

Nothing About Us Without Us

Intro to Disability Lesson



[Image Description: Silhouettes of students of different ages, races, and abilities are on a backdrop of waves and shapes of various colors, including green, yellow, blue, and dark pink.]



[Image description: The orange Office of the Education Ombuds logo]

“This lesson is called ‘Nothing About Us Without Us,’ a slogan that has been used throughout history as a part of disability activism. It means that no policy or work about people with disabilities should be made without people with disabilities. The videos I will show are made by Disability Rights Washington, and filmed and edited by people with disabilities. The students in each video have disabilities. We just learned the definitions of disability, accessible, and assistive technology. Now we are going to see some examples of what these words look like.”

Differentiation: Bring in tactile representations of the vocabulary examples. Lots of assistive technology can be found at home or in the classroom (e.g. Velcro, glasses, plastic straws, wheelchair from nurse's office)

Disability

A physical or mental difference or perceived difference that changes the way society treats someone, can also be a part of someone's identity



[Image description: A group of adults with disabilities dressed in formal attire, smiling and posing as a group. Some of the adults are using wheelchairs, while others stand or kneel. The group represents people of many different races, genders, and ages.]

Read definition of disability and have students follow on worksheet. "Disability looks different for everyone. Some disabilities are visible, so you can see them. About 20% of people in the United States have a disability. Who in this picture has a disability you can see? What is it? Some disabilities are invisible, so you can't see them. Does anyone know a kind of disability that is invisible?"

Visible disabilities: physical disabilities (using a wheelchair, walker, crutches; walking differently), visual impairment (using a white cane, guide dog), distinct facial features (Down Syndrome), a Deaf person using sign language/ASL

Invisible disabilities: Autism, intellectual disability, learning disability, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression, anxiety, chronic illness, fatigue, autoimmune disorders, hard of hearing or Deaf (when one can't see cochlear implants or hearing aids, or the individual isn't wearing any)

A note on language...



[Image description: Anita Cameron, a black woman with a cane on her lap, hold up her right fist as a sign for disability power. She is a disability rights activist and advocate.]

Person-first language: Person or people with disabilities

Person-first language started as a way to ensure that people with disabilities were seen as a person, not just as a disability. People with disabilities advocated for laws and policies to change all government documents to use person-first language.

Identity-first language: Disabled person

Some people strongly and positively identify as disabled and choose to call themselves a disabled person instead of using person-first language. The word “disabled” also highlights how society disables them through discrimination.

Make sure that someone tells you that they identify this way before using identity-first language with them.

Capitalization: d/Deaf

Deaf with an uppercase D refers to a cultural identity and being part of the Deaf community. With a lowercase d, it refers to the medical condition of having hearing loss.

“People have a lot of questions about language to use when talking about disability. Here are some terms that might come up in a conversation about disability.” Read clarifications about language.

Accessible

When people with and without disabilities can fully participate in tasks, events, and physical spaces



[Image description: A 3 by 3 grid with images in each of the boxes. The top row shows an access symbol, teletype device symbol, and assistive listening symbol. The second row has a telephone symbol, empty cell, and sign language symbol. The bottom row show a person with a cane symbol, braille symbol, and closed captioning symbol.]

Read definition of accessible and have students follow on worksheet. “These symbolize some ways to make things more accessible.” Choose three to share.

- The person in a wheelchair symbol indicates spaces that are accessible by wheelchair or spaces reserved for people with physical disabilities
- The teletype symbol indicates phone services that are more accessible for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- The assistive listening symbol indicates a sound amplifying that makes audio more accessible for people who are hard of hearing
- The telephone symbol indicates telephones that are more accessible for people who are hard of hearing
- The sign language symbol indicates accessibility by using sign language to communicate with people who are deaf
- The person with a cane symbol indicates that a space is accessible for people who may be blind and using a white cane
- The Braille symbol indicates increased accessibility through the incorporation of Braille for people who are blind
- CC indicates accessibility with closed captions when watching an internet video, TV show, or movie

Assistive Technology

Any product, device, or service that makes tasks possible or easier for people with and without disabilities



[Image description: A dark green GoTalk communication device with 9 squares. The squares each have an image and a word. The top row says: bathroom, lunch, gym. The middle row says: take bus home, Can I..., computer. The bottom row says: yes, no way, change overlay.]



