The Blind Leading the Blind: Goalball as Engaged Scholarship

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Abstract

The paper describes an engaged scholarship course at a large public research university on the west coast of the United States. The pilot course introduces students to the scholarship on disability framed within the cultural studies of sport. Participants engage with existing literature while actively participating in goalball, a sport designed for the blind or visually impaired. Through narrative analyses of participants, three themes emerged within this engaged scholarship experience: (a) an increased sensitivity to disability issues through an academic and somatic experience; (b) challenging ableism by privileging visual impairment in a sports context; and (c) envisioning political action by creating community among unlikely partners. Based upon research findings from this pilot study, the paper proposes an integrated model of sport and disability studies at the postsecondary level, bringing together campus and community, combining academic and athletic curriculum and integrating sighted and visually impaired participants. One important outcome of the course has been to help redefine the popular adage of the blind leading the blind from an ableist metaphor to an expression of emancipatory education.

Keywords: *goalball, sport, visual impairment, engaged scholarship, blind leading the blind*

"The blind leading the blind" is an expression commonly used to describe inept execution; a bumbling group effort. The expression is not only an indictment of poor leadership but a slight to all parties involved in the effort. It is a visual metaphor, conjuring the image of a poor soul, arms extended, searching the darkness, while trying to help others navigate the same path unsuccessfully.

The metaphor has been around since antiquity. Jesus uses the expression at least twice in the four Gospels; he heals the blind on even more occasions[1]. Having traveled across millennia, the expression remains in use today. Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones uses the metaphor as the title of a 21st Century rock ballad. The blind leading the blind is also a metaphor used by those who see and take for granted their advantaged status. The metaphor embodies a certain smugness of the sighted, implying that those with vision could perform the task in question far more capably. Perhaps not intended to draw a literal separation between the blind and those who see, the underlying cultural meaning of this expression is that the sighted must help the blind, leading them to safety.

From this perspective, societies must protect people with disabilities from dangerous situations rather than allowing them to take risks like everyone else. In certain physical activities, such as sport, the risks are perceived as even greater for people with disabilities. Not surprisingly, American children and youth with disabilities participate in physical activity 4.5 times less often than their peers without disabilities (Rimmer, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). These disparities in participation rates may be even more pronounced for visually impaired youth who tend to be more sedentary and have lower fitness levels than their sighted peers (Hopkins, Gaeta, Thomas. & Hill, 1987; Karakaya, Aki, & Ergen, 2009; Kobberling, Jankowski, & Leger, 1991; Lieberman & McHugh, 2001; Short & Winnick, 1986).

In response to these disparities, the United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) issued policy guidelines in January 2013 stipulating that educational institutions should make reasonable modifications and provide necessary accommodations to ensure that a student with a disability is afforded the opportunity to participate in extracur-

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ricular athletic activities in public elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2013) .

This paper describes one co-curricular example at the postsecondary level in keeping with these federal mandates. In the spring of 2013, the author helped design a university course at the intersection of sport and disability studies. The course introduces students to the scholarship on disability studies framed within the cultural studies of sport. In particular, participants engage with existing literature while actively participating in a sport designed for the blind or visually impaired.

Goalball was an activity first designed to help returning World War II veterans, blinded in battle; it has been a Paralympic sport since 1976. In goalball, visually impaired and blindfolded athletes compete in teams of three; competitors try to throw a three-pound perforated ball, with bells embedded in it, into the opponents' goal. Defenders try to block the ball with their bodies, usually by sliding and laying fully outstretched, as they listen to the ball's approaching trajectory. The goalball court, the size of a volleyball court, is marked by tape, thin rope, or sash cord so that participants can feel the boundaries of the playing field and thus orient themselves physically within this space.

Central to the success of this newly designed course has been a strong commitment to engaged scholarship. The underlying premise of engaged scholarship is to create meaningful collaborative environments with partners outside of the university and thereby promote reflective engagement among students on broad social issues and interests. In addition to strengthening the campus's commitment to equity, social justice, and civic responsibility, engaged scholarship represents another important tool for critical analysis and emancipatory education (Cutthill, 2012; Stanton, 2008).

