

Introduction: Disability – work – learning annotated bibliography

Compiled by Victoria Bowman

WALL study – Doing Disability at the Bank Case Study

Research team: Kathryn Church, Melanie Panitch, Catherine Frazee, Tracy Luciani

When Kathryn asked me to do this literature review she had two requests: no literature on rehabilitation, and no literature on sheltered workplaces. Right away that ruled out most of the literature on people with disabilities and work. She wanted articles that dealt with disabled people as regular workers; nothing special. The articles in this list reflect these boundaries.

Kathryn gave me three keywords to search with: disability, work, and learning. I looked for books and articles on workplace learning with a focus on disablement, or disabled workers, or doing disability, or people with disabilities. Those four ways of describing disability each point to different politics and academic traditions. When you read this annotated bibliography you might notice some different points of view on what disability means. Likewise with learning; I encountered an array of interpretations of what work and learning mean when you put them together.

Another thing you might notice about this annotated bibliography is the number of disciplines rubbing shoulders with each other. This bibliography combines the work of people who call themselves part of any of the following disciplines:

- organizational learning
- ethnography
- geography
- disability studies
- adult education
- law
- management
- human resources
- sociology.

This multi-disciplinary list reflects three themes I uncovered in the course of doing this search. First, corporate culture is hard to research. Little work has been done in this area. Second, researchers approach learning at work differently. Each of those disciplines has a wide variety of approaches, both positivist and interpretive, to study work and learning. Third, very little work has been done on disabled workers as learners. A lot of these sources deal with learning and work, or work and disabled people. Only rarely did I find an article that addressed disabled workers and learning, let alone all three keywords. I could have kept searching. I stopped because I was out of time, not because there was nothing more to read.

Finally, it might be useful if I shared with you the themes that surfaced while doing this literature search, and the keywords I used to categorize different sources. Here they are, in skeletal form.

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Themes: Disability – work – learning

1. Accommodation
 - Accommodation goes both ways
 - Accommodation is about hierarchy
 - Accommodation is about assessment of relative worth
 - Sometimes managers resist accommodating difference in the workplace
 - Sometimes employees avoid making a request for accommodation
2. Managing difference in the workplace
 - Occupations are gendered, racialized, and embodied
 - Disability doesn't fit in the workplace
 - A disabled worker? That doesn't look right.
 - Many workplace cultures assume everyone is the same
 - Failures in managing difference reflect failures in organizational learning
 - Spoken and unspoken values contradict each other at work
3. Managing a disabled identity in the workplace
 - The body is a site of struggle
 - Disability is a slippery category
4. Managing productivity in the workplace
 - Who is too slow?
5. Disability – work – learning: new area of research
 - Corporate culture is hard to research
 - Researchers approach learning at work differently, and that makes a difference
 - Little work has been done on disabled workers as learners
6. Informal learning at the bank
 - The workplace is a political space
 - Bank workers use informal learning strategies to survive.

Keywords

Accommodation

Attitudes

Body

Corporate culture

Disability

Difference

Diversity

Identity

Illness

Informal learning

Learning

Methods

Organizational culture

Organizational learning

Resistance strategies

Work

Workplace culture

Workplace learning

Annotated reference list

Disability – work – learning literature review

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For Kathryn Church

WALL study – Doing Disability at the Bank Case Study

Research team: Kathryn Church, Melanie Panitch, Catherine Frazee, Tracy Luciani

Barnett, R. (1999). Learning to work and working to learn. In D. Boud & J. Garrick (Eds.), *Understanding Learning at Work* (pp. 29-44). London, UK: Routledge.

Keywords: learning, work

Barnett holds that under conditions of supercomplexity, an unpredictable and contestable age, work is becoming learning and learning is becoming work. He writes, “learning is no longer just a matter of inward experience and challenge but is a matter of confronting multiplying expectations, standards and evaluations which stand outside of oneself and which – as with work itself – cannot, to a significant degree, be anticipated in advance” (p. 37). He wonders what it means to say that learning is work. He concludes that in a work setting learning opportunities may be formally acknowledged as opportunities, but inwardly they may feel like threats. According to Barnett the challenge for those developing learning organizations is to turn this inward sense of learning-as-threat into the more publicly visible sense of learning-as-opportunity.

Barnett says organizations require “engaged responsiveness” (p. 38) to cope with the challenges of supercomplexity. In engaged responsiveness one learns through bringing alternative frames of reference to bear on the frames of reference with which one is presented (p. 41). Engaged responsiveness generates the capacity for continuing creative insertions into an organization’s environment. Through continually critically engaging with its environment an organization learns how to learn.

Church, K. (2001, February). *Learning to walk between worlds: Informal learning in psychiatric survivor-run businesses: A retrospective re-reading of research process and results from 1993-1999*. NALL Working Paper #20-2001. Retrieved September 29, 2006 from <http://www.nall.ca/res/index.htm>

Keywords: disability, illness, informal learning, organizational learning, work

Church’s paper revisits processes and results of six years of research with psychiatric survivors working in psychiatric survivor-run businesses. Church uses a new lens – informal learning – whereas before she focused on the lived experience of participants in community economic development (CED). Church reports on three dimensions of social learning: solidarity learning, reshaping the definition of self, and organizational learning. Key aspects of organizational learning that she reports include peer training, on-the-job learning, trial and error learning, and “failing forward.” Church writes “A great way to foster CED-related learning is to encourage participants

not to be bound by expert advice, but instead, to learn by doing. Simply begin the work that needs to be done, risk making mistakes, learn from them and move on. In other words fail forward!” (p. 17). According to Church, an approach that encourages learning on the job is a defining characteristic of survivor CED.

In the section “Learning at A-Way Express couriers” Church notes ways in which employees reshape their definitions of themselves through their work at A-Way. One employee learned how to make his/her voice more authoritative, but not intimidating, when dealing with people on the phone. She found many employees had a sense of personal limitation, or a lack of self confidence in their employment opportunities. Church concludes the article with a narrative account of one woman’s learning at A-Way Express. Successful learning and management practices she highlights include:

- use membership and team meetings to communicate background information,
- spend time with employee board members before board meetings,
- read feedback through body language, and
- stay connected to your workforce and key employees.

Church, K. with Frazee, C., Luciani, T., Panitch, M. and Seeley, P. (accepted)
Dressing corporate subjectivities: Learning what to wear to The Bank. In Billett, S., Somerville, M., & Fenwick, T. (Eds.) *Work, Subjectivity and Learning*. New York: Springer.

Keywords: corporate culture, disability, identity, informal learning, methods

In this Chapter Church conveys the research team’s learning about of their own subjectivity – of who they are – which emerged in the course of doing a study with a large financial institution (“Everybank”) of learning practices of disabled employees. She writes, “More familiar with marginalized groups than with elites, my intellectual and political disorientation found its parallel in the experience – repeated over and over – of being physically lost... Even as we attempted to maintain an ‘external’ focus on the learning practices of disabled employees, we were compelled to attend to what we ourselves were being taught through a new set of relations” (p. 2-3).

Church discusses a variety of practices for fitting in the team learned through entering corporate spaces and interacting with corporate managers: how to dress, how to write, how to speak, and how to disappear. She uses subheadings like “Melanie gets dressed” to give specific examples of team members’ experiences of learning (or being trained) how to behave in corporate relation. In one example, “Patricia gets dressed,” Church explores the labour relation between people with disabilities and their attendants. In the series “Jackets,” “Cufflinks,” and “Rings” Church uncovers in stages her history; power, gender, and class dynamics in Everybank meetings on response to disabled workers and customers; and her own startled realization that she, too, wanted to be read as successful, professional, and “properly coupled in a gathering of wives” (p. 9).

