

Inverse Inclusion: Transforming Dispositions of Disability and Inclusion

“Inverse inclusion is a novel approach to preservice teacher pedagogy and has the potential to transform preservice teachers’ dispositions about disability and inclusion, particularly through student/peer relationships.”

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ABSTRACT

Inverse inclusion, a novel pedagogy, transforms preservice teachers’ dispositions about disability and inclusion during an action research study of two university intercession service-learning course collaborations with a community-based art program for adults with disabilities (clients). In this approach, university students (preservice teachers) rotate and reflect on roles as student, teacher, teacher’s assistant, and observer within an inclusive art class. Among these rotations, the student position relinquishes their hierarchical perspective as teacher, assistant, and observer, and situates them as a collaborative learner, conducive to building egalitarian relationships with clients. Based on qualitative data from university student participants in the form of pre and postquestionnaires, reflections, and focus group interviews, most students transformed their perceptions about disability, increased their own confidence and advocacy for teaching in an inclusion setting, and were most influenced during their role as student working alongside clients.

KEYWORDS

inclusion, disability, preservice teacher education

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Introduction

Inverse inclusion is a novel approach to preservice teacher pedagogy and has the potential to transform preservice teachers' dispositions about disability and inclusion, particularly through student/peer relationships. The approach involves the rotation through roles as student, teacher, teacher's assistant, and observer during a service-learning course collaboration with a community-based organization for adults with disabilities.

Service-learning¹ and inclusion² are two prime examples of preservice teacher experiences. Both approaches are common progressive practices, and yet, have the potential of perpetuating and solidifying stereotypes. Some service-learning experiences such as assisting and teaching members of a community with disabilities or acting in similar hierarchical roles may limit inclusive interactions to forms of charity and volunteerism (Bowen, 2014), and may position the disabled as weak with limited knowledge and abilities. As a result, negative stereotypes toward the disabled may be ratified and persist (Burns, Storey, & Certo, 1999). Similarly, the practice of inclusion often mimics a contemporary form of integration according to Keeffe and Carrington (2007), as students with disabilities are asked to "fit into existing and unchanging institutional structures" (p. 10). This distortion of inclusion has been termed *inclusionism* by Keifer-Boyd, Bastos, Richardson, and Wexler (2018), an insidious form of ableism³. A factor in these practices may be influenced by the inadequate preparation of preservice teachers, evidenced internationally by researchers in general education (Keeffe & Keeffe & Carrington, 2007; Melekoglu, 2013; Singh, 2016) and art education (Cramer, Coleman, Park, Bell, & Coles, 2015; Guay, 2003; Lund & Massey, 2004; Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2013). It is time to consider teacher preparation programs "that broaden real life experience and understanding of diversity" in order to "enable pre-service teachers to question assumptions about the historical hierarchies between individuals in society and critique traditional approaches to education" (Carrington and Saggars, 2008, p. 795).

Service-learning and inclusion experiences can be important transformative practices in preservice teacher education if a social justice perspective is embedded into the curriculum (Bowen, 2014), which embodies a collaborative social interaction component (Santos, Ruppert, & Jeans, 2012) that promotes reciprocal relationships. According to Burns, Storey, and Certo (1999), Gent and Gurecka (2001), and McLean (2011), programs that "foster relationships between diverse groups" (p. 19) can challenge participants' misinformed preconceptions and transform their own dispositions about people categorized as *other*. Service-learning can create an environment where differently abled people can

¹ Service-learning is a model for teaching and self-reflection where students gain knowledge, acquire skills, and work collaboratively in a community environment (Felton & Clayton, 2011).

² Inclusion values diversity and reduces the hierarchical power of the dominant culture to legitimizing all people within a society (Keeffe & Carrington, 2007).

³ Ableism is disability oppression or the discrimination of people with disabilities (Dastañeda, Hopkins, & Peters, 2013)

“work together, sharing ideas, planning to achieve certain missions and goals” (Carrington & Saggars, 2008, p. 802) in a friendly, respectful, and caring community where inclusion at its best can exist. The emphasis on this type of partnership encourages preservice teachers to gain a new perspective, to step outside of the privileged teacher or hierarchical service roles commonly held by university students to a more educative and transformational experience through reciprocal relationships.

