

# DC HEROES

in the  
**Disability Movement**



## **Lesson Plan Two:**

**Thomas H. "Mick" Countee, Jr.**



This project is funded by HumanitiesDC

# Lesson Overview

## Instructional Outcomes

Given exposure to primary sources (written, auditory, visual) about Mick Countee, students will be able to:

- Describe how Mr. Countee fought to see the FDR Memorial in Washington, DC accurately represent the former president as a disabled individual.
- Explain how Mr. Countee helped shape the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## Key Concepts and Terminology

- Advocacy
- Advocate
- Marginalization
- Multiply marginalized

## Applicable Common Core Standards

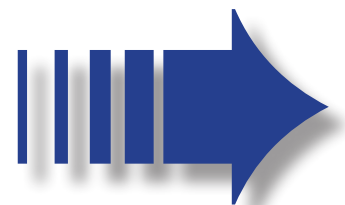
- 6-8: HYPERLINK "<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/6-8/1/>" CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1  
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- 9-10: HYPERLINK "<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/1/>" CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1  
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- 11-12: HYPERLINK "<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/1/>" CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1  
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- DC Social Studies Standard: 12.10.3 "[https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/DCPS-horiz-soc\\_studies.pdf](https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/DCPS-horiz-soc_studies.pdf)" Outline legislation and legal precedents that establish rights for the disabled, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, and other minority groups, including the tensions between protected categories (e.g., race) and nonprotected ones (*United States v. Carolene Products, Co.*, and "*Famous Footnote Four*").

## 5-E Instructional Model Activities

GRADES: 7 - 12

TOPIC: Mick Countee, a DC Hero of Color in the Disability Movement

**BRIEF LESSON DESCRIPTION:** This lesson will facilitate students' understanding and analysis of disability: its implications, its impact, and the people and events that influenced our nation's response to those with disabilities.



*Piques student interest; students make connections between past and present learning.*



## Pose the following questions to students:

- Many people have been thought of and treated as “less than” because of one characteristic: race, gender, religion, disability, poverty or something else.
  - » What happens if a person has several of these “marginalizing” characteristics? Suppose they are female and muslim, and deaf, and poor?
  - » Allow a few minutes for discussion.
- Tell students that they will interact with lots of resources that help them learn about Mick Countee, an individual who had more than one “marginalizing” characteristic and was a hero in helping disabled people gain their rights.



*Gives students opportunity to get involved with activities and materials. Students build a set of common experiences that prompt sharing and communicating. Teacher provides materials and guides student focus.*

## TOPIC: Mick's Life

- Ask students to read the SCILife article "Remembering Mick Countee."
- Organize students into Chat Stations:
  - » Place tape on the floor to create "station" locales.
  - » Divide class into 2 groups: A and B.
  - » Ask all A's to stand on one of the taped stations.
  - » Ask each B to pair with an A.
  - » Each pair discuss the following topics for 1 minute.
    - The expectations Mick's parents had for him growing up.
    - How these expectations might have been influenced by the way African Americans were perceived and treated during that time in our history.
  - » After their 1st 1-minute discussion B students move to the station on their left (A students stay in place)
  - » Students continue rotating and discussing questions with each new station partner
- Ask students to return to their seats when allotted chat time has expired.
- Facilitate a debriefing session (e.g., select 5 people to share some of main discussion points).

## Resource!

**SCILife:**  
**Remembering Mick**  
**Countee**

**Word Version**



## TOPIC: Multiple Marginalization

- Ask students to read the article "Black & Disabled in America."
- Have students organize into 3 groups. Each group will perform one of the following tasks:
  - » Group 1: Identify and document (i.e., write down or draw a picture) of real-life challenges/barriers people in the article faced.
  - » Group 2: Make a timeline of the disability rights movement as explained in 3 paragraphs on page 4 of the article.
  - » Group 3: Complete the math activity chart by filling in the empty yellow boxes.

- Tell students that they will now learn of many famous African Americans who also had a disability.
- Ask students to read the article "You Have to Scream Out."

## Resource!

**Black & Disabled  
In America**



## Resource!

**Group 3  
Math Activity**

**Teacher Key Group 3  
Math Activity**



I became an advocate not  
because I wanted to but  
because I had to, to survive.

