

Get Out of My Way!

Building Inclusive Study Abroad Experiences
for Students with Disabilities

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Presenter Introductions



Andrea Dvorak
Associate Director, Off-
Campus Study
she/her/hers



Carden Olson
Student Extraordinaire
he/him/his



Katie Lane
Assistant Director,
CLASS (Disability Resources)
she/her/hers



Cynthia Ramirez
she/her/hers
Majors: Sociology, Psychology
Augsburg Exchange: American
College of Greece

Student Voices



Carden Olson
he/him/his
Major: Psychology
Minor: Gender, Sexuality & Women Studies
DIS Copenhagen, Denmark



Emily Cherne
she/her/hers
Majors: ESL, Spanish
Augsburg CGEE Program, Mexico

Our Goals For You Today

- Learn baseline information about disability accommodations in higher education.
- Understand the study abroad experience from the perspective of students with disabilities.
- Gain strategies for making the study abroad experience more student-centered.

Agenda

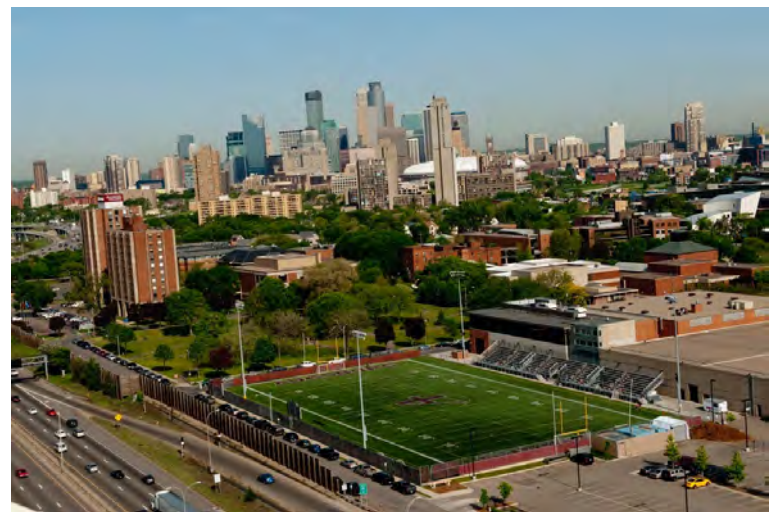
1. Disability Resources crash course
2. Three phases of the study abroad experience:
 - a. Idea: I want to go!
 - b. Planning
 - c. Experience
3. For each phase, we will discuss:
 - a. Challenges of that step vs the ideal.
 - b. How Augsburg strives for the student-centered ideal.
 - c. Carden's experience - and other student voices
 - d. Your turn! How does this apply to your institution?



Our Worksheet + Vulnerable Sharing

Augsburg Snapshot

- Private, liberal arts university in the Lutheran tradition
- Urban campus in Minneapolis
- 3,411 students - about 2000 of those are traditional undergrads
- Students working with Disability Service Office: 7.3% (463)
- Reputation of Disability Inclusion - we had a disability resources office before ADA was enacted.



Study Abroad + Disability #'s

	College students who report a disability	Study abroad students who report a disability
Augsburg (2017-18)	7.3% (463 of 3411)	19.5% (55 of 282)
Nationally	21.9% <i>CIRP Freshman survey 2016</i>	8.5% <i>Open Doors national reporting</i>

What is “Student-Centered”?

- Aren't we all?? Easier said than done...
- Balance of challenge and support
- Interactions are tailored to the student
- Students are heard and fully included in the process
- “Nothing about us without us!”
- Check your bias