Overview of Art Education’s Challenges with Disability and Inclusion

References in art education for exceptional (Clements & Clements, 1990), special (Gerber & Guay, 2006), differently abled (Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2013), or disabled (Derby, 2016; Wexler & Derby, 2015) are limited, and often lack a critical disability studies’ perspective (Derby, 2016). Historically, preservice teacher preparation coursework has incorporated broad definitions of disabilities, recommended pedagogical practices (Blandy, 1994; Gerber & Guay, 2006; Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2013; Wexler, 2009), and required a designated number of service hours with students with disabilities in the form of observation, facilitation, and teaching (Bain & Hasio, 2011) with the hope that educators would be prepared to enact inclusive environments for all students to learn together. Yet, many art teachers continue to feel inadequately prepared to teach students with disabilities (Cramer, Coleman, Park, Bell, & Coles 2015; Dorff, 2010; Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2013) while inclusionism persists (Keifer-Boyd, Bastos, Richardson, & Wexler, 2018).

In response to the shortcomings in teacher preparation programs, some art educators have attempted to bridge the gaps. Derby (2016) used action research in two art education courses employing a form of disability studies pedagogy to confront ableism. Based on the critical analysis of art and visual culture data, a disability attitudes survey, a focus interview, and reflections collected from the course, his students changed their attitude toward ableism and their own belief in socially constructed disability stereotypes. Another course example had a service-learning component that included teaching and volunteering ten hours of collaborative art making at a community-based program for adults with developmental disabilities (Alexander, 2015). Questionnaires and reflections revealed that preservice teachers gained confidence and reduced feelings of anxiety about the community partnership, and developed leadership skills, relationships, and changes in their perceptions of community engagement. In a similar special topics course, Bain and Hassio (2011) found that through discussions, art projects, and reflections preservice teachers gained confidence and skills after teaching art to middle and high school students with varied mental, behavioral, and cognitive disabilities. The two-week university art education course included teaching fieldwork in three self-contained classrooms and the opportunity to meet with paraprofessionals, special educators, and occupational therapists to enhance lesson plan development that catered to student interests and accommodations.

In a resource by Kraft and Keifer-Boyd (2013), preservice educators taught art, served as instructional support for inclusion students in grades 9-12, and critically reflected on their coursework. The mission was to “create a reciprocal and nurturing environment accessible to everyone involved using art as a vehicle for a creative and expressive journey of self and others” (p. 55). This book provided a model for bridging theory to practice for teacher education programs. Although student growth documented in the above publications is commendable, there remains a gap in the research relative to how collaborative inclusive experiences in preservice teacher education can impact attitudes toward disability and inclusion.

Similar to the above experiential approaches and studies in preservice teacher education, I developed a community-based service-learning course in which students practiced as teachers and instructional support for a community-based art program for adult clients with disabilities. Within two years, the course evolved into a novel pedagogy, *inverse inclusion*⁴ (La Porte, 2015; La Porte and Whiteland, 2017), as preservice teachers acknowledged their desire to participate as art students alongside the clients. This reflective response from my students inspired a revised platform for multi-experiential roleplaying that I soon applied with a focus on inclusion and collaboration. I refer to this practice as inverse inclusion since it inverts the conventional hierarchical learning experience as teacher, observer, and assistant to one that places the participants in rotating multi-perspective positionings, beginning with a side-by-side collaborative inclusion experience, followed by hierarchical roles mentioned above. The following study is an attempt to better understand the efficacy of *inverse inclusion* and its transformative aspects on preservice art teachers’ beliefs of disability and inclusion.

Mode of Qualitative Inquiry

In order to better understand the efficacy of inverse inclusion for preservice teacher educators during this two-week art education course, I implemented an action research study using qualitative data collection. Stringer’s (2013) action research model in education includes sequential steps: the development of a study design, data collection, data analysis, and concluding insights that inform future revisions on teaching practice and continued research. I used Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) method of data coding of pre/post-questionnaires, end-of-the-week and daily written reflections, and a focus group interview with the preservice teachers. Then, I applied Miles and Huberman’s (1994) recommendations for charting categories within the data and axial coding each segment. Themes emerged from the triangulation of data to understand the efficacy of the inverse inclusion experience on preservice art teachers throughout the role rotations. This research is relative to the efficacy of inverse inclusion’s role rotation experiences and the possible

⁴ Inverse inclusion provides preservice teachers direct experience in various interactions from multiple roles: working as students alongside people with disabilities, as art teacher, as teacher’s assistant, and as observer.

transformative implications based on reflections shared by the university student participants.

