The Curriculum of Disability Studies: Multiple Perspectives on Dis/Ability
Introduction: An Invitation to Complicated Conversations

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*We aim to crip the curriculum[1] (Erevelles, 2011), by bringing attention to the kinds of work constructs do to advance anti-oppressive curriculum, curriculum leadership, and curriculum theory. Through critique that tears at the limits of the paradigms that threaten to [~~"blind"~~] bind us, we hope to spur work(s) and study/studies that refuse(s) a **scrip**ted curriculum (Agosto, 2014) and welcome dis/orderly and dis/orienting reflection (Agosto, White, & Valcarlos, 2019).*

They say your expectations and the reality of your situation are mismatched (Seidel, 2019).

THE *JOURNAL OF CURRICULUM THEORIZING* has a rich history of publishing interdisciplinary articles that expand notions of curriculum theorizing while seeking to impact classroom practice. In this special edition, we invited scholars from the fields of Curriculum Studies and Disability Studies to present work about the curriculum of dis/ability. The scholars featured in this special edition have taken up the call in a variety of ways, including auto-ethnographical reflection, analysis of existing curricula, arts-based theorizing, and reflections on classroom interactions. Through these works, we offer not a prescriptive approach to infusing Disability Studies into Curriculum Studies (or vice-versa), but rather an invitation to our readers to theorize through intersectional and interdisciplinary lenses.

We understand this special edition as a continuation and deepening of a conversation that began at an all-conference panel that we organized at the 37th Annual Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice. Jamie and Kelly organized and participated in this panel discussion between five scholars, some of whom identified primarily as Curriculum Studies

scholars and others who identified as Disability Studies in Education scholars. Our hopes for that panel presentation were similar to our hopes for this special edition of JCT: to invite our Curriculum Studies colleagues to engage in a complicated conversation about how Disability Studies (DS), Critical Disability Studies, and Disability Studies in Education (DSE), can influence Curriculum Studies (CS) scholarship and classroom practice.

Contextualizing Our Conversations

While this brief introduction cannot summarize the depth of contributions or scope of work happening in Curriculum Studies (CS), Disability Studies (DS), or Disability Studies in Education (DSE), we do offer a few notes on each of these fields as to contextualize the contributions of scholars in this special edition.

Curriculum Studies

We draw attention to the description of JCT given on the Journal's website: "Historically aligned with the 'reconceptualist' movement in curriculum theorizing, and oriented toward informing and affecting classroom practice, JCT presents compelling pieces within forms that challenge disciplinary, genre, and textual boundaries." While early curriculum workers were primarily concerned with *developing and implementing* curricular initiatives in schools, since the 1970s, the reconceptualized field of Curriculum Studies has shifted to focus on "an interdisciplinary academic effort to understand curriculum: historically, politically, racially, autobiographically-biographically, aesthetically, theologically, institutionally, and internationally, as well as in terms of gender, phenomenology, postmodernism, and poststructuralism" (Pinar, 2010, p. 267). The work of Curriculum Studies scholars within the reconceptualized (or even post-reconceptualized) field, according to Eric Malewski (2010), includes "politically inspired scholarship with the capacity to meet the promise of a democracy yet to come, one that engenders imagination, deliberation, and creativity" (p. 3). Yet, while the field of Curriculum Studies is often aligned with a commitment to social justice, we would argue that, until very recently, many CS scholars have not theorized dis/ability as part of the social justice conversation. While some scholars are working in both CS and DS, there is much work to do to theorize how a Disability Studies perspective can address the quintessential curriculum studies questions: What knowledge is of most worth? Who decides? Who benefits?

Disability Studies

According to the *Society for Disability Studies* (2016), Disability Studies is a multidisciplinary field that "challeng[es] the view of disability as an individual deficit or defect"; draws from multiple perspectives on disability "with an aim of placing current ideas of disability within their broadest possible context"; and centers the participation and leadership of disabled people (n.p.). DS scholars reject the medical/deficit model of disability, which focuses on the impairment or difference of individuals; characterizes people with dis/abilities as "objects rather than as authors of their own lives"; and focuses upon treatments/interventions that attempt to "fix"

the person (Goodley, 2014, p. 8). There are multiple alternative models of disability offered by DS scholars. Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, the most widely known alternative model was the social model of disability, which defines "disability as a political category and provide[s] a vocabulary for contesting the processes of disablement: social, economic, and cultural barriers that prevent people with impairments from living a life like their non-impaired brothers and sisters" (Goodley, 2014, p. 7). Michael Oliver (1998), citing the 1986 Disabled Peoples International, explains that:

> impairment is the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment; disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others because of physical and social barriers. (p. 1447)

Many (but not all) who embrace the social model differentiate between impairment, or an individual's physical or physiological difference, and disability, which is a socially constructed condition created when barriers hinder full inclusion/accessibility. For example, if a child who uses a wheelchair cannot enter a classroom on the second floor of a school, the medical model may identify the child's impairment or need for a wheelchair as a "disability." However, those who embrace the social model would argue that the child's "disability" or disablement was caused not by his/her impairment alone, but rather by the lack of accessible entrances.

In the decades since the social model became the dominant alternative to the medical/deficit model, many from within the DS community critiqued the artificial barriers between impairment and disability and/or the inability to theorize embodied and intersectional experiences of people with disabilities (see, for example, Erevelles, 2014; Shakespeare, 2016). Newer models extend the social model. Thomas (1999), for example, asserts the need for a psycho-emotional model with an emphasis on the psychological and emotional lives of people with disabilities. More recently, Alison Kafer's (2013) political-relational model "builds on social and minority model frameworks but reads them through feminist and queer critiques of identity" (p. 4). While these models have originated in Disability Studies, they have relevance to how Curriculum Studies scholars conceptualize disability. For example, scholars have identified ways in which contemporary practices in schools, like the process of creating Individualized Education Programs, often are reliant on a medical/deficit view of dis/ability (see Valle, 2009). Curriculum Studies scholars can ask: How can conceptualizing dis/ability differently impact curricular and pedagogical practices for children with disabilities in schools?

Linton (2004) offers that the project of Disability Studies is "to weave disabled people back into the fabric of society, thread by thread, theory by theory" and "to bring disability perspectives and voices into the curriculum and simultaneously increase disabled people's participation in society" (p. 518). In understanding, contesting, and reimagining such participation in society (and schools), many scholars illustrate the intersections of race, gender, class, and dis/ability. For example, Goodley (2013) explains that "[c]ritical disability studies start with disability but never end with it: disability is *the* space from which to think through a host of political, theoretical, and practical issues that are relevant to all" (p. 632). Mia Mingus (2011), as cited by Erevelles (2014), articulates the work of "disabled people who are people of color; women, genderqueer and transgender; poor and working class; youth; immigrants; lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer; and more" to cultivate solidarity (n.p.). Disability rights activists are leading intersectional, collective re-visioning of schools and society.

Disability Studies in Education

Beginning in the late 1990s and early 2000s, critical special educators and scholars studying disability began to question conventional ideas about disability. Scholars and educators began to move away from positivist inquiry and problematized conceptualizations of disability as deficit. Many early DSE scholars, including those working in the field of special education, recognized unjust practices in schools and called for "alternative ways of envisioning, talking about, and writing about the lives and possibilities of persons with disabilities including many traditions of scholarship (social science, humanities, arts, spiritual traditions, etc.)" (Connor, 2014, n.p.). In 2000, the Disability Studies in Education Special Interest Group (DSESIG) at AERA was formed with the mission "to promote the understanding of disability from a social model perspective drawing on social, cultural, historical, discursive, philosophical, literary, aesthetic, artistic, and other traditions to challenge medical, scientific, and psychological models of disability as they relate to education" (DSESIG, 2019, n.p.). DSE scholarship, according to Danforth and Gabel (2006), emerged in part as a reaction against the "objectification of disabled and labeled students and the scientized reification of deficit constructs and identities" and the "evident failure of special education researchers to wholeheartedly support the cause of inclusive education" (p. 3). DSE scholars also asserted the need for critical educational researchers to focus on disability when discussing power and justice in schools. Danforth and Gabel (2006), for example, stated that the:

> standard critical trinity of class, race, and gender, even if fortified by constructs such as sexual orientation or immigrant status, fails to provide relevant, persuasive insight into the dynamics of power and identity within public schools by ignoring the most vulnerable students (those with significant cognitive impairments, for example) or by adding-on disability without fully exploring the ways in which disability transforms arguments about power, identity and justice. (p. 3)

DSE scholars have identified the lack of inclusion of dis/ability in texts about social justice and multicultural education (Connor, 2012); ableist assumptions about dis/ability in the work of critical scholars (Erevelles, 2009; Gabel, 2002); and the lack of theorizing about and resistance to the connected systems of white supremacy and ableism (see Bell, 2017). Some of these critiques are attributed to the "hegemony of special education" (Connor & Gabel, 2013, p. 103); whereas, Connor (2014) explained that, because all conversations about disability were "funneled into the default box of special education," special education became "an unquestionable reality" even though it was largely "predicated on a deficit-based model" (n.p.)

Recognizing that the "legacy of historical beliefs about race and ability, which were clearly based on White supremacy, have become intertwined in complex ways that carry into the present day," DisCrit scholars draw upon Disability Studies, Disability Studies in Education, and Critical Race theory to theorize and resist oppressive systems (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016, p. 10). Within schools, there are calls to address students' experiences with "interlocking oppressions," and there is recognition that real change in schools has to be intersectional and include challenges to ableism, as well as white supremacy (Annamma & Morrison, 2018, p. 71).

Within this context, DSE and DisCrit scholars advocate for a shift in curricular, pedagogical, and ideological practices in our classrooms, including an emphasis on inclusive education. Such shifts extend well beyond discussions of inclusion as placement, which, Ware

(2002) points out, can function as "little more than the relocation of disabled students into general education classrooms" (p. 154). As opposed to focus on placement for individual students, there is an effort to promote inclusive education, as defined by Waitoller and Artiles (2013), as:

> a continuous struggle toward (a) the redistribution of quality opportunities to learn and participate in educational programs, (b) the recognition and value of differences as reflected in content, pedagogy, and assessment tools, and (c) the opportunities for marginalized groups to represent themselves in decision-making processes. (p. 35)

Within this conceptualization, inclusive education is an effort to confront historically exclusionary practices in education and dismantle oppressive systems (see Kozleski, 2017) and has many implications for Curriculum Studies.

Cross-Disciplinary Work

Each of the fields mentioned above is multidisciplinary. As such, there have already been many connections between Disability Studies and Curriculum Studies. In fact, the field of Disability Studies in Education can be understood as offering an alternative curriculum of disability to a field largely dominated by special education approaches. The work of DisCrit scholars and Critical Disability scholars can also be understood as seeking to disrupt dominant notions of schooling by offering an alternative curriculum of disability. Some scholars are explicitly drawing upon the work of both CS and DS scholars to propose new curricular and pedagogical approaches. For example, Waitoller and Thorius (2016) have discussed how culturally sustaining pedagogy can work with Universal Design for Learning, which calls for multiple expressions of curriculum, pedagogy, and engagement efforts, to benefit all students. In this special edition, we highlight the work of scholars building upon this tradition.

Possibilities and Future Directions

Because both CS and DS (and DSE) have commitments to social justice and political, personal, and pedagogical transformations, we see great possibilities in centering dis/ability in discussions about curriculum theorizing. In both CS and DS, scholars are focused less on prescriptive solutions/treatments and more on understanding, theorizing, and re-imagining personal, political, and social contexts of education. Both CS and DS scholarship have significant traditions of turning inward (toward personal reflection and theorizing), while also looking outward (at political and institutional structure) with an effort to create more just practices.

Curriculum studies scholars often harken back to Pinar's (2003) description of the theoretical give and take which characterizes the field as "complicated conversation." One would arguably be foolish to suppose that any field exists without unique points of dissent or tension; scholarship in Disability Studies is no exception. The pieces in this issue work to highlight some of those tensions for the reader as their authors position their pieces' perspectives within particular frames or as springing from specific individuals' work, even as they provide possible points of convergence between curriculum and Disability Studies. As a reader, you may notice that authors use many different words to describe disability and ableism. For example, in this introduction, we

use dis/ability to both reject the binary of ability and dis/ability and to highlight that dis/ability is socially and culturally constructed (see Hernández-Saca, Kahn, & Cannon, 2018). Some authors use person-first language, while others use identity-first language. Still others, especially those with more K-12 experience, may use the term "students with special needs." Each of these terms has a history and offers problems and possibilities. As editors, we did not standardize language intentionally as to present multiple perspectives.

Articles in Our Special Issue

From David Connor's examination of special education's recent attacks on subjectivity, we learn of the long-standing divide between the technical scientism of special education and the critical subjectivity of Disability Studies. In so doing, we also glimpse the tensions that exist for those who, like Connor, identify as both special educator and Disability Studies scholar. Ultimately, Connor reminds us that there are multiple ways of knowing.

Emily Nussbaum and Maya Steinborn explore how educational landscapes have worked to actively eliminate particular bodies and minds from curriculum discussions. In response, they call for the visibilizing of disability, the rewriting and restoring of dis/abled individuals within education.

What we say matters, but so does how we say it. Agosto, White, and Valcarlos address questions of silences and linguistic misappropriation in educational justice work by analyzing scholarly rhetoric. They remind us that a portion of our work continues to be finding language and frames of reference, which is both generative and generous as well as humanizing.

Schwitzmann examines how her students at a minority serving institution who are preparing to become teachers react to and make sense of dis/ability as a marker of difference in a standalone diversity course. Through the use of excerpts from students' written responses to course materials, Schwitzmann highlights themes in her students' writing that bring her hope, even as she problematizes their reliance on ableist ways of knowing and communicating. In doing so, Schwitzmann relies on a rich theoretical tapestry woven from strands of Disability Studies (DS), Disability Studies in Education (DSE), critical race theory (CRT), the intersections of DS/E and CRT, which has come to be known as DisCrit, and Curriculum Studies.

Disability Studies sprang from the arts with a focus on the autobiographical and lived experience of disability and disablement. Through her art, Alexandra Allen works to make visible those disabilities that are largely invisible. In acknowledging art as a vehicle for positive disabled identity development, she calls for the shift from art as therapeutic to the centering of art as a way of knowing, a curricular window into disability culture.

Kai Rands and James Sheldon utilize the work of Deleuze and Guattari along with Warner's discussion of publics and counterpublics in engaging online continuing education courses aimed at classroom teachers and focused on themes and issues related to disability. Their work opens a broader discussion about how questions of disability are engaged (or not) with teachers both systemically and explicitly through experiences designed to further their education. Ultimately, Rands and Sheldon remind us that, to effect change in how teachers conceptualize disability, we must offer them experiences that engage them in thinking about disability in new ways.

While Disability Studies has stood in opposition to disability as the other, Melanie Janzen's exploration of "mis"behavior constructed as disability argues for the maintenance of mystery in relation to the other through ethical relationships that humanize rather than label.

Joseph Valente invites the reader into his classroom as students engage in puppet making and the production of a puppet show as vehicles for learning about affect and what it means to practice relationality. In doing so, he also touches on questions of what inclusion is or means and from whence it ought to come.

Utilizing Pinar's (2015) discussion of the curriculum of allegory, Mark Helmsing problematizes the overarching lack of a history of disability, as well as the instances in which disability is highlighted in history. In doing so, he illustrates how historical narratives have illustrated disability as epic, horror, tragedy, and romance.

We end this special issue with Jackie Seidel who brings us back to the autobiographical and creative roots of the field through her exploration of what it means to be a theorist and scholar living in the disruptive spaces that persist in practices of diagnosis and intervention in both the medical and educational fields. In her charge to seek out and embrace moments of vulnerability as vehicles for change, she reminds us of Schubert's (2009) assertion that for "the sake of goodness" is a "highly defensible prerequisite for social justice" (p. 3).

In our own way, this special issue is our answer to both Seidel's and Schubert's calls. As scholars who came to Disability Studies not through formal education but through personal experiences, we often operate in vulnerable spaces, ones in which we hope our own self-constructed understandings will suffice. We offer this compilation of voices and perspectives as the springboard for complicated conversations in which we have longed to engage.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Authors Agosto, White, and Valcarlos (2019) note: *"For historical information on the use of crip and crip theory see McRuer (2006)."*

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Why is Special Education So Afraid of Disability Studies?
Analyzing Attacks of Distain and Distortion from Leaders in the Field

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A S A CAREER-LONG SPECIAL EDUCATOR who identifies as a Disability Studies (DS) scholar, I walk the line between working within education while knowing there is so much more knowledge about *disability and education* that special education has historically offered. As a doctoral student, I was introduced to the work of critical special educator Ellen Brantlinger (1997) who openly critiqued how prominent researchers within the field of special education served as epistemological gatekeepers within the field's major publications. Subsequently, I discovered the work of other critical scholars who persuasively argued against limitations of special education's: mechanistic ways of conceptualizing disability and implementing instruction (Heshusius, 1989); reification of human differences through organizational structures (Skrtic, 1991); and use of scientism to make authoritative declarations of knowledge, claims said to be superior to qualitative, interpretive, or other methodological traditions (Gallagher, 1998). In retrospect, these critical scholars paved the way for the growth of Disability Studies in Education (DSE), as they sought new ways to consider questions such as: What constitutes a disability? According to whom, and based upon what evidence? Where and how should students identified as dis/abled be taught? And, what are possibilities for research on *education and disability* without the automatic historical default of special education?

As a contributor to, and consumer of, research in both fields of special education and DSE, over the last decade I have worked with colleagues to dialogue about the cleft encompassing many epistemological, ontological, and methodological differences (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, & Valle, 2011; Baglieri, Valle, Connor, & Gallagher, 2011; Connor, Gabel, Gallagher, & Morton, 2008; Connor, Gallagher & Ferri, 2011; Ferri, Gallagher, & Connor, 2011; Connor, Cavendish, Gonzalez, & Jeanne-Pierre, 2019). At the same time, prominent scholars in the field of special education have pushed back upon pluralizing perspectives by articulating the same core idea: special education should be unequivocally defined as scientific. Unfortunately, this situation signifies that multiple ways of thinking about, and responding to, disabilities are not engaged

within substantive ways befitting of public academic debate. Instead, alternative perspectives are side-stepped, ignored altogether, or derided.

As a critical special educator and DSE-identified scholar, I am dissatisfied that my professional field of special education remains insular and out of touch with other academic fields. This has led me to wonder why the field of special education consistently demonstrates hostility toward healthy scholarly engagement and persistently attacks other ways of knowing besides a scientific approach, leading to the question I seek to answer in this article: *In what ways do recent widespread and sustained critiques of Disability Studies reveal both the restrictiveness and vulnerabilities in the field of Special Education?*

Theoretical Framework

The lens through which I choose to analyze recent writings of prominent special education scholars (henceforth referred to as "the authors") is composed of a DSE theoretical framework with a *justification of bias* in this particular analysis (Babbit, 2001). By recognizing bias in scholarship as a strength rather a weakness, an asset rather than a liability, Babbit underscores how "there is power in the control of the story" (p. 297). To this end, the purpose of DSE is "to promote the understanding of disability from a social model perspective drawing on social, cultural, historical, discursive, philosophical, literary, aesthetic, artistic, and other traditions to challenge medical, scientific, and psychological models of disability as they relate to education" (Disability Studies in Education Special Interest Group 143 (DSESIG), 2019, n.p.). The tenets of DSE are to engage in research, policy, and action that:

- contextualize disability within political and social spheres
- privilege the interest, agendas, and voices of people labeled with disability/disabled people
- promote social justice, equitable and inclusive educational opportunities, and full and meaningful access to all aspects of society for people labeled with disability/disabled people
- assume competence and reject deficit models of disability.

It is my contention to claim the *value of bias* in responding to the field of special education's critique of DS, as positions and philosophies that have consistently been overlooked, deemed less important, and summarily rejected within the field of special education deserve to be foregrounded. In engaging special education in its critiques of DS by using a DSE lens, I illustrate core questions within Curriculum Studies that include: What knowledge is of most worth? Who decides? Who benefits? And, reflect upon the pertinent question: Who makes the rules? (Kumashiro, 2012). I return to these questions in the Discussion section of this article.

Data

The data consist of six professional articles published in established journals of special education or a closely related field. Criteria for selection included each article: (1) rigorously champions a Scientific framework as the singular knowledge base of special education, (2) rejects

knowledge based upon the social model of disability, and (3) vociferously critiques alternative ways of knowing within the disciplines of Disability Studies/DSE (See Table 1 found at the end of the article). For purposes of accurate referencing, the six articles are referred to throughout the remainder of this article as A1 through A6.

Methodological Approach

First, my interest was piqued by these articles as, when initially reading them all informally as a consumer, I was struck by their repetitive nature in terms of content, tone, and structure—motivating me to consider a formal analysis as a researcher. Second, in undertaking another read to seek a formal analysis of patterns, I determined that all articles contained three elements: (1) a harsh critique of the social model of disability, frequently distorting and rejecting its contributions, (2) a defense of scientific knowledge as the "true" basis of special education, and (3) a generalized tone of fear, anxiety, and anger. Third, having established these elements, another analysis of all articles was undertaken to review and code for related sub-categories. To facilitate this, a grid containing two columns was created for each article. The first column was labeled "Possible Codes/Connections to be Made" and dedicated to generating notes in regard to the three elements. The second column was reserved for quotations that substantiated the points and connections made. Fourth, once the information from all articles was engaged with and data entered into grids, these were all read *across* to consolidate codes under the three major elements. By using this process of analysis, data were "segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation" (Grbich, 2007, p. 21). Additionally, linked to element number two, I also paid particular attention to any *rationale* articulated for rejecting the knowledge claims of DS/DSE. In sum, I sought to answer the research question using a systematic process of analysis and by employing grounded theory, a deductive approach, to generate knowledge (Holton & Walsh, 2016). Echoing Charmaz's (2010) claim, "The grounded theorist's analysis tells a story about people, social processes, and situations" (p. 196), my goal was to explore the ideas of people, the social processes of academic gatekeeping, and the current situation of knowledge in the field of special education. I did this because, as a large body of diverse research has developed over the last two decades about *disability and education* outside of the special education paradigm, such a body of legitimate knowledge cannot be entirely dismissed by those within the field of special education. Therefore, I also searched for instances of contradictions in the authors' own assertions about a using a science-only and, therefore, culture-free approach to researching disability. Subsequently, in the following sections I analyze excerpts from the authors' work that correspond to the three elements initially identified above, along with contradictions that undermine their own rationale.

Characteristic 1: (Mis)characterizations of the Social Models

According to the authors, scholars identifying as social constructionists "share an antirealistic view of both the living and the social world" (A1, p. 373), possessing a "hostile ideological attitude towards special education" (A1, p. 380). In sum, they believe that "the social model of disability represents an extreme form of cultural determinism, because it denies the role of biology and is thus opposed to the actual experience of many people with disabilities" (A3, p.

452). However, there is no *one* social model, as the field of DS has acknowledged the existence of several, urging scholars to define which one they are using (Gabel & Peters, 2010). Moreover, much work has been done within DS to acknowledge biological pain along with the need to retain—and value—medicalized aspects of disability (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001). The purpose of DS is, therefore, not to denigrate or ignore biology and medicine, but rather to allow different conceptualizations of disability to exist simultaneously and "contextualize disability within political and social" realms (DSESIG, 2019, n.p.).

The authors take issue with the notion of even contemplating disability as a social construction, linking it to "moral depravity" (A1, p. 374), expanding, "for some of today's social constructionists potentially anything is socially constructed, from the taste of honey to the Holocaust, quarks, and the planet Mars" (A1, p. 374), a refrain that is repeated almost word for word in several articles. Continuing in a demeaning tone, the authors write, "The Zeitgeist includes, apparently, the notion that theorizing about disability by recounting personal experience (rather than rigorous scientific study) gives strengths to one's ideas" (A1, p. 368). Here they allude to a goal of DSE, that is, to "privilege the interest, agendas, and voices of people labeled with disability/disabled people" (DSESIG, 2019, n.p.).

Interestingly, the authors challenge the validity of disability as a "minority model" akin to other markers of identity such as race, gender, and sexual orientation. They charge, "Despite the fact that disability is part of human diversity, it is not just another difference and cannot be equated with social disadvantage" (A3, p. 446), cautioning that "the negative consequences of a monolithic 'identity' or 'civil rights' political strategy are plenty" (A2, p. 145). This position stands in contrast to DSE scholars who seek to "promote social justice, equitable and inclusive educational opportunities, and full and meaningful access to all aspects of society for people labeled with disability/disabled people" (DSESIG, 2019, n.p.). We also see that special education leaders reject the idea that a group or class of people defined by themselves do not encounter social oppression, thereby indicating non-acknowledgment of disabled people's realities.

The authors use phrases such as, "the hyperbole of phrasing used by proponents of the social model" (A3, p. 451), while demonstrating what they accuse others of. For example, they write, "Social constructionism has resulted in claims that dyslexia is a gift" (A4, p. 147). Indeed, some individuals with dyslexia (and other disabilities for that matter) *do* think how their brain works is a gift because it allows them to view and understand the world in different ways, calling upon creativity and self-reliance. Various individuals such as activists Jonathan Mooney (2008) and David Flink (2014), researchers such as Sally Shaywitz (2003), and Oscar-winning documentary filmmakers Susan and Allan Raymond (2011) have all demonstrated the benefits of thinking outside of the box/lines/deficit-based definitions used within special education. Of course, all disabilities do not equate as gifts, yet *some* may be considered so. In writing, "But disability is not a 'gift' that anyone with an accurate moral sense would give, celebrate, or fail to try to change in the direction of greater ability and less disability" (A6, p. 52), the authors claim a form of moral high ground. Nonetheless, they appear unconvincing due to an unwillingness to engage with the lived experiences of disabled people who have stated with reason, "Nothing about us without us" (Charlton, 1998, p. 1).

Although authors argue how complex disability is as a concept and seek recognition for specific categories within its breadth, they also invoke a "universal" understanding when dismissing the possibility of disability as a gift, stating:

This view reminds us of the outrageously cruel argument that various medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, cerebral palsy) and diseases (e.g. human immunodeficiency virus, dementias, poliomyelitis or polio, small pox, measles, cardiopulmonary disease) are part of normal human variation (they are, in fact) so they should be celebrated, not changed or perverted. (A6, p. 53)

Of course scholars in DS/DSE would agree that painful *medical conditions* should be cured. However, of interest is that "soft" disabilities that rely upon subjective judgment, such as learning disabilities, speech and language impairments, emotional and behavioral disorders, and intellectual disabilities—making up approximately 85% of students identified as disabled—can be seen as "school-based" disabilities, actual non-medical forms of human variation.

Characteristic 2: Science as the Only Basis for Special Education

According to Kauffman (2011), "for special education, the really radical idea is putting education on a scientific footing" (p. 39). Other authors concur, stating

Traditionally, special education has largely based its practices on scientific research: replicable empirical evidence and logical thinking. However, recent decades have seen an abandonment of science and rejection of objectivity as exemplified in such philosophies as postmodernism, post structuralism, and social construction…. Special education must decide whether science or an "alternative" way of thinking about disabilities and education best describes its identity. (A5, p. 146)

In claiming a scientific foundation and history, the authors present their narrative as a fait accompli. Considering the positives of a scientific grounding, the authors assert special education: "has produced instructional methods for atypical students and, above all, has empirically validated their effectiveness" (A1, p. 379). They also state, "In our view, today's scientific constructs (e.g. scientific definitions of specific disabilities) in the case of autism, blindness, deafness, physical disabilities, and speech or language impairments have legitimate factual reference and are approximations of scientific truth" (A3, p. 444). Interestingly, non-physical and non-sensory disabilities such as learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and intellectual disabilities, are not claimed with such specificity.

The authors write, "Disability must be seen for what it is—a limitation, an inability to do or extraordinary difficulty in doing what most people of similar age can do without the same difficulty" (A6, p. 58), reifying the default conceptualization of disability as a deficit. DSE scholars, in contrast, seek "Supporting disabled students in the development of a positive disability identity" (DSESIG, 2019, n.p.). The authors also add, "we find denial of disability, the idea of celebrating disability, or trying in some way to disparage the idea of 'normal' to be regressive and cruel to those with disabilities" (A6, p. 59), opposing DSE's mission to challenge the concept of normalcy as damaging and oppressive. They conclude that special education should, therefore, "unabashedly embrace a scientific viewpoint and reject other points of view that are not as helpful" (A4, p. 150).

Of note, here, is a key difference between special education and DSE. Unlike special education, DSE "Welcomes interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the phenomenon of

disability, e.g. with educational foundations, special education, etc." (DSESIG, 2019, n.p.). The interdisciplinary focus on disability is not reciprocal for traditional special education authors who seek engagement only within the domain of science. The authors note, "Apparently, disability studies are not homogenous, and can have pockets of science," but soon follow up with, "Nevertheless, DS is colored by strong nonscientific and even antiscientific trends" (A5, p. 149), implying DSE critical special educators are against science altogether, rather than simply acknowledging science's limitations.

Characteristic 3: Fear, Anxiety, and Anger

According to the authors, the field of special education is "Under Siege" (A1, p. 379). Throughout all six articles, the authors write of special education's decline and possible extinction if a return to scientific-only thinking cannot be achieved. For example, they share:

> We fear that these new ideas—the constructionist model, which has now become orthodoxy—will not be a liberating force. In fact, the constructionist model of disability may contribute not only to a zealous pursuit of inclusion at the expense of effective instruction but also to the demise of special education. (A1, p. 368)

Such fear is felt as a tangible loss on many fronts, revealed in the comment, "Special education is losing its identity—its visibility, distinctiveness, budget, and basic functions are all at risk" (A4, p. 139). The blame has arisen internally, caused by special education scholars who have different perspectives from traditionalists like themselves, stating:

> It is highly unusual for professionals within their discipline to so vehemently consider it harmful. Certainly other disciplines such as psychology, medicine, and law have criticized certain of their practices and tried to improve them, but never to portray their entire enterprise as racist, ineffective, and harmful. (A4, p. 140)

Dissenting scholars have, therefore, fueled "The movement toward special education's extinction" (A4, p. 140), creating a crisis. Hence, "special education is at a crossroad…. Its very identity is at risk, and its fate will depend on the direction it takes" (A4, p. 140).

