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Publisher: Informa Healthcare
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713432019>

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Online Publication Date: 01 March 2003

To cite this Article: Culham, Andrew and Nind, Melanie (2003) 'Deconstructing normalisation: clearing the way for inclusion', Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability, 28:1, 65 — 78

To link to this article: DOI: 10.1080/1366825031000086902
URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1366825031000086902>

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Deconstructing normalisation: clearing the way for inclusion*

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This paper considers two major movements affecting the lives of people with an intellectual disability: normalisation and inclusion. The authors look back at the normalisation movement, reviewing its aims, processes and outcomes, and explore its relationship and compatibility with inclusion. In looking forward to the realisation of the inclusion agenda they ask whether normalisation is a suitable platform on which to build inclusion, or whether a process of deconstruction is needed. They discuss what lessons can be learnt from normalisation for the inclusion movement.

Introduction

The concept of normalisation has been a dominant force in social and educational policy for people with an intellectual disability for three decades. In the last decade, the concept of inclusion, and more particularly inclusive education, has started to come into ascendance. Both concepts, although not always sitting well together, have become important guiding principles in creating and implementing services for people with an intellectual disability and thinking about their education.

Much research and debate has been generated from the principles of normalisation by academics and practitioners around the world. Scandinavia saw some of the earliest models of normalisation develop (Bank-Mikkelsen, 1980; Grunewald, 1986; Nirje, 1970, 1976) and in the USA the concept took a strong hold (Wolfensberger, 1972, 1980b). In

*Accepted under the editorship of Phil Foreman.

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Australia the influence of normalisation has “waxed and waned” with impetus gained from a visit from Nirje in 1985 and hesitation evident in institutional opposition (Rapley & Baldwin, 1995, p. 142). Nonetheless, influential visits by Wolfensburger combined with the growth of PASS (Program Analysis of Service Systems) and PASSING (Program Analysis of Service Systems Implementation of Normalization Goals) (Wolfensburger & Glenn, 1973a, 1973b) workshops has left a dedicated network of social role valorisation (SRV) advocates in Australia. In Great Britain and Europe the impact has been enormous and the debate is sometimes fierce (Brown & Smith, 1992; Tyne, 1989).

Inclusion too is researched and debated across the globe. Impetus for this has been gained from nations signing the “Salamanca Agreement” (UNESCO, 1994) and committing themselves to a philosophy in which inclusion and participation are recognised as essential to human dignity and the exercise of human rights; ordinary schools with an inclusive orientation are seen as the best means of combating discrimination and building an inclusive society.

Inclusion has been variously conceptualised as a process of reconstruction and reform to increase access and participation (e.g., Mittler, 2000); a process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion from mainstream settings and communities (e.g., Booth & Ainscow, 1998); about respect, equality and collective belonging (e.g., Thomas & Loxley, 2001); and positive responses to diversity (e.g., Barton, 1997). Such concepts of inclusion tend to “transcend the concept of normalisation... by using language that emphasises participation over normalcy” (Florian, 1998, p. 16). Inclusion is increasingly seen as about race, gender, poverty and transcending traditional boundaries between those with and without a disability through a focus on the actions and responsibilities of everyone and not just on those of the disadvantaged, disabled or previously marginalised.

The different voices in the inclusion movement place different emphases on the values, organisational, and pragmatic dimensions. Most dissent focuses on the operationalisation of the concept and on what is realistically achievable and even desirable (e.g., Hornby, 1999; Low, 1997). There is debate on how far to go with inclusion and on how to get there, but much support for the notion of inclusion as a journey or process of continual societal adjustment.

In the USA, Skrtic (1991), Stainback and Stainback (1992, 1996) and Villa and Thousand (1995) illustrate the struggle to break down the bipartite system of special and mainstream provision and to restructure and collaborate for greater heterogeneity. In Australia, Slee (1995, 1996) has documented the variable progress towards inclusion. Some countries, such as Italy, have seen more action (with the closure of most special schools) than research, and others more debate and research than action (Mittler, 2000). Ainscow (1999), Thomas (1997), Thomas, Walker & Webb (1998) have illustrated the concept in action in the UK, and Ainscow (1994) and O’Hanlon (1995) have disseminated developments towards inclusion in the Southern hemisphere and in Europe. Unlike normalisation, inclusion has also been on the agenda in the so-called developing countries (O’Toole & McConkey, 1995).

