

The Ability Project – Daily Lessons

A humbling inquiry into the lives of the physically and mentally challenged.

(Inspired by the World Health Organization, Center's for Disease Control, Museum of Disability, Disability Rights International, KQED, National Council on Disability, National Institute of Mental Health, and Deer Valley Unified)

“They may be ‘different,’ but they are not less.” ~ Mother of Temple Grandin, Challenge: Autism

“Obviously, because of my disability, I need assistance. But I have always tried to overcome the limitations of my condition and lead as full a life as possible. I have traveled the world, from the Antarctic to zero gravity.”

~Stephen Hawking, Challenge: Motor Neuro Disease / ALS

“No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.”

“Just when you think you know something, you have to look at it in another way.

Even though it may seem silly, or wrong, you must try!”

“You must strive to find your own voice because the longer you wait...the less likely you will find it....”

-Robin Williams (1951-2014) as John Keating in Dead Poet’s Society

Unspoken Challenges: ADHD, Parkinson’s, Depression, & Lewy Body Dementia

Opening Video Times: Grandin (4:43), Hawking (1:07), Williams (5:00)

1. Encountering Disabilities Activity
 - a. Students will need a journal and pencil. Break students up into groups of five. On the white board, write:
 - i. B
 - ii. M
 - iii. P
 - iv. D
 - v. Dy
 - b. Within each group, assign each student as a “B, M, P, D, or Dy.” Afterwards, write what those mean on the whiteboard to pique their interest:
 - i. Blind
 - ii. Mute
 - iii. Physically Impaired
 - iv. Deaf
 - v. Dyslexic
2. Discussion: (Ask the questions one by one and have them write them down before they discuss with their group.)
 - a. What is a disability?
 - b. How many relatives, friends or neighbors do you know who have a disability?
 - c. If none, how often do you see them at the mall, the grocery store? School?
 - d. What are their challenges? What are their limitations? How do you think they were treated as children?
3. “Person I Know” (My personal connection with my mom). With this discussion, create suspense with someone you know.

- a. A woman I know has scoliosis (scoliosis) and diastematomyelia (dyastem-a-toll-my-eleeya, a form of spina bifida).



For Vertebral Deformity Evaluation Only

Scan Date: June 24, 2011

Scan ID: A0624110V

Scan Type: f SE R/L Lateral Image

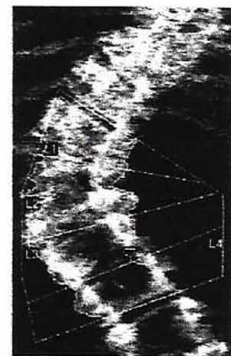
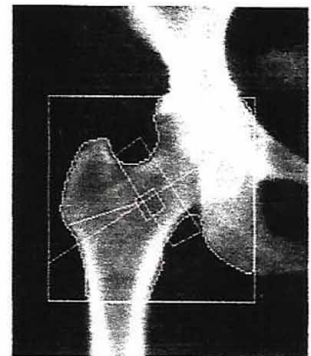
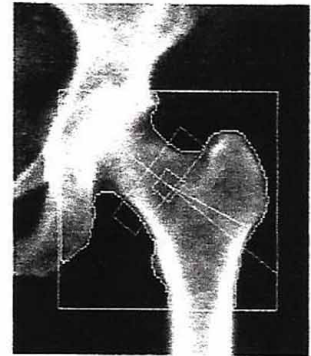


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- b. Do you know what that is? Explain the symptoms and the stories:
- i. She spent a year in the hospital in a metal waffle and bent her back in the opposite direction. Surgeries left her more physically deformed.
 - ii. Bullied

1. When in a wheel chair, they would grab the chair, run really fast, and then push away. Fortunately she never crashed
 2. Wore brace to school and kids would swing her around.
 - iii. Told never walk again or have children.
 - iv. We'll get back to her later
4. Cerebral Palsy Discussion/Activity: Every parent hopes to have normal, healthy kids one day. I can imagine the look on a parent's face when he/she hears the child's first words and witness the first awkward baby steps. Parents get excited to see their child perform every developmental milestone there is on the book. Fathers in particular, couldn't wait to teach their sons to play ball, go hunting and camping, or do all those father and son bonding stuff.

But what if you what you have is a special child? Would you give up on these dreams? Would you love him/her less? What if your child was born with Cerebral Palsy?

Cerebral Palsy: Students take notes. Then tell the students they will learn more about this later...

