

Using Duoethnography to Connect the Disability Justice Principles to Education Research about Disabled Populations on Campus

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Acknowledgment:

Because duoethnography is a dialogic process between two people, the authors want to acknowledge equal contributions to the collaborative thinking and co-writing of this paper.

ABSTRACT

The terms disability inclusion, disability rights, and disability justice are often used somewhat interchangeably, but have distinct meanings within academe more broadly and academic research contexts. The purpose of this investigation was to explore these concepts in relation to our research and present the way in which we (as education researchers) grappled with what a critical, disability justice-informed research methodology involves. We used a qualitative, duoethnographic research approach as it is both a reflection of social justice and a method to advance it (Sawyer & Norris, 2013). We engaged in virtual, asynchronous and synchronous dialogues in writing and audio formats to reflect, critique, question, and eventually, generate new ideas and ways of moving forward. In the paper, we first consider how the Disability Justice Principles from Sins Invalid (2019) could be connected to our current research practices using two questions about ethical considerations as well as research methodologies and frameworks. We then theorize how education researchers can intentionally incorporate activism throughout each stage of the research process. A Disability Justice-informed education research framework is proposed for use with research about disabled populations in higher education. This framework addresses the relationship between stages of the research process, disability inclusion, and disability justice, which was the ongoing debate throughout our dialogues.

KEYWORDS

Research; disability justice; duoethnography; inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Brown and Strega (2005) have called attention to the idea that pushing back against research and academic norms is “difficult and challenging” because we have “internalized dominant ideas about what constitutes ‘good’ research and ‘acceptable’ research practices (p. 2). Furthermore, as Croft and colleagues (2024) have pointed out, “the widespread embrace of normative research methods and infrastructures means that disabled people¹ must navigate multiple barriers to access research as both researchers and participants” (p. 2). Much of the barrier for participation is a result of academic ableism, which is the specific marginalization of disabled people—faculty, staff, and students—within academia (Dolmage, 2017). Accordingly, the number of disabled academics who work in Canadian post-secondary institutions is not widely understood: not all post-secondary institutions track the disability status of their faculty, staff, and students and not all those who do track that information publicly report that data (Clarke & Lalor, in press). The Canadian Research Chairs (CRC) program, on the other hand, implemented an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion target policy in 2017 that mandated institutions with CRCs have a certain number of disabled academics. In 2021, 5.5% of the program’s participants identified as disabled, with 7.5% expected by 2029 (CRC, 2024). Although this limited data is helpful, it becomes significantly more important as postsecondary institutions begin to work toward disability inclusion and disability justice in more explicit and intentional ways (Clarke & Lalor, in press).

Although there is increased discussion of socially just research methods in education (See Atkins & Duckworth, 2019; Brown & Strega, 2015; Strunk & Locke, 2019), much of the related literature in this area overlooks ableist oppression within the education field. Yet, there is a critical need for research that considers how ableism has been created and reproduced, particularly in the higher education context where institutions are enacting EDI policies that often overlook disability. We determined we would approach writing this paper as an exploratory process that would offer a starting point for other researchers interested in engaging in disability activism in their education research about disabled people on campus, using the Disability Justice Principles as a guiding lens. To this end, our work was guided by two questions:

- How do the 10 Principles of Disability Justice intersect with the research process?
- Using the principles of disability justice, how do we currently engage in disability activism through our respective research practices?

Terminology

Even though the concepts of *disability inclusion* and *disability justice* may be sometimes used interchangeably, it is important to consider that inclusion is not the same as justice. On one

¹ In this paper, we use identity-first language rather than person-first language. Identity-first language (such as “disabled people”) is a sociopolitical orientation that aims to disrupt the stigmatization of disability as part of a broader disability rights perspective (Andrews et al., 2019). In contrast, person-first language (such as people with disabilities) has been criticized as potentially leading to further stigmatization of disability (Andrews et al., 2019; Titchkosky, 2001).

