

Lesson Plans

NEA Human and Civil Rights
Awards Program

Lessons Learned from NEA's Social Justice Advocates

DANIEL RODRIGUEZ

George I. Sánchez Memorial Award

**Lesson At-A-Glance**

- ▶ **Opening the Lesson:**
Introduction of Daniel Rodriguez and the Dream Act
- ▶ **Leading the Lesson:**
A Dream Research Assignment
- ▶ **Closing the Lesson:**
Dream Out Loud

Objective(s)

- ▶ Students will be able to understand how personal experiences create a motivation to work for change and better circumstances for others.
- ▶ Students will be able to identify with Daniel Rodriguez and the difficulties he faced.
- ▶ Students will be able to identify the actions and characteristics that resulted in Daniel Rodriguez's recognition for leadership in social justice advocacy.
- ▶ Students will be able to identify educational barriers that are present for undocumented immigrants.
- ▶ Students will be able to reflect about what area is important to them and how they could make a difference.

Materials/Preparation

- ▶ Chalkboard or whiteboard space
- ▶ Markers or chalk
- ▶ Piece of scrap paper
- ▶ 12 x 18 or larger white construction paper
- ▶ Handout 1: Group Study Questions (make one copy per student)
- ▶ Handout 2: Group Study Questions: Answer Key (print one copy for your own use during the discussion)
- ▶ Handout 3: In Daniel's Words (make one copy per student)

Materials/Preparation continued

- ▶ Lined writing paper for each student
- ▶ Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- ▶ Computer access--one per student

Suggested Grouping Structures

Whole group discussion, small group activity, and independent activity

Estimated total lesson time: 50 minutes

Opening the Lesson (10 minutes)

Introduction of Daniel Rodriguez and the Dream Act

1. **Ask** if anyone knows the title of Martin Luther King's famous speech (I Have a Dream). Ask, "What does he mean by those words?" (Possible response: A dream for something you want to happen.)
2. **Ask**, "If you had a dream about what would be the perfect world for everyone, what would it be like?"
3. **Direct** students to write down a "quick list" of items to answer this question.
4. **Call** on students to read items from their lists and write on the board (Prompt to include if not listed, equal treatment and opportunity for all).
5. **Write** the name Daniel Rodriguez on the board. Say, "He is a person who has received a special award for work he has done to gain fair treatment for undocumented immigrants. He was honored with the George I. Sánchez Memorial Award from the National Education Association. This award was recognition of Daniel's efforts as a social justice advocate. Write the term "Advocate for Social Justice" on the board below Daniel Rodriguez.

6. **Ask**, "What is an undocumented immigrant?" (Prompt: Not having the official documents that are needed to enter, live in, or work in a country legally).
7. **Say**, "Mr. Rodriguez is the co-founder of the Arizona DREAM Act Coalition (ADAC), an organization working to create a nation of fully educated and integrated immigrant youths." Add Arizona Dream Act Coalition to the list on the board.
8. **Say**, "Today's lesson will help you to learn more about how Daniel Rodriguez and his own personal experiences, which motivated him to pursue this dream to help others."

Leading the Lesson (30 minutes)

A Dream Research Assignment

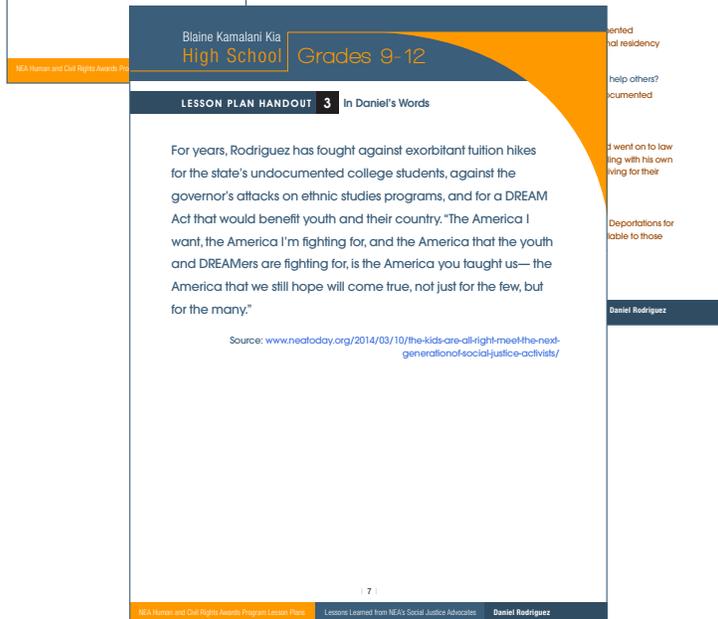
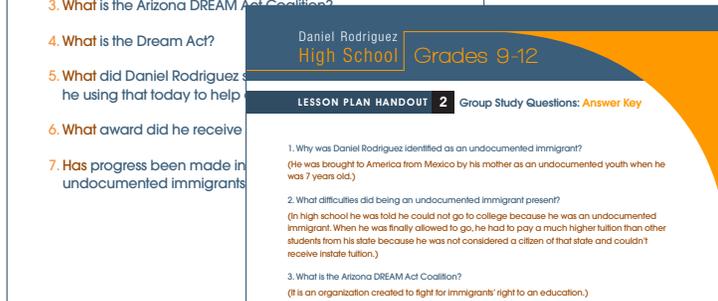
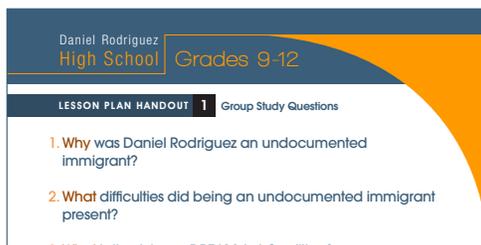
9. **Ask**, "Are you a dreamer? Do you have dreams for yourself and your future?" Say, "When Daniel Rodriguez was in school, he had similar dreams and goals as many of you do, but he was an undocumented immigrant."
10. **Tell** the class they will be working in groups to learn more about Daniel Rodriguez, how being an undocumented immigrant created difficulties for him, and how he used this personal experience to help others.
11. **Divide** the class into groups of four students each, and assign one student as the group leader.
12. **Distribute** lined paper to each group. Tell the students they are to spend five minutes in their groups writing questions they have about Daniel Rodriguez, his difficulties, and his accomplishments. Assign a person in each group to be the writer of the questions.

