

**A Review of Inclusive Education Programming for Pre-Service and In-Service
Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Student Services Administrators**

Prepared for:

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Inclusive Education: A Review of Programming and Services in New Brunswick**

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March 31, 2005

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Introduction: Preparing Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Student Services Administrators for Inclusive Education

The Province of New Brunswick has an established place in Canadian and international circles for its inclusive educational practices. Students, regardless of exceptionalities, have full access to the curricula, programs and services offered in the public schools across the province. According to the Department of Education's Mission Statement (1997), there is a commitment to provide additional support and assistance to students when necessary "to ensure that each student has the opportunity to develop the attributes needed to be a life-long learner, to achieve personal fulfillment and to contribute to a productive, just and democratic society." Indeed the current review of Inclusive Education stems from the Government of New Brunswick's desire to address issues associated with classroom composition and the demonstrated need for greater flexibility in teaching students with very different learning styles and learning capacities (Quality Learning Agenda, 2003, 30).

Ensuring greater flexibility in teaching to address individual learning and classroom needs has sparked increased concerns for the current classroom teacher, as well as the next generation of teachers, in terms of their attitudes towards the concept of inclusion, as well as their level of preparedness for teaching in today's inclusive classroom. Recent research reports have highlighted these concerns (Edmunds, 1999, 2003; Jordan, 2000; Pudlas, 2001; Stanovich & Jordan, 2004), arguing that while excellent methods for teaching in an inclusive environment are being developed and delivered through government departments, school divisions and faculties of education, most teachers have not been provided with adequate training. Across the country, teachers have reported serious concerns about their ability to identify, assess, program for, and teach students with exceptionalities or students with behavioural issues. There have also been concerns about the roles and responsibilities of the various other "team" members in the delivery of inclusive education: teaching assistants, resource and methods coordinators, health professionals such as psychologists, speech language pathologists and occupational therapists, principals and vice-principals, and school district officials. What training and professional development needs do each of these partners need in delivering a quality educational experience to all styles of learners?

Within New Brunswick, the debate about inclusion appears to be about the efficacy of implementation practices rather than opposition to the philosophy of inclusion or the policy of providing regular classroom settings for the inclusion of all students. The New Brunswick education system commits teachers to “pursuing other flexible learning options as necessary to ensure the educational needs of all students are met.” (Quality Learning Agenda, 2003, 30) yet there are no clear mechanisms for ensuring that those currently teaching, nor those entering the classrooms of New Brunswick schools, have the appropriate training to meet this commitment.

Therefore, there is a need to address the training needed in the inclusive classroom by identifying ways in which teachers can diversify their techniques of teaching, the content of lessons and the systems for assisting and evaluating students. A review of inclusive education must look to the pre-service education programs currently in place and ensure that theory and training in inclusive instruction is being provided, as well as in-service opportunities for current teachers, teaching assistants, resource and methods professionals and student service administrators. One particular area of concern is ensuring that Resource and Methods teachers are being provided appropriate levels of training so that they can work as the core service providers in the school team offering inclusive education for all students.

The purpose of this report is to summarise what is currently available within New Brunswick’s post-secondary institutions, in terms of inclusive education, dealing with exceptional students with special needs, as well as those with behavioural problems. The report will also highlight inclusive education programs and opportunities in other parts of the region, and beyond, as well as some opportunities for different styles of program delivery. Finally, the report will offer recommendations on ways in which New Brunswick’s post-secondary institutions may become stronger partners in inclusive education and learning, as well as some creative ideas on enhancing pre-service and in-service educational delivery opportunities.

Undergraduate Pre-Service Teacher Education in New Brunswick

As is the norm in all provinces and territories in Canada, the professional designation of a Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed.) or its equivalent is the required standard for teaching in the province’s public schools. The Department of Education awards Teaching Certification to those who have the Bachelor of Education degree from a recognized post-secondary institution (Certificate V). Teachers who attain a higher degree qualification, such as a Master’s degree, can apply for a Certificate VI, which allows for a higher rate of compensation. There are currently 3,962 teachers in the province holding a Certificate V and 1,125 educators holding a Certificate VI designation (Department of Education, 2005). While the Department of Education maintains good relations with the Faculties of Education, they do not maintain any direct governance over the undergraduate curriculum, the faculty or administration engaged in the training of future teachers. Further, teachers from outside of New Brunswick may apply to the

Department of Education for a professional teaching certificate. As education is a provincial responsibility, with further autonomy for each individual university, there is no clear or consistent pattern for the training of teachers entering the classrooms of New Brunswick.