Church credits this ongoing learning, and the data each team member’s “subjective shifts” generates (p. 11), with drawing the team’s attention to areas of employee experience, like clothing practices, they might otherwise have overlooked. Through learning who they, the research team, are in the corporate environment they discovered a question they should ask themselves in the

course of their research with Everybank: “What kind of self do I need to (learn to) become to be a successful worker in this environment?” (p. 11).

Church, K. & Luciani, T. (2005, June). “Stepping to the rhythm of circumstance:” A choreography of corporate disability: Reprise. Paper presented at the 2005 annual conference of the Research Network on Work and Lifelong Learning (WALL). Retrieved September 29, 2006 from <http://www.wallnetwork.ca/resources/workingpapers.htm>

Keywords: body, corporate culture, disability, informal learning, methods, workplace learning

In this paper Church and Luciani report on emerging findings from the study “Doing Disability at the Bank.” The purpose of the study is to discover learning strategies that disabled people initiate and rely on to keep jobs within corporate environments during global restructuring. Church and Luciani consider disability an “empty category:” “... we decided ... we would wait for the category ‘to be filled as we learn’” (p. 7). They define learning activities as “forms of work carried out at the juncture of everyday experience and larger institutional processes” (p. 11). The inductive inquiry is designed around conversations: individual interviews with a standpoint sample of disabled people with substantial work histories, focus groups with self-identified disabled bank workers and non-disabled co-workers, participant observation, and documentary analysis. The project exhibits three characteristics of second wave feminist epistemology and methodology: reflexivity, emotionality, and innovation in the face of exclusion (p. 17).

Church and Luciani report on preliminary findings around what counts as learning for disabled employees in corporate environments. They highlight four kinds of work: the work of keeping up, which highlights effects of the pace of work and expectations for productivity; the work of waiting, which explores waiting for equipment and waiting to be understood; the work of hiding, which explores ways in which employees manage disclosure; and the work of keeping it light, which uncovers disabled employees use of humour to teach and to create an impression of cheeriness.

In observing corporate life they report two findings: learning textual practices, and learning clothing practices. In learning textual practices the researchers learn from The Bank’s interventions (feedback and corrections) in the partnership agreement, discovery document, and newsletter. Here are a few things they learned:

- the role of corporate lawyers is to close every possible loophole in advance;
- managers have discretionary power and can make risky decisions;
- some documents operated as “Trojan texts” (p. 22) – they worked their way through corporate walls providing the researchers with opportunities to observe The Bank’s actions;
- bank employees feel they have too much to read in too little time; and,
- corporations and universities use the same textual practices of management and control.

In learning clothing practices the researchers learned through a series of “wardrobe moments” (p. 27) about the ways dress is connected to social and professional roles, as well as to the body troubles disabled workers manage daily in their work environments.

Church, K., Panitch, M., Frazee, C., & Luciani, T. (2006, June). *Recognizing the invisible work of doing corporate disability*. Paper presented at the 2006 annual conference of the Network on Work and Lifelong Learning. Toronto, ON: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto.

Keywords: attitudes, corporate culture, disability, informal learning, work

This article represents some preliminary findings of a four study called “Doing disability at the bank: Discovering the learning/teaching strategies used by disabled bank employees.” Researchers analyze conversations from seven focus groups in three Canadian cities to learn about what it’s like to work in a corporate bank environment. Each location included a group for employees who identified as ‘disabled,’ and another for coworker/manager ‘others.’ They ask, what constitutes learning for disabled employees in corporate environments?

The researchers learned that studying disability at the bank meant both studying disabled employees and studying the bank. Their interactions with the bank, a research partner with a stake in research process and outcome, added a layer of data about the corporate bank environment. From group formation the researchers learned that disability is both a bodily experience and an organizational construct, with distinct purposes within and for the organization (p. 1). From coworker groups they observed that the perfect employee has a lean and mean lifestyle. They saw the corporation’s commitment to a diverse workforce in tension with the drive for revenue. From disabled groups they learned that disabled employees prefer to stay hidden. Learning to conceal parts of themselves and their bodies was a form of work that had to be learned through trial and error – learning to create a virtual, able-bodied identity, for example.

The researchers outline their findings as learning as ‘work’ – four practices that count:

1. keeping up: co-workers explain,
2. waiting: disabled employees talk back,
3. making claims,
4. keeping it light.

The authors conclude these informal learning practices conceal an underlying politics of personal responsibility in which disabled employees hesitate to ask for workplace accommodations, and where humour is a key quality of success in a corporate environment. The result of self-deprecating humour combined with politics of individual responsibility is disabled employees who make working in a corporate environment look easy. They write, “... the people who learn how to make things look easy are the ones who end up staying” (p. 5).

Dyck, I. (1999). *Body troubles: Women, the workplace and negotiations of a disabled identity*. In R. Butler & H. Parr (Eds.), *Mind and body space: Geographies of illness, impairment and disability* (pp. 119-137). London, UK: Routledge.

Keywords: body, disability, identity, work

Dyck uses a feminist materialist analysis and work in geography concerned with “mapping embodied subjectivities” (p. 120) to explore how discursive constructions of the body, especially biomedicine, interplay with the environment. Dyck contrasts biomedicine’s inscription of the body as an object of science with participants’ own experiences of living with chronic illness, dealing with disclosure, and restructuring their workplace as they struggle with bodily changes. The author asks, for women with chronic illness, how does bodily change threaten a continuity in self and social identification? (p. 122).

Dyck identifies five themes in women’s everyday experiences of domestic wage labour post Multiple Sclerosis (MS) diagnosis:

1. medical uncertainty accompanying diagnosis,
2. struggles around the meaning of having MS in the workplace for women’s work abilities,
3. workplace as place of risk,
4. disclosure of diagnosis – a pivotal point,
5. importance of appearing able.

She explores strategies women use to manage the secret knowledge of their MS diagnosis and to defer meanings: concealment, non-disclosure, management of symptoms. She looks also at factors dictating women’s range of options in response to an illness experience, such as workplace organization and social practices; women’s own work histories, level of education, and class positioning; and women’s vulnerability to surveillance practices. Dyck found that bodies are politicized – the salience of a disabled identity may vary from setting to setting according to one’s power and to the responses of others inserted differently in distributions of power (e.g. supervisors, disability insurance assessors) (p. 133-134).

England, K. (2003). Disabilities, gender and employment: Social exclusion, employment equity and Canadian banking. *The Canadian Geographer*, 47(4), 429-450.

Keywords: accommodation, disability, diversity, workplace culture

England draws on disability studies and feminist analyses of paid work and gendered organizations to investigate workplace equity in Canada’s ‘Big Six’ banks. She assesses progress the ‘Big Six’ have made towards employment equity for people with disabilities by comparing employment equity data from 1987 and 2001. England looks at the banks collectively as emblematic of Corporate Canada. She asks three questions:

1. Has the numerical representation of women and men with disabilities in the banks increased over time, and how does it compare with the labour market availability benchmark of 6.5 percent for persons with disabilities?
2. Does the occupational distribution of women and men with disabilities reflect those of women and men without disabilities?
3. How have the banks addressed discriminatory barriers and exclusionary policies and practices that result from their employment systems, policies and practices? (p. 437)

England applies Acker's (2000)¹ concept of the gendered archaeology of organizations to investigate the disabling archaeology of workplaces. She writes, "Although organizations can no longer say that women (or persons with disabilities) are not appropriate for specific jobs, the 'gendered archaeology' of past actions lingers. Social networks, 'shared' understandings, informal practices and conventions of inclusion and exclusion can operate to reinforce dominant and subordinate places in the organization" (p. 434).

