



RETHINKING COLLEGE



A FILM ABOUT
COLLEGE
STUDENTS WITH
INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITIES



VIEWER'S GUIDE

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VIEWER'S GUIDE



Rethinking College was produced by Think College, a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston, funded by a grant from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (CFDA# 93-632, Grant No. 90DD0659).

The opinions contained in this film are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the funders.

Changing Expectations. Increasing Opportunities.

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www.ThinkCollege.net

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To view Rethinking College go to:

www.thinkcollege.net/rethinking-college

INTRODUCTION

Rethinking College is a 25-minute film about students with intellectual disabilities (ID) who are attending colleges and universities throughout the United States. These students, along with educators, college administrators, parents, disability advocates, and policy makers, reflect on the role that higher education plays in their lives.

The movie explores how accessing higher education impacts students with intellectual disabilities in positive ways. It also demonstrates how enrolling students with intellectual disability adds diversity and a renewed sense of purpose to these learning communities.

Rethinking College raises awareness of the opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to access higher education. Our hope is that this film will also serve as a tool to spark dialogue and encourage viewers to explore ways to increase opportunities for postsecondary education options in their own communities.

Raising awareness.

Opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities to access higher education are a relatively new phenomenon. While these options are growing, there is little public awareness about them. *Rethinking College* introduces viewers to a number of students who are attending college, and illuminates what that experience is like for them.

Other key stakeholders share their perspectives as well, including college students without disability, college faculty, administrators, high school educators, and parents. Advocates for people with disabilities speak about why having the option of a college education is so important, and share historical context for this new level of educational opportunity.

By sharing these perspectives, the film shows that while postsecondary education had been considered out of reach for thousands of students who are labeled with an intellectual disability, it is now a growing option.

Sparking dialogue.

When a new movement is emerging, there must be an opportunity to explore what it means and address how it challenges preconceived ideas. Many people lack an understanding of how postsecondary education can be made accessible to those who have an intellectual disability. Others may think, "This is not a good idea," "What is the point of it?" or "What outcomes can be expected?"

Rethinking College introduces the audience to what is possible for students with intellectual disabilities, and explores how initiatives to include them are currently working. However, this film is not designed to provide detailed information on how an inclusive higher-education program is established. Instead, the film encourages viewers to examine their own perspectives, ask their own questions, and talk to others about what it means when college is a choice for everyone—even those with intellectual disabilities.

To encourage this dialogue, the guide includes discussion questions for the film, as well as learning activities that can be used in classroom settings.

Find out more.

This film introduces viewers to the concept of inclusive higher education. We hope that after viewing it, audience members will want to continue to learn what is available and possible in their own communities, and at their local colleges and universities.

Think College maintains a comprehensive website, www.thinkcollege.net, that provides a wealth of information on this subject.

Its College Search feature (www.thinkcollege.net/collegesearch) highlights state and regional higher education options.

Think College publications (www.thinkcollege.net/publications) and a searchable resource library (www.thinkcollege.net/resources-database) offer additional reading on the subject, and the online learning modules (www.thinkcollege.net/think-college-learn) provide more extensive training.

WATCHING THE FILM

While we recommend watching Rethinking College in its entirety, it is divided into chapters that can be viewed on their own, or revisited while discussing the film.

When viewing the film online, click on the Chapters button in the top left corner to select a chapter to watch. Below we provide the chapter descriptions as well as the time stamp for each of the chapters in the film.



Chapter 1: Introduction (00:00 – 02:08)

Contrasting the thoughts of young children on going to college with those of an older woman and those of current college students with disabilities.

Chapter 2: Meeting Claire (02:09 – 04:10)

Claire, a student at Edgewood College--on campus, in classes, with other students.

Chapter 3: Claire's Parents' Perspective (04:11 – 5:31)

Claire's parents discuss how attending college has impacted Claire's life.

Chapter 4: Perspectives of College Students and their parents (05:31 – 12:12)

College students with intellectual disabilities reflect on why they go to college (featuring Mary, Micah, Amanda, Chelsea).

Chapter 5: College Faculty Perspectives (12:12 – 18:15)

College faculty discuss what having students with ID in their classrooms has meant for their teaching approach.

Chapter 6: College as a Choice for Everyone (18:16 – 20:58)

College students with and without disabilities discuss the importance of college education for all.

Chapter 7: Institutional Impact (20:59 – 22:06)

Faculty and three university presidents discuss their perspective on students with intellectual disabilities attending their universities.

Chapter 8: Advocates Speak Out (22:07 – 24:16)

Advocates for individuals with disabilities share their thoughts on postsecondary education, including Sharon Lewis, Steve Riggio, Judy Woodruff and Madeleine Will. Learn more about these inspirational leaders on page 6.