In developing and implementing the goalball course, the university partnered with the Disabled Athletics and Recreation Program (DARP), a local organization that has served the disabled community for over twenty five years. This campus/community partnership has allowed students and community members the opportunity to think and play together in a non-traditional classroom. The course provokes reflection on these intentional and spontaneous collaborations, providing a sports opportunity to visually impaired students while helping sighted students understand the lived experience of disability.

The novelty of this curriculum has been the blending of sport and disability studies within a non-traditional classroom. The classroom opens a field of play to students and non-students alike and to individuals with and without visual impairment. Researchers have found that visually impaired youth participating in goalball increased their physical fitness and stability (Karakaya et al., 2009) and reduced their percent body fat (PBF) and body mass index (BMI) (Aydog, Aydog, Cakci, & Doral, 2006; Caliskan et al., 2011).

Indeed, most existing studies of sport and the visually impaired have focused on quantitative rather than qualitative data that could illuminate the lived experience of participants. Similarly, there is a dearth of literature on sighted students participating in a sport designed for the visually impaired, particularly when sighted and visually impaired students are integrated within the same program. The current research fills these critical gaps in the literature. Because goalball normalizes visual impairment, this study problematizes the dichotomy between ability and disability. In highlighting the social construction of disability, this paper describes some of the key findings from this engaged scholarship course.

Conceptual Frame

Cultural assumptions of blindness exist within the lived experience and corresponding expectation of sightedness. The ability to see is normative and ubiquitous; to not see implies a lack or limitation of a given, taken-for-granted ability. Framed within a medical model, blindness is pathologized as a disability to be diagnosed, treated, and cured. Like a disease, this disability is often covered up, hidden from view. Lack of vision creates concrete examples of exclusion and marginalization. For example, when visually impaired students are given campus tours at this university, these students are not taken to the Recreational Fitness Center (RFC), implying that this would not be a space of interest for them. After all, the space is full of gyms, weights, and machines, a place to participate in extracurricular athletic activities. In this way, educational institutions implicitly enforce corporeal and social norms.

Counter to the medical model, social models of disability recognize the ambiguity of essentialized categories of ability and disability. These categories are socially constructed in opposition or as binaries, often leading to the marginalization and oppression of disabled individuals. As Gabel and Peters (2004) argue:

> a hallmark of the social model has been its political standpoint on the relationship of disabled people to society. In general, the social model recognizes two groups in the larger struggle—the disabled and non-disabled—even though the distinctions between these two groups is often unclear. (p. 593)

Documenting the theoretical eclecticism evident in the Disability Rights Movement and in disability studies, Gabel and Peters (2004) propose the use of resistance theory as a productive bridge between theory and practical action, a conceptual means to unite the diverse versions of the social model across paradigmatic boundaries. More specifically, resistance theory recognizes the potential for individual and collective agency attained through a combination of critical reflection and action. Drawing on the writings of Foucault (1994, 1995) and Freire (2003), resistance theory:

> assumes that disabled people and their non-disabled political partners are simultaneously individuals and members of a collective. As such, experience and its influence on the construction of the disability identity are as important as the macro-social processes of disability community-building, disablement and the oppression of entire groups of people. (Gabel & Peters, 2004, p. 594)

Method of Inquiry

Drawing on resistance theory's call for combining critical reflection with action, this paper utilizes narrative analysis within the context of sport and disability studies. The author refers to the work of Smith and Sparkes (2012), who use narrative analysis to enliven the experiences of athletes who have suffered catastrophic spinal cord injuries. According to these researchers, "narrative analyses hold onto understanding the sporting body as not just material or subjective, but also culturally produced and producing, with narratives from culture doing 'positive' and 'dangerous' work on and for bodies" (p. 82).

The blind leading the blind metaphor is one such narrative that has done harm to the visually impaired within the realm of sport and physical culture. In the goalball course, participants read and wrote about blindness as a disability while also performing in a sport for the blind. Through critical reflection of these practices, participants produced a series of experiential and embodied narratives. Specifically, data included initial and summative reflections of the goalball course experience from both sighted and visually impaired participants. Through a course website, facilitators asked participants to respond to narrative prompts such as, "What have you learned about disability and blindness? Relate this to your experience playing goalball and at least two texts in the class."