England's assessment of the 'Big Six' banks suggests little employment equity success for people with disabilities. In numerical representation people with disabilities fell below the benchmarks in both 1987 and 2001. England noted employment equity specialists' reluctance to talk about it – during interviews, specialists steered the conversation toward discussion of success in other areas. She also observed that issues around people with disabilities were a challenge for employment equity managers, who spoke of difficulties in recruiting and retaining, and in one case suggested that "banking might not suit people with disabilities" (p. 440). According to England, the Employment Equity Act does well in addressing exclusionary formal policies and practices, but inadequately addresses informal workplace practices, systemic discrimination, and workplace culture.

Fenwick, T. (2001, Winter). Tides of change: New themes and questions in workplace learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 92, 3-17.

Keywords: difference, identity, workplace culture, workplace learning

Fenwick looks at the contexts of work and learning in a globalized world characterized by a focus on learning, limited critical reflection, and the dominance of flexibility as an ideal. Fenwick asks, how do these conditions of work and learning in a globalized world affect the ways in which workers develop knowledge? (p. 5). Fenwick uncovers critiques as well as new ideas, models, and questions for study. She presents five themes appearing in working knowledge and workplace learning theory and research.

The first theme in working knowledge and workplace learning, situated views of learning and knowledge in work, reexamines the link between experience, reflection and knowing. The second theme looks at the culture and context of workplaces' culture and context. In particular she explores the effects of organizational culture on social networks, learning practices, and the meanings of learning (p. 9). The third theme looks at texts and discourses that mediate working knowledge through naming some things and ignoring others, through controlling identity, and through normalizing some behaviours while casting others as deviant. The fourth theme looks at identity and difference. Fenwick explores the limits and possibilities afforded to human identity by workplace conditions, activities, and relationships (p. 11). Finally, the equity and ethics in working knowledge theme looks at problems with current workplace equity training and practices.

¹ Acker, J. (2000) Revisiting class: Thinking from gender, race, and organizations. *Social Politics, Summer*, 192-214.

According to Fenwick the workplace is a highly political space. She recommends workplace educators start with our purposes and allegiances, asking ourselves what do we wish to bring about, and whose interests do we support?

Fenwick, T. (2005, June). *Tidying the territory: Clarifying our terms and purposes in integrating learning and work*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Work and Lifelong Learning. Toronto, ON.

Keywords: learning, work, workplace learning

Fenwick draws from early results of a meta-literature review of all work-learning literature published between 1999 and 2004. She warns that blurred definitions of learning and work may conceal ideological differences. She writes, “currently, the big ideas and the big research questions [in this field] are being named from within very different understandings of learning,” (p. 8). Fenwick seeks more conceptual clarity, and more clarity of research purposes.

Fenwick asks two questions: What counts as work in considerations of learning? What political issues are involved when we privilege the term work? (p. 2-3). She looks at two dominant views of learning: “learning is knowledge is product (with a process)” (p. 4), and learning is process. According to Fenwick, many who view learning as knowledge as product may use the term to mean both knowledge-creating actions as well as new knowledge. Her critique of this view is that few writers make clear the meaning or scope of ‘learning’ as they use it. Those who view learning as process may, in broadest terms, equate learning with all meaning making. This view of learning uses the formal/informal learning binary. As critique Fenwick cautions, “when we accept informal learning to be all conscious experience and sense making, individual and collective, we have a difficult time explaining just what is *not* learning,” (p. 6).

Fenwick recommends work-learning researchers pause, compare, and critically reflect on language negotiations. She calls for increased rigour in theoretical distinctions and justifications, as well as increased transparency in the terms and purposes of work-learning scholarship. She offers questions work-learning researchers should ask ourselves:

- What contradictions, elisions, continuities are emerging?
- What (if any) finer constructs can be agreed upon?
- What politics are afoot as we negotiate the terms of reference?
- Why are we focusing on the workplace?
- What key ideas hold together the field of work-learning studies? (p. 7).

Frazer, C. (2006, June). *Who is accommodating who, and to what purpose?* Panel Presentation: Accommodating persons with a disability in the workplace – Speaking notes. Presented at a Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA) pre-conference workshop, Fredericton, New Brunswick, June 14.

Keywords: accommodation, disability, work, learning

Fraze reports on the human rights implications of preliminary findings of a national research study that looks at the experiences of disabled workers in the Canadian financial sector. She describes three kinds of unrecognized work of accommodation. Accommodation in this context refers to “work performed by disabled workers to accommodate for the shortcomings and problematic idiosyncrasies of their employers and workplaces” (p. 1), as opposed to the standard human resource notion of accommodation as adjusting the workplace for the benefit of a particular disabled worker. According to Fraze disabled workers accommodate by hiding, concealing their disabilities from the public. Disabled workers accommodate by waiting for infrastructural support. Disabled workers accommodate by keeping it light, using humour to cope, teach, ease relations, and create receptivity for difference.

Fraze outlines implications of these forms of accommodation from a human rights perspective. Fraze and her co-researchers found in disabled employees day-to-day working life, customer preference still counts. They found that disability accommodation must be reciprocal – disabled workers accommodate in good faith, and likewise the employer must be ready, responsive, and must anticipate the need to accommodate in a manner consistent with the overall pace of the workplace (p. 3). They found that keeping it light is a way to cope, rather than an expression of inclusion. Fraze writes, “far too often keeping it light involves placating discriminators or potential discriminators or co-workers who are hostile to the notion of accommodation. This can operate in much the same way as we have seen historically in the coping strategies of women who work to “keep it light” in sexist work environments and racialized people who are compelled to “keep it light” in racist work environments” (p. 3).

Garrick, J. (1999). The dominant discourses of learning at work. In D. Boud & J. Garrick (Eds.), *Understanding Learning at Work* (pp. 216-231). London, UK: Routledge.

Keywords: workplace learning

Garrick identifies four influential discourses on learning at work: human capital theory, which thinks of human value and performance in terms of return on investment; experience-based learning, which holds that learning is influenced by the socioemotional context in which it occurs; cognition and expertise, which relies on understanding how the mind works and notions of generic competencies; and generic skills, capabilities, and competence, where learning is thought to prepare people for the marketplace. In each case Garrick outlines a critique, questions to ask, and recommendations.

Garrick suggests that workplace learning contains more possibilities than the prevalent interpretations of competence, and than the economic outcomes currently sought in many locations. He identifies the following as future directions for workplaces:

- support workers/learners;
- deconstruct the limiting conceptual differences between workers, managers, supervisors, and educators; and,
- develop more workplace-based qualifications and contextually specific learning (p. 227).

Hall, E. (1999). Workspaces: Refiguring the disability – employment debate. In R. Butler and H. Parr (Eds.), *Mind and body spaces: Geographies of illness, impairment and disability* (pp. 138-154). New York: Routledge.

Keywords: body, disability, work

Hall's goal with this chapter is to refigure the disability employment debate, introducing an idea of embodiment into discussions that previously focused on either the medical or social model of disability. He argues that we need an approach to disability that allows the everyday experiences of disabled people in. He says disability is not exclusively an individual pathology nor a socially constructed concept.

Hall's exploration of employment and the body relies on McDowell (1994)² and Hochschild (1983)'s³ studies of body normalization, and codes and rules of the body in employment. McDowell draws a parallel between women, out of place in the male employment world of merchant banks, and disabled people, also out of place in most workplaces where their presence disrupts accepted notions of embodied employment (McDowell in Hall, 1999, p. 146).