hand, disability inclusion broadly involves policies and practices that improve access and inclusion of disabled people. For example, the accommodations process within higher education institutions is more in line with an inclusion approach, where the provided accommodations are meant to supported the inclusion of disabled students in the classroom. On the other hand, disability justice focuses on generations of “collective struggle, drawing upon legacies of cultural and spiritual resistance” to multiple oppressions in an effort to enable people of all bodyminds to flourish (Sins Invalid, 2020, para. 17). Indeed, the importance of disability justice becomes paramount within discussions around disability rights.² A disability rights approach recognizes the role society has played in subjugating disabled people and focuses on how society must correct disability-based oppression (Stein, 2007). In the case of accommodations, a disability rights perspective acknowledges that students in post-secondary education institutions have a duty to accommodate (e.g., Alberta Human Rights Commission, 2021; Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.) disabled students. However, the ability to access accommodations is predicated on medical documentation and assessment, which can be both time- and cost-prohibitive (as well as geographically prohibitive in certain cases). In other words, disabled students with some level of economic and geographical privilege are more able to access accommodations in their post-secondary institution; which, as Chin (2021) has noted, is reflective of how disability rights frameworks often do not take into account how other axes of oppression impact disabled people and populations. In contrast yet again, a disability-justice approach to academic accommodations would first advocate for medical documentation not to be required, and second changing the structure of post-secondary institutions so that accommodations are not required for students at all.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We believe that research praxis should align with social justice principles³ in general and disability justice principles in particular because disability justice principles allow us to begin to articulate what better research entails. It is not common practice in academe to utilize non-academic sources to develop conceptual or theoretical frameworks, although activist frameworks such reproductive justice (e.g., Loder et al., 2020) are gaining traction in academe.³ We see the lack of inclusion of non-academic frameworks as a matter of *epistemic injustice*, that is, a form of discrimination that assumes that some kinds of knowledge are considered subordinate to others (Fricker, 2017; see also Davies et al., 2024). In this paper, we are using three of the ten Principles of Disability Justice from Sins Invalid (2019) as an entry point to discuss disability justice within research inquiry. Although this is atypical in terms of academic

² It is important to note that this understanding of disability inclusion and disability justice was part of an outcome of our discussions for this paper.

³ Taking an even broader approach to how/if disabled people are incorporated within society is “social justice,” which aims to construct a society where resources are equitably distributed and all people are physically and psychologically safe” (Bell, 2007, p. 1).

³ An additional example is the use of Indigenous onto-epistemological and axiological frameworks as they are applied to Indigenous research methodologies.

norms, it is aligned with work by other critical disability scholars, specifically where disability justice intersects with performance (Berne & Lamm, 2022; DeMirjyn, 2017), memory (Kopit, 2019), and beauty (Ettinger, 2018; Kafai, 2018). Accordingly, our work not only parallels the principles outlined by *Sins Invalid*⁴ but is also attuned with understandings of disabled lives as they are experienced by disability communities. More explicitly, in line with the work of Bulk and Collins (2023), we assert that disabled peoples are members of minoritized cultures whose identities and knowledges are crucial to the overall wellbeing of society as a whole and academia as representative part of that society. The three disability justice principles we lean into are included in Table 1.

Table 1.

Summary of Selected Disability Justice Principles

Disability Justice Principle Number	Name of Disability Justice Principle	Description
2	Leadership of the Most Impacted	Specifically ignoring the opinions of “academics and experts,” leadership of the most impacted asks that those who experience significant marginalization be brought to the forefront of decision-making processes (Berne et al., 2018; <i>Sins Invalid</i> , 2019). In so doing, “we keep ourselves grounded in real-world problems and find creative strategies for resistance” (<i>Sins Invalid</i> , 2019, p. 23)
5	Recognizing Wholeness	All people, regardless of disability status, have a “full history and life experience,” composed of their emotions, sensations, quirks, thoughts, and understandings (<i>Sins Invalid</i> , 2019, p. 24). In other words, “disabled people are whole people” (<i>Sins Invalid</i> , 2019, p. 24).
8	Interdependence	Before the settler colonial expansion of European powers, interdependence was normative in communities (Berne et al., 2018; <i>Sins Invalid</i> , 2019). To acquire liberation—“of all living systems and land”—we must “work to meet each other’s needs” away from state-organized institutions (<i>Sins Invalid</i> , 2019, p. 24)