Returning to a pure scientific identity, they urge, is the answer because special education must "be reconstructed on the basis of sound science, not alternative narratives or nonscientific ways of knowing that do not help students with disabilities learn all they can" (A4, p. 139). Tying disability to the Disability Rights Movements has been an error as "Portraying disabilities as demanding the same civil rights remedy as other differences will surely stymie efforts to prevent and remediate disabilities and do justice to people with disabilities" (A5, p. 7). Furthermore, the goal of full inclusion is seen as unrealistic, a form of extremism because "insisting on a single placement (only general education, in which one may offer different levels of support) is extremism that may well lead to the dissolution of special education as an identifiable entity" (A6, p. 59). While a discussion is merited about the *goal* of full inclusion and the inevitable exceptions that can occur, the authors' distancing of special education from the Disability Rights Movement is concerning. Yet, they are clear on their position: "In sum, the disability movement must not be built on false arguments that ignore realities; instead, it needs scientific truths" (A3, p. 456). When

disability is viewed in non-scientific ways (social, cultural, historical, political, etc.), the authors claim it is an attempt to be "chic," writing:

> we are concerned that disabilities themselves may become seen as chic by too many people if we are not careful in the ways they are portrayed and attitudes toward them are expressed. In fact, some forms of disability chic might themselves be seen as a kind of EBD [Emotional Behavioral Disorder] or mental aberration that should be treated by mental health service providers. (A6, p. 50)

Such comments are deeply disturbing in that the authors ascribe disability, without using their own scientific criteria, to scholars and activists who disagree with them, alleging "a kind of" emotional disturbance that is actually *only* based upon scholarly disagreement. It is also—ironically and sadly—using disability as a form of name-calling, an ableist act that asserts a hierarchy of superiority and inferiority.

Contradictions

Charging a lack of rigor in non-positivist research, the authors' own arguments often betray noticeable contradictions. For example, a major area is the concept of disability being used to cover so many different conditions—be they physical, sensory, cognitive, or emotional. The authors seek to harness the definition of disability in scientific terms, yet admit its elusiveness by writing, "Disability, in the singular, is useful because we can use a unique term to describe any severe restriction of lack of ability to perform a usual, critical activity of human beings" (A1, p. 375), and then immediately stating, "However, disability is a problematic category for scientific purposes, including education, simply because it constitutes a very abstract and general concept" (A1, p. 375). The category is problematic because "the generality, vagueness, and complexities of the notion of disability do not contribute to a general agreement on its definition. Instead, the general term generates several misconceptions and confusions in science" (A1, p. 376). The scientific "truths" of disability appear not to be clear-cut, as witnessed in the following statement:

> The identification of a disability depends on judgment, and judgment means that one arrives at a cutpoint on continuously distributed abilities. Inevitably social values are linked to the judgement of disabilities. However, not making such a judgment precludes the kind of assistance we consider necessary for social justice. (A3, p. 447)

Here, the authors state the need to measure humans against a statistically average person, in other words, one who has been socially constructed as "normal." They also concede such measurement cannot be achieved without interpretation and is, essentially, a *judgment*. In other words, the identification of disabilities is, at least in part, subjective. Put differently by the authors, "Any conceptualization of disability, whether physical or mental, is inevitably value-laden" (A3, p. 447).

Having vigorously rejected the concept of disability as a social construct, the authors consistently contradict themselves. In one instance they write, "disabilities are sealed within their social context. And many concepts about disabilities, whether involving low-incidence disabilities (e.g. severe intellectual disabilities) or high incidence disabilities (e.g. mild intellectual disabilities, specific learning disability) have socially constructed aspects" (A3, p. 449). In another instance,

the authors note that:

> Intellectual disabilities, autism, and EBD may be at least partially intrinsic, but they are also socially mediated. It is not accidental that they have been classified and reclassified, defined and redefined according to the status of scientific knowledge and social values. (A3, p. 449)

They also confess, "Regrettably, the truth is that there are still uncrossed boundaries, especially in the case of cognitive and behavioral disabilities" (A3, p. 450), indicating their own unsure footing against claims to the contrary.

The measuring of humans to determine disability is also alluded to throughout the authors' articles. For example, they write:

> The line that defines disability is necessarily arbitrary, arguable, and a matter of judgment based on the best data available, as is true for establishing a cut point in any continuously distributed variable…. Moreover, what is considered a disability can change over time and with particular circumstances. For example, the recognition of mental illness has varied greatly over time. (A6, p. 49)

In these slippages from "pure" science, the authors raise questions of *who* draws the lines of determining disability, and *how* and when disability occurs. Ironically, the authors' acknowledgement of social, cultural, and historical influences appears to consistently undercut their own arguments. As a reader, I am left wondering: Which parts of disability are socially constructed, and which parts are not? How do/can we know? According to whom? The authors reluctantly admit being unable to conceptualize or discuss disability in a culture-free context and attempt to *sometimes* acknowledge social consideration as necessary. They assert:

> what is needed is a unified and multidimensional understanding of disabilities, clarifying the relationship among the biological and cultural individuals and social, psychological and behavioral, intrinsic and external factors affecting the lives of people without eliminating one of these levels of analysis. (A3, p. 454)

This sentiment is very much in line with the philosophy of DS/DSE and offers a glimmer of hope. However, the authors then immediately revert to the dominant narrative of science being the centripetal force and default position of special education, writing, "In our view, the disability movement can be based on the sound ground of scientific theories and gain a lot through this meeting of biological and social explanations" (A3, p. 454). This position is echoed in their urging that, "Disabilities must be seen as *socialized biological conditions* (defined as social and technological mediations of biological features)…and as cultural factors and differences as well" (A5, p. 3). All of these instances symbolize the inability of special education to be culture free, despite arguments to the contrary.

Discussion

Let us return to the original question posed in this paper: *In what ways do recent*

widespread and sustained critiques of Disability Studies reveal both the restrictiveness and vulnerabilities in the field of Special Education? In order to respond, I also invoke core questions within Curriculum Studies to contemplate these interrelated domains: What knowledge is of most worth? Who decides? Who makes the rules? Who benefits?

What knowledge is of most worth?

What can be seen in the six articles analyzed is a coordinated effort to discredit DS and re-establish claims for a science-only based field of special education. But just as, from its inception, special education never functioned entirely as scientific-based profession, it cannot resurrect what was once imagined to be its future. Too much has happened. The Disability Rights Movement, the growth of DS as an inter-disciplinary field, and the emergence of DSE as a thriving sub-field have given rise to real alternatives to the proposed monopoly of science-only conceptualizations of disability.

Who decides what knowledge is of most worth?

I was drawn to writing this article because, while finding the field of special education well intended, it is also limiting in its conceptualization of—and response to—disability. Special education's journals, past and present, are almost exclusively scientific-based, positivist, and quantitative in design, filled with inaccessible language that does not resonate with many teachers. For two decades now, I have followed writings in DS/DSE and Special Education and am representative of educators who navigate the space within and between *both* worlds, working in the structure and apparatus of special education, yet having a DS disposition that views considering disability through a plurality of perspectives as a strength. Contrary to claims made by the authors, DS welcomes engagement with science while offering a critique if it is the only model used to understand all disabilities. As evidence, the tenets of DSE includes the statement, "Disability studies welcomes inter-disciplinary collaborations, including with science" (DSESIG, 2019, n.p.).

Who makes the rules about knowledge?

This analysis has foregrounded ways in which the field of special education exerts forms of gatekeeping regarding ideas about disability. While the arguments made in these articles contain valuable points that are ripe for more debate, they also lack rigor, are saturated with sarcasm, and end by insisting upon an uncritical adherence to scientism. However, such reasoning means the field of special education always leads itself into an epistemological cul-de-sac. The lack of tolerance for diverse opinions actually acts as a form of censorship, forcing many critical special educators to publish in non-special education journals. Furthermore, painting accomplished scholars with whom one disagrees as fad followers and/or deranged is an act that willfully dismisses their ideas and conveniently sidesteps serious engagement expected of academics. The renewed attempt by traditional scholars to define knowledge about disability and education while eschewing social models that feature historical, social, and cultural understandings has been given prime space among special education journals, yet DSE scholars have been turned down in their

request to write rejoinders *in those same journals* (Mastropieri & Scruggs, personal communication). Again, this active blocking of diversity symbolizes how the field of special education seeks to exert an epistemological monopoly on disability.

Who benefits from knowledge?

Whether self-defining as a special educator, critical special educator, or DSE-grounded educator, all professionals share the common ground of understanding disability and the desire to best educate students with disabilities. However, who benefits from the use of knowledge about disability and education varies enormously. While many achievements have been documented in the field of special education for individuals with disabilities such as guaranteed protections within law, engagement with parents, and developing creative ways of teaching, the field has also received criticism for: reifying human differences (Linton, 1998), being grounded in deficit-based perspectives of disability (Danforth, 2014), causing low graduation rates and high drop our rates (Advocates for Children, 2005), functioning as part of the school-to-prison pipeline (Annamma, 2014), inadequately addressing high rates of unemployment and underemployment (Moxley & Finch, 2003), and maintaining the overrepresentation of students of color in disability categories and restrictive settings (Losen & Orfield, 2002). In sum, the field of special education as currently configured does benefit many students and their families, yet these are often in contexts mediated by social class, race, and disability-type (Ong-Dean, 2009). At the same time, the field continues to marginalize many other students (Harry & Klingner, 2006; Valle, 2009).

DS has always sought engagement with special education to address what has variously been called a "divide" (Andrews et al., 2000) or a "schism" (Gallagher, Connor, & Ferri, 2014) in contrasting perspectives held about disability, including who is advantaged and disadvantaged by existing beliefs of special education's foundational knowledge and the social structures and practices built upon that knowledge. In fact, the inception of DSE was borne of scholars who saw the very real limitations of how disability was conceived and operationalized in education (Danforth & Gabel, 2007). By willfully ignoring DS/DSE, dismissing the social models of disability, and insisting that science is the only way to understand disability and education, the academic field of special education is attempting to maintain the power it has in shaping educational research and teacher education. In doing so, it has involuntarily shrunk itself. Its current arguments within these articles and those similar in nature "preach to the choir," are repetitive and reductive, and ultimately unconvincing to many educators interested in the joint topics of disability and education. Disconcertingly, ideas within the current field of special education are also dangerous. For instance, the field's embrace of recent claims by Morgan et al. (2015) that racial minorities are *underrepresented* in special education as proven by (unquestionable) scientifically-based empirical studies (Hallahan, personal communication; Kauffman & Lloyd, 2017) has resulted in the temporary suspension of federal funding to ameliorate this well documented historical phenomenon (Harry & Klingner, 2006; Losen & Orfield, 2002). This recent situation not only reveals special education's determination to adhere to scientific and mathematical-only ways of knowing, it also speaks to the field's deliberate race-evasiveness, particularly at the intersections of race and ability (Annamma, Jackson, & Morrison, 2017).

Conclusion

While the instance of negating overrepresentation shows the field of special education still wields power and influence, it also reveals the vulnerability of its own limitations and justifies the imperative of DS/DSE to continue providing other renditions of how we understand, and respond to, differences among humans. The growth of DS/DSE shows special education has lost significant ground in terms of itself being a legitimate field of study because key leaders in the field have zealously advocated to maintain an intellectual monopoly. These six articles are testimony to leadership in the field that is, unfortunately, rigid, rule bound, and narrow. As a result, while special education continues to exist as an institution in the form of structures, budgets, teacher certification programs, and so on, the intellectual appeal of special education as a stand alone scientific field of study has experienced a significant decline in currency.

The articles provide evidence of special education's attempt to reassert itself into a nostalgically imagined Golden Age. Tellingly, it does so largely within its own fiercely guarded kingdom of journals in which dissention from orthodoxy equals heresy. Meanwhile, DSE continues to grow, regardless, testimony to how conceptualizing disability in diverse ways is neither extreme nor chic, but rather informative, insightful, useful, and necessary. In sum, DSE has shown that the field of special education is no longer the sole source of information for conceptualizing disability throughout the curriculum. This fact has wide implications for teacher education programs and teaching in schools when, generally speaking, disability is viewed not as a human deficit but rather a form of natural variation. This has been, and continues to be, the contribution of DSE to education.

Table 1: Recent Articles in Special Education Critiquing Disability Studies

Title and Year of Publication	Journal	Authors and # of self referencing	Main areas of Discussion
A social constructionist approach to disability: Implications for special education (2011) [A1]	*Exceptional Children* 77(3), 367-384	Anastasiou & Kauffman 16	• Challenges social model of disability • Claims viewpoints within disability rights movement largely constructed by wheelchair users do not apply to all types of disabilities • Rebuffs special education as segregationist
Disability as cultural difference: Implications for special education (2012) [A2]	*Remedial and Special Education* 33(3), 139-149	Anastasiou & Kauffman 22	• Challenges social model and "minority model" of disability • Critiques notions of disability as a cultural difference • Discusses some damaging implications for special education by the politicization of disability identity

The social model of disability: Dichotomy between impairment and disability (2013) [A3]	*Journal of Medicine and Philosophy 38,* 441-459	Anastasiou & Kauffman 12	• Critiques rhetoric of social model of disability • Challenges downplaying of biological and mental conditions • Views oppression as a unidimensional, limiting lens
Disability in multicultural theory: Conceptual and social justice issues (2014) [A4]	*Journal of Disability Policy Studies 27(1),* 3-12	Anastasiou, Kauffman, & Michail 9	• Critiques the minority group model used in multiculturalism when applied to disability • Contests the "neutralization" of disability and attempts of assimilation in the multicultural movement • Discusses differences in perspectives of what constitutes social justice for people with disabilities
Special education at the crossroad: An identity crisis and the need for scientific reconstruction (2017) [A5]	*Exceptionality 25(2),* 139-155	Anastasiou, Kauffman, & Maag 31	• The field of special education is losing ground on all fronts • Other ways of conceptualizing disability have undermined a scientific field • There is no room for "alternative" epistemologies; only Science must prevail
Extremism and disability chic (2018) [A6]	*Exceptionality 26(1),* 46-61	Kauffman, & Badar 24	• Cites certain views of disability as being extremist, including "undesirable, distorted positive perceptions and denial of disability, as well as inappropriate responses to it" (p. 46) • Categorically rejects notion that disabilities can be viewed as "gifts"

Note: Of interest is how the authors self-reference to such a large degree, an average of 19 times per article, with a total of 114 in six publications. What this pattern suggests is their tendency to self-reference their own previous critiques of ideas from specific DS and DSE scholars, filtering through themselves rather than citing the original source of their critique, thereby, controlling the reader's access to original sources that differ from their own perspectives.

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A "Visibilizing" Project:
"Seeing" the Ontological Erasure of Disability in Teacher Education and Social Studies Curricula

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Who's (Still) Not Here Yet?[1]

IN OUR CONSIDERATION OF THE QUINTESSENTIAL QUESTIONS of "What knowledge is of most worth? Who decides? Who benefits?" we have arrived at a concept that we name *ontological erasure.* This concept goes beyond the absence of disability from curricular content, or silence around disability in educational justice frameworks—but rather is the active erasing of certain body-minds from "being" in the educational landscape. In this paper we trace a path through scholarly work in disability studies in education that identifies the places where the absence of disability within critical and intersectional frameworks remains glaring. We then turn our gaze to teacher education and critical social studies as sites of *erasure*, in order to posit our argument that classrooms and curriculum play necropolitical and oppressive roles in disabled people's lives. Throughout, we rely on Campbell's (2008) assertion of "studies in ableism" as a tool with which "to shift our gaze and concentrate on what the study of disability tells us about the production, operation and maintenance of ableism" (para 1). And, we conclude by describing a "visibilizing" project, guided by Hedva's (2016) Sick Woman Theory, through which it is possible and necessary for disabled people to become sites of political power and knowledge in their very existence by asserting and validating their knowledge of themselves and their world.

Over the last decade-plus, scholars in disability studies in education (DSE) have noted curricular absences and advocated for the inclusion of disability-related content within P-12 and post-secondary curricular contexts (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2017; Baglieri & Ware, 2012; Connor & Valle, 2017; Gabel & Connor, 2009; Valle & Connor, 2010; Ware, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2018). Further, specific texts in DSE have emerged that articulate a range of practice-based and theoretical considerations for education, in the shift from traditional notions of disability to DSE (see, for example: Baglieri & Shapiro, 2017; Cosier & Ashby, 2016; Danforth, 2017; Valle & Connor, 2010). Noting the limitations of embedding DSE content into teacher education because of national

standards tied to medicalized, deficit-based ways of viewing disability, Baglieri and Ware (2012), for example, offer two strategies for the inclusion of disability curriculum on a college campus—such that disability is not considered "additive" or tacked onto the end of a long list of identity markers, but rather, disability is solidly positioned alongside intersectional identities or asserted as the framework through which to interrogate and construct meaning.

As some DSE scholars have continued to articulate and identify the spaces and places where disability has been historically absent in curricular contexts, other DSE scholarship has simultaneously emerged that notes the absence of disability from social justice work in education that addresses both intersectional experiences and other critical silences (Connor & Gabel, 2010; Gabel & Connor, 2009; Ware, 2011, 2018). As cited by Gabel and Connor (2009), Gallagher (2004) offered an important, and yet unrealized, observation over a decade ago of previous decades' work in DSE:

> for more than a decade vigorous discussion has taken place among educators in special education and disability studies…that, despite its importance, has had relatively few participants…this conversation is of crucial importance because it confronts the fundamental frameworks within which the debates over full inclusion, disability definitions, labeling, and the like are deliberated. (p. vii)

Gabel and Connor (2009) additionally offer this significant insight: few outside of special education or DSE have demonstrated an interest in the rights of disabled students, despite the project of DSE being "a radical one that irritates tradition through its critiques of educational inequity and questioning the commonplace" (p. 386). Somehow, the connections to broader social justice (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009; Hackman, 2006), multicultural education (Banks, 2012; Nieto, 2000), and human rights education (Baxi, 1994; Grant & Gibson, 2013; Keet, 2013; Tibbitts, 2002) still remain tenuous, at best. DSE scholars continue to be virtually solitary voices present in advocating for disability inclusion in these spaces, despite the reduction of prejudice and discrimination as an identified objective of social justice education and progressive multicultural education.

Structuring the Theory of Ontological Erasure

By articulating the absence of disability from dialogues about diversity and marginalization in education, this conceptual paper investigates the ways in which disability has been systemically erased—more than silenced—on an ontological level from two fields wherein curriculum creation impacts not just content mastery, but what sources of knowledge are considered valid and worthy of study: teacher education and critical social studies (CSS). In teacher education, separate systems of preparing pre-service teachers are based on the binary of the "special" and "regular" student, reifying and reinforcing constructions of the "Other" about disabled students and those teachers who can/should teach them (Collins, 2013; Reid & Valle, 2004). Concerned with "silences and exclusions that have plagued social studies," CSS asserts that methods of teaching history should become more investigative, "inclusive and complex" (Jewett, 2007, p. 169). CSS further inculcates in its students "a concern for otherness…equity, and individual agency" (Klassen, 1997, pp. iii-iv).

These fields are probed to illustrate the genesis of *ontological erasure*, which we define as going beyond the *absence* of disability from curricular content or the *silence* regarding disability in educational justice conversations; rather, *ontological erasure* is the active erasing of certain body-minds from "being" in the educational landscape. This shift from considerations of *absence* or *silence,* which both imply passivity and neglect, to an analysis that arrives at the concept of *ontological erasure*, which is explicitly active, although not necessarily malicious, is significant as it denotes issues of agency and power, as well as the possibility of purposeful change. *Ontological erasure*, then, encapsulates the ways ableism creates societal norms that say disabled people cannot possibly be sources of knowledge because they lack, fundamentally, the ability to possess knowledge about themselves or the world. They are often viewed as already dead, as non-entities incapable of taking in or producing information, because they "were never meant to survive but did," to borrow the language of disabled scholar Johanna Hedva's (2016) Sick Woman Theory. Her theory—which critiques the way disabled bodies are policed and judged in society, alongside the ways disabled people resist nondisabled norms and forge unique ways of moving through, thinking about, and protesting the nondisabled world—is instrumental to understanding how curriculum plays a necropolitical and oppressive role in disabled people's lives.

To make visible how ontological erasure has impacted curriculum studies, we first note early critiques of the absence of disability from broad, disciplinary inclusion discussions and the resulting "normal/disabled" binary that pervades education and educational practices. We then address this form of ableism within teacher education and utilize our understanding of "studies in ableism" to explain our stance that disability is and should be centered as a source of knowledge and cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). We foreground the example of CSS since its goals of making social studies more inclusive, participatory, and anti-oppressive are aligned with DSE (Haworth, 2007), though the field does not analyze how disability has fundamentally affected who is considered human and who or what is worth learning about on a historical scale. The gaps in teacher education and CSS demonstrate how disability came to be erased from social justice scholarship in the U.S. and outline the necessity of further interdisciplinary research in disability studies in education.

A Disability Studies Perspective on the Enforcement and Expectation of Normality

Early on, scholars in humanities-based disability studies (DS) have articulated well the absence of disability from disciplinary (and, thus, curricular) spaces (for example, see: Garland-Thomson, 1997; Kudlick, 2003; Linton, 1998; Longmore, 2003). Further, the burgeoning field of humanities-based DS has long-positioned disability as an important tool for analysis, to uncover deeply entrenched, taken for granted conceptions of "normal," and the maintenance of binary distinctions that arise from this. Along these lines Baynton (2001) notes:

> Normality is a complex concept…it has been used in a remarkable range of contexts and with a bewildering variety of connotations. The natural and the normal both are ways of establishing the universal, unquestionable good and right. Both are also ways of establishing social hierarchies that justify the denial of legitimacy and certain rights to individuals or groups. (p. 35)

Thus, the Other exists in binary opposition to the "normate" (Garland-Thomson, 1997)—the idealized conception of the body-mind. And, as Goodley (2014, citing Michalko, 2002) argued, the problem of disability is firmly tied to the upholding of idealized body-minds and their "monstrous alternatives" (p. 13). The idea of disability as monstrous is perhaps why society has "the impulse to cast disability as an 'unlivable life'" (Baglieri & Ware, 2012, p. 115) and has erased disabled people's roles in civil rights history, literary movements, and technological developments in the U.S. for hundreds of years. As noted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, disabled people are "left behind in society," and this systemic enfreakment is perhaps why (BBC News, 2017).

Despite the proliferation of DS scholarship in disciplinary spaces outside of education, and emerging work that advances disability within bio-ethics considerations (see, for example: Garland-Thomson, 2017; Taylor, 2017; Zahid, 2017) and community-based scholarship (see, for example: Berne, 2015; Moore, 2017), there is a glaring absence of the topic of disability in critical conversations in social justice education and multicultural curriculum (Lalvani & Broderick, 2015). Broderick and Lalvani (2017) add an important dimension to the breadth of work articulating spaces of curricular (absence/silence) possibility by including disability through their concept of *dysconscious ableism*. They define dysconscious ableism as the "limitations and distortions of most teachers' consciousness of the existence of—let alone the workings of—ableist oppression [that] make[s] it difficult for them to create and enact equitable, liberatory, and just education practices for all students" (p. 2). Thus, they identify the hegemonic power of ways of thinking about disability that "tacitly accept dominant ableist norms and privileges" (p. 2). We argue that the resultant desire to erase body-minds that cannot achieve "normalcy" happens through practices of segregation and subjugation—within P-12 schools and curriculum, as well as within university-level teacher education.

Campbell's (2008) work advancing "studies in ableism" allows us "to shift our gaze and concentrate on what the study of disability tells us about the production, operation and maintenance of ableism" (para 1). This contributed to our move from absence/silence to *ontological erasure*—which is more than the result of the absences/silences long articulated in DS scholarship, enforcing a continued reliance on the resulting binary distinctions—normal/abnormal, regular/special—that fill educational landscapes. Rather than noting absences to fill with curriculum, or silences to fill with arguments for disability inclusion, we instead choose to note the ableist conclusion of these as *erasure*.

A Historical Perspective on the Erasure of "Abnormality"

Surveying the history of disability in the United States shows the genesis of ableism from the 19th century to the present day, and uncovering how this history is represented in the classroom—conceptualized an "incubator of national consciousness" (Lovell, 2006, p. 70)—illustrates how historical representations promulgate ableist mindsets. This survey takes on Linton's (1998) call to action that "people across the disciplines…study the consequences of constructing a knowledge base within which [ableist] social positioning is deemed rational and morally sound" (p. 72). The consequence of historical ableism, by the definitions put forth in this paper, is ontological erasure.

Teachers and teacher educators in U.S. schools work in a system born out of the rationalist, science and industry-focused 19th century, an age during which personhood, citizenship, and

intellectualism were defined in defiance to difference, and disability was seen as an illness to be cured rather than a natural part of human life (Benedek, 2012; Nielsen, 2012; Schweik, 2009). Society and its institutions developed a symbiotic relationship with ableism: spectacles and pseudo-scientific treatments of disabled people became more extreme, so the bystander became not just more normal, but more powerful (Garland-Thomson, 1996, p. 3). Profiting off people's combined fascination and disgust with disability, social Darwinists, such as Baron Georges Cuvier and Carl Vogt, convinced non-disabled freak show onlookers to fear and revile markers of racial and bodily difference (Clare, 1999, p. 95). Disabled people were made visible only in segregated spaces as specimens of wrongness, and the more people feared disability, the more they endeavored to police disabled bodies through educational segregation, scientific experimentation, and court-sanctioned murder (Garland-Thomson, 1996, p. 4). Erasing disability from social life became the first step in erasing disability from conceptions of humanity and knowledge.

The popularity of eugenics in this disability-fearing society led parents to relinquish their disabled children to eugenicists for experimental surgeries (Byrom, 2001; Kafer, 2013) and murder them through "mercy killings" or euthanasia (Brockley, 2001). Those who survived this hostile environment either entered a school system "entrusted with controlling, diagnosing, and policing difference" or a school system that legally excluded disabled students from enrollment (Ferri & Connor, 2007, pp. 24-29). Rather than integrating them into the schoolhouse, families, doctors, and lawyers sent disabled children to segregated "residential schools, day schools, and 'hospital schools'" where doctors and nurses took the place of teachers (Longmore & Umansky, 2011, p. 3). Backlash against *Brown* v. *Board of Education* (1954) led to white politicians and school boards across the U.S. further segregating and tracking students based on arguments that paralleled those of freak-show directors and social Darwinists so "students were technically being 'included' in the school, [though] they were barely going to be breathing the same air as the other students" (Ferri & Connor, 2007, p. 7). Nondisabled people controlled the means of producing and receiving knowledge, in turn erasing disabled people's voices from the creation of knowledge. School, then, ultimately became a place for disabled people to be taught how to acquiesce to their oppression and not a place for them to learn about their history because, "[as] a microcosm of society, classrooms and schools represent the degree to which knowledge and individuals are valued" (Ferri & Connor, 2007, p. 127). Disabled body-minds became fundamentally devalued in the normative space of U.S. education. This is in part due to the segregation of disability in spaces like special education, wherein students' identities are systematically repressed in an effort to produce rehabilitated, normalized subjects (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013; Linton, 1998).

Mbembe's (2003) theory of necropolitics underscores how this 19th century medical model instigated the ontological erasure of disability. By positioning disabled body-minds as defective, the medical model denies them humanity and participation in the demos, as they are considered to lack "self-understanding, self-consciousness, and self-representation" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 13). Herein is the first prong of ontological erasure: denying that a person has the physical, spiritual, or mental capacity to know the world. The medical model became popularized through eugenics and social Darwinism, which "divided [people] into either healthy or diseased classes," so the death of disabled people was not only acceptable, but was also seen as progress (Ferri & Connor, 2007, p. 27). This is the second prong: killing (or miseducating) those who have been labeled incapable of possessing or producing knowledge so they cannot even attempt to overcome oppressive social systems and stereotypes.

Disability History, Erased: A Theoretical Sampling of Historical Teaching Materials

Though the intricate social and scientific history of disability in the U.S. has been rediscovered and reframed by DS scholars, the lessons from these events are largely confined to DS spaces and are erased from mainstream curriculum. Furthering Linton's (1998) statement that "the reification of *normal* and *abnormal* structures curriculum" (p. 24), a theoretical sampling of three teaching guides and two history textbooks (microcosms of CSS teacher education) illustrate how disability is absent from social studies curricula, constituting a form of ontological erasure that perpetuates ableism by overlooking disabled people as historical actors whose lives were part of the fabric of American life (Steinborn, 2017).[2]

In *California Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* (CCCSS, 2013), only two disability keywords surfaced out of the document's 98 pages. Those two words, illness and disease, appeared in the same sentence on page 49: "Taking care of your body: Germs, diseases, and preventing illness" (CCCSS, 2013). A less standard and more progressive online resource, *Teaching a People's History – Zinn Education Project*, fell into the same pattern (Teaching a People's History, 2017). While disability keyword searches fruited zero results, equity merited five, equality merited 10, and justice merited a whopping 74 unique results. In dissecting a hard copy index of Howard Zinn's (2003), *A People's History of the United States*, none of the aforementioned keywords appeared, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was mentioned only once. Of this sample, the teaching guide most peppered with references to disability keywords was Los Angeles Unified School District's (n.d.) *11th Grade US History and Geography: Continuity and Change in the 20th Century* document. In its 345 pages, disabled appears three times, disease twice, mental three times, and blind once. Of these nine references, six are actually about disability, while the other three use disability as a descriptor ("color-blind" (p. B-5), "mental violence" (p. 12-21) and "students are either empowered, or alternately, disabled" (p. 1-6)).

