Acknowledgements

As I review the contents of this monograph, I recognize the influences of many people who helped shape the formative development of my career and the truths I learned to believe in during different phases on that career path. If they are not cited specifically in the body of this monograph, I would like to personally acknowledge the guidance and mentorship of the following individuals:

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Bob Perske – a person of great stature in dedicating his life to improving the lives of individuals with the most significant disabilities and his pioneering work on behalf of citizens with disabilities whom he believes have been wrongfully incarcerated in today’s prison system.

Marc Gold – introduced me to the Try Another Way philosophy of interacting with students and adults with disabilities.

Burton Blatt – both his speeches and writing continually brought to the surface the humanity and ethics involved in the way in which supports and services are structured for people with disabilities.

Paul Bates – my major advisor in my doctoral work whose guidance and direction heavily influenced my knowledge about the science of systematic instruction coupled with the values of inclusive practices.

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint – from Inclusion Press, Toronto, Ontario, whose pioneering work in person-centered planning has shaped my orientation to this process as one of listening to a person and capturing his/her dreams of the future and assisting that individual in ways that move toward that dream.

John O’Brien & Connie Lyle O’Brien – offer insights in the way we interact with and honor the dreams of individuals with disabilities. Their publications have added greatly to the truths I share in this monograph.

Thomas H. Powell – provided leadership in allowing me to be creative in the way in which I developed training materials and instructional in-services while working at the Corporation for Supported Employment, which evolved into the Institute for Human Resource Development.

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Dan Steere and Keith Storey – represent all of my co-workers with whom I have had the honor of working over the breadth of my career and to whom I owe a huge debt of gratitude for their feedback and friendship.

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Herbert Kohl, Jonathan Kozol and John Holt – challenged me, through their writings over the decades, to think differently about the educational options for all students.

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I know I have left out names of people whose influence may, in fact, be more significant than the people I identified in the previous sections. I view those named as representatives of hundreds more individuals who have shaped my career path.

A special Thank You to my wife, Marsha, and daughters, Nadya & Natyra, son-in-law Randy and grandson, Leo for providing me with the love and support it takes to have such a career as delineated in this monograph.

This publication is dedicated to my parents, Ernest & Cynthia Pancsofar who started me on this journey. Of specific note is the acknowledgement of my dad’s 100th birthday on January 18th, 2018 and subsequent family reunion on June 23, 2018 to celebrate this momentous occasion.

My walk begins.
I start my journey:
A labyrinth path
Of the life of Ernie.
I pass close to myself
At each and every turn.
I recognize and I learn
To be mindful of the times,
The activities and the pace -
To slow down and appreciate
It's a walk and not a race.
What was I thinking?
Who did I know?
Where will my path take me?
How did I grow?
The Changin’ Truths *
(to the Dylan tune – The Times They Are A Changin’)

Come gather round people and I'll sing you a tale.
I'll sing you this song and I'll send it e-mail.
It's a song about learning, teaching and fun.
It's a song that continues and never is done.
'Cause you better start lookin' & searchin' some more
For the truths - - - they are a changin'.

We're talkin' 'bout people with labels and names.
Sometimes we're different & sometimes we're the same.
We all have gifts and talents and skills.
We all have minds and souls and wills.
So look all around you and wonder in awe
For the truths - - - they are a changin'.

Come teachers and students and everyone here.
Come from your schools and gather all near
And celebrate our unique diversity
And welcome us all into your community.
'Cause we all have ambitions and goals and dreams
For the truths - - - they are a changin'.

The rules and the laws have helped pave the way
So parents and families can each have a say
About where, why and when and even ask how
That all children can learn together and now
Get ready for due process and advocacy
For the truths - - - they are a changin'.

It's time to begin my teaching at last
And remember the things that I learned in the past
About gifts and skills and talents and needs
No matter the label each child can succeed
'Cause each student is a wonder and no one must fail
For the truths - - - they are a changin'.

* Let me express my gratitude for a final mentor whose life's work influences me in ways I can only begin to imagine: Bob Dylan.
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My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statement on a given question, but to be consistent with the truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result is that I have grown from truth to truth ...
(attributed to Mahatma Gandhi and a quote from my journals on October 24, 1974)

You are the sum total of everything you’ve ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgot - it’s all there. Everything influences each of us, and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive.
(Maya Angelou, who died a month before the first edition of the Then/Now publication, May 28, 2014)
Then / Now / and Beyond
An Introduction

Several years ago, I developed a visual organizer with the following dimensions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Under Consideration: Current Truths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THEN 1970 – 80s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back in the 1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Long ago 2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this current edition, I added a fifth time period:

| 2020 and Beyond                            |

Periodically, I would record reflections connected to a current question that had gone through some transitions and interpretations as I advanced in my experiences working with students and adults with disabilities. I viewed the ingredients of this visual organizer as “truths”, as I thought them to be, beneath a consistent heading (questions) throughout my career.

I have found the process of completing this self-reflection to be life enhancing and thought provoking. I plan to share the results of this practice with my students who may be interested in their instructor’s advancements in his pursuit of truths.

I believe this process of self-reflection is a necessary one as we transfer our knowledge to the next generation of teachers and students. I do not consider this a polished product and I will be updating and modifying its contents as I age. I will post a current edition on the cover and invite the reader to travel with me as I document my changes in thoughts and feelings on each of the dimensions upon which I have chosen to elaborate.

Throughout this monograph, I have included reflections that connect with each of the truths and an occasional poem, where space allowed.
Forward

Honest, authentic, self reflection is far too rare in these times. Our friend, Ernie Pancsofar, shares his personal and professional journey in vivid and creative detail. From “The Changin’ Truths” to “2020 and Beyond … They are us!” Ernie shares; questions; challenges; encourages and supports all of us with his poems, rhymes, graphics and insightful comments! His personal journey becomes a template for each of our own journeys through our lives!

His constant guide and mentor is the ever changin’ – ever the same – Bob Dylan. Ernie’s reflections, literally, illustrate how times changed him. An illustration is his statement that describes his movement from a focus on “independence” to a focus on “interdependence”!!

2000s… I began to switch my orientation from helping individuals to be independent and, instead, aimed for interdependence as a viable goal. (p. 2)

This most important shift and growth over 40 plus years changed Ernie’s thinking, teaching, and impact on his students AND himself. In 14 reflective sections each of us, as readers, “walk with” Ernie and fill in our own experiences to accompany his own. Very thought provoking, such as Reflection #3!!

What you learn may not be as important as why you learn.
What you earn may not be as important as that you yearn.
To be is just as important as to do. (p. 9)

Read with a creative, open mind and enjoy the journey with Ernie!!!

George G. Ducharme, Ph.D.
Pat Beeman
Co-Directors
Communitas, Inc.