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Trends and Issues Involving Disabilities in Higher Education

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Abstract: People with disabilities have often been discriminated against in higher education; however, many institutions of higher education find ways of providing access to higher education for those with most forms of disabilities. Progress has been made in providing such access but undoubtedly there is still a need for more disability awareness, anti-stigma, and anti-discrimination training. At the same time higher education requirements, by default, involve higher cognitive capabilities. Some disabilities, those involving severe limitations of cognitive functioning, face insurmountable difficulties in meeting these higher intellectual demands, even with the most reasonable accommodations. Teacher education, for example, requires special attention to the cognitive tasks for which students are being prepared. We, therefore, discuss the role of teacher education in higher education and its special relationship to the matter of disability and inclusion. We also consider perspectives on the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in various other aspects of higher education.

Keywords: disability; diversity; capability; discrimination; teaching



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1. Trends and Issues Involving Disabilities in Higher Education

People with disabilities have been discriminated against in many ways, including in their participation in education; that fact has been recognized in the United States (e.g., the Americans with Disabilities Act or ADA of 1990) and internationally (e.g., the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities or CRPD adopted by the United Nations in 2006; [1,2] The discrimination involves the disabilities of students and faculty, and we address discrimination involving both in higher education, not elementary or secondary education, which is a different issue.

2. Nature and Purposes of this Article

This article is a conceptual essay about the promise and problems of the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in higher education. It is not an experimental study, nor is it a systematic review of such studies, of which there are few or none that address issues directly relevant to our concerns. We are aware of the worldwide movement toward greater inclusion of children with disabilities in public elementary and secondary schools [2–8] but that is not the focus of this article.

Higher education presents problems different from those of elementary and secondary education, and the nature of the diversity that is called disability becomes more important as the demands, difficulty, and complexity of education increase. Our purpose is to prompt the thinking of persons involved in higher education regarding the nature of the disabilities that

students and faculty might have and the relationship of specific disabilities to the missions of colleges and universities and the work of faculty and students in higher education.

We address several major issues that will be encountered in today's higher education. First, we comment on disability as a type of diversity and the various ways in which the diversity we call disabilities may have implications for higher education. Second, we present perspectives on the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of higher education. That is, we offer our thoughts on what some particular disabilities have to do with inclusion and exclusion, including the nature of advanced study, implications in the case of disability, and the requirements of faculty in higher education. Third, we discuss the role of teacher education as part of higher education and its special relationship with the matter of disability and inclusion. Specifically, we contend that teacher education bears special responsibility in the matter of inclusion because of the nature of the work for which individuals are being prepared. Although this is not a matter peculiar to teacher education—and preparation programs for other lines of work may make parallel judgments in selecting people with disabilities—we discuss teacher education because it is something in which we all are or have been engaged. Moreover, teacher training involves respect for higher education—not only from the perspective of students with disabilities who will be teachers but from the perspective of all students receiving training as future teachers. Finally, we briefly discuss the matter of preparation of teachers of courses offered in institutions of higher education—the faculty of colleges and universities—to work with and alongside individuals with disabilities.

3. Diversities and Disabilities

Disability is a type of diversity, and diversity of nearly all kinds should be valued in higher education, both among students and among faculty [9,10]. One trend in today's higher education is a reflection of the greater concern generally for inclusion—active welcoming into a society of those historically excluded, stigmatized, or discriminated against because of their difference or diversity in ethnicity, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and so on. Clearly, disability is one of those diversities involving violation of equal human rights and must be taken into account in striving for the value of inclusion. For example, Wong described the discrimination and cruelties she faced in education, including denial of her right to equal treatment in higher education in the years prior to the ADA [11]. However, although it was a landmark law that applies to people in higher education, the ADA did not end all discrimination against Americans with disabilities (e.g., campus accessibility, stigma, poor instruction, lack of knowledge of support, disability-unfriendly campus climate) [10,12,13].

Disability is a diversity of a particular type that is unlike other forms of diversity and requires different thinking and legal remedies than do diversities such as heritage, gender, color, sexual orientation, religion, and so on [5,8,14,15]. Unlike many types of diversity, disability cannot reasonably be reduced to a binary in all cases (i.e., is/is not, does/does not, etc.) because it is sometimes situation dependent. Neither can the particularity or the specificity of disability always be simply ignored as irrelevant for a given role in higher education [10]. This is because disabilities may affect any human function, exist in any combination, and reach any level of severity in any of those functions and combinations. Moreover, disabilities with all of these greatly varying aspects are found in combination with all other forms of diversity. That is, from no other type of diversity can disability be excluded.

