

Developing an Arts Based Research Approach to Critical Disability Studies

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Critical disability studies centers around three intersecting themes: embodiment, identity and agency (Shildrick, 2012). Currently, there is a lack of exploration in regards to these three themes and how they manifest for people with invisible disabilities. Furthermore, these themes and other theories that reside within disability studies such as compulsory ablebodiedness, performative ablebodiedness, and the act of un/covering have not been explored using arts based research. Throughout this study, I combine visual and narrative research methods as a means to un/cover my own disability identity, which also contributes to the notion that identities can be renegotiated in an effort to adapt to a normative society through performative ablebodiedness. This concept of transitioning identities further dissuades the notion of disability as deficit, and promotes the social model of disability. This presentation will address how arts based research methods can be used to explore these various theories for someone with invisible disabilities.

Bio:

Alexandra Allen received her BA in Studio Art and her MS in Art Education at Florida State University, where she is currently earning her PhD in Art Education with a focus in Disability Studies. Alexandra's research interests include disability identity development, arts based research and visual studies. Alexandra has presented at national conferences and will be presenting at an international conference later this year. She is also one of the founding researchers of the Video Lab project that focuses on community engagement for urban youth through film and youth empowerment through visual media production.