

The Ablest Privilege Activity: An Active Learning Classroom Exercise

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ABSTRACT

Social work educators are at the forefront of providing experiential learning opportunities for student preparation and the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) reaffirmation standards underscores the need for social work students to be culturally competent practitioners. As technological advances result in the proliferation of online teaching modalities, active learning strategies must also be relevant for students in courses that do not meet in traditional face-to-face classrooms. This manuscript introduces an active learning exercise and analyzes statements from this activity titled, "The Ablest Privilege Activity." In the activity, students explore their privileges associated with cognitive and physical abilities. Results from student statements are used to develop practical implications in face-to-face and online classroom settings.

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, it is estimated that close to 19% (56.7 million) of the civilian non-institutionalized population had some form of disabilities in individual who can be related to a physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional trait, or a mixture of these characteristics. These disabilities can be congenital or inflicted. They can be broadly classified into 3 domains: communicative, mental, or physical. The majority (30 million) of the 56 million had a disability in only one domain, while the majority of these individuals, 41.5 million, had a disability in the physical domain. The age ranges vary; however, it is estimated that the risk of having a disability increases with age, in particular among Americans 80 years or older. In 2010, there were 14.9% aged 15 and older who experienced some level of difficulty seeing, hearing or having their speech understood. It is also estimated that roughly 30.6 million Americans aged 15 years and older had limitations associated with ambulatory activities of the lower body including difficulty walking, climbing stairs or using a wheelchair, cane, crutches, or walker. More women (19.8%) had a disability relative to men (17.4%). Of the major racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. the greatest numbers of disabled Americans were African Americans (22.2%), while Asian Americans represented the group with the lowest rates (14.5%)^[1].

For the purpose of this study, we viewed disability beyond the Medical Model, which depicts this issue as a problem inherent within the impaired person^[2]. Under the medical model, the underlying belief was to identify a "cure" that would ultimately return the individual to "normalcy"^[3]. Flavo maintains that when an individual was "incurable", they were considered "abnormal" "dysfunctional", or "disabled". Thus, the impairment was innate within individual. Our view of disability looks beyond the individual and considers the larger social environment. We consider the ways in which the environment, and the individuals that live within it, creates artificial barriers that limit the lives of people with disabilities^[2]. We acknowledge that the social structure fails to account for the needs of people with disabilities in ways that make everyday living much more challenging^[4]. Such failures have been experienced at the micro and macro levels, which have created livelihood constraints for people with disabilities^[5]. These include increasing unemployment and poverty rates among people with disabilities^[6]. Unreliable transportation services due to complex infrastructure development^[7], government obliviousness when it comes to resource allocation^[8] and inconsistent wheelchair access, signage, and crosswalk alerts^[9]. While we concede that existing social structures fail to account for the needs

of this population, it is also the case that society itself fails individuals with disabilities. The disabled people's movement of the 1960s lead to awareness of disabilities among the general public^[10], it can still be argued that Americans without disabilities do not fully comprehend the plight of ones with disabilities^[11]. Most Americans who are able-bodied do not completely identify with the context of the lives of individuals with disabilities; thus, the concerns that affect people with disabilities typically go overlooked, or are is interpreted^[11]. Thus, there is ambivalence when it comes to accepting people with disabilities, which often translates into continuing stigmatization and stereotypes of this community^[12,13].

Social work educators are at the forefront of providing experiential learning opportunities for student preparation and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) reaffirmation standards underscores the need for social work students to be culturally competent practitioners. For the purpose of this study, we viewed cultural competence as having the aptitude to respond to the unique needs of populations whose culture(s) are different than that which might be considered "dominant" or "mainstream"^[14]. Our view of cultural competency as it relates to ableist privilege, includes an understanding of how the institutional structures at play work to keep disabled people in a disadvantaged state. In addressing cultural competency, issues of privilege have received increasing attention from the academic community^[15]. The application of active learning takes time to plan and implement, and these strategies are often not documented^[16]. The absence of active learning teaching strategies, particularly on issues of privilege, is an important gap in our knowledge of how to develop and implement learning opportunities for acquiring relevant skills in cultural competence. Furthermore, addressing only multicultural awareness is not the same as teaching specifically on socially marginalized groups^[17]. Offering active learning opportunities for social work students on issues of privilege helps them to understand their personal connection to the issues from a broader context^[18,19].

