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Curricular Cripistemologies: The Crip/Queer Art of Failure

David Mitchell, Sharon Snyder und Linda Ware

1. Song of Ourselves: Disability as Teachable Moment

On the last leg of his decade-long journey back to Ithaca after the Trojan War, Odysseus finds himself shipwrecked on Phoenicia. Once introduced to Phoenician culture, Odysseus quickly discovers Phoenician men self-identify as a muscular tribe celebrated for their superior athleticism, skill in shipbuilding, and expertise in navigating the high seas. From King Alcinous's box he watches as the athletes engage in competitions of strength, speed, and agility with each other. At one point the participants turn to Odysseus and bait him into competing against them in the games; after many refusals he reluctantly joins and defeats all competitors soundly.

This demonstration of superior athletic prowess gives Odysseus a momentary stage. Pointedly he takes the opportunity to observe that his hosts' obsessive overvaluing of physical ability leads to more significant social elisions. The Phoenicians take for granted other talents in their midsts such as the blind poet/prophet, Demodocus, a creative, multi-versed, and talented performer. The singer's songs effectively operate as the equivalent of an active cultural archive that preserves Phoenician cultural history, crafts an explanatory context for their physical exploits, entertains them after the endurance required by physical competitions, soothes their ruffled masculinities, includes women as active participants in the life of the kingdom, and diversifies their ranks by making blindness into an asset they too readily depreciate. Odysseus's commentary engages in what we call throughout this essay, "curricular cripistemologies," teachable moments organized around disability content that interrupt normative cultural practices. The evening's songs provide a wider range of opportunities for those who might be otherwise marginalized on the basis of socially devalued queer statuses such as disability and sexuality.

The author of *The Odyssey*, Homer, is also blind and a singer of poems, and he employs Demodocus as a double; both actors use their devalued bodies as an opportunity to operationalize the curricular cripistemology at hand. Disability lyricism offers an alternative narrative to the themes of war, destruction, human depravity toward others, and brute survival. In recognition of Odysseus' lesson to his fellow tribesman, the poet takes up his trade and

sings of myth as he does on most nights following the denouement of the games. Significantly, the story he tells on this occasion involves Hephaestus's cuckolding by Mars and Venus; the tale places "the crook-foot god" center stage as a protagonist who bemoans being taken advantage of by two non-disabled gods (Rose 2003: 40).

Positioned at Demodocus's feet the Phoenician athletes transform into students of their own pre-history. They find their devotion to athleticism seriously disrupted by a web of disability content woven by a blind author (Homer), through the common disability trope of a blind poet-prophet (Demodocus), telling the story of a disabled god (Hephaestus) seeking to redress social depreciation on basis of his differential embodiment. Mars and Venus's desirability – associated specifically with ancient Greek bodily ideals of power and beauty – come to be outflanked by Hephaestus, a god with a disability whose mobility limitation presumably makes him more vulnerable to this kind of sexual deceit. Nonetheless, Hephaestus inverts the scenario in securing the couple's mutual humiliation for the amusement of others by catching them up in a specially forged net of steel from which they cannot escape.

The Phoenicians – and, by extension, Homer's future audiences – experience their own ideals of capacity displaced. Rather than excessive vulnerability, disability creates an alternative value system to the naturalized desirability of physical prowess, aesthetic norms of body types, and above average expectations of functionality. The upstaging of these ideals materializes a space of interaction mapped most effectively and queerly not by bodies trained and 'perfected' for competition, but by the cultural products crafted of blind poets and semi-mobile gods.

2. Curricular Cripistemologies: Inclusionism and Its (Dis)Contents

Odysseus's experience on Phoenicia provides an historical example of the insights awaiting those who undertake pedagogical practices of what we call curricular cripistemologies. *Curricular cripistemologies* involve the development of teaching pedagogies that foreground disability-based content, offering important social options for constructing alternative ethical frameworks for living. An alternative ethical framework results in the creation of useable maps that, from a curricular cripistemological standpoint, are otherwise absent from normative curricular content. One overarching goal of such content is to provide opportunities for re-imagining our relationship to devalued forms of embodiment in order to better speak to the political dilemmas of contemporary experience.

