



Civic Engagement--People with Disabilities Find their Voices

Ontario Grade 10 Civics course (2014)

C. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ACTION

C2. Inclusion and Participation; FOCUS ON: *Political Significance; Political Perspective* By the end of this course, students will:

C2.1 analyse ways in which various beliefs, values, and perspectives are represented in their communities (e.g., with reference to people with disabilities ...) and assess whether all perspectives are represented or are valued equally

Sample questions: “What are some ways in which various student perspectives are represented in our school? Do you feel like your voice is heard?” ... “Why might some people’s perspectives be valued more than those of others? What are some ways to address this inequity? What action could be taken to ensure that marginalized voices are heard?”

Accommodations for ALL people’s voices to be heard:

For people with intellectual disabilities there has been an important shift since de-institutionalization from “being taken care of and protected” to “self-advocacy.” This is especially evident in the past 15 years.

Today the disability community, including the intellectual disability community (especially through People First), has been clear in saying they want “NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US!” They want to shape the messages about themselves—just as do other groups in society—and they are doing this. It is important for the rest of us to respect their capacity to do this and to hear them.

Student project: Interview some students with disabilities in your school. How are students with disabilities invited to participate in your classroom and school community? How do or can they take leadership? Are there barriers that prevent them being able to participate fully in school life? Talk with them about actions that could be taken to overcome these. Make a plan together.

Links to various resources created by and/or for people who have disabilities:

<http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/humanrights/endoflife/euthanasia/Canadians-with-disabilities-we-are-not-dead-yet>

<http://www.independentliving.org/docs5/stonereview.html>

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified by Canada in 2010) <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

Inclusive Education has become a right:

Download a banner by People First on inclusive education: http://www.inclusive-education.ca/thoughts/thoughts_index.php#here



Community Living Resources on inclusive education:

<http://www.communitylivingontario.ca/issues/policy-issues/education>

includes: what is being done in Ontario, links, legislation, innovative policy ideas.

“Building an Inclusive and Accessible Canada: Inclusive Education” by Bendina Miller:

<http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/socialpolicy/poverty-citizenship/income-security-reform/celebrating-our-accomplishments#sec-incl-miller>

Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA):

Enacted in 2005. Sets out accessibility standards in 5 areas:

1. customer service
2. employment
3. information and communications
4. transportation
5. design of public spaces

Ontario govt website about the Act (includes videos)

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/aoda.aspx

The Act online: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm

Disability & the Law in Ontario: <http://www.lco-cdo.org/en/disabilities-threshold-paper-sectionII>

Disabled Woman’s Network Ontario did a backgrounder on the ODA:

http://dawn.thot.net/ODA_Backgrounder.html

Accommodating Students with Disabilities – Roles & Responsibilities (Fact Sheet):

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/accommodating-students-disabilities-roles-and-responsibilities-fact-sheet>

People First Canada: http://www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca/index_en.php Visit their website to learn about the vision, goals, mission and role of this important self-advocacy organization run by and for those who have been labelled with an intellectual disability. source:

http://www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca/visions_goals_en.php

Short history of People First in Canada: http://www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca/start_en.php

Different political/legal/social campaigns that People First has been involved in:

http://www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca/legal_political_en.php

Inclusion BC offers good of resources on self-advocacy: <http://www.inclusionbc.org/self-advocates>

“Self-advocacy is about people with disabilities speaking up for themselves. It means that although a person with a disability may call upon the support of others, the individual is entitled to be in control of their own resources and how they are directed. It is about having the right to



make life decisions without undue influence or control by others.

“What Disabled People Can Do,” by Lois G.

“There is a saying that disabled people can do just as much as anyone else. Right now we are trying to stand up for ourselves. We would like to be given a chance to prove that we can make it in the world - get jobs, get married, get places of our own to live and budget our money. There are quite a lot of us out now in the community and we’re doing great!

A lot of us have some good ideas but don’t get to say them. We would like to be seen and heard at the same time for who we are. People should look at us not for what disability we have, but for who we are.