Disability Resources 101

Disability Definition

A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

Applicable Laws

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

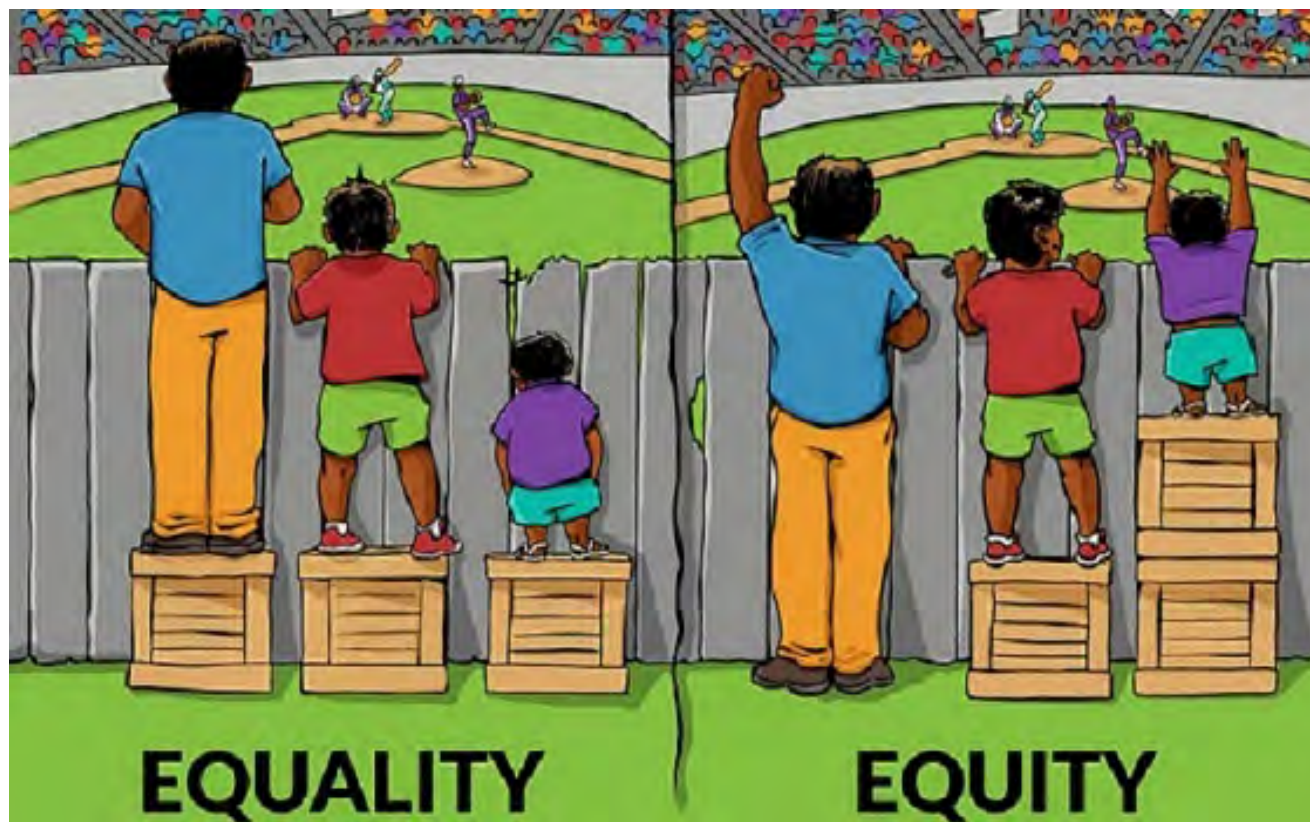
“No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, **be excluded from** the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or **be subjected to discrimination** under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance....”

Applicable Laws

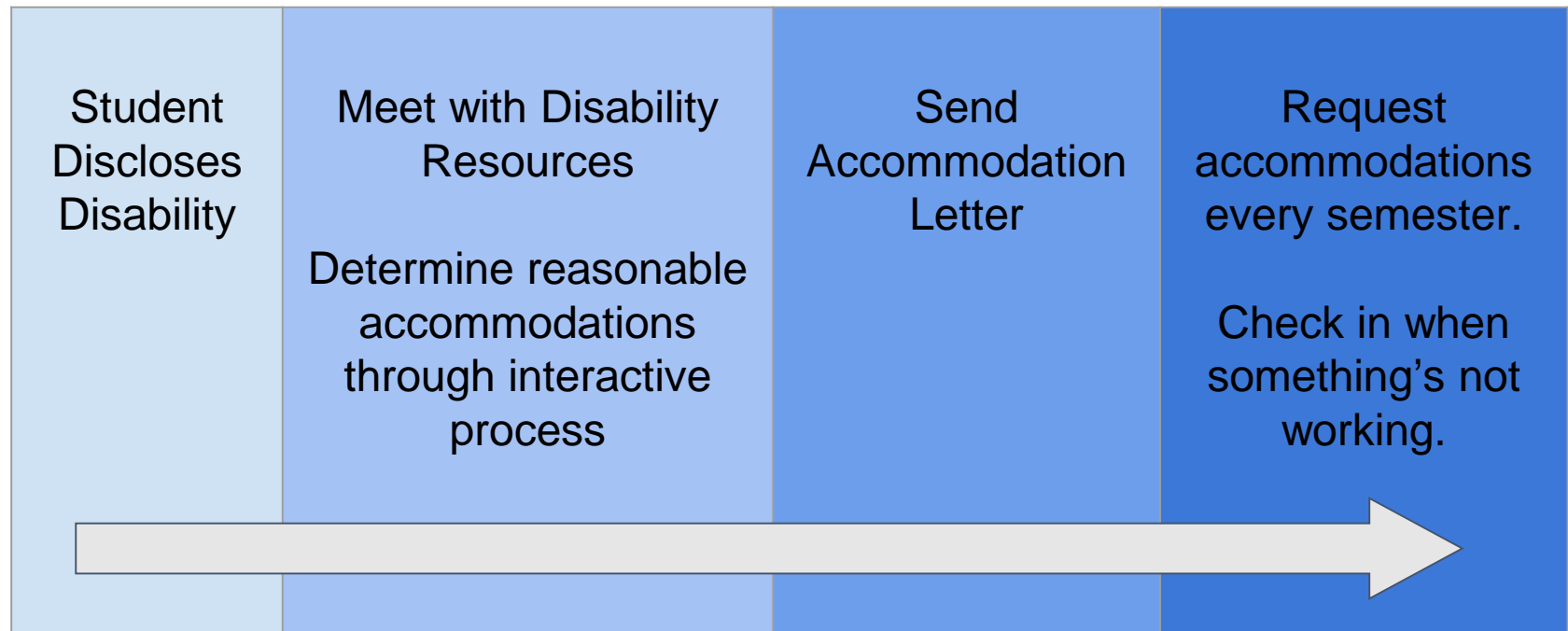
Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