The pedagogy of curricular cripistemology depends upon the insights of human interdependency that disability illustrates in examples such as the one above. It is neither a discourse of "specialness" wherein we learn to value disabled people as "human" when we discover them scraping out an existence alongside others; nor do we find the value of disability guaranteed in overcoming obstacles of social making wherein disabled peoples' incapacities are offset by the compensatory qualities of an otherwise extraordinary body (Garland-Thomson 1997: 5). Nor do we discover disability as an opportunity for political correctness wherein all bodies are valued for the "diversity" they provide in a relativistic equation of multicultural differences. Relativistic valuations of difference often lead to a process that queer theorist Lee Edelman explains as neoliberal normativity's "tenacious will to sameness by endlessly turning the Other into the image of itself" (59).

Instead of these various strategies for culturally rehabilitating disabled peoples' experiences within normative social contexts, curricular cripistemologies critically assess how communities obstruct or facilitate disabled people's participation. Such failings result in false perceptions of absence as a naturalized condition of non-normative existence. While social spaces appear open to all who wish to navigate them, curricular cripistemologies unveil architectural and moral spaces of exclusion that produce forms of abnormalcy seemingly particular to the bodies they exclude. Thus, normative assumptions encourage exclusion as inherent to the nature of those individuals who "choose" to stay home, rather than experience stigmas associated with socially imposed conditions of abberancy. In turn, non-normative bodies represented within curricular cripistemologies harness creative means by which to live alternative lives—in part, because they must do so to survive, but additionally, because they derive their strategies of living from the historical traces of other devalued lives (Foucault 2006: 105).

Yet, there is no rehabilitation (cultural or otherwise) that does not come replete with a strategy of disguising difference to make estranged bodies better fit normative expectations. In *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*, Roderick A. Ferguson explores the impact of educational diversity strategies of cultural incorporation. Ferguson identifies forms of late 1960s inclusionist practices as institutional ways of robbing minority students of the alternative insights they might provide to available models of living while seeming to embrace them (138-139). Similarly inclusionist practices place disabled bodies in the position of making normative practices more desirable: of course, they want to be like us, the story of institutional normalization goes, because our ways naturally enshrine that which all human beings desire. In this sense, curricular cripistemologies actively seek to avoid diminishment (or assimilation) of alternative modes of navigating the world evidenced by disabled and other marginalized experiences of embodiment.

For example, normative disciplines such as Special Education (SPED) are founded upon the goals of rehabilitation and remediation. SPED is not so much a pedagogical approach as an incorporation within educational systems of applied technologies whose goal is to integrate disability by disguising defining differences. Inclusionism seeks to bring disabled people into mainstream educational practice by effecting an erasure of difference with the help of assistive devices, separate test-taking spaces, "quiet hands" practices for kids with autism ("just stimming" wordpress.com), adjusted grading scales, and encouraging students with disabilities to be absent during standardized testing dates so their scores do not suppress the school's academic ranking.

Among the obstacles to the full embrace of Disability Studies in Education (from this point on referred to as DSE) are SPED's historically functionalist ideological roots; an entrenched medical model orientation to the education of students with disabilities; state imposed curriculum requirements for students with disabilities as academically indequate; certification requirements for the normative preparation of teachers; national policy mandates, including, but not limited to inclusion, Response to Intervention (RTI), co-teaching, vocational training, and transition planning. The barriers erected by systems of education ensure that disability remains in the domain of SPED alone – a separate fiefdom staked out upon the variable demographics of contemporary student populations. Decades following the move to create inclusive classrooms we find that policing the disability "border" remains an implicit mandate shared by general and special education alike.