Service-learning Participants and Environments

This study encompasses data collected from two separate groups of university students during a two-week service-learning course taught on two different occasions in collaboration with a community-based visual art program for adults with disabilities. A total of seventeen students provided data for plausible insights on how the pedagogical approach described as inverse inclusion can transform student dispositions relative to ableism, teaching confidence, relationships, and beliefs about inclusion. Most of the university students were preservice teachers. One was a graphic design major, two were M.F.A. graduate students in art. All but one student was female. Four were of minority backgrounds. One had a disability. Another had an adult son with a disability. Most had limited to no interaction with individuals with disabilities. One who also had a disability worked with a mixed ability high school flag corps team. Two others had family and/or friends who were disabled.

These university students participated in a community-based art class with up to fifteen adult clients with mental, physical, and/or learning disabilities. The cooperating agency provided no background knowledge of the clients' particular mental, physical, and/or developmental disabilities. These adults, referred to as clients by the community agency, lived with family, in their own homes, or in clustered duplex housing near the main program complex. Two separate agency sites served them: one for performing arts, recreation, advocacy, and skill building, the other devoted to visual art. The class met three hours each day for eleven days over a two-week period.

The first session of this class met onsite at the community facility for client accessibility. The second two-week session had a limited number of clients (ten) due to the facility's flood damage and client travel restrictions and met at the university and a nearby museum. Another difference between the two groups was that one had a final exhibition and reception open to the public at the university while the other only shared artworks at the end of each art lesson and had socialization time and food with participants during the final class.

Description of the Service-learning Experience as a Prioritized Inclusion Practice

This service-learning course approach was a prioritized inclusion practice more than a service-oriented program. Unlike inclusion classrooms where art teachers instruct a few students with disabilities, and reverse inclusion (Schoger, 2006), where a few students learn with a majority of students with disabilities in a self-contained classroom, *inverse inclusion* allowed preservice teachers to serve multiple participatory roles fostering varied interactions with clients with disabilities from a community organization. Both classes began with an

inclusion experience for all participants as an art unit co-taught by me and other collaborators. Smaller mixed groups of students and clients learned together throughout each introductory unit during the first three days of class.

The big idea of the first unit taught in 2016 included the reinterpretation of imaginary stories. Defining what a story could be and how other artists have created stories from cave walls to film, and literature. Following the presentation, teams set out to create storyboards of reinterpreted or original stories that would later be made into a Claymation production. Members of each group contributed to the writing of the story, at least one character or prop out of clay, and/or the backdrop and recording of the story (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Creating stop-motion claymation

Due to time constraints and availability of clients, the university students spent the third day of class in the computer lab putting together the stop-motion photos, text, and sound. Participants viewed and discussed the videos at the end of the next day with popcorn.

The introductory unit taught in 2018 revolved around gardens. The first day, students, clients, and six junior high school students from a local private school traveled from the university to a local museum to view an art exhibition of artworks inspired by gardens. Upon arrival at the museum, students met with their mixed groups and got to know each other through ice-breaker discussions about personal interests and experiences with gardens. Then, they gathered as one large group to talk about Miriam Shapiro's artwork in the gallery with a museum educator. Afterwards, I encouraged individual students to sketch some elements of a garden in the gallery or in the museum's outdoor landscape (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Sketching at the museum gardens.

The second day, all students met back at the university to recap what they experienced at the museum. Then, I introduced a brief history of gardens from Eastern and Western cultures and some contemporary artists inspired by gardens. Finally, each group planned and created a design for their own mixed media garden. In order to maintain some organization, every person had to contribute something that they imagined to be a part of the garden, including at least one prominent object such as a fountain, a pathway through the garden, and some element that was repeated in the garden (see Figure 3).

