

Using Design Examples in Arts Courses as On-Going Advocacy for Inclusion in Art and Design Teaching and Projects

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I. Introduction

First, I will provide the context or problem that informed my pedagogical choices based on my desire to be an advocate whenever possible. Second, I will share the goals I had in mind when considering continuous advocacy and the course I was teaching at the time. Third, I want to focus on possible solutions starting with shifting mindsets and perspectives. Lastly, I will share my more practical efforts, the examples used in my course, that reflected solutions based in a mindset of possibilities.

I want to start with a disclosure. I am an able bodied person with ADHD and anxiety. I have the least amount of training required to be licensed to teach special education in Illinois. I do not claim expertise. I try to convey information I have learned through readings or relationships as a form of advocacy. I struggle with representing others, but often I feel information won't be shared at all or often enough if I don't in the contexts where I live and work. Therefore, I apologize if my information or perspective is off or out-dated; corrections, updating, and related information is appreciated.

II. Problem & Purpose

Navigating icy and half cleared sidewalks on campus in winter makes me aware of just how treacherous getting to class can be. I notice the need for better surfaces inside and out to aid with traction and all my issues are from my own choices to wear the wrong shoes and not strengthen my core for stability. My laziness would probably benefit from design changes more specific to those with mobility issues. The design solutions for those with mobility issues should be a priority since more than that population would probably benefit (Naughton, 2020). After years of working in retail, I subconsciously notice when there isn't at least three feet of clearance. The biggest problem is the slow pace of redesigns in all aspects of life for specific populations and

their needs, but that also speaks to the issue of more able people being completely oblivious to these needs and their usefulness to everyone. If the solutions aren't useful to all, I will make the bold statement they probably won't create any issues for the majority of the population either.

As for the problem or context, care and empathy are related to all aspects of my teaching and research, specifically the idea of engrossment. I embrace Nel Noddings' views on care. Noddings (2013) identified three factors that make up care; commitment, engrossment, and motivational displacement. I see one of the problems as a lack of the appropriate kind of awareness that allows the privilege of ability to remain an ignorant default.

- A. Commitment. What is one's commitment? Where does this commitment come from? Considering those two questions for myself and hypothetically for my students informed my pedagogical decisions. I provided a disclosure that shares some of the answers and later I will share another anecdote related to my own commitment. As for my students, I can expect a wide variety, but also the possibility that they have not had a moment to spark any level of commitment.
- B. Engrossment. Has time been taken to become engrossed? To understand another person's reality? Engrossment does not require stalker level effort, but it should be authentic and beyond the surface level. Personally, I believe engrossment and care should be considered on an individual level, and am uneasy connecting these ideas to labeled groups because ethical caring is not always "best" for each individual. I do feel it is necessary to advocate and make change in these more overarching ways in order to more successfully support individuals in the future.
- C. Motivational Displacement. Can I set aside what is best for me for the good of the cared-for? Without any commitment and engrossment, motivational displacement is unlikely. We have had a law to force society to care and do this for the past 32-49 years, if you consider section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act first passed in 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act passed in 1990 (Ali, 2020; Burke, 2020). Yet, there is still so much to be done from the past in addition to new needs as society has continued changing.

III. Solutions

By being purposeful in the content I include in my courses, I have the opportunity to contribute to awareness of the ongoing need to support all members of society in many ways. I can use my commitment to being an educator and advocate for inclusion in addition to what I have learned by being engrossed academically and personally in topics related to inclusion, art, and design to support motivational displacement. I cannot rely on everyone having life experiences that creates an awareness and desire to strive for equity in many aspects of their lives. I can curate my content to provide opportunities to support a similar outcome.

In my design history course, my students need to be aware of key design moments as well as the contributing factors. The history of design is already a place of possibility and addressing new needs. The conversations include constant negotiation of form and function. By framing the entire course as finding new solutions and possibilities, students should have that mindset when looking at more contemporary projects. I can then select specific examples that I believe can create awareness because the outcomes would be mutually beneficial even though these projects started with a very specific group of people in mind. I hope to make sure they do not write off designs as for someone other than them without taking a moment to review the details and see if they are really excluded or their needs are actually different.

IV. Design Examples

Next, I will share three examples that I believe were impactful for my students. That informal evaluation is based on questions during and after those lectures, seeing the content appear in other course components, and scanning the lecture hall to see who was paying attention! For each I will summarize the topic and any key points based on my reflection as an educator.

A. **DeafSpace** (probably the most eye-opening for my past students)

1. The ASL Deaf Studies Department at Gallaudet and architect Hansel Bauman established the DeafSpace Project, or DSP, in 2005. Over five years, DSP developed a catalog of 150 plus distinct DeafSpace

architectural design elements called the DeafSpace Guidelines. These guidelines reflected the long held traditions and practical ways of making a space work for the Deaf experience. The project formalized and therefore brought them into broader architectural and design conversation.

2. On Gallaudet's website, specifically campus design and planning, states, *The study of DeafSpace offers valuable insights about the interrelationship between the senses, the ways we construct the built environment and cultural identity from which society at large has much to learn.* Using this example did provide my students with much learning. We looked at the five core features of space and proximity, sensory reach, mobility and proximity, light and color, and finally acoustics. Sensory Reach and Mobility and Proximity had the best lightbulb moment since so many of my hearing students have their heads buried in their phones with earbuds. Many of them could see how these solutions, specifically designed for Deaf people, would also help them considering how technology often disconnects them from certain sensory experiences.
3. Resources:
 - a. <https://www.gallaudet.edu/campus-design-and-planning/deafspace/>
 - b. <https://archive.curbed.com/2016/3/2/11140210/gallaudet-deafspace-washington-dc>
 - c. <https://www.archdaily.com/406845/architecture-s-first-full-fledged-experiment-in-deafspace-design>

B. Landscapes of Justice: Redefining the Prison Environment

1. This project reflects a collaboration between the Iowa Department of Corrections and Iowa State University's landscape architecture department to change the prison environment for rehabilitation and to change the perception of prisons. The designs were implemented at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women in Mitchellville, Iowa. Sharing this project was enlightening for my students as many have not thought about the disconnect from nature that occurs when someone is incarcerated, as

well as the significant benefits of being able to engage with nature that my students enjoy regularly.

2. Resources:

- a. <https://www.asla.org/2015studentawards/95349.html>
- b. <https://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2015/09/30/iciw-asla>

C. Tools: Extending Our Reach

1. This exhibition was at the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum from December 12th 2014 to May 25th 2015. I selected several items from the exhibit to share with my students within the theme of collaborating with technology. This supports a mindset of possibility especially when considering life challenges and how to support better function through design. I am able to show how new challenges and solutions happen throughout time. I present this lecture before jumping into socially conscious design (Landscapes of Justice) and inclusive design (DeafSpace).

2. Resources:

- a. <https://www.cooperhewitt.org/events/current-exhibitions/tools/>
- b. <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/exhibitions/51668987/>

V. References

- Ali, S. S. (2020). 30 years after Americans with Disabilities Act, college students with disabilities say law is not enough. *NBC News*. Retrieved March 22, 2022 from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/30-years-after-americans-disability-act-college-students-disabilities-say-n1138336>
- Burke, L. (2020). The ADA at 30. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved March 22, 2022 from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/08/05/qa-ada-30>
- Naughton, S. (2020). Speak up: A call for universal design: Why accessibility should be a priority instead of an afterthought. *Uprising*, 9. 32-35.
- Noddings, N. (2013). *Caring: A relational approach to ethics and moral education* (2nd edition), University of California Press.