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Inclusive Post-Secondary Education: Human Rights can Legislate Change but can it

Create Acceptance?

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What does one's worldview – one's ontological stance – have to be to envision truly inclusive education from the primary grades right through to post-secondary institutions? How does one come to know or experience “the other” in order to allow an opening to this vision? To narrow this question – what does one's epistemology of people with intellectual disabilities have to be in order to picture this group as an included part of the typical post-secondary campus?

This paper will attempt to grapple with these global questions while defining the construct of inclusive post-secondary education for people with intellectual disabilities and situating this concept within the community living movement. Inclusive education, as an aspect of human rights, will be explored. Inclusive post-secondary education for people with intellectual disabilities will be looked at as an important transition from inclusive primary school education through the secondary grades and into adulthood. How inclusive post-secondary education impacts employment, which is seen as a vital aspect of full inclusion in society, will be examined. Reasons for viewing the college or university campus as a perfect site for the varied aims of inclusive post-secondary education and the community living movement will be explained. Programs in place in Alberta, Ontario, P.E.I., Hawaii, and Flinders – Australia will be looked at in terms of their impact on students with intellectual disabilities, their family, peers, and instructors. Although this paper is written from an ontology and epistemology that holds inclusion as an important moral responsibility, a strictly human rights approach carries its own limitations. Finally, implications for counseling with students enrolled in an inclusive post-secondary education program will be touched on.

Inclusive education and an epistemological approach to knowing

If a view of inclusion is seen to only work in certain circumstances or settings then the meaning of inclusion has been distorted. If conditions are established in respect to inclusion then it isn't inclusion. Partial inclusion is an oxymoron and there is a “. . . recognition that many practices, and their epistemological underpinnings, that gather under the banner of inclusive schooling, add to institutionalized exclusion” (Slee, 2000). Either one's ontology can envision and hold inclusion or it cannot. Inclusion is the antithesis to the politics of disablement in which disability is grounds for disentanglement rather than entitlement (Roehler, 1996a). Zygmunt & Bauman (1991, cited in Slee, 2000), describe the process of social “othering” and the role of educational institutes in this process using the metaphor of a map. All societies produce strangers – the people who just don't fit the cognitive, moral, or aesthetic map of the world the majority wants to hold. The schools become the “cartographic police”, and for many people the boundaries on the map are drawn along the lines of intellectual disability. Educational institutions become the arena to screen out those deemed uneducable and this screening process is based on a very narrowly defined, biological capacity (that of intellect) to contribute to society and to learn (Roehler, 1996a). Slee (2000) asks the question – what is the epistemic foundation from which inclusion or exclusion stems? This epistemic

foundation rests on how one comes to know about disability. If one comes to know about disability from a distance, through professional experts, through labels, and as an aspect of defective individual pathology (Oliver 1996, cited in Slee, 2000) then exclusion is inevitable. Epistemology is not bloodless abstraction – every epistemology becomes an ethic, every way of knowing becomes a way of living (Palmer, 1987, cited in Lincoln, 1995). The way one knows about the disabled becomes the way one lives with them and educational institutions become the place where exclusion can merge with the broader epistemological principles that govern social exclusion at all levels. Conversely, if one comes to know the person with an intellectual disability as a son or daughter at college or university, as a friend sharing lunch in the student cafeteria, as a peer in the next seat or a classmate to commiserate with over coffee, or as a student in one’s class, then knowing about disability from a stance of inclusion becomes inevitable. A movement to celebrate and accept diversity, to focus on ability instead of disability, becomes possible. If all people are seen as unique and valued members of society, diversity will be valued and all members of society will benefit (Florian, Rose & Tilstone, 1998, cited in Swift, 2001). “[P]ersons with a mental handicap have essentially the same needs as any other individual” (Uditsky, Frank, Hart & Jeffery, 1988, p98), so why wouldn’t we use the same means to meet them?

