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Building Community Partnerships with Adults with Disabilities: A Case Study Using Narrative Literacy as a Conduit for Shared Learning

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Abstract

Building relationships between traditional college students and adults with disabilities is an important yet little understood aspect of civic engagement. The case study presented in this paper built one such relationship by utilizing a shared narrative project to construct an equitable collaborative experience between a set of students from Wagner College and some adults with intellectual disabilities from a community organization, Lifestyles for the Disabled. We also discuss learning outcomes of this project, which included a deeper understanding and connection between people who learn differently.

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Keywords

learning community, narrative literacy, adults with intellectual disabilities, collaborative learning

Individuals with disabilities have been marginalized throughout Western culture (Barnes, 1997). Since the latter half of the 20th century, however, disability rights activists have made great strides in the United States in achieving public accommodations for individuals with disabilities, most significantly through the passages of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. But a social anxiety about disability persists in a culture where the dominant idiom is that of "survival of the fittest," and where the prevailing national ideology insists that ability, talent, and hard work lead to success (Ghosh, 2013). In this context, able-bodiedness is taken to be a background assumption and anyone with disabilities is regarded as someone who must either overcome her disabilities (and fall in line with others in the race to succeed) or else be a failure (and therefore be disqualified from recognition and respect). This produces for people with disabilities the twin burdens of negotiating a world made for and by able-bodied peers as well as the real and imagined injury of being denied respect and recognition (for more on respect and recognition, see Young, 1990; Fraser, 1995; Markell, 2003; Fraser and Honneth, 2003). This realization sometimes even leads parents to choose selective abortion of fetuses with disabilities (for a critique of selective abortion, see Saxton, 2010).

Despite the achievements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), access and equity issues in employment, medical care, and education remain, and much improvement is still needed (Thomas, 2004; O'Brien, 2001). This is especially true for adults with cognitive or intellectual disabilities, formerly referred to as adults with "mental retardation" (until the passage of Rosa's Law in 2009 [P.L. 111-256]).[1] While non-disabled peers typically graduate high school and go to college, adults with intellectual disabilities usually do not. This limited access to college has an isolating effect on people with cognitive or intellectual disabilities, but it also limits the opportunities for non-disabled peers to get to know people with such disabilities on an interpersonal basis and work with them in an equitable manner.

In addition, a legitimate and aggressive focus on racial, gender, nationality, and other kinds of diversity often obscures the very real imbalance most academic institutions typically have in the recruitment of students with disabilities, particularly those with cognitive disabilities, whereby these members of our communities are routinely underrepresented at our institutions of higher education. Iris Marion Young calls this kind of marginalization one of the "five faces of oppression"—a situation in which older people, racial minorities, disabled people, and others are kept systematically outside of the ambit of full participation in society, including the labor force (Young, 1990).

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1 Intellectual disability is a below-average cognitive ability (IQ of 70 or below). It occurs before the age of 18 and individuals with intellectual disabilities also exhibit limitations in the ability to adapt to, and carry on, everyday-life activities.

In this paper, we discuss as a case study a learning community (LC-21) we organized during Fall 2012 at Wagner College (Staten Island, New York) in order to provide an opportunity for adults with intellectual and cognitive disabilities to attend a college class (more or less) on a regular basis. This opportunity was also designed to provide traditional age college students a chance to work closely with individuals with intellectual disabilities and to get to know them, first as individuals, second as learners, and finally as individuals with disabilities.

For some very valid reasons, including reasons related to resource-limitations, colleges are usually unable to accommodate students who have severe cognitive disabilities as part of the regular student body. Non-disabled students may find themselves in interactions with students with deafness or other physical impairments, but it is far more rare for them to get a chance to interact with those with cognitive disabilities. Yet, colleges can *occasionally* foster an environment where these members of our communities are made to feel welcome and given opportunities to connect and collaborate with typical students. As we describe in detail in the rest of the paper, our experience in this learning community indicates to us that both the disabled as well as the non-disabled members of LC-21 learned and benefited from the experience of collaborating on a narrative project. It is our belief and recommendation that more projects like LC-21 should be organized both on Wagner College's campus as well as other campuses nationwide. We also believe that in the compelling interest of bringing diversity to campus, it is absolutely essential that a range of diversities in identity be accommodated on campus. We suggest that despite the difficulties colleges have in accommodating students with cognitive disabilities as if they were non-disabled students, we *can* create more inclusive environments on college campuses that allow students with cognitive disabilities a chance to have at least some limited access to a college experience.

