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### Disability Awareness Course Outline using the Torrence Incubation Model (TIM)

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*Developing an Undergraduate Course Outline on Disability Awareness*

by

Pamela A. Simmeth

An Abstract of a Project

in

Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Science

December 2013

Buffalo State College

State University of New York

Department of Creative Studies

## ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

*Developing an Undergraduate Course Outline on Disability Awareness*

This project guides the reader through the process of creating an undergraduate course exploring disability history and the need for inclusion in society. The Torrance Incubation Model (TIM) was used to create the course outline which includes the course description, outcomes, competencies, assessment of student learning, and a topical outline.

This project is twofold, and may be used as a stepping stones for training Direct Support Professionals by intertwining New York State's Core Competencies within the course content and objectives.

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Pamela A. Simmeth

December 12, 2013

Buffalo State College  
State University of New York  
Department of Creative Studies

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## Acknowledgments

In this section, I will try to mention all of the people who have supported me during this project. Without them, it would not have been possible; thank you to my advisors, friends and family.

Initially, I would like to express my gratitude to Cyndi Burnett, my final project mentor. I appreciate her guidance, patience and attention to detail, which drove me to become comfortable using APA format. Her passion towards creativity and teaching has inspired me to use creativity within my classroom, and at home.

Michael Fox was instrumental in advising me throughout my Master's degree; he challenged me to find my passion and to create something useful.

A huge THANK YOU goes to my colleague and great friend, Carol Reis. I am indebted to her for helping me muster up the courage to begin the Master's program; and for holding my hand as we entered our first graduate level course together. We continue to push each other to accept challenges and grow; while always planning time for recreation. Her playfulness, friendship and insightful perspective helped me through the sticky points in this project. I admire Carol for her patience, humor and the time she selflessly provided. The Master's program seemed as if it would take a lifetime to complete, and it has finally come to an end, five years later.

This has been a long journey that required sacrifices from those around me, particularly my family and dog, whom I feel I had neglected over the past year. I first want to acknowledge the humor and backing I received from my

husband Bill, and my two children Chelsea, and Shelby. They had to accept that mom was working late or spending another weekend doing her project. They have been incredibly supportive and gave me the motivation and emotional boost I needed to pursue this venture. As my children inspired each other to work hard in school; they each made the honor roll, without much help from me. I hope that by completing this Master's program, I have stimulated them to reach their potential and to make a difference in the world.

To my Mom, thank you for your love and support. For checking in on me and the girls to see if we needed anything. She made sure the girls were fed and entertained while I was busy with this project, especially on the weekends.

To my Dad, thank you for instilling your morals and values on our family. As we grew up, you encouraged us to play sports and to keep trying when we were losing; this has been the foundation of my work ethic, ever since. Often times, Shelby said "if I were you, I would have stopped working on this project". That thought never crossed my mind, and I wasn't sure why until I took the time to reflect on my accomplishments. Who would have thought that after being on my own for 20 years, my Dad would be such a force impacting my life?

In addition, I want to acknowledge the professionals in the disability field that I met who made this project possible. Susan Barlow took the time to explain what OPWDD is experiencing and invited Carol and I to the RCTW meeting. Another thank you goes to Mr. Kirk Mauer for sharing his vision, and providing me with guidance and direction for this project.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Roger Firestein from the International Center for Creative Studies where it all started, in September 2009. He introduced me to the creative environment which has changed my life, my family, and made this project possible.



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## **Section One: Background of the Project**

### **Description**

The purpose of this Master's project was to use the creative process to develop an undergraduate course outline for *Disability Awareness*. This course was developed following the Torrance Incubation Model of Creative Teaching and Learning (TIM) to meet the needs of students and human service agencies while linking assessment standards to current higher education learning outcomes at Erie Community College (ECC), in Buffalo New York.

Included in this project is the course description, course outcomes, assessments, learning resources, and topical outline. The course outcomes describe what a student will learn as he examines, identifies, discusses, and comprehends course content. Mastery of these skills is measured through assessments comprised of a project, presentation, examinations and homework. Books and websites are itemized under learning resources because they are referenced throughout the course. Additionally, the topical outline lists specific events and information which are covered during the 15 week semester, containing 45 instructional hours. The specifics of the above are found in Section Four: Outcomes, and Appendix A. Lastly, this course intertwines the core competencies Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) must exhibit proficiently.

### **Purpose of Project**

The Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) had expressed an interest in working with community colleges to identify best-practices to use as a model for training DSPs. Since ECC is always looking for

ways to reach out to the community and form partnerships I took advantage of this opportunity to collaborate and put my creativity to the test.

The OPWDD strives to improve person-centered supports and services for individuals with developmental disabilities. In doing so, they identified a set of core competencies DSPs are expected to demonstrate. Unfortunately, many DSPs are not proficient in this technical and value-based skill area, which has created a problem. To address these discrepancies the OPWDD appointed a sub-committee called the Regional Centers for Workforce Transformation (RCWT). I had been invited to work with this group, and have taken it upon myself to structure this course as a stepping stone to creating a comprehensive training program for DSPs, at ECC.

### **Rationale for Project**

The motivating factor behind my project is to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. As a bonus feature this will meet the needs of ECC and its students, OPWDD, and save the tax payers money.

### **Rationale for ECC**

One of the many goals of ECC is to be a valued resource for business, government and organizations by delivering competent, educated students. Equipping students with the prerequisites to become DSPs opens up opportunities for employment in over 800 agencies, which are governed by OPWDD. New courses may increase enrollment and attract new students, or spark an interest in the disability field for current ones. Either way, it develops more eligible job candidates.

## **Rationale for Students**

It is always a huge effort for an 18 year old student to decide what he would like to do for the rest of his life. As a community college advisor it is my goal to assist students in identifying an attractive career; leading me to ask the tough questions. What makes you excited to jump out of bed in the morning? What gives your life meaning? What might be all the ways you can make a difference in the world? Initially, most students are unable to answer these questions.

However, from my personal experience, after teaching several semesters of Orientation to Disability groups, I have found that these students enjoy helping others. Through this course they have developed an understanding and appreciation for people with disabilities and what they can do. As they become mindful of their personal prejudices, they realize the impact their behavior has on others. Many times this leads to an interest working in the disability-field.

Careers in the disability-field are vast and present students with hundreds of possibilities to help others, and often provide many benefits other than personal satisfaction. Research by Brown, Nesse, Vonokur & Smith (2003), had presented evidence that people who provide social support to others have a lower rate of mortality than those who did not.

In addition, not only will students who graduate with a human services degree benefit from a Disability Awareness course, so would other majors from other disciplines. Graduates from Physical Education, Health and Wellness, Criminal Justice, and Culinary will connect with individuals who are disabled at

various points in their careers. Acquiring experience and knowledge about disabilities can make students feel comfortable interacting with the disabled. Ultimately this will help their careers. The more interaction a professional had with an individual with disabilities, the more positive the treatment the person with disabilities received (Tervo & Palmer, 2004). It took numerous appointments for the professionals to feel confident and comfortable; at which time the disabled person felt he received better service.

This course was also designed using the Torrance Incubation Model (TIM), in an effort to teach students creativity and valuable life skills. Team this with the mastery of the OPWDD's core competencies and we have marketable students with credentials, making them eligible for over 23,000 positions throughout New York State (NYS).

### **Rationale for Agencies**

Agencies under OPWDD are in desperate need of well-trained DSPs and a means for employees to develop skills and competencies. These are essential for implementing the person-centered approach. This philosophy uses person centered planning, a method that involves making life plans that are centered on the individual with disabilities for whom they are built.

Unfortunately, OPWDD is facing severe budgets cuts, and is unable to provide crucial training for DSPs to become proficient. Therefore, OPWDD has formed a subcommittee called RCWT to review best-practices and determine how training will be delivered to staff, qualifying DSPs to work anywhere within

the NYS system. Allowing staff to work as substitutes across various agencies will save the state money, as they will not have to retrain seasoned staff.

The OPWDD agencies could use this Disability Awareness course to their advantage too. By providing internships to students, it enables agencies to receive extra help as they evaluate the skills and work ethic of potential employees. Again, the OPWDD saves money by giving consent for the community college to train DSPs, freeing up time, personnel and resources which can be applied elsewhere.