Two course readings, in particular, were frequently cited in participants' narrative responses: H.G. Wells's short story, *Country of the Blind* (2007) and Tanya Titchkosky's scholarly article, "Looking Blind: A Revelation of Culture's Eye" (2005). Participants reflected on the fictional and non-fictional stories embedded in these course texts to construct their own narratives. The construction of these narratives reflected a critical chronology, as participants developed a more nuanced understanding of sport and disability studies over time.

Participants

The pilot study involved 36 participants, including the author as the instructor of record, two goalball coaches from the Disabled Athletics and Recreation Program (DARP) and two graduate students enrolled at the university at which this pilot course was offered. All other participants were students and community members actively engaged in the goalball course. Participation in this course was voluntary; informed consent and liability waivers were obtained from all participants. Pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the participants.

As the instructor of record, the author designed the academic curriculum and helped to coordinate meetings between campus and community partners. He also documented the process and took the lead on conducting research associated with the program. Two graduate students helped to facilitate the academic aspects of the course and supported the athletic instruction provided by the community experts. The head coach had worked for DARP for over twenty five years. He began working at DARP as a volunteer coach and has since developed as one of the most experienced goalball coaches in the country. The assistant coach competed in goalball for the United States at a previous Paralympic Games. He originally served as a volunteer coach for the course but was hired as a university employee in the Recreational Fitness Center beginning in the 2013-14 academic year. In this more formalized capacity, he has since taken a more active role in leading the goalball class.

In addition to the five course facilitators, 31 participants were actively engaged in this co-curricular experience. As illustrated in Table I, 13 of the participants (42%) were female; eighteen (58%) were male. Twenty-three (74%) were university students; eight (26%) were local community members. Four of the students were disabled; three of these students were visually impaired. All of the community participants identified themselves as visually impaired. Thus, over one-third (35%) of the participants in the goalball course were visually impaired, while the majority (65%) was sighted. The racial/ethnic identification of the participants was as follows: 16 were white (52%), eight were Asian or Asian-American (26%), four were

Chicano/Latino (13%), one participant was African-American/Black (3%), and one participant was Pacific Islander (3%).

Study Context

The course met weekly in Gym B of the Recreational Fitness Center (RFC), the university's largest fitness center with over 100,000 square feet of activity space. The RFC serves the campus community of faculty, staff, and students. Gym B is approximately 100' x 110' or 11,000 square feet, almost completely occupied by two full-size basketball courts. On the floor there are various court markings for other sports such as volleyball. The course utilized the court markings of one of the volleyball courts for the goalball class. Because participants rely on hearing in this sport, the second court of the Blue Gym was closed to other recreational sports, such as organized or pick-up basketball games, while the goalball class was in session.

Each class lasted two hours. Course facilitators arrived early to set up the court, laying out the rope and covering it with tape so as to frame the boundaries of the goalball court. The course was organized into three segments of approximately 40 minutes. The first one-third of the course involved discussion and reflection, based on course readings or guest speakers. These discussions took place on the floor of the gymnasium. The second segment of the class involved goalball instruction, with coaches teaching specific game skills and strategies. The final third of the class was reserved for sport competition, led by one or both of the two coaches.

Analysis and Results

Utilizing a holistic-content analysis (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998; Smith & Sparkes, 2012), an inductive process generated common themes or patterns through the reading, review, and rereading of participants' textual data. A final review of these narrative texts ensured that the themes discovered during the inductive process were relevant and representative of the data.

Preliminary data revealed three key themes associated with this course. These themes were (a) an increased sensitivity to disability issues through an academic and somatic experience; (b) challenging ableism by privileging visual impairment in a sports context; and (c) envisioning political action by creating community among unlikely partners.

In light of the Office for Civil Rights recent clarification of schools' responsibilities to ensure that students with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in extracurricular athletic activities, the paper includes recommendations for providing athletic opportunities for students with disabilities. These recommendations suggest that future efforts at providing athletic opportunities for students with disabilities at the postsecondary level should focus on creating an integrated model of engaged scholarship. The proposed model would include the integration of campus and community partnerships, the integration of sighted and visually impaired participants, and the integration of athletic and academic instruction within a non-traditional classroom. Furthermore, the proposed model seeks to recognize and promote blind and visually impaired leaders in the field of sport disability studies. As educators, we have the potential to reclaim an ableist narrative in the form of an ancient metaphor, creating spaces within which the blind not only lead the blind, but lead the sighted, as well.