In manually reviewing the glossaries and indexes of two textbook sources, *America: History of Our Nation* published in 2007 by Pearson Prentice Hall (Davidson & Stoff, 2007) and *The American Vision* published in 2007 by McGraw-Hill, Inc. (Appleby, Brinkley, Broussard, McPherson, & Ritchie, 2007), the trend of disability erasure continued. In both texts, the sole explicit reference to people with disabilities appeared in one paragraph related to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Neither text described the decades of social activism that resulted in the passage of the ADA or specified the multitude of individuals involved in the law's initial formulation. *America* noted that disabled people's activism and disability rights organizations led to public accommodations and that Congress passed legislation for people with "handicaps" and "impairments" (Davidson & Stoff, 2007, p. 897). In addition to there being no other direct or indirect references to disability in either text, both defined no forms of prejudice besides racism (such as sexism, classism, or ableism), and both defined integration and segregation only in relation to race, while a disability analysis shows the importance of defining both terms in relation to excluding people on a variety of often-intersecting identity characteristics, including disability, gender, class, and religion.

Investigating this small sample of texts shows that disability is either completely erased from U.S. history or shown as dangerous, disease-related, and deficient. Ontological erasure is stemmed by this removal of disability from the historical record; when students are taught that disability does not exist in history, they are made illiterate in discussions of how disability does exist in the present. The nondisabled body-mind is, thus, centered as the only way of understanding

the past or creating the future; disabled body-minds are positioned as void of historical agency and knowledge, as lacking the "self-understanding, self-consciousness, and self-representation" that citizens of a societal body are expected to possess (Mbembe, 2003, p. 13). Problematizing this, we advocate a visibilizing project, whereby disability is recentered as a site of knowledge, historically and in the present, and social studies is used as a *transformational based system* dedicated to "transforming the minds and lives of the students and community stakeholders" and "[critiquing] official knowledge" (Blevins & Talbert, 2016, pp. 23-24).

Conceptualizing the Future of "Visibilizing" Projects

According to Sick Woman Theory, disabled people manifest "self-understanding, self-consciousness, and self-representation" through the act of claiming their right to life (Hedva, 2016, n.p.). By surviving when society was built to prevent their survival, disabled people become sites of political power and knowledge in their very existence, working against normative conceptions of whose knowledge is valuable or worthy. This "visibilizing" project, then, requires that activism take place in disabled body-minds, disability-literate curricula, and radically inclusive classrooms. Rather than situating this activism and ontology "in the street" (Arendt, 1958) or the industrial confines of the general education classroom, disability-ontology is situated in the body and with community. The body and the community are reframed as syllabi—not for the purpose of delineating normal/abnormal boundaries or advancing curative science, but for the purpose of asserting and validating disabled people's knowledge of themselves and their world. Visibilizing disability-ontology can then be understood as engaging in the "creative process of turning everyday activities into strategies of rebellion" (Anyon, 2005, p. 143).

With the goal of visibilizing disability in anti-oppressive multicultural curricula, human rights can be used as a tool to create interest convergence by foregrounding commonalities between disabled people and other marginalized communities, all of whom are dedicated to securing their rights to life, freedom, education, safety, and cultural expression, and all of whom cross paths in education and scholarship (Bell, 1980; UNGA, 1948). The interest convergence that brought the Black Panthers, Delancey Street Foundation, and Butterfly Brigade to the 1977 Section 504 sit-ins (O'Toole, 2015) can again bring scholars together from different disciplines, for the achievements of one group can and should have ripple effects for others.

Human rights education (HRE), which holds transformative action and social change as core tenets and sees the right to education as paramount (Bajaj, 2011; Tibbitts, 2002), is just one example of an anti-oppressive multicultural discipline wherein disability can and should be visibilized. HRE is fundamentally about the inalienable social, cultural, and political rights of all people, so from a human rights perspective, disabled people claiming their right to life is a transformative social, cultural, and political act that not only requires, but also proves, metacognition. Claiming personhood requires people to think about who they are, as well as what their existence means and what rights it entails and, as such, proves that disabled people have a stake in society's ontology.

Traditional conceptions of knowledge and being are uprooted through this incorporation of disability because scholars are forced to renegotiate their proximity to power and broaden their largely Western definitions of intelligence and logic. By claiming personhood and infiltrating new areas of academia, "disabled people…push against dominance while also…[pulling] society into disabled people's way of seeing" (Gabel & Peters, 2004, pp. 594-595). This dissolves the

"smart/not smart" binary to which much of education implicitly ascribes and creates an opening for collaboration between educators in previously segregated disciplines, like general and special education (Weiss & Pellegrino, 2016, p. 189). In these acts of rebellion, disabled people's and communities' cultural wealth is born.

Notes

1. This is a response to the title of Burch and Sutherland's (2006) paper in *Radical History Review*, "Who's Not Yet Here? American Disability History."
2. Parts of this section previously appeared in the co-author's unpublished master's thesis; see Steinborn (2017).

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Deficit-Laden Use of Constructs in Anti-Oppressive Curriculum

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"I tell my husband that he should not say, *That's gay*. Instead, he should say, *That's lame.*"

THE ABOVE QUOTATION came from a teacher in an educational leadership preparation program who described how she admonished her husband for using language that disparages gay people. She simply replaced one term associated with a marginalized existence (being gay) for one typically associated with physical disablement (being lame).[1] Derogatory terms, used colloquially and professionally, often reflect deficit thinking about people/groups (Valencia, 1997). Terms that operate as constructs contain several ideas, perform more intellectual labor, and serve as the building blocks of theory about phenomena. As constructs, they carry meanings that rely heavily on empirical relationships (Markus, 2008). We are concerned with how constructs circulating in academic literature support the deficit paradigm, become deficit-laden, in relationship to race/racism and ability/ableism when arguing for inclusion, equity, and/or justice.

Like Goldberg (2016), we ask how "disabled and disability-aware scholars, address the 'perennial' tendency of some of the most intersectional anti-oppressive theories (and theorists) to routinely ignore disability in their substantive analyses?" (p. 59). To address this tendency, we challenge the premise that anti-oppressive theories and theorists ignore disability. Noting that "the ideology of ability is so much a part of every action, thought, judgment, and intention that its hold on us is difficult to root out" (Siebers, 2008, p. 9), we argue anti-oppression scholarship narratively hinges upon cognitive, social, physical, or sensory differences in ability and paradoxically and problematically supports social, mainly racial, justice rhetoric.

This work explores racism/ableism in connection to the Black/White, deficit, and positivist paradigms. Linked to the positivist paradigm, and evident in both communications and education, are ocularcentrism and phonocentrism (Carspecken, 2003). As Bauman (2004) reminds us, in discussing audism and Deaf education, "phonocentrism provides an overriding orientation in which the systems of advantage (education and medicine) form and consolidate power by enforcing a normalcy that privileges speech over sign, and hearing over deafness" (p. 245).

Ocularcentrism and phonocentrism help us to ["~~make clear,~~" "~~point to,~~" "~~illustrate,~~" "~~make apparent~~"] make explicit the dependency on "seeing" and "hearing" (about) about deficit-laden language.

As ever-emerging scholars, we are not outside the critique nor free from the structural and systemic forces that help to make us who we are and how we communicate (via writing) to involve ourselves in these matters of concern. We aim to *crip the curriculum*[2] (Erevelles, 2011) by bringing attention to the kinds of work constructs do to advance anti-oppressive curriculum, curriculum leadership, and curriculum theory. Through critique that tears at the limits of the paradigms that threaten to ["~~blind~~"] bind us, we hope to spur work(s) and study/studies that refuse(s) a s*crip*ted curriculum (Agosto, 2014) and welcome dis/orderly and dis/orienting reflection.

Relevant Literature

According to the literature discussed below, the deficit paradigm operates via rhetoric that hinges on deficit-laden constructs peppered among arguments in between lines of reasoning, authoritative knowledge, and philosophical orientations. Over time, within professional fields and fields of study, deficit-laden constructs can build up into what Gergen (1990) described as vocabularies of deficit and can be furthered in education (Harper, 2002). We have selected a few key sources that reference curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, or qualitative research to convey current debates and approaches to communicating about racism and/or ableism.

Scholars studying disability literature have suggested that knowledge of literary devices (tropes, narratives, discourses) can be used to discern oppressive language and challenge it. Wolgemuth et al. (2016) conducted a critical construct synthesis (CCS) of academic "literature associated with autism and work in order to show the ways in which academic writing creates labels and people, rather than objectively studies and reflects them" (p. 779). They identified two argumentative approaches, the deficit-laden *intervention story* and the asset-laden *complex story* and recommended that academics experiment with writing that expands work and career possibilities and approaches that, like the CCS, model and promote an "interactive discourse of (poss)ability" (p. 792).

Lightfoot and Gustafson (2000, 2009) used literary based, metaphorical analysis to discern how the assessment practices, such as diagnosing and labeling, rely on metonymy (part used to represent a whole). An example is how test scores are used to divide students into parts (i.e., neurons, minds, motivations) to be examined and labeled as if the label and the process are natural phenomena. They suggested art and literature be used in qualitative research to create subversive, or transformative, fictions to "break down the inevitability of our understandings of factors such as risk, intellectual deficit, and mental health pathology, which enforce the boundary between the normal and the abnormal in our society" (p. 130).

In Canada, Titchkosky (2015) identified deficit-laden constructs and phrases, used within social justice scholarship linking race and disability, that constitute impairment rhetoric. She stated:

> Still we say *color blind, deaf to the call of justice, suffering from historical amnesia; blind to structural oppression, limping under the weight of inequality; an amputated self, simply crazy, subject to colonial aphasia, agnosia, even alexia; nothing but a deformed autonomy*

made to fit a crippled economy—devastatingly disabled. What compels such impairment rhetoric? It is obviously steeped in ableism punctuated with medical overtones. (p. 1757)

In answering the question of what compels impairment rhetoric, she argued that the answer lies in the medical model of disability and the positivist paradigm.

Titchkosky (2015) further claimed that impairment rhetoric is evident in critique. By hurling *ableist* as a *diagnostic slur* or making the *medicalized claim* that "injustice is disabling" one produces a diagnostic moment that brings forth a sense of certainty and satisfaction. Instead, she suggests social justice advocates trade in "the pleasure of the certainty that comes with the act of highlighting what is wrong" in order to maintain a critical impulse and seek possibilities for social movement (p. 15). She offered Fanon's (1967) use of amputation as an example of an enlivening metaphor for anti-racism agency (i.e., becoming whole and part, crossing borders).

She further imagined its use to address issues such as the so-called "natural disasters" in Haiti and the displacement of Native/First Nations Peoples in Canada. This use of *amputation* to cut across contexts and metaphorically flesh out relationships among material conditions, biopolitics, situations, and statuses such as *disaster, refuge(e),* and *displacement* (of bodies and body parts) provides a model for anti-oppressive curriculum. While activism of the 1960s and 1970s contributed to the radical reconceptualization of curriculum studies, recent developments in scholarly-activism support its re-examination, including how *amputation* and other such metaphors of materiality *crip the curriculum.* According to Erevelles (2011), *crippin the curriculum* can come through the deployment of a "transnational historical materialist analytic that explores the political, economic, and social interconnections between the metropoles, the colonies, the ghettoes, the prisons, and other segregated social institutions" (Erevelles, 2011, p. 33). Likewise, re-radicalization of curriculum studies can be aided by interconnections among unruly bodies, and their difficult to contain limitations and excesses, that materialize in the analysis of who/what is *cripped, queered, womanist,* etc.

Both Titchkosky (2015) and Lightfoot and Gustafson (2009) drew on postcolonial literature to provide examples of how such literature retains the holism and complexity of life by blurring the distinction between what is part, whole, real, imagined, fictional, and *true to life*. These authors provided textual examples of how constructs such as amputation and mental illness were reimagined into stories of resistance. Titchkosky's (2015) examples of how one might apply the amputation metaphor are reminiscent of intersectionality exemplified in the burgeoning critical race theories and studies of education concerned with racism/ableism.

Also relying on literature and the arts, Mitchell, Snyder, and Ware (2014) make use of *crip theory* at the intersection/ality with queer theory (McRuer, 2006) to advance *curricular cripistemology*. They argue *crip*/queer cultures, histories, and art are latent curricula; already there but requiring one to read differently and reject so-called "best practices" that amount to heteronormative, ableist, individualistic, neoliberal conditions for inclusion. Such practices and conditions can be resisted using *crip arts of failure*, namely *fortunate failure,* which is to fail at being assimilated under the guise of inclusion. For Mitchell et al. (2014), "curricular reform must come first because it changes faculty and students' facility with crip/queer ways of knowing" (p. 310), which "from a curriculum cripistemological standpoint, are otherwise absent from normative teaching approaches" (p. 303). Embedded in their comment is a reference to *standpoint*, a construct we argue is an example of ableist language. We make this argument using disability scholarship provided by Mitchell and Snyder (2006, 2013), the first two authors of Mitchell et al. (2014).

Across this literature, intersectionality was used to explore issues of oppression and identify sources of agency. Authors modeled levels of analysis (individual, global, and interdisciplinary) and recommended creative approaches to research, communication, and education. In order to reduce the vocabulary of deficit, they advocated for the use or creation of metaphorical constructs that are asset-oriented, empowering (i.e., *crip/crippin*), and *flawed* by any measure—flawed *by* any measure.

Analytical Framework

Approaches stemming from critical race studies in education have arisen to link race/racism and ability/ableism analytically—via intersectionality. The intersectionality of racism and ableism is increasingly being explored across fields such as education, communications, and law. In part, this change has come in response to the failure of Disability Studies to address race/racism. Oliver (1996/2013) admitted to how, in the 1990s, work that used the social model of disability in combination with other social categories was nascent at the time. More recently, Bell (2017) argued that the field would be better named *White Disability Studies*, where, like in other fields of inquiry, "individuals of color are treated as second-class citizens" (p. 413).

There are at least three strands of scholarship that use intersectionality to examine racism/ableism. Critical Race Theory (CRT) studies in education concern racism, ableism, etc. This strand is most evident in K-12 education and may be most familiar to readers either apart or in connection to Critical Race Disability Theory (DisCrit). The other strands are from outside of education: Black Disability Studies[3] and Intersectional Rhetorics. We make use of the last one because it overlaps with the other strands and also links material conditions to language while implicating curriculum beyond the confines of schooling. We draw from critical disability scholarship (narrative prosthesis) and communications (intersectional rhetoric) to construct our analytical framework.

Narrative Prosthesis and Metaphors of Materiality

Language shapes meanings and creates realities, and its disabling effects are not avoided simply by replacing one word with another, for language provides a schema upon which institutions define their roles in connection to the constructs and narratives (Oliver, 1996/2013). From critical disability studies, we borrow *narrative prosthesis*, to expose "the dependency of literary narratives upon disability" (Mitchell & Snyder, 2013, p. 206). This literary theory helps to explain how dis/ability narratives operate out of "desires to compensate for a limitation or reign in excess" (p. 226). We examine how constructs operate as *metaphors of materiality* (Mitchell & Snyder, 2006), figures of speech, that contain ways of being that are unfleshed out in narratives within anti-oppression scholarship concerning race/racism or racial justice.

Intersectional Rhetoric

Intersectional rhetoric combines critical rhetorical analysis with intersectionality, both of which support critiques of power and the ways power affects freedom and domination in

connection to aspects of individuals' identity. A major proponent of intersectional rhetoric is Kearl (2014, 2018), who claimed that examination of rhetoric using intersectionality requires a close analysis of context, history, and cultural circumstances that empower and disempower. Intersectional rhetoric brings attention to the influences that contribute to the effectiveness of such rhetoric and can be used to expose how curriculum theory plays out in institutions such as courts and clinics. To introduce intersectional rhetoric, we turn to recent examples concerning a legal case over *wrongful birth*.

Using critical intersectional rhetorical analysis, Kearl (2018) examined a legal case in which a White, lesbian mother evoked the medical claim of wrongful birth to seek legal remedy from malpractice when a sperm bank employee mistakenly replaced the sperm she selected (from a White donor) with the sperm of a donor she had not selected (from a Black donor). Her analysis reflects how a socio-medical model of analysis can be fused to illustrate how human rights, medical law, and intersectional discourses of race and disability are intimately involved (i.e., co-implicated, intersectional). Kearl argued the case was an example of how a non-White racial classification (i.e., biracial) can be construed as a birth defect. Black identity was argued by the mother and her legal counsel to be a socially disabling condition that could have been biologically and medically prevented (i.e., abortion); a category with real/material meaning; a hardship that requires material or financial remedy.

Implicated in this case were schooling and curriculum. First, a wrongful birth claim can result in reimbursement for tuition for specialized schooling. Second, the mother filing the lawsuit claimed that her lack of cultural competence to raise a biracial child was one condition among others that would be "psychologically damaging" for her and her child (p. 300). Her argument is not unlike the argument in education whereby a lack of cultural competence is associated with educators' inability to educate those whose cultural backgrounds are different or even incongruent with their own. Despite the history of cultural competence in anti-oppressive (i.e., racial justice, multicultural education) education movements in education, the possibility of learning to competently provide a culturally relevant education at school or at home went unchallenged by the author.

Kearl (2018) engaged disability law, modeled intersectional rhetorical analysis concerning racism/ableism, and implicated curriculum. Her treatment of racism/ableism reflects Erevelles' (2011) suggestion to conduct a "materialist analytic that explores the political, economic, and social interconnections" (p. 33). Likewise, we use an intersectional rhetorical analysis to examine the rhetoric in anti-racist curriculum exemplified in constructs that serve as narrative prostheses using *metaphors of materiality* that invoke tangible bodies or body parts (i.e., a child, genes, melanin, blood quantum).

Who Not to Be/What Not to Do: Negatively Oriented Constructs

This section presents sample constructs concerning impairment related to the ability to see, hear, and think. Included in this sample are *color-blindness*, *color-mute*, *dysconscious racism*, and *racial dyslexia*. These are deficit-laden constructs that are used to advance racial justice by reminding people not to be (blind, mute, dysconscious, dyslexic) racist, and not to perpetuate racism or allow it to proliferate.

Color-Blind/ness

Color-blindness represents "a mode of thinking about race organized around an effort not to 'see' it" (Frankenburg, 1993, p. 145). According to Leonardo (2007), color-blindness has been coupled to the idea that discrimination due to color/race was a thing of the past or a way to reject the idea that race, and, therefore racism and colorism, was real (a scientifically proven biologically-based construct). As a social construct to be denied and ignored, color-blindness became an excuse to evade material issues of race and power. According to Mikulich (2005), Ruth Frankenberg's (1993) "'color evasion' is a more powerful descriptor that does not judge negatively the physical disability of color-blindness" (p. 119). While embracing colorblindness serves to maintain the absence of anti-racism/colorism in curriculum, naming it is a diagnostic slur signaling that it is an impairment to racial justice that curriculum can help diminish or eradicate—teach away.

Colormute

Historically, the term mute was used to indicate a person's lack of voice, as well as those with vocal chords that are functional but unused or underused as a source of verbal expression. Eventually, mute became synonymous with dumb and associated with silence (National Association of the Deaf, 2018). Pollock (2009) defines colormuteness as "an active resistance to describing people as racial" (p. 44), which works to silence issues of racial inequity and maintain race-based socio-political/economic divides. She describes colormuteness as an "American dilemma" that must be addressed to combat racial inequities, particularly in schools (p. 4). *Colormute* associates vocal and verbal inability and silence with deficiency and can imply dumbness/incompetency, which has implications for curriculum where there is an aim to build competency and intelligence with regard to racism/ableism linked to eugenics and White privilege.

Dysconscious Racism as Impairment

Biological conceptions of race metaphorically meet up with medical models of dis/ability in social justice discourses. For instance, Joyce King (1991) described dysconscious racism as an *impaired* or distorted way of thinking about race, which contrasts critical consciousness. She argued that dysconscious racism reflects an "uncritical habit of mind" that forms the basis of knowledge from which people can begin building an argument that "justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the given order of things as natural" (p. 135). Impairment is used to describe a way of being that should be fixed in order to be more critical about what is thought to be "natural" regarding race/racism.

Racial Dyslexia

The following section involves a deficit construct and how it was re-thought after its initial use. Leonardo (2015a) reflected on his presentation at a Disability Studies in Education conference when he used the construct *racial dyslexia* to argue that White people "exhibit a form of racial learning disability when it concerns racial matters" (p. 90). In his reflection, he remarked upon

"the danger of undoing our progressive work as contradictions are contained within the medium of language" (p. 91) and acknowledged his choice of words was tantamount to endorsing ableist discourse. However, his reflection did not extend to "color-blindness" and "race-blindness" (Leonardo, 2015b). This contradiction indicates how narrative prosthesis can be imperceptible even when reflecting on the use of language and responding to the urge to imagine more creative metaphors allowing deficit-laden ability constructs to be taken for granted within anti-racist scholarship.

How To Be and What to Do: Positively Oriented Construct(ion)s of Normative Ability

These positively oriented constructs frame ability (within the norm) as an asset and advance a deficit-laden schema for anti-oppressive curriculum and pedagogy among educators and researchers. Constructs such as *standpoint theory*, *voice, visible or non-visible disability* are deficit-laden in that they prosthetically hinge political positionalities (i.e., be an upstander, speak out) upon normative physical postures and sensory processing. They privilege ways of being, sensing, and expressing resistance to oppression using unimpaired abilities.

Standpoint Theory: Taking a Stand or Stance

Standpoint theory has acknowledged the ways in which experience within a collective shapes their knowledge and vice versa. By centering experiences, this theory rejects notions of positivist epistemology as absolute reality (Harding, 1992). For some scholars, standpoint theory engages narratives and knowledge from a "political/ethical" concern as opposed to an epistemological one (Kokushkin, 2014). Both epistemologically, ethically, and theoretically, the construct *standpoint* problematically sidelines some marginalized positions and positionalities. It isolates others by attaching political and ethical ways of being to a normative way of being, ignoring those who cannot, do not, or find it unbearable to stand.

In addition, *standpoint* is implied in curriculum presupposing a "standing community," and using metaphors of materiality that admonish students to be "upstanders," not "bystanders." According to Sapon-Shevin (2017), children are learning to valorize *color-blindness* and foster *invisibility* in anti-bias curriculum about anti-bullying. The same can be said about the anti-bias curriculum that rests on (normative) abilities and ableist critiques using a deficit-laden construct or constructs to build curriculum and/or theory. In describing standpoint theory, Patricia Hill Collins (1997) stated: "it holds that power can be erased through reducing the significance of group consciousness, group self-definition, and 'voice'" (p. 379). Her reliance on *voice* theoretically entangles standpoint theory in the rhetorical and semantic web of power relations privileging phonocentrism and abilities associated with vocalizing.

Voice as Power: Vocal Ability Raising and Amplifying

Voice has been extensively used as part of the discourse on empowerment, and it is deeply embedded in anti-oppressive discourse and qualitative research with a social justice emphasis (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013; Giroux, 1988; hooks 1989, 1990). Voice provides access to

power, representation, and emancipation from oppression by allowing people to "talk back"—speak to authority (hooks, 1989). It can be deduced that those who lack vocal ability, also lack power. hooks (1989) associated the idea of being voiceless to being oppressed and further argues that true speaking is "a political gesture that challenges politics of domination" (p. 27). Even in critical race disability studies (DisCrit), voice is used as a construct to signify power. Annamma, Connor, and Ferri (2013) claimed "that people of color and/or those with dis/abilities already have voice as a form of academic activism to explicitly 'talk back' to master-narratives" (p. 14).

Ashby (2011) asserted that spoken voice is privileged in American culture, and voice neglects other ways of communicating such as sign language, and therefore, fails to acknowledge individuals who do not use speech as their primary mode of representation. The use of voice and talk reassembles assumptions that bodies can speak, hear, and move in politically active ways, and the uncritical use of the metaphor voice allows it to be regarded as "'natural' or, even worse, 'normal'" (Mitchell & Snyder, 2000, p. xiii). Linking the idea of power to an en/abled body with vocal and verbal ability, permitting one to voice (express) something, perpetuates a problematic mode of subjectification that erases individuals with vocal disabilities (May & Ferri, 2005) or renders them as powerless beings. These assumptions and constructions favor normative constructions of bodily abilities and leave little space for individuals who have other ways of communicating and knowing.

Visibility: A Slight of Sight and a Sleight of Logic

An example of anti-oppressive education concerned with learning disabilities and inclusive education comes from scholars in New Zealand. Macartney wrote, "labelled people are hyper-visible and subjected to surveillance" (Wills, Macartney, & Brown, 2014, p. 182). This passive construction forces the question, to whom are labelled people "hyper-visible"? Rhetorically, this construction promotes a default ability (seeing) and a default positionality (seer/sighted). Although being hyper-visible and invisible are framed as negative processes, we contend these deficit-laden constructs are negatively oriented because they infer normative abilities. We wondered, if Macartney and her co-authors (2014) had been speaking directly to parents and/or children who had (also) been visually impaired, would constructs such as hyper-visible or surveil been replaced by constructs such as *hyper-emphasize*, *monitor*, or *police.*

Concerning race/racism, Macartney signaled or stated the children's gender, language, and ability (i.e., she/her, speech-language therapy, dyslexia) but ignored race even after claiming she had become passionate about "anti-racist and anti-bias curriculum" (Wills, Macartney, & Brown, 2014, p. 182). This example reminded us of Bell's (2010) claim that disability studies is, more specifically, White Disability Studies. Scholars/researchers who leave race/racism out of studies about the ableism confronting students and their families allow race/racism to remain *untouched*, *under-emphasized, under-monitored, and under-policed* by curriculum specialists and generalists. The next example is from a Canadian disability studies scholar to whom we referred to in the introduction, Goldberg (2016). Her scholarship provides us an example of disciplinary cross-pollination, itinerant curriculum (Paraskeva, 2016), and curriculum internationalization (Pinar, 2007). Although Goldberg (2016) referred to *voices* and *standpoint,* we attend to her major metaphorical construct, *visibility*.

Goldberg (2016) asked if intersectionality is a disabled framework and then proceeded to *crip* it using curriculum theory. To acknowledge intra-categorical differences within disabled

communities, she parsed them into two theoretical categories: 1) "obvious and stable impairments and disabilities" (OSID), and 2) "invisible and variable impairments and disabilities" (IVID) (Goldberg, 2016, p. 64). As she explained, her concern is with "invisible" rather than (non-) "obvious," and with achieving a literary goal. She stated, "I use the word 'invisible' here for simplicity and recognisability (and because its 'I' vowel makes my proposed initialisms pronounceable as an acronym)" (p. 63). Despite grounding her work in critical traditions (i.e., *crippin intersectionality*) and acknowledging that "critical self-reflexivity…is a hallmark of critical social theory" (p. 66), she footnoted this reflection and wrote she would later revisit objections to the notion of invisibility.

To address the objections within the text, she affirmed what we are arguing with regard to sight but did so using a rhetorical sleight of logic rather than critical self-reflexivity. She wrote:

> That the term 'invisible' makes 'looking' the dominant mode of taking in information may, semantically, erase other equally valid kinds of non-sight-based knowing (e.g., the perceptions of people with visual impairments). Nonetheless, few would contest that PWD's [people with disabilities'] experiences differ depending on the degree to which those around them notice…and sight is, ever-increasingly, the dominant mode through which most people make at least initial appraisals of embodied situations and capacities. (pp. 81-82)

She justified the use of *visible* based on what "most people" do—use the mode of sight, and by arguing that few would contest that sight shapes different experiences, she evaded the critique and validated the erasure underway. Narrative prosthesis is used here as a salve to erase disability via a quick rhetorical fix that "removes an audience's need for concern or continuing vigilance" (Mitchell & Snyder, 2000, p. 8).

We anticipated Goldberg (2016) would have said more about ableism/racism given her use of intersectionality, which is an outcome of critical race scholarship. However, she only mentioned race/racism once—in a footnote—within the title of a chapter written by Angela Davis (1982) on racism, birth control, and reproductive rights. Even after writing in another footnote how a reviewer reminded her it was important to acknowledge the Black feminist critical thought that Crenshaw brought into the formalization of intersectionality, Goldberg did not cite Crenshaw and claimed that using intersectionality to link disability to other marginalized experiences was "outside the scope" of her paper. Such statements and treatments reinforce the claim that critical disability studies and its scholars remain unapologetically active in retaining its Whiteness (Bell, 2010; Ejiogu & Ware, 2008).[4] With regard to Goldberg's question of whether intersectionality is a disabled framework, we might ask if intersectionality can be used to support disabled frameworks. At risk here is that curriculum workers will follow suit and lean towards "simplicity and recognisability," repeating this erasure of other ways of knowing, evading self-reflexive critique, and writing race/racism outside the scope of curriculum.

Discussion

Intersectional frameworks are part of the growing attention to racism/ableism. Our model of intersectionality rhetorical analysis stemmed from communications where the examination of racism/ableism continues to work primarily within the Black/White racial paradigm. Additionally,

the deficit paradigm is implicated in scholarship associating racism and ableism and in curriculum theory informing K-12 anti-oppressive education. Future research on the use of deficit-laden language might explore critical disability studies scholarship for ways in which it discursively enables curriculum to evade race/racism. However, Erevelles (2015) cautioned that disability and race should not be conceived of as interchangeable tropes in order to foreground the notion that the ubiquity of oppression for racism and ableism are analogous, not synonymous. Simply put, within the way race/racism and able/ableism are structured in schools in the United States, one could become disabled tomorrow, but one is raced every day.