DSE scholars have succeeded in authoring a critique of SPED practices as heavily reliant upon a functionalist approach to education and its rigid adherence to behaviorism; SPED practitioners proffer an ideological stance toward disability as synonymous with cure, care, and the promise of a return to "normalcy." DSE scholars have spent the better part of the past decade cultivating legitimacy by organizing conferences and producing scholarship that exposes the limits of SPED's worldview and its impact on special and general educational structures, schooling systems, and educational research. Efforts to engage the field of SPED within this critique are on the rise through DSE publications in the flagship SPED journals and conferences to advance a call for "plurality of perspectives" (Baglieri, Valle, Connor & Gallagher 2011; Connor, Gallagher & Ferri, 2011; Gallagher 2006; Reid & Valle 2005). Critical engagement between SPED and DSE remains illusive and numerous tensions remain unresolved (Gabel 2005; Danforth & Gabel 2006; Rice 2006; Valle & Connor 2010; Ware & Allan 2005). Nonetheless, new discursive communities to address disability have formed through the efforts of DSE scholars who recognize the importance of understanding disability as far too complicated to be understood by one single disciplinary field of study.

3. "Every Child Left Behind," or the Queer/Crip Art of Failure

Most indicators point to the fact that inclusionist practices have resulted in new kinds of exclusion as opposed to integration. For example, while students with disabilities make up 13% of the student population those labeled with intellectual disabilities receive a diploma only 36.6% of the time and 22% drop out. The rest (59%) finish their schooling but receive no diploma and, over the course of their educations, spend time with non-disabled peers only in art, gym, or music (Smith 2010: 4f.). In other words, segregation dominates the world of most SPED students.

This essay may be understood, then, as a companion to DSE efforts regarding the ongoing critique of an inclusionist process that *leaves all children behind*. In undertaking this exposure we seek to accomplish three specific tasks: 1) engage disability studies in a dialogue with Judith Halberstam's important recent work on "the queer art of failure" (147); 2) draw out how queer theorizing of the last decade can be productive for Disability Studies even though, as Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow point out, a more direct engagement with disability has been slow in coming within Queer Studies (3); and 3) pursue what may seem, at first, to be a counter-intuitive argument on behalf of actively promoting a certain kind of *failure* in the context of curricular cripistemologies. All of these objectives combine in our recent teacher training and scholarly research projects to more effectively address shortcomings foundational to inclusionist methodologies now extant in most public schools across the nation.

To accomplish these goals we intend to explain why educational inclusion operates as an exclusionary undertaking in, perhaps, the most entrenched, neoliberal, and common sense institution of all: public education. By neoliberal we mean to define education as part of a ongoing privatization scheme for selling off public institutions to for-profit interests (Hardt & Negri 2005: 302). In particular, our critique centers on inclusionism as a neoliberal gloss of diversity initiatives that get some disabled students in the door while leaving the vast majority behind. Contemporary education's neoliberal practices cultivate further funding opportunities by advancing claims of the successful normalization of disabled students rather than drawing upon their differences as sources of alternative insight. Curricular cripistemologies, in contrast, openly advocate for the productive potential of failing normalization practices (if they were ever obtainable) because such goals entail erasing the alternative values, practices, and flexible living arrangements that attend the negotiation of interdependent disabled lives.

Whereas the administrative platform of former President George W. Bush pushed for U.S. educational reforms around the promotion of standardized

testing that would "leave no child behind," we, in turn, present an argument for recognizing standardization of curricula as ultimately "leaving every child behind," or, at least only promoting a certain type of norm-fulfilling child in whose name most students turn up wanting. This curricular abandonment of difference in the name of assimilation occurs primarily through an incapacity (or, perhaps, unwillingness) to adapt the lessons of systemically in-built accommodations and disability content designed to address the range of learning differences comprising today's classroom demographics. The neoliberal school attempts to resolve accommodating disability through downplaying rather than learning from people's differences. Through the abandonment of disability as difference, neoliberal standards guide educational reforms saturated in the questionable values of ableism, normalization, and rehabilitation.

