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# Making it work: teachers' perspectives on inclusion

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This qualitative study was designed to investigate teachers' perceptions of the impact of inclusion of children with special needs on their classes. Twenty participants were randomly selected from the 25 teachers who had volunteered for the study. These teacher participants completed a survey which was composed of 62 items dealing with attitudes and perceptions, incentives for encouraging inclusion, and concerns from a classroom perspective. From these 20 participants, five teachers were then randomly selected for interviews. Findings revealed that some of the teachers' primary concerns were planning time, meeting the needs of all students, and ongoing professional development to respond effectively to the increasingly diverse needs of students in the classroom.

## Introduction

This study focused on teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of children with special needs in the regular classroom and its impact on their daily working lives. It explored teachers' attitudes, beliefs and concerns about inclusion in Prince Edward Island (PEI) elementary schools. Inclusion is commonly defined as serving students with a full range of abilities and disabilities in the general education classroom with appropriate in-class support (Crawford, 1994; Roach, 1995; LoVette, 1996; Salend, 2001).

There has been a substantial amount of research done on teachers' concerns about inclusion and about the supports that teachers feel are necessary in the inclusive classroom (Daniel & King, 1997; Lipsky & Gartner, 1998; Lupart, 1998). Hammond (2003) showed that there were several variables that affected the inclusive classroom. Norrell (1997) suggested an inclusive classroom requires prior and on-going training for teachers, additional planning time, limitation of the number of special education students to three per class, provision for teacher aides, additional monetary resources, and support from principals and other staff. This study complements Norrell (1997) and Hammond's (2003) work as it looks at perceptions of teachers in PEI toward inclusive practices.

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There has been a mixed reaction to the implementation of inclusive practices in the classroom, with positive aspects of inclusion expressed by some researchers and reservations expressed by other researchers. Fox and Ysseldyke (1997) found that there were positive effects on the social development of all students in the inclusive classroom. Bunch and Finnegan (2000) stated that peer interaction through modelling and simple physical proximity appeared to increase self-esteem for all students and promote a sense of belonging for students with learning needs. Increased academic motivation was also seen as a definite effect of inclusion. The American Federation of Teachers called for a moratorium on inclusion policies to allow more time and thought to be put into balancing the needs of special education students and general education students alike. Moore *et al.* (1998) suggested that inclusion does not work, especially when students with disabilities in the general education setting do not receive necessary support services. Opponents of inclusion have stressed that regular classroom teachers in an inclusive setting may lack the appropriate support and assistance to adequately meet the needs of all their students (Daniel & King, 1997).

Due to a lack of research on inclusive practices in PEI schools, and because PEI is in a period of transition regarding special education policies, the researcher chose to investigate the following question. What are the attitudes, beliefs, and concerns of teachers regarding inclusion at the elementary level in PEI?

## Methods

### *Survey*

An adaptation of The School and the Education of All Students Scale (SEAS) survey—developed in Colorado by Pearman *et al.* (1997)—was utilized. SEAS was developed through discussions with district directors of special education, university graduate classes in administration and special education, university instructional personnel, building administrators, and regular and special education teachers, all based in Colorado. These discussions focused on the needs, hopes, and expectations of each respective group. The SEAS survey was a result of this collaboration. The researchers utilized a stratified proportional random sampling procedure to select a total of 558 district personnel from a mid-size Colorado school district to complete the survey.

The SEAS survey instrument was chosen for this PEI study because it dealt with two issues that were relevant: (1) the attitudes and perceptions about educating all students; and (2) the areas that may be causing concern for educators. These sections of the survey had a total of 40 questions that dealt directly with the purpose of the study. Written permission to use this survey instrument was obtained in advance. An instrument field-test was done by surveying one teacher with a child with special needs in a combined grade 2–3 class who had a resource/teacher assistant support less than 25% of the day. This teacher reported that the survey questions were comprehensive.