Findings and Participant Outcomes

Performing Blind(ness): An Increased Sensitivity to Disability

In "Looking Blind: A Revelation of Culture's Eye," Titchkosky (2005) describes her experience as a sighted person passing as blind, and therefore being mistaken to be blind. Her husband, "a real blind person," she writes, was working late and became concerned that his guide dog, Smokie, was getting hot and tired. He asked his wife to pick up the dog and take him home.

While leading the guide dog to the entrance of the subway station on the way home, Titchkosky gave Smokie a verbal command, a command the dog did not immediately heed. A sighted man witnessed the exchange and grabbed Titchkosky by the arm, telling her that he would take her to the subway. He then guided her to the ticket booth, despite her protests that she did not need his help. Titchkosky writes, "Despite this stranger's impositional power, performed through his own status as a 'helpful sighted person,' he failed to see that I was sighted" (p. 221). He also failed to imagine her as competent, independent, and blind.

In a liminal or in-between state between passing as blind and performing blindness, Titchkosky reveals how blindness as an identity category is constructed through interaction. While her experience with the man at the subway epitomizes the way in which society treats the disabled with protective gloves, Titchkosky sees the potential for meaningful engagement between disabled and non-disabled people, where the experience might be open, reciprocal, and respectful.

This potential for meaningful engagement and interaction was realized within the goalball class at the university. Performing blindness within the context of goalball enabled the participants, particularly sighted participants, to increase sensitivity to disability issues through an academic and somatic experience. Jennifer, a sighted student, wrote:

> I've noticed, similar to Titchkosky, that visually impaired people are often treated very differently by society from everybody else. People with visual impairments are sometimes seen as helpless or lower status, under the assumption that disability is a "stigmatized deviation and oppressive minoritization" (p. 227). But, in our class, not being able to see is simply a different way of experiencing life and interacting with each other. We use a lot more verbal communication and listen closely for both the sounds of the ball and each other's voices.

The lessons learned on the goalball class extended beyond the court of play. Ryan, a senior and Division I student athlete wrote,

> Several points Titchkosky made opened my eyes to what being blind was like. I had never thought that trying to help a visually impaired person cross the street could annoy and frustrate him or her… After reading the article, I couldn't stop thinking of how it would frustrate me if I had walked a certain distance to get somewhere and all of a sudden someone who thought of me as 'disabled' thought that I needed their help to cross the street. It opened my eyes to the ignorance of the general population when it comes to disabilities.

While the narrative reflections of some of the sighted students may have seemed superficial to the visually impaired participants or those better versed in disability studies, a heightened sensitivity to disability was a recurring theme in the initial reflections of many participants in the course.

Resistance and Reflection: Challenging Compulsory Able-bodiedness

Requiring all members of the class to wear blindfolds when playing goalball had an immediate and powerful impact on participants. Performing blind(ness) within this sport's context enabled participants to recognize but likewise challenge the normative state of being able to see. Sarah, a disabled female student, wrote:

> …compulsory able-bodiedness [is] the idea that disabled people should do as much as they can to be like able-bodied people. However, goalball is a sport designed with the assumption of not being able to see, and requires blindfolds to keep the players from seeing-whether the participants are blind or not. Goalball presents an opposing condition to compulsory able-bodiedness.

As such, the course afforded visually impaired participants an unfamiliar advantage while witnessing the fear, fragility, and even humility of sighted participants. Emily, a sophomore who describes herself as "legally blind [with] some remaining vision," appreciated the risk and pleasure of competing with and against others. She wrote:

> Ever since a young age, I never had much exposure to athletics. From first grade onward, I was in adapted physical education courses, which were extremely safe environments. The goalball class was drastically different. For the first time, I felt like part of a team and experienced real competition. Although sometimes I would return home feeling very sore, I could say it was all worth it because I scored a goal for the team! Not only did I have a great time interacting with others and bonding with my goalball classmates, I also realized I am not as fragile as I thought.

