

“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 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 implemented at any grade level, any content area, with differentiation built into every component.

To access the learning resources, follow this link: <http://www.oeo.wa.gov/education-issues-topics/one-out-of-five-disability-history-and-pride-project/>.

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.

RCW [28A.230.158](#)

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.

[[2008 c 167 § 3.](#)]

NOTES:

Short title—2008 c 167: "This act may be known and cited as the disability history month act." [[2008 c 167 § 1.](#)]

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.](#)]

Information from The Website

*There are five main lessons for Disability Pride and History:

- Lesson 1: Intro to Disability
- Lesson 2: Intersectionality
- Lesson 3: Disability History in USA
- Lesson 4: Disability History in WA
- Lesson 5: Allyship

Each of the above 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.

- *SSS6-8.1.1-8.2.1-* Analyze positions and evidence supporting an issue or an event and evaluate the logic of reasons for a position of an issue or event.
- *SSS6-8.3.1-* 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.
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Compelling Questions

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.

Highly Recommended Sources for Teachers

*“I am not your inspiration, Thank You Very Much” by Stella Young. Young discusses the problematic ways that society turns people with disabilities into what she refers to as inspiration porn.

Easiest Way to Incorporate Disability Content into the Middle School Social Studies Curriculum

*If you can only find time for one period worth of instruction on disability history, integrate a lesson that revolves around civil rights and activism. **Lesson 3: Disability History in the USA** includes a timeline and categorization activity of important disability events, milestones, court cases, etc. throughout American history.

*If you are teaching Washington State History, take a period to explore **Lesson 4: Disability History in Washington State**. It includes a series of primary documents and activity exploring and analyzing a variety of historical events in the disability rights movement in Washington.

Interested in more information, classroom teaching support and/or participating as a pilot classroom?

Contact Sarah Arvey (saarvey@uw.edu), Adina Rosenberg (rosenberg@bsd405.org), and/or Carrie Basas (carrie.basas@gov.wa.gov).

We want to support teachers in whatever way possible! Please contact us if want more information about the resources and/or follow up materials. We’d also be happy to provide classroom teaching support (ideas on when and how to incorporate lessons into your curriculum, differentiation techniques, questions about your specific classroom setting, etc). Any classroom can be a pilot classroom! After using the resource please complete our survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OneOutOfFive>