Thus, what appears on the surface as disabled students' incapacity to keep up with their normative peers, turns out to be a form of resistance to the unreal objectives of normalization. In *The Queer Art of Failure* Halberstam argues on behalf of a concept of "failure [that] allows us [queer people] to escape the punishing norms that discipline behavior and manage human development with the goal of delivering us from unruly childhoods to orderly and predictable adulthoods" (3). This queer studies inversion of ways to read non-normative lives as falling short of heteronormative expectations allows queer people (including those with disabilities) to pursue other modes of existence as alternates to sanctioned social kinship roles. These alternative strategies of living pass by largely undetected because educational assessments measure only the degree to which students fall short of the mark of normalization. By applying this queer deployment of "failure" curricular cripistemologies undertake pedagogical practices suppressed by normative neoliberal educational contexts.

In adopting a strategically counter-intuitive slogan such as "every student left behind," inclusionism's practitioners would openly acknowledge the increasingly disciplinarian nature of public education's normalizing objectives. Inclusion has taught teachers a hard lesson: disabled students cannot effectively compete with their non-disabled peers and the measurement of this gap will result in their professional punishment by administrators. But what if a "failure to thrive" in pre-determined social roles is understood as the product of active refusals (that which Halberstam refers to as a "rejection of pragmatism" [89] and Herbert Kohl refers as "willed not-learning" [134]) to "fit" disability paradigms reductively dictated by normative institutional expectations? We could take seriously the findings of DSE scholars such as Phil Smith who points out in *Whatever Happened to Inclusion?: The Place of Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Education* that education has actually lost ground in terms of including students with more significant learning needs in recent years (28). Within this context, the objectives accomplished by public relations-driven educational "creaming practices" – those inclu-

sionist claims to success wherein the normative accomplishments of the most able disabled students eclipse the struggles of those left behind. Elsewhere we have termed this elite minority of hyper-adapted disabled people, *the able disabled*, neoliberal creatures whose full assimilation comes at the expense of the majority of those with stigmatized impairments (Mitchell & Snyder 2010: 121).

Inclusionism, in other words, covers over an unethical promotion of the successes of the few based upon normative standards of achievement for the inadequacies of the many. Such an approach to disability echoes with the problematic elitism of other diversity advancement projects such as W.E.B. Dubois's early twentieth-century concept of "the talented tenth" advanced in *The Souls of Black Folk* (74). Through the application of curricular cripistemologies disability metamorphoses from an inability to successfully normalize into lesser versions of the ableist self into a meaningful alternative site for transforming pedagogical practices and devalued social identities.

What would a curricular cripistemology look like if the subterfuge of normalcy did not dictate the socially anemic goals of inclusion – or that which Linda Ware has provocatively termed "(in)exclusion" (2004: 2)? Perhaps these reformist efforts have come on the heels of developments during the Clintonian era wherein previously inclusive legislation had to be revitalized and newly enforced. The implementation of more flexible accessibility features followed implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1992) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004). Both of these legislative reforms were necessary to update unenforced legislation from two decades earlier including the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) and the Architectural Barriers Act (1968). These policy-based efforts to mandate the inclusion of students with disabilities under neoliberal principles of integration opened up U.S. education to those with developmental disabilities and "multi-handicaps" who had been actively segregated from public education with their peers since the early 1900s and into the early 1970s ("Multi-handicapped").

Nevertheless, the results of inclusionism have been incomplete because neoliberal efforts evolve around beliefs that mainstreaming would largely require retrofitting architectural environments in order to bring students with disabilities into buildings outfitted for their able-bodied peers. Further, the political pressures of the disability rights movements to achieve meaningful integration ultimately relied on the neoliberal approaches they presumably critiqued. By advocating for the right to be included alongside their able-bodied peers activists in the 1980s and 1990s used a normalizing framework to give weight to their critique of exclusion. They argued that disabled people were like everyone else and wanted the right to pursue the normative values of their non-disabled peers. In other words, a disability rights-based model of

policy intervention relied upon assimilationist claims in order to gain access to key neoliberal institutions such as education.

