

500 Word Response II

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The opportunity to explore the perceptions that our world has placed on ableism, impairments and disabilities has furthered my understanding of the privilege that I have over others. It is eye opening to realize that there are still so many groups of people who face challenges day to day because of others who are blinded by their own privilege. It is our responsibility to see the viewpoint of others and to question how we wield power over others by disempowering their voices as we choose to be lost in our own ignorance. As people with privilege, it is our responsibility to act and make change for the people whose voices are not always heard.

As a teacher, I have made a promise to myself that I will continue to educate myself on world issues. With that being said, there are some concepts of my pedagogical approach that must be changed for the sake of my students learning and my own professional development. Recognizing that the way in which we formulate questions and responses is critical to creating a safe learning environment that is inclusive so all students. Saying to a student “good question” might affirm one student in the room, however it might just as easily cause anxiety and fear for the next child as they ask themselves if their question is a “good” one or not. A more appropriate response would be something more neutral without stating the value or worth of the question such as “thank you for your question, Emily”. This simple shift in the way we respond could change the discussions we have in our classrooms. Similarly, not simply agreeing with what our students say to shift the conversation onto ourselves is incredibly important. Hearing one student’s answer and saying ‘yes that is right’ or “I agree” might lead to other students in the

classroom believing that the answer they were going to give was wrong. Moreover, how are we even sure that we fully understand the meaning behind the student's answer? Agreeing with the student and paraphrasing their response is merely cutting them short of what could have been something bigger. Who are we benefiting when we simply nod our heads and say yes? We should be saying "tell me more" or asking them "why" they thought what they thought. These types of responses fuel the path to deeper conversations with our students.

Lastly, I would like to talk about the students in our schools that are overlooked by prejudiced ideologies from society. Students with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities are often not granted the same affordances that "normal" students are (Davis, 2007). Our educational system should be accepting of their limitations and embrace them. We as teachers need to advocate for these students so that they feel a part of the school community and reach their fullest potential.

Now, I am interested in learning more about special education so that I can support these students in their learning and overall well-being.

## Resources

Davis, L. J. (Ed.). (2016). *The disability studies reader*. Taylor & Francis Group. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca>