

REQUIRED TEXTS

Watson, Nick, Alan Roulstone, and Carol Thomas, editors. Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies. New York: Routledge, 2020.

RECOMMENDED TEXT

American Psychological Association. (2019). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). Washington, DC: Author

Question 1 ICF

- 1) The ICF is often highly criticized by disability scholars for being a perpetuation of the medical model; do you think this is true? How does the ICF align (or not) with the social model?
- 2) How do you think the ICF can progress the field of disability studies?

Answer 1 :

I don't think the ICF is a perpetuation of the medical model. The medical model views disability as a problem to be fixed, aiming at a cure. Whereas the ICF focuses on measuring health and disability at an individual and population level. In my opinion, the ICF does align with the social model in the way that they both see disability as a collection of conditions and not solely an attribute of an individual. Each model has a different view on where to focus their attention on this regard and other classifications of each model, but their view on societal changes toward disability seem to be aligned.

I think the ICF can progress the field of disability studies in many ways. The ICF focuses on a multidimensional and interactive approach, it is etiologically neutral, universal, and continuous (ICF PowerPoint presentation). With all these parts to the model, it shows that they focus on inclusivity and think about all parts of disability studies. It recognizes that environmental factors can contribute to disability, on a functional level as well as health conditions. This means it doesn't solely focus on one role towards disability, but all potentially contributing factors. I think this is a wonderful approach as it really equates an inclusive environment, which is something we really need to strive for in society.

Answer 2 :

I believe that the ICF is not a perpetuation of the medical model but rather a comprehensive and holistic framework of the World Health Organization. The framework aligns with the social model by encouraging a more holistic understanding of disability and health while looking at how individuals function. Additionally, the framework encourages a shift from a purely medical approach to a more patient-centered approach that applies across different fields. For example, the framework insists on an in-depth patient-centered approach across social services to ensure individuals with disability get the necessary social service they need.

The ICF can progress the field of disability studies by incorporating empowerment and inclusion in disability studies. The approach will help raise access levels for disabled populations within society. The framework can also help researchers develop research questions and designs in the quest to build a better understanding of the disabled population and use the research to develop inclusive policies. ICF can also help in adding essential content to disability training and education to improve the experiences of disabled populations.

Question 2: ETHICS AND DISABILITY SPORT

- 1) Should Oscar Pistorius (or in future, another runner of similar capacity with prosthetic legs) have been allowed to race in the Olympic Games?
- 2) Should able-bodied athletes interested in qualifying for Canada's Olympic Sledge Hockey Team be permitted to try out?
- 3) If a member of the Olympic swim team was legally blind, should they be allowed to participate in both the Olympic and Paralympic Games?
- 4) Canada pays Olympians a cash bonus for each gold, silver, or bronze medal they win at the games but does not pay this bonus to Paralympians. Is this ethical?

Justify your answer using the ethical decision-making framework presented in the slides

ANSWERS 1:

Firstly, I do not think its ethical that Canada pays Olympian medalists but not Paralympian medalists. They've all made the same achievement of winning a bronze, silver or gold medal making them equals and so they should be treated equally.

Secondly, if they meet the entry standards for the events, I think a blind swimmer should be allowed to participate in both Olympic and Paralympic games. The blind swimmer has no advantage over other athletes so there's no harm in them competing. If they're willing to accept the challenge of having sighted competitors, there's no reason they should be prevented from participating.

For able-bodied athletes and sledge hockey, initially my thinking was similar to the swimmer situation – “if they're up for the challenge, why not?”. But when I thought about it more, I realized that the involvement of able-bodied athletes may take away opportunities from disabled athletes. There are already significantly fewer opportunities for disabled

athletes to be involved in sports. It seems unethical to jeopardize some of those few opportunities when able-bodied hockey players have so many other options. I'm torn between "everyone should be allowed to participate!" and "could this actually be harmful to the disabled players the sport is intended for?".

Again, with Oscar Pistorius, my initial response was, "if he's up for the challenge, why not?". On second thought, I wondered if the mechanics of a prosthetic leg being different from that of a human leg could cause a problem. I would expect that the situation with Oscar can't be treated the same as a blind swimmer because a prosthetic is an addition to the human body. It's designed to work like a leg but is it similar enough? How do you measure and compare that? Who gets to decide? It seems like a gray area with super high stakes and no clear way of deciding what's fair to all parties involved.

ANSWER 2:

1.) I do believe that Oscar Pistorius or other future athletes with similar capacity should be able to compete in the Olympics if they are comfortable and confident that they are able to compete with able-bodied athletes. I don't think his prosthetics give him any advantage for the races. If they have trained and worked hard and they want to compete and they qualify for the Olympics then they should be able to compete in the Olympics.

2.) I don't think that able-bodied athletes should be allowed to try out for the sledge hockey team. Sledge hockey is made for individuals who have lower body disabilities and I don't think it would be fair to take that opportunity from those individuals if anything if there is enough able-bodied people around who want to do sledge hockey and an able-bodied sledge hockey team could potentially be made. The equipment for sledge hockey is adopted for those with disabilities.

3.) I think a legally blind individual wanted to either compete in the Olympic or Paralympic, I think the athlete should try-out for whichever team they feel comfortable trying out for. If they want to try for the Olympics they should go for it but if they want to try for the Paralympic they should go for that but I don't think they should be allowed to do both.

4.) I dont think that it's fair or ethical for Canada to pay olympians but not paralympians they both work just as hard to get to where they got so they should both get the bonus no matter what. They should be treated equally and should both get the bonus if the receive a gold, silver, or bronze if able-bodied people get it ones with disabilities should as well its only fair
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