



[Drawing artist and Dr. Seuss](#) by Tamaricus Brown. CC0

How We View Disability and Why It Matters at School

Created by Dr. Suzanne Stolz as part of the *Leaders for Inclusion Project* at the University of San Diego and generously funded by the Johnson Family Foundation.

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Learning Objectives

1. Write your own definition of disability, reflect on your own conceptions.
2. Compare the medical model and the social model of disability.
3. Use the social model to define disability, placing it in the context of valued diversity.



Introductions: Who is in the room?

Share with us the following:

1. Your Name
2. Your Interests
3. Disability is...





Disability Studies in Education Tenets

To engage in research, policy, and action that

- contextualize disability within political and social
- privilege the interest, agendas, and voices of people labeled with disability/disabled people
- promote social justice, equitable and inclusive educational opportunities, and full and meaningful access to all aspects of society for people labeled with disability/disabled people
- assume competence and reject deficit models of disability

(American Educational Research Association, 2019)



How do we view disability?



[Four women working in a business meeting](#) by LinkedIn Sales Navigator. CC0


Think Pair Share:

1. Your earliest memory related to disability
2. Your most recent memory related to disability



What else informs
your thinking?

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A hand holding a pair of glasses against a sunset background. The hand is in silhouette, holding the glasses in front of the sun. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow. The background is a blurred landscape, possibly a beach or a field, with a blue sky above.

The root of disability depend on
the lens you use...

[Tinting the sunset](#) by
Joshua
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Medical Model of Disability

- Problem that needs to be fixed or cured
- Defect, deformity, tragedy
- Individual issue
- Student = Patient
- Social policies: institutions, segregation, charity

(Shapiro, 2003)



[Shot of an abandoned Victorian building which used to be part of a mental institution](#) by Doug Maloney. CC0

Social Model of Disability



[Step free route](#) by Yomex Owo. CC0

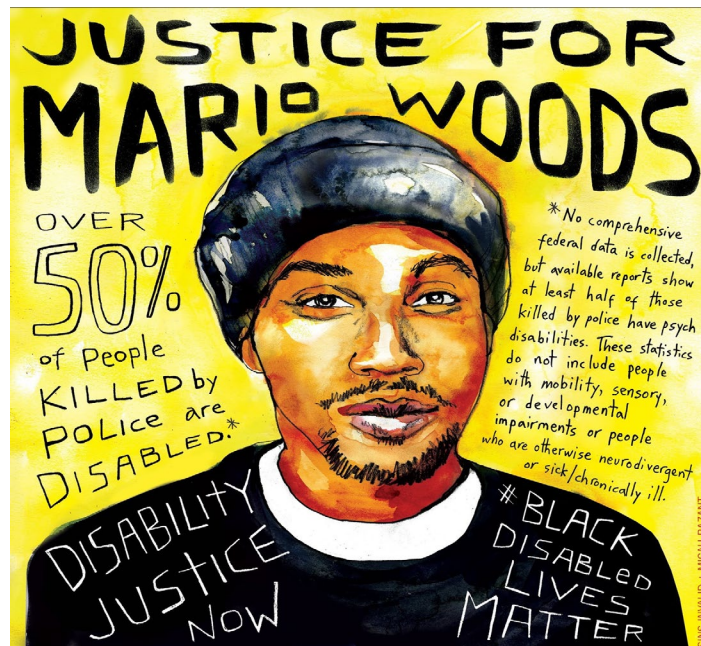
- Disability is diversity; differences are natural.
- Considerations of barriers
- Social issue
- People demanding control of their lives and full access to mainstream society
- Provides perspective on autonomy, wholeness, independence, dependence, health, physical appearance, aesthetics, community, and the notion of perfection (Shapiro, 2003)

A photograph of a chainlink fence with several yellow flowers and green leaves growing through it. The background is blurred, showing more of the fence and foliage.

**What is ableism?
Have you witnessed it?**

More from the Social Model

- Ableism
 - Prejudice, Stereotypes, Discrimination
- Acknowledgement of...
 - Unequal recognition under the law
 - Unequal education
 - Unequal employment
 - Unequal freedom of movement
 - Lack of transportation
- Double discrimination (or intersectionality) (Shapiro, 2003)



[Justice for Mario Woods](#) by Clarion Mural Project.
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Which model of disability did my memory rely on?

Think Pair Share: Remember at the beginning - early memory and one recent memories of disability.

Which model or models of disability did you use?




Why does your model of disability matter?

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Cat peeking
through blinds
by Ed Philippi.
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Why does your model of disability matter in the lives of young people?



Youth's
Conception
of Disability

View of Self

Self-Expectations
and Goals

(Stolz, 2010)



Influences on Young People's Ideas

- Media Depictions
- Peer Beliefs
- Parents Beliefs
- Medical Professionals
- Teacher Practices
- Social Policies and Practices
- Disability Community

(Stolz, 2010)



Return to Your Own Definition

“Disability is...”

Rewrite your definition using the social model and convey disability's place as a valued part of diversity.



Reflection

How can teachers promote positive conceptions of disability among students and in the community?

What can teachers do minimize the harmful effects of ableism within schools?



Summary

As supportive teachers, we can:

- contextualize disability within political and social
- assume competence and reject deficit models of disability
- and consider ways to confront ableism

Recommended Readings

Baglieri, S. (2017). *Disability studies and the inclusive classroom: Critical practices for creating least restrictive attitudes*. Routledge.

Valle, J. W., & Connor, D. J. (2019). *Rethinking disability: A disability studies approach to inclusive practices*. Routledge.

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