As a corrective to inclusionist and assimilationist objectives that began whole-heartedly in the mid-1990s, scholars in DSE such as ourselves have pursued the development of a *curricular cripistemology*. Curricular cripistemologies imagine another kind of inclusion as that which entails a multi-tiered approach to making disability not just integrated but *integral* to the contemporary curricular knowledge base (Stiker 1999: 32). As an alternative to engaging existing inclusionist methodologies as largely an application of assistive technology – the formalization of a "technological fix" to the integration of disabled students – we argue that curriculum needs to contextualize the lives of disabled people in order to create a context of receptivity for a more productive engagement with embodied differences in school. A functioning curricular cripistemology entails teasing out otherwise latent disability themes in education materials as a primary ordinal in a multi-tiered approach.

Based on our experiences in a variety of pedagogical training and research settings, curricular cripistemologies involve the development of a systemic, even replicable, disability pedagogy and content in combination with the active participation of individuals with disabilities. Our collaboratively implemented projects rest largely on the findings of five key activities that have taken place roughly from the mid-1990s to 2010: 1) an NEH sponsored teacher education series at the University of Rochester held from 2000-2001; 2) the development of an Interdisciplinary PhD program in Disability Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago from 2000-2009; 3) an NEH seminar for scholars in Higher Education held at San Francisco State University in summer 2000: 4) an NEH seminar for public middle and high school educators at UIC in summer 2003; and 5) a federal demonstration project of "national significance" on improving outcomes for students with disabilities held at Temple University from 2008-2010. This variety of education venues within which to develop curricular cripistemologies point to their flexibility, diverse contexts for pedagogical success, and multi-modal opportunities for application for students, educators, researchers, and scholars.

The remainder of this essay seeks to provide an overview, then, of our collective pedagogical projects in DSE. Perhaps most foundational to our own body of work is the promotion of curriculum-first approaches as the foundation stone of a more meaningful integration. Collectively these pedagogical training applications of curricular cripistemologies provide opportunities to institutionalize options for a multi-tiered pedagogy based on DSE methodologies including: 1) "cripping the curriculum" – a process of transforming curriculum with DSE content; 2) "coming out as disabled" in the classroom as a means to interrupt standard neoliberal assimilationist approaches to minority difference; and 3) the development of alternatives to the

reductionist technologization of learning as synonymous with inclusion. The multi-tiered nature of these approaches draw upon the productive realization of queer/crip arts of failure that reject simply "fitting in" as a worthy basis for educational projects of difference realized through applications of pedagogies informed by DSE.

4. Cripping the Curriculum

For the purposes of developing a curricular cripistemology, the most critical yet least well understood aspect of DSE is the reform of pedagogical content. Why is reform of curriculum the first step rather than a later evolution of making disability integral to educational contexts? In addressing these questions directly we are building up to the idea that curriculum reform must come first because it changes faculty and student "ways of knowing" disability. This insight is critical to curricular cripistemologies because it identifies disability as integral to education rather than merely an auxiliary student population in need of integration.

While the pedagogical projects cited here as the basis for our findings have occurred in diverse venues, we have consistently adopted three basic principles critical to deepening disability curricular efforts as a productive experience:

1. Our approaches can be adapted to almost any existing educational content extant in contemporary curricula;
2. Training teachers to recognize and adapt pedagogy that draws out disability content in active collaboration with disabled scholars and students in DSE;
3. The architectural modifications and technologically-based inclusionist approaches of today, while important, cannot overcome the deficiencies of content not re-imagined to represent the experiences and history of people with disabilities.

Each of these principles requires a significant level of educational reinvention to implement in an impactful manner. They effectively ask contemporary educators to go against much of what is believed foundational to the fashioning of a rigorous educational experience for all students, including students with disabilities.