In some cases of disability, discrimination in higher education is simply a matter of access and the necessary accommodations are relatively simple (e.g., creating access for those who use wheelchairs by installing ramps and lifts or allowing recording of classroom sessions for those with learning disabilities or those who are blind (see National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [16]). In general, accommodations are adjustments to an academic program, materials, procedure, and environment that intend to mitigate the impact of functional limitations and facilitate the social participation of students with disabilities [17].

In other cases, depending on their nature and severity, disabilities require creative thinking about equipment, technology, and sometimes more difficult-to-make accommodations and variation in presentation or participation, as in the case, for example, of hearing impairments and deaf-blindness. Most US higher education institutions have established a disability support services (DSS) office that provides assistance to students with disabilities and deals with disability issues [13]. Many US, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, and European universities usually provide testing and other assignment accommodations for students with dyslexia, ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), and ASD (autism spectrum disorder), such as extended time for completion of assignments and taking an exam in a special place without distractions, so that they can be fairly evaluated [13,17,18].

Hart et al. [17] categorized *testing reasonable accommodations* into three subcategories: (a) setting alterations (e.g., priority seating, separate room, low distraction environment, computers for essay exams), (b) time/schedule provisions (e.g., extended time (50%, 100%, etc.), breaks during testing, and (c) test format changes (e.g., a reader to read directions and questions or oral test, larger type, dictate answers to scribe or tape recorder, clarification of questions or answers, oral supplement to essay exams) [17,18]. *Instructional reasonable accommodations* can include video-recorded presentations, screen enlargers, advanced receipt of the syllabus, notes, slides or course handouts, etc. [17,18]. *Classroom environment reasonable accommodations* can include a laptop or tablet for note taking, notetaker/audio record/digital “smart pen” in class, more breaks, smaller groups, permission to bring sensory objects, permission to bring drinks or food, etc. [17]. For example, for people with hearing impairments, reasonable accommodations typically include video captioning, audio amplification equipment, induction loop technology, and sign language services during the class [19]. The above accommodations are typically suggested by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (henceforth CRPD Committee), a body of experts who monitor the implementation of the United Nations’ CRPD.

Nevertheless, in some cases, the nature of the disability or disabilities may be incompatible with the nature and function of higher education and no reasonable accommodation can address insurmountable difficulties in meeting higher intellectual demands and critical thinking skills (e.g., in cases of severe intellectual disability) that a program requires. Brown and Wolf [17] suggest that accommodations can be either reasonable or unreasonable. This raises the issue of what constitutes a reasonable or unreasonable accommodation. This question has been addressed in some legal cases (e.g., *Alexander v. Choate* (1985); *Wynne v. Tufts* (1991); *Guckenberger v. Boston University* (1997); *Zukle v. Regents of the University of California* (1999); see [13] for a review of such legal cases). A full review of the reasonable accommodations legal issue is beyond the scope of this article but in those cases reviewed by Katsiyannis and his colleagues, the courts ruled that accommodations that fundamentally alter the nature of the program by lowering the academic standards are not reasonable [13]. Brown and Wolf [17] established some criteria for accommodations that are not reasonable, such as the following:

- (1) confer an unfair advantage of the recipient, (2) compromise the fundamental requirements, technical standards, or essential functions of a course program or position, (3) pose an undue burden to the provider, or (4) be inappropriate per the diagnosed condition and its functional limitations. [17], p. 362

For example, an accommodation that is not reasonable might be a tutor who is to accompany the student to all classes and exams and clarify all of a student’s answers to their instructor [17], p. 362.

Internationally, the topic of higher education and post-secondary education for people with intellectual disabilities has gained momentum [20]. Cases of disability involving intellectual capacity and ability, the ability to distinguish ideals from reality, and socially appropriate behavior are those most likely to provoke controversy. Detection and evaluation of intellectual capacity and appropriate behavior are necessary for all programs of higher education, and the refusal to admit a student with a disability to a program of higher education is not ipso facto unfair, as is the case in many other forms of diversity. Higher

education involves selectivity in the admission and evaluation process—not in the sense of unfairness, injustice, or prejudicial treatment but in the sense of observing a difference and its implications for right and wrong decisions.

4. Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities in Higher Education: General Principles

An increasing presence of students with disabilities (SWD) in higher education has been observed in various countries. Around the year 2003 in the UK, most students with disabilities had chronic disorders (46.6%), followed in percentage by students with dyslexia (reading disability not caused by intellectual or developmental disabilities; 15.6%), mobility impairment (6.1%), and sensory impairments (9.1%) [21]. In Germany, students with “chronic organic disorders” made up 81.2% of SWD within higher education; of those, 52% had allergies and respiratory problems, 17% were affected by musculoskeletal-related disorders, and 8% had psychological disorders. In addition, students with chronic disorders represented 12.5% of the total population of SWD in German higher education and 6.3% were dyslexic [21]. In France, most SWD were those with sensory impairments (28.1%) followed by those with health disorders (23.4%) and motor impairments (22.6%) (OECD, 2003). In Ontario, SWD in higher education included those with learning disabilities (difficulty learning not associated with intellectual or developmental disabilities; 47.9%) and people with other chronic disorders (21.7%) [21].

