

## The Ability Project

### 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)

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“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)

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1. Encountering Disabilities Activity
  - a. Break students up into groups of five. Within each group, give them a slip of paper with a B, M, P, D, or a Dy on it. 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. Woman I know (My personal connection with my mom):
  - a. A woman I know has curvature of the spine (scoliosis-[show picture](#)) and spina bifida (diastematomyelia : dyastem-a-toll-my-eleeya)
  - b. Do you know what that is?
    - i. Doctors put her in a waffle and bent her back in the opposite direction. Basically dug her back apart and she has never worn a bathing suit without a back on it.
    - 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. Disability Awareness (2:04) : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKtAK7pJjLM>
5. Compare and Contrast: Before and After. What do you notice?
  - a. Read: 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?

If there is time, Read: What is 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. Model stiffness.
    2. Have students try.
    3. Students try writing their name in notebook.
- b. Pass out scratch paper.
- 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.

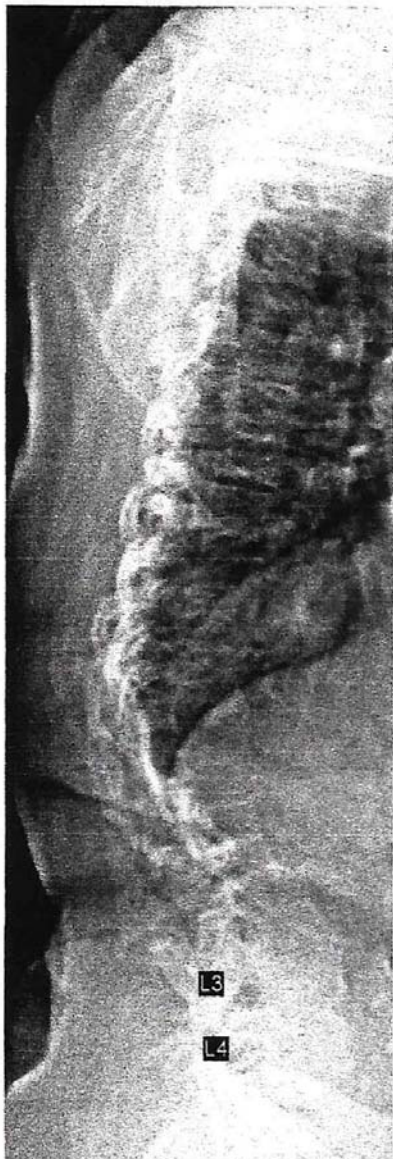


- ii. My Left Foot, DVD: "D is for Dunce"
  - 1. No one expects much from Christy Brown (Daniel Day-Lewis), a boy with cerebral palsy born into a working-class Irish family. Christy is a spastic quadriplegic and essentially paralyzed.
  - 2. Show DVD from: 9:15 to 14 (or portions...make sure you get the last :30 seconds)
- iii. Man in wheel chair.



- 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>
6. After!
- a. Film & Discussion: What is a Disability (2:41)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYWfdpz2oXI>
  - b. Dick & Ricky Hoyt (6:39): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDnrLv6z-mM>
  - c. Read about Christy Brown: A miraculous event occurs when, at the age of 5, he demonstrates control of his left foot by using chalk to scrawl a word on the floor. With the help of his steely mother (Brenda Fricker) -- and no shortage of grit and determination -- Christy overcomes his infirmity to become a painter, poet and author.
  - d. [Stephen Hawking](#): Physist and graduate from Cambridge and Oxford University and suffers from early-onset ALS.
    - i. (3:59) <http://www.biography.com/people/stephen-hawking-9331710>

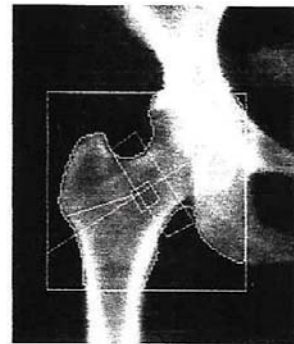
- ii. If there is time:  
[http://www.ducksters.com/biography/scientists/stephen\\_hawking.php](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/scientists/stephen_hawking.php)  
 e. Back to intro and show pictures of friend with spina bifida and scoliosis.



