One Out of Five: Disability History and Pride Project

In 2008 Washington state legislature passed a law declaring October as Disability History and Awareness Month, and that “each public school shall conduct or promote educational activities that provide instruction, awareness, and understanding of disability history and people with disabilities.” Adina Rosenberg and Sarah Arvey, two local educators from the Bellevue and Seattle School Districts, worked with the Governor’s Office of Education Ombuds (OEO) to create a learning resource for October, Disability History and Awareness Month.

The title of this project is “One Out of Five: Disability History and Pride” because 1 out of 5 people in the United States has a disability. Bringing disability into classroom conversations and curriculum makes visible and celebrates the history and identity of people with disabilities. The resource includes:

- **Student Voice Videos**: Centered around the experiences of Washington middle schoolers with disabilities. These videos are embedded in the lessons and also separately accessible with a discussion guide.
- **Five Lessons**: Intro to Disability, Intersectionality, Disability History in the USA, Disability History in WA, and Allyship.
- **Book Resource Guide**: On literature (fiction and non-fiction) about individuals with disabilities for grades K-12.

Please encourage staff to use this resource for Disability History and Awareness Month and throughout the school year. It is designed to be easily incorporated into any grade level, any content area, with differentiation built into every component.


Highly recommended sources for teachers:

- *"I am not your inspiration. Thank you very much."* By Stella Young
  
- **Exercise:** Write a weekly blog post (or e-mail to your students) summarizing what you learned in the lesson. This can help you think critically about what you are teaching and how to improve your instruction.

**How to Incorporate Disability Content into the Middle School Social Studies Curriculum:**

- **Incorporate disability content into your existing curriculum:** Consider how your existing curriculum can be expanded to include disability history and awareness.
- **Teach a unit on disability history:** Consider a unit on the history of disability rights and activism.
- **Use primary sources:** Incorporate primary sources from the disability rights movement into your lessons.

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We want to support teachers in whatever way possible! Please contact us if you need more information, classroom teaching support (ideas on when and how to incorporate disability history and awareness into your classroom), or classroom teaching support (ideas on when and how to incorporate disability history and awareness into your classroom). Please contact us if you need more information, classroom teaching support (ideas on when and how to incorporate disability history and awareness into your classroom).

Contact Sarah Arvey (sarvey@uw.edu), Adina Rosenberg (rosenbergad@bsd405.org), and/or Carrie Basas (carrie.basas@gov.wa.gov).
Why Should We Teach This?

This topic is important to students and is grounded in student voice! Disability is an important aspect of people’s identities and lived experiences. Yet, disability is often left out of conversations about equity, diversity and social justice, and the strong history of disability rights goes unrecognized in school curriculum. Students advocated for Disability History Month and it’s now included in Washington State Law. This learning resource includes student voice videos, highlights important aspects of disability identity and history, and calls for the creation of a more inclusive community.

Disability History Month—Activities. Annually, during the month of October, each public school shall conduct or promote educational activities that provide instruction, awareness, and understanding of disability history and people with disabilities. The activities may include, but not be limited to, school assemblies or guest speaker presentations.

NOTES: Short title—2008 c 167: "This act may be known and cited as the disability history month act." [2008 c 167 § 3.]

Findings—2008 c 167: "The legislature finds that annually recognizing disability history throughout our entire public educational system, from kindergarten through grade twelve and at our colleges and universities, during the month of October will help to increase awareness and understanding of the contributions that people with disabilities in our state, nation, and the world have made to our society. The legislature further finds that recognizing disability history will increase respect and promote acceptance and inclusion of people with disabilities. The legislature further finds that recognizing disability history will inspire students with disabilities to feel a greater sense of pride, reduce harassment and bullying, and help keep students with disabilities in school." [2008 c 167 § 2.]

What’s in the lessons?

- **Introduction to Disability:** The purpose of this lesson is to humanize the experience of disability by focusing on student-voice videos, teach students the difference between disability and impairment, and recognize diversity within the disability community.
- **Intersectionality:** The purpose of this lesson is to shift stereotypes and limited ways of thinking about people with disabilities to consider the full range of disability experiences from an intersectional perspective.
- **Disability History in the US:** The purpose of this lesson is to teach the history of the disability rights movement in the United States, as well as diversity within that movement. This lesson includes important people, policies, and events in disability history in the United States.
- **Disability History in WA:** The purpose of this lesson is to increase awareness of local and state disability history, including discrimination, advocacy, and grassroots movements.
- **Allyship:** The purpose of this lesson is to teach students how to actively and intentionally build inclusive communities, recognize ableism and its harmful effects, and be allies to people with disabilities.

Each of the lessons comes with lesson plans and resources that can be used for the individual lesson. Also, there are PowerPoint presentations with notes, pre-made exit slips, and interactive lessons.

In addition to the lessons, there are discussion guides to go with each of the student voice videos and a reading list that includes books (non-fiction and fiction) with themes around disability and characters with disabilities for a range of grade levels.

Social Studies Standards

**Skills Anchor:** The student understands and applies reasoning skills to conduct research, deliberate, and form and evaluate positions through the process of reading, writing, and communicating.
- **H2.6-8.1.1-8.2.1:** Analyze positions and evidence supporting an issue or an event and evaluate the logic of reasons for a position of an issue or event.
- **H2.6-8.3.1:** Engage in discussion, analyzing multiples viewpoints on public issues.

History Anchor: The student understands and applies knowledge of historical thinking, chronology, eras, turning points, major ideas, individuals, and themes of local, Washington State, Tribal, United States, and world history in order to evaluate how history shapes the present and future.
- **H2.6-8.6:** Explain and analyze how cultures and cultural and ethnic groups have contributed to United States History.
- **H2.6-8.8:** Explain and analyze how cultures and cultural and ethnic groups have contributed to United States History.

Compelling Question

What has been the experience of individuals with disabilities throughout American history and present day? How can we identify and challenge ableism to promote inclusive communities?

Highly Recommended Sources for Students

**“Why was it illegal to be ugly?”** Found on YouTube. “Disability History in the US.” The resource is called Ugly laws are designed to keep anyone different out of sight. This lesson could be taught with the Civics Unit, having students research interesting and strange laws across the United States and how they have impacted various cultures.

**“Disability Solidarity: Completing the Vision for Black Lives.”- Huffington Post Article.** Black Lives Matter- can use disability forum to piggy back on the idea of being all inclusive. This is from the intersectionality lesson. Great statistics.... 60-80 of the deaths at the hands of the police are, in fact, Disabled and/or Deaf people. This article is FULL of statistics.

**Disabilitymuseum.org.** This is a database that provides a variety of primary and secondary sources, including visual skills and documents that outlines “the cultural and social history of people with disabilities across the lifespan and diagnosis categories.”

**“Ten Principles of Disability Justice.”** It is from a blog, but it is a primary source document from the modern disability justice movement. This initiative could be placed right next to the Black Lives Matter curriculum and could be compared and contrasted.