### **Rationale for Disabled Population**

Regrettably, our culture encourages the participation of people who are able to take part in predictable ways, while excluding those with diverse backgrounds, beliefs and abilities. This has been happening for centuries as people with disabilities were killed and institutionalized in their fight to be recognized and treated as valued members of society. Today, they continue to be victims of crime and are deliberately excluded from programs and opportunities as they receive downgraded services (Brault, 2008). Studies using data from the 2010 census indicates people with disabilities are severely disadvantaged educationally, vocationally, and in all aspects of life. They continue to live in isolated, substandard conditions suffering daily without essential supports.

The United States' has made an attempt to rectify this situation through directives and laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); which was supposed to end discrimination against people with disabilities in

employment, transportation, public accommodation, communication and governmental activities (Harkin, 2009). Since change has been a slow process, we must try to do more; I believe educating the public through a Disability Awareness course would be an opportunity to speed up the progress.

Today, over 43,000,000 Americans have at least one physical or mental disability and that number is increasing as veterans return from war, and residents grow older (Brault, 2008). Combine the prevalence of disabilities with the requirements of the ADA which expect every service, every place, and every activity to be accessible to all individuals; one can count on intermingling with people who have disabilities weekly, if not daily.

Currently, the main barriers to equality for people with disabilities are the ignorance and attitude of people within their communities. Richard Reiser's article titled *The Top Ten Stereotypes of Individuals with Disabilities* (2002) supports this accusation, and you will agree after reading his top five stereotypes:

1. Inspirations- they can overcome every challenge;
2. Deviant and evil – they are naturally crooked, must be contained, controlled or destroyed;
3. Victims – they are vulnerable, weak, objects of violence and abuse;
4. Exotic freaks – they generate feelings of horror, and embarrassment;
5. Clowns – they are used for: comic relief, laughs, the butt of jokes and are dumb.

These labels must be dissolved, and can be eliminated with education. Students need to be aware of their discriminatory thinking, behaviors and their environment which prevents individuals with disabilities from living independently. As students talk with family and friends about disabilities, they spread their knowledge throughout the community facilitating an acceptance of diversities. Inspiring them to adapt neighborhoods, and eliminate barriers. Once we make it possible for individuals with disabilities to feel physically and emotionally comfortable, they become willing to participate within society. Once people know better, by means of education, they can act better.

### **Rationale for Taxpayers**

Most individuals with disabilities depend on public assistance to pay their bills. If an individual acquires a disability and needed to build up his endurance to work full time, he would be unable to unless he could survive without public assistance. Unfortunately, there are many restrictions pertaining to employment for people with disabilities. By advocating for inclusion, we are making an effort to decrease the dependency of individuals with disabilities on the welfare system; NYS tax payers could save millions of dollars, and the lives of many would be enriched.

### **Rationale for Course Content**

The content of this course was chosen for three reasons. The first was to decrease barriers to inclusion for people with disabilities so they would be accepted as equal members of our communities. The second intent was to assist OPWDD with training by including core competencies for DSPs within the



course objectives. The last aim was to weave creativity skills into the course content, using the TIM model to engage students.

Studying history, reviewing stories, and situations about individuals with disabilities may encourage students to examine their own moral compasses. People who have overcome adversity in historical circumstances can often inspire others. Feelings of empathy may be aroused, motivating students to break down the barriers between them and the disabled.

Disabilities have always been, and will always be, part of the human experience. Society must embrace the Disability Rights Movement so issues can be dissolved. To do this, we have to take a look at how the treatment of people with disabilities has evolved. It is important to learn from the heroes, great men and women who successfully worked through moral dilemmas, and ordinary people who provided lessons in courage, diligence, and constructive protests. This will give us a better appreciation for the person-centered approach and vision of the OPWDD.

### **Qualifications**

I am qualified to develop a course on disabilities because of my education and experience. For over 20 years, I have been nationally certified as a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS), working in rehabilitation, residential and educational settings. I also have a personal interest in making decisions as the Health Care Proxy and Power of Attorney for a friend, who acquired a traumatic brain injury.

My hands-on experience includes working with individuals whom had a variety of disabilities, such as traumatic brain injuries, intellectual impairments, autism, stroke, mental health issues, physical and learning disabilities. As well as training direct care staff and college students to work with the disabled. My knowledge and professional connections to people within this field has provided me with ample resources to develop a detailed, thought-provoking course.

In addition to this experience with disabilities, upon successful completion of this project, I will have earned a Master's of Science degree in Creative Studies from The International Center for Studies in Creativity (ICSC), at the University of Buffalo in NY. This degree provides me with the knowledge and skill necessary to create novel and useful ideas and products; a course outline, is one of them.

The focus of many projects throughout my Master's program emphasized creativity and health. I investigated the benefits of using creativity to improve one's health physically, cognitively, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Throughout this journey, I spent a year studying the Torrance Incubation Model of Creative Teaching and Learning (TIM) and applied it to lesson plans for a Personal Health class.

During this project, I have used the TIM model to assist me with the development of the course outline, and I will continue to use it when I develop daily lesson plans, in the future.

## **Torrance Incubation Model (TIM) of Creative Teaching and Learning**

E. Paul Torrance conducted a variety of studies which identified specific skills related to creativity; these skills are easily integrated into course content using the TIM. This model assists the instructor when presenting lessons so that students are engaged, which makes them motivated to learn. TIM has three stages: heightening anticipation, deepening expectations, and extending the learning (Keller-Mathers & Murdock, 2008). To make it easier to practice, I refer to them as What? So What? and Now What?

Stage one, Heightening Anticipation is designed to get the students attention through curiosity (Keller-Mathers & Murdock, 2008). It explains the “what” they are going to learn. Torrance describes this as a warming up period with six functions:

1. Create the Desire to Know;
2. Heighten Anticipation and Expectation;
3. Get Attention;
4. Arouse Curiosity;
5. Tickle the Imagination;
6. Give Purpose and Motivation (Keller-Mathers & Murdock, 2008).

Stage two, Deepening Expectations is the focus of the lesson; it provides a richer learning experience by connecting the student to the new information. Various strategies and metaphors are used to engage students during this process (Keller-Mathers & Murdock, 2008). This is when I ask the students “So

what” does that mean to you? I have found reflection to be a great tool to move students through this stage in preparation for stage three.

Stage three, Extending the Learning, like planting a seed which will grow once the student leaves the classroom. Torrance uses another list of metaphors to extend their learning (Keller-Mathers & Murdock, 2008). I have the students answer “Now what?” What can they do with this new information?

### **Conclusion**

My plan begins by educating student’s one course at a time. As students gain knowledge on how to integrate individuals with disabilities into our communities, acceptance may grow and decrease discrimination and prejudice. Hopefully, in doing so, people with disabilities will be treated better and can take advantage of opportunities to participate on an equal level, and become productive members of society.

## **Section Two: Pertinent Literature**

The foundation for creating the course on disability awareness began by exploring a variety of sources in search of the most current information which was included in the course outline. What I have discovered during this process is that there are only a few higher education Disability Awareness programs in New York State. In addition to Governor Cuomo's Transformation plan and the development of a new system, the information is quickly changing, which has made it difficult for text books to be published.

The following section involves my quest to determine what should be included in a Disability Awareness course. I began this journey by searching for the difficulties people with disabilities encounter; and found many articles which indicated that people with disabilities were being discriminated against; which led me to examine what was being done to discourage this unfair treatment.

I reviewed the laws which were created to give people with disabilities equal rights. Unfortunately, my findings indicated many barriers to freedom still exist, which hinder most attempts at forming an inclusive society.

I also discovered Governor Andrew Cuomo's plan to make services to the consumers within the OPWDD more inclusive. This created a need for a DSP training program, which in essence may benefit college students as they can earn credentials making them eligible for employment after graduation.

Finally, I reviewed the Torrance Incubation Model to refresh my memory. It was used as a template, to organize the pertinent resources listed below. All

were essential to the development of the Disability Awareness course outline and future lesson plans.

## **Annotated Bibliography**

### **Discrimination**

Brault, M. (2008). *Current populations report, 20th anniversary of Americans with disabilities act*. Retrieved from:

[http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/cb10-ff13.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb10-ff13.html) Mr. Brault created a profile of disabled

Americans in this document, which contains links to obtain further details.

It has broken down disabilities into specific types, by age, sex, and income level etc.

