

Teacher's Guide: Ableism



A product of the Social Justice Project Lecture Series

Lesson Description:

An overview of *ableism*, including definitions, history, discussion prompts, activities, and video to help students understand social justice issues in depth.

Grade Level: High School

Estimated time: Two class periods of 60 minutes each

Standards Met: Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for High School

United States History Studies Since 1877 TEKS (113.41):

C.9 *History. The student understands the impact of the American civil rights movement. The student is expected to:*

C.9B Describe the roles of political organizations that promoted civil rights, including ones from African American, Chicano, American Indian, women's, and other **civil rights movements**;

C.17 *Culture. The student understands the distribution, patterns, and characteristics of different cultures. The student is expected to:*

C.17A Explain actions taken by people to expand economic opportunities and political rights, including those for racial, ethnic, and religious minorities as well as women, in American society;

C.17C Compare economic, political, or social opportunities in different cultures for women, ethnic and religious minorities, and other **underrepresented populations**;

Sociology TEKS (113.46):

5 *Culture and social structure. The student differentiates and recognizes examples of subculture and counterculture. The student is expected to:*

.5A Compare cultural norms such as ethnicity, national origin, age, socioeconomic status, and gender among various U.S. subculture groups;

.5B Describe **stereotypes** of various U.S. subcultures;

.5C analyze social problems in selected U.S. subcultures;

Lesson Objectives

The goals for this lesson are to:

- Introduce some of the terminology surrounding *ableism*.
- To help make the classroom a safe, comfortable, and hate-free space regarding *mental, emotional, and physical abilities*.
- To develop an understanding of attitudes of *ableism*, its effects, and how society reinforces messages about able-bodied (through media, texts, schools, etc.) and how it reinforces stereotypical beliefs.
- Examine students' assumptions as well as giving them the opportunity to examine different perspectives.

Materials

What you will need:

- Video: **[7 min.]**
- Lecture/Power Points
 - **Ableism_Lecture.ppt**
- Acticity:
 - **Ableism_Activity1.doc**
 - **Ableism_Activity2.doc**
- Laptop or computer with PowerPoint

Activities

There are several activities that can be done to examine *ableism*. Listed are the names of activities:

- 1) Activity #1: Identifying Ableism in Disney's Films
- 2) Activity #2: Ability Visualization

Adaptations

Make sure students are facing each other during discussion. Ensure that the students with additional disabilities have support if there are fewer of them in the classroom. Ensure all film and materials are accessible via subtitles and ASL.

Evaluation

Vocabulary concepts taught: **Ableism, Able-bodied, Americans with Disabilities Act, Audism, Autism, Difference, Disability, Normal, Stigma, and Sterilization.**

Lesson Procedure:

1) Introduction Activities- (40 mins. TOTAL)

Have students view Lecture Video “**Ableism**” on ERCOD’s YouTube page. Use **Ableism_Lecture.ppt** to review the video and/or expand discussion of each lesson point. Use **Ableism_Activity1.doc** for the activity.

2) Discussion- (15 mins. TOTAL)

To give students a chance to share what they know about **ableism**, write the word on the board. Have students watch Latoya explain in the ASL video the questions and allow students to come up with their own answers.

Pre-Activity Discussion Questions:

1. What is normal? How do you define and decide who is normal and who is not?
2. What are the labels that are often used towards people with disabilities?
3. Can you imagine what the world would be like if able-bodied people became disabled and disabled people became capable?

3) Activity #1- Identifying Ableism in Disney’s Films (40 mins. TOTAL)

Please look at instructions in **Ableism_Activity1.doc**. Have students split in groups and work on coming up with Disney films that reveal ableism. Discuss the discussion questions included at the end of the worksheet.

Step-by-step Instructions:

- 1) Arrange students in classroom where they will not be distracted and are able to visualize in the minds.
- 2) Have students discuss and share what they’ve discovered from the photos.