- i. Neurological disorders that appear in infancy or early childhood and permanently affect body movement and muscle coordination but don't worsen over time.
 - ii. Not caused by problems in the muscles or nerves. It is caused by abnormalities in parts of the brain that control muscle movements.
 - iii. The majority of children with cerebral palsy are born with it, although it may not be detected until months or years later.
 - iv. Most common are a lack of muscle coordination when performing voluntary movements (ataxia); stiff or tight muscles and exaggerated reflexes (spasticity); walking with one foot or leg dragging; walking on the toes, a crouched gait, or a "scissored" gait; and muscle tone that is either too stiff or too floppy.
 - v. A small number of children have cerebral palsy as the result of brain damage in the first few months or years of life, brain infections such as bacterial meningitis or viral encephalitis, or head injury from a motor vehicle accident, a fall, or child abuse.
 1. Modeling Stiffness Activity:
 - a. Students will need a notepad and pencil.
 - b. Ask students to tense up every muscle in their body and time them for 30 seconds.
 - c. Without loosening their muscles, tell them to "pick up" their pen/cil and write their name on their piece of paper.
 2. Discussion
- b. Pass out scratch paper and tell them to *not* right their names on it. These will also be collected later.
 - c. Read about Dick and Ricky Hoyt and showing them the pictures below, ask them, "What words come to mind?" and encourage them to be honest. Give students one

minute to jot notes on scratch paper that you will anonymously share later. Encourage students to be honest and they may use stereotypes.

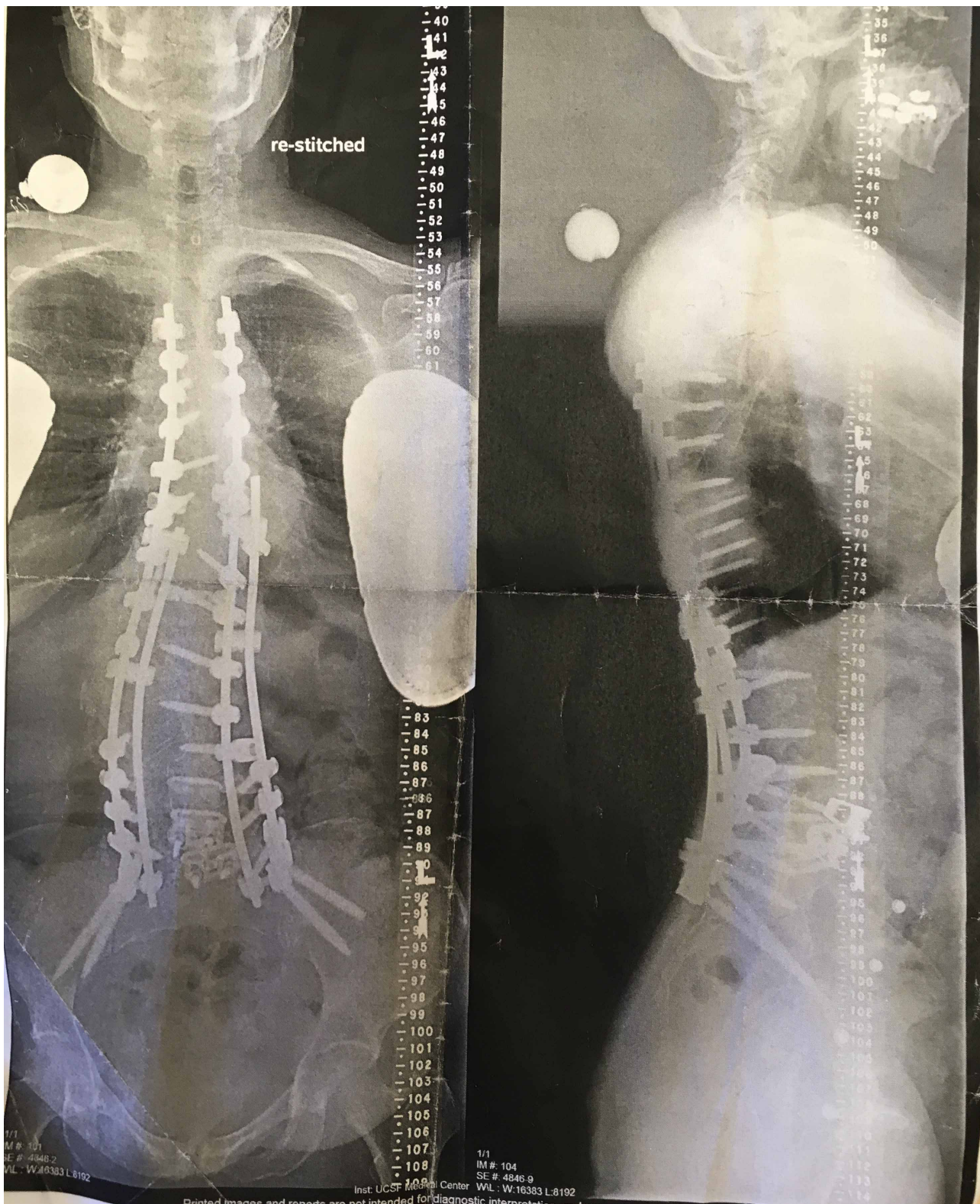
- i. Dick & Ricky Hoyt: Rick Hoyt was born in 1962 to Dick and Judy Hoyt. Due to complications at the time of delivery, Rick's brain was deprived of oxygen and as a result, he was diagnosed with spastic quadriplegia and cerebral palsy (CP).