The research sites consisted of inclusive classrooms (Grades 1–6) in English elementary classrooms in PEI. All English regular classroom teachers from elementary

schools in PEI were invited to participate. Letters were written to the Eastern School District and the Western School Board describing the research and asking for permission to do the research. With permission given, a letter of introduction was sent to the elementary principals in the Eastern School District explaining the research and asking for their assistance in identifying volunteer teachers. In the Western School Board, an information sheet that briefly outlined the approved research project was sent to principals from the superintendent. Teachers interested in volunteering for the research contacted the researcher. The informed consent form was then mailed to the volunteers. Upon receiving the signed consent forms, surveys were mailed to the participants. Participating teachers were contacted a week later to ensure that the surveys had been received and to check for any questions or concerns, except in cases where the survey was returned before this time. The consent forms and surveys had self-addressed envelopes for return via the inter-school mail with permission from the school board. For surveys and consent forms from the Eastern School District, postage on the self-addressed envelopes was included.

Initially, 16 elementary teachers volunteered from the Western School Board and Eastern School District to participate in the survey. Letters of consent and surveys were mailed to these teachers. A week later, a principal contacted the researcher with the names of nine additional teachers from one school who were interested in doing the survey. Four of the nine teachers were randomly chosen to make the total of 20 teachers completing the survey, in keeping with the initial projections approved by the University of Prince Edward Island Research Ethics Board. In total, seven teachers from the Eastern School District and 13 teachers from the Western School Board completed the survey. The combined 20 English elementary school teachers (19 female and one male) from PEI had an average age of 42.1 years and an average of 18.6 years of teaching experience.

### *Interviews*

During this study, the researcher also conducted interviews for data collection. Interviews were used in this study to elicit additional details about inclusion responses. The interviews allowed the researcher to verify accurate understandings of the participants' meanings from the survey. Five of the nine teachers who had indicated an interest at the end of the survey were randomly selected to be interviewed. Semi-structured interviews, with open-ended questions related to the research questions were conducted. Each interview was audio taped and took approximately 30 minutes to complete. The order and phrasing of the questions varied slightly in each interview as some respondents elaborated and directed the flow of the conversations. Questions were structured to encourage a discussion of teachers' concerns about inclusion and supports that they felt were necessary, thereby enabling participants to share their personal experiences and their opinions regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular classroom. The following questions were used:

- Can you give me a sketch of your life as a teacher? (Include such things as years of experience, grades and subjects taught, educational background.)

- What training/professional development did you receive prior to and during having a special needs child in your class?
- Could you tell me about the needs of the special needs child/children in your class?
- What supports (time, personnel, and materials) did you receive from the special education/resource teacher? Were there any negative effects from having this support? Were there any positive effects from this support? (Please elaborate.)
- What supports did you receive from the administration?
- What supports did you receive from the other staff?
- Did you receive support from a teacher assistant? If so, how much and what type of support was provided? Were there any positive effects from this support? Were there any negative effects?
- Were there any supports that would have made your teaching more effective for the whole class?
- Did you have any concerns?
- What were the feelings of the other students in the class?
- What were the effects—positive and/or negative—on the other students in the class?
- What were your overall feelings of your experience?
- A continual check for accurate understandings of the participants' meanings occurred. Participants were engaged in active feedback, and corroborated interpretations of the data throughout the interview. Participants received transcripts of the interview and were asked to contact the researcher if they had any questions, concerns, or additional feedback.

### *Analysis*

Upon receipt of surveys, data were immediately analysed and coded. Due to the small sample size percentages were used to translate the data. Data from the surveys of the 20 teachers were compiled into bar graphs for each survey question to portray results. Initially, bar graphs were chosen because they convey an overall visual representation of the data. Corel Quattro Pro was used to assist in this process. Afterwards, the percentages were tabled to provide for a compact representation of the survey results.

For the interview data, the use of a tape recorder was approved by participants to reduce the distractions of note-taking during the interviews and to ensure that the entire interview was captured. As soon as possible after the interview, the notes and observer comments were typed. Each tape was labelled and stored in a locked filing cabinet. Interview data were coded and categorized into themes. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim with explanatory or clarifying comments in parentheses. The data from the interviews were coded, and categories were generated. There was a search for comments that would enhance the survey data.

### **Results**

This section reports the findings from the survey which consisted of two parts: (1) attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about inclusion; and (2) areas of concern for educators.

Two separate tables indicate all survey results. In addition, quotes from the interviews are provided to add depth to the survey data.

*Teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions*

This section of the survey asked teachers to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with 22 statements about attitudes, beliefs, and opinions concerning the inclusion of students into the regular classroom in their school. Table 1 indicates the survey data results.

Table 1. Teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions

Survey topic	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
1. Inclusion is the best way to meet the needs of all students	5	70	20	5
2. Inclusion causes more problems than it solves	n.a.	10	80	10
3. Believe parents are willing to accept a philosophy of full inclusion	20	60	10	10
4. School boards support efforts of including all students into the classroom	25	75	n.a.	n.a.
5. Believe colleagues support full integration of students with special needs	30	70	n.a.	n.a.
6. Diversity within the classroom enriches the learning environment	30	60	10	n.a.
7. Leadership of the principal is necessary for inclusion to work well	70	30	n.a.	n.a.
8. Principals enable regular and special education staff to communicate with each other	35	55	10	n.a.
9. Department of Education supports inclusion	10	75	5	5
10. Inclusion of students with special needs into the regular classroom creates tension in their schools	25	40	35	n.a.
11. Staff at school resist inclusion	n.a.	5	55	40
12. Special education staff support full inclusion	30	55	10	one teacher did not rate
13. Adequate principal support	25	70	5	n.a.
14. Teachers currently need training in inclusive practices	40	60	n.a.	n.a.
15. Inclusion would work well in their schools	20	70	10	n.a.
16. School staff members are adequately prepared for inclusion	10	55	30	n.a.
17. Inclusion dependent solely on teacher/staff involved	10	25	45	20
18. Inclusion of students with special needs was detrimental to the education of other students	5	45	35	15
19. Students in their schools accept children with special needs in their classrooms	40	60	n.a.	n.a.

Table 1. (continued)

Survey topic	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
20. Inclusion creates too much additional work for the staff	5	25	50	20
21. Parents are more satisfied with their child's education as a result of inclusion	5	60	25	two teachers did not rate
22. Regular and special education staff are provided time to plan together for instruction	n.a.	10	50	40

Values are percentages.

### Interview data

The interview comments provided elaboration on some of the above survey questions. The following quotes provide further insight into the beliefs and opinions of some participants:

- Survey item 1 (needs of all students): 'We have to look beyond the disability or the exceptionality and see the child for who and what he is and what positive qualities he has to offer. Most importantly, I think you look at it as a learning experience'.
- Survey item 2 (problems of inclusion): 'The other children had to learn to be more independent because of the amount of time she (the child with special needs) was taking away, so they developed some independence and responsibility, but, at the same time, when I have to leave them for half an hour, you know that is not fair to grade three and four children'.
- Survey item 6 (diversity and enrichment): '[students with special needs] teach tolerance, and we can learn from them. When we see this child zipping up his jacket and putting on his boots when he only has use of one arm, then that's a lesson to learn because the other students, when they have complaints that they can't tie their sneakers and they can't do this and that and I said, 'Well, look! This little boy uses his teeth and his fingers. He's found a way to do it'.
- Survey item 8 (communication): One teacher who disagreed with this statement added that there is 'no time to communicate but I'm not sure the principal has anything to do with it'.
- A teacher who did not rate survey item 9 (Department Support) stated that it was 'lip service support'. In addition, one teacher remarked, 'The Department of Education seems to think that there are enough resources out there—financial and human—and there's not. Sometimes being stuck in a classroom with 30 kids when you can't do any of the work without the necessary support is not for the maximum benefit of the child'.
- Survey item 13 (principal support) generated varied interview comments, such as, 'I don't think administrators really understand the amount of time you spend preparing for that child'; and 'Both our administrators are wonderful to come and

sit in on any kind of meetings, or if there are any resources that we need, we could order them'.

- Survey item 16 (staff members are adequately prepared for inclusion): a teacher commented, 'This year I feel bad for the little boy who is not getting the help one-on-one, and the time I do spend with him, I feel bad because I know there's other children sort of being neglected'.
- Survey item 18 (detrimental effects) generated some interesting comments, for example: 'Until we got the teacher assistant, this little boy was taking up an inordinate amount of the teacher's time so other children who had needs weren't being served'; and 'When the child gets upset or starts to scream or pound his desk, gets frustrated, then it does upset the class a bit because they stop their work and look to see what is happening. By the time you get the child out of the room, they've lost track of what they're working on. It's hard to get back on task'.

