

# EDUCATION WATCH

AN UPDATE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Interview

## Straight from Nancy

**NANCY NOSEWORTHY**  
STUDENT SUPPORT CONSULTANT  
DEHCHO DIVISIONAL  
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FORT SIMPSON NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

### WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT MAKING SCHOOLS INCLUSIVE IN A SMALL NORTHERN COMMUNITY?

In many of our small northern communities we have one and two room schools. By nature of the set up of the school they are naturally inclusive. The difficulty arises when there are students with complex needs. It becomes a challenge to meet their needs due to lack of services that exist especially in the area of Speech Language Pathology and Occupational Therapy and pediatrics.

### WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU FACE?

I believe that the biggest challenge we face is the lack of access to services as well as any diagnostic services. Many of our students with complex needs require unique interventions and it becomes the role of the teacher and school to be creative in meeting these needs without an assessment. In addition, it is sometimes very difficult to attract teachers with significant background and training in special education to our more remote communities. We are very fortunate in our district that we have staff in some of our communities who have been there for a long time and have



learned to adapt to the complexities to create a functioning inclusive climate.

### WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND TO BE THE CRITICAL ISSUES FOR TEACHERS?

In my discussions with teachers the critical issues continue to be the increased complexity of needs that we are seeing in our schools. Teachers do not necessarily have all the skills they need to be able to meet the needs in their classrooms due to the changing needs that exist yearly. Just

as they develop skills in one area, a new need arises and they have to start the learning process again. Once again we are blessed with dedicated individuals who engage in this continued learning process eagerly.

### WHAT EFFECT DOES FREQUENT TEACHER TURNOVER HAVE ON YOUR SCHOOLS AND INCLUSION?

One of the most significant factors in creating a climate of inclusion is teacher turnover. Schools are

## » STRAIGHT FROM NANCY NOSEWORTHY

continually setting goals in school improvement that target inclusive learning cultures. This is very staff dependent. Once teachers leave they take that learning with them and the school has to start again with new staff. It has been my experience that understanding Inclusion in the Northwest Territories is a process. It comes from understanding the theory behind inclusion and transfers into practice as teachers become more embedded in the culture. Staff turnover impacts this process significantly.

### **WHAT ROLE DO PARENTS TYPICALLY PLAY IN THE EFFORT?**

The role parents play in inclusion varies. Some parents advocate for inclusion and others do not. Those who advocate have a solid understanding about inclusive practices and why it is beneficial to their child. I still believe that there is a lot of education that needs to take place in all of our communities around inclusion. The inclusive schooling practices are not the same as many of our parents experienced when they were in school. These conflicting school experiences sometimes lead to misunderstandings that could be avoided with more education around the philosophy and practices of inclusion.

### **HOW DO YOU DELIVER EFFECTIVE SUPPORT TO TEACHERS WHEN DISTANCES ARE SO GREAT?**

Distances impact service delivery without a doubt. We need to be creative in the way we offer support. I do travel directly to all communities whether by road, ice road or flying. I try to optimize my visits by having a clear plan around what I can accomplish in the amount of time I am in a school. I always try to come away from the school with a plan for things I can do to support them at a distance. We also use communication technology such as Skype, telespeech, video conferencing, as well as teleconference sessions, even though not all communities

have great Internet connections. Four of our nine schools have program support teachers who are the inclusive schooling leads in their schools. The other schools do not have this position and it is my role to support them in various ways.

### **WHAT IS THE SINGLE THING THAT MAKES YOU OPTIMISTIC ABOUT IMPROVING INCLUSION IN YOUR SCHOOLS?**

I do have schools in my district where I see a culture of inclusion. I see all students learning in their diverse ways and I see dedicated teachers working diligently to meet the needs of the students they work with. I am optimistic that as we enter into this renewal of inclusion in the NWT that decision makers in our education system acknowledge that small schools need support in order to maximize the learning that can occur. I celebrate the progress we have made thus far and look forward to continued work to improve inclusion in our schools.

### **CAN YOU SHARE A SPECIFIC STORY ABOUT A STUDENT AND TEACHER WHERE INCLUSION WAS EFFECTIVE AND MADE A DIFFERENCE?**

The example that makes my heart smile is the story about a young boy with many disabilities who attended one of our schools in the NWT. He started school with his peers in kindergarten. He could not talk or walk and was functioning around 2-3 years of age. This young boy continued to move with his peers and I watched the relationships develop. His peers looked for him in the mornings, played with him at recess and in the class were always looking out for his best interests. His teachers worked diligently to include him in all facets of the classroom. The students were modeling the positive attitudes and practices of the teachers and the effect of this was amazing. I happened to be in the class one day and the young boy squealed with delight as he saw one of his peers enter the room. The peer responded

by going over, saying good morning, and giving him a big high five. That was the day I realized inclusion could be powerful and effective. I could see that inclusion made a difference in the lives of all the students in that class.

### **A FINAL WORD - AS A SCHOOL LEADER WORKING TO HELP YOUR SCHOOLS HAVE SUCCESS WITH LEARNERS WITH DIVERSE NEEDS?**

I believe that our exceptional teachers choose education because they are passionate about helping all students learn. Fortunately in my district we have many exceptional teachers. I see myself as a champion of inclusion. My attitudes and practices always reflect my passion for inclusion for all students. I offer continuous support to all our schools and work to train our program support teachers to support classroom teachers in their learning journey in inclusive practices. My main message to schools and staffs is that all students can learn. I will help you help those students so that this can be accomplished.



