Developing Cultural Competence:

Disability as Diversity, Disability Culture, Disability Awareness

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Overview

A. Why culture matters.
B. Learn about common paradigms of disability.
C. Examples of disability culture.
D. Addressing disability as diversity in postsecondary education.
Questions to Consider:

• What is your personal definition of disability?
• Where did your definition of "disability" come from?
• How does your definition of disability affect how you approach your students?

4. How might your understanding of another culture affect your teaching style?
Why Culture Matters
What is Culture?

• SYSTEM of learned and shared standards for perceiving, interpreting and behaving in interactions with others and with the environment.

• Cultural system components.

• Culture is not static.
“Sources of Cultural Identity”

- Race
- Ethnicity/Nationality
- Social Class
- Sex/Gender
- Health
- Age
- Geographic Region
- Sexuality
- Religion
- Social Status
- Language
- Ability/Disability

The Individual
“Socializing Agents that Transmit Culture”

The Individual

- Family
- School
- Church
- Community
- Neighborhood
- Peer Group
- Electronic Media
- Sports
- The Arts
- Print Media
- Workplace
- Technology

Cushner, McClelland, & Safford (1996), Human Diversity in Education: An Integrative Approach, p. 66
“The Cultural Acquisition Process”

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Western vs. Non-western
Collectivistic | CONTINUUM OF VALUES | Individualistic
--- | --- | ---
Interdependence | Independence | Obligations to others | Individual rights | Rely on group | Self-sufficiency | Adhere to traditional values | True to own values and beliefs | Maintain traditional practices | Continuously improve practices (progress) | Fulfill roles within group | Pursue individual goals/interests | Group achievement | Individual achievement | Competition between groups | Competition between individuals | Group/hierarchical decision-making | Self-determination, individual choice | Shame/guilt due to failing group | Shame/guilt due to individual failure | Living with kin | Independent living | Family takes care of own | Seek outside help if needed | Property shared within group | Strong individual property rights | Elders transmit (oral) knowledge | Individuals seek (textual) knowledge | Objects valued for social uses | Objects valued for technological uses
Common Paradigms Of Disability
Assumptions about Causes and Effects of Disability
A. Medical Model

Disability is located:

In an individual
(who is broken or sick
and needs fixing or curing)
B. Social Model

Disability is located:

In environment, which prevents people with disabilities from access to (for example):

Buildings
Communication
Education
C. Disability Culture/Pride Model

Disability is located
In positive identity:

People with disabilities have forged a group identity. We share a common history of oppression and a common bond of resilience. We generate art, music, literature, and other expressions of our lives and our culture, infused from our experience of disability. Most importantly, we are proud of ourselves as people with disabilities. We claim our disabilities with pride as part of our identity. We are who we are: we are people with disabilities.

(Brown, *Movie Stars and Sensuous Scars*, 2003, pp. 80-81)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE/MEDICAL/CHARITY PARADIGMS</strong></th>
<th><strong>DISABILITY RIGHTS CULTURE/PRIDE PARADIGM</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEFINITIONS OF PROBLEMS</strong></td>
<td>Physical or mental impairments; lack of socio-economic, political, educational, and cultural skills</td>
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<td>Dependence on professionals, family members, and others; hostile attitudes and environments; lack of legal protections or recognition of inherent worth of disabled people</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LOCUS OF PROBLEMS</strong></td>
<td>In individual (who is broken or sick and needs fixing or curing)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In socio-economic, political, educational, and cultural environments and perceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL ROLES</strong></td>
<td>Patients, clients, charity recipients, non-existent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family and community members, customers, coworkers, advocates, same as anyone else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS</strong></td>
<td>Professional and volunteer interventions and treatments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equitable socio-economic, political, educational, and cultural options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHO CONTROLS</strong></td>
<td>Professional and/or volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual or group of individual's choice</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DESIRED OUTCOMES</strong></td>
<td>Maximum self-care; No social misfits</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pride in unique talents and attributes of each individual and positive disability identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of Disability Culture

• http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMSrpZi_6WM&feature=related
• Fishing is Free
• http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmJ6FDj9R1k
D. Storytelling Model

Disability is located Everywhere:

We all have so many stories to bear
Cry, laugh, sing, and despair;
how will our children learn and compare
if we’re too timid to dare
to raise the flare
share that we care.