- Angel Love Miles

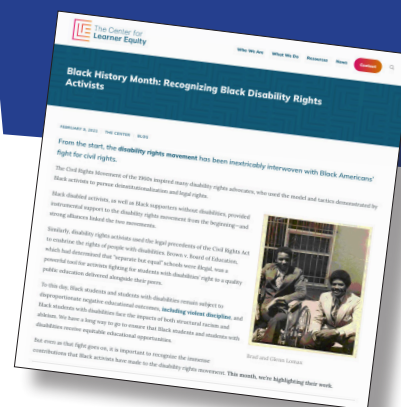


## TOPIC: Multiple Marginalization (cont.)

- Engage students in research about disabled African Americans.
- Tell them that they will be Disability Private Investigators or investigative reporters.
  - » Ask students to pair up - or at most 3 to a group.
  - » Ask each group to assign a recorder and a reporter.
  - » Assign each pair/group a person from the Disability Activity.
  - » Ask groups to research online the disability of their assigned individual and find at least one of that person's achievements to share. (Recorder should take notes of findings.)
  - » (For student groups larger than 2, ask for additional achievements.)
  - » Allow about 10 minutes for groups to complete their research.
  - » Have the Reporter for each group share that group's notes with the rest of the class.

### Resource!

#### Recognizing Black Disability Rights Activists



### Resource!

#### Disability Activity



## TOPIC: Mick's Approach to Life with Spinal Cord Injury

- Ask students to read the 2 articles indicated: one describes the reactions of disabled persons to not being represented in the FDR Memorial. The other is an article about Roy Campanella, a disabled athlete whom Mick looked up to.
- Ask students to form small groups and create a brief dramatization that shows what people helped Mick see himself as a capable, competent individual, rather than a victim.
- Have each group act out their dramatization for the entire class.

### Resource!

AllPolitics - A  
Monumental Mistake  
April 27, 1997



### Resource!

On Thirtieth  
Anniversary  
Campanella Recalls  
Paralyzing Accident



*Students have the opportunity to communicate what they have learned and figure out what it means.*

## **TOPIC: Mick's Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities**

- Ask students to consider what they have learned or surmised about Mick.
  - Ask them to use their knowledge to write a testimony Mick might give to Congress about the need for a civil rights law for disabled people.
  - Tell them that they can write their testimony as lyrics to a rap song, a country song, or a blues song, or as a spoken word poem/performance.
- 
- Ask students to recall and reflect on what they have learned about Mick and his advocacy.
  - Tell them that they will create a word cloud around the meaning of advocacy:
    - » Use a white board or post chart paper around the room.
    - » Give each student 3 strips of paper.
    - » Ask the students to write 1 word (or draw a picture) that represents the meaning of the word "advocate."
    - » Distribute glue or tape and have students affix their strips of paper on the white board or chart paper to make a word collage/word cloud.
    - » Tell student groups that they have 5 minutes to brainstorm all the ways in which Mick's advocacy has made things better for people with disabilities.
    - » Have each student group report to the larger group the results of their brainstorming.

# Elaborate/Extend

*Students use their new knowledge and continue to explore its implications. They make connections to other related concepts. They apply what they've learned to new situations.*

- Remind students that:
  - » Society has often marginalized individuals who are African American and individuals who are disabled.
  - » Despite changes regarding society's perception and treatment of African American people and society's perception and treatment of disabled people, people who are both African American and disabled face marginalization on two fronts.
- Ask student groups to develop a comic strip that depicts what they might tell a visitor from outer space about the lives of multiply marginalized people in America.

## Resource!



<https://www.blackdisabledandproud.org/black-lives-matter.html>



# Evaluate

*Teacher determines if students have attained understanding of concepts and knowledge. Students demonstrate what they have learned in various ways (journals, performance tasks, etc.).*

- Ask students to review the article “Digital Time Capsules.”
- Tell students that they are going to create a PowerPoint presentation that describes the contents of a digital time capsule.
- Tell them that each slide in the presentation should show an object (written, auditory, visual, touchable, etc.) that represents Mick’s contributions.
- Have students discuss their recommendation and why they think their object should be included in the time capsule.

## Resource!

Digital Time  
Capsules



# Differentiation

Teachers should endeavor to make the contents of this lesson accessible for all students. Following is a non-exhaustive list of the ways this can be done.

- Vary the modalities by which information is presented to students – input modalities (e.g., visual, auditory).
- Vary the time students are allowed for processing information presented.
- Vary the modalities by which students express what they have learned – the output modalities (e.g., written, oral, pictorial, dramatic, kinesthetic, etc.).
- Utilize resources and technology designed to enhance accessibility. Many of these, such as the following, are free and part of Microsoft Office.
  - » EDITOR provides “document stats” describing number of words, number of sentences, readability of written documents (thereby allowing teachers to adjust these document characteristics as needed to enhance accessibility).
  - » DICTATE allows for the user to create documents by dictating them, rather than typing them.
  - » SCREEN READER converts text into synthesized speech so a user can hear content, rather than read it.

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