

NEWS

UPEI Education Researcher Launches Inclusion Curriculum in India

In the heavily populated and culturally diverse country of India, providing equal access to basic education to all children is a major challenge. Across the subcontinent, 90 per cent of India's estimated 40 million children aged four-16 years with physical and mental disabilities are out of school. On February 27, the government of India took a significant step forward in the movement to include more disabled children in the regular education system when it launched a new curriculum model entitled "A Whole School Approach to Inclusion," published by Education World.

One of the two researchers who developed the new curriculum was Dr. Vianne Timmons, Vice President of Academic Development from the University of Prince Edward Island. She defines inclusive education as "every child learning together in his/her neighbourhood school. All children are welcomed in the school and all children learn together in the regular classroom." Dr. Timmons travelled to New Delhi to attend the launch of "A Whole School Approach to Inclusion," which took place during a major international conference called North-South Dialogue III: Towards a Global Alliance that began on February 27 and runs until March 4.

"This curriculum took five years to develop. It provides guidelines for teachers to work with families and instructional strategies that focus on developing a classroom that welcomes all children," says Dr. Timmons.

Dr. Timmons has been working for the past five years as Lead Consultant for Training with the National Resource Centre for Inclusion, India

(NRCI). The National Resource Centre for Inclusion has been supported through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Roeher Institute, Toronto. She has carried out her extensive research and curriculum development work in cooperation with Dr. Mithu Alur, Principal Coordinator, India, of the NRCI.

Dr. Timmons' study of inclusive education in India has involved 3,000 children in 53 schools. The result is a detailed Code of Practice manual that outlines the important steps that must be taken by staff, children, families, and heads of schools to make it possible for disabled children to be accepted and to be successful. The document also includes numerous case studies that describe successful inclusive education practices in India.

A historic landmark in the evolution for disabled people in India took place in 1995 when the Persons with Disability Act was passed to promote the integration of disabled children into normal schools. Since then, the National Resource Centre for Inclusion has been committed to creating "the how of inclusion."

The methodology framework researched and developed by Dr. Timmons and her colleagues is an important first step in accomplishing that mission.

In addition to her work as Vice President Academic Development at the University of Prince Edward Island, Dr. Timmons carries out research in family literacy and knowledge translation. She is presently working on a program to learn more about Aboriginal children's perceptions of health and education.

William E. "Bill" Andrew Installed as UPEI Chancellor




With the usual pomp and ceremony associated these events, William E. "Bill" Andrew, a 1973 Engineering graduate of UPEI, was installed as the University's seventh Chancellor on Sunday afternoon.

Andrew, a native of Milton, PEI, now resides in Calgary with his wife, Denise. Although they no longer call the Island their year round residence, they have a home in Stanley Bridge and share ownership of a farm in Milton with Bill's two brothers.

Andrew is President of Penn West Petroleum, a member of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and a successful horse rancher.

The new Chancellor is a founder of the Calgary group Friends of UPEI, which supports 14 students annually with scholarships to study at UPEI. He and Denise have also created a new scholarship endowment at UPEI for students in Education and Engineering.

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