

TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 4-6



TOGETHER WE ROCK!

TOGETHER WE ROCK! INC. TEACHER GUIDE: LEARNING ACTIVITIES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: GRADES 4-6

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SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION



TODAY IS THE DAY TO RADIATE AWESOME!

Together, students and their teachers have proven time and time again how they can champion a better world. At Together We Rock!, we have seen first-hand how schools embrace the vision of accessible and inclusive communities and lead the way to make that vision a reality. In their efforts, they find ways to go around barriers, discover opportunities and shine to make a difference. The Together We Rock! School Leadership Program is designed to provide an opportunity for students to soar and radiate awesome.

TOGETHER WE ROCK! SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The Together We Rock! School Leadership Program is designed for elementary students in Grades 4 to 8. Classes, student leadership groups or an entire grade level can book a We Rock! virtual or in-person presentation with John Draper, Founder of Together We Rock! As a journalism graduate, recognized leader in accessibility and inclusion, community volunteer and a person with a disability who is non-verbal, John provides a memorable experience for students and educators. Through the use of assistive technology and a professional narrator, John delivers an interactive 30-minute presentation aimed to inspire students to action to champion accessibility and inclusivity in their schools, neighbourhoods and communities. The presentation can be followed by an opportunity for dialogue and questions. Teachers are supported in their efforts to inspire accessibility and inclusivity with a number of free resources and learning products from Together We Rock! including:

- Free Teacher Guides and Resource Sheets: There are Teacher Guides and Resource Sheets for grades 4 to 6 and grades 7 to 8 that can be downloaded from our website at no cost.
- Posters: The Together We Rock! posters can be purchased for a nominal cost; check out our shop on our website.
- E-Workbooks: Together We Rock! has developed E-Workbooks on the five topics of community, diversity, accessibility, inclusion and leadership. These E-Workbooks can be purchased individually or as a set. Each workbook features topic-specific information, learning activities and tools to help students in their endeavours to make a difference.

SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION



CONNECT WITH TOGETHER WE ROCK!

The team at Together We Rock! is available to answer your questions or provide additional information. Connect with us by:

- **Email:** send an email through our website at www.togetherwerock.com or to info@togetherwerock.com
- **Telephone:** 1-905-404-9569
- **Toll Free:** 1-833-253-0587
- **TTY (Telecommunications Text):** If you are an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing and use a TTY device, the Together We Rock! team would be pleased to communicate with you using this technology.

SECTION TWO LEARNING ACTIVITIES



TEACHER GUIDE

The purpose of this Teacher Guide is to provide educators with a resource that further explores the following key messages of the Together We Rock! elementary school presentation:

- **Celebrate Diversity:** A school community is a place where everyone feels they belong and where everyone's differences are accepted and respected.
- **Believe in Possibilities:** A school community welcomes and recognizes everyone's contributions and embraces the belief that all students have an opportunity to participate fully.
- **Be a Leader:** A school community supports and nurtures diversity, cooperation and inclusion, while teaching students to be active citizens within their local and global community. One person can make a difference. Small actions add up to big change.
- **Today is the Day:** Inclusive and accessible communities don't just happen; they are created. Now is the time.

By using this guide, teachers can foster learning and help students become inspired, work together, share their ideas to enrich their school community, and take action to make a difference.

Each learning activity is presented with an objective, timeframe, required materials, background information, activity descriptions, activity steps, and some common curriculum connections. Most activities can be adapted to other grade levels.

Educators and students can share their experiences with these learning activities with the Together We Rock! team. Visit the Contact Us on our website at www.togetherwerock.com to connect with us.

*"I believe children are our future.
Teach them well and they will lead the way."
-Michael Masser and Linda McCreed*

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Diversity Makes Us Better

Learning Objective

This activity will encourage students to identify individual strengths and the value of a diverse community. This activity encourages students to consider what communities lose when they exclude people.

Timeframe

This activity can be completed in 20-40 minutes.

Materials

The materials for this learning activity include:

- chart paper;
- sticky notes (enough for each student); and
- pen or pencil for each student.

Background Information

Schools are vibrant communities. Excluding even one student causes a chain effect, and detracts from the character of the school community.

Definitions

Diversity: A community has diversity when the people in the community have different talents, abilities, backgrounds, likes and dislikes and these differences are celebrated. These differences can include some things that you can see (like the colour of someone's skin or the fact that someone is a wheelchair user) and other things that you can't see (like our talents and likes and dislikes).

Community: A community is a place or a group where people feel like they belong and accept that everyone is different. People take part in activities, care about each other and work together to find answers to problems.

Learning Activity Description

Students will think critically about their strengths and the talents they can share with their school community. They will be encouraged to recognize the unique value of each of their classmates, and the benefits of diversity.

Activity Steps

STEP ONE:

- Introduce or review the concepts of diversity and community using definitions in the Background Information section of this learning activity.
- Facilitate a class dialogue on whether it is better to have a diverse society or to divide people into similar groups.

STEP TWO:

- Invite students to think of 2-3 strengths they bring to the community (e.g., playing on the baseball team, being a lunch monitor, being a good friend, etc.)
- Ask students to choose their greatest contribution to the community and write it on a sticky note. Place all sticky notes on chart paper.
- Go through all of the sticky notes and read the greatest contribution that each student wrote down.

STEP THREE:

- Have students imagine what it would be like if certain sections of the class were to be excluded (e.g., students with a certain birth month, eye colour, favourite subject, etc.). Ask students who have these excluded characteristics to come up to the front of the classroom and move their sticky note to the side. Read out the list of qualities your class would lose for each excluded group.

STEP FOUR:

- Ask students to share their reactions, using the following prompting questions:
 - How did it feel to be part of an excluded group?
 - Are there any clubs or daily routines that exclude certain groups?
 - If we're stronger together, why do we often exclude people?
 - What are some strategies we can use to ensure everyone is included?

Curriculum Connections

There are various opportunities to link this activity with the Language Arts curriculum. The example below is a connection within the elementary school curriculum of the Province of Ontario, Canada and can be adapted to curriculum expectations in other jurisdictions.

Language Arts

Oral Communication: At the junior level, students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate speaking behaviour. This activity encourages students to ask questions to clarify their understanding, respond to peer ideas, and build upon the ideas of others. Students are to acknowledge different points of view and make personal connections from their own experiences.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Diversity Snowflakes

Learning Objective

This activity will encourage students to think about diversity, individuality and sense of self.

Timeframe

This activity can be completed in 45-60 minutes.

Materials

The materials required for this learning activity include:

- white board/chalk board/chart paper;
- paint and paint brushes;
- paper;
- magazines, newspapers;
- markers, crayons and/or coloured pencils; and
- scissors.