Hall uses a case study of a major high-street banking company, and specifically one woman Jane's experience, to illustrate the value of an embodied approach. Hall draws three key issues from the case study discussion:

1. Employment has real effects on the employee's body and the body then has real effects on employment.
2. These interactions and expectations take place within a framework of rules, codes, and performance about which bodies are acceptable and which aren't.
3. Employment operates within certain work spaces, and employees work out their position and identity within these spaces (p. 150).

According to Hall the relationship between the body and work in space lies at the heart of the disability–employment relationship.

Harlan, S. L. & Robert, P. M. (1998). The social construction of disability in organizations. Special issue on social inequality in the workplace. *Work and Occupations*, 25(4), 397-437.

Keywords: accommodation, disability, organizational culture, resistance strategies

Harlan and Robert explore how work organizations handle the new federal (U.S.) mandate of reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They use data on requests for and responses to reasonable accommodation, wondering how and why organizations resist making reasonable accommodations for employees. The authors use two theoretical perspectives to generate new ideas about the social construction of disability in the workplace: the

² McDowell, L. (1994). Performing work: bodily representations in merchant banks. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 12, 727-750.

³ Hochschild, A. (1983). *The managed heart: the commercialization of feeling*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

social theory of disability; and theories of social construction of gender, race and class in organizations. They question how “ableness” (p. 399) is defined in organizations. They ask: who qualifies as a person with a disability, which accommodation requests are reasonable, and which job functions are essential and therefore immune from reasonable accommodation requests? (p. 400).

Harlan and Robert identify barriers to requesting reasonable accommodation including: resistance strategies employers use to maintain power relations, employer reluctance to recognize disabilities, and exploiting the knowledge-resource differential. They found employees fear consequences associated with making accommodation requests – job loss, job reassignment to demeaning work, disbelief, being labeled a troublemaker. Employees often used personal compensation as an alternative to accommodation.

Harlan and Robert found that outcomes of accommodation requests varied according to gender, salary grade, individuals who handle the requests, and the types of accommodations employees requested. These findings support the existence of a socially defined concept of ableness (p. 416). They also suggest that disability is a unique dimension of inequality, one that people already on the disadvantaged side of race, class, and gender may be more likely to experience. The authors conclude that accommodations undermine authority in the workplace, threatening control over pace and output of work. They recommend future research integrate disability into theories of the cultural interpretation of organizations and of individual attainment. They write also that researchers must talk to workers, as “policy gets implemented on the shop floor” (p. 417).

Jackson, N. S. (2005, June). What counts as learning? A case study perspective. Discussion paper for WALL Network Meetings, June 19-20. Toronto, ON: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto.

Keywords: informal learning, methods

Jackson discusses the conceptual challenges of creating a research dialogue about informal learning across research traditions – qualitative/quantitative; positivist/interpretive. She suggests case studies are well equipped to understand the nature of adult learning, while survey methods suit understanding the extent of adult learning. Jackson sets Livingstone’s (2003⁴, 2005⁵) work in the survey tradition against Fenwick and Tennant’s (2004⁶) interpretive work. Jackson sketches case studies written for past WALL conferences to illustrate the usefulness of the case study approach, and to highlight the connection between the approach used (positivist vs. interpretive) and the kinds of findings a study may produce.

⁴ Livingstone, D. (2003). Informal learning: Conceptual distinctions and preliminary findings. Prepared for publication by Z. Bekerman, N. Burbules and D. Silberman (Eds.), *Learning in hidden places: The informal education reader*. [no publisher information available].

⁵ Livingstone, D. (2005). *Profiles of adult work and learning: Canada 1998-2004*. Paper for 3rd Annual WALL Network Conference, June 19-20.

⁶ Fenwick, T. and Tennant, M. (2004). Understanding adult learners. In G. Foley (Ed.), *Dimensions of adult learning*. Berkshire, England: Open University Press, pp. 55-73.

For example in the case study “Labour education for equality” Jackson illustrates a surprise the researchers encountered, captured through an open-ended research format. She writes, “one significance of such ‘immeasurable’ findings might be to draw the attention of a researcher to different questions and different sites of questioning than she may have originally intended” (p. 14). In the case study “Stepping to the rhythm of circumstance” Jackson compares the researchers’ lens (they positioned themselves as needing to learn about what it’s like to work in the bank environment) with a survey research approach. She writes, “I will speculate that most survey researchers would not know in advance the significance of reversing the perspective of their questions. They might need to ask ‘Do you spend time teaching your co-workers to understand your disability?’” rather than “Did you go to courses, workshops; how many hours per week?” (p. 16). Jackson concludes the survey approach is better suited to measuring what is familiar; the interpretive approach to breaking new ground.

Klein, D., Schmeling, J., & Blanck, P. (2005). Emerging technologies and corporate culture at Microsoft: A methodological note. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 23, 65-96.

Keywords: corporate culture, disability, diversity, methods

Klein, Schmeling and Blanck address the implications of Sandler and Blanck’s (2005) study for the study of corporate culture and for developing research methods for studying IT and IT-using organizations. They ask, why study corporate culture? (p. 67). They note little study of disability issues in corporate culture. The authors write, “Most existing research on disability has focused on supervisor and coworker attitudes and their effects on employees with disabilities. ... However, these studies focus on what may be artifacts of corporate culture, or of the culture at large. ... The information derived from such research may not provide reliable insight into the assumptions that make up the cultures that support these behaviors” (p. 67).

Klein, Schmeling and Blanck address methods of studying corporate culture, problems, challenges, barriers to collecting data from emerging technologies (e.g. system crashes, corporate policy, magnitude of available data), as well as data management and security protocols. They outline briefly implications for future study, which is primarily that emerging technologies are a moving target – dynamic, and challenging to study. They note two items of interest for future study: determining who has responsibility to implement diversity, and then understanding the systems of rewarding or penalizing responsible parties.

Klinger, M. G. M. (2002, Winter). Organizational culture and people with disabilities. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 22(1), 21-25.

Keywords: disability, diversity, organizational culture

Klinger’s short article applies her past research experience to the question, why have we not solved the problem of diversity in the workplace? She identifies two reasons, specific to people with disabilities:

- perceptual and attitudinal barriers (stereotyping, fear), and

- employers perceive a legal barrier (does hiring a person with a disability mean she can never be fired?).

According to Klinger, in the workplace people with disabilities often need better qualifications than people without disabilities to achieve comparable employment. Once employed disabled people may feel a need to “neutralize their handicap by adopting a self-exacting attitude,” (p. 22) proving themselves through additional education or experience. Klinger places students in educational internships as a way to meet the need for what she calls “additional credentializing” (p. 22). She notes her students frequently encounter low expectations in their employers. She resists the “beg, place, and pray” approach (p. 23) where counselors beg a company to hire a person with a disability, place them, and then pray that it works.

Klinger offers recommendations for how to counteract perceptual barriers. She suggests educational internships as a way to produce cultural change. More broadly she calls for employers to accept the burden of “fitting in,” rather than the new employee.

Macy, G. (1996). Accommodating employees with disabilities: A matter of attitude. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 8(1), 78-91.

Keywords: accommodation, attitudes, disability, learning, organizational culture, work

Macy uses an attitude-based model to examine three factors influencing an organization’s ability to take a progressive stance on accommodating employees with disabilities: understanding, organizational values, and practices (p. 79). He works with concepts of attitudes; culture; and values or normative beliefs, which he divides into functional values and elitist values. Macy proposes that education is an important way to reduce problems associated with the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA) and minimize employers’ fears of excessive litigation and employer burden.