Daniel Rodriguez High School Grades 9-12

Leading the Lesson continued

13. **After** five minutes, have each group leader read the questions, writing them on the board. Tell students not to read a question if it has already been written on the board.
14. **After** all groups have responded, prompt students to include any key questions not listed. (Refer to Key Questions on Handout 1).
15. **Assign** each group to research one of the key questions using the computer. Add in related

questions for that group to provide answers to that information, if possible.



16. **Provide** students with websites to answer the Group Study Questions. Have each student work individually to locate related information for their group's questions and jot down notes from the site information. (Allow 10 minutes of work time).

17. **Direct** groups to meet again to write an answer to their group's question, combining the important pieces of information from group members. Assign a writer and group leader (the two students in each group who were not yet assigned either role).

18. **Direct** each group leader to read their question and the group's answer to it. Use the answer key (Handout 2) to provide clarification as needed.

19. **Ask** if events in your life and the world around you help to shape your dreams for yourself and your future. Ask students to share their thoughts.

20. **Distribute** Handout 3 and have students read the quote.

21. **Ask** students if there are any similarities between the meaning of the speech referred to at the beginning of the lesson about Martin Luther King and the dream Daniel Rodriguez has for America.

22. **Ask** what they think Daniel Rodriguez means by a dreamer.

Websites for Group Study Research

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/tempe/2014/07/01/undocumented-arizona-youth-receives-human-rights-advocate-award/11796337/>
<http://theadac.org>

Leading the Lesson continued

23. Direct students to compare and contrast the purpose of Martin Luther King’s dream and Daniel Rodriguez’s dream. (Compare: Equal treatment for all, minorities are not discriminated against, youth in the country have equal access to education. Contrast: Martin Luther King’s work was initially related to unfair treatment of black people. Daniel Rodriguez’s work was begun because of education blocks for undocumented immigrant youth).

Closing the Lesson (10 minutes)

Dream Out Loud

- 24. Give** students a large piece of white construction paper. Assign them to think of an issue that is significant to them. What issue makes them a “dreamer”?
- 25. Direct** students to create a poster that would explain their focus, which would inspire others to join their cause.

Assessment Suggestion(s):

- ▶ Group discussion response
- ▶ Teacher observation of group work
- ▶ Key Question responses
- ▶ Poster

Adaptations, Enrichment, Cross-curricular Opportunities

- ▶ Print material from websites and the alternate key questions worksheet. Divide students into groups of four to answer all of the key questions, and then share answers as a whole class.
- ▶ Have students write a paper to go with the closing activity poster (or have students do the writing assignment in place of the poster), describing what their dream is and how they could make a difference.
- ▶ Co-curricular connection-language arts, research skills, art.

1. **Why** was Daniel Rodriguez an undocumented immigrant?
2. **What** difficulties did being an undocumented immigrant present?
3. **What** is the Arizona DREAM Act Coalition?
4. **What** is the Dream Act?
5. **What** did Daniel Rodriguez study in college and how is he using that today to help others?
6. **What** award did he receive and why?
7. **Has** progress been made in gaining rights for undocumented immigrants?

1. Why was Daniel Rodriguez identified as an undocumented immigrant?

(He was brought to America from Mexico by his mother as an undocumented youth when he was 7 years old.)

2. What difficulties did being an undocumented immigrant present?

(In high school he was told he could not go to college because he was an undocumented immigrant. When he was finally allowed to go, he had to pay a much higher tuition than other students from his state because he was not considered a citizen of that state and couldn't receive instate tuition.)

3. What is the Arizona DREAM Act Coalition?

(It is an organization created to fight for immigrants' right to an education.)

4. What is the Dream Act?

(The Dream Act is a legislative proposal which addresses the issues of undocumented immigrants who came here as children. It would provide a process for conditional residency and permanent residency for those who meet certain criteria.)

5. What did Daniel Rodriguez study in college and how is he using that today to help others?

(He studied law and now as a lawyer he does work striving for the rights of undocumented youth.)

6. What award did he receive and why?

(He received the George I. Sánchez Memorial Award. He excelled at school and went on to law school despite difficulties he faced as an undocumented immigrant. While dealing with his own difficulties he still helped and encouraged other undocumented immigrants, striving for their human and civil rights.)

7. Has progress been made in gaining rights for undocumented immigrants?

(Yes, In June 2012, some changes were implemented to the immigration policy. Deportations for those meeting established criteria were stopped. Work permits were made available to those who came to the U.S. as children, if they have had no recorded criminal issues).

Source: <http://theadac.org>

For years, Rodriguez has fought against exorbitant tuition hikes for the state's undocumented college students, against the governor's attacks on ethnic studies programs, and for a DREAM Act that would benefit youth and their country. "The America I want, the America I'm fighting for, and the America that the youth and DREAMers are fighting for, is the America you taught us— the America that we still hope will come true, not just for the few, but for the many."

Source: <http://neatoday.org/2014/03/10/the-kids-are-all-right-meet-the-next-generation-of-social-justice-activists/>