Chloe, a blind international student, wrote:

> I have never been athletic as a child. Even when other children ran or played around me, I would not join them…This goalball class has been an unexpected gift for me this semester. Even during the first lesson, I already found this sport to have the speed and thrill one sees in popular sports like soccer, basketball, and football. Every move requires a refined technique, and strategy and teamwork are vital for one's success. On the one hand, I was considerably humbled, for I realized how ignorant about goalball I really was! Yet, on the other hand, I was empowered; if I keep learning and working hard, I will have the competence to play well in this sport.

The intentional interaction between sighted and visually impaired athletes in goalball created camaraderie, a space at once competitive but also safe to challenge one's vulnerabilities and preconceptions. While Ryan recognized his own, and society's, insensitivity to the abilities of the disabled community, Chloe acknowl-

edged her own hesitation as a blind person to take advantage of athletic opportunities.

The experience also allowed participants to recognize the broad range of disabilities and the varying degrees of visual impairment. Sarah, a disabled and sighted student wrote:

> Because I am not blind, I worried that I would be entering into a private sub-culture in which I would be out of place despite the reassurances that all were welcome…I thought that putting on a blindfold would help level the playing field between blind and sighted students but I did not think it would help sighted students better understand the lives of blind students.

She added, however, "There is no real comparison between an hour of playing with a blindfold and a life of blindness."

Sighted participants, or "sighties" as Michael referred to those with full vision, came to recognize that visual impairment and sightedness exist along a continuum. Moving beyond binaries of ability and disability, the notion of "partials" emerged, an in-between state of being able and not being able (to see). Learning about this in-between or liminal state in sport reinforced course curriculum, illuminating the blurry border crossing between ability and disability. Moving beyond binaries opened unexplored spaces in which participants could experiment with perspective, expand possibilities and establish mutual values of respect and dignity for all abilities.

The Country of the Blind: Envisioning Political Action through Critical Reflection

In *The Country of the Blind*, Wells (2007) creates an allegorical world in which the people had not known sight for many generations. Wells connects the country's original "plague of blindness" to disease: "a strange disease had come upon them, and had made all the children born to them there—and indeed, several older children also—blind" (p. 323). As a result, citizens organized their social and physical environment from this perspective. Blindness was normal, expected, taken for granted.

Nunez, a sighted mountaineer from a country over the hills, fell over a precipice to land in the valley of the blind. As the sighted explorer discovered this strange new world, he remembered the proverb, "In the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king." To his surprise, however, he would not become king of these people. His ability to see was not a skill of value in this land. Rather, as Wells writes of the citizens that Nunez confronted, "their senses had become marvelously acute; they could hear and judge the slightest gesture of a man a dozen paces away—could hear the very beating of his heart…Their sense of smell was extraordinarily fine" (p. 335).

Conversely, Nunez's demands to express his advantage of sight were perceived as the ravings of a lunatic. A blind doctor sought to cure Nunez of his affected brain by removing his eyes. Ultimately, Nunez fled the country of the blind, with the knowledge that he would die but retain his ability to see the world from his perspective:

> There were deep mysterious shadows in the gorge, blue deepening into purple, and purple into a luminous darkness, and overhead was the illimitable vastness of the sky. But he heeded these things no longer, but lay quite inactive there, smiling as if he were satisfied merely to have escaped from the valley of the Blind in which he had thought to be King. (pp. 346-347)

The *Country of the Blind* resonated with both visually impaired and sighted participants in the goalball course at the university. In particular, participants were struck by how the course inverted the normative position of sightedness. Emily, a visually impaired student, wrote:

> The description of Nunez's experience in the valley contrasts ironically with what visually impaired individuals experience in daily life. In this story, Nunez is seen as being abnormal, having a diseased mind, because he continues to hallucinate about sight… In the modern world, it can be said that the able body is king: able-bodiedness exemplifies power and advantage. This is also true in the world of athletics. Society assumes the able body to be better, faster, more competitive and likely to win in athletics. However in the Goalball class, this does not necessarily hold true. Sighted players are not only asked to enter the game, but in addition they are asked to pass, like Nunez and Titchkosky, as blind. All players are asked to wear eyeshades, and the perceived advantage of sight is removed. It is with the removal of this perceived advantage that sighted players learn to become attentive to their other senses while the daily lived experiences of the blind players become an experiential advantage. In goalball a reversal of roles occurs, breaching the gap between disability and assumptions of athletes while further questioning the definition of the normative position.

