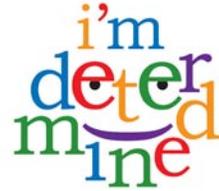


**Organizing Topic:** IEP Involvement

**Title:** Introduction to Self-Determination

**Target Level:** Elementary and Middle Schools



**Sample Related Standards of Learning:**

K.5 The student will explain the importance of seeking guidance from parents/guardians and other trusted adults. Key concepts/skills include

- a) the peaceful resolution of conflicts;
- b) the importance of sharing information.

1.4 The student will demonstrate healthy mental and emotional development. Key concepts/skills include

- a) cooperation with others;
- b) adaptation to change;
- c) expression of ideas and thoughts to create positive relationships;
- d) the differences between positive and negative emotions.

3.2 The student will use decision-making skills to promote health and personal well-being. Key concepts/skills include

- a) goal setting for personal health;
- b) the process of resolving conflicts peacefully;
- c) strategies for solving problems related to health.

4.1 The student will use effective oral communication skills in a variety of settings.

- a) Present accurate directions to individuals and small groups.
- b) Contribute to group discussions.
- c) Seek ideas and opinions of others.
- d) Use evidence to support opinions.
- e) Use grammatically correct language and specific vocabulary to communicate ideas.

6.4 The student will analyze the consequences of personal choices on health and well-being. Key concepts/skills include

- a) the connection between self-image and personal success;
- b) the importance of accepting responsibility for personal actions;
- c) the use of resistance skills to avoid violence, gangs, weapons, and drugs;
- d) identification of risk behaviors;
- e) strategies for preventing and responding to injuries.

## Objectives:

1. Students will be able to define self-determination and list reasons these skills are important
2. Students will identify some of the characteristics that will make them unique and individual
3. Students will identify some famous people with disabilities and some of their unique learning difficulties and talents.

## Prerequisite Understandings/Knowledge/Skills:

- Overall individual perception of things they do well, and areas of struggle

## Materials Needed:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- "Famous People with Documented Disabilities or Who are Believed to be Disabled"* handout
- "Who is Your Inspiration?"* worksheet
- Age appropriate book which highlights self-esteem and individuality (i.e., *I'm Gonna Like Me*, written by Jamie Lee Curtis & Laura Cornell)

**Timeframe:** 20-30 minutes

## Lesson Procedure:

1. Introduces the concept of self-determination. The teacher begins by asking the student:

*"What does it mean to be determined?"*

The teacher may use other words, or explain that making a determination is making a decision. Next, ask students:

*"If you go to a self-serve restaurant, who will get your food to you?" "If a person is self employed, who do they work for?"*

Stress to students the fact that the word "self" refers to the individual. When we talk about self-determination, we are talking about ways that you (individuals) can make decisions for yourself. Explain to students that being self-determined means that you know about yourself, your goals and the supports you will need to reach your goals. Next, teachers need to give examples of what this might look like in their own life -- examples of goals they have for themselves, how they work to obtain those goals and supports they used.

2. The teacher then explains that knowing yourself involves knowing about your strengths and weaknesses. Next, discuss the fact that some people, young and old, are good readers while others have a weakness in reading. Some love to work math problems, and it is easy for them.

Others don't like math and have trouble adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing numbers. Some people like playing a musical instrument, while others struggle with this. Help students to understand that part of what makes each person unique and different is the way they learn. Emphasize the fact that not all people learn the same way or can learn at the same pace or are able to learn the same information. Learning differently, however, does not mean that you are dumb. It does sometime mean that you need to receive special services at school in order to learn and grow.

3. Read the attached list of famous people. Ask students to list or tell you everything that they know about these individuals. Emphasize all of their accomplishments. Ask students the following questions about these people:

*“Do you think these people are/were dumb or stupid?  
lazy?  
successful?  
not able to learn?”*

Next, explain that many of these people struggled when they were in school and were identified or would have probably been identified as a person with a disability. Stress the fact that these people had strong self-determination skills. They knew themselves, their goals and the supports they needed to accomplish their goals. Despite their disabilities, they accomplished many of the goals they set for themselves.

4. Generate a discussion about an individual area of strength and weakness for each student in the class.
5. Ask students how they feel when they struggle, or when they can't keep up with others? Use white board or chart paper to list their various feelings. Discuss with the students the importance of positive "self-talk."
6. Have students break into small groups. The teacher can ask:  
*“When you feel frustrated and tell yourself, ‘I’m dumb; I can’t do this,’ what are some things you might do to make yourself feel better? What kind of positive self-talk should you use?”*  
Students generate ideas to share with class.
7. Review the definition of self-determination (knowing yourself, your goals and the supports that you will need to reach your goals). Discuss with students the importance of mentors or adults that help and support them. Have students complete the worksheet, *“Who Is My Inspiration?”* Discuss responses individually with each student.

8. As a group, generate a list of resources and people in the school who can help them.
9. (*Optional*) Read a book that emphasizes self-esteem and individuality.

**Specific Options for Differentiating this Lesson:**

- Use icons/pictures to create a collage showing strengths and challenges.

**Evaluation:**

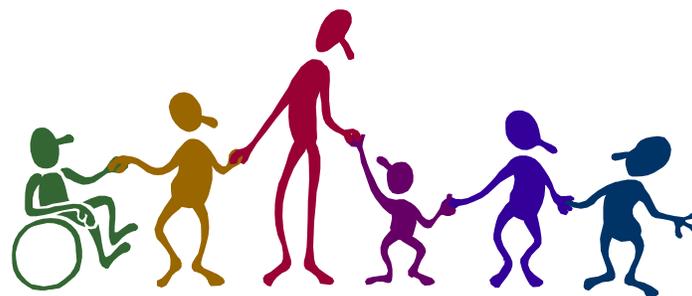
- Teacher checks for understanding through
- student participation in discussions about strengths and challenges, and
- student-generated ideas about turning negative self-talk into positive words and phrases.

**Extending Understanding:**

- Have student research other famous people with disabilities.
- Additional information about famous people with disabilities can be found at the following websites:
  - o [www.iidc.indiana.edu/cedir/kidsWeb/fpwdinfo.html](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cedir/kidsWeb/fpwdinfo.html)
  - o [www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/general/famous.html](http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/general/famous.html)

# Famous People with Documented Disabilities or Believed to have a Disability

BEETHOVEN	composer	<i>deaf</i>
WALT DISNEY	animator/ businessman	<i>learning disability</i>
ALBERT EINSTEIN	mathematician/ physicist	<i>learning disability</i>
FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT	U.S. President	<i>physical disability</i>
TOM CRUISE	actor	<i>learning disability</i>
HARRIET TUBMAN	rescuer of slaves	<i>epilepsy</i>
THOMAS EDISON	inventor	<i>attention deficit hyperactivity disorder</i>



# Who is My Inspiration?

**An adult I can talk to about the things that bother me:**

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**An adult who is an inspiration to me or someone I admire:**

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**An adult who will never let me quit something that is important:**

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**Someone my age who I admire:**

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