Background Information

Diversity includes differences in race, gender, preferred learning styles, culture, ethnicity, physical/developmental/cognitive ability, personality, etc.

Definitions

Diversity: A community has diversity when the people in the community have different talents, abilities, backgrounds, likes and dislikes and these differences are celebrated. These differences can include some things that you can see (like the colour of someone's skin or the fact that someone is a wheelchair user) and other things that you can't see (like our talents and likes and dislikes).

Community: A community is a place or group where people feel like they belong and accept that everyone is different. People take part in activities, care about each other and work together to find answers to problems.

Learning Activity Description

In this activity, students will think about the qualities that make them unique and discuss why the topic of diversity is so important. Students will create their own diversity snowflake to represent their talents, abilities, backgrounds, interests, etc.

Activity Steps

STEP ONE:

- Students can remain at their desks for this activity or join together in a community circle if space permits.
- Write on chart paper/chalk board/white board the following discussion questions:
 - What is diversity?
 - Why is diversity important in a community?
 - What would be the disadvantages if everyone in the class were the same?
- Review the definition of diversity and write down student responses on the chart paper/chalk board/white board.
- Divide the class into pairs to discuss the question: "Have you ever felt unique or different in your classroom community? Provide examples."
- *Extension:* Explain to students that while we are each unique we also often share many similarities that tie us to others. As human beings we often share a sense of identity with people that we have something in common with. In their journals, have students respond to the following:
 - "Reflect on who you are and where you get your sense of who you are."
 - To help get the students started, provide examples as the teacher of who you are and where you get your sense of self.

STEP TWO:

- Explain to students that they will each be making a diversity snowflake that represents their talents, abilities, background, interests, culture, etc.
- Before they make their snowflake, have students make a collage to represent themselves using a variety of different materials and elements of design (e.g., paint, magazines, newspapers, pictures, markers, etc.).
- Have students cut out a snowflake from their collage.

STEP THREE:

- Have a follow-up/consolidation discussion with the class about how the snowflakes are symbolic of human diversity. (Like each snowflake, each human being is unique and different from others).
- Display the diversity snowflakes around the classroom and have students participate in a “gallery walk” to give each student the opportunity to share with the class an art piece that represents who they are. This sharing helps to build a strong classroom community that respects and acknowledges student similarities and differences.

Curriculum Connections

There are various cross-curricular opportunities to link this activity with curriculum standards in the areas of Social Studies, Language Arts, and The Arts. The examples below are curriculum connections within the elementary school curriculum of the Province of Ontario, Canada and can be adapted to curriculum expectations in other jurisdictions.

Language Arts

Oral Communication: Language Arts expectations focus on students' knowledge and skills in reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy. This activity allows students to participate in purposeful talk and discussion, while communicating their ideas, thoughts, and experiences associated with diversity. Students are to acknowledge different points of view and make personal connections from their own experiences.

Writing: In this activity, students will be required to generate, gather and organize their ideas and information for the purpose of reflecting about who they are and the source of their own identity.

Social Studies

Communities: At the junior level, social studies expectations provide various opportunities for students to explore concepts such as beliefs and values, culture, community, and relationships. This activity requires the students to explain why different groups of people may have different perspectives and how these perspectives can shape our communities.

The Arts

Visual Arts: At the junior level, expectations focus on students' ability to communicate, explore, and understand their multicultural environments. In this activity, students are expected to apply the elements of design in order to produce an art piece that communicates feelings, ideas, and understandings related to their

sense of self and identity. Having a gallery walk allows students to observe, analyze, and respond to other art creations within their classroom.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Your Voice Matters

Learning Objective

This activity will inspire students to use their voice creatively and assist them in making connections between the power of words and positive change.

Timeframe

This activity can be completed in 45-50 minutes.

Materials

The materials for this learning activity include:

- pencil for each student;
- black marker for each student; and
- one copy of the Introduction from the Together We Rock! School Leadership Program Tool Kit for each student (see template at the end of this lesson).

Background Information

Children are continually trying to make sense of the world around them. Within the classroom community, it is important to provide opportunities for children to demonstrate and express their views, perspectives, and experiences through diverse outlets of communication. This can contribute to building a classroom community that recognizes and respects the importance of student voice. Students can express their voice through many avenues of communication (e.g., writing, art, poetry, music, etc.).

This activity focuses on student voice, expression, and social action through the art of blackout poetry (the art of creating a new poem from an existing piece of writing by choosing certain words and blacking out the rest, so that the words left, when read in order on the page, create a poem). As children become familiar with poetry, they start to recognize its power and ability to inspire emotions. Poetry builds community, promotes literacy, and fosters social action through the power of words. Blackout poetry allows students to take the words of other individuals and create something new and different in their own voice. It is important to encourage children to take chances and risks in their art. Poetry as an art form allows students to give language an internal purpose and open various avenues for writing, listening, and speaking. Poetry helps to build resilience in children, while fostering

social and emotional learning within the classroom. Children should be encouraged to use their voice to spark emotions and ignite discussions.

For many students, showing poetry to classmates can be a scary thing. It is important that students feel as though they are in a safe environment to share their voice with others. Many students struggle with creative writing when given a blank white page. Blackout poetry assists students with limited vocabulary to express themselves creatively. This process can be viewed as a scaffolding technique (a technique that helps students build on their prior knowledge and experiences in order to reach higher levels of learning and proficiency) when finding their voice within creative writing. Poetry can also help increase student awareness of the world around them. This activity helps students to make connections to others and think in synthesizing ways.

This activity can support learning that focuses on creative literacy development, community building and the power of words. This activity will provide an opportunity for students to express themselves, connecting the familiar with the strange and transforming the way they see everyday life through new perspectives and avenues of communication. Prior to this activity, you will need to print each student a copy of the Together We Rock! School Leadership Program Tool Kit Introduction and of the sample Blackout poem (see templates located at the end of this lesson).

Learning Activity Description

Students will create a blackout poem based on the Introduction to the Together We Rock! School Leadership Program Tool Kit. Students will need to present their poem to the class while using their vocal skills and strategies to relate to the audience.

Activity Steps

STEP ONE:

- Students can remain at their desks for this activity or join together in a common space.
- On chart paper/white board/chalk board write the question, "What is blackout poetry?"
- Explain the following:
 - Blackout poetry process and concept were created by web designer, author, and cartoonist Austin Kleon.
 - Blackout poetry is the art of creating a new poem from an existing piece of writing by choosing certain words and blacking out the rest, so that the words left, when read in order on the page, create a poem.

- Hand out copies of the sample of blackout poetry provided at the end of this learning activity.
- Demonstrate the process of creating blackout poetry (first use pencil to circle key words/phrases, then take black marker and black out the rest of written text to create a poem).
- Explain to students that they should not pick random words in the text but explore different ways to make their poem flow and have meaning. Tell students to think about the meaning behind the words they choose to keep, and what mood or effect they want their readers to feel. The central idea is to develop a new text from the original text, and allow the readers to make their own interpretations.