Macy recommends organizations examine four areas of practice to work towards a progressive stance in accommodating employees with disabilities. In training Macy recommends employees at all levels of the organization understand the intent and requirements of the ADA. In job analysis and description Macy suggests starting with a job analysis to identify a job’s essential aspects, necessary requirements, and output. In recruiting and selection Macy calls for a focus on assessment of ability to perform a position, rather than focusing on a candidate’s disability. Finally, as a precaution to avoid litigation Macy advocates reviewing policies that may restrict employees with disabilities, especially: lateness, attendance, leaves of absence, work schedules, overtime, benefits, and promotions/transfers.

Mason, M. G. (2004). *Working against odds: Stories of disabled women’s work lives*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Keywords: accommodation, attitudes, disability, organizational culture, work,

Mason conducts an ethnographic study of 18 disabled women's relationships with work. She organizes the narratives under three chapter headings: the way we see ourselves, containing stories about integration, body image, identity and dependency; the way the world sees us, with stories about marginalization, "passing" (p. 6), and social constructions of disability; and the way we work, with stories about discrimination and strategies for self-sufficiency. Macy uses the pronoun "us," a narrative strategy that reduces the distance between author, reader, and the participants' narratives.

Mason identifies themes which cut across all of the narratives. She writes, "In all cases, the women struggle with society's construction of 'normality,' which instructs them to divide the 'impaired' and 'bad' parts of themselves from the 'good' and 'normal' parts ..." (p. 7). For example, Lauren, a wheelchair user, describes a familiar scene at work: "A customer comes in to buy a bouquet and I come right up to them and say, 'May I help you?' and they don't know what to say. You can tell they are quite uncomfortable about it. ... So then sometimes I try to reassure them by saying, 'All you need is the talent that's in my little fingers..." (p. 162). In another narrative Sally describes proving her professionalism: "'They would think you could not make a presentation because you were in a wheelchair.' She mimics, 'My goodness, how would that look?'" (p. 134).

Other themes addressed include confronting social marginalization, integration, claiming disability, coming to terms with the need for having caregivers, dealing with discrimination, and living in two worlds.

McAdams, T., Moussavi, F., and Klassen, M. (1992). Employee appearance and the Americans with Disabilities Act: An emerging issue? *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 5(4), 323-338.

Keywords: attitudes, difference, disability, work

McAdams, Moussavi and Klassen's goal with this article is to alert readers to an unanticipated, but potentially onerous, repercussion of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The authors suggest that businesses are caught between the demand for attractive front-line employees, believed necessary to create a positive organizational image, and the legal/public demand for inclusive workplaces that embrace physically stigmatized workers. They ask:

- How can businesses legitimately work to create a positive image through their personnel without discriminating against an employee whose appearance is unattractive or disturbing? (p. 326).
- Is differential employment treatment based on appearance likely at some point to be regarded as unlawful discrimination? (p. 327).

The authors consider the implications of the move toward a service-based economy of "disability-related unattractiveness" or "attractiveness per se" according to case law and scholarly opinion. They suggest this move has two implications for the role of attractiveness in business decision making:

1. As firms become more service-oriented, physical and psychological closeness between employees and customers increases requiring the service deliverer to act as image maker (p. 333).
2. Because services are intangible, objective evaluation of the quality of service provided becomes difficult for customers, who may instead rely on tangible cues (like appearance of the service deliverer) not directly related to the service.

McAdams, Moussavi and Klassen outline the implications of this shift: physical appearance can be expected to become an even stronger, though still hidden, employment criterion. They write, "... organizations will become more reluctant to assign service delivery to individuals whose stigmatized appearance will negatively affect customer perception of the service delivered even as legal pressure mounts to embrace those very individuals" (p. 334). They recommend organizations prepare for managing the repercussions of the APA while appearance as a social issue is still at the earlier stages of its life cycle. They recommend organizations use the appearance issue as an opportunity to develop more substantive means of improving the perceived quality of their services.

Mergenhagen, P. (1997). Enabling disabled workers. *American Demographics*, 19(7), 36-43.

Keywords: disability, work

Mergenhagen's article contains statistics on a variety of topics, including: percentage of people with disabilities in the employed population, biggest number of impairments, average earnings of disabled workers vis a vis "normal" workers, and who hires disabled workers. The article also outlines general info on coworker reactions to disabled workers, costs of accommodation, and trends in employment for workers with disabilities.

Most useful is the author's attention to the question of who is disabled. Mergenhagen compares the definition of disability in three frequently cited surveys that measure the extent of disability in the U.S.: the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), the Current Population Survey (CPS), and the National Health Interview Survey. She concludes that, using the broadest definition, virtually everyone ends up on the disabled list at some point. The key she points out is to be aware of who falls into which categories and to be sensitive to their needs (p. 7).

Mitchell, L. & Livingstone, D. W. (2002, August). 'All on your own time:' *Informal learning practices of bank branch workers*. NALL Working Paper #64. Retrieved September 28, 2006 from <http://www.nall.ca/res/index.htm>

Keywords: informal learning, workplace learning

Mitchell and Livingstone examine learning practices in three bank branch workplaces in the Greater Toronto Area, Ontario. They focus on the impact of reorganization of work and workplace learning on informal learning. Their analysis relies on ethnographic fieldwork with branch workers, and a national survey of branch workers' informal learning practices during the

introduction of new financial services software and self-study modules. Mitchell and Livingstone employ a situated learning approach, and activity theory to examine activities within the branch system. The researchers ask the following questions:

- How has workplace learning changed over the past 10 to 15 years inside the bank?
- How has bank restructuring affected branch learning practices, including individual and collective informal learning practices?
- How have staff resisted and/or created new informal learning opportunities? (p. 15).

The authors give an overview of workplace changes associated with bank restructuring. Mitchell and Livingstone describe changes to the bank's approach, including office redesign, increased workloads, downsizing, a sales/service split, and the restructuring of workplace learning. They highlight a contradiction between management rhetoric, which highlights availability of flexible work arrangements, and branch workers' experience, which shows that only management, not branch staff, can access alternative work arrangements (p. 12).

Mitchell and Livingstone found bank branches had shifted from an informal, voluntary approach to a formal, management-driven learning regime characterized by learning targets, testing, quarterly monitoring, and accreditation procedures. They identify informal learning as a site for support, creativity and resistance, providing an extensive list of recommendations for creating a learning environment within branches. Livingstone and Mitchell conclude restructured bank branches pose many barriers to informal learning, such as a lack of mentors, inhibiting technology, and not enough time to learn on the job. The authors draw from this conclusion a series of questions and concerns, some of which include:

- How are families affected by after-hours compulsory learning parents etc. bring home?
- How are women (as primary caregivers) and/or marginalized groups particularly disadvantaged?
- Why is so much learning required of branch staff and at such a rapid pace?

Pinder, R. (1995). Bringing back the body without the blame?: The experience of ill and disabled people at work. *Sociology of health and illness*, 17(5), 605-631.

Keywords: difference, disability, illness, learning, work

Pinder starts with this premise: if we think critically about the policy question – how may we better integrate people with arthritis into employment – focusing on ‘barriers and facilitators’ will lead to an over-simplified understanding of a complex problem (p. 606). On the macro level we risk glossing over structural issues like gender differences and access to resources. On the micro level we ignore subtle mental dialogues ill and disabled people engage in as they enter the labour market and stay employed. Pinder uses the social model of disability and a phenomenological framework to explore the ways illness and disability are seen to threaten everyday life. She asks:

- how did disabled people order their experiences, acquire common sense knowledge, and cope?
- how did informants want their struggles to be seen and understood in the context of the moral and cultural imperatives in contemporary society? (p. 607).

