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Building Social Justice Awareness Through the Curriculum: Teaching a Crash Course in Disability Studies

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Building Social Justice Awareness Through the Curriculum: Teaching a Crash Course in Disability Studies

Beth Ann Bryant-Richards
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The Idea

- Diversity Training for Students

Overview: Requirements for general education curriculum for all students to take one course related to the experiences of underrepresented groups in the United States

As of 2012, UNC Chapel Hill, University of Pennsylvania, Occidental College, St. Edwards, Fairleigh Dickinson, Iowa State University, and DePaul University were among the universities making this requirement.
DePaul’s Program

- Sophomore Seminar in Multiculturalism in the United States
- Taught by faculty from across the university
- Proposal to Liberal Studies Council
  - Writing-based learning
  - Cross-disciplinary academic sources
  - Primary and secondary sources
  - Research project by students
  - Focus must be on underrepresented populations in the United States
Purpose

- Build awareness for social justice
- Encourage the concept that ability-level is a part of diversity
- Connect with a diverse student population to expand their definition of what diversity means
- Get a seat at the table
Day One

- People-first language
- Connections with Civil Rights Movement
- “Freaks” (1932)
The Rhetoric of Disability

- Rhetoric: speaking or writing to persuade

- Language=power; who has the power to define us? Who has the power to decide the language used?
“Freaks” 1932
Reading/Topics
Official Trailer for the book

[Image of book cover]
Reading/Topics
Rhetoric and Politics
Reading/Topics
Autism Spectrum Disorder

- DSM IV Aspergers
- DSM 5 Autism Spectrum Disorder
Reading/Topics: Disability Pride
Reading/Topics: Representations of Disability in Art and Culture

- Comic Books
- Film (Finding Nemo, My Left Foot, Million Dollar Baby)
- Art Riva Lehrer
Culminating Projects

- Research-based
- Academic sources
- Other sources
- Field research
The Rhetoric of Disability

Questions or comments? Thank you.