⁴ It is important to note that *Sins Invalid* does not focus solely on matters of accessibility, rather, the collective equally considers disability cultures, art, aesthetics, and performance (Moore, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

Duoethnography is a qualitative approach to research that is meant to bring together two people to collaboratively reflect on themselves and their positions, and engage in “dialogic critique and question the meanings they give to social issues and epistemological constructs” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 2). This research approach is grounded in social justice and Sawyer and Norris (2013) argued that although duoethnographers cannot solve social injustice, they can advance social justice through their words. Duoethnography was therefore chosen as the appropriate methodology for this paper, in which we aim to contribute to an emerging body of work about disability research in higher education that is informed by principles of social justice and a critical lens.

Norris and Sawyer (2012) identified nine tenets that could serve as “an outline of the types of researcher dispositions, principles, and foci required to undertake this work” (p. 12). Norris and Sawyer do not argue that these tenets should be considered as rules that must be followed in duoethnography, or that they are indicators of quality. Rather, they are “working principles” (Sawyer & Norris, 2013, p. 14). The tenets are: 1) currere; 2) polyvocal and dialogic; 3) disrupts narratives; 4) difference; 5) dialogic change and regenerative transformation; 6) trustworthiness found in self-reflexivity, not validity and truth claims; 7) audience accessibility; and 8) ethical stances; and 9) trust. Norris and Sawyer (2012) note that duoethnographies should ascribe to the tenets to varying degrees. Here, we briefly discuss two of the tenets, to illustrate that we have used a distinct methodology.

With currere, duoethnographers “use themselves to assist themselves and others in better understanding the phenomenon under investigation” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 13). In this article, we view the phenomenon under study as our exploration of disability activism through higher education-related research. We integrate our experiences and reflections to interrogate what disability justice and activism looks like in the research process.⁵ A polyvocal and dialogic process is another tenet that is integrated in our process. This means that we “made the voice of each duoethnographer explicit (Norris & Sawyer, 2023, p. 14). This is demonstrated by sharing the name of each author throughout the discussion of our dialogues for the two guiding questions we explored together.

Data Collection

Over the years, there has been a reluctance to provide a description of defined procedures for duoethnography. The duoethnographic process generally involves selecting social phenomena or themes to investigate, engaging in cycles of interpretation that involve data analysis, data situation within personal stories and cultural meanings, dialogic and collaborative critique, and an articulation of new perspectives and insights (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). In this paper, we

⁵ Identifying a research problem; reviewing the literature; specifying a purpose; choosing a research design; selecting participants and collecting data; analyzing data and reporting results; drawing conclusions; disseminating and evaluating research

discuss our dialogues with a scope that we deemed suitable given the time restrictions within which we could engage in this exploration for the purposes of this special issue. We view this paper as a foundation upon which we will engage in further dialogue, interpretation, data analysis, interpretation, critique, and articulation of new perspectives and insights.

Social Locations

As we began writing this manuscript, we grappled with these questions: *Do we need to/why do we need to situate ourselves in relation to our social locations? How do we situate ourselves in relation to disability identities? How are our experiences similar or different? What are the shared goals in coming to this work? Why are we doing this and what do we want to get out of this?* Rinaldi (2013) considers the limitations to reflexivity and the sharing of researcher positionalities in disability studies work. She argues:

I would like to think it is possible for a researcher to practice reflexivity without publicly taking a position, to conduct responsible research all the while working quietly. I would like to think that while narratives and standpoints have their use, they are not our only approach, and they should not be required. (para. 61)

Academics' decision to disclose in the workplace and in research or writing can be based on a variety of factors. Brown (2020) points out that early career academics especially, may worry about the consequences of being identified as someone dealing with health issues and conditions due to the repercussions it may have on career development and job security.

After much contemplation, we determined that it was important to acknowledge our own social locations and positions in terms of disability. Given that duoethnography involves introspection and a willingness to practice vulnerability (Sawyer & Liggett, 2012), we viewed sharing our positions as an act of practicing this vulnerability.