Pinder contrasts narratives drawn from two participants – Elaine’s forced exit, and Sally’s containment. She uncovered a dialectic of trust and trouble. Both informants dealt with mistrust in the capacities of their own bodies, in the eyes of others, and in the wider work environment. The sick record was a source of trouble in store that compromised respondents job security and future career prospects.

Pinder draws four conclusions from this research:

1. Pain and fatigue are unstable, incomprehensible, and invisible. Neither informant was able to convey to their peers/supervisors the significance of their bodily discomfort.
2. Illness is taboo. In the current economic climate respondents felt insecure; they didn’t want to risk going home when they felt unwell.
3. The unclear is unclean. Neither organizational cultures nor the disability movement nor unions want to deal with the ambiguity between the able-bodied norm, disability, and illness.
4. Transition is dangerous: “Much of the inability to contain the periodic ill health of those with arthritis at work is due to organizational imperatives requiring employees to be either unequivocally well or manifestly sick” (p. 625).

Pinder calls for a more nuanced understanding of disadvantage and discrimination. She says the disability movement must acknowledge difference-within-difference.

Pinder, R. (1996). Sick-but-fit or fit-but-sick? Ambiguity and identity at the workplace. In C. Barnes and G. Mercer (Eds.), *Exploring the divide: Illness and disability* (pp. 135-156). Leeds: The Disability Press.

Keywords: disability, identity, illness, work

Pinder explores the ambiguities of going sick at work. She draws narrative accounts of two informants with arthritis from a wider qualitative study – Phillip, who she calls fit-but-sick, and Lucy, who is sick-but-fit – to illustrate how disabled peoples’ working lives reflect and shape personal, social and cultural identity. Phillip was fit to work in his own eyes but sick in the eyes of others. His arthritis diagnosis presented his employer with a predicament: because his future was uncertain Phillip was neither sick (he looked well and could perform his job) nor fit for long-term employment. Worse, Phillip’s inconclusive future prognosis, lack of formal education and sick record rendered his future career prospects bleak. Lucy’s story, called “Doing normal sickness” contrasted two jobs against each other. In one job, absenteeism for regular hospital appointments and family caregiving responsibilities jeopardized her credibility in her employer’s eyes. In another, Lucy’s sick leave was framed ‘normal,’ like everyone else’s (p. 146).

Pinder draws conclusions from Lucy and Phillip’s stories about the embodied self, the social body, and the political body. Pinder found discomfort exists between disabled people, wider society, and those with partial impairments who may occupy an in-between area between these worlds. She suggests, if disability is associated with moral blameworthiness than sickness may carry even more disturbing connotations (p. 151). Politically she found that dismissals are laced with moral connotations, embedded in wider shifting structural relationships. She writes, “once ‘on the books,’ the sick record itself became an invisible form of discipline, blocking Phillip’s career

advancement and seriously jeopardizing Lucy's credibility. As a means of classifying illness behaviour and making unambiguous decisions about sickness or fitness, it was a symbol of unpredictability and unreliability" (p. 152). She concludes the article with recommendations for successful employment policy and a more holistic definition of disability.

Sandler, L. A. & Blanck, P. (2005). The quest to make accessibility a corporate article of faith at Microsoft: Case study of corporate culture and human resource dimensions. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 23, 39-64.

Keywords: corporate culture, disability, identity, methods, organizational learning, work

Sandler and Blanck examine challenges Microsoft confronts and solutions it develops in its quest to integrate technological accessibility and equal opportunity into Microsoft's employment policies, products and market strategies. They explore the relationships between the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), corporate leadership, and the dynamics that drive organizational culture at Microsoft. They unwrap Microsoft's corporate culture, conveying case study-type information through diary entries with titles like "Spring 2000: Confidentiality, trade secrets, and non-disclosure agreements" (p. 44).

In the section, "Summer 2000: Accessible Technologies Group (ATG) and diversity" Sandler and Blanck analyze company members' responses to the ATG, what ATG workers do, and factors hindering their success such as corporate amnesia and workplace culture (p. 47-48). In the section "Summer 2000: Disability and corporate culture" the authors contrast Microsoft's unspoken values (e.g. new hires must leave everything behind) and the Microsoft lexicon (dog years, death march) with the ATG's efforts to promote accessibility and equal opportunity. Sandler and Blanck highlight a stark contradiction imbedded in Microsoft's workplace culture:

[Microsoft] employees who have a disability or who know someone that lives with a disability have been responsible for incorporating accessibility features into company products and developing technical innovations that enhance usability or accessibility. ... However, without exception, each insists they are not "disabled" in any legal or true sense. (p. 50)

Similarly the section "Summer 2000: Disability, Law, and Corporate Culture" holds a significant finding. The authors describe an interview with a recruiting coordinator they had categorized as non-disabled. During the interview the authors asked why the participant's work schedule was for 20 hours per week. The participant described an illness, surgery, and recovery experience and Microsoft's accommodations that made continued work possible. As with members of the ATG, this participant had never considered herself to be disabled, or to be considered by others to be disabled (p. 51). This finding deserves further exploration – what constitutes disablement at Microsoft?

Sandler and Blanck encountered a number of methodological issues in their research. They found it difficult to obtain data about Microsoft employees, particularly disabled employees averse to disclosing, and they struggled with non-disclosure agreements with Microsoft. The authors conclude that researchers need systematic measures of disability workforce dimensions and

corporate culture. They outline opportunities Microsoft has to generate information about disablement at Microsoft, product accessibility, and corporate culture indicators, e.g. conducting a prospective/retrospective workforce portrait.

Schur, L., Kruse, D. & Blanck, P. (2005). Corporate culture and the employment of persons with disabilities. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 23, 3-20.

Keywords: attitudes, corporate culture, disability, methods, organizational learning, work

Schur, Kruse and Blanck explore political implications for companies that want to create a more inclusive environment for people with disabilities. They ask:

- What role does corporate culture play in the employment of people with disabilities?
- How can corporations develop supportive cultures that benefit disabled employees, non-disabled employees, and organizations as a whole?
- Has the Americans with Disabilities Act made a difference in the employment of disabled people? (p. 4).

As outsiders they develop an understanding of an organization's culture through determining rules for inclusion, studying the organizational power structure, and identifying the reward and punishment system.

Schur, Kruse and Blanck look at existing sources of information on the relationship between corporate culture and disability. The authors explore theoretical models of treatment and attitudes toward employees with disabilities, strategies disabled employees use to shape expectations in the workforce, and the effects of organizational structures (values, practices) on the treatment of disabled employees. The authors find that in the area of analyzing corporate culture and disability little work has been done, few definitive hypotheses exist, and little is known about the nature of the phenomenon. They write, "The treatment of people with disabilities in organizations is a new research area" (p. 10).

Schur, Kruse and Blanck identify specific areas for future study, including: collecting data in actual workplace settings; using multiple modes of analysis; conducting longitudinal and detailed case studies; and involving people with disabilities in all stages of the research process (e.g. participatory action research). They identify steps organizations can take to fully incorporate people with disabilities into organizational life, e.g. increase autonomy, review HR policies, etc. (p. 16). They cite Manpower Inc. as an example of corporate culture that works (p. 12).

Smith, D. E. (2005). Work knowledges. In *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people* (pp. 145-164). Oxford, UK: AltaMira Press.

Keywords: methods, work, workplace learning

In this chapter Smith addresses the following questions about the practice of institutional ethnography:

- What should the ethnographer orient to in the data dialogue?

- What should we be looking for and asking about?
- How should we orient questions or observations?
- How should we frame the informant's attention so that what is learned can become the data on which the researcher relies in analysis? (p. 145).

