

Challenging Normalcy: Lessons for a High School History Classroom

This series of lessons was created for an 11th grade Humanities class, but could be used within other high school classes. Any of the first three lessons could also be used as stand-alone lessons.

[Lesson 1: What is disability?](#)

[Lesson 2: History of Disability](#)

[Lesson 3: Disability Culture](#)

[Lesson 4: Disability Writing](#)

Title of Lesson: What is disability?		
Date of Creation: 08/07/2022	Creator of the Lesson: Brianna Pressey	
Grade Level: 11	Subject: Disability Studies/History	Time Duration: 45-60 minutes
Summary of Lesson: In this lesson, students will be introduced to the idea of “challenging normalcy” and learn key vocabulary for the lesson. In small groups, they will define terms associated with disabilities studies and use those words in context. They will share their learning with their peers and complete the KWL chart.		
DSE Alignment: This lesson focuses primarily on these two DSE tenets: contextualizing disability within political and social spheres and assuming competence and rejecting deficit models of disability		
Lesson Objectives and Assessments: <u>Objective 1:</u> Assess students baseline knowledge of disability studies and terminology. <u>Assessment 1:</u> KWL chart <u>Objective 2:</u> Students will learn, explore, and use key disability studies terminology. <u>Assessment 2:</u> Vocabulary worksheet and group presentation		
Teacher Guide: Anticipatory Set: As students enter the classroom, their “warm-up” activity will be to complete the first two sections of a KWL chart about disability history and culture. (K=know, W=want to know) Students will complete the first two columns at the beginning of the lesson, and the “L” or “what I learned” section at the end of the lesson. The teacher should provide students with context to understand this warm-up. On the board, the teacher will write (and say out loud, prompt for clarifying questions) “Fill out the “K” and “W” sections of this chart answering this question: What do you know and want to know about the history of disabled people in the United States? What experiences do you have with disability in your own life?” Students complete independently and then share aloud. Lesson Progression:		

1. *What is "normal"?* class discussion: Ask students to define the word normal in their small groups. Have them write out a definition of what it means to be a "normal" student or learner. They may write sentences, bullet points, or draw. Challenge them to think outside the box and remind them that this is a space to challenge society's ideas. Have each group share their definition and then introduce the idea of "challenging normalcy." Write the word "normal" on the whiteboard and cross it out/erase it. Tell students that from this point forward, we will not be using the term "normal" to describe humans.
2. Vocabulary Instruction: Vocabulary instruction is very important for this unit. It is important that we share common definitions of each term in order to co-construct knowledge. Divide these vocabulary words evenly amongst each small group. Each group will be responsible for finding definitions for their assigned words and teaching them to their classmates. Have students complete [this worksheet](#) to define terms and then create google slides to present to the class. Students may represent their terms with images, words, or recordings when they present to the class. Use these "critical disability" terms from the University of Minnesota: <https://cdsc.umn.edu/cds/terms>
3. After students complete their vocabulary in small groups, they present their learning for the class. Students write down definitions in their notebooks for future reference.

Closure: Complete the third section of the KWL chart. Students complete independently and then share aloud.

Required Materials/Equipment:

- pens/paper
- computers/google slides

Extensions/Practice (Continuation of Engagement):

To ensure comprehension of each term, students can complete the vocabulary worksheet for each term.

References:

<https://cdsc.umn.edu/cds/terms>

Vocabulary Worksheet:

Date:
Term:
Definition in my own words:
Sentence using the word:
Image/Phrase/Strategy to remember the term:
How does this term "challenge normalcy?"

Date:
Term:
Definition in my own words:
Sentence using the word:
Image/Phrase/Strategy to remember the term:
How does this term "challenge normalcy?"