Danielle: I am a PhD candidate in a Faculty of Education in one of the Prairie provinces. I have lived experience of disability—from birth and acquired afterward—which has informed my approach to research and teaching. Yet, as a white ciswoman pursuing a terminal degree, the individual and systemic privileges I have been afforded have made my ability to move through the world easier than it is for others.

Kathleen: I am an Assistant Professor in a Faculty of Education in Ontario. In my teaching, I prioritize accessibility and frequently consider how disabled students can be supported in the classroom. My research is closely connected to my teaching as I aim to further develop our understanding of the experiences of disabled students and how support can be tailored to their needs. I consider my disability identity to be emerging and evolving, having only been recently formally diagnosed. I recognize that diagnoses can act as gatekeeping to the disability community and can also be viewed as reinforcing biomedical ideas of disability. There are many different models of disability identity that consider a variety of factors in how people come to identify as disabled. For me, obtaining a diagnosis was validating and allowed me to move towards acceptance.

I have increasingly found my voice in advocating for myself and other disabled people on postsecondary campuses. Now, as I continue to reflect on and understand this aspect of my life, I am able to discuss it with others and in writing this paper, grapple with disability justice and my current and potential role in advancing social justice through activism.

Combined: We view ourselves as coming from distinct backgrounds in terms of our lived experience with disability and our current roles. Yet, we are similar in the sense that we both have a strong understanding of the field of higher education and come to this work with more recent awareness of the Disability Justice Principles. As emerging scholars situated within higher education, we do not consider ourselves to have extensive backgrounds in critical disability studies. We wondered whether it is possible for disabled scholars with our backgrounds to advance disability justice in an intentional way through education-related research.

Engaging in Dialogue: The Emergent Process, Questions, Critiques

To begin engaging in dialogue about the research process and disability justice, we reviewed the purpose of this Special Issue and how it aimed to “delve into the intersection of research and activism, examining how scholarly inquiry can drive societal change, challenge power structures, and foster social justice.” As we prepared a proposal for submission, we raised questions in relation to this purpose, with disability as our focus. We wondered: How does research in general and our research specifically intersect with *disability* activism? What is activism? How might scholarly inquiry about disability drive societal change? What power structures are at play when considering disability? What does disability justice mean? In our initial virtual meetings, we engaged with these questions and examined existing literature to get a sense of the landscape with regards to disability activism. We began by grappling with terminology in this area, to explore whether we understood these concepts in similar ways. For instance, how did we individually and as a duo, articulate disability inclusion? Similarly, did we understand disability justice as different, similar, or the same as disability inclusion?

After the acceptance of our proposed abstract, we were left with more questions than we had initially anticipated. We both agreed that exploring research as disability activism was a topic that was overlooked in the existing educational research. Both of us were also familiar with the Disability Justice Principles collated by Sin Invalid. We wondered how the Disability Justice Principles might be connected to the ten guiding questions that the editors of this Special Issue posed in the call for papers. Accordingly, we listed each of the questions in a document and collaboratively began responding to them and each other, based on our own lived experiences as disabled women and our experience as higher education researchers.

As we worked through the questions and discussed our responses in virtual meetings and asynchronously through Google Docs, we reflected on how some of the questions were connected to our research. We determined that for this paper, presenting our dialogues for each of these questions was not feasible. Instead, we determined that we would discuss two questions to illustrate our process in making connections between our research, the research

process, and the Disability Justice principles. The questions we focus on in this initial exploration are:

- What ethical considerations guide your approach to research as activism?
- What methodologies or frameworks do you employ to integrate activism into your research?

What Ethical Considerations Guide Your Approach to Research as Activism?

Danielle [initial comment #1]: Fundamentally, I think that any research conducted by academics must have two components. The first element focuses on why research should be pursued at all: it should be undertaken in the pursuit of justice (Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR] et al., 2022). In this way, research should positively impact those who are the most affected by the topic under consideration rather than solely benefitting the career of the researcher. For research about disabled people in higher education, this means that the research must focus on pursuing justice for those groups. Second, those who are at the center of the study (i.e., disabled people) must be afforded dignity as participants and their welfare must be considered during all stages of the research process (CIHR et al., 2022). In other words, the purpose of research with disabled populations should always be for the benefit of disabled people more than the career of the researcher.