[Image description: A bald white man with glasses wearing a white button down shirt sits at a computer. On the computer screen is "Zoom Text" written in large font.]



[Image description: 8 plastic bendy straws in rainbow order: red, orange, yellow, green, light blue, dark blue, purple, pink.]

Read definition of assistive technology and have students follow on worksheet. "These are just three examples of assistive technology. What do each of these things do? How can they help people? What are some other examples of assistive technology that you've seen or used?"

ZoomText: Enlarges text and changes contrast for people with visual impairments on computer screens

GoTalk: Recordable communication device. An individual presses an icon and the icon is spoken either as a single word or as a sentence (e.g. "Bathroom" or "May I go to the bathroom please.")

Plastic straws: Help people drink when they have less control of their bodies. A plastic straw is flexible enough to mold to someone's lips and move in the direction they need it to.

Student-Voice Videos



[Image description: A student's profile is shown in teal blue as they hold a light blue piece of paper.]

“Now we are going to watch videos about students with disabilities who live in Washington.”

CHARLOTTE



[Image description: A map of the State of Washington. Seattle is located in Western Washington, by the Puget Sound. Seattle is labeled with a yellow star and written in black with a yellow border.]

“Our next video is about Charlotte, a fourth grader who lives in Seattle, Washington.” Point to Seattle on map. Point to where your classroom is located on map. “I am going to pass out a worksheet for you to work on while you watch the video. We will preview the questions together now.” Read questions from worksheet.



*[Image description:
Charlotte, a girl in fourth
grade with long dark brown
hair and purple glasses]*

Charlotte's Story Open Captions: <https://youtu.be/qwLdNByCy4U>

Charlotte's Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: <https://youtu.be/r-uFBfw3mlk>

Charlotte's Story Open Captions: <https://youtu.be/qwLdNByCy4U>

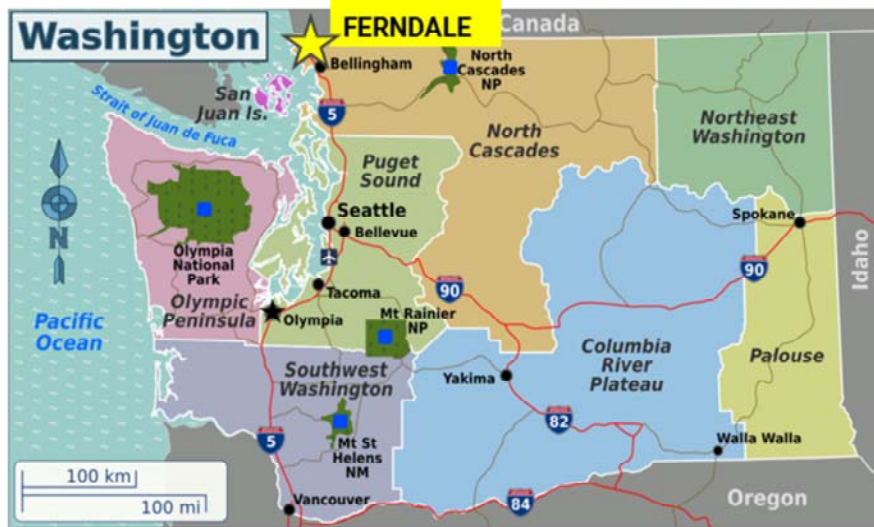
Charlotte's Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: <https://youtu.be/r-uFBfw3mlk>

Discussion:

1. What does Charlotte like to do at school?
2. How does Charlotte's disability make her school experience different from other students? How is it similar to other students?
3. How do Charlotte, her mom, and her friends who use wheelchairs make things easier for themselves?
4. What kinds of adaptive recess equipment does Charlotte use?
5. How does Charlotte get around by herself throughout her school?
6. What is one new thing that you learned from this video?

