice teachers. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20(1), 1-15. [doi: 0.1080/13603116.2015.1059501](https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2015.1059501)

de Lugt, J., & Hutchinson, N. (2017). Unpacking the relationship between learning to read and mental health: using an ethnographic case study approach. In A. P. Costa, L. P. Reis, F. Neiri de Sousa et al. (Eds.), *Computer Supported Qualitative Research*, (Vol. 71), (pp. 95-103). Switzerland: Springer.

Freeman, J. G. (2016). An innovative approach for addressing inclusion with teacher candidates. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 16(S1), 895-896.

Aylward, M. L. (2016). Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Programs in Canada: Student Voices. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 16,(S1), 899-890.

Maich, K., & Hill, R. G. (2017). *Special Education Case Studies: 20 cases for Ontario classrooms*. Oxford University Press.

Sider, S.; Maich, K.; Morvan, J. (2017). School principals and students with special education needs: Leading inclusive schools. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 40(2).

Retrieved from https://cie-rce.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/07/Regular-2417-Sider.Final_June_21.pdf

Find many more articles at the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education
www.inclusiveeducationresearch.ca

Beginning Teacher Study Welcomes Visiting Scholar

International interest in research underway by the Beginning Teacher Study team was evident in a series of meetings and presentations this winter with visiting scholar Susanne Miesera. As an Instructor and Research Fellow from the Technical University of Munich, Miesera visited two sites of the Beginning Teacher Study, the University of Victoria and Western University. Many lively exchanges were held to deepen our thinking on good practices in the preparation of novice teachers.

Miesera also presented on her comparative research: “Teacher education on inclusion: Comparison of the attitudes, self-efficacy and experiences of pre-service teachers in Canada and Germany”. She shared the results of two studies conducted in Canada and Germany. The first study was a comparison between German education students, pre-service teachers, and in-service teachers’ attitudes, self-efficacy and experience towards inclusion. The second study focused on the same factors but focused only on pre-service teachers in Canada and Germany.



Professional Specialization Certificate and Diploma Programs in Special Education

In September 2018, the Special Education area of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria is enrolling its 10th cohort of practicing teachers. Over the past 9 years approximately 300 teachers have graduated from the Certificate program and also 150 from the diploma program. This program has successfully met the needs of teachers who want to develop their knowledge and skills to confidently teach the diverse range of students they are experiencing in their classrooms as well as gain certification to take on special educator roles with their schools and districts. The following comments capture the benefit of this program,



“The courses and assignments that I have completed have been useful for my job as a Learning Support Teacher.”

“I have been thrilled to work within a dynamic cohort of peers, who are amazingly supportive and insightful when sharing information and career related experiences.”

“With each course in the certificate and diploma programs, I have come away inspired to improve not only my teaching techniques and skills but also to improve ways in which I can influence, inspire and share the ideas I have learnt with others in key roles working with Special Needs students.”

For more information:

<https://www.uvic.ca/education/psychology/future/certificates/certificate/index.php>

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Beginning Teachers Study

Thank you again for your support in this project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the principal investigator, Dr. Jacqueline Specht at jspecht@uwo.ca.