STEP TWO:

- Ask students why it is essential that they have a voice (through writing, oral communication, art, music, etc.) and why it is important that their voice is heard and respected.

STEP THREE:

- Provide each student with a copy of the "Welcome to Together We Rock!" introduction.
- Have students use a pencil to circle the words that they would like to use in their poem, and then use black marker to black out all the words that will not appear in the final poem.
- Encourage students to work with other students and share the process of how they are getting to their finished piece of work.
- Have students share their blackout poetry with a partner. Have them talk about the effect their partner's poem has on them and the mood the poem creates.
- *Extension:* Have students create blackout poetry using other texts (e.g., newspaper articles, a page copied from a book, etc.). You can also suggest that students transform their blackout poem into a piece of art by using various visual arts techniques (i.e., blending, clustering, colour, shading, etc.) that create a design to enhance the poem. If you are not familiar with blackout poetry designs and would like another example, Google 'blackout poetry designs.'

STEP FOUR:

- Have students read their poem aloud to the class using specific vocal skills and strategies (tone of voice, emotion, pace, etc.) to convey the meaning of the written text.

- *Extension:* Have students write a reflection piece on their poem.
- Email student blackout poetry to Together We Rock! and we may post it on our website.

Curriculum Connections

There are various cross-curricular opportunities to link this activity with curriculum standards in the areas of Language Arts, Social Studies, and The Arts. Character Development is also embedded within teaching practices/development projects in publicly funded Ontario school boards. Character development seeks to nurture relationships and create a foundation for building and sustaining a safe, caring, and inclusive school community. The examples below are curriculum connections within the elementary school curriculum of the Province of Ontario, Canada and can be adapted to curriculum expectations in other jurisdictions.

Language Arts

At the junior level, students are starting to look beyond the literal meaning of texts, as they ask questions and reflect on various strategies that help them construct and communicate meaning.

Oral Communication: Students use listening and speaking skills to communicate with an audience while sharing their blackout poetry with classmates. Students are to read their poem with expression, adjusting reading strategies to match the purpose and emotion of their work.

Reading: This activity encourages students to demonstrate an understanding of a text, while using reading comprehension strategies to construct meaning. Students are to use the text from the Together We Rock! Tool Kit and construct their own blackout poetry.

Writing: In this activity students develop and generate ideas, draft and revise their poems and use editing and proofreading to present their blackout poetry. In their reflection piece, students can reflect on their poem's meaning and comment on various strategies they found helpful during this process.

Social Studies

Community: The Grade 4 social studies expectations focus on a number of concepts related to community, culture, power, relationships, beliefs and values, and stewardship. This activity allows students to explore these concepts through creative writing and art.

The Arts

Visual Arts: As an extension activity, students can apply the creative process using various elements, principles and techniques of visual arts to communicate feelings and ideas through their blackout poetry art.

Welcome to Together We Rock!

We live in a world of possibilities. Every day we see and hear of people who are making a difference in school communities. Whether they are doing it on their own or together with their friends, people are making things happen so that the world is a better place. Some people protect the environment by recycling; others may help people in the community who are in need; and many work hard at teaching and learning, because they know these are important. These individuals have embraced an opportunity to turn the impossible into the possible and to bring a dream into reality. Building a school community that is accessible to and inclusive of everyone is possible. An accessible school is a school where there are no barriers preventing anyone from fully participating in school life. An inclusive school community is a place where all people are welcomed and respected and feel that they belong. Building an accessible and inclusive school community depends on the efforts of everyone in the community. This includes students, families, teachers, school staff, parent and student councils, and community partners. If a school community believes that it is possible to create accessibility and inclusion, then it will happen. If a school community accepts and respects people's differences, then everyone will feel they belong. If a school community finds ways around barriers, then everyone will be able to participate. If a school community takes steps to improve its accessibility and inclusion, it is showing leadership. And if everyone works together, then a school community can make a difference.

Every day
people who are making a difference
together with their friends,
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Together We Rock!

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Promoting Inclusive Communication

Learning Objective

By experimenting with different styles of communication, students will understand the importance of inclusive communication strategies.

Timeframe

This activity can be completed in 30-45 minutes.

Materials

The materials for this learning activity include:

- blank paper (printer paper or rough paper);
- pen or pencil for each student; and
- one handout with pattern, geometric shape or simple picture for each student (see sample templates at the end of this learning activity).

Background Information

When imagining accessible communities, we often overlook communication barriers. Many people have communication disabilities, such as a vision or hearing impairment, that can make communication a challenge. Within the classroom community, it is important to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and express their views and perspectives through diverse outlets of communication. This can contribute to building a classroom community that recognizes and respects the importance of student voice. This activity encourages students to identify with these challenges, and identify ways to make communication more inclusive.

Definitions

Accessibility: When a place or activity is accessible it means that everyone can go there or join in. To make a place or activity accessible, we need to make sure there is nothing standing in the way (a barrier). Things that stand in the way can be physical barriers like doors with no automatic door openers or steps with no ramp. The things that stand in the way can also be barriers you can't see, like the negative way people feel about someone who is different or a rule set by the school or community.

Community: A community is a place or group where people feel like they belong and accept that everyone is different. People take part in activities, care about each other and work together to find answers to problems.

Learning Activity Description

Students will attempt to give and follow directions for drawing a picture either without speaking or with their eyes closed to improve their understanding of the importance of inclusive communication.

Activity Steps

STEP ONE:

- Divide students into pairs.
- Give one partner in each group the handout with a pattern, shape or simple picture and the other partner a blank piece of paper and pencil. Tell the first partner to give verbal directions to his or her partner on how to draw the image on the handout while keeping the image hidden.
- Tell the second partner to close their eyes and attempt to follow the first partner's directions to recreate the image from the handout on the blank piece of paper.

STEP TWO:

- Give the second partner a handout with another pattern, shape or simple picture and give the first partner a blank piece of paper and pencil. Instruct the second partner to attempt to describe the picture for the first partner using only hand gestures, while keeping the picture hidden.
- Instruct the first partner to keep their eyes open and attempt to draw the picture based solely on the hand gestures of the second partner.

STEP THREE:

- Once both partners have taken a turn drawing, have each partner reveal the original picture. Have the students compare the original and the attempted reproduction.
- Have the partners discuss the challenges faced by people who have communication disabilities.
- Have the partners brainstorm strategies for overcoming communication limitations.

