

MAINSTREAMING CRITICAL DISABILITY STUDIES:  
TOWARDS UNDOING THE LAST PREJUDICE

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Colleen Ann McDonald-Morken

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**Title**  
MAINSTREAMING CRITICAL DISABILITY STUDIES:  
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**By**  
Colleen Ann McDonald-Morken  
Nom de Plume Cali L. Anicha

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The Supervisory Committee certifies that this *disquisition* complies with  
North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards  
for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

Dr. Christopher Ray  
Chair

---

Dr. Elizabeth Roumell

---

Dr. Nathan Wood

---

Dr. Clayton Hilmert

---

Dr. Canan Bilen-Green

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Approved:

4/08/14  
Date

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Dr. William Martin  
Department Chair

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## **ABSTRACT**

According to critical disability studies scholars, disablism may be the fundamental system of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging upon which all other notions of difference-as-deviance are constructed. If so, a deeply critical and intersectional investigation of enabled privilege/disablism prepares a grounding from which seeds of novel and effective approaches to social and educational justice may be cultivated. Whether or not disablism holds this pivotal position, the costs to us all in terms of personal, ethical, professional, and financial losses are too steep, have always been too steep. In this disquisition I begin by arguing for the prioritizing and centering of a radical emancipatory discourse—across and within all education venues—regarding disability. In Chapter 2, I explore models of disability and notice where awareness of enabled privilege has been absent in my own experience as an educator and call for all educators to consider what might it mean if awareness of enabled privilege and the harms of disablism were at the center of our daily personal, social, and institutional lives. Chapter 3 investigates the perceptions of post-compulsory education professionals regarding what constitutes disability allyship and identifies three unique viewpoints. Chapter 4 blends conceptualizations of allyship developed within various social justice literatures with those identified viewpoints of disability allyship to yield a model professional development approach focused on an intersectional analysis for social justice through disability justice. The dissertation concludes in Chapter 5 with a discussion of core assertions and findings and points to future research priorities.

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An original draft of Chapter 4 was developed collaboratively with Dr. Chris Ray. Also, much of the research regarding allyship, a topic central to Chapter 3, was accomplished while working on a writing project with Dr. Ann Burnett and her insights and guidance are well-represented in that manuscript.

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#### AUTHOR'S NOTE

I have also published under my nom de plume, Cali L. Anicha.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. To Lynn, who continues to bring love and balance to my life. To my parents who were my first teachers of compassion and justice and to my siblings and extended family—each of you are in my heart at all times. And to my children, and all the world’s children, who remind me that it truly matters what we believe, say, and do, and to whose thrival I commit.

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## CHAPTER 1. AN ONTOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR DISABILITY JUSTICE

An introduction, by convention, establishes the nature and importance of the topic. After all, it is only polite to begin a conversation at the beginning so that all participants in this text-based discourse are “on the same page.” Wagering that the readers’ interest is engaged by the disquisition title’s suggestion that perceptions of disability may be understood as wrongful prejudice, I begin by attempting to establish a shared meaning for the construct of disability. And there’s the rub. Definitions of disability are historically, culturally, and ontologically dependent. Yesteryear’s now-repugnant characterizations of people perceived as disabled as invalids or imbeciles is yesterday’s misguided characterization as handicapped is today’s clumsy characterization as differently-abled. “Different from what?” we might reasonably ask. Definitions vary across as well as within sociocultural contexts resulting in a myriad of culturally-encoded definitions of disability (Brown, 2002). Moreover, interrupting complacency regarding conceptualizations of disability is a primary intent of this disquisition, and accordingly I am reluctant to attempt consensus.

Though I hedge, it is likely that we already hold at least partially-shared perceptions of disability. Perhaps identifying the frequency with which disability is experienced or exploring the magnitude of disability discrimination would serve to signal its import. How many of us experience disability? How frequently does disability discrimination occur and what are the types and degrees of the harms it propagates? Goodley (2011) provides a reprise of statistics from around the globe: world-wide one person in ten is deemed disabled and there are higher incidences of disability in locales experiencing armed conflict, malnutrition, and poverty, with 97 % of impairments acquired postnatally; people of color are more likely to be labeled with psychiatric or educational disabilities. While 88% of people experiencing disability live in

economically marginalized countries, in the United States, “19.3% ...of the ‘civilian non-institutionalized population of five years or older’” are identified as disabled (Goodley, 2011, pp. 1-2).

People perceived as disabled are more likely to experience economic hardship, be excluded from educational and social venues, and to be targets of rape and other interpersonal violence. Prenatal tests are increasingly used to identify and eradicate “impaired” fetuses. Goodley goes on to note, “[a]live, people with impairments are ignored, pitied, patronised, objectified, and fetishised... [w]hile impaired bodies and minds have always been a part of everyday life, demeaning societal responses... are historically and culturally relative” (Goodley, 2011, p. 2). The “multiple deprivations” (Barnes & Sheldon, 2010) experienced by people perceived as disabled have been comprehensively cataloged and the rendering of vast and pervasive discrimination and violence is unassailable and harsh: being perceived as disabled is hazardous to one’s economic, social, psychological, and physical health (Finkelstein, 2001a, 2007; Meekosha, 2011; Shildrick, 2012; Snyder, Brueggemann, & Garland-Thomson, 2002; Watson, Roulstone, & Thomas, 2012).

Having established a need for investigations of the phenomena labeled disability, let us revisit questions of definition. If one’s belief about the nature of reality and the experience of being human, that is, one’s ontology, is grounded in expectations of universally “ideal” bodies or minds, one is likely to see disability as a problematic deviation from that ideal. Alternatively, if one’s worldview is grounded in expectations of ever-changing and widely-ranging human differences, one is likely to construct disability as an essentially perceptual and/or social issue. Religious or cultural beliefs may identify either malevolent or beneficent spiritual influences as primary causes of disability (Bragg, 1997; Fadiman, 1997; Nielsen, 2012). The medical model



characterizes disability as a function of individual biology (Kaplan, 1999). In social models persons perceived as disabled experience barriers arising primarily from cultural customs and institutional practices (Barnes, 2003; Smart, 2009; Snyder & Mitchell, 2006). There are numerous additional permutations and analyses regarding the constitution and consequences of perceptions of disability, many of which will be explored in this dissertation. Clearly, it matters what we believe.

If we wish to foster particular directions of change, as is commonly intended by educational reform, institutional transformation, or quality improvement projects, we must first become cognizant of our foundational ontologies. The personal and ethical costs of disability discrimination, as well as professional and financial losses are extensive. If we intend to dismantle systems that perpetuate the noxious and self-destructive cultural conduct that comprises disability discrimination, we need to be deeply strategic.

### **Navigational Considerations for Changing Course**

Robinson (2010) said, “A paradigm is what we think of something before we think about it.” Our paradigms about disability are what we believe *before we think about it*. Beliefs influence perceptions, and are thus the drivers of attitudes and actions (Bandura, 2000, 2006; Homer & Kahle, 1988; Milfont, Duckitt, & Wagner, 2010; Ray, 2006; Smart, 2009). When it comes to beliefs about human difference, whether we believe a characteristic is inherently dangerous or problematic, or inherently beneficial, our responses tend to be in kind. Moreover, our paradigms about the nature of humanity and about our relationships within our biological, psychological, and social worlds operate to iteratively and mostly non-consciously (re)create our beliefs, perceptions, and relationships in whatever contexts we find ourselves (Wood, Erichsen,

& Anicha, 2013). These complex sets of social structures, these “social imaginaries” (Searle, 2008a, 2008b; Taylor, 2004), give rise to shared social practices.

Miller, Parker, and Gillinson (2004) refer to discrimination based on perceptions of disability as “the last prejudice.” Effectively setting a course for undoing disability discrimination requires that we contemplate, interrogate, and unpack our personal and cultural ontologies: What do we truly believe about “the being of human” (Brookner, 2012)? Do those beliefs match up with our deepest values? If there is disconnection between what we hold in high regard and our attitudes or behaviors, how does that arise? Where might we have taken the cognitive turn(s) that moved us away from our core values? One may wonder, what benefits might we anticipate in asking and answering these first-order questions? Because matters of belief are the drivers of human attitudes and actions, insights obtained and choices made in the present regarding our most closely held values and paradigms may guide us to starkly different futures.

In one future narrative, the current dominant culture trajectory takes us to an already too-present reality in which choosing to be your unmodified self is equated with noncompliance, cluelessness, or immorality (Bragg, 1997; Campbell, 2008b; Erevelles, 2002). This enforced normativity, that is, what social convention suggests we ought to think or do (De Caro & Macarthur, 2010), can be observed today in westernized and high-resourced countries in the booming cosmetic and reconstructive surgery industry and in the virtual epidemic of psychotropically managed attentional and mood “disorders” (Goodley, 2011; Wolbring, 2009b). Wolbring (2009a) sees these trends as reflections of the deeper belief structures of *ableism*, a paradigm that “shapes goals people put forward and is often a goal in itself” (para. 9). He predicts that science and technology will continue to develop “products that enable new abilities

and expectations and desires for new forms of abilities making possible new forms of ableism” (para. 9). As communication and transportation technologies generate the potential for expanded local and global connections among and between institutions, communities, and persons, this is a worldview that engenders discrimination based on perceived disability and thwarts the full expression of vital human diversities.

This social imaginary motivates a chilling neo-eugenics movement. Foreshadowed by present-day medical, social service, and special education practices (Baker, 2002; Grenier, 2010; Shakespeare, 1998; Smith, 2001), it is a paradigm that supports the tracking and manipulation of fetal development in order that characteristics ranging from eye color to potential gene expression can be selected. Individuals whose physiques, cognitive patterns, or moods are left unaltered reap the consequences of political, social, and material disadvantaging (Burchardt, 2004; Hällström, 2009; Sherry, 2010; Stevens, 2011a). Productivity is privileged over diversity and those with access to financial resources maintain that access by acquiring the physiological and psychiatric modifications demanded by system norms (Barnes & Sheldon, 2010; Boyd, 2012; Imrie, 2000; Wolbring, 2009b, 2009c). As discussed more fully in upcoming sections of this manuscript, social systems are made robust through diversity; thus the repression of diversity that is inherent in this worldview serves to delimit creativity and stagnates our capacities for problem solving (Mitchell, 2009; Mitchell & Newman, 2002; Page, 2011).

A different future narrative points to an also already-present viewpoint perhaps best articulated by critical disability studies scholars in which compulsory normativity (Campbell, 2009) is intentionally revealed and studied in its myriad forms. In this social imaginary, thoughtful considerations of who benefits and who loses leads to revision of cultural norms and practices so they no longer contribute to political, social, and material injustices (Burghardt,

2011; Gabel & Peters, 2004). Human diversities are understood as central aspects of valued and desirable lifeworlds (Block, Balcazar, & Keys, 2001; Campbell, 2002; Cole-McCrea, 2001) and are seen as indivisible from sociopolitical, educational, and workplace excellence (Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Maher & Thompson-Tetreault, 2007; Milem, 2003). A diverse and engaged public, inclusive of all perspectives present across societies, is recognized as a requirement for optimal outcomes (Page, 2007, 2011; Shutkin, 2000). As communication and transportation technologies generate the potential for expanded local and global connections among and between institutions, communities, and persons, this worldview ensures access and participation for all. In consequence, effective and creative problem-solving also expands (Bandura, 2000, 2006; Page, 2011; Shutkin, 2000).

Certainly other social imaginaries are possible and perhaps even likely. However, these two sketches provide raw trajectories reflecting where we are headed when we cultivate particular worldviews. Present-day dominant culture in westernized high-resourced nations characterizes disability as aberrant and anomalous; it is expected to be managed, altered, or obliterated. This is a view that is directly at odds with a paradigm that recognizes the simple fact of species-atypical embodiment, cognition, and affect and explicitly values the diverse perspectives of those persons. It is recognized that optimal problem-solving requires an abundance of diverse mind sets and skill sets. Thus, the latter perspective recognizes that a diverse and fully included public is *necessary* to our shared best interests (Miller & Page, 2007; Morrison, 2008; Page, 2007, 2011). In short, discrimination based on perceived disability circumvents the contributions of the world's largest minority (Goodley, 2011) and, in so doing, harms us all. Indeed, a disability-positive paradigm turns notions of the welfare state on its head:

rather than the enabled majority providing for the welfare of disabled citizens, it is those who are perceived as disabled who insure the welfare of us all.

### **Ubiquitous Yet Invisible**

Discrimination based on perceived disability is perhaps the most pervasive, yet least acknowledged, form of inequity in contemporary societies (Arenas Conejo, 2011; Barnes & Sheldon, 2010; Berry, 2012; Bickenbach, 2011), signaled by “poverty, mass unemployment, discrimination and the indignity of denigrating [*sic*] social prejudices” (Watermeyer, 2009, p. 1). As is true in many parts of the world, in the United States (U.S.), disability has been recognized as a category of human diversity warranting legal protections, with a variety of legislation enacted before, during, and since the Civil Rights Era (Bickenbach, 2011; FCC, 2003; Nielsen, 2012; Oliver & Barnes, 2012; USDOJ, 2009). Legal protections notwithstanding, discrimination based on perceived disability continues to be rampant across educational, employment, and community settings (Albrecht, Skiba, Losen, Chung, & Middelberg, 2012; Baynton, 2008; Berry, 2012; CDC, 2012; Cole-McCrea, 2001; Davis, 2002; Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010; Kudlick, 2003). Yet, in discourses around diversity, disability is often entirely missing from inventories of protected classes or is seen merely as a contributing factor in experiences of other forms of oppression such as racism or sexism (Fox & Lipkin, 2002). The costs, in economic as well as ethical terms, are profound. “Disabled” is a social category to which all persons presently or potentially belong and thus is a topic relevant to all.

What can account for the puzzling absence of disability from mainstream discourses on human diversity given its ubiquitous presence in human experience? Davis (2011) theorizes that even though we are over 20 years post the landmark legislation of the American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA), from the viewpoint of our cultural ontology “disability is antithetical to

diversity” (para. 4). Disability is recognized globally and nationally as a human and civil rights issue, though it continues to be left out of the “traditional interpretive troika of race, class, and gender” (Burch, 2003) in much of academic research conducted in the English language. For example, the call for a March 2012 Special Focus section of the National Education Association’s journal *Thought & Action* asked for responses to the query, “[a]re we fulfilling the nation's implicit promise to deliver a high-quality higher education to all who qualify, regardless of race, gender, or income?” The 2013 *Review of Research in Education*, a top-rated journal, effectively dismisses disability in its enumeration of “poverty, race, social class, and language” as characteristics of nondominant students benefiting from “Extraordinary Pedagogies” (Volume 37). Even when disability is included as it is in Curry-Stevens’ (2007) important study of transformative adult education, again it is race, class, and gender that are directly addressed and disability is essentially mentioned in passing. Such positioning of disability in vaguely supporting roles is problematized by disabilities studies scholars (Fox & Lipkin, 2002; LeBesco, 2004; Whittington-Walsh, 2002) as yet another erasure of disability—and thus of the people experiencing lived realities of disability discrimination.

Indeed, disability status is routinely ignored or obscured. How do we make sense of this cultural environment in which disability is acknowledged as a characteristic warranting legal remedies, yet is either missing entirely from or is persistently marginalized in discourses about systemic discrimination? The collective scholarship of community and intellectual activists reveals that the typical machinations of systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging—that is, idealized norms combined with threats of individual and institutional coercion or violence (Combahee River Collective, 2000; Hill Collins, 2013; Lorde, 1984; Pharr, 1988)—apply to disability, though with distinctive twists. Similar to socioeconomic status, disability status

freights cultural connotations of moral and/or psychological stereotypes (e.g. the heroically inspirational or deviant and dangerous); unlike racialized or gendered characteristics, disability may be considered avoidable or remediable. Yet, understanding the ubiquitous *and* invisible status of disability is more complex than these comparisons may suggest.

Disability studies is an academic field that has been developing in westernized countries since the 1970's and scholars have been grappling with the ostensible invisibility of disability within majority cultural consciousness for decades (Baynton, 2008; Campbell, 2009; Davis, 2002; Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010; Kudlick, 2003; Putnam, 2005; Snyder & Mitchell, 2006). While founding disability studies scholars recognize and applaud the growth in disability-focused publications and in disability studies programs (Baglieri & Arthur, 2011; Gabel, 2005; Gleeson, 1997; Goodley, 2011; Watson et al., 2012), from the perspective of current mainstream diversity discourses, questions linger regarding the visibility of disability.

Cultural “givens” often lie outside majority cultural awareness and often resist a simple or straightforward accounting. A thoughtful observation of this cultural atmosphere with regard to disability is found in a talk given by Yee (2007) as she quoted an Irish law professor (Gerard Quinn) regarding his involvement with the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

I think a disability treaty was needed for many reasons—but one stands out for me. It has nothing to do with law—and everything to do with the war of ideas... it is remarkable how in many different cultures throughout the world persons with disabilities were effectively treated as lesser human beings. It is as if the rationality of... valuing each human being equally... pointed in one direction and our culture pulled in the other. And *the*

*contradiction was not even experienced or acknowledged a contradiction [emphasis added]* (para. 10).

It is this paradoxical belief structure regarding human life that must be pulled from the shadows and interrogated if disability justice is to be done.

### **Conceptual Tools For Investigating Contradictions**

In order to bring the contradictions interlaced within our notions of disability to awareness, new or refurbished conceptual tools are needed. Which theories and paradigms might support such awareness in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century where individuals and institutions must navigate increasingly complex environments and social worlds? As discussed previously, our beliefs about human diversity must first be explicitly acknowledged, investigated, and in many cases, renegotiated. Key concepts developed within complexity sciences, critical disability studies, and critical global or transnational studies, offer useful conceptual tools for this undertaking; taken together they provide powerful theoretical maps of present and potential social imaginaries. The following sections provide an overview of these disciplinary approaches and begin to delineate connections among them relevant to conceptualizations of disability.

#### **The Conceptual Scaffolding: Complexity Science**

Complexity science is considered first because it offers the structures upon and through which the critical and transnational conceptual material can be assembled and integrated. Complexity science is sometimes named “the new science” signaling a departure from currently dominant scientific paradigms that have guided modern westernized research conventions (Mitchell, 2009; Mitchell & Newman, 2002). This complexity thinking (Davis & Sumara, 2008) views all phenomena as arising within nested, interconnected, and interdependent *systems*, thus



notions of cause and effect must be considered within those contexts of mutuality and influence. Complex systems can be described as having four defining characteristics: 1) multiple *diverse* actors or agents that 2) are *connected* such that they 3) become *interdependent* and 4) demonstrate *adaptive* capacity—agents, and the systems they comprise, learn, come to fresh conclusions, and take novel actions (Miller & Page, 2007; Page, 2011). Complexity science scholars suggest that human societies are currently experiencing increasing complexity engendered by flourishing communication and transportation technologies. Although access to new technologies is differentially available around the globe, technological changes bear implications for all the world's denizens due to influences on physical as well as social environments.

All living biological entities, including single celled organisms, plants, nonhuman animals, and humans, exist within diverse and interdependent (social) contexts that require adaptation (learning) to be sustained. Today's complex human social systems are made up of multiple culturally distinct agents who are experiencing more frequent opportunities to interact through technologies and to adapt to and learn from one another. While many of these interactions may be transitory or intermittent, previously unimagined ideas or behaviors can emerge from even short-lived interdependencies. Because agents in complex systems adapt to circumstances as they arise, thus creating new sets of circumstances to learn in and from, complex systems (and the actors constituting them) demonstrate dynamic nonlinear behaviors and are thus minimally controllable and predictable. Moreover, increased frequencies of interdependent interactions represent an increased degree of complexity with attendant unpredictability. This increasing unpredictability is present in many aspects of contemporary societies.

Conventional science paradigms and research approaches that rely by default on theories and analyses based on linear relationships are often ill-suited to today's complex social and environmental contexts. While complexity science may “refuse tidy descriptions” (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. xi), it offers a wider set of effective conceptual structures—of ideas to think with (Eisenhart, 2001). Fundamental to complexity science is the recognition that random or Gaussian distributions, along with measurements and interventions premised upon the controllability and predictability (replicability) of simple linear relationships within such distributions, cannot be expected to be broadly representative of the nonlinear dynamic activities characteristic of human social systems. This becomes particularly salient when we recognize that conventional cultural conceptualizations of disability are dependent upon the assumption that human variability manifests within or under this familiar bell-shaped curve or “normal” distribution (Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010). Thus, the construct of disability relies on notions of normalcy that arise from an ontology that (over)privileges Gaussian distributions and simple linear relationships. Disability is imagined as the manifestation of “the left field” of human diversity, that is, *minus n* standard deviations from the mean or average human.

A complexity science approach destabilizes this construction by first troubling our unexamined allegiance to replicability, controllability, and predictability, and then offering new structures for conceptualizing the manifestations and functions of human diversities. Diversity is understood as *inherent and necessary* in complex systems. Whereas the current dominant cultural view of disability can be characterized as a deficit model, a complexivist analysis does not ascribe specific values to particular human differences. Rather, diversity is recognized as a system parameter providing both procreative and stabilizing influences. A system with too little diversity signals stagnation. Diversity promotes resiliency and constitutes thriving, responsive,

robust systems (Miller & Page, 2007; Page, 2007, 2008, 2011). While a world of teeming diversity may at times seem to engender confusion and cross-purposes at micro and meso scales, on larger macro scales a world populated with vast and varied diversities reflects a social system with the potential for all needs to be met, for the “hard problems” of humankind to be resolved.

It is undeniably important to acknowledge that Gaussian distributions and linear relationships are indeed observed in selected subsets of biological and social systems and that a vast store of important knowledge has come to light through this lens. However, investigations of living biological and social worlds that are limited to such relationships unnecessarily restrict us to exploring what is easy to measure rather than what is meaningful to measure. While a complexivist stance is unique from current dominant science practices, the viewpoints are not irreconcilable. Davis (2008) points out that,

Complexity thinking provides a means around this apparent impasse [*incompatibility among disciplines/paradigms*] and it does so by emphasizing the need to study phenomena at the levels of their emergence, oriented by the realization that new stable patterns of activity arise and that those patterns embody emergent rules and laws that are native to the system. (p. 52)

There are myriad methodological approaches and tools that have been developed within the field(s) of science to date. Complexity thinking integrates those approaches and tools with new unimagined means, wielding them in novel and beneficial ways. As we seek to better understand manifestations of human variability currently circumscribed as disability, a complexivist ontology suggests that there is no such thing as “normal” and presses us to re-imagine human diversity.

## **The Operating System: Critical Disability Studies**

This re-imagining is facilitated through a critical disability studies perspective, the second of three disciplinary approaches constituting this disquisition's ontological framework. A critical disability studies perspective approach recognizes that notions of normalcy work behind the scenes to coordinate the retrieval, manipulation, and storage of cultural data, thereby orchestrating our "habits of knowing" (Davis, 2010, p. 137). By posing classic critical theory queries, this approach reboots and reconfigures the system of operations: Whose/Who's normal? Whose knowledge? How was/is it created? Who benefits?

Critical theory scrutinizes social contexts and attempts to identify cultural beliefs and practices that legitimate inequalities (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2010). The processes through which these beliefs and practices perpetuate injustice is known as cultural hegemony and Gramsci is known for providing the bulk of originating scholarship on this construct (Adamson, 1980). While the concept of hegemony has been adopted and adapted by innumerable scholars, simply stated hegemony "means domination through consent as much as coercion" (Lash, 2007, p. 55). We provide consent when we accept discriminatory status quos or believe without question in the authority of our social institutions such as schools, churches, or governments.

Gender studies scholars use a critical lens to reveal the enforcement of heteronormativity through hegemonic notions of masculinity (Messerschmidt, 2012; Montgomery & Stewart, 2012) and the hegemony of white racial superiority is explored by critical race theorists (Gold, 2004). Critical disability studies scholarship reveals the operating systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging based on perceptions of disability. In disability studies texts, scholars describe the hegemony of disability (Oliver 1995/2012) and ableist normativity (Campbell, 2008). Thus, "hegemonic normativity" can be understood as both the process and the product of a

transcription of societal norms onto human bodies and lifeworlds, norms that identify difference-as-deviance and create and maintain twinned systems of social empowerment and disempowerment.

Critical theorists ask who benefits from the cultural practices of hegemony? In a world built around hegemonic normativity, economic and social benefits resulting from *enabled privilege* accrue to people who are perceived as non-disabled. I use the term *enabled privilege* rather than *abled privilege* because it simultaneously avoids stereotypical associations of disability with physicality (i.e. able-bodied) while following naming conventions used in other critical theory disciplines by shifting the focus from individuals perceived as disabled, to persons benefiting from a particular system of unearned advantaging. Examples from racialized and gendered discourse can help make this point.

In racialized discourses, white skin is constructed as normative and thus white privilege is reproduced. The racialized practices of European colonizers generated a confounding global legacy of systemic pigmentocracy (Lynn, 2008), even while that skin tone is represented in only about 11% of the world's population (Jones, 2012). In gendered discourses, a heterosexual cisgender male embodiment is constructed as normative and thus straight male privilege is reproduced. Normative constructions of gender force a false bipolar identification of male or female, erasing the lived realities of legions of persons whose physical or psychological manifestations of gender fall somewhere in between or outside these poles (Bem, 1995; Fausto-Sterling, 2003)

Similarly, in conventional disability discourses “species-typical” (Campbell, 2009) embodiments, as well as cognitive and affective performances, are constructed as normative and thus *enabled privilege* is reproduced. Normative valuation of species-typical embodiment

suggests that “it is better for a [person] to walk than roll, speak than sign, read print than read Braille” (Hehir, 2002, p. 1). Hegemonic normativity acts as a distortion mirror—our unique humanity is reflected back to us as devalued non-normative images of the self. Our diverse humanities are demeaned at individual as well as social group levels, thereby instantiating harm to us all. Enabled individuals may remain oblivious to discrimination based on perceived disability, though none of us are exempt from its repercussions. Without the ongoing acceptance and enactment of enabled privilege, hegemonic normativity would dissolve.

### **Local and Global Locations: Critical Transnational Studies**

The final disciplinary approach constituting this disquisition’s ontological framework, a critical transnational perspective, takes particular note of implications for local contexts in relation to wider regional and global contexts. A transnational analysis recognizes unequal power relations (re)produced by corporatized “adventures” of Global North/West nation-states and calls for border-crossing acts of resistance (Alexaner & Talpade Mohanty, 2010). Whereas the term international is understood as involvement across more than one nation-state, transnational is understood to reflect personal and political consequences of those boundary-crossings. A critical transnational approach is grounded in recognition of *local* implications of *global* systems of sociopolitical power. Goodley (2011) asserts that “across the globe disability studies have developed in “glocal” ways, reflecting distinct regional contexts” (p. 18).

Transnational scholars examine “the mechanisms through which... nationalized spaces are created... which in the West was powered by slavery, industrial capitalism, and colonialism” (Carty & Das Gupta, 2009, p. 100) and consider the local implications of those mechanisms.

Notions of disability have been and continue to be built upon the same false premises used to construct other systems of privilege and oppressions. That is, selected characteristics are

merged with negative attributions, and, as noted above, when combined with threats of individual and institutional coercion or violence, these beliefs are the mechanisms through which systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging based on perceived disability status are generated, regenerated, and maintained (for an insightful review see P. Smith, 2004). Paradigms flow across borders, transmitted through social and economic policies and via personal and political relationships. Acknowledging the poly-directional influences inherent in these transnational flows guides us in recognizing unique permutations as well as commonalities in perceptions of disability.

### **Connecting Complexity, Hegemonic Normativity, and Transnational Paradigms: Using the Master's Tools to Dismantle the Master's House**

When these conceptual tools are united a complexivist critical transnational theoretical framework emerges. This merger sets the stage for investigations that are explicitly and unapologetically emancipatory, well-equipped for addressing issues of social justice. Lorde (1984/2007) argued that “the master’s tools cannot dismantle the master’s house,” when she pointed out that mainstream feminism wields the master’s tools when positing white women’s experience as normative, thereby maintaining the master’s house of white privilege. While I find Lorde’s perspective persuasive, in this section I invite you to imagine with me some ways that the master’s tools can indeed dismantle the master’s house of enabled privilege.

Perceptions of disability have been built over centuries of knowledge creation, constructed through philosophizing, theorizing, and empirically investigating the origins, meanings, and manifestations of human life. Within the Anglo-European canon, this work was most often accomplished by species-typical individuals who posited their own experience as normative, thereby establishing and then iteratively buttressing, girding, and otherwise shoring

up their privileged positions through academic exercises in the name of science. The same tools of science—philosophy, theory, and empirical investigation—can be wielded to dismantle enabled-privilege-centric notions of disability by (re)imagining the embodiments and performances of human life as unpredictably, enchantingly diverse.

The philosophical scaffolding of complexity thinking calls for the recognition that multiple layers of system are co-complicit in the functioning at each scale and across their semi-permeable boundaries. This may help us to conceptualize human difference as 1) not merely a manifestation of biological diversity, as does an individual/medical model, 2) not merely a function of cultural views and practices, as does a purely social model, and 3) as more than merely the sum of various parts or aspects of particular human experiences.

Critical disability studies wield the master's tools of philosophizing and theorizing to scrutinize cultural discourses around disability for signs of hegemonic normativity, then generate emancipatory social imaginaries and empirical practices through which all people are psychologically and materially valued. A critical disabilities lens also reveals the raw theoretical materials of the master's house of enabled privilege: ontologies that conflate worthiness and morality with idealized (and mythical) bodies and minds and academic and sociopolitical practices that over-privilege notions of objectivity and universal truths while simultaneously undercutting alternative approaches (Allan, 2008; Anders, 2013; Davis, 2008; Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010; Tremain, 2010). Humming along mostly below conscious awareness, hegemonic normativity establishes networks of beliefs regarding human diversities, orchestrates our perceptions and interprets our experiences, allocates psychological and material resources, and dictates allowable relationships and behaviors. Hegemonic normativity might be imagined as the theoretical operating system that keeps the master's house of enabled privilege running, a virtual



robot-butler that keeps us all locked inside while cultivating in us a Stockholm Syndrome-esque allegiance to enabled privilege.

A critical transnational perspective is also a vitally important conceptual tool in the work of understanding the pervasiveness and tenaciousness of systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging. Explicitly invoking a transnational analysis reminds us that our empirical investigations must include considerations of multiple layers of context. Local experiences are understood as unavoidably linked with regional and global systems of material and social power. The idea of a global village may seem quaint, but the pace of technological change and the concomitant rise of interactions and interdependencies among persons and groups across the world suggest that we are in many important ways, all that. Finally, and perhaps most vitally, because various permutations of hegemonic normativity essentially undergird all systems of privileging/oppressing, understanding structures of enabled privilege and disability discrimination may play an exceptionally important role in their undoing.

### **Summary**

The worldviews promulgated by current dominant culture paradigms see disability as occupying conceptual space at the periphery of a mythical normative center or average. However, disabled is an open-enrollment social category—all humans potentially belong; this makes disability uniquely positioned for fruitful investigations of hegemonic normativity in its myriad formulations. In truth, humans are fundamentally non-normate; across multiple metrics, the majority of humans do not reflect cultural ideals. We are perhaps too short, too tall, too butch, too effeminate, too thin, or too wide. Perhaps we are more anxious or are less attentive than the mythic average human. In each of these instances, it is our self, through our bodies, psyches, and/or behaviors that is marked as deviant, as not-ideal, as non-normative.

Davis (2011) reasons that disability is missing from dominant diversity discourses because normative cultural characterizations of disability are always negative. The human variations perceived to cause or account for disability “need to be repressed because they are a collective *memento mori* of human frailty” (Davis, 2011, para. 5). Thus, calls for celebrating diversity become dissonant—how does a culture mired in hegemonic normativity make sense of the rejected non-normate experience?

To fully grasp hegemonic normativity will require a profound shift in our understandings of ourselves and of the biopsychosocial worlds we inhabit. This shift may be ushered in sooner than later by the reality that, in many parts of the world today, notions of the normative human and of typical human experience are swiftly transforming. Local and global human rights movements may reveal the folly of a socioeconomic model that over-privileges normative labor capacities and in so doing loses the creative efforts of legions of diverse workers. A full trans-cultural shift will be at hand when notions of normalcy—of the normate human (Garland-Thomson, 1996; McRuer, 2004)—no longer persuade.

### **Interrupting Hegemonic Normativity**

As the title of this dissertation suggests, bringing critical disability studies into the mainstream of educational practices may lay the groundwork for undoing discrimination based on perceived disability. Because we are, all of us, bound up in this interdependent web of normative and non-normative identities, a robust and intersectional understanding of hegemonic normativity, along with analyses of the socioeconomic and psychological costs of attendant enabled privileges, may benefit us all. Disability is a common term in mainstream culture discourses, thus it offers us a generally shared conceptual handle for grasping the larger puzzle of hegemonic normativity.

For critical theory scholars and activists, once the operating systems of unearned advantaging/disadvantaging have been identified, the focus shifts to interrupting dominance. To such ends, Apple (2010) echoes other critical education scholars in offering wise counsel—first, recognize that all education is a political act which “requires that we situate it in the unequal relations of power in the larger society and in the realities of dominance and subordination” (p.152). To do this we—dominant-culture we—must “engage in repositioning... to see the world through the eyes of the dispossessed” (p.152). I have experienced such repositioning through my exploration of the compelling scholarship of critical disability studies academics and activists. As a current recipient of enabled privilege, I hold myself accountable for a sincere attempt to explicate—to untangle, to (re)interpret, and to share— what I have come to understand regarding that privilege; as an educator I hold myself answerable to communities of educators, students, and families. Moreover, as a special education professional (a moniker that today gives me pause, for reasons illuminated in the following chapter) I find myself doubly responsible, even liable, for communicating some of the “breadth and depth of knowledge” (EDP, n.d.) revealed to me through my graduate study explorations of lived realities and cultural notions of disability.