This site was useful for me to get a better understanding of the prevalence of disabilities in America. During week one, the instructor will use this report to help students become oriented to the disabled population.

Rieser, R. (2002). *Disability equality in education*. Retrieved from:

<http://worldofinclusion.com> Richard Reiser developed a curriculum for Disability Equality in Education. It included many lesson plans, articles and useful information from his work throughout the world. Mr. Riener allowed others to use his publications, PowerPoints and lesson plans.

This article provided me with the information on the phases of the Disability rights Movement, as well as the Models of Disabilities. This information will be covered during weeks eight, nine, eleven and twelve.

After instruction on these topics, it is my intent that the student will be able to identify social and physical barriers to inclusion, which fall under course outcome three.

The <http://worldofinclusion.com> site also includes Reiser's article on *The Top Ten Stereotypes of Individuals with Disabilities*, which I found to be useful. They are:

1. Inspirations- they can overcome every challenge;
2. Deviant and evil – they are naturally crooked, must be contained, controlled or destroyed;
3. Victims – they are vulnerable, weak, objects of violence and abuse;
4. Exotic freaks – they generate feelings of horror, and embarrassment;
5. Clowns – they are used for: comic relief, laughs, the butt of jokes and are dumb;
6. Pitiful and Sweet - pathetic, innocent, grateful for crumbs, need to be looked after;
7. Twisted and Bitter- chip on shoulder, whining, angry and difficult, taking out inner hurt and rage on the world, okay to ignore their concerns, pointless trying to communicate with them;
8. Burden and Outcast - costly, non-contributing burdens on society, should be segregated, institutionalized, provided with the bare minimum or prevented from reproducing;
9. Non sexual - can never be in a relationship, unless partner is pervert or a martyr;

10. Incapable of full participation in everyday life - just can't learn, earn, play, socialize, shop, travel, or use the phone.

This specific article will be used during week two as the meaning of disabilities, and the myths and misconceptions are discussed. These stereotypes support my assumptions that a lack of information and compassion about disabilities must be addressed. This will require much reflection on the students' part to overcome and meet this objective. Having students memorize and learn history would not be as effective as having them participate and become part of the learning experience. Hence the reason this Disability Awareness course was designed with the intent of guiding the student's affect, using interactions with disabled people.

Purdie, I. (2013). *Discrimination against people with disabilities*. Retrieved from: <http://suite101.com/a/discrimination-against-people-with-disabilities-a181483> This article focused on how people with disabilities continue to be discriminated against. Ian Purdie contributes this to how the disabled are perceived and treated differently as they struggle to become accepted by their non-disabled peers. He also emphasized how our approach to people with disabilities needs to be changed.

This article was helpful in identifying my fifth and sixth course outcomes. Synchronously, students will discuss challenges the disabled face pursuing equal rights, and examine public care and treatment of people with disabilities.



Boursiquot, B. & Brault, M. (2013) *Disability characteristics of income-based government assistance recipients in the United States: 2011*. United States Census Bureau. Retrieved from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/acsbr11-12.pdf> This article broke down each disability by state, prevalence and type of disabilities. This information makes it evident that there is a huge discrepancy in income as it categorizes people with disabilities. It even goes so far as classifying them as severely disadvantaged: educationally, vocationally, financially, and socially as they continue to live in substandard conditions.

This information was used to support the previously mentioned sixth course outcome, and contributed to the topical outline content for weeks twelve and thirteen. This will allow the instructor to emphasize the prevalence of poverty among the disabled in America and the importance for the non-disabled population to develop an understanding of their difficulties.

### **What is being done**

Harkin, T. (1990). *Americans with disability act*. U.S. Department of Labor.

Retrieved from: <http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/disability/ada.htm> This website contains the American with Disability Act document which prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communication and governmental activities.

I felt it was very important for me to learn more about the American with Disabilities Act and the different sections, so I could determine how much time would be spent examining this area. These laws and legislative policies are taught during week six. Comprehending the legal and self-advocacy milestones are listed as course outcome two.

The National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth. (NCLD/Y).

(2010). Retrieved from <http://nclid-youth.info> NCLD-Youth uses the five areas of youth development and leadership: learning, connecting, thriving, working, and leading to guide their work with disabled youth leaders. These five areas correspond to: employment, education, housing, recreation, health, childcare, quality assurance, and transportation; all of which are a part of the Developmental Disabilities Act.

I used this website as a guide in determining the content of the course. I took the suggestions of this group and what they believe every person should be aware of regarding disabilities. These areas are also part of the OPWDD's core competencies.

Samowitz, P. & Coleman, J. (2013). *OPWDD's core competencies: Goal, competency area, skill, time frame and example tasks*. Retrieved from: [www.nysadsp.org/images/DSP\\_Competency\\_Presentation](http://www.nysadsp.org/images/DSP_Competency_Presentation). As the title indicates this document contains OPWDD's six core competencies written as goals, followed by a coordinating competency area, skill, and time frame they expect it will take for DSPs to master the tasks. It also includes examples.

After examining this document, I chose two core competencies which seemed appropriate for a Disability Awareness course: Goal 1: Putting People First, and Goal 3: Demonstrating Professionalism. The competency area and skills are weaved throughout the course objectives and content.

Tervo, R. & Palmer, G. (August 2004). *Health professional student attitudes towards people with disability*. *Clinical Rehabilitation*, 18:908-915. These researchers determined that the more contact a professional had with an individual with disabilities, the more positive the interaction and treatment would become. This became obvious after the professional had numerous appointments with the disabled. The professionals became more comfortable, and the individual with disabilities felt he received better service. This supported my theory that the more exposure to disabilities the college can provide undergraduate students the better prepared these students will be for future interactions with the disabled.

Brown, S., Nesse, R., Vonokur, A. & Smith, D. (2003). *Providing social support may be more beneficial than receiving it: Results from a prospective study of mortality*. *Psychological Science*, 14(4):320–327. Brown's article provided evidence that individuals who spent their time volunteering to help others, lived longer. By providing social support to others, these volunteers had lower rates of mortality than those who did not.

This information will be an important selling point for taking the course and to encourage students to work in the human services field. I

wouldn't be surprised if students would be interested in this benefit, especially as the community college level, when they are so unsure of their majors.

Disability History Museum. (2013). Retrieved from:

<http://www.disabilitymuseum.org>. This is an amazing interactive website which includes a disability library, lesson plans, and artifacts. Important people who started the Disability Rights Movement are featured, with photos, video clips, and a timeline.

This sight was foundation to developing course outcome one, to identify events which made a significant impact on the treatment of individuals with disabilities and their progress towards civil and human rights. The information needed to create a timeline is nicely illustrated. I will also refer to it as I create future lesson plans, which are not a part of this project.

### **Transformation Plan**

Finally, to get a better understanding of where New York State is headed under Governor Cuomo's Transformation plan and how these sources tie into one another, I found it helpful to read the following documents:

Cuomo, A. (2013). *Olmstead cabinet report: A comprehensive plan for serving New Yorkers with disabilities in the most integrated setting*. Retrieved from: <http://www.governor.ny.gov/assets/documents/olmstead-cabinet-report101013.pdf>

Cuomo, A. (2013). *Regional Center Workforce Transition (RCWT): A summary dsp workforce capacity building through collaboration funded by nys/ddpc across the opwdd enterprise 2013 to 2016*. Retrieved from: <http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/node/3653>

### **Torrance Incubation Model**

Keller-Mathers, & S. Murdock, M. (2008). Teaching and learning creatively with the Torrance Incubation Model: A research and practice update. *International Journal of Creativity and Problem Solving*, 18(2),11-33. This article provided a visual of the *Torrance Incubation Model (TIM)* which is a template instructors used to grasp students attention, making them motivated and eager to learn.

I followed this model to create the course outline in three stages; heightening anticipation, deepening understanding and extending the learning. The details will be explained throughout this project.

### **Selected Bibliography**

The following sources were used to improve my understanding of: disabilities, services, and creativity's role in course development.

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Baynton, D., Gannon, J. & Lindquist-Bergey, J. (2007). *Through deaf eyes, a photographic history of an American community*. Gallaudet University Press.

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### **Section Three: Process Plan**

Creating a Disability Awareness undergraduate course was a way for me to apply what I have learned in the creative studies program. I was able to implement the first three stages of the creative problem solving process which are to clarify, ideate, and develop. The implementation stage cannot occur within the time frame of this project, as it may take up to one year to receive approval, due to college protocols.