Special education

There is no need for “special education” at the adult level of post-secondary institutions. There is no such thing as “programmed” adulthood (Roehrer, 1996b). Special education, as a term and practice, seriously needs deconstruction (Slee, 2000). It is generally founded on the politics of disablement (Oliver, 1990, cited in Slee, 2000) and the scientific assumption that disability is about individual pathological defect (Corbett, 1996; Skidmore, 1996, cited in Slee, 2000). Intellectual disability need not be seen as an inherent flaw in need of fixing; diversity doesn’t equal the need for special education. Disability can be viewed as social pathology. Disability is not an inherent part of the individual but a part of social structures and society is responsible for working to amend these structures to include everyone (Roehrer, 1996a). The vision stated in the Government of Canada’s document, “In Unison 2000 – Person’s with Disabilities in Canada”, is that persons with disabilities will participate as full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society and this will be accomplished through access to the interventions they require as they proceed at their own rate through the institutions they choose.

After years of inclusive primary, elementary, and secondary opportunities the current world offers exclusive segregation as the next step for people with intellectual disabilities (Uditsky et. al., 1998). Instructing people in “so-called” normal adult behaviour sets them apart. Adulthood is seen to be implicit for “normal” people (Corbett & Bartan, 1992). Artificial environments often contain a large number of labeled people practicing to do things that may have no practical applicability in the real world (Uditsky et. al., 1988). “People are maintained in a perpetual state of . . . preparation for something better that never comes” (Uditsky, et. al., 1988). It isn’t necessary to prepare to live as an adult or receive “special education” support to live in the adult world; a world that includes post-secondary education.

Defining Inclusive Post-Secondary Education

If education is ever to be truly inclusive, access to educational institutions that clearly communicate to every student that they are welcome is imperative (Bildren, 1985; Braun et. al., 1989, cited in Roehrer, 1996b). Inclusive post-secondary education means students attend regular classes;

students choose the focus of their particular program; there are no special education courses and no special life skills programs (Swift, 2001). Inclusive education means young adults with intellectual disabilities are enrolled in regular courses or programs along with non-disabled peers (Synder, 1993, cited in Roeher, 1996b). Inclusive post-secondary education means educational opportunities in generic settings; socially valued continued educational opportunities with the possibility for multiple relationships, associations, connections, and life-enriching experiences; natural and functional real world environments that are normative, challenging and offer opportunities for making valuable contributions to society and opportunities that promote learning as a life-long process (Uditsky et. al., 1988). Truly inclusive education comes from a systemic approach – the system responds to the student’s needs, the student is not adapted to the system (Swift, 2001). Inclusive education is an assumed precondition of a democratic society (Slee, 2000). Not an end in itself (Knight, 2000, cited in Slee, 2000), but a means to a very specific end – the inclusion of all within the broader social context. Changes in the culture of education that serve to enable rather than disable are made visible through curriculum and pedagogy, through the organization and the ethos of the educational environment (Slee, 2000). Work needs to be done on all these fronts and as this paper progresses this need will be linked to the role of post-secondary institutions in this process, not only as needing to be and practice inclusion but as a place where education, awareness, and future direction is set. The challenge is huge. As Roger Slee, Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Australia states, in his keynote speech to the International Special Education Congress in 2000, “Perhaps the basic problem for inclusive schooling is that we have failed to recognize we are working from an oxymoron. Schools were never meant for all comers”.

The Community Living Movement

The Community Living movement represents a value-based transformative practice that has taken place over the last forty years and comes out of the normalization movement of the 1960’s (Swift, 2001). Normalization put forward the contention that to do right by people, everyone had to have the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in the normal patterns of everyday life (Swift, 2001). “Promoting inclusion in post-secondary education is part of a larger process in which families and communities enable the participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of community living” (Roeher, 1996b). Inclusive post-secondary education is a grassroots movement generated by parents (McDonald, MacPherson-Court, Uditsky & Symons, 1997) who come from the perspective of community living and are not looking for specialized programs for their post-secondary age children but seeking inclusion in what is already available (Roeher, 1996b). The struggle for inclusive post-secondary education closely parallels the struggle of the community living movement in general (Uditsky et. al., 1988). A progression from segregation to integration and ultimately to full inclusion; from access seen as a privilege to access viewed as a right; from the inclusion of the mildly handicapped to the inclusion of all, irregardless of perceived level of disability. The social context of inclusive post-secondary education is part of a larger political movement (Swift, 2001) and inclusive education practices are but one means of promoting the ultimate goal of inclusive community living (Roeher, 1996b)

Inclusive Education as a Basic Human Right

Inclusive access to post-secondary education needs to be framed as a human rights issue (Roeher, 1996a). Roger Slee (2000) asks the question – are we willing to recognize exclusionary

education practices as human rights violations? “Democratic societies have maintained that universal access to education is a right and a necessity. Yet the assumption that all Canadians have access to universal and equitable education does not hold up” (Rioux, 1991, cited in Roeher, 1996b). As we come to a greater and more profound understanding of the capabilities and needs of people with disabilities we make a quantum leap from charity to questions of human rights (Roeher, 1996b).