This introduction positions hegemonic normativity and enabled privilege as the twinned tap-root of perceptions of disability, which in turn supports social and material injustices arising out of disability discrimination. Chapter Two of this dissertation is a manuscript written as an open letter to my education colleagues, presenting an integrative review of existing literatures on disability as seen through a narrative lens, and closes with questions of myself and my peers as to how we might move toward more justice-centric systems of education. In Chapter Three, perceptions among educators in post-compulsory settings regarding the beliefs and behaviors of

disability allies are investigated through a mixed-method approach (Q Method). Findings from the integrative review and the Q-analyses provide the foundation from which a professional development model and modules for teaching about disability allyship are built in Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five recaps and reconsiders core assertions/findings, identifies limitations, and suggests future research priorities.

## CHAPTER 2. CONSCIENTIZATION: EDUCATIONAL REFORM FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Throughout these pages I extend an invitation for connection and for conversations around “the power and intractability of the idea of “normal”” (Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010, p. 222). I am a public school teacher, returning from a five year leave of absence during which I became a full-time graduate student myself and experienced life on the other side of the desk. My public school educator community was sorely missed, even while I made great new friends at university. It has not been an easy five years for anyone, anywhere in the world, who cares deeply about education. I am longing to deepen my own understandings and to fashion what I have learned into something of benefit. To that end, I share with you an idea I have been pondering. It is presented as a blended narrative in personal and academic voice; a docudrama of sorts. I offer this invitation in the spirit of the late and beloved poet-activist June Jordan, who famously invited those who reached her telephone answering machine: “Callin’ on all silent minorities ... we need to have this meeting at this tree that ain’t event been planted yet” (Stein, 2005). Together we can cultivate the seeds of ideas, ideas that perhaps are yet to be planted.

The process of my graduate education has been rather like (I imagine) building and then traversing an interstellar wormhole; it has been a rich, startling, and sometimes bruising passage to an alternate universe of cultural meaning. In adopting a narrative lens for this integrative literature review, I explicitly leverage my personal experience and insight in order to entertain a deeper critique of cultural norms, a critique that would likely remain “under the radar” of consciousness in a more conventionally constructed integrative review. This allows for investigations of “unexamined assumptions that govern everyday life, behavior, and decision-making [and that] are as strong as any overt belief” (Muncey, 2010, p. xi). Writing in first

person is additionally important and purposeful as it simultaneously acknowledges my situatedness and signals recognition of the limits of my knowing. A first-person lens is my method of explication choice because it is “a means of getting across intangible and complex feelings and experiences that somehow can’t be told in conventional ways” (Muncey, 2010, pp. 2-3) and thus allows me to use my personal experience to deepen my understanding and analysis of my cultural contexts (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2010, para. 1). Though I feel certain that I am not alone in my experiences, I rarely find them reflected in the education literatures I have explored.

Alternating voice now and again, I will speak from multiple personal and academic identities and positions. Though not a playwright, I will do my best to weave these perspectives into a meaningful, cohesive, and engaging narrative. Turning to my own experiences of evolving critical consciousness as the object of study reflects the idea that academic work can be “a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act” (Ellis et al., 2010, para. 1), a perspective that aligns well with what I value most in educational research—that it is done for the sake of educational, and thus social justice.

### **Unpacking Central Tendencies in Educational Assumptions**

In my pre-service teacher preparation (in the late 1980’s), all that was important to know about how children develop and learn could be understood through the lens of the so-called “normal” or bell-shaped curve. I could expect my first graders to be around 45 inches tall, +/- 2 standard deviations from the average-sized six year old; they would be beginning readers, be gaining in number sense, independently don and doff their jackets, tie their shoes and know to stop whatever they were doing when I flashed the classroom lights off and on (if the kindergarten

teacher had been effective). Moreover, each of them would perform on standardized tests within an average range, +/- two standard deviations from the mean score of the average first grader.

I was taught to expect that some students would not be found within average range rankings. After all, standardized assessments were modeled on *assumptions* of a “normal” Gaussian distribution of scores. Students whose scores fell rather far left of center were deemed in need of remediation while students whose skills landed them rather far right of center were seen as having good parentage and/or parenting and were either celebrated or ignored. I was taught that student characteristics such as general intelligence, or the ability to read, or master math, or to physically manage or independently organize school materials, or behave within expected parameters, or marshal attention in age-appropriate manners and timeframes were essentially stable characteristics that may or may not respond to good teaching. Students whose test scores landed in the left tail of the Gaussian bell-shaped curve would need specialized instruction—and that required identifying them as disabled.

Imagine my consternation when I repeatedly encountered student performance issues that had nothing to do with students’ skills or how well prepared and delivered my lessons were. Rather, classroom contexts, peer relationships, and teacher-student personality (mis)matches mattered. Culturally-biased test items, test-taking contexts, and previous educational experiences mattered. Nutrition and economics mattered. How the students’ weekend went, how welcome and supported they and their family felt in the school and wider community mattered. Whether or not they were ensconced in a community that shared their language and cultural practices mattered and what I believed and expected of them mattered. My confidence in confidence intervals faltered. The outcome-based reforms of the 1990’s and the No Child Left Behind restructurings of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century brought educators together to

grapple with important questions of equity and consistency; they also brought impossible timelines, profoundly insufficient resources, and punitive accountability measures. By the time I left public school settings for my leave of absence in 2008 I no longer believed that our approaches for measuring learning were capturing much of the truly vital and meaningful aspects of knowledge production in the classroom.

Late in my second year of graduate school I came across some researchers who were applying the concept of complexity science to educational concerns. I knew I had hit pay-dirt, but I had no idea it was the mother lode that it has turned out to be.

### **Science and the Paradigm Shift**

A scientific revolution (Kuhn, 1970) is underway and education systems are caught in the crosswinds (Davis, 2008; Horn, 2008). Conventional science paradigms continue to operate as the prevailing ideology; however, the “new science” of complexity is claiming conceptual space for re-thinking educational praxis and reform. Even as this paradigm unfolds in physics, economics, anthropology, biology and sociology (Bar-Yam, 1997; Zimmerman, 2009), nearly all educational research and instructional practices remain fundamentally driven by “old school” conventional science and scholastic customs.

Many P-12 educators in the United States have been demoralized by the utter unrealizability of successful education reforms couched in No Child Left Behind legislation and the standards-based education movement that preceded it (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Giroux, 2002, 2009; Saltman, 2012). The most recent incarnation of standards-based reform comes by way of Common Core approaches, the successes or failures of which are yet to be known (Rothman, 2011). Post-compulsory educators are similarly reeling from simultaneous reductions in funding and increased demands for accountability (Bogue & Hall, 2003; Cohen & Kisker, 2009; Giroux,



2002). Fortunately, and in large part due to the unfortunate failures of our reform efforts (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gay, 2007; Hursh, 2007; Leonardo, 2007), traditional science paradigms are yielding center stage, allowing for fresh and productive approaches to be considered.

Of significant relevance to this integrative review is the idea that the theoretical underpinnings of much of conventional science are the same constructs that undergird conceptualizations of disability, in particular the assumption of a Gaussian distribution as an accurate representation of human phenomena such as learning (Davis, 2008; Davis & Sumara, 2006; Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010). Certainly, notions of ability and disability are central to educational purposes and pedagogies. Numerous scholars have contended that discrimination based on perceptions of disability may be the fundamental system of privileging/oppressing upon which all other notions of difference-as-deviance are constructed (Campbell, 2008b; Davis, 2002; Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010; Kudlick, 2003; Snyder & Mitchell, 2006). What if this were so?

Whether or not we adopt the view that notions of disability are at the root of all oppressions, a deeply critical investigation of the construct of disability may deepen our “understandings of the long-standing disparities in education among cultural and socioeconomic subgroups in society” (Leonardo & Worrell, 2012, p. 4). This dissertation is a sincere attempt, not to fully accomplish that deed, but to encourage us all to take up the conversation, in whatever venues we find ourselves, and see where candid dialogues might take us. To that end, I will briefly review key aspects of my theoretical framework, describe the disorienting dilemma that provoked this effort, then discuss several personal identity characteristics that may help readers locate and understand the perspectives from which I speak. After asking and, in part, answering

questions raised by the predicament in which I found myself and digressing not-so-briefly on languaging issues, I more directly explore implications of my theoretical framework for education and education reform.

### **More to Unpack: The Unbearable Subjectivity of My Theoretical Framework**

I concur with Popkewitz (1984) that “[f]ar from being neutral, inquiry is a human activity which involves hopes, values, and unresolved questions about social affairs” (p. 1) and is thus unavoidably subjective and ideological. This perspective compels me to begin with the assertion that omniscient 3<sup>rd</sup> person “objective” discernment is impossible (Argyris & Schön, 1989; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Lather, 1986, 1993; McIntyre, 2008; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Stringer, 2007). In the context of that fundamental assumption, I provide a brief outline the concurrently complexivist, critical, and transnational theoretical framework that guides this review.

The complexivist aspect of my theoretical framework references multiple agents/actors interacting with and in multiple interdependent systems, resulting in coordinated structures which are stable yet adaptive (i.e. capable of producing novel responses) and in which the interconnected, interdependent, adaptive nature of multiple systems is explicitly recognized (Alhadeff-Jones, 2008; Davis, 2008; Horn, 2008; O'Day, 2002; Page, 2011). A complexity science lens is empowering because it reminds us that influences within and among systems are multi-focal and multidirectional. That is, while it is true that macro-system parameters such as federal education policies clearly influence important aspects of schooling, it is also true that agents and networks of actors within systems—students in classrooms, teachers in school buildings, administrators in districts—in turn influence system parameters. Moreover, a complexivist view can help us extricate ourselves from Gaussian notions of normalcy by providing alternate distributions, such as power law, log-normal, or stretched exponential

distributions (Newman, 2005) in which learning and other social and material phenomena of interest are located in the “interesting in-between” lying between total randomness and complete determinacy (Page, 2011).

A critical analysis is also a fundamental component of my theoretical framework, an approach that works to “explain and critique social structures...while embracing emancipatory and utopian principles” (Burghardt, 2011, p. 2). Critical methods are essentially transformative approaches that pursue the self-empowerment of and justice for individuals and groups who are systemically marginalized by social structures. The four elements comprising critical social theory as described by Freeman and Vasconcelos (2010)—a theory of false consciousness, a theory of crisis, a theory of education, and a theory of transformative action—provide points of departure for investigating larger social phenomena through a personal subjective lens. As detailed in this manuscript, my false consciousness regarding disability was revealed through a crisis of conscience, a situation that required of me a deepened analysis of my own education and of the meanings and functions of our education systems, which in turn compels me to action for disability justice.

The final element of this tri-faceted theoretical framework is an analysis developed within transnational scholarship. The focus of a transnational lens is on characteristics of relationships among individuals and groups across geographical locations. This differs from a bare international sensibility in which cross-border flows of goods, people, and services are considered without deliberation regarding the influences or implications of those exchanges. Transnational viewpoints consider the personal and political repercussions of those boundary-crossings, intending to deconstruct vertical-hierarchical power flows in favor of lateralizing influences among members/agents. Applying a transnational perspective to education policy

would reveal ongoing colonization perpetuated by current practices of international nongovernmental organizations acting as donors in the exportation of educational theory and praxis, and thus of modern western conceptualizations of disability, from the Global North to the Global South (Okurut-Ibore & Anicha, submitted for review). A transnational lens supports the interruption of this exportation by prioritizing indigenous and other locally enacted ways of knowing and knowledges (Arenas Conejo, 2011; Carty & Das Gupta, 2009; Meekosha, 2011; Nair, 2006). A transnational perspective is a vital aspect of this framework because it explicitly incorporates the material and social realities that are inherently part of life lived locally on an increasingly globalized planet.

Taken together, these theoretical assumptions reflect a framework grounded in an analysis of privilege and oppression as arising through and within ongoing iterative interactions among individuals within embedded and/or overlapping local-through-global systems. While individual acts alone do not constitute nor disassemble systemic privilege, behaviors of individual agents can and do influence behaviors of systems (Kuhn, 2008; Lissack, 2007; Mason, 2009; Meadows, 2008). As will be demonstrated in the remaining sections, this framework is knit together through a Boyerian scholarship of integration, of “making connections across disciplines, placing specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way,” and a scholarship of interpretation, of fitting research into “larger intellectual patterns” (Boyer, 1990, pp. 18-19). In that spirit I advocate for the prioritizing and centering of a radical emancipatory discourse regarding disability, across and within all education venues. A personal narrative approach is adopted in anticipation that a recounting of my own learning will serve as useful scaffolding in this rendering of contemporary manifestations of disability and of the discourse(s) unfolding within critical disability studies circles. The choice of a conversational tone through

narrative story is congruent with my wish to invoke further conversation: conversations that can deepen the present analyses and bring us all closer to imagining and enacting the “robust social justice vision of education” described in Carl Grant’s keynote presentation titled by that phrase (2012).

### **Declarations**

As a United States (U.S.) education system veteran, I recognize the value of transparency regarding learning objectives from both sides of the desk—from perspectives of both learner and teacher. Moreover, I am clear that my life experiences profoundly influence my beliefs and behaviors; my social positions inform my paradigms and broader ideologies (subjectivities) which in turn guide my actions. It is obligatory that I describe the lenses and experiences through which I construct and read the world because “[c]ritical researchers enter into an investigation with their assumptions on the table, so no one is confused concerning the epistemological and political baggage they bring with them to the research site” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1998, p. 265, as quoted by Goodley, 2001). My objectives and intentions cannot be separate from my own experiences, history, and self-narrative. Indeed, it was the experience of a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1990, 2000), induced by research undertaken as a graduate assistant, that has compelled this narration of my emerging critical consciousness. Therefore, I begin by following critical scholar Lather (1986), among many others, in stating that value-neutral research is “unrealizable” and in declaring my scholarship as “openly ideological.”

### **Positionalities and Subjectivities**

Many of the ways in which my own beliefs and perspectives have been shaped may be anticipated from my litany of positionalities and subjectivities (Kezar & Lester, 2010; Peshkin, 1988): raced-white, nondisabled, a-theistic, economically middle-classed, cisgendered hetero-

oriented woman, citizen of the U.S., special education teacher, graduate student. Raced-white, I am systemically afforded benefits based merely on skin color; this pigmentocracy (Lynn, 2008) is often termed white privilege. Perceived as non-disabled, I am essentially *enabled*; I have remained effectively unaware of, and undeterred by, environmental, institutional, educational, and attitudinal barriers based on perceived disability. Revealing my theological status is always a choice and I generally choose to “pass.” Middle-class, white, and enabled privileges have co-conspired in the acquisition of economically comfortable circumstances (i.e. marketable skills and housing I can afford). As a cisgendered woman, my self- and socially-perceived gender and gender expression has matched my biological sex; my romantic desires have mapped onto heteronormative expectations, and thus for much of my life, the deeply gendered nature of dominant culture escaped my notice. As a U.S. citizen I have unconsciously absorbed relentless confabulations of “our global superiority.”

That I am able to name these identity categories is reflective of ongoing processes of “coming to.” That is, coming to awareness that 1) these social positions point to something profound and constitutive of the culture in which I am immersed, and 2) that each position is implicated and constitutive of my sense of self and my beliefs about what is true, relevant, and/or worthy of my attention. Intersectional analyses of the layered, nuanced, and compounding implications of my various social statuses is crucial; however, my own understandings and analyses in this regard are in zygote stage—though through the scholarship of numerous intellectual activists it continues to evolve (Acker, 2012; Alejano-Steele et al., 2011; Cole, Avery, Dodson, & Goodman, 2012; Combahee River, 1986; Coston & Kimmel, 2012; Crenshaw, 1991; Ferber, 2012; Flyswithhawks, 1996; Hill Collins, 2000; McIntosh, 1990, 2012; Shaw, Chan, & McMahon, 2012).

## **My Disorienting Dilemma**

Prior to investigations of disability prompted by research assistantship tasks assigned to me as a graduate student, my understandings regarding enabled privilege were rather shockingly shallow. This is not to say that I have had too little schooling. Rather, I acknowledge that I am coming to understand how enabled privilege—my enabled privilege—has been hidden in plain sight. Indeed, there have been three major contexts in my life as an educator, each one of which had the clear potential to have elicited awareness of enabled privilege, but did not: 1) my general and special education teacher preparations, 2) continuing education in diversity and equity-focused curricula and pedagogy, and 3) participation in community-based anti-oppression (poverty, sexism, racism) coalitions. Yet, as a double-decade, multiply-licensed general and special education teacher, and after many years in academia, I have only recently become aware of disability studies, the academic discipline that investigates social, cultural, and political perceptions and implications of disability with the goal of disability justice.

How can this be so when, for the bulk of my adult life, I have been deeply engaged in learning about and working to dismantle systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging? Within professional settings “the traditional interpretive troika of race, class, and gender” (Burch, 2003) is frequently invoked, and we explicitly recognize the unearned advantages and privileges associated with those racialized, classed, and gendered social systems. How has enabled privilege managed to slip out of my awareness when disability was the primary focus of every workday as a special education teacher?

While discrimination based on perceived disability has been generally recognized by myself and my education colleagues, in my experience, enabled privilege has not been directly addressed in professional discussions or collegial conversations. We recognize that this system

of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging exists of course, on some mostly un-worded level, because we see it unfold in the daily lived experiences of students and families. Some of us experience unearned disadvantaging of perceived disability directly in our own lives. How then could *we* not be aware of the existence of an entire field of theory, research, and practice known as disability studies? Given long-standing educational disparities detailed by numerous researchers, administrators, and policymakers over many a year, not to mention the professed aim of special education to reverse those disparities for students identified as disabled, how could the field of disability studies *not* be familiar to us?

Granted, the political will to see disability as a civil and human rights concern is relatively young in academic years, having only recently emerged on the heels of the disability rights movement (Barnes, 2003; Baynton, 2008; Davis, 2002). Further, it is an open question as to whether disability studies is a field of study, a discipline, or a transdiscipline (Goodley, Hughes, & Davis, 2012). Still, I have been investing heart, mind, and much time with this question: As an educator who takes seriously my accountability to participate in the provision of a free, appropriate, public education for all learners, how do I understand my lack of understanding regarding enabled privilege? I self-identify as a disability ally, as, I feel confident, would most special education teachers. How is it that my knowledge has been so partial; so occluded?

A one-word answer to my confusion is hegemony. While the concept of hegemony has been adopted and adapted by innumerable scholars, simply stated hegemony “means domination through consent as much as coercion” (Lash, 2007, p. 55). Citizens provide consent when we accept discriminatory status quos or believe without question in the authority of our social institutions such as schools, churches, or governments. Thus, I have been exceedingly well-



schooled in, and have unconsciously consented to, mainstream cultural constructions of disability through my participation in general and special education teacher training. I have not considered, perhaps not allowed myself to consider, that special education categorization schemes *require* the construction of disability as that which is insufficient and problematic. Although naming a mystery can have the effect of taming it or at least containing it, in the case of social injustices this offers but fleeting satisfaction. Consequently, some serious unpacking is in order.

**Unpacking the invisible knapsack of enabled privilege.** McIntosh's article on the "invisible knapsack" of white privilege had alerted me to my own potential for unawareness, and I had even read May Machunda's reprise of McIntosh's article with regard to able-bodied privilege (May Machunda, n.d.). However, as I investigated perceptions of disability in the context of post-compulsory education faculty as a research assistant, it began to dawn on me that my ignorance of the lived realities of people experiencing disability represented only the shadow of a wider ignorance of enabled privilege. I began to dig deeper. At first I was painfully befuddled by my own seemingly willful ignorance. Indeed, in some moments, I still experience the shock and awe of my own life cleverly hidden right under my own nose. Nonetheless, I gather some measure of clarity, perhaps even relief, from Yee's (2002) introduction to the collection of laws and publications the Disability Rights & Education Defense Fund is amassing,

The phenomenon of disability prejudice is not widely understood or truly accepted among the political, legal and social institutions that are counted upon to put anti-discrimination laws into practice. The claim that modern society is unfamiliar with disability prejudice may seem incredible in the face of the enactment of national and international disability anti-discrimination laws. (para. 1 & 3)

Yee (Yee, 2002) further points out that there are several “complicating social and historical factors that make disability prejudice such a complex topic of study,” a situation which “threatens the future of disability anti-discrimination, because laws and policies are only effective in so far as they are maintained, enforced and accepted by *a society that understands the underlying need for such laws*” [emphasis added] (para. 8). So now I want to know, what is it that makes disability prejudice so complex, so unique in relation to other systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging? What makes it so special? What is it that we do not yet understand regarding the “underlying need” for disability anti-discrimination law and practice?

Fortunately, disability studies scholars have been diligently at work theorizing and investigating these questions for several decades. Collectively their scholarship reveals that the typical machinations of other systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging are fully in play in regards to disability. Commonalities notwithstanding, there exist a large number of conceptual models describing the unique parameters and inner-workings of discrimination based on perceived disability and enabled privilege. These models are briefly considered in upcoming sections—but first, a sidebar regarding vocabulary.

### **Some Words About Words**

Following the example of Smith (2004), I begin by “unpacking of the baggage around these words and discourses” (para. 7). Specifically, I want to take pause before further using the term *disability*. I balk because the very use of the word implies that disability is definable and recognizable—an indefensible implication, as the work of critical disability studies scholars attests. Even so, I do use the term, claiming pragmatics—to minimize confusion and word count—though this is unsatisfactory and unsettling. To assuage my unease, I again call on Lather, this time invoking: “Jacques Derrida’s ‘ordeal of the undecidable’ and its obligations to

openness, passage, and non-mastery. Here questions are constantly moving and one cannot define, finish, or close. This is a praxis of not being so sure” (Lather, 1998, p. 488). I am sure that disability is a social construct with important implications for identity and undeniable material consequence—for both dis- and en-abled people. I am not so sure how to speak to the construct without using what is at least minimally a shared vocabulary. And so I proceed in using the term disability.

When I began my graduate education on the topic of disability I had been schooled in the U.S. brand of people first language—that is, the idea that “people with disability” or “a person who has...” was the most appropriate and respectful way to name and discuss disability. As I explored conceptualizations and languaging of disability I learned that in the social model prevalent in the United Kingdom, disability is parsed such that the term disabled references the social contexts that create barriers for persons with impairments. As one person characterized it, this means that identifying as a disabled person directs attention to the social norms and systems that are *disabling*—one would not say “I have a disability” because that would be akin to saying “I have a racism” (Price, 2011, p. 213).

Indeed, disability is languaged in multiple ways. While in academic writing careful attention may be paid to the languaging around disability, in less formal venues (blogs, interviews, podcasts, etc.) it appears that many terms are used interchangeably by critical disability studies scholars and activists. This may be necessary in order to bridge awareness. For example, although disability, disablism, or ableism may be known or interpretable terms, ableist normativity may be too unfamiliar to interpret without significant context. However, when two or more terms are referenced in tandem and in contexts, audiences can begin to

appreciate that they each reflect similar though perhaps importantly different approaches to the topic.

Perceptions and conceptualizations of disability are reflected in a multiplicity of terms found in disability-focused literatures and virtual digital venues: people with disability, (PWD or pwd), disabled people, disabled and chronically ill, psychiatric system survivors, disablism/disableism, disability oppression, disability discrimination, disability privilege, ableism, abled privilege, able-bodied privilege, hearing privilege, sighted privilege, neurotypical privilege, ableist normativity, disability politics, disability community, disability rights movement, disability rights community, disability activists, and disability justice. Ally relationships are also variously identified: disability allies, anti-ableist/ableism allies, and able-bodied allies. Nondisabled people, the previously unnamed/invisible dominant majority, too are provided various monikers that bring them/us into view: Abled, Able-Bodied, Currently Non-Disabled, Temporarily Able-Bodied or TAB, normie, or neurotypical. Critical transnational scholars have introduced the construct of ablenationalism—"the degree to which treating people with disabilities as an exception valorizes able-bodied norms of inclusion as the naturalized qualification of citizenship" (Snyder and Mitchell, 2010, p. 113).

As is true for many forms of oppression, some people experiencing disability/disablism are engaging in word reclamation. The disability slurs "crip/cripple" and "gimp," are being used to retrieve the power of the words. The arguments for and against such reclamation are currently being waged across the blogosphere and generally parallel contestations regarding words such as "bitch" and "faggot." Arguments against their use call for caution against the ongoing dehumanizing influences of the slurs. Alternatively, proponents identify the practice as a coming-out of sorts and revel in wordplay—crip theory, crip culture, crip community, criptastic,

crip action, gimp on the go, the Gimp Project, gimp ‘tude, gimp encounters, and gimp swag. Of course, the same rules apply here as when other disenfranchised groups reclaim hating words—the names are applied to oneself by oneself/one’s own community; they are not to be appropriated.

How ought we identify the nondisabled majority? While physical disability, the disabled body, is the most common cultural stereotype of disability, bodily markers of disability are only minimally representative—only 1% of disabled folks in the U.S. have bodily markers of disability (Stevens, 2010). Because the countervailing stereotype is of the abled body it seems that using abled or able-bodied as generic terms for nondisabled people may run the paradoxical risk of linguistically erasing a majority of disabled people. Currently nondisabled or temporarily able-bodied also are limited—not everyone eventually becomes disabled and some folks are temporarily disabled. Moreover, Hughes (2007) has critiqued the fear-based this-could-be-you approach as one that presumes a universalizing negativity in regards to disability, leaving no room for a positive disability identity. Rather, he suggests that we “problematize non-disablement” and interrogate the “forms of invalidation that lie at the heart of disabling culture” (p. 673).

In that vein, Campbell has written extensively and eloquently on the construct of ableist normativity (Campbell, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2011) and has attended carefully to the many manifestations of ableism, clearly articulating an approach that transgresses a body-only focus. Campbell defines ableist normativity as a “common ableist homosocial world view that asserts the preferability and compulsoriness of the norms of ableism” (Campbell, 2008, para. 4). The phrases “normative privilege” and “majority privilege” are oftentimes used in reference to systems of unearned advantaging/disadvantaging including racism, hetero/sexism, genderism, as well as

ableism/disablism and others. Also, the idea of enablement is found in texts promoting Universal Design, the creation of environments, products, curricula, pedagogy, etc. which are intended to be inherently accessible for the widest possible spectrum of people/needs. Enablement encompasses physical, cognitive, affective, and functional purviews; it is what the system or context does on our behalf to meet us where we are. In our (modern western) social and physical worlds as they are currently constructed, nondisabled persons are enabled; people experiencing disability are disabled by those same features. Given these options, *enabled* seems to best represent the nondisabled majority and serves to direct our attention to the very particular system of privilege we are seeking to understand.

### **Deconstructing Disability**

Conventional science thinking is 1) grounded in assumptions of objectively knowable essential/universal truth(s), 2) presupposes Gaussian “normal” distributions, and 3) favors predictable, most often linear, relationships. Conventional understandings of disability similarly 1) make *a priori* assumptions about the reality/truth of perceived disabilities and 2) characterize perceived disabilities as manifestations of embodiment or psychology that fall *n* standard deviations from the species-typical mean under the well-known bell curve, and 3) expect that disability can be confidently identified, understood, and predicted by virtue of stable linear relationships among selected variables of interest (see Snyder and Mitchell, 2006, and Dudley-Marling and Gurn, 2010, for similar analyses from a score of scholars). For example, school-based disabilities are identified when age and test scores intersect below a pre-determined cut point; more stereotypically, species-atypical motor patterns are mis-associated with low intelligence (itself a culturally inscribed construct).

Yet, conventional science paradigms *are* giving way. A “new science” of complexity is gaining in esteem and usefulness. This complexivist worldview does not reject conventional approaches; rather, a larger theoretical body of complex adaptive systems (CAS) incorporates predictable linear as well as dynamic nonlinear behaviors and relationships (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Mason, 2008; Miller & Page, 2007; Page, 2008). CAS science is 1) grounded in assumptions of context-dependent truth(s), 2) includes a multiplicity of potential distribution patterns depending upon the type of system and scale of observation, and 3) anticipates ongoing adaptations and changes in relationships among variables of interest. Thus, when viewed from a complexivist standpoint, the construct of disability is destabilized on all fronts.

The potential outcomes of this destabilization are reflected in the title of this chapter, *Conscientization: Education Reform for the 21st Century*. The reflexive praxis necessary to development of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills such as creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration, is inherent in “conscientization,” a process described in numerous publications by critical theorist and pedagogue Paulo Freire as the development of critical awareness of one’s own social reality through reflection and action (Freire, 1968/2000, 1998; Freire & Macedo, 1995). If we educators seriously contemplate the ways in which notions of conventional science, and thus notions of disability, undergird our current paradigms regarding standards of knowledge and student capabilities, we may indeed find it difficult to carry on with business as usual. Although much of current education policy in the U.S. continues to over-privilege the tools of conventional science, signs of more inclusive paradigms are emerging on education research and reform horizons.

Bryk and colleagues (Bryk, Gomez, & Grunow, 2011; Bryk, Harding, & Greenberg, 2012) urge researchers and practitioners to consider multiple contexts and iterative designs, to

think in terms of networks and relationships. Research methodologies, such as qualitative approaches and the use of multiple or mixed methods, understood to “produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently” (Lather, 2012) are increasingly accepted as not only legitimate but in many cases crucial to meaningful knowledge production (Dance, Gutiérrez, & Hermes, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Haggis, 2008; Lather, 2010). Studies of administrative and leadership skills focus on mechanisms and relationships among agents/actors rather than on individual agents or leaders (Blase & Blase, 1999; Guastello, 2007; O’Day, 2002).

This scholarship, and much more, points toward a scientific revolution, a science paradigm shift, in which complex human beings and lifeworlds are not quashed or ignored in misguided efforts to study what is easy to measure rather than what is meaningful to understand. Lather’s critical scholarship frequently serves as harbinger of emerging research trends, as it did when she quoted Kuhn while reflecting on the paradigm shift from positivist to post-positivist science that was unfolding in the late 1980’s. The quote works equally well today to describe the current paradigm shift from the conventional “received view” (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011) of post-positivist science to a deepened and broadened post-positivism that incorporates the radical unpredictability (e.g. potential for non-replicability) of a complexity science viewpoint:

Thomas Kuhn wrote that “rather than a single group conversion, what occurs [with a paradigm shift] is an increasing shift in the distribution of professional allegiances” as practitioners of the new paradigm “improve it, explore its possibilities, and show what it would be like to belong to the community guided by it.” (Kuhn, 1962, as quoted in Lather, 1986, p. 63)



A shift in professional allegiance toward of a complexivist critical transnational framework applied through the lens of disability studies offers enriched opportunities for understanding and effectively eradicating educational inequities at their origin.

### **The Conceptual Toolkit of Disability Studies**

As my research led me more deeply into the work of those who identified as disability justice activists and scholars I experienced conscientization—and as I continued to explore this universe of cultural context and meaning, I continued to grow in that critical consciousness. Each new search term opened doors to previously unknown perspectives, and my collection of conceptual tools to think with expanded. Although disability studies may be the more generic and inclusive frame, critical disability studies may reflect more accurately on the content of the field. The critical in critical disability studies arises both from its early roots and its growing edges (Gilson & Depoy, 2000; Gleeson, 1997; Pilling, 2013; Price, 2011; Putnam, 2005).

Disability studies was inaugurated in the United Kingdom (U.K.) when Paul Hunt and Vic Finkelstein articulated this definition of disability in the early 1970's, framing what has come to be known as the social model of disability:

In our view it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments, by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society. (Finkelstein, 2001b, p. 1)

As a refugee in the U.K. from Apartheid South Africa, Finkelstein was influenced by Nelson Mandela (Finkelstein, 2001) and those insights were reflected in his scholarship and activism throughout his life. He asserted that “[i]n the ‘rights’ approach parliament grants legal rights to those *it defines* as ‘disabled’. The focus is on identifying characteristics of the individual, rather

than the nature of society” (Finkelstein, 2007, p. 5). Thus, he counseled disability activists in the U.K. to resist a civil rights legalistic approach, which was and is at the core of disability activism in the U.S. and which was increasingly being adopted in the U.K.

In the U.S., disability studies coalesced as a transdisciplinary field in the late 1980’s (Snyder & Mitchell, 2006). The Society of Disability Studies (SDS) mission statement indicates that “[t]hrough research, artistic production, teaching and activism” the organization “seeks to augment understanding of disability in all cultures and historical periods, to promote greater awareness of the experiences of disabled people, and to advocate for social change” (2013). In its widest sense, the field of disability studies includes scholars, activists, and practitioners ranging from medical sociologists, rehabilitation specialists, and special educators, to critical sociologists, disability rights lawyers, and theorists grounded in a variety of critical paradigms—with a dizzying array of models reflecting those diverse orientations.

As I persisted in this compelling and complicated journey, I saw that the aptly named social models of disability directed attention to disabling social structures (Finkelstein, 2001b, 2007) while medical models located disability as a “pathology” inherent to the individual (Wainapel, 1999), and that these two models were often positioned as conceptual polarities (Block et al., 2001; CDC, 2012; Finkelstein, 2001b, 2007). However, a number of theoretical models positioned disability within wider, more complex and overlapping conceptual spaces, and I resonated more with these approaches. My edification continued as I was exposed to more detail regarding a shift in perspective from civil rights to human rights (Yee, 2007), then was introduced to the idea that the very notion of who is human undergirds constructions of disability. I came across scholarship investigating political and psychological identities of persons perceived to be disabled, and scholarship exploring personal and political implications of

exclusion from geographic, civic, professional, and educational spaces (Harpur, 2011, 2012; Kitchin, 1998; Price, 2009; Putnam, 2005; Thomas, 2004).