The third day, I shared some videos of their local botanical garden and a garden that I visited in Italy, Villa d'Este, while the groups finished their own gardens and shared ideas and inspirations. Following the introductions on both occasions when I taught this course, students rotated through roles as teacher, teacher's assistant, observer, and student working alongside clients. Since students spent most of their experience as students, the following emerging concepts overwhelmingly reflect that role.



Figure 3. Developing collaborative garden designs.

Transforming Dispositions Most Influenced by the Student Role

The majority of students from the 2016 and 2018 classes provided some evidence of disposition transformations in written and verbal reflections. The axial coding and triangulation of data from pre/post-questionnaires, a focus interview, and daily reflections over a two-week period revealed changes in university students' views of disability and attitudes toward the pedagogical practice of inclusion, and were most influenced while in the student role, learning alongside the clients. Students also noted increased confidence in teaching and relating to clients. I reference supporting quotes throughout this article with fictitious names in order to personalize student voice and maintain anonymity.

Initial Dispositions of Disability Stereotypes

Initial speculations from preservice teachers about disability seemed to parallel common stereotypes held by the general population. When asked on a prequestionnaire prior to the first day of class, most preservice teachers agreed that regardless of abilities, clients had the potential to be creative, but students from the 2016 class seemed to have a skewed and discriminatory attitude that disability automatically coincides with challenges, neediness, and limitations. Robbie stated, “I think that a lot of them excel at something, and sometimes that is art, and they just need a little help getting there,” and “it’s just harder for them to focus” (Robbie, personal communication, May 16, 2016). Lily suggested, “special needs students make good art students, but their technical abilities are generally less than other students” (Lily, personal communication, May 16, 2016). In addition to prequestionnaire responses, preservice teachers noticed that their peers used a high-pitched voice when speaking with clients, similar to how adults might interact with young children (*baby talk*) or *elderspeak* with older adults (Williams, Kemper, and Hummert, 2004). The weekly preservice teacher reflections noted this type of voice interaction as demeaning, yet correctable in the future. It is difficult to confirm the individual disposition changes between pre and post-questionnaires or reflections as the course progressed, but some data offered evidence of student revelations and renegotiations of past beliefs about disability and inclusion.

Transforming Perceptions of Disability

A shift in preservice teachers’ beliefs about disability evolved throughout the course. Most stated in reflections and a post-questionnaire that their side-by-side role in the course best influenced their change in disposition about disability. Three categories of transformation in perceptions about disability occurred. Preservice teachers gained an understanding of: (a) social justice and equity viewpoints; (b) clients’ creative potential; and (c) clients’ ability to focus.

Social Justice and Equity

A more nuanced understanding of social justice and equity developed among many participants. Students began to view themselves as similar to clients rather than the common understanding of “we” and “they” that often separates people based on ability characteristics (Rusch, 2003). Andréa, a Latinx student, achieved this consciousness as she realized her cultural identity to be similar to having a disability. She stated in a focus interview,

For me, it opened my eyes to another community that gets sometimes tossed to the side; thinking about equality and inclusion, I felt it was a societal issue, but I had never given it as much attention as I had to during this course. I am building a relationship . . . and now I can have more empathy towards clients . . . to understand that they might also have societal issues that I might have for being Hispanic. (Andréa, personal communication, May 25, 2018)

Another student, Kelly, jokingly admitted that she depended on the clients. For example, from a focus group interview, she stated to a client sitting next to her, “What does Jorge want us to do next? I don’t know. I wasn’t listening” (Kelly, personal communication, May 25, 2018). This type of side-by-side experience also led Carla to view everyone as equals, regardless of ability, as contributing members of the class, working on the same project [collaborative garden design]. She said, “It puts you in your place and kind of levels the playing field . . . side-by-side time just shows you that quickly, that we have a lot more in common than what we may think” (Carla, personal communication, May 25, 2018). Students began to form reciprocal relationships and see the adults with disabilities as equitable contributors to the art class through relationships that can, according to McLean (2011), transform stereotypical dispositions about disability.