Normalisation and inclusion have in common a suggestion of a “new dawn” in how services and education are provided and practice organised. Both claim to have the interests of people with disabilities at heart, yet they have very different value bases and aims that threaten their compatibility (Culham, 2000). Thomas and Loxley (2001) have recently made an extended case for the need to deconstruct special education before constructing a framework for inclusion and inclusive education. They illustrate the problems of overlaying policies for inclusion onto policies that are the legacy of earlier

thinking. They show how, in the UK for example, the lingering policies of the New Right undermine inclusion. In this paper we look back at the normalisation movement, reviewing its aims, processes and outcomes and ask, is normalisation a suitable basis on which to build inclusion? This is a discussion paper in which we present a range of arguments rather than an empirical study.

Models of normalisation

Normalisation has, over the past 30 years, been interpreted in a number of ways, providing numerous theories and definitions. As a consequence, according to Emerson (1992) there is "...no such thing as the concept or principle of normalisation" (p. 1), but rather a series of normalisations (Baldwin, 1985). Each definition is unique, yet importantly they share common traits with each other and in a sense not only illustrate the socio-geographical divide between each school of thought, but an ongoing academic debate that attempts to determine the meaning of normalisation and its connotations for service users and providers. The principles of normalisation have undergone various modifications and reconstruction during the 1970s and 1980s as they journeyed from Scandinavia to the USA and Australia and returned to Europe.

The popularity of normalisation has been international, but the different models have been somewhat geographically defined. In Scandinavia, Bank-Mikkelsen (1980), Head of the Danish Mental Retardation Service, was the first user of the term "normalisation", which he regarded as creating "an existence for the mentally retarded as close to normal living conditions as possible... making normal, mentally retarded people's housing, education, working and leisure conditions" (p. 56). Importantly, this also meant in this model, "bringing them [the mentally retarded] the legal and human rights of all other citizens" (p. 56). Nirje (Director of the Swedish Association for Retarded Children) (1970, 1976, 1985) elaborated the principles of normalisation in Denmark, pursuing a concern that the rhythm of a person's day should reflect that of an "average" person matched for sex, age and culture, maintaining personal behaviours and characteristics. While Nirje (1980) identified areas of life where normalisation could effectively change or "fine-tune" behaviours that society deemed "undesirable", he also wanted society to be more accepting of people with an intellectual disability, including their differences.

Both the Nirje and Bank-Mikkelsen models of normalisation supported the notion of integration for people with an intellectual disability, but this was secondary in importance to issues of equality and human rights. The Scandinavian formulation was unapologetic about its humanistic, egalitarian value base. In the USA, Wolfensberger (1980a) criticised both Nirje and Bank-Mikkelsen as ineffective and regarded their models as overly concerned with equality and rights at a price that a "devalued" individual could not uphold. "Genuine" normalisation, integration and equality, according to Wolfensberger, would not succeed without social contact and the abandonment of segregation. Consequently, Wolfensberger (1980a, 1983) proposed a revised interpretation of the Scandinavian model of normalisation linked with the civil rights movement and based on socio-political ideals in the USA. Both the Scandinavian and American models of normalisation shared an eager challenge to institutional segregation.

Wolfensberger's model expanded its focus from people with an intellectual disability and/or mental health difficulties, to apply to all devalued and deviant groups in society. It moved from an explicit ideological base to a form of "scientific theory" allied to social and behavioural science (Wolfensberger, 1985, p. 5). Normalisation for Wolfensberger

(1972, p. 8) involved “conditions at least as good as that of the average citizen” in order to “as much as possible enhance or support their behaviour, appearances, experiences, status and reputation”. According to this model, people who do not integrate, and therefore remain “different”, may find it difficult to become valued by others. Society may surmise those who are regarded as “different”, with what Wolfensberger (1980b) terms “negatively valued differentness” or “social devaluation”. Furthermore, that society is likely to perpetuate these devaluing and stereotypical labels and attitudes. The American model, although not indifferent to ideas of human rights, drew more on deviancy theory.