Curricular cripistemologies shifts the educational emphasis with respect to disability in four seismic ways. First, the application of disability content to existing curricular materials asks us to take experiences of embodiment seriously rather than removing ourselves to a more ethereal realm of "intellect." Second, not requiring the purchase of new materials to address the

insufficiencies of current texts avoids the oft-levied charge of too much expense as an excuse for neglecting disability as meaningful integration. Third, the open acknowledgement of disability as a discrete sociological content area asks us to go against certain founding precepts extant even in the disability rights movement; namely, that disability is a medical condition which must be secreted to the greatest extent possible within a neoliberal moment characterized by HIPPA protections. And, finally, by recognizing that disability-based content and principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in pedagogy situate disabled students at the foundation of our teaching methods rather than as marginally accommodated exceptions to the rule.

Our efforts actively bring disability as alternative curricular content to education. A key contribution of DSE has been the development of disability readings performed with respect to "classic" fiction and non-fiction texts. For instance, the divinings of Sumerian priests regarding the productivity of harvest cycles based on identifications of "deformed" calves' livers and the births of disabled human offspring (Mitchell & Snyder: 52); disability-based directives about body appearances that populate Biblical writings almost exclusively while other physical descriptors are comparatively absent (Schipper 2006: 4); discussions of human utopias such Thomas Moore's *Utopia* (1516) that imagine future social orders as predicated on the provision of adequate healthcare for all citizens (Dorn); exploring Darwin's largely overlooked arguments in *Descent of Man* (1871) about people with Intellectual Disabilities as proof of the existence of evolutionary "throw backs" to demonstrate human ancestry with animals (Snyder & Mitchell 2006: 13); explorations of W.E.B. Dubois's understanding in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) that black people's cultural rehabilitation had to be founded on establishing their distance from intellectual and bodily deformities (Lukin 2013: 312); the framing logic of American eugenics for interpreting the centrality of Benjy's treatment as a person with Down Syndrome in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (Snyder & Mitchell 2006: 168); the origins of Nazi medical genocide on people with disabilities housed in German psychiatric institutions as documented in Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) and the documentary film *A World Without Bodies* (2000).

This list (which could of course be much longer) identifies some of the content-based analyses developed by DSE scholars with respect to oft-taught writings in secondary and post-secondary education. The catalogue is not exhaustive but intended to suggest the trans-historical, cross-cultural, and multi-disciplinary reach of disability-based content approaches. The goal of such teaching is not to find "positive" examples of people with disabilities in cultural materials. Instead, we have a more far-reaching objective: through applications of DSE scholarship curricular cripistemologies draw out a complexly nuanced human constellation of meanings for disability akin to the academic study of other marginalized histories pursued in critical area studies

focusing on marginalized experiences of class, gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, age. In other words, cripistemologies develop foundational experiences of embodiment that cannot be simplified down to the practices, modes of existence, and privileges of a narrowly conceived normality.

5. Some Outcomes of "Coming Out" as Disabled

In addition to curriculum-first applications these projects all attended to the experiential proximity of the instructors with substantive disabilities delivering DSE content. Such pedagogical exchanges exposed classrooms to people with disabilities rarely encountered in positions of educational authority. We don't make a claim for an automatic relationship between experiencing disability and the expertise of leading effective DSE classrooms. However, the opportunity to employ disabled individuals in the role of educator plays a key role in changing educational expectations. There exists significant value in non-disabled teachers leading students in the insights of a reformist curriculum about disability as a valued social identity. As theorized in disability coming out literature on teaching, classroom discussions about bodies that do not fit into a "minoritizing logic of tolerance" (Sandahl 2003: 26) or considered in proximity to commonly perceived "strained subjectivities" (Brueggemann & Moddelmog 2003: 312) plays a key role in developing alternative interpretive relations to socially stigmatized embodiments.

