ANNUAL REPORT

2015

Research to enhance the educational opportunities of all students with exceptionalities.
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About the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education

ABOUT
The Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education, located in the Faculty of Education at Western University, is a research association of faculty members, research associates and graduate students across Canada who share an interest in inclusive education research.

MISSION
The goal of the Centre is to encourage collaborative investigations of theories and practices in an effort to enhance the educational opportunities of all students with exceptionalities. The Centre is committed to sharing research findings and resources with academics, educators, families and community organizations.

WHY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT
Classrooms singularly create possibilities for Canadian society to shape the values of the next generation. By including and valuing all members of the classroom, educators provide caring communities that appreciate the unique contributions and diversity of all people.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR
In 2015 we continued to work together to spread the word of Inclusive Education across Canada. You will see the many accomplishments of our members in the publications, conference presentations and research grants mentioned in this Annual Report. In April 2015 we received SSHRC insight grant to investigate the development of inclusive practice in beginning teachers. As the members of the Centre are all in faculties of education, we felt that this would be a good way to bridge our teaching and our research. We received $488,800 for a period of 5 years to follow preservice teachers as they progress through their programs and out into their first few years of teaching. In addition, we will work with our partners to develop professional development opportunities for newly hired teachers. We are very excited to be venturing ahead with this project across Canada.

We continued with the journal *Exceptionality Education International* publishing three issues. A special issue on At-Risk youth under the guest editorship of Dr. Nancy Hutchinson from Queen’s University and Dr. Nancy Perry from the University of British Columbia was well received. We have another special issue that should be released in 2016 on mental health and inclusion. We encourage researchers to consider this journal as an outlet for their work; issues become open access within a year of publication, meeting requirements of many granting agencies who now mandate publication in open access journals.

As always, we provide development opportunities for local educators and graduate students through participation in research-related activities and events at Western's Faculty of Education, and adjudicating two annual graduate research awards. We are very excited to support our mandate in the coming year so that all students in Canada can experience an environment of belonging.

Jacqueline Specht, Ph.D.
Director
Our People

FACULTY AND STAFF AT WESTERN

Jacqueline Specht, Professor and Academic Director of the Centre
Elizabeth Nowicki, Associate Professor and Faculty Member of the Centre
Grace Howell, Centre Co-ordinator
Sarah Cloutier, Shawna Lee, Graduate Student Research Assistants
Sarah Copfer, Irene Melabiotis
Karen Gregory (Ph.D. 2015)

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES AT POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

M. Lynn Aylward, Associate Professor, Acadia University, NS
Sheila Bennett, Professor, Brock University, ON
Tiffany Gallagher, Associate Professor, Brock University, ON
Kimberly Maich, Assistant Professor, Brock University, ON
Tim Loreman, Professor, Concordia University College of Alberta, AB
Jennifer Katz, Associate Professor, University of Manitoba, MB
Tara Flanagan, Assistant Professor, McGill University, QC
Roberta Thomson, Course Instructor, McGill University, and LaSalle College, QC
Sharon Penney, Associate Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland, NL
Gabrielle Young, Assistant Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland, NL
Angèle AuCoin, Associate Professor, University of Moncton, NB
Mireille LeBlanc, Assistant Professor, University of Moncton, NB
Kim Calder Stegemann, Associate Professor, Thompson Rivers University, BC
Wanda Lyons, Associate Professor, University of Regina, Saskatchewan
Scott Thompson, Associate Professor, University of Regina, SK
Anne Marshall, Professor, University of Victoria, BC
Donna McEch-Chie-Richmond, Associate Professor, University of Victoria, BC
Steve Sider, Associate Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University, ON

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Lorayne Bradshaw, Jeffrey MacCormack, Queen's University, ON
Cynthia Bruce, Acadia University, NS
Nicole Forest, University of Moncton, NB
National Team Members Meet at Congress of the Humanities, Ottawa 2015

**Back row l to r:** Steve Sider, Sarah Cloutier, Tiffany Gallagher, Sheila Bennett, Nancy Hutchinson, Kim Maich, Nicole Forest, Lorayne Bradshaw, Kim Calder Stegemann, Jennifer Katz, Tara Flanagan, Angela AuCoin, Lynn Aylward.

**Front row l to r:** Irene Melabiotis, Gabrielle Young, Donna McGhie-Richmond, Jacqui Specht, Grace Howell, John Freeman, Sharon Penney.