Chapter 9: Where Are They Now? (24:17 – 25:33)

Shows what the students profiled in the film did next after attending college.

Credits (25:34)

PIONEERS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

These advocates are featured in our film. It is through their efforts, along with many others, that postsecondary education is a growing options for people with intellectual disabilities.

Madeleine Will

Madeleine Will has been an advocate for persons with disabilities for three decades. She has worked to promote the concept of inclusive general education classrooms for students with disabilities and to create transition and supported employment programs. A former Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) in the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and Vice president of Policy for the National Down Syndrome Society, she currently is working to modernize government policy that impact people with disability with the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination. Mrs. Will is the parent of three children. Her son, Jonathan, has Down syndrome.

Steve Riggio

Steve Riggio, a 30-year veteran of the bookselling business, was the chief operating officer of Barnes & Noble from 2002-2010. A long time advocate for individuals with Down syndrome and developmental disabilities, he also serves on the board of The Association for the Help of Retarded Children Foundation. The Riggio Family Foundation provided start up funding for many postsecondary education programs in New Jersey and in New York, some in memory of his daughter Melissa Riggio, a talented artist with Down syndrome who had dreams of attending college.

Sharon Lewis

Sharon Lewis serves in the dual roles of Principal Deputy Administrator of the Administration for Community Living, as well as HHS Secretary Burwell's Senior Advisor on Disability. From March 2010 to November 2013, Ms. Lewis served as the Commissioner of the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Sharon has been an advocate and leader at both the state and national level for inclusive higher education for many years. Sharon is a parent to three daughters, including one with a disability.

Judy Woodruff

Judy Woodruff is the Co-Anchor and Managing Editor of the PBS NewsHour with Gwen Ifill and Judy Woodruff. She has covered politics and other news for more than three decades at CNN, NBC and PBS. Judy's son Jeffrey was born with a mild case of spina bifida. When he was 16, Jeffrey required surgery related to his condition that left him with severe disabilities. Judy became a tireless advocate for other families with children with disabilities. Jeffrey was able to graduate from college and lives independently.

George Jesien

George Jesien has had over 30 years of experience in the developmental disabilities field in various capacities as a school psychologist, faculty, and director of state and federally funded programs for children with developmental disabilities and special needs and their families. His most recent position was as the executive director of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities which represents national networks of University Centers conducting research, training and service for and with people with developmental disabilities and their families. Previous positions include serving as the executive director of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, director of the Early Intervention Program at the Waisman Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and executive director of the Portage Project.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A key purpose for this film is to raise awareness and to engage viewers to think about this new educational option. To encourage active viewing, use these discussion questions, or others you may develop, with the film's audience.

Prior to watching the film

Before showing *Rethinking College*, ask audience members to think about some or all of these questions.

- What were your first thoughts when you heard about students with intellectual disabilities attending college?
- What are the benefits of a college education?
- If you went to college, in what ways did you benefit?
- Is college for everyone?
- What questions do you have about college for students with ID?
- What are some arguments for or against including students with ID in inclusive college initiatives?

After watching the film

Engage the audience in a dialogue, using these questions to prompt them. Recall specific moments in the film--you may want to replay the specific clip--and ask people to respond. This can be done with small groups or with the full audience.

By reflecting on these moments in the film, the audience will begin to think more deeply about what the film says to them and what they think about the ideas presented.

- What is your response to the start of the film, which juxtaposes young children planning for their futures with the recollections of a person who did not have the opportunity to go to college?
- Claire is featured quite a bit in the film as an advocate for college for all. What are your impressions of her? What impact does she have on your opinions about college for students with ID?
- Of all the students and other speakers you meet in the film, which one impacts you most, and why?

