**Reflection 2 - The F.A.T. city workshop**

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**The F.A.T. City Workshop**

The video “How Difficult Can This Be? The F.A.T. City Workshop'', led by Richard Lavoie, is an exploration of the challenges faced by students with learning disabilities. F.A.T. stands for Frustration, Anxiety, and Tension, which are common to how students feel in the classroom. Richard runs a workshop with teachers, parents, professionals and a few students to simulate the difficulties these children encounter daily.

A few key takeaways for me were, watching the participants' reactions to how challenging it can actually be for students. I enjoyed how Richard demonstrates how overwhelming it can be for students, how frustrating it can be and how anxiety sets in. I have witnessed all of this as an EA working for the school school district, I think this is a great video for all teachers to watch. This video and workshop effectively increases empathy and understanding among the participants, encouraging them to develop strategies that would accommodate and support students with learning disabilities.

I think one way the video shows the evolution of inclusion is by taking the participants through the simulations to create empathy and understanding. The approach highlights the importance of experiencing what the students are going through. Today I think there is more emphasis on listening to and collaborating with individuals with disabilities. Another way the video shows the evolution of inclusion is in the language used. The language focuses on the deficits and challenges of the person, like the term “learning disabled”. Whereas today, the language used is more person-centered and strengths-based, like the term “students with learning differences” or "neurodiverse learners”.

Since 1989, there has been a significant shift in how society talks about disability. I think the change reflects society having a better understanding and more of a value in diversity and inclusion. I can see the change in my kids and students in situations like, playing with their friends, the conversions they have, and when adults, like my father, say rude or unacceptable terms. My kids have no problem telling people that is not ok, or we don't talk like that anymore, and it makes me proud. In the video some key aspects of evolution include the language and terminology, the phrases like “the disabled” are replaced by “people with disabilities”. The social model of disability has moved from a medical model, viewing disabilities as a problem to be fixed, to seeing disabilities as removing barriers and creating accessible environments for everyone. Overall, society's approach to talking about disability has become more inclusive, respectful, and focused on the drive to increase awareness, advocacy, and a deeper understanding of human rights.

Watching the video effectively provided insight for me into what it is like for some of my students to sit in class and try to get through lessons. Watching the video made me think of certain students and situations I have been in while being an EA. I have so much empathy for my students and want to do the best I can for them. The simulation of frustration, anxiety and tension definitely had me feeling empathy for my students and gave me more understanding of what they go through daily. The discussion on the misconceptions about students with disabilities being lazy or unmotivated again had me thinking of my students. I have heard other teachers or staff talk about certain students using terms like this and made me think that we should be reconsidering our choice of words and assumptions of students and come at it more compassionately.

Based on Scarborough rope and The simple view of reading, the reason participants were struggling to comprehend while reading silently is because the students struggled with the components of each of these two learning practices. Scarborough Rope illustrates reading as a complex integration of various strands, each contributing to the overall process. It includes two major components, word recognition and language comprehension. In the video the exercises disrupted the phonological processing, decoding and comprehension strategies causing a breakdown of understanding. The Simple View of Reading illustrates that reading comprehension is the product of two components, decoding and comprehension. If either decoding or comprehension is weak, overall reading comprehension is compromised. In the video the exercises impaired decoding skills (like when he went way too fast) and comprehension skills (like when he introduced distractions) which would have led to the breakdown of understanding the text.

In conclusion, the F.A.T. City Workshop provided valuable insight into the complexities and challenges that students with learning disabilities can face. I can gain a deeper understanding of why students struggle, the importance of empathy, understanding and how students will need tailor support for success.