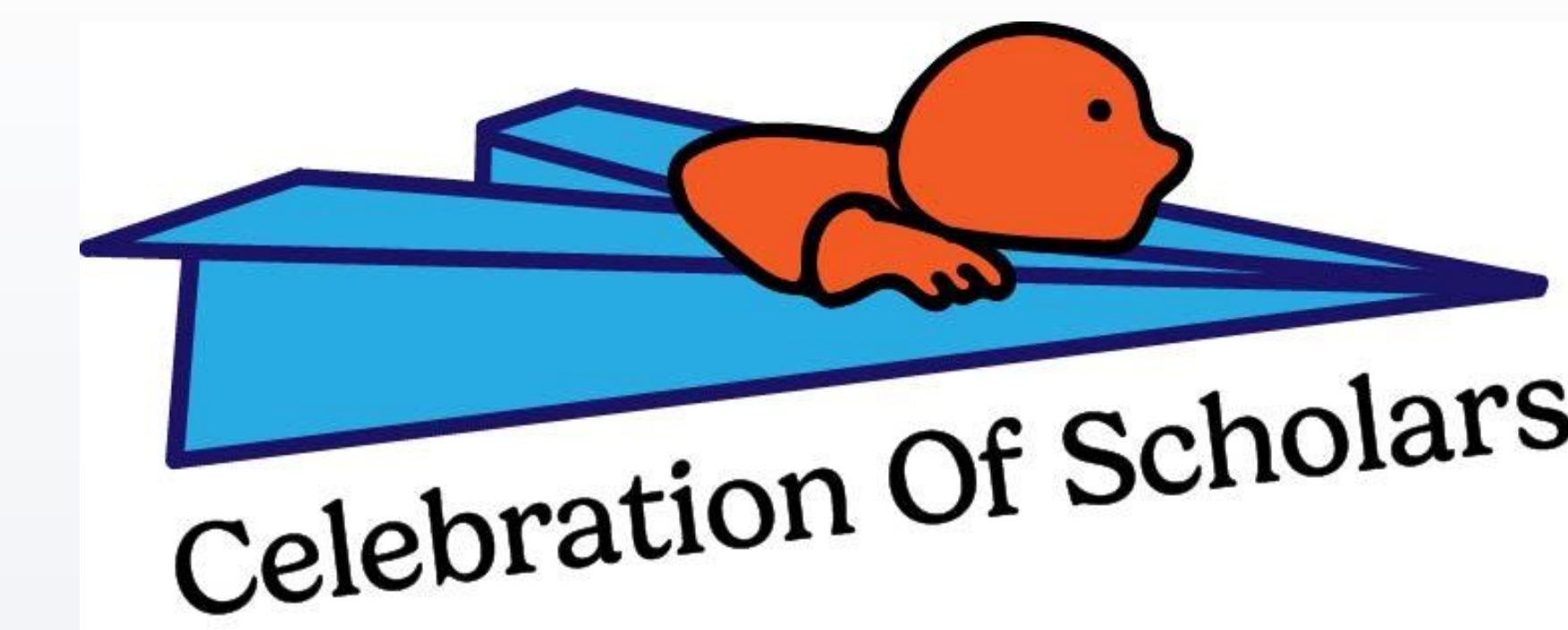


Teaching Dis/Ability in The Social Studies Classroom

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Introduction

There exists a stigma toward dis/abilities and many misconceptions toward disabilities in the classroom and in society in general. Children with disabilities were not protected in education until the establishment of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990). Disabilities and rights are hardly addressed or taught in the social studies classroom aside from discussing the civil rights movement. General education teachers are still sometimes apprehensive of including students with disabilities in their classrooms.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) revised the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (1975) To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (IDEA Sec. 033.114)

Literature Review

Dis/ability breaks down into three categories, past, present, and future
Dis/ability History in the United States
Present State of Dis/ability in education
Future for individuals with dis/abilities in and outside the social studies classroom

What is Dis/ability?

Dis/ability is used due to the change in how “dis/ability” is defined. Using the “/” helps to move away from a negative connotation. Dis/ability challenges the current idea that it is a tragedy. Viewing as such insinuates that the disability is inflicted upon a person, that they are burdened by their disability. We currently define disability through the medical model, which defines the disability as the individual and their diagnosis. We want to move towards the social model, which changes to seeing dis/ability as a community.

General education preservice teachers need to interact with adults with disabilities. Some of the participants said they began to see people with disabilities as people like them.

Teachers and parents have opposing views of what disability is and what it is like to live with someone with disabilities. The families view living with a child with disabilities as normal. They do not view their child as a burden. Whereas general education teachers assume parents view their child as a burden, and wish for a normal life.

This attitude carries into the classroom. Teachers, students, and parents need to be educated on disability, and this unit plan is one place to start.



Figure 1. Carpentier, September 2023



Figure 2. Carpentier, March 2024

3 Week Lesson Plan

Week one: Students will participate in a lecture discussing the 13 Disabilities the ADA defines as a disability, and what they protect. Students then participate in a gallery walk and choose a disability to research and discuss in their group.

Week two: Students finish research and present to the class, class is expected to take notes. Students are expected to write about what they initially think of said disability, and what they think of it post-presentation. At the end of the 2nd week students will form groups to determine if there is still a stigma towards disability, or if there are no stigmas anymore.

Week 3: Students debate/discuss as a class stigma, whether it exists or not. At the end of the week students write self-reflection, what they learned, and did anything change about their knowledge or beliefs about dis/ability?

Results

I did not teach this lesson to a class. However, I had 5 students (1 6th grade, 1 freshman, 1 junior, 2 seniors) review the lesson. The students’ familiarity with disabilities ranged from little interaction and information, to being well versed in the topics. Ultimately the students reported that they would have liked to be taught this unit starting as early as middle school. They also said they saw disabilities in a new light. I plan to incorporate this lesson in my future classroom with a few modifications.

Please write all answers in blue
Take the IAT
Thoughts on IAT:
Were you surprised with your results?
Did you have any expectations going into the IAT?
You will write what first comes to your mind as we go through these words. Write the definitions in as well. You do not need to spend a lot of time on these initial thoughts and definitions

Disability	Initial thoughts	Definition

Identify First language	Initial thoughts	Definition

People First language	Initial thoughts	Definition

Handicap	Initial thoughts	Definition

Physical Disability	Initial thoughts	Definition

Invisible Disability	Initial thoughts	Definition

Figure 3. Week 1 Note sheet

Link to lesson plan



Acknowledgements & References

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