

4-12-2019

Hope College and Ready for Life: Kate's Story

Hannah Kenny
Hope College

Kate Veldink
Hope College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/curca_18



Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Repository citation: Kenny, Hannah and Veldink, Kate, "Hope College and Ready for Life: Kate's Story" (2019). *18th Annual Celebration of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (2019)*. Paper 17.
https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/curca_18/17
April 12, 2019. Copyright © 2019 Hope College, Holland, Michigan.

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Celebration of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity at Hope College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in 18th Annual Celebration of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (2019) by an authorized administrator of Hope College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@hope.edu.

Hannah Kenny and Kate Veldink
Hope College, Holland, Michigan

Abstract

In an effort to merge social science and humanities methodology, I undertook an ethnographic case study of Ms. Kate Veldink, a student in the Ready for Life (RFL) program at Hope College. My research question is: What are the day-to-day experiences of a RFL student on Hope College's campus? I obtained consent from Ms. Veldink and her family, enabling us to embark as research partners in this query. Through the Mellon Scholars Program of Hope College, we created an inquiry-into-research project as an extension to the class Human Behavior and the Social Environment in the Department of Sociology and Social Work. We investigated accessibility and awareness for students with disabilities on-campus in the RFL program.

Under the mentorship of advisor Dr. Dennis Feaster, we developed a project to showcase Ms. Veldink's vision for greater integration between Hope College and RFL. We used oral history methodology to conduct a series of interviews with Ms. Veldink and her family, friends, and community supports. Both the Grounded Theory and Cooley's looking-glass self concept further informed our process as these interviews were then analyzed and compiled into a short documentary that brings to light the story of Ms. Veldink and her peers as they navigate Hope College through the RFL program, and calls to action the administration of Hope College to recognize and react to these students' realities.

A central theme that emerged from this process is the paradox between accessibility and barriers for RFL students. Hope College welcomes RFL students into the campus community, but inviting these students into our daytime routine is not enough. Rather, we must embrace the challenge of Hope College's core values of "being a caring community" that "fosters the development of the whole person - intellectually, spiritually, socially, and physically."

Methods

Thirteen interviews were orchestrated and compiled into a video to tell Ms. Veldink's story. Content analysis was used to identify themes. Additionally, Ms. Veldink is featured wearing a GoPro throughout the film, allowing viewers to get a glimpse into what a trip from the RFL classroom to Hope College's Dimnent Chapel is like through her perspective.



Results

The interviews highlight the vision of Ms. Veldink and her support system as it concerns the relationship between RFL and Hope College, all of which relate to the organizing theme of **Challenges of Social Location**.

Themes	Representative Quotes/Experiences
Challenges of Social Location (Organizing Theme)	To access the current RFL classroom, Ms. Veldink must undertake the laborious task of traversing winding hallways in her wheelchair. Furthermore, there are no windows in the classroom and the listed room capacity is six, though the instructor reports that there are a minimum of ten students in the RFL program, many of whom have one-on-one aides, occupying the small space.
Accessibility	The handicap door access button to open the chapel door for Ms. Veldink did not function at the time of this investigation.
Awareness	"There's a fair amount of people who don't even know that Ready for Life's on-campus... it's in the basement of Anderson Werkman." - Max Sievers
Inclusion	"Right now Ready for Life students are guests on Hope College's campus. Kate has a visitor ID badge instead of a Hope student ID badge. [There needs to be] a change in mindset from the Hope College administration that these students are Hope students." -Abby Sievers
Belonging	"I would like [RFL] to be integrated with Hope. Right now, I feel like its 'us' and then 'them,' so I would like it to come together and be a 'we.'" - Kate Veldink
Resources	"I've often felt like we are the college resource room, this is the college inclusion room and I don't love that." -Nicole Mosterd

Limitations

As a single case study, the results of the analysis cannot be generalized.

Conclusions

In order to honor and uphold the Qualities that Distinguish Hope College, we must embrace its aspiration to provide "academic excellence and deep Christian faith joined together to strengthen each other in a supportive and welcoming community" to include all individuals of all abilities.

Implications

The students, faculty, and staff of Hope College have an opportunity to help respond to and address the needs of students in the Ready for Life program, including improving: accessibility, awareness, inclusion, belonging, and resources. It is anticipated that these benefits would also positively impact Hope College and the greater Holland, MI community.



Advocacy

To access the link to our published video project highlighting Ms. Veldink's experiences in the Ready for Life program at Hope College and her vision for a greater integration between the two institutions, please scan here:



Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the following individuals featured in Ms. Veldink's video: Rachel Beckman, Donald Kent, Maddy Maurice, Mattie Mikitka, Nicole Mosterd, Cathy Owen, Carrie Rodgers, Abby and Max Sievers, Sarah Van Zoeren, David Veldink, Kate Veldink, and Mary Veldink.

This project was possible through the support of Kate Veldink, Mary Veldink, Dr. Dennis Feaster, Dr. Marsely Kehoe, Tori Longfield, and the Mellon Scholars Program of Hope College. *All media used with permission.*