There is a need for curriculum theorizing to take into consideration the emerging alliances occurring across intersectionalities from various theoretical and global locations (queer, Black, disability studies, queer *crip* studies, decolonial disability studies, afrofuturistic critical race disability studies). Exploring these alliances as potential sites for curriculum theorizing is more urgent as curriculum is becoming neoliberalized and internationalized (Pinar, 2007). Areas conducive to further *crippin* the curriculum might include the following:

- Fascinations with dead metaphors might be reimagined through the construct *necropolitics* (Mbembe, 2008) to further theorize itinerant curriculum related to curriculum epistemicide (Paraskeva, 2016) and *cripistemology* (McRuer, 2006).
- Racism/ableism associated with assisted reproductive technology (ART), such as "wrongful birth" and "wrongful death," could be woven into curriculum via art while taking on problems with the language and intent of the law "*stand* your ground."
- Analyzing titles, soundtracks, and storylines in movies such as *Blindspotting* (López Estrada, 2018) could bring attention to how verbifying a construct (i.e., blindspot) does not make the construct less deficit and how gentrification exacerbates ableism/racism across the able/racial continuum and border(s)/land(s).

We are left wondering what it would mean to bring prominence to other constructs across curriculum concerned with ability.

In addition to using constructs in the form of nouns (*inability, disability, disabled, and non-disabled*), curriculum could rely on constructs in the form of verbs: i.e., *enable, dis-enable, capacitate, and incapacitate*. For example, *enable* carries positive and negative connotations and can be used to indicate the working of politics and power in social contexts and on material existences. Its form *enabling* is used primarily in psychotherapy and mental health occupations to describe a force that empowers people to do what is good or beneficial, as well as to do what is harmful (to self or others). In anti-oppressive curricula, we might ask about enabling conditions and actions that promote benefit and/or harm, rather than disabling conditions that only suggest doing harm (implied by the prefix dis- meaning without, apart, or a negative force). We conclude with questions intended to be incite/ful rather than in*sight*ful.

Concluding Questions

The following questions concern the qualitative use of constructs as metaphors of materiality, namely their semantic and semiotic flexibility when used to communicate about racism/ableism.

- *At what point does the use of a construct devolve into measurement and diagnoses? How can constructs informing racism/ableism curriculum be helped to productively, miserably, and fortunately fail?*
- *How does one recognize when constructs are failing to inspire empowering prosthetics and deliver amputating cuts into the well-fitted containers of suitable use?*

The following set of questions is informed by our analytical framework and themes in the literature, such as the advocacy of arts and humanities to create transformative fictions and imaginary metaphors. More specifically, this set of questions makes use of spectral criticism as an approach to curriculum and elucidates what we refer to as spectral curriculum theory, a materialist criticism emphasizing metaphor. Such questions could be posed by curriculum workers who make use of the construct, *spectrum* (i.e., autism spectrum).

- Is *spectrum* being used to mean an image or apparition?
- Is there *spectral evidence* of autism based on testimony by *spectres,* people not physically present, or hearsay about ghosts or apparitions of the so-called student on the autism spectrum?
- What can foster spectral criticism, while staving off spectral analysis (a statistical technique) that would redirect curriculum theory from spectral education toward special education?

Similar questions can be asked with regard to the construct, *continuum.*

Titchkosky (2015) recommended creatively playing with language, which may result in stumbling upon accidental metaphors. Playing with language such as amputation could begin with the terms dis/abled and able-bodied, their punctuation, and different opinions held by disability scholars about whether or not or when they should be used. These terms may be rejected for how they signal others to think of the parts that make up the whole person/people, just as they may be accepted because they allow people's parts to remain in contact, unlike "people first" language such as "people with disabilities."[5] These slashes and dashes are literary—amputating—devices. Though this work is construed here as a language game, it punctures and punctuates anti-oppressive curriculum across various areas of education, including education research. To be clear, while language may be a game, "oppression is not a game, nor is it solely about language—for many of us, it still remains profoundly real" (Collins, 1997, p. 381). In our attempt to communicate the paradoxical and problematic issues associated with constructs often cited across anti-oppression scholarship informing curriculum, we hope to have failed in a way that allows readers to reap the fortune latent and laden in this work.

Notes

1. According to the Kanigel's (2019) work, *The Diversity Style Guide*, "some people object to the use of the word lame to describe a physical condition because it is used in colloquial English as a synonym for weak" (p. 359).
2. For historical information on the use of *crip* and *crip theory* see McRuer (2006).
3. For more information about Black Disability Studies see Dunhamn et al. (2015).
4. Goldberg (2016) describes her privilege related to her Whiteness and access to education and marginalization related to her queerness, among other things. See footnote number four.

5. The entry in the Disability Language Style Guide described "disabled people" as identity first, rather than people first, language. It is described as a preference among a growing number of disability activists who take "their disabilities to be inseparable parts of who they are" (National Center of Disability and Journalism, 2018, n.p.).

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"Dealing with Diversity and Difference":
A DisCrit analysis of teacher education curriculum at a Minority Serving Institution

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INEQUITABLE EDUCATION ACCESS IN THE UNITED STATES is often attributed to the fact that the teaching force does not reflect the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of K-12 students in public schools (Brown, 2014; Haddix, 2017). This mismatch has fueled a heightened focus on race and ethnicity in both teacher recruitment and preparation. While well-intentioned, the current focus on placing more diverse teachers in K-12 classrooms often denies teachers of Color access to diversity training, because they are assumed to intuitively know how to translate their experiences with racism into equitable pedagogical practices (Brown, 2014; Jackson, 2015).

Despite recruitment efforts, the majority of the teaching force remains white women (Feistritzer, Griffin, & Linnajarvi, 2011, as cited in King & Butler, 2015). Diversity curricula, then, assume a monocultural, universal (white) teacher education student, who has little experience with marginalization. Diversity in this context is often discussed only on racial and/or ethnic terms (Montecinos, 1994, as cited in Knight, 2002), thereby, discounting the "multiple grounds of identity" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1245) that construct the social world.

It would seem, then, that a unidirectional focus on race—whether through recruitment and/or preparation—denies teachers of all ethnic backgrounds an in-depth and robust diversity education. Much of the current research focuses on how Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) work toward or away from diversity—whether that be through designing curriculum to help white students face their privileges and/or essentializing the few students of Color in their classes as diversity experts. Little is known, however, about the preparation of teachers (of Color) at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) (Will, 2017). This lack of knowledge is not surprising, given the overall pattern of low representation of MSIs in higher education research (Flores & Park, 2013; Raines, 1998). Valuing and acknowledging experiences of marginalization, discrimination, and racism, MSIs might be better positioned to meet the needs of students of Color (Conrad, 2014, 2015; John & Stage, 2014; Merisotis & McCarthy, 2005; O'Brien & Zudak, 1998; Raines, 1998). Yet, they are often considered inferior to PWIs (Gasman, Conrad, & Nguyen, 2015; Raines, 1998). Despite measures that indicate they have remained "on par with traditional [white] institutions" (Flores & Park, 2014, p. 266), MSIs remain historically marginalized spaces in the landscape of

higher education. MSIs produce significant numbers of Black, Hispanic, and Native American teachers; yet, the continued focus on PWIs leaves unknown whether, how, and through what social locations/lenses these teachers experience diversity education. Given the current exclusion of MSIs in teacher preparation research and the limitations of diversity curricula that focus unidirectionally on race, my inquiry is guided by the following question: When first introduced to the concept of dis/ability as a form of diversity, how do undergraduate students at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) negotiate the "'normalizing' aspects of the curriculum that have rendered disability invisible [and] have simultaneously contributed to the oppressive practices meted out to students marked by race, class, gender, and sexuality" (Erevelles, 2005, p. 435)?

Understanding that discussing diversity through the lens of race alone "conflates or ignores intragroup differences" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242), I use dis/ability critical race studies (DisCrit) in education to read and interpret my experience incorporating dis/ability into a stand-alone diversity course at Northern City College (NCC)[1]—a racially diverse HSI in the northeastern United States, with the majority of students coming from low-income households. Understanding racism and ableism as "normalizing processes," this intersectional framework theorizes difference at the mutual construction of race and dis/ability, such that "race does not exist outside of ability and ability does not exist outside of race" (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013, p. 6). DisCrit deliberately utilizes dis/ability to expand notions of student achievement, making it a useful theoretical tool in conversations around multicultural education. Using DisCrit, I demonstrate how historically marginalized students have varied understandings of diversity and difference (Brown, 2014; Jackson, 2015), even in a historically marginalized space that explicitly prioritizes social justice, equity, and diversity. By challenging the notion that students who have been "othered" along *one* line of difference, such as race, automatically understand being "othered" along *any* line of difference, I work to show how centering dis/ability studies in diversity education can: forefront intersectionality in understanding difference; dismantle the essentialization of historically marginalized students; challenge teacher educators' deficit perceptions of preservice teachers of Color; and ultimately grant more preservice teachers access to meaningful curricula and preparation for teaching in urban schools.

Theoretical Framework

Informed by disability studies/in education (DS/E) and critical race theory (CRT), DisCrit proposes a "dual analysis of race and ability" (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 1) to problematize the simultaneous "racializing [of] ability"/"disabling [of] race" (p. 2) in schools and in society. DS/E, CRT, and DisCrit are useful theoretical tools in conceptualizing curriculum and studying the way it shapes educational discourses and experiences. The strands of my theoretical framework take into account what the study of dis/ability and race—both separately and together—brings to understanding subjectivity, difference, and curriculum.

Theorizing Curriculum

Understanding that identities are both socially constructed and embodied, I view both the manifest and hidden curricula of schooling as "normalizing texts" (Erevelles, 2005) that maintain dominant ideologies and legible subjectivities. The knowledge that is produced by teachers and

students is shaped by both what is explicitly addressed—or manifested—in educational discourses and what is excluded, or hidden. For example, my students' knowledge of what constitutes "diversity" is shaped both by the categories of difference that I explicitly define in my course, as well as the ones that I exclude. They learn what diversity is, as well as what it is not. The manifest and hidden curricula also teach students the appropriate ways to produce knowledge through valuing particular types of school work and behaviors, while simultaneously "construct[ing] certain student subjectivities as deviant, disturbing, and dangerous" (Erevelles, 2011, p. 2157). Curriculum, then, acts as "both a disciplinary tool and a normative social practice" (p. 2162) that justifies the inclusion of "normal" students and the exclusion of those marked as different. Additionally, I understand curriculum to include both the text and what happens outside of the text (Erevelles, 2005)—as something linguistic, affective, and embodied.

DS/E and Curriculum Studies

Pushing against the medical model dominating the applied sciences that conceptualizes disability as an individual, inherent deficit in need of diagnosis and treatment, disability studies (DS) offers the social model of disability that instead problematizes the environment that disables individuals. Grounded in DS, disability studies in education (DSE) similarly rejects deficit thinking that locates educational "problems" or labels in individual students (Sleeter, 1986; Valle & Connor, 2011). Instead, DSE focuses on how disabling school environments and contexts— such as traditional special education curricula—"other" individual students. Relatedly, both DS and DSE (DS/E) privilege the voices and experiences of people with disabilities (Connor, Gabel, Gallagher, & Morton, 2008) and understand that, taken collectively, they constitute a minority group (Erevelles, 2005; Siebers, 2008).

In thinking about subjectivity, DS/E re-conceptualizes dis/ability as another facet of human diversity that is part of someone's identity and mediated by his/her/their specific sociocultural context (Connor et al., 2008; Linton, 1998; Thomson, 1997). Yet, their shared "pivotal, unifying perspective...that disability is a social construct" (Connor et al., 2008, p. 447) has certain limitations when discussing disabilities that have medical and/or painful components (Connor, 2006; Siebers, 2008), as well as the materialist consequences of being labelled disabled (Erevelles, 2005). Given that dis/ability can be a "hyper-visible identity" (p. 422), it "cannot be easily written out of the body's script" (p. 424) and, therefore, "marks the limits of performativity" (p. 424). Thus, I use philosophical realism, rather than poststructuralism, to conceptualize dis/ability as complexly embodied (Siebers, 2008), thereby, understanding "the body *and* its representations as mutually transformative" (p. 2, emphasis added). Philosophical realism also fits better with Crenshaw's (1991) conceptualization of intersectionality. Rather than focusing exclusively on the (de)construction of identity itself, intersectional theories of difference, such as DisCrit, focus their attention on "the system of subordination based on that identity" (p. 1297).

As "an object of general knowledge" (Siebers, 2008, p. 81) foundational to the understanding of difference, dis/ability exposes ableism and normality, thereby, providing an alternative set of "powerful ideological commitments and political aims" (Connor et al., 2008, p. 447). DS works to problematize curricula that normalize the exclusion of "deviance/disability that...threaten[s] the social [and economic] order" (Erevelles, 2005, p. 433), not only because the hidden curriculum sorts students into predetermined economic strata (Anyon, 1980; Bowles & Gintis, 1997), but also because economic exclusion itself is premised on an ideology of ability that

rationalizes any exclusion from the economic sphere on the basis of capacity (Erevelles, 2005). DS intersects with curriculum studies by "focus[ing] on the social construction of the 'normal' body in the curriculum" (p. 423) and addressing the positioning of disability as the "othering other" (Siebers, 2008, p. 6) and the "disabled student [as] 'abject' entity" (Erevelles, 2005, p. 434). DS has been a powerful theoretical tool for examining the (mis)representation of dis/ability in higher education curricula across academic disciplines (Linton, 1998) and the inaccurate, negative depictions of disability in school curricula and society (Erevelles, 2005; Valle & Connor, 2011). In practice, DSE takes up this intersection between DS and curriculum studies by centering notions of accessibility in both the manifest and hidden curricula. For example, many DSE scholars prioritize an *inclusive stance* that continuously interrogates barriers to learning for *all* students, rather than the mere placement, or inclusion, of students with disabilities in general education classrooms (Naraian, 2017).

CRT and Curriculum Studies

CRT rejects the ways in which whiteness marginalizes people of Color and problematizes the embeddedness of racism in the fabric of our society (Bell, 1992). Grounded in critical legal studies, CRT scholars understand racism not simply as individual bias, but as an entire de facto *system* granting privileges to whites *from* the disadvantages of people of Color (Alexander, 2010; Tatum, 1997). CRT historicizes and interrogates the function of schools as institutions used to stratify students not only based on class, but also based on race (Anderson, 1988) through a variety of mechanisms, such as: unequal funding, inadequate resources, and lack of representation in the curriculum. CRT also problematizes the ways in which both the manifest and hidden curricula maintain whiteness as the norm. For example, the manifest curriculum often "actively denies any acknowledgement of the contributions of African-American culture and knowledge to mainstream society" (Pinar, 1993, as cited in Erevelles, 2005, p. 423). The hidden curriculum teaches all students that the correct ways to produce knowledge and to behave in schools are those aligned with white norms. Students of Color are taught how to "code switch"—sometimes explicitly in "social emotional learning" curricula—between their home and school contexts, in order to be perceived as "normal." CRT in education addresses these mechanisms by centering the (counter) narratives of students of Color (Jackson, 2015; Milner, 2007; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and prioritizing culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2014).

DisCrit and Curriculum Studies

DisCrit brings these two theories together to move beyond unidimensional understandings of both race and ability. Questions of ability have generally been absent from conversations about race, except to argue that students of Color are competent and/or *not* disabled. Similarly, questions about race have largely been absent from DS/E. Indeed, the latter has been critiqued for being "too white" and not taking into account how the intersection of race and class influences one's access to inclusion in schools and in society. Conceptualizing race as embedded in dis/ability and dis/ability as embedded in race opens conversations around liberating educational and societal praxis. For example, CRT challenges notions of colorblindness that shape common understandings

of meritocracy, objectivity, and liberalism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). CRT scholars assert that not to "see" race is to refuse to "see" people of Color and to deny how whiteness functions as a form of property in our society (Lipsitz, 1998). DisCrit scholars have troubled notions of color*blind*ness for: utilizing ableist metaphors that position dis/ability as ignorance (or blind people as unknowing), limiting understandings of racism as only visual, and suggesting a passive response to the "failure to address [the unequal] material conditions" (Annamma, Jackson, & Morrison, 2017, p. 154) experienced by people of Color. They instead propose color-evasiveness as a term that: is not ableist, signals a more robust understanding of racism as multimodal, and more appropriately captures society's purposeful, rather than passive, refusal to interrogate racism and white privilege (Annamma et al., 2017).

In education, DisCrit affords a simultaneous interrogation of whiteness and smartness in the "normalizing text," or curriculum, that legitimizes exclusionary practices in both K-12 schools and teacher education. For example, it highlights the overrepresentation of minority students in (more subjective) special education categories, such as emotional disturbance and learning disability (Ferri & Connor, 2006; Harry & Klingner, 2005), and how a disability diagnosis is used to segregate students of Color. It similarly emphasizes how whiteness continues to define "good" behavior (Broderick & Leonardo, 2016), resulting in higher suspension rates for students of Color (Milner, 2010). In teacher preparation, DisCrit calls attention to how whiteness presents multiple barriers to preservice teachers of Color—such as the regiment of standardized testing and racial biases in defining teacher quality (Rogers-Ard, Knaus, Epstein, & Mayfield, 2012; Sleeter, 2017)—that are premised on the basis of capacity. Building on these prior affordances of DisCrit and reading the intersection of race and dis/ability as a normalizing text that "reveal[s] the critical relationship between disability and the other social categories of difference" (Erevelles, 2005, p. 434), I work to use it as a tool to unpack unidimensional understandings of diversity when preparing historically marginalized preservice teachers in a historically marginalized space to teach historically marginalized students in urban schools.

Methodological Approach

I utilize DisCrit to approach my students' work in my diversity course for preservice teachers at NCC. While there is disagreement over the effectiveness of stand-alone, separate diversity courses (Juarez, Smith, & Hayes, 2008; McDonald, 2005; McHatton, Keller, Shircliffe, & Zalaquett, 2009; Talbert-Johnson & Tillman, 1999), the majority of perspectives has developed from studying the curriculum at PWIs. The preferred approach to teaching diversity at HSIs—and MSIs more broadly—has yet to be discussed in the literature.

Using Crenshaw's (1991) intersectionality framework, I focus each section of a semester-long course on a particular lens of difference: class, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, dis/ability. While we focus on one of these lenses at a time, I still work to demonstrate how none of these social locations can exist without the others. To prepare for the first class that forefronts dis/ability as a form of diversity, students complete two readings—a historical overview of how dis/ability has been used to justify inequality in the United States (Baynton, 2001) and a *New York Times* article covering the Anna Stubblefield trial (Engber, 2015). In the trial, the family of D. J.— a Black man with cerebral palsy—pressed charges against Anna—his white professor/tutor—for engaging in a sexual relationship with him. I chose these pieces because they utilize the affordances of using an intersectional framework to think about difference. Next, students choose one of the

readings and post a reflection to the online discussion board that addresses their prior knowledge, what they learned from the reading, and any questions they have. Finally, students respond to at least two of their classmates.

I selected some of my students' discussion posts and responses that resonated with me, or "glowed" (MacLure, 2010). For example, one student wrote:

> I'd like to think of myself as someone who has their eyes open when it comes to injustice. Most of the articles or topics we've discussed in this class have been about things I've noticed already (with the exception of the use of minority prisoners to add to the population of "red states"). I'd also like to believe that I am open-minded and am not discriminatory against any group. This piece, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History" has proved me wrong on both fronts. I have honestly never realized, in all the reading I've done or videos I've watched, how often disability is used as an excuse for inequality. Since I am not disabled myself, I have also never truly thought about how it is not the disabilities themselves that are the problem, but the fact that disability is a reason to be discriminated against. – Student 1
> (The above excerpt and the rest of these selections—which resonated with me for different reasons—can be read in Appendix A.)

I then analyzed these selections in two different qualitative ways: via poetry and via categorizations. Each of these methods allowed something different to emerge from my students' writing. Staying rooted in DisCrit as I engaged in these methods allowed me to comment on their work without engaging in deficit thinking that might marginalize their voices.

Utilizing a poetical approach to my data, I hoped to better understand my students' "experience as it [was] experienced, not as it [was] thought" (Freeman, 2017, p. 75) as they read the pieces and wrestled with their emerging understandings of dis/ability as a form of diversity. As I read through the selections, I removed chunks of sentences that seemed to go together, engaging in a creative approach to the more linear way of coding. Putting the chunks on a new document, I read their words several times to feel where pauses, breaks, and stanzas seemed to fit together. The art of continuously (re)arranging their words de-contextualized and de-authorized their individual ideas, further emphasizing overall experience, rather than analyzing how individual students' identities manifested in their words.

I used indentations to signify where different voices had repeated similar ideas, with the idea that the repetition itself would add emphasis. I did not alter any of the original text; however, there were times in constructing this poem that I could not help but interject. The italicized text represents my interjections that intend to call attention to what I perceive as normalized assumptions embedded in my students' writing. I bracketed this text to call attention to my interjection and the meaning it generates. I also bolded words that explicitly invoked ideas of ableism, normality, and/or "ableist metaphors" (May & Ferri, 2005, p. 120). Below is a stanza of the poem, or a part of this analytic process. The full poem can be found in Appendix B.

> We *[sighted people]* gradually become **blinded** to it.
>> We [*sighted people*] **no longer see**
>> the issues they face on a day to day basis.

In order to understand some of the "pieces of a pattern in progress" (Saldaña, 2015, p. 32), I used DisCrit to inductively (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) categorize my data to look at one theme or idea at a time. Using this method, the chunks were not broken up beyond groups of sentences. I also tried to use, as much as possible, the words of specific participants as category titles. Chunks that belonged to more than one category were placed more than once. For example, I categorized the following chunk—"As for the disabled themselves, I now have a new desire to help them find their voice. I think it's about time they had a movement of their own."—in two places. The first was under the category "Non-disabled identity" for responses that suggest the author identified as non-disabled. The second was under the category "Assuming audience of discussion board is all non-disabled" for responses that suggest the author has not considered the possibility of disabled students in our class. The full list of categorizations and their corresponding chunks of data can be found in Appendix C.

Findings/Themes

Language and Exclusions

Students utilized multiple ableist metaphors in their emerging understandings of dis/ability. For example, they used "seeing" and keeping their "eyes open" as ways to discuss what they "noticed." Not only does this privilege a certain kind of sensory engagement in relation to knowledge production, but it also signals that students might be stuck on physical disabilities and still "unaware" of how they marginalize invisible disabilities. Reproducing this hierarchy within the disability category, one student wrote:

> There is also an association that if people have a physical disability, they also must have a mental one as well. Those two things sometimes do not match up, so people should be taught that if you are talking to someone in a wheelchair, you should treat them as a normal able-bodied person without questioning their mental ability to understand.
> – Student 6

Yet, the fact that these words were rearranged, deauthorized, and decontextualized to tap into a realm outside of discourse somehow shifted my "focus:"

> If you [non-disabled person] are talking to someone in a wheelchair,
> you should treat them as a **normal able-bodied person**
> without questioning their mental ability to understand.

> [non/disabled] people overuse the word disability for the wrong reasons and abuse it

> **Change how I speak** about inequality now—
> the types of words I use in my rhetoric.

Ableism may be entangled in their language, but their words prompted me to question whether and how it is also entangled in their very thinking about the rights of disabled people

and/or their collective experience(s) with the reading. For example, it is not clear which "people" "overuse the word disability for the wrong reasons and abuse it." Certainly, Student 6 seems to be using the word disability in a way that (metaphorically) abuses people with disabilities. Yet, "people" could also refer to people with disabilities who are wrongfully judged for trying to get "ahead" in life by "using" their disability to their advantage (Siebers, 2008). The fourth line in the above excerpt could be calling attention to ableism or reproducing it.

The poem evokes multiple emotions—shock, sadness, reimagining, hope, mindfulness—as well as affective encounters outside the realm of discourse that could suggest the students understand they should consider changing their orientation toward social justice.

How could this have been possible?
I was getting upset while reading.

When we *[non-disabled people]* are taught about discrimination
and minorities in schools,
we *[sighted people]* only **see color,**
with the exception of the use of minority prisoners *[disabled by society]*
to add to the population of "red states,"
which is sad.
We, as a whole [*group of sighted people*],
need to work on **looking beyond color,**
because this is a major part of history.

Through dis/ability they began to understand the limitations of "seeing" diversity through/as color only, despite relying on the repeated use of "seeing" as a way of knowing. Students' stances toward those marked "different" or "other" shifted. Yet, even though they might feel the exclusion of people with disabilities is "wrong," they still reproduce disability metaphors, hierarchy, and inequality through their language. Without examining the ways in which the linguistic representation of disability shapes the lived experiences of being disabled, it seems they only have a partial understanding of disability as an embodied form of diversity. The curriculum taught them to feel empathy for people with disabilities without teaching them how to unpack the ways in which they are complicit in ableism.

(In)visibility of Disability

Drawing on the assumption that dis/ability is both physical and visible, many students assumed that everyone reading the discussion board was nondisabled. This was evidenced in statements like: "*We* no longer see the issues *they* face" (emphasis added). This assumption makes sense, given that, during opportunities to write about and/or discuss themselves, students typically forefronted their race, class, gender, and sexuality and generally did not disclose their dis/ability identity. Yet, DisCrit might remind us that, given the racial diversity in the class, it is likely there are students who have/had Individualized Education Programs or have been diagnosed with other (invisible) cognitive, mental, and/or emotional disabilities.

Relying on visibility, students also spoke against the invisibility of people with disabilities in society. Specifically, many felt that people with disabilities should be understood as a minority

group. One student wrote: "I never think of disabled people when I think of minorities either which is truly sad." It is striking that the only way in which disabled people can be humanized, or made "visible," is through a minority status. My students seem to be drawing on the idea that people with disabilities should be understood as a minority group because this status can lend itself to civil rights activism and legislation. Yet, even the passing of legislation that has supposed to support people with disabilities has fallen short in fully integrating them into society (Erevelles & Minear, 2010). For example, the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act did not lead to affirmative action for people with disabilities.

It can be difficult for people with disabilities to assert themselves as a minority group. As the only common experience that people with disabilities share is the stigma of being deemed abnormal (Broderick, 2010; Thomson, 1997), there is often not as clear of a notion of what it means to belong to disability culture (Garland-Thomson, 2016; Hahn, 1988). Additionally, dis/ability is more fluid than other identities, such as race, ethnicity, class, and even gender and/or sexuality (Siebers, 2008; Thomson, 1997). Anyone at any point in time can become disabled, such as through accident, illness, or old age (Garland-Thomson, 2013, 2016; Siebers, 2008; Thomson, 1997). This fluidity has material consequences. For example, people seeking protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act spend more time convincing the court that they are "actually" disabled, rather than explaining their experiences with discrimination (Davis, 2015). Compounding the fluidity of dis/ability identity is the fact that many people with disabilities either have an ambiguous relationship to their disability label (Thomson, 1997) and/or do not want to see themselves as disabled (Baines, 2014; Connor, 2006; Garland-Thomson, 2013). Despite this difficulty, my student's sadness around not considering people with disabilities as minorities might be rooted in beginning to understand that thinking about disabled people as a minority group "offer[s] social critiques" (Siebers, 2008, p. 22) of society and schools that expose the borders imposed by (ab)normalcy.

Curriculum of School(ing)

Students wrote that society constructs and conditions deficit thinking about dis/ability. Many felt they should be learning about dis/ability in this way earlier in their education. One student wrote, "this should be taught in high school." Yet, through the hidden curriculum, the ideology of ability allows dis/ability to act as a legitimized exclusion mechanism in schools—via the myths of the normal curve (Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010) and of the normal child (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, & Valle, 2011)—especially for students of Color (Blanchett, 2006; Reid & Knight, 2006). Overall, in education, the very notion of academic achievement is conflated with ability and becomes the way in which high school—the place in which students feel they need to learn about dis/ability oppression—is structured. Those in the academy and in education are the least likely to question smartness, as smartness has benefited them (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011) materially, economically, and emotionally.

A DisCrit lens in this context produces the knowledge that curricular/pedagogical reform is incomplete: students were asking for something that remains an impossibility without a radical restructuring of schools and schooling. They understood school(ing) as a liberatory educational space that is supposed to teach them to be critical, political, and "woke." Yet, if the curriculum in schools remains bound to whiteness/smartness, students "learn" about diversity without experiencing a shift in their social imagination. The unidirectional forefronting of racism, sexism,

and heteronormativity when discussing civil rights and present-day exclusions—"When we talk about race, class, gender, etc. we normally do not discuss the advantages or disadvantages of what it is like to be disabled"—leaves little space to consider the ways that taken-for-granted notions of ability are ignored. Physical disabilities are often viewed as deficit medical conditions in need of "fixing," while "invisible" disabilities go unnoticed and reproduce inequities confounded by race, gender, and sexuality:

> We *[non-disabled people]* tend to overlook the troubles that they actually face in society—
> the people who are being treated differently,
> for not only what they may look like,
> but also **their condition.**
> Being disabled is an **everyday struggle**.

A non-intersectional approach to civil rights curricula, then, might explain the following student's response:

> I agree that it is horrible that people thought African Americans automatically had a disability because of their skin color. It is completely unfair that people were judged by their appearance under the assumption that they have a disability. –Student 6

Not only does this student invoke ableism in discussing the horrible treatment of African Americans, they also invoke whiteness. It was white people, specifically, who conflated ability and race as a way to justify the exclusion of Black people. Yet, by just calling them "people" in the first sentence, this student leaves intact the norm that people are both white and nondisabled unless otherwise specified. This is also supported by the second part of this student's response referenced earlier, in which they described normal people as "able bodied." The inclusion of dis/ability in the curriculum—as a "constant and meaningful presence" (Erevelles, 2005, p. 432), rather than as "liberal gestures that will now mention disability" (p. 435)—might have provided access to more transformative ways of learning for this student. While the Baynton (2001) piece to which Student 6 responded presents dis/ability as the material and discursive location upon which other marginalized groups fight for their rights, the curriculum in my course also needed to deconstruct normality (Erevelles, 2005) and to include dis/ability as a form of diversity (Connor et al., 2008; Erevelles, 2005) that is foundational for challenging deficit thinking.