Back when I was growing up - about thirty years ago, people in society were not too sure about people with disabilities. Now people have a lot more information on people with disabilities, and are leaning how to deal with it. People have come a long way in what they think and what they do.”

Source: <http://www.develop.bc.ca/about/self-advocates.html>

Documentary on the “R” word: <http://www.cacl.ca/publications-resources/The%20R%20Word%20-%20Documentary%20Film%20Project>

&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&

Events since the 1960s that have changed the situation of people with disabilities

Jean Vanier—Public Recognition of the Contributions that People with Intellectual Disabilities can offer.

Jean Vanier was a pioneer in the deinstitutionalization of people with intellectual disabilities. In 1964, appalled by conditions in institutions Vanier visited while in France, he invited two men to share a home with him. This was a radical gesture and one that he says he recognized as irreversible from the start. The idealism of the 60s led young people, including some of his former students from St. Michael’s College (U of Toronto) where he had taught philosophy, to join him, and the grassroots community movement known as L’Arche took hold and spread. As Vanier began to live with people with disabilities he soon realized that he had much to receive from them. They taught him about acceptance of others, about warmth and forgiveness and humour and the priority of relationships. This reciprocity or mutuality of relationships remains at the core of L’Arche. CBC TV interview with Jean Vanier in 1964:

<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/society/education/jean-vanier-opens-first-larche-house.html>

(What is unique about L’Arche, in contrast to most other supported housing options for people who have disabilities, is (1) its deliberate blurring of the lines between those who come as “assistants” to help and those who receive help, and (2) the sharing of life together so that the



house becomes home for both the assistants and those with disabilities and they live together as family. A 2006 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation bulletin reported on a housing survey for people with disabilities. “L’Arche was the only group home that was identified as a best practice.” (<http://www.cmhc.ca/odpub/pdf/65011.pdf?lang=en>)

Read about Jean Vanier and L’Arche in the other documents on the Education page of [larche.ca](http://www.larche.ca) and in other places on these websites: <http://www.jean-vanier.org/en/home>; and www.larche.org and www.larche.ca .)

Wolfensberger—another pioneer: Wolf Wolfensberger and Jean Vanier hit it off when Vanier visited Canada and the USA after founding L’Arche in France. Wolfensberger was an American who, in the late 60s, had seen ways in which the abilities of people with disabilities were being called forth in Scandinavia. He was invited to come to Toronto to share his ideas in 1971. He and Vanier had the same vision that people who have intellectual disabilities are able to live in society and should be able to have normal life experiences and meaningful work and friends who are not all disabled. (Wolf coined the word “normalization.”) When they met, L’Arche was already beginning to take off as a community living movement. (The first L’Arche Community outside France was founded in Richmond Hill, just north of Toronto, in 1969.) Also, already in the 1960s families had begun to meet together and form associations to create daytime programs or workshops in their communities for their young people with disabilities whom they were reluctant to place in institutions. Some of these families formed local “Community Living Associations” (ACLs) and began to look at other living options such as group homes for their young people. These associations grouped together to form the Canadian Association of Community Living (CACL) (<http://www.cacl.ca/>)

“CACL's efforts to close institutions began in 1971 when Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger came to Canada as a Visiting Scholar. His task was to promote the concept of normalization—the idea that people who had an intellectual disability should be able to live lives similar to others in their communities—and didn't need institutions. Although schools and some workshops for people with intellectual disabilities existed then, the concept of providing residential services in the community was still very new and the first group homes—many of them huge by today's standard—had just begun to pop up across the country.”