There was a period in which normalisation philosophy became so entrenched in everyday thinking and practice in the intellectual disability field that it was as if no one dared question it. Wolfensberger’s brand of thinking, however, has ultimately come under a great deal of criticism, mostly from academics, but also from practitioners working with people with (intellectual) disabilities. Despite the far-reaching adoption of practices based on normalisation principles and the widespread recognition of the many benefits of these for service users, normalisation has become tainted with controversy. Much of the criticism has stemmed from the emergence and growth of the social model of disability, in which the medical model where people are cast as individually lacking has been challenged, and instead society has been seen as disabling (Oliver, 1993). This has similarly led to challenges of the concern within normalisation to change and “normalise” an individual’s difference, requiring them to conform in order to gain acceptance.

Perrin and Nirje (1985) were sensitive to this criticism and sought to disassociate their model from it:

Probably the most common misinterpretation of the normalisation principle is the mistaken belief that it means mentally handicapped people must be expected to, indeed be forced to, act ‘normal’, to conform in all respects to society’s statistical norms for all dimensions of behaviour... normalisation does not mean normalcy; it does not mean that people should be normalised... normalisation means the acceptance of a person with their handicap within ‘normal society’ (pp. 69–70).

The requirement to conform was a charge that Wolfensberger also ardently rebuked. In an attempt to allay confusion and controversy, he abandoned the term normalisation and adopted instead the term “social role valorisation” (SRV) (Wolfensberger, 1983). This, he argued, was intended to separate the controversial moral interpretations of normalisation, and to clarify its true intentions, which were about using culturally valued means in “the creation, support, and defence of valued social roles for people who are at risk of social devaluation” (p. 234).

Achievements of normalisation/ SRV

The movement for normalisation or SRV has, according to its supporters, achieved much over the last four decades. Such supporters would argue that it has survived as an educational and social tool for so long because it has led to the successful integration of devalued individuals. Achievements claimed for normalisation and SRV are improved lives for those who have been “devalued” and discriminated against (O’Brien & Lyle,

1989; O'Brien & Tyne, 1981) and the creation of services aimed at maintaining such standards of improvement (Campaign for People with Mental Handicaps, 1981).

The success of normalisation/SRV can be measured against its aims, but these are variable according to the various models. Indeed, some of the conceptual confusion (Baldwin, 1985; Rapley & Baldwin, 1995) has interfered with the evaluation of impact. Even Wolfensberger (1980a) has acknowledged that some aspects of normalisation are too complex to be fully researchable. A breadth of impact is widely claimed, with benefits in the arenas of employment, education, training, social interaction and independent living.

In more tangible terms, the accomplishments credited to the operationalisation of normalisation (Nirje, 1980; Wolfensberger, 1980b) can be listed as follows. First, the teaching of skills and competencies to those who may need them to grow and develop—in essence to minimise their own disability. Second, the gaining of respect, status and dignity for people with disabilities through the acquisition of new competencies and behaviour and the adoption of socially valued roles. Third, normalisation/SRV has created a presence for people with disabilities who, with their new-found competencies, are able to share space with the rest of “normal” society. Fourth, as a result of this physical presence they have been able to secure and develop relationships within their communities. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, normalisation/SRV has, through its other achievements, given people with disabilities the freedom of choice and opportunity, to gain employment, independence and social autonomy.

The achievements of normalisation/SRV perhaps can be primarily seen in terms of improved services for people with disabilities (Tyne, 1992). The UK, for example, witnessed a number of scandals and subsequent inquiries regarding the “care” of people with disabilities in long-stay hospitals, institutions and care homes, and in the search for a service philosophy that would guide services and service providers towards a better model, normalisation principles were influential. Particular impact was made by the writings of O'Brien (1985; O'Brien & Tyne, 1981) with much re-shaping of old models of service.

The degree of improvement in services that can be accounted for by normalisation/SRV may be debated. Indeed it may be misleading to see improvement as constant, because threats from competitive employment, for example, slow down aspects of progress. Nonetheless, the normalisation principles and goals have undoubtedly made considerable impact as a framework for evaluation (O'Brien & Lyle, 1989). They have “led to an examination of how services can support or hinder people with significant handicaps or disabilities in having more valued social roles and a better quality of life” (Carson, 1992, p.216). Many authorities have adopted the evaluation tools and materials, such as PASS and PASSING (Wolfensberger & Glenn, 1973a, 1973b, 1975; Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1983), to determine how and to what extent services for people with disabilities use the principles of normalisation. Normalisation-inspired activity has included de-institutionalisation, to be replaced by ever smaller group homes in ordinary houses in ordinary streets and the use of ordinary education, health and leisure facilities (King's Fund Centre, 1980). With a huge influence on service provision “the goals of normalisation have become synonymous with the goals of community care” (Chappell, 1992, p. 35) (leading to further conceptual confusion).