This information from the OECD indicates that the issue is multinational and that the nature of disability in higher education is extremely varied. Moreover, the OECD data we provide are representative of the situation two decades ago, and current data would undoubtedly indicate considerable progress in the inclusion of students with disabilities in public and private colleges and universities throughout the world. Edwards et al. [9] reported these percentages:

Universities Australia’s 2019 annual snapshot reported an increase of 123% in the number of undergraduate domestic students with disability between the years of 2008 and 2017 (UA, 2019) [22]. Such trends are not unique to Australia (de Cesarei, 2015; De Los Santos et al., 2019) [23,24]. In the USA, 11.1% of undergraduate students identified as living with disability during the 2011–2012 enrolment period. That increased to 19.4% during 2015–2016 (Snyder et al., 2019) [25], whereas in England, the number of students with a known disability increased 36% between the academic years of 2014–2015 and 2018–2019. (Hubble & Bolton, 2020, p. 780) [26]

In Germany more recent data show that 11% of university students have a disability, but only 4% have a visible one. More than half of students with disabilities have a psychological problem, 20% have chronic illnesses, such as rheumatism, multiple sclerosis or epilepsy, 10% have a physical disability, such as visual or physical impairments, 6% of students have dyslexia, 6% have other impairments, and 7% have a combination of impairments [27].

Furthermore, the idea of inclusion has facilitated the participation of those with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities in higher education, albeit in prescribed roles. However, in some cases this is questionable. For example, one might question whether the individuals described in the following vignettes should, in fact, be students in higher education (the vignettes describe individuals actually admitted to higher education in the USA; all names are pseudonyms):

- Hannah is a student whose senior year of high school I.E.P. goals included mastery of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts up through the number 5. She is enrolled in a pre-veterinary sciences program. She recently left class seeking out the Disability Services Coordinator (DSC) for help with an in-class assignment. She did not understand the instructions for the assignment, which had been provided both orally and in writing by her instructors. Hannah assumed that the DSC was the person who would “sit with me and help me do my work when it is hard”.

- Albert is a student with autism who had 1:1 paraprofessional support for behavior and academics from kindergarten through to his graduation from public school. He is currently enrolled in five college courses, passing none of them, and disrupting other students every day. Instructors have not reported his behavior “because he has a disability”.
- Tina is a student whose triennial evaluation in her senior year of high school showed that her academic skills ranged from a grade equivalent to 2–3 in reading and 3–6 in math. In addition to her difficulties with learning, she presents with a complex mental health profile that includes cutting herself, multiple hospitalizations over the summer before her first year of college, and verbalizations that often include thoughts of her own death. She has not remained in a college class for longer than 15 min without having a panic attack, leaving the room, and cutting herself. In a conversation with an instructor, she confided that she probably will not be able to continue her studies because she has to “save herself first”. She did not attend the class again and dropped out of all the classes.
- Dan is a student from a home in which only Vietnamese is spoken. He has been on an I.E.P. for a specific learning disability, communication disorder, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder since he was six years old. Dan struggles to manage daily hygiene tasks, to read a clock, to get to places on time, or to remember things that he has not written down. He enrolled in five college courses, including online chemistry, a course he has since dropped.
- Aaliyah is a first-year college student who received special education and related services as having intellectual disability since the age of 18 months. She is enrolled in four college courses. Aaliyah is exceptionally quiet during her classes. She has not turned in any assignments during the first five weeks of the semester.

We quote here excerpts from an email we received to illustrate the extremes to which the notion of inclusion in higher education has been taken (this from a state offering free higher education to all):

“I have four students with full-scale IQs under 65. I regularly have students with untreated bipolar disorder who are alternating between mania and despondency in my office. I have students who freely admit that they do not want to be in college and are there because their parents insist that they attend since it is free. I have many, many students with 3 or more serious mental health diagnoses... [The Dean] has no mental health knowledge or experience.... When told of a student whose mania was concerning (he went swimming at 3 a.m. and tried to swim to Spain), [the dean said] “At least he knows something about geography.” [this student] also went skateboarding in the middle of [a major highway]. Informed of this [the dean] said, “He does have a lot of energy and he loves to kid around!” Mania, grandiose thinking, and danger to self and/or others are all foreign concepts.”