Source: “CACL's Deinstitutionalization Initiative: A Long Struggle” By Diane Richler
<http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/socialpolicy/poverty-citizenship/income-security-reform/celebrating-our-accomplishments#sec-incl-walters>

From an unpublished paper by Jessica Vorstermans:

“Wolfensberger has a PhD in psychology and was deeply influenced by the Scandinavian authors of the normalization theory, N.E. Bank-Mikkelsen and Bengt Nirje; the former first developed the theory and the latter is credited with formalizing it in academic literature. Wolfensberger is quite clear in his desire for specific fundamental change and was (and still is) very involved in the promulgation of the normalization principle (now Social Role Valorization Theory). In the late 1960s Wolfensberger visited Scandinavia to see firsthand what he describes as the move from the ideas and ideals of normalization to



“concrete external realities” (1972, 126). He is so radicalized by what he sees and experiences in Scandinavia that he calls for a challenge to the field of developmental and intellectual disability in North America. He boldly states that the Scandinavians are “nowhere near the limit of what can be achieved” and that North Americans should “embrace a concept of activation¹ which includes as a major goal the *virtually total abolition of immobility, and to a large extent also non-ambulation of the profoundly retarded and multiply handicapped*” (Ibid, 127). Indeed Wolfensberger has (in the past) influenced the field of intellectual disability and describes himself as spearheading the Normalization reform movement and the author of the Social Role Valorization Theory (Social Role Valorization website, first paragraph). Wolfensberger, Wolf (1972). *Normalization: The Principle of Normalization in Human Services*. National Institute on Mental Retardation: York University, Canada.

Further resources:

Social Role Valorization Theory website (n.d.) *About Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger*. Accessed on November 13, 2010 at:

<http://www.socialrolevalorization.com/training/trainers/wolfensberger/index.html>

Wolfensberger, Wolf (1975). *The Origin and Nature of Our Institutional Models*. Syracuse, NY: Human Policy Press.

Human interest article by Helen Henderson in the Toronto Star : “Disabled Leave the Shadows and their Mark” (2008)

http://www.thestar.com/life/health_wellness/diseases_cures/2008/03/15/disabled_leave_the_shadows_and_their_mark.html

Other organizations in the 60s, 70’s and 80’S:

The Roeher Institute collected data and did important research on the situation of people with intellectual disabilities in Canada. It was previously called NIMR (National Institute on Mental Retardation). The Roeher Institute is now called Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion in Society. IRIS: <http://www.cacl.ca/news-stories/blog/cacl-would-introduce-you-new-home-of%20A0iris---institute-research-and-development-inc> New website: <http://irisinstitute.ca/about-us/>

L’Arche in Canada—People with intellectual disabilities more and more shape their own lives and the life of their community

After the 1969 founding of L’Arche in Richmond Hill (just north of Toronto) L’Arche communities opened in major centres across Canada in the 70s and the decades following (see www.discoverwith.ca). Meaningful, work or daytime activities as well as a family-like environment were central to the L’Arche vision. Several L’Arche communities have their own workshops or day programs—often with an emphasis on people being able to use their creativity and artistic talents. (Depending on the community these included weaving, woodworking,

¹ Activation is a term coined by the Scandinavians, Wolfensberger provides us with the definition as, “Activation not only refers to the involvement of persons in meaningful, and hopefully normalizing activities, but to a significant degree, it also implies motor involvement and ambulation, or at least mobility” (1972, 124).



candle-making, card making, a market garden, a café and a bakery.) Other L'Arche members may work at local ARC industries workshops run by Community Living Associations. In L'Arche communities, everyone participates in weekly house meetings where plans for the coming week are worked out, from visitors to be invited to the menu and who will cook with whom each day. Suggestions and also disagreements can be voiced. In earlier days L'Arche, beyond the house level, was rather paternalistic, like most organizations of the time. L'Arche core members (as the people with disabilities are called) were not involved in the actual running of the community beyond the house level, but today core members vote and serve on the elected L'Arche community councils and the national council of L'Arche Canada. National and International gatherings normally have equal numbers of core member and assistant and board delegates. Like anyone else in society, L'Arche core members are likely to enjoy using social media and other aspects of the internet.

Community Living Associations—the first parents' groups

“Founded in 1958, Canadian Association of Community Living (CACL) is a national federation of over 40,000 individual members, 400 local associations, and 13 Provincial/Territorial Associations for Community Living. CACL is a national member of **Inclusion International**, the international federation of associations working to advance the inclusion and human rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families”

From its inception in Canada, probably mainly because of its size and capacity, CACL has taken the lead among disability organizations for people with intellectual disabilities in political activity-- advocating for funding and the rights of people who have intellectual disabilities.

