



Social Model and Accessibility Proposal



Lesson title: Social Model and Accessibility Proposal

Subject and topic:

STEM

Grade level:

6-8

Duration:

4 class periods

Lesson summary:

In this lesson students will survey their school environment, learn from a person(s) with a disability and research accessibility in schools. Students will have a chance to ask the speaker(s) questions and have a discussion with speaker(s) about the Social Model of Disability. They will use the information collected to design a brand-new school building with full accessibility for people with disabilities.

Ask students to imagine they are architects/interior designers. Students will imagine the school is demolished and will be rebuilt to accommodate all students with disabilities. Invite a person with a disability to come speak to the class specifically about accessibility in schools.

Their task is to design this new fully accessible school. They will make a proposal to the school administration with all of the necessary accommodations for access. This could be done using Power Point or google slides.

All of the timing in this lesson is based on approximations. You know your students best, if they are capable and have access to work on the project together outside of school you also have that option.

Alternatively, students can draw a version of the proposal on a big piece of butcher paper. The main idea is just to get students thinking about what accessibility can look like in their school and discuss why the school isn't already accessible and also how the school can meet accessibility needs in the future.



Standards:

- 3.4.5.E7- Describe the importance of guidelines when planning a community.
- 3.4.5.A1- Explain how people use tools and techniques to help them do things.
- CC.1.5.6.A- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CC.1.5.6.D- Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- understand and explain the Social Model of disability in 1 paragraph.
- gain a better understanding of their environment in terms of accessibility for people with disabilities.
- correctly identify 3 main components of accessibility by creating a visual proposal.

Essential Questions:

- EQ1: What is the social model?
- EQ2: Why was the social model developed?
- EQ3: What are accessibility features and why are they needed?

Vocabulary:

- Social model
- Accessibility
- ADA

Materials:

- Computer
- Projector
- Internet
- Butcher paper (optional)
- Accessibility Check List Handout: <https://www.ada.gov/racheck.pdf>
- Colored markers
- Pens
- Handout (pre and post survey)

Pre-lesson Notes:

Make sure to secure a speaker before class and ask them if they need any accommodations. If the speaker is deaf and needs an interpreter please plan ahead of



time (DEE will assist you). Interpreters are often quite busy and need to be reserved weeks in advance. Trained speakers can be provided by Disability Equality Education if requested.

Please read the section at the end of this lesson on the Social Model of Disability and why accessibility is so important.

Teacher note:

The timing of this lesson is dependent on your class allotment. If there isn't enough time for students to finish the proposal in class, have them meet outside of class to work on it.

Procedure:

Procedure (Day 1)

1. **Pre-Lesson Survey:** This survey is intended to gauge their learning from before and after the lesson. Ask students to fill them out and put their names on the papers. Explain to students they will only be filling in the “before the lesson” part of the survey. Later on, the survey will be handed back to them to complete and the second section will be completed. **(5 minutes)**
2. **Speaker:** Welcome the speaker. They will explain concepts to students regarding accessibility (ramps, elevators, large bathroom stalls, grab bars, braille, sign language, sensory disabilities, railing in the hallways, adaptable lighting, large print signs, etc.) and why accessibility is so important to people with disabilities and why it is important for students to learn about it. The social model of disability is front and center in this lesson. (DEE will provide a trained speaker) **(30 minutes)**
3. **Quick Speaker Wrap-up and questions:** After the speaker is finished check if students have questions or concerns about any of the information. **(10 minutes)**

Procedure (Day 2)

4. If you have a class of 10 or less leave the group whole. More than 10 split up into groups of 5.
5. Activity Explanation and School Walk through: Explain to students “Imagine you are an architect/interior designer.” Check and make sure students understand the terms.
 - a. “Imagine the school is going to be demolished and you are tasked with the great responsibility of designing the new school building inside and out. With all that you have learned about accessibility and the Social Model of



Disability you are going to work together as a team to design a school building that is as accessible as possible.” **(5 minutes)**

6. Explain that you want students to draw a plan of the school both inside (bathrooms, classrooms, science labs, etc.) and outside (parking lot and playground) and list the accessibility features they want to include.
7. Say “Before you start on your projects, let’s take a quick walk around the school and see how accessible our school is” **(5 minutes)**
8. Give accessibility checklist to all students.
9. As a class takes a walk around your school and use the checklist as a guide. See if students notice anything the speaker discussed. Does the school have an elevator? Are there wheelchair symbols anywhere? What kind of wheelchair symbol is being used (see examples in teacher notes)? How about the bathrooms? Are there grab bars in the bathrooms? Ask students to be very observant of what type of accessibility their school already has and what is missing. **(30 minutes)**