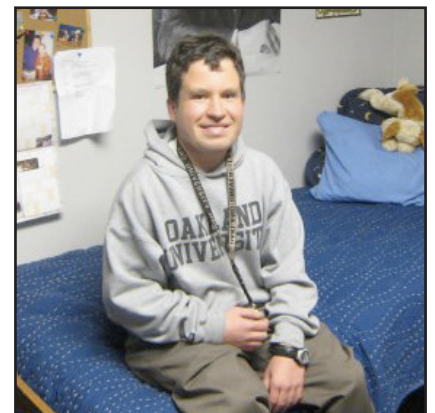
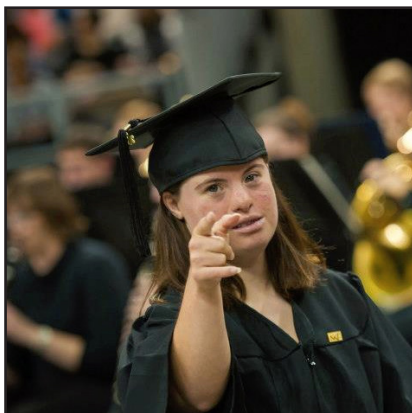
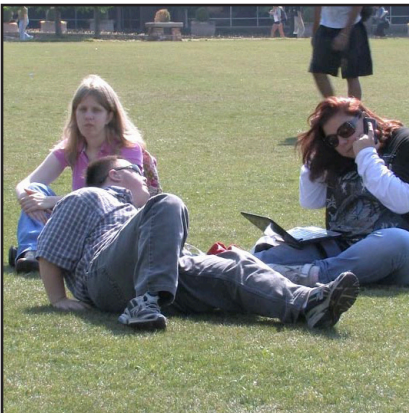
- Many people in the film speak positively about including students with ID in college. What do you think others might say who have concerns about including this population? How might those concerns be addressed?
- How did the film make you feel? Why?
- Was there a perspective that you wanted to hear about, but didn't? If so, what was it?
- Do you think that college students without disabilities benefit from these inclusive initiatives? Why or why not?
- Claire says, "To get what you want, you have to work at it every day." Another student states that one of the benefits of college is "the knowledge we gain with relationships with each other." Discuss how these statements reflect the development of autonomy and self-discovery in college.
- In the film, Madeleine Will, a disability advocate, reflects on how far we have come in the treatment of people with disabilities: "In the past 50 years, the blink of an eye in the course of human history, we have come to see how misguided we were." How does postsecondary education fit in this change in perspective?
- Parents: How does this film impact or align with your expectations for your son or daughter?
- College faculty members/administrators: What questions does the film answer for you? What questions does it bring up?
- Policy makers and legislators: What issues or policies make it easier or harder for students with intellectual disabilities to access higher education?
- What questions do you still have after viewing this film?

TEACHING WITH RETHINKING COLLEGE

Below are some suggestions for classroom activities and assignments using the film *Rethinking College* in its entirety, as well as focusing on specific chapters in the film.

Learning Activities for the full 25 minute film

Themes	Assignment Prompts	Assignments/teaching tools
Implications for secondary education	What changes are necessary in secondary education practices to support postsecondary education for students with ID?	Prepare a two-page proposal for secondary education reform that reflects your conclusions.
Learning more about postsecondary education options	Consider what the film has not revealed. What questions do you still have about students with ID attending inclusive college options?	Create a storyboard for the sequel to <i>Rethinking College</i> . Include a minimum of 10 scenes. Follow a rubric to create a storyboard showing interview topics, interview subjects, and locations.
The importance of inclusion	How important is it for people with disabilities to be included in typical settings such as college? What are the advantages and challenges of inclusion?	Prepare a one-page research proposal that addresses inclusive college participation for students with ID. Include at least one research question, methods to gather information, and an abbreviated lit review with at least 10 references.



Suggested Learning Activities by Chapter

Chapters	Themes	Assignment Prompts	Assignments/teaching tools
Chapter 1: Introduction Time stamp: 0:00 – 2:08	Communicating expectations	<p>What conclusions can you draw from the children's understanding of careers/career development?</p> <p>How did low expectations and lack of opportunity impact Patty's life?</p>	<p>In-class discussion</p> <p>Interview children in your life about their thoughts on college and careers.</p> <p>Reflect on your own experiences. How have expectations and opportunities impacted your choices in life?</p>
Chapter 4: Perspectives of College Students and parents Time stamp: 5:31 – 12:12	Listening to student and parent perspectives	<p>List the reasons you hear students give for attending college. How are their reasons similar to, or different from, those of students without disabilities?</p> <p>Consider the ways we do or do not encourage students with ID to pursue college. What message do we send to students by these actions?</p> <p>How do some of the parents' experiences differ? How are they the same?</p> <p>What is the role of a parent in the pursuit of higher education? What are some actions you see parents take in the film?</p>	<p>In class discussion</p> <p>Write a two-page paper that reflects your answers to these questions.</p> <p>Interview the parent of a transition-age youth with intellectual disability, and the parent of an adult child with intellectual disability, about how high school and transition staff communicated with them about higher education. Compare and contrast their responses</p>
Chapter 5: Faculty perspectives Time stamp: 12:12 – 18:15	Academic expectations	<p>Listen to faculty testimonies. What accommodations are they making? What more do you want to know about student participation in college classrooms?</p>	<p>Interview college faculty about their experiences teaching students with ID.</p> <p>Invite these faculty to a class or synchronous webinar to view and discuss clips together.</p> <p>Interview at least two college faculty who have not taught students with ID to determine their perspective on having those students in their classes.</p>
Chapter 8: Advocates Speak Out Time stamp: 22:07 – 24:16	Historical changes in laws, attitudes	<p>Listen to the advocates on film; follow up with selected readings or films highlighting the history of disability rights – see Resources section for suggestions.</p>	<p>Use Dipity (http://www.dipity.com/) to create a timeline of the disability rights movement. What were the pivotal historical changes that have led to increasing college opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities?</p> <p>Review past policies about inclusion in education, community, and employment for people with disabilities. Write a one-page essay about how these policies have changed in the past 50 years.</p>