Smith uses concepts of work, work knowledge, institutional capture, and social relations to articulate the method she describes. According to Smith, work knowledge is the institutional ethnographer's data. Work knowledge has two aspects:

1. a person's experience of and in their own work – what they do, how they do it, what they think and feel about it;
2. the implicit or explicit coordination of a person's work with the work of others, including how texts coordinate work processes (p. 151).

Work, Smith says, is intentional: "It is done in some actual place under definite conditions and with definite resources, and it takes time" (p. 154). By taking this approach to work institutional ethnographers are likely to notice both what people need in order to do their work, as well as what they are doing. She warns against the problem of institutional capture, a problem in which the researcher may not notice until after an interview, while reading the transcript, that an informant gave an account of work purely in institutional terms. Smith uses the concept social relation, a metaphorical map, to explain what is discovered in the process of assembling work knowledges and finding out how they coordinate with one another. She contrasts this approach with grounded theory.

Solomon, N. (1999). Culture and difference in workplace learning. In D. Bond & J. Garrick (Eds.), *Understanding learning at work* (pp. 119-131). London, UK: Routledge.

Keywords: difference, diversity, work, workplace culture, workplace learning

Solomon explores changes in the way we understand culture and work. She compares past meanings of culture to contemporary management philosophy. She examines two technologies of workplace learning to bring to the surface challenges that the terms 'culture' and 'difference' demand of workplace educators: competency-based training, and a management philosophy underpinned by a workplace culture that promotes sameness (p. 215).

Solomon explores contradictions in competency-based training. The concept of difference, central to competency training, suggests a humanistic face with learner-centred pedagogical practices (group work, oral participation, negotiated content and activities, p. 123). These practices are designed to give learners a sense of control over their learning. Solomon holds that any sense of learner control or autonomy ignores the role of competency training in socializing people to be certain kinds of workers and learners. Solomon says competency training is political – its standards represent power exercised over and through individuals, and its intent is to classify, measure, and judge.

Solomon unpacks the language of productive diversity, which supports post-Fordist approaches to work. In the language of productive diversity (a.k.a. the celebration of difference) "different

knowledge and skills are recognized as valuable resources for the productive workplace ...” (p. 125). According to Solomon the contradiction rests in celebrating difference while upholding a particular set of norms. She writes, “culture in the post-Fordist workplace ... has meant that diversity, while inevitable and central to work and to the worker, still has to struggle against the seduction of sameness ... where those who are not the same (i.e. have different knowledge and skills) are seen to be in deficit” (p. 125). Difference is seen as something to be fixed up. Solomon uses recognition of prior learning practices as an example of this contradiction in practice.

Solomon contends that difference, not sameness, should be recognized as the norm. She writes, “by engaging with an understanding of culture as an evolving dynamic rather than as a fixed state of being, workplace learning dialogues and practices can be more easily challenged and seen as openings” (p. 130). Solomon’s recommendations for workplace educators and learners are as follows:

1. Recognize one’s own cultural identity and assumptions around culture and difference.
 - How do our own beliefs influence what we understand to be natural or normal?
 - What do our own beliefs mean for ourselves? For others?
2. Analyze the culture of the workplace and its assumptions around culture and difference.
 - What structures, norms, beliefs, values underpin expectations and behaviours in an organization?
 - How are gender, age, education, culture, and language backgrounds distributed across the workplace?
3. Recognize the cultural dimensions of workplace learning. Consider:
 - Who is different to whom?
 - How are they different?
 - Who identifies them as different? (p. 129)

Spataro, S. E. (2005). Diversity in context: How organizational culture shapes reactions to workers with disabilities and others who are demographically different. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 23, 21-38.

Keywords: disability, diversity, organizational culture

Spataro asks, how does an organization’s culture affect the work experiences of employees who are different from the majority? She looks at values comprising an organization’s culture to advance understanding of when and where incorporation of workers with disabilities and workers who are demographically different may have a positive impact on organizations. Spataro outlines the ethical and business reasons why diversity merits attention. She reviews existing research approaches to understanding the effects of demographic diversity on organizations (and their shortcomings), and, based on organizational culture, offers a model of the effects of greater diversity among employees in organizations.

Spataro reviews organizational culture according to five dimensions:

- definition of diversity
- emphasis on differences
- social interaction process
- reactions to policy, and

- general implications for diversity (p. 29).

She distinguishes between three types of organizational culture: culture of differentiation, culture of unity, and culture of integration. In each case she highlights considerations for managers hoping to create a more productive, inclusive workplace environment. Spataro suggests a culture of integration, which values differences among coworkers as sources of insight and enhancers of group quality and creativity, may present the greatest opportunity for managers to successfully integrate differences and maintain peak performance within a diverse workforce. She recommends workers with disabilities assess the cultural system at a potential employer's organization to get a sense of the likelihood of success within that work environment. Questions to consider include:

- Are disabilities salient in the work environment?
- How do front-line representatives of the organization and hiring managers react to a worker's disabilities?
- Are there appropriate work settings and accommodations for disabled workers?
- Do disabled workers hold positions of power within the organization? (p. 35).

Vallas, S. P. (2003). Rediscovering the color line within work organizations: The 'knitting of racial groups' revisited. *Work and Occupations*, 30(4), 379-400.

Keywords: difference, diversity, informal learning, methods, organizational culture, workplace learning

Vallas offers a set of observations gleaned through his fieldwork in American manufacturing settings. He wants to provoke thought about how sociological research might engage the social processes more directly that reproduce racial inequalities within work organizations in the US. Vallas argues that researchers need to emphasize more strongly the social and organizational processes that underlie the structure and experience of racial boundaries at work. He says key questions have languished, such as these:

- How do workers "do" race on the job? (p. 380)
- How might informal patterns of interaction and affiliation reproduce the colour line within work organizations?
- How have corporate, legal, and judicial interventions affected the character of intergroup relations at work?

According to Vallas these questions have gone unaddressed for four reasons: a methodological bias towards positivist methods; a theoretical orientation taken by organizational sociologists which stresses external environments of work organizations; social structural conditions (deindustrialization, weakening of urban labour markets) encouraging researchers to emphasize availability, rather than nature, of work; and corporate employers' fear of litigation.

Vallas makes five propositions on the colour line at work. He describes the symbolic meaning of spatial segregation at work. He writes, "As in residential communities, spatial segregation within the workplace powerfully constrains the movements and activities of minority employees, which, in turn, affects their opportunities for interaction with dominant-group workers, limits their access to production skills and job information, and hinders their chances of establishing informal ties of solidarity to dominant-group workers (p. 385). He addresses informal relations and the acquisition of skill – dynamics of trust and embeddedness may play prominent roles as conduits of skill,

expertise, and support within organizations and occupations. He outlines the role of status hierarchies, resistance, and the reproduction of racial lines; the limits of juridically oriented human resource regimes; and the limits of judicial remedies. He concludes with recommendations for social science researchers, including:

- develop increased sensitivity to legal concerns and reasoning,
- conduct focused case studies to address key questions [outlined above],
- use a multi-method approach, and
- explore innovative research strategies and new sources of data (e.g. narratives, insider testimony, employee statistics).

Vallas warns that employers are likely to remain highly reluctant to grant fieldworkers free access to study racial boundaries within their organizations. In recognition that covert participant observation is not an option for academic social scientists, Vallas suggests strategic partnerships to get around this obstacle: “Although individual researchers and research teams will find it difficult to overcome employer resistance to research on race, it may be possible for elite educational institutions, private foundations, and powerful government bodies, in conjunction with civil rights groups, to enlist the participation of corporate actors (and conceivable labor organizations and professional associations as well) in pursuit of *in situ* fieldwork on race” (p. 392).