A Bachelor of Education degree program is currently offered in English by the University of New Brunswick and St. Thomas University in Fredericton and Atlantic Baptist University in Moncton. Mount Allison University offered the B.Ed. until it decided to close its program in 1998, yet they still operate the Meighen Centre for Learning Assistance and Research. The Université de Moncton offers a program in French, which will be discussed in a separate report. Historically, teacher training programs have tended to react to the educational theories and practices within schools of the day, so it was not unusual to see teacher education programs divided between education for “typical” and “atypical” children, thus “regular” and “special education” programs have prevailed over the last few decades. Timmons (2004) outlines the two basic approaches being taken in Canada today in embracing inclusive education in pre-service education programs. The first approach is to add a course or courses to the undergraduate education program that will deal with inclusive education. The usual approach is to make one or two of these courses mandatory for graduation from the teacher preparation program, leaving others as options for those who may wish to have a more comprehensive background in exceptionalities, behavioural issues, academic assessment, or other related topics. The second approach is a process of infusion throughout the curriculum of the B.Ed. program. In this approach all courses have inclusive education principles as one of their objectives and all of the faculty are trained in inclusive educational practices and provide students with a consistent message. Finally, both approaches see student teachers placed in schools where they observe inclusive educational practices as part of their practicum requirements. A more extensive school placement program, or practicum, was made possible through the expansion of the province’s educational training requirements being expanded to a 60-credit hour program several years ago.

Each of New Brunswick’s English language teacher education programs have adopted the more typical Canadian approach of offering a series of courses that relate to inclusive education. None of the province’s pre-service teacher preparation programs are based on the “infusion model”. Individual 3-credit hour courses are delivered in a lecture-based format at each institution with no on-line or distance education options available to students. Brief course and program descriptions for each university are provided here:

The University of New Brunswick

Two 3-credit hour courses are required as part of the undergraduate program:

- Education 3021: Human Development and Learning – An Overview
- Education 3031: The Education of Exceptional Learners

Optional Courses as part of program (also part of Graduate Program):

- Education 3051: School Law and Organization

- Education 3061: Students, Schools, Equity and Social Justice
- Education 4012: Diversity and Inclusion in Adult Learning
- Education 4031: Towards Diversity in the Classroom
- Education 4032: Adult Learners with Special Needs
- Education 4089: Gifted Education: Introduction
- Education 5031: Creating Supportive Environments for Learning
- Education 5032: Inclusion from the Early Years
- Education 5072: Teaching Gifted Students
- Education 5091: Learning Disabilities: Introduction
- Education 5094: Significant Learning Difficulties
- Education 5096: Behavioural/Emotional Disorders

St. Thomas University

Two 3-credit hour courses are required as part of the undergraduate program:

- Education 5223: Educational Psychology I (Normal Development)
- Education 5323: General Methods: Differentiated Instruction

The program requires students to enroll in Education 5123: Topics in Education. This course is currently a modular-based program that has a focus on a number of topics in inclusive education, such as crisis intervention, disruptive behaviour and differentiated instruction. A number of teachers and resource practitioners are invited to the class as guest lecturers.

Optional Courses as part of program:

- Education 5233: Educational Psychology II
- Education 5243: Teaching Exceptional Learners

Atlantic Baptist University

One 3-credit hour course is required as part of the undergraduate program:

- Education 4103: Educational Psychology-Inclusionary Practices

Optional Courses as part of program:

- Education 3243: Developmental Disabilities
- Education 3773: Communication Disorders
- Education 4143: Educational Psychology-Theory and Practices
- Education 4713: Behaviour Disorders in Children and Adolescence

Graduate Level Training and Professional Development at New Brunswick Universities

The **University of New Brunswick (Fredericton)** is the only New Brunswick university that offers a graduate degree program in the education. Within the Master of Education (M.Ed.) and the doctoral (Ph.D.) programs offered at UNB, professional educators may opt for full-time or part-time studies in the Exceptional Learners stream. The program currently requires students to enroll in a 36-credit hour program, which would provide the credential for a Department of Education Level VI Certificate. Students enrolled in the program may opt to complete the degree through course work only, course work and the completion of a thesis, or course work and a project and report. The basic M.Ed. program is listed below:

M.Ed in Exceptional Learners:

All applicants to M.Ed in Exceptional Learners must have successfully completed ED 3031 (or ED 3035), Education for Exceptional Learners.