#### **Clarify**

I began this journey by inviting Carol Reis, Assistant Professor at Erie Community College (ECC), to participate in a brainstorming session. Many people refer to Carol as the “Czar of Western New York (WNY) Adaptive Recreation”. Carol knows just about everyone and everything that is going on in WNY, especially if it welcomes people with disabilities. If she can’t help me, she knows someone who can, and that is exactly what she did.

We were working on clarifying the problem, which was “what might be all of the content in an Introduction to Disabilities course?” As we began to generate ideas Carol informed me that she recently had lunch with Susan Barlow, Director of WNY Parent Network; which is a resource and training facility for parents of children with special needs. Mrs. Barlow shared with Carol some highlights from a conference she attended with the top administrators from agencies throughout New York State.

These administrators are all struggling with the same issues; they are unable to hire and keep staff that that have common-sense, a good work ethic

and take initiative. This is an awful problem as they work hard to provide high quality services to individuals with disabilities. I knew this was a person I needed to talk to, so Carol and I set up an appointment to meet with Mrs. Barlow.

I began to think my project could be beneficial to others besides myself. Rule number one in creative problem solving is to “make sure you are solving the right problem”. So I took a step back, and began to ask myself the crucial questions “what might be all of the benefits an orientation to disabilities course could provide, how might others benefit from the development of a course on disabilities?” I was unsure of the answers and needed to gather data.

I networked with professionals within the field of disabilities and became aware of the disarray in New York State’s (NYS) system that services individuals with developmental disabilities. The Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is expanding community-based services, which will in-effect require staff to perform professionally.

Still unclear, I contacted Kirk Mauer, the director of OPWDD, in New York State (NYS). This agency is responsible for coordinating services to over 126,000 New Yorkers with disabilities. These supports and services include funding for long-term care, habilitation and clinical services, as well as, residential supports. He was very helpful in offering me insight and direction.

Mr. Mauer brought me up to speed on Governor Andrew Cuomo’s plan for NYS. Human service agencies need to restructure due to a “transformation of the system” which is in progress. In an effort to integrate individuals with disabilities into their communities, agencies will be mandated to follow the

Person-first Model; an assessment will evaluate the participant's needs, and designate a pre-determined amount of money for their care. It is also referred to as the money follows person (MFP). Individuals with disabilities will have to shop for their own services, using the predetermined allotment of funds.

To give me a better understanding of this transformation, Mr. Mauer shared with me the *Olmstead Cabinet Report: A Comprehensive Plan for Serving New Yorkers with Disabilities in the Most Integrated Setting*, published by Governor Cuomo in October 2013. Talk about being on the cusp of change, this 30-page document is NYS's plan to assist people with disabilities as they must move from segregated settings into the community, with integration being the ultimate goal.

A lot had changed throughout the years in the disability-field and more changes were to come. I realized I needed to clarify my problem so I asked Mr. Mauer to help me sort through many ideas, which led me to this conclusion; a course on disability history would be the best way to start.

There were several benefits to this decision. While fulfilling the requirements for my Master's project, it could be benefit direct service professionals and all college students. Mr. Mauer provided me with several contacts, state-of-the-art programs, and colleges whom I should look to for direction.

This was exciting; I was on my way as the clarification stage was complete. "How might I determine the content of a Disability History course?"

**Ideate**

I began to send emails and reach out to the contacts Mr. Mauer provided me so I could collect data. Dr. Mariette J. Bates, Academic Director of Disability Studies, at the City University at New York (CUNY) was instrumental in the development of National Standards for Direct Support Professionals. She indicated the NYS Alliance of Direct Support Professionals had also been working on developing statewide competencies (about sixty) and a Code of Ethics for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). Luckily, these are quite similar to the national competencies.

CUNY currently offers courses which cover the Code of Ethics in some depth, and almost all of their Disability concentration courses raise specific ethical issues. National competencies are embedded into each of the courses' learning outcomes, and are related to, but different from, the academic coursework CUNY programs offers. CUNY courses explore topics more extensively than training programs do, so students can develop critical thinking, writing and research skills. Both are needed to support the disability workforce; they complement and reinforce each other.

Human service agencies in NY City formed a partnership with CUNY, providing internships and job opportunities for their graduates. This is exactly what the WNY area needs. Dr. Mariette J. Bates offered her assistance and referred me to some great websites, and programs which have been referenced throughout this paper. It was exciting talking with her as she offered to share with me everything she had. I was ready to dive in, just as I realized, in order to make this course useful, I needed to meet the needs of WNY agencies. It would

be wasteful to put so much effort in to something that may not be valuable. Now, I couldn't wait to meet with Susan Barlow and Carol Reis.

Susan Barlow enlightened us on the government's plan to discontinue Medicaid Services, and implement a Managed Care system. Managed care is a self-directed model that will decrease funding to over 800 human service agencies in NYS, by four to five million dollars. The impact of this change has created disorder amongst agencies in a hurry to develop a plan which enables them to continue serving people with disabilities, with less funding.

In the past, the first thing agencies cut was training, or as they call it "talent development". Mrs. Barlow confirmed what Kirk Mauer had already told me, talent development still needs to be provided, which may create an opportunity for OPWDD to form a partnership with community colleges. I told Kirk that I would be willing to do my part, and if all went well; share it with the rest of the state. Our meeting concluded with Mrs. Barlow inviting Carol and I to attend an OPWDD subcommittee meeting, called Workforce Transformation.

I had the chance to explore some of the websites Mrs. Barlow spoke about, before attending the Workforce Transformation meeting. Wow! I was surprised to learn that there were so many certificates, minors and majors in disability-related topics offered throughout the country. The more prominent programs in NYS are Tompkins Cortland Community College, CUNY, University at Buffalo, New Paltz, North Country Community College, Hudson Valley Community College and Borough of Manhattan Community College. They offer an array of courses, from the vague- like Disability Awareness, to the specific on

Autism Spectrum Disorders. Besides offering these classes to students, several colleges welcomed individuals with disabilities, their families, and direct care workers into their classes. It was exciting to know that I was not starting a program from scratch and I would have many resources to draw from.

Since there are no universal training programs for DSPs, and they are not recognized as professionals of direct care, there were no studies or research available to ground my project. Several states have taken it upon themselves to treat direct care workers as independent contractors or provide training through a specific agency or community college. Therefore, I was left to tease out the important stuff, and used many of those programs as a guide. Since I am a new stakeholder in the RCWT, I think it will be important for me to know what other higher education institutions have done.

Finally, the Regional Centers for Workforce Transformation (RCWT) meeting was held. This was a great opportunity for Carol and I to meet with the administrators from Region I's Steering and Workgroup, as well as, Regis Obijiski, Deputy Director of Workforce Transformation for NYS OPWDD. This group will be instrumental in helping to change the system-wide cultural thinking about DSPs, and to shape DSPs career ladders and profession. The purpose of this meeting was to review the goals of RCWT, Governor Cuomo's "Road to Reform", and to prioritize the tasks of the Talent Development Consortium. "Quality is the wise choice of many alternatives" (Obijiski 2013), this group is reviewing all options in an effort to create a training model which would take the Person-first Model into the next century.

Many issues came up during this meeting. The big question was how do we prevent abuse while facilitating freedom and independence? In the past, there has always been direct supervision to ensure an individual's safety. Nevertheless, many allegations of abuse are reported by staff in spite of the several levels of supervision. Now, NYS is planning to have individuals with disabilities living independently, and contracting out for their own services. Who will report abuse? Sure, the individual with disability could, but what if this individual has difficulty communicating? What if this individual does not have contact with a trusted professional?

This was just one of the several problems the administrators brought to Regis Obijiski's attention, indicating several kinks NYS OPWDD needs to work out as they transition to this new system. Hence the reason, Mr. Obijiski instructed the group to refer to the September 19, 2013 summary of the RCWT: A Summary DSP Workforce Capacity Building through Collaboration funded by NYS/DDPC across the OPWDD Enterprise 2013 to 2016. It stated "the most important aspect of NYS achieving People-first Services and Supports is the buy in of the plan by DSPs."