Jennifer, a sighted student who participated in two semesters of the class and became a course facilitator during her second term, recognized the importance of how normative positions are created and reinforced. She wrote:

> Although the story seems to guide the reader toward a reverse type of thinking about disability, the Blind people from the Valley in the story have just as much hubris as Nunez when he first entered the Country of the Blind. Both Nunez and the Blind people were born and raised to have opinions about what they consider as normal, and thus both parties automatically assume that the other is strange and different. Nunez thinks he can rule the country better because he can see, and the Blind try to 'cure' Nunez by planning to take his eyeballs out!

These narrative reflections represented a developmental process within the course. Participants moved beyond simply acknowledging the need for a heightened sensitivity around disability issues. Participants began to articulate a more nuanced understanding of disability and the so-called disability community. The disabled community became more than a monolithic, essentialized social category, comprised of a diverse collection of individuals and groups. Recognizing the notion of compulsory able-bodiedness, narratives began to see the disabled community itself guilty of replicating their own structures of inequality within and between a range of disabled identities.

A deeper understanding of disability helped to forge alliances between sighted and visually impaired participants. Meaningful interaction among participants became a recurring theme developed from these somatic experiences and critical reflections. The interaction took place in discussion on and off the court of play. Susan, a sighted student, described her experiences on the court:

> In goalball we are forced to communicate in ways in which we normally wouldn't if we had sight. It forms more of a bond between team members, as you really have to trust your fellow teammates to hold down their end of the fort; moreover it forms a sort of community between you and your fellow classmates, who all understand the level of cooperation that has to go on to properly execute a solid block or play.

Susan's description highlights the co-curricular aspect of this experience, referring to interaction with fellow participants as both her teammates and classmates. Similarly, instructors leading the class are both coaches and teachers, a further blurring of pedagogical lines within this non-traditional educational space.

Brian, a sighted senior, drew from course readings to reflect on his experiences with goalball when he wrote:

> The story of Nunez and the Country of the Blind seems similar to my experience in goalball, both in terms of playing the game and interacting with the community members who are visually impaired. The idea that the people who are blind in the story have heightened their other senses and have made that into an advantage seems applicable to the actual game of goalball and the need to focus on your other senses. Going past the sport itself, the idea of both groups of people having a lot they can learn and gain through working together seems similarly applicable.

Establishing mutual values through critical reflection and action provided a productive framework to resist compulsory able-bodiedness and to work for social justice. Participants' narratives from the goalball class culminated in a sense of individual and collective agency surrounding disability issues. Sighted and visually impaired participants alike created community, redefining dominant understandings of disability. This process unfolded over time, on and off the goalball court. On the court, performing blind demanded cooperation and trust, as teammates played together and competed against others. Individuals tested themselves, forced to challenge existing perspectives.

Off the court, participants initially developed a more heightened sensitivity to disability. For sighted participants, a narrative chronology often developed from a cultural naiveté to a more nuanced understanding of disability. These participants may have gained the most from this experience, transforming what one participant described as ignorance to a sense of political advocacy for the disabled community. Visually impaired students gained a greater sense of physical and athletic competence as a result of the course. Participating in a competitive, fast-paced sport led many to feel stronger and less fragile.