Course route (10 courses)

- ED 6902 Introduction to Research

Cluster A (3 courses)

- ED 6064 Behavioural/Emotional Disorders I
- ED 6016 Learning Disabilities I
- ED 6055 Academic Assessment

Cluster B : (3 courses)

- ED 6067 Practicum in Exceptionalities
- ED 6056 Design and Evaluation of Special Education Programs
- ED 6079 Introduction to Gifted Education OR
- ED 6061 Teaching Gifted Students
- Three (3) additional approved courses

Thesis route (5 courses)

- ED 6902 Introduction to Research
- ED 6064 Behavioural/Emotional Disorders
- ED 6016 Learning Disabilities
- ED 6055 Academic Assessment
- ED 6067 Practicum in Exceptionalities
- ED 6997 M.Ed Thesis

Please note: In addition to the above requirements, teachers seeking Level VI certification in NB are recommended to take the following courses:

- ED 6056 Design and Evaluation of Special Education Programs

- ED 6079 Introduction to Gifted Education or
- ED 6061 Teaching Gifted Students

Project/report route (8 courses)

- ED 6902 Introduction to Research
 - ED 6064 Behavioural/Emotional Disorders
 - ED 6016 Learning Disabilities
 - ED 6055 Academic Assessment
 - ED 6067 Practicum in Exceptionalities
 - ED 6056 Design and Evaluation of Special Education Programs
 - ED 6079 Introduction to Gifted Education OR
 - ED 6061 Teaching Gifted Students
- One (1) additional course.
- ED 6996 M.Ed Project/Report

Credentialing to obtain a higher Teaching certification (Level VI) is an important aspect of professional development for teachers, especially those who wish to work in the area of student services, school administration and exceptionalities, special needs and inclusive education. The Master of Education option would appear to be the most logical degree program for those wishing to develop their skills and training in these areas, while also increasing their professional certification and salary level. It must be noted that UNB Fredericton has experienced growth in enrollments in their various M.Ed. options, yet there is a requirement to attend the Fredericton campus to participate in the program, in both the part-time and full-time programs. While the Faculty of Education has worked to make these courses available at suitable times of the day and the year (i.e. after school hours, week-end and summer institutes and intensive programs), there are currently no distance level or on-line programs available, although active discussions are underway to streamline the program, reduce the credit hour requirements and possibly offer courses at distance education locations. It must also be noted that while there are expectations that Resource and Methods teachers will develop personal knowledge and experience through professional development related to planning for students with exceptionalities (Department of Education, 2002, 14), there are no formal requirements for Resource and Methods teachers to have certification or credentials in the areas of special needs, exceptionalities, behavioural or psychological testing and training, or any other area.

Another critical factor in the delivery of graduate programs in the areas of special education, exceptionalities or behavioural issues is the fact that UNB faculty must deliver the undergraduate program, as well as graduate level training. With the equivalent of just 2.5 full-time faculty, they are stretched and not likely to be able to offer the range of courses and options that may be in demand – especially in terms of distance education courses at various locations around the province.

St. Thomas University does not offer any graduate programs in these areas; however, members of the faculty participate in the Human Rights Summer Institute that is designed for pre-service teachers, practicing teachers, and professionals in related

fields. Education 5503 and 6503: Teaching for and about Human Rights are courses which introduce participants to the various rights, instruments, and issues relevant to the classroom and provides opportunities for teachers and others to increase their knowledge base in the human rights field.

Atlantic Baptist University does not offer any graduate programs, yet they too will be offering more Spring and Summer Intensive courses and programs for teachers. According to ABU administration, they will offer an Intensive Spring Session course for teachers on The Inclusive Classroom and they have been working with the Department of Education to identify other possible course offering for teachers in the Southeast New Brunswick region.