Dick and Judy were advised to institutionalize their child since CP is an irreversible condition and there is very little hope that Rick would be able to live a normal life.



- ii. My Left Foot, DVD: “D is for Dunce”
 - 1. No one expects much from Christy Brown (Daniel Day-Lewis), a boy with cerebral palsy born into a working-class Irish family. Christy is a spastic quadriplegic and essentially paralyzed.
 - 2. Show DVD from: 9:15 to 14 (or portions...make sure you get the last :30 seconds)
- iii. Man in wheelchair.
- iv. Again, ask the student what words come to mind and to write them down on a piece of paper. THEN, show videos.
- v. Have them pass in pieces of paper and share a few.
- vi. Disability Awareness (2:04) :
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKtAK7pJlLM>



- f. Again, ask the students what words come to mind and to write them down on a piece of paper. Have them pass in pieces of paper and share a few.

- g. Discussion:
 - i. How do you think disabled people were treated when they were young?
 - ii. What affect does seeing famous disabled people have on the public?
 - h. Homework:
 - i. Interview an adult and ask them: 1) How were disabled people treated when they were young, 2) Why do you think people’s attitudes have changed regarding disabled people’s treatment? What is the biggest challenge facing disabled people today?
 - ii. Start new name tag using Braille!
 - 1. In large “dots,” create their name.
 - 2. Use a hole punch to punch out the dots.
 - 3. With their “Ability Team,” have the students feel the words one at a time, match up with the Braille chart, and guess what the name is.
 - 4. Decorate the name tag with “Ability” words.
6. Encountering Disabilities Activity/Experiment (Revisited)
- a. Break students up into “Ability Group:” Warn them: You must figure everything out as a team. They must be innovative. They must adjust. They must modify. They must be cooperative.
 - i. Blind-Close eyes or bandana
 - ii. Mute-Mouth closed or masking tape
 - iii. Physically Impaired-arm tucked behind
 - iv. Deaf-Search for “The Best of Beethoven” on YouTube and to turn up the volume so they can’t hear. THEN give directions as they are not allowed to listen to directions.
 - v. Dyslexic-They will choose the “Reichmuth Dyslexic” on Quizlet!
 - b. Activities
 - i. Remind them, they are to, participate, communicate as best they can, and figure things out on their own.
 - ii. Students start roll-playing.
 - iii. Tell the students to get their computers and to search for the “The Ability Project” on Quizlet and to start practicing for five minutes. Dyslexic participants need to search for “The Ability Project – Dyslexic”. All students will be given a test after 5-minutes.
 - iv. Pass out the “Ability Project” PBL and start discussing the unit.
 - c. Journal and Discussion (use talking chips).
 - i. Each person will write a half page and answer the following in the journal section of their notebook:
 - 1. How did you feel during that experiment?
 - 2. What is it like in the world of a mentally or physically challenged person?
7. Disability Awareness Activity Packet
- a. Autism Activity
 - i. Temple Grandin
 - 1. “Different But Not Less” clip (2:59)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBi7iexGzL0>