Procedure (Day 3)

10. Group Work: Once all the students have walked around the school ask students to sit with their groups and start by reviewing what they learned from the speaker and the school walkthrough.
11. Group brainstorm: Students will brainstorm all of the features they want to include in their proposal and start creating their google slides. The basic guidelines for their proposals are listed below.
 - a. All proposals should Contain:
 - i. An explanation of the Social Model and how it is informing their decisions as a group.
 - ii. At least 10 suggestions for better accessibility in the school
 - iii. Pictures and visual representations
 - iv. Acknowledgement of accessibility features already included at school. **(whole school period 45 minutes)**

Procedure (Day 4)

12. **Presentation Discussion (5 minutes each)**: After all team’s present discuss these questions:
 - a. Was there anything that surprised you?
 - b. What was a feature maybe your team didn’t think of, but another team used in their proposal?
 - c. What was it like to work on this proposal?
 - d. Do you think your school design would provide better accessibility for students with disabilities?



- e. So Why is this important? Why is accessibility important?
 - i. Lead them to the answer that accessibility means anyone can access systems in society. People can live their lives the way they choose, as opposed to how society is designed.
 - ii. We as a collective society need to pay attention to accessibility. If something isn't accessible, tell someone. Bring it up with the manager, often people don't even consider it! (approx. 30 minutes)
13. **Survey and Closing:** At the end of class hand back each student's survey form. **(10 minutes)**
 - a. On the survey form ask students to fill out the "after lesson" section
 - b. On the blank paper ask students to finish these sentences
 - i. What I liked about this lesson was...
 - ii. What I didn't like about this lesson was...
 - iii. Something I want the teacher to know is.

Related materials:

- Documents below

Evaluation:

Ask your students this question related to this lesson to gauge how much they learned.

Did this lesson help you understand how to apply the social model of disability to a school environment?

Thank you for bringing the conversation about disability into your classroom. Help us evaluate this lesson plan by visiting [our evaluation page to assess this lesson.](#)



Teacher's Notes:

Encourage students to be creative and think about their fellow classmates, neighbors, family members etc. with disabilities.

Here are some sample ideas for building a fully accessible school:

- Included in the new building a quiet/dim room with comfy pillows and maybe a fridge with some water and snacks. This could be a room for students with mental health and sensory disabilities (Autism, ADHD, anxiety, etc.) to come, relax and regulate themselves.
- Braille indications across the school. (braille on all door placards, door knobs, braille along the hallways, braille in the elevator, etc.)
- Braille books and all school handouts.
- Computers with accessible software.
- International symbol of accessibility instead of the handicap symbol



international symbol of access



handicap symbol

- Easy to find ramps or lifts (not located in the back of the building)
- Accessible playground so kids with mobility devices can use equipment while in their mobility device or transfer out of their wheelchairs onto the equipment.
- If the school has a pool, ask students to check if there is a lift, if there isn't one they can write it up in their proposal.
- If the school is multiple stories, include an elevator.
- Large hallways
- Rails in the hallways
- All staff and employees take conversational sign language.
- Large print signs
- Lighter doors and/or automatically operated doors



Name: _____ **Date:** _____

What is the social model of disability?

Before:

After:

What is accessibility?

Before:

After:



What are some features of an accessible building/campus?

Before:

After:

Why is full accessibility important?

Before:

After:



Pre-lesson Educator Reading

The social model of disability says that disability is caused by the way society is organized, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. It looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people. When barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives.

Disabled people developed the social model of disability because the traditional medical model did not explain their personal experience of disability or help to develop more inclusive ways of living.

Read more at

<https://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/our-brand/social-model-of-disability#ZcZlf4tAh2OAWgyd.99>

The 7 Principles of Universal Design were developed in 1997 by a working group of architects, product designers, engineers and environmental design researchers, led by the late Ronald Mace in the North Carolina State University. The purpose of the Principles is to guide the design of environments, products and communications. According to the Center for Universal Design in NCSU, the Principles "may be applied to evaluate existing designs, guide the design process and educate both designers and consumers about the characteristics of more usable products and environments."

<http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles/>

