

Undergraduate Student Reflections of Disability: Implications for Postsecondary Pedagogy

Project Update - Marisa Kofke

Submitted October 2015

Purpose

This qualitative study examines several facets of a course about disability issues including undergraduate students' personal and professional perspectives of disability, how their views of disability change, and pedagogical practices used in the course.

Research Activities

The project has been going well and is continuing as planned into this Fall 2015 semester. The data collection for the study began in the Spring 2015 semester and has resumed in the Fall 2015 semester. During the Spring semester my researcher role while collecting the data included observing and co-facilitating in two discussion sections, as well as observing the once weekly full lecture component. Throughout the Fall semester my researcher role changed slightly to solely observing during the full lecture and two discussion sections. This was a decision made by the research team due to the introduction of an additional discussant for the purpose of co-facilitating with the lead instructor and providing personal insights regarding disability. This change in the structure of the course is not related to my role as a researcher or to the study. The data collection methods remain the same as they were initially outlined.

I decided to specifically analyze the following data sources: pre- and post- course questionnaires, reading and learning reflections, and field notes from the observations. The data analysis of these sources started in June after the conclusion of the Spring semester. After engaging in data analysis over the summer I have some preliminary findings. In relation to the first research question I determined the students seem to be independently identify problems and solutions related to different aspects of disability. For the second research question I am looking at the ways the students' assumptions of disability are realized and the differences in their assumptions depending on their major course of study. And in relation to the third research question I have determined the impact of the readings and discussions as pedagogical decisions, which the students reference often in their reflection assignments.

I also have continued to consider theoretical frameworks for this research and have determined that Transformative Learning and Critical Theory within the context of Disability Studies offer interesting possibilities for conceptualizing the study and findings.

As a result of this analytic work, I have made some changes to related to my own

conceptualization of the study. First, I shifted the wording of the title (*perceptions* changed to *reflections*) to better illustrate the study's purpose. Second, I refined the first research question, which now asks: *How do undergraduate students make sense of and understand disability while completing this Disability Studies course?*

Dissemination

The timeline for the development of two manuscripts has been adjusted. I had originally planned to have a manuscript with results from the first semester by the fall. The first manuscript is now planned to be written by February 2016, with a second manuscript written by May 2016.

As planned, this research was presented as a poster at the College of Education & Human Development's 2015 Steele Symposium. It will be disseminated in November 2015 as a poster presentation at the Association for University Centers on Disability (AUCD) national conference. A proposal was submitted to the 2016 American Education Research Association (AERA) Conference, with notification of acceptance to the conference anticipated in November. Also, several proposals are planned for conferences occurring in 2016 (e.g. Penn Ethnography Forum, Equity and Social Justice Conference, Society for Disability Studies Conference, Disability Studies in Education Conference). I plan to contact the Center for Disabilities Studies to schedule a Lunchtime Learning presentation of this research during the Spring 2016 semester.

Grant Funds

The grant funds were used to attend the Society for Disabilities (SDS) conference in Atlanta, GA from June 10-13, 2015. I attended a daylong pre-conference event, the Disability and Social Justice Summit on June 10, with the SDS conference commencing that evening. An extensive summary of the conference and timeline of events and speakers is attached. The total amount spent includes the conference registration, registration for the Summit, and hotel accommodations for 5 nights at the discounted conference rate. To make use of the generously reduced conference attendance rate for members, I purchased a one-year membership to SDS. The initial budget allotted for airfare, however I decided to drive to Atlanta and there is a balance of \$108.80. I would like to use this remaining balance to fund the printing of the poster for the AUCD conference, and to purchase 2 print books relevant to this project, which are not currently in print circulation at the UD library. See below for an itemized account of the funds.

Itemized Expenditures

Society for Disability Studies Conference

- Social Justice Summit- \$40
- SDS Conference at the Early Bird Rate- \$150 with membership (without SDS membership the total would have been \$250)
- SDS Membership- \$40
- Stay in the Hilton Hotel June 9-14 (@ \$139/night + tax)- \$806.20
- Total: \$1,036.20

Approximate prices for the remaining \$108.80

- Poster Printing: \$30.00
- Books (pricing according to Amazon.com):
 - \$41.95- Connor, D., Valle, J. (2014). *Practicing Disability Studies in Education: Acting Toward Social Change*. Peter Lang.
 - \$35.14- Goodley, D. (2014). *Dis/ability Studies: Theorising Disablism and Ableism*. Routledge.
- Total: \$107.09

Remaining Timeline

August – December: Participate in one common lecture and two discussion sections weekly for the duration of the semester. Collect observational and narrative data.

October-December: Continue data analysis from previously developed themes.

November: During the last week of class provide the link to the post-course questionnaire. Present a poster at the AUCD national conference on November 16.

December 2015- February 2016: Develop manuscript from the Spring semester data and submit to a journal.

February- May 2016: Analyze data from both semesters. Develop manuscript of entire study for submittal to a journal.



CENTER FOR THE
STUDY of
DIVERSITY