*Concerns of teachers*

This section of the survey asked participants to rate the level of concern on the part of all staff that the move towards inclusion of all students into the regular classroom may have created. The main findings from the 19 items on the survey are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Concerns of teachers

Survey topic	Very Concerned	Concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned
1. Enough time to meet the educational needs of all students	50	35	15	5
2. Concerned about instructing students with a wide range of needs in one class	5	75	15	5
3. Class standards would change	5	55	30	10
4. Staff had not been trained to work with increasingly diverse student needs	25	60	10	5
5. All students would not be adequately challenged	20	45	30	5
6. Maintaining discipline would be difficult	10	30	45	15
7. Staff lacked training to manage diverse classrooms	15	60	25	n.a.
8. Not able to individualize instruction	15	50	35	n.a.
9. Evaluating work of diverse students	15	55	30	n.a.
10. Able to work cooperatively with other staff	5	35	40	25
11. Sufficient planning time	45	50	5	n.a.
12. Lack of ongoing training	30	50	20	n.a.
13. Additional paperwork	20	35	45	n.a.
14. Student attitudes toward inclusion	n.a.	10	60	25
15. Teacher's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of inclusion programmes	15	50	30	5

Table 2. (continued)

Survey topic	Very Concerned	Concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned
16. Whether all school staff are responsible for all students (staff ownership)	15	30	40	10
17. Additional meeting times	25	50	25	n.a.
18. Parents would not understand the reasons for inclusion	n.a.	25	60	15
19. Student acceptance of classmates with special needs	n.a.	15	55	30

Values are percentages.

### Interview data

The interview comments provided elaboration on some of the above survey questions. The following quotes provide further insight into the beliefs and opinions of some participants.

- Survey item 1 (adequate time): ‘When you’re dealing with behaviour issues, of course that takes time from your other students. It was really difficult, and a lot of teaching time was taken away. If he was on the floor kicking and screaming, how do we get him up and out and not disrupt the other children? When the other little one was yelling too, if she was overwhelmed by noises or just change, that took a lot of time away, too. But once your support systems are in place, I think it has been an overall positive experience for the other children’.
- Survey item 13 (additional paperwork): ‘Check lists have to be filled out every-day. Daily logs have to be done. Then there are your medication times’ and ‘You have all these other professionals or specialists—the speech and language therapist, the autism coordinator—and they want daily or regular reports to see how things are going. So there is constant paperwork. It’s to find time to do all your paperwork on top of actually doing your lesson plans and your regular teaching assignment’.
- Survey item 14 (student attitudes): ‘At the first of the year, it took a little bit of adjustment because one of the students was very loud, had a really hard time adjusting to the school routine, and would panic and scream a lot. They were a little bit scared and intimidated and weren’t sure how come she’s yelling. As we talked our way through, they became more comfortable and are now much better, almost mother-henning her’.
- Survey item 18 (parent understanding): ‘The children often went home and told their parents what this little boy had done. I had a number of parents come to me and say that they didn’t want their child in with this boy next year’.
- Survey item 19 (student acceptance): ‘Other students are very tolerant. If tolerance isn’t taught at home, it has to be taught in the class’; and ‘I had a lot of males in here who did not want anything to do with him, like ‘Don’t put me near him. A

few of the girls would have a lot of empathy, but no one would go out of their way to say hi. We did a lot of talking about it, and it's something people have to get used to. The more you're exposed to it, the more compassionate you are. They're modelling what the TAs and I are doing. Even the boys who shunned him before are really warming up to him and asking him to play'.

## Discussion

The research questions involved the attitudes, beliefs, opinions and concerns of teachers regarding the inclusion of all students in the regular elementary classroom in PEI. The following section discusses how the PEI survey results corroborate with previous research. The survey results and supplementary interview data concur with established research on teacher attitudes and concerns with inclusion. These links are discussed in order to draw out the main themes that can be deemed pertinent to the implementation of inclusive practices.

### *Overall attitude toward inclusion*

In a study by Edmunds (1998) that surveyed teachers in Nova Scotia, Canada, the results similarly indicated that teachers' attitudes toward the broad notion of inclusion were favourable. In this PEI study the teachers surveyed agreed that regular education staff in their school want students with special needs to belong fully in the regular classroom. The overall PEI perspective indicated that teachers are there to teach children, not subjects, and teachers tended to look at what is best for each child in their class. Therefore, it is not surprising that teachers from PEI agreed that the regular classroom is the best place for all students.