The universities of New Brunswick do not currently offer any credit-based hours of instruction with respect to training for other student service providers, such as Teaching Assistants, supervisory staff, resource and methods teachers, guidance counsellors, school psychologists or school principals. The universities do not usually accept other agency certificates or credentials as credit towards a degree. Resource teachers, guidance counsellors, school psychologists and administrators have often enrolled in other types of graduate degree programs (e.g. Educational Administration, Counselling Psychology, Adult Education), as these degrees will also meet Level VI Certification requirements within the province. Many educational professionals seek graduate level training outside of New Brunswick, through distance education, on-line and summer institute programs in special education, exceptionalities or other areas.

Other Educational Opportunities within New Brunswick

Professional Development:

According to teachers, administrators and government officials interviewed, the vast majority of training for inclusive education has been developed within individual schools, school districts, the New Brunswick Teachers' Federation, and the Department of Education. A number of Guidelines and Standards have been developed in cooperation with teachers and resource and methods teachers (Department of Education, 1994, 2002(a), 2002(b)) and the Department of Education consultants for exceptionalities. The New Brunswick Teachers' Federation offers a series of Professional Courses for teachers and administrators, such as "Designing Motivation for All Learners" and "Teaching Through Learning Channels." These courses are delivered at some 15 locations across the province and require 36 contact hours over 12 sessions, as well as an action research paper. At the moment, these courses are not recognized for university degree-based credits, although the Department of Education will recognize up to four courses toward the Level V Certificate.

The Emerging Role of the Teaching Assistant:

According to Bunch (2002), the Teaching Assistant (TA) is usually a very nice person who is looking to seek employment in a classroom setting; a helping person that

works with the teacher to add that extra pair of hands needed to deal effectively with a large and diverse classroom, or to provide the level of support required to include students with high level challenges (Bunch, 2002, 82). Within New Brunswick, the only requirement for employment as a TA is graduation from high school. Ideally, a TA should have supplemented their high school diploma by completing an approved training course related to the field of work and experience or a demonstrated ability in dealing with children; or any equivalent combination of training and experience. While many TAs have substantially more training and experience than this minimum qualification, there is no credential or certification requirement for Teaching Assistants in New Brunswick. TAs are often hired with little knowledge of disability, exceptionality or behavioural problems and even less of teaching. Most teachers have had little or no preparation working Teaching Assistants and there are no pre-service or in-service courses devoted to this critical relationship. Likewise, Resource and Methods teachers, principals and vice-principals may have hired the TA, yet they will have no particular depth of understanding of how these individuals should be managed or developed within the professional staff of a school setting. As inclusion has been adopted as policy, faculties of education and school districts have not adjusted by developing appropriate training and standards for TAs, and those who work with them.

While there are no provincial university-based programs for the training and certification of Teaching Assistants, there are some limited opportunities within the New Brunswick Community College campus system and a private educational operation in Moncton. The Saint John campus of NBCC offers a diploma program in Early Childhood Education that, while not clearly dealing with the inclusive classroom, has certainly assisted some TAs in developing some of the skills required in their positions. Oulton's College offers a comprehensive, one-year Teacher Assistant Certificate Program at their campus located in Moncton. Program instructors are experienced student service professionals who teach various course modules on a part-time basis, while working in various educational settings. The program costs about \$2000 and students are able to apply to the New Brunswick Student Assistance Program. The basic courses offered in this program are listed below:

Oulton's College Teacher Assistant Certificate Program (Modules):

- TACP 101: Child and Adolescent Development
- TACP 102: Understanding Exceptional Learners
- TACP 103: Professional Ethics and Skill Development
- TACP 104: Professional Wellness and Stress Management
- TACP 105: Assisted Strategies I
- TACP 106: Assisted Strategies II
- TACP 107: Mentorship/Field Practicum Experience

Inclusive Education and Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities Beyond New Brunswick:

