

Understanding Disabilities

Summary

Students will get past misconceptions about people with disabilities through activities that create empathy for those with disabilities.

Main Core Tie

Health Education - 5th Grade

[Strand 1: HEALTH FOUNDATIONS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF HEALTHY SELF \(HF\) Standard 5.HF.4:](#)

Time Frame

1 class periods of 30 minutes each

Group Size

Pairs

Materials

- Paper and pencil for each student
- Small mirror for each student
- Pair of socks, 1 per student pair
- Large, button-up shirt, one per student pair
- Copy of "The Friembly Bog" (included at end of this lesson plan)
- Copy of American Manual Alphabet for each student

Background for Teachers

Mental Retardation- means that a person learns more slowly compared with most people. Sometimes they act and look differently than others their own age. May have trouble speaking, learning to write alphabet, learning to feed self. Most can work, have friends, and have fun just like everyone else.

Learning Disability- You can't tell by looking at them or talking to them. They may have trouble reading and writing. Sometimes when they look at a word, looks backward, or letters and words don't make sense.

Cerebral Palsy- People are born with it. Means that messages from the brain to the body get mixed up. Muscles may be rigid and spastic. Trouble walking, may be in a wheelchair, trouble talking and eating because their muscles won't do what they want them to do. Just as smart as anyone else.

Deafness- Some people can't hear at all, others can hear some things.

Student Prior Knowledge

This lesson can be included in units on Self Acceptance/Acceptance of others/Diversity.

Intended Learning Outcomes

- Students will get past misconceptions about people with disabilities.
- Lesson promotes positive interactions between people with disabilities and others.

Instructional Procedures

Pass out materials to all students.

Discussion:

What do you think when you see someone in a wheelchair?

Someone who walks/talks/looks different compared to most people?

Who uses a cane or seeing-eye dog?

Who can't hear?

What do you wonder about them? (Why they can't walk/talk. If they are "retarded".)

How do you think people with disabilities are treated by others? (Stared at, teased, ignored.)

How do you feel when people stare at/tease/ignore you?

You don't want to make someone feel bad, but sometimes when you see something different, you don't know how to act.

I want you to know more about people with disabilities so that you feel comfortable around them and can be their friend. We'll look at some today.

Define Mental Retardation and Learning Disability.

Model for students to hold their mirror at top of paper so that the paper is reflected in the mirror and they can see what they will write on paper.

Instruct them to write the alphabet WITHOUT looking at their paper, only looking in mirror.

Tell students they are not allowed to talk or laugh during any of the activities.

After, ask:

How did you feel doing that?

How did your work look? (Frustrated, stupid, want to quit) Explain: Some people with disabilities try their hardest, but it is very hard for them.

Instruct students to open their copy of "The Friendly Bog". They will each read one sentence until finished.

After, ask:

How did you feel when you saw the story? When you had to read it aloud? (Frustrated, stupid)

How did it feel to have to wait while classmates struggled to read? (Impatient) Explain: You are all smart, but you had trouble reading.

Many with learning disabilities are smart too, but letters don't make sense to them.

Read translation. Point out the mix-ups between "b" and "d", backward words.

Define Cerebral Palsy.

Divide students into pairs. Each pair should have 1 pair of socks and 1 shirt.

Instruct one student to put socks on hands and the other to put the shirt on, leaving it unbuttoned.

The student with the socks will attempt to button the shirt. Then students switch.

Teacher can walk around the room, observing each group.

Ask:

How did it feel?

What was hard/easy about it?

How did you feel with people watching you?

Did you feel like laughing? Why? (Embarrassed, stupid, took too long)

Instruct students to look at their copy of American Manual Alphabet.

Review and practice letters with students.

Have each person write one word on a strip of paper and put them in a pile at front of room.

One student comes forward and takes a piece of paper. Student signs the word while others guess.

Student who guesses correctly is next to choose and sign a word.

Wrap up: I hope you now will be able to have more understanding of people with disabilities. Ask for questions. Ask students how their feelings about people with disabilities have changed.

Assessment Plan

Assessment can take place as students discuss how feelings have changed about people with disabilities.

Authors

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