The normalisation movement has also left a legacy in terms of widespread influence. A number of organisations and bodies have adopted its tenets, including, in the UK, the Campaign for People with Mental Handicaps, the Community and Mental Handicap

Education and Research Association, the King's Fund Centre and the Independent Development Council for People with Mental Handicaps (Emerson, 1992, p.13). Research has been influenced by normalisation ideology (together with feminist and other new paradigm research and the social model of disability), such that researchers have moved towards a more participatory stance and people with an intellectual disability have taken on valued social roles in inclusive research projects (Walmsley, 2001). In research, as in other activities, normalisation has led to contact between people without a disability and people with an intellectual disability, the former often acting as advocate and paving the way for self-advocacy. Who should set the research agenda and who should decide on the ideal against which services are often evaluated in joint research projects, however, is uncomfortable territory between normalisation and disability politics (see Walmsley, 2001).

Legacies of normalisation/SRV: criticisms of practice

Criticism of normalisation/SRV has focused on the underlying philosophy and set of principles, on the methods and the actions related to these, and on the way in which the ideas have been transmitted and taught (Baldwin, 1985). We turn now to consideration of the legacies of normalisation/SRV, going beyond the achievements outlined above to the basis it provides, good and bad, for building inclusive education and practice.

It is difficult to deny that for many people with an intellectual disability there has been a tremendous shift towards a more "normal" way of life. The life story work of people with an intellectual disability, supported by Atkinson and colleagues (Atkinson et al., 2000; Brigham, Atkinson, Jackson, Rolph & Walmsley, 2000) illustrates all too clearly the joy experienced by people with an intellectual disability at seeing the doors of long-stay hospitals finally close and new doors open for them. It is not our intention to underestimate the importance of changes towards ordinary living for those involved, but rather to note the half-heartedness of these trends. While lifestyles that are very obviously not ordinary are now often seen as unacceptable, the new lifestyles that are available are often prescribed rather than chosen and come within narrow parameters. Heavy conditions and even penalties have often accompanied access to ordinary environments. Penalties might include loss of freedom to "roam" that some people with an intellectual disability enjoyed in the institutions, together with loss of friendships. Going to the park might be conditional upon keeping one's favoured "twiddle" in a pocket and not going on the swings or behaving in a child-like manner.

The real legacy of the normalisation movement can be seen to be a status quo that has been largely unchallenged. The power dynamics in which professionals hold on to key decision-making is unthreatened (Aspis, 1997; Chappell, 1992). Schools, colleges and workplaces have been required to do little to respond to the needs and rights of people with an intellectual disability and nothing major in terms of their systems and structures. People with an intellectual disability are present in services for ordinary people, due mostly to their own attempts (or attempts by others "on their behalf") to conform and be invisible (Rapley, Kiernan & Antaki, 1998). Attitudes may have changed because of the community presence of people with an intellectual disability, but the attitudes that are the legacy of normalisation are problematic in many ways.

Legacies of normalisation/SRV: values and attitudes

The values and attitudes that can be regarded as a legacy of normalisation/SRV and analysed here as a foundation for inclusion are: attitudes towards difference, attitudes regarding normality, attitudes about who is responsible for the social acceptance of people with an intellectual disability and attitudes about their rights.

Many of the concerns expressed about normalisation/SRV have focused on the denial of difference (Jenkinson, 1997; Peters, 1995). Despite the protests that Nirje would undoubtedly make at this position, the normalisation/SRV era has left practitioners thinking that difference is not something to be valued, while conformity is (Brown & Smith, 1992). Above all, visible markers of difference have come to have very negative associations. The movement has after all stressed the image of people with an intellectual disability as the route to their achieving dignity in a stance of “never mind the product, look at the packaging” (Coupe O’Kane, Porter & Taylor, 1994, p. 16).