STEP FOUR:

- Have a follow-up class discussion on different methods of communication. Ask students to share the things they found challenging both while attempting to draw the image and while communicating how to draw the image. As a group, share strategies for improving communication to promote a more inclusive school community.
- *Extension:* Expand the discussion to introduce the concept of multiple intelligences – how each student, regardless of ability, learns differently. Students can discuss the following questions:
 - When might it be beneficial to include multiple communication options?
 - Why might it not be feasible?
 - Are there changes in communication style that might benefit the classroom or school community?
- Have students write a reflection piece about their experience with this activity. The students can choose to write about:
 - how they felt when their partner was instructing them;
 - how they felt when they were instructing their partner;
 - any frustrations they may have had with the activity at any point; and/or
 - strategies for overcoming communication limitations.

Curriculum Connections

There are various cross-curricular opportunities to link this activity with curriculum standards in the areas of Language Arts and The Arts. The examples below are curriculum connections within the elementary school curriculum of the Province of Ontario, Canada and can be adapted to curriculum expectations in other jurisdictions.

Language Arts

Language Arts expectations focus on the students' knowledge and skills in reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy. At the junior level, students are starting to look beyond the literal meaning of texts, as they ask questions and reflect on various strategies that help them construct and communicate meaning.

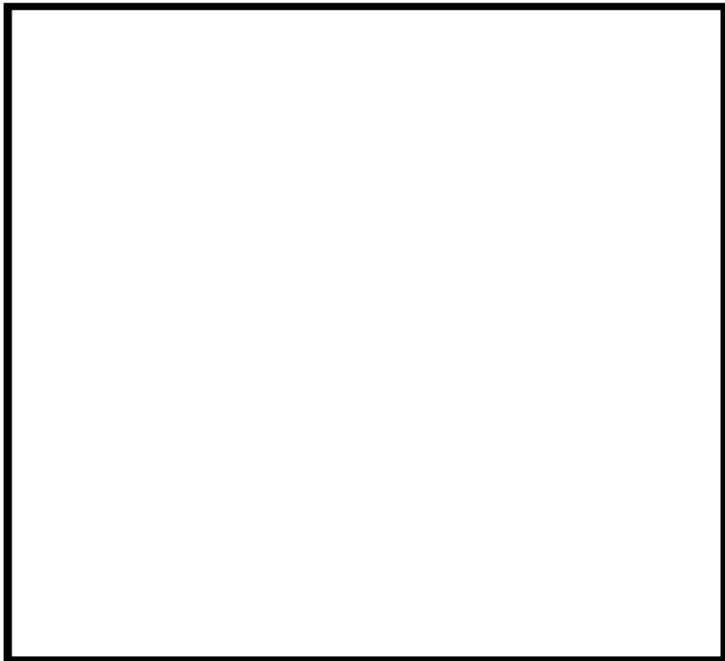
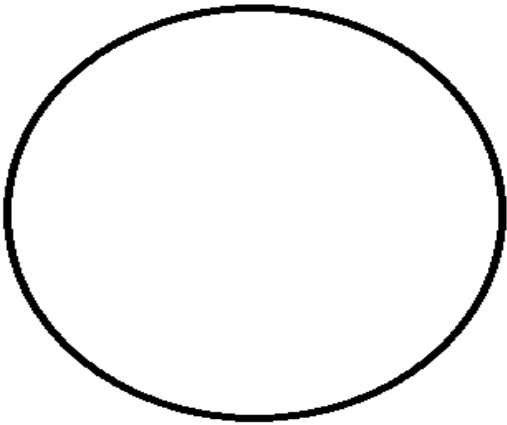
Oral Communication: In this activity, students use listening and speaking skills to communicate with their classmates the challenges one may encounter when using a different method of communication. Students are to communicate in a clear and coherent manner while presenting instructions and information in a readily

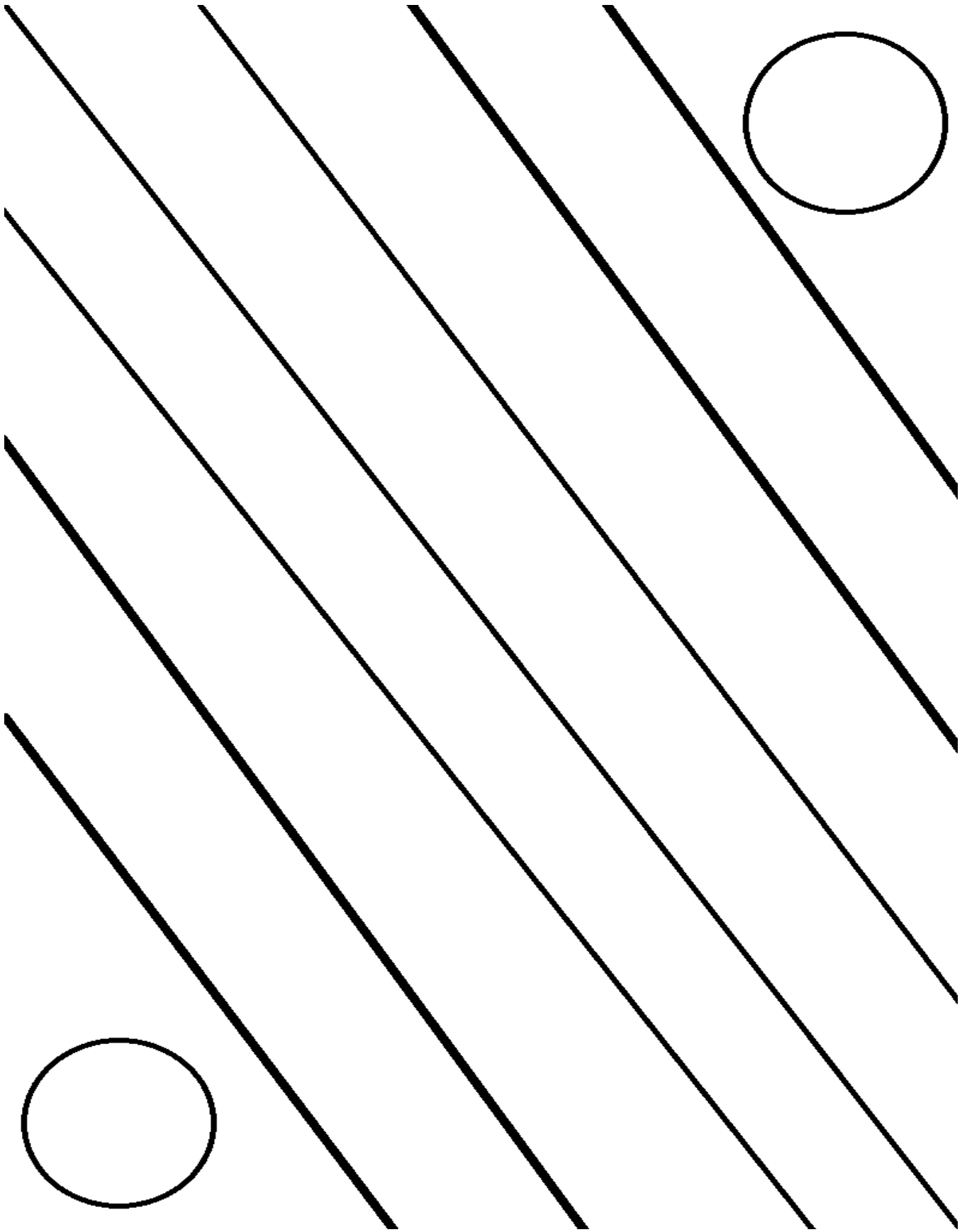
understandable form. Students are required to use appropriate words and phrases from the full range of their vocabulary to communicate their meaning accurately.