In Canada, our constitutional guarantee of equality rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is unique and the Charter is a powerful tool to redirect the idea that disability is not an individual deficit (Roeher, 1996a). Section 15.1 of the Charter states: Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability (cited in Roeher, 1996b, p15). The Charter doesn’t define the term equality so that has been left to the courts. “. . . [A]ll provincial education must now be read in the full light of equality rights guaranteed by subsection 15.1” (Vickers & Endicott, 1985, cited in Roeher, 1996b, p16).

Inclusive education is not just a right – it includes important aspects of accommodation and support to access – equitable access is different from equal access (Swift, 2001). The traditional approach to educating people with disabilities amounted to disabled person plus added resources, in the form of special education, equals equity. Resources alone do not make equity (Slee, 2000). A rights based approach can get to the bare essentials but it can’t address equity (Swift, 2001). Equality of benefit, as opposed to simply looking at equal access, implies that a person should receive the benefits of education in inclusive settings and continue to receive such benefits until the person attains their full potential (Roeher, 1996b)

Transition Stage

Post-secondary education is used by many young people as a transition setting that provides a bridge between high school and the adult world of work (Roeher, 1996b). Many students are unclear of the exact reasons they are attending a post-secondary institution. The timing and the setting allow an important period of self-growth (Bowman & Skinner, 1994). The traditional view of post-secondary education has been a place where young people come of age and develop adult identity (Grantley, 2000). “Most students with severe disabilities finish high school with few dreams and career ambitions; their access to mechanisms for transitions from high school to life as an adult are restricted” (Weinkauff, 2002, p35). Inclusive post-secondary education can provide for these students what it provides for all students and is the logical progression from an inclusive high school setting to adulthood in an inclusive community living setting. Specialized transition settings for the intellectually disabled, while setting out to help, often end up limiting (Uditsky et. al., 1988). Research supports the idea of keeping students with developmental disabilities with their peers in post-secondary settings through the years eighteen to twenty-two (Moon & Inge, 2000; Tashie, Mallory & Lichtenstein, 1998; Smith & Puccini, 1995, cited in Zafft & Hart, 2001).

Inclusive Post-Secondary Education and Future Employability

Inclusive post-secondary education for people with intellectual disabilities is linked to future employment. The Government of Canada sees employment as the key to independence and full participation with the community and links access to educational opportunities as vital to gaining employment (In Unison, 2000). In the report, “Advancing the Inclusion of Person’s with Disabilities” the Government of Canada lists enhancing employability as one of the seven key areas on the road to full inclusion in Canadian society (2002). The long term success of Canada’s

innovation strategy for full inclusion depends on improving access to post-secondary education options for people with disabilities (2002). “Advancing the Inclusion of Person’s with Disabilities” makes the statement that increasing access to education improves the chance of finding employment for all Canadians, including those with disabilities (2002). 1996 census figures show a strong correlation between educational attainment and labour force participation among person’s with disabilities (In Unison, 2000). In a study carried out by the Roeher Institute (1992) on Canadian employment related support and programs for people with disabilities revealed access to the labour market is affected by education and availability of support and not by disability or severity of disability (Roeher, 1996b). The National Association of Disabled Students states, “The securing of a fully accessible post-secondary education is instrumental for people with disabilities, as it enables us to experience the many benefits of acquiring the skills and knowledge required to integrate successfully in Canada’s labour force” (1999, p1). Research conducted by Gilmore, Schuster, Zafft & Hart (2001) showed a correlation between increased opportunities for post-secondary education and competitive employment rather than sheltered employment for people with significant cognitive disabilities. This research points out that post-secondary education is an important step in gaining employment that offers a livable wage.