As an extension of this, assimilation has been seen as the way forward in eradicating visible difference (Allan, 1999). This assimilationist aspect of normalisation/SRV is at odds with the type of empowerment strategy used by other devalued groups (ethnic minorities, women, people with disabilities, gay) who have instead glorified their differences and openly congregated. This has served to separate people with an intellectual disability further, and left a feeling that their road to empowerment is a unique one. While other groups have come to regard themselves as strong, and been seen by others as such, the assimilation of normalisation/SRV has led only to a begrudging acceptance for people with an intellectual disability. It is this group who are still unashamedly expected to attempt to “pass” for “normal” (Shaddock & Zilber, 1991; Williams & Nind, 1999).

Although not necessarily intended, normalisation has also left a legacy of attitudes towards normality, with “normal” thought of from a moral standpoint and equated with good rather than bad. Practitioners have given wide acceptance to the idea that there is an ordinary lifestyle, which is to be aspired to for their students or service users if not for themselves. This assumption, that to be normal is the aspiration of people with an intellectual disability and not just of their staff on their behalf, is recognised and strongly challenged by Morris (1991): “one of the most offensive features of prejudice which disabled people experience is the assumption that we want to be other than we are; that is, we want to be normal” (p. 34).

Normality has become antithetical to diversity and seen as something that can and should be prescribed. It has become acceptable to change the behaviour, appearance and even preferences of people with an intellectual disability in the name of achieving their integration and valued role. Although normalisation/SRV should not be equated with the various means used to achieve such changes, it holds some responsibility for the attitude that even “radical measures” (Brown & Smith, 1992) are acceptable in an “ends justify the means” mentality. It is often maintained that people with an intellectual disability have to survive and compete in an unfair world and so a mindset has prevailed in which the requirement to behave normally is made of those “on trial” by those with authority (Corbett, 1991). Only a minority of critics have challenged this attitude by recognising that it is not the behaviour per se but who does it that leads to rejection, and so changing it is unlikely to be a viable route to being seen as normal (Murdoch, 1997) or as an “insider” (Williams & Nind, 1999).

Corbett’s (1991) point about who is on trial and who has authority is an important

one in terms of the legacy of attitudes from normalisation/SRV. The philosophy and practice have made a strong impact on ideas about who is responsible for the social acceptance of people with an intellectual disability. Staff frequently take responsibility for working for this social acceptance as a key function of their job, with as strong a sense of duty to the public audience as to their clients/students (Nind & Hewett, 1996). This is understood in terms of the outcomes being better, both for “this person” and for all persons with an intellectual disability in the long run. The public audience is not expected to take responsibility for their attitudes and is forgiven their discrimination, while there is a blame culture in which people with an intellectual disability are held responsible for their own social devaluation (Baldwin, 1985). This endorses attitudes about their need for professionals to help them (Chappell, 1992) with visible solutions and an approach to gaining dignity that is different from how others gain it (Thomas & Loxley, 2001).

The legacy of attitudes undoubtedly goes on and on, but the last to be considered here is the attitude towards people’s rights. There may have been an egalitarian, human rights steer underpinning normalisation, but thinking has inevitably evolved and distorted it. The right to ordinary living and to participation is valued strongly by practitioners in the field, but Shaddock and Zilber (1991) illuminate where attitudes about this from normalisation/SRV are problematic:

Is living in a normalized environment only justified if it leads to normalized behaviour? Is a normalized environment only a means to an end? We would suggest that access to a normalized environment is a basic right for all people—the starting point, rather than the destination (p. 173).

The need for deconstruction

Critics have questioned the longevity of normalisation/SRV. Mesibov (1976), for instance, looking forward saw the normalisation principle “as an excellent starting point for developing community-based services”, but noted, “this does not mean that the principle should be automatically pursued forever” (p. 30). Similarly, Shaddock and Zilber (1991) looking back some years later, commented:

Normalization and Social Role Valorization, while necessary in their time, have now taken us as far as they can go... do we really need a separate guiding philosophy for people with disabilities or is all we need an acknowledgement that they too have basic human and citizenship rights like everybody else? (p. 174).

This leads to the question considered here: is now the time to celebrate what has been achieved, to learn lessons from the critics and the mistakes, and to embrace a new guiding philosophy that is not exclusive to people with an intellectual disability?

The question misleadingly, of course, implies that guiding philosophies take turns in a simple linear fashion, each giving way to the other, politely not interfering! This is clearly not the case and inclusion and normalisation have co-existed in recent years. Culham (2000) has suggested that they are not altogether “compatible” and Thomas and Loxley (2001), addressing a similar discomfort between special education and inclusion, have argued for deconstructing one regime before constructing another. They doubt the feasibility of anything like a smooth transition from special education to inclusion,

interrogating the epistemological basis of the concepts and addressing problems of “incremental dissonance” in which there are new policies layered “on top of policies that have demonstrably contrary effects” (p. 96).

