

Call For Papers for Special Issue of the *Journal of Fandom Studies*: Disability, Pedagogy, and Identity in Fan Studies Classrooms

Disability studies moves disability out of a medical model and into a cultural understanding; disability becomes a constructed identity with effects on more than just the person with a disability, but their peers with or without disabilities, and the political, economic, and social circles in which they move (LoGiudice 2016). Disability stands as a unique category of identity and experience, as it has multiple entry points, and its duration varies from person to person. A person can be born with a disability or set of disabilities, or can experience disability at different points of life. A person can have a disability that is lifelong, one that comes and goes, one that can be mitigated or adapted to, or one that is only temporary. Disability crosses racial, gender, and economic lines.

In the classroom, these disabilities, as well as the other gender, sexual, and racial identities with which they intersect become “identities-in-process” (Gray-Rosendale and Birnley 2011, pp 218). The popular culture, and by implication Fan Studies, classrooms in which these students learn become places to grapple with the questions born from the multiple, complex identities of students with disabilities.

As Fan Studies classrooms develop emerging pedagogies and consider how students’ identities impact their engagements with media texts, the question arises of how teaching fandom impacts the lived realities of students and instructors. For students and instructors with disabilities, this different representation and engagement may be particularly fraught.

How does a consideration of disability as a category of identity play out when teaching fan studies? How can we interrogate the assumed “safety” of fan spaces? How does such an interrogation impact our understanding of Fan Studies classrooms as “safe spaces” as well? How do we as Fan Studies scholars and teachers resist the medical model of disability by avoiding diagnostic labels? How do we explore and incorporate a pedagogy that critically examines disability and its intersecting identities in the classroom? How do we study disability in fandom and in the media texts themselves and open our classrooms to that exploration? How does fandom reveal the politicized nature of identity and disability in ways larger cultural readings do not?

This special issue of the *Journal of Fandom Studies* aims to investigate the intersection of disability studies and fan studies. We welcome all explorations of this intersection, but are especially excited about discussions of how the pedagogy we employ, as well as the texts we teach and identities we embody, impact our students and our teaching.

Examples of popular media texts in which disability is displayed are: *Star Wars*; *Daredevil*; *The Avengers*; *The X-Men*; *Finding Nemo* and *Finding Dory*; “Game of Thrones;” “Glee;” *The Hunger Games*; *Me Before You*; “United States of Tara;” *The Harry Potter Series*; “Empire;” *Spring Awakening*; *Murderball*; *The Percy Jackson series*; “Breaking Bad;” and many more. We encourage you to define disability broadly as you examine your chosen text. Analysis of texts of all media are accepted and encouraged.

Submissions of particular interest include, but are not limited to:

- Teaching role of disability in media texts
- Praxis about disability, pedagogy, and fandom
- The experience of disability in a Fan Studies classroom

- Distinctions between disability, disease, and stigmatized identities.

Submit proposals of 5-600 words to Katherine Anderson Howell, issue guest editor, at khowell@gwu.edu by May 12, 2017. The issue will be published in July 2018.

Gray-Rosendale, Laura and Kendra Birnley 2011 “Reconfiguring Differences: Radicalizing Popular Culture Pedagogy” *Queer Popular Culture: Literature, Media, Film and Television* Edited by Thomas Peele. Gordonsville, US: Palgrave Macmillan pp 215-227 Available From Proquest [1 September 2016]

LoGiudice, Joseph A. 2016 “Restructure and reframe DS offices by implementing Disability Studies concepts.” *Disability Compliance for Higher Education* vol. 22 Issue 5.