“A public entity shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an **equal opportunity** to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by a public entity.”

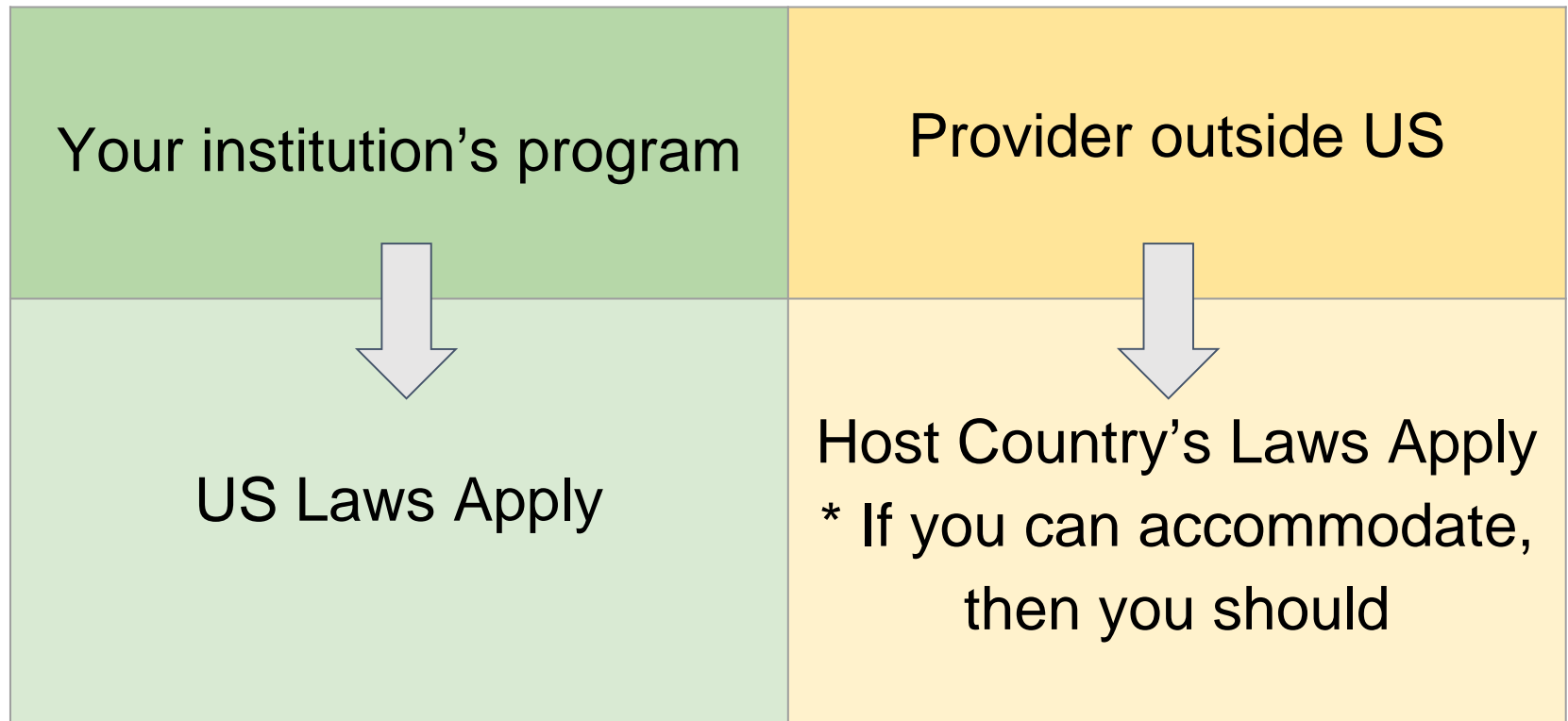
Why Accommodations?



