



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2013 Volume IV: Invisible Cities: The Arts and Renewable Community

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## **People with Disabilities: An Invisible Community**

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by Benjamin Barnett-Perry

Students with disability often feel stigmatized. They struggle with feeling abnormal and inferior to their general education peers. The goal of this unit is to examine the idea of normalcy and how it relates to disability. The history of normalcy and the inception of the medical model of disability give a glimpse as to why disability is thought of as negative. Through this process a new model emerges, one that rather than attempting to "fix" people with disabilities to allow them to fit into society, instead seeks to alter our environment to accommodate all people. This social minority model is best illustrated through the examination of Ed Roberts and the history of the disability rights movement. The concrete of Roberts' success teamed with the introduction to the concept of Universal Design illustrates how the social minority model has worked to promote independence and foster community. Self-advocacy plays a big role in this investigation and is necessary if this model is to be transferred to our current education system.

(Developed for Tutorial Resource, grades 9-12, and Psychology, grades 11-12; recommended for History/Social Studies and Special Education, grades 6-12, and Psychology, grades 9-12)

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