Inclusive travel: Making study abroad attainable for ALL college students

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LITERATURE
When responding to some-projective methods, adults with intellectual disability (ID) expressed a desire to travel domestically and abroad (Dyson, Schreiner, Maxwell, & Myatt, 2006). After traveling, adult-family, adults with ID were rated by their guardians on more self-confidence, better decision makers, more independent, and better at handling money (McConkey & McCullough, 2006). Reading maps, paying for transport, time management, itinerary, and problem solving have been shown to be barriers to travel for adults with ID (Gaines, Black, Holway, & Winney, 2010).

SPED (Special Education) 493
The course used site visits, personal interaction, guest lectures, and readings to introduce students to services and experiences for adults with developmental disabilities in England and Ireland. Including:
- Laws and policies
- Postsecondary education
- Living arrangements
- Employment options
- Attitudes

SUCCESSES
1. Direct interaction with English and Irish adults with ID
2. Collaboration, connection, and future opportunities with NUI-Mayo
   - Students became more experienced and knowledgeable users of public transportation
   - Students directly observed the UP Program components in action

CHALLENGES
1. Staff transition in WCU International Studies, which increased faculty workload
2. Greater travel expense than anticipated
   - Plane tickets and study abroad deposits were due approximately the same time
3. Family member anxiety and fear
4. Financial instability required more credit hours than course offered
5. Students misunderstood security regulations
6. Finding suitable class times

FUN
1. Enjoyable experiences
2. Positive affect

DEVELOPMENT
1. Public speaking
2. Critical thinking
3. Community (2.4%)

LIFE EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
1. Individuals with Disabilities
2. Organizations/Programs

TRANSPORTATION
Exploring many types of transport: planes, buses, trains, subways, boats, taxi, and walking

UP STUDENT Reflection Themes*

INCLUSION
1. Enhanced knowledge
2. Benefits everyone
3. Everyone needs support

BARRIER AWARENESS
1. Inaccessibility in physical environment
2. Exclusion
3. Negative attitudes and behavior
4. Lack of resources

LIFE EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
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"A couple of days ago I was doubting myself and wondering if working with the Special Needs population was what I really needed to be doing, but after our visit today, I’m quite convinced I’m right where I need to be."

"Their talk about how it can be hard to be at college at first, but how you can overcome the problems...It was hard for me at WCU at first too, but they had so much more support to guide them."

"Josie [an employee with disabilities] was all about handing us leaflets and making copies of Easy Read information for us. They really have a lot of support from the government agencies."

"I had a great, super, awesome time."

"I feel like I can blend in very well."

"I made a lot of friends in Maynooth. At lunch we talked with them, just bonding with them."

"I had to get some euros to use from the ATM machine which was so neat also to try."

"When I traveled to another city it was great. They told me they were glad that I came to visit, and to hear me say what I wanted to say."

"I rode on a train to Dublin, the train station was on a very different schedule."

"It was very moving to hear what those people said. When Michael [a Maynooth student] showed us his video about his life it made me cry. What made me cry was he was telling about his experiences in the university and how it made a difference in his life and all around him."

* Themes were derived through open coding (initial & axial coding) of student journals. Approximately 8 journal entries per student.