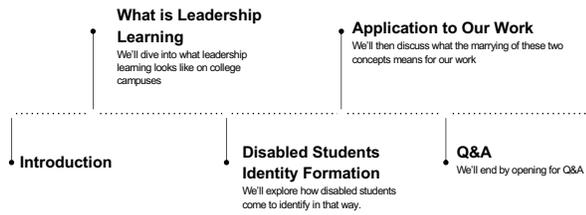


Becoming Disabled Leaders on Campus

How Disabled Students Learn Leadership Through Campus Experiences
AHEAD Conference 2022
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What We'll Cover Today



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What Is Leadership Learning?

- Educational experiences of students in preparing them to be agents of social change during and after their time in college
- Reframes the work of Student Affairs/Higher Education Professionals
- Includes factors such as identity-formation, worldviews, dominant and marginalized perspectives, and change-as-a-constant

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Identity Formation in Disabled Students, Pt. 1

- The formation of disability identity can be a vital part of leadership development
 - Cultivating innovative thinking
 - Unique perspective-taking
 - Creative problem solving
 - Self-advocacy skills

In what ways have you seen students take on these skill sets and embrace their disabled identity?

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Identity Formation in Disabled Students

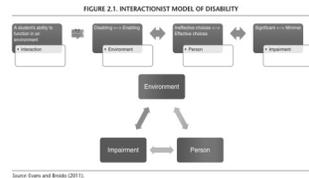
- Often begins with first experience and encountering as a result of legal protections in K-12/Higher Education
 - Reflect the ongoing attempts at disability justice in a system of education that often places barriers in front of individuals with disabilities
 - How students navigate those barriers and each formative experience with disability frames their own perception
- The importance of these protections, beyond their mere existence, lies in the visibility and autonomy given to students with disabilities with respect to access and ownership of their own education experiences, especially those grounded in leadership learning

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Identity Formation in Disabled Students, Pt. 3

Interactionist Model of Disability

- Ability status can be seen as intersecting functions of the environment, the individual person, and the impairment
- Each of these functions exists on a spectrum and influence each other
- Contextualizes how students with disabilities use these functions to form some sense of identity



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Identity Formation in Disabled Students, Pt. 2

Acceptance/Embracing Disability

- Disability "acceptance" begins as a stage of passive awareness of disability
- Proceed through moments of realization, characterized by a coming-to-terms
- Integration of oneself with a community and pride in disability-identity occurs when acceptance is reached

Community Identification

- Building community often removes silo of feeling effects of disability
- Community can reduce feelings of loneliness, and provide examples to students that they are not the only ones who feel like they are not understood
- Examples then become impetus for shifting changes in thought around disability identity

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Identity Formation in Disabled Students, Pt. 4

Activism as Identity-Formation Tool

- Becoming an activist, disabled students accept an active role in building and supporting their community
- This call to action is really the process of *developing purpose*
- Because much of their educational and personal trajectory is determined by others, as disability is illuminated as a sociopolitical structure, many students with disabilities begin these steps of purpose development when they get to college

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Vaccaro et al. (2018) Model

<p>Imagination</p> <p>Students begin to discover what their strengths are and how they can start to use them to change the world around them.</p>	<p>Exploration</p> <p>After solidifying the strengths and skills they possess, disabled students begin to act upon them</p>	<p>Integration</p> <p>Students begin to prune and hone what they are doing, only retain goals, commitments, and activities that are the most integral to achieving purpose</p>
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Thinking about our accommodation processes and the support we provide to students, what might be some hallmarks of students going through these different processes of developing purpose?

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Identity Formation in Disabled Students, Pt. 5

Microactivism

- Activism doesn't always show up in the traditional ways we might think about our campuses
- Acts of Microactivism
 - When a disabled student accepts their right to access in the classroom and advocates for themselves
 - Begins utilizing tools and different strategies compared to their peers

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Why Is This Important to Us?

- How many of us want to see more disabled students own their own educational experiences?
- How many of us are committed to student success on our campuses?
- How many of us spend time with students who are not confident in their own strengths and strategies for learning?

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So What Do We Do?

- Interactive Process = Great Place to Start
- Moving to Strengths-Based Perspective
- Adding Cultural Elements to Our Work with Students
- Becoming Thought & Change Leaders at our Institutions

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Questions?

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