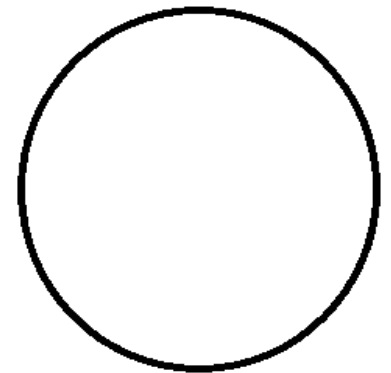
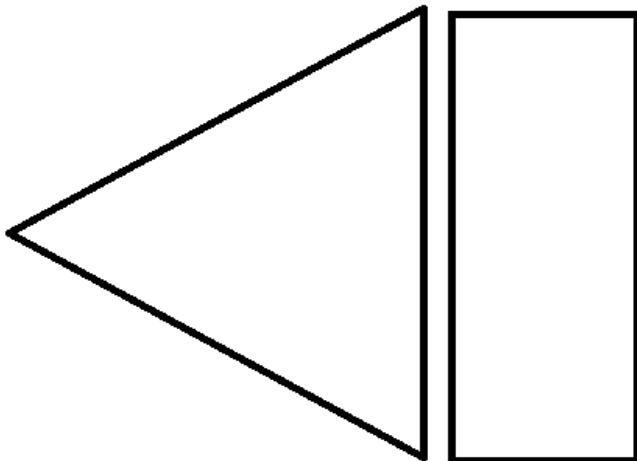
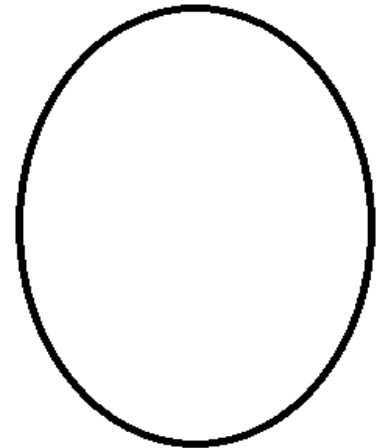
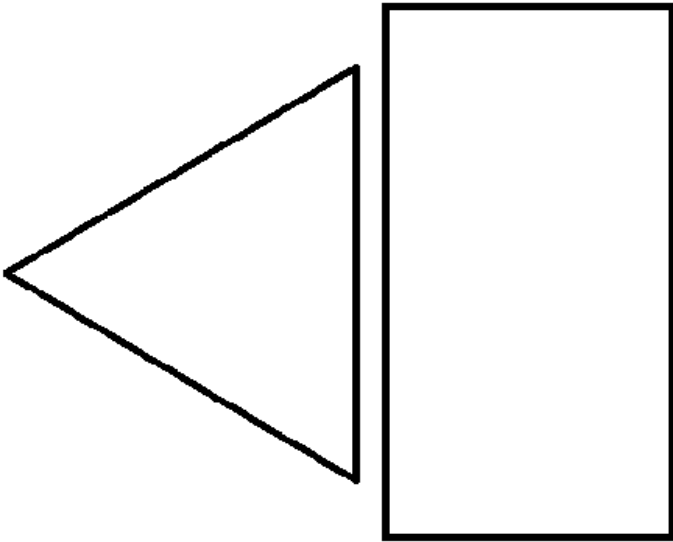
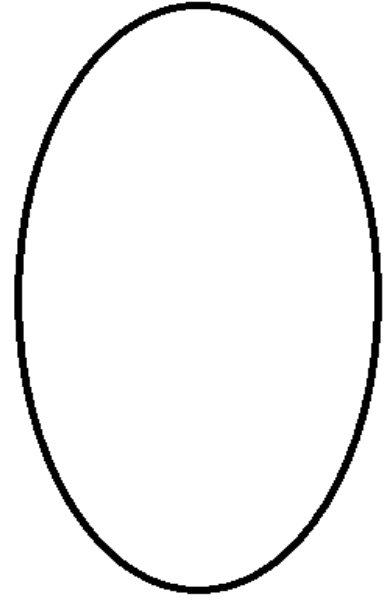
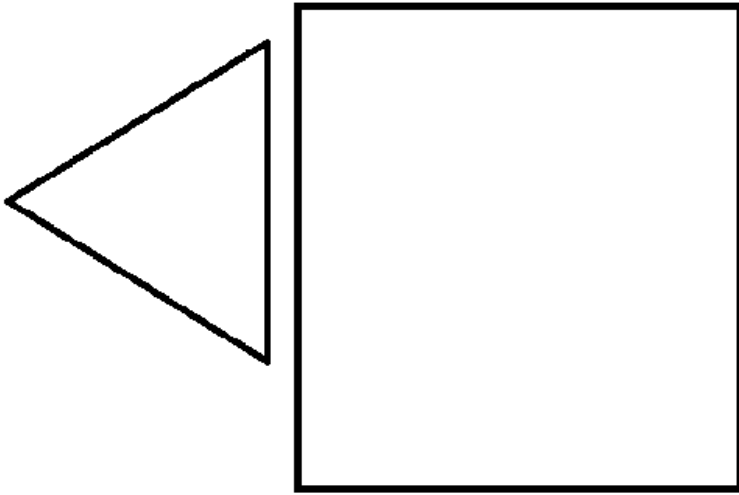
Writing: At the junior level, students are required to generate ideas about topics using different strategies and resources to present effective written work. This activity allows students to reflect upon their ideas, thoughts and experiences associated with different forms of communication. This activity gives students the opportunity to reflect on the benefits and challenges of different methods of communication.

