



NEA Educator's Book Club for Disability Rights & Inclusion

We need champions for disability rights and inclusion! NEA members have a unique and powerful opportunity to advocate for meaningful change, challenge ableism and biases, and become allies with and for individuals with disabilities.

[Find out more about becoming a champion for disability rights and inclusion.](#)

Who can participate in the NEA Book Club?

The NEA Book Club is open to all members! This is a great opportunity for you to take what you learn and share key concepts with your community.

How does the NEA Book Club work?

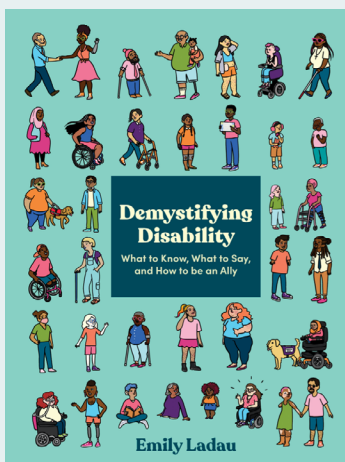
We encourage you to participate in all three book discussions; however, we understand that this may not be possible for everyone. The books that were selected are meant to be read sequentially OR individually. We believe that participants will gain a great deal of knowledge related to disability and its intersections that can be taken back into learning environments and applied in each of our daily lives.

Where, when, and how will the NEA Book Club meet?

The NEA Book Club will meet virtually three times for each book over the course of the 2023–2024 school year. For those who cannot join the book club, we encourage you to read the books and use the accompanying reading guides to heighten your understanding.

The guides are available at [NEA.org/disabilities](https://www.nea.org/disabilities).

A Book Study in Collaboration with Traci Arway and Emily Nusbaum



Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally

By Emily Ladau

The first book that we will read as part of the NEA Book Club is *Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally*. It is an accessible guide to educate readers about disability and its intersections, foster a progressive understanding of disability, and promote allyship. The book offers readers an opportunity to promote positive change in perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes about disability and people with disabilities as well as better understand the firsthand lived experience of disability.

Reading Guide

Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally

What NEA Leadership Competencies are addressed through this book?

You will gain a foundational understanding of advocacy, communication, leading our profession, organizing, and social-emotional learning. [Find out more about NEA Leadership Competencies.](#)

What are the main objectives?

As you are reading this book, approach the content with the following objectives in mind:

“If one person who reads this book thinks better of using disability as a slur or insult, or calls their representatives to advocate for disability issues, or adds a ramp to the entrance of their shop, then we’re moving in the right direction.” (p. 3)

“If you have met one person with a disability, you have met one person with a disability.” (p. 5)

“Learning about disability and applying what you learn to your daily life is a journey, keep reading, keep learning, and keep going.” (p. 5)

Chapters 1 and 2 (to be read prior to first book club meeting)

Pre-Reading Reflection Questions

1. How do you define disability?
2. How do you talk about disability and why? (for example, person-first vs. identity-first language)

Post-Reading Reflection Questions

1. Do you still use offensive terms? What should you say instead?
2. What resonated most with you in these chapters and why?
3. What salient points from these chapters will you apply to your daily life, and how?

Discussion Questions

1. How can we unlearn and disentangle ourselves from the mess of stigma and prejudice toward people with disabilities, especially people with disabilities who have multiple marginalized identities, and move toward a more inclusive, accepting world?
2. What did you learn from these chapters?

Next Steps

Read Chapters 3 and 4 before the next meeting.

Chapters 3 and 4

Pre-Reading Reflection Questions

1. What is ableism?
2. Do you have ableist behaviors? How can you work toward changing your own ableist actions?

Post-Reading Reflection Questions

1. How do you create an accessible learning environment for all students?
2. What are ways your learning environment might be inaccessible?

Discussion Questions

1. What does ableism look like in your learning environments?
2. Can you name ableist language and actions of others, and if so, how?
3. Did you know any of the disability rights activists in these chapters?
4. Which of these activists made an impact on your learning?
5. How will you teach others about these activists, and what more do you need to learn to do this?

Next Steps

Read Chapters 5 and 6 before the next meeting.

Chapters 5 and 6

Pre-Reading Reflection Question

1. Evaluate yourself on the do's and don'ts of disability etiquette. Where can you improve? What do you do well?

Post-Reading Reflection Questions

1. What are the ways that you might perpetuate ableism?
2. What are specific ways that you can make changes?

Discussion Questions

1. What are you doing with your new insights to the disability experience?
2. Will you advocate for accessibility, and if so, how?
3. How do you become an ally without being a "bad" ally?

Next Steps

Recommend the book to others in your community and have conversations about what you learned. And, don't forget to sign up and attend the next book talk, featuring *The Pretty One*, by Keah Brown.