Questioning Mental, Physical, and Creative Ability

As relationships developed, the university students began to question their initial beliefs associated with disability and creativity. Jenny responded in a weekly reflection, “Before this class, I was honestly worried that teaching students with disabilities meant having a lesson modified in 15 different ways. But this class brought me to realize just how capable these clients are and if there is a modification that needs to be made . . . there is more that the clients can do than we probably realize” (Jenny, personal communication, May 23, 2018). Another student mentioned in her post-questionnaire that “It’s easy to assume things about other people and groups before you spend time with them or create art with them. So, it was cool to have those preconceived ideas torn down, and I was amazed to see the artwork that was created” (Cathryn, personal communication, May 20, 2016).

Students discovered clients’ creative potential by making art alongside the adult clients. One mentioned how the side-by-side interactions during one of the course introductions, *Stories through Claymation*, challenged notions of disability:

And I always thought that you had to teach at a more elementary level . . . But coming in, getting right into the Claymation part and seeing . . . imaginations . . . The clients thought of things that I never could have thought of and especially make them. . . did things that I would have never been able to do. That was definitely an eye-opening experience for me. (Cala, personal communication, May 18, 2016)

Kelly also gave credit to the clients for helping her come up with new ideas: “being alongside was a more important part of the experience. . . I began to realize the creativity possessed by the clients. They are not afraid to be creative. It seems . . . pure, like the unbroken creativity of a child” (Kelly, personal communication, May 27, 2016), a common goal of many professional artists. And when given the opportunity, according to a daily reflection by Jenny, “clients came up with interesting and creative ways to make art.” Maria, a student from the 2016 class noted similar responses describing the clients as “capable individuals, very intelligent, and very creative” (Maria, personal communication, May 27,

2016). Robbie agreed, “The clients are very creative, more creative than most people” and “I hadn’t realized the potential of their abilities as art students . . . If they struggled with something, they wanted to figure out a solution in another manner” (Robbie, personal communication, May 27, 2016). Sammie also realized her transformed beliefs: “For a long time, I didn’t really think about how the clients could excel at art, but once I got into this course, I realized how great the clients can be” (Sammie, personal communication, May 27, 2016). Students’ experiences resembled what McLean (2011) referred to as “the conflict experienced between the realities of experience and existing preconceptions (p. 14) or “dissonance inducing experiences that can promote conceptual change” (p. 16). Students became aware of their own discriminatory practice and renegotiated new beliefs.

Reconsidering the Restrictions of Focus and Ability

My students expected to find a restricted ability to focus among clients as a characteristic limitation of disability, but found that expectation grounded in stereotype, not in fact. One preservice teacher’s demeaning statements mentioned earlier changed in a postquestionnaire as she learned from her side-by-side observation that clients exhibited determination and enthusiasm while participating in the art class. This was a common transformation realized by the university students. Jorgé commented, “I was surprised that the clients were so focused when they worked on the projects” and “side-by-side allowed me to get to know them and their abilities more than just teaching” (Jorgé, personal communication, May 25, 2018). Carla also admitted that “I now view students with disabilities with a new lens: picturing their determined and excited faces. If they struggled with something, they wanted to figure out a solution in another way” (Carla, personal communication, May 25, 2018). These student reflections began to offer hope for breaking down the persistent ableism views expressed by students in prequestionnaires.

Developing Transformations About Inclusion and Teaching

Two changes in beliefs about inclusion and teaching developed as: (a) student advocacy for inclusion and (b) confidence teaching an inclusion art class. Self-reported transformation in my students’ attitudes towards inclusion was highly influenced by their student role. While most students had limited or no inclusion experience, many agreed in a prequestionnaire that inclusion was important. However, all but one initially envisioned it as the student with a disability on the receiving end, whether accepting assistance or emulating a cued role model. According to Gent and Gurecka (2001) this approach to service-learning can perpetuate stereotypes as students act exclusively in a hierarchical role.