A study by Werts *et al.* (1996), showed 79.2% of teachers with a student with special needs in their class reported their principal as supportive of serving children with disabilities in general education classrooms. In the PEI survey, all teachers agreed that the leadership of the principal was necessary for inclusion of students with special needs to work well. Four of the teachers interviewed agreed that their principal was supportive. For inclusion to work well it appears that the principal is needed to provide supports, such as teacher assistant time, planning time, leadership at meetings, smaller class sizes, and special education teacher support.

### *Teacher training*

In the study by Werts *et al.* (1996), 77.7% of the teachers who had a student with special needs in their class reported the necessity of regular and ongoing in-service training on teaching children with disabilities. Teachers in the study by Edmunds (1998) indicated that they did not have the skills necessary for the inclusive classroom. The PEI survey indicated that teachers agreed that further training was essential for the effective integration of students with special needs. The interview data suggested that unless teachers understand the disability and know how and what to

do, the teachers may more readily experience frustration and guilt over not doing their best for all the students in the class.

Edmunds (1998) found in his study that regular classroom teachers in Nova Scotia were not confident in their abilities to provide for students in terms of teaching skills and did not feel that they could make the required programme and curriculum adaptations for students with special learning needs. Edmunds (1998) found that teachers felt that they were not professionally prepared to work with students with challenging needs. In a study by Pearman *et al.* (1997), 85% of the respondents were concerned or very concerned that staff had not been trained to manage a class of diverse students. Training to work with a variety of students in the classroom was also a major concern of 85% of the participants in this study. A total of 65% of the teachers surveyed were concerned that they would not be able to individualize instruction for a diverse classroom population, and 80% were concerned about instructing a variety of students in one class. All five of the teachers interviewed stressed the importance of having training to assist in including students with special needs in their classrooms. Teachers are professionals and strive to do their best for all students, and this cannot occur without proper training.

#### *Support from students, parents, and departments*

Grigal (1998) stated that the connections peer tutors make with students with disabilities are positive in establishing and nurturing new interpersonal relationships. These connections help other students to see that students with disabilities have unique strengths and special qualities to share. All teachers surveyed in this study agreed that students in their school accept classmates with special needs. All five teachers interviewed stated that students were very tolerant and accepting of other students with special needs in their class. In this study, students appeared to become more tolerant and accepting of students with disabilities when they understood the nature of the disability and felt free to ask questions. PEI teachers made a commendable effort to communicate this information to students in recent years.

In a study by Bennett *et al.* (1998) teachers felt that parents/caregivers had concerns that there would not be enough time for their child with special needs or time for meetings. The researchers found that parents' concerns included lack of attention from teachers, ridicule or rejection of their child by peers, and the quality of services their child would receive. Pearman *et al.* (1997) found that 52% of the teachers surveyed were concerned or very concerned about how parents would understand and accept the inclusion of students with special needs in the class. The results from the study of PEI teachers differ from the results of studies from other locations. In this study, 75% of the teachers surveyed were not concerned that parents/caregivers would not understand the rationale for inclusion. This could be a result of the small population and size of PEI. Most teachers live in the same community in which they teach and know most parents/caregivers outside the school setting. As well, most parents/caregivers know students, including those with special needs, outside of the school setting. Their children interact with one another in other areas such as church,

hockey, figure skating, Scouts and swimming lessons. These interactions could explain why parents in an area such as PEI might be more accepting of having their child in the same class as a student with special needs.

In a study by Edmunds (1998), 75% of the teachers in Nova Scotia felt that the philosophy and practice of inclusion was implemented by the province as a cost saving measure. In this survey the PEI teachers did not share such suspicions and instead agreed that the school board supported efforts to include all students into the regular classroom, and 85% of teachers agreed that there was support from the Department of Education for inclusion. One teacher interviewed stated that there were not enough resources—financial or human—provided by the Department of Education. Teachers have received draft special education policies from the Department of Education which are supportive of inclusion. As well, teachers have witnessed personnel from school boards work toward getting more teacher assistant time and reduced teacher–student ratios for inclusive classrooms. PEI teachers generally agreed that parents were willing to accept the philosophy of including all students, special education staff wanted their students to be included fully in the regular classroom, and principals provided the support needed to include students with special needs.