Clearly, some individuals’ disabilities or prior learning present problems, sometimes insurmountable problems, for their higher education. For example, it may be worth noting that intellectual disabilities were not among those studied by Edwards et al. [9]. At some point on the continuum of intellectual competence, intellectual disability poses an insurmountable difficulty in engagement of intellectual pursuit. However, most disabilities, even those involving some kind of cognitive aberration, do not preclude higher education. Moreover, some university programs find ways of including those with comparatively mild intellectual disabilities.

One German institution provides an example of the kind of program that can include individuals with intellectual disabilities in higher education and work. In Germany, since the year 2013, people with intellectual disabilities are included as educational specialists at various universities in different roles. German states may do this as part of a larger project financed by various private and public entities. Most of the participants attend sheltered

workshops prior to being accepted in this project. Six or seven participants at a time learn how to plan and teach classes within the 3-year full-time training program at a university. One goal is that these future lecturers can share their own, unique perspectives with students of education, social work, and possibly other professions, such as law, medicine, and engineering. Another goal is that, following their training, the individuals with intellectual disabilities will obtain regular employment and be integrated as regular lecturers at various universities and universities of applied sciences, within public administrations, or as lecturers for organizations and companies [28].

Also planned in Germany is the building of an “inclusive company” to employ the graduates so that they can be hired in that company. The project has been widely praised nationally and internationally and received many awards. In terms of organization, the lectures, workshops, classes, etc. are given by two educational specialists plus an assistant in a form of team teaching, involving a single educational specialist and a professor/lecturer. One of the topics that the educational specialists taught at the University of Kiel is “Classroom Management in Inclusive Settings” [29]. Other topics are education, work, housing, recreation, culture and health, and questions related to the following themes:

- Dealing with heterogeneity in the classroom
- Simulation of disabilities
- Investigating the environment for possible barriers
- Participation (reality and desire)
- What is good support?
- Inclusive competence for leaders in human resources
- Prerequisites of an inclusive labor market
- Professional attitude as a foundation for teacher training

The first graduates of the program have all secured permanent employment. For other graduates in the German state of NRW (Northrhine-Westfalia) it is envisioned that they will become state investigators in social and educational programs for people with disabilities [29]. Slightly different projects have been initiated in Finland and the Netherlands [30]. What seems to be behind projects such as this is the idea that in order to teach inclusive values at the University level it is important that universities themselves become inclusive places and that such values are being taught in an inclusive way in which people with different biographies and experiences can share their expertise and, with that, produce new knowledge and interpretation of knowledge. Just with their sheer presence in the university, people with intellectual disabilities question the mission logic of knowledge production, thereby questioning certain research procedures or assumptions and requirements of scientific research [31]. The premise is that universities should no longer be seen only or primarily as places for scientific research, careful intellectual analyses, and teaching, but they should redefine their role in society [31].

In general, it is a good thing for people with cognitive impairments to share their own experiences of social work, education, and other professions with students and that they receive optimum training that will allow them maximum life opportunities, given their abilities. These projects offer excellent opportunities for people with cognitive disabilities and exemplify the slogan “nothing for us without us”. Many organizations and institutions in Germany can benefit from learning about the experiences of people with cognitive disabilities, as it is still a very marginalized group.

Perhaps more than anything, this German project points to the fact that much needs to be done to improve access to vocational education for young people with disabilities on a more regular basis. The German apprenticeship program is well known internationally and is highly regarded. Legislative and policy efforts have been made to increase the participation of people with intellectual disabilities in regular and adapted apprenticeship programs or further vocational training with elements/modules that could be applied to traditional apprenticeship programs. However, inclusion into regular vocational education programs for people with intellectual disabilities continues to be a challenge in Germany [32]. This is also true for obtaining regular employment for people who work in

sheltered workshops [33]. In any case, there should be an analysis of the conditions that made the participants in this program at a university so successful and enabled them to secure positions outside of sheltered workshops—and whether those conditions can be replicated outside of this specific project at universities.

Access to higher education for students with a variety of non-cognitive disabilities can be solved in a variety of ways, besides attending regular programs at universities with or without accommodations. It is important that students know about the possibility of accommodations. In a study in Germany, nearly 90% of students with disabilities reported that their disability impacts their studies. With accommodations however, they can complete their program without compromising on the learning goals. However, only 30% ask for such accommodations because of a lack of knowledge about those possibilities or fear of stigmatization. The academic expectations for students with disability are the same as for those without disabilities [27].