“CACL has its roots in parents coming together to seek better lives for their sons and daughters with intellectual disabilities. The grassroots networks of family organizations began in the 1930s in Montreal, and later in Saskatchewan and Ontario.”

Source: <http://www.cacl.ca/about-us/history>

In 1958 it was called the Canadian Association for Retarded Children.

In 1969, it changed its name to the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded

Then in 1985: “When the Association changed its name to the Canadian Association for Community Living, the change reflected the shift in thinking and values that had taken place during the course of its history to that point. The issue was not to ‘fix’ people with intellectual disabilities, but to create communities of equality and diversity where all people are welcomed and belong”

Source: <http://www.cacl.ca/about-us/history>

Community Living Associations's group homes began in the 70s

The “ACL's (Association of Community Living) efforts to close institutions began in 1971 when Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger came to Canada as a Visiting Scholar. His task was to promote the



concept of normalization—the idea that people who had an intellectual disability should be able to live lives similar to others in their communities—and didn't need institutions. Although schools and some workshops for people with intellectual disabilities existed then, the concept of providing residential services in the community was still very new and the first group homes—many of them huge by today's standard—had just begun to pop up across the country.

Many families responded very positively to the concept of community living, but others were fearful that if institutions disappeared there would not be adequate care for their family members. Most professionals were extremely critical of suggestions to dismantle the existing system. However, gradually, as more community services developed during the 70's, the tide began to turn. More families and professionals realized that people could be supported in the community. However, although the number of people entering institutions slowed down there was no major effort to close existing institutions and in the mid 80's there were at least 30,000 people with intellectual disabilities in large institutions and estimates of equal numbers in nursing homes.”
Source: <http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/socialpolicy/poverty-citizenship/income-security-reform/celebrating-our-accomplishments#sec-incl-walters> (A Report by the Roeher Institute, written by Cam Crawford--gives statistics on how many people have lived in institutions and group homes in Canada.)

A CACL summary: **“Together we've made history.** Groups of parents came together as early as the 1940s to begin developing networks and associations so their sons and daughters can get access to education. So that families can dream of a different future. The Woodlands (BC) Parents' Group lead the way in getting the first major residential institution for people with intellectual disabilities closed. Later, self-advocates went to the Supreme Court of Canada to win the Eve case, and so outlaw sterilization without consent. Luke Elwood and his family challenged the education system and so help chart a path to inclusive education. Families and others mobilized across the country to close large institutions. And in the course of doing this, they created one of the largest community development efforts our country has known - the Community Inclusion Initiative. “We stand up and speak out for our rights, and secure the recognition of our fundamental equality in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, in Human Rights Codes across Canada, and recently in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Along the way, we keep reaching out to others, to help them learn and imagine anew. We create and nurture supports and services so people can live good lives, supported by their families, valued by others, contributing to family and community, their self-determination assured. We help make a classroom and school inclusive in one community, post-secondary education possible in another. We support employers to redesign workplaces; community leaders to re-imagine neighbourhoods. We work with governments to make laws and policies so that inclusion



becomes a birthright, not a lottery.” Source: <http://www.cacl.ca/cacl-action/projects/50th-anniversary-initiatives/50th-anniversary-conference#sthash.D3h6Ov3f.dpuf>

Where in Canada were Community Living Associations first established?

“CACL has its roots in parents coming together to seek better lives for their sons and daughters with intellectual disabilities. The grassroots networks of family organizations began in the 1930s in Montreal, and later in Saskatchewan and Ontario.”

Source: <http://www.cacl.ca/about-us/history>

Residential Care Facilities in Canada for People with Intellectual Disabilities: numbers and Trends.

http://www.institutionwatch.ca/cms-filesystem-action?file=pdf/rcfs_intellectual%20disability_r1.pdf

See the document on the Eugenics Movement and Sexual Sterilization for links to important legal cases that members the intellectual disability community hold up as milestones are:

Linda Muir – explained above.