McIntosh's essay on white privilege has become a valuable discussion starter in many a social work classroom. In her writing, McIntosh described a need for a more "finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege", which in her case was extended beyond a male/female privilege dichotomy. This notion can also be explored beyond white privilege. For example, the critical analysis of privilege as a self-awareness activity can be extended to other visible socially marginalized groups such as those who are sexual minorities or physically and intellectually disabled. McIntosh's work on white privilege inspired our activity by raising the critical consciousness of social work students about the plight of people with disabilities. The activity is also rooted within the notions of andragogy (discussed later) and cultural humility, concepts that extend beyond cultural competency. While cultural competence has evolved to include knowledge about the intersections of privilege beyond simply racial or ethnic categories^[20,21], we extend our teaching to include cultural humility. In the foundational work describing cultural humility, it was defined as a "lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique^[22], to redressing the power imbalances in the patient-physician dynamic, and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic clinical and advocacy partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations". Therefore, cultural humility goes beyond cultural competence requiring the person in power (i.e. social worker, physician, counselor etc.) to not only empathize with their client or client systems but also to extend their personal growth to include a simultaneous process of self-reflection^[23]. Bryan maintains that many prejudices exist about individuals with disabilities. He asserts that these biases are not typically intended to be hateful, but that individuals who are not disabled nonetheless may build up feelings of annoyance, ambiguity, and intolerance when dealing with persons with disabilities particularly if the disability is severe^[23]. Given this recognition, as social work educators, we believed that there was a need to develop an active learning experience for social work students. Our goal was to further their individual consciousness in ways that would allow them to develop a deeper level of understanding of ableist privilege, while concurrently engaging in proactive self-reflection. Such an activity was necessary given the unconscious negative perceptions of disability held by many individuals^[23].

ANDRAGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

Andragogy is known as the art and science of helping adults learn^[24]. Although the word adult is present in the translation from Greek to English, andragogy embodies a philosophy of learning tailored to what might be understood as self-directed learning for any age group. Using a broadly based understanding of andragogy, the term has been typified as an adult-centered teaching approach; however a closer look reveals this term as an empowerment centered approach. Andragogy allows for self-directed learning, and although an instructor will be present, the learning is most commonly directed by the student who chooses the best method for herself. This approach allows the instructor to act more as a facilitator of knowledge and information enabling the student to make choices about how, where and in what way they will approach the material^[25]. This approach may require that certain concepts are broadly understood before student learning can be individualized; however this may not always be the case. In a classroom situation, both online and face-to-face, the process is inherently chosen by the learner and then facilitated and supported by the instructor.

The Ableist Privilege Activity adopts the notion of cultural humility utilizing an andragogy framework, with the idea that critical exploration of privilege can begin in the classroom and ideally extend to a continued learning process. As such, an experiential learning activity was created to encourage social work students to examine the privileges of being "abled," or having no functional physical or intellectual impairment. The Ableist Privilege Activity embodies an andragogical approach to learning in several ways. First, when studied at the graduate level, the topic of diversity requires the careful self-examination and self-reflection of its students. Recognizing that learners enter the topic of diversity using a myriad of paradigms, which have been molded over time through individual and group experiences are key to creating a dynamic and personal learning experience for each student. The

activity challenges learners to take initiative in the learning process by approaching the activity from a domain of their choosing. Second, as the student begins to recognize their ableist privilege, they are given the opportunity to analyze where they stand in the bigger picture and how that might impact their future as a social worker. In writing the statements, students make a choice about the setting, perspective, ability, and individuality of the perspective they wish to represent.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample Description