Research and practice on inclusive education are well ahead of the curriculum at most faculties of education across North America. While state and provincial legislatures have been busy putting inclusive legislation into place, teacher preparation programs have been coping with a whole range of new subject areas and methodologies, such as technology, language across the curriculum, human rights education, global studies, and a host of others. There is always a gap between what is developing in the schools of our land and what the teacher preparation programs can accommodate within their undergraduate programs. Experience within the schools of New Brunswick and beyond support the claim that inclusion is both possible and practical. It is academically and socially stronger for all students than are other educational solutions to disability (Bunch and Valeo, 1997). Teachers across the continent report that they can teach inclusively without burning out, and without lowering standards. “We know that it is better for all students to learn together and that teachers can create an inclusive environment (Bunch, 2002, 9).” With the expansion of most education degree programs to full, two-year programs, with increased practical experience in schools, student teachers now have a greater likelihood of observing and practicing the realities of the inclusive classroom. Faculties of education are, one course at a time, closing the gap between the inclusive classroom needs and the pre-service theory and practice offered as part of the undergraduate experience. Much remains to be done in providing post-secondary training and professional development for those already teaching and providing student services in the schools.

It is clear that expectations for inclusive education in our schools requires urgent attention to the pre-service and in-service professional development of New Brunswick teachers, student service professionals, teaching assistants, and administrators. Often, these individuals seek such development beyond the borders of New Brunswick, so it is important to complete an environmental scan of the North American scene before making recommendations on improving training opportunities within New Brunswick.

Timmons (2004) surveyed the Canadian faculties of education on their pre-service training and their in-service teacher professional development programs, delivered at the November 2004 National Summit on Inclusive Education. In a survey of 54 member institutions from the Canadian Association of Deans of Education, all universities currently have some level of attention to the role of inclusion in schools and the role of the teacher in dealing with students with exceptionalities. Each faculty of education is different, with teacher preparation programs that range in duration from eight months to 24 months. Provincial legislation on inclusion, categorical approaches to exceptionalities and special education programs, require faculties of education to reflect the policies and legislation within their home province. There is no consistent, national definition or approach to inclusive education. An environmental scan of web versions of teacher

education programs across Canada reveals that most every program takes a similar approach to the one taken by the universities in New Brunswick: a specific course or courses which deal with inclusive education. Some programs have separate Special Education Units for graduate and professional development studies, with one or two of their courses being made mandatory within the B.Ed. undergraduate graduation requirements.

Several Canadian universities have developed research units devoted to the study of inclusive education. Two dominant programs include the Centre for Inclusive Education at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario and the partnership between York University Faculty of Education and the Marsha Forest Centre/Inclusion Press in Toronto. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education within the Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto maintains one of the largest graduate programs for teachers wishing to increase their knowledge of exceptionalities, school psychology and inclusive education through the Master of Education degree within the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning.

Within Atlantic Canada, all teacher education programs follow the approach where one or more courses have been added to the undergraduate teacher preparation program. Bachelor of Education programs are offered at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Acadia University in Wolfville, N.S., Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, and Memorial University campuses in Newfoundland. Memorial University also has a teacher education partnership with a focus on Aboriginal Issues at Cape Breton University (formerly University College of Cape Breton) in Sydney, Nova Scotia.

The **University of Prince Edward Island** has included a course in Inclusive Education as a core part of the B.Ed. curriculum for several years. All students must enroll in this course, where the curriculum is designed to introduce teachers to the concept of inclusive education, focus on attitude and philosophy and how students will differentiate the curriculum once they enter the classroom (Timmons, 2001, 183). Students may also take an elective course which focuses on individualized instruction. UPEI has several options for graduate-level training, including a Master of Education degree. They have also designed a Graduate Certificate in Inclusive Education program, designed to prepare classroom teachers to teach children with varied academic abilities and needs in their classrooms. The program is designed to provide classroom teachers with background knowledge, attitudes and skills to provide appropriate instruction for all children in the classroom. A number of teachers and observers have questioned the ability for teachers outside of Prince Edward Island to have such a certificate accepted as part of the certification process within their home provinces.

Cape Breton University has an Institute for Education that offers a Graduate Diploma in Educational Counselling. This program, along with a strong relationship to the on-line program at Memorial, is one of the few in the region to offer studies through on-line course completion. Again, while the university suggests that teachers can increase their certification levels within the province of Nova Scotia, there is no evidence that

these courses would meet the requirements for a Level VI certificate within the New Brunswick context.

