Journey through the Trials and Triumphs of disability

Abstract: Some statements made are not complete or lack substantiation:

• What is typical about of the time and the country you live in?

* Expanded on time and country

• What type of attention (positive or negative or any other description?) did your experience draw from the delegates at the Disabled People’s International 8th World Assembly when you share your story?

* My experiences with disability in South Africa drew encouraging attention from delegates at the Disabled People’s International 8th World Assembly when I shared my story. The resounding positive response affirmed that my experiences are not unique to nationality, gender, race or age, and are typical of the time and country in which I live, where people with disabilities are considered to have little potential, and woman with disabilities are further marginalised. In the infancy of our democracy, we are still in the early days of attending to equity amongst all South Africans.

Introduction: It would assist if the writer of this paper can explain why she chooses to present her story in chapters and what each chapter will entail. Most commonly chapters have an introduction, the body, critical issues that have emerged and a conclusion. It is not clear which format did your chapters follow and why.

* Included an explanation
* Looking back, the major events and choices form crossroads that clearly delineate each segment of my journey from the last, forming chapters of my life thus far.

Body of the paper: the chapters

The writer tends to make important statements that are not complete nor explained. This was noticed in the following chapters:

Chapter1: Paragraph 2, sentence 1: Why did the writer pursued teaching after working with children on the Autism spectrum?

* Additional information included
* After working as a private tutor with children on the Autistic spectrum, I decided to pursue my studies in teaching to complete my degree in education.

Paragraph 4: sentence 1 – to expand I generally enjoyed fighting the good fight – which good fight and for what?

* Information included
* And with a passion for social justice, I generally enjoyed fighting the good fight, and challenging the social norms within both school and university sphere.

Chapter 2: Paragraph 2, 2nd sentence – what are the wonders of bilateral pulmonary emboli?

* Unchanged. Sarcasm may be the lowest form of wit, but in this case, the statement speaks truly. I only realized that I wanted to live when pulmonary emboli rendered it difficult to read.

Chapter3: In the title of the chapter to leave out – our apartheid legacy as it is not clear how the body of this chapter links to the legacy of apartheid.

* Disagree. The only place I felt accepted and safe was a remnant of apartheid: a traditional special school. Reference to the segregated disabled community included in the text.

Paragraph 11: to reference the Open Air school motto.

* Reference included

Paragraph 14: Which identity did the learners bestowed upon you – expand.

* Ironically, the very identity with which the learners bestowed upon me was the exact reason that I had to move on: being included by the learner into their disabled community, from which I had been excluded as an able-bodied teacher, motivated me to move out into a position where I could actively promote inclusive education, to hopefully help to prevent other children leaving their home community to join a disabled one.

Chapter 4

Paragraph 4: These students formed the sample group for the later mini-research project carried – this was not explained in your abstract and introduction.

Paragraph 6: It might be important to also show that there are also people who act more or less in a logical manner towards people with disabilities.

* This “ag, shame” mentality pervades South African society and has to be one of my most frustrating experiences on both a personal and professional level and I am most appreciative to those people who respond in a level-headed, logical manner when faced with someone with a disability.

It is also important to raise the issue that disabled people are part of vulnerable groups who also might experience lesser or sometimes greater exclusion e.g. people with HIV and AIDs and on certain occasions immigrants in SA.

* This is addressed later when discussing issues with students. The ‘ag shame’ response refers to my experiences with people in general. This is a narrative.

Method: This part, I suggest that it be removed from the paper as it tends to be a distraction. Instead I would suggest the writer to make a summary of its contribution to the paper/chapters and lessons learnt from it.

* I would prefer not to remove the entire piece as it was specifically carried out to see if my choice to move into the able-bodied environment was worth the enormous effort it requires from me. I have however rephrased it into the narrative format in which it initially existed, prior to initial submission.

Conclusion:

The first 4 paragraphs in conclusion, I suggest that they be integrated under chapter 2 as it appears they still tend to focus on the writers experiences. The perception is that this area is about pulling together all lessons learnt from each chapter and conclusion that were drawn and combine these into a final contribution.

* The first 4 paragraphs are anecdotal and occurred during the writing of the conclusion of the narrative and gave me insight on how the different chapters tied together. That there is resilience is developed in play as it is a positive action that brings about a positive frame of mind.

Need to expand on these sentences:

Paragraph 6: It should be the standard expectation for all people to achieve – why and are all South Africans enjoying this success – are we not further marginalizing disabled people when we expect them to succeed in a country where a sizeable percentage of its disabled or non-disabled citizens are blighted by poverty, illiteracy and lack of jobs?

* Rephrased and expanded to show that when teachers do not expect children with disabilities to succeed, the transfer this expectation on to the learner and learners perform poorly. It should be expected for all people to achieve.
* Ideally, it should be the standard expectation for all people to have the potential to achieve. It is generally accepted that teacher expectation of learner potential and the teacher’s belief in their ability to teach the learner directly impacts on learner achievement, therefore focus needs to be placed on pro-actively equipping teachers to implement inclusive education so that teachers believe that they have the ability to teach learner with disabilities and that those learners will achieve.