Eve vs. Eve – also explained above.

(http://www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca/legal_political_en.php)

Self-Advocacy Organizations:

The Council of Canadians with Disabilities has become an important voice and helped to shape the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

<http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/socialpolicy/poverty-citizenship/income-security-reform/celebrating-our-accomplishments#sec-incl-prince>

Derksen gives a great breakdown of the “**Inclusion of Disability Rights in the Equality Rights Section of the Canadian *Charter* of Rights and Freedoms:**”

<http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/socialpolicy/poverty-citizenship/income-security-reform/celebrating-our-accomplishments#sec-huma-derksen>

Some Faith-based Organizations:

L’Arche describes itself as “faith-based.” It has Catholic roots in France but from the beginning it has welcomed people of any religion or of no religious affiliation and it commits in its Charter to support each person in their own faith journey. It asks those who come to respect the faith traditions of the individuals in the particular home where they live. There are 29 L’Arche communities in Canada. L’Arche is international and reflects the local population from which its members come. In Western Europe and North America it is largely made up of people from Catholic, Anglican or Protestant and some communities also have Jewish or Muslim members



with disabilities or assistants. In India, L'Arche is largely Hindu but in some communities Hindus and Muslims and Christians live together. In most L'Arche homes around the world, a candle is lit after the main meal and those who wish to pray aloud may do so while others simply observe the silence.

Christian Horizons “Christian Horizons is a non-profit, faith-based charitable organization serving nearly 1,500 people with developmental disabilities and their families in Ontario. With more than 200 residences as well as respite care and retreat facilities, we offer programs and services that can be tailored to meet a wide variety of needs.”

It describes its vision as follows: “People with exceptional needs belong to communities in which their God-given gifts are valued and respected, and its mission as Serving the person with exceptional needs.

It says, “We will honour God and value people in all we do and with all our resources.”

Source: <http://www.christian-horizons.org/about-us/about-christian-horizons/>

Christian Horizons offers some resources for Churches: <http://www.christian-horizons.org/churches/resources-for-churches/>

Canadian Association of Muslims with Disabilities (CAM-D):

“CAM-D values collaboration, cooperation, consultation and collective action to increase access for people with disabilities and Deaf people (add a footnote). We believe that inclusion can only be achieved through working together as a community. People with disabilities and Deaf people have the right to participate fully in our spiritual and cultural centers and schools... Guided by universal values, CAM-D is non-denominational and here to facilitate access for everyone regardless of faith affiliations, race, culture, gender, age or type of disability.

CAM-D’s objective is to develop a comprehensive, sustainable model of support and services for people with disabilities and their families through working together with community organizations, professionals and service providers as community resources are limited. “We are a national organization focusing on community based approaches for building capacity to meet the needs of Canadians with disabilities and their families. We invite organizations and individuals wishing to provide disability services to work with us in partnership.”

Source: <http://camd.ca/about-us/endorsements/> Located in Mississauga, Ontario.

SMILE:

“Its mission is “To create a support network for Muslim children with disabilities, and their families.” <http://www.smilecan.org/about> Located in Peel Region in Ontario.

Jewish organizations providing homes and programs:

Most Canadian cities have Jewish services and homes for people who have intellectual disabilities . For example, in Toronto, “Reena is one such organization. It is a non-profit social service agency dedicated to helping children, adults and senior citizens with developmental



disabilities to realize their full potential and to become integrated into the mainstream of society. Reena was established in 1973 by parents of children with developmental disabilities, as a practical alternative to institutions. Reena strives to create and maintain an environment that respects and promotes dignity, individuality, independence and freedom of choice within a framework of Jewish culture and values. In 1977, Reena began receiving funding from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services and, since that time, has grown to now provide support for close to 1,000 adults and children with developmental disabilities and their families through a variety of programs. Like other faith-based organizations which receive government funding, Reena welcome people of any religion or no religion. Throughout the Greater Toronto Area, Reena supports almost 1,000 persons of all denominations. As a Jewish agency, Reena provides opportunities for the individuals it supports of the Jewish faith to connect to their heritage. As a faith based community agency, Reena understands the importance of enabling people of all faiths to practice their faith and to assist them in this regard.” Source: <http://www.reena.org/about>