Acadia University has a strong reputation for the graduate level programs they have developed in the area of Inclusive Education. Many New Brunswick teachers and administrators have graduated from one of Acadia's graduate programs, receiving Level VI recognition for graduate level studies. Acadia offers only a limited number of on-line courses in this area, yet they have had strong registration numbers in their on-campus programs. The Graduate Certificate in Inclusive Education is an 18-credit hour summer institute program, delivered in cooperation with the Roeher Institute of Toronto. The Institute has been taking place for two weeks in July for the past 15 years. Successful completion of the program results in the awarding of the certificate by the Roeher Institute and these courses may be applied to any of the Master of Education programs offered by Acadia. The Master of Education (Special Education or Counselling or Curriculum Studies/Inclusive Education) is a 30-credit hour program that offers full and part-time studies where students combine on-line courses and summer institute and fall/winter term courses in areas such as assessment, curriculum, inclusion, learning difficulties, and student resources. Students are also given the option of completing a thesis or a project and have credit provided for practicum studies in special education or inclusive education in their own schools or communities.

Mount Saint Vincent University requires two 3-credit hour courses in exceptionalities and inclusive education for students enrolled in the B.Ed. program and they are one of the few faculties of education to offer different courses for students enrolled in the various program streams (elementary vs. secondary). At the graduate level, Mount Saint Vincent has a strong reputation within the region for their Master of Education programs for School Psychology and Special Education, particularly their program for education of the Blind and Visually Impaired and Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Each of these programs require full time study.

On-Line Instruction

There is little evidence of any undergraduate or graduate degree programs in Inclusive Education within the Atlantic region of Canada that may be completed entirely on-line. There are a limited number of graduate level programs that offer an on-line degree, yet these are in the areas of Educational Administration and Curriculum Studies (e.g. Memorial University). Those interested in an on-line graduate degree program tend to look at on-line university programs in areas such as a Master of Business Administration, Educational Administration or a particular subject area. Those interviewed for this report suggest a clear need for face-to-face interaction for at least part of any program to train teachers in the areas of inclusive education.

Teaching Assistants

There is no evidence within the Atlantic region of university-based training, diploma or certificate programs for Teaching Assistants. Those interviewed for this report

suggest that an on-line program for Teaching Assistants would be an ideal setting for acquiring the required skills for this type of employment. There is an urgent need for developing Teacher Assistants with a solid understanding of the characteristics of students with special needs, strategies to deal with exceptionalities, and a comprehensive training program that develops these particular skills.

An excellent example of an on-line resource for Educational Assistants has been developed through a cooperative network between the Government of Ontario and the University of Toronto. Launched in January of 2001, the In-Service Development for Educational Assistants (IDEA) workshops offers a certification program that includes practical learning tools, theory and peer-to-peer support for Teaching Assistants working with special needs students and their families. The 2005 schedule, which is self-paced, includes courses such as: “Supporting the Student with Special Needs in the Classroom”, Supporting the Individual with Developmental Disabilities in the Classroom”, “Autism in the Classroom”, Supporting the Individual with learning Disability in the Classroom”, and Supporting the Individual with Behaviour Disorder(s) in the Classroom”. Each course registration costs \$90.00.

The IDEA workshops are part of a larger on-line environment known as the Special Needs Opportunity Windows (SNOW). It is an online professional development resource for all educators and parents involved with students with special needs. The network includes on-line certificate programs, workshops, curriculum materials, open forums and technologies for assisted learning of special populations <<http://snow.utoronto.ca/index.html>>.

A number of other non-profit organizations and for-profit private education companies offer on-line courses and continuing education for special education, exceptionalities and inclusive educational practices. The Washington-based **Council for Exceptional Children**, the organization that has established the ethics, standards and guidelines for special educators across North America (What Every Special Educator Must Know, 2003), offers a series of self-paced on-line courses. Current courses include “Adapting Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science Materials for the Inclusive Classroom”, “Educational Assessment Principles and Practices”, “Accommodations and Alternate Assessment”, and “Adapting Reading and Math Materials for the Inclusive Classroom” <<http://www.cec.sped.org/pd/webcourses/index.html>>. A Canadian-based on-line Teacher’s Aid Diploma is offered through Toronto-based Stratford Career College. It is a self-paced program and costs approximately \$900.00 for the program.