Wagner Plan

LC-21 was organized as part of a college-wide curriculum known as the Wagner Plan (see Figure 1). The plan seeks to incorporate during the college experience three sets of courses that combine traditional and interdisciplinary scholarship and experiential learning. In short, the Wagner Plan attempts to systematically connect the theories learned in the classroom with practice in local and global communities.

While all course instructors are encouraged to make direct connections between theory and practice, the Wagner Plan provides three specific moments in all undergraduates' experiences in which these connections are made explicit. The first stage of the Wagner Plan occurs during students' first (Fall) semester in college and is called the First Year Program (FYP). In the FYP, students enroll in

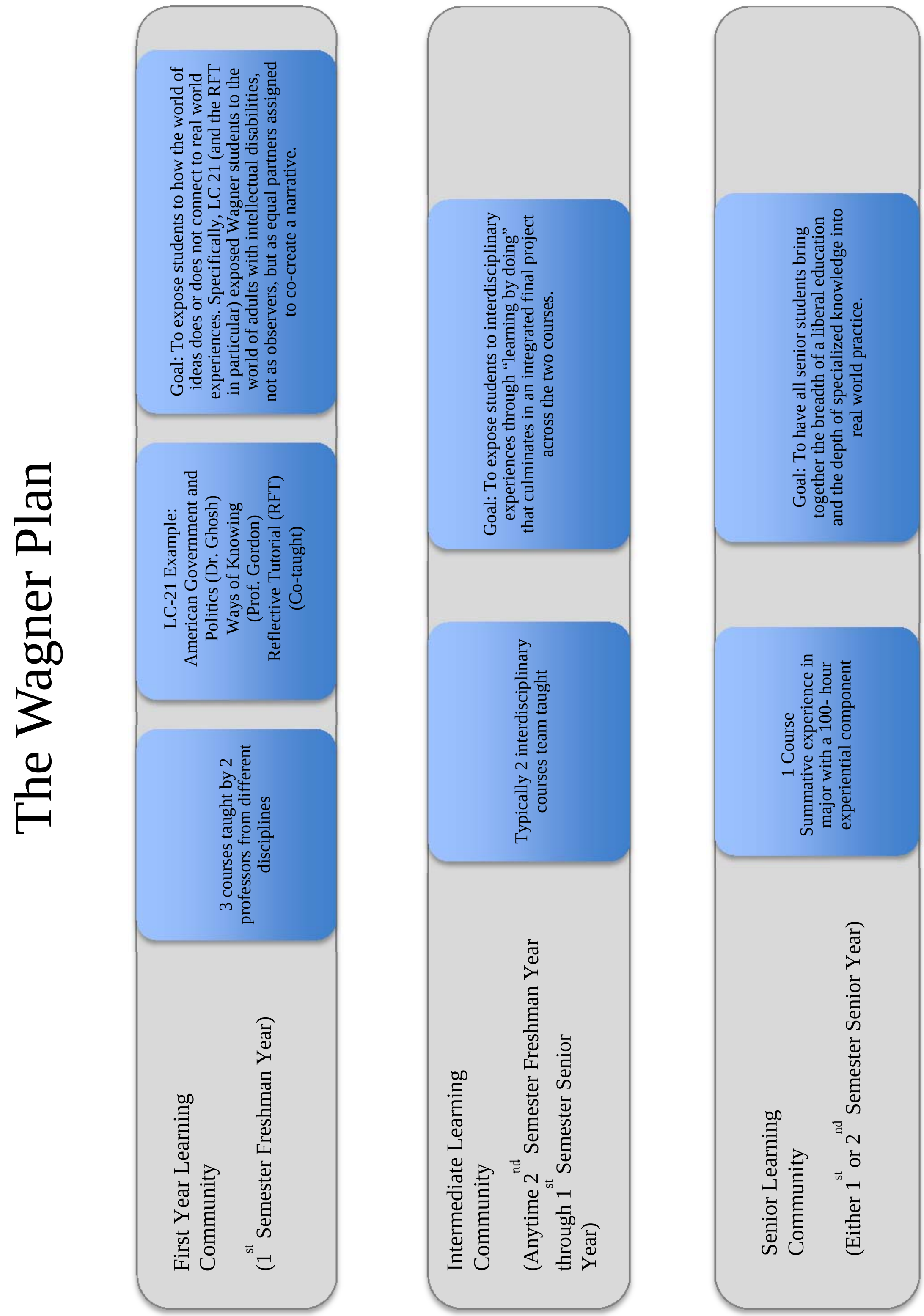

Figure 1. The Wagner Plan

two courses taught by faculty in different departments as well as a third course that is jointly taught by these two faculty members. The third course, called a Reflective Tutorial (RFT), combines interdisciplinary liberal arts scholarship with experiential learning. This 3-course block of related classes together forms the First Year Program. In the RFT, students either make multiple field trips or work with a community organization as part of their experiential learning component for the course. The second stage of the Wagner Plan can occur as early as the Spring semester of the freshman/first year or during either their sophomore or junior years, and is titled Intermediate Learning Community (ILC).[2] The ILC addresses interdisciplinary topics, allowing students to see the social and intellectual links between diverse perspectives and/or disciplines. Learning together for a second semester encourages a deeper level of active participation in the learning process.[3] The goals of the ILC are to expose students to, and involve them in, an interdisciplinary experience of "learning by doing" through sophisticated writing, challenging research, and an integrated final project that facilitates critical thinking. The ILC concludes with a written or an oral presentation.

Students enroll for the final stage of the Wagner Plan during their senior year: the Senior Learning Community (SLC). By the end of the senior year, all students must successfully complete an SLC with a reflective tutorial in their major. The SLC is a capstone experience that contains the following elements: a summative major course and an RFT that includes a 100-hour experiential component, a substantial and sophisticated written project, and a presentation. Each experience is meant to increase both students' engagement in cross-disciplinary content and in the various communities that they will eventually serve (Gordon & Fitzgerald, *under review*). The study presented in this paper focuses on one of these learning communities organized at Wagner College during Fall 2012 as part of the FYP.