Kathleen [response]: I think that's an important point, that "pursuit of justice" needs to be front and centre of research about disabled populations in higher education. I'm not sure that I necessarily consider justice throughout the research process and within ethics specifically. But maybe that's part of it - for our research to be ethical, maybe that justice piece needs to be highlighted in our ethics applications. But, although I have a basic understanding of what justice means, I'm not sure I am confident in what disability justice is, or disability activism. These aren't really things I've been exposed to in my educational background, which is outside of critical disability studies. I'm also not sure that I consider dignity and welfare specifically...I don't really use that language. I more so consider inclusivity and access.

Danielle [initial comment #2]: Currently, the way I view my work intersecting with ethics is that it puts me in a position where I have to think about inclusion and accessibility during the data collection process. When ethics applications ask about the study methods, the recruitment strategies, consent, dissemination etc., I consider how all these things can be done in an inclusive and accessible way. For example, surveys need to be hosted on platforms that are accessible to screen readers. I think the activism part of this is that we have to challenge the existing ethical norms, including the application process. Why are ethics boards not asking about the accessibility of data collection tools, knowledge mobilization strategies etc.? Is it ethical to conduct inaccessible research when researching disabled populations? Or, even just doing research in general?

When thinking about the connections to the Disability Justice Principles, I wonder if we could view the ethics application as enabling ableism and reinforcing normativity? If they aren't

asking about how researchers are integrating inclusive/accessible practices, are they not part of the problem? Maybe researchers (regardless of discipline and who the participants are), should look at ethics applications with inclusivity and accessibility in mind and design their projects accordingly? Kind of like a Universal Design for Learning (UDL)-approach?

Kathleen [response]: I think that if a study includes disabled participants, then the research ethics boards should absolutely be looking at those proposals with inclusion and accessibility in mind. But if we go back to my original point about research being done for the pursuit of justice, is looking at inclusion and accessibility in the ethics process considered pursuing disability justice? I'm not sure. I think it's a part of it, but does it take it far enough? The Disability Justice Principles can provide some insight.

One connection between ethics and the Disability Justice Principles is that when disabled people are treated as research *objects*, from whom knowledge is extracted, the Disability Justice tenet of leadership of the most impacted (Principle 2) is being flagrantly ignored. The "worth" of disabled people is of "use" to the researcher, but they/we are not co-researchers. I would argue that it is unethical to do research about disabled postsecondary populations as objects from whom knowledge is extracted, yet, this is likely what happens a lot of the time. Disabled and non-disabled researchers then have a responsibility, if they are to be viewed as disability activists that are working towards disability justice, to not view participants as objects from which knowledge is extracted. And, perhaps it is the responsibility of ethics review boards to ensure that this does not take place when researching disabled groups. To me, this means there's kind of a mindset or lens that has to be applied for the research to be considered a form of activism. It maybe isn't just about inclusion and access in data collection, but about that pursuit of justice for disabled populations and including these populations throughout the entirety of the process. This means that disabled and non-disabled researchers need to establish partnerships with disabled populations and co-create research with the purpose of pursuing disability justice—it's not supposed to be about the researcher benefitting from this work through publications, presentations, and citation counts. Disability justice has to be front and centre.

What Methodologies or Frameworks do You Employ to Integrate Activism Into Your Research?

Kathleen [initial comment]: I mostly do surveys and interviews as well as secondary data analysis on relevant datasets. For my survey work, if I'm including a question that asks participants to identify whether they have a disability, I frame it so that they are self-identifying. It isn't about whether someone else has diagnosed them with a condition/disability, it's whether they feel that disability is consistent with their experience. For both surveys and interviews - if I'm asking people to self-identify as having a disability, I will try to include a paragraph that addresses the definition of some terms. For example, I might provide a definition of a medical model of disability (e.g., Have you been diagnosed with a disability?) because that is what a lot of folks are familiar with, but then acknowledge the limitations of that definition and provide a more holistic definition (e.g., Do you have a disability that affects your living, learning, or

working experiences?) so that folks whose experiences are not consistent with the medical model can also self-identify and be included in the research. I think that by doing these things I'm kind of challenging the medical model of disability, which to me is a form of activism.