The Canadian Mental Health Association Policy Statement - Access to Higher Education for Consumers of Mental Health Services (2001) states: “Education is an essential aspect of citizenship in many ways. Not only has a college and university education become a necessity for employment and participation as a citizen in the “knowledge-based” economy of Canada, but, for many students, the educational experience is a fulfilling end in itself”.

Why a university or college setting?

Why is a university or college setting the perfect place to promote inclusive educational practices? This is a very important question that serves to highlight attitudes about places of “higher learning” and the multi-faceted mandates of most post-secondary institutes. A university or college is a place that demonstrates excellence in teaching, research and service to the community. “Universities often provide many community support services in addition to traditional academic instruction” (Uditsky et. al., 1988, p101). The mission statement of the University of Victoria states this broader mandate clearly and lists, under its values and principles, equal rights and dignity of all persons (A Vision for the Future, 1998). Post-secondary institutes have a lot of influence in society and they are important places where people are exposed to ideas that form future values and attitudes (Roeher, 1996b). “Future generations, after coming through an education system where differences among people are welcomed and celebrated, may, when they are in positions of leadership, create a society where everyone is treated with respect and dignity” (Roeher, 1996b, p5). It is important to examine how the university is envisioned. Is it solely the ivory tower of academia? “The elitist view of university education must be challenged . . . “(Gibson, 1997, cited in Grantley, 2000). Some post-secondary institutes are embracing the idea that excellence in education can also mean a variety of learning experiences for people with a diversity of learning styles and needs (Roeher, 1996b).

The role of the university student is a highly valued role in our society that comes with an aura of personal competence and social image enhancement for anyone who has the good fortune to occupy that role. “If a person with a severe disability can succeed at university, which doors in our society can remain closed?” (Uditsky et. al., 1988, p101). The university stands to benefit as well by being an institution that is inclusive and open to the needs of individuals who are often outside the mainstream of society (McDonald et. al., 1997). The attitudinal change that comes about due to this type of exposure is very important.

In their policy statement, “Advancing the Inclusion of Person’s with Disabilities”, The Government of Canada (2002) lists seven indicators to measure the success of their inclusion initiative and three of those indicators speak directly to a university or college setting for promoting inclusion. The government sees organizational partnerships as integral to success, quality information decimation and access to media exposure. The university or college campus is well-situated with processes already in place to meet all of these objectives.

Research on Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Programs

Research on inclusive post-secondary education programs in place at various universities and colleges is, for the most part, scarce and has focused on program description and rationale (Swift, 2001), though more recent studies and research have started to look at outcomes. Albertan Universities and Colleges have had inclusive post-secondary education programs in place since as early as 1987 and Weinkauff (2002), in reflecting on these programs, identified three basic underlying principles. The programs have been made available to any adult with a disability, they have been totally inclusive, and these programs have assumed socially valued roles in terms of fostering life-long friendships as educational goals and using the programs as tools of community education.

The University of Alberta has had their On Campus program in place since 1987. In studying this program Bowman & Skinner (1994) found benefits in several areas. Students enrolled in the program had developed increased social experience, social skills, decision-making, and participation in a wide range of activities. Higher career aspirations and increased job prospects were also noted. McDonald et. al. (1997) reports positive impacts on friendships, new skills, knowledge, independence, and self-concept. The participants for McDonald’s study were ten students ranging in age from twenty-one to thirty-six with moderate to severe developmental disabilities. The participants reported that it was easy to make friends at university and that they hung out with friends, had lunch together, and participated in recreational activities with friends. Families of the participants were very positive about the inclusive education environment. One parent reported, “They’re treated as grown-ups. They’re expected to make their own decisions and follow through on them” (McDonald et. al., 1997, p54). Faculty members in McDonald’s study reported that inclusion enriched the experience for all students in the class and 71% indicated that they would accept a student with intellectual disabilities into their class again. Peers benefited in terms of having their own personal awareness on inclusion raised, increasing their levels of understanding, tolerance, gaining the ability to interact and help effectively, and breaking down the barriers that past experiences of exclusion had created. Uditsky et. al. (1988), also looked at the University of Alberta’s program and they describe it as, “. . . a daring innovation in providing a post-secondary education to people with mental handicaps through integration with and in a university context” (p96). Uditsky’s research looked at employment opportunities and found that they were diverse and consisted of on and off campus opportunities along with part-time summer and coop jobs. Students gained much needed job related experience, skill development, and valuable references from employers. Weinkauff (2002) carried out a qualitative study with staff of the University of Alberta program and found that staff reported increases in self-esteem and confidence, among students of the program, as well as increased academic skills, self-determinations, job skills, and the enhancement of social status.