From, Steven E. Brown, “Tell Your Story”
E. Policy/Legal Model

An individual is considered to have a disability if:
• S/he has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities,

• S/he has a record of such an impairment, or

• S/he is regarded as having such an impairment
Disability as Civil Rights

- The law posits disability rights as a form of civil rights. How did this thinking come about?
- People with disabilities formed a civil rights movement, inspired by that of the 1960s.
- The law now asks us to think of disability discrimination like discrimination on the basis of race or gender.

“Access is a civil right.”
Disability Law

• Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act
  ✓ The first acknowledgment of disability discrimination
  ✓ Agencies receiving federal funds may not discriminate on
    the basis of disability, including public schools and
    universities.

“I can’t even get to the back of the bus.”
The 1990 Americans With Disabilities Act

- First comprehensive civil rights law that outlawed disability discrimination in public and private areas.
- Title II: People with disabilities have the right to access and participate in public programs and services in which people without disabilities participate, including attending YOUR class.
- You and the institution are responsible for providing accommodations.
- Failure to provide accommodations is a form of discrimination.
Disability, Diversity, and Postsecondary Education
Signs of Positive Growth

• An increasing number of students with disabilities are entering colleges & universities.
  ✓ Enrollment has tripled since the 1970s.
  ✓ Students with Disabilities make up approximately 9% - 12% of the total U.S. college population.

• A postsecondary education degree serves as an equalizer for persons with disabilities in employment settings
But...in reality

• Only 41% of SWD in postsecondary education obtain a degree

• Unemployment rates for SWD with a college degree range from 33% to 45%

• For people aged 16-64, only 56% of people with disabilities are employed
How to include disability as diversity in postsecondary education

Traditionally:
• Working with your disability student services office to provide appropriate accommodations.
• Support provision is linked to access rather than learning success or program completion.

Now:
• Addressing the needs through Universal Design for Learning.
• Disability studies programs.
Universal Design Continuum

Accommodating individuals one at a time

Universal Design: Barrier-free, fewer individual accommodations needed

Americans with Disabilities Act

Higher Education Opportunity Act
Universal Design for Learning

“[Universal Design for Learning] UDL provides a blueprint for creating flexible goals, methods, materials, and assessments that accommodate learner differences. ‘Universal’ does not imply a single optimal solution for everyone. Instead, it is meant to underscore the need for multiple approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners.” (CAST, [www.cast.org](http://www.cast.org))
Principles of UDL

• Multiple means of representation

• Multiple means of expression

• Multiple means of engagement
Diversity of Strengths

- Learning through seeing
- Learning through hearing
- Learning through touching and doing
Diversity of Challenges

- Lack of interest or engagement
- Returning/age
- Learning disabilities
- Sensory and physical disabilities
- Psychiatric disabilities
- Language barriers
How is UDL Applied in Postsecondary Settings?

- Diversification of instructional method
- Diversification of instructional materials
- Application of technology
Interdisciplinary Certificate Program in Disability and Diversity Studies

• 15 credit graduate level program by the Center on Disability Studies (CDS) in the College of Education.
• An interdisciplinary approach to disabilities and diversity issues.
• The goal is to acquire skills in joint planning, decision-making, goal setting and to understand contemporary disability issues, research, and effective practices from a social, political, cultural and historical context.
• Trained over 700 graduate students.
• Students from over 15 disciplines including: education, social work, psychology, public health, law, nursing, and political science.
Questions & Comments

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