This same argument/treatment can be applied to normalisation and inclusion. Does normalisation/SRV provide the right foundations for inclusion or is there a need for deconstruction here too? Thomas and Loxley (2001) contend that it is important to challenge these big theories as, although they are useful as “thinking tools”, they can dominate and dictate and become “hypnotic and even dangerous”. They note, “things become shaped according to the theoretical lens through which one is viewing them” (p. 9). Deconstructing normalisation/SRV is not about pulling down small group homes and re-building institutions, but about changing the way we view things. In looking at the impact on values and attitudes that normalisation/SRV has made, this paper has begun to illuminate what may need to be deconstructed and what challenges may need to be made to past orthodoxy.

The danger in thinking about inclusion, like the danger in thinking about normalisation, is thinking of it as a single concept, in which everyone agrees about all aspects. Just as there are different normalisations (Baldwin, 1985) there are different inclusions (Low, 1997). However, there is some consensus that inclusion is about gender, ethnicity, poverty, sexuality and not just about disability. It encompasses the process of increasing the participation of those with disabilities in mainstream community and schooling, through a process of reform and restructuring of systems and schools, so that they take responsibility. Thus, it is linked with the social model of disability rather than with a deficit model. At the heart of inclusion is the right to not be excluded and for individuals, whatever their difference, to be treated with respect and given opportunities.

The way in which difference is viewed in inclusion is incompatible with the way in which it is viewed in normalisation. The former is more celebratory and the latter more apologetic. For inclusion, difference is ordinary (Ballard, 1995) (although in Nirje’s writing there is an acceptance of this too). Ainscow (1999) writes of the need for a “transformative” rather than a “normative” lens to view difference. In this way, it is not evaluated as good or bad, but seen as an aid to improving education and other services. If the system can be made to address the needs of children experiencing difficulties with literacy, the rights of the young people whose behaviour makes challenges and so on, then they help to transform it into a better system for everyone.

Who is held responsible for the participation of people with an intellectual disability is also an arena of incompatibility between normalisation/SRV and inclusion. Mason and Reiser (1990) have challenged the notion, inherent in normalisation thinking, that people with an intellectual disability need to “adapt to a hostile environment”, and challenged the practices in which “people have become individual objects to be ‘treated’, ‘changed’, ‘improved’ and made more ‘normal’” (p. 14). In Wolfensberger’s SRV model (as opposed to Nirje’s model), practitioners are charged with helping people with an intellectual disability do ordinary things, in order for them to gain social value, which has to be earned through “being like us”.

Inclusion is more aligned to the kind of reverse normalisation that Henderson (1996) described, in which those with authority and privilege rid themselves of their “inappropriate behaviours” of exclusion, rejection, hostility, ridicule and paternalism. For many inclusionists, what distinguishes inclusion from integration is the acceptance that the school/system has to adapt to the participants and not the person with disabilities or other difference who has to adapt in order to gain entry (Mittler, 2000).

Integration has put the onus of readiness on the individual rather than the institution. Institutional adjustments have often been piecemeal or add-on rather than the fundamental and pervasive change called for in inclusion. The mere presence or co-location of previously marginalised groups, with adjustments as necessary, is not enough for inclusionists; the quality of participation and the removal of barriers to such participation is the focus of much inclusion work.

Ferri and Gregg (1998) comment that in normalisation “individuals are encouraged to change themselves to gain access to society, rather than calling into question their exclusion in the first place” (p.435). In contrast, the starting point for inclusion is that inclusion is not conditional but a right—with accompanying remedy—or at least an entitlement within the sphere of basic human rights. This places the onus of responsibility on all of us not to allow such a fundamental human right to be transgressed. Inclusion places people with an intellectual disability in a much more powerful position of claiming their rights, which in normalisation/SRV are given and thus can be taken away (Brown & Smith, 1989). One might, of course, argue that a requirement to be included is no less impositional than a requirement to be integrated or normalised; the operationalisation of the inclusion concept would need to avoid such imposition.