Unfortunately; the DSP workforce is not fully prepared for the changes that are required. This process will require a re-tooling of the DSP workforce. Moving from congregate residential and day services to highly individualized settings requires much more of the DSP than the ability to follow the instructions and complete tasks assigned by immediate supervisors within a program. It requires a deep ethical commitment, and ability to exercise effective independent



judgment, and professional skills necessary to affect personal outcome measures for persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (IDD).

This meeting concluded with an excerpt from Clarence J. Sundram's seminal report to Governor Cuomo titled *Measure of a Society*. He stated that in order to reach success, the first pillar must be strong, ethical, well-trained direct support staff. Mr. Sundram (2012) believed "the attainment of this transformation plan rests on a workforce that requires capacity-building of 90,000 DSPs and the change of service model". This left me and the RCWT members with the certainty that a lot of work needs to be done, and quickly.

I departed feeling overwhelmed; I thought attending this meeting would enhance my project, not get me involved in another project. In actuality, the RCWT had been waiting for community colleges to jump in and take part in this operation. Actually, enlisting community colleges was printed on the PowerPoint they had distributed at the start of the meeting. Wow! I needed time for this information to incubate.

The next day I met with Carol, we came to the realization that my project may be part of something much bigger. What had begun as an aspiration to break down the ignorance's and change attitudes of college students towards individuals with disabilities may turn into the foundation of an essential piece of a big puzzle. This project may impact thousands of individuals with disabilities, and their caretakers.

There are four stages to the creative problem solving process: clarify, ideate, develop and implement (Puccio, 2011). I had gathered enough data to

complete the clarifying stage and I was ready to move forward. As I began to ideate I recognized the collaboration between NYS OPWDD and ECC could result in the construction of a training program for Direct Support Professionals. The details that need to be put into this course and future courses had already been determined (in a round-a-bout way) if I used the OPWDD Core Competencies. OPWDD could save money by allowing community colleges to create new programs that provide training to their employees, a win-win situation for all.

Before I could move onto developing the course outline, it became obvious to me that I needed to get up-to-speed on disabilities. Many changes had taken place since I entered the world of academia in 2001. I wanted to refresh my memory and get a good grasp of the Disability Rights Movement, seeing it is critical to the development of its future leaders.

I could have spent months exploring the details on hundreds of great websites on disabilities, but I needed to move forward and start the development stage. It was necessary that I prioritize what I had; pulling together the essential pieces which included OPWDD's core competencies. I created a flow chart with the following column headings: OPWDD Core Competencies: Goal, Competency Area, Skill, Time Frame and Example Tasks, Assessment of Student Learning, Course Outcomes, Learning Outcomes and Topical Outline (Appendix B). This worksheet made it easier for me to map content throughout the course outline. Well, at least I thought it would make it easier. As the ideas flowed, I realized I

needed to access my sounding board partner. I had already wasted so much time going off on tangents and I was running out of time.

Carol Reis and I met for a few hours sifting through my ideas, sharing concepts until we converged. She made it clear to me that I was focused on too many core competencies, and many could be addressed in other courses offered at ECC. By the end of our meeting we drew up a plan, split up tasks, and left with a feeling of purpose and accomplishment.

### **Develop**

I decided to use the creativity tool, card-sort, to eliminate some of the competencies. First I wrote each competency on an index card to make them easier to rank; then I began by asking myself “which competency could be taught in a disability history class?” I put that card at the top, next I asked “which competency would be awkward or difficult to teach in a disability history class?” I put that card in the last spot; I repeated the process until all of the competencies were ranked in order of usefulness. It became evident that using the top two competencies would provide plenty of information to complete the course outline.

I started to write course objectives that addressed these competencies and skill areas using information I had collected up until this point. Knowing Carol was one phone call away for support; I plunged into the data and created the course outline. It was a tedious process, in which I saved many versions; just in case I needed to go back and include one of the many detours I had taken along the way. Too bad I wasn't this diligent in resaving my entire project, as I

had lost at least four hours of typed work with just one click. Not a good way to end a Friday night, but life went on.

The next step is to present it to the College wide Curriculum Committee (CWCC) for their approval. In order to move into the implementation stage I will need their endorsement to begin teaching it in the fall 2014. Hopefully by that time, ECC will have continued its collaboration with the OPWDD and will have established a training program for their DSPs. Once the groundwork is laid, ECC can begin to develop a Certificate or Associates degree in Disability Studies.

As a result of putting my creativity to the test using personal inquiries, attending professional meetings, contacting experts from NYS's education and government agencies and exploring websites, I assembled a course outline on Disability Awareness. Several doors have opened and I see myself playing a part in creating history. An opportunity has presented itself, because I pursued a passion to change the beliefs and attitudes of others using this project. In doing so, I may impact thousands of individuals with disabilities, their support staff and students at the college.

<b>Project Timeline</b>	
<b>September 20 hours</b>	Contact Dave Bochynski ECC Dept. Chair - to get the criteria needed to write a new course and get his support
	Find the process for submission of proposals for new courses certificate and degree programs
	Find the criteria for the Course Outline
	Attend <i>Community College Instruction</i> course through UB Sept 12- Nov 7, 2013
	Brainstorming Session with Carol Reis to Clarify the Problem
	Explore SUNY colleges' websites for course outlines pertaining to disability groups Prominent programs in NYS are: Tompkins Cortland Community College, CUNY, University at Buffalo, New Paltz, North Country Community College, Hudson Valley Community College and Borough of Manhattan Community College

	Telephone Interview Dr. Mariette J. Bates, Academic Director of Disability Studies, at the City University at New York (CUNY)
<b>October 50 hours</b>	Interview Director of Parent Network, Susan Barlow Susan Barlow enlightened us on the government's plan to discontinue Medicaid Services, and implement a Managed Care system
	Contact higher education publishers to get review copies of texts- none available
	Compare and find the most similarities in course outcomes
	Research Disability Rights Movement
	Telephone Interview Kirk Mauer, the director of OPWDD, in New York State (NYS).
	Attend the Adaptive Recreation Expo and interview people with disabilities to find out what they would like others in the community to know about them
<b>November 60 hours</b>	Attended the Region I Center for Workforce Transformation meeting (RCWT) Networked with Administrators from various agencies
	Converge with Carol Reis regarding RCWT meeting
	Contact resources from the Adaptive Recreation Expo to gather information
	Review OPWDD's Core Competencies
	Attended in-service on ECC's new Learning Outcomes for 2014
	Create table and insert information: Assessment of Student Learning, Course Outcomes, Learning Outcomes and Topical Outline
	Determine if my topic is too broad and should be made into 2 courses
	Complete Community College Instruction course through UB
	Reviewed Torrance Incubation Model and previous projects using the TIM
<b>December 15 hours</b>	Put final touches on my Masters Project and submit it

## Section Four: Outcomes

The result of my creative efforts is a 5-page course outline on *Disability Awareness* that I propose to teach at Erie Community College. It will be presented to the College wide Curriculum Committee (CWCC) in January for approval, and if all goes well, I intend to teach Disability Awareness in the fall 2014 semester.

**Products:** The course outline includes the following:

Course Description

Course Outcomes

Assessments

Learning Resources

Topical Outline

**Course Description.** The final write up which was used for the course description is “The evolving impact of the Americans with Disability Act, U.S. legislation, and the growing rates of Americans with disabilities set the ground-work for this course. Basic knowledge of disabilities, appropriate terminology, social etiquette, and tips for positive interactions will be examined, as well as, myths about people with disabilities. A review of the heroes, who took on great challenges while being discriminated against, and their fight to change society’s perceptions of people with disabilities. All in an attempt to create an equitable and diverse society, inclusive of people with disabilities.”

This includes just enough information to meet my vision of educating students on people with disabilities as well as meeting OPWDD Goals.

Goal 1: Putting People First

Competency Area C: Promoting Advocacy with the Individual

Goal 3: Demonstrating Professionalism

Competency Area N: Exhibiting Ethical Behavior on the Job.

**Course Outcomes.** This course was intentionally built around specific OPWDD Core Competencies, with the hope that it could be used in the future, as part of the training platform and for a Certification program or Associates degree. The course outcomes (CO) are listed and numbered below.

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify events which made a significant impact on the treatment of individuals with disabilities and their progress towards civil and human rights;
2. Comprehend the legal and self-advocacy milestones;
3. Identify future needs of individuals with disabilities to live in a society free from physical, environmental and social barriers;
4. Discuss the rights and responsibilities to which all individual are entitled;
5. Discuss challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in regards to their rights;
6. Examine public care and treatment of people with disabilities.