Structuring a Meaningful Collaboration: The Case of LC-21

In Learning Community-21, David Gordon and Cyril Ghosh were teamed up. Gordon is assistant professor in the Education department and Ghosh started a position as visiting assistant professor in the Government and Politics

[2] The students have some flexibility in deciding which semester they want to complete their ILC in. There is a tacit assumption, and several faculty advisors recommend, that students complete their ILC sooner rather than later, just to prevent too large a gap between their first-year Learning Community and the ILC.

[3] In this second iteration of the Wagner Plan's interdisciplinary program, the students don't usually work as exactly the same group as their first year Learning Community. So, this is not a continuation of the first iteration in that literal sense. It is a second interdisciplinary opportunity to work together as a group.

department in Fall 2012. While both were new, Gordon had built a relationship with Lifestyles for the Disabled, a nonprofit organization that provides programming for over 350 adults with intellectual disabilities, during the previous fall. Their mission is to provide quality learning experiences that will enable all program participants, regardless of their present disabilities, to become productive members of society and live their lives with dignity and as independently as possible. Lifestyles learners are given the opportunity to work, train, and socialize as productive members of society through various working partnerships with Staten Island businesses. Thus, Lifestyles provides the means for adults with intellectual disabilities to develop self-respect by obtaining valued functional and productive roles within the community. In its strategic vision, Wagner College, too, takes seriously the commitment to inculcate among its students a spirit of civic engagement. This convergence of vision provided a strong foundation for these two institutions to work together.

Planning

Since this was the second year that Gordon had taught in the First Year Program, there was only the roadmap from the previous year from which to work. Gordon and Ghosh held several meetings during the summer prior to the fall semester and discussed the various types of expertise each could bring to the table in developing this course. Gordon not only has extensive experience in working with people with disabilities, he is also the principal person in his department teaching classes in special education. His research focuses on access and equity issues for people with disabilities. Some of Ghosh's research, on the other hand, focuses on political participation, identity politics, and multiculturalism in the United States (Ghosh, 2013). We decided that we could structure a course in which students learn both broadly about identity politics and specifically about disability as an identity category.