Colleges and universities can be specifically tailored to students with disabilities, but most require a certain level of intellectual functioning. Judgement needs to be exercised before selection and treatment can be determined. For example, Landmark College (<https://www.landmark.edu/>; accessed on 23 September 2022), founded in 1985, is designed for students with a variety of disabilities, including such disabilities as dyslexia, ADHD, and ASD (which may or may not include severe intellectual disability).

Another higher education program known for its inclusion of students with various disabilities, including developmental and intellectual disabilities, is the Lesley University's Threshold Program in the USA (<https://lesley.edu/threshold-program>; accessed on 23 September 2022). It offers a non-degree experience on campus for those who have graduated high school, have IQs in the range of 70–80, and have received special education. The program includes not only those with low intellectual ability but also those with a variety of other disabilities, such as learning disabilities, ADHD, and cerebral palsy. Very often, individuals have multiple (a combination of) disorders, but the key factor in student success, regardless of the higher education institution, is special attention to and accommodation of students' learning differences related to their disability.

5. General Principles

Judgment is required to separate diversity that does or does not matter for a particular function, such as teaching and learning at any level. Disabilities involving severe cognitive limitations and severe psychiatric disorders are likely the most obvious in justifiably disqualifying a candidate for working as faculty in higher education. Notable exceptions such as John F. Nash show, however, the importance of judgment on an individual basis [34].

Learning, particularly at advanced educational levels, does not depend primarily on or require things such as normal vision, hearing, and typical mobility, but it does require above-average intellectual ability. Furthermore, some cognitive, emotional, and behavioral differences that may be judged disabilities are incompatible with success in higher education, whether as a student or teacher. The matter of disability is clearly not one in which inclusion is simply an automatically desirable or appropriate response. Some disabilities should exclude a person from consideration for particular roles on an individual-competence basis and not categorical level. This is not necessarily discrimination in the sense of unfair treatment.

6. Cautions and Exceptions

Although it is true that technologies, adaptations, and various ingenious alternative ways of managing the limitations of many disabilities make inclusion in higher education and many other activities possible (e.g., <https://www.cnn.com/video/2020/01/03/harvard-laws-first-deafblind-graduate-disrupting-disability-rights.html>; accessed on 23 September 2022), this is not so for all disabilities. Anti-ableism and inclusion are great ideas but, as with any other idea, they can be taken to absurd, bizarre, and self-destructive extremes [6,7].

Moreover, we note that individuals such as Haben Girma (the deaf-blind graduate of Harvard Law School) or Pablo Pineda, a university graduate with Down syndrome, are statistical outliers, not representative of most individuals with deaf-blindness or Down syndrome. We also note that deceptive claims are sometimes based on statistical outliers—those at both extreme. Applying this kind of thinking to education at any level is a problem [3]. For example, an exceptional student with disabilities who does well in general education is sometimes said to illustrate how full inclusion can work for *every* exceptional child. Or the misplacement of a few students in special education is sometimes said to illustrate how children are *typically* misidentified for special education when they do not need it. Despite evidence disproving the claims that inclusion is always best, and that research shows that students always perform better in general education, these false ideas persist [35,36].

Disability is too easily taken as a general category in which all individuals within it are considered to be essentially the same [37]. What is important is considering the individual and his or her *demonstrated* competence without assuming that (a) all individuals in a given category are equally competent or that (b) individuals are automatically disqualified from degree programs if they have *any* intellectual disability or mental illness. Most disabilities do not automatically disqualify an individual for employment as faculty in higher education. Inclusion is important when the disability does not matter or can be accommodated for the task at hand. It will be interesting to see if and how universities will accommodate people with intellectual disabilities in various roles and responsibilities, particularly faculty positions, which is envisioned by some as we described.

We urge caution in making assumptions about people with disabilities because of their categorical labels rather than their demonstrated abilities. A given categorical label, such as “deaf-blind,” or autism spectrum disorder may well be misleading regarding what a person can do. Even categories that have typically been associated with intellectual disability can lead someone to disregard a person’s competence. One such categorical label is Down Syndrome (DS), a group in which there is a great diversity of intellectual and social competence. Some individuals with DS have the intelligence and social competence to be successful in higher education and a career for which they have been prepared, but this does not apply to all or even a majority of people with DS (e.g., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pablo_Pineda; accessed on 25 September 2022).

Finally, we note that higher education of individuals with disabilities is vulnerable to at least three problems: (1) misrepresentation and fraud, (2) misidentification or mislabeling, and (3) change of ability. First, misrepresentation of a student’s abilities, for example by using “facilitated communication” (FC) that does not represent the actual communication of the person with disabilities, and other purposeful fraud, is possible. It is, obviously, possible for nearly any individual to obtain a degree, even an advanced degree, by means of fraud on the part of students and their supporters or the degree-granting entity. Second, it is possible for people to be identified as having an intellectual disability that they do not have, to be mislabeled as mentally deficient even though they are not. This can occur because other disabilities, for example, cerebral palsy or other disabilities of movement, obscure their mental abilities. Third, mental acuity can change for a variety of reasons, including medication, surgery, neglect and abuse, attention and opportunity, or unknown causes. Atypical changes in intellectual function are not unknown or impossible.