Only Carla understood the benefits of inclusion for all learners in the prequestionnaire. She had recently experienced inclusion in a university ceramics course and found friendship in a creative peer with a disability. By the end of the class, she expanded on the importance of inclusion, “I’m much more open and excited at the idea of having an inclusion classroom. I think I am very likely to advocate for that once I become a teacher. . . . There are social skills, empathy, understanding, and so many other things that

we can learn as students to become better humans” (Carla, personal communication, May 25, 2018). She noted that a required reading had suggested that teachers often automatically associate students with disabilities with class disruptions, and an obstruction to student learning. Carla reflected on the reading, “This class has proved this to be wrong . . . and has made me want to include students of all abilities in my classroom. I think there is so much for everyone to learn” (Carla, personal communication, May 22, 2018). This type of positive peer interaction seemed to also be transformative for other preservice teachers, as in the following comments from a variety of student reflections throughout the course. Andréa said, “I was able to see how beneficial this type of classroom environment can be to both students and teachers because I was able to experience both perspectives [as a student and teacher]” and “witness the students’ work more closely” side-by-side (Andréa, personal communication, May 22, 2018). She saw it as improving her own verbal communication and reflection at a personal level as well as allowing for a more open understanding of others. When asked about inclusion prior to the class, she supported it and was willing to “help anyone who can benefit.” By the end of the class, she stated, “It benefits not only students with disabilities, but all students in general . . . all students can learn from each other” (Andréa, personal communication, May 25, 2018).

As beliefs about inclusion changed, students gained confidence about teaching art in an inclusion class. One preservice teacher, Kelly, who had more extensive teaching experience, stated during a focus interview, “I was nervous about teaching, but then, as soon as you taught, and we got to be alongside . . . that really helped me not to be nervous about teaching” (Kelly, personal communication, May 25, 2018). She went on to explain how important the relationships supported that transition, “Those gals [clients], I like them so much. They are so nice and made you feel super comfortable. I thought it would be awkward, I would mess up or not know what to say or . . . treating them like children and be too easy” (Kelly, personal communication, May 25, 2018). Ann also offered a reflection based on her side-by experience,

I feel that it was more apparent how easy having inclusion is just being able to participate in it. Because I did when I was younger, I had a couple of inclusion classes, but there was an aide always with the individuals. We didn’t really interact . . . as much. So, it was nice being in more of an inclusion class, like this class, sitting beside the clients and working with them. It isn’t as much of a struggle as some people would think. (Ann, personal communication, May 25, 2018)

Ann commented that overcoming a fear of teaching and planning for an inclusion class was the most important learning outcome, to not be intimidated by inclusion, that “some things might not work out, but that’s a risk regardless of the abilities of your students” (Ann, personal communication, May 25, 2018). Most students felt more comfortable with inclusion after the side-by-side collaboration during the first three days of class. Being thrown into the student role [side-by-side] on the first day of class, Jenny claimed, “it made me a lot more comfortable” (Jenny, personal communication, May 25, 2018). Ann wrote that

she needed to know more information about a student with a disability before feeling comfortable talking to them, but

You don't do that with abled people . . . In this class, you didn't have the chance. . . I think it was really beneficial to just hang out. . . It was a better experience than anything else. . . I loved it. (Ann, personal communication, May 25, 2018)

Jorgé believed that the comfort level grew out of acting in roles as students and teachers. He wrote in a postquestionnaire, "Each day as we got to know each other better, the confidence and trust grew on both sides" (Jorgé, personal communication, May 25, 2018). Reciprocal relationships seemed to promote teacher confidence in this study as suggested by the literature (McLean, 2011; Santos, Ruppard, & Jeans, 2012), which is often lacking in inclusive education (Cramer, Coleman, Park, Bell, & Coles, 2015).

Reciprocal Relationships as a Factor in Transforming Ableist Beliefs

Reciprocal relationships with clients also bolstered my students' teaching confidence in an inclusion setting seemed to begin transforming attitudes towards disability and inclusion. According to McLean (2011), these types of interactions relate to Festinger's (1957) dissonance theory, when preservice teachers are abruptly placed into uncomfortable interactions that challenge their ableist beliefs, discovering that their stereotypical preconceptions do not match their new experience. As Carla mentioned during a focus group interview, "You form a different type of relationship rather than if you were just helping or just teaching them, because you become friends . . . You start talking to each other . . . learning more about each other (Carla, personal communication, May 25, 2018). Andréa who once felt nervous about how to socially interact with people with disabilities, established "a way of communicating and building a relationship." She claimed, "It brought me closer with an inside perspective, and was able to enhance my communication and relationship . . . in order to make the learning environment more enjoyable to not only the clients, but myself as well" (Andréa, personal communication, May 25, 2018).