This task was made easier because of the pre-existing relationship with specific Lifestyles staff. Gordon had worked closely with Louise Vallario, Social Skills/Mentors in Training Educator, and Urszula Zalewska, Lifestyles Educational Center Supervisor, along with additional support staff, in a previous project. These Lifestyles staff members are responsible for creating additional learning opportunities for Lifestyles participants. Gordon discussed the possibility of this new collaboration with Vallario and Zalewska, who were then granted permission from upper management at Lifestyles to proceed.

It was our intention that not only would the entire LC meet and interact with a group of Lifestyle learners but also that each of our students would be partnered with a Lifestyles Learner so that they could collaborate on a final project.[4] We also hoped that our students would reflect on their interactions with their Lifestyles partners in the context of the reading material assigned for the RFT. After a series of planning conversations, we decided the course should provide an opportunity for learners (both Wagner students and those from Lifestyles) to create quasi-fictional narratives together. These narratives were quasi-fictional in the sense that we encouraged them to come up with a fictional narrative, but we also suggested that they draw from their own biographies and memories in doing so. We wanted them to recount similar types of experiences, which they would then compare, morph, and work into the narrative.

Our work was influenced by Griffin, et. al. (2012) who describe the importance of including adults with intellectual disabilities in higher education classes, and note the variables that influence levels of acceptance of these adults among traditional college students. Our goal was to create more than just a clinical teaching experience; we wanted to structure experiences so that Wagner students would be open to building stronger relationships with learners with intellectual disabilities.

Consequently, we designed the RFT to help create an open and trusting collaborative environment. We allocated time early in the semester to focus on understanding the needs, wants, and desires of adults with intellectual disabilities, possible ways our students could gain their partners' trust, and narrative topics that would be interesting to themselves, their partners, and the larger reading audience. We selected articles from the literature on identity politics as well as pieces from the well-known anthology on disability studies edited by Lennard Davis, *The Disability Studies Reader* (2010). For identity politics, we assigned selections from Iris Marion Young's *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990) and from *Critical Race Theory—An Introduction* (Delgado &Stefancic, 2001). From *The Disability Studies Reader* (Davis, 2010), we assigned several pieces to help broaden our students' understanding of diverse members of this segment of our society. For example, we assigned articles on disability and women's rights (including a discussion on selective abortion of disabled fetuses) by Ruth Hubbard (2010) and Marsha Saxton (2010). On intersectionality (race/sexuality/HIV status), queer theory and disability, we used Chris Bell's (2010) piece, and we used Simi Linton's (2010) piece on the assignation of meanings.

The collaborative narrative, the culminating project for LC-21, required

[4] There were diverse ways in which we could have partnered the Wagner students with Lifestyles learners. We decided to match them by their interests. Specifically, we created a short interest inventory form with a 10-point Likert scale. The interest categories in the scale corresponded to work training programs at Lifestyles. Lifestyles participants choose the work training areas they enjoy the most (viz., cooking, woodworking, sports, creative writing, etc.). We then matched Wagner students with Lifestyles participants on the basis of their ratings on similar activities.

Wagner students to "do" more than talk about how to interact with individuals with disabilities appropriately. The structure of the class was designed so students could develop the interpersonal, social, and communication skills that would be vital to co-creating a successful narrative. To this end, we organized various field experiences in which the Wagner students and their partners could spend time together and learn something from each other. As a starting point, three "getting to know you" sessions were designed before the Wagner students and Lifestyles learners actually began to work on narratives. These sessions included trips to the two Lifestyles for the Disabled centers as well as a combined trip to a local zoo. We also planned 10-12 hours of direct contact time between the Lifestyles learners and Wagner students in a variety of settings during the semester. Details of all these meetings are discussed in the next section.

Implementation

We started the "getting to know you" sessions with a tour of each other's campuses. First, we organized a trip where LC-21 went to Lifestyles for a tour which included visiting over 100 Lifestyles learners in the classrooms and work areas where they spend much of their day. We also had the opportunity to meet some of the Lifestyles learners we would be working with directly. The following week the fifteen Lifestyles learners who were going to work with LC-21 came to Wagner College. The Wagner students gave them a tour and they spent some time socializing. The most entertaining part of this day for everyone was the time we spent on the Wagner College Oval playing "ice-breaker" games with each other on a wonderfully bright fall afternoon. The 41 learners were split up into three groups to participate in games that allowed them to learn a little bit about each other. The Wagner students were assigned different roles, and took turns leading these groups. During this shared learning experience, both groups warmed up to each other and started to become less guarded about their interactions.