An excited team travelled to Ottawa, Ontario at the end of May for the annual gathering and planning meeting. This year the focus of discussion centred on planning for the first year of the five-year study, *The Development of Inclusive Educational Practices for Beginning Teachers.*
Community Partners

Members of the national research team have partnered with these agencies and school boards to share information about current and proposed research projects, and to make presentations at professional development day workshops.
Research Activities

SELECTED RESEARCH GRANTS OBTAINED BY NATIONAL TEAM


Craig, W., & Pepler, D., with J. Freeman, Co-investigator (2011-2015). A societal approach to achieving healthy relationships and eliminating violence. National Centres of Excellence Knowledge Mobilization Grant. $1,600,000


Kilborn, M., Cameron, E., McGowan, E., & Young, G. (2015). Healthy active living for children and youth in Labrador. Recreation NL. $25,000


Penney, S., & Young, G. (2015). Examining home and school relationships surrounding a child with a disability. Seed, Bridge and Multidisciplinary Fund. $10,000

Young, G. (2015). Using assistive technology within the framework of universal design for learning in inclusive elementary schools. Start-up Grants for New Faculty, and Seed, Bridge and Multidisciplinary Fund. $20,000

Please note: Team members' names appear in bold type; graduate students' names are underlined.


Gordon, (Ed.), *Challenges surrounding the education of children with chronic diseases*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.


**GRADUATE STUDENT SUPERVISION**

**Cynthia Bruce** is a Ph.D. candidate in Educational Studies in the School of Education at Acadia University. Cynthia situates her work within the academic discipline of Disability Studies in Education, an activist field of inquiry that brings focus to the sociopolitical contexts in which disability is constructed as deficit, illness, and/or tragedy in educational settings. Cynthia’s thesis supervisor is Dr. Lynn Aylward.

**Sarah Copfer** is a Ph.D. student in the Faculty of Education at Western University. She is a qualified teacher for Intermediate/Senior level English, Social Science, and Special Education. Sarah completed her Master of Education degree at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, focusing on the transition process from secondary to post-secondary education and students' perceptions of academic and social preparedness for the higher education context. Sarah’s thesis supervisor is Dr. Jacqui Specht.

**Shawna Lee** comes to the PhD program at Western with over 18 years of experience in the mental health and early childhood education sectors. She has provided leadership in chairing the clinical transformation of 0-6 Children’s Mental Health Services for the largest children's mental health agency in Ontario, and has received international recognition for innovative implementation of school-based mental health programs for parents and educators in York Region. Her career goal is to bridge the gap between research and practice in order to influence systemic change in mental health prevention and intervention. Shawna’s thesis supervisor is Dr. Jacqui Specht.

**Jeffrey MacCormack** is a Ph.D. candidate at the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University. Prior to his doctoral work, Jeff worked as an elementary teacher for nearly 10 years, including 2 years as the lead teacher in a classroom for children with moderate to severe autism. He was the lead researcher in a pilot project for iPad use for augmentative language communication devices. He has authored several courses for Continuing Teacher Education at Queen's University, including the Use and Knowledge of Assistive Technology. Jeffrey's thesis supervisor is Dr. John Freeman.

**Nicole Forest** is a student in the M. A. Ed. Program in the Faculty of Education at Université de Moncton, in New-Brunswick. She is a qualified teacher and aims to work as a resource teacher. Nicole is currently working on a thesis that explores the transformation of high school students’ perceptions of diversity. Nicole's thesis supervisor is Dr. Angèle AuCoin.
Knowledge Creation and Mobilization

PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS


Bennett, S., Parekh, G., & Specht, J. (2015, March). What the research says about inclusion and effective education. Presented at the conference “How to Meet the Diversity Challenge in the Classroom”, Kingston, ON.


