

Various programs have been organized for students with learning difficulties. There are public school classes for slow learners; separate institutions for the trainable mentally retarded; special classes to deal with other types of disability, such as visual or auditory impairment; and separate provincial and interprovincial institutions for the blind and deaf.

Provincial funding for the education of the handicapped is extensive. Even where special schools are operated within the local public system, it is not unusual for the province to provide full funding for special-education programs. Moreover, handicapped students are being increasingly integrated into the regular school system in an effort to help them overcome their disabilities without being made to feel different from other children.

Education of teachers

When the basic requirement for an elementary teaching certificate was high school graduation plus one year of teacher training, provincial teachers' colleges provided this training in most provinces. The education of high school teachers, however, traditionally has been a responsibility of the universities. Thus in some provinces the training of elementary teachers also took place in the universities. In recent years, as provinces have raised the minimum certification requirement to a university degree as well as (or including) teacher training, the universities have assumed responsibility for all teacher education programs.

Teacher education courses of four or five years' duration combine academic and professional studies. In some universities, joint degrees (e.g., B.A. and B.Ed.) are awarded; in others, the programs lead to the B.Ed. degree only. Provision is also made for the completion of one year of professional studies following a bachelor's degree program in an academic discipline.

Although teacher education is the responsibility of the universities, only the provincial departments of education have the authority to issue certificates, which are, in fact, licences to teach in the public school system. These certificates are granted on the basis of an applicant's university record.

Other schools

The public elementary and secondary systems are only one of the education options available to parents and students in Canada. Others include the separate and the private schools.

Separate schools

Some provincial education systems provide for tax-supported "separate schools." Legislation in these provinces permits religious groups to establish and operate schools and allows taxpayers to specify that their municipal taxes be used to support these schools.