Six sections of courses with approximately 35 graduate social work, (MSW) students in each participated in the activity. Two sections were online while four were face-to-face (FTF). There were 25 groups in the FTF format with approximately 4-6 students in each group. The online students completed their statements individually for a total of 51 online students. In all, approximately 176 students participated in the activity. The Ableist Privilege Activity can be conducted both in the online and traditional FTF learning environments. In the FTF setting, instructors should plan for approximately 60 to 90 minutes to facilitate and engage students, while the online environment may require a week's time depending on the pace of the course. In the online and FTF learning environments, the activity is best suited for implementation in conjunction with the weekly topic of disabilities in a diversity course. In this way, the substantive content of the week provides relevant material for students to think through the elements of Ableist (among other) privileges. Prior to the activity commencing, several anticipatory sets are recommended including a discussion of various privileges, intersections of privilege, critical thinking approaches, and a review of various "isms." Anticipatory sets are principally readiness activities that vary depending on the topical content as well as the audience; they may include short conversations or related content applications utilized to prepare students for the current topic under analysis^[26]. Following the anticipatory sets, students are then given the opportunity to analyze their own privilege and apply it to being abled both physically and intellectually^[26].

Implementing the Ableist Privilege Activity

In the traditional FTF format, following anticipatory sets, students were asked to work in groups and collaboratively identify their experiences in being able-bodied, intellectually and/or physically. The instructor prompted students to think of people they know who have experienced disability, previous and current personal experiences with disability, and the course required readings on the topic. Students who have experienced disabilities previously, temporarily, currently, and/or permanently were also encouraged to share their experiences with the group if they feel comfortable while considering Ableist privileges they have concurrently.

The activity instructions included having students individually and as a group, craft at least six statements related to their Ableist privileges, with a minimum of three cognitive privileges and three physical privileges. When students completed the assignment, each group shared their statements with the rest of the class. Following the group share, a class discussion closed the activity. At the end of the three hour seminar, students were reminded to purposefully pay attention to their Ableist privileges for the remainder of the day and longer if possible. The goal is to encourage students to continue building self-awareness, while identifying ways to address their privileges. Additionally, Ableist privilege is one of the options students may write about at the end of the semester for a final reflection paper.

The online course followed a similar process to the FTF format, with the exception of learning typologies in an asynchronous environment. In other words, students were able to participate in this activity electronically over the course of one week, and may log on to the online learning environment at any time during the week to participate in the class discussion as well as post their privilege statements whenever they choose. Another difference was that students brainstormed their statements and posted individually as opposed to posting as a group. This provided students with the option to read previously posted statements and reply to another student with their statements or create a new thread of statements having not previously read others' statements.

Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the phenomenological method outlined by two researchers initially read through each student's statements independently in their entirety to obtain a general feel for the data. To gain a true sense of the transcripts, the researchers read the complete data set multiple times. Step 2 of Colaizzi's process required each researcher to independently read through each transcript again and identify key phrases within each block of statements that represented the phenomenon under investigation^[27]. For the Ableist Privilege Activity, the concept under investigation was students' perceptions of disability and privilege. These sections were then rephrased into the researchers' own words, resulting in the development of codes, or formulated meanings for each participant transcript. The next step in Colaizzi's method is to cluster codes from each transcript into more general themes that are common across multiple transcripts. This resulted in a list of master themes of the exercise. NVivo 9 qualitative software was used to analyze all data. Following the identification of themes from the data, the researchers undertook a similar process to identify and apply the six levels of knowledge from Bloom's Taxonomy^[28] to the student's statements. Previous research utilizing Bloom's Taxonomy to analyze student data has assisted educators in understanding student levels of critical thinking with different modalities of teaching^[29-31]. Thus, in addition to the content-related codes and themes that were identified in our initial analysis, statements were also categorized into higher order and lower order knowledge levels using the Taxonomy.

RESULTS

Themes

The following three broad themes were generated from student statements and are diagrammed in **Figure 1**. Physical, Cognitive and Intellectual Privilege, 'Aha Moments' and Empathy. The first two themes had several sub-themes more specific to the social environment (**Figure 1**).