Study Tour Successfully Completed:

# Participants from Eight (8) Countries Take Part



Participants taking notes at Woodstock High School



Tour Participants at Connell House in Woodstock, NB

Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, China and the Czech Republic.

The participants found the school visits and information sessions very helpful and appreciated the hospitality and insights shared by their hosts.

One participant wrote: *This study tour was a great opportunity to see the inclusive education in practice. It is a big eye-opener when you have a chance to see the theory becoming reality. To see how policies and practices come together in everyday life in the best interest of each child was truly overwhelming. In every school, we could feel the team spirit of teachers and other staff to make inclusion work.*

**Inclusive Education Canada** is an initiative of the Canadian Association for **Community Living**, the national member of Inclusion International. It promotes inclusive education in Canada through information sharing, training and collaboration with educators and family organizations. More information is available on the IEC website – [www.inclusiveeducation.ca](http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca)

Inclusion International sponsored a successful study tour focused on inclusive education in New Brunswick, Canada. The event was the latest in several arranged in the last few years. It was led by **Dr. Gordon L. Porter**, Director of Inclusive Education Canada and Inés E. de Escallón, Inclusion International (II) Regional Coordinator for the Americas. It was held from October 5-10, 2015 with participants based in Fredericton, the capitol of New Brunswick.

The OECD, as well as UNESCO, has recognized New Brunswick, for the systemic implementation of inclusive education. Law and policy has mandated inclusion since 1986 and a new policy was issued in September 2013 to focus and enhance practices in schools and classrooms. The New Brunswick Ministry of Education received the 2013 **UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize which cited the province** – "... for its long-standing commitment to a systemic approach to inclusive

education for learners with disabilities and for its vision of education as a catalyst for social justice and equity."

Participants in the study tour visited several schools in three different communities and had the opportunity to observe and discuss strategies and approaches with school leaders and teachers. The tour also included sessions with senior officials, parents and parent advocacy groups. Participants were from 8 countries: **Argentina, Colombia, Panama,**



Gloria E Sierra Delgado, Colombia, - Pauline Légère, District scolaire francophone Sud, and Inés E. de Escallón, Inclusion International

## Report

# Using Universal Design to Support Technology Integration

BY JEFFREY MACCORMACK, PH.D. CANDIDATE, QUEENS UNIVERSITY AND GABRIELLE YOUNG, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NFLD

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Jeffrey is a Ph.D. candidate at the Faculty of Education, Queen's University, with a focus on cognition. He is a teacher certified by the Ontario College of Teachers with 9 years of experience

teaching elementary school. He works as an instructor at Queen's University and has taught and authored online courses for educators. He is currently conducting research on several topics including: social skills interventions for children with autism, emotional well-being and rates of physical activity of school-aged children, using interest-based programs to increase motivation, and the effect of morphological instruction on elementary aged children.



Dr. Gabrielle Young is an Assistant Professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland, where she teaches undergraduate courses such as the Nature and Characteristics of Learning Disabilities,

Inclusive Practices for Students with Learning Disabilities, and the Practicum in Special Education, as well as graduate courses such as Nature and Assessment of Learning Disabilities and Principles and Practices in Exceptionalities. Gabrielle's research interests surround: the use of assistive technology by students with special learning needs, learners' self-beliefs and the self-esteem of individuals with learning disabilities, and the use of universal design and differentiated instruction to support the inclusion of students with exceptionalities in the general education classroom.

Students do not arrive in September with the same capacities, nor do they learn in the same way; and as a result, educators must continually reflect on how they can create flexible learning environments for all students. Originally adapted from the field of architecture, educators employ the framework of Universal Design for Learning to create flexible learning environments for all students. When applied to architecture, curb cuts in sidewalks, which are designed for mobility impairments, also benefit elderly pedestrians, bicyclists and individuals with carriages. When considered through an educational lens, when made publically accessible, many of the technological accommodations that are necessary for students with exceptionalities can also benefit to their typically achieving or academically gifted peers. Universal Design for Learning ensures that material is presented in multiple ways and students have multiple ways to engage with the material and demonstrate learning. Assistive technology is one of many tools that help to promote multiple means of presentation, engagement, and expression. Assistive technology refers to any device or service that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the capabilities of learners (Dell, Newton, Petroff, 2012). Assistive technology includes motorized wheelchairs and specialized keyboards, as well as

more commonly used devices such as pencil grips, software programs, tablet computers and instructional websites. Assistive technology ranges from low-tech (e.g., sticky notes and highlighter strips), to mid-tech (e.g., graphing calculators and audio recorders) and high tech (e.g., iPads and text-to-speech software). The following three vignettes are designed to represent students you may find in your classroom, and are intended to illustrate how, when applied within a universally designed framework, assistive technology may be used to support all students.



