

## Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Parents: Navigating and Critically Constructing Special Education

Dr. Luigi Iannacci

Professor, School of Education and Professional Learning, Trent University, Canada

### Abstract:

This presentation explores Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) parents' experiences with and critical reflections about special education. Critical Disability Theory (CDT) informs the research. To that end, cross-cultural factors, tensions and complexities mediating the identification of disability are explored through a synopsis of current research and a narratively structured case study. Interview data informing the critical narrative case study demonstrate how cross-cultural factors are not considered throughout deficit focussed processes that pressure CLD parents to identify their child as having a disability and place them within special education. Data demonstrate that these dynamics have a significant impact on the home lives of CLD parents and their children. The deficit model and expertism are dominant discourses that shape interactions between CLD parents and schools which ultimately ensures unquestioned coercive relations of power. These discourses are critically explored in light of how they shape how CLD parents experience and navigate special education systems. The presentation uncovers various issues CLD parents face and offers concrete alternatives to address them.

### Keywords:

Cultural and linguistic diversity, special education, disability.