Lesson 2:

Title of Lesson: History of Disability		
Date of Creation: 08/07/2022	Creator of the Lesson: Brianna Pressey	
Grade Level: 11	Subject: Disability Studies/History	Time Duration: 45-60 minutes
Summary of Lesson: In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of the history of disability rights in the United States.		
DSE Alignment: This lesson focuses on these two tenets of DSE: contextualizing disability within political and social spheres and promoting social justice, equitable and inclusive educational opportunities, and full and meaningful access to all aspects of society for people labeled with disability/disabled people.		
Lesson Objectives and Assessments: Objective 1: Students will understand and articulate key events and chronology of the disability rights movement. Assessment 1: Timeline scramble activity Objective 2: Students will synthesize and analyze an event in the disabilities rights movement. Assessment 2: Event summary		
Teacher Guide: Anticipatory Set: As a warm-up, give students 10-15 minutes to pursue the virtual exhibits for this museum. This is intended to get their brains moving and expose them to a new resource. https://www.museumofdisability.org/ Teacher prep: using this timeline - https://disabilities.temple.edu/resources/disability-rights-timeline place each event on an index card and sort by decade		

Lesson Progression:

1. Disability timeline scramble activity: In small groups, students get a stack of events and try to place them in order. When they think they have the cards in the right order, they tell the teacher and the teacher checks for accuracy. When students have the events in the right order, they research one event in more detail and prepare to share with the class.
2. Build the big timeline! Students paste their decades' events on the timeline and create a big timeline of the disability rights movement in the US. Allow students time to decorate and read through the timeline after it has been constructed. Each group shares what they learned about their decade and the event they researched in depth.
3. Summarize an event. After building the big timeline, decorating it, and reading it as a class, students pick one event on the timeline to summarize in an in-class writing assignment. Students select an event and can choose to respond to the following prompt with an audio recording or 8 sentence paragraph. Prompt: Describe an event in the history of the disability rights movement. Why was it significant? How does it challenge the idea of "normal?" Encourage students to use this website as a source for their responses.

<https://www.lead4inclusion.com/resources>

Closure: Reflect in journals on the lesson. What did you learn about the history of disability in the United States? What surprised you? What has the movement accomplished and what work is still left to be done? Students may answer this in complete sentences, bullet points, or mind maps, and include illustrations as desired.

Required Materials/Equipment:

- pens/paper
- computers/google slides

Extensions/Practice (Continuation of Engagement):

For extra credit, students may respond to the prompt with a second event in disability history.

References:

<https://www.museumofdisability.org/>

<https://disabilities.temple.edu/resources/disability-rights-timeline>

<https://www.lead4inclusion.com/resources>

Lesson 3:

Title of Lesson: Disability Culture		
Date of Creation: 08/10/2022	Creator of the Lesson: Brianna Pressey	
Grade Level: 11	Subject: Disability Studies/History	Time Duration: 45-60 minutes
Summary of Lesson: In this lesson, students will participate in a station learning activity to explore disability culture and its many facets and nuances.		
DSE Alignment: This lesson best aligns with the DSE tenets: contextualize disability within political and social spheres and privilege the interest, agendas, and voices of people labeled with disability/disabled people.		
Lesson Objectives and Assessments: Objective 1: Students will explore disability culture and gain a new understanding of its complexities and nuances. Assessment 1: Disability culture note catcher		
Teacher Guide: Anticipatory Set: Warm-up - students independently answer the prompt, "What do you think disability culture is? What are you curious to learn more about?" <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Students share 2-3 responses, brief class discussion Teacher prep: Prepare stations - 4 stations, computers, and printed materials at each table Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Note Catcher (included below lesson plan)		

- Stations: 1. Art by People with Disabilities 2. Deaf Culture 3. People with Autism 4. Special Olympics and Athletes with Disabilities
- Google folder with resources for these 4 stations:
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1HZmkN0BzUkZkRsqs56N2TBY1n1wgsaD?usp=sharing>
- These 4 stations are not exhaustive, there are so many ways to look at disability culture. This is intended more so as an offering for students to expose them to new voices and perspectives

Lesson Progression:

1. Whole class: Define disability culture - share this article with students and have them read 2-3 of the definitions and perspectives aloud: <https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/343/433>
2. Remind students that disability culture is not a monolith and that these resources are first-hand accounts, but that each individual person is different and will be a part of this culture in their own way, intersectionality often plays a huge role in how one defines their own culture
3. In small groups, students will travel from station to station, spending 20 minutes reviewing resources about different facets of disability culture.
4. Students will fill out a graphic organizer at each station. They may fill this out using full sentences, bullet points, speech-to-text, or drawings with captions.

