

# 2017 NSPU Scientific School Presentation On Inclusive Education (Russia)

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*I am pleased to be a participant in the 2017 Novosibirsk Scientific School on Inclusive Education.*

My presentation outlines aspects of the history of Inclusive Education, as I understand it, developed in *Russia and Canada*. My relationship with NSPU has been personally and professionally rewarding and hopefully useful to those attending your meetings. I do not claim to have a firm understanding of what has occurred with regard to Inclusive Education in Russia .

I have had the opportunity to visit NSPU and other areas of Russia and. These experiences allowed me to get a sense of progress of the development of Inclusive Education in Russia and to share with you what has occurred in Canada.

It was in the early 1960's that a Canadian educator, Jim Hanson, who was responsible for the Special Education program in the Hamilton-Wentworth Board of Education in Ontario, Canada. He considered segregation socially un just and began to include all students with disabilities in the same classrooms as any other student (Hansen, Leyden, Bunch and Pearpoint,2006). At this time, the term Integration, which is part of the Special Education Model, was still in use. The term 'Inclusive Education" had yet to be conceived even though what Jim Hansen began to include all students. Jim used the term "Each Belongs".

Jim had a definite idea of what he meant when he began to include all students. He stated his beliefs in a Credo, his guide to socially just education for all. Here it is.

## Each Belongs Credo

- Each person is endowed with the dignity of a person.
- Each person has equal value despite difference in ability.

- Each person has the right to grow and indeed each person can grow.
- The limits of individual growth are unknown and should not be circumscribed.
- No person is static, each is ever in the process of becoming.
- Each person is unique and irrepeatable.
- The beliefs we hold about people can serve as prison walls limiting us at every turn.
- They can also set us free from our shackles to confront great new possibilities never dreamed of before.
- Life is the ultimate gift and learning is its crowing.

Here is the story of how the term “Inclusive Education” for students with disabilities came about. John O’Brien and Marsha Forest wrote of how the term came about. In July 1988 a group of 14 people from Canada and the United States, who felt that the integration of students with disability was not successful, entered into a lengthy discussion. The group included educators, writers, parents, and adults with disabilities, all of whom had first-hand experience with segregated education, came up with the idea of bringing all students together under the concept of “Inclusive Education”.

This was a radical departure from the idea of Special Education, but the term and the concept rapidly caught on, first in Canada and the United States and then in other nations. Inclusive Education is a term and concept now used around the world.

- The next powerful dynamic was a 1994 global meeting in Salamanca, Spain brought together by UNESCO. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss whether to continue education for students with disabilities under the Special Education practice of segregation of students, or to move to Inclusive Education, an

approach considered to be more socially just. Following intense discussion, those at the meeting chose Inclusive Education and recommended it as United Nations policy.