The University of Calgary’s Varsity Education Program has been in place since 1992. Bieserdorff, Bowman & Weinkauff (1997) found tangible benefits for students enrolled in the program in terms of the refinement of academic skills, greater job-related awareness, and the opportunities for networking with others in a chosen career area. Intangible benefits included increases in maturity, independence, self-confidence and decision-making.

The College Connection Program at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton began in 1997. Students in the Connection Program attend Grand MacEwan for four years rather than the regular two year program of non-disabled students. An informal survey of this program reported that 90% of grads were working in their field of study and 70% had paid employment (Wood, 2004). Taylor (1999, cited in Swift, 2001), carried out research on disabled and non-disabled young women who had attended Grant MacEwan. These young women were asked how attending college impacted their life. The research findings indicated quite clearly that the disabled women were very capable of accounting for and giving meaning to their experience. This is an important piece of research in terms of future qualitative studies that focus on the individual student's voice regarding their own experiences.

The Community Integration through Cooperative Education Program at Humbar College reports virtually no attrition in their program and an 88% employment rate for program grads (Panitch, 1988).

The University of P.E.I.'s Adult Connections in Education has been in place since 1997 and Leary (2002, cited in Woods _____), found that students reported meeting their goals to mature, learn new things, meet people, and decide what they wanted to do with their lives.

Flinders University, in Southern Australia, responded to the fact that Universities in Australia were not including people with intellectual disabilities (Andrews, 1991, cited in Grantley, 2000), by setting up a program entitled, "Up Hill Project". Research on this program indicated that students quickly blended in with the general student population – wearing casual clothing to class and arriving at lectures with coffee in hand (Gibson, 1997, cited in Grantley, 2000). The program enjoys a high level of attendance that is equated with personal commitment. Increased self-esteem, self-confidence and the expansion of social network and contacts, the acquisition of age-appropriate social skills, developing work associated skills and competencies, opportunities to participate in work experience, inclusion in a wide range of social activities and opportunities to participate in leisure and recreational activities, were all research findings (Gibson, 1997, cited in Grantley, 2000).

Zafft & Hart (2001) carried out a preliminary study with twenty significantly cognitive disabled students enrolled in an inclusive post-secondary education program at the University of Hawaii. The research looked at employment in terms of competitive environments for work versus sheltered workplace environments and matched the twenty students enrolled in the inclusive university program with a cohort not enrolled in such a program. All the students from the inclusive program, who were employed, were working in competitive workplace environments as compared to only 43% of the matched cohort who had not come through an inclusive university program. No student from the inclusive university program was working for less than \$6.75 per hour. This preliminary research suggests that inclusive post-secondary education programs may reduce the need for employment support and may contribute to participants being able to garner a livable wage in the paid labour force.

Limitations

For many the concept of inclusive post-secondary education is difficult to envision or accept (Uditsky et. al., 1988). The message about inclusion is getting out but it is a slow process and much more education and change is needed to raise people's awareness around this issue (Roehrer, 1996a). Competition for space in post-secondary institutions is fierce and the creation of new spaces is not keeping pace with the need (Roehrer, 1996b). Scarce resources often create climates of fear and exclusion. One doesn't have to talk to very many people on the subject of inclusive post-secondary education before the inevitable argument is raised – to include this student, who is basically incapable

(in the speaker's mind), we must exclude a capable student. Allies, especially within the post-secondary system, are difficult to find (Roeher, 1996b). The myths about disability persist and, "Negative attitudes of instructors toward including students with disabilities in their classrooms are based on fear and lack of knowledge about inclusive practices" (Roeher, 1996b, p70).