*Juan didn't always enjoy reading. He read graphic novels and loved the stories, but when it came to reading passages in his Grade 5 literacy-reader, he couldn't make sense of the content for the task of decoding words was too exhausting. Juan's mother insisted that he stop reading graphic novels and start reading chapter books at home. She said, "You can go back to your comics when your grades improve." Suddenly, reading was a difficult chore at home as well as at school. Juan read at home every night, but the stories were hard to follow. When the results of the end of term reading assessment came home, it was clear that Juan's effort had not paid off. Juan was devastated and felt helpless in his ability to improve his reading. When extended family flew in over the holidays Juan told them, "Math is where I'm doing well. I'm just not a reader."*



**When Shawnda imagines answering math questions on the chalkboard her chest tenses and her cheeks feel hot. Shawnda tries hard to succeed in math, but she finds that she needs extra time to fully understand a concept. By working at home with her father, she was able to practice and complete her assigned homework. Unfortunately, his new job keeps him working late and she misses the extra practice. This month the class is working on division and Shawnda is having a hard time due to her low automaticity in subtraction and multiplication, which are necessary skills to complete the equation. While modeling a complex long division equation, Shawnda's teacher asks her "How many 5s are in 22?" Shawnda's teacher intended to keep her engaged with a simple question, but Shawnda looked horrified as she felt the eyes of the other students on her.**

Students like Juan who struggle with reading comprehension may lose motivation to read and experience learned helplessness. Students who feel incapable of succeeding in school may resign themselves to failure and stop trying. According to cognitive theorist Albert Bandura, the willingness of a person to try new skills and persist when frustrated is affected by their self-perception of ability, a term referred to as self-efficacy. For students like Juan, teachers need to address areas of concern surrounding reading difficulty and reduced self-efficacy. Educators should focus on the strengths of their students and encourage students to perceive themselves as competent and capable of new challenges.

Various forms of assistive technology are available to support students like Juan. Low-tech solutions like a highlighter strip may help Juan to focus on one line at a time. High-tech solutions like Kurzweil 3000, a text-to-speech software program, can have a positive effect on decoding and word recognition (Holmes & Silvestri, 2009; Izzo, Yurick, & McArrell, 2009; Stodden, Roberts, Takahishi, Park, & Stodden, 2012). By reading the digital text out loud, the software may decrease the negative emotions students associate with reading and provide students with a more complete comprehension of the text (Young, 2012). Text-to-speech can assist students with monitoring and revising their typed work (Rao, Dowrick, Yuen, & Boisvert, 2009; Zhang, 2000), and may improve students' perception of their work and their ability to write expressively (Chiang & Jacobs, 2009). Making the software available to anyone may

mitigate the stigma surrounding the use of these specialized devices. Students who struggle with math concepts may also suffer from anxiety. Feeling anxious about doing math can paralyze students from asking for help and completing tasks in which they have difficulty. Assistive technology can provide opportunities to improve math skills. Students can benefit from computer-assisted math instruction that enables them to practice math skills in low-stakes independent settings. The

nonjudgmental computerized drill and practice can benefit anxious learners who worry less about embarrassment with a computer (Stetter & Hughes, 2010). Math drill programs can be an effective way to support mental math (Adcock et al., 2010), and increase motivation for math practice (Amiripour, Bijan-zadeh, Pezeshki, & Najafi, 2011). Websites such as Sumdog provide math games and are programmed to individualize content based on the users' progress. Computer-assisted learning can be

**Universal Design and Assistive Technology**  
A Framework and Tools to Support Inclusive Classrooms

**#1 AT Supports Reading**

Low tech solutions, like highlighter strips, can help students to concentrate on one line at a time.

Text-to-speech software programs, like Kurzweil 3000, can have a positive effect on decoding and word recognition.

**Free Tools:** Storyline Online (www.storylineonline.net), Google Classroom (www.google.com/classroom)

**Necessary for some, helpful for all**

Universal Design for Learning is a set of guidelines that helps educators to design flexible instruction that supports students' diverse learning needs.

Engagement, by stimulating interest and motivation for learning

Representative, by presenting information and content in different ways

Action and expression, by differentiating the ways that students can express what they know

**#2 AT Supports Math**

Computer-assisted math instruction allows students to practice skills in low-stakes independent settings.

Non-judgmental computerized practice benefits anxious learners who may otherwise worry about getting the wrong answer.

**Free Tools:** Sumdog, Web Math

**Assistive Technology**

**HIGH** Mid- and Low-tech

Any device or service that is used to maintain or improve the capacities of learners.

Assistive technology devices can be high tech (e.g., iPads, Kurzweil 3000 software), mid-tech (e.g., graphing calculator, audio recorders), and low-tech (e.g., highlighter strips, sticky notes).

**#3 HELPING STUDENTS WRITE**

Graphic organizers assist with the organizational stages of writing and can increase the quality and quantity of writing.

When using speech-to-text software, students compose stories that are longer, more complex, and contain fewer errors than when not using the software.

**Free Tools:** Dragon Dictation, Google Writer

For more free assistive technology, visit: <http://mathinsider.com/assistive>  
For more information on Universal Design for Learning visit <http://www.udl.org>  
To learn more about the benefits of assistive technology for students with disabilities, visit: <http://education.com/classroom-technology-technology>

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Presented by **Piktochart**

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an effective way to practice math drills (Bouck & Flanagan, 2009), and develop a more positive attitude towards math (Adcock et al., 2010).

Students with math related anxiety might experience difficulty explaining math concepts in front of their peers. Interactive whiteboard programs allow students to share their ideas without having to speak in front of others. Whiteboard apps like ShowMe and Explain Everything turn the iPad into an interactive whiteboard by using screen capture to record the work on the screen and the microphone to record voice. Videos of math concepts can be shared from student to teacher (assessment), and from teacher to student (instruction), in order to create a virtual classroom scenario. Whiteboard apps can be used to create instructional videos for entire classrooms. Virtual lessons allow students to rewatch lessons as many times as they need, and allow students to catch up on time away from class, and as such, the use of assistive technology can benefit the entire classroom.