In particular, the course forced participants to confront one of the tenets central to the disability rights movement: balancing dignity with risk. This balancing act may be even more difficult for blind or visually impaired individuals, who are often excluded from physical activities and sports where such exclusion is justified as a means of protection. Thus, a more nuanced understanding of interaction between able-bodied and disabled participants suggests that

schools need to do more than simply provide access and opportunity for sports and physical education. These educational institutions should seek to treat disabled participants with respect and dignity by pushing the boundaries and meanings of participation.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Implications

The initial premise of the pilot course was to provide a unique sports opportunity for visually impaired university students. As it turned out, sighted students may have learned more from this unique experience. In addition to learning a new sport designed for the visually impaired, sighted students developed an increased sensitivity to disability issues on their college campus and in society more broadly. This heightened sensitivity, provoked by playing blindfolded and reading about disability in a college goalball class, led participants to reflect and resist the social construction of compulsory able-bodiedness. As Titchkosky argues, "This is part of the radical critical power that *lies between* the differences of disability and nondisability and makes cross-disability experiences potential spaces for critical inquiry into ableist culture" (p. 223, author's italics).

Almost by accident, the goalball class created this critical space for a cross-disability experience. The space promoted the integration of able-bodied and disabled participants, coming together around a common goal. As an engaged scholarship experience, the course facilitated the integration of campus and community collaboration. The course would not have been possible without DARP, a community organization with the knowledge and experience to guide the campus through the often-blind intersection of disability and sport. DARP's expert coaches and community participants enlivened and broadened the course experience. The integration of community partners and campus participants remains at the heart of engaged scholarship and its commitment to collaborative, critical reflection and emancipatory education.

Finally, the course has helped to redefine the blind leading the blind as an ableist metaphor. The university's hiring of a former Paralympian to teach both visually impaired and sighted student athletes suggests that we may have stumbled across an educational model that works. The model, recommended for educational institutions interested in replicating a similar course, has been successful at this university because the pilot program integrates campus and community, academic and athletic curriculum and sighted and visually impaired participants. Ultimately, the course has been successful because it teaches and dignifies a diverse community while broadening the vision of sport and higher education.

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Footnotes

[1] Jesus uses the metaphor in Matthew 15:13-14 and Luke 6:39-40. In the latter case, he tells his disciples a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher." Jesus heals the blind in John 9:6-7, Luke 18:35-43, Mark 8:22-25; 10:46-52, and Matthew 9:27-31; 20:29-34.

About the Author

Derek Van Rheenen received his B.A. degree in Political Economy/German, M.A. in Education, and Ph.D. in Cultural Studies all from the University of California, Berkeley. His experience includes working as the Director of the Athletic Study Center for UC Berkeley since 2001, serving as the Director of the M.A. program Cultural Studies of Sport in Education in the Graduate School of Education at UC Berkeley since 2010, and competing as a professional soccer player on the San Francisco Bay Blackhawks from 1988-1992. He is also currently an adjunct professor in the Department of Education at UC Berkeley. His research interests include a wide range of topics from the cultural studies of sport to physical education to intercollegiate athletics and higher education. As of late, Dr. Derek Van Rheenen has explored the intersection of disability and sport in institutions of higher education. He can be reached by email at: dvr@berkeley.edu.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Name	Role	M/F	Ethnicity	Visual Impairment
Randy	Coach	M	White	No
Michael	Coach	M	African American	Yes
Rebecca	GSI	F	White	No
Jeff	GSI	M	White	No
Chris	Student	M	Asian American	No
Harris	Student	M	African American	No
Ernest	Student	M	White	No
Noah	Student	M	White	No
Kevin	Student	M	White	Yes
Sarah	Student	F	White	No
Chloe	Student	F	Chinese	Yes
Natalie	Alumni	F	Asian American	No
Alice	Student	F	White	No
Walter	Student	M	White	No
David	Student	M	White	No
Saul	Student	M	White	No
Nathan	Student	M	Chicano/Latino	No
Stewart	Student	M	White	No
Reed	Student	M	White	No
Ryan	Student	M	White	No
Emily	Student	F	Asian American	Yes
Jennifer	Student	F	Asian American	No
April	Student	F	White	No
Rufus	Student	M	White	No
Nick	Student	M	White	No
Nora	Student	F	White	No
Irene	Community	F	Chicana/Latina	Yes
Jamie	Community	F	Asian American	Yes
Mark	Community	M	Pacific Islander	Yes
Lawrence	Community	M	Asian American	Yes
Spencer	Community	M	Asian American	Yes
Grant	Community	M	White	Yes
Haley	Community	F	Chicana/Latina	Yes
Amanda	Community	F	Chicana/Latina	Yes