This point, however, is made only while acknowledging the serious professional consequences commonly reported by disabled and minority teachers in receiving disproportionately negative teaching evaluations. The delivery of disability content as a disability-identified teacher comes replete with epistemic benefits as well as epistemic risks. For important examples of these trade offs see the essays about professional discrimination experienced by educators and staff with disabilities in institutions of Higher Education included in Mary Lee Vance's collection, *Disabled and Staff in a Disabling Society: Multiple Identities in Higher Education*. However, our studies consistently found that the participation of strongly disability-identified teachers lends credence (even without direct address) to the reasons why pursuing disability-based analysis proves socially necessary.

While placing openly disability-identified instructors in front of the classroom enabled one kind of educational change, the evolving participation of students with disabilities in the classroom also resulted in critical insights heretofore unrealized. If the overwhelming emphasis on disability is the effort of passing as non-disabled, DSE based instruction consistently resulted in more students coming out as disabled during the semester. As Tobin Siebers explains, one of the most common public impulses involves masking

the visibility of disability in order to keep its shameful embodiments out of view (97). This practice is no less common in the classroom. Masking disability as a stealth approach to stigmatized differences results in less desirable outcomes of students with disabilities "sitting back" in order to maintain anonymity among their classmates.

Alternatively, an open curricular cripistemology encourages the identification of personal expertise with disability as a reservoir of knowledge. As we have pointed out throughout this essay in our promotion of the Queer/Crip art of failure, standardized educational accommodation preaches de-emphasis of disability as the best way to avoid stigmatizing situations. When the classroom conversation gives credence to the authority of disability experience, students with disabilities gradually sense a thaw in the labor required to keep their differences in the background. Instead they begin actively cultivating personal experiences with disability into fertile ground for classroom contributions.

The transformation can be profound. Students can be witnessed suddenly operationalizing ways of drawing from the authority of their experience rather than removing a formative aspect of their knowledge from conversation. In this manner their bodies shift from liabilities to be secreted away into active vectors of insight from which one may engage in classroom models of collective understanding. Through such developments disability becomes a way of knowing the world; an embodiment akin to other forms of discredited knowing such as femininity, race, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. The non-normatively embodied classroom that emerges with curricular cripistemologies becomes a place in which diversity operates as a nuancing agent of educational knowledge. Curricular cripistemologies, in the parlance of DSE, leaves no *body* behind.

6. Technological Fixes

The passage of the 1972 consent decree in Philadelphia reaffirmed the right of all disabled children to have access to an otherwise mandatory public education in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Since that time the focus of the vast majority of integration efforts have not been focused on curriculum reform efforts; rather the emphasis has targeted retrofitting inaccessible architectures and adapted learning technologies. Such products identify the learning environment and the learner rather than the practice of pedagogy itself as the desired object of change -- as if a computer program will somehow magically integrate a student with a disability into a classroom that has no tradition of disability integration from which to draw.

Yet, in point of fact, we have seen little effort in accomplishing a working reciprocity between the experiences of disabled students, non-disabled students, and curricular content. A necessary dialectic has gone missing. The reasons for this absent conversation varies; however, the end product most consistently takes the shape of disabled students operating in parallel educational universes with their non-disabled counterparts. Inclusionist approaches tend to turn disability into a puzzle of accommodations and a nest of potential litigation actions to be preemptively warded off by school administrators, social workers, and SPED bureaucrats. In *Reading Resistance*, Beth Ferri and David J. Connor discuss how this case-by-case approach within SPED inherently benefits the status quo (18). Similarly they also argue problems with ADA implementation which often gets litigated on a case-by-case basis as well (3). Thus, the individualized solutions offered by Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) presumably tailored to individual disabled student needs rarely become systemic. As such these efforts fail to assist future generations of students in a successful navigation of the learning process by offering them access to alternative pedagogical delivery methods already inbuilt to the educational environment.