Accommodation Process



Accommodations for Study Abroad



Idea: I want to go

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Idea: Challenges



- Many challenges are universal
- Accessibility of programs
 - Is the information accessible
 - Representation
 - **Interpersonal access**

Idea: Ideal



Students can SEE themselves in study abroad,
and they can ACCESS it in a meaningful way.

Idea: How Augsburg does it!

- Your own work: awareness mindset, “yes, and...”
- Your work with staff: share meaningful info with disability services staff + invite them into the process
- Your work with students:
 - Present about the barriers FIRST + how we support them
 - Multiple modalities - i.e. info sessions
 - Learn from our mistakes + acknowledge where we can do better... (i.e. authentic representation)

Student Voices: Carden



DIS Danish Institute for
Study Abroad
Summer 2019

*Cerebral Palsy, Generalized Anxiety
Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress
Disorder*

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Student Voices: Carden

I Want To Go! **But...**

- Where to? (accessibility, cultural attitudes, environment with CP, GAD, PTSD)
- How long? (medical + emotional needs)
- Funding costs?
- What If ___ happens...?
- Travel? Transportation?
- Living on my own... Scary!



Student Voices

Felt... *Like the Boss!*

- Went to Katie and Andrea with idea of study abroad
- *Knew* I wanted to go to a European country
- *Knew* how my CP, GAD, PTSD impact daily life in U.S.

Student-Centered:

- Representation? Yes AND no!
- Had expert help of Katie (disability accommodations) and Andrea (study abroad resources and advice)
- Shared excited attitudes!

Idea: How about you?

Worksheet time!

1. How does this work at your institution?
1. What are ways to make what you're doing more student-centered?

Students can SEE themselves studying abroad and they can ACCESS it in a meaningful way.

Planning:
I found a program,
how do I do it?

Planning: Challenges

- Planning is complex, 4 player Tetris!
- Hard to “translate” accommodations from here to there.
- Where to start? What aspects are most important? Where do we have the most questions? But beware: staff takeover!
- Rabbit holes, dead ends + U-turns can delay the process or force a do-over. Can be discouraging!
- Dealing with uncertainty: preview of the students’ study abroad experience!