For Vertebral Deformity Evaluation Only  
 Scan Date: June 24, 2011  
 Scan ID: A0624110V  
 Scan Type: f SE R/L Lateral Image



For Vertebral Deformity Evaluation Only  
 Scan Date: June 24, 2011  
 Scan ID: A0624110U  
 Scan Type: f SE AP Image



- 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.
7. 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 “Reichmuth Ability Project” on Quizlet and to start practicing for five minutes. Dyslexic participants need to search for Reichmuth Dyslexic. All students will be given a test after 5-minutes.
    - iv. Pass out the Ability Project 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?
8. Disability Awareness Activity Packet
  - a. Autism Activity
    - i. Autism Preview, “Temple Grandin: Optical Illusions”:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGbFUajfNe8>
    - ii. Autism Lesson (teams of 5, one random book for each group, journal)
    - iii. Video & discussion (Temple Grandin: Brains are Wired Differently-5:57)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuzE6lMQQmo>
    - iv. Journal and discussion to questions.
  - 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
  - ii. Backwards (Whole class)
    1. Prep several sentences ahead of time to place on overhead:
      - a. Andre
        - i. My horse is named Andre and he is the best in the world.
        - ii. Ym esroh si deman erdnA dna eh si eht tsest ni eht dlrow.
      - b. School
        - i. The Career Fair will be our last Project Based Learning unit of the year.
        - ii. ehT reeraC riaF lliw eb ruo tsal tcejorP desaB gninraeL tinu fo eht raey.
      - c. 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.
      - d. 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.
    - iii. Journal and discussion to questions.
- e. Mental Retardation (Need: Students in pairs, student white boards and erasable markers)
  - i. Dif Acult y under st anding
    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 (3:19):  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CL8GMxRW\\_5Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CL8GMxRW_5Y)
    2. Butterfly Boy (5:57): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFV5tjo80QQ>
  - 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. 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.
  - ii. Classwork (Individual and team)
    1. Start new name tag using Braille!
    2. In large “dots,” create their name.
    3. Use a hole punch to punch out the dots.
    4. 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.
    5. Decorate the name tag with “Ability” words.
9. Dysgraphia
  - a. Anti-Defamation League “Understanding Learning Differences” Packet (page 35): Dysgraphia with mirror (pairs)
  - b. Maze with mirror
10. Bullying
  - a. Video and discussion: Lizzie Velasquez (“World’s Ugliest Woman” on Katie-7:57): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1tydA1MraE>
  - b. Teaching Tolerance Lesson: What is Ableism? <http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/lesson-1-what-ableism>
  - 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.brighthouseeducation.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?
  - ii. Proper Etiquette
    1. Disabilities Etiquette Quiz: <http://www.understandingdisability.org/DisabilityEtiquette>
    2. Anti Defamation League Suggested Language
      - a. <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/Guidelines-for-Achieving-Bias-Free-Communication.pdf>
      - b. <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/communication-guidelines-relating-to-ability.pdf>
      - c. <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/suggested-language-for-people-with-disabilities.pdf>



- iii. Teaching Tolerance Lesson: Treating People with Dignity:  
<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/treating-people-dignity-middle-grades-6-8>
11. Famous People
- Video and discussion: Famous People (3:52):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paj6bA3ktMs>
  - Find a famous person with a disability and take a ½ page of notes to share:  
[http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/article\\_0060.shtml](http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/article_0060.shtml)
12. Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligences
- Review printout from Lesson 4 Understanding Learning Differences
  - Quiz:  
[http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources\\_ftp/client\\_ftp/ks3/ict/multiple\\_int/index.htm](http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources_ftp/client_ftp/ks3/ict/multiple_int/index.htm)
  - Journal: Are your Intelligences relevant to you?
13. Teaching Tolerance Lesson: Fighting Prejudice and Discrimination Against People with Learning Disabilities (Middle & High Schol) <http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/fighting-prejudice-and-discrimination-against-people-learnin-0>
- How can learning disabilities affect students' experiences at school? How can they affect life outside school?
  - What prejudices have caused schools and society to discriminate against people with learning disabilities, and how can we fight this discrimination?
  - 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?
  - What are some advantages of living in a world in which people learn in different ways?

#### Website Links for Teachers:

- 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=Q9lNUsLLC8c>
  - “If You Listen, You Will Hear Us.” (9:32)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp4PW17U\\_h8](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-pdlJ8M>
- "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>

## Common Core Standards

### **Text Types and Purposes:**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.b

Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.d

Establish and maintain a formal style.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.e

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2.b

Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2.c

Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2.d

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2.e

Establish and maintain a formal style.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2.f

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3.e

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

### **Production and Distribution of Writing:**

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

### **Research to Build and Present Knowledge:**

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.9.b

Apply *grade 8 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced").

### **Conventions of Standard English:**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2.c

Spell correctly.

**Knowledge of Language:**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.3

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

**Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on *grade 8 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4.c

Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

**Key Ideas and Details:**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**Comprehension and Collaboration:**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.c

Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.