Wilton, R. (2004). From flexibility to accommodation: disabled workers and the reinvention of paid work. *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers (New Series) 29, 420-432.*

Keywords: accommodation, attitudes, disability, organizational culture, work

This article reflects aspects of a qualitative case study with disabled workers in Hamilton, Ontario. Wilton looks at the meaning of flexibility in changing geographies of employment. He explores the extent to which disabled workers can exercise control in their work environments and labour processes. He unpacks the assumption that employment means liberation from state dependence. He considers how paid work “constitutes a site for disciplining of disabled bodies/minds in contemporary society” (p. 420). These questions have implications for workplace accommodation in capitalist economies; the gender, race, and ability profile of occupations which may encourage disabled workers to self discipline in order to craft an identity that aligns with an organizational culture; and disabled peoples’ relationships with non-disabled coworkers in a competitive entrepreneurial environment.

Wilton uncovered three themes that characterized work experiences:

1. training and multi-tasking
 - pressure to adapt, train quickly increased intensity of work
 - requests for accommodation provoked negative reaction; workers disciplined themselves
 - contradiction between state’s message of paid work as liberation and employers’ reluctance to hire people who don’t embody a flexible, unhindered ideal (p. 426)
2. speed of labour process
 - recent changes to organization of paid work are even more disabling (e.g. “speed-up program” p. 427)
 - surveillance sparked anticipatory compliance

- disabled workers assume responsibility to adapt
- 3. emotional and aesthetic labour
 - workers in service occupations disciplined for failing to induce/suppress feelings in front of customers
 - workers disciplined for having abnormal bodies, e.g. “We don’t want you to use a magnifying glass in front of [the clients] because they’ll start worrying about you and you’re the one who’s supposed to be taking care of them” (p. 428).

Except for a minority of managers and professionals, Wilton found respondents’ frequent lack of control made obtaining accommodation at work a challenge. Respondents evaluated themselves according to embodied ideals: speed, adaptation, emotional management. Many respondents were faced with a double bind: request accommodation and risk getting labeled a ‘problem worker,’ or fail to meet performance norms and risk getting labeled a ‘bad worker’ (p. 430). Withholding an accommodation request allowed workers to forge a ‘normal’ identity, but they risked disadvantage in a labour process modeled on a non-disabled norm. Making an accommodation request might improve a worker’s labour process, but they risked getting labeled a recipient of ‘special treatment’ or provoking disciplinary reactions from supervisors, coworkers, or themselves.

Wilton concludes, “it is in employers’ interests to ensure that accommodation remains constructed as a form of ‘special treatment’ for a minority population precisely because it threatens to disrupt existing labour processes and organizational cultures” (p. 431). He recommends we critically assess the value placed on employment, recognize diversity, and move from flexibility to accommodation.

Wilton, R. & Schuer, S. (2006). “But you do need to have the right applicant for the role:” Employer perspectives on the place of disabled people in paid work. *Area* (in press).

Keywords: attitudes, disability, resistance strategies, work

This paper reflects part of a larger study based in Hamilton, Ontario examining labour market experiences of disabled people from perspectives of workers and non-disabled employers. Wilton draws here on interviews with employers to critically examine employers’ perspectives in hiring and managing disabled workers. He asks, How do employers make sense of people with disabilities as suitable employees? How do employers understand workplace accommodation? (p. 4) His interest is as follows: “To what extent are disabled people *squeezed* between a state that demands pursuit of individual well being and a labour market that demands flexibility but offers limited accommodation?” (p. 4).

Wilton found five themes characterized employers’ positions:

1. “It wouldn’t work in this business.” In some cases employers provided a clear reason for not hiring disabled workers – e.g. referring to costs of accommodation. In other cases employers provided unclear rationale – e.g. service sector “aesthetic considerations” (p. 5) that had little to do with a specific job.

2. A level playing field. Employers argued disability was not relevant to the hiring process, focusing instead on qualifications and training. Wilton found employers tended to overlook enduring inequities built into the work environment and labour process.
3. Benevolence. Wilton found two motives at work: altruism, and improving corporate identity/public relations.
4. Exploitation. Employers characterized people with disabilities as grateful for work and unlikely to cause problems on the job. Employers also used strategies to ensure the potential costs of hiring people with disabilities were borne by disabled workers, not by the employer.
5. Wilton found instances of meaningful accommodation in the workplace, tempered in many cases by concerns about costs of accommodation. Wilton links this concern with the benevolence theme, and to employers' comments that "accommodation was only appropriate in cases where disabled people were exceptional workers" (p. 9).

To these concerns Wilton recommends both political and conceptual responses, including:

- challenge individualization that characterizes contemporary labour markets and positions workers as entrepreneurs;
- cultivate an inclusive collective identity;
- pressure organized labour to acknowledge accommodation as part of the struggle for control in the workplace; and,
- unsettle paid work's taken-for-granted position at the core of contemporary citizenship (p. 10).

Wooten, L. P. & James, E. H. (2004). When firms fail to learn: The perpetuation of discrimination in the workplace. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 13(1): 23-33.

Keywords: diversity, organizational learning, work

Wooten and James advance the view that failures in managing discrimination and discrimination lawsuits reflect failures in learning by firms (p. 24). They identify three barriers to organizational learning:

1. Dysfunctional routines
 - discriminatory routines
 - reliance on reactive learning routines
 - organizational defensive routines
 - limited learning-based routines
2. History-dependent learning
 - limited history of discrimination lawsuits
 - few opportunities for firms to get feedback, improve management strategies
 - lapses in organizational memory
3. Target orientation
 - focusing on the wrong target

The authors outline implications that result from these barriers. First, employees don't consider discrimination management and prevention worthy of their time and attention. Second, managers are unlikely to link employment-level consequences to employees handling (or mishandling) of

discrimination issues. Firms fail to learn to manage discrimination because without consequences, employees are not likely to learn how to manage discrimination. Wooten and James recommend firms transfer knowledge associated with management and prevention of discrimination between groups within the firm. They contend firms should focus on how to prevent a crisis, not how to resolve lawsuits. They offer Georgia Power as an example of learning in practice (p. 30).

Wooten, L. P. & James, E. H. (2005). Challenges of organizational learning: Perpetuation of discrimination against employees with disabilities. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 23, 123-141.

Keywords: disability, organizational learning, work

Wooten and James explore why organizations do not comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prohibits discrimination against workers with disabilities. They base their observations on a multi-case study using newspaper accounts of disability discrimination in the workplace. The authors contend that failures in eliminating disability discrimination reflect difficulties in organizational learning.

Wooten and James identify five learning barriers by percent of cases studied:

1. Discriminatory organizational routines (43.8 percent)
Consequence: organizations vulnerable to allegations of discrimination.
2. Organizational defense routes (37.5 percent)
Consequence: may result in missed learning opportunities; continuation of behaviour.
3. Reliance on reactive learning (14.6 percent)
Consequence: organizations don't learn which factors within the organization caused the problem; can't resolve issues.
4. Window dressing (4.1 percent)
Consequence: No deep change of management practices; no organizational learning.
5. Lack of vicarious learning (N/A)

In order to manage disability in the workplace Wooten and James recommend: leadership adopt a proactive stance; organizations take responsibility for learning how to comply with the ADA; stop window dressing to appear disability friendly; engage in reactive, reflective and vicarious learning to develop effective routines that prevent discrimination; and consider the organizational culture that values and encourages fair treatment of employees with disabilities (p. 138).