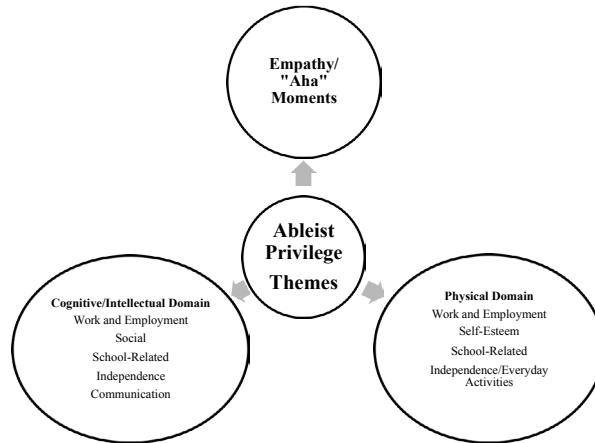


Figure 1. Ableist Privilege Themes

Physical Privilege

Over 61 statements were coded into the physical theme. This theme was characterized by statements focused on physical abilities, with particular emphasis on activities of daily living. Sub-themes included Independence, Work and Employment, Self-Esteem, and School-Related. Independence was a very common theme for many of the statements and included perceptions about everyday living activities such as hygiene, dressing, cooking, living alone, transportation, and interaction with the social environment. Statements included, "I can, walk around the block without the assistance of others, or any equipment," "I can maintain my personal hygiene without special devices or accommodations." One grouping of statements included: I am able to take a shower in private without the assistance of an aid. I am able to dress myself and feed myself without assistance. I can remodel/ decorate my house in any fashion I choose without worrying about physical usability/function ability. Work and Employment statements included both the physical and social aspects of working. On the physical aspect of working, a student wrote: Another privilege is that I have all my fingers. I don't think we realize how much we rely on something until we can't use them anymore. Having all my fingers allows me to type with more ease. I consider this a privilege because I do a lot of typing for work. Especially in this day and age, just about everyone is expected to be able to type. Another grouping of statements on the social aspects of working included: I can, if I wish, apply for a job without wondering if I will be discriminated against because of my disability. If I am not hired I can be sure that it was not the result of discrimination based on a physical impairment. Students also wrote about school experiences with physical disabilities and included examples such as Independent Educational Plans (IEPs), attending school events, learning centers and other facilities on college campuses, and textbook formatting. Statements such as: "I can, if I wish, go to High School football games without worrying about the accommodations"; "I can use the main entrance at my local library"; "I am able to take classes without needing special assistance for testing," and "I can post this information online without having to find someone to do it for me since there is no interface for the blind on our system" epitomized this theme. Self-Esteem was another category addressed in the physical domain. This theme included the emotional aspects surrounding physical ableist privileges, such as feelings from interactions with others in a community setting. One student wrote, "If someone is staring at me, I can feel confident that it is not the result of a visible disability." Another wrote, "I can have relationships without worrying that I'm being pitied." Several statements were similar to "I can frequent high traffic events/ places without feeling like I'm in the way." In an online discussion board, one student wrote: As a mother of a daughter with several disabilities, it is incredibly disheartening to hear that her potential is stunted or that her mere presence is a distraction to society. I had an experience when my daughter was 9 months old where a man told me that I should know better than to take 'something' like that out in public. Years later I still tear up when I think about that experience. Disabilities do not define the person.