Many Canadian community colleges and university-based offices for Continuing Education offer Teaching Assistant certificate or diploma programs. For example, **Confederation College** in Thunder Bay, Ontario offers a four semester Educational Assistant Program. The Division of Continuing Education at **The University of Winnipeg** offers an Educational Assistant Diploma Program over a 120 hour core program, supplemented by a further 120 hours of professional development, conferences and practical experience. This program has been very successful since its inception in 1987 and has been used as a model for other provinces and states. The University of

Winnipeg also offers the Educational Assistant Diploma Program with an Aboriginal Perspective. This program has been developed to train Aboriginal Resource Teachers and Special Needs Assistants, in cooperation with the **Aboriginal Peoples College and Red River College**. The **Nova Scotia Community College** system (Kentville and Port Hawkesbury) offers a 2-year Educational Assistant Program, with a limited number of on-line courses, with a focus on children and youth with exceptionalities, behaviour management techniques, and a field-based cooperative component.

Conclusions and Recommendations: An Enhanced Role for Post-Secondary Institutions in New Brunswick:

A review of Inclusive Education programming and services in New Brunswick must look to what role our post-secondary institutions are currently playing in the delivery of skills and knowledge so that new teachers are fully prepared to enter the inclusive classrooms of the province. We must also look beyond our province to see what strategies are being used in other jurisdictions to provide teachers, teaching assistants, administrators and resource staff – as well as future generations of school personnel – the required skills and knowledge needed in an inclusive school environment.

It appears that New Brunswick universities are providing the most basic levels of course work to their pre-service undergraduate programs, so students are receiving one or two 3-credit hour courses on exceptionalities, behavioural problems and educational psychology. There is evidence that the Department of Education and the New Brunswick Teachers' Federation are striving to assist in-service teachers with a range of non-credit courses and professional development opportunities, policies and publications. Yet there are a number of identified problems with the current structure and offerings from the post-secondary sector, in terms of offering inclusive education:

- 1) Nearly all of the undergraduate teacher preparation is completed on two university campuses located in Fredericton. Atlantic Baptist University offers a small program at its Moncton campus. In short, the large rural areas and smaller centres of the province are not served well by these campus-based programs.
- 2) All inclusive education courses and programs are offered in classroom setting, with no on-line courses being offered by any of the province's post-secondary institutions.
- 3) It is very clear that teachers interested in professional development in these areas are also interested in credentials that will allow them to be certified at Level VI. Only one university within New Brunswick offers graduate level degree credentials in the area of education. This program has a very limited capacity, based on the current faculty complement. Again, potential graduate students must travel to Fredericton, or depend on

possible satellite community offerings by a limited number of faculty instructors.

- 4) There is a very limited presence in educational training for Teaching Assistants within the province and little or no credentials required to perform this important function in the schools of the province.
- 5) New Brunswick Community College provides little training for those who may be interested in Inclusive Education training programs at any of their locations across the province.
- 6) Efforts to provide professional development courses are being made by the Teachers' Federation, yet these courses are not recognized by the university as part of a degree program. Also, such types of training within or outside of the province are not likely to be recognized as part of the Department of Education in the certification process at Level VI.
- 7) There is little credentialing being required of teachers, resource and methods staff, administrators or student service personnel in the standardization of skills and knowledge required for working with students with exceptionalities, the value of inclusiveness and differentiated instructional techniques.
- 8) While there are many examples of solid relationships between individual members of faculty at our universities and individual teachers and consultants in schools and the Department of Education, there is a significant gap between the enunciated needs of in-service teachers and student service professionals and the ability- or desire- of our public universities and faculties of education in meeting those needs.

Recommendation #1:

Working with the Faculties of Education (St. Thomas University, the University of New Brunswick and Atlantic Baptist University) and the Meighen Centre, Mount Allison University, the Department of Education should establish a specific requirement listing and Teaching Certification requirement that all teachers who successfully complete an approved program of initial teacher education have undertaken specific course work and practicum experiences that include attention to the various aspects of Inclusive Education and the diverse range of students who have identified needs and exceptionalities.