Articles on multicultural programs:

Multicultural Communities Making Progress on Disability Issues

<http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/socialpolicy/poverty-citizenship/income-security-reform/celebrating-our-accomplishments#sec-incl-sikand>

The Impact of the Social Development Partnerships Program on the Ethnocultural Disability Communities

<http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/socialpolicy/poverty-citizenship/income-security-reform/celebrating-our-accomplishments#sec-incl-matanga>

&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&

New college and university programs in Disability Studies and for people with intellectual disabilities

Disability Studies graduate programs are new in the past 15 years. Even newer are Community College and University post-high school programs designed as transition programs for people with intellectual disabilities.

As more students undertake these studies they will doubtless contribute to civic awareness and engagement in issues of concern to people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

The disability rights movement, emerging in the 1970s and 1980s, laid much of the groundwork for the current development of disability studies. It was people with disabilities themselves who shifted the perspective away from a focus on individual deficiency and pathology, towards a focus on socially constructed barriers (inaccessible architecture, exclusion, prejudice).

As scholars in Disability Studies, we consider it important to remain connected to the disability



rights movement. Maintaining the “fusion” between disability studies and people with disabilities and their organizations is an important underpinning of Ryerson’s Disability Studies program. (*Adapted from Disability Studies: A Field of Study Whose Time has Come, by Melanie Panitch, Director, Ryerson School of Disability Studies.*)” Source: <http://www.ryerson.ca/ds/>

“Ryerson University’s School of Disability Studies, established in 1999, was the first in Canada to offer a degree education that is strongly rooted in a disability studies perspective. We offer a distinct undergraduate program that illuminates the extent to which the lives of disabled people are shaped by patterns of injustice, exclusion, discrimination and the rule of social, cultural and aesthetic ‘norms’. Put another way, Ryerson University’s School of Disability Studies does not teach about disability, but rather teaches about social and material worlds, beginning from disability.”

Disability Studies “... examines the policies and practices of all societies to understand the social, rather than the physical or psychological determinants of the experience of disability. Disability Studies has been developed to disentangle impairments from the myths, ideology and stigma that influence social interaction and social policy. The scholarship challenges the idea that the economic and social statuses and the assigned roles of people with disabilities are the inevitable outcomes of their condition.” Source: <http://www.ryerson.ca/ds/>

The University of Manitoba offers an Interdisciplinary Master's Program in Disability Studies. This is a joint program initiative of the University of Manitoba and the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies. This is the first graduate program of its kind in Canada. Experts from community disability organizations are also involved in the course delivery as guest speakers, lecturers or facilitators as provided for by University regulations.” Source: http://www.umanitoba.ca/disability_studies/

Critical Disability Studies: York University in Toronto offers “the first critical disability studies program in Canada. It is research-based and deals with contemporary questions. [Its] program emphasizes the importance of activism among both students and faculty so that community involvement is an essential part of critical disability studies work.” This is a graduate MA and PHD program. Source: <http://futurestudents.yorku.ca/graduate/programs/critical-disability-studies>

Here is an article on DS programs internationally, but you can see the data for Canada only. It is an open source journal – access here: <http://dsq-sds.org/issue/view/41>

CANADIAN CENTRE ON DISABILITY STUDIES – TIMELINE OF EVENTS:
<http://disabilitystudies.ca/timeline/>

Michael Prince: *The Disability Community and the Academic Community in Canada: We've Come a Long Way!*



<http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/socialpolicy/poverty-citizenship/income-security-reform/celebrating-our-accomplishments#sec-incl-prince>

Other research: “Disability and the Muslim Perspective: An Introduction for Rehabilitation and Health Care Providers:” <http://cirrie.buffalo.edu/culture/monographs/muslim/>

Thanks to Jessica Vorstermans, doctoral candidate in the Critical Disability Studies program at York University, for her work on this document.