EXTENSION OPTION: Read and discuss the questions in a pair share, class discussion format, or have students brainstorm and write responses.

ANGELINA (AJ)



[image description: A map of the State of Washington. Ferndale is located north of Bellingham, by the Canadian border. Ferndale is labeled with a yellow star and written in black with a yellow border.]

“Our next video is about Angelina, sixth grader who lives in Ferndale, Washington.” Point to Ferndale on map. Point to where your classroom is located on map. “ I am going to pass out a worksheet for you to work on while you watch the video. We will preview the questions together now.” Read questions from worksheet.



[Image description: Angelina (AJ), a black tween in sixth grade, wearing a red sweatshirt and purple headband]

Angelina's (AJ's) Story Open Captions: <https://youtu.be/1XQyuMHUwrc>

Angelina's (AJ's) Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: <https://youtu.be/8NE3sFz9vto>

Angelina's (AJ's) Story Open Captions: <https://youtu.be/1XQyuMHUwrc>

Angelina's (AJ's) Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: <https://youtu.be/8NE3sFz9vto>

Discussion:

1. How could kids and adults at Angelina's (AJ's) old school have acted differently? What would have changed?
2. Is having a disability a part of AJ's identity? How so?
3. In the video, AJ walked and used a wheelchair. They also talked about using other kinds of assistive technology. What are some ways that AJ's body moves differently in the world?
4. What would their experience be like if there were more ramps and more acceptance of disability?
5. How did their environment help them as a student with a disability? How did it limit them? What could have been better?
6. What is one new thing that you learned from this video?

EXTENSION OPTION: Read and discuss the questions in a pair share, class discussion format, or have students brainstorm and write responses.

JULIAN



[Image description: A map of the State of Washington. Vancouver is located on the southern border of Washington right above Portland, Oregon. Vancouver is labeled with a yellow star and written in black with a yellow border. "]

“Our next video is about Julian, a seventh grader who lives in Vancouver, Washington.”
Point to Vancouver on map. Point to where your classroom is located on map. “ I am going to pass out a worksheet for your to work on while you watch the video. We will preview the questions together now.” Read questions from worksheet.



[Image description: Julian, a mixed race African American, white boy in seventh grade, wearing glasses and a navy shirt greets the camera in American Sign Language.]

Julian's Story Open Captions: https://youtu.be/e-Jkhq_WxOw

Julian's Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: https://youtu.be/lz3_n5g4LRs

Julian's Story Open Captions: https://youtu.be/e-Jkhq_WxOw

Julian's Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: https://youtu.be/lz3_n5g4LRs

Discussion:

1. How is Julian's school different from a school that you attend or have attended? How is it similar?
2. Why does Julian say that it's important for him to be with other students and teachers who are d/Deaf?
3. How can teachers support students who are d/Deaf regardless of whether it's a school for the d/Deaf or any other public school?
4. How does Julian's family provide support for him? Why is signing so important in Julian's family?
5. How does Julian talk about having pride in his identity? How can students, teachers, and community members support identity pride?
6. What is one new thing that you learned from this video?

EXTENSION OPTION: Read and discuss the questions in a pair share, class discussion format, or have students brainstorm and write responses.

"Notice that the word deaf is spelled with a lowercase d and uppercase D. This is because the word deaf is both refers to a medical condition and a cultural identity. Deaf with an uppercase D refers to the Deaf community and people who identify culturally with that community. Lowercase d refers to the medical condition of having hearing loss."

WARREN



[Image description: A map of the State of Washington. Quincy is located in Central Washington, about midway between Tacoma and Spokane. Quincy is labeled with a yellow star and written in black with a yellow border.]

“Our next video is about Warren, an eighth grader who lives in Quincy, Washington.” Point to Quincy on map. Point to where your classroom is located on map. “I am going to pass out a worksheet for you to work on while you watch the video. We will preview the questions together now.” Read questions from worksheet.



[Image description: Warren, a white boy in eighth grade, with short brown hair wearing a navy t-shirt.]