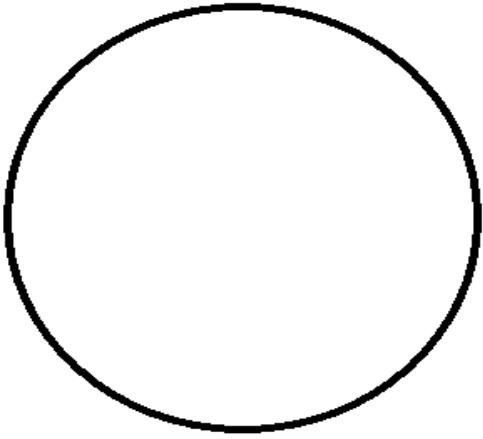
The Arts

Visual Arts: In this activity, students are expected to create a drawing based on the description received from their partner. Creating this drawing requires students to use different elements of design (lines, shapes, space, texture, etc.) as well as different principles of design (emphasis, proportion, balance, etc.).

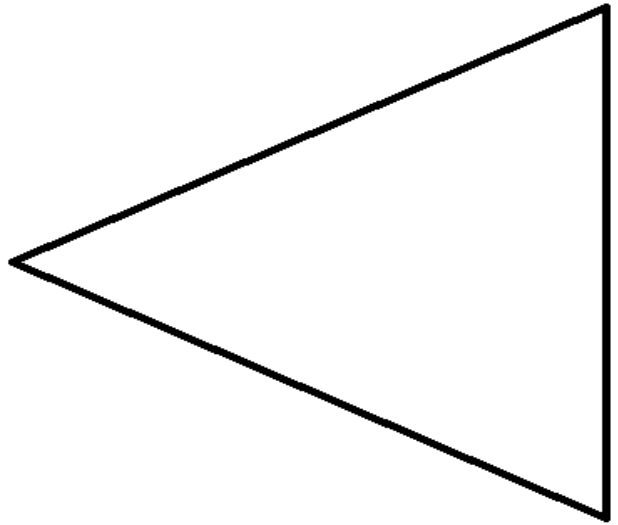








Together We Rock!



LEARNING ACTIVITY

Committing to Accessibility

Learning Objective

Students will understand the meaning of “accessible” and “inclusive,” develop a class-wide commitment statement about inclusion, and develop a personal commitment or goal to make their classroom more inclusive.

Time Required

This activity can be completed in 40-60 minutes.

Materials

The materials for this learning activity include:

- one blank piece of paper for each student;
- pen or pencil for each student;
- chart paper/chalk board/white board;
- one large sticky note for each student; and
- stickers.

Background Information

The Together We Rock! elementary presentation encourages students to take a leadership role in creating more accessible and inclusive communities. This activity allows students to review definitions of accessibility and inclusion and discuss some of the many barriers to accessibility. Students develop a vision of a truly inclusive classroom and school community. Students then set specific goals, both as a class and as individuals.

Definitions

Accessibility: When a place or an activity is accessible it means that everyone can go there or join in. To make a place or activity accessible, we need to make sure there is nothing standing in the way (a barrier). Things that stand in the way can be physical barriers like doors with no automatic door openers or steps with no ramp. The things that stand in the way can also be barriers you can't see, like the negative way people feel about someone who is different or who has a disability or a rule set by the school or community.

Inclusion: Inclusion means that everyone in the classroom or community feels welcome and accepted. Everyone takes part and shares in all the activities and experiences that are available in the class or community. Everyone feels like they belong, and the things each person does for the class or community are appreciated.

Learning Activity Description

Students will draw their vision of an accessible and inclusive classroom on a piece of paper, make a personal commitment to creating an inclusive classroom, and then follow through on that commitment to make it happen.

Activity Steps

STEP ONE:

- Review definitions of “accessibility” and “inclusion” with students. Remind students that barriers to accessibility can include physical barriers, attitudes, technology, communication and rules.

STEP TWO:

- Split the students up into groups of three or four and ask them to come up with some of the key features of an accessible and inclusive school community.
- After approximately 5-10 minutes, have the students share some of their ideas with the rest of the class.
- Write down the ideas on the board or on chart paper.

STEP THREE:

- As a class, use these ideas to come up with a classroom commitment to create a more accessible and inclusive classroom. The classroom commitment could be a vision statement (“We commit to using people-first language” or “We will always remember to make our classroom accessible”), or a specific classroom goal (“We will raise money to build a ramp at the front of the school”).
- Write this statement on a piece of chart paper and display it in the class.
- On a regular basis throughout the rest of the school year, have a discussion with the class to see if they are still following through on the classroom commitment. Ask students to constantly be thinking about how they can extend the classroom commitment to the rest of the community.

STEP FOUR:

- After the class has come up with the classroom commitment, ask students to consider all of the ideas that have been suggested. For the remaining time, challenge each student to come up with a personal commitment to create an accessible and inclusive classroom and community.
- Have students write their commitment on a sticky note, then have them post the sticky notes on the chart paper or on the wall for everyone to view.
- Tell students that you will check in with them in a week to see if they are following through on their personal commitment.
- Follow up with students a week later to find out if any of them have met their personal commitment. For those who have, mark their sticky note with a checkmark or sticker. Encourage the students to continue working on their commitment to creating an accessible and inclusive community.

Curriculum Connections

There are various cross-curricular opportunities to link this activity with curriculum standards in the areas of Language Arts and The Arts. The examples below are curriculum connections within the elementary school curriculum of the Province of Ontario, Canada and can be adapted to curriculum expectations in other jurisdictions.

Language Arts

Language Arts expectations focus on the students' knowledge and skills in reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy. At the junior level, students are using their life experiences and prior knowledge to communicate a broad range of information and ideas.

Oral Communication: Students use listening and speaking skills to communicate to their classmates their vision of an accessible and inclusive school community. Students are to communicate in a clear and coherent manner while presenting their thoughts on inclusion and accessibility. Students are required to use appropriate words and phrases from the full range of their vocabulary to communicate their meaning accurately.

Writing: At the junior level, students are required to generate ideas about topics using different strategies and resources to present effective written work. This activity allows students to reflect upon their ideas, thoughts and experiences associated with inclusion and accessibility to create their personal commitment.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Our School Community

Learning Objective

This activity will encourage students to start thinking about their school community and whether everyone feels they belong and are respected. It also encourages students to consider what communities lose when they exclude people.

Timeframe

This activity can be completed in 15-20 minutes.

Materials

The material for this learning activity includes:

- white board/chalk board/chart paper.

Background Information

When imagining accessible and inclusive school communities, it is important to embrace the diversity that exists within that community. Within communities, people form connections and relationships, which extend to feelings of belonging and being valued.

Definitions

Community: A community is a place or a group where people feel like they belong and accept that everyone is different. People take part in activities, care about each other and work together to find answers to problems.

Diversity: A community has diversity when the people who are part of community have different talents, abilities, backgrounds, likes and dislikes and these differences are celebrated. These differences can include some things that you can see (like the colour of someone's skin or the fact that someone is a wheelchair user) and other things that you can't see (like our talents and likes and dislikes).