TAKE ACTION

We hope that Rethinking College energizes viewers to raise awareness and to increase postsecondary education options in their communities. Here are some ways to take action after viewing the film:

- Organize a larger screening of the film in your school, at a local college, or elsewhere in your community. Lead a discussion with attendees using the questions provided in this guide.
- Share the film and this guide with high school guidance counselors, special educators, and transition staff.
- Share the film with parents of younger students with intellectual disability to inform and engage a new generation of potential college students.
- Encourage parent training and information centers to share the film with parents of kids with intellectual disabilities.
- Use the film as part of a film series on your campus related to diversity and community membership.
- Hold a debate at your school on the topic "College should be an option for every young adult."
- Invite young people with intellectual disabilities to join a panel discussion about accessing educational opportunities after high school.
- Do you know a student who's been successful in college? Submit their success stories to Think College to be highlighted in our Think College Stories series. www.thinkcollege.net/publications/think-college-stories
- Share what you learned while watching the film with your Twitter followers and Facebook friends. Share student stories on the Think College Facebook page (www.facebook.com/thinkcollege) or share the link to the film's webpage on your own Facebook page and encourage your friends to watch it.

TWEET IDEAS...



Using the hashtag **#RethinkingCollege** and this tiny url link to the film's webpage

[**http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv**](http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv)

Access to higher ed positively impacts students with ID. Learn more:

[**http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv**](http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv)
#RethinkingCollege

How can your college include students with ID? Start the discussion!

[**http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv**](http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv)
#RethinkingCollege

Postsecondary education is a growing option for students with ID. Advocate in your school:

[**http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv**](http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv)
#RethinkingCollege

Don't ask, "What outcomes can be expected?" Begin the discussion. Create your own success stories.

#rethinkingcollege

"To get what you want, you have to work at it every day."
-Claire

#RethinkingCollege
[**http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv**](http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv)

How has college changed the lives of students you know?

#SelfAdvocacy
#RethinkingCollege
[**http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv**](http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv)

Have higher expectations for students with ID. We should all be **#RethinkingCollege**:

[**http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv**](http://tinyurl.com/krm2smv)

The Institute for Innovative Transition at the University of Rochester (NY) hosted a community screening and discussion focusing on postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities. They screened Rethinking College as a national overview, and also showed locally produced short films (about 7 minutes each) that featured students attending college in the area. They then held a panel discussion, featuring local students as well as educators and advocates. They also submitted Rethinking College and their own short films developed with funding from the B. Thomas Golisano Foundation to the local public television station WXXI to show as part of their "Move to Include" initiative about the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in their communities.

SELECTED RESOURCES

Our website www.thinkcollege.net provides many resources on postsecondary education for students with ID. Below are just a few resources that may be useful for those who view the film, as they provide important context and background information. To learn more, visit the website and search the Resource Library.

www.thinkcollege.net/resources-database

Prelude to Progress

This Think College Insight Brief shares a historical perspective and the evolution of postsecondary educational options for people with intellectual disabilities.

www.thinkcollege.net/images/stories/Insight_I2_web_F.pdf

Overview of the Higher Education Opportunity Act Authorization

This Think College Insight Brief explains the changes to the Higher Education Act in 2008 that resulted in new opportunities for students with ID in postsecondary education.

www.thinkcollege.net/images/stories/HEAC_Overview.pdf

What's the Point?

This Think College Insight Brief explores why postsecondary education and lifelong learning are so critical for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

www.thinkcollege.net/images/stories/INSIGHT_2.pdf

Think College Standards for Inclusive Higher Education

This link takes you to a section of the Think College website that shares information about the Think College Standards, including background information, explanation of the standards and an online survey to determine level of implementation of the standards within college programs.

www.thinkcollege.net/topics/standards-survey

Think College Stories

The Think College Stories series introduces many more students who are attending college all over the country and have shared their experiences with us.

www.thinkcollege.net/publications/think-college-stories



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