After the Lifestyles learners left, the Wagner students had a reflective discussion about their interactions. Several students said that their preconceived ideas about people with disabilities did not match what they experienced. Others reported being excited that the Lifestyles learners were happy just to "be there" among Wagner students, and commented that they "were no different than anyone else." When asked to elaborate, some students discussed themes related to acceptance, kindness, and humor, and possibilities for enjoying the company of those who are different from us.

The next scheduled time together was our first collaborative classroom "working narrative" session. Prior to the meeting, we discussed with our students the importance of having a "lesson plan" or at least a series of activities to use with their Lifestyles learners. At the first meeting it became clear that the Wagner students took this advice seriously, creating activities to assess the learning strengths of the Lifestyles learners as well as getting to know their partners and giving their partners a chance to get to know them. Interestingly, and very organically, students began to make "small groups" as well, which allowed stronger partner teams to help other partner teams when conversations seemed to stall.

Our third experience, a joint outing to the Staten Island Zoo, served as an opportunity for Wagner students and Lifestyles participants to spend time together in a more informal setting. (Later in the semester, Wagner students also had a tour of the Lifestyles Campus at the historic Willowbrook site.)

After each of the first three meetings, Wagner College students and Lifestyles participants reflected on the session as a large group, and then met separately. In our separate meeting, Wagner College students discussed their fears and biases, the concerns they had, and the strategies they could use to support each other during the project. The Lifestyles learners had similar feedback sessions with their professional staff. After completing the three "getting to know you" sessions, we started to focus on the primary content: co-creating the narratives.

We regularly communicated with Lifestyles, sometimes multiple times a week, in order get a sense of where we stood with our shared goals. We used feedback from the Lifestyles staff, both positive and negative, to guide our activities in subsequent sessions and to figure out whether or not we could tweak the lesson plans to incorporate some of Lifestyles' own vision into our collaborative enterprise. Regular communication was critical because this partnership was something new; mistakes would inevitably be made and challenges would arise, so we all needed to be comfortable with trying, failing, and trying again.

We met for multiple sessions at Wagner College as students conducted their narrative work. While the tours and the zoo trip allowed for informal interactions in fun, comfortable, and familiar settings helping to achieve the goal of getting to know one another interpersonally, the classroom meetings helped achieve two other goals: 1) to set the tone that Wagner campus was a place where students work and write, and 2) to ensure that the campus was a place where Lifestyles learners had equal value and expectations as writers and learners.

As part of the RFT, we discussed the readings with our students and invited them to reflect on the degree to which the readings matched what we were experiencing with our community partners. Further discussion focused on interpersonal relationships as well as the moral and social undertones that accompany working with individuals with disabilities.

We also dedicated time in class to discuss how to create narratives. Over time, the Wagner students began to think about how to construct a narrative as well as how to teach someone else the process of building a narrative. To be sure, not all of our Wagner students enjoyed the writing process. But before long, these students realized that regardless of their complaints, the expectations of both Wagner instructors were consistent: the narrative was the ultimate objective and these students needed to keep an open mind and try their best, as other learners were depending on them. As the reality of the expectations for LC-21 took root, the Wagner students became more willing and steadfast in improving their skills as writers, learners, and educators in order to create a better narrative that would be shared with the class.

The groups continued to meet for the remainder of the semester in two Wagner classrooms. Each session began with a 5-minute orientation led by Wagner and Lifestyles professionals designed to do three things: first, to insure that everyone was clear on the goals for the day; second, to identify any missing partners and make alternative arrangements; and, finally, to discuss the work people had done since the last meeting. One partner pair conducted their sessions via Skype teleconference as the specific Lifestyles Learner in this team had a chronic health condition that often prevented in-person participation. Beyond these mini-orientations, learners rarely needed direction or instructions from the "professionals" in the room; over the next few weeks the partners worked on their narratives. Toward the last few meetings, the Wagner and Lifestyles professionals asked the pairs to post their work on a private Google Site to be shared with the rest of the class as well as with family members. Finally, at the end of the semester, as a "culminating" activity involving all of the participants, we had a narrative-reading session at Lifestyles for the Disabled where both the Lifestyles and Wagner students read their work.