#### *Lack of adequate time*

There has been much research focused upon teachers' concerns regarding lack of time for planning and meetings. Edmunds (1998) found that teachers did not feel they had time to attend to professional meetings that inclusion requires. Long (1995) found that the emotional strain for teachers to find more time for classroom instruction was real. In a study by Pearman *et al.* (1997), 74% of the 558 teachers and administrators surveyed were concerned about the time needed for additional paperwork and 83% were concerned about additional meeting time. Werts *et al.* (1996), in his study involving 2100 elementary teachers, found a large discrepancy in the need for and availability of time to meet with specialists and release time for meetings.

According to the participants in this study, time was also a major concern. All teachers surveyed rated planning time as important or very important. A total of 85% of the teachers surveyed were concerned or very concerned about having enough time to meet the educational needs of all students and 75% were concerned or very concerned about the time required for additional meetings such as those with parents, with resource teachers *and* parents to develop Individual Education Plans, and with other professionals. Three of the five teachers interviewed stated that more planning time was needed to meet with the teacher assistant, to plan for the teacher assistant, and to plan for the rest of the class. Two of the teachers interviewed were concerned with the extra time needed for meetings. Teachers are already burdened with doing much planning and correcting on their own time. Teachers do need more time to provide an effective education for all students.

*Academic adjustment*

LoVette (1996) indicated that teachers may be required to make major changes in plans to accommodate the included student, and these changes may diminish opportunities and experiences that were previously planned for regular students. The majority of interviewees in a study by Bunch and Finnegan (2000) believed that inclusive education contributed to academic achievement of students with and without disabilities. A total of 65% of participants in this study were very concerned that all students would not be adequately challenged and 60% of the teachers surveyed were concerned that class standards would change in the inclusive classroom. Four teachers interviewed provided examples of detrimental effects for other students in the inclusive classroom as noted in the results section. These detrimental effects involved the need for extra time for the student with special needs; the fear experienced by students during outbursts by a student with special needs; and the distraction caused by the teacher assistant working in the same classroom. According to teacher perceptions many of these effects are the result of the lack of supports, such as, teacher assistant time and teacher training in inclusion. Academic adjustments may be smoothed over with comprehensive supports in place.

In general the attitudes, beliefs, opinions and concerns of PEI teachers indicated from the survey and interviews centre on a positive outlook toward inclusion, a need for ongoing teacher training, a need for comprehensive support, and a need for more time to implement the intricacies of inclusive practices.

**Conclusions**

In general, the teachers from PEI who were surveyed were more positive about including students with special needs into the regular classroom than teachers in other studies. This positive attitude could be a result of the teachers usually living in the same community where they teach and knowing families well. They did, however, express the belief that they were not adequately prepared to meet the needs of students with special needs. They also stated that teachers were not provided sufficient time to plan cooperatively for instruction. If the procedural concerns of classroom teaching such as administrative support, planning time, and disability-specific teaching skills and resources are not addressed, these positive attitudes could wane (Edmunds, 1998; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001). In PEI, the question is no longer whether to include students with special needs into the regular classroom. Inclusion is here to stay. The question is how to make inclusion most effective for all students? Teachers have positive attitudes about inclusion and students are generally accepting of students with special needs. Teachers from this study believe they now need supports such as smaller classes, training, planning time, teacher assistant support, and assistance in adjusting curriculum. Teachers are experiencing challenges with inclusive classrooms in PEI that are similar to concerns expressed in other areas of Canada and the USA. For example, Fox and Ysseldyke (1997) indicated the same concerns in their study in a suburban school district in Midwestern United States:

ongoing training, classroom assistance to teachers, communication, planning, and ongoing evaluation and monitoring.

Inclusive practices are now a fact of life in schools of PEI. Idol (1997) stated that responsible and effective inclusion does not happen because it is right or because it may cost less, but because all children have the right to learn to the maximum extent possible. Therefore, teachers also have the right to be supported in building collaborative and inclusive programmes. PEI teachers are positive about including all students in regular elementary classrooms. When the complexities of providing inclusive education for all students are fully understood, the more likely all students will be more effectively served. This study indicates that all partners—teachers, parents, school boards, Department of Education, and universities—need to work together to understand and improve inclusive education for all students.

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