Graphic organizers, such as Inspiration, allow students to brainstorm and organize their ideas. Graphic organizers can support the organizational stages of writing and can increase the quality and quantity of writing (Sturm & Rankin-Erickson, 2002). Being taught a strategy to plan and organize writing can improve the compositions written by students with learning disabilities (MacArthur, 2009). While some student may chose to create graphic organizers by hand, web-based graphic organizers with procedural prompts may enable students to produce better organized and higher quality papers than they could produce with handwritten organizers (Englert, Wu & Zhao, 2005; Englert, Zhao, Dunsmore, Collings, & Woblers, 2007). Speech-to-text software programs, such as Dragon Naturally Speaking, translate spoken words into digital text. When using speech-to-text software, students compose stories that are longer, more complex, and contain fewer errors than when not using the software (Graham, 1999). Assistive technology may improve students' writing abilities in all content areas (Batorowicz, Missiuna, & Pollock,

2012); however, obtaining personal access to laptops and computerized devices does not ensure engagement and increased academic success (Donovan, Green, & Hartley, 2010). Teachers and students need to be trained to meaningfully integrate technology into academic contexts (Dell, Newton, & Petroff, 2012). Universal Design for Learning supports the learning of all students without bringing undue attention or stigma to the strategies used. Planning for difference means that all students can benefit from the tools that are essential for a few. When coupled with purposeful design, assistive technology provides a toolkit of possibilities that can have a positive impact on all students.



**Jamaal is a storyteller. On the way home from watching an action movie at the theatre, he relates, in great detail, how he would write the sequel. His family is happy to see him so excited, but his stories are hard to follow. Jamaal feels frustrated when he tries to write his ideas down. There is no doubt that Jamaal knows a lot, but his stories are so heavy with descriptions and details that the narrative gets lost. When he was identified as gifted the school team recognized that Jamal's written output did not match his verbal capacity. The school provided Jamaal with a laptop to write his stories, but he continued to have a hard time typing quickly enough to get his ideas converted to text. Even when using the laptop, Jamaal felt like his ideas were "Stuck inside my head."**



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inclusiveeducation.ca**

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# Honouring Achievement: National Inclusive Education Awards made in British Columbia



**inclusionBC**

Formerly the BC Association for Community Living

Inclusion BC and CACL presented inclusive education awards to recipients in five communities across the province at the 60th Anniversary Conference in Vancouver on May 28, 2015.

The awards highlight the many positive examples of inclusive classrooms and schools across the country. The Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) created a national certificate of recognition to be bestowed upon recipients who have made positive contributions to inclusive education in their province or territory. To see detail of the five (5) awards made in British Columbia use the link below. Congratulations to all from Inclusive Education Canada.

 [Click Here or visit inclusionbc.org](http://inclusionbc.org)

## Moving Forward Together: A REPORT ON THE ACTIONS TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS IN NEW BRUNSWICK ANGLOPHONE SCHOOLS – 2012-2015



A three-year action plan to strengthen inclusion was wrapped up in June 2015. Both the Francophone and Anglophone sectors had a full range of activities. The document attached provides a summary of the various initiatives featured in the Anglophone schools and districts in New Brunswick.

 [Click Here](#)

In Retrospect:

## Looking Back at Special Education and the Struggle for Equality and Inclusion



**Audrey Cole, a Distinguished Associate of CACL, with Executive Vice President Michael Bach in 2015.**

**A**udrey Cole has been an advocate and a visionary in the Community Living movement. As a mother and parent she worked diligently to get her son Ian into school and to challenge the school system in her community to do what was needed for her son and others. In 1982 Audrey and her son's teacher, Bill Brown, wrote a brief to the local school authorities. Looking back on the brief over the 30 plus years that have passed, Audrey and Bill suggest that while circumstances have improved, some of the concerns they had then are the same as those expressed by parents today.

They write: *"...from concerns that are currently expressed by many families, we know that all is not yet as well as it could be in the education world, regular or special. This glance back into history might be helpful. Perhaps it is the very notion of "special education" that needs to be addressed. We could have listened more carefully to the late Burton Blatt, renowned US Educator, who, back in those days, was questioning whether special education was really special or even education. The concerns that continue to be raised by parents of children with intellectual disabilities, the frustrations that continue to play such damaging roles in the lives of their families, suggest that issue has yet to be resolved."*

To read Audrey and Bill's Brief and Current Commentary use the link below.

[↻ LINK TO ARTICLE](#)

Interview

## Tina Estabrooks



**Tina Estabrooks has an M. Ed from the University of New Brunswick, and undergraduate degrees in Business and Education. She lives with her two children, Samantha and Jake, in a small community outside of Saint John, New Brunswick. Tina is currently the Principal of Centennial Elementary, a provincially designated high priority school in the New Brunswick Anglophone South School District. In 2013 she was nominated by her staff and received the Vince Sutherland Educational Leadership Award. Tina began her teaching career at Kennebecasis Valley High School. In addition to classroom teaching and school leadership, her career includes tenures for her Board and for the New Brunswick Department of Education. Tina is passionate about building partnerships that secure equal opportunities for children residing in high priority neighbourhoods and she is dedicated to fostering inclusive learning environments. She is devoted to life-long learning and empowers her staff to pursue professional growth opportunities at all times. Tina's interests outside of education include athletic training and family.**

**IN YOUR TERM AS PRESIDENT OF CAP HOW WOULD YOU RANK INCLUSION AS A CHALLENGE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS?**

Meeting the needs of children in an inclusive school environment is a nationally reported challenge. Principals involved in our pan-Canadian study inform us that teachers require more support and professional development and are frequently overwhelmed by the demographics of the classroom. Supporting EAL students



and supporting students with diverse needs are significant factors and teachers are “stretched very thin”.