Cognitive Privilege

Over 30 statements were identified within the cognitive theme, which included two subthemes: Independence and Social Communication. Like the physical domain, Independence was a common sub-theme with statements that addressed living alone, parenting, hygiene, employment, managing money, and making other daily decisions. Common statements included, "I have the ability to make decisions for myself on when I want to leave, go, or do with my life"; "I can communicate my needs easily and be understood," and "I can have a family without society worrying about my incompetence." Several statements related to money management and ranged from "I can manage my own money," to "I am able to take care of myself financially and make my own financial decisions." Education and employment also fell within this theme as all statements were related to independent

living. One student wrote, "I am able to obtain highest education possible and pursue all professions that require cognitive ability." Another wrote, "I can live without fear that taking standardized tests will affect my scores because of my learning disability." When addressing employment, another student shared online: A former co-worker of mine suffered from severe chronic depression and paranoid ideas. Over the years, it deteriorated to a degree that it became a disability. He was no longer able to work as engineer because he came across as "socially awkward" or "slow". He is now gainfully employed, but in a job far below his skills. Society generally sees him this way, too, not knowing that he actually suffers from a disability (mental illness) and that his real potential is much higher. This statement also related to the Social Communication theme of cognitive abilities. Other statements in this sub-theme included, "I can understand sarcastic jokes without feeling hurt," and "I can be in large groups/loud situations that could be a trigger." Similarly, another student wrote, "going to a party and easily engaging in conversation with others without avoidance or awkwardness." "Aha" In addition to listing privileges, many students noted the empathy they built through personal experiences, "aha" moments, and processing the material of this exercise. One student commented in an online discussion board: I like what you said about wondering if people are making eye contact to avoid looking at the disability. True, when we do see individuals who are different from us, we are quick to look, however not realizing how they may feel. The fact that they are different is what draws our attention; however we must realize that they are still human beings and must show respect. Another student noted: We tend to take things for granted on a daily basis. We fail to acknowledge how blessed we are until we are unable to perform some of the most simple tasks. We often do not pay attention to our everyday routine. If we thought of how life would be if we had to depend on something or someone to function on a daily basis, I believe we would be more appreciative. Finally, another student wrote: reminded me of when I had knee surgery and had to have help getting in and out to the bathtub. I luckily had a stool that I could sit on but it was still difficult at first because it was something that I had never experienced before. After a week or two I was able to adjust and get the hang of it with no assistance. Thinking about this and other daily activities that I do every day without a conscious thought makes me realize just what I take for granted. This activity...was a definite eye opener. In summarizing their appreciation for the assignment and the related content, several students wrote, "This assignment reminds me of how grateful we should be to have functionality in every area of our lives," and "I liked this discussion also because it made me realize how truly blessed that I am and that without even trying; we take so many things for granted each day."

DISCUSSION

The critical analysis of privilege, specifically relating to ableism was examined through student statements from a classroom learning activity. The activity broadened awareness of many students involved in the process, both online and face-to-face. While specific instructions to craft at least three intellectual and three physical ableist statements, the majority of students struggled to identify the former. Additionally, the statements revealed a dearth of critical thinking skills. Therefore, to gain a better understanding of the extent to which the Ableist Privilege Activity was successful in eliciting characteristics of cultural humility and critical thinking of students, their statements were also examined using the lens of the six cognitive domains of Bloom's Taxonomy ^[28]. The Taxonomy consists of six discrete cognitive domains: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. An intent leading to the development of the Ableist Privilege Activity was to engage students in an active learning activity that would challenge them to move beyond lower level skills of the taxonomy (knowledge, comprehension and application) and move toward a demonstration of higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis and evaluation).

Our findings suggest that the majority of student statements appeared to reside in the lower three levels of the cognitive domains. Students were primarily able to recall information from personal experience, understand problems faced by those with disabilities, and visualize their thought processes outside of the classroom. A limited grouping of student statements were in the higher three levels of the cognitive domain. Of the statements in these higher areas, most were analytical with very few reaching a level of synthesis or evaluation. Additionally, statements in the lower domain of cognition were limited in critical thinking, whereas statements in the higher domains exemplified more traits of critical thinking. For example, statements on the higher end of the domain identified the multiple intersections of privilege alongside ableism. Conversely, the lower level statements were basic with simple recollection and no acknowledgement of other areas of privilege. As an example, depicts some of the statements related to transportation and their respective domains. Of the entire student statements and discussions online, over 30 utilized the word "car" referring back to transportation issues (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Cognitive Domains Identified in Privilege Statements Acknowledging Transportation.