I was mildly surprised to find manuscripts describing biological and “anti-social” models that shared some, though not all, tenets of the medical model (Block et al., 2001; Dewsbury, Clarke, Randall, Rouncefield, & Sommerville, 2004). Numerous additional scholars and activists with decidedly emancipatory paradigms explicitly rejected an either/or approach (e.g. either social/political or medical/individual) and advocated instead for nuanced and comprehensive analyses and narratives regarding disability (Thomas, 2004; Watermeyer, 2009; Waters & Johanson, 2001; Watson, 2002). Perhaps most instructive for me have been the intersectional investigations of disability, such as those that view ontological assumptions through the lenses of queered/disabled lives (Carlin, 2011; McRuer, 2002, 2006; Pilling, 2013; Stevens, 2011b), as well as racialized (Ferri & Connor, 2005), classed (Barnes & Sheldon, 2010), and gendered (Arenas Conejo, 2011; Bonnie, 2011) identities.

Each of these approaches has provided meaningful illumination of the multifaceted networks of beliefs, experiences, and social behaviors that co-create notions of disability. When a complexivist critical transnational framework is brought to bear on these perspectives taken as a whole, a belief structure comes into view. This structure is anchored on twin supports: the hegemonic normativity iteratively transcribed through cultural notions of what is laudable or permissible and the resultant invisibility of enabled privilege to the enabled majority.

### **Summary**

My intent for this narrative integrative review was to share with you my in-progress journey of critical awareness, of conscientization, regarding the pervasive, persistent, self-perpetuating, and too-often unconscious and unnamed patterns of thought and action comprising

the cycles of socialization (Harro, 1997) that (re)inscribe ableism onto our minds and bodies. As may be surmised from the foregoing discussion, my objectives are at once personal, political, and academic. On a personal level I am impelled to connect with education colleagues around my disorienting dilemma and to continue to unlearn in collective collegial settings. This unlearning calls for critical humility, for “remaining open to the fact that our knowledge is partial and evolving while at the same time being committed to speaking up and taking action in the world based on our current knowledge, however imperfect” (Barlas et al., 2012, p. 2).

My political and academic objectives are blended and arise from those personal motivations. A central political-academic intention for this manuscript is to speak with and thus engender connections among my colleagues in two often unconnected arenas in the wider field of education—the arena of practicing educators where theory operates *as* praxis, and the arena of the academic cognitariat “the world’s knowledge workers” (Bruno & Newfield, 2010, para. 2) where theory operates as the “stuff” of depth psychologies, philosophies, and sociologies. My hope is that both readerships are engaged throughout this text. I anticipate that this discourse has clear linkages to classroom matters for the pedagogues amongst us, and sufficient conceptual material to appeal to theoretical purists. Both arenas are host to crucial insights that can and do well-serve the other—when and if they are shared.

While the scope and depth of disablism, ableism, and enabled privilege and the magnitude of suffering we visit upon ourselves in the name of social convention and normativity are stunning, the possible worlds of self-respect and engaged community reflected in the work of disability scholars and activists are possible for us all. Beliefs and ideologies undergird “all that humans do and experience, whether they have consciousness of it or not [and become] enmeshed in and expressed by social and cultural institutions” (P. Smith, 2004, para. 39). Perhaps,

mainstreaming the beliefs and ideologies that undergird critical disability studies into our chosen educational arenas may offer humanizing pathways toward educational reform. This personally narrated integrative review is intended as an invitation into conversation, to deepened discourses and considerations of what an education community guided by a complexivist critical transnational paradigm might offer. Perhaps such a shift will facilitate educational justice and help us cultivate educational practices that consistently elicit the inherent satisfaction and joy of learning.

Whether or not notions of disability hold a singularly influential position among the sundry systems of unearned advantaging/disadvantaging that constellate our daily socioeconomic universes, the costs *to us all* in terms of personal, ethical, professional, effectiveness, and financial losses are too steep, have always been too steep. Let us follow the lead of critical disability studies scholars (Campbell, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2011; Ferri & Connor, 2005; Harpur, 2012; Hughes, 2007) in shifting our personal, political, and scholarly attentions—from disabled alterity to the structures that create and maintain unearned enabled privilege. Such investigations have the potential to prepare a grounding from which seeds of novel and effective approaches to social and educational justice may be imagined and cultivated. Let us become intellectual activists (Hill Collins, 2013) in undoing this “last prejudice” (Miller et al., 2004).

Academia holds a central location in the trajectories of educational praxis, and post-compulsory education settings are central to chapters three and four. As the source of teacher education and much of what constitutes knowledge production, post-compulsory education both iteratively creates educational content and practice and receives the students influenced by that content and practice. Thus, academia is multiply accountable in shepherding educational reform and justice.

### **CHAPTER 3. DISABILITY JUSTICE: MATTERS OF BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR**

Academic outcomes and workplace performances are benefitted by psychologically safe and supportive environments (Bond & Flaxman, 2006; Burnett, Bilen-Green, McGeorge, & Anicha, 2012; Carr, Schmidt, Ford, & DeShon, 2003; Dweck, 2006). Attention to social justice and equity concerns is essential to fostering such environments (Fricker, 2008; Giroux, 1983; Smith, 2009; Zirkel, 2008). Unfortunately, while legal and policy-based affirmative action practices (overt behaviors) have made some initial progress, “inequality regimes continue to be relatively resistant” (Acker, 2012, p. 221). Numerous investigations demonstrate that some of this resistance may be due to implicit biases arising from unconsciously held gendered and raced stereotypes that influence both our attitudes (explicit beliefs) and our behaviors (Bertrand, Chugh, & Mullainathan, 2005; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009; Schmader, Croft, Scarnier, Lickel, & Mendes, 2012; Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008). More recent research shows that implicit negative biases regarding disability are present for most people even when explicit measures do not reflect those biases (Archambault, Van Rhee, Marion, & Crandall, 2008; Dionne, Gainforth, Malley, & Latimer-Cheung, 2013; Pruett & Chan, 2006; Rohmer & Louvet, 2012; Thomas, Vaughn, Doyle, & Bubb, 2013). These studies provide strong support for the contention that a comprehensive understanding of both explicitly held beliefs and non-conscious biases may be essential for interrupting stubborn inequality regimes and fostering psychologically safe and welcoming environments.

Much productive research regarding gendered and raced inequality regimes has been undertaken over the past 50 years, and though serious inequities remain, those investigations offer promise of eventual justice. Although disability is increasingly included in enumerations of

significant demographics such as gender and race/ethnicity, the implications of discrimination based on disability status are less frequently the focus of mainstream scholarly research (Davis, 2011). Nonetheless, a growing cadre of scholars and activists are investigating discrimination based on perceived disability. Disability studies scholars have explored the idea that beliefs regarding disability constitute perhaps the most foundational and complex system of advantaging (privileging) and disadvantaging (oppressing) faced in human society today (Burghardt, 2011; Campbell, 2011; Davis, 2002; Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010). If so, a deeply critical and intersectional investigation of disability may lay groundwork for the undoing of multiple intransigent injustices.

In our efforts to thwart inequality regimes and to cultivate authentically inclusive and welcoming educational and workplace environments, we might begin by recognizing that alliances among individuals and groups represents a time-honored tradition in service to social justice (Bishop, 2002, 2005; Curry-Stevens, 2007; Warren & Mapp, 2011). Questions regarding what specifically characterizes genuine and effective ally relationships—or *allyship*—is an increasingly popular topic among “intellectual activist” researchers (Hill Collins, 2013).

This study investigates perspectives of post-compulsory education professionals regarding disability allyship. In the following sections I review discourses regarding disability discrimination, ableism and enabled privilege, and allyship. After briefly discussing key methodological principles, I describe the method (Q-Method) and the analyses employed in the study. Summaries and interpretations of three disability allyship perspectives identified within the participant responses are then described. Next, study limitations are addressed, participant demographics are briefly explored, the viewpoints are reviewed from a critical disability studies perspective, and implications are considered.

## **Disability as Social Oppression**

Watermeyer (2009) comments that while “the social phenomenon of disability is probably as old as humankind itself... [m]odernity has witnessed an unprecedented and subduing mass socio-political offensive upon the disabled minority” (p. 1). The idea that disability reflects sociohistorical phenomena is echoed in Nielsen’s (2012) history of the United States (U.S.) from the vantage point of disability. Her examination suggests that the dominance of an industrialized economy contributed importantly to negative cultural responses to disability by virtue of a fundamental shift in skills valued in the labor force and to an increased incidence of impairment due to unsafe factory conditions. Meekosha (2011) presses this analysis further by describing a present-day global economic system in which wealthy countries such as the U.S. act to protect narrowly-defined economic interests, and in so doing “are often guilty of producing more disabled people through such acts as war and invasion and dumping of polluted waste” (p. 667). Regrettably, Watermeyer’s unequivocal assertion that “[a]round the globe, the hallmarks of the social predicaments of disabled persons are poverty, mass unemployment, discrimination and the indignity of [demeaning] social prejudices,” (2009, p. 1) is all too well-grounded (Officer & Posarac, 2011; Sherry, 2010; Thomas, 2011; Tilley, Walmsley, Earle, & Atkinson, 2012).

Although conceptualizations of disability are not cultural universals (Gilson & Depoy, 2000; Groce, 1999; Ilyashov, 2012; Nielsen, 2012; Wainapel, 1999), most societies do actively and passively discriminate based on perceptions of disability and we do so at great cost to ourselves (Bickenbach, 2011; Oliver & Barnes, 2012). People who experience discrimination based on perceived disability represent an untapped pool of talent and expertise; ongoing discriminatory practices inhibit our capacities for engaging those talents and delimit our abilities



for responding to the “hard questions” of our times (Beretz, 2003; Bickenbach, 2011; Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010; Miller et al., 2004).

### **Defining Disability Discrimination**

Miller, Parker, and Gillinson (2004) provided this characterization of discrimination based on perceived disability: “Disablism *n.* discriminatory, oppressive or abusive behaviour arising from the belief that disabled people are inferior to others,” then asserted that “you won’t find a definition in a dictionary” (p. 9). More recently (February 2013) an internet search for the term disablism yielded 73,000 results. An alternate spelling, “disableism,” yielded 4,670 results. Coltham (2009), in an entry for Blogging Against Disablism Day recognized that much of what constitutes disablism may arise from simple lack of awareness on the part of non-disabled/enabled persons and offered this addition to the Miller et. al, 2004 definition: “...*or through not acknowledging that disabled people are equal and taking reasonable measures to protect their rights accordingly*” [emphasis in original] (Society’s Barriers section, para. 2).

Interestingly, the term “ableism” was also seen in the search results for disablism and disableism. Moreover, although the stalwart Merriam-Webster did not define disablism, a definition of ableism was provided, and 1981 was noted as the first known use of the term: “discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities” (Ableism, n.d.). Each term points us in distinct conceptual directions: disablism orients us toward investigations of unearned *disadvantaging*, with persons perceived as disabled as objects and subjects, while ableism directs us toward explorations of who benefits from unearned *advantaging*, with persons who are privileged and enabled by social systems as objects and subjects.

## **The Privilege Studies Turn**

Critical theory guides an investigative approach that scrutinizes social contexts and attempts to identify cultural beliefs and practices that legitimate inequalities (Cohen et al., 2010). The fundamental tenets of critical theory have been integrated fruitfully within many disciplines: critical race theory, critical feminism(s), critical queer theory, critical indigenous studies, and critical globalization studies, among others. These various critical studies disciplines are increasingly understood as constituting a wider field of “privilege studies” (McIntosh, 2012; Morrison & Morrison, 2008). Perhaps most importantly, this shift in terms is guided by a deeper analysis, one that seeks to reveal and demystify the cultural hegemony at work. Thus, in critical studies it is cultural hegemony, the myriad ways in which discriminatory status quos are propagated by our social institutions (schools, religious institutions, governments, etc.), that becomes the object and subject of study.

Scholars in the transdisciplinary field of critical disability studies also have been grappling with how best to understand systemic unearned advantaging and disadvantaging and the shift from disablism toward ableism reflects this privilege studies turn. Campbell (2008b) argues convincingly that while social justice work that started from an orientation of disablism may have motivated some important emancipatory social changes, it has done so whilst “re-inscrib[ing]... an able-bodied voice/lens toward disability...[which] continues to be examined and taught from the perspective of the Other” (paragraph 3). Harpur (2012) too advocates explicitly for changing languaging from disabled to abled as a way forward in undoing disability discrimination, and the term ableism is increasingly being used by scholars and activists (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012; Lee, 2011; NYAC, 2010).

Critical disability studies has enjoyed a fresh surge in activity and seasoned as well as new scholars continue to explore the implications of this transformative approach, drawing connections among critical disability studies and other critical disciplines (Abes, 2009; Bell, 2011; Campbell, 2008a, 2009, 2011; Carlin, 2011; Erevelles, 2011; Ferri & Connor, 2005; Kafer, 2013; McRuer, 2006; Shildrick, 2012; P. Smith, 2004). In the context of a broader analysis of ableism, Campbell (2008b) provides a brief chronology of the evolution of the field: Tong's (1999) work is cited as an early example of critical disability studies perspectives applied in service to understanding race and gender. Shakespeare is next in Campbell's lineage of ableism theorists with his assertion that "the maintenance of a non-disabled identity ... is a more useful problem with which to be concerned: rather than interrogating the other, let us de-construct the normality-which-is-to-be-assumed" (Shakespeare, 1996, p. 96). Campbell also points to scholarship from Hughes in which the conceptual tables are turned toward a "pathologies of non-disablement" (Hughes, 1999, p. 164; 2007, p. 683) approach.

Finally, Campbell directs our attention to the cultural hegemony of "ableist normativity." In paraphrasing earlier work by Butler and Parr (1999), Campbell defines ableist normativity as a "worldview that asserts the preferability and compulsoriness of the norms of ableism... [in which] there is a failure to ask about difference, to imagine human be-ingness differently" (2008b, *Shifting the Gaze* - "The Ableist Project" section, para. 4). This construct of ableist normativity begins to unpack and decipher the cultural beliefs that underlie discrimination based on perceptions of disability, while also pointing to other hierarchies of privilege maintained within the social category of disability. For example, in the U.S., early disability rights activists were white men with physical or mobility impairments who were able to leverage gendered and raced privilege (Clare, 2009; Stevens, 2011b). From this history the symbol of a wheelchair

came to represent the polar opposite of the socially sanctioned abled-body, becoming the purportedly universal sign for disability.

Disability studies scholars have made repeated efforts to expand the meaning of “abled” to include not only species-typical bodies but also less observable species-typical health, cognitive, and affective experiences (Campbell, 2009; Hahn, 2001; Putnam, 2005; Stevens, 2010). Nonetheless, notions of embodiment and physical mobility continue to be associated with the term, leaving other forms of perceived disability less visible and more stigmatized (Stevens, 2010). To avoid conflation of perceived disability with species-atypical embodiment, the phrase “hegemonic normativity” is offered as an alternative to ableist normativity. Also, in keeping with a critical studies turn, the terms enabled and enabling are used here to refer to nondisabled persons and the social systems that promote and sustain unearned advantaging based on perceived disability status.

### **Conceptualizations of Allyship**

Social justice allies act in solidarity with persons and groups who are the recipients of unearned disadvantaging. Broadly speaking, social justice allies may be defined as “members of dominant social groups (e.g., men, Whites, heterosexuals) who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on their social-group membership” (Reason & Davis, 2005, p. 7). Systemically socially advantaged group members acting as allies can play crucial roles in creating equitable social systems. The inequality regimes referenced by Aker (2012) were described by Harro (1997) as having been “built long before we existed, based on history, habit, tradition, patterns of belief, prejudices, stereotypes, and myths. *Dominant or agent* groups are considered the “norm” around which assumptions are built... Agents have relatively more social power” [emphasis in original] (p. 17). Thus, persons who are advantaged

by social systems, though who also see such systems as inherently unjust, may be motivated to act as “agent allies” using their “power and privilege to try to make change” (Harro, 1997, p. 20) on behalf of social justice.

National and international attention to social justice allyship is growing (Arenas Conejo, 2011; Barker et al., 2010; Carty & Das Gupta, 2009; Harpur, 2011; Nair, 2006). Perhaps due in part to the realization that workplace inequalities negatively impact the financial bottom line, ally behaviors that foster racial and gender justice have received renewed attention in corporate and non-profit business venues (Prime, Foust-Cummings, Salib, & Moss-Racusin, 2012; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009).

Theory and research indicate that there are key stages in the development of an ally identity and effective ally behaviors (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Bishop, 2002, 2005; Curry-Stevens, 2007; Ford, 2012; Lowery, Knowles, & Unzueta, 2007; Tatum, 1999). Overall, there appears to be accord among investigators such that 1) potential allies must first understand unearned advantaging and how it works in their own lives, as well as how it impacts the lives of systemically disadvantaged persons; 2) allies need opportunities to explore and practice ally behaviors and to hold themselves accountable to (i.e., obtain guidance and feedback from) non-dominant group members; and 3) successful ally development approaches educate, inspire, and support members of the dominant group. These components are interdependent, iterative, and synergistic; together they support the development of ally identities.

Reason and Davis (2005) suggest that a conviction that blends distributive and procedural aspects of justice, when coupled with comprehension of implications regarding unearned advantaging and disadvantaging, prepares allies to test and refine important ally attitudes and behaviors. In a similar vein, Prime and Moss-Racusin (2009) found that awareness of gender

bias, when combined with a “strong sense of fair play,” was predictive of men who were identified as gender equity “champions” by their colleagues ( p. 11). Being an ally requires a commitment to rigorous critical inquiry, self-reflection, perspective taking, and other complex skills that require “both cognitive and emotional effort” (Reason & Davis, 2005, p. 11). Thus, allies may benefit substantially by participating in ongoing supportive education and networking opportunities; such participation may even be essential to acquiring effective ally skills.

Scholars and social justice activists have been developing and finessing the study of systemic social privileging as well as the enactment of allyship for many a decade (Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007; Barlas et al., 2012; Barndt & Birkelo, 1986; Chishom & Dunn, n/d; McIntosh, 2012; Miller et al., 2004) and the core tenets of allyship appear to apply across multiple domains of difference. Attention to intersectional implications is crucial to meaningfully address the complexities and power paradoxes inherent in social systems. For example, gender justice ally programs must accurately reflect men’s lived experience by addressing “men’s contradictory experiences of power” (Davis & Wagner, 2005, p. 30) or risk being irrelevant or ignored by men (Kimmel, 2010). Likewise, approaches to any particular form of allyship may be improved by addressing multiple and intersecting systems of privileging/oppressing, including paradoxical or contradictory experiences of social power.

### **Disability Allyship**

An important strategy in undoing disability discrimination is to enlist, as allies, beneficiaries of unearned enabled advantaging. Evans, Assadi, and Herriott have suggested that the development of disability allies necessarily includes “increasing awareness among individuals who are not disabled that their [enabled] identity is ascribed and affords them power and privilege” (2005, p. 68). Tregaskis (2000) stated it clearly when noting that “what seems to

be missing from existing disability studies analyses is... an investigation of the individual and collective ways in which non-disabled people's attitudes, beliefs and perspectives on disability and impairment are constructed and maintained" (p. 344). Given that about 94% of the adult population in the U.S. identifies as non-disabled (CDC, 2012), a large pool of potential candidates is available.

In order to construct a dependably informed notion of allyship, it is essential to first listen intently to the perspectives of persons who are systemically disadvantaged by whatever form of social normativity is in question. The motto "Nothing about us without us!" continues to be a central organizing principle of disabled activists, a phrase that both captures and rejects the grip of dominant enabled culture, while simultaneously providing guidance to would-be allies. In the spirit of this dictum, the scholarship and sources reviewed herein originate from persons who identify as or who are perceived as disabled and/or reflects the views of academics and activists working within an explicitly critical disability studies paradigm. True to critical theory, critical disability studies perspectives reject notions of disability that are fundamentally individualist in nature, focusing rather on how social power is wielded, who benefits, and how social power can be employed for justice (Burghardt, 2011; Guess, 1981; Sleeter, 2010; Tremain, 2010).

### **Q-Methodology**

Q-methodology was developed by Stephenson as means to study human subjectivity, "the total person-in-action" (Stephenson, 1953, p. 4). A Q-approach assumes that "subjectivity has a measurable internal structure [and] is the internal frame of reference one calls upon to make sense of the world around oneself" (Robbins & Krueger, 2000, p. 637). After earning doctorates in both physics and psychology, Stephenson crafted Q-methodology and method in response to constraints he perceived in conventional *R*-methodological approaches, namely that *R*-methods

investigate the relationships among variables (e.g. individual difference traits) within a given population of persons but cannot characterize specific persons (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Q-methodology that essentially integrates relationships among data as viewed from both a physics and a psychological paradigms (Watts & Stenner, 2012), a fact that aligns well with the recognition that human social worlds frequently exhibit both linear and nonlinear relationships (Davis, 2008; Page, 2011). In this approach, rather than comparing participant responses to selected statements or conceptual groupings of statements, the full set of statements, as arranged by the each participant, represent the variable of interest, allowing for individuals' perceptions as a whole to be considered. Q-method employs this unique approach to defining the variable of interest and also employs conventional correlational analyses. Thus, although Q-analyses are non-conventional in some regards, the trustworthiness of the obtained data can be explored using conventional approaches. For example, the reliability of the approach, that is, that an individual's responses will be similar across response opportunities, has been investigated and Q-method analyses have been shown to demonstrate this characteristic (Amin, 2000; Brown, 1980; Nicholas, 2011).

As noted by McKeown and Thomas (1988), "The true test of any methodology is to be found, pragmatically, in the veritable pudding of what it produces: what it brings to light and the intensity of the illumination it affords" (p. 10). The ability of Q-methodology to address the inherent complexities of both inter- and intra-personal experience (McKeown & Thomas, 1988; Ramlo, 2008) makes it particularly well-suited to understanding the shared perceptions and rich nuances of disability allyship. Kellington (2002) used Q-method to investigate the shared discourses and multiple frames of reference regarding racialized stereotypes, noting that the goal



of studying subjectivities is not to “find the truth” but to “highlight the multiplicity of truths about it” (Kellington, 2002, p. 158).

Research on social justice and equity often focuses on describing structural aspects of social systems, such as shifts in legislation or policies and practices, prevalence of under-represented minorities in specific educational or corporate venues, or the presence or intensity of prejudicial beliefs. Thus, studies do not often address the more complex beliefs and behaviors that guide day-to-day lived experiences of individuals within institutions. While top-down structural approaches arising from such traditional research are necessary, they are insufficient to the multifaceted task of social and institutional transformations. Stubborn social problems require more complex and adaptive responses (Patton, 2011; Preskill & Beer, 2012). Practices that support dynamic bottom-up approaches in which individuals with social power are seen as important change agents/allies have potential to meet this shortfall. Investigations utilizing the Q-approach to understanding whole-person subjective beliefs and shared viewpoints regarding social justice allyship may be well-suited to dismantling the seemingly intractable manifestations of the multiple inequality regimes that continue to plague us. Perceptions of education professionals are of particular interest given the pivotal roles faculty and teachers play in cultural transmissions of social norms (Allan, 2008; Behrent, 2009; McIntosh & Style, 1994; Moody, 2012; D. E. Smith, 2000).

### **Method**

Subjective perceptions of disability allyship were gathered using the Q-techniques developed by Stephenson (1953). A naturalistic sample of statements reflecting ideas related to disability allyship, the Q-sample, was developed from multiple sources grounded in disability activism and disability studies. This Q-sample was semi-structured in that the statements were

selected with the intention to reflect beliefs specific to disability allyship while also conforming to more general contours of social justice allyship. Subjective perceptions, operationalized in units of “quantification called ‘psychological significance’” (Burt and Stephenson, 1939, as referenced in Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 15), were obtained by asking participants to perform a Q-sort, that is to rank order the Q-sample statements based on the degree to which each statement was deemed “most like” or “most unlike” their own viewpoints within a frequency distribution grid (anchored on +5 at the right and -5 on the left; see the results section for graphic images). While ranking distributions do not impact the statistical findings from the data, prearranged distributions tend to make the ranking task more coherent for participants and facilitates visual comparisons of composite Q-sorts for data interpretation (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

### **Participants**

Initial study invitations were emailed to two groups of post-compulsory education professionals: a disability studies scholar group developed from authors of published manuscripts focused on disability, and a social justice interest group developed from a pool of scholar participants in various local social justice efforts. A snowball sampling approach encouraged participants to forward the invitation to post-compulsory educators whom they believed may be interested in disability allyship. Sixty-seven respondents completed the online version of the Disability Allyship Q-Sort; one participant was dropped after she reported she did not feel her responses were representative of her views. Of the 66 participants, 29 were respondents to the disability scholar group invitation and 37 responded to the social justice interest group invitation.

## **Research Instrument**

A Disability Allyship Q-Sort was developed for the purposes of this study, comprised of statements reflecting a representative range of perspectives on disability allyship. Statements were selected from literature reviews of various approaches to social justice allyship including white allies, straight allies, disability allies, and allyship in general, as well as scholarship regarding experiences of disability by persons who identified as disabled. Explorations of less formal resources highlighting disability rights and advocacy (i.e., online blogs, listservs, webinars) supplied additional statements.

Three faculty members familiar with conceptualizations of allyship who also identified as disabled completed a series of editorial reviews of early drafts of the Disability Allyship Q-Set (57 statements) to insure accuracy and comprehensiveness. Statements were either integrated with existing statements or dropped based on reviewer comments. IRB approval (Appendix A) was obtained after which pilot data were collected from P-12 educators attending a professional development conference (total  $n = 19$ ) using the Q-set (Appendix B) of 40 statements regarding beliefs and behaviors of disability allies. Given a choice between online or paper instruments, most participants opted for the online version; five participants selected paper versions.

A post-sort questionnaire included four open-ended response items regarding participants' reasoning for statements chosen as most and least like their views and also invited feedback regarding any unclear or missing aspects; this was followed by requests for demographic information. A review of participant comments indicated satisfaction with the instrument's clarity and comprehensiveness and no changes were made to the Q-set. Prior to implementing the current study, updated IRB approval (Appendix A) was obtained for modifications to the post-sort questionnaire including the addition of open-ended response items

regarding participants' definition of disability and willingness to be contacted for follow-up interviews, along with changes to anticipated demographic categories (work roles).

## **Procedures**

A link to the online version of the Disability Allyship Q-Sort instrument was included in emailed invitations to two groups of post-compulsory educator professionals, the disability scholar group (n = 20) and the social justice interest group (n = 97), though with unique links, and remained open for 37 days (Appendices C and D, respectively). Invitations were resent eight days after the first invite, then again after 10 additional days; the study was closed 19 days later when the response rate had slowed considerably. The link brought participants to a webpage with this condition of instruction: "What beliefs and behaviors best represent your views about what it means to be a disability ally?" The 40 statements were presented in random order and participants were asked to first read through the statements and sort them into three general stacks according to similarity with their views. Next, participants arranged all of the statements within the ranking distribution grid, then were given the opportunity to shift statement rankings until they had obtained an arrangement that satisfactorily represented their viewpoints based on the available statements. Opinions regarding aspects of disability allyship that may not have been included in the Q-sort were invited via the post-sort questionnaire. Following completion of the post-sort questionnaire, participant responses were recorded through the web application, and respondents were thanked for their participation.

## **Data Analysis**

Individual participant Q-sort data were submitted to correlation-based statistical analysis via PQMethod factor analysis software (Schmolck, 2002) to establish factor groupings representative of viewpoints among respondents regarding beliefs and behaviors that characterize

disability allyship. Correlations were calculated based on values associated with the statement positions within the distribution grid (e.g. +5 was associated with the two statements rated “most like my views” and -5 was associated with the two statements rated “most unlike my views”). Responses from the final pool of 66 participants were submitted to factor analysis using principal component analysis factor extractions followed with Varimax factor rotations.

A three factor solution was determined to represent the best fit for the data based on the following criteria: simultaneous maximization of variance explained and number of participants with statistically significant loadings (defining sorts) along with simultaneous minimization of confounded sorts, non-significant sorts, and inter-correlations among factors (Watts & Stenner, 2012). One of the three factors did include one defining sort that loaded on the opposite (negative) pole and visual comparisons of patterns among factor loadings indicated that this singular significant instance may have reflected a larger pattern of responses that did not meet statistical significance parameters. The three factor viewpoints resulting from this quantitative analysis were reproduced as individual composite theoretical Q-sorts depicted within the original distribution grid template. A brief consideration of the emergent fourth viewpoint is included below.

## **Results**

The primary purpose of this study was to delineate shared and divergent perspectives of post-compulsory education professionals regarding disability allyship. The viewpoints resulting from the Q-method factor analysis numerically represent the raw collective perceptions of the participants whose Q-sorts defined each factor. Based on that quantitative analysis, comprehensive narratives of each viewpoint were constructed by organizing the Q-sort

statements in composite-sort ranked order, with additional narrative built from associated participant comments.

Interpretations of these results were completed by considering each composite sort individually, as well as in relation to the other two sorts, in order to obtain an overall gestalt understanding of areas of similarity and divergence among the three viewpoints. The draft narratives were considered in the following contexts: Anchor statements found at the extreme ends of the composite Q-sorts, that is, statements considered *most like* or *most unlike* participant views; Statements identified by the Q-Method software as having obtained standardized scores that were either significantly different from the scores of those statements within the other factors (distinguishing statements), or significantly similar (consensus statements) and; Patterns of statement placement within each composite sort (e.g. noting if groupings of similar statements were observed and if so, were they found nearer the center or closer to one anchor or the other). Viewpoint narrative wording was then refined to reflect researcher interpretations and to improve readability.

To increase confidence in the representativeness and accuracy of the identified viewpoints and narrative summaries, participant checks were undertaken by contacting two participants per factor viewpoint. These participants had indicated their willingness to be contacted for follow-up interviews and were selected based on the representativeness of their Q-sort with the identified viewpoints (i.e., the highest loading sorts of participants who had agreed to follow-up). They were invited to review visual images of the composite sort in both numeric and color-coded text formats, along with demographic information and the comprehensive narrative summary, then to provide feedback regarding whether the viewpoint aligned reasonably

well with their own viewpoint, and if not, what might have been missing or inaccurately represented.

Two additional participants from the disability scholar group were contacted with a request to offer their views regarding how well the three viewpoints, taken together, characterized existing perspectives on disability allyship. The decision to contact the two additional reviewer-participants was made based on assumptions of expertise, that is, because they had self-identified as experiencing disability and were known to be disability studies scholars with interests in disability allyship working within post-compulsory education institutions. Also, their Q-sorts had loaded significantly on a factor (Factor 1 in both cases), and they were willing to be contacted for follow-up interviews (see Appendices E-I for feedback request scripts).

Responses were obtained from six of the eight participant-reviewer invitations; in each case participant-reviewers offered email text commentary and indicated willingness to be contacted for further questions or clarifications via email, phone, or face to face interviews. Both invited reviews were received for Factors 2 and 3. One invited review for Factor 1 and one additional invited review for the three viewpoints taken together were received. The participant-reviewer who responded to the three viewpoints taken together also loaded significantly on the Factor 1 viewpoint and volunteered comments on that viewpoint. Thus, reviews from two participant-reviewers were obtained for each of the viewpoint narratives and in each case they affirmed that the narrative had essentially captured their views of disability allyship. Additional commentary from the six participant-reviewers is integrated within the following abridged narrative summaries for each viewpoint. Implications regarding how factor viewpoints may

relate to participant demographics, as well as how the viewpoints relate to a critical disability studies perspective are considered in the discussion section.

### Three Viewpoints of Disability Allyship

Comprehensive narrative summaries of each composite viewpoint, as well as graphic images of the composite Q-sorts in text format, are found in Appendices E, F, and G, respectively. Full demographic data are also included in those appendices. Selected demographics are shown in Table 1 below. Images of the three composite sorts in numeric format with anchor statements are included in this manuscript, shown in Figures 1-3, respectively.

Table 1

#### *Selected Demographics for Viewpoints*

Characteristic	Factor 1 Accountable Collaborators	Factor 2 Amicable Empathics	Factor 3 Universal Design Advocates
Social Justice Group (# w/Disability)	5(0)	12(1)	15(1)
Disability Scholar Group (# w/Disability)	25(16)	1(2)	1(1)
> 38 years of age (< 38 years)	21(8)	6(4)	10(5)
Faculty Role (Administrators)	17(2)	8(2)	9(3)
> 8 years in Educ (< 8 years)	18(9)	7(4)	11(3)
Total participants (Variance Explained)	30 (25%)	13(11%)	16(13%)

*Note.* (N = 66); Non-responses to demographic questions are not included.

**Factor 1: Accountable Collaborators.** Participants in this viewpoint offered definitions of disability allyship that included a sense of accountability for educating themselves about



enabled privilege through communicating with and working alongside persons perceived as disabled. Allyship from this standpoint was grounded in collaboration with persons experiencing disability or disablism (statement 37: +5) and the recognition that multiple systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging influence the identity development of all persons (statement 33: +5). One respondent commented that allyship begins with “becoming aware of the system of privilege and one’s place in it” (participant L21).

For Accountable Collaborators, disability allyship meant accepting responsibility for educating oneself and others about unearned systems of enabled privilege, requiring openness to ongoing personal critique regarding one’s advocacy approaches (statements 3: +4; 36: +4). Distress about unearned advantaging or disadvantaging was rated as unlike this view (statements 8: -3; 6: -3). As one participant put it, “I don’t waste time in being distressed. I try to recognize and understand my privileges so I can work to create a level playing field” (participant L08), indicating that overly-emotional responses are to be avoided.

Statements regarding heroic overcoming (statement 32: -5) and reliance on experts (statement 38: -5), were cast as “most unlike” this viewpoint and indeed were adamantly rejected as “[c]ondescending, patronizing, paternalistic” (participant N22) and “potentially harmful... to say or think” (participant N21). One respondent whose sort defined the Accountable Collaborators asserted that the “notion that all people with disabilities need to work harder, pray more, wish deeper” is a reflection of a cultural assumption “that disability is, and should be, fixable” (participant N28). “We would all be so much better off if this belief were debunked instantly!” (participant N5). The idea of experts speaking or acting on behalf of people perceived as disabled was characterized by one respondent as “an attitude that keeps the disabled

in a perpetual state of receiving charity/pity” and as “actually a really dangerous idea” (participant N27).