Inverse inclusion placed students in an awkward position on the first day of class. Ann commented, "This class being so fast-paced, we just get thrown right into it. We meet them on the first day, and we're hanging out . . . Being thrown into this situation immediately, you learn immersively" (Ann, personal communication, May 14, 2018). This might be similar to what Mezirow (2000) refers to as a "disorienting dilemma" where transformation occurs when we have a disturbing/disruptive experience that challenges one's beliefs and forces a critical reassessment of them. According to McLean (2011), this approach "can trigger a jolting or enlightening experience that impels movement away from hegemonic understandings. . . Significant personal distress, jarring events, crises or disorienting dilemmas and integrating circumstances can trigger perspective transformation" (p. 18). The "inverse" experience presents a novel perspective, challenging

the associations implicit in ableism, and creating an environment conducive to reflection and revision.

The relationships were unlike the conventional teacher/student hierarchy. Carla admitted during a focus group interview, “You become friends . . . You start talking to each other . . . learning more about each other” (Carla, personal communication, May 25, 2018). Andréa added,

Every time I meet someone with different abilities than those of my cousin [who is disabled], I find myself nervous about how I should behave socially. In this gathering, since we had students of all abilities, it kind of helped me establish a way of communicating and building a relationship. It brought me closer with an inside perspective. (Andréa, personal communication, May 25, 2018)

Also, an important factor during interactions was an establishment of trust among participants, sharing information about themselves, interests, their families, and past jobs. Heidi stated, “It gave me a chance to know them on a personal level” (Heidi, personal communication, May 27, 2016). For her, it was important to see beyond difference in order to begin to establish relationships. According to Kelly, the most important part of the class was “getting to know the students [clients], creating an environment of trust” (Kelly, personal communication, May 25, 2018). In a postquestionnaire, Sammie said, “I made an amazing friend, sitting and talking with on the level of student earned me this” (Sammie, personal communication, May 20, 2016). Having enjoyable experiences together also added to the positive relationships. Santa commented in a focus interview “We had a blast. I really had a great time” as she and a client had been “laughing so hard” together (Santa, personal communication, May 27, 2016). These types of intimate relationships of equity and trust are conducive environments for learning and occur more frequently among inclusive community-based settings rather than hierarchical school environments (Carrington & Saggars, 2008).

Conclusion and Implications for Inverse Inclusion

Emerging concepts from this study relate to the efficacy and transformative aspects of inverse inclusion on preservice teachers’ dispositions about diversity and inclusion. Preservice teachers’ reflections included three perceptual changes of disability. Ableist notions that separated preservice teachers prior to the class seemed to begin to offer another view as equal human beings, friends, breaking down the hierarchy often found in service-learning (Bowen, 2014). Many began to realize clients’ ability to intensively focus on art and have more creative ideas than previously expected. Reducing preconceived stereotypes as McLean (2011) suggests can happen through reciprocal relationships. Students also changed their beliefs about inclusion regarding advocacy and confidence toward inclusive pedagogical practice. Similar to Alexander’s (2015) study, preservice teachers experienced collaborative art making and a decreased anxiety about teaching. Excerpts from the qualitative data begin to offer perspectives on the benefits of inverse inclusion as a pedagogical practice that can begin to dismantle social constructs of ableism

through positive collaborative relationships. Ultimately, if teachers can believe in the individualized potential of all students, achievements can prosper (Florian, 2009). The key element of inverse inclusion is the flipping of hierarchical roles as teacher and assistant to more equitable relationships. These egalitarian interactions through art education offer transformative possibilities and have possible implications for dismantling other social constructs such as racism and ageism.

Despite the positive implications noted above, this article barely scratches the surface of possibilities for transforming preservice teacher education. In addition to the limitations of the researcher, site, and participants, future consideration should be given to understanding how adults with disabilities might be influenced by participating in this type of inclusive art education experience compared to their typical segregated community art class, and their perception toward the university students. The limited perspectives from university student participants and lack of feedback from the adults with disabilities leaves the reader open to question the equitable distribution of benefits. Future research should be considered using both qualitative and quantitative methods, engaging other participants and alternative sites to further investigate the potential transformative implications of inverse inclusion.

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