2. “Temple Grandin: Optical Illusions” clip (4:43):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGbFUajfNe8>
3. “Learning Differently” clip (2:50)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeWks6cgJ-k>

ii. Autism Lesson

- iii. Journal about experience. How might those with autism experience life?
How can you help?
- b. Communication Disorders (whole class)
 - i. Different words
 - ii. No words (whole class and if time, pairs or groups)
 - iii. Journal and discussion to questions.
- c. Hearing (pairs)
 - i. Video and Discussion:
 1. Lachlan (Deaf, 1:27) - 7 week old hears for first time.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUP02yTKWWo>
 2. Grayson (Brain Stem Implant):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GA9gEh1fLs>
 - ii. Instructions for partners
 - iii. Notebooks and pencils
 - iv. Journal and discussion to questions.
- d. Learning (whole class)
 - i. Say what?
 1. Place color worksheet on overhead to say together as a class.
 2. Divide the class into twos and ask one side of students to read the colors as their “visual” color and the other side to read the words.
 3. Discuss the advantages /disadvantages of those who were able to just read the words as they were. How would this affect them in school and life?
 - ii. Backwards (Whole class)
 1. Prep several sentences ahead of time to place on overhead:
 - a. Life
 - i. No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.
 - ii. On rettam tahw elpoep llet uoy, sdrow dna saedi nac egnahc eht dlrow.
 - b. Food
 - i. If I had to eat one thing for the rest of my life, it would be pizza.
 - ii. fl I dah ot tae eno gniht rof eht tser fo ym efil, ti dluow eb azzip.
 - c. Favorite Place
 - i. My favorite vacation ever was when I went on a safari in Africa.
 - ii. yM etirovaf noitacav reve saw nehW I tnew no a irafas ni acirfA.
 2. Pick sticks to read.

3. Journal and discussion to questions.
 - e. Downs Syndrome: (Need: Students in pairs, student white boards and erasable markers)
 - i. Difficulty understanding
 1. Pairs: one with back to board. This person will draw the figure on whiteboard.
 - ii. How it feels
 1. “German Test” for overhead and timer
 2. White boards, markers, OR write on paper.
 - iii. Journal and discussion to questions.
 - f. Physical Disabilities (stations)
 - i. Video and discussion:
 1. Talk to Me: Physical Disability Awareness (Cerebral Palsy) (3:19): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CL8GMxRW_5Y
 - ii. With one hand:
 1. Prep for class
 2. Tie shoes
 3. Use only one hand all through break or lunch
 4. Open a jar
 5. Play catch
 6. Hold stack of papers and hand them out
 7. Zip and unzip backpack
 - iii. Journal and discussion to questions.
 - g. Vision Impairments (Whole class)
 - i. Braille
 1. Supplies:
 - a. Thick paper (old file folders work nicely)
 - b. Hand-held hole punch.
 - c. Braille alphabet (from activity)
 2. Start new name tag using Braille.
 3. In large “dots,” create their name.
 4. Use a hole punch to punch out the dots.
 5. With their “Ability Team,” have the students feel the words one at a time, match up with the Braille chart, and guess what the name is.
 6. Decorate the name tag with “Ability” words.
 - ii. Blurred vision
 1. Put an article from a topic you have already studied on overhead.
 2. Make it blurry
 3. Give students two minutes to take notes
 4. Give a test
 5. Journal and discussion to questions.
8. Dysgraphia
- a. Supplies:
 - i. White board
 - ii. White board markers

- iii. Mirror
 - b. Anti-Defamation League “Understanding Learning Differences” Packet (page 35): Dysgraphia with mirror (pairs)
 - c. Maze with mirror
9. Famous People
- a. List: <https://blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/famous-people-with-disabilities/>
 - b. Famous People (10:07): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7J8cPjZmeUw>
 - c. Journal: Find a famous person with a disability and take a ½ page of notes to share. Are there people you learned about that you were surprised to learn they had a disability?
10. Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligences
- a. Review printout from Lesson 4 Understanding Learning Differences
 - b. Quiz: <https://www.idrlabs.com/multiple-intelligences/test.php>
 - c. Journal: Are your Intelligences relevant to you? Are your results surprising to you? How are having different points of view and different ways of learning beneficial to group projects?
11. Bullying
- a. What is Ableism? From Learning for Justice: <http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/lesson-1-what-ableism>: Children need opportunities to discuss what they know and don't know about accessibility, ableism and stereotypes regarding people with disabilities so that they can be empowered to talk to one another about the ways these issues impact their own lives. They will use language and literacy skills to understand what ableism is and why it is important. Students will also work on forming opinions about what equity for people with physical disabilities actually means.
- Journal:
- What is a physical disability?
 - What big issues or problems do people with physical disabilities face?
 - What kinds of work and activism help people with physical disabilities gain rights?
- b. Video and discussion:
 - i. Progeria-Sam Berns (TED). *Excellent discussion about Sam’s Four Life Principles*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36m1o-tM05g>
 - ii. Lizzie Velasquez (“World’s Ugliest Woman” on Katie-7:57): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1tydA1MraE>
 - c. You Are Special by Max Lucado Lesson (book club group)
 - 1. CR-Refer to Sue Robinson
 - 2. Read the book or play it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15QuHygLwFU>
 - 3. Lesson by BrightHubEducation.com <http://www.brighthubeducation.com/high-school-english-lessons/7018-you-are-special-think-aloud-lesson-plan/>
 - 4. Journal and discussion