Inclusion: Inclusion means that everyone in the classroom or community feels welcome and accepted. Everyone takes part and shares in all the activities and experiences that are available in the class or community. Everyone feels like they belong, and the things each person does for the class or community are appreciated.

Learning Activity Description

This learning activity encourages students to identify the similarities and differences of everyone in the school community and to determine how their school could be more accepting of everyone.

Activity Steps

STEP ONE:

- Students can remain at their desks for this activity or join together in a community circle if space permits.
- Display the following quote from John Draper, Founder of Together We Rock!, on your Smart Board/ chalk board or somewhere else in the classroom.

A community is a place or group where everyone feels they belong and where they respect each other's differences. People have similar opportunities, care about each other and work together to find solutions.

STEP TWO:

- Ask students to think about this quote and to discuss how their school is a community. To help them get started, you can pose the following questions:
 - Who are the members of our school community?
 - How are the people in our school similar in their abilities, appearances, interests and families?
 - How are the people in our school different from each other?

STEP THREE:

- Ask the students to think about the similarities and differences of the people in their school community and to discuss whether their school is accepting of everyone and whether there are ways their school could be better at being more accepting of everyone.
- After having this discussion as a class, have the students write down a response to the following questions:
 - How are the people in our school similar in their abilities, appearances, interests and families?
 - How are the people in our school different?
 - How could our school be more accepting of everyone?
 - How do you think people feel when they are included?

- How do you think people feel when they are not included?

STEP FOUR:

- Ask the students to answer the following new question:
 - How are you going to make your school or community more accessible and inclusive to ensure everyone feels that they belong?
- Ask them to begin their answer to this question with “I Rock because I will...”
- After students have finished writing their responses, have them share some of their “I Rock because...” ideas with the rest of the class.
- Together We Rock! would love to hear your ideas! Go to the *Making a Difference* page on our website and submit a class commitment to making your school or community more accessible and inclusive, or encourage students to submit their own personal commitment individually.

Curriculum Connections

There are various cross-curricular opportunities to link this activity with curriculum standards in the areas of Language Arts and The Arts. The examples below are curriculum connections within the elementary school curriculum of the Province of Ontario, Canada and can be adapted to curriculum expectations in other jurisdictions.

Language Arts

Language Arts expectations focus on the students' knowledge and skills in reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy. At the junior level, students are using their life experiences and prior knowledge to communicate a broad range of information and ideas.

Oral Communication: Students use listening and speaking skills to communicate with their classmates their vision of an accessible and inclusive school community. Students are required to use appropriate words and phrases from the full range of their vocabulary to communicate their meaning accurately. This activity allows students to use descriptive vocabulary to express feelings and thoughts while listening to the responses of their classmates.

Writing: At the junior level, students are required to generate ideas about topics using different strategies and resources to present effective written work. This activity allows students to reflect upon their ideas, thoughts and experiences associated with inclusion and accessibility to create their own personal commitment. This activity also gives the students an opportunity to share their personal commitment to inclusion and accessibility with the Together We Rock! team.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Our Vision

Learning Objective

By the end of the learning activity, students will understand the meaning of “accessible” and “inclusive.” Students will envision a fully inclusive and accessible school community and learn how to turn that vision into a reality.

Timeframe

This activity can be completed in 30-40 minutes.

Materials

The materials for this learning activity include:

- chalk board/white board/chart paper;
- coloured pencils or markers for each student;
- one sticky note, sticker or star for each student;
- tape; and
- One *My Vision* template for each student (see template at the end of this learning activity).

Background Information

The Together We Rock! elementary presentation encourages students to take a leadership role in creating more accessible and inclusive communities. This activity allows students to review definitions of accessibility and inclusion and discuss some of the many barriers to accessibility. Students develop a vision of a truly inclusive and accessible classroom and school community. Students then set specific goals, both as a class and as individuals. This activity should help inspire students to think about potential steps to make this vision a reality.

Definitions

Accessibility: When a place or an activity is accessible it means that everyone can go there or join in. To make a place or activity accessible, we need to make sure there is nothing standing in the way (a barrier). Things that stand in the way can be physical barriers like doors with no automatic door openers or steps with no ramp. The things that stand in the way can also be barriers you can't see, like the negative

way people feel about someone who is different or who has a disability or a rule set by the school or community.

Community: A community is a place or group where people feel like they belong and accept that everyone is different. People take part in activities, care about each other and work together to find answers to problems.

Inclusion: Inclusion means that everyone in the classroom or community feels welcome and accepted. Everyone takes part and shares in all the activities and experiences that are available in the class or community. Everyone feels like they belong, and the things each person does for the class or community are appreciated.

Learning Activity Description

In this activity, students will draw a picture of their vision of what accessible and inclusive school communities looks like, choose one vision to be the class vision, and discuss how to make it happen.

Activity Steps

STEP ONE:

- Students can remain at their desks or join together in a community circle if space permits.
- Ask students to discuss what they learned from the Together We Rock! presentation.
- List the students' responses on the board or chart paper.

STEP TWO:

- Have the students return to their desks (if applicable) and ask them to brainstorm about their vision of what an accessible and inclusive school community looks like. Examples are:
 - ramps and automatic doors at the entrance of the school
 - everyone playing together at recess, cooperating and having fun
 - students working together in a group on a project
 - students helping one another when they do not understand a concept in class
 - students with a disability participating in accessible activities during recess and gym class

STEP THREE:

- Hand out a *My Vision* template to each student.

- On the template, have each student draw a picture that illustrates their vision of an inclusive and accessible school community. Under the illustration have them write a short paragraph or statement to describe their vision.

STEP FOUR:

- Have each student post their vision somewhere visible in the classroom or on the wall outside the classroom.
- Tell the class they will now do a gallery walk to view all of the different visions and will vote for their favourite vision. Give each student a sticky note, sticker or star for voting. Invite the students to walk around the classroom to view all of the visions. Ask them to vote for their favourite vision by placing their sticky note, sticker or star on their choice.
- Determine which vision has the most sticky notes, stickers or stars and announce this favourite vision to the class.
- Have the students discuss how they can make this vision happen.
- Email your class favourite vision to Together We Rock! and we may post it on our website.

Curriculum Connections

There are various cross-curricular opportunities to link this activity with curriculum standards in the areas of Language Arts and The Arts. The examples below are curriculum connections within the elementary school curriculum of the Province of Ontario, Canada and can be adapted to curriculum expectations in other jurisdictions.

Language Arts

Language Arts expectations focus on the students' knowledge and skills in reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy. At the junior level, students are using their life experiences and prior knowledge to communicate a broad range of information and ideas.