One participant commented that leveraging one’s own privilege “to dismantle the various \*ist paradigms” was a key responsibility of disability allies and that “[t]aking direct action speaks louder than words or feelings” (participant N21). However, another participant remarked that enabled people working as direct service providers may be “unlikely to be [an] actual ally (because of training)” (participant L15), and yet another participant asserted that “[s]o-called ‘experts’ have done more to disable people and to prop up ableist systems than any other group” (participant N17). Feedback from one of the participant-reviewers may offer additional insight for this issue. The participant-reviewer commented at some length regarding “aspects of being an ally that can come with pitfalls” such as “the issue of friendship between enabled and disabled people and with providing direct assistance.” Remarking on the complexity inherent in balancing the development of friendship relationships and needs for direct assistance, the importance was noted of “genuinely being open to being friends with disabled people without seeking such friendship merely because someone is disabled.” In order to spend time with friends who required a lot of direct assistance “without an employee or family member present too” this participant-reviewer “learned to do what was needed to make that happen.” In a related comment the participant-reviewer brought up “the larger issue [of] a dearth of really good assistance available for people who really require a lot” most especially when communication requires adaptations or technologies, then it is a “really important part of collaborating with them on disability rights issues and so on to simply provide the assistance they need so that they can speak for themselves—without it, they are silenced.”

Most  
Unlike  
My Views

Most  
Like  
My Views

					40						
				34	29	39					
		24	17	28	35	30					
	10	8	23*	12	26	20	15	31	36		
38	7	6	13	5	25	18	14	27	19*	37	
32	2	4	11*	1	22	16	9	21	3	33	
	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

\* Consensus Statements

**Anchor Statements**

**-5**  
 38 Knows that people experiencing disability often need to rely on experts acting on their behalf  
 32 Knows that some people overcome their impairments through heroic effort

**-4**  
 10. Provides sympathetic support for people experiencing disability  
 7 Advocates for charitable groups as providers of needed services for people with disability  
 2 Understands that disability is caused by a health condition

**+5**  
 37 Knows importance of collaboration w/persons w/disability  
 33 Recognizes racism, sexism, etc influence experiences of disablism/enabled privilege

**+4**  
 36 Is open to personal critique regarding disability/disablism  
 19 Believes persons w/disability when they communicate about their experiences  
 3 Accepts responsibility for educating self and others re enabled privilege

Figure 1. Composite sort for Accountable Collaborators with anchor statements.

Recognizing disability as a natural expression of human diversity (statement 31: +3) is integral to this viewpoint and one respondent noted that “a person with a disability is not shift in focus away from notions of disability to the enabled majority by suggesting that disability studies be renamed as “Normalcy Studies” (participant N19). In many ways, these comments reveal the essence of the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint—that we are all “normal” and we are all accountable for building a just society.

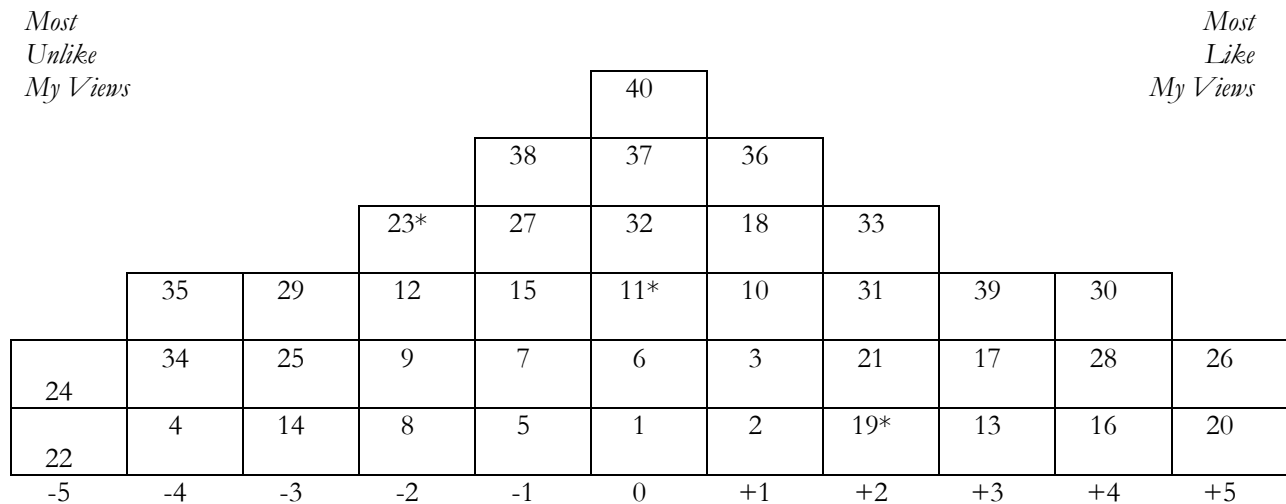
**Factor 2: Amicable Empathics.** Participants in this viewpoint offered definitions of disability allyship that simultaneously included social and biological features and expressed a strong sense of compassionate support toward persons experiencing disability discrimination. Disability allyship from this standpoint is demonstrated through valuing and including the perspectives of people perceived as disabled (statement 26: +5). Amicable Empathic allies were cognizant of their unearned enabled advantages and aware that those advantages are often invisible to enabled persons (statements 20: +5; 30: +4).

Noting that social stigmas constitute chronic stressors for persons experiencing disability, allies within this viewpoint empathized with people perceived as disabled (statements 28: +4; 13: +3). Amicable Empathic allies understood experiences of disability as multifaceted and recognized that all people, including people perceived as disabled, are subject to influences of socially structured systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging such as racism or sexism and that people perceived as disabled may or may not have shared experiences of discrimination as disabled people (statements 16: +4; 33: +2; 39: +3).

The statements that elicited strong responses from the Accountable Collaborators were ranked as neither like nor unlike the perspectives of Amicable Empathics. Allies who resonated with this viewpoint ranked in the mid-range of the distribution grid statements regarding disability as something that may be overcome through heroic effort and the need for persons perceived as disabled to rely on experts acting on their behalf (statements 32:0; 38: -1). Amicable Empathics ranked consultation with persons perceived as disabled before taking actions as relatively unlike their views (statement 14: -3). Ally behaviors identified as unlike this viewpoint of disability allyship included advocating for learning, community, and workplace settings to be barrier-free (statements 25: -3; 29: -3; 35: -4) and working as a direct service

provider, or creating opportunities to advocate for disability rights (statements 4: -4; 34: -4).

Networking with groups providing services to persons perceived as disabled, or with groups working for disability rights were ranked as most unlike this viewpoint (statements 24: -5; 22: -5).



\* Consensus Statements

**Anchor Statements**

**-5**

- 22 Networks with groups working for disability rights
- 24 Networks with groups providing services to people experiencing disability

**-4**

- 4 Works as a service provider to people experiencing disabilities
- 34 Creates opportunities to advocates for disability rights
- 35 Advocates for all workplace settings to be inherently barrier-free

**+5**

- 20 Understands social norms give unearned advantage to the nondisabled
- 26 Values the benefits of diverse perspectives including people w/disability

**+4**

- 16 Knows that experiences of disability are multifaceted
- 28 Knows that social stigmas constitute chronic stressors for persons experiencing disability
- 30 Knows that nondisabled people are often unaware of their enabled privilege

Figure 2. Composite sort for Amicable Empathics with anchor statements.

Comments offered by participants who populated the Amicable Empathics factor reflected an understanding of disability as a fundamentally individual and embodied

phenomenon, though with explicit acknowledgement of the invisibility of enabled privilege, as well as social stigmas associated with perceptions of disability. Definitions of disability provided by several respondents included various individually-referenced characterizations: “a physical or mental barrier to learning, communicating, or conducting Activities of Daily Living [routine self-care] that is not experienced by the majority of the population” (participant L28), “an inability to carry out a specific task” (participant L03), “an aspect of an individual that limits his/her ability to engage in some behavior” (participant L11), and “physical or psychological: something that prevents ability” (participant L18).

Several Amicable Empathics also expressed social-construction interpretations of disability. One participant indicated that disability “seems to be primarily defined by societies [*sic*] normative expectations [in] areas of life where we need some assistance and/or accommodation” (participant L15). Another respondent described transactional individual/social aspects when identifying disability as “a socially-induced condition forced on people who are physically impaired in some way. The ‘disability’ is more squarely located in society than in the person, or even in their body” (participant L06). Identity development for people with enabled privilege and for people experiencing disability or disablism was understood by Amicable Empathics to be multifaceted and complex; one respondent rejected an “essentialist notions of identity” further noting that “[a]bility is like race, gender, sexuality, etc. One aspect of identity rather than a problem” [*sic*] (participant L24).

Amicable Empathics may “see disability as a diversity issue” (participant L06). A participant whose sort defined this viewpoint stated that “status and awareness of advantage/privilege tend to be inversely related” and that “social contexts where [one’s] status is esteemed” may improve both personal comfort and skill performance (participant L15).

Education was identified by one respondent as “the key to understanding disability and the privilege of not being disabled” (participant L06). This valuing of education and understanding was also reflected in comments from participant-reviewers for the Amicable Empathics viewpoint.

One participant-reviewer advocated for a more nuanced interpretation of the statements cast as most “unlike” their viewpoint of disability allyship. She further noted for example, that while Amicable Empathics may highly value interpersonal relationships, issues that may impact their ability to advocate for barrier-free settings or to network with groups providing services to persons perceived as disabled may include “restrictions on time and resources to devote to the success of special populations of students, [and the] ability to connect with other advocates.” The other participant-reviewer noted that lack of awareness of unearned enabled privilege makes it “difficult to have serious discussions about equal opportunity” though the reviewer also remarked that as a professor, he felt “it is critical for me to be continually aware of both the unearned privilege I enjoy as an able bodied person, as well as the message I get from society that says the disabled are ‘others.’” Overall, Amicable Empathics prioritize compassionate interpersonal aspects of disability allyship.

*Plus one?* As a brief though potentially important aside, the Amicable Empathics viewpoint did include one defining sort that loaded on the opposite (negative) pole of the factor ( $r = -0.46$ ). Demographics indicated that this participant, a respondent to the disability scholar group invitations, was a tenured faculty member who identified as “hav[ing] an impairment.” Although this participant was the only one whose sort loaded significantly at that pole, visual comparisons of the three factor loadings indicated that this singular significant instance may have reflected a larger pattern of responses that did not meet statistical significance parameters.

Eight of the 30 participants whose sorts loaded significantly positively on the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint also loaded non-significantly negatively on Amicable Empathics viewpoint and six of those eight participants identified as experiencing some form of disability or disablism.

Conjecturing that this pattern may be suggesting an emergent viewpoint, a defining sort was developed by organizing a mirror-image of the Amicable Empathics viewpoint responses as described by Watts and Stenner (2012, pp. 165-166). The resulting composite theoretical sort was characterized as Engaged Pragmatists to reflect a focus on collaboration with people perceived as disabled and the no-nonsense get-involved tone observed in the comments offered from the sole respondent (participant N30). Disability was defined as “a complex phenomenon which arises from the interplay of mental or physical impairments with the wider social and physical environment.”

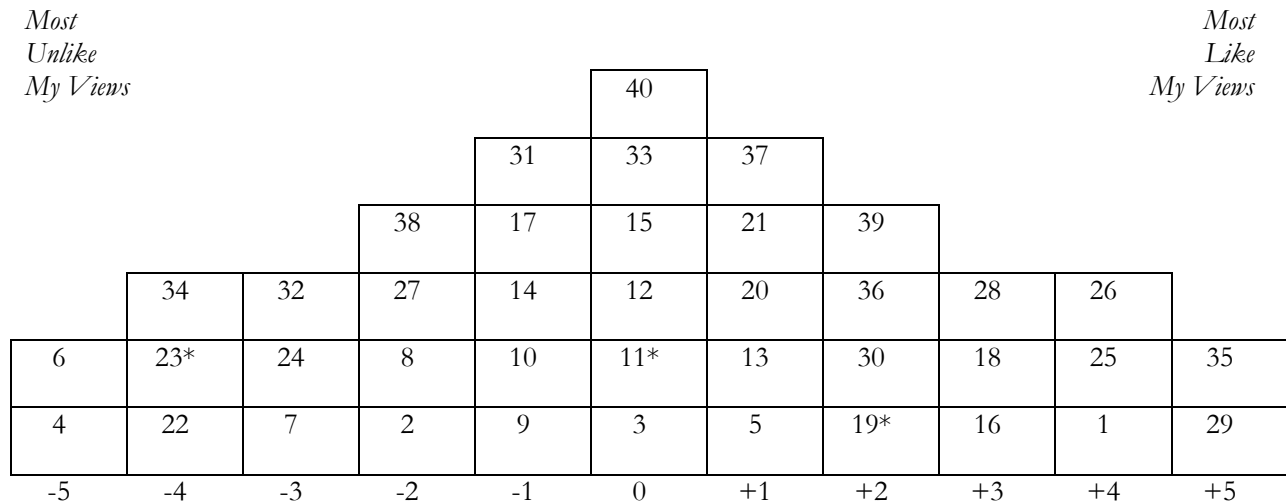
This Engaged Pragmatist asserted that the disability rights slogan “‘Nothing about us without us’ should not be confused with ‘disabled people can and should do everything for themselves.’ Technical skills – including research – may come from disabled or nondisabled people. I do not want an ethnic, separatist notion of disability identity.” The participant declared that services to people experiencing disability ought to be viewed as a right, not as the purview of charitable groups, and sympathy, while it “may come from a positive place,” is unwelcome as an emotion too close to “pity which tends to demean the recipient.” Noting that “there are multiple ways of being an ally” the participant emphasized that “[a]llies take their cue from the representative organizations of disabled people... working alongside and in partnership with disabled people.” Thus, an Engaged Pragmatist viewpoint prioritizes egalitarian effectiveness as the hallmark of disability allyship.



**Factor 3: Universal Design (UD) Advocates.** Participants in this viewpoint offered two divergent definitions of disability allyship, with several respondents describing a social constructivist view and others identifying disability as located with the individual, though in both cases they shared the view that environmental barriers are the primary cause of disability discrimination. Respondents within this viewpoint understood barrier-free environments in learning, community, and workplace settings as crucial to disability justice (statements 25: +4; 29: +5; 35: +5) including support for the implementation of flexible schedules so persons perceived as disabled have opportunities to work according to shifting needs (statement 1: +4). UD Advocates ranked speaking for themselves rather than “for” persons perceived as disabled as relatively like their views (statement 18: +3). One participant-reviewer indicated appreciation for this viewpoint’s focus on “barriers instead of on people.”

Similar to Accountable Collaborators, UD Advocates found notions of people overcoming impairments through heroic efforts to be unlike their views (statement 32: -4). They also rated experiences of distress regarding their own unearned advantages (statement 6: -5) as unlike their views of disability allyship, indicating that emotional responses may be seen by UD Advocates as essentially “[u]seless” [participant N7] or perhaps, as asserted by one participant, to be “narcissistic” rather than empathetic (participant L30). UD Advocates generally appeared to concur that “[g]uilt doesn’t help... Disability is about barriers” and that we “can fix barriers” without attempting to fix people (participant N7). Similar to the views of Amicable Empathics, ally behaviors such as creating opportunities to advocate for disability rights or networking with groups working for disability rights (statements 34: -4; 22: -4) or working as a direct service provider to people experiencing disability (statement 4: -5) were viewed as unlike this view of disability allyship. However, one UD Advocates respondent did note that it is difficult to

“help/advocate for disability rights without understanding (at least in part) the interests and concerns of people with disabilities” (participant L30).



\* Consensus Statements

**Anchor Statements**

<b>-5</b>	<b>+5</b>
4 Works as a service provider to people experiencing disability	29 Advocates for all community settings to be inherently barrier-free
6 Experiences distress about one’s own unearned advantages	35 Advocates for all workplace settings to be inherently barrier-free
<b>-4</b>	<b>+4</b>
22 Networks with groups working for disability rights	1 Supports flexible schedules so persons w/disability can meet shifting needs
23 Knows people w/disability are individuals who may have shared experiences of discrimination	25 Advocates for all learning settings to be inherently barrier-free.
34 Creates opportunities to advocate for disability rights	26 Values the benefits of diverse perspectives including people w/disability privilege

Figure 3. Composite sort for Universal Design Advocates with anchor statements.

Comments offered by participants who populated the Universal Design Advocates viewpoint indicated that while they hold differing definitions of disability, UD Advocates share the perspective that environmental contexts are central to the experience of disability/disablism.

Several UD Advocates' definitions of disability highlighted interactions of individuals and contexts. One UD Advocate definition indicated that "[a]ny physical or psychological impairment that has an impact on one's daily experiences" (participant L14) may be considered a disability. Another described disability as "physical or mental conditions which interfere... within the existing context of the dominant 'abled' culture. Disability is context dependent" (participant L05). Still others described disability as "anything that prohibits someone from participating in something the same way it is presented" (participant L25), or "[a]ny condition ...such that a person faces barriers [including] inability to enter public spaces, inability to access publicly-available information, social stigma, or pain from trying to be normal or live a normal life" (participant N7).

Both participant-reviewers for the UD Advocates viewpoint indicated that the narrative description aligned reasonably well with their views. One participant-reviewer highlighted the importance of "helping to engage others as advocates—in fields such as journalism, law, transportation." The other participant-reviewer indicated that it would have helped to learn of "the other narratives, or even names of the other viewpoints" in order for her to more confidently ascertain the degree to which the composite UD Advocates narrative aligned with her viewpoint. She also expressed discomfort with a sense of "either-or" that seemed to be latent in the draft narrative rather than a preferred "and/and" approach, "I think while [disability] is certainly socially constructed, locating disability in both environmental and individual contexts make sense to me." These comments reflect a recognition of the transactional aspects of individuals-within-environments-and-contexts that is emblematic of the UD Advocates viewpoint.

## **Overview of Disability Allyship Viewpoints**

The narratives developed from the quantitatively obtained composite sorts and the narratives developed from participants' comments presented markedly similar descriptions of each viewpoint. Additionally, participant-reviewers for each viewpoint expressed confidence that the composite narrative descriptions did accurately represent their general perspective on disability allyship, though they did also offer thoughtful extensions or qualifications which were incorporated into the descriptions above. The three factors taken together were also affirmed by one participant-reviewer to be broadly representative of currently existing viewpoints of disability allyship. This triangulation of metrics (narratives of quantitatively-generated factor viewpoints, narratives constructed from respondents' open-ended comments, and participant-reviewer confirmations) suggests confirmability and also offers assurances that the findings are representative and trustworthy.

**Uniquenesses among viewpoints.** The three viewpoints, Accountable Collaborators, Amicable Empathics, and Universal Design (UD) Advocates, each represent importantly unique perspectives on disability allyship. Accountable Collaborators prioritized taking their lead from and acting in concert with persons experiencing disability/disablism and recognized intersecting systems of advantaging and disadvantaging. Amicable Empathics prioritized interpersonal relationships and recognized the importance of awareness regarding their own enabled privilege as well as the stigma experienced by persons perceived as disabled. UD Advocates prioritized the dismantling of barriers across all environments and recognized the rich potential for accessible contexts to prevent many forms of disability discrimination.

**Commonalities among viewpoints.** Each viewpoint also overlapped in important ways, as discussed in the narrative accounts and further explored below. The Accountable

Collaborators and the Universal Design Advocates viewpoints shared key perspectives and this similarity is reflected in the quantitative relationship seen in the factor correlation value of 0.52 for these two views. Universal Design Advocates and Amicable Empathics viewpoints also shared a number of similar views as reflected in a factor correlation value of 0.42. The fewest commonalities were seen between the Accountable Collaborators and Amicable Empathics viewpoints with a factor correlation of 0.25.

Table 2 lists the valence associated with three statistically significant consensus statements for the viewpoints and also identifies three statements that reflect non-significant though noteworthy agreement among the perspectives. As the positive valences for the rankings of statements 19 and 21 show, all three viewpoints affirmed the importance of listening to and

Table 2

*Areas of Overlap and Consensus*

Concourse Statement	Accountable Collaborators	Amicable Empathics	Universal Design Advocates
Believes persons w/disability when they communicate about their experiences (19)*	+4	+2	+2
Provides direct assistance to persons experiencing disablism (23)*	-2	-2	-3
Develops friendships with people experiencing disability/disablism (11)*	-2	0	0
Knows that disability is just one of many enriching identity attributes (40)	0	0	0
Educates oneself re: lived experiences of people w/disability(15)	+2	-1	0
Knows we all need to unlearn nondisabled = superior or normal (21)	+3	+2	+1

*Note.* \* Indicates statistically significant consensus associations across viewpoints.

believing people when they speak of experiences of disability and the need to unlearn the practice of equating normal with nondisabled. Understanding disability as an enriching identity attribute (statement 40) and developing friendships with people perceived as disabled (statement 11) were ranked in the middle of the distribution for all three viewpoints. A participant-reviewer may have captured the essence of this middle-ground consensus when she noted that, “if you're ‘trying,’ you aren't really being a friend, because friendship just happens. But if friendship never happens, then clearly you're closing yourself off in some way, not seeing disabled colleagues as real people.”

Although the three perspectives also showed generally similar mid-range rankings for the need to educate oneself about lived experiences of disability (statement 15), the slight differences in ranking placements may reflect important nuances in central characteristics of each view. Accountable Collaborators ranked this statement closer to the “Like my views” anchor, Amicable Empathics ranked it somewhat closer to the “Unlike my views” anchor, and UD Advocates were equivocal.

Providing direct assistance to people perceived as disabled was ranked as relatively unlike the views of all three of these primary factors. Conversely, the possibly emergent viewpoint represented by the single sort that loaded on the negative pole of the Amicable Empathics viewpoint, characterized as Engaged Pragmatists, takes direct service (statement 4: +4) and assistance (statement 23: +2) to people perceived as disabled as relatively like that view. Moreover, statements regarding consultation (statement 14: +3) and networking *with* people perceived as disabled and disability-focused groups were ranked as most like that view (statements 22: +5; 24: +5) whereas these statements were relatively unlike the other three viewpoints.

## **Discussion**

The learning and unlearning involved in the development of ally relationships is uniquely personal, thus analytic tools which recognize and honor the complex, distinctive subjectivity inherent in this highly contextualized process are invaluable, and Q-methodology served this research need. The Q-approach was selected for this study because it offers theoretically sound and effective methods for describing “specific individuals in a holistic fashion,” then enabling a “thorough comparison of their individual differences” (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 22). The Disability Allyship Q-set of 40 statements, developed from a wide-ranging exploration of resources that represented perceptions regarding disability allyship supported this investigation of post-compulsory education professionals’ perspectives regarding disability allyship. Secondary research interests included exploring relationships among factor viewpoints and participant demographics, and considerations of the viewpoints in relation to critical disabilities studies perspectives.

### **Demographics**

While a typical Q-method study does not allow for statistical investigations based on demographics, anecdotal explorations may provide important insight regarding the participant sample and may prompt future research priorities. The snowball sampling used in the current study proved to be an effective approach for reaching individuals with an interest in disability studies. Initially, very few responses were received from the disability studies scholars invitation—until the invitation was forwarded to the Society for Disability Studies (SDS) listserv. Within two weeks, responses to this invitation had grown from four to 30, with no additional prompts.

The demographics of this group differed notably from the social justice respondents in two characteristics. First, of the 23 study participants who identified as experiencing disability or disablism, 19 responded to the disability studies scholars invitation. Second, when asked to write-in their gender, disability studies respondents listed nine gender identities, whereas participants from the social justice interest group listed three.

Twenty-five of the 30 participants whose sorts loaded significantly on the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint had responded to the disability studies scholars invitation after it was posted to the SDS listserv, thus it is probable that the majority of those participants are SDS members. The SDS mission statement essentially promotes a critical disability studies perspective in that the organization “promotes the study of disability in social, cultural, and political contexts... recognizes that disability is a key aspect of human experience, ...seeks to augment understanding of disability... and to advocate for social change.” Given the high representation of persons who identified as experiencing disability/disablism in the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint, it appears that disability allyship viewpoints may, perhaps unsurprisingly, be substantively associated with status with regard to perceived disability. Additionally, given the expanded representation of gender identities offered by these participants, it seems likely that many of the Accountable Collaborators respondents were familiar with critical gender studies analyses. These anecdotal considerations suggest that the Accountable Collaborators’ viewpoint may be generally reflective of views held by post-compulsory academics who experience disability disablism and who value a critical studies approach.



## **Critical Disability Studies Perspectives**

The beliefs and behaviors represented in the Disability Allyship Q-set statements were gathered from multiple sources reflecting currently existing views of disability allyship. Notably, three of the statements elicited strong critiques from participants who responded to the disability scholars invitation, the majority of whose sorts defined the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint. The three statements, regarding the role of charitable groups, reliance on outside experts, and heroic efforts on the part persons perceived as disabled, were considered emblematic of harmful disability stereotypes. As is true for racialized and gendered stereotypes, these disability tropes represent unconscious biases that guide attitudes and behaviors in spite of explicitly stated values and beliefs (Rohmer & Louvet, 2012; Thomas et al., 2013; Traub, 2013).

Several of the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint participants vehemently asserted that, left unexamined, these stereotypes contribute to disability discrimination in myriad overt and covert ways. One participant-reviewer characterized individuals who identify as allies, though who have not explicitly rejected such stereotypes, as “ANTI-allies.” This participant-reviewer declared that “there needs to be a critical unpacking of perceptions/ideologies of even some who identify as allies” because individuals who identify as disability allies may be unaware of the degree to which “institutionalized ableism infiltrate[s] [their] beliefs and values” reflecting a “medical model ideology, often unconsciously, but quite overtly.”

While the explicit rejection of these stereotypical beliefs resonated most strongly with Accountable Collaborators, UD Advocates also ranked those three statements as relatively unlike their views. Moreover, although the Amicable Empathics were relatively equivocal regarding these three statements, their underlying focus on interpersonal and affective concerns reflects an arguably vital sense of compassionate humanity.

It may be reasonable to assume, given the linkages with SDS membership, that the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint is to some degree representative of a critical disability studies standpoint, that is, one that follows a social justice approach to the study of disability. This interpretation is supported by comments from the two participant-reviewers whose sorts loaded significantly on that viewpoint. The Accountable Collaborators participant-reviewer who also considered the three viewpoints taken together stated,

I supposed that I shouldn't be amazed that the viewpoints of almost all of the people identifying as having a disability are in the Accountable Collaborator's grouping. Still, given the diversity of perspectives of PWD's, it's cool that they are there [and] that they reflect so strongly an opposition to a medical model, an understanding of the concerns and issues reflected in/through/by/over/around Disability Studies, and a connection to what counts as normal.

This remark highlights an important disability-specific aspect of allyship as defined by disability justice activists: the explicit rejection of a view of disability as arising primarily or fundamentally from individual psychological or physiological medicalized conditions, a view that freights with it a tendency toward charity rather than parity, assumptions of diagnoses and treatments by "professional others," and places inordinate attention and value on stories of inspirational/heroic overcoming.

A second participant-reviewer for the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint asserted that an individual who doesn't "grasp enabled privilege but who goes on and on about how 'some of my best friends are disabled' is suspect and needs some enlightenment to really be a useful ally." This remark is reflective of a theme that is so common across discourses regarding social justice alliance relationships that it is frequently used to signal ironic humor (e.g. "some of my best

friends are....” fill in the blank). The unique priorities represented in the Amicable Empathics and UD Advocates viewpoints also represent important ally beliefs and actions. Whereas the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint may be most representative of an academic critical disability approach to disability allyship, the Amicable Empathics and UD Advocates viewpoints esteem interpersonal and action-oriented approaches, respectively.

As detailed in the foregoing literature reviews, there is a consensus among critical studies scholars and social justice activists that a first order of business for a person intending to act as an ally is the cultivation of awareness regarding one’s own positionality within the system(s) of unearned advantaging/disadvantaging in question. Understanding how that unearned advantaging plays out in one’s own life often comes in response to learning about both the social/structural realities and the more intimate lifeworlds of persons experiencing unearned disadvantaging. Additionally, unlearning the beliefs, cognitive and/or affective responses, and behaviors emblematic of privileged statuses necessarily unfolds in the context of opportunities to act as an ally. Allyship is an iterative and ongoing process of learning and unlearning (Bishop, 2002, 2005; Evans et al., 2005; Reason & Davis, 2005).

### **Possible Study Limitations**

Three individuals reported experiencing difficulties that prohibited them from completing the online Q-sort. One indicated that the instructions and statements were visually inaccessible, a concern that was likely due to a mismatch between the older software of the web application and a newer device, and two expressed overwhelming frustration regarding the forced-choice distribution. It may be that these difficulties were experienced by others who did not report those challenges.

The study included a relatively high representation of participants who identified as experiencing disability/disablism (approximately 35% of respondents). While this oversampling increases confidence that the viewpoints of persons perceived as disabled are represented, the majority of these participants (19 of 23) are likely to be SDS members. It may be that perspectives held by post-compulsory education professionals who do not conform to the critical disability studies perspective of the SDS are underrepresented.

### **Implications**

Current dominant cultural constructions of disability simultaneously promote unearned advantaging and disadvantaging based on perceived disability status, giving rise to a complex web of material, social, and personal inequities. Discrimination based on perceived disability creates great harms to us all. Though it falls most harshly and directly on persons perceived as disabled, the “bottom line” costs to our abilities to solve complex problems of the day are enormous and unnecessary. Also, even though some are materially enabled by systemic unearned advantaging, when we remain unaware of the systemic nature of those advantages, we erroneously presume that it is through our own efforts that those benefits accrue to us. This lack of self-knowledge and awareness of the peoples’ lived experiences of unearned disadvantaging lends itself to hubris, superficial social connections, and diminishes our humanity. The enabled majority has the power—and the accountability—for undoing this last prejudice by becoming informed and productive allies with peopled disabled by the current cultural paradigms around the putatively normate human.

A social justice conceptualization of accountability suggests that it is the responsibility of enabled allies to recognize our own ignorance, and to seek out, listen to, and believe persons perceived as disabled regarding experiences of disability, and then to act together for disability

justice. A majority of participants in this study who identified as disabled roundly rejected the three Disability Allyship Q-set statements regarding charitable groups, outside experts, and heroic efforts. When ally accountability is taken seriously, and the disability justice mantra, “Nothing about us without us!” is respectfully observed, it becomes clear that educational efforts addressing disability discrimination must explicitly unpack and deconstruct these harmful disability stereotypes.

Beliefs and behaviors formed over a lifetime of being positioned as “not disabled” are unlikely to substantively change without repeated opportunities to unlearn these internalized views. Indeed, Waitoller and Artiles (2013) have recently detailed the ongoing and “difficult task” of “changing teachers’ deficit views of students who struggle to learn” (p. 331). To do so, we must first come to recognize and resist, both individually and collectively, beliefs and behaviors that reflect paradigms of disability as an inherently problematic individual pathology. Whether explicitly or implicitly held, such perceptions diminish human worth and trigger a range of marginalizing responses that constitute systemic unearned disadvantaging of persons viewed as disabled, and systemic unearned advantaging for those among us who are viewed as nondisabled. If institutional transformation with a goal of disability justice is intended, then ongoing opportunities to develop and hone a range of social justice ally skills and practices will be vital to the success of those endeavors (Danforth & Gabel, 2006; Davis, 2002; Mehta, 2013; Pohland & Bova, 2000; Rankin & Reason, 2008).

This study has characterized three unique viewpoints of disability allyship held by post-compulsory education professionals and has described another possibly emergent viewpoint. Interpretations of these results highlighted areas of unconsciously held disability biases and stereotypes that provoke multiple permutation of disability discrimination. Each viewpoint

addresses important aspects of disability justice, though as stand-alone approaches none of the three fully address the complex web of hegemonic normativity and enabled privilege that maintains myriad social injustices. Taken together, these viewpoints offer promise of effective action for disability justice, and do so within a broadly inclusive and intersectional critical analysis.

A comprehensive and truly effective approach to dismantling disablism will recognize and amplify the areas of agreement among the viewpoints while also leveraging the unique priorities of each. In sum, attention to broadly functional contexts and environments, as is prioritized in the UD Advocates viewpoint, must be balanced with ongoing communications and collaborations with persons experiencing disability, as is characteristic of the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint, and none of that can take place if we do not established friendly and compassionate relationships with one another, as is prioritized by the Amicable Empathics viewpoint. On the whole, the viewpoints prioritize collaboration, human dignity, and action and represent the best of disability allyship.

## **CHAPTER 4. WORKING IT BACKWARDS: STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>**

Research has established that beneficial educational, psychological, and financial outcomes are associated with a diverse student body, and these benefits accrue to all students. Unfortunately, access to and successful completion of post-compulsory education programs remains elusive for students from marginalized groups. According to Goodwin and Morgan (2012) “Just as academia continues to drive away talented women, we may be driving out talented people... [a]s a consequence, we may be losing valuable scholars and teachers who would broaden our discourse across the academy” (p. 38). This is a social justice concern because successful completion of some form of post-compulsory education has become nearly synonymous with the ability to access socioeconomic resources (Cooper, 2010).

In response to this concern access to educational opportunity has become a central refrain across discourses. While access to educational opportunity is generally recognized as being more complex than the simple availability of courses and programs (Bastedo & Gumport, 2003), current discourses often frame access as a function of inputs and outputs with tuition costs providing the front-end appraisals and graduation rates serving as the back-end evaluations. Yet meaningful access requires far more than the financial capacity to select a program of study from a menu of options or mere exposure to particular curricula.