#### **IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN - URBAN, RURAL - LARGE PROVINCE, SMALL PROVINCE - OR SOME OTHER FACTOR?**

Variance in the composition of inclusive school environments is evident. The influence on workload associated with ESL is high in Alberta and Saskatchewan while, supporting the needs of Indigenous students, is a most evident in Ontario, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories. It is notable that, meeting the diverse needs of students (inclusion), is reportedly high in all provinces.

#### **WHAT DO PRINCIPALS SEE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO HAVE SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION?**

The National study identified 6 critical influences shaping the work of Canadian Principals. Inclusive education, termed Diversity of Students for the purpose of the research, is considered one of these influences. The study also presented six short- and long-term supports. All of these supports can be directly related to the goal of teaching for diversity and indicate the systemic gaps impeding leadership ability. The six supports participants call for are: Teacher professional development, political vision & commitment, more specialists in schools, community partnerships & wrap-around services, leadership & capacity building and increased funding (more staff).

#### **CAN YOU SHARE 2 OR 43 OF THE STRATEGIES YOU UNDERSTAND PRINCIPALS USE TO HANDLE DIVERSITY ISSUES IN THEIR SCHOOLS?**

In response to inclusion, a systemic shift in the way we approach our students is occurring. The implementation of Universally Designed Learning environments and the practice of data driven instructions better ensures that we approach students with options most suitable for their

learning style and teach in a manner that builds upon success and prior knowledge. Education is also becoming the facilitator of a networked approach that brings external agencies and supports to a child in need. Attention to school readiness is also having a positive effect especially for children negatively affected by economic disparity.

#### **TO WHAT EXTENT DO PRINCIPALS SEE INCLUSION AS ABOUT DISABILITY? OR DO THEY SEE IT TIED TO DIVERSITY IN GENERAL?**

In my opinion the historic perception of inclusion was certainly associated with disability. However, as education transitioned from teacher-driven instruction to student-driven instruction the mindset of leaders and teachers shifted. Educators now recognize and respond to the diversity of all learners whether it is associated with their learning style, their learning ability or their physical ability. Today, classrooms are an eclectic group of children with individual goals and expectations.

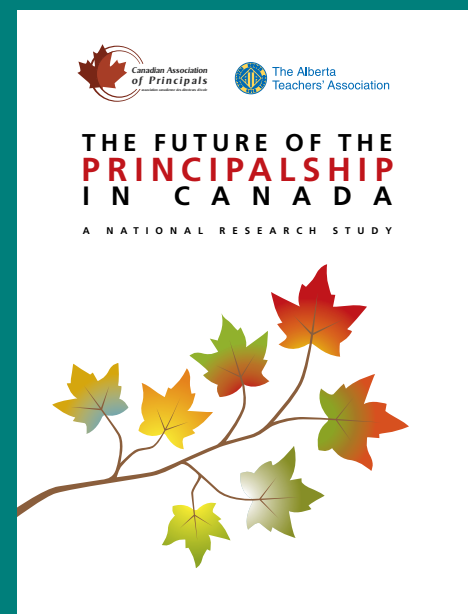
#### **ARE YOU OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE CAPACITY OF CANADIAN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR INCLUSION? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

I am optimistic about the capacity of Canadian school principals to evoke leadership in the area of inclusion. Education forges new paths and processes that support social and academic growth. We will continue to build a system that improves our ability to compete on a global level and develops communities empathetic and accepting of everyone. I do, however; fear the current workload that afflicts out school leaders and the educators within. Ninety five per cent of our principals surveyed report that the workload is unsustainable. In one province psychiatric disorders account for half of long-term disability leaves among principals. Such findings indicate that the tremendous tasks of maintaining such a responsive and diverse system is great.

# Diversity and Inclusion: The School Principal's Role

In her interview, Tina Estabrooks, Past-President of the Canadian Association of Principals refers to the 2014 report on the challenges facing school principals in Canada. The Report can be found by using the link provided below.

 [LINK TO PDF ARTICLE](#)



## Making Inclusion Work:

# A Northern Canadian Perspective



**SONIA GREGORY IS THE PRINCIPAL OF THE CHIEF PAUL NIDITCHIE SCHOOL, TSIIGHEHTCHIC, NWT. SHE HAS BEEN A TEACHER AND RESOURCE TEACHER IN SASKATCHEWAN AND THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES. SHE SHARES SOME OF HER IDEAS ABOUT ACCOMMODATING DIVERSE STUDENT NEEDS IN A SMALL, NORTHERN COMMUNITY.**

### **WHAT DOES BEING AN "INCLUSIVE SCHOOL" MEAN IN A NORTHERN COMMUNITY?**

In many ways being an inclusive school in a Northern community is much easier than in a Southern context as we have no other options. In our remote Northern communities we have no ability to have specialized schools or programs for students with diverse needs – we don't have the population base or the ancillary services. People are used to working together to support each other as part of survival; this naturally extends to the school setting. We welcome and include all children and work extremely hard to meet their needs.

Other students and parents are quite accepting of challenging students because they live in close proximity as part of being in a small community every day.