Significance

At NCC, I have heard traces of faculty discourse on diversity. "The students here *get* diversity. That's not the issue. The issue is passing the Praxis." Students have echoed similar sentiments, saying they are "used to *dealing* with a lot of diversity and differences." MSIs might be uniquely positioned to combat the essentialization that often happens to preservice teachers of Color; however, even a space that prioritizes diversity is not immune to this essentializing and/or framing it as a problem or issue to be solved. A DisCrit analysis of my students' work demonstrates that students of Color at all types of higher education institutions should have access to an intersectional approach to diversity education. Like the inclusion of students with disabilities in

K-12 classrooms, diversity education does not just happen by mere *placement* of diverse, historically marginalized students in a college course (or campus), especially when it is conceptualized only through the lens of race.

The ways in which race and dis/ability work together in my students' writing troubles the assumption that students of Color have deeper understandings of diversity—an assumption that receives significant caution in the literature (Brown, 2014; Jackson, 2015; Sheets, 2001, as cited in Knight, 2002; Sheets, 2004). Using DisCrit problematizes the assumption that experiences of being marginalized along one line of difference translate into an automatic understanding of diversity along another. The persistence of deficit language about physical disabilities and the erasure of nonphysical disabilities across multiple students' writing demonstrates that even people with disabilities can engage in ableist ways of knowing and/or distance themselves from that identity. Put differently, teacher educators cannot essentialize all students with dis/abilities or disabling experiences as intuitively understanding ableism, just as we cannot essentialize all racial minorities as intuitively understanding racial inequity.

While categorizing the data allowed me to centralize dis/ability assumptions, the poem afforded an affective engagement with my students' experience that touched on how their thinking was changing in ways that cannot be captured through (academic) discourse. Touching on this counternarrative is an important tenet for both dis/ability studies and critical race theory. Put differently, focusing only on ableist metaphors might have framed my students on deficit terms alone, focusing on the understandings that they lack. For historically marginalized students, this narrative of being cast as not knowing something might be too familiar. In analyzing data, I took up several modes of inquiry to make complex their multiple meanings and intentions, understanding that words are both contradictory and powerful when analyzed from different angles (e.g. poetry, categorizations). A DisCrit approach to diversity curriculum should prioritize presuming competence (Biklen & Burke, 2007)—especially for students of Color who may have internalized the trauma from their K-12 years of being overly disciplined and/or stereotyped as "stupid" or "lazy." As the students of Color remain underserved in many of their K-12 schools, college might be the first time that some students are granted access to high quality education that centers their experiences. Presuming competence, however, does not need to come at the price of dismissing ableist knowledge that students of all backgrounds should be confronting in a diversity course. As teacher educators, then, we must continuously work the balance of facilitating inclusive *and* culturally responsive pedagogy, while also paying deliberate and intersectional attention to the social locations, such as dis/ability, that do not receive as much attention in conversations around social justice and inequity. This more complete stance may be an important component of the necessary curricular/pedagogical reform of diversity education.

Notes

1. "NCC" is a pseudonym to protect identity.

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Appendix A

I'd like to think of myself as someone who has their eyes open when it comes to injustice. Most of the articles or topics we've discussed in thiass have been about things I've noticed already (with the exception of the use of minority prisoners to add to the population of "red states"). I'd also like to believe that I am open-minded and am not discriminatory against any group. This piece, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History" has proved me wrong on both fronts. I have honestly never realized, in all the reading I've done or videos I've watched, how often disability is used as an excuse for inequality. Since I am not disabled myself, I have also never truly thought about how it is not the disabilities themselves that are the problem, but the fact that disability is a reason to be discriminated against.

I think in our society, we are just so conditioned to believe that being disabled is just this taboo, unfixable thing and that disabled people are unequal burdens to the "real man". If you asked me to list all the minority groups I could think of before reading this work, the disabled probably would have been toward the end, if at all. This work has really opened up my eyes and mind in a new way. I know it will change how I speak about inequality now- the types of words I use in my rhetoric. As for the disabled themselves, I now have a new desire to help them find their voice. I think it's about time they had a movement of their own. –Student 1

I would like to start my response by first saying that I really connected with your opening sentiment. As someone who has also spent a lot of free time researching social justice, I too was mildly alarmed to find that I had not been frequently including the disabled when speaking about discriminated groups. I think this may be a byproduct of what you've said, that we see disability as a taboo and unfixable thing. However, I'd like to run in a slightly different direction with this concept. I think that we as a society are so conditioned that disability is this entirely unfixable concept that we gradually become blinded to it. We no longer see the issues they face on a day to day basis, and push them to the furthest reaches of our minds. I also agree that it is time the disabled receive a movement of their own; as this is a group that has definitely spent too much time in the shadows, and needs some well-deserved recognition. – Student 2

I agree with everything you stated in the response. I never think of disabled people when I think of minorities either which is truly sad because as a person who considers themselves to be aware of injustice, like you, that shows how much this group of people is truly ignored. I feel like there are many things to blame when it comes to us being uneducated about disabled people as a whole and a lot of that comes from the schooling system. When we are taught about discrimination and minorities in schools we only see color which is sad. We don't even think to focus on the people who are being treated differently for not only what they may look like, but also their condition. We, as a whole, need to work on looking beyond color so we can realize and understand all the issues that occur with the people around us. –Student 3

I find it immensely disheartening that women did not use their newfound voice to uplift all repressed groups. I think that helping only yourself or groups that you belong to, on the front of social justice is not a win for equality, but rather for systemic oppression. By new groups reaching separate "equality", it leaves more discrimination and inconsideration for the remaining marginalized groups, such as the disabled, as you had mentioned in your writing. – Student 2

I personally never thought of disability this way. This is something that I think should be taught in high school because this is a major part of history. Throughout the reading I found myself asking how could this have been possible to the point that I was getting upset while reading.
– Student 4

I agree that this should have been taught in high school. – Student 5

I agree that it is horrible that people thought African Americans automatically had a disability because of their skin color. It is completely unfair that people were judged by their appearance under the assumption that they have a disability. There is also an association that if people have a physical disability, they also must have a mental one as well. Those two things sometimes do not match up, so people should be taught that if you are talking to someone in a wheelchair, you should treat them as a normal able-bodied person without questioning their mental ability to understand.
– Student 6

I have noticed that sometimes people overuse the word disability for the wrong reasons and abuse it. [...] This article has taught me that it is not just an inequality between the LGBTQ or races, but everyone facing a difficulty reality in their lives. – Student 7

I think that disability is not often spoken of. When we talk about race, class, gender, etc. we normally do not discuss the advantages or disadvantages of what it is like to be disabled. Those who have a disability are often judged because of their appearance and we tend to overlook the troubles that they actually face in society. Being disabled is an everyday struggle and we should be more mindful of them and not treat them any less because we are all the same. –Student 8

Appendix B

A lot of free time researching
social justice,
I am **open-minded**,
eyes open when it comes to injustice.
How often disability is used as an excuse for inequality
proved me wrong on both fronts,
opened up my eyes and mind in a new way,
since I am not disabled myself.

It is not disabilities themselves,
that are the problem,
but the fact that disability is a reason to be discriminated against.

I personally never thought of disability this way.
  I never think of disabled people
  when I think of minorities,
  which is truly sad.

We [*non-disabled people]* are just so conditioned to believe,
that disabled people are unequal burdens
to the "real man."
That being disabled is just this taboo,
unfixable thing,
  this entirely unfixable concept.

I had not been frequently including the disabled
when speaking about discriminated groups,
  when we talk about race, class, gender, etc.,
   disability is not often spoken of.
    We [*nondisabled people]* **normally** do not discuss the advantages
    or disadvantages
    of what it is like to be disabled.

We [*non-disabled people]* tend to overlook the troubles that they actually face in society—
the people who are being treated differently,
for not only what they may look like,
but also **their condition.**
Being disabled is an **everyday struggle**.

  We [*sighted people]* gradually become **blinded** to it.
   We [*sighted people*] **no longer see**
   the issues they face on a day to day basis.

How could this have been possible?

I was getting upset while reading.

This group of people is truly ignored,
and a lot of that comes from the schooling system.
       This is something that I think should be taught in high school
          I agree that this should have been taught in high school.
When we *[non-disabled people]* are taught about discrimination
and minorities in schools,
we *[sighted people]* only **see color,**
with the exception of the use of minority prisoners *[disabled by society]*
to add to the population of "red states,"
which is sad.
We, as a whole [*group of sighted people],*
need to work on **looking beyond color,**
because this is a major part of history.

[white] people thought African Americans automatically had a disability
because of their skin color.
It is completely unfair
that *[Black]* people were judged by their appearance
under the **assumption that they have a disability**,
that if people have a physical disability,
they also must have a mental one as well.

I now have a new desire to help them
find their voice.
It's about time they had a movement
of their own.

If you *[non-disabled person]* are talking to someone in a wheelchair,
you should treat them as a **normal able-bodied person**
without questioning their mental ability to understand.

       [non/disabled] people overuse the word disability for the wrong reasons and
       abuse it

Change how I speak about inequality now—
the types of words I use in my rhetoric.

I'd **like to run** in a slightly different direction
with this concept.
We should be more **mindful** of them
and not treat them any less
because we are all the same.

Appendix C

Social Justice Identity

- I'd like to think of myself as someone who has their eyes open when it comes to injustice. Most of the articles or topics we've discussed in this class have been about things I've noticed already (with the exception of the use of minority prisoners to add to the population of "red states.") I'd also like to believe that I am open-minded and am not discriminatory against any group.
- As someone who has also spent a lot of free time researching social justice, I too was mildly alarmed to find that I had not been frequently including the disabled when speaking about discriminated groups
- I never think of disabled people when I think of minorities either which is truly sad because as a person who considers themselves to be aware of injustice, like you, that shows how much this group of people is truly ignored.

Recognizing Disability as a Mechanism for Exclusion

- I have honestly never realized, in all the reading I've done or videos I've watched, how often disability is used as an excuse for inequality.
- I find it immensely disheartening that women did not use their newfound voice to uplift all repressed groups. I think that helping only yourself or groups that you belong to, on the front of social justice is not a win for equality, but rather for systemic oppression. By new groups reaching separate "equality", it leaves more discrimination and inconsideration for the remaining marginalized groups, such as the disabled, as you had mentioned in your writing
- Throughout the reading I found myself asking how could this have been possible to the point that I was getting upset while reading.
- I agree that it is horrible that people thought African Americans automatically had a disability because of their skin color.
- Those who have a disability are often judged because of their appearance and we tend to overlook the troubles that they actually face in society.

Non-disabled Identity

- Since I am not disabled myself, I have also never truly thought about how it is not the disabilities themselves that are the problem, but the fact that disability is a reason to be discriminated against.
- As for the disabled themselves, I now have a new desire to help them find their voice. I think it's about time they had a movement of their own.

Assuming Audience of Discussion Board is All Non-disabled

- As for the disabled themselves, I now have a new desire to help them find their voice. I think it's about time they had a movement of their own.
- I also agree that it is time the disabled receive a movement of their own; as this is a group that has definitely spent too much time in the shadows, and needs some well-deserved recognition.
- We no longer see the issues they face on a day to day basis, and push them to the furthest reaches of our minds.
- I never think of disabled people when I think of minorities either which is truly sad because as a person who considers themselves to be aware of injustice, like you, that shows how much this group of people is truly ignored.
- There is also an association that if people have a physical disability, they also must have a mental one as well. Those two things sometimes do not match up, so people should be taught that if you are talking to someone in a wheelchair, you should treat them as a normal able-bodied person without questioning their mental ability to understand.
- I think in our society, we are just so conditioned to believe that being disable is just this taboo, unfixable thing and that disabled people are unequal burdens to the "real man."
- I think that we as a society are so conditioned that disability is this entirely unfixable concept that we gradually become blinded to it.

Society and School Conditions Us to Think About Disability in a Deficit Way

- I think in our society, we are just so conditioned to believe that being disable is just this taboo, unfixable thing and that disabled people are unequal burdens to the "real man."
- I think that we as a society are so conditioned that disability is this entirely unfixable concept that we gradually become blinded to it.
- I feel like there are many things to blame when it comes to us being uneducated about disabled people as a whole and a lot of that comes from the schooling system.
- This is something that I think should be taught in high school because this is a major part of history.
- "I agree that this should have been taught in high school

It is Wrong to Understand Disability as Unfixable

- I think in our society, we are just so conditioned to believe that being disable is just this taboo, unfixable thing and that disabled people are unequal burdens to the "real man."
- I think this may be a byproduct of what you've said, that we see disability as a taboo and unfixable thing.
- I think that we as a society are so conditioned that disability is this entirely unfixable concept that we gradually become blinded to it.

Medical Model of Disability

- We don't even think to focus on the people who are being treated differently for not only what they may look like, but also their condition.
- I agree that it is horrible that people thought African Americans automatically had a disability because of their skin color.
- It is completely unfair that people were judged by their appearance under the assumption that they have a disability.
- There is also an association that if people have a physical disability, they also must have a mental one as well. Those two things sometimes do not match up, so people should be taught that if you are talking to someone in a wheelchair, you should treat them as a normal able-bodied person without questioning their mental ability to understand.
- I have noticed that sometimes people overuse the word disability for the wrong reasons and abuse it.
- Being disabled is an everyday struggle and we should be more mindful of them and not treat them any less because we are all the same

People with Disabilities Should be Understood as a "Minority" Group

- If you asked me to list all the minority groups I could think of before reading this work, the disabled probably would have been toward the end, if at all.
- I think it's about time they had a movement of their own.
- As someone who has also spent a lot of free time researching social justice, I too was mildly alarmed to find that I had not been frequently including the disabled when speaking about discriminated groups
- I never think of disabled people when I think of minorities either which is truly sad because as a person who considers themselves to be aware of injustice, like you, that shows how much this group of people is truly ignored.
- I personally never thought of disability this way.
- This article has taught me that it is not just an inequality between the LGBTQ or races, but everyone facing a difficulty reality in their lives.
- I think that disability is not often spoken of. When we talk about race, class, gender, etc. we normally do not discuss the advantages or disadvantages of what it is like to be disabled.

DisCrit

- When we are taught about discrimination and minorities in schools we only see color which is sad.
- We, as a whole, need to work on looking beyond color so we can realize and understand all the issues that occur with the people around us.
- I agree that it is horrible that people thought African Americans automatically had a disability because of their skin color.

Disability Metaphor
- This work has really opened my eyes and mind in a new way.
- I know it will change how I speak about inequality now- the types of words I use in my rhetoric.
- However, I'd like to run in a slightly different direction with this concept.
- I think that we as a society are so conditioned that disability is this entirely unfixable concept that we gradually become blinded to it.

Nondisabled = Normal/Assumptions About Normality and Difference

- There is also an association that if people have a physical disability, they also must have a mental one as well. Those two things sometimes do not match up, so people should be taught that if you are talking to someone in a wheelchair, you should treat them as a normal able-bodied person without questioning their mental ability to understand.
- Being disabled is an everyday struggle and we should be more mindful of them and not treat them any less because we are all the same

Intersecting Arts Based Research and Disability Studies:
Suggestions for Art Education Curriculum Centered on Disability Identity Development

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IN AN EFFORT TO DISSUADE THE USE OF DIAGNOSES and symptomology as determining factors of a disability via a medical perspective, disability studies focuses on the social-political and cultural factors that propagate issues of discrimination and subjugation for people with disabilities. Instead of centering on ameliorating one's impairments, disability studies addresses how our understanding of disability has been constructed by a normative society, which has led to issues of institutionalized ableism. Ableism is defined as

> A network of beliefs, processes and practices that produce a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human. Disability, then, is cast as a diminished state of being human. (Campbell, 2001, p. 44)

Ableism is built upon the notion that people with disabilities do not meet anticipated attributes or normative expectations deemed by the majority, which leads to the perception of people with disabilities to be "deviant." This negative discrepancy between a person's perceived deviant identity and their actual identity is known as stigma (Goffman, 1963).

Issues of ableism and stigma play a very large role in how people with disabilities perceive themselves, which in turn may affect how and if they develop a positive disability identity.

> Disability identity refers to possessing a positive sense of self and feelings of connection to, or solidarity with, the disability community. A coherent disability identity is believed to help individuals adapt to disability, including navigating related social stresses and daily hassles. (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013, para. 1)

A positive disability identity encourages disability disclosure, which is particularly important among students with disabilities who may choose to pass or cover their identity to meet the expectations of compulsory ablebodiedness. The concept of compulsory ablebodiedness is built upon the belief that one must be ablebodied to perform in a normative society (McRuer, 2010). By appealing to the notion of compulsory ablebodiedness, students may not find the space to disclose or discuss their disabilities with others, which has the potential to perpetuate ableist perspectives in schools.

In this article, I examine the research that I conducted for my dissertation—using arts based practices for disability identity development—and discuss ways in which the intersection of art and critical disability studies can facilitate disability identity development as a method for integrating social justice practices into an educational setting. Throughout my research, I used both visual and narrative methods of inquiry to generate a series of works with the purpose of countering the notion of compulsory ablebodiedness through acts of uncovering. While promoting the social model of disability through these arts based research practices, my intention was to integrate the reflective ways of knowing oneself through art into current art education curricula, therefore, establishing disability culture in current pedagogical practices. In the following sections, I will focus specifically on my primary research question: How can art be used as a reflective tool for understanding significant aspects of critical disability studies such as identity, embodiment, and agency? This study will conclude with suggestions for implementing an art education curriculum that is centered on disability identity development.

Theoretical Framework

Currently, many educational approaches still implement a medical model of disability in the classroom.

> The *individual and medical models of disability*, which perceive and classify disability in terms of a meta-narrative of deviance, lack and tragedy, and assume it to be logically separate from and inferior to "normalcy," are characteristic of the kinds of epistemologies or knowledge systems generated by modernism. (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002, p. 2)

Critical disability studies, however, suggests the implementation of the social model of disability, which is rooted in postmodernism as it attempts to critique the individualized or medical model of disability. The social model of disability

> makes a conceptual distinction between disability and impairment, similar to the feminist distinction between gender and sex. It sees disability as socially created, or constructed on top of impairment, and places the explanation of its changing character in the social and economic structure and culture of the society in which it is found. (p. 3)

The medical model of disability views disability as an individualized defect that must be cured in order for a person to function as a human being (Siebers, 2011). According to John Derby (2011), "the implication of the medical model for schools is that disabled learners are positioned as helpless dependents requiring unusual services from nondisabled educators, paraprofessionals, and peers" (p. 2).

This can be particularly problematic for the field of art education because the medical model is still being practiced in current art education pedagogy as it applies to integrated students with disabilities (Blandy, 1989). Yarmol (2013) also states

> Within this model, goals and objectives of art education which are art oriented are replaced, suppressed, de-emphasized, or become secondary to educational goals that prescribe measures to compensate for, or eradicate negatively-valued behaviors or characteristics associated with disability and deviancy. (p. 9)

The social model of disability, however, is far better suited for art education curriculum. Eisenhauer (2007) states that the implementation of the social model of disability encourages students to think critically about their own cultural understanding of disability. Additionally, Derby (2011) suggests that, "disability studies can advance the field of art education's perspectives and policies about disability" (p. 3).

Similarly, Disability Studies in Education (DSE) "offers much to the traditional field of special education, providing various lenses through which to view disability that, in turn, influence how we conduct research, the ways that we teach, and the place of students with disabilities in schools" (Baglieri, Valle, Connor, & Gallagher, 2011, p. 275). Furthermore, DSE discusses the importance of not using research to exclude the voices of people with disabilities. My research complies with this need as I integrate my own voice as a person with disabilities into discourse about the intersection of art and disability studies in education.

This integration of disability studies in art education curriculum is important because students with disabilities are often integrated into art classrooms as a means of complying with facets of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). There is a great deal of research supporting the role of arts and how it is beneficial for students with disabilities.

Role of the Arts

Art has long since been recognized as a very beneficial tool for students with disabilities (Dodd, 1980). Art based programs have been integrated into special education classrooms because studies have shown that art can help exceptional students by training and reinforcing deficient perceptual, motor, and academic skills. According to Coleman, Cramer, Park and Bell (2015) "students of all ages and ability levels can benefit from expressing their thoughts, ideas, and emotions through the multiple modes of learning (intuitive, kinesthetic, etc.), creative processes, graphic narratives, and social experiences of an art classroom" (p. 638). Many students with disabilities can demonstrate their understanding of concepts through the use of art more successfully than other methods (Hammel & Fischer, 2014).

Since the implementation of the IDEA, however, art education assumed a therapeutic approach for students with disabilities. "It was generally presumed during this period that art education for disabled students was a remedial effort suitable for building self-esteem and for rehabilitation" (Derby, 2011, p. 2). Therefore, a broader application of art practices and a better understanding of the nature of disability should be implemented into art curricula. Eisenhauer (2007) further supports this notion, claiming "disability in the art classroom is not only about inclusion, defined as appropriately accommodating students with disabilities, but is also about the exploration of disability culture and the sociopolitical issue of ableism in arts curriculum" (p. 10).

By addressing sociopolitical issues that are inherent in disability studies, disabled and non-disabled students are better able to understand what it means to live in a culture of disability.

Agency

Because issues of stigmatization exist, people with disabilities continue to be disenfranchised. Disability studies aims to counter these issues by speaking about, for, and with disabled people (Siebers, 2008). Voice and visibility play a large role in how people with disabilities are represented, so it is increasingly more important for people with disabilities to disclose their own individual experiences. Frank (1988) explores the life histories of three people with impairments and determines that these participants have practiced agency through the visibility of their disabilities by stating,

> By insisting on being visible as people with disabilities and exploiting the discourse this disability provokes, they appear to reject the givenness of stigma, making it an open question for society to deal with, and furthering their sense of, as well as actual opportunities for, self-empowerment. (p. 97)

This sense of empowerment is important for people with disabilities because, in this sense, visibility becomes a form of activism. Claiming a disability identity is also considered a form of activism as it allows people with disabilities to understand how they situate themselves within their own communities, as well as with themselves and other nondisabled persons, therefore, empowering them though a sense of belonging. According to Gill (1997), there are four types of integration in disability identity development. These four types are: integrating into society, integrating with the disability community, internally integrating our sameness and differentness, and integrating how we feel with how we present ourselves. These four types are also known as: "coming to feel we belong," "coming home," "coming together," and "coming out." By integrating in these ways, people with disabilities become active agents of their own lives, therefore, furthering the civic rights movement for themselves and others within the disability community. Throughout my research, arts based practices are used as a way to explore these four types of integration in disability identity development as they apply to my experience as a person with disabilities. By exploring these types of integration through art, I can visualize my disability experience to my non-disabled peers, which allows my research to act as an agent of social change. This study uses art based research methods to explore my own disability identity with the intention of opening up a dialogue about ableism between disabled and nondisabled communities. By articulating intersecting theories of identity development through visual and narrative methods while simultaneously constructing my own disability identity, I provide an alternative method for integrating social justice issues into ordinary discourse.

Methodology

Arts based research has several different methods of application and interpretation, including the use of artistic approaches to address social issues (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Finley (2008) states that arts based inquiry is "a methodology for radical, ethical and revolutionary

research that is futuristic, socially responsible, and useful in addressing social inequities," and it also "has the potential to facilitate critical race, indigenous, queer, feminist and border theories and research methodologies" (p. 71). Throughout this research, I have combined the method of reflexive journaling, as well as methods of visual inquiry such as drawing, watercolor, and sculpture to explore a heuristic understanding of my own disability experience. These intersecting arts based methods provided a collection of visual art and written narratives that formed an arts based journal that I later used for my data interpretation. During the data collection process, I used Moustakas' (1990) heuristic approach, which included seven different phases: "Identifying with the focus of inquiry," "self-dialogue," "tacit knowing," "intuition," "indwelling," "focusing," and "the internal frame of reference." While working through the different phases of this heuristic approach, I considered the nature of how I embody my own disability experience, specifically in relation to relevant concepts in critical disability studies.

The resulting data was then interpreted using the method of arts based reflexivity. Arts-based reflexivity has five steps: summarizing core themes from the raw data, creating an artistic response to these themes, synthesizing these responses into a larger scale artistic creation, reflection upon this artistic creation, and meta-reflection through continued experiencing (Schenstead, 2012). These steps are based off Moustakas' (1990) six phases of heuristic research, which include: Engagement, Immersion, Incubation, Illumination, Explication, and Creative Synthesis. The raw data for this research was taken from the arts based journal generated in the previous step. Through interpreting the data, I determined emerging themes such as the fluidity of identity, disability as metaphor/deficit, and the complex nature of un/covering. I used these themes to push my artwork further, allowing me to reconsider my disability experience from a multifaceted perspective. From these generated artworks and narratives, I continued to create artwork that synthesizes these ideas in a comprehensive visual manner. Following this step, I reflected upon prior themes from my raw data and reinterpreted them with my growing understanding of the disability experience. The final step was the creation of an exhibition space that allowed for meta-reflection through continued experiencing. This final meta-reflection, in turn, provided implications on how disability identity development could be implemented in current art education pedagogy as a means to disrupt existing ableist hegemonies in an institutionalized setting.

Findings

When I began analyzing the data from my arts based journal, I noticed that many of the images that I was generating represented my disability almost exclusively through metaphor (Figure 1, below). I was leaning heavily on my desire to explain my disabilities to others in a way that I believed would be more easily understood, which in turn represented my disability as a form of deficit. Some of the themes that I found in relation to this were: pain and nakedness (vulnerability), helplessness (carrying the burden with me), medication and feeling abnormal (feeling out of control), medication and academia, and feeling disconnected (internally from externally).

Figure 1. Mental Health

In recognizing that I was representing disability as deficit through metaphor, I began to explore some concepts inherent to critical disability studies that extended beyond this notion of disability. This led me to look at theories that included binaries, borderlands, identity renegotiation, and the performative nature of identity. These theories are particularly important to my research because they frame the disability experience as something that moves beyond the individual and looks at how external perceptions of disability affect the development of my own disability identity. This allowed me to shift toward an abstract method of representation during my second stage of reflection to better show how the interdependence of the mind and body play a role in the disability experience and how embodiment and identity intersect both theoretically and visually (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Borderlands

During the third stage of synthesis, I embraced the notion of complex embodiment and attempted to create three-dimensional artworks that reflected the importance of sociocultural context in relation to disability identity development and visualization of invisible disabilities. As I thought through some of these central concepts to disability studies, I began to recognize various

ways in which disability is a social construction. The theories that I focused on in this step included transitioning identity, performative ablebodiedness, critical moments of disability awareness, and the act of un/covering (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Transitioning Identity

Throughout the fourth stage, I considered the multifaceted and fluid nature of disability by reconsidering previous themes of deficit from the first stage and reapplying them through a critical disabilities perspective of fluidity and inclusivity. This led me to create an installation that represents how I believe the disability experience is truly constructed—disability doesn't happen *to* you, it *is* you—and this thread is what ties together the disability experience and the construction of a disability identity (Figure 4).
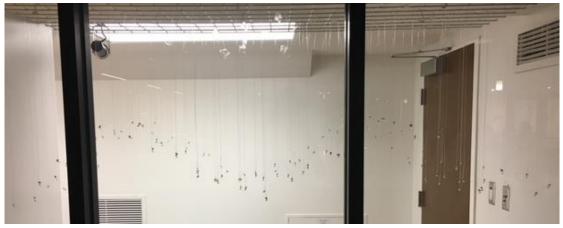

Figure 4. The Ocean

The final stage led me to curate an exhibition of my works, which allowed me the space to reflect on my artistic journey from a holistic perspective and visualize my development of a positive disability identity over time (Figure 5, below). Furthermore, the exhibition provided me with the realization of "coming out" both as an academic and an artist with disabilities.

Figure 5. Completed Exhibition

My primary research question investigates how art can be used as a reflective tool for understanding significant aspects of critical disability studies such as identity, embodiment, and agency. Throughout this research, I determined that the practice of using arts based research is well suited to engage these key themes in critical disability studies through a complex and multi-dimensional way, which provides insight into aspects of critical disability studies. By thinking through key theories in critical disability studies as they relate to themes of embodiment, identity, and agency, I was able to generate more multifaceted artworks that exemplify the intricate nature of the disability experience.

This process allowed me to understand how arts based research can provide a critical distance, which led me to reflect on concepts central to the field of critical disability studies while simultaneously enabling me to resituate my own understanding of disability. I also determined that the art making process allowed me to make thematic connections between theories, as well as between theory and personal experience. The process of thinking through theory while generating artwork gave me greater insight into the disability experience, therefore, adding nuance to the understanding of critical disability studies, particularly in relation to the malleable nature of identity, embodiment, and agency.

Working through various concepts in critical disability studies through art led me to consider and reconsider all of the various facets of the disability experience, including issues of ableism and normative expectations of compulsory ablebodiedness, which in turn allowed me to shift away from the notion of disability as deficit. Additionally, the process of arts based reflexivity led me away from a medical model of disability and towards a social model of disability, which enabled me to recognize the sociopolitical factors that influenced the development of my own disability identity.

Throughout this process, arts based research provided me with the distance needed in order to critically look at the work I was generating, which enabled me to recognize how I truly understood theories that related to disability studies based on the ways in which I represented them artistically. I would not have discovered my thematic tendency to rely on disability metaphors had I not seen the common thread visually. Furthermore, when my thought process was mapped out visually, I could see where there was a disconnect—or a missing piece in my representation of theories related to identity, embodiment, and agency. By creating artistic representations of my

understanding of these theories, I could see how my pieces were both visually and literally one-dimensional. Seeing that my work was not as complex as the theories I was working though forced me to consider what I could add to each piece to make it more intricate. In doing so, I reconsidered how I was using each artistic method, which deepened my understanding of each theory through interpretation of each artistic choice. This allowed me to understand identity as multifaceted and transitioning, embodiment as complex and interconnected, and agency as something that can be maintained through a stronger understanding of self and, in my case, the acceptance of disabilities as culturally constructed.