Approaches based on rights ". . . are often unsuccessful because people do not know how to treat others who are different . . ." (Young & Quibell, 2000, p.758). The words, "You can't legislate attitudinal change" (Roeher, 1996b, p.13-14) speak clearly to this issue. In an editorial for the *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, J. S. Reinders (2002) discusses the issue of inclusion. Reinder's writes that inclusion has brought significant changes for people with intellectual disabilities but it has its own form of limitation. Rights create space for action, they create new opportunities and new institutional roles, but real inclusion requires something more. "We create space and include people with intellectual disabilities as citizens in our institutions, but do we also include them in our lives as human beings? Is that also part of our politics of inclusion?" (Reinder, 2002, p2). Being included in other people's lives, being accepted and appreciated by others isn't something that rights based legislation can achieve. The creation of new institutional roles is an important first step. Until persons with intellectual disabilities are visible the process of acceptance and inclusion can't even begin but the politics of inclusion has to have a wider agenda than mere visibility.

The subject of inclusive post-secondary education is vastly under researched. The program at the University of Alberta has been in place for seventeen years and yet research on this program and others is very limited. Little or no research is available to indicate the advantages or disadvantages of inclusive post-secondary education compared to exclusive and segregated post-secondary programs. This lack of research represents a major limitation in promoting inclusive post-secondary education programs.

Counseling Implications

Counseling implications for students with intellectual disabilities enrolled in inclusive post-secondary education programs, to be true to the philosophy of inclusion, need not include any additional or "special" counseling services. Most, if not all, post-secondary institutions have counseling services in place and inclusion means that all students may access these services. C. Hutton (2002), in an article entitled, "A review of psychosocial interventions for adults with intellectual disabilities and mental health programs", for the *Journal of Mental Health*, writes, ". . . people with mild intellectual disabilities appear to show the same range of mental health problems as the general population . . ." (p12). There is evidence to suggest, according to Hutton's article, that various psychosocial interventions (cognitive-behavioral techniques in particular) are as feasible for this population as they are for the general population. Conversely, Simpson (2002), writes that psychiatric disorders are higher in persons with intellectual disabilities than in the general population. This is not due to an inherent biological predisposition but to the stress associated with transitions, loss and rejection, environmental stressors, lack of adequate social support, stigmatization, and frustration (Rush & Frances, 2000, cited in Simpson, 2002). Lunskey & Havercamp (1999, cited in Simpson, 2002) attribute the increased risk for psychiatric disorders to the absence of adequate social support. Cognitive-behavioral techniques are suggested as a means of teaching effective communication and assertiveness skills, and group work is suggested to help develop social skills and teach anger management. These are exactly the interventions one might expect to see employed in any campus counseling center for any student who presented with the above issues. Thompson, McGrew, Bruininks & Peabody (2002) identify particular support needs of person with intellectual disabilities and then describe a four prong approach to treatment: identify the person's desired life experience and goals; determine the level of support required; develop an individualized treatment

and support plan; monitor outcomes and assess effectiveness of plan. How different is this four prong approach to treatment from what a qualified counselor would do with any client?

Counseling implications that do deserve mention are the need to obtain fully informed consent and to work more collaboratively and creatively than one might with another client. The counselor may need to put more effort into proper assessment. There may be the need to make use of adjunct informants such as family or inclusive education support staff, and to do behavioral observations in environmental settings to arrive at a complete picture of this particular client. There is no reason to suggest that any of these activities indicate “special services” that are qualitatively different than what a counselor would provide for any client. The counselor is entering into a culture and a reality that may be quite different from their own and whenever this happens extra care is needed to really hear and understand the client’s reality and their needs.

This paper has set out to examine inclusive post-secondary education as a human rights issue, an important transition time, and a means of increasing employment opportunities. The university or college is seen as an ideal setting for inclusion for a number of reasons. Research on current inclusive post-secondary programs, as well as limitations to a strictly rights based approach to inclusion, and the counseling implications for students in such programs was included. In conclusion, our society has a long way to go before true inclusion is a reality.

“It is a mistake to think that we have achieved the goal of inclusion by creating new institutional roles . . . “ (Reinders, 2002, p.3). Though this is an important first step, the mere creation of space for people with intellectual disabilities is not enough. Jean Vanier (1998), states, “I have come to the conclusion that those with intellectual disabilities are among the most oppressed and excluded people in the world” (p.207). Paulo Freire (1971), in, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, writes that when we deny the oppressed person’s reality we work to maintain the status quo. Until we are able, as a society and as individuals, to embrace an epistemological approach to knowing about people with intellectual disabilities through full inclusion we will continue to maintain the status quo of exclusion.

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