This conflation of access with minimalist notions of opportunity essentially ignores concerns about campus and workplace climate for members of underrepresented groups (Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009; Edman & Brazil, 2009; Gusa, 2010; Worthington, 2008). Although

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<sup>1</sup> An early draft of this manuscript was co-authored by Cali L. Anicha and Dr. Chris Ray. Cali L. Anicha was the primary developer of the ACT Framework and the professional development approach advanced here, and also drafted and revised all versions of this chapter. Dr. Chris Ray developed the original section on the impacts of diversity for students.

relatively fewer students from underrepresented backgrounds matriculate, pipeline issues do not fully account for the demographic mismatches between potential students and actual students, potential faculty and actual faculty, nor between students and faculty (Bilimoria, Joy, & Liang, 2008; Goulden, Frasch, & Mason, 2009). Other factors are undoubtedly influential. In order to increase the rates of successful post-compulsory education program matriculation and completion we need to look at student experiences within those programs.

Individual faculty members and student affairs professionals are the primary actors in delivering educational programs. Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff are crucial to support the curricular, pedagogical, and programmatic transformations necessary if post-compulsory education institutions are to fulfill their missions (Cox Suárez, 2008; Moody, 2012). Viewing student experiences from the “altered perspectives” (Apple, 1997) of critical education studies compels us to consider ways in which traditional educational approaches may actually thwart efforts to retain (i.e. provide meaningful access for) a diverse student body. That is, functionally and authentically accessible educational opportunities must interrupt the current dominant culture’s systemic disadvantaging of underrepresented students and the over-privileging of dominant cultural educational approaches.

Following a review of economic, pedagogical, curricular, and social/affective benefits associated with a diverse student body, we extend typical conceptualizations of diversity such as racialized and gendered identities, to also include disability. Further, we unpack the contention that discrimination based on perceptions of disability is foundational to all forms of systemic privileging and oppressing and highlight growing national and global recognition of disability as an important facet of human diversity. Next, we defend the proposition that access to and success in academia for students from underrepresented groups is, in part, contingent upon the



presence of faculty from those underrepresented groups. Lastly, we offer a professional development plan that puts disability at the center of campus efforts toward recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty, inclusive of faculty with disability.

### **Student Access and Success**

Given the demonstrated role of educational attainment in overcoming inequalities caused by decades of segregation and exclusion of under-represented individuals and groups, access to colleges and universities has been heavily emphasized since the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's (Baker & Vélez, 1996). While marginalization is perpetuated when students are denied access, increased access to education decreases prejudice and injustice (Janks, 2000). To move toward a more just society, it is imperative that educators actively work to dismantle systems that maintain power and privilege and instead promote systems that enhance inclusion and equality. To reduce these systemic inequalities, a fundamental principle valued in post-compulsory education systems in the U.S. is that all students should have an opportunity to obtain a quality education at a public institution (Bastedo & Gumport, 2003).

Increased educational access is expected to have considerable benefits for those who would not have otherwise attended college. For example, a college education is considered necessary to achieve the American dream: working hard to achieve a higher quality of life for oneself and one's family (Erisman & Looney, 2007). One apparent benefit of a college education concerns the lifetime earning potential of individuals. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, bachelor's degree recipients were expected to earn nearly double the income of those who possessed a high school diploma (Day & Newburger, 2002). Additionally, college graduates have been found to have increased financial savings, greater personal and professional mobility, expanded leisure activities, better overall health, and improved quality of life for

themselves and their families (IHEP, 1998). There are likely countless other benefits including increased cognitive and affective skills, making it critically important that the benefits not be limited to particular individuals or groups.

What is less obvious is the benefit that a diverse student body brings to the educational experience of the entire student body. Theories and empirical work concerning the development and socialization of college students indicate that interaction with diverse peers results in numerous positive inter- and intra-personal outcomes such as self-confidence, empathy, and even enhanced cognitive development (Astin, 1977, 1993; Pascarella, 1985; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Weidman, 1989). In a study exploring peer interaction during college, Astin (1993) found that frequent interaction with others diverse from oneself was connected to both increased cultural awareness and an increased commitment to understanding other perspectives.

Additionally, peer interaction was related to increased knowledge, analytical skills, and writing skills, as well as satisfaction with the college experience. When further exploring the impact of a diverse campus environment, Chang found that increased racial diversity on college campuses resulted in greater socialization across race, which ultimately led to increased discussions of racial issues and enhanced racial understanding (Chang, 1996). In the same year, Pascarella and his colleagues reported that interactions with diverse others, both in and out of the classroom, promoted critical thinking skills (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996). Further, diversity is useful to help students at all levels become comfortable with the forms of change and differences, including social and cultural, that students experience daily (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002).

Taken together, and in conjunction with numerous other studies examining the impact of diverse student populations, it becomes apparent that issues of accessibility have the ability to

positively impact both majority and underrepresented students. These benefits include increased campus involvement and satisfaction with the college experience as well as improved academic success through enhanced intellectual and interpersonal development. The benefits to society are likely just as important as broadened perspectives during college and will ultimately lead to a greater willingness to listen to others' ideas. Greater abilities in critical thinking combined with diverse approaches to problem-solving will allow us, as a whole, to better address the multitude of issues concerning our society.

Despite the voluminous literature in the past few decades concerning the value of diversity experiences in enhancing the educational experience and outcomes of students, the majority of the research has used a seemingly truncated definition of diversity that focuses primarily upon race/ethnicity or gendered identities rather than more holistic definitions of individual differences (Davis, 2011). While raced and gendered dimensions of identity are indeed critical areas to explore and understand regarding student differences, other forms of diversity, each with unique strengths and needs, are perhaps equally important. Among those under-recognized identity diversities is disability.

### **Defining Diversity**

While few would argue that access to social and economic resources ought to be restricted based on raced or gendered characteristics, perceptions of disability do not yet fully enjoy that consensus. Today, the right to access socioeconomic resources is predicated on one's ability to contribute one's labors to local and/or global economic markets. The idea that individuals ought to contribute to ongoing socioeconomic efforts in service to themselves and others is not novel or remarkable, though notions of *how* such contributions can or ought to be made have changed. Nielsen (2012) provides examples of this shift by describing experiences of

disability in pre-industrial colonial U.S.: a woman with difficulty walking or standing may have been employed in her family's shoemaking business, a man with cognitive disability might have provided neighborhood messenger services, and someone who experienced psychological difficulties was likely to have been supported by family or community members as the need arose and would have otherwise pursued their skills and interests. The standardization and mass-production of the industrial revolution, along with increasing population density in many communities, obliterated most of those kinds of opportunities and supports and the demographic category of disabled began to take shape (Baynton, 2008; Longmore & Umansky, 2001; Nielsen, 2012).

Fast-forward to the civil rights era and we see the establishment of disability as a minority demographic, an identity characteristic that, due to disproportionate wrongful discrimination, warrants legal protections. Interestingly, discrimination based on both gendered and raced characteristics has historically been predicated on the construct of disability—that is, the bodies and minds of white women and of women and men of color were deemed “deformed” relative to white men's (Baynton, 2001, 2008; Kudlick, 2003; Nielsen, 2012). Economic class/caste based discrimination is contingent on and emerges from these culturally constructed and differentially valued demographic characteristics.

Although the case for diversity as a requirement of academic, social, and economic excellence has been repeatedly made (Antonio et al., 2004; Kurlaender & Orfield, 1999; Maher & Thompson-Tetreault, 2007; Milem, 2003; Moreno et al., 2006; Page, 2007; Rankin & Reason, 2008), in the U.S. and elsewhere around the world social and economic power and privileges continue to be disproportionately wielded by individuals who are raced white or “light” (Lynn, 2008), gendered male and heterosexual, and who are not perceived as disabled. Nonetheless, in

today's post-industrial and increasingly technologically-oriented marketplace standard-issue labor and laborers are less and less in demand. It may be that with this shift in the labor economy perceptions of disability will again shift and be understood, simply, as atypical and interesting manifestations of human difference. However, that paradigm shift will depend greatly on our willingness to engage in a profound cultural re-visioning regarding what it means to be human—and concomitantly what that means for meaningful access to educational opportunities.

### **Why Diversity Must Include Disability**

In a recent Chronicle of Higher Education article (September 25, 2011), Davis asked “Why is disability missing from the discourse on diversity?” His analysis is as insightful as it is unsettling: “[D]isability is antithetical to diversity as it now stands.” He asserted that diversity is most frequently constructed as affirmation and celebration of human difference, which suggests that, “any identity is one we all could imagine having, and that all identities are worthy of choosing” (Davis, 2011). Given this framing, disability is generally not assumed to be viewed as a form of diversity a non-disabled person might freely “choose.”

Davis' assertion rings true when we recognize that institutional diversity efforts addressing disability often appear to represent theoretically shallow attempts to meet minimal legal requirements of accessibility for specific individuals (Taylor, 2010; Waters & Johanson, 2001; Yee, 2002). However, sociopolitical and relational views of disability as simultaneously 1) a function of a disabling society and 2) one among many aspects of human diversity are becoming more common in various literatures and government documents. The recognition of positive disability identities is also more prevalent, though this perspective is generally found within disability justice venues such as disability rights groups and independent living centers.

Some examples of this shift include Clewell's and Fortenberry's (2009) incorporation of disability as one of several categories of underrepresented groups relevant to the work of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Collection and disaggregation of data "by race/ethnicity, sex within race/ethnicity, *disability*, citizenship, and STEM fields...for students and faculty" [emphasis added] (George, Malcom, & Campbell, 2011, p. 25) is suggested, seemingly as a matter of course, in a recent American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) document. The work of these two agencies is central to the work of many U.S. academies, thus, considerations of disability are currently on the near-horizon of many universities.

Disability studies and other critical theory-based disciplines offer multiple perspectives on disability and disablism. The premise that discrimination based on perceptions of disability is a/the fundamental system of privilege and oppression upon which all other notions of difference-as-deviance are constructed is found in a number of scholarly analyses (Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010; Kudlick, 2003; Snyder & Mitchell, 2006). This does not diminish Lorde's (1984, 2009) assertion that there is no hierarchy of oppression, nor does it make the realities of intersectionalities, such as identifying as a black lesbian with a disability as did Lorde, any less salient. Rather, this framing suggests that there is much to be gained in diversity and justice work by beginning with a critical analysis of perceptions of disability and disability discrimination. Burch eloquently expresses this in her review of Davis' (2002) book *Bending over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions*:

Davis elucidates the extent to which the idea of normalcy has been tied to, created by, and developed with the idea of abnormal bodies. Rather than tack on disability to the traditional interpretive troika of race, class, and gender, Davis provocatively suggests that disability embodies, supplants, and transcends these postmodernist classifiers. According

to Davis, it is in part disability's instability as a category that... "provide[s] a critique of and a politics to discuss how all groups, based on physical traits or markings, are selected for disablement by a larger system of regulation and signification. So it is paradoxically the most marginalized group—people with disabilities—who can provide the broadest way of understanding contemporary systems of oppression. (Burch, 2003, p. 1)

Conceptualizations of disability are also gaining international recognition. Following the trend documented by the United Nations (UN) International Disability Rights Treaty in 2006, the World Health Organization (WHO) has situated disability as a human rights concern. WHO, in collaboration with the World Bank, recently produced a report on the global status of disability that included recommendations for "...governments, civil society organizations, and disabled people's organizations—to create enabling environments... to the benefit of people with disabilities and the wider community" (Officer & Posarac, 2011, p. xi). A global standpoint draws further attention to the socially and economically constructed nature of disability when the lived realities of people in low-resourced nations as compared to high-resourced nations are considered. For example, high-resourced nations "are often guilty of producing more disabled people through such acts as war and invasion and dumping of polluted waste" (Meekosha, 2011, p. 667).

Thus, disability is increasingly understood as a function of social and physical infrastructures—that is, as disablement or disablism. Bickenbach (2011) asserts that the UN World Report on Disability artfully modeled disability as simultaneously a social construction and individually embodied, thus refusing to perpetuate "the dogma that the medical model and the social model are dichotomous and mutually exclusive." He suggests that disability was portrayed as "a complex, dynamic, multidimensional concept that engages both intrinsic features

of human physiology and functioning... and features of the physical, human-built, social, and attitudinal environment” (Bickenbach, 2011, p. 656). This is an important paradigm shift in that the focus of accountability is moved from individuals perceived as disabled to the beliefs, policies, and practices that create and maintain social and physical barriers to access and participation. Some critical disability studies scholars contend that such an analysis does not go far enough to interrupt notions of disability as always negative (Oliver & Barnes, 2012); Mingus (2010) dares us to move toward an “understanding of disability justice... that embraces difference, confronts privilege and challenges what is considered “normal” on every front” (para. 5). Fortunately, a broad and inclusive consideration of emergent models of disability offers a vantage point from which we can begin to consider new approaches and actions for transforming our classrooms, workplaces, campuses, and communities.

### **Diverse Faculty: Benefits Accrue Across Difference to All Students**

Given the well-established research base discussed above regarding associations between a diverse student body and beneficial outcomes for all students, it is reasonable to expect that a diverse faculty may also be related to student successes. Indeed, research does show that a diverse faculty promotes academic excellence and has positive influences on student learning (Astin, 1993; Maher & Thompson-Tetreault, 2007; Sims, 2006; Turner, 2002; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005; Weinberg, 2008). Smith (2004) notes that faculty diversity is valuable for its “contributions to the diversity of the scholarship and curriculum available” (p. 8) and has published extensively with colleagues regarding the multiple benefits of a diverse faculty in post-compulsory education (Smith, 1999; Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, & Richards, 2004; Smith, Wolf, & Busenberg, 1996). Key arguments for the importance of a diverse faculty include the



development and use of diverse pedagogies capable of reaching a range of learners, and the presence of role models for students (Smith, 2009).

The blogosphere can be counted on to play out the myriad political arguments put forth to discount efforts toward diversifying post-compulsory education faculty. While these accounts are usually thinly veiled opinion pieces, they may warrant attention given the role they play in expressing and swaying public opinion. In one such piece former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently was claimed to have asserted “Don't think that your mentors have to look like you... My mentors have been old white men. If I had waited for a black Soviet specialist, I might still be waiting” (MentorNet, 2012). On the face of it this purported quote simply points out that in-group mentors may not be available. However, the implication is that such similarities are only tangentially important and the substantial scholarship that supports the impacts of stereotyping and the importance of in-group role models is ignored (Iyer & Ryan, 2009; Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Mussweiler & Bodenhausen, 2002; Postmes & Smith, 2009).

We are not suggesting that student success rests on the presence of an in-group faculty role model for every form of identity diversity—nor is that even possible when intersectionality and intra-group diversity are taken into account. Simply adding a token faculty member or two who appear diverse from dominant norms may do little to benefit students. In fact, Taylor and colleagues (Taylor, Lord, McIntyre, & Paulson, 2011) explored protective effects offered by in-group role models on performance in academe and found that it may be especially important that those role models are understood to be competent in their roles. Their study showed that the presence of an in-group member who was believed to have gained recognition or success by luck rather than by personal talent or skill did not produce beneficial performance effects when stereotype threat was present.

A report published by the Association of America Universities (AAU) in 1997 emphasized the significance and implications of “the many unquantifiable human qualities and capacities of individuals, including their promise for continuing future development”(p. 2). Indeed, as previously shown, both relatively subtle as well as measurable benefits to college students have been established in relation to diverse learning environments (Gurin, 1999; Gurin et al., 2004; Zirkel, 2008; Zirkel & Cantor, 2004). Although the intentions of the AAU (1997) report were to describe the national collective gains issuing from a diverse student body, the rationale made on behalf of its 60+ member universities in the U.S. and Canada resonates today as a constructive justification for a diverse faculty.

Finally, it is essential to keep the aforementioned intangible benefits in mind as we navigate the global economic labor-market focus of much of today’s educational reform activity. This market-driven focus often functions in service to a discriminatory status quo rather than to “an education that is dynamic and which prepares people for a world not as it is but as it should and can be” (Mayo, 2009, p. 6). It is important to recognize that post-compulsory education does serve central functions in preparing the world’s workforce; however, it is equally important that post-compulsory education prepares learners for civic involvement. The currently dominating/dominant discourse of standards and competencies is oriented primarily if not exclusively on marketability of skills and market-ready workers, a circumstance that shrinks educational curricula and praxis (Giroux, 2002, 2009; Saltman, 2012), and thereby limits our ability to notice and leverage the creative forces inherent in diversity, whether manifested in students or in faculty.

## **Professional Development in Service to Institutional Transformation**

Applying a critical disability studies lens, we adopt the perspective that cultural perceptions and norms regarding disability may be the foundational or root system of all systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging (Campbell, 2009; Davis, 2002; Erevelles, 2002, 2011; Meekosha, 2011; Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011). Conceptualized in this way, addressing disability discrimination through an intersectional approach simultaneously tackles multiple forms of over-privileging and/or discrimination, and thus has a crucial role to play in institutional transformation directed toward social equity and justice. Given the pivotal role academia holds in the production and performance of education, and consequently in the (re)production of cultural truths and values, critically addressing disability in post-compulsory academic settings may be most profitable. Moreover, given that it is not possible to teach well what one does not know well, it may be most effective to address disability discrimination by first working to foster this critical analysis of disability with academic faculty and student affairs staff.

Disability discrimination in academic workplaces occurs when there are problems with structural and functional accessibility, when campuses have an unwelcoming or chilly social climate for persons perceived as disabled, and when tenure policies and practices ignore systemic advantaging and disadvantaging based on perceived disability status. Fostering institutional supports designed to address concerns regarding accessibility, climate, and tenure can aid in the successful recruitment and retention of faculty and student affairs staff who are underrepresented in the professorate, and, as we have asserted previously, lay a stronger foundation for student success.

Professional development programs focused on diversity and equity are a form of such institutional support. Unfortunately, diversity training and allyship education may result in a

“backfiring of good intentions” in which “oppressive attitudes can be solidified and confirmed, or backlash triggered” (Bishop, n.d., Beyond Token Change section, para. 11). This may occur for a number of reasons; perhaps the individuals providing the education or training are underprepared, or the approach is piecemeal, or time given to the work is too limited. Bishop’s observations are based on several decades of providing diversity and allyship education to school, community, and government groups. She reports that much of the time diversity trainings go badly when “a person attempts ally education but does not thoroughly grasp the concepts, or demonstrate being an ally in their own actions, or does not have the skills to deal with the deep emotions that will be stirred up” (Bishop, n.d., Beyond Token Change section, para. 11). Although post-compulsory education professionals are expected to provide relevant and even cutting-edge teaching and training, their own educations regarding systemic privileging and oppressing may be quite limited. The professional development approach detailed in this manuscript is designed to address these challenges.

### **Accessibility, Climate, and Tenure: A Framework for ACTION**

The Accessibility, Climate, and Tenure (ACT) Framework is modeled on an approach developed by the NDSU Advance FORWARD Initiative, an institutional transformation project that applies an intersectional analysis to address systemically unearned advantaging and disadvantaging by working simultaneously from multiple vantage points across the university and sustaining those efforts over the long haul. The ACT Framework represents a model for furthering the already effective work of the FORWARD Initiative by fostering institutional supports designed to address disability discrimination in academic workplaces. Each element represents a necessary, though not sufficient, aspect of this comprehensive approach and each overlaps with the others. Essentially, the elements of the ACT Framework operate as design

parameters for an institutional professional development plan. Full effectiveness of the model may best be leveraged when professional development opportunities are embedded within an extended institutional plan that includes key aspects of the exemplar adult education approaches described below. While the ACT Framework elements are initially articulated in the context of perceptions and conceptualizations of disability, an intersectional critical disability studies perspective adopted in the suggested curricular content insures that multiple aspects of human diversity are also addressed both explicitly and implicitly within each element.

**Accessibility.** The first element of the ACT Framework concerns accessibility. Accessibility begins with the foundations of Universal Design (UD) and Universal Design for Learning (UD/L), that is, products, environments, learning materials, and instructional approaches that are usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for modifications or adaptation (Edyburn, 2010; Higbee, 2003; Salmen, 2011; Shaw, 2011). Physical space/architecture, curricula, the digital commons of the internet, and classroom as well as social events and spaces are considered. Events such as academic conferences are recognized as being constituted by physical, cyber, and social spaces and each of these aspects are developed in manners that promote accessibility (Price, 2009). Academic discourses that perpetuate disablism are critically analyzed to reveal potential avenues for dismantling disability discrimination. In an accessible and inclusive environment where UD and UD/L considerations have been centralized, the vast majority of workplace or academic adjustments (accommodations) are simply available as-needed. In accessible contexts, procedural requirements which are emblematic of the inherently discriminatory medical model of disability, such as documentation of impairment provided by a licensed practitioner (Barnes & Sheldon, 2010; Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010; Huger, 2011; Kliewer & Raschke, 2002; Piercy et al.,

2005; Rankin & Reason, 2008), will eventually fade from institutional practice and cultural memory.

**Climate.** The second element of the ACT Framework concerns workplace and campus climate. Priorities for addressing climate include the intentional and ongoing promotion of awareness regarding what constitutes disability discrimination, coupled the university's explicit commitment to equity and justice in regards to all aspects/forms of disablement and unearned advantaging. Campus-wide cultivation of cross-cultural competency skills (Huger, 2011; Piercy et al., 2005; Rankin & Reason, 2008) includes professional development opportunities imparting culture-specific information regarding unrepresented groups along with culture-general interpersonal interaction skill building (Roybal Rose, 1996). Campus-community alliances across communities of difference are fostered and it is explicitly acknowledged that the need for such alliances arises from historic and ongoing bias, discrimination, and resulting underrepresentation of persons from marginalized groups. These alliances provide networks of professional and personal relationships that facilitate the ongoing (re)education needs of the majority group members and create pathways for access to resources, mentoring, and other forms of support for underrepresented community members, students, and faculty (Carr et al., 2003; Driscoll, 2008; Girves, Zepeda, & Gwathmey, 2005; Tierney, 1993; Wilcox, 2009).

**Tenure.** The third element of the ACT Framework concerns institutional practices related to the tenure. Tenure and promotion policies and practices often operate to perpetuate unearned advantaging and disadvantaging (Fox, Schwartz, & Hart, 2006; Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009; Moody, 2012; Price et al., 2005; Price et al., 2009; Short, 2006; Thornton, 2005). In order to dismantle discrimination based on perceived disability, flexible policies for faculty in tenure track positions must explicitly address disablement in terms relevant to

workplace expectations. Tenure policy changes that have been shown to be effective in retaining underrepresented faculty include longer probationary periods, tenure-clock-stopping options, working less than full-time while remaining in tenure-track positions, and modifications of duties (Bunton & Corrice, 2011; Fox et al., 2006; Thornton, 2005; Waltman & August, 2005).

Beretz (2003) points out the significant costs for the university of ignoring the impacts of discrimination based on disability and identifies a number of ways in which individual disability and disabling environments intersect for faculty with visible and/or hidden disabilities. An excellence-through-retention tenure model recognizes that faculty members with disability are already employed in post-compulsory educational institutions and that many currently nondisabled faculty will likely experience some degree of disability during employment (UC Davis, 2011).

Similar to visible disability, the impacts of a hidden disability may wax and wane due in part to environmental demands, such as the need to walk long distances to one's office or classrooms. Due to social stigmas associated with disability and the potential for covert and overt discrimination, many faculty with hidden disability do not self-identify nor ask for workplace adjustments, thus, avenues for advocacy are needed to provide a collective voice for faculty experiencing disability (Knapp, 2008; Steinberg, Iezzoni, Conill, & Stineman, 2002). "Objective criteria notwithstanding, evaluations for tenure and promotion and annual and other reviews in the academic workplace necessarily involve subjective assessments of quality that can be affected by the stereotypes and prejudices associated with stigmatizing illnesses" (Goodwin & Morgan, 2012, p. 34). Importantly, faculty with disability are likely to be overrepresented among contingent and non-tenured positions such as clinical faculty, full and part-time

instructors, and adjuncts (Beretz, 2003) and considerations of policies and practices relevant to these faculty positions are also crucial when addressing disability discrimination in academia.

### **Implementing the Framework with a Critical Andragogy**

The formulation of the professional development approach crafted for use with the ACT Framework is patterned after three models of adult education for institutional transformation. The first of those is an approach adopted by several NSF-ADVANCE campuses in which current faculty formed “cadres of equity advisors” (Moody, 2012, p. 196) an approach that was further developed by the NDSU FORWARD Advocates initiative to specifically recruit men faculty for participation in an ongoing group dedicated to leveraging gendered privilege in service to gender equity ([ndsuh.edu/forward](http://ndsuh.edu/forward)) (for a detailed review see Anicha, Burnett, & Bilen-Green, 2014, submitted for review). The second approach is the Antiracist Multiculturalism Across the Curriculum (ARMAC) model ([mnstate.edu/tocar](http://mnstate.edu/tocar)), collaboratively developed by three university professors (Phyllis May Machunda of Minnesota State University Moorhead, Emily Drew of Willamette University, and Victor Rodriguez of California State University Long Beach) (P. May Machunda, personal communication, September 20, 2013), in which post-compulsory education professionals participate in a week-long workshop, then apply the ARMAC analyses to transform their own courses and curricula. The third approach is the Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) Project on Inclusive Curriculum ([nationalseedproject.org](http://nationalseedproject.org)), typically structured as a year-long series of monthly faculty-led faculty development seminars (McIntosh & Style, 1994; B. J. Smith, 2000).

Each of these three professional development approaches offers key strategies for comprehensive and effective institutional transformation. The Advocates approach aims to educate, inspire, and support individuals who benefit the most from systemic unearned over-



advantaging to leverage their privilege in service to equity and parity in their own departments and across the campus as a whole. The ARMAC approach begins with explicit expectations that faculty and student affairs staff will apply what is learned directly to the work they do with students by integrating seminar material into their courses and activities. The SEED seminar approach provides ongoing opportunities for learning in a context of relationship-building that engenders safe spaces for grappling with the thorny questions of systemic unearned advantaging and disadvantaging. In short, the Advocates prioritize the need for accountability from those in privileged positions, ARMAC supports the expectation of direct and purposeful action, and the monthly seminars of the SEED approach provides for ongoing learning and unlearning within a supportive community of intellectual activists (Hill Collins, 2013). Blending these three professional development approaches with the three elements of the ACT Framework provides a comprehensive scheme for addressing the multilayered and multifaceted forms of discrimination and injustice present today on university campuses.

Thus, our model includes each of the three ACT Framework elements explored within a professional development plan that highlights accountability and advocacy, meaningful translation of learning to course curricula and student activities, and the establishment of ongoing learning communities. Guidelines for implementation, along with a suggested curriculum for a year-long series of professional development seminars are provided in the appendices.

### **A Concrete Example**

While the execution of this approach will necessarily be unique to institutional contexts, in order to bridge the theory-to-practice gap it is perhaps useful to describe one among many possible applications of the ACT Framework using the andragogical approach outlined here. In this example we envision here a four-year plan in which the three elements are considered in

concert, and a primary focus is on an intensive year-long commitment by a broadly representative group of seminar participants who are then charged with further development and applications.

Considerations of accessibility are seen as first order concerns and accessible practices are enacted while issues of accessibility are considered in the seminar content. That is, meeting spaces are physically accessible as well as virtually accessible and the functional accessibility of seminar content and processes (e.g. all materials are available in translatable/digital formats and with closed caption and/or Communication Access Real-time Translation services) is explicitly considered and available as a matter-of-course. Similarly, a welcoming climate is attended to in the microcosm of the seminars through flexibly structured communication processes in which the views/voices of all participants constitute 50% of the curriculum (McIntosh and Styles, 1998; McIntosh, 2005) while the wider parameters of campus climate are central seminar topics. In terms of tenure, participants consider the larger questions of how tenure policies operate to both protect and prohibit equitable workplace practices while reviewing the tenure policies of their own institutions and enacting collective advocacy for policy change that promotes equity.

All participants would be asked to refrain from using scented products when attending seminars and would be invited to describe any particular requests for materials, settings, or actions/behaviors (e.g. speakers face them when talking to help with lip reading) that would make the seminars more comfortable and accessible for them. Simultaneously, it would be important to be explicit regarding the short- and long-term goals of the professional development work so that participants can consider their willingness and ability to support those goals. The following timeline assumes the intent to develop a formal Critical Disability Studies (CDS)

program. While such a systematic and long-term approach is recommended, seminar session content may also be used to meet a variety of professional development needs.

### **A Suggested Timeline**

**Year 1.** In order to generate interest and allow potential participants lead-time for considering their availability for an at least year-long professional development commitment it may be helpful to provide general informational sessions on disability discrimination via multiple brief 1-hour presentations and recruit participants for ACT Framework seminars. Intentionally invite community members including people working with Independent Living Centers, as well as students, staff, and faculty from across multiple academic venues including departments of history, sociology, psychology, health sciences, art and theatre, education, business, STEM disciplines, student affairs, facilities management, IT, etc. If applicable, during these sessions discuss that the intent of the seminars is to integrate CDS perspectives into courses and student affairs activities with a long-term intention for building a CDS program of study. In tandem with establishing the participant group plan for seminar meeting spaces with physical, online, and functional accessibility in mind.

**Year 2—the seminars.** Once per month over a nine-month period host seminars facilitated by and for faculty, student affairs professionals, and interested community members. This approach harvests the rich experiences and talents of participants while the extended program provides for deepened analyses by allowing for time to absorb and integrate seminar content, consider implications, and take relevant actions. The modules (three sets of three seminars) are organized around the ACT Framework components of Access, Climate, and Tenure. Key Questions are posed for each module as focal points to keep in mind throughout each of the three seminars as participants engage in the various readings and other media.

**Summer work.** Faculty and student affairs professionals integrate new perspectives into current course offerings and activities and/or develop additional programming. Work with administration and Registrar to develop CDS Program of Study requirements.

**Year 3.** Faculty and staff who integrated the previous year's learning into coursework may facilitate seminars within their own departments/colleges to test run and fine-tune their courses and to deepen their understandings of disability justice. If possible, offer the series of seminars to another cohort of participants.

**Year 4 and beyond.** Offer a transdisciplinary CDS program of undergraduate and graduate courses.

### **Suggestions for Facilitating the Seminars**

Central questions relevant to each of the three modules (Key Questions) are included below to guide selection of resources and to focus discussions, and are also listed at the top of each module for convenience. A suggested process for facilitating the seminars is to schedule a 3-hour block of time each month. Sharing meals during sessions signals our shared humanity and fosters interpersonal relationship building crucial for the challenging work undertaken through engagement with seminar topics. A critical andragogy calls for centering the perspectives of participants in order to unravel the hegemony of the status quo. Thus, a balance of “scholarship on the shelves” and “scholarship of the selves” (Styles quoted in McIntosh, 2005, p. 392) is facilitated through thoughtful structuring of participant discussion and interactions and engagement with curricular materials. Pairing multiply formatted discussion formats with the following (over)simplified format is recommended:

- ◆ Highlight/Review Key Questions for the module for participants to keep in mind during seminar

- ◆ Engage in multimedia explorations of curricular materials and guided discussions
- ◆ Close with conversation regarding which of the Key Questions were addressed, what new questions may have emerged, and potential actions arising from what was learned

An example key question for seminars focused on accessibility may include considerations of what constitutes access/accessibility and how ideas regarding kairotic spaces (Price, 2011) might be applied in our classrooms, conferences, and academic workplaces. In working to balance knowledge from curricular sources and participants, it may be especially important to allow for additional discussion and relationship-building among participants in the earlier seminars.

Opening and closing each session with reflections on the overarching intents of the professional development opportunity supports clarity of purpose. Of course, these suggestions essentially represent basic and effective educational practices, however, it is particularly important in undertaking a critical andragogical approach that seminar facilitators be prepared to support all participants during the emotionally-charged interactions that are likely to emerge in the deep work of institutional transformation.

### **Summary**

Diverse learning environments are well-established within the education research literature as a means to enhance educational outcomes of all students, not just students from underrepresented backgrounds. Meaningful access for a wide diversity of students to a high quality post-compulsory education is a democratic ideal that continues to be greatly valued in the U.S. for its individual, as well as its collective benefits. While diversity discourses frequently emphasize categories of race, gender, or income, disability is often overlooked. Just as it is important to diversify the student body according to other areas of individual difference,

diversification according to disability will enhance the capacity of all students to participate in the greater society through meaningful interactions with others.

An important route to diversifying the student body to include students with disabilities is through supporting not only students with disabilities, but also faculty and staff with disabilities. A critical focus on disability may not address the unique needs of every underrepresented group. However, the cross-cutting nature of disability provides fertile ground from which to cultivate critical examinations of our social responses to a broad range of human diversities and to foster a “new normal” of difference-as-the-norm.

In this manuscript we argue that institutional transformation efforts toward social justice may be best served by a critical disabilities studies approach. We also argue that professional development for academic faculty and student affairs staff may be a most effective route for those efforts. To that end we have articulated the ACT Framework and have theorized key aspects of an andragogical approach designed to comprehensively address ACT Framework elements in an intersectional and integrative manner. Finally, curricular content and implementation suggestions that match those assertions and intentions are included in appendices.

The Accessibility, Climate, and Tenure Framework provides a model for post-compulsory educational institutions to pursue student success through the development of an academic workplace grounded within the social justice and excellence inherent in a comprehensive and inclusive notion of diversity. The specifics of how the model might be applied will of course vary depending on institutional circumstances, resources, and needs. Nonetheless, piloting the proposed curriculum, within the context of the suggested andragogical elements and priorities and in accordance with the guidelines for implementation, is a

recommended next step. In tandem with that undertaking, assessing the influence and effectiveness of those efforts would allow for refining the model to better suit specific institutional needs and could provide important documentation in support of further professional development efforts.

## CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

In this disquisition I draw attention to a gap in our cultural awareness, and thus in our knowledge bases and educational praxis, regarding the causes and consequences of disability discrimination. A framework was introduced in Chapter 1 providing conceptual tools for understanding this awareness gap. A difference-as-deviance narration of disability was further posited as foundational to disability discrimination and the fostering of a critical consciousness regarding disability was identified as a path toward creation of a counter-culture narrative that begins to bridge the gap. This bridge was further strengthened in Chapter 2, addressed to my education colleagues, in which I detailed my personal academic journey of conscientization regarding the paradoxical and problematic cultural paradigms around disability. Closing with a call for all educationists to engage in the ontological reformulations necessary for disability justice, I turned to post-compulsory education.

Postulating in Chapter 3 that post-compulsory education may serve as a fulcrum for radical educational transformations, I described my study of disability allyship among post-compulsory education professionals. Chapter 4 illustrated linkages among student success, a diverse student body, and a diverse faculty, then detailed the ACT Framework and professional development approach designed to further post-compulsory education's institutional transformation toward disability justice.

In this final chapter, I review the perspectives and information assembled in each of the preceding chapters, offer my current overarching interpretations regarding how this disquisition advances the field of education, consider implications of my findings, and offer conclusions and recommendations for next steps.



## **An Ontological Framework for Disability Justice**

The idea that cultural conceptualizations of disability are a principal way in which we mark human difference as a negative is introduced Chapter 1. Disability is a socially constructed demographic characteristic with harmful material and social impacts on the lives of people perceived as disabled, with simultaneous advantaging of persons perceived as not disabled (among numerous others, see Campbell, 2009; Finkelstein, 2001b, 2007; Garland-Thomson, 2002; McRuer, 2002; Snyder et al., 2002; Thomas, 2004). While people who are perceived to be disabled are increasingly leveraging their social group status in ways that reclaim justice, dignity, and social power, they continue to disproportionately experience economic hardships, interpersonal aggression and violence, and restricted access to or exclusion from educational and social opportunities (Berry, 2012; Burghardt, 2011; Sherry, 2010; Watermeyer, 2012). These disability-related harms are directly tied to cultural paradigms that stigmatize species-atypical persons by pathologizing human differences, viewing disability as an adverse individual or medical phenomenon rather than as that which emerges from interactions within cultural and physical world contexts.

Fortunately, disablism is increasingly being recognized as one among many forms of discrimination based on cultural norms (Barnes & Sheldon, 2010). Cultural norms are (re)produced based on our ontologies, that is, on our beliefs regarding the nature of humanity and our relationships with one another and the material world. It is our ontologies, as expressed through cultural norms and practices, which form and perpetuate systemic unearned disadvantaging and advantaging. Thus it is our beliefs about human normalcy and equitable and just human relationships, which must be transformed if we are to effectively address disability discrimination.

Although legal remedies have been enacted to circumvent injustices arising from biased treatment of persons based on their group membership, inclusive of raced, gendered, and disabled characteristics, considerations of disability are largely absent from dominant discourses regarding diversity. Peering into this paradox reveals the interdependent sociocultural constructions of hegemonic normativity and enabled privilege. In order to mentally grasp the ubiquitous, yet invisible contradictions inherent in our beliefs and behaviors regarding disability, a conceptual framework was built from theoretical perspectives gathered from complexity science, critical disability studies, and critical transnational studies. Each of these theoretical lenses reveals important insights regarding the cultural conundrum of disability. Taken together they provide a complexivist critical transnational framework that supports a fresh approach to educational praxis which can lead us to effectively disrupt hegemonic normativity and the suffering it engenders.

### **Conscientization: Educational Reform for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Chapter 2 presented an integrative literature review in tandem with a personal narrative in order to explicitly link my (purportedly) individual yet culturally shared experience of hegemonic normativity and enabled privilege. In this manuscript, the three theoretical elements of my framework as detailed in the introduction are (re)viewed through the lens of cultural constructions of disability in order to deconstruct disability.

The complexivist analysis central to my framework begins by acknowledging that human lifeworlds function as *adaptive* systems, producing novel and unpredictable behaviors. Diversity is understood as a system parameter with primarily beneficial effects including resiliency, flexibility, and creativity. This viewpoint destabilizes science paradigms that over-privilege assumptions of perpetual Gaussian distributions and shakes our confidence in dominant cultural

tendencies to equate what is species-typical or average with normalcy, goodness, and moral righteousness. A critical perspective is similarly central to my framework and is used to examine our education system from the vantage point of disability studies, asking and responding to classic critical studies questions. In currently dominant educational theory, research, and practice, whose knowledge is valued? Who benefits from educational norms, and who is silenced? These theoretical tools bring a spotlight to disability injustices and allow us to become more authentically accountable to our own aspirations for equity and justice.

A transnational analysis is applied to communicate the importance of recognizing that cultural paradigms flow across borders, and to draw connections among local and global interactions and interdependencies. This aspect of my framework closes the loop and brings us full circle to complexity science notions of micro, meso, and macro scales of influence. Explicitly acknowledging the poly-directional influences inherent in these transnational flows is crucial in our increasingly globalized world. Disability discrimination is (unfortunately) integral to the educational theories and practices we enact here in the U.S. and export to other countries. On the whole, this complexivist critical transnational framework leads us to recognize the pivotal role education plays in generating and maintaining hegemonic normativity, enabled privilege and thus discrimination based on perceptions of disability. This awareness is an necessary first step in cultivating a critical consciousness capable of educational justice for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Disability Allyship: Matters of Belief and Behavior**

In Chapter 3, I argued that psychologically safe educational and workplace settings are essential for a welcoming climate and thus for academic success and workforce retention. To foster such an environment, institutional change efforts must address the discrimination and equity concerns of all students, faculty, and staff, inclusive of persons perceived as disabled.

Ally relationships are a time-honored strategy for promoting social justice and I contended that the cultivation of a genuinely critical disability allyship may be an effective approach to engendering a welcoming academic workplace climate.

To investigate perceptions held by post-compulsory education professionals regarding disability ally beliefs and behaviors a research method designed to address the subjective and interactive nature of beliefs and relationships, Q-Method, was selected. The study yielded a three factor solution; the three unique viewpoints were characterized as Accountable Collaborators, Amicable Empathics, and Universal Design (UD) Advocates. Participants in all three viewpoints endorsed the importance of recognizing that multiple systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging are simultaneously in place (e.g. raced, gendered, enabled) and study participants within each of these perspectives also acknowledged the importance of understanding their own social location(s) within those systems. These areas of agreement align with first steps or initial stages of allyship as described by Bishop (2002, 2005), Reason and Broido (2005), and others. It is reasonable to expect that comprehensive disability allyship education efforts would value and amplify these areas of agreement. However, fully effective approaches to dismantling disablism will go beyond these initial steps.

Bishop (2002, 2005) articulates an additional and important step in becoming an ally: becoming a worker for your own liberation. In the context of disability allyship, this may be interpreted as a call to recognize the psychological toxicity of internalized enabled superiority; ally behaviors must be undertaken as a means to self-liberation from hegemonic normativity rather than in efforts to be helpful to others. Not only is it important to recognize the abstract and material consequences of systems of social power and one's place within those systems, it is crucial to also explicitly disrupt the inherently discriminatory or stereotypic accounts of

disability. These narratives valorize heroic overcoming and equity through charity while simultaneously reproducing notions of disability as a medicalized phenomenon that inheres in the individual and requires reliance on outside experts.

Action is another core aspect of allyship and opportunities to act in alliance must be paired with opportunities to obtain feedback regarding the effectiveness of those actions (Bishop, 2002, 2005; McKenzie, 2013). Would-be allies must seek and be prepared to gracefully receive critique regarding their efforts from persons experiencing the systemic unearned disadvantaging in question. Allyship may be best understood as a process of learning and unlearning, a process within which we expect always to be learners, to not be fully sure (Lather, 1998, 2010; McIntosh, 2009). Thus, fully effective approaches to dismantling disablism will explicitly address harmful disability stereotypes, take actions to disrupt discrimination based on perceptions of disability, and incorporate ongoing critique and critical accountability measures.

### **Working it Backwards: Student Success Through Faculty Professional Development**

Chapter 4 linked student success with faculty demographics and offered the Accessibility, Climate, and Tenure (ACT) Framework as a model for institutional transformation through a multi-year faculty development seminar approach to educational justice. The ACT Framework is grounded in research establishing that a diverse faculty can best be recruited and retained when a welcoming climate is present (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011; Bilimoria et al., 2008; Cox Suárez, 2008; Cropsey et al., 2008; Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002). A welcoming campus climate begins with well-prepared and informed faculty, administrators, and student affairs professionals (Rankin & Reason, 2008; Smith, 2009; Wilson, Meyer, & McNeal, 2012) and professional development can serve as a key strategy in those efforts.

The professional development approach recommended to be paired with the ACT Framework is patterned after three adult education models and is designed for adults working on institutional quality improvement efforts in post-compulsory education settings. This year-long curricular model reflects a complexivist critical transnational perspective and incorporates the conceptualizations of disability allyship observed in the Q study. The disability allyship viewpoints and the components of the ACT Framework overlap with and are integral to one another: Accessibility aligns most directly with the main concerns of UD Advocates, Climate is prioritized by Amicable Empathics, and Tenure policies and practices fall primarily within the purview of Accountable Collaborators.

The series of seminars is designed to support post-compulsory education professionals in deeply considering their own views regarding disability allyship, leading to the integration of critical emancipatory analyses into discipline-specific content and pedagogy. This approach also prepares post-compulsory education professionals to cultivate an institutional workplace that operates to welcome rather than to stigmatize colleagues experiencing disability, leading to increased representation of education professionals experiencing disability, which in turn lends itself to increased representation and success of students who identify as experiencing disability. The cross-cutting nature of disability allows us to cultivate critical examinations of our social responses to a broad range of human diversities. The ACT Framework provides a model for post-compulsory educational institutions to pursue student success through the cultivation of an academic workplace grounded in the excellence inherent in this comprehensive, inclusive, social justice notion of diversity.

## **Interpretations**

Through the preceding chapters I assert that, as agents of currently operative educational systems, education professionals are co-conspirators in the systemic unearned disadvantaging of people perceived as disabled and the concomitant enabling and unearned advantaging of those of us who are not perceived as disabled. While awareness of the omnipresent hegemony of species-typical normativity may help us to grasp the depth and breadth of harmful cultural paradigms of disability, our ongoing silence will serve as our consent. Merely including disability in enumerations of protected demographics or identity characteristics is insufficient and half-hearted. We must imagine and enact countervailing cultural ontologies, become co-conspirators in a social imaginary in which cultural systems are congruent with stated values of human dignity and justice. Without our ongoing participation in cultural (re)productions of notions of normalcy via core tenets of our education systems (e.g. intelligence quotients and academic performances tied to age norms) many notions of disability would not—could not—exist. While this accountability may at first seem unmanageable, we can choose to also cultivate the beliefs and behaviors of disability allies, recognizing that educational justice is a long-term project that both requires our ongoing engagement in this social moment and may well extend beyond our own lifetimes.

By recognizing the role(s) we play as education professionals in perpetuating hegemonic normativity and enabled privilege and the subsequent discriminations arising from perceptions of disability, we can simultaneously recognize and leverage that social power in service to transforming cultural perceptions of human normalcy. Rather than ignoring or turning away from the painful knowledge of injustices arising out of perceptions of disability, we have the option of “becoming comfortable being uncomfortable” (P. McIntosh, personal communication,

June 1992) as we work toward educational justice for all. In essence, professional development that addresses disability discrimination and cultivates disability allyship has the potential to address all forms of injustice grounded in negative attributions for human diversities.

My study of perspectives regarding disability allyship among post-compulsory education professionals showed three predominant viewpoints: Accountable Collaborators, Amicable Empathics, and Universal Design Advocates. Taken together they reflect a reasonably comprehensive conceptualization of allyship in general, and disability allyship in particular. Any one of the viewpoints alone would likely result in a partial and ineffective model of disability allyship. For example, an approach singularly modeled on the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint may ignore important interpersonal concerns or an Amicable Empathics-focused version may single-mindedly pursue personal relationships and neglect action for systemic change. Too, a sole focus on Universal Design Advocacy without intentional collaborations with people perceived as disabled may result in actions that perpetuate a charity model and/or the privileging of an outside-expert stance. Thus, undertaking professional development or enacting allyship from one of these perspectives without incorporating the priorities of the others risks reproducing the very system of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging the alliance relationships are intended to transform.

Collectively, the complexivist critical transnational analysis, the disability allyship study, the ACT Framework, and the proposed curriculum modules yield a set of working premises, as applied to notions of disability. A primary working assumption is that undoing disability discrimination *requires alliances* among enabled majority persons and persons perceived as disabled. These alliance relationships require a unique form of *accountability*. Accountability within disability allyship means that people experiencing the unearned advantaging of enabled



privilege become critically curious about the causes and consequences of enabled privilege and also become critically curious about the lifeworlds of people experiencing the unearned disadvantaging of disablism. Enabled allies are accountable for finding and/or creating opportunities to listen to and learn with persons perceived as disabled, and then to act on behalf of justice based on those conversations. Moreover, it is vital that disability allies cultivate a critical humility (Barlas et al., 2012) by seeking ongoing feedback and critique from persons perceived as disabled and apply insights gained from those critiques to further action.

Another working premise that arises from the current analysis is that disability allyship is *contextual*. For example, ally behaviors in the context of an interpersonal relationship may look quite different than the allyship of an enabled personal care provider, which may look quite different than allyship engaged in changing administrative policies or in instantiating legal structures that prohibit disability discrimination. Also, disability allyship is both *developmental* and *immediate*. Individual and cultural shifts tend to be nonlinear and to emerge uniquely across multiple interactive phases and stages. The complex systems of cultural practices that constitute hegemonic normativity and give rise to discrimination based on perceived disability are unlikely to be transformed instantaneously. Nonetheless, complexity science suggests that the emergence of transformed systems can occur in a relative flash when agents experience critical insight and take novel actions within culturally marginalized spaces, spaces “where new ideas... are forever nibbling away at the edges of the status quo, and where even the most entrenched old guard will eventually be overthrown” (Davis and Sumara, 2006, quoting Waldrop, p. 136).

It may be crucial to recognize that disability allies experiencing unearned advantaging are likely to experience *painful psychological consequences* when initially learning of their enabled privilege. Enabled majority persons may feel shock, deep sadness, and perhaps guilt regarding

their enabled privilege and must take responsibility for understanding and healing their emotional pain (Bishop, 2002, 2005). Unexamined and unaddressed, these emotions may be manifested in problematic ways (McKenzie, 2013; Smith, 2013), such as denial and resentment, patronizing behaviors, or a compulsion to confess one's emotional distress or describe one's disability ally behaviors to persons experiencing disability.

Perhaps most crucial is the recognition that disability allyship must be perpetually performed and (re)enacted; being an ally is an *iterative* process. McKenzie (2013) eschews even the use of the word "ally" and suggests using phrases that describe "what a person is doing in the moment" (para. 4) in order to counter the idea that isolated actions or mere self-proclamation of an ally identity can be effective or sufficient. This means that enacting disability allyship requires allies to engage in a life-long process of learning and unlearning, of problematizing hegemonic normativity and enabled privilege, and undertaking deep reflection to identify where harmful disability stereotypes abide in their personal and cultural ontologies, then assuming responsibility for cultivating a cultural norm of disability justice.

The primary contributions to the field of education that flow from the work comprising this disquisition include the examination and explicit deconstruction of harmful cultural paradigms of disability through application of a complexivist critical transnational analysis to our foundational system(s) of education. The resultant awareness by educators of hegemonic normativity and enabled privilege is a crucial first step for cultural transformation. Undoing discriminations arising from deep ontological beliefs and interlocking cultural practices will call for intentional, persistent, and iterative learning and unlearning. In service to that ongoing process are the Q study findings regarding the perceptions of post-compulsory educators about

disability allyship and the proposed ACT Framework and curriculum for institutional transformation through disability justice.

### **Implications for the Field of Education**

One profoundly disturbing implication arising from this disquisition for the field of education is that much of educational theory is the progenitor of disability discrimination. Without a theory of normalcy, “special” education would have no niche. Imagine, if educators did not espouse nor act on such a theory. Where might the idea of disability arise and where could it obtain or sustain any traction? Because disciplined inquiry explicitly or implicitly relies on theory, much of educational research and evaluation serves to perpetuate paradigms of disability that are at best unhelpful for understanding and promoting learning and at worst create systems of individual and group harm. Educational practices evolve through combinations of research findings and teacher experience; both are guided by theory and result in modifications or confirmations of theory. Thus, it is our theories, that is, our ontologies, which must be addressed and renegotiated.

Bishop writes succinctly that “[a]llies are people who recognize the unearned privilege they receive from society’s patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns” (Bishop, n.d., Home section, para. 1). Given the pivotal roles education professionals play in cultural transmissions of social norms, education is an important site for cultivating allyship. Education is commonly seen as a vital and valued aspect of contemporary life and conceptualizations of ability—and disability—are central features of education systems. The paradigms educators hold regarding disability are powerfully influential. Educators are, quite literally, arbiters of our social imaginaries, those complex sets of social structures that give rise to shared social practices. Current dominant culture paradigms regarding disability are

fundamentally grounded in harmful stereotypes; as educators if we are not explicitly disrupting those stereotypes, we are consenting to them through our inaction and silence.

### **Professional Development: The 500 Year Plan Approach**

As education professionals we must hold ourselves accountable to unlearn and undo discrimination based on cultural constructions of disability. If we count ourselves among the enabled majority, this undertaking will likely call for deep reflection and may well lead to a crisis of conscience as we face the twin tyrants of hegemonic normativity and enabled privilege. In my work with antiracism organizing, the idea of a 500-year plan has sometimes been proffered as a way to conceptualize the nature of the task, and in this we are reminded also of a proverb that instructs: It is not mine to finish the task, nor is it mine to lay it down. How do we effectively engage in this long-term transformational project? Once we have become aware of the systemic and pervasive nature of all forms of discrimination advanced via hegemonic normativity, understood our positioning within those systems, and recognized our shared bondage, we can set out to cultivate authentic allyship. In Bishop's description of allyship, becoming a worker for one's own liberation is essential, taking action as an ally is necessary, and finally, maintaining hope is vital (Bishop, 2002).

This final aspect may seem the most difficult when the enormity and durability of systemic privileging and oppressing are grasped, yet it is crucial. Hope is renewed when we envision a social imaginary in which human diversities are understood as central aspects of valued and desirable lifeworlds and cultural norms and practices contribute to political, social, and material justice. As asserted in Chapter 1, if we intend to dismantle systems that perpetuate the noxious and self-destructive cultural conduct that comprises disability discrimination, we need to be deeply strategic.

A national study completed 20 years post-ADA showed “little or no substantial gains in ten key indicators ranging from employment and income to social engagement and life satisfaction” (Schneider, 2010, para. 1) for persons perceived as disabled. Sylvestre’s (2013) interpretations of the challenges faced by advocates of sustainability measures in university settings may be fruitfully applied in explaining the apparent impasse that has characterized disability justice over the past decades. Sylvestre wondered why “overall engagement” in post-secondary education had been “both piecemeal and accommodatory leading many to ask: what is blocking this transformation?” He reasoned that the “protean nature of sustainability and the complexity of institutional cultures present significant challenges” (Sylvestre, 2013, p. ix). Indeed, when attempting institutional transformation with regard to any issue, we are well served by attending to both the protean nature of the subject at hand and the unique contexts inherent to the social institution in question.

The subject at hand for this disquisition is systemic unearned advantaging and disadvantaging based on perceptions of disability. Systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging are simultaneously stable and mercurial. Discrimination based on perceived disability shares many of the philosophical and historical underpinnings of other “isms” (Bell, 2011; Sleeter, 2010; P. Smith, 2004). In racism, sexism, and disablism, negative cultural characterizations are ascribed to selected biological phenotypes. Meanwhile other observable human characteristics are privileged (lightly pigmented skin, cis-gender maleness, and species-typicality, respectively).

Categorical notions of class/socioeconomic status have intentionally not been included in the disquisition as a demographic of human diversity. As is true for racism, manifestations of disablism appear to be interdependent with cultural socioeconomic structures. Racism provided

a rationale for enslavement in service to economic interests (Bracey Jr., 2011). Similarly, disability as a group identity characteristic developed as the industrial revolution required that laborers fit more and more restrictive job markets (Nielsen, 2012). Certainly, discrimination and privilege based on access to socioeconomic resources has a long and variable history that is inextricably interlaced with other systems of advantaging and disadvantaging inclusive of those based on racialized, gendered, and enabled/disabled discourses (Ferber, 2012; Giroux, 2002; Lerner, 1986).

While racism has endured for hundreds of years it continues to adapt to meet contemporary circumstances (Dovidio, 2001; Drew, 2011; Gould, 1981; May Machunda, Drew, & Rodriguez, 2011). From its early economic roots in the U.S., racism has morphed from legalized kidnapping and enslavement of Africans, to the Jim Crow era of “Whites Only” and “separate but equal,” to today’s school-to-prison pipeline with disproportionate impacts on students of color (Alexander, 2010).

Misogyny has had a much longer run, originating perhaps some 7,000 years ago as early agrarian Neolithic cultures grounded in female-centric theologies were replaced when nomadic cultures organized around male-centric theologies “gradually imposed their ideologies and ways of life on the lands and peoples they conquered” (Eisler, 1987, p. 44). Sexism/genderism continues to be reflected today in the increased risks of cultural and interpersonal violence and economic disparities experienced in most every aspect of contemporary societies by women and people whose gendered identities do not map onto the bi-polar heterosexed convention.

Disablism/ableism too has transmogrified over centuries of recorded history. Perceptions of disability have roots in cultural attributions tied to philosophical or spiritual beliefs and to modern medicalizations of human difference, as well as to economic concerns

(Baynton, 2008; Munyi, 2012; Nielsen, 2012). The present foci in education on standardized academic products and market-ready skills currently operates in service to a culture of domination based on economics (Ball, 1998, 2012; Saltman, 2012) and people perceived as disabled are fundamentally disproportionately marginalized by these circumstances. Thus, although socioeconomic or class status is a legally protected minority group and is an identity characteristic that is frequently included in discourses on diversity, it may be more accurate and appropriate to view socioeconomic class as an outcome of corporate-centric capitalism rather than as a group or cultural identity characteristic (Gorski, 2008; Ng & Rury, 2009).

### **Future Research Priorities**

As is the case with most inquiries into the nature and function of human experience, the perspectives assembled here give rise to additional questions. Further explications of hegemonic normativity and enabled privilege are certainly warranted and many scholars working across the transdisciplinary field of critical disability studies are undertaking those investigations from myriad vantage points. In the case of this disquisition, noteworthy implications for future research inquiries may be primarily associated with the Q-study detailed in Chapter 3.

Twenty-nine of the 66 Q-study participants were respondents to the disability scholar invitation. Close to 30% of the current study participants' (19 of 66) indicated that they experienced disability or disablism, a percentage similar to the 33% of non-institutionalized U.S. adults 18 years and older reported to experience disability when it is defined as at least one basic actions difficulty or complex activity limitation (CDC, 2012). Sixteen of those 19 participants loaded on the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint and had responded to the invitation after it appeared on the SDS listserv. Thus, it is likely that close to 50% of the current study participants hold views which align closely with the critical disability studies values espoused by the SDS

and the three viewpoints identified in the current Q-sorts may not reflect a full spectrum of perspectives held by a broader representation of individuals regarding disability allyship beliefs and behaviors. Another emergent viewpoint may have been augured by the single participant whose views loaded on the opposite (negative) pole of the Amicable Empathics factor, a viewpoint characterized as Engaged Pragmatists and which prioritized “working alongside and in partnership with disabled people.” It is possible that this viewpoint and/or others, though not detected in the present study, may be observed in other studies.

Additionally, because the vast majority of the disability allyship Q-concourse statements were collected primarily from persons who identified as experiencing disability/disablism and/or as critical disability studies scholars, this may be a limitation of the study such that the perspectives of persons who identify as disability allies though who do not ascribe to a critical disability studies analysis are underrepresented in the Q-sample (Q-concourse statements). It may be especially beneficial to more deeply explore the beliefs and behaviors of such individuals, especially if the intent is to convince scholars and allies to adopt critical disability studies viewpoints.

Finally, it may be worth directly acknowledging that this disquisition emerges from my own enculturation which is overwhelmingly dominated by a modern western colonial worldview. While the complexivist critical transnational framework detailed in the first chapter and applied in each subsequent manuscript was my currently-best attempt at making visible and working both with and outside of this worldview, it is simultaneously an analysis that requires me to acknowledge that disembodied culture-free perception is impossible. Domination culture (Rosenberg, 2003; Wink, 1992) has exported and imposed a modern western settler-colonial worldview across much of the planet (Erevelles, 2011; Meekosha, 2011; Suárez-Krabbe, 2013;



Tikly, 2001), and has in effect colonized my mind and the minds of so many. Future research implications may include a deepened exploration of the ways that this enculturation has erased ways of being in the world that are distinct from colonial domination-centric social imaginaries.

### **Conclusions and a Place to Begin**

Re-configuring our cultural paradigms to reflect beliefs and behaviors that more fully honor the lived realities of us all, in whatever species-typical or atypical ways we show up, is a daunting undertaking. Yet, we can begin at the micro-scale, by intentionally changing our languaging, which will eventually impact our viewpoints, then influence our beliefs, then guide our behaviors. For example, “lame” is a currently popular word used in the same way “gay” has been used—to signal derision or a dismissive, disdainful attitude, as in “That’s so gay” or “That’s so lame.” Of course, some of us are uniquely gendered and some of us are lame—or species-atypical in other ways. Just as many of us no longer accept derogatory uses of gay, we can explain to our colleagues and students that lame refers to a way that some people move or walk, and that characterizing the lived experiences of a group of people with contempt is a form of hate speech. We can follow the wise counsel of Three Rivers (1996): “Be creative. There’s thousands of adjectives in the English language that do not equate evil with the way people... look” (para. 21). If we mean to say something is weak, or inefficient, or uninteresting, or unskillful, or unimpressive—then we can say *that*. As educators we can refuse to use “normal” or “average” to characterize acceptable or sufficient academic performances.

We can begin the meso-scale work of local community transformations by initiating conversations with colleagues, family members, and community groups regarding what our current educational structures tell us about our beliefs about who matters. From one perspective complexity thinking poses such a overwhelming view of powerful systems at work that we may

be discouraged from action (Davis & Sumara, 2008). A more useful perspective is found in leveraging complexity thinking's recognition of our unavoidable interdependencies and the influence of actors within systems, especially networks of actors, on the parameters and functioning of those systems. We are each enmeshed within multiple social networks and in conversation with one another we can explore questions regarding the influences of both conventional and complexity science thinking on educational paradigms and programs. Surely, in these conversations we must question our claim that every child is offered a free and appropriate public education by looking directly at our continuing separate-but-equal approach to schooling where general education is distinguished from special education and children are sorted based on socially constructed and then legally mandated notions of normativity and disability. If we are candid with ourselves we must acknowledge that in this paradigm some children are seen as inherently more valuable than others. Are we willing to be complicit in the reproduction of these systems or are we ready to be about the business of radical respect and justice for all?

These steps, changing our own languaging and working locally to change our cultural attributions and practices, have the potential to influence the macro-scale patterns that can usher in a fully transformative cultural shift. As noted in Chapter 1, two distinctly different social imaginaries are reflected in worldviews that are clearly discernible in the world today. Present-day dominant culture characterizes disability as aberrant individual characteristics that should be managed, altered, or obliterated. That paradigm is directly at odds with a viewpoint forwarded by critical disability scholars and activists that recognizes the facts of species-atypicalities and explicitly values the diverse contributions of all persons. Critical disability studies scholars and activists have articulated an alternative worldview that leads us out of the morass of self-doubt

and “othering” that hegemonic normativity provokes and promotes. It is a worldview in which human diversities are understood as central aspects of valued and desirable lifeworlds, and all diversities, inclusive of perceived disability, are seen as indivisible from sociopolitical, educational, and workplace excellence. Let us take in and take up this paradigm, make it our mainstream approach to education, and see if the last prejudice is undone in process.

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# APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL

## Institutional Review Board

...for the protection of human participants in research

North Dakota State University  
Sponsored Programs Administration  
1735 NDSU Research Park Drive  
NDSU Dept #4000  
PO Box 6050  
Fargo, ND 58108-6050 231-8995(ph) 231-8098(fax)



### Protocol Amendment Request Form

Changes to approved research may not be initiated without prior IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. Reference: SOP 7.5 Protocol Amendments.

Examples of changes requiring IRB review include, but are not limited to changes in: investigators or research team members, purpose/scope of research, recruitment procedures, compensation scheme, participant population, research setting, interventions involving participants, data collection procedures, or surveys, measures or other data forms.

#### Protocol Information:

Protocol #: **HE13239** Title: **Disability Allyship**

Review category:  Exempt  Expedited  Full board

Principal investigator: **Chris M. Ray** Email address: **chris.ray@ndsu.edu**  
Dept: **School of Education**

Co-investigator: **Colleen McDonald-Morken** Email address: **c.mcdonaldmorken@my.ndsu.edu**  
Dept: **School of Education**

Principal investigator signature, Date: Chris Ray (email) 6/4/13

*In lieu of a written signature, submission via the Principal Investigator's NDSU email constitutes an acceptable electronic signature.*

#### Description of proposed changes:

1. Date of proposed implementation of change(s)\*: **June 10, 2013**  
*\* Cannot be implemented prior to IRB approval unless the IRB Chair has determined that the change is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.*
2. Describe proposed change(s), including justification:  
**In order to improve the relevance of the data collected the following three changes are proposed [highlighted in yellow on the attached files]: 1) One question has been added to the Post-Sort Questionnaire; 2) Participants have been invited to provide contact information if they are willing to be contacted for follow-up interviews; 3) Demographic items have been added to more accurately reflect potential work roles of sample participants; and 4) Wording in the recruitment email has been altered slightly based upon the addition of participants.**

3. Will the change involve a change in principal or co- investigator?

No - skip to Question 4

Yes:

- *Include an Investigator's Assurance (last page of protocol form), signed by the new PI or co-investigator*
- *Conflict of Interest disclosure.* Does any investigator responsible for the design, conduct or reporting of the project (including their immediate family members) have a financial, personal or political interest that may conflict with their responsibility for protecting human participants in NDSU research? (*SOP 6.2 Conflict of Interest in Human Research, Investigator and Research Team*)

No – As PI, I attest that I have conferred with my co-investigators and key personnel and confirmed that no financial, personal or political interests currently exist related to this research.

Yes – Describe the related financial, personal or political interests, and **attach documentation of COI disclosure and review** (*as applicable*).

Financial, personal or political interests related to the research (the sponsor, product or service being tested, or a competing product or service) may include:

- compensation (e.g., salary, payment for services, consulting fees)
- intellectual property rights or equity interests
- board memberships or executive positions
- enrollment or recruitment bonus payments

(Refer to *NDSU Policy 151.1, External Activities and Conflicts of Interest, and NDSU Policy 823, Financial Disclosure – Sponsored Projects* for specific disclosure requirements.)

**Note: If the change is limited to addition/change in research team members, skip the rest of this form.**

4. Will the change(s) increase any risks, or present new risks (*physical, economic, psychological, or sociological*) to participants?

No

Yes: *In the appropriate section of the protocol form, describe new or altered risks and how they will be minimized.*

5. Does the proposed change involve the addition of a vulnerable group of participants?

Children:  no  yes – include the *Children in Research* attachment form

Prisoners:  no  yes – include the *Prisoners in Research* attachment form

Cognitively impaired individuals:  no  yes\*

Economically or educationally disadvantaged individuals:  no  yes\*

*\*Provide additional information where applicable in the revised protocol form.*

6. Does the proposed change involve a request to waive some or all the elements of informed consent or documentation of consent?

no

yes – include the *Informed Consent Waiver or Alteration Request* attachment form

7. Does the proposed change involve a new research site?

no

yes – include a letter of permission/cooperation, IRB approval, or grant application or contract



If information in your previously approved protocol has changed, or additional information is being added, incorporate the changes into relevant section(s) of the protocol. Highlight (e.g. print and highlight the hard copy, or indicate changes using all caps, asterisks, etc) the changed section(s) and attach a copy of the revised protocol to this form. (If the changes are limited to addition/change in research team members, a revised protocol form is not needed.)

**Impact for Participants (future, current, or prior):**

1. Will the change(s) alter information on previously approved versions of the recruitment materials, informed consent, or other documents, or require new documents?  
 No  
 Yes - attach revised/new document(s)
  
2. Could the change(s) affect the willingness of *currently* enrolled participants to continue in the research?  
 No  
 Yes - describe procedures that will be used to inform current participants, and re-consent, if necessary:
  
3. Will the change(s) have any impact to *previously* enrolled participants?  
 No  
 Yes - describe impact, and any procedures that will be taken to protect the rights and welfare of participants:

-----FOR IRB OFFICE USE ONLY-----

Request is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	
Review: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exempt, category#: <u>2</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Expedited method, category # ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Convened meeting, date: ____	
IRB Signature: <u>Kristy Shirley</u>	Date: <u>6/5/13</u>
Comments:	

Protocols previously declared exempt: (Allow 5 working days) If the proposed change does not alter the exemption status, the change may be administratively reviewed by qualified IRB staff, chair, or designee. If the change(s) would alter this status, Expedited or Full Board review will be required.

Protocols previously reviewed by the expedited method: (Allow 10 working days) Most changes may also be reviewed by the expedited method, unless the change would increase risks to more than minimal, and/or alter the eligibility of the project for expedited review.

Protocols previously reviewed by the full board: Minor changes (not involving more than minimal risks, or not significantly altering the research goals or design) may be reviewed by the expedited method (allow 10 working days). Those changes determined by the IRB to be more than minor will require review by the full board (due 10 working days prior to next scheduled meeting).