The tension yet to be resolved by inclusionists is what to do about those who want to exercise a right to be outside of mainstream provision. There is still an assumption in inclusion like the strong inference in normalisation/SRV (Chappell, 1994) that a community of people who share a learning disability is inferior to a mixed community in which people with an intellectual disability can be among peers who are more able. The UK government is attempting to provide inclusive education alongside a system in which special and selective schools still have a place (Riddell, 2000). Critics such as Booth (2000) would argue that this financially and philosophically undermines inclusion. One might say that inclusion brings a stronger right to be different and still centrally placed and participating, but is less sure of the right to be different and opt not to participate in mainstream schooling or other community activity. Williams and Nind (1999) have argued that women with an intellectual disability might have more to gain from coalition with other outsiders than from clamouring to be “insiders”. Ultimately, as the cultural norm itself is broadened and questioned, inclusion should eradicate the need to seek strength in such coalitions, but discomfort is inevitable during the process of change.

It might be argued that normalisation and inclusion are guiding philosophies that have the same end in common, but that have different ideas about the means of reaching that end. There is indeed a shared desire to see people with an intellectual disability as valued members of the community. There is a key difference, however, in that in normalisation or SRV, at least, this community presence and value are earned through denial of difference, whereas in inclusion the person’s difference is welcome and valued. This distinction is important to the consideration of whether inclusion can grow out of normalisation/SRV, based on the roots laid down by one model/movement for the other. Inclusion seems to emerge more strongly from criticisms of normalisation/SRV than from the movement itself.

The “deliberate mistake” in the argument in this paper is that the worst of normalisation/SRV has been considered alongside the best of inclusion. One could argue that “good” normalisation and “bad” inclusion have more in common! Baldwin (1985) reminds us that many of the critiques of normalisation have failed to explicitly identify which model is being criticised. There are certainly fewer differences between Nirje’s model and inclusion than between Wolfensberger’s SRV and inclusion. Nonetheless, the

legacy of SRV may be stronger, and the need to deconstruct much of the “way of seeing” associated with it is evident.

Conclusion: learning from normalisation/SRV

It is appropriate and timely for this discussion to culminate in a consideration of the lessons that can be learned from normalisation/SRV. Can the inclusion movement avoid making the same mistakes? With normalisation/SRV one can look back and see how things have become distorted and that some of what has happened in its name is not true to early conceptualisations of what is important to the philosophy. It is too early to do this with inclusion, although the conceptual confusions with integration already show signs of leading to confusion in practice and practitioner thinking.

Rapley and Baldwin (1995) argue that a “lack of conceptual clarity amongst policy makers was viewed as one possible obstacle to successful normalisation implementation” (p. 143). There is clearly enormous potential for this with inclusion. Baldwin (1985) notes how criticisms of normalisation have confused means with goals and equated normalisation with mainstreaming. This lack of clarity is already happening again with inclusion where many of the pragmatic criticisms are about integration. Comments that inclusion will not work are based on mainstream schools and communities as they currently are and not on how they need to change in their radical overhaul to become inclusive.

Shaddock and Zilber (1991) argue that “normalization is one of those illusory concepts that everyone understands until asked to give examples of how it might affect practice” (p. 170). There was and is a philosophy–practice gap in normalisation that could easily be repeated in inclusion. Again, there is a danger of over-simplification here as policies become lived, more than just text, as they are interpreted and enacted by practitioners. Practitioners of normalisation/SRV could enact any of a number of normalisations and practitioners of inclusion can enact any of a number of inclusions. They can indeed create their own.

Nind (2000) compared teachers’ understanding of interactive approaches in special education with the critical concepts that underpinned their development and found some elements enhanced and some undermined, almost forgotten. The same can be said of normalisation/SRV where rights of people with an intellectual disability to ordinary experiences became subservient to a duty to lead ordinary lives defined by more powerful others (Chappell, 1992; Williams & Nind, 1999). Wolfensberger distanced SRV from the egalitarian, human rights value base of Nirje’s normalisation to make it “scientific”. In inclusion, debates already rage about its empirical basis. Questions are asked, for example, about the evidence for inclusive education leading to better outcomes than special education (Hornby, 1999). The need for such evidence is rejected by those who argue that inclusion is a human rights issue (Mittler, 2000; Thomas, 1997). With inclusion, as with normalisation, is the human rights agenda in danger of being lost all over again? Or, through critical appraisal and learning lessons from the past, are we wiser now?

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