**Assessment:** Using the flow chart, Appendix B, made it easier to develop the assessment piece. Three evaluation tools in addition to examination were used to accommodate the various styles of learning. This approach enables students of all abilities to demonstrate their mastery of course outcomes. An explanation

of each evaluation tool and assessment piece is included below, as well as the course objective (CO) in parentheses.

The second stage of the TIM is to Deepen Exploration. As students complete their first assessment piece which requires them to create a timeline which includes significant events that made an impact on the treatment of individuals with disabilities and their progress towards equal rights (CO 1). To do this they will be asked to visualize what it had been like to be disabled over 100 years ago and at various times throughout history. In groups they will put together a skit portraying society during various eras. This allows students to make deep connections to the subject matter, in ways that only the classroom can do by involving the learners.

Next they will extend the timeline by estimating future trends in programs or product development (CO 2, 3) to increase the independence of individuals with disabilities. This second assessment piece is based on my belief that all students are creative, and by the time they are in college they have suppressed this skill and must unleash creativity to achieve self-actualization. By encouraging students to be creative, they are asked to produce a visual or tactile product which communicates their understanding of the course objectives. Their audience must be able to see, feel or experience the student's project by means of a demonstration, experiment, PowerPoint, poster or any other mode.

This evaluation technique meets course objective six, which is to use information from the legal and self-advocacy milestones to determine a need of the People-first approach (CO 4, 5). This also follows the TIM model by



extending learning outside the classroom. Students will imagine what it would be like to become disabled and look around their homes and neighborhoods for barriers to their inclusion. Then they will design a program or product to move individuals with disabilities closer to a society which is free from physical and social barriers.

Finally, communication lays the foundation to success. At the beginning of my career I had been uncomfortable speaking during meetings when various professionals were present. To prepare students for this challenge, they are required to do a presentation in front of the class. Learning the skill of public speaking can never be futile. The final assessment piece embraces public speaking by asking students to verbally and visually present their program/product design which was developed to alleviate a challenge faced by individuals with disabilities (CO 5, 6).

**Learning Resources.** These books give the student the perspective of living with a disability, the discrimination and struggles they endured.

*Disability History of the United States (Revisioning American History)*, (2013), Kim E. Nielsen, Beacon Press is a narrative that reinterprets how we view our nation's past, placing the experiences of people with disabilities at the center of American history from pre-1492 to present.

*Disability Studies Reader, 4<sup>th</sup> edition*, (2013), Leonard Davis, ISBN-10: 0415630517, Routledge. This text emphasizes the global, transgender, homo-national, and post-human conceptions of disabilities. Includes physical disabilities

and explores issues around pain, mental disability and invisible disabilities. New histories of the legal, social and culture give a broader picture of disability.

*The Disability Rights Movement, (2000)*, Doris Fleischer and Frieda Zames, ISBN-10:1566398118, Temple University Press. This text is based on interviews with U.S. activists who provide the history of their struggle for disability rights.

*The Ugly Laws, Disability in Public, (The History of Disability).* (2009), Susan Schweik, ISBN-10:0814783619, NYU Press. This book views disabled as criminals and explores the meaning of laws.

*The Unseen Minority: A Social History of Blindness in the United States,* (2004), Frances A. Koestler, ISBN: 978-0-89128-896-1, AFB Press. A comprehensive account of everything for the blind from books to issues, and the role mobility played as their key to independence.

*Through Deaf Eyes, A Photographic History of an American Community,* (2007), Douglas Baynton, Jack R. Gannon & Jean Lindquist Bergey, ISBN:10:1563683474, Gallaudet University Press. These photos are from the movie which explores 200 years of deaf life in America, including conflicts, prejudice and affirmation.

These following websites are full of information which was used to create the course outline, and will be an integral part when creating the lesson plans. Many of these websites encourage users to utilize their lesson plans, along with visual aids. The list is as follows:

<http://www.ada.gov>. This site delivers information and provides technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act for individuals applying for services.

<http://www.disabled-world.com> Provides disability information and videos on many topics, health issues and up-to date news.

<http://www.disabilityhistory.org> This site includes disabled heroes, important events, resources, and gives people with disabilities and opportunity to share their personal stories as part of history.

<http://www.disabilitymuseum.org> The Museum of Disability History website includes a disability library, lesson plans, and a virtual museum.

<http://Dsq-sds.org> Disability Studies Quarterly (DSQ) is a multidisciplinary and international journal of interest to social scientists, scholars in the humanities, disability rights advocates, creative writers, and others concerned with the issues of people with disabilities.

<http://nclid-youth.info> The National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth (NCLD/Y) provides information about the importance of specific events, and the history of the Disability Rights Movement which is critical to the development of its future leaders.

**Topical Outline.** It is arranged in chronological order by events and issues which will be taught during 45 hours of lecture, over a fifteen week semester.

The first stage of the TIM is to heighten anticipation. Anticipation is heightened by engaging the learner in personal reflection and base knowledge.

The semester begins with an introduction to disabilities and basic background knowledge which will be covered during the first two weeks in the semester.

Week 1:      Orientation

- Introduction to disabilities
- Who is disabled?
- How has the media portrayed individuals with disabilities?

Week 2:      The Meaning of Disability

- Myths and misconceptions
- Barriers to inclusion: physical, attitude, organizational, environmental
- What is in a name?
- Why do we create labels?

Then we take a look back throughout the centuries of the famous people and events that have influenced the treatment of the disabled. These inspirational stories can be told using audio podcasts, videos or pre-readings, which may also heighten a student's anticipation of what is coming next.

Week 3:      Important People who started the Disability Rights Movement

- Dorothea Dix
- P.T. Barnum
- Franklin Pierce
- Thom Thumb
- Grace Kennedy
- Burton Blatt

Week 4: Eugenics

Intelligence Testing: Testing of Feebleminded Immigrants

- The Death of the Bollinger baby
- Lippmann vs. The Testers: Can intelligence be measured?

Week 5: Legislative Policies and Significant Events

- Independent Living Movement
- The Rehabilitation Act
- Urban Mass Transportation Act
- Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act
- Fair Housing Act
- Air Carriers Act
- The burning of Paul Longmore's book
- The Deaf President Now shutdown of Gallaudet University

Week 6: Legislative Policies

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Telecommunications Act of 1996
- Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act
- Padavan's Law – New York State
- The Hate Crimes Act of 2000
- Individuals with Disabilities Act

Week 7: Presentation of Timelines and Mid-term Exam

Week 8: Phase 1 and II of the Disability Rights Movement

Week 9: Phase III of the Disability Rights Movement

- Week 10: Famous People with Disabilities and their Accomplishments
- Week 11: Models of Disabilities
- Medical Model vs. Social Model
  - Person-first Model
  - Person-centered services
- Week 12: Complications with the Social Model
- Week 13: Characteristics and Needs of Persons with Disabilities
- Advocacy
  - Self-Advocacy
  - Self-Determination
  - Person-centered social inclusion planning
- Week 14: Capstone Activity: Verbal and visual presentations of students work on a program or product they designed for individuals with disabilities.
- Week 15: Final Exam

## **Section Five: Key Learnings**

There are several key learning's that I will take away from this project both personally, and professionally. While the purpose of this project was to embark on a creative process and create a course outline on disability awareness which could change the perceptions of college students, by creating an environment of equality and inclusion; it also presented an opportunity for me to be a part of something bigger, something that has not yet been created. The development of a training program for DSPs would require collaboration with professionals from various disciplines, all over the country impacting the lives of people with disabilities and the world.

### **Personal Learnings**

This project required me to dig deep within myself, to examine my life's purpose, even though I thought I was living it. My desire to help people with disabilities had diminished over the years; as I focused on assisting college students with finding their passion. After attending the Adaptive Recreation Expo, as part of refreshing my knowledge about disabilities, a spark was reignited, creating my desire to do more for people with disabilities.

I learned to ask for help, over and over again. Twenty-five years ago, I had completed an internship under Carol Reis's supervision, and today she continues to assist me with my education. She helped me through this process, and always knew the right thing to say, giving me a little boost, as I was ready to give up. Being part of something so big, which was not fully developed, and

unable to grasp, took a lot of energy. Carol's redirection and excitement kept me going.