Warren's Story Open Captions: https://youtu.be/PJ7jK_IyOPs

Warren's Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: <https://youtu.be/xtyYluovtnM>

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Warren's Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: <https://youtu.be/xtyYluovtnM>

Discussion:

1. What are some ways the video itself was made more accessible for people with disabilities?
2. Warren has an invisible disability. What do you think some of the effects are of having a disability that is not on the surface? How might that change Warren's experience from Angelina's (AJ's)?
3. In the video Warren talked about bullying. How did the bullying impact him at school?
4. Is having a disability a part of Warren's identity? Why or why not?
5. In the video, Warren used an iPad as a kind of assistive technology. What devices or tools have you used to help you with school?
6. What would be helpful about getting a "break" card at school?
7. What is one new thing that you learned from this video?

EXTENSION OPTION: Read and discuss the questions in a pair share, class discussion format, or have students brainstorm and write responses.

ANNA



[Image description: A map of the State of Washington. Issaquah is located near Bellevue, Washington right by the freeway I-90. Issaquah is labeled with a yellow star and written in black with a yellow border.]

“Our first video is about Anna, a twelfth grader who lives in Issaquah, Washington.” Point to Issaquah on map. Point to where your classroom is located on map. “ I am going to pass out a worksheet for you to work on while you watch the video. We will preview the questions together now.” Read questions from worksheet.



[Image description: Anna, a white young woman, who is a senior in high school. Anna has blonde hair and is wearing a white cardigan and black blouse]

Anna's Story Open Captions: https://youtu.be/8GrgEOsfl_M

Anna's Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: <https://youtu.be/CLFezthp62A>

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Anna's Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: <https://youtu.be/CLFezthp62A>

Discussion:

1. What difference does Anna describe between her perception of her disability and the way other people perceive it?
2. What accommodations does Anna use? How can your school ensure that students with disabilities get the accommodations that they need?
3. Anna talks about how some of her teachers haven't provided accommodations and she has felt that she's needed to prove her worth to them. Why are accommodations important? What might you recommend students do when advocacy doesn't work?
4. Anna's relationship with her white cane has changed over the years. Why does she decide to use it second semester senior year?
5. Anna's software LEVI is a useful tool for all students, including people with disabilities. Why do you think it's useful to include accessibility in the design process?
6. What extra information is important for students with disabilities to think about in the transition from high school to college? How might a disability resource center affect the transition to college for students with disabilities?

EXTENSION OPTION: Read and discuss the questions in a pair share, class discussion format, or have students brainstorm and write responses.

KENASSA



[Image description: A map of the State of Washington. Shoreline is located in Western Washington, north of Seattle. Shoreline is labeled with a yellow star and written in black with a yellow border.]

“Our next video is about Kenassa, a twelfth grader who lives in Shoreline, Washington.”
Point to Shoreline on map. Point to where your classroom is located on map. “I am going to pass out a worksheet for you to work on while you watch the video. We will preview the questions together now.” Read questions from worksheet.



[Image description: Kenassa, a 21-year-old senior in high school of Japanese, Chinese, and Oromo heritage, wearing glasses and a sweatshirt]

Kenassa's Story Open Captions: <https://youtu.be/ZUzupiG1D3Y>

Kenassa's Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: https://youtu.be/cs_6aDxS6WY

Kenassa's Story Open Captions: <https://youtu.be/ZUzupiG1D3Y>

Kenassa's Story Spanish/English Closed Captions: https://youtu.be/cs_6aDxS6WY

Discussion:

1. What was your reaction when Kenassa explained about how difficult it was for him to talk and walk when he was younger, compared to how he appears today?
2. How do improv and theater provide a space for personal expression that is not typical in schools?
3. Why do you think Kenassa didn't think he would make it to college?
4. Why do you think Kenassa states that some neurotypical people may be "naive"?
5. Kenassa describes how supportive his mom has been in his life. Why do you think it's important to have a support system at home, at school, and in the community?

EXTENSION OPTION: Read and discuss the questions in a pair share, class discussion format, or have students brainstorm and write responses.

References

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