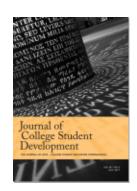# PROJECT MUSE®

Disability in Higher Education: A Social Justice Approach by
Nancy J. Evans, Ellen M. Broido, Kirsten R. Brown, and
Autumn K. Wilke (review)

Karen A. Myers

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Throughout, the authors consistently position assessment as a routine, planned, structured, and predictable responsibility of student affairs professionals, including entry-level professionals. In accordance with the general and program-specific CAS Standards and the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies document, *Assessment in Student Affairs* moves assessment knowledge, skills, and proficiencies into the center of effective student affairs practice.

Another relatively new book on assessment, *Student Affairs Assessment: Research to Practice* (Henning & Roberts, 2016) also emphasizes the convergence of assessment expertise with professional competence through its close alignment of content with foundational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research competency indicators; its discussions of quantitative assessment approaches are also particularly strong. *Coordinating Student Affairs Divisional Assessment* (Yousey-Elsener, Bentrim, & Henning, 2015) provides—as the title indicates—perspectives on the development of appropriate resources, infra-structure, and expertise to support assessment work at the division level.

Professionals, scholars, and graduate students all stand to benefit from the growing collection of student affairs assessment resources, and the second edition of *Assessment in Student Affairs* deserves to be front and center on one's assessment bookshelf.

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Disability in Higher Education: A Social Justice Approach

Nancy J. Evans, Ellen M. Broido, Kirsten R. Brown, and Autumn K. Wilke

San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. 515 pages. $45.00 (hardcover), $36.99 (e-book)

Reviewed by Karen A. Myers, Saint Louis University

In *Disability in Higher Education: A Social Justice Approach*, Evans, Broido, Brown, and Wilke did an outstanding job creating a resource for disability scholars, faculty, and practitioners and a textbook for disability education courses within higher education administration, student affairs, disability studies, and human services programs among others. This comprehensive book provides a view of disability in higher education through a social justice lens from its roots to today's college campus experience—traditional, virtual, and global. Using the social justice lens is one of the main contributions this book makes to the topic of disability in higher education. In doing so, the authors address the power dynamics, institutional oppression, and lack of equity (Goodman, 2001) experienced by individuals with disabilities in a higher education setting. The authors capture this in their critical examination of ableism. Particularly unique to this book are the voices of students with disabilities, sharing their lived experiences.

The authors explain in the preface, "A social justice approach to disability in higher education means beginning with the assumption that people's abilities to contribute to and benefit from higher education are not dependent on their bodies or psyches conforming to dominant norms . . . . [Rather] barriers to success . . . lie in structural, organizational, physical, and attitudinal aspects of our institutions" (p. xiii). Dividing the book into 4 parts—Foundational Concepts, Population Specific Experiences,

Environmental Issues, and Serving Students —the authors intentionally begin with foundational philosophical, historical, theoretical, and legal concepts, addressing first the social justice lens and language and concluding with recommendations for practice. Each of the 15 chapters begins with personal quotes from students, faculty, and staff with disabilities and disability service providers, and ends with discussion questions, ideal for the classroom setting. Useful tables and appendices appear throughout, supplementing the narrative and providing "snapshot" summaries, including history of disability in the United States; disability models; universal design strategies; and student conduct case law.

Part 1, comprised of 4 chapters, addresses the history of disability in higher education; disability models including the Social Justice (Ableist or Disability Oppression) Model and emerging models—Disability Justice and the Interactionist Model of Disability and disability law related to education in the United States and legislative implications. Chapter 4 is an insightful explanation of the terms *impairment*, referring to specific physical, psychological, sensory, cognitive, and health-related conditions, and *disability*, referring to a person's interaction with barriers in their environment that may hinder equal access and full participation. This section concludes with statistics of college students reporting disabilities and descriptions of those impairments.

Part 2 (3 chapters) addresses disability identity development and multiple aspects of identity, student populations, and faculty and staff with disabilities, the latter being welcomed voices to disability literature. Part 3 is the most extensive unit comprised of 5 chapters addressing the college experience beginning with "The Campus Environment" and "The Campus Climate." Chapter 10 addresses the application of Universal Design

(UD) to higher education. Incorporating user-friendly tables throughout, the chapter illustrates Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Universal Instructional Design (UID), and Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) and concludes with the connection between social justice and the implementation of UD. Chapter 11 explores useful and practical types of assistive and learning technologies and provides examples of accessible, adaptive, and universally designed technology, highlighting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. Chapter 12 is filled with examples of effective classroom practices encompassing UDI applications and learning strategies for world language classrooms, STEM disciplines, and fine arts curricula.

Part 4 addresses accommodations for students with disabilities and the entities on college campus who coordinate services. The authors emphasize the shared responsibility of the campus community. Chapters focus on the role of disability resource offices on college campuses; the role student affairs plays to ensure inclusion of individuals with disabilities; and the transition of students with disabilities from high school to college, a much-needed tutorial for both high school and college practitioners.

The authors accomplished their purpose "to expand the conversation about disability in higher education, [moving the reader] beyond the traditional narrative of deficit of people with disabilities, legal compliance, and academic accessibility" (p. 7). They challenge readers to consider inclusive practices and be attentive to the voices and the lived experiences of faculty, staff, and students with disabilities.

As a higher education administration faculty member with a disability who has been teaching a self-designed graduate disability education course throughout my career, I can relate to the challenges involved in finding reading materials relevant to the topic.

Over the years, I was able to pull together a comprehensive reading list for my disability-focused classes thanks to books authored by Higbee (2003), Linton (1998, 2006), Higbee and Goff (2008), Higbee and Mitchell (2009), and Burgstahler (2015); articles by Gibson (2006, 2011) introducing her Disability Identity Development model; numerous publications by Evans, Broido, and others on disability and social justice; a multitude of websites and YouTube videos; and an ASHE monograph (Myers, Lindburg, & Nied, 2014) written to fill a gap in disability literature related to college students with disabilities. *Disability in Higher Education* differs from these resources in that it is a wide-ranging publication presented though a social justice approach that addresses the information above, but also includes student, faculty, and staff voices. I look forward to adding this book to my course reading lists!

Disability in Higher Education is a welcomed response to the call from instructors, practitioners, scholars, and students looking for a comprehensive book on disability in higher education through a social justice lens. Ultimately, this book asks all college and university stakeholders to take on the social justice mantle to challenge ablesim by raising their voices and advocating for social change in institutional cultures. Through shared responsibility and ally development, we will promote equity and inclusion for all members of our campus communities.

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