I am grateful to have Carol's friendship; guidance and support which helped me complete my graduate degree. She often reminded me that it was not going to be an easy process, we are creating history. I will never forget the many times, as we would depart, she would say "let it incubate, it will come to you", and many times it did.

### **Professional Learnings**

I learned that the world of disabilities which I drifted from just a short time ago had changes tremendously. The abbreviations and acronyms that I once felt professional using were now outdated. Agencies had changed their names to emphasize the acceptance of a person with a disability, using the Person-first Model to show respect for the person in spite of his disability.

The journey of the Disability Rights Movement has been a tough road, and there is still a long way to go. If society changed its perception of people with disabilities and made the environment (infrastructure) accessible, people with disabilities could live inclusively, which is their right.

I believe creative problem solving could be used to address some of the big issues OPWDD is facing today. Maybe, they should take another look at the assistors and resistors to integration. I feel that everyone may not want to leave the safety of their group homes or institutions. It may be okay to allow people with disabilities to live in an institution, or residential facility, if that is their desire. After all, I prefer to be in a home full of people instead of alone, even if the



people are not my family. Politicians and administrators are trying to use a one-size fits all approach. We are a unique species, and for that reason we may not benefit from one solution

Collaboration is the key to moving forward. Achieving success can be accomplished by putting egos aside to do for the greater purpose. I was thoroughly impressed with the alliance formed between WNY administrators at the RCWT meeting. I felt their eagerness to embrace Carol and I so we could assist them with their training issues. What I previously had thought was infringing on their territory, turned out to be an invitation to join them, as they would save money having community colleges prepare their personnel. I'm still baffled as to how; I guess that is why I was never interested in the business world.

WNY has an incredible team of professionals who should be the "poster child" for collaboration and teamwork. The OPWDD is in complete readjustment mode with so much influx, and indecisions. The entire system is being transformed, and just as we were being dismissed from the RCWT meeting, Susan Barlow spoke up and asked Mr. Regis Obijiski "What would you like us to have accomplished by our next meeting?" I had never seen anyone embrace change so enthusiastically. It was so positive and absolutely beautiful.

Another surprised was how quickly, professionals responded to my emails, and inquiries. They were willing to share their hard work with me in the name of progress. So many of the websites allow others to use their information, there is no need to recreate the wheel. This attitude towards sharing was so

refreshing; it was no wonder that these professionals are in the human services field, their love for people, and wanting to help others was evident. They have seen the inequality and poor service individuals receive and know they have a long way to go in solving this problem. Professionals believe there is strength in numbers, and if they work together, they can make more of an impact and help more people.

### **Recommendations to others**

The first thing I would recommend to others, whom are starting their project, is to look through all of their assignments they had completed since the beginning of the graduate program. Then ask yourself if there is some way to use this work as part of your final project. It wasn't until I started the Literature Review section that I realized I should have dug deeper into what I had started in CRS 560, the creative environment.

I would also recommend using different search engines and key word searches before choosing your topic. I was surprised when I did a Google search on my home computer that I would get different results from my work computer. I found out too late that Disability Studies was major in various higher education programs, as I may have taken a different approach to my topic if I would have known this first, and worked on developing a Certification program instead. On the other hand, I should feel grateful, as I recall Professor, Mike Fox's words of wisdom "just pray, Oh God, please don't let me be the first to study this topic" and then we would laugh.

Another suggestion I would offer which may make the process move smoothly is to make your intentions known at every opportunity. Send emails to every contact, informing them of your project topic. It stunned me when others were connected to or discussing similar issues. I was unaware of the big picture, or that there was training programs which needed to be coordinated. So many people were instrumental in providing me contacts and direction; it amazed me that I was able to complete this project in one semester.

### **Recommendations to self**

I was struggling with some uncertainty professionally, and could have held a CPS session within my department to determine a vision for the next five years. We do have a five year plan; however it does not address the strengths of the department's faculty members, nor their personal visions for the future. It would have been nice to have other faculty members from our department in on this project. Once again, I am thankful for Carol! We have similar professional experiences and educational background; she was my guiding light as I struggled to move forward.

It would have been nice to know that the administrators at my college do not want to create elective courses. They are approving courses that are required for a specific program. I should have developed a Disability Awareness Certificate or degree program first, and then the course I develop would directly relate to Disability Awareness competencies.

Be prepared. Lastly, in spite of the iPhone and hi-tech equipment, not every agency has the latest and greatest technology. The teleconferenced

meeting between members of RCWT and Regis Obijiski often went silent; at times we could not see our colleagues who were logged in from Rochester.

Finally, I learned that nothing happens overnight, and great things take time, energy, and endurance.

## Section Six: Conclusion

What I know now about creativity and change leadership that I did not know when I started is that it is an amazing process that must be taught and learned throughout a lifetime. It needs to be part of the U.S. educational system. I have observed many instances the CPS process and tools should have been used as human service agencies struggled to move forward or identify their goals.

I also thought “dreams” were a product of one’s imagination, or a fairytale. Dreams weren’t something one achieved; that is why they are called “dreams”. In my first creativity course, taught by Dr. Roger Firestein, I began to put my dreams to paper, using the CPS process. I am ever so grateful to him and his passion for the process, as it has improved my life in so many ways. I was able to work through the process which moved me closer to the “dream house” I had imagined since I was a child. Actually, my dream house is even better; because I was able include the many features of a creative environment.

The creative environment is something I studied throughout my graduate work in Creative Studies; there were so many tangible aspects to it. I had written about its benefits without realizing the impact it was having on my life. Last semester, after the installation of the landscaping around my “dream home” that the last of my childhood dreams had come true. What an uplifting feeling which has carried me through this project.

After attending the Center for Creative Studies at Buffalo State College, I realized the importance of creativity and how my life has blossomed since

nurturing it. What is even more amazing, was listening to my sounding board partner, Carol Reis, reflection as a witness of my growth moving through this process. I did not realize my progress would be so visible to others, as I now glow, due to the fact that I currently live in a creative environment.

You might think I have gotten a little off track, but the point I am trying to make is, I don't think I would have been able to complete this project with such rigor and enthusiasm without the support of the creative environment. It has provided me with the necessary elements such as natural lighting, glimpses of nature, art and colors that I need to be productive.

What I know about creativity and change leadership that I did not know when I began this project is that changes are occurring at all times, even when we are unaware of it. The purpose of using creativity tools has become clearer to me as I visualized their benefits as if they were being used in committee meetings. I feel as though I should be prepared to pull out index cards, for card-sort, or brain-writing sheets, as I have witnessed important meetings get stagnate and fail to move forward. Since I don't practice using these tools often, I am not comfortable adapting these tools using the supplies available in the room. I should prepare a small folder with these tools, SCAMPER, Forced Connections and the Evaluation Matrix so I can have quick access and create direction during meetings (Mamnoon, 2011).

Creativity, I love creativity! I am definitely an Ideator, and Implementor. I have a better understanding of Four Sight, (Puccio, 2011). I found myself a little frustrated leaving the RCWT meeting; the final product seemed so far away.

What would I do next? Let's get moving, make progress, and make decisions. I am not a person who can be productive sitting in meetings, teasing out the details. This is not how I want to spend my days. I would love to create and implement the training programs for the OPWDD, however, with all of the leg work, and negotiations, I may get lost in the details. It will be a tough road working through this development process, but I believe my input will be valuable for the success of the "final product".

I believe that creativity is essential for life satisfaction. I didn't realize how much I depended on creativity for distraction and renewal until my time was limited, and I found myself thinking about what I could create next. For as often as I tried to hold off procrastinating, what I found myself doing was visually redecorating my home. When I needed a break, I would rearrange a room, or buy a piece of artwork, or dream about how I could make an exciting change. Thankfully, I did not give in to temptation and was able to hold off on redecorating the bathroom, as I knew it would take more than a full weekends worth of work, which I currently have no time for.

### **Next Steps**

What I see myself doing next is attending the Transitional Workforce meeting in December and being an active participant as they move toward their final product, a universal training program for DSPs. I will also be contacting administrators at Erie Community College to inform them of this project, in case I need to include some of them in this process.