Closure: Students take time to independently explore the stations and complete the note catcher. Give students 20 minutes to complete the note catcher sections they could not finish during station time.

Required Materials/Equipment:

- pens/paper
- computers

Extensions/Practice (Continuation of Engagement): Students can continue to explore the station on their own, as desired.

References: Links in Google Folder

Lesson 4:

Title of Lesson: Disability Writing		
Date of Creation: 08/10/2022	Creator of the Lesson: Brianna Pressey	
Grade Level: 11	Subject: Disability Studies/History	Time Duration: 45-60 minutes
Summary of Lesson: In this lesson, students will be assessed and reflect on their learning in this mini-unit.		
DSE Alignment: This lesson best aligns with the DSE tenets: assume competence and reject deficit models of disability and contextualize disability within political and social spheres.		
Lesson Objectives and Assessments: Objective 1: Students will be able to articulate key figures, details, trends, and themes in American disability history. Assessment 1: In-class writing assignment Objective 2: Students will reflect on their own ideas about what disability means and how to challenge their own biases. Assessment 2: In-class writing assignment		
Teacher Guide: Anticipatory Set: Warm-Up: Students gather and organize the notes and worksheets they have created over the course of the last three lessons. In their tables groups, they compare notes and add any information they were missing. This provides an opportunity for students who have felt behind or feel nervous about the writing assessment to gather their thoughts and ask questions of their peers. After students have 10-15 minutes to review their notes, each group shares 1 important thing that all of their table members had in their notes. Teacher prep: Print rubric copies		

Lesson Progression:

1. Review rubric: Each student is handed a copy of the rubric to review. The teacher will walk through the rubric for students and provide examples and clarification as needed. While this assessment is a writing assignment, the teacher may choose to allow students with IEPs to answer the prompt orally or in bullet points rather than in complete sentences.
2. To allow for some student choice, there will be three prompts for students to choose from, all assessed using the same rubric.
3. Modeling the rubric may include some guided practice (examples and clarification) as students need.

Directions: Use your class notes, worksheets, and own experiences to answer ONE of the following prompts. Each prompt is worth the same amount of points and will be assessed using the same rubric.

- Prompts:

1. What does "disability" mean and how has this term been defined throughout American history? How does being labeled as "disabled" alter an individual's life (consider cultural, political, and personal implications). How has your understanding of disability changed (or not) during this unit?
2. What is disability culture? What and who does it include? How has it changed over time? How has your understanding of disability changed (or not) during this unit?
3. Summarize a key event in American disability history and explain the key figures and its significance. Why is it important to learn disability history? How has your understanding of disability changed (or not) during this unit?

Closure: Students will complete the in-class, open note writing assessment. They will choose between 3 prompts and have the option to hand write or type the assignment. The prompts are different but all include an aspect of individual reflection. Based on student needs, the teacher may allow students to complete this assessment over multiple class days, but it is intended to only take one class period.

Required Materials/Equipment:

- pens/paper
- computers/google slides

Extensions/Practice (Continuation of Engagement):

If time allows, students may create a visual piece that represents their learning in these 4 lessons for extra credit (i.e. a painting, photograph, cartoon, etc)

References:

A brief history of the disability rights movement. ADL. (n.d.). Retrieved July 19, 2022, from <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/brief-history-disability-rights-movement>

Baglieri, S., & Lalvani, P. (2020). *Undoing ableism: Teaching about disability in K-12 Classrooms.* Routledge.

Disability rights timeline. College of Education and Human Development, Institute on Disabilities. (2022, February 15). Retrieved from <https://disabilities.temple.edu/resources/disability-rights-timeline>

Lesson plans: Teacher leaders for inclusion. Teacher Leaders for. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.lead4inclusion.com/resources>

Museum of Disability history. Museum of DisABILITY History. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.museumofdisability.org/>

Valle, J. W., & Connor, D. J. (2019) 2nd edition. *Rethinking disability: A disability studies approach to inclusive practices.* New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN: 978-138085862 (pbk) (Free ebook via Copley Library)

University of Minnesota. (2022). *Terminology.* Terminology | Critical Disability Studies Collective. Retrieved from <https://cdsc.umn.edu/cds/terms>