Statement	Domain
I can if I wish, drive my car on my own without help.	Knowledge (lower)
Get in and out of and operate my car (and those of others) without additional assistance or devices.	Comprehension (lower)

I can drive my car without putting costly modifications on it to enable me to drive.	Comprehension (lower)
We could also make sure public transportation was available everywhere so that this would not be another hindrance to individuals daily lifestyles.	Application (lower)
I can drive my car without having to alter it in any way. (Having to move the pedals or adjust for being paralyzed).	Analysis (higher)
I can easily buy a car, if I have the funds, without waiting for accommodations to be completed.	Analysis (higher)
Driving is a huge privilege. Teenagers can't wait to drive because they feel like they have a sense of independence and freedom. When older adults that I worked with, loss their privilege to drive due to vision problems or etc they felt like they had loss their independence and rights as an adult.	Synthesis (higher)
I would say the majority of social expectations and norms are still focused on accommodating able-bodied people, even though the world has been increasing their acceptance and modifying social norms, there is still much to be done. One cannot always get from one place to the next without the use of public friendly transportation. Especially in our society in[location omitted], because there are very few options if you don't own and drive a car or don't have a dependent family member or friend to take you around.	Evaluation (higher)

Lower Level Domains

Statements typified in the knowledge domain demonstrated basic recall of information by students. Key phrases typically matched to the knowledge domain included know, recognize, and describe. For example several statements referred to independence: "I can be confident that I am able to live independently". "I can maintain my personal hygiene without special devices or accommodations." In these statements, students are able to recognize or describe in basic terms their able-body privilege. Other similar statements such as, "I can go anywhere without needing assistance" and "Not needing special accommodations for travel, working, or daily activities" were also categorized into the knowledge domain. The next domain of cognition, comprehension, allows for statements to build upon knowledge and add a level of understanding. Student statements that demonstrated comprehension included an ability to provide related examples and inferences. One student wrote, "I can understand sarcastic jokes without feeling hurt," and another wrote "I don't have to worry about not being able to go to non-handicap accessible places due to having a disability (places with stairs and not ramps)." Both of these statements, one related to invisible and the other visible disabilities, demonstrated a level of comprehension by stating examples. Another similar statement noted, "Being able-bodied, I can: live independently of others if I choose since I can provide for my own personal [hygiene], make my own meals, clean up after myself, and work to supply my own basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter." This statement took similar knowledge level statements to the next level in that the types of independence were further exemplified. Finally, another student wrote, "I am not labeled as anything other than who I am. Some people with disabilities are labeled by