### **ARE THERE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY GEOGRAPHY AND BEING A RELATIVELY SMALL COMMUNITY?**

The same things that comprise our strengths are also our biggest challenges. We have all students in our classrooms, often with little support beyond educational staff. Our children with complex health, learning and mental/emotional needs don't get access to the same services they would in a larger center. Many of our communities are serviced by travelling medical staff; we lack permanent, on-site mental health professionals and we don't necessarily have educational staff with training and experience in working with students with complex needs. As a result, we don't have access to many of the supports that students need to reach their full potential. Services like speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, mental health services and reviews by specialists are sporadic. Professional services in the North are subject to high rates of staff turnover so we are often starting over with case workers and service providers, this leads to issues with trust with our families. It's exhausting for parents who have to repeatedly begin with new service providers. Then there is the issue of access once referrals happen, most services require expensive travel to regional centers or Southern communities like Edmonton. All of this means that staff at the school level is often left with the

challenge of trying to develop and deliver programming that they are neither trained nor equipped for. Schools are funded based on student population; some of our smallest schools have some of our most diverse student populations. These schools have multi-graded classrooms, some with more than four grades in one class. Even with low numbers, trying to effectively program for four or more multiple grades in one class with one teacher when you have students with high needs is a tall order even for the most masterful of educators.

### **WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR INCLUSION IN YOUR SCHOOL?**

I am a fulltime teacher, the instructional leader and the person responsible for supporting students with diverse needs. For me, providing leadership for inclusion has to be about modelling best practice and providing consultative support to teachers. Working with teachers and students in their class is nearly impossible as I have fulltime classroom responsibilities. What I can do is be available for support by gathering resources, consulting with teachers and parents, communicating with outside agencies and placing referrals. I can also provide guidance by demonstrating how to plan for and differentiate instruction in my own practice. While I would love to be able to work with teachers in their classes, that is just not a reality.

### **YOU HAVE BEEN A "SUPPORT TEACHER" IN SEVERAL SCHOOLS. WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE TO PROVIDE REAL SUPPORT TO CLASSROOM TEACHERS?**

In my experience, the best support I can give to a classroom teacher is through modelling and guided practice. There is an important role for assessment and working with interagency partners but those things don't have the same impact on the day to day reality of the classroom environment as getting in there and getting your hands dirty with

a teacher. I've always appreciated my good fortune as a support teacher because I get to watch teachers working every day. I see many different styles and I get to see what works and what doesn't. I learn as much from teachers as they learn from me. It's those experiences that have helped me build my toolkit. Remaining current on research about best practice, instructional strategies and continuing your education in the area of complex needs is critical to the role of a support teacher. To really support classroom teachers, we need to have trained qualified support teachers in every school whose only job is as teacher support. If they are multi-tasking as administrators or subject teachers their time will always be divided. The role of the support teacher needs to be sacred. We are skilled professionals; we need the time to do the job we were trained for.

#### WHAT MAKES YOU OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE NORTH?

One of the promising things happening in the North is that we have begun the process of open and honest dialogue about our realities. For a long time we just didn't have the data to show us exactly what the reality of our schools was. At the school level, we know our reality and we have always developed action plans based on the needs of our schools. Through the EC&E working groups we have been given a way to talk about the pieces that are beyond our control: the

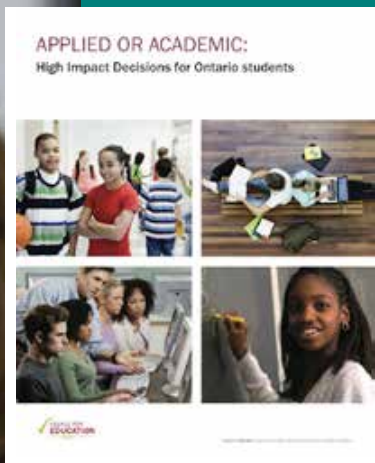
inequitable access to services, the budget issues created by the extremely high shipping costs to remote communities and the realities of population-based funding.

This awareness of the unique challenges of our Northern reality is creating solution-focused dialogue. I've already seen changes in how some of our ancillary services are being delivered. The distances and remoteness of communities is always going to a reality in the North. We need to become creative about how we support students using the resources we already have in our Regions. Things like videoconferencing units are allowing our students increased service by speech and language therapists.

#### WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO NORTHERN PRINCIPALS NEED TO HANDLE STUDENT DIVERSITY IN THEIR SCHOOLS?

Northern principals need support from qualified professionals. Some of our communities have high turnover rates and experience difficulty recruiting staff. For a variety of reasons we are experiencing high rates of students with mental health concerns. We need support to help these students and support their families. Telling the parents of a child who is suffering that they need to go away to a larger center to access intensive support is not okay. People need to be supported in their communities in ways that are culturally responsive.

# Advocacy group calls for end to 'streaming' in Ontario high schools



Kristin Rushowy  
Education Reporter, Toronto Star

Students who take applied courses are more likely to come from low-income homes and are less likely to graduate, says a new report from People for Education, which is calling on the provincial government to end the practice of streaming.

Annie Kidder, executive director of advocacy group People for Education, says it's time to bite the bullet and get rid of streaming in Grade 9.

CLICK BELOW FOR TORONTO STAR ARTICLES

[Article #1 - April](#) [Article #2 - October](#) [Article #3 - October](#)

 [LINK TO FULL REPORT](#)

## Commentary

# No question, inclusive education matters!

KIM SOUTHERN-PAULSEN



Inclusive education is probably one of the most misused, misunderstood terms in education. Feared by many staff and parents alike, until you see it in action or better yet experience it first-hand.

Inclusive schools are strong connected school communities. It's not about being normal, or being ready to come in. It is about figuring out how to welcome you now, as you are, how to accommodate your needs, keep you feeling safe and fostering a sense of belonging and meaningful participation.