ASSIGNMENT OPTION: You may suggest that students study definitions for vocabulary quiz. If you are to give a quiz the next class, it is suggested that they study the definitions that are provided to them.

You can create your own Ableism Vocabulary sheet and quiz using the Sexism Vocabulary template in Lesson Plan #2 of SJPLS.

4) Discussing scenarios in the “The Freedom Signers” film- (30 mins. TOTAL)

Film Quotes about Ableism to use:

- *“Growing up, I see all these negative labels, names, and stereotypes: DEAF, DUMB, CAN'T SPEAK, CAN'T HEAR, CAN'T DRIVE, CAN'T READ, DUMB, STUPID, all of these has affected me to think that there's something wrong with me.”--Student*
- *“In my hearing school, students picked on me because of my voice. They thought it sounded weird. So I stopped using my voice and stopped voicing my opinions” ---- Amanda*
- *“90 percent of Deaf children come from hearing families, and 69% of these families do not sign regularly.” ---Statistics from Audism Unveiled.*
- *“I have an cochlear implant and I come from a hearing family where I'm the only deaf child. I support the choice to get a cochlear implant but I do not support the [doctors] perspective on Deafness. They consider Deaf people sub-humans.”-- Kasey*
- *“They put me in a lower class, lower than students of color. I feel like I can't work out there- like get a well paying job--like I can't meet their education level. They put me in special education class.”--Alex*

5) Activity #2— Ableism Visualization (30 min. TOTAL)

Go to the slide titled “Activity #2- Ableism Visualization” in Ableism_Lecture.ppt to do this activity.

Step-by-step Instructions:

- 1) Arrange students in classroom where they will not be distracted and are able to visualize in the minds.
- 2) Have students follow the Categorize instructions on the Powerpoint and group the photos according to time period of those photos, appearance, and message portrayed.
- 3) Have students discuss and share what they've discovered from their brainstorm and then show the photos at the end of the Powerpoint.

ASSIGNMENT OPTION: You may suggest that students write a paper of the discussion questions. Encourage them to use the vocabulary words that are included in Activity #1.

Optional Activities:

Depending on the amount of time you have to focus on this lesson plan, you may include some videos and documentary that focuses on Ableism.

SJPLS_ListOfFilms.pdf has a collection of videos that focuses on ableism.

Note to the Teacher:

The intent of these activities is to examine the students' assumptions as well as giving them the opportunity to examine different perspectives.

It may be helpful for this exercise to set up some ground rules that the students can help to establish. Because this may be a contentious issue for some students in the class, perhaps the teacher can make it clear that students are free to use whatever terminology they feel the most comfortable with unless that terminology becomes offensive. Worrying about political correctness should not get in the way of fostering an understanding of the issues in all of the students.

Evaluation:

There are several ways to evaluate student's understanding on this topic. One is to give a vocabulary quiz, another is for students to do an essay on the Discussion Questions. It is up to the teacher to choose which method to use for evaluation.

Option #1- Vocabulary Quiz

Create a "Ableism Vocabulary" sheet for students to work on and to study for the quiz. You can create your own quiz from this.

List of Vocabulary Words:

Ableism
Able-bodied
Americans with Disabilities Act
Audism
Autism
Disability
Difference
Normal
Sterilization
Stigma

Option #2- Essay Prompt

Essay Questions:

1. What determines if someone has a disability or not?
2. What changes have been made related with how people with disabilities are portrayed in everyday media?
3. What changes need to be made? Use sources to support your answer.

Additional Resources:

Sources:

- 1) *Helping Teens Stop Violence, Build Community, and Stand for Justice*. 20th Anniversary Edition. Allan Creighton, Paul Kivel. 2011. Hunter House, Inc. Activities derived from Overview of the “isms” chapter.
- 2) CNN Health’s article on photographer fights ableism. “‘Impaired Perceptions’: Photographer rejects first impressions” by Jacques Wilson:
<http://bit.ly/VVFVbK>