their disability, although many overcome that label and want to be focused on as being a person, not their disability.” Overall comprehension was one of the most common categories for student statements. On the upper boundary of the lower domains of cognition is application, which, in this activity, would allow a student to think outside the classroom and apply their statement to a novel situation. There were a very limited number of statements in this category. Those statements in this level demonstrated a students’ ability to think in the role of a future social worker, and one noted she can, “learn from the hardships of those around me and advocate for alternatives to or removal of their [obstacles] that may also be impeding others.” In applying her privilege, one student notes, “I can choose to make my home and place of work accessible for friends, family and visitors regardless of their level of ability. “Higher Level Domains On the cognition level above application, analysis builds upon all the foundational levels by allowing for distinguishing between facts and inferences. In this stage, statements in the activity reflected a level of comparison of ablest privilege and disability. One student noted the difference between youth and older adults, driving is a huge privilege. Teenagers can't wait to drive because they feel like they have a sense of independence and freedom. When older adults that I worked with, loss their privilege to drive due to vision problems or etc. they felt like they had loss their independence and rights as an adult. Another student was able to differentiate between visible and invisible abilities: Physical impairments are usually most visible; so I think many of us often overlook nonphysical disabilities. I have a close friend who was left with brain damage from a car accident. Although no one knows at first glance that he has limitations, it is very frustrating for him to communicate with others. He's often left feeling as though he must explain his disability. Finally, in an online course, a discussion board following student statements demonstrated one student’s ability to analyze a statement from a colleague: You wrote "I can easily find and use public transportation". To be able to do that requires both cognitive and physical ableness [sic]: "Easily find" to me means a certain level of cognitive skills (possibly/probably reading, have a concept of time, understand geographical location, memory). "Easily use" to me means a certain level of physical ableness [sic], such as not using a wheelchair. Quite a lot of assumptions in here thanks for your input! The need for culturally competent social workers calls for learning experiences in and out of the classroom. This study addressed the former by encouraging students to address the beginnings of cultural humility by examining the intersections of privilege, specifically related to ableism. In the Ableist Privilege Activity, students were invited to share at least three cognitive and three physical privileges, and overwhelmingly there were twice as many of the latter. In essence, visible disabilities were much more recognizable for students and thus their privilege statements in the physical domain were more common. We speculate that writing statements in the cognitive domain may have taken a little more creativity for students who had little to no personal experiences or knowledge of relevant issues, which is why we would advocate for a more active role on the part of the instructors. As social work educators looking to raise the critical conscious of our students, we must push the social work students to engage in a deeper level of self- analysis and reflection as it relates to people with disabilities and their experiences. Data from the online discussions proved to be very rich. Many students included statements of empathy, conferred their “aha moments,” and stated their appreciation for the activity. The online courses were asynchronous, which gave students an opportunity to read others statements before writing their own. We suspect that accountability for creativity, honesty, and originality was higher in the online classes given their statements can be read by the whole class compared to a small group of students in the FTF classes. Utilizing Bloom’s Taxonomy for thematic analysis provided insightful information about the critical thinking skills of our students. The limited number of statements corresponding to the application level of cognition may be related to the limitations of the activity or to the limitations of interpretation. For example, students were not asked to perform any other task than write out statements. The writing of the statements in it of itself could reflect application of Ableist privilege awareness; however, from our methodological and analytic perspective, which saw application as a thought process in a future role, demonstrated paucity in this level of cognition.

CONCLUSION

In facilitating the discussion following the activity, social work instructors can be instrumental in assisting students in the process of engaging in higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The Ableist Privilege Activity lends itself well to the development of cultural humility among social work students by providing a pathway towards critically analyzing their privilege. It is clear, however, that the Activity itself is not sufficient for most students to develop a critical understanding of the roles of power and privilege as they relate to disability. Analysis of students’ responses indicated that most students are rooted firmly in a disability paradigm characterized by the medical model, and are focused primarily on the situational dependency of persons with disabilities. In order for students to fully develop an appreciation of the role of oppressive societal structures inherent in the medical model of disability, educators must be willing and able to implement and maintain a purposeful feedback mechanism to provide students with a more critical understanding of the issues facing people with disabilities. The opportunity to review Bloom’s Taxonomy with students prior to the activity and matching statements after the activity may increase their critical awareness, providing yet another pathway to self-evaluation in this activity and possibly beyond. The activity is easy to implement in both the traditional classroom as well as in the online class environment, and can be a useful tool for social work educators who wish to build on students’ critical thinking skills related to able- bodied privilege. As such, it provides an innovative and sophisticated, yet painstakingly simple, method of encouraging active learning in the classroom setting. We know that people with disabilities do often experience many challenges. Some of these relate to the specific nature of their impairments, but many more relate to the way they are perceived and treated within society. Our results echo what others have observed experiences of people with disabilities are not well understood. Even social work students fail to see or fully understand the broad spectrum restrictions

associated with various disabilities. Thus, discussions of privilege requires that students not simply state the manifestations of that privilege, but that they engage in deep and honest reflection on how their privilege contributes to and/or sustains the disadvantage of the oppressed group, in this case, persons with disabilities. Only then can students begin to explore how, as social workers, they can develop strategies for actively addressing the societally created disadvantages experienced by many people with disabilities.

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