We have chosen the path of inclusive education for our son. He has been educated in his neighbourhood schools and in regular classes for the majority of his student life. There were a few blips here and there and some adjustments along the way, once he was in the regular class fulltime, he became engaged in learning, his

participation and sense of belonging improved drastically. He was no longer a visitor in the classes he attended, he was a student and his classmates understood he was part of the class.

We know everyone can learn. We know kids like our son can learn from his classmates in the regular classes. Equally important his classmates can learn from him. They learn everyone can contribute, they learn everyone has value and they learn people communicate, move and act in a variety of ways but that does not interfere with their value, their human qualities nor does it or should it impact the potential for friendships.

Inclusive education has fostered a sense of belonging for our son. He is a confident young man with his eye on his future, he cannot wait to get out there and live life to the fullest. The added benefit, he has a whole

community who knows him, cares deeply about him and his future. He is accepted, he is loved and he is viewed as a responsible hard working young man.

I see inclusive education as paving a path for a better future, not just for my son but for everyone. It paves the path for kids, from an early age to be with others, to experience the broad spectrum of diversity and difference in the human condition. The reason this is important, is because the students of today will be the adults of tomorrow. They will be our doctors and nurses, teacher, lawyers and trades people, they will be the neighbours and citizens populating our communities. If they learn from a young age, humans come in many forms, many abilities, move in a variety of ways, communicate in a wide variety of ways, they will be prepared to welcome, be-friend, be the supportive neighbour, become the proud parent of a newly diagnosed child and be a professional representing, treating or caring for people of a wide variety of abilities and conditions and they will do it well, they will do it respectfully.

They will understand we all have strengths and abilities and we all have value. My son deserves a world where he will be accepted, welcomed for who he is, not avoided for who he isn't and be recognized as a valued human being. Inclusive education is the cornerstone for all of this and more. Children need to be with, educated with and play with children of all abilities. It is the right thing to do!

## NO QUESTION, INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MATTERS!

**Extend-A-Family** is a Toronto wide community organization that seeks to ensure that children and youth with developmental disabilities develop meaningful relationships and participate fully in the community.

 [www.extendafamily.ca](http://www.extendafamily.ca)



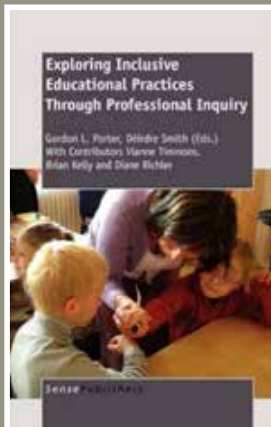
Attending the Lodhi Lecture were Kimberly Korotkov (L) and Sophie Pitre-Boudreau (R) of the Ministry of Education, seen here with Dr. Porter.

President Dawn Russell,  
St. Thomas University



## Dr. Gordon Porter - “Experiencing Human Rights: How Inclusion in the Schools Educates a New Generation to a Human Rights Perspective”

Dr. Gordon L. Porter, Director of Inclusive Education Canada and former Chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission delivered the 2015 “Lodhi Lecture in Human Rights” at St. Thomas University in Fredericton. Porter was introduced by University President Dawn Russell, who emphasized the critical role leadership in critical areas of human rights can occur at both the theoretical and practical level. Susan Butterfield, chair of the Atlantic Centre on Human Rights at the university, thanked Dr. Porter and noted the leadership he has provided in Canada and internationally in achieving inclusive education.



### Comments on the book by the “Experts”

**Michael Fullan**, Professor Emeritus, OISE, University of Toronto – wrote the Preface for the book and observed that – *This is a book on inclusive education that leaves you with hope and ideas for action. It takes a very difficult and highly charged topic and demonstrates that it is possible to see both the trees and the forest.*

**Professor Luanna H. Meyer**, PhD, Director, Jessie Hetherington Centre for Educational Research, Victoria University, New Zealand wrote this about the book: *Practitioners, scholars, and teacher education students alike can celebrate reading Exploring Inclusive Educational Practices through Professional Inquiry. This rich array of case scenarios both illuminates and elaborates the meaning of inclusion in today's schools and tomorrow's visions.*

Edited by  
**Gordon L. Porter**  
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Published by: Sense Publishers,

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# » Formation en pédagogie inclusive

The Department of Education in New Brunswick – Francophone sector – has published an on-line training program for teachers preparing to be Education Support Teachers (the NB term for support/resource teachers).

The program is one element of the action plan for the report - Consolidier l'inclusion pour consolider nos écoles - Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools - Porter & AuCoin (2012).

The modules were developed by a team led by Sophie Pitre-Boudreau, Agente pédagogique provinciale (formation à l'inclusion scolaire), with technical support from a team at The Université de Moncton including Angèle AuCoin. For information contact the Services d'appui à l'éducation, Éducation et Développement de la petite enfance - TANYA ROY, Directrice.



Angèle AuCoin and Tanya Roy



The program is set up in modules and is available on the Department's website.

The Link is: <http://inclusion.nbed.nb.ca>

## The message from the team:

Bonjour à tous,

C'est avec plaisir que je vous partage les affiches de la formation en pédagogie inclusive pour les enseignants-ressource novices. La formation est disponible au public depuis le 30 mars dernier. Vous trouverez ci-joints, deux formats d'affiches afin d'en faire la promotion et de partager dans vos réseaux:

- 1) PedagogieInclusive.pdf est un document du format PDF qui se distribue bien en format électronique dû à sa petite taille.
- 2) PedagogieInclusive\_Impression.pfd est aussi un format PDF, mais de meilleure qualité si vous choisissez d'en imprimer des copies.