I also try to continually acknowledge the various identities that participants have. I try not to only compare those with disabilities to those without disabilities—I'll de-aggregate data based on different intersections of identities. In terms of methods, I integrate questions of accessibility into how I collect data. If I'm doing a survey, I consider whether the survey platform is accessible. When researchers do things like "hovers" for more information on a question, are these accessible? If I'm doing face-to-face interviews, is the location/space accessible? How am I integrating some UDL principles into the design of the study, and also providing opportunities for participants to share their own accessibility requirements?

I do view this as activism because I'm actively working towards more inclusive/accessible research methods. It's challenging that notion of normativity in treating all participants as if they have the same abilities in terms of how they are participating. I think this is closely connected to our discussion about ethics and how it could be considered unethical to research disabled populations using inaccessible methods. I have to admit though that this is really only something I've been considering within the last few years. Within my research methods training, I don't recall inclusion/accessibility being discussed or even social justice-informed research approaches being mentioned.

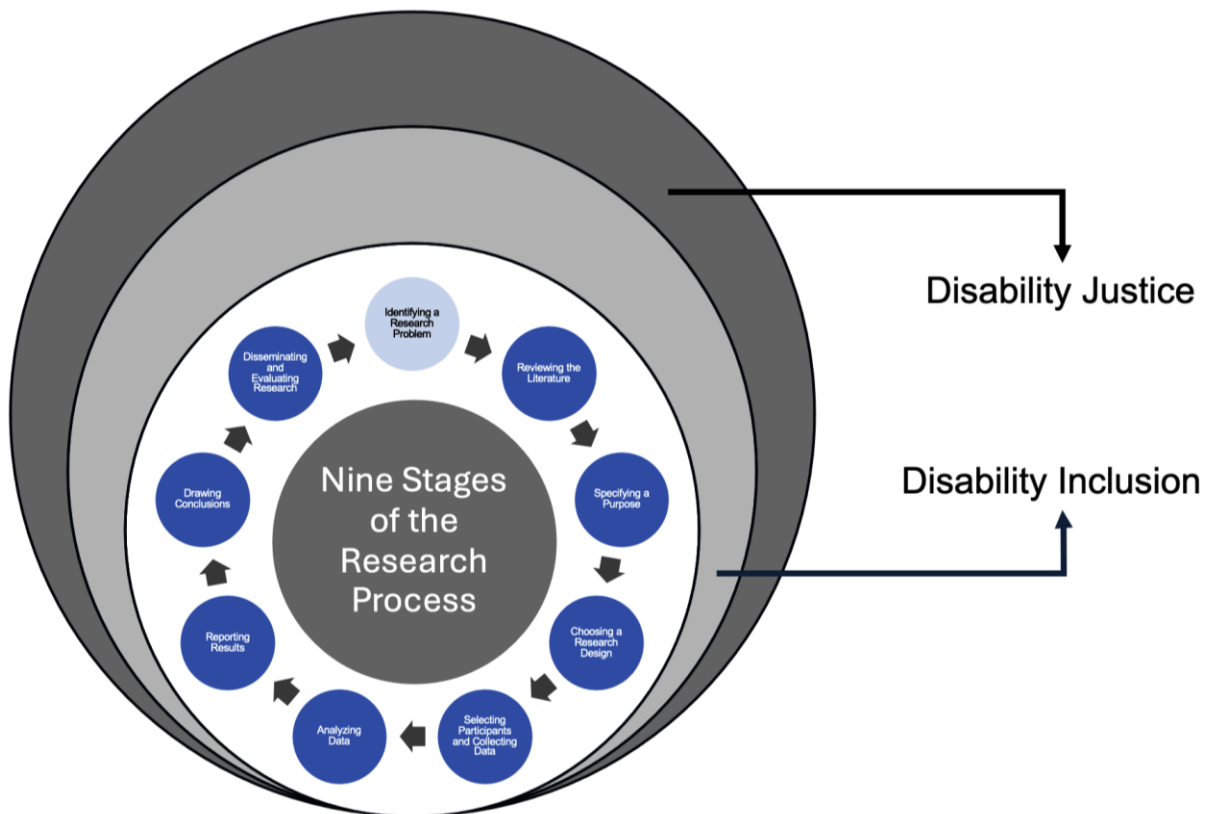
Danielle [response]: I have a somewhat similar experience in terms of data collection. When I have been in a position to design or co-design studies, what has always been at the forefront of my mind is the ways the data collection process can reduce barriers to participation. For instance, this has included providing multiple avenues for participants to be interviewed: I conducted my dissertation interviews (on a topic completely unrelated to disability) in-person, on the phone, and using Skype because I wanted to ensure that there were as few barriers to participation as possible.

