

Beginning Teachers Study: The Development of Inclusive Practice



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What is the Beginning Teachers Study?

Classrooms create endless possibilities for Canadian society to shape the values of the next generation. By including and valuing all members of the classroom, educators can foster caring communities that appreciate the unique contributions and diversity of all people.

The **Beginning Teachers Study** brings a variety of scholars from multiple disciplines related to education (i.e., equity and diversity, human rights, advocacy, disability studies, and special education) across Canada to collaborate on the important issue of creating competent and confident teachers for the inclusive classroom. In addition, this study will provide a high-quality research training experience for students in faculties of education across the country and put the findings into the hands of those who can act on them (educators and policy-makers).

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Teaching Resources

Inclusive Education Canada

A national NGO committed to quality education for all students in inclusive schools and classrooms in Canada.

www.inclusiveeducation.ca

Inclusion Outreach BC

Assists school teams and families in developing meaningful and functional programs for students with severe cognitive and multiple physical disabilities.

www.inclusionoutreach.ca

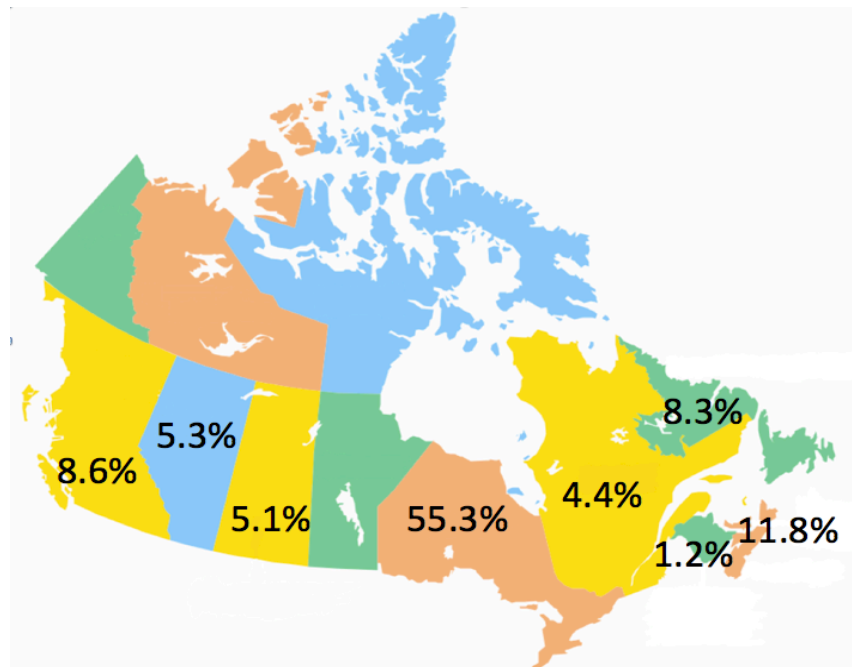
LD@school (Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario)

Information, resources, and research related to teaching students with learning disabilities.

www.ldatschool.ca

What We Have Done

The study is designed to assess changes in beginning teachers' beliefs and perceptions of their abilities in providing inclusive environments. Researchers are eager to collect follow-up data to assess what changes may occur over the course of the two-year program. Plans are underway to interview more participants to hear their views about factors that may affect their beliefs and confidence.



Percentage of participants in each province across Canada

To date, we have collected initial surveys from 1376 teacher candidates from 14 faculties of education across Canada. Follow-up surveys from all sites for the first cohort will be completed by spring/summer 2017, along with interviews with participants. The initial data for the second cohort is being collected. Thanks again to those who have participated and who plan to continue with this research study – your input is invaluable!

What We Have Found

Observations from Cohort 1 Intake Survey:

Participants: Surveys were received from 1,376 participants at 14 institutions in 8 provinces. Of these, 367 (26.7%) identified as male, 995 as female (72.3%), 3 as “trans-gender” (.2%) and 11 participants (.8%) did not provide this information. All participants were completing the 2-year post-degree program, either in a four-semester program with a summer break, or in a 16-month continuous program.

Experience: The majority of participants had some experience with people who are diverse learners, either as their friends (72%) or from volunteer or work experience (77%). Experience teaching students with diverse learning needs was more evenly distributed along the range from no experience (29.2%), to between 1 and 30 days (34.5%) to more than 30 days (36.3%).

Beliefs: The Beliefs about Learning and Teaching Questionnaire (BLTQ, 2008) used in this study contains four subscales: the importance of teacher-controlled lessons; students’ ability to learn; student-centred learning and the value of attaining standards. Participants appear to have a range of beliefs about the importance of teacher-controlled lessons and attaining standards. As a group, they indicate lower levels of belief that students’ ability to learn is a static trait, and higher levels of belief in the importance of student-centred learning. More analysis will be conducted to determine if specific factors such as gender or experience may be associated with differences in levels of belief.

Efficacy: The Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practice (TEIP, 2011) measures participants’ confidence in: managing students’ behavior, collaborating with others and providing inclusive instruction. Preliminary analysis shows that although all participants are confident in these abilities, males appear to be somewhat more confident than females in their ability to manage students’ behavior. Again, more analysis will be conducted to determine which factors may be associated with differences in levels of confidence.

What’s Next?

Another group of incoming teachers (Cohort 2) were surveyed during the 2016-2017 academic year, and preliminary analyses will be conducted to determine initial descriptives. Cohort 1 data from follow-up surveys and interviews is being collected and will be analyzed in the summer of 2017. For those who began in 2016, we will send an invitation through email to participate in a second round of surveys.

This continual sampling will show us whether self-efficacy and beliefs change as preservice teachers progress through their teacher education. In addition to the surveys, qualitative information will be collected through interviews with a random sample of beginning teachers from each participating university to discuss their individual experiences in shaping their practice for inclusive classrooms.

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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.