Furthermore, we know that opportunity and environment can change abilities, including cognitive and social abilities, and that diagnostic stability of individuals can vary across their life span [38,39]; see also <https://psychology.stackexchange.com/questions/227/how-does-raw-iq-change-over-the-lifespan-at-the-group-level>; accessed on 25 September 2022. Factors affecting early development of skills, especially those involving language and reading, can have very significant and cumulative effects throughout the life span, although not all disabilities can be avoided. Some disabilities are progressive, becoming ever more debilitating over time. Other disabilities take the opposite course over the life

span, becoming less and less a serious predicament. However, most disabilities are more stable and predictable, not changing much over the years.

7. A Rational Course

We have seen proposals from countries in Europe to make some adults with intellectual disabilities university faculty members in education, as in the German example described above. Schuppener et al. [31] welcome those changes in higher education. However, those changes are in our opinion not without paradoxes. The one disability that most often precludes participation as a degree-program student or regular full-time tenure-track faculty member in higher education is intellectual disability. Such programs and roles require the ability to manipulate ideas and concepts at a high level, and the lack of that ability is the hallmark of intellectual disability. UNESCO defines tertiary education as follows:

Tertiary education builds on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields of education. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. Tertiary education includes what is commonly understood as academic education but also includes advanced vocational or professional education. It comprises ISCED [International Standard Classification of Education] levels 5, 6, 7 and 8, which are labelled as short-cycle tertiary education, Bachelor's or equivalent level, Master's or equivalent level, and doctoral or equivalent level, respectively. The content of programmes at the tertiary level is more complex and advanced than in lower ISCED levels.

First programmes at ISCED level 5, 6 or 7 require the successful completion of ISCED level 3 programmes that give direct access to first tertiary education programmes. Access may also be possible from ISCED level 4. In addition to qualification requirements, entry into education programmes at these levels may depend on subject choice and/or grades achieved at ISCED level 3 or 4. Further, it may be necessary to take and succeed in entrance examinations. (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011, p. 46) [40]

Those proposed and desired changes would certainly require a redefinition of what tertiary education actually is and also a major change in admission policies. Steering a course between reality—recognizing disabilities for just what they are and the limitations they impose—and fantasy or unbridled romance—the extreme of romanticizing disabilities so that their signified concept becomes meaningless—is not always easy. Edgerton [41] wrote of the “cloak of competence” worn by those with intellectual disabilities that fool others into believing they have mental capabilities they do not. Similarly, Kauffman and Badar [42] warned of the danger of making disabilities themselves something to be ignored or even be considered “chic,” in the sense of romanticizing disability. It is important to recognize the limitations that disabilities impose but also those they do not impose for each individual, whether student or faculty. Giving people with disabilities opportunities to demonstrate their competence is critically important, and both technologies and inventive thinking allow increasing participation of persons with disabilities in higher education.

One of the great challenges in future years is likely to be the use and misuse of artificial intelligence (AI). The challenge will be knowing whether the person with intellectual disabilities is or is not directing or in control of the AI. This may seem to be a nonsensical hypothetical, but we suggest caution based on controversy about another technique involving disability, including individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that we mentioned earlier: facilitated communication (FC).

FC, which has gone through various name changes, such as “rapid prompting,” is a controversial treatment that has been thoroughly debunked by the scientific community as fraudulent [43], especially chapter 17; [44]. Nevertheless, FC still has its advocates and true believers. The issue with FC is whether the communication is actually that of the individual with disabilities or, alternatively, that of the “facilitator” or person controlling

the typed message. This controversy has even involved legal difficulties for faculty in higher education [45]. We anticipate that in the interfaces between individuals and AI, the same sort of controversy may arise: that is, who is actually controlling the AI?

8. Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities in Higher Education

Special Considerations for Teacher Education

We hope we do not see a recurrence in this century of something that became a higher education issue in the last—the assumption that educating teachers was the responsibility of *all* faculty in institutions of higher education and, therefore, teacher education need not be a “separate” or special program. This idea was forcefully rejected by Goodlad [46]. Among other problems with the notion that preparing teachers is “everybody’s responsibility” in higher education, he wrote:

And these resources [for educating teachers] must be made secure for the purposes intended. That is, they must be earmarked for and assigned to a unit with clear borders, a specified number of students with a common purpose, and a roster of largely full-time faculty requisite to the formal and informal socialization of these students into teaching. Put negatively, these resources must not go to the larger, multipurpose unit of which teacher education is a part; there they run the danger of being impounded by entrepreneurial program heads and faculty members. [46], p. 152

Furthermore, he said, the administrative structure of the university was important, and certain features of it were critical for the education of teachers:

First, the farther down in a university’s organizational structure teacher education finds itself, the less chance it has to obtain the conditions necessary to a healthy, dynamic existence. Second, the farther down in the hierarchy teacher education finds itself, the less likely it is that it will enjoy the tender loving care of those tenure-line faculty members universities strive so hard to recruit. Who, then, speaks for teacher education? Who speaks for those who would become teachers? [46], p. 277

We see the possible re-emergence of this notion under the banner of “inclusion,” specifically the press to merge special and general education, which itself now has a history of advocacy spanning several decades [47,48]. The idea of “inclusion” is that separateness and distinctiveness are undesirable pathways for children with disabilities, and this idea could “morph” into the idea that teacher education need not or should not be “special” or “separate” from other higher education programs.

Preparation of teachers for children, especially those of younger ages but even high schoolers, necessarily includes child development and pedagogical study that are not included in many other higher education programs. Furthermore, disabilities of various kinds may preclude the inclusion of those who would teach children in public or private schools [34]. Disabilities that may be irrelevant to (or be accommodated in higher education may disqualify a candidate for teacher education but not all other programs.

For example, severe bipolar disorder or schizophrenia unsuccessfully treated with medication and/or other interventions might not disqualify an individual from all programs of higher education, but it would be incompatible with teaching K-12 students. Teaching K-12 requires a level of emotional stability, behavioral predictability, and social skills that may not be required for other tasks.

Future teachers in inclusive and special education can learn much from people with intellectual disabilities. This can occur during prescribed teaching internships, by interacting with people with intellectual disabilities and their families, getting to know their strengths and challenges in daily life, and realizing the impact of intellectual impairment and the best support an individual may need. There is much to be done to facilitate inclusion in communities, leisure activities, and lifelong education opportunities. Education faculty can network with agencies and people with intellectual disabilities who can share experi-

ences about their lives and reflect upon them with students. Simulation activities can also be effective. Lecturers and students with intellectual disabilities may improve students' attitudes towards and perception of intellectual disability and perhaps be living proof of what is possible—albeit with significant support.

However, we do think that there should be an understanding that any personal perspective is limited and lived experience is a singular experience that may not necessarily apply to all people with intellectual disability, as this group is very diverse, ranging from milder to severe levels of intellectual disability. The question also is how the personal experiences of faculty members with intellectual impairments' personal experiences relate to the production of new scientific knowledge and how those experiences compare with larger empirical studies relevant for teacher training. Listening to and learning from lived experiences (feelings, beliefs, and interests) is not only relevant but should also be an object of study [51]. Lived experience also needs to be critically examined because it can be subject to bias or can lead to the reification of limited experience [51]. As Karson [52] put it, "Lived experience' can be a claim that what the person is aware of all there is, with no allowance for the way the narrative may be self-serving or just plain wrong."

Lived or personal experience ("inner sentiments") and self-expression can raise their own limits to knowledge in the public sphere. Romanticism invests in lived experience, "the notion of an inner voice or impulse, the idea that we find the truth within us" [49], p. 368. It is not a new literal, cultural, or even political movement in human history with diverse historical outcomes (e.g., counter-Enlightenment). Romanticism is a recurring movement of ideas that appeared around the end of the eighteenth century in Europe (e.g., Johann Gottlieb Fichte and other German Romantics) and reappeared in the counterculture of the 1960s and afterward [49,50].

Critical thinking and analysis should be applied to all ideas, concepts, and theories beyond lived or subjective experience and subjectivism [51]. Critical thinking means open-minded consideration of whether the person's narrative fits with reality and whether that narrative is the most objective, valid, and productive way of thinking about it [52]. This was a central feature of the Enlightenment but nowadays is in retreat [51]. The concept of full inclusion in education cannot be an exception to the need for critical analysis. When it comes to teacher education, it is crucial that teachers learn evidence-based practices to be successful in inclusive settings [53]. They also need intensive supervised practice in teaching children in a classroom setting from the beginning of their education as teachers. In many nations, the shortage of teachers is troubling. The drop-out rate from teacher training programs is higher than in other university programs, and in some nations, teaching is treated with contempt for the intelligence, training, duties, and judgment that is required of teachers.