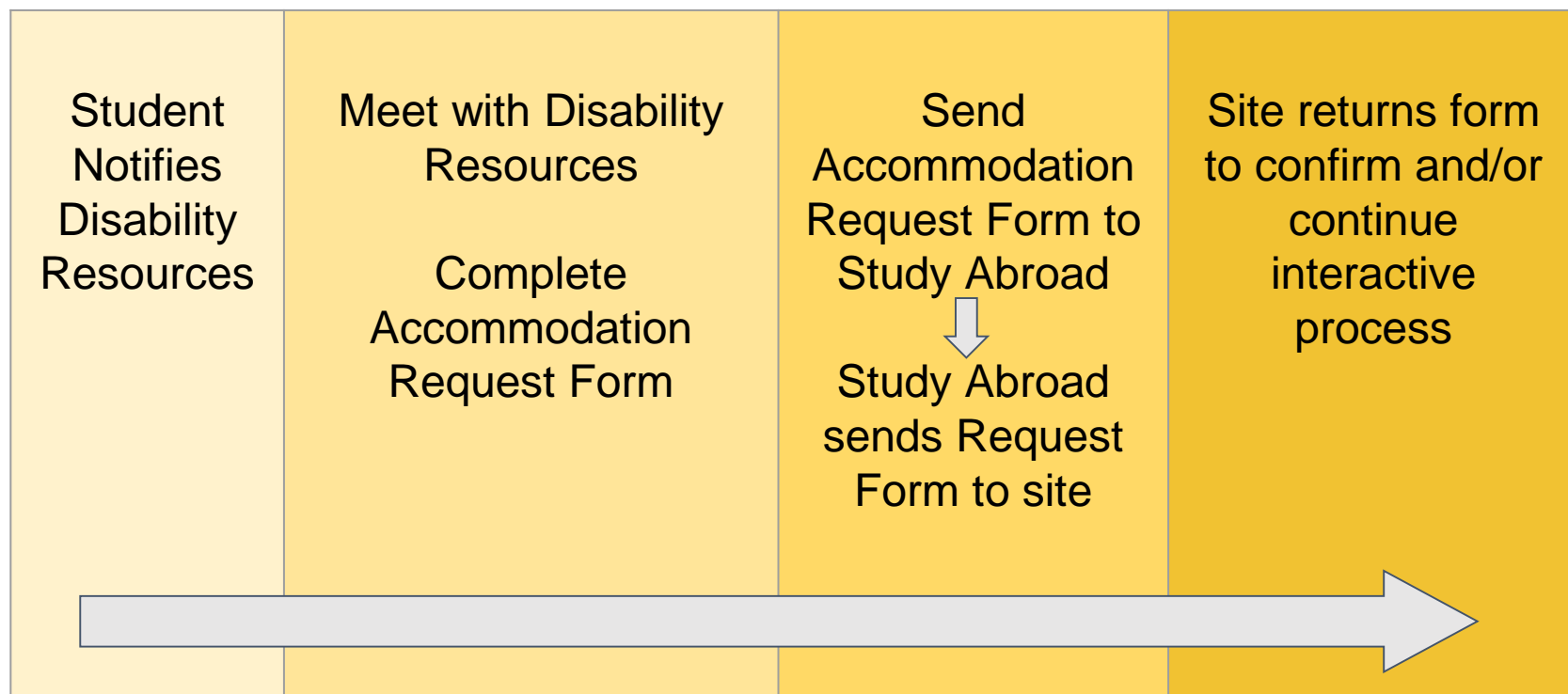
Planning: Ideal



Students are HEARD, and
they know their access needs will be
MET.

Planning: How Augsburg does it!

It's all about the PROCESS



Planning: How Augsburg does it!

- Find your experts and consult/collaborate
 - Within and outside your institution
- Always checking assumptions
- Continuous collaboration with...
 - Study Abroad
 - Disability Resources
 - Student
 - Provider



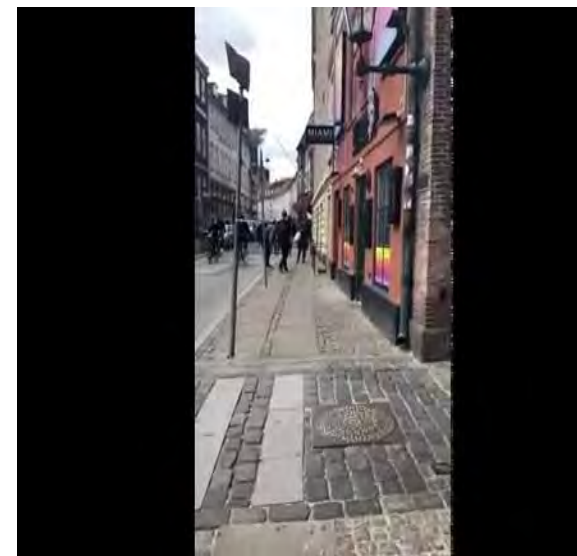
Student Voices: Carden

Feeling HEARD...

- Connecting with my Program: Peter Shapiro!

...Helped get Access needs MET!

- How to fund out-of-pocket PCA? (field studies, Berlin study-tour)
- Accessibility of Copenhagen and Berlin?
- Support system abroad?
- RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH!



Peter Shapiro
DIS Outreach Manager

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Student Voices: Carden

Student-Centered:

Felt like EQUALS with **Katie**

- Planning was a BIG puzzle... made it easier to problem-solve
- Involved in EVERY step, email, question, etc
- Used accommodations at Augsburg to start process
- Nominated for AHEAD scholarship

Felt supported and challenged with **Andrea**

- Help in finding scholarships, cost estimates, program options/Danish culture
- GILMAN Scholarship!

Student Voices: Cinthia



American College of Greece
Spring 2019

Dermatomyacitis

Autoimmune disorder that involves inflammation of the muscles and rash of skin. Occasional flare ups, need infusions, IVs, steroids, antibodies.