**NDSU** NORTH DAKOTA  
STATE UNIVERSITY

Friday, April 19, 2013

FederalWide Assurance FWA00002439

Dr. Chris Ray  
School of Education  
216A Family Life Center

**Re:** IRB Certification of Exempt Human Subjects Research:  
Protocol #HE13239, "Disability Allyship"

Co-investigator(s) and research team: **Cali Anicha (Colleen McDonald-Morken)**

Certification Date: 4/19/13      Expiration Date: 4/18/16  
Study site(s): **varied**  
Funding: **n/a**

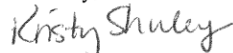
The above referenced human subjects research project has been certified as exempt (category # 2) in accordance with federal regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46, *Protection of Human Subjects*). This determination is based on recruitment and consent documents (received 4/19/13).

Please also note the following:

- If you wish to continue the research after the expiration, submit a request for recertification several weeks prior to the expiration.
- Conduct the study as described in the approved protocol. If you wish to make changes, obtain approval from the IRB prior to initiating, unless the changes are necessary to eliminate an immediate hazard to subjects.
- Notify the IRB promptly of any adverse events, complaints, or unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others related to this project.
- Report any significant new findings that may affect the risks and benefits to the participants and the IRB.
- Research records may be subject to a random or directed audit at any time to verify compliance with IRB standard operating procedures.

Thank you for your cooperation with NDSU IRB procedures. Best wishes for a successful study.

Sincerely,



Kristy Shirley, CIP, Research Compliance Administrator

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

NDSU Dept 4000 | PO Box 6050 | Fargo ND 58108-6050 | 701.231.8995 | Fax 701.231.8098 | [nds.u.edu/irb](http://nds.u.edu/irb)

Shipping address: Research 1, 1735 NDSU Research Park Drive, Fargo, ND 58102

NDSU is an EO/AA university.

## APPENDIX B. Q STATEMENTS (IN NUMERICAL ORDER)

1. Supports flexible schedules so persons w/disability can meet shifting needs.
2. Understands that disability is caused by a health condition.
3. Accepts responsibility for educating self *and* others re: enabled privilege.
4. Works as a service provider to people experiencing disability.
5. Works to ensure people with disability can access the services they legally deserve.
6. Experiences distress about one's own unearned advantages.
7. Advocates for charitable groups as providers of needed services for people w/disability.
8. Experiences distress about unearned disadvantages for people w/disability.
9. Is committed to leveraging personal privilege to undo systems of unearned advantage.
10. Provides sympathetic support for people experiencing disability.
11. Develops friendships with people experiencing disability/disablism.
12. Seeks business relationships w/people w/disability.
13. Empathizes with people experiencing disability/disablism.
14. Consults persons experiencing disability/disablism before taking action(s).
15. Educates oneself re: lived experiences of people w/disability.
16. Knows that experiences of disability are multifaceted.
17. Knows that being non-disabled influences one's identity.
18. Knows to speak for oneself rather than for persons with disability.
19. Believes persons w/disability when they communicate about their experiences.
20. Understands social norms give unearned advantage to the nondisabled.
21. Knows we all need to unlearn nondisabled = superior or normal.
22. Networks with groups working for disability rights.
23. Knows people w/disability are individuals who may have shared experiences of discrimination.
24. Networks with groups providing services to people experiencing disability.
25. Advocates for all *learning* settings to be inherently barrier-free.
26. Values the benefits of diverse perspectives including people w/disability.
27. Takes actions to dismantle disablism even when doing so reduces one's own social power.
28. Knows that social stigmas constitute chronic stressors for persons experiencing disability.
29. Advocates for all *community* settings to be inherently barrier-free.
30. Knows that nondisabled people are often unaware of their enabled privilege.
31. Understands disability as a natural expression of human diversity rather than as a problem.
32. Knows that some people overcome their impairments through heroic effort.
33. Recognizes racism, sexism, etc influence experiences of disablism/enabled privilege.
34. Creates opportunities to advocate for disability rights.
35. Advocates for all *workplace* settings to be inherently barrier-free.
36. Is open to personal critique regarding disability/disablism/enabled privilege.
37. Knows importance of collaboration w/persons w/disability to undo disablism.
38. Knows that people experiencing disability often need to rely on experts acting on their behalf.
39. Provides direct assistance to persons experiencing disability.
40. Knows that disability is one among many enriching attributes of personal identity.

## APPENDIX C. EMAIL INVITATION SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP

Hello! You are receiving this invitation because you have indicated an interest in research, social justice, and diversity in conversation with me - or because you have participated in one or more equity/diversity-focused professional development events held locally over the past several years.

I would like to thank you in advance for taking some time to help me with my dissertation research by participating in this online study and/or forwarding this invitation to colleagues you believe will be interested in the topic of disability allyship - and encouraging them to also participate! I hope to have data collected by the end of June so any help in meeting that timeline will be very much appreciated!

~Cali

[Note: This data collection program uses a relatively new version of the Adobe Flash software, therefore it will not work on iOS devices such as iPhones and iPads]

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Colleague,

Would you be willing to share your views with us about what it means to be a disability ally? As a college or university faculty member, your opinion is important to us!

We are conducting a study to better understand the various perspectives on what it means to be a disability ally. That understanding will in turn help us to develop teaching materials designed to support disability ally beliefs and behaviors.

We know your time is precious and hope you are willing to invest a bit of it in participating with us. Many people have found this research format to be particularly unique and engaging, so our expectation is that you will also feel benefited by participating (it will take approximately 20-30 minutes).

*We would appreciate your assistance in making this study even more inclusive by forwarding this email to your college or university faculty colleagues who you think may also be interested in sharing their views on being a disability ally.*

Please click the following link to participate in this voluntary study:  
[www.ndsu.edu/pubweb/~chrray/allies](http://www.ndsu.edu/pubweb/~chrray/allies)

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Cali Anicha, Ph.D. Candidate,  
Institutional Analysis Program  
Education Doctoral Programs  
North Dakota State University

Chris M. Ray, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor,  
Education Doctoral Programs  
North Dakota State University



**APPENDIX D. EMAIL INVITATION DISABILITY SCHOLARS GROUP**

Hello! You are receiving this invitation because I appreciate your critical disability studies scholarship and hope that you will be willing to help me in furthering my own understandings and scholarship.

I would like to thank you in advance for taking some time to help me with my dissertation research by participating in this online study and/or forwarding this invitation to colleagues you believe will be interested in the topic of disability allyship - and encouraging them to also participate! I hope to have data collected by the end of June so any help in meeting that timeline will be very much appreciated!

~Cali

[Note: This data collection program uses a relatively new version of the Adobe Flash software, therefore it will not work on iOS devices such as iPhones and iPads]

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Colleague,

Would you be willing to share your views with us about what it means to be a disability ally? As a college or university faculty member, your opinion is important to us!

We are conducting a study to better understand the various perspectives on what it means to be a disability ally. That understanding will in turn help us to develop teaching materials designed to support disability ally beliefs and behaviors.

We know your time is precious and hope you are willing to invest a bit of it in participating with us. Many people have found this research format to be particularly unique and engaging, so our expectation is that you will also feel benefited by participating (it will take approximately 20-30 minutes).

*We would appreciate your assistance in making this study even more inclusive by forwarding this email to your college or university faculty colleagues who you think may also be interested in sharing their views on being a disability ally.*

Please click the following link to participate in this voluntary study.  
[www.ndsu.edu/pubweb/~chrray/allyship](http://www.ndsu.edu/pubweb/~chrray/allyship)

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Cali Anicha, Ph.D. Candidate,  
Institutional Analysis Program  
Education Doctoral Programs  
North Dakota State University

Chris M. Ray, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor,  
Education Doctoral Programs  
North Dakota State University

## **APPENDIX E. ACCOUNTABLE COLLABORATORS**

### **Narrative of Viewpoint**

This viewpoint has an eigenvalue of 21.4 and explains 25% of the study variance. Thirty participants are significantly associated within this factor space. Their gendered demographics included two who declined to respond and 28 who identified as follows: 15 female, two women, two as cisgender woman/female, one butch female, one female non-femme queer, three genderqueer, one cisgender male, three as male. One participant did not select an age range and no one indicated they were less than 18; four participants selected the 18-27 age range, four selected 28-37, 11 selected 38-47, and 10 selected 48 or older. In response to the question, “Do you experience disability/disablism?” 12 participants said yes, four provided contextualized affirmative responses, and 14 said no. Participants in faculty roles included four adjunct instructors, one professor of practice, four tenure track and eight tenured faculty; two indicated they held primarily administrative positions, seven selected the non-faculty position option, and four did not respond to that demographic question. Notably, 25 of 27 total respondents to the disability scholar group invitation are included in this viewpoint and the remaining five participants responded to the social justice interest group invitation.

Allyship from this standpoint is grounded in collaboration (37:+5) and consultation (14:+2) with persons experiencing disability or disablism and the recognition that multiple systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging (e.g. racism and sexism) influence the identity development of all persons (33:+5). Disability is understood not as a problem but as a natural expression of human diversity (40:0) and as one of many enriching identity attributes (31:+3). Disability allyship means accepting responsibility for educating oneself and others

about unearned systems of enabled privilege and to do this well requires openness to ongoing personal critique regarding one's education and advocacy approaches (3:+4; 36:+4).

Enabled allies are committed to using social power and privilege in service to dismantling disablism, although this may come at a cost (9:+2; 27:+3). Allies seek to educate themselves about the lived experiences of persons perceived as disabled, believe people perceived as disabled when they communicate about their lives, and are careful to speak for themselves rather than 'for' people experiencing disability or disablism (15:+2; 19+4; 18:+1). They understand that all of us need to unlearn the notion that being perceived as not-disabled is equivalent to "superior" or "normal" (21, +3). These allies recognize that experiences of disability are unique and multifaceted (16:+1) and understand that they themselves are likely to be unaware of their own enabled identities and privileges (20:+1; 30:+2; 17:-1). While social stigmas are acknowledged as chronic stressors for persons experiencing disablism, Accountable Collaborators know that people perceived as disabled may or may not have shared experiences of discrimination (28:0; 39:+1).

Accountable Collaborators value the diverse perspectives people experiencing disability or disablism bring to workplace and community settings (26:0). Networking with groups working for disability rights and advocating for all learning, community, and workplace settings to be barrier-free are actions allies may take to further the work of dismantling disablism (22:0; 25:0; 29:0; 35:+1). Working to ensure that legally guaranteed services are available and accessible, networking with groups that provide such services, initiating conversations or actions that promote disability rights, seeking professional relationships with persons perceived as disabled, and supporting flexible scheduling are also options for ally behavior (5:-1; 24:-2; 34:-1; 12:-1; 1:-1).

Working as a direct service provider or otherwise providing direct assistance to persons perceived as disabled (4:-3; 23:-2) are seen as less important to allyship. Friendships developed with persons perceived as disabled (11:-2), as well as attention to emotions such as distress, sympathy, and empathy (6:-3; 8:-3; 10:-4; 13:-2) are also seen as relatively less important. Statements rated as “most unlike” this viewpoint included an interpretation of disability as a health condition that may require reliance on outside “experts,” be “overcome through heroic effort,” or ameliorated through charitable services (2:-4; 38:-5; 32:-5; 7:-4).

Comments offered by participants who populate Accountable Collaborators factor space defined disability as a socially constructed “systemic subjugation of a group of people “(L08) that creates “barriers to accessing the material and economic and community resources available to others” (N16) “due to some difference from the assumed ‘normal’ body upon which society is based” (N18). Notions of disability arise from a world “made for too narrow a range of human beings” (N19) resulting in an “attitudinal, social, and physical... form of systemic and institutional discrimination that needs to be removed” (N20). This viewpoint understands disability as “an identity position, sometimes of oppression, like gender, sexuality, [or] class” (N2), though one that can also be an aspect of a “reclaimed... identity” which may serve to widen one’s supportive peer community (N15).

Notions of heroic overcoming, reliance on “experts,” and the role of charitable agencies/acts were adamantly rejected by Accountable Collaborators as “[c]ondescending, patronizing, paternalistic” (N22) and “potentially harmful... to say or think” (N21). The “popular stereotypical narrative of disability as deficit... privileges some pwd as ‘good’ for overcoming” (N18) and “supports a view that if pwd ‘just tried hard enough’ or if we just funded ‘the right people’ that disability would no longer exist” (N23). The “notion that all people with

disabilities need to work harder, pray more, wish deeper” is a reflection of a cultural assumption “that disability is, and should be, fixable” (N28), and “[w]e would all be so much better off if this belief were debunked instantly!” (N5).

Moreover, these stereotypes were noted to locate “the problem... in a person with a disability rather than a social system [and] implies that the solution lies in changing the person with a disability rather than changing the social system” (N3). “This is the attitude behind ‘inspirational porn,’ and leads to the experiences of disabled people being discounted as unworthy of attention if they cannot be cured, or do not wish to be cured” (N6). As one participant noted, “[U]sing disabled people and their stories as ‘inspiration’ is really off-putting to me. We are not your inspiration. We are people living our lives” (N27). The idea of experts speaking or acting on behalf of people perceived as disabled “is an attitude that keeps the disabled in a perpetual state of receiving charity/pity” and is also noted as “actually a really dangerous idea” when considered in historic contexts as there have “been many cases of disabled women being sterilized, institutionalized, denied right[s]... and many other horrific acts” (N27).

From the standpoint of Accountable Collaborators disability allyship begins with “becoming aware of the system of privilege and one’s place in it” (L21), though emotional responses are viewed as generally counterproductive, “I don’t waste time in being distressed. I try to recognize and understand my privileges so I can work to create a level playing field” (L08). This calls for educating oneself “about what it means to be privileged and an ally – which means talking to and working with folks with disabilities and being aware that I can be working with folks with disability without even knowing it” (L13). Leveraging personal privilege to “create positive social change” (N3) is “the definition of [an] ally in action (N15) and may be “the most helpful thing can do” (N21).

While using privilege “to dismantle the various \*ist paradigms” (N12) is seen as a key responsibility of disability allies and although “[t]aking direct action speaks louder than words or feelings” (N21), enabled people working as direct service providers may be “unlikely to be [an] actual ally (because of training)” (L15). “So-called ‘experts’ have done more to disable people and to prop up ableist systems than any other group” (N17). Indeed, “very few ‘experts’ in positions of power have disabilities themselves, and the advice they hand out is as weighted by bigotry and false premises as much as the general public” (N6). Also crucial to Accountable Collaborators is the understanding that “[n]ormality’ is an empty concept” (N17). One participant suggested that Disability Studies be renamed as “Normalcy Studies” (N19), another noted that “a person with a disability is not broken... just another version of ‘normal’” (N13).

Demographic information for Accountable Collaborators is listed next. Figure E1 provides a graphic image of the theoretical/composite sort in color-coded text format.

### **Demographics**

Primary Role in Ed:	2 Administrators 4 Adjuncts 1 Prof of Practice 4 Tenure Track 8 Tenured 7 Non-faculty positions 4 No Response
Years in Education:	5 0-3 4 4-7 1 8-11 6 12-15 2 16-19 9 20+ 3 No Response
Gender:	15 Female 2 Woman 2 Cisgender female/woman 1 Butch female

1 Female non-femme queer  
3 GenderQueer  
1 Cis-male  
3 Male  
2 No Response

Age ranges: 0 - Less than 18  
4 - 18-27  
4 - 28-37  
11- 38-47  
10 - 48 or older  
1- No Response

Educational Experience:  
0 Vocational Training  
1 Associate's Degree  
3 Bachelor's Degree  
6 Master's Degree  
16 Doctoral Degree  
2 Professional Degree  
1 Other Degree  
1 No Response

Identify as experiencing disability/disablism: 12 Yes; 14 No; 4 Contextual Responses; 0 No Response

Most  
Unlike My  
Views

Most Like  
My Views

**Color Code**

- Green: Consensus
- Red: Distinguishing (+)
- Orange: Distinguishing (-)
- Black: Remaining Items

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					Knows disability is one of many enriching attributes (40)					
					Creates opportunities to advocate for disability rights (34)	Advocates for all <i>community</i> settings to be inherently barrier-free (29)	Knows PWD may-may not have shared exp of discrimination (39)			
			Networks with groups providing services to people experiencing disability (24)	Knows that being non-disabled influences one's identity (17)	Knows that social stigma is chronic stressor for persons w disability (28)	Advocates for all <i>workplace</i> settings to be inherently barrier-free (35)	Knows that nondisabled people are often unaware of their enabled privilege (30)			
	Provides sympathetic support for PWD (10)	Experiences distress unearned disadvantages PWD (8)	Provides direct assistance to persons experiencing disability (23)*	Seeks professional relationships w/people w/ disability (12)	Values the benefits of diverse perspectives including PWD (26)	Understands social norms give unearned advantage to nondisabled (20)	Educates oneself re: lived experiences of people w/disability (15)	Understands disability natural expression of human diversity (31)	Is open to personal critique regarding disablism/ enabled privilege (36)	
Knows people w disability rely on experts (38)	Advocates charitable groups provide services (7)	Experiences distress about own unearned advantages (6)	Empathizes with people experiencing disability/disablism (13)	Works to ensure PWD receive legally ensured services (5)	Advocates for all <i>learning</i> settings to be inherently barrier-free (25)	Knows to speak for oneself rather than for persons with disability (18)	Consults persons experiencing disability/disablism before taking action(s) (14)	Takes actions to dismantle disablism even when doing so reduces social power (27)	Believes persons w/disability when they communicate about their experiences (19)*	Knows importance of collaboration w/persons w/disability (37)
Knows that people overcome impairment heroic effort (32)	Understand disability as caused by a health condition (2)	Works as a service provider to people experiencing disability (4)	Develops friendships with people experiencing disability/disablism (11)*	Supports flexible schedules to meet shifting needs (1)	Networks with groups working for disability rights (22)	Knows that experiences of disability are multifaceted (16)	Is committed to leveraging personal privilege to undo systems of unearned advantage (9)	Knows we all need to unlearn nondisabled = superior or normal (21)	Accepts responsibility for educating self and others re enabled privilege (3)	Recognizes racism, sexism, etc influence experiences of disablism/enable d privilege (33)
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

Figure E1. Composite sort text format for Accountable Collaborators.



## APPENDIX F. AMICABLE EMPATHICS

### Narrative of Viewpoint

This viewpoint has an eigenvalue of 6.9 and explains 11% of the study variance. Thirteen participants were significantly associated within this factor space. Their gendered demographics included two who declined to respond, six who identified as female, and five as male. Three participants did not select an age range and no one indicated they were less than 18; one participant selected the 18-27 age range, three selected 28-37, three selected 38-47, and three selected 48 or older. In response to the question, “Do you experience disability/disablism?” one participants said yes, one provided a contextualized affirmative response, ten said no, and one did not indicate a response. Participants in faculty roles included two adjunct instructors, three tenure track and three tenured faculty; two indicated they held primarily administrative positions, two selected the non-faculty position option, and one did not respond to that demographic question.

Disability allyship from this standpoint places a premium on recognizing the benefits associated with an inclusive stance with regard to diverse identities and backgrounds and intentionally values and includes the perspectives of people perceived as disabled (26:+5). Allies are both cognizant of their unearned enabled advantages and aware that those advantages are often invisible to enabled persons (20:+5; 30:+4). Disability is understood simultaneously as caused by a health condition and as a natural expression of human diversity (2:+1; 31:+2). Taking note that social stigmas constitute chronic stressors for persons experiencing disablism, allies within this viewpoint feel it is important to empathize and sometimes sympathize with people perceived as disabled (28:+4; 13:+3;10:+1). Experiences of disability are understood to be multifaceted; all people, including people perceived as disabled, are subject to influences of

socially structured systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging such as racism or sexism and this means people perceived as disabled may or may not have shared experiences of discrimination as disabled people (16:+4; 33:+2; 39:+3).

Similarly important to this approach to allyship is the recognition that we have all been taught, and thus all need to *unlearn*, the idea that being nondisabled is equal to ‘superior’ or ‘normal;’ people who do not identify as disabled especially need to understand that not being perceived as disabled also profoundly influences one’s identity (21:+2; 17:+3). Allies accept responsibility for educating themselves and others regarding enabled privilege while remaining open to personal critique of those efforts and demonstrate regard for the perspectives of people perceived as disabled (3:+1; 36:+1; 19:+2) through collaborations and friendships with people perceived as disabled (37:0; 11:0). Allies recognize disability as just one of many enriching identity attributes and know to speak on their own behalf rather than ‘for’ persons perceived as disabled, though they may speak up in support of the implementation of flexible schedules in order to address the shifting needs of persons experiencing disability or disablism (40:0; 18:+1; 1:0).

Distress regarding one’s own unearned advantages and the unearned disadvantages experienced by people perceived as disabled (6:0; 8:-2) may prompt allies to educate themselves about the lived realities of people perceived as disabled and may lead them to take action to dismantle disablism even when doing so reduces their personal social power (15:-1; 27:-1; 9:-2). These actions may include working to ensure access to legally guaranteed services, advocating for charitable groups to provide needed services, providing direct assistance, or seeking professional relationships with people perceived as disabled (5:-1; 7:-1; 23:-2; 12:-2).

Allies who resonate with this viewpoint may see disability as something that can be overcome through heroic effort (32:0). They may believe that persons perceived as disabled often need to rely on experts acting on their behalf (38:-1) and thus may not feel compelled to consult persons perceived as disabled before taking actions (14:-3). The following direct actions or behaviors were identified as “most unlike” this viewpoint of disability allyship: advocating for learning, community, and workplace settings to be barrier-free (25:-3; 29:-3; 35:-4), working as a service provider or creating opportunities to advocate for disability rights (4:-4; 34:-4), or networking with groups providing services to persons perceived as disabled or groups working for disability rights (24:-5; 22:-5).

Comments offered by participants who populate Amicable Empathics factor space offered definitions of disability grounded in both social and biological analyses. This viewpoint understands disability as a fundamentally individual and embodied phenomenon, though with explicit acknowledgement of the invisibility of enabled privilege as well as social stigmas associated with perceptions of disability. For example, disability is described as “struggling to interact with physical and social environments” (L23), “a difference in ability” (L24), “a level of functioning (without accommodation) below the expected or ‘normal’ of a typical individual. [P]hysical, mental, emotional, intellectual limitations to normal activity that necessitate some accommodation/s” (L01), “Any physical or psychological shortcoming that when considered in societal terms inhibits certain individuals to access equal rights and privileges as opposed to those that do not have similar shortcomings” (L19), “a physical or mental barrier to learning, communicating, or conducting Activities of Daily living that is not experienced by the majority of the population” (L28), “an inability to carry out a specific task” (L03), “an aspect of an individual that limits his/her ability to engage in some behavior” (L11), and “physical or

psychological: something that prevents ability” (L18). In some cases, participants tended toward a predominantly social-construction interpretation, indicating that disability “seems to be primarily defined by societies [sic] normative expectations [in] areas of life where we need some assistance and/or accommodation” (L15) and is “a socially-induced condition forced on people who are physically impaired in some way. The ‘disability’ is more squarely located in society than in the person, or even in their body” (L06).

Amicable Empathics may enact ally behaviors by registering their objections or disagreement “when other people make discriminatory comments about someone with a disability” (L28). While they recognize the reality of enabled privilege, they view interpersonal relationships as more important than overt advocacy or action for disability rights. Participants in the Amicable Empathics viewpoint may not see opportunities for disability allyship in their work roles or workplaces, indicating that “my profession is not in this area” (L18) or “I have never been in this role in the past, nor currently.” (L15). Amicable Empathics understand that we need to “make concerted efforts to dispel our own personal myths about ableism and disablism in society... [and to] change our worldviews” (L19), though they may not expect that “equal opportunity [for] every person is 100% possible” (L23) or may see the prospect of disability justice as improbable: “it would be great if this was possible, but it is unlikely to ever happen. Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination will always exist. We can do what we can do to reduce it” (L11).

Identity development for people with enabled privilege and for people experiencing disability or disablism is understood by Amicable Empathics to be multifaceted and complex; they may “reject essentialist notions of identity” (L23) noting that [a]bility is like race, gender, sexuality, etc. One aspect of identity rather than a problem” (L24). Amicable Empathics “see

disability as a diversity issue” (L06) indicating that “Like with race, sex, etc, unearned privilege falls to the able, and I get it” (L18), and that “[s]ystemic and structural forces such as racism and sexism often times affect our individual choices and access to power and privilege in life” (L19). This viewpoint understands that “status and awareness of advantage/privilege tend to be inversely related” and that “social contexts where [one’s] status is esteemed” may improve both personal comfort and skill performance (L15). Amicable Empathics may see education as “the key to understanding disability and the privilege of not being disabled” (L06).

Demographic information for Amicable Empathics is listed next. Figure F1 provides a graphic image of the theoretical/composite sort in color-coded text format.

### **Demographics**

Primary Role in Ed:	2 Administrators 2 Adjunct 0 Prof of Practice 3 Tenure Track 3 Tenured 2 Non-faculty position 1 No Response
Years in Education:	1 0-3 3 4-7 2 8-11 1 12-15 2 16-19 2 20+ 2 No Response
Gender:	6 Female 5 Man 2 No Response
Age ranges:	0 - Less than 18 1 - 18-27 3 - 28-37 3 - 38-47 3 - 48 or older 3 - No Response

Educational Experience:

- 0 Vocational Training
- 0 Associate's Degree
- 0 Bachelor's Degree
- 4 Master's Degree
- 7 Doctoral Degree
- 0 Professional Degree
- 0 Other Degree
- 2 No Response

Identify as experiencing disability/disablism: 1 Yes; 10 No; 1 Contextual Responses; 1 No Response.

**Color Code**

- Green: Consensus
- Red: Distinguishing (+)
- Orange: Distinguishing (-)
- Black: Remaining Items

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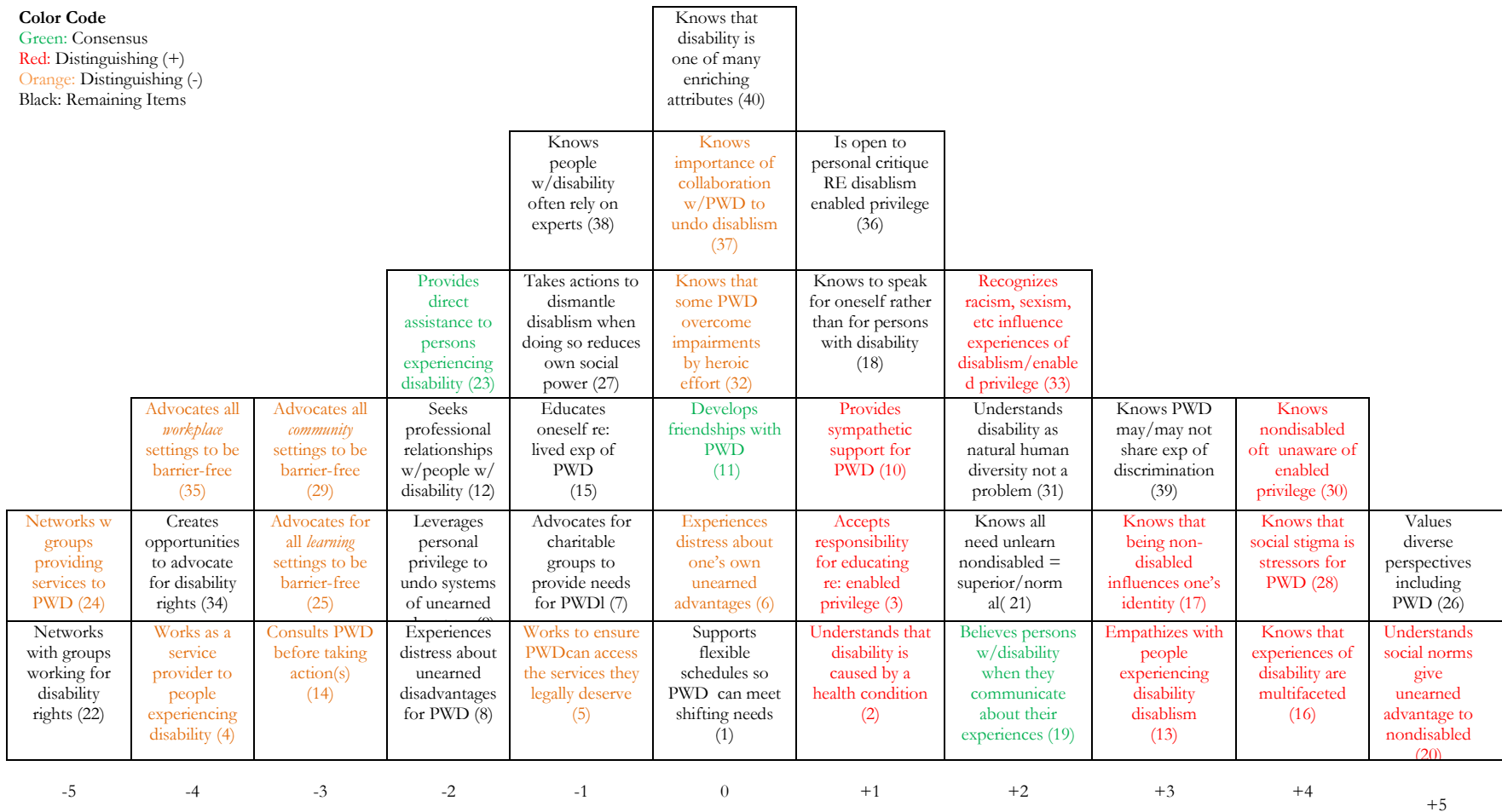


Figure F1. Composite sort text format for Amicable Empathics.

## **APPENDIX G. UNIVERSAL DESIGN ADVOCATES**

### **Narrative of Viewpoint**

This viewpoint has an eigenvalue of 4.3 and explains 13% of the study variance. Sixteen participants are significantly associated within this factor space. Their gendered demographics included one who declined to respond, nine who identified as female, one as a woman, and five as male. One participant did not select an age range and no one indicated they were less than 18; one participant selected the 18-27 age range, four selected 28-37, four selected 38-47, and six selected 48 or older. In response to the question, “Do you experience disability/disablism?” one participants said yes, one provided a contextualized affirmative response, twelve said no, and two did not indicate a response. Participants in faculty roles included three adjunct instructors, six tenure track faculty; three indicated they held primarily administrative positions, two selected the non-faculty position option, and two did not respond to that demographic question.

Respondents within this viewpoint understand that barrier-free environments in learning, community, and workplace settings are crucial to disability justice (25:+4; 29:+5; 35:+5) and this includes supporting the implementation of flexible schedules so persons perceived as disabled have opportunities to work according to shifting needs (1:+4). UD Advocates recognize that the experience of disability is multifaceted and they value the diverse perspectives of persons perceived as disabled (16:+3; 26:+4). These disability allies recognize that although social stigmas constitute chronic stressors for people experiencing disability or disablism (28:+3), persons perceived as disabled may or may not have shared experiences of discrimination (39:+2).

Acknowledging the importance of collaboration with persons perceived as disabled in efforts to undo disablism (37:+1) allies within the UD Advocates viewpoint believe what persons experiencing disablism say and know to speak for themselves not ‘for’ persons perceived as



disabled (19:+2; 18:+3). Empathizing with experiences of disablism and working to ensure that legally guaranteed services are accessible are understood as important ally behavior (13:+1; 5:+1). UD Advocates allies know that all people need to *unlearn* the notion that nondisabled is equal to ‘superior’ or ‘normal’ (21:+1). They recognize that social norms provide unearned advantages to people perceived as nondisabled and that these advantages often remain invisible to enabled people, thus they are open to personal critique as they accept responsibility for educating themselves and others about enabled privilege (20:+1; 30:+2; 36:+2; 3:0).

Taking responsibility for educating oneself regarding the lived experiences of people perceived as disabled is valued (15:0) and allies may enact this through seeking professional or friendship relationships, or otherwise consulting with people experiencing disablism (12:0; 11:0; 14:-2). UD Advocates disability allies recognize that multiple systems of unearned advantaging and disadvantaging (e.g. racism or sexism) influence the identities we all have, including identities as disabled or enabled (33:0) and see disability as one of many enriching identity attributes, a natural expression of human diversity rather than as a problem (40:0; 31:-1). This viewpoint does see that being non-disabled influences one’s identity and allies may take action to dismantle disablism even when doing so may reduce their own personal social power (17:-1; 27:-1; 9:-1).

An understanding of disability as caused by a health condition, or the idea that people perceived as disabled need to rely on experts acting on their behalf, or notions of people overcoming impairments through heroic efforts are all relatively “unlike” the views of allies who align with this standpoint (2:-2; 38:-2; 32:-4). UD Advocates allies may experience some distress about unearned disadvantages for persons perceived as disabled (8:-2) and may provide sympathetic support for people experiencing disablism (10:-1), however, they are less likely to

experience distress about their own unearned advantages (6:-5), or to provide direct assistance (23:-3) or work as a service provider to people experiencing disablism (4:-5). Ally actions such as advocating for charitable groups to provide needed services or networking with groups that provide services for people perceived as disabled (7:-3; 24:-3) are viewed as unlike this view of disability allyship as are actions such as creating opportunities to advocate for disability rights or networking with groups working for disability rights (34:-4; 22:-4).

Comments offered by participants who populate Universal Design Advocates indicate that while they may have differing definitions of disability, they share the perspective that environmental contexts are central to the experience of disability/disablism. One participant noted “[e]nvironmental changes are SO important” (L27); another indicated that through her learning environments research she has come to understand that “barrier-free [environments are] most beneficial for the broadest range of students” (L37); yet another stated, “As an educator, the single most important thing I can do is to be flexible and accommodating to the needs of individuals with disability” (L29). UD Advocates may recognize the need for barrier-free design of physical and social spaces due to direct experience, as did one participant who stated, “I have conditions that typically result in disability because of access barriers and spent most of my life facing access barriers but am currently accommodated so well I only face impairment, not disability” (N7). Others may see themselves as having little or no experience with disability due to growing up “in a society where disability did not exist because it was hidden”(L33), though seeing accessibility as “a fundamental right” (L14) that calls for advocacy and the use of social power because “personal beliefs on equality” (L33) demand as much (L02).