Finally, what I see myself doing next is to work on the development of the lesson plans for the Disability Awareness course. In view of the fact that the information is out there, I would like to approach this class from a different perspective, which is the way I think education needs to move towards. Information can be obtained within minutes using technology; I would like to determine what the “big ideas” are for disability awareness. It is not important for students to memorize the names, dates, and laws which started the Disability Rights Movement since they can find that out pretty quickly. So what is it that they need to understand? I would like to approach the development of these lesson plans from this perspective, using “big ideas” and understandings as the core.



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## **Section Seven: Appendices**

Appendix A: Course Outline: Disability Awareness

Appendix B: Flow Chart Part 1

**Appendix A: Course Outline: Disability Awareness**

**A: Unit Code and Suggested Course Title:** Disability Awareness

**B: Curriculum/Program:** Human Services

**C. Catalog Description:** The evolving impact of the Americans with Disability Act, U.S. legislation, and the growing rates of Americans with disabilities set the ground-work for this course. Basic knowledge of disabilities, appropriate terminology, social etiquette, and tips for positive interactions will be examined, as well as, myths about people with disabilities. While constructing an equitable and diverse world, inclusive of people with disabilities, students will review heroes who took on great challenges, while being discriminated against in their fight to change society's perceptions.

**D. Duration of Instructional Period:** 50 minutes, 3 class meetings per week, or 85 minutes, 2 class meetings per week for 15 weeks

**E. Academic Credit Hours:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 3

3-0-3

**F. Suggested Text/Course Materials:** *The New Disability History: American Perspectives (History of Disability)*, (2001), Paul K. Longmore & Lauri Umanski, New York: New York University Press.

**G. Course Outcomes:** Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify events which made a significant impact on the treatment of individuals with disabilities and their progress towards civil and human rights.
2. Comprehend the legal and self-advocacy milestones.
3. Identify future needs of individuals with disabilities so they can live in a society free of physical and social barriers.
4. Discuss the rights and responsibilities to which all individuals are entitled.
5. Discuss challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, in regards to their rights.
6. Examine public care and treatment of people with disabilities.

#### **H. Program Competencies N/A**

#### **I. SUNY General Education Knowledge and Skills Areas: N/A**

#### **J. ECC Learning Outcomes (LO):**

##### (1) Communication -

Produce a coherent text which develops an argument with well- organized supporting information (3, LV3)

##### (3) Information Literacy -

Analyze information sources available and rank their value relative to need (1, LV3)

Compare new information with prior, recognizing value, contradiction or unique characteristics (1, 2, 3, LV3)

## **K. Student Learning**

### **K1. Evaluation of Student Learning:**

**25%** Research Project- Creating a timeline (CO 1, 2)

**25%** Program/product development (CO 2)

**25%** Oral presentation (CO 3, 4, 5)

**25%** Participation/ homework and Exams- to be determined by the instructor (6)

### **K2. Assessment of Student Learning:**

- Create a timeline of events; include significant events which made an impact on the treatment of individuals with disabilities and their progress towards equal rights (CO1), extend the timeline by estimating future trends in programs or product development (CO 2, 3).
- Using information from the legal and self-advocacy milestones determine a need from the People-first approach (CO 4, 5); design a program or product which may have the potential to move individuals with disabilities closer to a society, which is free from physical and social barriers (CO 6).
- Verbally and visually present your program/product design. This program/product should be designed to alleviate a challenge faced by individuals with disabilities. (CO 5, 6).

## **L. Library Resources:**

<http://nclld-youth.info> The National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth (NCLD/Y) provides information about the importance of specific events

and the history of the Disability Rights movement which is critical to the development of its future leaders.

<http://www.disabilitymuseum.org> The Disability of Museum History website includes a disability library, lesson plans, and a virtual museum.

<http://Dsq-sds.org> Disability Studies Quarterly (DSQ) is a multidisciplinary and international journal of interest to social scientists, scholars in the humanities, disability rights advocates, creative writers, and others concerned with the issues of people with disabilities.

<http://www.disabled-world.com> Provides disability information and videos on many topics, health issues and up-to date news.

<http://www.ada.gov> Delivers information and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act.

<http://www.disabilityhistory.org> Contains disabled heroes, important events, and resources. This website also gives people with disabilities an opportunity to contribute to disability history by sharing their personal stories.

*A Disability History of the United States (Revisioning American History)*, (2013), Kim E. Nielsen, Beacon Press. A narrative that reinterprets how we view our nation's past, placing the experiences of people with disabilities at the center of American history from pre-1492 to present.

*Disability Studies Reader 4<sup>th</sup> edition*, (2013), Leonard Davis, ISBN-10: 0415630517, Routledge. Emphasizes the global, transgender, homo-national, and post-human conceptions of disabilities. Includes physical disabilities and explores issues around pain, mental disability and invisible disabilities. New

histories of the legal, social and cultural issues present a broader picture of disabilities.

*The Disability Rights Movement, (2000)*, Doris Fleischer & Frieda Zames, ISBN-10: 1566398118 , Temple University Press. Based on the interviews with activists who provide the history of their struggle for disability rights in the U.S.

*The Ugly Laws, Disability in Public, (The History of Disability), (2009)*, Susan Schweik, ISBN -10: 0814783619, NYU Press. Justifies the previous criminalization of disabilities, and clarifies the meaning of the laws.

*The Unseen Minority: A Social History of Blindness in the United States, (2004)*, Frances A. Koestler, ISBN: 978-0-89128-896-1, AFB Press. A comprehensive account of the journey to independence for individuals who are blind.

*Through Deaf Eyes, A Photographic History of an American Community, (2007)*, Douglas Baynton, Jack R. Gannon & Jean Lindquist-Bergey, ISBN-10:1563683474, Gallaudet University Press. These photos are from the movie which explores 200 years of deaf life in America, including conflicts, prejudice and affirmation.

### **M. Topical Outline:**

Week 1:     Orientation

- Introduction to disability
- Who is disabled?
- How has the media portrayed individuals with disabilities?

Week 2:     The Meaning of Disability

- Myths and misconceptions



- Barriers to inclusion: physical, attitude, organizational
- What is in a name?
- Why do we create labels?

Week 3: Important People who started the Disability Rights Movement

- Dorothea Dix
- P.T. Barnum
- Franklin Pierce
- Thom Thumb
- Grace Kennedy
- Burton Blatt

Week 4: Eugenics

Intelligence Testing: Testing of Feeble-minded Immigrants

- The death of the Bollinger baby
- Lippmann vs. The Testers: Can intelligence be measured?

Week 5: Legislative Policies and Significant Events

- Independent Living Movement
- The Rehabilitation Act
- Urban Mass Transportation Act
- Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act
- Fair Housing Act
- Air Carriers Act
- The burning of Paul Longmore's book
- The Deaf President Now shutdown of Gallaudet University

- Week 6: Legislative Policies
- ADA
  - Telecommunications Act of 1996
  - Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act
  - Padavan’s Law – New York State
  - The Hate Crimes Act of 2000
  - Individuals with Disabilities Act
- Week 7: Presentation of Timelines and Mid-term Exam
- Week 8: Phase 1 and II of the Disability Rights Movement
- Week 9: Phase III of the Disability Rights Movement
- Week 10: Famous People with Disabilities and their Accomplishments
- Week 11: Models of Disabilities
- Medical Model vs. Social Model
  - Person-first Model
  - Person-centered services
- Week 12: Complications with the Social Model
- Week 13: Characteristics and Needs of Persons with Disabilities
- Advocacy
  - Self-Advocacy
  - Self-Determination
  - Person-entered social inclusion planning

Week 14: Capstone Activity: Verbal and visual presentations of student's work on a program or product they designed for individuals with disabilities

Week 15: Final Exam

**N: Proposal Prepared by:** Pamela Simmeth

**Date Prepared:** November 2013

**Date Last Updated:** November 2013

## Appendix B: Flow Chart

Used to ensure the course objectives coordinate with the Learning Outcomes, Evaluation, and Assessment and covered in the topical outline.

<b>Course Outcomes</b> Upon completion of this course the student will be able to...	<b>Topical Outline</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes</b> 1. Communication 2. Critical Analysis & Reasoning 3. Information Literacy Scientific Reasoning	<b>K1 Evaluation of Student Learning</b> exams, papers, research projects, capstone activities, collaborative assignments laboratory work, portfolios, oral presentation % of grade	<b>K2 Assessment of Student Learning</b> List same methods used for this course, its outcomes as listed on approved academic assessment plan Means to determine various Learning Outcomes Course, Program, Institutional, SUNY GE