- a. Do we give each other stars and dots?
 - b. How can we learn to accept everyone's differences?
 - c. Describe what makes a person special: what he or she *can do* or who he or she *is*? Why?
 - d. What do you think about Punchinello? Eli? Lucia?
- d. How Can I Treat Someone with Dignity? From Learning for Justice: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/how-can-i-treat-someone-with-dignity>: How Can I Treat Someone with Dignity? In this lesson, students will explore the ways people with a critical health condition or disease might feel, as well as various ways they can support and show compassion toward those who are living with an illness.

Journal:

- i. How can we show compassion to people who are seriously ill?
 - ii. What are ways that we can treat people with dignity?
 - iii. What is the difference between being sympathetic and being empathetic?
- e. Proper Etiquette
- i. [Disabilities Etiquette](#) (3:40)
 - ii. Disabilities Etiquette Quiz: <http://www.understandingdisability.org/DisabilityEtiquette>
 - iii. Anti Defamation League Suggested Language
 1. <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/Guidelines-for-Achieving-Bias-Free-Communication.pdf>
 2. <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/communication-guidelines-relating-to-ability.pdf>
 3. <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/suggested-language-for-people-with-disabilities.pdf>
- f. Fighting Prejudice and Discrimination Against People with Learning Disabilities (Middle & High School) from Learning for Justice. <http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/fighting-prejudice-and-discrimination-against-people-learnin-0>

In any educational context, there is a wide range of interests as well as learning strengths and areas of difficulty. A specific learning disability can stand in the way of a student's positive experience of school and learning. And, if the student does not receive necessary support, it can hamper academic achievement. Moreover, even when learning disabilities are diagnosed and children receive help, these students may face discrimination by teachers and their peers due to underlying assumptions regarding the meaning of intelligence. In this lesson, students will work toward understanding what it means to have a learning disability. The goal is make them aware of prejudice and discrimination aimed at those with learning disabilities.

Journal:

- i. How can learning disabilities affect students' experiences at school? How can they affect life outside school?
- ii. What prejudices have caused schools and society to discriminate against people with learning disabilities, and how can we fight this discrimination?
- iii. How does prejudice and discrimination against people with learning disabilities connect to other forms of prejudice and discrimination, and what can we do to fight against these biases?
- iv. What are some advantages of living in a world in which people learn in different ways?

Website Links for Teachers:

- World Health Conference Interview with Dr. Donald Mordecai, Head of Psychiatry Bay Area, Kaiser Permanente and National Leader for Mental Health & Wellness: (Caution! CBD mentioned 3:30-4:45) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2773eOkqvnM>
- Human Rights Issues
 - Disability Rights International Intro (2:33): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9nmHuW-nMw>
 - Disability Rights International "The Visionaries" Part One (27:57) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4VugOi1YUQ>
 - Disability Rights International "The Visionaries" Part Two (27:19) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWeqEodJgdQ>
 - "Behind Closed Doors" Mental Disability Rights International in Turkish hospital (10:01) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q91NUsLLC8c>
 - "If You Listen, You Will Hear Us." (9:32) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp4PW17U_h8
- Robin Williams "Smile" Tribute: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZtnbeHWjx0>
- Rudy Garcia-Tolson (3:21): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4I6W51oEaA>
- Nick Vujicic (missing limbs) (7:54): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meT-XgQix6w>
- Children with Disabilities (3:44): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjhF-pdIJ8M>
- "Just Ask Me" - A Disability Awareness / Accessibility Compliance Project (5:15) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcIEpgwypbY>
- Song Analysis re. Depression: Cee Lo Green "Robin Williams" lyrics (laugh the pain away): <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/ceelogreen/robinwilliams.html>