Certain cognitive and behavioral disabilities present particular problems in programs of teacher education. Persons involved in preparing them must find a balance of individual interests and public interests and recognize that certain forms of mental illness and/or behavioral aberrations preclude teaching, but others do not. This judgment is often not easy and is subject to human frailty and error.

One persistent complaint from teachers in training is lack of practical experiences in schools and the paucity of instruction on how to teach children []. That is, in many cases, if not most, teacher trainees are simply not given enough guided, supervised experience in schools and classes of the kind for which they are being prepared. Some teacher educators seem to think that children are not different in ways that matter for education—at least not if that difference involves disability. Therefore, they conclude, special education has no legitimacy in education as a separate program and special and general education should be merged at all levels (i.e., in teacher preparation as well as in all schools. Total inclusion policies imply merging special and general teacher education. As Kauffman and Hallahan suggested long ago, this would be contrary to the postulates and corollaries Goodlad [46] used to defend teacher education as a separate, special, distinctive program in higher education.

9. Preparation of Higher Education Faculty

Certainly, both adults with and without disabilities require preparation for their roles as higher education faculty, including training in recognizing and valuing diversity of all kinds in both their students and their colleagues. Disabilities are part of this diversity, as Edwards et al. [9] discuss. However, it is, as we noted earlier, also a special kind of diversity that requires distinctions that other kinds of diversity do not.

Part of the training or preparation of higher education faculty involves distinguishing diversity in behavior and demeanor that is acceptable from that which is not, diversity that is reasonable from diversity that is not, and appropriate diversity from inappropriate diversity. Inappropriate diversity includes such things as cheating, plagiarizing, stealing, vandalizing, refusing to follow the instructor's directions, destroying instructional materials, all of which have occurred in institutions of higher education, particularly as admission criteria have been abandoned. This is sometimes no simple matter, and the complexity and difficulty of these necessary discriminations is important and often a matter of controversy. What is said to whom and how, when and what actions are appropriate and justifiable—all those questions that arise in human existence—will inevitably arise in considering disabilities of colleagues and students. As we noted in the matter of teacher education, human judgment on the part of the individuals concerned is required, and that judgment is always open to error.

Colleges and universities may be considered hotbeds of controversy about correct language, group identity, privilege, grievance, rights, and other social controversies. Disabilities are certainly among those controversies, albeit perhaps less likely than some other differences to result in conflict. Nonetheless, they can become points of considerable tension, and higher education administrators are well advised to make treatment of disabilities of staff and students a matter of training that emphasizes welcoming behavior, fairness, access, and accommodation. These matters require introspection and judgment.

10. Summary and Concluding Remarks

Inclusion of people with disabilities in higher education is to be encouraged and appropriate accommodations for all kinds of disabilities are essential. For most faculty and students, such accommodation is relatively straightforward. However, disabilities are tremendously varied. They are a particular form of diversity requiring special considerations that many other forms of diversity do not.

Involvement of people with intellectual disabilities in higher education must be considered particularly carefully, as it has its paradoxes and limitations. Substantial potential benefits can accrue from having people with a wide range of disabilities share their personal experiences with fellow educators and students. Nevertheless, some writers have noted the limits of personal experience [e.g., 50].

Further investigation using a case-by-case analysis is needed to determine whether the advanced teaching, research, and scholarship that are the hallmarks of tertiary education are compatible with the appointment of people with sustained and significant intellectual disabilities to regular lecturing roles. This suggestion, which has been proposed in some European countries, could take the idea of inclusion of people with disabilities in higher education to a new status and question higher education as we know it, moving it into new roles and uncharted directions. This issue needs to be viewed within the wider context of the benefits of people with disabilities being involved in higher education, for themselves as well as for non-disabled people.

As a special aspect of higher education, teacher education has a particularly important obligation to assess the nature of disabilities and its relevance to the task of teaching children. Few disabilities preclude competence in teaching but some do, and some present special challenges in serving competently as a schoolteacher.

Preparing higher education faculty to work with colleagues and students with disabilities is important. Preparation should emphasize making colleagues and students with

disabilities feel welcome, assuring them of their fair treatment, access, and accommodation of their special needs.

The majority of people with disabilities involved in higher education as students or as academic staff have a positive experience. However, for a minority of people with disabilities, such as many of those with intellectual disabilities, whether such involvement is in their best interests must be questioned. Involvement in higher education might contribute in some cases to a sense of failure rather than to a sense of being empowered. Therefore, rather than facilitating their access to higher education we consider that the focus for the majority of young people with intellectual disabilities should be on providing them with educational programs that develop the vocational and life skills necessary for them to live fulfilling lives, be as independent as possible, and be included in communities in which they feel they belong.

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