Recommendation #2:

Working with representatives from each of the universities, the Department of Education should delineate the roles and responsibilities for Teaching Assistants

employed within the school districts of the province who work with students who have special needs. Further, the Minister should establish a specific requirement listing for Teaching Assistants and appropriate courses and standards for the preparation and employment of such personnel.

Recommendation #3:

Each university should consider courses delivered by the New Brunswick Teachers' Federation, the Department of Education or other public or private education provider for possible transfer to a degree or diploma-based credential within their institution. While transfer credit or Prior Learning Assessment and Review are within the purview of each institution, the Department of Education could work with these institutions to ensure quality control and, perhaps, targeted funding programs to encourage increased recognition of Inclusive Education programming.

Recommendation #4:

The Department of Education or the Minister of Finance should consider tuition rebates or tax refunds to teachers who undertake advanced study in areas of study devoted to special education or other inclusive education programs.

Recommendation #5:

The Department of Education and universities should explore the possible development of an on-line learning environment for Inclusive Education. These courses and programs could be designed for the range of education professionals across the province who could access this centralized clearinghouse for Inclusive Education. This would be a cost-effective mechanism for delivery of course and program information to individuals and schools across the province. An interested university could develop and maintain the site, or the Department of Education's E-learning department, including their newly developed Portal for Educators or the WebCT environment (where distance education high school courses are currently delivered) could be used. If this approach is not possible, consultations should take place with one of the on-line providers mentioned in this report, such as Acadia University or the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre at the University of Toronto. A combination of on-line courses and summer or week-end institutes would be the most accessible and financially efficient model for the province to pursue at this time.

Recommendation #6:

It is recommended that the Department of Education engage in direct discussions with the Meighen Centre for Learning Assistance and Research at Mount Allison University. The Meighen Centre is a nationally recognized research and resource centre for training and development in learning disabilities at the elementary,

secondary and post-secondary levels. While Mount Allison University no longer offers an undergraduate teacher education program, the Meighen Centre would be well positioned to work with other post-secondary institutions, as well as directly with Department of Education officials, school districts and individual schools in the delivery of in-service training programs for Inclusive Education, learning strategies, exceptionalities, parent and community education, research programs and monitoring. It is recommended that the Department of Education consider a funded, graduate level program in cooperation with the Meighen Centre to deliver a made-in-New Brunswick graduate degree in Inclusive Education. A combination of on-line courses and summer or week-end institutes is recommended as the most efficient and affordable model for the province at this time. This one Centre could be used to deliver Inclusive Education in-service opportunities to the various levels of school personnel: teachers, teaching assistants, principals and other student service administrators, as well as specialized courses and training for Resource and Methods Teachers.

Recommendation #7:

The Government of New Brunswick may wish to consider the establishment of an Endowed Chair or Chairs in Inclusive Education at one or more of the provinces post-secondary institutions. A number of university-based and federal funding programs could be accessed to match provincial funds. Such a commitment would demonstrate the importance that the government has attached to inclusive education and it would enhance the pre-professional and in-service capacity of one or more post-secondary education programs.

Each recommendation is submitted to Mr. Wayne MacKay as background for the current Review of Inclusive Education Programming and Services in New Brunswick. The report is based upon the environmental scan of New Brunswick's post-secondary educational offerings, as well as a review of the larger education world, including Canada and the United States. While the review is limited and the recommendations are suggestions only, the author was able to review the literature, as well as holding discussions with a number of informed professionals in the field of inclusive education. Their participation is acknowledged here, with thanks:

- Dr. Gary Bunch, Professor of Education, York University, Toronto, Ontario
- Dr. Bill Morrison, Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick
- Dr. Heather Richmond, Chair, Education Department, St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick
- Dr. Lex Wilson, Director, Meighen Centre for Learning Assistance and Research, Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick
- Dr. Vianne Timmons, Vice President Academic Development, University of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

- Dr. Seth Crowell, Vice President Academic, Atlantic Baptist University, Moncton, New Brunswick
- Dr. Kate McLellan, Exceptionalities Consultant, Department of Education
- Mr. Philip Longmire, Department of Continuing and Distance Education, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia
- Ms. Heather Shand, Inservice Development for Education Assistance Workshop Coordinator, Adaptive Technology Resource Centre, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

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March 31, 2005

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