As I used reflexivity through art, the subtle differences in the ways that I identified as disabled, as well as the way that I embodied my own disabilities, became visually perceptible. The steps that I used in arts based reflexivity acted as a scaffolding process, in which each step furthered my understanding of the complexity of the disability experience. Each step required me to revisit previous themes and artworks and to reflect how my understanding of the disability experience became more complex through nonrepresentational works.

As my study suggests, arts based research can be used as a way to broaden the understanding of the disability experience by highlighting the nuance between each individual, much like I have highlighted the nuance of my own disability identity through each step of arts based reflexivity. The abstract nature of reflection that I chose to employ opens up an opportunity to address these aspects of identity, embodiment, and agency through a multi-interpretational way. Arts based research, therefore, does not only promote critical thinking through visual methods, but it can also generate work that can be deciphered in whichever way best suits the audience's needs in regard to understanding the experience of having invisible disabilities in a normative society. Furthermore, I have determined that the process of making art allows for a way of thinking through and alongside theory that is exploratory and expansive. Thus, arts based research facilitates the ability to understand and interrogate the disability experience as well as highlight the nuance of the disability experience as it relates to one's disability identity.

Significance

Throughout my research, I have used art as a way to discuss my disability experience, which has led to a sense of agency as I explore my disability identity. One implication of these findings is that art could be used in the classroom to understand facets of students' identities whether or not they are disabled. For students with disabilities, however, art can be used as a form of empowerment as students learn to accept their disabilities as part of what makes them who they are. Derby (2012) states that art addresses identity, which allows people with disabilities to understand a sense of self, which can promote self-awareness. Nevertheless, this may be difficult to do without the guidance of an educator. Derby (2011) also suggests that incorporating disability studies in art education can advance the perspectives of disability. If art educators can facilitate a discussion about the perspectives of disability, it may lead students to feel more comfortable accepting their disabilities, in which case art can also be used as a form of uncovering these disabilities because students would not feel as pressured to pass or cover their disability identities.

The introduction of disability studies into art curricula needs to move beyond inclusion and accommodation and should focus on familiarizing students with disability culture and addressing sociopolitical issues of ableism that occur within the arts curriculum and within other educational settings. Using art as a way to uncover disability identity opens the possibility of introducing

disability culture into the classroom by means of class discussion and critiques based on the work generated through this type of self-reflective practice and work created by other artists. Art can also act as a medium for promoting critical thinking about issues of ableism as they relate to other fields of critical theory, such as critical race theory and gender studies.

Additionally, the arts have been shown to have a number of benefits for people with disabilities, including identity development. Despite knowing the benefits that the arts have for people with disabilities, there is still the tendency to use art as a rehabilitative tool in the classroom because of the institutionalized adoption of the functional limitations model. By intersecting disability studies and art education through the use of the social model of disability, the art classroom can then become a space for disability discourse through self-representation. By merging these two interdisciplinary fields, the disability arts movement can reshape the way disabilities are viewed by both disabled students and their nondisabled peers. Pedagogical practices in art education can then begin to move beyond a medicalized understanding of disability in order to combat the issue of ableism in schools.

This research, in effect, offers an alternative method for employing a disability studies perspective within pedagogical approaches to art education. The process of using arts based reflexivity can be adapted in a way that allows students to think through and alongside disability theory in a method that is critical, meaningful, and expansive. However, the process of identity development is a delicate and intricate process, so introducing complex topics such as passing and uncovering must be done with care. Although the arts have the tendency to remediate some of the tensions that may arise by allowing a person to consider the disability experience without having to tackle it directly, it is important for educators not to push students past their comfort level if they are not prepared to take on such a sizable task. This process takes time, and sometimes it requires one to step away from the process all together as a way to internalize what has been learned. The arts also have the ability to unearth the subconscious, as I discovered in step one of arts based reflexivity. With this in mind, and within the context of creating art curricula that is socially conscious, art could, therefore, become a catalyst for critical introspection by hinting at the way in which one views his or her own disabilities as they pertain to his or her identity, as well as how other nondisabled students view disability culture as a whole.

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The Possibility of a Disability Studies in Education Continuing Education Course:
A Deleuzoguattarian Stratoanalysis

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DISABILITY STUDIES IN EDUCATION (DSE) calls into question deficit-based views of folks with impairments, the notion that disability resides within individuals, and commonplace technologies of disablement in schools and the broader educational arena. As teacher educators, the authors wanted to investigate the feasibility of teaching a DSE-based continuing education course for inservice teachers using a particular online platform. Researchers in DSE view disablement as a process situated within historical, cultural, social, and political contexts. The purpose of education shifts from a singular focus on enhancing individual performance to more of a focus on transforming existing environmental limitations in place for students (Baglieri, Vale, Connor, & Gallagher, 2011). Moving beyond the mere application of interventions to remedy student deficiencies, DSE scholars seek to have teachers reflect on their decisions as educational agents (Baglieri et al., 2011). If teachers are to work toward social justice in this way, it is imperative that teachers have access to disability studies perspectives. Platforms such as ForeverEd (a pseudonym) could be one way in which teacher educators could more widely disseminate DSE perspectives.

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which a particular continuing education platform, ForeverEd, and its infrastructure enable and constrain the possibility of teaching a DSE-based continuing education class. Specifically, we investigated the following questions: 1) To what extent do the current disability-related courses available on the online platform express ideas that align with and/or contrast with DSE perspectives? and 2) To what extent does the infrastructure of the platform enable and/or constrain the possibility of teaching a DSE-based course? In order to investigate these questions, we used document analysis of documents found on the ForeverEd website. The constant comparison method of data analysis led to the emergence of several key

themes. We found that the work of Deleuze and Guattari and of Michael Warner served as a helpful lens through which to interpret the findings.

Online professional development is an emerging area of research, with concerns being raised about the often random selection of topics, with little attention paid to quality and appropriateness of content (Ginsburg, Grey, & Levin, 2004). Looking at online training in general, researchers have expressed qualms about the focus on financial return on investment at the expense of pedagogy and learner experience (Homan & MacPherson, 2005). Despite these concerns, there remains considerable potential, especially in regard to providing professional development to teachers in rural areas (Erickson, Noonan, & Mccall, 2012). What has not yet been studied is the ways in which online course platforms constrain acceptable topics of professional development and privilege certain educational discourses over others.

Methodological Approach

The method used in this study was qualitative document analysis. Document analysis "is the systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents" (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). The documents used as data sources were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to generate emerging qualitative codes. The constant comparative method is "based on an inductive approach geared toward identifying patterns" (Bowen, 2009, p. 37). The first author began by coding sections of the data sources into themes. Following the constant comparative method, the researcher compared the sections of text coded with a particular theme with previous sections already coded with the same theme in an ongoing process. In a similar manner to the process described by Bowen (2009), the author "constantly checked and rechecked the elemental codes and concepts…scrutinized and compared [document] data with data and with codes in order to [organize] ideas and pinpoint concepts that seemed to cluster together" (p. 37). As themes emerged, sections of documents were compared with the "accumulated knowledge" (Glaser, 1965, p. 440) related to relevant themes. Like Bowen (2009), the author continuously asked, "How is this text similar to, or different from, preceding text?" (p. 37). The data were interpreted in order to explore the ways in which ForeverEd enable and constrain the possibility of teaching a DSE-based continuing education class.

The data sources used for this study consisted of online documents available to the public related to continuing education courses on a particular online continuing education platform, ForeverEd. The platform includes continuing education courses across a variety of disciplines, including education. ForeverEd is recognized by school districts, and the process of receiving continuing education credits from the courses is simple. ForeverEd partners with community colleges to make it convenient to find and take the classes. For example, a selection of currently offered ForeverEd courses is available to teachers through a network of over 2,100 colleges throughout the United States. Teachers can sign up for the online classes through the community colleges' websites or on the ForeverEd website itself. The price at the time of writing is $70 -$100 per course. In the mid-2000s, ForeverEd was purchased by a major, for-profit, educational publishing company.

To choose courses for analysis for this study, the following selection process was used. First, the authors examined the titles of all of the courses listed under education and selected all of the courses whose titles referenced dis/ability in some way. The courses were categorized as follows: 1) general courses about disability, 2) courses about specific conditions, and 3) courses

about differentiated teaching and learning. The first category, general courses about disability, best matches the scope of a DSE-based course; therefore, the two courses from the first category were selected for inclusion in the study. These were the only two courses that met this criterion.

Online documents for each class were systematically analyzed and coded for emergent themes. Specifically, the online system included the following documents for each course: "About This Course," "About This Instructor," "Syllabus," and "Related Courses." Each of these documents was analyzed for each of the courses.

In addition to the course documents, two online documents related to the infrastructure of the ForeverEd platform teaching processes were analyzed. The first was the application to teach for ForeverEd. The second was the FAQ page related to teaching for ForeverEd.

Theoretical Framework

The work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari served as a lens for interpreting the findings in the study. Their work provides ways to critique curriculum and create new modes of engagement. In this study, we use Deleuzoguattarian stratroanalysis along with Michael Warner's elaboration on the concepts of publics and counterpublics to examine the material and ideological difficulty one of the authors encountered when attempting to propose a disability-studies based class for teachers that would carry continuing education credits. Specifically, we use the notions of common sense from Deleuze's (1968/1994) *Difference and Repetition* and double articulation and lines of flight from Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) *A Thousand Plateaus.*

Stratoanalysis and Double Articulation

Deleuzoguattarian stratoanalysis involves looking for locations of stratification and destratification. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) describe stratification in the following way: "Strata…consist of…imprisoning intensities or locking singularities into systems of resonance and redundancy…. Strata are acts of capture" (p. 40). In other words, stratification locks a particular organization of reality that does not allow for other ways of organizing reality. On strata are points of structuration, which Deleuze and Guattari call "assemblages." Assemblages link two heterogeneous elements. The first element is linguistic in nature (broadly speaking) and is a "form of expression." The second element is material (broadly speaking) and takes on a "form of content." Stratoanalysis poses the following questions: "Which forms of content have come to be linked with which forms of expression? How can pressure be applied to this link to open it up, to force it to become something other than it is" (Rands, 2011, p. 36). Double articulation involves the linking up of a form of content with a form of expression to form an assemblage. A key example of double articulation is Foucault's (1977) linking of the the prison (a form of content) with "delinquency" (a form of expression).

Learning and Common Sense

According to Deleuze (1968/1994), "learning takes place not in the relation between a representation and an action (reproduction of the Same) but in the relation between a sign and a

response (encounter with the Other)" (p. 22). Such encounters interrupt assumptions of the form "Everybody knows…" (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 129) or reveal the ways in which "givens" are often "takens" (Semetsky, 2006, p. 82). Kumashiro (2004) points out that what comes to be seen as common sense is often comforting and familiar but is also often oppressive. Both Deleuze (1968/1994) and Kumashiro (2004) conceptualize learning as involving working against common sense. Deleuze (1968/1994) argues that people have an investment in making claims about what "everybody" knows or recognizes. The person who refuses to know something that "everybody" knows, that refuses to be represented or represent anything (Deleuze, 1968/1994), introduces a crisis (Kumashiro, 2004) into a "dogmatic, orthodox or moral image" of thought (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 131). Working toward social justice entails inserting these refusals into oppressive strata—or, in other words, learning.

Publics and Counterpublics

Michael Warner (2002) distinguishes the public from a public; the public is a social totality whereas a public has certain specific characteristics. A public is self-organized. In other words, it comes into being through the very process of being addressed and of paying attention. The creation of a public is a circular process in which the speaker or writer addresses a public imagined already to exist. This address then creates that very public through the act of attending to what is said or written. In Warner's conception, a public is a social and discursive space, rather than a physical one. Addressing a public differs from other modes of address because it entails addressing presumed strangers.

Counterpublics are publics that purposefully do not present themselves as the public. Instead they have a conflictual relation to the general public, which is marked as not just general but also dominant. Like all publics, a counterpublic's ontology depends on addressing indefinite strangers. However, the counterpublic is marked in a particular way: it is assumed that ordinary people would not want to talk or write in this way.

Lines of Flight

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) present following lines of flight as a strategy for escaping the strata, for breaking out of realities that seem like the only possible reality. Their directions for doing so are to "lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers…find potential movements…possible lines of flight, experience them…. It is through meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight" (p. 161). Embarking on lines of flight allow the creation of new ways of being.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which a particular continuing education platform and its infrastructure enabled and constrained the possibility of teaching a DSE-based continuing education class. Specifically, the study investigated 1) the extent to which the ideas expressed in the current disability-studies related courses available on the online platform

align with and/or contrast with DSE perspectives, and 2) the extent to which the infrastructure of the platform enables and/or constrains the possibility of teaching a DSE-based course. Examining the findings through a Deleuzoguattarian lens, we suggest that expressive and material double articulation embedded in the process of proposing a DSE-based continuing education course on the platform analyzed creates a public with certain common sense assumptions that preclude a DSE-based class proposal.

The Form of Expression in Disability-Related Courses

Stratoanalysis of documents from two ForeverEd courses related to disabilities illuminated the form of expression in the courses. Overall, rather than taking on a form of expression that aligns with DSE-based views of disablement, we found that the course documents reinforce oppressive, dominant views of disability. The form of expression addresses, and in the process of addressing also creates, an audience that is presumed non-disabled and ableist. Although both courses addressed the topic of disabilities, overall the courses contrasted with DSE perspectives in key ways. Here we will use one class session description as an example to illustrate several themes that served as forms of expression that arose throughout the data. One of the class sessions of one of the classes addressed "Speech and Language Disorders," a title that already expresses a deficit view. The class session overview reads as follows:

> Imagine how frustrating it would be if you couldn't speak clearly, understand other people, or express your thoughts and feelings well. That's what life is like for children with speech or language disorders, a topic we'll investigate today. In addition to learning what it's like to have these disorders, we'll explore simple tricks that can beef up your students' communication skills.

Several themes that contrast with DSE perspectives are evident in the class session description. First, the class description does not address the social and political process of disablement, instead locating disability within individuals and ignoring the connection between the process of disablement and oppression and/or privilege. Along with the individual focus, the description pathologizes speech and language diversity, focusing on what these students cannot do instead of what they can do. Second, the class session description expresses the assumption that the course attendees are nondisabled; instead of asking attendees to reflect on their own experiences, it asks them to imagine others' experiences. While DSE would privilege disabled people's experiences, this class instead allows presumably nondisabled teachers to dwell on their own stereotypes and preconceptions. Third, the course description denies the complexity of addressing the ways in which systems of oppression disable students and instead offers "simple tricks" to teachers, tricks that from a DSE perspective would be seen as coercing students into speaking in normative ways. Overall, the class description and the courses as a whole reinforce oppressive dominant views of disability rather than taking on a form of expression that would align with a DSE-based perspective. The documents analyzed produce a public that is assumed to be nondisabled, to be ableist, and that views disability as an individual deficit.

Infrastructure of the Online Platform (Form of Content)

The infrastructure of the ForeverEd platform serves as a material form of content that is doubly articulated with the form of expression. Two documents related to the infrastructure were analyzed to determine the extent to which the infrastructure of ForeverEd enables and/or constrains the possibility of teaching a DSE-based course on the platform. The documents revealed several constraining aspects of the infrastructure that, in combination, made the possibility of teaching a DSE-based class using the ForeverEd platform unlikely. First, the application to teach for ForeverEd revealed that the teacher's role was that of author, and courses were structured as written content on the website. This feature alone does not constrain developing a DSE-based course. However, a second aspect of the behind-the-scenes infrastructure revealed in the application was the expectation that those hired as teachers would "develop courses that are consistent with all of our other courses in tone, style, and length" and would be willing to "make corrections" to their courses according to ForeverEd's editor's "informed opinions." Taken together, these two aspects require teachers to follow expectations such as providing quick-fix "tips and tricks," which are not conducive to the difficult transformational work required by a DSE perspective. Finally, ForeverEd encourages teacher educators to view their course attendees as customers. Such a view, again, deters teacher educators from including perspectives that would encourage course attendees to grapple with ideas that challenge their assumptions about disability in the ways that a DSE-based class would. The infrastructure or form of content of the ForeverEd platform combines elements that are, then, doubly articulated with the form of expression to prevent teachers from teaching a DSE-based course.

Summary

The course pages work together as the form of expression, expressing individualistic, deficit, ableist views on disability. The infrastructure of the course serves as the form of content, shaping the courses into containers of the same style, tone, and length with a presumed public of customers who have similar views on disability. Together these two aspects are doubly articulated to form a stratum, a reality in which DSE-based courses are not feasible on the ForeverEd platform at this time.

Significance: Lines of Flight, Counterpublics, and Learning

In contrast to Ginsburg, Grey, and Levin's (2004) observation about the haphazard nature of available professional development courses, our study found a unifying ideology that underpinned the courses on disability: the idea that students have deficits that can be easily remedied by a teacher who has taken one of ForeverEd's classes. The teacher is conceptualized more as a technician who administers quick fixes rather than a professional making complex judgments and decisions. Furthermore, reminiscent of the fears expressed by Homan and MacPherson (2005), ForeverEd seems more interested in the number of paying enrollees than in the depth of experience offered to the participating teachers. Further research should examine other

ideologies underlying online professional developments; what appears haphazard on the surface may in fact represent an implicit ideological consensus.

Although there is considerable potential in these virtual platforms for reaching teachers who do not have access to traditional university-based resources for professional development, this study offers a cautionary note to teacher educators seeking to partner with third-party companies to offer professional development. We found that the form of expression embedded within the course pages, paired with the form of content consisting of the infrastructure, made the feasibility of teaching a DSE-based class unlikely. Rather than supporting the transformational pedagogy involved in a DSE-based class, the double articulation between the form of expression and the form of content reinforce the status quo. Future research might explore other platform options to determine the feasibility of teaching DSE-based courses in other spaces.

This study also offers inspiration for those seeking to develop professional development opportunities that take into account DSE perspectives; by seeing the problematic nature of ForeverEd's course descriptions—that is, engaging with the stratum—it is possible to embark on lines of flight and design courses that do not reflect those deficit-oriented assumptions. Such courses call into being counterpublics whose views contrast with that of the dominant societal views of disability. DSE assumes that disablement is a complex social, cultural, and political process (Ashby, 2012; Kafer, 2013; Taylor, Shulz, & Wallker, 2003). Hence, disability is a socially and culturally defined construct (Ashby, 2012). The process of disablement is a form of oppression/privilege in which social and political contexts "create and perpetuate hierarchies of ability and disability" (Ashby, 2012, p. 92; also see Barnes, Oliver, & Barton, 2002; Davis, 1997; Hahn, 1997). In these hierarchies, certain people gain unearned advantages that others are denied. DSE assumes that it is the social and physical environment that must change in response to disablement. DSE also challenges discourses of normalcy and ableism. Like racism, classism, and heterosexism, ableism privileges certain worldviews and ways of being in the world and, thus, constructs them as "normal," while other worldviews and ways of being in the world are constructed as "abnormal" (Artiles in Chamberlain, 2006; Ashby, 2012; Kafer, 2013). Creating courses that reflect these perspectives produce a counterpublic and allow for lines of flight from the dominant stratum. DSE-based continuing education courses for teachers involve learning in Deleuze's and Guattari's sense. Such courses challenge what presumably "everybody knows" about disability (according to dominant views) and center paradigms based on DSE research, such as the social model and the social/political model.

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Children's "Mis"behaviours:
An Ethical Engagement with the Mystery of the Other

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> *"He was the most non-complaint, violent and challenging child I ever encountered in my three decade career." (Lena, early years teacher, 32 years of experience)*

The child was sometimes described by teachers in our study in dramatic terms; sometimes considered "a nightmare," "uncontrollable," "totally disruptive," or "absolutely wild." Other times, teachers told of the ways that their colleagues discounted children because they were "bad" or "going to end up in jail anyway." Additionally, the teachers described the frustrating processes of their students being referred to experts who would formally or informally diagnose children or provide recommendations, often suggesting of a variety of "interventions."

Children who do not comply with the school's expectations of conformity and control are often positioned as deviant and defective, exceed the frames of recognizability as "students," and although already precarious, become even more vulnerable (Butler, 2010). Yet, the teachers we interviewed also acknowledged the greater contexts of these children's lives, recognizing that many of these children were affected by poverty, being in foster care, or living in "hopeless situations." In these teachers' emotional stories premised on relationality, the teachers conveyed the ways in which, due to their felt obligations to children, they sought to foster particular types of relationships with these precarious children. Seeking to understand and engage with children beyond hierarchical relationships premised on control, they instead sought relational ways of being with children who demonstrate difficult behaviours, premised on an openness to difference and a resistance to pathologizing children through labels and dehumanizing recommendations.

This paper draws on data from interviews with teachers from a multi-year study that sought to articulate the emotional toll of obligation and teachers' disengagement from the profession (see Janzen & Phelan, 2015, 2018). The research team conducted 24 in-depth, phenomenological interviews with teachers from two Canadian provinces who had left or who had considered leaving the profession. "Leaving" was defined as: moving from a current school, district, or teaching position; medical, stress, or personal leave; quitting or resigning from the profession; or taking early retirement. Participants were invited to respond to a list of prompts (similar to the methods

used in Pitt & Britzman, 2006; Pitt & Phelan, 2008) that included, for example, times when they felt frustrated by the expectations of others, had disappointed others, or had felt insufficiently prepared to support children. The interviews sought to solicit participants' reflections on personal, social, and historical narratives related to their decisions to leave or stay in the profession. We aimed to elicit teachers' experiences and understandings of obligation and to trace the various events that created their sense of moral disengagement.

In the analysis for this paper, I was particularly provoked by a few snippets of data that signalled larger political, ethical, and theoretical issues. I read these data hermeneutically and drew them into a "dialogic encounter" (Schwandt, 2003, p. 292) with theory and philosophy. Importantly, working hermeneutically allowed for a focus on the particulars, attending to the subjectivities of the participants in order to inform understandings of teachers' experiences.

Here, obligation is conceptualized as that "feeling that comes over us when others need our help, when they call out for help, or support, or freedom, or whatever they need" (Caputo, 1993, p. 5). Importantly, obligation gives teaching its moral integrity in that it requires that teachers respond to the Other, but notably, it also takes an emotional toll on teachers, in that one can never respond fully to one's obligations. Obligations are always ripe with uncertainty and knowability. Yet, although the teacher is always burdened by obligation, obligation is also "the pedagogical site from where the teacher derives a sense of ethical integrity" (Janzen, in press). Here, I will take a curricular research "line of flight" (Deleuze, 1995), inspired by participants' perspectives and enlivened by theoretical engagements, into that space of ethical integrity, in order to conceptualize possibilities for ethical relations between the teacher and the child. Enlisting hermeneutic analysis, I put empirical data into conversation with theory and philosophy in order to provoke reconceptualized understandings of teachers' engagements with children and their "mis"behaviours. I use this term, "mis"behaviour, to signal the socially constructed and subjective nature of the term, while also problematizing its use (Janzen & Schwartz, 2018).

I will begin by arguing that schools remain reliant on technologies of control and the effects this has on the ways in which "mis"behaviour becomes situated within and as the fault of the child (Millei, 2014). Thus, because the child fails to conform to school norms and because the school (in many cases) does not understand and know how to respond to difficult behaviours, the "mis"behaviours become pathologized and conceptualized as a "disability." Pathologizing the child results in medicalized—and thus, legitimized—approaches to responding to "mis"behaviours, whereby the goal is to "treat" the problem, which is framed as residing within the child. Importantly, I will argue that this "framing" of children as deviant positions these children as precarious (Butler, 2010), further marginalizing those already marginalized and subsequently devaluing their humanity. In the final section, I will then enliven this theorizing with a data segment from one of our research participants, in order to illustrate teachers' insights into ethical relationships with children and possibilities for reconceptualizing "mis"behaviour.

"Mis"behaviour as Disability

Education systems are premised on notions of knowledge as rational and objective (Säfström, 2003), which has both epistemological as well as ontological effects. Epistemologically, the curriculum becomes a tool of transmission, rather than a function of how schools understand, create, and make sense of the world (Smits & Naqvi, 2012). These epistemological presuppositions constitute knowledge as fixed and apolitical, constituting

curriculum as a stable and transferable product. Whereas, ontologically, the subjectivities of teachers are reified as masters—masters of knowledge and over students. The ontological effects of such rational knowledge maintain imbalanced hierarchies, positioning teachers as knowers—or masters—over knowledge and over children, and subsequently constructing children as knowable objects. The ontological effect on children is that they become the "ultimate 'Other'" (Cannella, 2000, p. 36). Thus, children are constructed as always inferior, as:

> those who must have their decisions made for them because they are not yet mature—those who must gain knowledge that has been legitimized by those who are older and wiser—those whose ways of being in the world can be uncovered through the experimental and observational methods of science—those who can be labeled as gifted, slow, intelligent, or special. (Cannella, 2000, p. 36)

When children are objects of the education system and products within the industrial model on which modern day schooling is based, children are required to be compliant, controlled, and controllable. The dominance over the child is the mode of maintaining order in the school (Davies, 2008; Gore & Parkes, 2008). The "good" student, therefore, is one who obeys, completes tasks, masters knowledge presented, and performs "student" in a particular way. These performances of the "good" student become the normalized behaviours of being a student.

When education's foundations are built on the certainty of rational knowledge, the perceived lack of such knowing has serious consequences for those within the system. Specifically, when particular knowledge is valued and centred, other ways of knowing and being are devalued and marginalized. It is here, within this particular staging of "knowledge," that special education emerged and grew with potency particularly in the twentieth century. As education cultivated notions of particular forms of "intelligence" as naturalized, concomitantly, the "lack" of "intelligence" was considered as a deficiency of the individual, facilitating the flourishing of special education and the enlisting of psychologizing as the means by which the students with deficiencies could be identified, measured, and fixed (Thomas & Loxley, 2007).

Importantly, the reach of educational psychology extended to include behavioural psychology as a means to address children's identified learning and behavioural deficits. The hyper-rational assumptions of knowledge ultimately distort the educational project, leading to oversimplified responses to those who are deemed lacking. In other words, when knowledge and ways of being are considered within strict boundaries of normalcy, the ease and ability to identify *ab*normalcy becomes routine—and even desirable by the system. So, even for children who have extreme impairments that cause or manifest in "mis"behaviour, the problem is not positioned as our limited knowledge or misunderstandings about the perceived impairment and how this becomes expressed by the child, but rather, the problem is that we do not know how or do not have the resources to respond. Pathologizing the child's "mis"behaviour redirects our focus from acknowledging our limited understandings of the impairment, the inadequate resources to respond to and support the child, and our own frustrations about the child's lack of compliance. This allows us to direct our focus away from our (and the system's) shortcomings towards the child, locating our lack of understanding and support for these particular differences on and within the child who, thus, becomes defined as deficit, deviant, and/or disturbed.

Thus, the student who demonstrates compliance and controllability is positioned as normal, while student non-compliance and uncontrollability becomes positioned as *ab*normal. Non-compliant and uncontrollable behaviour is often considered by the schools as "misbehaviour."

Although student "mis"behaviour may in fact be due to factors such as difficult family situations, trauma, frustration, social or contextual factors, or as protest against schooling itself, student "mis"behaviour, reflective of the discourses of special education, is positioned as a problem that resides within the student—something to be found, identified, labeled, and fixed. Even if the child has an extreme impairment, the problem is positioned as the deficit of the child and not of the system's lack of ability to understand, respond to, and support the child. What I would like to argue or explore here is that, while the school system positions student compliance and controllability as *normal*, it consequently constructs student "mis"behaviour as *ab*normal, constructing behavioural difference as deficiency, deviancy, or being disturbed. The basis of the schools system's approach to identifying "abnormality" is grounded in the "special education" discourses, which are premised on developmental psychology's tyrannical reign over and colonization of education (Pinar, 2004). The discourses of psychology have been a powerful influence in constituting student identities, particularly those deemed "behaviourally disturbed" (Laws & Davies, 2000, p. 207). It is within this context that we can see the ways in which student "mis"behaviours have been pathologized, creating the sense that schools are responding to the child's "needs" and reinforcing the school's expertise and benevolence, while detracting from the problems of curriculum, pedagogy, or of schooling itself (Thomas & Loxely, 2007).

Importantly, this shift of "mis"behaviour to the realm of the duties for which special education is responsible is, in part, an aspect of the ways in which those who "mis"behave are subsumed under the umbrella of "disabled." As Bernadette Baker (2002) so clearly articulates, marking the body or mind as "disabled" is an attempt to be seen as fixing what is defective, while maintaining a particular order of things. Moreover, Baker, who draws on Fiona Campbell, argues that the application of the label of "disabled" is an insidious project of exclusion, "a deep-seated despise of unevenness, asymmetry, or imbalance that places bodies-minds labeled as disabled at the edge of the abyss, pushing limits of human subjectivity, and creating an outlaw ontology" (p. 674). In other words, those identified as disabled are outside the norm and, ultimately, less human. This medicalization of difference, constructing difference as a "disability," is reflective of the positivistic and hegemonic implications of the epistemological underpinnings of schooling and reifies the social constructions of disability (Gallagher, 2006; Linton, 1998) resulting in schools' simplistic and binaried conceptions of children as normal-abnormal, able-disabled, and behaved-misbehaved. These simplistic dualisms reduce our responsibility to better understand and accept differences presented by children.