Wagner Students' Responses

When the Wagner students first learned that they would be working with adults with intellectual disabilities, a small minority of students, especially those who already knew that they wanted to become teachers, were excited. The vast majority of the class was apprehensive. Their trepidation was not unexpected. Very few had prior experience working with individuals with cognitive disabilities (although multiple students had worked with deaf learners) and they were afraid that they would not be able to carry on a sustained and successful interaction with their partners, let alone come up with a collaborative project. With these realities in mind, relatively early in the semester we organized a session where, as a class, we engaged in an exercise that focused on our students' biggest fears and the specific challenges they anticipated during this experience. We had a free flowing dialogue about these concerns and then spent the rest of the time discussing research-based solutions and some "common sense" strategies to use with this particular population. We also dedicated an entire class session to the use of language and the casual use of words. We read Simi Linton's (2010) piece in *The Disability Studies Reader* entitled "Reassigning Meaning" and discussed how language may or may not oppress people and how the linguistic expectations of an ableist society can be problematic when we interact with individuals with disabilities. As a class, we came to an understanding that genuine feelings of solidarity, understanding, and friendship trump "political correctness." We agreed that we were all going to make "mistakes" in our use of language but to the best of our abilities, we wished to remain sensitive to the lived experiences of others.

During the early sessions, the Wagner students were also confronted with the issue of inclusivity. Simply put, adults with intellectual disabilities are not usually invited to college campuses to learn. The Wagner students learned that some of the Lifestyles learners were afraid the Wagner students would tease or bully them, which was often a part of their experiences as K-12 students, or worse, that they would tell them that they did not belong on a college campus. As one of the Lifestyles staff members said: "College has always been unobtainable for this population. They watched their same age peers go away to colleges and universities while they were stuck at home." As the Wagner students better understood this situation, discussion turned from fear to cautious optimism about how they could make a meaningful difference in the lives of the Lifestyles learners, by enabling for them a brief opportunity to be part of the "college experience."

By the end of the semester, we were both happy to observe that even the most reluctant of our student participants had slowly but steadily developed a sense of ethics about the task at hand. This was unmistakable in one Wagner student who, during most of the first part of the semester, was resistant to the work assigned to him. He would show up late to class and be slow to turn off his music and remove his headphones. He would also constantly play/text with his cell phone. In short, he displayed considerable difficulty focusing on the task at hand. But over the course of the semester, we saw this pattern disappearing, particularly when we were working with our Lifestyles learners in the classroom. During the final narrative reading event, which lasted three hours, this student did not use his phone, nor did he fidget. He sat and listened attentively to each and every presentation. When one of us asked him why he was not playing with his phone, he simply smiled and said, "I'm listening [to them]!" When other peers of his had to leave early and offered to give him a ride, he politely refused and stated that he wanted to stay until the end so he could hear all of the stories.

Narratives as a Conduit for Shared Learning

Early on, we had cautioned the Wagner students that it would be very easy for them to monopolize their narrative's plot because in most cases they would bear the primary responsibility for writing, given that most of the Lifestyles participants have limited experience in formal writing. But we had accepted this inevitable asymmetry, in part because we knew that any other kind of arrangement would be unfair to the Lifestyles participants.

As they wrote the narratives, several of the Lifestyles participants and the Wagner students found out what they had intuitively known all along: there isn't much difference between them. Apart from universal themes like love, friendship, and achievement, the plot lines ran the gamut of teenage and young adult experiences including subjects like bullying, Halloween, superheroes, Dancing with the Stars, Special Olympics, and even crime fiction!

Reading the stories revealed that, in some cases, both participants enjoyed writing them. They found experiences and interests that they had in common and drew upon them to make the plots exciting and/or moving. In what follows, we illustrate some of the ways in which a shared narrative writing process took place in LC-21.