Several UD Advocates offered definitions of disability located within the individual: “a physical or mental condition that limits abilities, or creates challenges in accomplishing day to

day tasks”(L12); “any physical or psychological impairment that has an impact on one’s daily experiences” (L14); “any physical, developmental or psychological condition that is not shared by the majority... and which may impair interactions with that majority population or create perceived ‘otherness’”(L10); other UD Advocates focused on the socially constructed nature of notions of disability: “An impairment defined by a majority group. It can be mental, sensory, emotional, etc.” (L33); “Possessing characteristics (physical, mental, behavioral, cognitive) that a large majority of people don’t share. [I tend to think of it as a question of perception (how others perceive someone, how a disabled person perceives others) than of ability.]” (L30). Definitions of disability provided by UD Advocates also explicitly included the influences of environmental contexts: “physical or mental conditions which interfere... within the existing context of the dominant ‘abled’ culture. Disability is context dependent” (L05); “anything that prohibits someone from participating in something the same way it is presented” (L25), and “Any condition not covered by another model of oppression, such that a person faces barriers of one or more of the following sort: inability to enter public spaces, inability to access publicly-available information, social stigma, or pain from trying to be normal or live a normal life” (N7).

UD Advocates acknowledged the importance of understanding and honoring a range of perspectives of people experiencing disability/disablism, noting that one cannot “help/advocate for disability rights without understanding (at least in part) the interests and concerns of people with disabilities” (L30), that “disability may be understood in a number of ways” (L10), and that advocacy is not speaking for or over others (L10). Participants who aligned with this perspective tended to concur that although it is important to be aware of one’s own unearned advantages, an emotional response of distress in relation to that recognition does not necessarily translate to effective ally behavior (L05, L16) and may be considered “narcissistic” rather than empathetic

(L30) or perhaps even “[u]seless” [N7] . Additionally, working or networking directly with people experiencing disability/disablism was considered less important than finding ways to “act as allies in whatever scope of work or life” so that there are “allies working as journalists...and attorneys... and bus drivers” (L26). UD Advocates generally appear to concur that “Guilt doesn’t help... Disability is about barriers” and we “can fix barriers” without attempting to fix people (N7).

Demographic information for Universal Design Advocate is listed next. Figure G1 provides a graphic image of the theoretical/composite sort in color-coded text format.

### **Demographics**

Primary Role in Ed:	3 Administrators 3 Adjunct 0 Prof of Practice 6 Tenure Track 0 Tenured 2 Non-faculty position 2 No Response
Years in Education:	1 0-3 2 4-7 2 8-11 3 12-15 2 16-19 4 20+ 2 No Response
Gender:	9 Female 1 Woman 5 Man 1 No Response
Age ranges:	0 Less than 18 1 - 18-27 4 - 28-37 4 - 38-47 6 - 48 or older 1 No Response
Educational Experience:	0 Vocational Training

0 Associate's Degree  
0 Bachelor's Degree  
7 Master's Degree  
8 Doctoral Degree  
0 Professional Degree  
0 Other Degree  
1 No Response

Identify as experiencing disability/disablism: 1 Yes; 12 No; 1 Contextual Responses; 2 No Response

**Color Code**

- Green: Consensus
- Red: Distinguishing (+)
- Orange: Distinguishing (-)
- Black: Remaining Items

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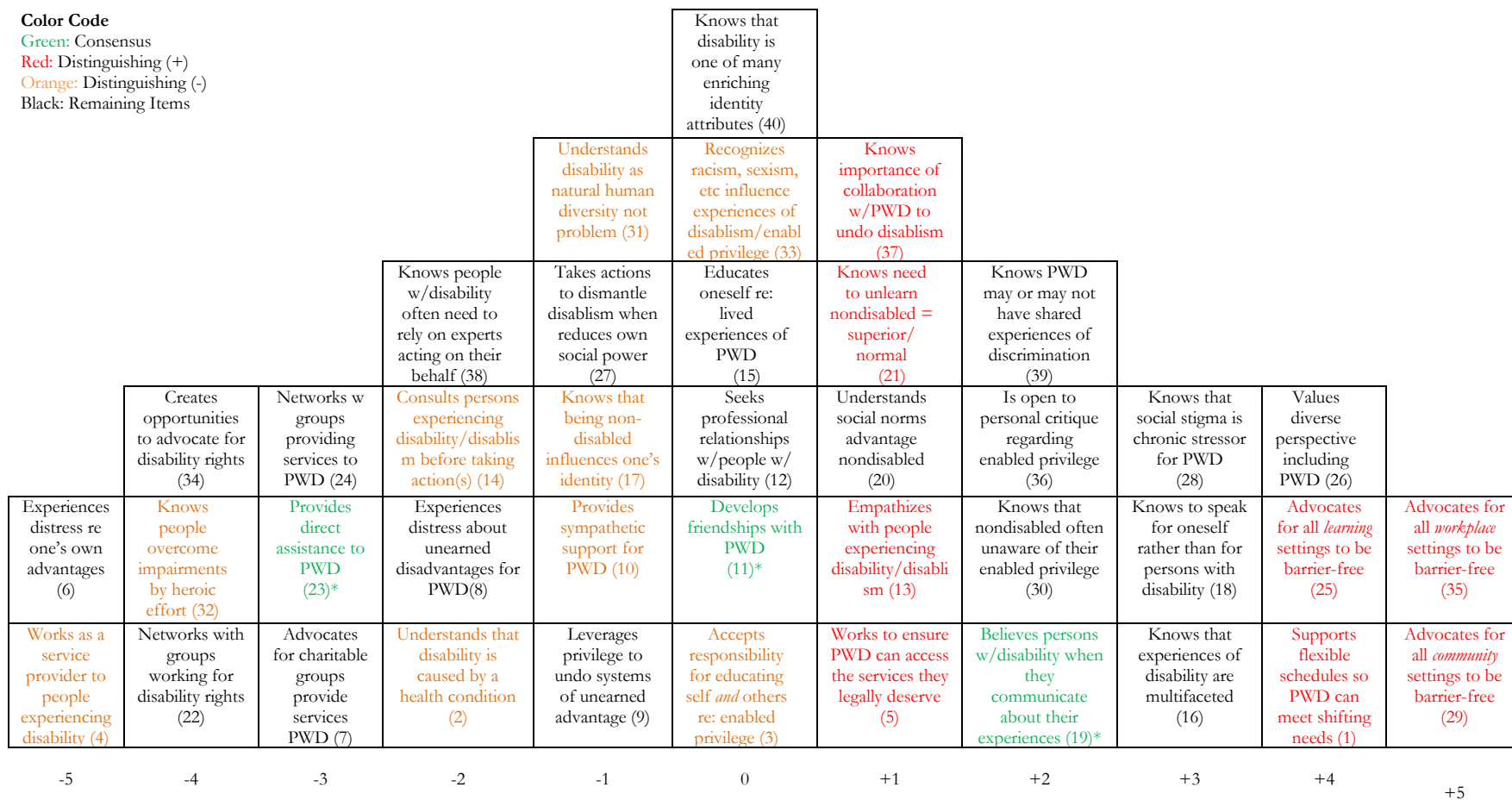


Figure G1. Composite sort text format for Universal Design Advocates.

## APPENDIX H. EMAIL FOLLOW-UP SINGLE FACTOR REVIEW

Dear xxxxx,

Thank you so very much for agreeing to be contacted in regard to our Disability Allyship study. Your participation and insights are deeply appreciated!

Included in this email message are documents for your review. I look forward to hearing from you about your preference for communicating further. Please indicate which of the following three approaches works best for you – or please offer a preferred alternative. [Also please note - If you opt for a verbal interview, I will ask your permission to record the discussion in order to help me accurately represent your perspectives – of course, you may decline and I will do my best to take careful notes!]:

- 1) Reply to the question below via email or other text document.
- 2) Reply more briefly to the question below via email or other text document and provide phone or skype contact information along with a day and time you would like to connect and I will contact you at that time for further clarifications or elaborations.
- 3) Reply with phone or skype contact information along with a day and time you would like to connect and I will contact you at that time for an interview based on the question below.

The attached document “Narrative of Amicable Empathics Viewpoint for Review” provides an overview of responses from participants who shared similar viewpoints on disability allyship, as determined by Q-methodology correlational analyses that result in groupings of perspectives (a form of factor analysis). The Q-sort that you completed was one of the sorts that constitute and characterize the factor we have titled *Amicable Empathics*. If you would like more information about the approach employed in our study, please see the Q-methodology website at <http://qmethod.org/about>.

Also attached is a version of the theoretical/typical representation of the *Amicable Empathics* viewpoint pictured within the response format/distribution you used when you completed the activity, along with another document that features a color-coded text version. Both versions also include demographic data. These are offered as supportive or background information, in hopes that the visual representations of the typical sort and the additional information may be helpful as you consider the text overview. Once you have had an opportunity to explore these documents please consider the following question:

***Does the overview of the viewpoint align reasonably well with your viewpoint of disability allyship?***

***If yes, please offer comments regarding what specifically seemed important or notable in the overview. For example, are there specific points made that you believe ought to be included or highlighted when a more concise summary is prepared for publication or abstract purposes?***

***If the summary does not seem to reflect your viewpoint, can you discuss what might have been missing or inaccurately represented?***

Again, I extend gratitude for your assistance in our study of perspectives on disability allyship. I am very much looking forward to learning from your observations and feedback.

Regards,

*Cali Anicha (aka Colleen McDonald-Morken)*  
FORWARD – Advancing Women Faculty Initiative, RA  
Ph.D. Candidate, Institutional Analysis Program  
North Dakota State University School of Education  
Fargo, ND 58108-6050  
Cell 701-367-3818



## APPENDIX I. EMAIL INVITATION FOLLOW-UP 3-FACTORS OVERVIEW

Dear xxxx,

Thank you so very much for agreeing to be contacted in regard to our Disability Allyship study. Your participation and insights are deeply appreciated! In fact, when I saw that you had participated and agreed to follow-up contact I was elated – because I have so benefited from and enjoyed your scholarship as I have journeyed in my own learning regarding disability allyship.

My request of you may be more than you bargained for when you agreed to be contacted. If that is so, please simply decline this request – and – please also then accept my regrets for the overreach.

Here is my request: My interpretation of the Q-Methodology factor analysis of 66 study respondents consists of three primary factors or viewpoints. Would you be willing to review all three and provide your overall reactions? Any insights or comments you may have will be most welcome, though I am also interested in your thoughts regarding how well the three viewpoints may characterize what you know about perspectives on disability allyship.

In the event that you have the time and inclination to take on this task, included in this email message is a zip file with documents for your review (3 documents for each of the 3 viewpoints). I look forward to hearing from you regarding your intentions.

If your answer is yes, please let me know about your preference for communicating further by indicating which of the following three approaches works best for you – or please offer a preferred alternative. [Also please note - If you opt for a verbal interview, I will ask your permission to record the discussion in order to help me accurately represent your perspectives – of course, you may decline and I will do my best to take careful notes!]:

- 1) Reply via email or other text document.
- 2) Reply briefly via email or other text document and provide phone or skype contact information along with a day and time you would like to connect and I will contact you at that time for further clarifications or elaborations.
- 3) Reply with phone or skype contact information along with a day and time you would like to connect and I will contact you at that time for an interview.

Participant checks are also being accomplished by asking two respondents whose viewpoints are most highly correlated with the theoretical/representative viewpoint associated with each factor - to provide feedback on my interpretation of that viewpoint; the text of those communications is included below my signature and is offered just FYI. Also, I expect it would be a point of interest to you – your sort is found within the Accountable Collaborators viewpoint.

Again, I extend gratitude for your assistance in our study of perspectives on disability allyship. I am very much looking forward to learning from your observations and feedback.

Regards,

*Cali Anicha (aka Colleen McDonald-Morken)*  
*FORWARD – Advancing Women Faculty Initiative, RA*  
Ph.D. Candidate, Institutional Analysis Program  
North Dakota State University School of Education  
Fargo, ND 58108-6050  
Cell 701-367-3818





Sample text included in participant checks: The attached document “Narrative of Universal Design Advocates Viewpoint for Review” provides an overview of responses from participants who shared similar viewpoints on disability allyship, as determined by Q-methodology correlational analyses that result in groupings of perspectives (a form of factor analysis). The Q-sort that you completed was one of the sorts that constitute and characterize the factor we have titled *Universal Design Advocates*. If you would like more information about the approach employed in our study, please see the Q-methodology website at <http://qmethod.org/about>.

Also attached is a version of the theoretical/typical representation of the *Universal Design Advocates* viewpoint pictured within the response format/distribution you used when you completed the activity, along with another document that features a color-coded text version. Both versions also include demographic data. These are offered as supportive or background information, in hopes that the visual representations of the typical sort and the additional information may be helpful as you consider the text overview.

Once you have had an opportunity to explore these documents please consider the following question:

***Does the overview of the viewpoint align reasonably well with your viewpoint of disability allyship?***

***If yes, please offer comments regarding what specifically seemed important or notable in the overview. For example, are there specific points made that you believe ought to be included or highlighted when a more concise summary is prepared for publication or abstract purposes?***

***If the summary does not seem to reflect your viewpoint, can you discuss what might have been missing or inaccurately represented?***

## **APPENDIX J. ENGAGED PRAGMATISTS**

### **Narrative of Viewpoint**

Engaged Pragmatists understand disability as “a complex phenomenon which arises from the interplay of mental or physical impairments with the wider social and physical environment” (N30). While recognizing the implications of these complex interactions for the identity development of both enabled and disabled people, Engaged Pragmatists place the highest value on allyship that is grounded first in direct connections with people experiencing disability/disablism: “Allies take their cue from the representative organizations of disabled people... working alongside and in partnership with disabled people.” The Engaged Pragmatist understands that the disability rights slogan “‘Nothing about us without us’ should not be confused with ‘disabled people can and should do everything for themselves’. Technical skills – including research – may come from disabled or nondisabled people. I do not want an ethnic, separatist notion of disability identity.” This viewpoint recognizes that “there are multiple ways of being and ally and explicitly states that “Nondisabled allies are welcome.” Services to people experiencing disability are viewed as a right, not the purview of charitable groups; sympathy, while it “may come from a positive place,” is unwelcome as an emotion very close to “pity which tends to demean the recipient” (N30).

### **Demographics**

This viewpoint is represented by a single defining sort that was significantly associated with factor B on its alternative or ‘negative’ pole. This participant declined to respond to most demographic queries though did indicate tenured faculty status and in response to the question, “Do you experience disability/disablism?” this participants said yes.

## **APPENDIX K. ACCESSIBILITY, CLIMATE, TENURE (ACT) FRAMEWORK**

### **SEMINAR CURRICULUM**

#### **Overview**

The professional development approach crafted for use with the Accessibility Climate and Tenure (ACT) Framework includes each of the three ACT Framework elements explored within a professional development plan that highlights accountability and advocacy, meaningful translation of learning to course curricula and student activities, and the establishment of ongoing learning communities. Simplified guidelines for implementation along with a suggested curriculum for a year-long series of professional development seminars are provided here.

A suggested approach includes central questions relevant to each of the three modules. Key Questions are included below at the beginning of each set of three modules to guide selection of resources and to focus discussions. A suggested process for the seminars is to schedule a 3-hour block of time each month and follow this simplified format:

- ◆ Highlight/Review Key Questions for the module for participants to keep in mind during seminar
- ◆ Engage in multimedia explorations of curricular materials and guided discussions
- ◆ Close with conversation regarding which of the Key Questions were addressed, what new questions may have emerged, and potential actions arising from what was learned

The resources identified for each module generally focus on the selected aspect of the ACT Framework, though the content of many of the materials are applicable and relevant across aspects. Multiple resources are suggested for each seminar, though participants may know of additional, more locally relevant, or updated materials that may be preferred.

## Accessibility, Climate, Tenure (ACT) Framework

### Seminar Curriculum

In preparation for the first seminar, encourage participants to read Price's *Access Imagined*:

*The Construction of Disability in Conference Policy Documents* (cited below).

#### Access (Seminars 1-3) Key Questions:

- ◆ What constitutes access/accessibility?
- ◆ What inhibits or creates barriers to access?
- ◆ In what venues and realms does accessibility matter?
- ◆ How does functional accessibility differ from conceptual accessibility?
- ◆ How might Margaret Price's ideas regarding kairotic spaces be applied in our classrooms, conferences, and academic workplaces?
- ◆ What aspects of pedagogy and curriculum might inhibit or facilitate access/accessibility?
- ◆ What is Universal Design/Universal Design for Learning (UD/UDL)?
- ◆ What are some problems with using simulations as an approach to teaching enabled people (person's who are not perceived as disabled) about disability and accessibility?

#### September/Seminar One - ACT, Access/Accessibility, and Disability Rights:

- ◆ Highlight/Review Key Questions for the *Access* module for participants to keep in mind during seminar
- ◆ Provide an overview of *ACT Framework (Accessibility, Climate, Tenure)*
- ◆ Discuss what is known by seminar participants regarding Disability Rights in the United States
- ◆ View *When Billy Broke His Head* Billy Golfus film/discuss
- ◆ Explore CAST website in pairs, report findings of interest to full group
- ◆ Small groups read/discuss one or more of suggested articles (below), summarize for full group
- ◆ Close with conversation regarding which of the Key Questions were addressed, what new questions may have emerged, and potential actions arising from what was learned

#### Resources:

Film – *When Billy Broke His Head* (Golfus, 2008)

Website: CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology) *What is Universal Design for learning?* <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines>

Book: *Mad at School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability and Academic Life* (M. Price, 2011)

Articles: *Access Imagined: The Construction of Disability in Conference Policy Documents* (M. Price, 2009); *Building Capacity for a Welcoming and Accessible Postsecondary Institution* (Burgstahler, 2007); *Accessible online learning* (Case & Davidson, 2011); *Accessibility to the PhD and Professoriate for First-Generation College Graduates: Review and Implications for Students, Faculty, and Campus Policies* (Kniffin, 2007); *Report on the Status of People with Disabilities: A Survey of Faculty and Staff* (Vanderminde & Swiech, 2011)

In preparation for following month/seminar two read *A Disability History of the United States* (Nielsen, 2012) and *What Is Disability Culture?* (Brown, 2002).

#### October/Seminar 2 - Disability Histories and Cultures:

- ◆ Highlight Key Questions for the *Access* module to keep in mind during seminar
- ◆ Timed paired sharing (five minutes each speaker) in response to the question: What was your previous knowledge and understanding of disability and what new information have you found important or insightful during the seminars thus far?
- ◆ In full group discuss the readings regarding histories of disability across cultural framings/time
- ◆ View several of the over-1000 interviews of U.S. disability rights activists in the *It's Our Story* videos (available on YouTube)
- ◆ Explore the *Disability Social History* website in small groups, report findings of interest to full group
- ◆ Close with conversation regarding which of the Key Questions were addressed, what new questions may have emerged, and potential actions arising from what was learned

#### Resources:

Film: *It's Our Story* <http://worldenabled.org/our-work/its-our-story/>

Website: <http://www.disabilityhistory.org/>

Books: *The new disability history: American perspectives* (Longmore & Umansky, 2001); *Disability and difference in global contexts : enabling a transformative body politic* (Erevelles, 2011);

Articles: *Disability History: Why We Need Another "Other"* (Kudlick, 2003); *Disability in History* (Baynton, 2008); *What a Difference a Decade Makes: Reflections on doing 'emancipatory' disability research* (Barnes, 2003); *Foucault and "the Right to Life": From Technologies of Normalization to Societies of Control* (Anders, 2013)

#### November/Seminar 3 - Models of Disability and Disability Studies:

- ◆ Highlight Key Questions for the *Access* module to keep in mind during seminar
- ◆ Form three groups and critically explore the three websites below – report back to the large group perceptions regarding the tone and content of the website
- ◆ In either departmental or transdisciplinary groups explore approaches to critical disability studies as an academic discipline via the two films listed below – consider possibilities for integrating disability studies perspectives into current curricula and programs
- ◆ Close with conversation regarding which of the Key Questions were addressed, what new questions may have emerged, and potential actions arising from what was learned

## Resources:

**Films:** *disCOVER: Ableism* 17 minute video – Dan Goodley interviews Fiona Kumari Campbell, Griffith University, about the shift of focus from disablism to ableism  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJU5GyiTzs> (Campbell, 2011); *Beyond Inclusion: Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities* 11-minute video, highlights from the opening panel of conference, held on June 2, 2010 at Temple University  
<http://disabilities.temple.edu/programs/ds/hEd2capacity.shtml#capacity> (Keefer, 2010)  
**Websites:** *Ragged Edge* Online Magazine <http://www.ragged-edge-mag.com> ; Federal U.S gov't sponsored disability blog <http://usodep.blogs.govdelivery.com/> ; A blog post about disability blogs <http://joshvandervies.com/10-top-disability-blogs/> ; *Gimp 'Tude - Blogging against assumptions about disability and mental health* <http://gimptude.com/>  
**Books:** *Disability studies : an interdisciplinary introduction* (Goodley, 2011); *Cultural Locations of Disability* (Snyder & Mitchell, 2006)  
**Articles:** *The 'Social Model of Disability' and the Disability Movement* (Finkelstein, 2007); *The question of access: disability, space, meaning* (Hansen, 2012); *From disability to ability: changing the phrasing of the debate* (Harpur, 2012); *Being disabled: towards a critical social ontology for disability studies* (Hughes, 2007); Book Review: *Disabled people and housing: choices, opportunities and barriers*, by Laura Hemingway (Imrie, 2012); *Back to the future: the World Report on Disability* (Oliver & Barnes, 2012); *This long disease, my life* (Shakespeare, 2011)

## *Climate* (Seminars 4-6) Key Questions:

- ◆ What is a disability ally and what constitutes disability allyship?
- ◆ Is/ how is disability allyship unique from other forms of allyship?
- ◆ How is the concept of disability leveraged in service to other forms of systemic discrimination?
- ◆ What have been and are some of the costs – personal and political, local and global – of disability discrimination?
- ◆ What are the current national and local/institutional policies and practices that support students and faculty with disability? In what ways are those practices effective and/or ineffective?
- ◆ What forms of collective action might your faculty take to address disability discrimination?

## December/Seminar 4 - Disability in the Humanities and Education:

- ◆ Highlight Key Questions for the *Climate* module to keep in mind during seminar
- ◆ View some of the interviews and clips from the Turner Network 2012 *The Projected Image: A History of Disability in Film* (link below) series. Where do we continue to see disability stereotypes in the media? You may wish to use Lucy Wood's critical compilation *Media Representation of Disabled People* (link below)
- ◆ Review as a large group the processes Temple University used to integrate disability studies across their undergraduate programs as described in *A Guide to Embedding*

*Disability Studies into the Humanities* (Nelson-Bryen & Keefer, 2011) and consider what aspects may be useful in your own settings

- ◆ Close with conversation regarding which of the Key Questions were addressed, what new questions may have emerged, and potential actions arising from what was learned

Resources:

Films: Turner Network 2012 *The Projected Image: A History of Disability in Film*  
<http://www.tcm.com/mediaroom/video/517205/Disability-In-Film-Movie-Promo-Stereotypes.html>

Websites: *ReelAbilities*: NY Disabilities Film Festival <http://www.reelabilities.org/about-us> ; United Nations Enable Film Festival <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1562> ; *Media Representation of Disabled People* <http://www.disabilityplanet.co.uk/index.html> (Wood, 2012)

Books: *Disability studies: enabling the humanities* (Snyder, Brueggemann, & Garland-Thomson, 2002); *Disability studies and the inclusive classroom: critical practices for creating least restrictive attitudes* (Baglieri & Arthur, 2011); *The Hunt for Disability: The New Eugenics and the Normalization of School Children* (B. Baker, 2002); *Whatever happened to inclusion?: The place of students with intellectual disabilities in education* (P. Smith, 2010);

Articles: *There's Something About Disabled People: The Contradictions of Freakery in the Films of the Farrelly Brothers* (LeBesco, 2004); *From Freaks to Savants: Disability and hegemony from The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1939) to Sling Blade (1997)* (Whittington-Walsh, 2002); *A Faceless Bureaucrat Ponders Special Education, Disability, and White Privilege* (A. Smith, 2001); *Vital questions facing disability studies in education* (Danforth & Gabel, 2006);

January/Seminar 5 – Intersectionality and Disability in the STEM Disciplines:

- ◆ Highlight Key Questions for the *Climate* module to keep in mind during seminar
- ◆ Round-robin read as a large group (each seminar participant reads about a paragraph) Eli Clare's two-page flyer *Be an Ally to Disabled People* (Clare, 2008), then move into pairs, then groups of four to discuss
- ◆ Listen to mp3 recording (linked below) of an interview with Bethany Stevens, professor and researcher in disability leadership and sexuality (Stevens, 2011b)
- ◆ Read blog from Black Girl Dangerous *No More "Allies"* and discuss intersectional aspects of allyship and implications for authentic disability allyship
- ◆ In small groups read and summarize articles in the Special Issue of *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, Volume 24(4) on STEM Education; share summaries with full group
- ◆ Close with conversation regarding which of the Key Questions were addressed, what new questions may have emerged, and potential actions arising from what was learned

Resources:

Films: [audio podcast] *Telling Our Disability Stories* with Bethany Stevens  
<http://atcoalition.org/podcast-media/2011/2011-Dec-TODS-Stevens.mp3>

Websites: Eli Clare - activist/poet/teacher [www.elicclare.com](http://www.elicclare.com); Bethany Stevens, <http://cripconfessions.com/>; Black Girl Dangerous

<http://www.blackgirldangerous.org/2013/09/30/no-more-allies/>

Books: *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (Gutiérrez\_y\_Muhs, Flores\_Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012); *Blackness and disability: critical examinations and cultural interventions* (Bell, 2011); *Feminist disability studies* (Hall, 2011); *Feminist, queer, crip* (Kafer, 2013); *Crip theory: cultural signs of queerness and disability* (McRuer, 2006)

Articles: *Invisible Identity in the Workplace: Intersectional Madness and Processes of Disclosure at Work* (Pilling, 2013); *STEM Mentoring for Youth with Disabilities: Research, Practice, and Resources* (Mentoring\_Partnership\_of\_MN, 2012); *Ohio's STEM Ability Alliance* (Ohio's\_STEM\_Ability\_Alliance, 2011); *Radio Series Highlights Women with Disabilities in Science* (Zacharias, 2010): Special Issue of Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, Vol 24(4) on STEM Education, S. Burgstahler guest editor

## February/Seminar 6 - Disability in Student Affairs and Academic Affairs

- ◆ Highlight Key Questions for the *Climate* module to keep in mind during seminar
- ◆ Explore your institution's resources, policies, practices in regard to disability—how well-resourced are disability services for students? For faculty? For staff?
- ◆ What are the percentages of the student body/staff/ faculty who identify as having a disability?
- ◆ View and discuss 10 minute short film *Normal People Scare Me*
- ◆ Review Burgstahler's suggestions for a Capacity-Building Institute (and review Campus Accessibility Indicators (in Resources link) <http://www.washington.edu/doi/cbiN/toc.html> ; generate a report on where your campus stands
- ◆ Close with conversation regarding which of the Key Questions were addressed, what new questions may have emerged, and potential actions arising from what was learned

## Resources:

Films: *Normal People Scare Me* –available on YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYu-s8VVCKk>

Websites: *If I can't dance is it still my revolution?* Blog on Being An Ally

<http://still.my.revolution.tao.ca/ally> ; Architecture – the build environment reflects the lived experiences of people with disabilities <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/people-and-places/disability-history/> ; University of Washington DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) website <http://www.washington.edu/doi/>

Books: *Universal Design in Higher Education: From Principles to Practice*, Burgstahler, S., & Cory, R. (2008)

Articles: *Whiteness, Normal Theory, and Disability Studies* (P. Smith, 2004); *Interrogating Transability: A Catalyst to View Disability as Body Art* (Stevens, 2011a); Burgstahler, S. (2007). Building capacity for a welcoming and accessible postsecondary institution

<http://www.washington.edu/doi/cbiN/> ; *Critical disability studies: Rethinking the conventions for the age of postmodernity* (Shildrick, 2012)



### Tenure (Seminars 7-9) Key Questions:

- ◆ Does/How does the tenure system prevalent in most U.S. post-compulsory education institutions today perpetuate unearned advantaging and disadvantaging?
- ◆ Does/How does the tenure system used in your education institutions perpetuate unearned advantaging and disadvantaging?
- ◆ How could a tenure policy benefit all faculty?
- ◆ What are ‘essential functions’ (skills and competencies) of a faculty position?
- ◆ Which demographics are over or underrepresented in tenure-track, professor of practice, part-time instructor, and adjunct positions?
- ◆ How do notions of normalcy constrict our expectations for ourselves and others and influence the social imaginaries—of academia and the wider social communities—within which our lives unfold?

### March/Seminar 7 - Faculty Demographics and Essential Functions of the Position

- ◆ Highlight Key Questions for the *Tenure* module to keep in mind during seminar
- ◆ Explore the Essential Functions document developed by NDSU FORWARD Task Force on Faculty with Disability
- ◆ View *Breathing Lessons: The Life and Work of Mark O'Brien* (35 minutes). What are some implications of Mark O’Brien’s experience of academia and disability for notions of essential functions of faculty positions?
- ◆ Close with conversation regarding which of the Key Questions were addressed, what new questions may have emerged, and potential actions arising from what was learned

### Resources:

Films: *Breathing Lessons: The Life and Work of Mark O'Brien* (1996)

Websites: Chronicle of Higher Education forum on chronic illness and academia

<http://chronicle.com/forums/index.php/topic,49343.0.html>

Books: *Disabled Faculty and Staff in a Disabling Society: Multiple Identities in Higher Education* (Vance, 2007); *Faculty diversity: removing the barriers* (Moody, 2012a)

Articles: *Hidden Disability and an Academic Career* (Beretz, 2003); *Where Are They? A Multilens Examination of the Distribution of Full-Time Faculty by Institutional Type, Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Citizenship* (Daryl G. Smith, Tovar, & García, 2012); *Missing from the Institutional Data Picture: Non-Tenure-Track Faculty* (Kezar & Maxey, 2012); *Chronic Illness and the Academic Career* (Goodwin & Morgan, 2012); *Accommodating Faculty Members Who Have Disabilities* (Franke, Bérubé, & O’Neil, 2012); *Locked Closets and Fishbowls: Self-disclosing Disabilities* (Cheuk, 2012)

### April/Seminar 8 - Community Linkages and Accountability in Disability Allyship:

- ◆ Highlight Key Questions for the *Tenure* module to keep in mind during seminar
- ◆ View Fiona Kumar Campbell’s *Old World: Hegemonic Explanatory Frameworks for Thinking Disability*

- ◆ Discuss how the explanatory framework of the medical/individual model of disability influences tenure policies and practices; how might a social or social relational explanatory framework show up in tenure policies and practices?
- ◆ Collaborate with local Independent Living Centers – if not done already, invite Board Members, staff, or community members to participate in seminars and/or to participate in an ad hoc group focused on developing guidelines for accountable allyship
- ◆ Close with conversation regarding which of the Key Questions were addressed, what new questions may have emerged, and potential actions arising from what was learned

Resources:

Films: *Old World: Hegemonic Explanatory Frameworks for Thinking Disability* (Slideshow – available at [slideshare id=12565097&doc=week2medmodel-120416191656-phapp02])

Websites: The Ability Center of Greater Toledo – extensive links to disability blogs and activists <http://www.abilitycenter.org/disability-culture-and-resources/disability-magazines> ;Centers for Independent Living : <http://www.ncil.org> ; <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/cil/index.html> <http://www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/index.html>

Books: *Cultural Locations of Disability*, S. Snyder & D. Mitchell (2006);

Articles: *Are some disabilities more equal than others? Conceptualising fluctuating or recurring impairments within contemporary legislation and practice* (Boyd, 2012); *Unseen Workers in the Academic Factory: Perceptions of Neoracism Among International Postdocs in the United States and the United Kingdom* (Cantwell & Lee, 2010); *Racial privilege in the professoriate: An exploration of campus climate, retention, and satisfaction* (Jayakumar, et al., 2009); *Encouraging the Development of Disability Allies*, Evans, N.J., Assadi, J.L., & Herriott, T.K. (2005)

May/Seminar 9 – Integrating What We’ve Learned and Next Steps Toward Disability Justice:

- ◆ Highlight Key Questions for the *Tenure* module to keep in mind during seminar
- ◆ View *Lives Worth Living* and discuss implications for academic workplace accessibility and for educational praxis
- ◆ Large and/or small group work on action plans (e.g. additional seminars, summer work on integrating disability concerns into current or new coursework, etc.)
- ◆ Close with conversation regarding which of the Key Questions were addressed, what new questions may have emerged, and potential actions arising from what was learned

Resources:

Films: 4 minute ABC News clip on documentary film *Lives Worth Living*

[http://abclocal.go.com/wls/story?section=news/disability\\_issues&id=8399432](http://abclocal.go.com/wls/story?section=news/disability_issues&id=8399432) PBS film *Lives Worth Living* 60 minutes <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/lives-worth-living/film.html#.UmAEmlNaWRM>

Websites: PBS interactive timeline of disability rights movement

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/lives-worth-living/disability-rights-timeline.html#.UmAI8FNaWRM>

Books: *Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions*, Davis, L.J. (2002); *The Myth of the Normal Curve*, Dudley-Marling, C., & Gurn, A. (2010);

*Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, Dweck, C. (2006)

Articles: *The Benefits of Diversity in Education for Democratic Citizenship*, Gurin, P., Nagda, B.A., & Lopez, G.E. (2004)