The medicalization of difference within schools has meant an increased "hunt for disability" with a "proliferation of categories of educational disability used to mark students as outside norms of child development or as at-risk of school failure" (Baker, 2002, p. 676). Baker provides a list of the labels to illustrate the increased phenomenon of behaviourally deviant children, which includes ADD, ADHD, ED, BD, and SBD (to which I would add EBD) and argues that this "proliferation of Ds" (p. 677), does not just reflect a new language for understanding development, but rather reflects "a shift from the moralization of disability to the medicalization of disability during the 20th century" (p. 678). The medicalizing of difference legitimizes the claim of difference as a disability, thereby, sanctioning labeling and interventions of the school and reinforcing a "natural" order of things, "a 'quality control' of national populations" (Baker, 2002, p. 664). Ontologically, the homogeneity of children is what is sought, wherein children's differences become hunted by schools, reinforcing the categorizing and labelling of children, devaluing them as objects to be fixed—or if too broken, then discarded. Again, this move puts the

onus on the child as the problem, abdicating responsibility of schools and society for their own complicity.

As an example, let us consider the label of Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (EBD), which has emerged as a diagnostic category that is, "specific to children, which combines legal, medical and education connotations and meaning" (Thomas & Loxley, 2007, p. 48). It has become a legitimized label for children with "wide-spread and unquestioned acceptance" (p. 49). The pseudo-medical term positions the child's "mis"behaviours as problems of and within the child and as manifestations of the child's innate deviance and deficiency, thus, requiring intervention and treatment of the child (Thomas & Loxley, 2007). The labeling of children as EBD, according to Thomas and Loxley, invokes the legitimized fields of psychology and medicine in the service of education's need for order and control. As per the epistemological order of "special education," once a child has been identified as deficient, the child's "need" can, therefore, be addressed, and interventions (in the form of "helping") can be applied. Importantly, this subversively transmutes the school's fear of uncontrollability onto the child's constructed deficiencies (Thomas & Loxley, 2007).

Importantly, the effects of "diagnosing" children as "emotionally disturbed" has serious long-term effects on the children's ability to be seen as "viable" in their ability to succeed in school. As a case in point, Gresham, Hunter, Corwin and Fisher (2013), who work from a medical perspective regarding "emotionally disturbed" children, argue that, "outcomes for children with such [emotional] difficulties are the worst of any disability class" (p. 19) and manifest in high rates of dropping out, being suspended, and being placed in out-of-school placements—alongside experiencing poor grades, employment rates, and personal relationships. The premise from which the medical perspective operates is that students classified with emotional difficulties are positioned as the problem themselves, medically deficient, requiring both diagnosis and remedy. This medicalized conception of misbehaviour as a "disability" heavily informs the views of children in school, legitimizing the construction of children as deficient and requiring remediation. Yet, these identified deficiencies are addressed through remediation that often further marginalize and inhibit children (Buffington-Adams, 2014). Therefore, imposing these diagnoses and subsequent remedial measures can end up doing more harm than good. The child, framed as precarious, becomes devalued (Butler, 2010). As Buffington-Adams (2014) writes, "subjected, limited, and mechanically trained, humanity slips away" (n.p.).

The labels imposed upon children act as discursive frames that illustrate the operations of social and political power, differentiating between those lives that count and those that do not (Butler, 2010). As Butler states, "thus, there are 'subjects' who are not quite recognizable as subjects, and there are 'lives' that are not quite—or, indeed, are never—recognized as lives" (p. 4). The school's preoccupation with the compliance and conformity of children means that children who do not comply with behavioural norms of schooling become diagnosed as deficient, a political move sanctioned and legitimized through medicalized discourses. This labelling reinforces the regulation of the subject through pre-established norms, ultimately dehumanizing the child and magnifying the child's precarious existence in school (Janzen, in press).

"Mis"behaviour as Difference: A Reconceptualization

Shifting the focus from student compliance and control to an ethical engagement with the other requires a reconceptualization of misbehaviour and centering of difference. Here, I draw on

the work of Sharon Todd (2003) to consider the "violently lived realities" (p. 1) of children who are often living in contexts of injustices that include various forms of inequity, poverty, abuse, trauma, and so on. Todd argues that difference and "Other" are "seen to be the consequence of social, economic, or political disaffiliation, and thus to be 'Other' signals that which is undesirable by virtue of its formation within oppressive circumstances" (p. 2). Through this lens, Todd draws heavily on Levinas and argues that we can respond in an ethical manner to a wide range of lived experiences, specifically by attending to the Other in a manner that preserves one's alterity. Thus, rather than seeking to categorize, label, and diagnose, an ethical relationship requires, "giving up on the idea that learning about others is an appropriate ethical response to difference" (p. 16). When one presumes to know the Other, according to Todd, one exercises power over the Other, enveloping the Other into the self. Therefore, to seek to know the Other is an act that attempts to reduce the Other to the self (Todd, 2003).

Todd's (2003) distinction between *knowing about* the Other and *learning from* the Other is useful in considering the importance of difference. Todd conceptualizes *knowing about* the Other as informed by rational perspectives of knowledge and of the subject, assuming the Other can be known and that, in knowing, differences can be mitigated—and minimized. In attempting to know the Other, the relationship between the teacher and the child is, thus, reified within the power hierarchy of master and object; the teacher remains the knower, and the child is objectified and measured against norms. Rather, *learning from* the Other is an ethical encounter in which the "self and the Other exist as radically distinct beings" (p. 29). It is this distinction between the self and Other, "the break between self and Other" (p. 29), where the conditions for ethical relationships exist. In this reconceptualization of the teacher-child relationship, the focus is on maintaining the alterity—the difference—of the Other, not subsuming the Other into the self or into distinct categories of knowability. Here, difference is not seen as deficiency or disability, but rather is integral to maintaining the alterity of the Other and creating the space where ethical relationships become possible.

Honouring Alterity: Maintaining the Mystery

"We can't blame the child. I can think of a student who was barely passing for years. I got her in grade 9 and she was labelled a 'struggling' learner.... I was fortunate to have the time to just sit with her—to talk. It was a chance to work with a kid that was a mystery to me." (George, middle years resource teacher, 10 years experience)

Here, we see George honouring the difference of the Other, engrossed by the mystery of the child, without an aim to identify, categorize, or fix. George's stance is emblematic of the Levinasian argument that Todd (2003) is making, specifically that, "the relationship with the Other is a relationship with a Mystery" (Levinas, as quoted in Todd, 2003, p. 51). Mystery, here, is understood not as a puzzle to be solved, but as an engagement with, and maintenance of a stance of intrigue and curiosity about, the Other. As Todd goes on to explain, this mystery maintains the difference of the Other, the "radical alterity" that seeks to keep the space between the self and the Other. It is not where the self seeks to know about the Other, but rather experiences the alterity of the Other through its own revealing; "where the self is receptive to the revelation of difference and is thereby moved to a level of responsibility" (p. 51). An important aspect of maintaining this mystery for the Other is not an effort to seek to know or to create a connection in the space of

difference between the self and the Other—to bridge the gap—but rather to maintain the space between the self and Other by honouring the Other's alterity.

The second characteristic that Todd (2003) identifies in this relationship with the Other is the necessity for the self to remove its ego. This means that, in an ethical relationship with the Other, it is not premised on the interests, intentions, or needs of the self. It is an attention to the Other "in such a way as to limit one's own self-concern" (p. 52). This is an "egoless passivity" (p. 53) that orients the self to the Other, creating the conditions for "being for the Other" (p. 53), opening one up to a state of exposure, of feeling for the Other, "in the sense of giving oneself across difference through one's pain and enjoyment" (p. 53), creating an exposure or vulnerability of the self "susceptible to the Other's needs" (p. 53). Thus, the ethical relationship with the Other is premised on a stance of mystery for the Other and of an egolessness within the encounter.

As we see with George, an engagement with the mystery of the Other requires an investment in listening. George wants to "sit with her" and to "talk." Within his words, we can hear his allusions to a patience, openness, and listening. We hear his sense of responsibility to the student. Where Levinas and Todd use the idea of mystery to illustrate an aspect of the ethical relationship that refuses to seek certainty but rather is premised on maintaining difference, I see this is a fruitful conceptualization for the ways schools might reconsider their relationships with children, particularly those who "mis"behave. What might be productive is engaging in a genuine curiosity about children and their behaviours—not to seek to attempt to know them and "fix" them, but rather to learn from them. This is the type of relation that aims to be vulnerable—open to the possibility of being altered by children.

This is where the ethical encounter becomes salient; the stance of a mystery is not about seeking to know why a child behaves the way she does, but rather to be in relation with a child, to listen "as an ethical response to suffering" (p. 118). It is an attentiveness to the Other enlivened through listening, requiring a suspension of judgement, and a sense of trust that always positions the listener as implicated (Todd, 2003). This type of listening that inquires into the mystery of the Other aims to create "new forms of relationality" (Todd, 2003, p. 125). This engagement with children as a stance of attentiveness to their mysteries—particularly those who are seen as "mis"behaving—is an attempt to reconceptualize our understandings of children and their behaviours, to alter how teachers engage with these children, and to honour the differences of those children who do not comply. This type of ethical relation has no guaranteed outcomes or certainty of effects, but it is a way in which children might have the opportunity to be seen, acknowledged, and valued for the differences that they bring.

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"I've Killed My Puppet!"
A Relational Psychotherapeutic Approach to Inclusive Classroom Practices

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A Deaf Teacher Educator, Relationality, and Inclusive Classroom Practices

AS A DEAF TEACHER EDUCATOR working at a non-deaf, public university teaching in an undergraduate, pre-kindergarten through fourth grade (preK-4) program and a graduate program that trains educational researchers and leaders, I have been compelled to rethink what it means to be inclusive, and that has upended what I previously understood to be inclusion. In the essay "Your American Sign Language Interpreters Are Hurting Our Education," I wrote about how my understanding of what made inclusion, well, *inclusive* crumbled apart after a particularly intense exchange with a group of non-native English speaking international graduate students. Much to my disbelief, the students confronted me after class with complaints that the American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters were impeding *their* education. In short, the international students demanded that I ditch the ASL interpreters and read their lips instead when in class (Valente, 2016).

While initially this painful incident felt like a discriminatory attack on my rights to have what is a legally-mandated accommodation of ASL interpreters (and it was one), I later found it emotionally reparative *and* pedagogically generative to consider alternative ways of reading what transpired that memorable day. I came to understand the international students' many grievances: feeling disconnected from me with the ASL interpreters as communicative intermediaries, feeling "culture shock" with having interpreters repeatedly overstep or violate boundaries of space in their struggles to hear sometimes soft speaking, mumbling, or strongly accented speech, feeling humiliated being asked to repeat what they said when the interpreters struggled or failed to understand, and feeling unsure if the interpreters were interpreting their comments in class accurately or clearly enough.

Once the grief of exclusion felt less raw, I came to realize that I, too, shared many of the same feelings and concerns the students raised. For me, this episode with my graduate students brought into sharp relief the paradoxes of inclusion and exclusion. After working through this and other similarly difficult or traumatizing experiences of exclusion as a patient in relational

psychoanalytic psychotherapy (e.g. Valente, 2014a, 2014b, 2016), I eventually came to learn about and attempt to put into practice a relational psychotherapeutic approach to inclusive classroom practices (e.g. Benjamin, 1997; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Minow, 1990; Ogden, 1994; Skrtic & Kent, 2013; Valente, 2016). So, then, what *exactly* is a relational psychotherapeutic approach to inclusive classroom practices?

A Relational Psychotherapeutic Approach to Inclusive Classroom Practices

At its core, a relational approach is about relationships. What this has meant practically in terms of inclusive practice is reframing "difference" (e.g., disability, language, race, my "deaf" difference, international students' "language" difference, etc.) itself as a *relation*.[1] In other words, a relational view presupposes that "difference" does not singularly reside in the individual, but that "difference" is also shaped and given shape by the group. A distinct feature of a relational praxis that makes it especially *inclusive* is how relationality works purposefully to keep front and center individual and group practices of relating (or not) to one another. Another distinct feature of a relational approach is how it reframes teaching and learning as simultaneously a *pedagogic* and *therapeutic* project (Valente, 2016). In my everyday practice, this means there is an equal emphasis on attending to the *emotional/affective* and *intellectual* lives of and relations amongst members of the classroom community.

Additionally, through a relational praxis, inclusive educators are compelled to continually consider how "inclusion" and "exclusion" are what psychoanalytic theorist Gail Boldt (2006) called, "relational act[s]" (p. 274). For instance, when later revisiting the incident with the group of international graduate students from a relational perspective, I came to realize how our failure to communicate and relate to one another *with* and *across our differences* affected all of us—as a *group*. Simply put, ours was a group failure. For me, reframing this episode not as an individual but collective failure was productive because I came to realize the generative, inclusionary potential of thinking about and responding to difference not as an individual's burden, but as a group's responsibility. Most especially, I came to understand the critical mantra of relationality: there should not be a hierarchy of difference but a shared burden to deal with difference in ways that allow all members of the group to share the rights and responsibilities for establishing an inclusive community (Valente, 2016).

Rather than further describe what a relational approach "is," the purpose of this essay is to instead show what relational strategies can "do" to help educators create an inclusive classroom community. In what follows, I begin with the "I've killed my puppet" story to provide a concrete illustration for inclusive educators of the remarkable potential of putting into practice a relational psychotherapeutic approach to inclusion. Afterward, I use the "I've killed my puppet" story as an example to foreground relational strategies employed in my teaching practice in my class and in this particular episode. I aim to use this story and the discussion that follows to make the case for inclusive educators to consider adapting or modifying into their own teaching practices these particular relational strategies.

"I've Killed My Puppet"

Picture in your mind this scene: a university classroom with twenty pre-service students

in groups of five huddled together around four oval-shaped tables, each table camouflaged by the blue, green, red, yellow, tiger-striped, or polka-dotted body parts of partially-sewn and stuffed melon-head puppets. On the tables were also sewing machines, laptop computers, marble notebooks, fabric, thread, sewing needles, felt, polyfoam, polyester fiberfill, glue guns, scissors, rulers, and markers. The class was abuzz like a workshop.

A short while later, I noticed Whitney sitting in a chair a little distance from her groupmates, all of whom were busily working at their table. I observed Whitney's familiar pattern of spasm-like movements: head jerking, shoulders shrugging, and left leg kicking out. Whitney's head, shoulders, and leg repeated the same sequence of movements. And, again. I watched Whitney stare out the window lost in thought, her clasped hands clenching pieces of fabric. I soon observed another pattern that emerged. I noticed one groupmate at a time approach Whitney, whisper in her ear or have a quick exchange, and then return to the group working at the table. After each visit from a groupmate, Whitney would return to staring out the window. Eventually, I decided to approach Whitney to ask a rather simple question, a version of which countless teachers since time immemorial have asked, "Whitney, where are you staring off into space to?"

Much to my surprise, Whitney let out a woeful howl that hushed the workshop buzz and got the attention of all the groups in the classroom, "I've killed my puppet!"

And, with that, Whitney's trembling eyes welled up with tears and her cupped hands jerked outward to show me the puppet she had "killed," with its tortured threadwork and mangled puppet limbs then falling to the floor. By no means was this my first time having a student cry or get emotional in class, but the juxtaposition between the almost comic absurdity of Whitney's comment that she had "killed" her puppet and the intensity of her despair caught me off guard. Momentarily unsure how to respond, I uncharacteristically said nothing. Instead, I clumsily placed my hand on Whitney's shoulder and with my free hand motioned to the rest of the on-looking class to get back to work.

Whitney sat in her chair looking depressed and defeated. In a soft voice, she continued, "I can't do this. I just can't. I'm not good at this arts and crafts stuff. I wish I could just write a paper or take a test and not do this."

Before I could respond, Whitney shot me and her surrounding groupmates a grudging half-smile to acknowledge she knew what was coming next. On cue, I looked at Whitney and her groupmates, "Do you imagine that in your future classroom your students will feel this way about their learning? How would you respond?"

Relationality as Inclusive Praxis: Practicing Relational Strategies in the "Puppet Class"

The "Puppet Class": Puppets as a Vehicle for Practicing Relational Strategies

In what follows next, I will describe the "puppet class" and then draw attention to the relational strategies built into the course before concluding with the strategies implicitly and explicitly at work in the "I've killed my puppet" story. *The Happy Valley Puppet Show* or what is colloquially known by students as the "puppet class" has three major strands of scholarship that shape the course design or make up the class readings, including disability studies in education (e.g. Valente & Danforth, 2016), reconceptualizing early childhood education (e.g. Ayers & Alexander-Tanner, 2010; MacNaughton, 2003) and psychoanalytic or psychotherapeutic

approaches to pedagogies (e.g. Boldt, 2006; Boldt & Valente, 2016; Britzman, 2015; Paley, 1986, 1990, 2009; O'Loughlin, 2009; Valente, 2016). *The Happy Valley Puppet Show* is a class-produced and performed puppet variety show about an inclusive kindergarten class that riffs off of the television program *Sesame Street*. Each group in the class is tasked with making a 5-10 minute skit for a production of *The Happy Valley Puppet Show*, and the course culminates with filmed performances for local preschool audiences. The original inspiration to use theatre as a pedagogy for *The Happy Valley Puppet Show* came from Vivian Paley's (1990, 2009) use of storytelling theatre with children and the Sesame Workshop (e.g. Cole, Richman, & Brown, 2011; Fisch & Truglio, 2011; please see the endnote on the Sesame Workshop and the course)[2]. A salient feature of each relational strategy discussed in this essay is our purposeful practice of dialoguing openly and often about our own and our group's ways of relating (or not) with one another and dialoguing about how these relations affect individuals and the group.

Relational Strategy: Attending to Our Ways of Living and Relating Inclusively (Or Not)

As I explain to students each semester, the pedagogic purpose of *The Happy Valley Puppet Show* is to use it as a vehicle for practicing strategies of relationality in our classroom life. *The Happy Valley Puppet Show* is designed to purposefully provide opportunities (or, really, the needed tensions) for practicing relationality. I make explicit to my students that the pedagogical purpose of puppet-making and producing an original puppet show is to have pre-service teachers—most of whom are clearly experts enough at "doing school" (Pope, 2001) to attend our flagship university—engage with materials and activities that they have little or, most often, no experience with, including, most dauntingly, tackling the sewing machine, stitching (yes, there is a difference between sewing and stitching), singing, writing song lyrics, character voicing, puppeteering, script development, and so on.

It never ceases to amaze me how thread stuck in a sewing machine, singing in front of a group, or biting criticism from focus groups after doing mock performances can and often does evoke strong emotions and noticeable affect in people. All throughout the semester, I make and re-make the point that the purpose of the puppets is that they serve as a medium for provoking classroom encounters that compel us to dialogue about and across our differences, our experiences of inclusion/exclusion, and how we are affected by and affect the group. Instead of only reading and talking about inclusive practices, we attempt to *live* and to *relate* to one another inclusively while navigating through the inevitable obstacles that come up in our efforts to produce and put on a puppet show.

Relational Strategy: Tracking, Dialoguing, and Journaling About Affect

To have students practice attending to the emotional and intellectual lives of everyone in the group, I organize class readings, discussions, and activities around talking explicitly and regularly from the first to the last day of class about our relational practices (or lack thereof). We put this relational principle into practice on the very first day of class by tasking students with tracking their own and others' affect. To come up with a working definition of affect, we begin by reading and discussing an excerpt from Kathleen Stewart's (2007) description of ordinary affects which,

are the varied, surging capacities to affect and be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergences. They're things that happen. They happen in impulses, sensations, expectations, daydreams, encounters, and habits of relating, in strategies and their failures, in forms of persuasion, contagion, and compulsion, in modes of attention, attachment, and agency…that catch people up in something that feels like something. (pp. 1-2)

Rather than focusing on defining affect too long, we instead focus on what affect *does* or when it seems to materialize. To do this, we practice early on and throughout the semester the strategy of tracking affect by watching short videos from Penn State's Exemplary Digital Teaching Archive (see link: http://edtap.psu.edu). The Exemplary Digital Teaching Archive project (EDTAP) is a collection of videos of elementary and middle school students in classes led by master teachers modeling lessons in project-based, inquiry-based, or studio-based pedagogical approaches that we learn about in the course. These EDTAP videos are a rich resource that we use repeatedly throughout the semester for doing the dual task of trying to make sense of the affective/emotional and intellectual lives of students. For this purpose, each time we watch an EDTAP video, we watch them twice with the idea that we need to read each scene in the classroom for both affect/emotion and teaching/learning dynamics. The first viewing is to practice tracking and dialoguing with groupmates about the affect of the children and teachers in various contexts in the video; similarly, the second viewing is to track and dialogue about the specificities of the above-mentioned pedagogical approaches. Before starting, as we will do for almost every class activity throughout the semester, I remind the students to pay attention to and think about their own affect and others' affect as they do these activities.

To watch the video, students are given prompt questions to write in their journals about such as:

- How do the students relate (or not relate) with one another one-on-one, in their groups, in whole class activities/discussions?
- How do the students relate (or not relate) with the teacher one-on-one, in their groups, in whole class activities/discussions?

The students then discuss these journal entries with their groupmates in order to talk openly about how the affective flows and relationships are shaping or shaped by our individual and collective experiences in the class. Through this routine, we make the practice of dialoguing about and across our differences, through discussions, journals, and then discussing journal entries, part of our collective habits.

Relational Strategy: The "Pause," Quick Reaction Journal Entries, and Dialoguing Some More

Another routine I have adopted is to pause or interrupt an activity or discussion "that catch[es] people up in something that feels like something"—that is, moments that feel especially intense, uncomfortable, boring, disconnected, and so on. This pause strategy, much as a therapist would employ it during session, allows pre-service students to practice taking stock of and to master tracking their own and their group's affect when "something that feels like

something" emerges during class. Students are then tasked with writing quick reaction journal entries about how they feel about their learning, their peers, and our class. These journal entries are, in turn, shared within their groups for students to dialogue once again about how they are affected and affect others in the group and class. Through these quick reaction journal entries, students are habituated to our collective responsibility to "pause" to think about the purpose of every interaction and take into consideration how it will affect—unproductively or productively—relationships in our classroom. As a group, we are all supposed to be on the lookout for how our ways of relating with one another connect or disconnect us from our shared experiences of learning and our collective responsibilities for building an inclusive classroom community.

Returning to Whitney: From "Why" to "Where" to Another "Pause"

In returning to the story about Whitney, I want to circle back to the original question I asked that she curiously did not respond to in that moment: "Whitney, where are you staring off into space to?" Through the years, ad nauseam, I have asked students, "Why are you staring off into space?" Whitney staring off into space presented the quintessential teacher dilemma of what to do when a student appears to be off task or disengaged. In this instance with Whitney, the shift from asking "*why*" to "*where*" may seem insignificant; however, for me, it was indicative of my continuing efforts (not always so successful) to break free of old patterns of relating to my students. As I described at the opening of this essay, these old patterns of relating had the effect of reinforcing traditional, hierarchical roles of student-to-teacher and perpetuating unequal power dynamics. These days I am cognizant of the fact that hierarches of differences and unequal power dynamics disconnect me from my students both emotionally and intellectually. Rather than responding as I have in the past and getting stuck with the usual troubling results, I attempted to engage with Whitney *relationally* as an *ally*. Changing the question from "Why are you staring off into space?" to "Where are you staring off into space to?" was my somewhat awkwardly worded attempt to spark a connection—an *alliance*—with Whitney.

Relational Strategy: "Therapeutic Alliance"

In my rather bumbling efforts to engage Whitney, I had in mind the idea that I was modeling for her groupmates a strategy from a recent reading by Boldt (2006), where she described the psychotherapeutic practice of "therapeutic alliance" or "working alliances." By alliance, Boldt (2006) means seizing opportunities—those seemingly ordinary and extraordinary—during class where "the [teacher] proves she is not punishing, even in the face of the worst the [student] has to offer," which allows the student and teacher "to begin to work together to help the [student] address ideas, needs, and desires that previously had felt much too dangerous to face" (p. 295). The concept of "alliance" was a core tool for the course that we revisited continuously in order to consider our ways of relating to and being inclusive of one another (Greenson, 1965; Rather, 2001; and Zetzel, 1956; all as cited in Boldt, 2006).

As it turns out for Whitney, there was indeed something "too dangerous to face" beyond "killing" her puppet or rather her stated frustrations with her failures in puppet-making. Because of what happened, Whitney, her groupmates, and I engaged in a rich, lengthy conversation about

how each in the group would have wanted me (as their teacher) and their peers to have responded if in a similar situation to Whitney, and we then had an exchange on how each imagined they would respond to their future students. As is wont to happen, for those who are familiar with psychotherapy, it was when our conversation was about to conclude that Whitney let out a deep sigh, turned to look at her groupmates, and then looked directly at me to say, "You asked me earlier where I was staring off into space to?" I nodded, yes.

Whitney's lips quivered, "I was staring off to…a hospital, thinking about someone I love who is dying."

Relational Strategy: Returning to the "Pause"

Upon hearing Whitney, her groupmates and I comforted her and re-engaged in another conversation, albeit a different one with different ways of relating. At this juncture, I need to pause here to caution against reading what Whitney revealed to be evidence of correlation or causality that the relational approach can work. I also do not want to read this as what some folks call a "*Chicken Noodle Soup for the Soul* moment" (okay, maybe for some folks it is). For me, there is something that feels, at best, sensationalist and, at worst, akin to emotional voyeurism to try to imagine I can or ought to analyze Whitney. I am not Whitney's therapist; I am her professor. I can provide her with compassion, not therapy. Equally as much, I think there is danger in reading Whitney revealing her tragedy to the group and me as "good" or the desired outcome. I cannot know what it meant to Whitney or what motivated her to share her tragic news. Whitney may not know herself.

What I do know is that the switch from "where" to "why"—my attempt to be curious and to connect—did not yield to me the answer to the question at the point I initially asked Whitney. Understandably so, maybe Whitney did not feel able to be vulnerable in that moment in front of the class but did later in the small group with peers she has been engaging with in close conversations through the semester. Or, as I imagine, perhaps she was still working through her own complicated feelings at that moment. Maybe Whitney pivoted to the puppet because it was less dire or a more immediate tragedy or she thought *I thought* being on task with the puppet was more pressing. Whatever the case may be, I cannot know as, thereafter, when I or her groupmates inquired a few times about how she was dealing with the impending death of a loved one, Whitney pivoted to another conversation. Taking the hint, I did not raise the topic again—to have done so would have felt like it was more for me than for her.

Importantly, I think focusing on the "reveal" redirects our attention from the more pressing issue of what the reveal *does*, not so much for what it *means*. I do know asking the question affected Whitney and that it later affected our group. Everyone was affected. The goal of being relational was not for Whitney to reveal what she had yet to share with anyone. But instead, the goal was to open up pathways for dialoguing and connecting with one another. In this case, we connected over the unanticipated ways our vulnerabilities can affect us and, in turn, affect others in the group. If there was anything that was important, I think it was that curiosity and being in relation with Whitney was generative in creating new ways of relating to one another—not better or more honest—but differently shaped by our shared sense of intimacy in that moment.

Conclusion: Inclusive Education as a Therapeutic and Pedagogic Project

In closing, what I argue for here is a version of inclusion that takes into account affect and emotions. A relational ethos ought to address differences in our real and/or perceived attributes, in addition to attending to our differing *and* shared emotional lives as we navigate inclusion and exclusion. We need to rescue emotions, feelings, and the ways we are affected, affect others, and affect the group from the margins—for me, this is the *affective potential* of what a relational approach to inclusion offers. As I have written before, I see inclusion these days not as a noun but a verb (Valente, 2016). Our shared work toward a relational understanding of inclusive classroom practices is a never-ending process and dialogue. Educators need to unfasten themselves to a priori understandings of inclusion and consider how inclusion is a process that is constructed intersubjectively. This relational ethos is not about eradicating exclusions nor resolving or guarding against the affective and emotional complexities of exclusions. The power of the relational psychotherapeutic approach to inclusion is that it provides a framework within which community members routinely, dialogically engage and are duty-bound to collectively respond when exclusions inevitably do emerge. Finally, a relational ethos recognizes the inclusive potential of reconceptualizing teaching as a therapeutic *and* pedagogic project, where the emotional *and* intellectual lives of and relations amongst members of the classroom community are held to be equally vital.

Notes

1. For readers less familiar with relational models of disability studies, see Dan Goodley's (2010, 2016) primer *Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* about global disability studies movements and disability politics. Goodley outlines four major traditions that make up the field of global disability studies, which includes the social, minority, cultural, and relational models. While a description of the specificities and entanglements of these four disability studies models is beyond the scope of this paper, I do caution against reading Goodley's description (or any account, for that matter) of the major models of disability studies as a continuum from outdated to contemporary (where relational models replace social, minority, and cultural models), but instead read these various models as productively complementary and complexifying (even as and especially because these models of disability studies sometimes contradict and contest each other). For readers more versed in disability studies and particularly relational models of disability studies, see "L'école Gulliver and La Borde: An Ethnographic Account of Collectivist Integration and Institutional Psychotherapy" by Boldt and Valente (2016), which offers an alternative account of a relational model of disability studies grounded in the works of Felix Guattari, Fernand Deligny, and their contemporaries (which stands in contrast to the Lacanian and Nordic relational models of disability presented in Goodley's work).

