Multi-Disciplinary Human Rights Education as a step for the Social Justice

By
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Abstract

Through the COIL Academy, the School of Social Work of the University at Buffalo and the Law School of Universidad La Salle, developed a new course, titled “Disability and Human Rights through the Lens of Social Work and Laws”. In this course, that is currently teach in both institutions, students of law in Mexico and graduate level social work students in the United States are bringing together for discourse and instruction using a globally networked approach to cross-cultural collaboration as a vehicle to learn about disability and human rights.
How the idea started?
There are two common study lines during the course: (i) Human Rights, and (ii) Disability.

The course is designed for Social Workers and Lawyers.

The main purpose is to find, during the course, the common collaboration opportunities that lawyers and social workers could share representing disabled persons.

In addition, we truly believe that an interdisciplinary course is a good step to realize Social Justice.
Materials

• Case Law (from Mexico, the U.S. and the Inter-American System)

• Readings (from the School of Social Work and the Law School)

• Videos (different materials related with Human Rights and Disability)

• Legislation (from the U.S. and Mexico, and International Instruments as well like the CRPD)
Activities

• Online discussions (through Facebook and Blackboard)

• Synchronous Sessions (Mexico & Buffalo)

• Guest Speakers during the course.

• Recorded Classes (for both countries)

• Joint Papers (between Mexican and American Students)
Positive Outcomes

- Our course was selected to be presented during the Fifth International Conference on Human Rights Education organized by the Washington College of Law (December 2014).

- The presentation now is be considered for a publication in Australia related with Human Rights Education.
Challenges during the Course

• Language Barriers

• Online Interaction

• Academic Background (between law students and social workers)

• Organization Facts
Benefits from the Course

• Law Students now are familiarized with the activities of social workers and vice-versa.

• Students now have a different perspective of Disability.

• Now, both students, can easily identify common opportunities to improve the defense of the Human Rights of the persons with disabilities.
Good evening!

Fortunately, all of our group members were able to coordinate and had a productive conversation about the court topic. We discussed how social workers and lawyers can function in an extremely symbiotic way to best assist their clients. Furthermore, we discussed how individuals with disabilities should be treated as equals who possess the same opportunities as everyone else. In addition, the benefits of community-based programs was introduced as well as the significance of these on integrating individuals with disabilities into the community. The comparison of the CRPD and it’s application to this case was stated. Overall, it was a productive conversation about the results of the case and how it affects the rights of individuals with disabilities.

Thank you to all that participated!
The course still continues, the next week we are going to have a live class at Buffalo and a presentation.

The course is moving forward on a potential Summer Program for lawyers and social workers in Mexico and the U.S.
Questions?

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