

Conference amendments/additions

The following papers have been withdrawn:

Eiriksina Asgrimsdottir

"Are you a retard?": disability, discourse, and non-disabled teenagers

Claudia Malacrida (C1)

Dehumanization and Its Effects: The Historical 'Treatment' of People with Intellectual Disabilities

Viveca Selander (B2)

Challenges and dilemmas of everyday life with personal assistance in Sweden

Per Koren Solvang

Between Art Therapy and Disability Aesthetics

Ema Loja

Disability, embodiment and political identity

Changes to Chairs

F7 Chair: Dan Goodley

F8 Chair: Chris Grover

Additional Paper

Wednesday 11.00-12.30 Session C1

Ghasem Norouzi

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Abstract: This paper discusses the findings of the life histories of leisure activities of the six adults with the label of 'learning difficulties' in city in the North of England (Northtown). This was done through a thematic analysis of the experiences of six adults with learning difficulties. The stories showed that the informants were all excluded from mainstream leisure activities. Among them, the informants engaged in 80 different leisure activities. 37 of these activities were pursued at home by the informants and 63 were out of the parental home or homecare. All the six informants, at home, watched TV; helped parents or the staff, and listened to music. Writing, colouring and reading books were done by three informants; playing games on computer by two people; and other activities were done by one informant. The stories showed that out of the leisure activities which the six informants pursued in the community, shopping, travelling and going on holiday were done by all the six informants; physical activities by five informants; going to the local pub by four informants. Going to the Gateway Club, non-competitive sports, going to the stadium to watch football matches, and going to the cinema were done by three of the informants; and, the other activities were done by two or one informant. The stories showed several aspects of the exclusion of six people with learning difficulties in mainstream leisure. Most leisure activities of the six informants were passive (for example listening to music, and watching TV), and

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were organised by their families who perceived their disabled children as 'incompetent adults.' Secondly, informants who had engaged with leisure activity in the community spent little time on their activities. Thirdly, the social setting in which the informants had engaged with leisure activities were few and were segregated settings like The Gateway Club. Overall, the stories showed that further on exclusion of the informants from mainstream leisure, most of them had very limited personal autonomy. Griffiths (cited in Lawson, 2003: 118) notes that personal autonomy is one of the important adult statuses. Why does personal autonomy not apply to people with learning difficulties? Why do most parents decide what their disabled children should do and where they should go? Theoretically, all disabled people are citizens and have equal rights (DRC, 2004; PMSU, 2005). However, the reality showed the opposite. Why are people with learning difficulties not accorded the full range of rights that other citizens have? A lot of evidence shows that there are many 'socio-structural and ideological barriers to the exercise of full citizenship rights by people with learning difficulties' (Walmsley, 1991: 219; PMSU, 2005). They are seen as second class citizens (Hughes, 2004: 64), and viewed as 'less than' other citizens in society (Hasler, 2004: 232). Lawson (2003: 118) emphasises that the perception of non-disabled people of people with learning difficulties as 'forever children' deny citizenship for these people in society.

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