2. Due to space limitations, a fuller description that does justice to the pedagogical innovativeness of the Sesame Workshop is outside the scope of this essay. For those interested in learning more, here is a brief account: The Sesame Workshop is a non-profit organization that produces the popular PBS television program *Sesame Street* and offers other educational media and outreach. The precursor to what is today the Sesame Workshop was the Children's Television Workshop (CTW) that originated the CTW coproduction model, an innovative feature of which was its development of a flexible creative plan and processes for productively facilitating dialogue during the group work collaborations between television writers and producers, curriculum specialists, and educational researchers (Cole et al., 2011; for more on CTW, see Fisch & Truglio, 2011). Another innovative feature of the CTW coproduction model was its use of individual and focus group interviews with children, their parents, and educators to learn about and take into consideration the educational and social-emotional content of the shows prior to releasing on television, and post-airing interviews were sometimes conducted too (Cole et al., 2011). In *The Happy Valley Puppet Show*, we do a version of these focus groups for peer feedback at selected phases during the semester, where groups perform parts of their skits, script dialogues, or songs in-progress for the other groups in the class who are charged with assessing the performances for how well they align with the

curriculum models we are learning about, as well as creating plot points or lyrics that make concrete a relational approach to inclusive classrooms preschool audiences.

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Disability Plots:
Curriculum, Allegory, & History

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THE FIRST HIGH SCHOOL where I began my career as a social studies educator in Indiana offered an elective course called "Ethnic Studies." By its official course description from the state, the Ethnic Studies course is meant to offer "a comparative approach to the study of patterns of cultural development, immigration, and assimilation" with a focus on "specific ethnic or cultural groups" (Indiana Department of Education, 2018). In 2003, my school's principal at the time asked the social studies department to expand the course's curricular scope to cover the history of all minority groups in the United States. My principal requested the course add to its curriculum some instruction on the history of lesbian, gay, and other minority sexualities, as well as the history of people with disabilities in the United States.

I remember our professional conversations well because they were interesting to me, especially at a time when teachers and administrators could (and did) talk deeply about issues of curriculum and course design, a time that was then on the eve of our current obsession with testing, accountability, and scripted standardized curricula. A debate ensued over whether the Ethnic Studies course was the best curricular fit for inclusion of these two different historical narratives: of sexual orientation and disability as markers of identity. While the instructors wanted to include the newly suggested content, they suggested that those histories are not ethnic histories. An attention to intersectional ways of thinking and teaching would have helped broaden the conversation to perhaps alter this perspective. Nonetheless, the instructors and administrator decided that a course titled Ethnic Studies is not the same thing as a course on the history of minority groups in the United States. This episode offers an image of what the intersection of curriculum studies (what knowledge is of most worth?) and disability studies (how is our knowledge shaped by normality, impairment, and dis/able-embodiment?) makes possible for teachers to consider teaching.

This intersection underscores a crucial upside to the debate we had over the proposed curriculum change: a new realization that the history of people with disabilities—and the history of how disabilities have been framed, supported, ignored, criminalized, vilified, pathologized, and recognized throughout the history of the United States—required necessary inclusion in the course all of our students took on the history of the United States. Today, 15 years later, now a professor and teacher educator of both curriculum studies and social studies education, I help my students

see how such histories are often excluded or marginalized in our conversations and curriculum in social studies education. In this article, I share how bringing theoretical approaches from disability studies, curriculum studies, and philosophy of history intersect to bring teachers' attention to how we position the experiences of, and discourses about, people with disabilities in the various narratives we recreate about "America" and U.S. national history.

To do so, I apply Pinar's (2015) curriculum theory of allegory to explain how historical narratives of disability can be read as "a specific story that hints at a more general significance" (p. 27). The specific stories of disability that appear in the curriculum of social studies education performatively do different things. In order to define and frame the performativity of the historical narratives of disability I share in this article, I turn to White (2010, 2014) and his method of uncovering the various ways we emplot the past through the histories we narrate. I share examples of disability histories taught in classrooms to argue that these are historical allegories of our present thoughts on disability (Pinar, 2015), with each narrative following a specific curricular mode of emplotment, ranging from romance and tragedy to epic, horror, and more. The article offers the fields of curriculum studies and social studies some implications for its practice in terms of how we can teach better "critiques of labeling, stigmatization, and the medicalization" of disability, which appears in our curriculum so often "wrapped in stereotypes and stigma" (Taylor, 2016, pp. xviii-xix).

Finding Disability in the History Curriculum

During my doctoral studies in curriculum theory, I began teaching courses in social studies education, which, early on in the experience, alerted me through a critical consciousness of how most middle and high school social studies textbooks for U.S. History courses pedagogically frame disability, which is to say they include and frame such narratives minimally at best and are fully absent at worst. For example, in the first edition of a new high school textbook, *American History* (HMH Social Studies, 2018), the only instances of disability making a specific appearance are in two chapter sections: one on Dorothea Dix and reforming sanitariums and asylums (pp. 311-312) and another in a section on "rights for Americans with disabilities" with a document-based historical source sidebar reading "from the Americans with Disabilities Act" (pp. 1112-1113).

Dissatisfied with the scant coverage and lack of resources ready at hand to share with my students as they began their teaching careers, I sought more materials to supplement our curriculum planning. A fellow graduate student at the time recommended Nielsen's (2012) *A Disability History of the United States* to better inform and arrange how I thought of historical narratives of disability in the U.S. Across her book's eight chapters, Nielsen constructs a chronology of how disability appears through the lives of those who have occupied what we now call the United States. Nielsen's critically oriented history uses narratives of people with disabilities to call attention to how political, bureaucratic, and policed forms of governance, coupled with capitalism and industrialization, shaped dominant views of, and ways of talking about, normality, disability, and difference in the United States.

While Nielsen does make brief references to both Helen Keller and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, two individuals I discuss in the following sections, the majority of the book calls attention to names, places, movements, and legislation that I and my students had not learned, such as Mary Phipps, considered to be an "idiot" in need of protection in 17th century New England, whose biography helps us understand how "poor people deemed insane, and those violent or

uncontrollable, became a community responsibility," instantiating early national discourses about disability (Nielsen, 2012, p. 25). My students also learn how public attitudes and approaches to disability change throughout the nation's history. Nielsen suggests that the "Revolutionary War Pension Act of 1818 established disability as a legal and social welfare category," an act that presages the kind of activism and protest over rights, access, and equity for peoples with disabilities in the United States that unfolded over the new two centuries (Nielsen, 2012, p. 54).

The work of disability historians, such as Nielsen, as well as work by disability theorists my students read, such as Garland-Thomson (2009), Goodley (2011), and Thomas (2007), all help inform their understanding (and mine) that how we talk and think about disability changes based upon the context of why we talk and think about disability. This can appear in certain times through a frame of regulation, "we are what we are," and at other times through a frame of resistance, "we are what we do not want to be," two of many possible ways to frame disability's relationship with the status quo, accommodation, assimilation, domination, and emancipation as potential ways of being in society (Goodley, 2011, p. 51).

Theorizing Disability in History Curriculum as Allegory

Once my students and I had a blueprint for what an inclusive curriculum could look like in a history course, we had to next ask what these history narratives do. What do they "want" or "demand" of the student who learns these narratives? This opened the way for us to take disability history and disability studies and enter into conversation with curriculum theory and curriculum studies. Pinar (2015) upholds the power of allegory to be a productive frame for theorizing curriculum, especially history, when he argues that "historical facts are primary, but it is their capacity to invoke our imagination that marks them as allegorical" (p. 28). What a historical fact, lesson, or curriculum topic might have meant in its original historical context enlarges and expands when encountered in the present.

We often think of allegory as a thinly veiled moralizing lesson: what you are reading or seeing means something other than or in addition to what it seems to mean. When we think of allegory as a mode of curriculum, it enables us to consider that what we teach through our curriculum has an *other* meaning, an *other* significance, opening a way to speak otherwise about what the knowledge that we learn through curriculum means or may mean. Considering curriculum as allegorical means acknowledging that the people, places, and ideas of the curriculum we select, construct, and share with students are "at once particular and symbolic, simultaneously historical and metahistorical, even mythological," inviting us to "self-consciously incorporate the past into the present" (Pinar, 2015, p. 27).

Why is an allegorical theory of curriculum relevant for how we teach the history of disability in defining and enlivening people and their experiences in the United States? One way to answer this is to consider how Lesnik-Oberstein (2015) challenges essentialist ways of defining and discussing disability, whose disability theory questions how disability represented through concepts such as "agency" or "the body" often "rely on ideas of who 'sees' or 'hears' whom, and how and why" in changing social, cultural, political, and historical circumstances (pp. 3-4). This stance on learning the histories of people with disabilities then asks us to choose a particular allegorical method to use in unpacking and deconstructing the histories we teach. Out of many allegorical methods to use in theorizing curriculum with my students, I use White (2014) and his theory of emplotment that demonstrates the metahistorical aspects of narrating a historical account,

calling attention to the rhetorical effects, tropes, and ideological significance of emplotting histories in different modes of storytelling, the curricular modes that historians, history educators, students of history, and other consumers of history bring to our study and understanding of the past.

Disability Histories as Epic, Horror, Tragedy, and Romance

These modalities, or modes, map on to the commonly encountered narrative modes we consume in literature, film, art, television, and theater, all of which are expressive mediums where we stage and encounter the past as history and where we encounter narratives of people with disabilities. I help my students see that there is an array of curricular modes from which we can conceptualize and emplot disability history narratives.

To begin, we see the epic mode used to emplot disability when we teach about former U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's life with polio, which he spent much of his presidency hiding from public view and knowledge. History educators often emplot Roosevelt's history with polio as a struggle or a fight, one in which he is a lone hero battling against debilitating effects of polio, often described as being "confined" to a wheelchair. Being the president during the Second World War amplifies the epic nature of Roosevelt, whose life allegorically serves as a lesson in the history curriculum for overcoming his partial paralysis and not allowing that disability to define his identity during his campaigns and presidential terms. It follows an epic mode of "beating the odds" and "winning" as a victor over disability as a force, condition, or essence of one's identity that is an obstacle to beat.

Alternately, one can emplot a disability history in the mode of horror. The history of eugenics, forced sterilization, and the murder of people with disabilities throughout the Western world in the 19th and 20th centuries—acutely presented when we teach the history of the Holocaust—is often taught using a curricular mode of horror. Indeed, some may claim the only word to accurately describe the history of eugenicist thought is horrific. Earlier this year, I accompanied a group of university students on a European tour to learn the history of the Holocaust. We required quite a bit of self-care and reparative group conversations after an emotionally devastating visit and lecture at the T4 memorial in Berlin, officially called the "Memorial and Information Centre for the Victims of the Nazi Euthanasia Programme." The *Aktion T4* program carried out the "euthanasia" (involuntary murder) of 70,000 mentally and physically disabled peopled immediately before and during the early stages of the Second World War (Reese, 2018). The allegorical nature of including this history in the curriculum, especially the often untaught history of eugenics in the United States, is meant to horrify us in the present to the unconscionable ways we once treated people with disabilities, avowing never to forget and never to treat people with disabilities this way again. By using fear, terror, and disgust to frighten and alert us allegorically to real danger in the present that could happen to us at any moment, horror works as a curricular mode to foreground disabilities histories through the abject and grotesque in the disability histories we emplot about brutal and dehumanizing histories of disability.

Related to the Holocaust is the specter of war and how we very often in history education shy away from addressing and confronting the consequences of war, conflict, injury, and disability, especially amongst veterans of wars. During a lesson I observed of a high school world history teacher for a year-long ethnographic research study I conducted in 2013, I was drawn to the

teacher's framing of how soldiers were disfigured and disabled through injuries sustained during combat in the First World War. To help give credence to his claim that the First World War should be understood through its scope of violence and brutality, the teacher, Mr. Bauer, reads aloud to his students a description of Andrew, a British solider injured while fighting in the First World War as recounted in Margaret Rotowski's (1986) novel, *After the Dancing Days*. From the passage of the book Mr. Bauer reads, it describes Andrew as follows:

> The only thing normal about him was his eyes, but even they were pulled out of shape. The rest of his face was red, as if it had been deeply sunburned, and all of his features were pulled downward, as if hot tears had run down and melted his face. His mouth had no lips. It looked as if someone had cut a slit where his mouth should be. (p. 47)

As Mr. Bauer reads aloud this description, his students make verbal responses that indicate disgust and revulsion to their mental images of the solider. One student, Brett, blurts out that the description "is seriously messed up, for real." Another student, Peter, says aloud, "I would probably just kill myself if I looked like that." Upon hearing Peter's admission, Mr. Bauer admonishes Peter for an apparent lack of sympathy, suggesting Peter think "long and hard" about idealizing suicide in the face of disfigurement and disability. Mr. Bauer pushes Peter to consider what such voicing may mean for others who are disfigured or disabled in some perceptible way. Mr. Bauer goes on to explain that it must not have been easy for Andrew to be seen in public after his disfigurement. Crafting this history of disability through war in his lesson, Mr. Bauer emplots his curriculum as a tragedy, an allegorical mode in which "there are no festive occasions, except false or illusory ones" that have a "somber resignation" through which humans cannot escape the inalterable limits imposed upon them by a harsh, unforgiving external world (White, 2014, p. 9). Allegorically Mr. Bauer's lesson uses the motif of a tragic fall from "normal" figurement and ablebodiedness to a tragic circumstance of suffering at the hands of an ill-fated combat assignment in the war.

As a final example, I share a lesson from my first year of teaching a high school interdisciplinary course in English and social studies for ninth-grade students, in which we studied texts, plays, films, and primary source documents about Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan. The traditional history, which is one I taught my students, narrates how Keller's family came into contact with Sullivan, a visually impaired teacher from the Perkins Institute for the Blind, who became Helen's teacher in 1887, teaching through Keller's blindness, deafness, and muteness to communicate through touch. Sullivan and Keller spent their lives together as Keller eventually traveled frequently as a writer and lecturer, gaining national acclaim as a celebrated advocate for improving conditions for people with disabilities. The historical narrative of Keller and her teacher, as both I learned it and later reproduced it through my teaching, is an example of emplotting disability histories as a romance. By romance we do not mean a conventional love story, but rather a much older conception of romance as an inspiring story of self-identification through "a triumph of good over evil, of virtue over vice, of light over darkness" (White, 2014, p. 9).

As I reflect on my teaching, I see how I emphasized the darkness that we often describe Keller experiencing through her inability to see, hear, and speak. The historical narrative I created for my students emplotted Keller's relationship with her family as antagonistic. This history followed a romantic emplotment of positioning Keller as being a problem, an obstacle—living with her must have been a struggle for her family, causing them to, at least, seek out the help

(initially suspect) from the teacher Annie Sullivan. As happens in many good romances, my students and I expressed empathy for Keller's parents, who clash over concerns of how best to "help" or "fix" Keller, as well as expressions of empathy for Sullivan, Keller's teacher. Keller herself often took a secondary role in this framing. My teaching positioned Keller and Sullivan as struggling together through a wilderness of sorts, clashing at first, and slowly working past their antagonism that evolves into a loving, nurturing relationship, achieving harmony as lifelong adult companions. Working on the allegorical level, this history of Keller and Sullivan I taught served to teach students about the virtues of hard work, compassion, teamwork, and perseverance. Keller "emerges" from her disability to live what some students would identify as a "normal" life.

I did not have this realization of my teaching until later in graduate school when I discovered, through reading critical studies of curriculum, that the historical narrative we teach about Keller often does engage, allegorically, in a form of hero-making. Indeed, Loewen (2007) points out the romantic allegorizing of Keller's life when he quotes from an education film about Keller's life, offering to its student viewers that the real takeaway from learning about Keller's life is,

> to remind us of the wonder of the world around us and how much we owe those who taught us what it means, for there is no person that is unworthy or incapable of being helped, and the greatest service any person can make us is to help another reach true potential. (p. 12)

This is a striking case of using Keller's life and her disabilities (without ever acknowledging her agency and activism as an adult fighting for radical political causes) to engage in an allegorical mode of romance in which we tell that history to foreground a resurrection of sorts for a beleaguered protagonist "fighting to free itself from the forces of darkness, a redemption" (White, 2014, p. 152).

Conclusion

In concluding this article, I end with referencing Loewen as an example of how to critically read against the grain in the allegorical modes we use to emplot the histories we teach about disability in our curricula. I return to the request made at the behest of my first school administrator, pushing for the inclusion of people with disabilities as a history worth teaching in the Ethnic Studies course. What I would offer now in a response to that administrator is what I offer readers in this article: a call to historicize our narratives of America as always embedded, inhabited, and occupied with competing perspectives of disability, narratives that emplot disability as a medical condition with tragic and romantic notions of cure, remedy, and chronic treatment, as well as a moral condition with tragic, romantic, epic, and horrifying visions of disability.

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Life. Frayed.

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YOU WORKED LATE LAST NIGHT and several early hours this morning on that book manuscript you are editing and rushing to finish so that you can finally arrive at the part of your first sabbatical you've been looking forward to for seven years. Freedom is coming. And suddenly gone. One moment you are well. The next you are not.

The Call for Papers for the Special Issue asks for theoretical framework, methodological approach, themes, significance. I don't know. My brain is tired. I haven't written academically for a long time. To weave together citations, theory, ideas: this is too hard. Still. I've published in this journal before. Twice. Both times poetry. Maybe I should try again. To write *something*. I have questions without answers. Who did this happen to? Was it me? Who/how was I before, and who/how am I now? What does it mean to have a brain injury and be a professor? One is a disability. One is an identity, a profession, a job that pays the bills. To do it, do you have to be able? No dis allowed? Can a person be a brain injured professor? How to navigate *this* space?

I try to write. These are my findings and themes.

Pain is somewhere. Maybe everywhere.
Your ears hear a sound. This long, low moan.
What is that? Until you realize it is you.
You didn't know you could make this noise, deep and low in your throat.
Try to get up.
The ice is cold against your face that hurts so much.
Someone is coming. Hands touch you. Voices ask questions. You say, I hit my head. I hit my head. My head hurts. I can't move my arm. Your lips touch the cold ice. You ask if you are bleeding. A little bit, someone says, just a little bit. You imagine that your face and head are cracked open and spilling out. You are rolled over and you see the blue sky above you. It's beautiful and bright. Strangers look down. You feel small and lost and scared. Somehow you are magically transported to a car and your arm is tied to you with a scarf that is not yours, and two gorgeous men lean in from each side and do up the seat belt while someone asks if you feel like throwing up and you say yes. Later, you're told you slowly walked to the car with help and it was your mother who did up your seat belt and then you know how wrong everything was when you dreamed the angelic

men. You don't know how you even got up off the ice. This part is a blank. Your entire bodymind is filled with panic panic panic all the way to emergency, and you are anxietyswearing nastyprickly hotnumbpain. What just happened?

The doctor who barely has looked at you rushes back into the curtained space next to the other curtained space where someone might be having a heart attack. "Good news," she says, "Your shoulder isn't dislocated!" During her moment's breath, your self-critical mind says *see you're such a baby; you made up this pain, so you're a liar too; you could probably move your arm if you tried harder.* "Bad news," she continues, "Your shoulder is badly broken into three pieces, and here's the name of a surgeon who wants to see you next week." "What about my head?" you ask, like you've already asked three nurses. "You're fine," she says, "I've been talking to you, and I can tell you're fine. Good luck." She goes to the heart attack person.

You do not wonder why mosquitoes whine their annoying high pitch around your head, close to your ears. Taking their sudden Decembered existence for granted, you lament that you can't swat. Fractured bones mean stillness is best. Eyes closed. Sleeping sitting up in a chair. You don't mention the first-night mosquitoes to anyone. Days later you realize your ears are ringing. Loudly. Oh fuck. Confused by your blurry vision, you make an appointment to get it checked.

A colleague convinces you to still participate in a doctoral student's exam. Otherwise it will be cancelled. Guilty, you say yes. The phone by distance will work. Grad studies approved. You try to read the proposal to prepare. You've done this so many times before. But now you can't read. You blink with confusion. What you can read, you don't understand. No questions come to mind. You tell yourself you will think of questions after the presentation and during the exam. No one will notice you aren't prepared. It's just a candidacy. You go to sleep in the chair until the phone rings. You are awake for the exam, but you don't understand the presentation. You don't understand the questions. As soon as one's been asked, you forget what the conversation is about. You make up some questions. Your voice sounds like a croak. You feel embarrassed, but you can't bring strength to it. After the bathroom break, you are surprised by the phone that is turned on laying beside the chair. You hear voices calling you. Your colleagues, wondering where you are. You forgot about the exam. Your cheeks are wet with tears. No one notices. You fall asleep afterwards for a long while.

I am reduced.
A number.
Deficient.
Deficit.
I speak slowly
St-st-st-st-uttering.
I move slowly.
The world tilts dizzy.
Slow slow slow. Breathing. I'm just a shoulder, I say, I don't have a body. Just a shoulder and a hurting head. I sleep sitting up in a chair. For several bone knitting months. I sleep and sleep and sleep.

I am reduced.
A number.
Deficient.
Deficit.
Many months pass. And many more.
The number of forms to fill in with rating scales for this and that. That and this. I need help with the most basic. I'm not sure what the questions are asking. I can't follow along a line. Can't copy a phone number. Can't follow spoken instructions if they have more than half a step.
The clinic therapists want me to make SMART goals.
Disliking, dismissing my suggestions, they make goals for me. Then everyone forgets about them until my discharge date when they can click off that they've been met.
I have my own goals. Like living a life. Like learning how to grieve.
Like learning how to let go.
Saying goodbye to projects underway. Goodbye to ideas. Dreams. Possibilities.
So much is unknown now. What will become of all this formerly futured hope?
What is to become of me. Am I to be discharged from this life?

Meetings are loud and bright. Everyone is shouting at once and speaking fast. Where has civility gone? You can't follow the conversation. Your ears start ringing loudly. You go home and lay down. This was your day. Your head hurts.

Reading has been your life, your joy. Now, you read, finally. You forget what you read. The next day, no idea. It's all new to you again. You take notes. Draw character maps. Review them before you read again. You read for 10 minutes and then, so exhausted, fall asleep for an hour. You attend a presentation. It's been seven months. You have your notebook ready. The speaker is brilliant. You're excited. You try to take notes. You can't do it. A creeping fear comes over you. It's not the first time you discovered your inability to do something, but this is the most terrifying heartbreak so far. You tell them at the clinic. You mention your memory issues, again. You are sent for more tests. The results are discussed in a room of six various therapists whose mandate is to discharge you as soon as possible. As if you are an object that can be measured. And fixed. You remember this from being a teacher. The goal in these meetings was always to find the fastest solution to fixing deficit children. You always rejected this and fought for a more holistic vision. And now, here you are, where those children and parents sat waiting to be diagnosed as deficit, just drains on the system, needing to be fixed. This does not feel good. The test took over twice as long as it should have. You are slow. Your cognition is intact, but other deficits are crippling. You start to learn strategies, not to overcome them, but to live with them. They might get better. They might not. No one knows, really. You aren't very good at the strategies. You keep trying. It takes a lot of energy. You had planned to go back to work. "No," they say. "Not just now, no. Not yet." They say your expectations and the reality of your situation are mismatched.

Near the beginning, you tell the neurologist. About the stuttering. She says, "Only when you say 3 and 4 syllable words?" and laughs. "It's fine," she says, "it will get better. No alcohol. No caffeine. Be patient. It takes time." What is time? You finally return to work after a year and a half. After practicing returning to work. Writing course outlines feels like one of the greatest challenges you've ever faced. You work hard all day. The next day you can't remember what you've done. You repeat it again and then, the next day, realize you've done the same thing twice,

differently. Which should you choose? You teach a full course load. You have experience. You realize can fake it, mostly. You enjoy the students. They like the courses. You enjoy the learning culture. A phenomenal teaching assistant supports you. You bow with gratitude. This is a workplace accommodation. Having them makes you feel vulnerable and weak. You stumble with fatigue. Sometimes you're still at work long after dark because you're too tired to organize yourself to leave your office. No energy to put on your coat and walk home. After 22 months. You can't find words. Where did they go? Words for names, concepts. Authors you have loved. You know them *almost*, but the words elude you. When fatigued, you stumble when you speak. You try to hide it. You stumble with spelling. The letters are jumbled. On the board in front of students. Homonyms are crooked. You are stumped and confused in the middle of a word. You say the wrong words, not what you meant at all. Sometimes it is a similar word, and sometimes completely unlike and you are even confusing yourself. You try to make your challenges more invisible. You tell yourself you are fine and brave and strong. Try hard, very hard. The alternative is bankrupt.

You feel like your creativity is gone. You used to love thinking. You'd remember your thoughts. Play with them in your mind. Connect ideas. This is how a paper would get written. Now they sometimes come, and you love them like always, and then they drift away. Your head aches all the time. Your brain is so tired, just so very tired. You are too tired to cook, too tired to eat, too tired to move. Too tired to think. Too tired to publish. Will you perish?

After two and a half years, ongoing symptoms provoke a neuro-optometry referral. Exam results confirm experiences. You are not crazy or lazy. But you are surprised at how slow your reading tests. It explains why you work so hard yet never accomplish quite enough before paralyzing fatigue brain fog headache. Targeted exercises are prescribed. They make you dizzy. The research says they might work. As a researcher, you know "might" is not a strong promise, but you choose the side of hope and get dizzy every day while a metronome counts beats. In her report, the doctor writes big words: "Oculomotor and Binocular Dysfunction with Convergence Insufficiency," and "Over 50% of the brain's pathways play a role in visual processing, therefore it is not surprising that patients with traumatic brain injuries experience a multitude of visual difficulties… light sensitivity… migraines… unsteady ambient vision post-traumatic brain injury symptoms… hypersensitive and fragile visual system… overwhelmed by normal lighting conditions… great difficulty using screens without significant discomfort." You remember when you couldn't read at all, for six months, two years ago. Take a deep breath. Step by step. Word by word. Beat by beat.

No one wants to hear about traumatic brain injury. You were warned about this at The Clinic before returning to work. They said don't talk about it. Especially in your workplace. "There is discrimination," they say. "We've seen it. You are entitled to protections and accommodations under The Law. Just tell people you are fine. You are still recovering, say that." This is true, but you insist it's a teachable moment and you are a teacher. That you should educate people about TBIs. Maybe it's a gift and not a dis/ability. They encourage you to stay silent. They role play possible responses with you.

You tell people about the TBI, sometimes, a little bit. Some are generous. Some are not. You wonder when the patience will wear thin and then wear out. After all, productivity is god and everyone will bow to it. Even after the bough breaks, we won't even notice that we have fallen.

Until we feel the cold ice on our face and realize we can't get up. Maybe then we will finally realize there is something very wrong with this place. It takes immense courage to accept that you are now forced to live a slower, more careful life. You don't know how yet. You don't know what it means. Who/how are you? You are so able, you can do so much, you can contribute so much. But will it measure up?

I am reduced.
Fractured.
A frayed/afraid life.
I become a smiley emoji.
Often it is genuine.
You look fine, people say.
Ok then.
I look fine.

Postscript

During recent months, I have been considering the ways this experience continues to teach me to live and think differently across all domains of my work in Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies and also about the contemporary academy. I noticed that, when teaching again last year, I became ultrasensitive to students' mental, spiritual, and physical well-being. I did everything more slowly and more simply, because I required it, but also because deep in my healing brain and bones I understood that they needed it too. And that the diverse children they would soon teach need and deserve this. Reflecting back (and also forward), there is no sense that we needed to rush faster or cover more "content." Through my teaching actions, I understand that I can recommit myself again and again to fostering forms of radical love, kindness, and inclusion, and to thinking together with teachers how this might be our first thought for our work against which all other pedagogical and curriculum decisions are held accountable.

Throughout my past 27 years of teaching, I have witnessed, first in schools and then in universities, how quantitative and calculative ways of thinking can be dangerous to human well-being and communities. As I moved through the medical system, I learned about the ways this is true also in medicine. Measured and checklisted, to ever increasingly fragmented levels, with goals made for me by well-meaning people with great confidence in their system, there was little opportunity to holistically describe or make sense of my experience. It often felt that accountability was to a test or checklist, not to actual needs of a real person, which could never be accounted for by any list or so-called "achievable" SMART goals. What remained of my dignity and autonomy were greatly diminished through this process. The many parallels with education were painful to experience. Thus, philosophy and theorizing continue to matter. Schools, like universities, are also increasingly beset with punishing performance standards for both teachers and children. There have been decades of writing, thinking, critiquing, and warning about this in Curriculum Studies (perhaps even over a century!), and still it gets worse as existence itself bows under the crushing pressures of globalized, neoliberal capitalism and the tremendous inequalities it both creates and relies upon for its life-destroying energies. Such systems foster cruelty, meanness, and disregard for anyone or anything that doesn't "measure up" to pre-determined criteria of belonging. There is little room or patience for weakness, illness, frailty or fragility, difference or diversity. Such

ways of thinking not only cause indescribable pain and suffering, but also immeasurable loneliness and life-long exclusions, particularly for those whose living and being are seen as irrelevant to the system's continuing.

I recommit myself, also, to working with new and practicing teachers to make sense together of the historical and contemporary conditions of our work *in community*. There is existential meaning in that and new kinds of possibilities for justice and peace. This includes and extends to our non-human kin. Schools emerged from the same cultural processes as industrialization, patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism and often remain deeply entrenched in these his/stories, even while we often imagine that they do "good." If even one person is excluded, or if these places foster or contribute to further exclusions, then they are not good enough. I continue to hope that we can do better, that I can do better. This necessitates speaking the truth (to power). To do so always risks exposure and vulnerability, yet to not do so risks accelerating the cataclysm of suffering witnessed globally: cruelty and hatred towards diversity and difference, incalculable and growing numbers of migrants and refugees (and borders and walls that exclude them), mass extinctions and changing climate, amongst so many examples. Ecologically speaking, the strongest and most resilient environments are those that are the most diverse. This has direct implications for ways of thinking about schools and universities as communities and workplaces with their powerful bent towards homogenization and standardization. Imagining instead that the highest orienting purpose of this work is to serve and support diverse life perhaps opens space and time more generously and widely welcoming for *each* unique person to completely belong, so that as David G. Smith (1999) wrote, "life itself has a chance" (p. 27). I understand my own experience and vulnerability as a teachable moment, for myself most of all. There is much (good) work to do.

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