Oral Communication: Students use listening and speaking skills to communicate to their classmates their vision of an accessible and inclusive school community. Students are required to use appropriate words and phrases from the full range of their vocabulary to communicate their meaning accurately. This activity allows students to use descriptive vocabulary to express feelings and thoughts while listening to the responses of their classmates.

Writing: At the junior level, students are required to generate ideas about topics using different strategies and resources to present effective written work. This activity

allows students to reflect upon their ideas, thoughts and experiences associated with inclusion and accessibility to describe their vision of an accessible and inclusive school community.

The Arts

Visual Arts: In this activity, students are expected to apply the elements of design in order to produce an art piece that expresses their feelings and communicates their thoughts and ideas of an accessible and inclusive school community. Having a gallery walk allows students to observe, analyze, and respond to other creations within their classroom.

My Vision

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Together Our Voices Can Be Heard

Learning Objective

This activity will encourage students to reflect on the topics of accessibility, inclusion and community and will demonstrate the influence that a group of students can have when they work together to deliver a specific message they believe in.

Timeframe

This activity can be completed in two 40-50 minute periods.

Materials

The materials for this learning activity include:

- white board/chalk board/chart paper;
- one piece of paper for each student; and
- pen or pencil for each student.

Background Information

The Together We Rock! elementary presentation encourages students to take a leadership role to create a more accessible and inclusive school community. This activity allows students to reflect on the topics of accessibility, inclusion and teamwork and review the key messages from the Together We Rock! presentation.

Definitions

Accessibility: When a place or activity is accessible it means that everyone can go there or join in. To make a place or activity accessible, we need to make sure there is nothing standing in the way (a barrier). Things that stand in the way can be physical barriers like doors with no automatic door openers or steps with no ramp. The things that stand in the way can also be barriers you can't see, like the negative way people feel about someone who is different or a rule set by the school or community.

Community: A community is a place or group where people feel like they belong and accept that everyone is different. People take part in activities, care about each other and work together to find answers to problems.

Inclusion: Inclusion, or including everyone, means that everyone in the classroom or community feels welcome and accepted. Everyone takes part and shares in all the activities and experiences that are available in the class or community. Everyone feels like they belong, and the things each person does for the class or community are appreciated.

Learning Activity Description

In this activity, students will create a short commercial, bulletin, poem, rap song or infomercial to convey the most important message they have learned from the Together We Rock! presentation.

Activity Steps

STEP ONE:

- Ask the students what they think the key messages were from the Together We Rock! presentation. Write down their responses on the chalk board/white board/chart paper
- Write the following question on the chalk board/white board/chart paper:
 - How can we help our school community better understand the messages from the Together We Rock! presentation?
- Write the students' responses on the chalk board/white board/chart paper.
- On the board write the following key messages from the Together We Rock! presentation:
 - Believe in possibilities
 - Celebrate that we are all different and that's okay
 - Everyone belongs and feels welcome
 - If we work together, we can make a difference
- Ask each student to decide which message is most important to them.

STEP TWO:

- Divide students into small groups, so that students who have chosen the same message are in the same group. (If many students pick the same message, feel free to allow more than one group to work on the same message.)

- Tell groups that they will be creating a two-minute commercial, bulletin, poem, rap song or infomercial to convey the message they have chosen.
- Have the students work together as a team to write their message. While writing their message, they need to keep in mind how they are presenting their message (i.e. if they are presenting their message as an infomercial, they need to have a catchy slogan).
- Monitor each group to ensure that students remain focused on the message chosen. This portion should be completed by the end of the first work period.

STEP THREE:

- In the second work period, reassemble the students in their groups to continue working on their messages. Students should have already decided how they are going to present their message but should now be focusing on the details.
- Monitor each group to ensure that students remain focused and that everyone in the group is participating.

STEP FOUR:

- Have students present their creative work to the class.
- As a class brainstorm how the creative messages could be shared with the school or the community.
- Email the ideas for sharing these messages to Together We Rock! and we may post them on our website.

Curriculum Connections

There are various cross-curricular opportunities to link this activity with curriculum standards in the areas of Language Arts and The Arts. The examples below are curriculum connections within the elementary school curriculum of the Province of Ontario, Canada and can be adapted to curriculum expectations in other jurisdictions.

Language Arts

Language Arts expectations focus on the students' knowledge and skills in reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy. At the junior level, students are using their life experiences and prior knowledge to communicate a broad range of information and ideas.

Oral Communication: Students use listening and speaking skills to communicate to their classmates the key messages from the Together We Rock! presentation. Students are required to use appropriate words and phrases from the full range of their vocabulary to communicate their meaning accurately. This activity allows students to use descriptive vocabulary to express feelings and thoughts while listening to the responses of their classmates.

Writing: At the junior level, students are required to generate ideas about topics using different strategies and resources to present effective written work. This activity allows students to reflect upon their ideas, thoughts and experiences associated with inclusion and accessibility to express their key message. The students will need to use creative language to express their chosen message in their final piece of work.

The Arts

Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts: This activity allows students to choose how they want to present their final message. Students are expected to apply the creative process and elements of design in order to produce a final two-minute presentation. This final presentation must express their feelings and communicate their chosen message. Students are able to choose whether they want to incorporate dance, drama, music and/or visual arts into their presentation.

SECTION THREE GLOSSARY



DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

The following definitions may be helpful to your efforts to implement the presentation preparatory and follow-up activities.

Accessibility: When a place or activity is accessible it means that everyone can go there or join in. To make a place or activity accessible, we need to make sure there is nothing standing in the way (a barrier). Things that stand in the way can be physical barriers like doors with no automatic door openers or steps with no ramp. The things that stand in the way can also be barriers you can't see, like the negative way people feel about someone who is different or a rule set by the school or community.

Community: A community is a place or group where people feel like they belong and accept that everyone is different. People take part in activities, care about each other and work together to find answers to problems.

Disability: Disability refers to one or more medical, visual, intellectual, learning, hearing or mobility conditions. A person's disability can happen at birth, can be the result of an accident or illness, or can develop at a later stage in life. A disability can prevent a person from doing some things that other people can do. However, barriers created by society (such as prejudice and negative stereotypes) are more likely than the disability itself to prevent someone with a disability from fully participating in their community.

Diversity: A community has diversity when the people who are part of community have different talents, abilities, backgrounds, likes and dislikes and these differences are celebrated. These differences can include some things that you can see (like the colour of someone's skin or the fact that someone is a wheelchair user) and other things that you can't see (like our talents and likes and dislikes).

Inclusion: Inclusion, or including everyone, means that everyone in the classroom or community feels welcome and accepted. Everyone takes part and shares in all the activities and experiences that are available in the class or community. Everyone feels like they belong, and the things each person does for the class or community are appreciated.