Research project funding for disability initiatives consistently underwrite the purchase of technologies such as software to mitigate against teachers having to adopt the strategies of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into their pedagogical methods. Alternatively, projects based on curricular cripistemology promote the development of content about disability as a first order necessity to the accommodation of diverse learning styles. In *Crip Theory*, Robert McRuer demonstrates how reading and writing from the body helps to promote alternatives to standardized educational approaches. Particularly those promoted in the homogenizing goals of the "corporate university" and tax funded public school systems that emphasize finished products as synonymous with learning (168). Such approaches adapt everyone to the goal rather than the diversification of true engagement based on the ways in which trans-gender, disabled, and/or queer lives fail to fit the oedipal mold of, say, the five paragraph essay. Or, rather, the accomplishment of making these experiences fit the mold of standardization voids the significance accorded to what Kevin Floyd theorizes in *The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism* as "the social labor" of fashioning alternative subjectivities (75).

Almost by definition, the UDL structured classroom promotes the unique knowledge precipitated by the ontology of diverse embodiments ("About UDL" cast.org). UDL, first and foremost, requires a systematic negotiation of needs across any assembly of students with and without disabilities. Because disabled students do not necessarily know their own access requirements and university programs are often not equipped to accommodate them ahead of time, accommodations prove to be uneven at best. The opening weeks of a

UDL structured classroom inevitably entail an active negotiation of the ways in which reading materials, classroom discussions, and visual media will be made accessible to all. Many faculty complain of the wasted time such strategizing entails. But commitment to UDL is seen as part of the point of a DSE-based education itself. Open discussions of multi-pronged access bring information about disabilities into the conversation from the start as well as tutoring students in the provision of UDL-based training as a founding stone of access equity.

For instance, a student who was deaf or cognitively disabled often involved assignment of a real-time captioner by disability services to the classroom. The real-time captioner functions as a real-time stenographer of classroom conversations and lectures. While the university approached real-time captioning as a specific accommodation for a particular kind of disabled student, the UDL classroom recognizes an opportunity to assist all participants in the rigorous engagement with academic ideas. An active exchange of ideas in the classroom often results in students losing track of the nuances of a discussion; alternatively, the sharing of real-time captioning notes on-line following class allows an ease of review that lessens anxiety about retention of information. When blind or visually impaired students required audio description of images, all students found themselves abreast of details that they might have otherwise missed. Language used in a lecture that escaped some listeners would prompt a request to repeat the information in alternative ways. Such variations in approach to academic materials created the kind of pedagogical flexibility that began to seem all too missing from standard classroom environments. Rather than describe the nuances of disabled lives from afar, students often brought their own experiences to bear on what would otherwise appear as medically neutral narratives of "medical disorders." Such efforts demonstrate the ways that UDL pedagogies benefit all students as opposed to serving as expensive interventions on behalf of a few disabled students.

A similar point might be made on behalf of a curricular cripistemology as an opportunity for the advocacy of the hiring of teachers with disabilities in school systems (including disabled people of color). There has been a longstanding resistance to recognizing this argument as valid criteria for hiring individuals as representative of a growing student population – particularly one made up of a sizeable number of young people from all socio-economic strata with disabilities including a disproportionate number of racial minorities. Further there is a running commentary in Education circles that, in co-taught classrooms, the regular education teacher is in charge of the development of curricular materials. In fact, neither Gen Ed nor SPED has not yet embraced the idea that Special Educators might make a contribution to the co-taught classroom related to the content delivered. Rather their expertise is exclusively located with content delivery methods on behalf of a

couple students who might struggle with more unilateral pedagogical approaches. A serious commitment to the development of curricular cripistemologies might go some distance toward re-valuing human differences as something other than embodiments that should be disguised, diminished, or hidden away as unwanted accessories. After all, Demodocus's contribution to Phoenician culture comes not only by virtue of his own embodied experience but through his ability to use that experience as an entry into the exploits of even the most able-bodied athlete. A true curricular cripistemology plays the entire room and promises to widen the arena of embodiment for all.

7. References

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