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Student Voices: Cinthia



I didn't feel like the planning process was student-centered. When I had my sights set on Greece, there was some pushback from Andrea to have me not go with my friend at the time. I was having health problems, and my friend knew quite a bit of this and I felt more comfortable going together. Andrea didn't listen to my concerns. This would be my first time away from my family with my health condition. This was important for me that she understood this.

Student Voices: Cinthia

It's important that [study abroad professionals] **listen**. They need to **understand** where I'm coming from about being apprehensive - going somewhere without my team of doctors and my family was a very big decision. And while I feel like I should get feedback about what my decisions are, if I've made a decision, you should respect it. I know what I need, not you.

Vulnerability Moment: Checking Our Biases



What biases and assumptions we have?

- “Studying abroad with your friends is a bad idea.”
- “Semester programs are better than short-term.”
- etc....

It’s so hard to bring these into awareness, but it’s our responsibility as humans!

STUDENT-CENTERED

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Planning: How about you?

Worksheet time!

1. How does this work at your institution?
1. What are ways to make what you're doing more student-centered?

Students are HEARD, and
they know their access needs will be MET.

Experience

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Experience: Challenges

- Expectations vs reality: Always hard, but effect for this student can be much worse!
- Disability as cultural construct: Here's where we find out how good our "translation" was!
- Culture shock + language barrier - usual supports: Student may not know who to ask or able to speak up.
- How do the tetris players interact to solve problems? IF the student wants help... and sometimes they don't!



Experience: Ideal



Accommodations happen as planned -
and students have the resources they need
if they don't.

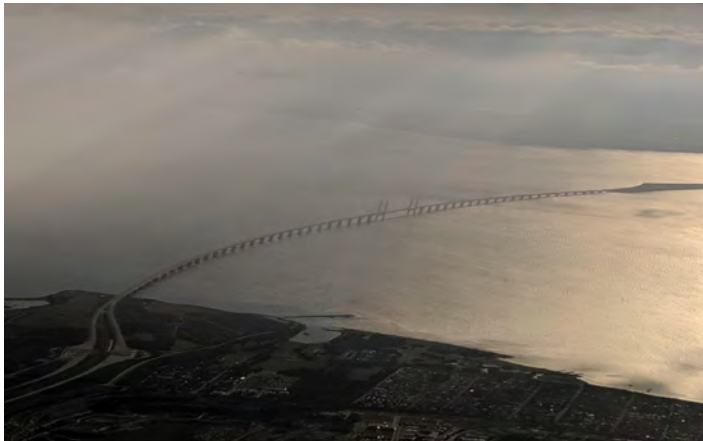
Experience: How Augsburg does it!

- Communicate accommodations in writing.
- Stuff is going to wrong, acknowledge when it does.
- Listen to the student.
- Lean in to the discomfort.
- Having a worst-case-scenario plan.

Student Voices: Carden

An Amazing, Challenging Experience!

- Independence in Copenhagen was easier than expected
- Felt supported by DIS Care Team, instructors, and PCA
- Obstacles tested abilities to assert my needs and ask for help



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Student Voices: Carden



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Student Voices: Carden

However, *not everything went as planned...*

- Electric bike... harder than expected, and not used often!
- Inaccessible testing accommodations site
- Wheelchair broke during day-trip to Sweden... (Fixed, for FREE!)
- Supermarket Panic Attacks
- Debit Card info stolen



Student Voices: Emily



Augsburg Program
Cuernavaca, Mexico
Spring 2018

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

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Student Voices: Emily

The whole context behind mental health was a hard topic to talk about in Mexico. It just doesn't exist there. I had to explain to my Spanish teacher that I have accommodations from school. She was really nice about it and supportive, but she needed to know more information to know that I wasn't trying to "cheat the system." I don't think she ever knew about this before.

I got what I needed, but I had to advocate for myself. It's not like I didn't get to have the accommodations, but there were more steps in this process.

When Augsburg says they have things put in stone, that's what students expect. I'm already nervous going to a new country and having to explain what I need.

Continued...

Student Voices: Emily

If we want to be inclusive of our students, Augsburg has to make it clear about what we need. Do some training with the staff there - they don't even have to completely understand it, just know when they receive a student with an accommodation letter that they be allowed those resources.

Experience: How about you?

Worksheet time!

1. How does this work at your institution?
1. What are ways to make what you're doing more student-centered?

Accommodations happen as planned -
and students have the resources they need
if they don't.

Takeaways!

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Takeaways

Know thyself

Know thy student

Check your assumptions

Keep the student in the “center” and
get out of their way!

