Cultural Diversity & Disability Studies
What We Have Learned at the University of Hawaii

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Key Points

1. There is a need for the integration of multicultural studies and disability studies.
2. Graduate coursework in DS should include multicultural perspectives.
3. Faculty development should include disability as a component of diversity.
Integration of Disability Studies & Multicultural Studies
Consider the Relationship

Multiculturalism
Human condition
Identity
Classifier

Multiculturalism + Disability
Acculturation

Disability
Human condition
Identity
Classifier
Definition of Culture

- **SYSTEM** of learned and shared standards for perceiving, interpreting and behaving in interactions with others and with the environment
- Cultural system *components* include:
  - Behaviour
  - Communication
  - Knowledge
  - Relationships
  - Transmission of culture
Is There a Disability Culture?

Yes: What we share

- history of oppression
- stigma of difference
- political advocacy
- language (signed or “crip lingo”)
- arts

No: What we don’t share

- religion (except in a church that welcomes us)
- geography (except in institutions and certain communities)
- food (except at Potlucks and fast food joints)
- family customs (except when our parents are disabled or our peers are our family)
Cultural Assumptions

Assumptions that we make based on our own culture and the culture of others.

Impacted by biases, stereotypes.

These assumptions impact our work with students, colleagues, and clients.

Understanding these assumptions can lead to cultural awareness.
SECTION TWO

Graduate Course in Multiculturalism and Disability
Course Description

**Context:** One of a 5-course series for the Graduate Certificate in Disability and Diversity Studies at UHM.

**Goal:** Provide background and understanding of various cultures in the conceptualization and treatment of persons with disabilities.
1. Understand one's own cultural values.

2. Understand history and values of other cultures.

3. Understand impact of culture on research practices.

4. Increase intercultural communication skills.

5. Develop ethnic-sensitive approach to professional and scholarly interactions.
Course Content

- **Readings** reflect both scholarly and personal accounts of cultural issues.

- **Introductory sessions** in meaning of culture, cultural assumptions.

- **Guest speakers** with intimate understanding of specific culture AND disability.

- **Topics vary** by cultural makeup of region.
Faculty Professional Development Series
Need for Training

- **Increasing number of students** with disabilities in higher education.

- Students have **diverse identities** and backgrounds that impact their learning.

- Many **faculty unsure** how to address the needs of diverse student body.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Professional Development Topics at UHM</th>
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1. **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

2. **Multicultural Awareness**

3. **Mentoring**

4. **Disability Awareness**
   - Rights and Responsibilities
   - Hidden Disabilities
   - Assistive Technology
   - Accessible Online Instruction
More Information

- Students with Disabilities as Diverse Learners Project
  www.ist.hawaii.edu

- Certificate in Disability and Diversity Studies at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (now offered via distance education)
  www.cds.hawaii.edu/main/certificates

- Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal
  www.rds.hawaii.edu