**Full Inclusion and Integration the Only Path toward the Good Things of Postsecondary Transition**

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All people with disabilities should have the opportunity to participate in the same learning environments available to same-age peers, and post-secondary education for students with intellectual disabilities must “operate from the perspective of higher education” (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2011, p. 10) in order for it to be an inclusive experience. Therefore, as part of Millersville University Integrated Studies provides opportunities for students to continue with their personal and academic development in a fully inclusive environment. Any student who comes to Millersville University for higher education must come because he/she chooses this university, and because they will find satisfactory experiences that will enhance their personal growth socially, academically and vocationally. This is the opening paragraph when we envisioned a curriculum for students with intellectual disability at Millersville University. It never occurred to us that colleges and universities around the country would become a discussion ground for the value of inclusive.

**Unconscious Assumptions**

It is amazing how pervasive unconscious assumptions about disability are on campus, even among ourselves. Unconscious assumptions are the basis of the entire struggle to get students with disabilities on university campuses. When we started this initiative we were thinking of a two-year program, but why only two years? Was it because we did not see students with ID as capable of sustaining four years on campus or perhaps we were thinking that this program was more like a two-year community college program but on a university campus. Typical students at Millersville take more than four years to complete their degree, sometimes twice that time. Why were we thinking that students who have not had all the advantages of other students coming to college and have an intellectual disability or some other kind of learning disability are going to gain all they can or need in just two years? So we, like many people, had unconscious assumptions that we had to examine in the light of experience.

**100% Inclusive**

At Millersville we made a decision from the beginning to be 100% inclusive in all we do, from the students first application to college through to graduation. If you come to Millersville you are go to be doing exactly what everyone else is doing on campus with the supports and services you need to participate fully. We have a fundamentally inclusive identity here in that for us, inclusion means all the way all the time.

This was a conscious decision because we believe that part-time inclusion soon degenerates to less and less inclusion and that given the prevalence of unconscious assumptions to segregate students with disabilities into special groups and classes that inevitably it will be inclusion that suffers. Furthermore, we believe it is more difficult to increase inclusion than it is to increase segregation so starting from a baseline of full inclusion is a better foundation than starting with partial inclusion and hoping to increase to full inclusion at a later date.

As a result of this approach we do not provide special classes of any kind for students with disabilities. We believe placing students in special classes with each another will provide less challenge and lower expectations than would be the case in a typical classroom. Students are also not likely to feel as valued in a segregated setting than they would in a typical setting. Being with their peers and the acceptance and belonging that fully accessible education provides is the gold standard and highly valued.

When planning and discussing the concept of inclusion and full inclusion the issue of definition often arises. Clarity in the meaning of full inclusion is a significant contributor to the achievement of quality in IPSE (Uditsky, 2012). There are (at least) two useful ways to understand the concept of full inclusion: the use of the culturally valued analogue and the concept of authenticity.

**Anchors to Understanding**

AUTHENTICITY: The standard of authenticity is “the experience of those typical students without disabilities who are gaining the greatest benefit from their postsecondary education” (Uditsky, 2012, p. 299). Areas of authenticity include academic, social, associational, employment and vocational, and family. An authentic university experience therefore applies the same standards in these five areas to students with intellectual disabilities as other students.

THE CULTURALLY VALUED ANALOGUE: The CVA is defined as: *A societal practice (a) which can be encountered with at least reasonable frequency in the valued sector of society, (b) with which most members of the society would be familiar, (c) of which most members of the society would hold positive expectations and images, (d) which constitutes a valued parallel to a practice performed by or with devalued people (Wolfensberger & Thomas 2007, p. 30)*

This is a similar standard as authenticity and refers to specific practices. For example, the local neighborhood high school is the CVA for a segregated special school. For adults with intellectual disabilities college and university is the CVA for post-secondary education that is the valued parallel to the practice of keeping the student in high school until age 21 perhaps with some work experience at a sheltered workshop.

 When talking to people on campus we describe the CVA as “like everyone else.” This is a weak version of the definition but as an introduction it does describe what our assumptions are and is a very useful expression for quickly communicating the idea of inclusion to people.

**Community Dialogue Conclusion**

Embedded within this brief abstract are a plethora of values, assumptions and directives. A conclusion may only be reached as an organic consideration emerges from a diverse collection of committed citizens. We wish this abstract to be fodder for such a dialogue and process. Each person will exit with what they brought plus what they heard. It is possible that people return home with new insights and tools to create learning communities as they are meant to be.