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Guest Editors' Introduction to "Disability Studies and Education" Issue

Comments

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Education and Disability Studies

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We are pleased to present a special issue entitled Disability Studies and Education to *DSQ* readers. While the articles in this special issue do not speak to a single theme, the thread that holds them together is each author's utilization of a disability studies perspective in the analysis of educational issues. As a whole, the articles provide a sample of the growing body of work by educational researchers; a body of work that has come to be known as "disability studies in education."

In 1999, we co-founded a special interest group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) entitled "Disability Studies in Education" (DSE). In our announcements about the SIG we wrote that disability studies is an emerging interdisciplinary field of scholarship that critically examines issues related to the dynamic interplays between disability and various aspects of culture and society. We claimed that Disability Studies unites critical inquiry and political advocacy by utilizing scholarly approaches from the humanities, humanistic/post-humanistic social sciences, and the arts. When specifically applied to educational issues, we argued that Disability Studies promotes the importance of infusing analyses and interpretations of disability throughout all forms of educational research, teacher education, and graduate studies in education. The purposes of DSE are to: 1) encourage Disability Studies in education, 2) provide an organizational vehicle for networking among Disability Studies researchers in education, and 3) increase the visibility and influence of Disability Studies among all educational researchers.

Since 1999, membership in DSE has grown and our sessions and roundtables are included in the annual AERA conference program. This year's conference has just ended. The Disability Studies in Education papers presented included:

- "Option for the Disabled: Catholic Social Teaching and the Politics of Disability," by Scot Danforth
- "Origins and Development of the Social Model: A Historical Deconstruction," by Susan Peters
- "Resistance and the Transformation of the Social Model of Disability," by Susan Gabel
- "Race, Dis/ability and the Unfulfilled Promise of Brown," by Beth Ferri
- "Mental Disorder[Invisible...Knowing...Identities]Queer Theory," by Steven Noble
- "Integrating Disability Studies into the Humanities," by Santiago Solis, Edmundo Echeverria, and Suzanne Stoltz
- "Examining Affirmative Action and ADA Policies in Postsecondary Access fror Students with Disabilities," by Eboni Zamani
- "Spheres of Resistance: Web Accessibility Policy and the (Re)formation of Education," by Alan Foley
- "Deaf Culture: The Reverent Body and School Music," by Jessica Murphy Edwards and Ruth Gustafson

Shortly after founding the SIG, we accepted a journal contract and co-founded the first peer reviewed journal of its kind - *Disability, Culture and Education* - in which we published articles that intersected the three themes in the title. In our editorial in the first issue, we wrote that we are at a critical juncture during which much of what was once accepted as true is now in question, including the meanings and experiences associated with disability.

For over twenty years, scholars, activists, and disabled people around the world have contested the meanings assigned to disability...The present culture of contestation gives us opportunities to question ourselves and our beliefs; the decisions we make about how and why we conduct our inquiries; the theoretical frameworks within which we conduct them; the contributions we make to practice; and the ways in which practice can and should inform theory and research. We have taken this opportunity to open up possibilities and facilitate interrogations at the intersections of and interstices between disability, culture, and education (Gabel and Danforth, 2002, 1).

Unfortunately, the journal was short-lived, lasting only one volume year due to low subscriptions. The articles in its two volumes, however, are rich with critique and we encourage readers to seek them out. The issues can be obtained from InfoAge Publishing at <http://www.infoagepub.com/>.

In the aftermath of Disability, Culture, and Education, we were fortunate to secure a *Disability Studies in Education* book series contract with Peter Lang Publishing. Through this partnership with Peter Lang, we will be able to support the publication of a series of scholarly books in this growing area over the upcoming years. The first book of the series will be *Reading Resistance: Discourses of Exclusion in Desegregation and Inclusion Debates*, by Beth Ferri and David Connor. *Reading Resistance* will be available sometime in the spring of 2005.

The articles in this special issue of *DSQ* are, in fact, a set of articles that we had committed to publish in *Disability, Culture and Education* (DCE) before its demise. Every article in this set was anonymously reviewed by DCE field reviewers, many of whom are long-time SDS members. Each article underwent several editions and revisions prior to this publication. We are pleased to finally fulfill our commitment to these authors and thank *DSQ*'s Corinne Kirschner and Beth Haller for agreeing to publish them.

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