However, speaking more broadly, there simply needs to be more disabled academics in the academy. They/we need to be the ones designing ethical research that aims to impact disabled communities in a positive way. This is a form of interdependence (Disability Justice Principle 8), in that we (as researchers) are meeting the needs of our disabled kin as it relates to the needs of disabled communities being represented in research projects. This research thereby has the potential to offer disabled people more control over their/our lives. In addition, a critical mass of disabled people in the academy puts leadership of the most impacted (Disability Justice Principle 2) into practice. Disabled people have knowledge and experience that lend them/us to being natural problem solvers because we are used to traversing a society that is not built for them/us. With equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) conversations becoming increasingly commonplace in higher education institutions (e.g., EDI Strategic Plans), it is important that disabled people are not only included in policy decisions around EDI but also that we are part of the leadership making decisions about EDI.

OUR PROPOSED FRAMEWORK: DISABILITY-JUSTICE INFORMED EDUCATION RESEARCH

If activist research must understand what knowledge is, what “counts” as knowledge, and how knowledge is produced (de Castro Leal et al., 2021), then how can Disability Justice Principles connect to academia? Pushing back on what is understood to be knowledge, how knowledge is developed, and who is creating that knowledge can result in change. In other words, providing space for disabled knowledges and seeking them out within research is a form of activism within academe. Some of the creation of space comes from activist-inclined methodologies such as duoethnography. Sawyer and Norris (2013) pointed out that in duoethnography, two or more researchers work together on the eventual “Articulation of new perspectives and insights” (p. 2) that comes from research. A theme we noticed when reviewing our dialogues was how we both seemed to be doing things either unintentionally or intentionally at different stages of the research process, to try to be more inclusive for disabled populations. However, we questioned whether these inclusive practices at different stages of the research process were enough to be considered as advancing disability justice. We determined that although it is beneficial for education researchers, whether disabled or not, to consider how they can be more inclusive at each of the research stages, these individual practices were more in line with disability inclusion, which we described earlier as the policies and practices that improve access and inclusion of disabled people. A disability justice-informed research approach would take this a step further and look at the research process holistically while considering the input of disabled people from the outset. Meaning, we viewed the whole of the research process—one that actively and purposefully considers disability justice principles—as greater than its individual parts. We therefore wanted to illustrate how we collaboratively made sense of how the research process and its nine stages were connected to disability inclusion and disability justice.

The design of the disability justice-informed framework comes from the Indigenization framework written by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) as it was illustrated in the University of Alberta’s *Indigenous Strategic Plan* (2022). The concentric circles are used to display how knowledge builds from previous understandings while being interconnected with future aspirations of growth. In this way, we move from a more general understanding of how to conduct research, to a way of doing research that is mindful of disability inclusion and finishing with disability justice principles fully integrated in research processes. Figure 1 presents our new, shared understanding of this connection:

Figure 1*Framework for Disability Justice-Informed Education Research*

[Image Description: Three circles overlap with each other. The first circle is white and includes nine blue smaller circles arranged in a circle with small arrows between them. A larger circle in dark gray in the middle says “Nine Stages of the Research Process.” The second circle is a light gray and is partially covered by the white circle. An arrow is coming from it and points to the words “Disability Inclusion.” The third circle is a dark gray and it is partially covered by the light gray circle. An arrow is coming from it and points to the words “Disability Justice.”]