Specht, J. (2015, March) It was hard mom, but I did it: How to raise kids who feel good about themselves. Presented as part of the “An Evening With” series co-sponsored by Thames Valley District School Board and the Learning Disabilities Association of London Region. London Canada. (invited)


JOURNAL HOSTED BY THE CENTRE

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 and removed. People with exceptionalities are those from groups who have been traditionally marginalized in education as the result of ability, culture, ethnicity, gender, identity, language, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. Editors: Jacqueline Specht, Western University, and Tim Loreman, Concordia University College of Alberta. Associate Editors: Sharon Penney and Gabrielle Young of Memorial University of Newfoundland. This online journal is published by Scholarship@Western.
Awards Given and Received

**CANADIAN RESEARCH CENTRE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AWARD.**

Three graduate students were chosen to receive this award in 2015. This award is sponsored by the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education and funded by Foundation Western. The recipients’ research proposals address a wide range of issues related to the inclusion of students who represent a diversity of backgrounds or learning needs. Congratulations to Patrick DiGiacinto (Providing effective learning opportunities for students who are hard of hearing), Amy Kipfer (Educational assistants supporting inclusive education in secondary schools), and Jessica Ticar (Investigating the transnational identities of Filipina/o youth in urban schools). Patrick and Amy are students in the M.A. in Educational Studies program, and Jessica is a Ph.D. student in Critical Policy, Equity and Leadership Studies at Western.

**JESSICA JEAN CAMPBELL COULSON RESEARCH AWARD.**

For 2015, Lynn Dare was chosen to receive this award for her research on the attitudes of educators, parent and students toward acceleration in inclusive education. This award was established through Foundation Western by Jessica’s father, David Campbell (BA ’38) to acknowledge research that is related to the inclusion of students with special needs. Congratulations!

**ONTARIO PROFESSORS HONORED: EXPERT SUPPORT FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION RECOGNIZED**

Sheila Bennett and Jacqueline Specht receive the National Inclusive Education Award – March, 2015

*Sheila Bennett and Jacqueline Specht* have contributed a great deal to the development of inclusive education in Canada. They are both professors in faculties of education at Ontario universities. Sheila Bennett is at Brock University in St. Catharine’s and Jacqueline Specht is at Western University in London. Both have had public school and academic positions and have grounded their work in university teaching and research with personal experience in the public education system.

*Specht and Bennett* were both nominated by Community Living Ontario to be recognized by the Canadian Association for community Living (CACL) with a National Inclusive Education Award. Kimberley Gavin of Community Living Ontario and Gordon Porter, the Director of Inclusive Education Canada, made the presentation at symposium in Kingston.

The event was a joint project of Community Living Ontario and Inclusive Education Canada. Both recipients were presenters at the event, which included educators from Ontario public schools.
Conferences Co-hosted by the Centre

SYMPOSIUM: MEETING THE DIVERSITY CHALLENGE IN THE CLASSROOM

This two-day symposium held in Kingston, Ontario in March was a collaboration by the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education, Community Living Ontario (CLO), Brock University, and Inclusive Education Canada.

School and district leaders as well as education advocates interacted with the symposium team and with their own teams of colleagues to address strategies in making schools effective and inclusive from an educational and school improvement perspective. Teams also considered the relevant Canadian legal and human rights factors.

It was during this event in March when Sheila Bennett and Jacqui Specht learned that CLO had nominated them for a national award, which would be officially presented during the annual conference of the Canadian Association for Community Living in Hamilton in October.

COACHING TO INCLUSION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Since 2007, the Centre has partnered with the Coaching to Inclusion Committee, comprised of several school boards in southwestern Ontario to plan and host a professional development conference day in London. These themed events feature renowned speakers or facilitators who are experts in their field. The theme for 2015 was “Navigating Current Themes in Inclusive Education”. However, due to the continuing labor uncertainty at Ontario school boards in the fall, the committee elected to postpone the conference until the fall of 2016. The situation has since been resolved, and plans are once again underway for 2016.
Plans for the Future

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

- Complete second year of the quantitative study of the development of inclusive education practices for beginning teachers in Canada.
- Begin first year of the qualitative study of the development of inclusive education practices for beginning teachers in Canada.
- Seek additional funding for related studies.

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION PATHWAYS

- Newsletters to provide information about the Centre, announcement of the grant, and outline of the project.
- Research Tip Briefs to provide summaries of other key projects, reviews of articles or books.
- E-Updates with information on project updates, coming events.
- Web site maintaining information about the Centre.

GRADUATE STUDENT MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES

- Research assistantships and thesis projects to enhance graduate students’ research skills in proposal development, ethics protocol writing, data collection and analysis, writing and presentation.
- Virtual and face-to-face interactions to gain an appreciation of different perspectives, and to network with other faculty.
- Contributing to research briefs to gain an understanding of how research is used by those in the field.

The year 2016 promises to be most exciting!
Contact Information

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