My Teacher’s in a Wheelchair

Subject: Social Studies  Time: 1 class
Grade Level: Elementary; Grade 2-3

Virginia Standards of Learning:

History:
2.10—The student will explain the responsibilities of a good citizen, with emphasis on
   c) describing actions that can improve the school and community;
   d) demonstrating self-discipline and self-reliance.

2.11 —The student will understand that the people of Virginia
   b) have diverse ethnic origins, customs, and traditions, make contributions to their
      communities, and are united as Americans by common principles.

3.11 —The student will explain the importance of the basic principles that form the foundation of a
      republican form of government by:
      a) describing the individual rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and equality
         under the law;
      d) describing how people can serve the community, state, and nation.

English:
2.8 —The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of . . . nonfiction.
   a) Locate information to answer questions.
   b) Identify the problem, solution, and main idea.

3.6 —The student will continue to read and demonstrate comprehension of nonfiction.
   a) Summarize major points found in nonfiction materials.

Science:
3.4 — The student will investigate and understand that behavioral and physical adaptations allow
      animals to respond to life needs. Key concepts include
      a) . . . instinct, and learned behavior.

Lesson Objectives:
Content—The student will be able to
1. describe the importance of protecting the rights of all citizens.
2. explain the desire of Americans with disabilities to live independent and self-reliant lives.

Process—The student will be able to:
1. identify problems and solutions discussed in nonfiction.
2. demonstrate knowledge of nonfiction by writing a conclusion about what is read.

Materials:
Handout # 1 – Problem—Solution Notes
Handout # 2—Drawing Conclusions

Summary: Brian Hanson injured his spinal cord playing lacrosse in college. Now he uses a
wheelchair to get around. This book looks at the challenges Brian faces in his daily life and how he
overcomes them. In addition, it shows how he gives back to his community.
**Evaluation/Assessment:** The student will be:
2. assessed on the completeness and correctness of Handout # 1—Problem-Solution Notes.
3. assessed on the completeness and correctness of Handout # 2—Drawing Conclusions.

**Lesson Procedure:**

**Background Knowledge and Purpose Setting:**
1. Ask students if they or a friend has ever had a broken arm or leg, or maybe had a serious ankle sprain. Ask students to describe the challenges they faced in daily tasks. Tell students that these are only temporary disabilities.
2. Explain that some people are born with a permanent disability and others become disabled through a disease or an accident. Explain that according to the US government there are more than 50 million Americans with a disability.
3. Ask students to recall their study of Helen Keller. Discuss how she became deaf and blind; how her teacher helped her learn to talk; and her contributions to her community.
4. Explain that Helen Keller lived long ago before there were laws to help Americans with disabilities live independently in their communities.

**Reading/Note-Taking**
   a. Ask students to describe what they see in the picture.
   b. Ask students to tell where they think the picture was taken.
   c. Explain that the man in the picture is named Brian Hanson.
6. Orally read the story and periodically stop to encourage the students to summarize what has been read.
8. Ask students to make connections with their own lives and the tasks they and their families perform each day. How does Brian do these tasks?

**Processing Information**
9. Explain that people respond to needs in life through instinct and learned behavior. Discuss what this means.
10. Ask students to list those things Brian needs to do each day (cook food, get to work, etc.) and those things he does at work (push the swing, help children on the chin up bars, etc.) Ask how these compare to what they do. Encourage students to see they have similar lives.
11. Distribute Handout # 1—Problem-Solution Notes. Have students pair up or get into small groups and ask them to list three problems Brian faces on the left side of the two-column note sheet and what solutions he has to overcome these difficulties on the right side.
12. Explain that everyone has some difficulties in their lives. On the lower portion of the worksheet write a difficulty you have and a possible solution. Discuss student answers.

**Closure:**
13. Explain that July 26, 2010 was the 20th anniversary of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA). This law requires that housing, workplaces and public places are accessible. Discuss why it is important to have an accessible building. [Optional—show a short video clip of the 20th anniversary ceremony at the White House.]
14. Remind students that a conclusion is a statement that summarizes and includes details given about a subject. It is based on what you learn.
15. Distribute Handout # 2—Drawing Conclusions. Ask students to pair up to complete the worksheet in class or for homework. Read several conclusions aloud.
Additional Resources:

Web-based:

- President Obama marks the 20th anniversary of the Americans Disabilities Act.  
  [http://www.mefeedia.com/watch/32271111](http://www.mefeedia.com/watch/32271111). This video is approximately 45 minutes in length. The president begins speaking at 27 minutes.
- [http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/drilm/](http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/drilm/). This website is an excellent resource for teachers. It contains information on individuals and background readings.
- *Disability is Natural* by Kathie Snow.  
  [http://www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com). This site provides resources on ways of thinking and talking about people with disabilities.

Print Sources:  (primarily resources for teachers)

- Pelka, F. (1997). *The ABC-CLIO companion to: The Disability Rights Movement*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc. [See pp. 165-167 and this book has a lot of the same individuals as in the website]
Brian Hanson was a good problem solver. Look back at the story of his life in the book, *My Teacher’s in a Wheelchair*. Use complete sentences to describe at least three problems he had and how he solved them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Everyone faces problems in their lives. Describe a problem you have and a possible solution.
Drawing Conclusions

*My Teacher’s in a Wheelchair* by Mary Ellen Powers

After you finish reading draw a conclusion about what you read.

A conclusion is a statement that summarizes and includes details given about a subject. It is based on what you learn. (For example, a conclusion you might make about the weather is that rainy weather often comes with cooler temperatures.)

**Your Conclusion:**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**List one or more things you read in the book that make you come to this conclusion.**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________