

Teacher's Capable But NOT Allowed

Directions: Think of a time when you were not allowed to do something that you were capable of doing. Then answer questions 1-4 based on that experience.

Engage students in sharing personal experiences of being 'discriminated' against despite their capabilities. Help them distinguish between being prohibited from doing something due to unjust or biased assumptions of others versus adult/parental/peer guidance.

1. What was it that you were not allowed to do, but felt you could have done?

Highlight student experiences where their capabilities or ability to learn was undermined or ignored.

2. How did it make you feel? Students may share diverse feelings, such as anger, shame, frustration, dismay, etc. Affirm that all of them are natural responses when others not only underestimate your capabilities, but also prohibit you from doing what you are capable of doing or learning how to do.

3. Why do you think that you were not allowed? Help students understand there are different possible reasons--intentional or not, personal or social bias, etc. If appropriate, incorporate words such as discrimination, prejudice, and injustice during the discussion.

4. How did you change or might you have changed the mind(s) of the person(s) who didn't allow you to do what you were capable of doing? Engage students in examining if/how the change could come about--e.g., demonstration of their abilities, reminders of past accomplishments, an unexpected need for them to accomplish or to participate in something because others normally allowed weren't available, debate on unjust exclusion, etc.