One pair of students came up with a story about a serial killer. The narrator is a police officer who is trying to apprehend a serial killer, and he is joined on the detective squad by Christina, who has just moved from Seattle. The Wagner College student in this team had just moved from Seattle to New York. Beyond that, the plot is pure detective fiction. The two officers work through the clues, realize that the serial killer is stalking young women on Facebook before he takes their lives, and so on. Christina finally realizes the killer is none other than her ex-boyfriend who the two detectives spot in midtown Manhattan. Both students were interested in detective stories and this was a perfect way to let their imaginations work their magic. They even managed to weave social media into the story—yet another common interest of theirs!

Another story is about Grumpy the tiger, who found out that making friends was not as hard as it seemed. A whole new world of friendship opened up for Grumpy once he befriended Flicka the horse. Their friendship started when Flicka met Grumpy and took a risk and opened up about his feelings. He noticed that Grumpy did not like to be social: in fact, he "did not like to be around anyone, and […] enjoyed his space." When Flicka tells him, "Stay away….I do not like you because you are not nice to me, at all [sic]" Grumpy responds by apologizing and asking to be friends.

The story reveals more than it appears on the surface. Its narrators were both hoping to make friends. The Wagner student was just starting college and his Lifestyles partner was having her first college experience. In addition, and probably more importantly, they were trying to be each other's friends! Friendships, however, don't happen out of thin air. Somebody needs to break the ice, and this is the most moving part of the narrative. The entire plot is predicated upon Flicka breaking the ice and Grumpy acknowledging that (no matter how rough and off-putting his exterior) he just wants to be friends with Flicka. The wisdom of the story is in the sub-text.

In yet another story, two participants with a common interest in sports came together to write about a young man, Jose, who grows up in a foster home and eventually participates in the Special Olympics, running track, playing softball, and doing the high jump. Jose's story is one of triumph and the overcoming of odds, including his (implied) disability and his abandonment by his parents at birth. He eventually gets to carry the Olympic torch over the Verrazano Bridge from Staten Island to Brooklyn for the Special Olympic Games. At the age of 21, Jose leaves home to live independently and even gets a job working at a restaurant. It turns out that later in life, Jose co-founds Lifestyles for the Disabled. He also meets a young woman called Queen, who also participates in the Special Olympics. Although Jose is hesitant about it at first, the two eventually fall in love and marry. To this day, they remain in love.

Love, as it turns out, is a universal theme. Several teams wrote about people falling in love, about love triangles, about Valentine's Day, about a boyfriend taking long walks with his girlfriend because she is upset, and so on. But, as indicated above, universal and abstract themes were not the only things that brought together our disabled and non-disabled students. A range of other topics were treated in these stories, including friendship, achievement, bullying, superheroes, TV shows, a murder mystery, and Halloween!

Outcomes

LC-21 addressed multiple goals. Our first goal was to provide traditionally-aged college students the opportunity to work closely with individuals with intellectual disabilities. Second, we wished to provide an avenue for adults with intellectual disabilities, for whom college is usually inaccessible, to attend a college course. Finally, we intended to provide an opportunity to strengthen relations between the Staten Island community and Wagner College. Not only were all of these goals met, but we also received feedback from the Wagner College students, the Lifestyles professionals, and the Lifestyles learners themselves that substantially more was accomplished in their interpersonal interactions and bonding.

On several occasions, stakeholders from each of the three groups commented on what they were learning. Wagner students would comment on the skill and ability levels of their partners, noting that they had skill sets and talents that they themselves did not possess. The Lifestyles professional staff often commented on noticeable improvements in self-esteem and self-confidence among some of the Lifestyles learners; they also observed that, for some of the Lifestyles participants, this increased sense of self-worth carried over to other work settings. LC-21 had not only met its initial goals; indeed it had done more.

In this article, we have focused on themes of planning and implementation of this learning community. We have also discussed the impact of this experience on the traditional college students as well as the professional staff. Finally, we have shared some of the narratives that were written as part of the culminating activity for LC-21. Yet, possibly the most poignant of all assessments of this learning community's achievements came from the Lifestyles learners themselves, several of whom expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to attend college and demonstrated their pride in their narrative-writing accomplishments. Having the opportunity to learn beside, and in equal partnership with, college students was an opportunity that many thought they would never have. In future research, we look forward to exploring, in greater detail, some of the more abstract themes of love, kindness, interpersonal relationships, and ability that appear in the final collaborative narratives described above.

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