To provide a more illustrative example, we describe how the fourth step in the research process, choosing a research design, would function from a disability justice lens. Selecting a research design could be based on a few of the principles depending on who exactly is involved/employed on the project; however, we want to focus on *recognizing wholeness* (Disability Justice Principle 5). This principle is important for all people on the project, regardless of their role: we have our own experiences and they ultimately shape who we are and how we participate in research projects. In this way, research that recognizes a variety of experiences can allow for greater possibility in what types of data are collected, how the data are collected, and how they are interpreted. This acknowledgement of experiences and knowledges goes beyond disability inclusion: disability inclusion focuses on being able to participate in research processes rather than being involved developing the processes used to conduct research. For instance, there is a propensity for qualitative researchers to utilize interviews for data collection: how could other modalities that do not require listening and speaking (e.g., arts-based methods) be used to collect data in lieu of *recognizing wholeness* (Disability Justice Principle 5)? Said

differently, how might “non-traditional” forms of data collection remove barriers for both researchers and participants? We believe that a disability justice orientation to research would purposefully aim to collaborate with disability communities (e.g., members of Canadian Deaf Theatre, disabled student groups on university campuses) from the point of identifying a research problem all the way through the cycle to disseminating and evaluating research. It would facilitate, in light of *interdependence* (Disability Justice Principle 8), the ability of disability communities to say “no” to being involved in research at all.

LIMITATIONS

Normative understandings of trustworthiness in qualitative research are framed around dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, these paradigms are inherently at odds with the subjective nature of duoethnographic research, which aims to “promote more complex and inclusive social constructions and reconceptualizations of experience” (Sawyer & Liggett, 2012, p. 631) more than impartiality, objectivity, or replicability. Where there is a parallel with qualitative research norms is dependability, which asks that authors record decision-making processes (Ahmed, 2024; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although not all research resolutions are visible in this final product, our drafts of this article outlined the choices we made and our rationales as part of our duoethnographic process.

We acknowledge that duoethnography is considered a living method (Sawyer & Norris, 2012) that allows for the process to develop as it takes place. An example of this is our late realization that we could have recorded our virtual meetings and transcribed the conversations, using our meeting notes as an additional form of data for this study. Like the way in which we narrowed the scope in how we discussed the tenets of duoethnography, we also narrowed the scope on the number of Disability Justice Principles that we engaged with in this work. Our goal in this paper is to present a starting point for education researchers examining disability in higher education to consider. Namely, the questions of: *How does your current approach to research enact disability inclusion and/or justice? What steps can you take to align your more with a disability-informed research approach?*

Lastly, an important part of the Disability Justice Principles is intersectionality, Principle 1. We are mindful of how various components of a person’s identity and interlocking systems of oppression may impact them as they go through the world. In this preliminary work, we have not fully unpacked our own identities in relation to disability and our research practices, nor our intersecting identities in terms of gender, sexual orientation, or race. We acknowledge that disability and the fight for justice are often understood to be a White experience (Stapleton & James, 2020) and that by not exploring our intersecting identities, we are reinforcing this. Future work should explore the role of intersectionality in terms of the research process, disability inclusion, and disability justice within education research. Specifically, exploration of QuantCrit (Quantitative Critical Race Theory; see Garcia et al., 2023) and DisCrit (Dis/ability critical race studies; see Annamma et al., 2013) in relation to the research process.

CONCLUSION

Through this process, we uncovered several ways in which our current research practices mostly lend themselves to activism in the form of disability inclusion. Yet, as we noted in the introduction section of this paper, there is a difference between disability inclusion and disability justice. Mingus (2017) highlights this distinction:

I am done with disability simply being “included” in able bodies people’s agenda and living only when it’s convenient. I want us to tap into the transformative powers of disability, instead of gaining access to the current system . . . and doing nothing to change that system. We don’t simply want to join the ranks of the privileged, we want to challenge and dismantle those ranks and question why some people are consistently at the bottom. (para 16)

While we do consider the practices we described in our dialogue as largely within the scope of inclusion, we do view this as a form of activism. However, these individual practices aiming for inclusion must also be reconsidered in terms of how they collectively advance disability justice. Sawyer and Norris (2012) pointed out that “autoethnographers and duoethnographers cannot solve social injustice. But through their words and deeds they can advance social justice” (p. 7). Through researchers’ actions and reflections, they/we can advance disability justice in intentional ways.

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