Sophie Pitre-Boudreau

Western  Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education

Check out their website:  
[www.inclusiveeducationresearch.ca](http://www.inclusiveeducationresearch.ca)



Canada's source for  
information on  
Inclusive Education

[www.inclusiveeducation.ca](http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca)

## Associate Information

## Isabel Killoran

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION, YORK UNIVERSITY



Isabel is currently an Associate Professor at York University, Faculty of Education. She is also cross-appointed to the Graduate Program in Critical Disability Studies. Isabel began her career as a primary/junior teacher with a special education specialist. Many of those years were spent working with students who had been identified as having a behaviour exceptionality. The difficulty Isabel had securing the identified students' right to an inclusive experience inspired her to

further her education and begin the process of changing educators' (mis)perceptions about inclusion and disability.

**Interests:**

Teacher attitudes; teacher preparation; disproportionate representation; intersectionality; mental health; differentiation.

**Publications:**

- Killoran, I., Woronko, D. & Zaretsky, H. (2013). Preparing teachers for inclusive environments. *International Journal of Special Education* DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2013.784367.
- Killoran, I., Zaretsky, H., Jordan, A., Smith, D, Allard, C., & Moloney, J. (2013) Supporting teachers to work with children with exceptionalities. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 36 (1), 240-270.
- Underwood, K, & Killoran, I. (2012). Parent and Family Perception of Engagement: Lessons from Early Years Programs and Supports. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 35(4), 376 -414.
- Boucher N., Fiset D., Pinto P. Dinca-Panaitescu M. Carpenter S., Killoran I., Estey S., Rioux M. (2012). Droits humains et personnes ayant des incapacités. Pour une analyse comparative des services de soutien en contexte ontarien et québécois, *Journal of Human Development, Disability and Social Change/ Revue développement humain, changement social et handicap* 19(2), 23-42.
- Parekh, G., & Killoran, I, & Crawford, C. (2011). The Toronto Connection: Poverty, Perceived Ability, and Access to Education Equity. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 34(3), 249-279.
- Link to papers: <https://yorku.academia.edu/IsabelKilloran>.

**Consultation:**

Universal design for learning (UDL); Differentiation; Navigating the special education system (parents and families); MAPS; Inclusive practices.

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## Associate Information

## Tiffany L. Gallagher

DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION  
BROCK UNIVERSITY



Tiffany L. Gallagher, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Department of Teacher Education. She teaches and has co-authored texts in educational psychology and language and literacy instructional methods. Tiffany was an administrator and diagnostician in supplemental education for over a decade. Her current research interests include literacy assessment and strategy

instruction, inclusion through the use of technology, the role of the special education teacher, teachers with learning disabilities and post-secondary education for persons with disabilities.

**Interests:** Learning Disability; Intellectual/Developmental Disability.

**Publications:**

- Gallagher, T. L., & Bennett, S. (in press). A Canadian Perspective on the Inclusion of Students with Intellectual Disabilities in High Schools. In R. Craven, A. Morin, P. Parker & D. Tracey (Eds.) *International Advances in Education: Global Initiatives for Equity and Social Justice. Inclusive Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities* (Vol. 9). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Gallagher, T. L., & Grierson, A. (2014). Supporting teachers who engage in district-wide, school-based programs: the experience of principals. *Ontario Education Research Exchange*. <http://oere.oise.utoronto.ca/document/supporting-teachers-who-engage-in-district-wide-school-based-programs-the-experiences-of-principals/>
- Gallagher, T. & Bennett, S. (2013). School supported workplace transition for students with ID: Why inclusive principles/principals matter! *International Journal for Leadership in Learning*. 1(1), 1-25. <http://ijll.journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/ijll/article/view/213/pdf>
- Bennett, S. & Gallagher, T. L. (2013). High school students with intellectual disabilities in the school and workplace: Multiple perspectives on inclusion. *Canadian Journal of Education*. 36(4), 96-124.
- Bennett, S. & Gallagher, T. L. (2012). Inclusion, education and transition to employment: A work in progress. (pp. 81-102). In D. Griffiths, F. Owen, & S. Watson (Eds.) *The human rights and agenda for persons with intellectual disabilities*. Kingston, NY: NADD Press. ISBN 978-1-57256-145-8.

**Consultation:**

Differentiated Literacy Assessment; Using Technology to Differentiate

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# February is Inclusive Education Month in Canada



Inclusive Education Month 2012 February is Inclusive Education Month Every year CACL and Inclusive Education Canada in partnership with provincial and territorial associations recognize the efforts of teachers, school leaders and parents as they work to make inclusion a reality in Canadian schools. Some provinces schedule a major event to celebrate "Inclusive Education Month".

In past years they have invited the Minister of Education, the Lieutenant-Governor and even a premier or two to

special events. Associations have run media campaigns, held contests, hosted special lectures and produced new promotional materials. This year we want to encourage local associations across the country to do something in their town or school that draws attention to the positive outcomes of inclusion. And we want you to let us know about it so we can share the news with folks on our website – [www.inclusiveeducation.ca](http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca) Let us know what you do!

**Join the Inclusive Education Team!**



[www.inclusiveeducation.ca](http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca)

To reach the Editor, please email Gordon L. Porter at [inclusiveeducation@cacl.ca](mailto:inclusiveeducation@cacl.ca)