



# CELEBRATING DIVERSITY



## READY-TO-USE STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A teaching resource to foster inclusive classrooms  
and appreciation for human diversity

Designed for use in grades 4–8

- Language Arts
- Social Science and Social Studies
- Health and Physical Education
- Citizenship





# CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

The materials for **Celebrating Diversity** are supplied by Classroom Connections in partnership with Special Olympics Canada and Subway. This resource is a revised and extended reprint of an earlier edition, published in October 2000.



## First Edition

### **Writing Team:**

Marian Reimer, Theresa Kim and Lisa Kelley

### **Materials Development:**

CoEd Communications Inc.

### **Editing and Design:**

New Concept

## Second Edition

### **Writing Team:**

Heather Lang and Suzanne Anderson

### **Project Manager:**

Suzanne Anderson

### **Editor:**

Lori Anderson

### **Design:**

Travis Hines



**Celebrating Diversity** can also be downloaded from our website ([www.classroomconnections.ca](http://www.classroomconnections.ca)) and from [www.osoinc.com](http://www.osoinc.com).

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# SPECIAL OLYMPICS — WHO WE ARE

Special Olympics provides athletes with an intellectual disability the opportunity to experience and succeed in sport. Special Olympics athletes gain self-confidence and transfer the success from the playing field to becoming more active citizens in society.

Special Olympics is not an event that takes place once every two or four years. There are hundreds of Special Olympics programs throughout the province that provide athletes with opportunities to train twelve months of the year. Special Olympics athletes train and compete at community and regional events, and every two years they have the opportunity to be selected to advance to provincial level competition. Just like other great Canadian athletes, Special Olympics athletes also have the opportunity to advance to national and international competitions every four years.

If you want more information, please write or call Special Olympics Canada at:

60 St. Clair Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2N5

Phone: 416-927-9050

Fax: 416-927-8475

Email: [info@specialolympics.ca](mailto:info@specialolympics.ca)

# ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

There is no question that Canada is a country with an increasingly diverse population. Schools are being challenged as never before to respond to a complex range of needs while building classrooms and schoolyards that are safe and inclusive. The activities in this resource raise awareness in youth about the challenges and strengths of diversity, and the critical need for mutual respect and understanding. Students are encouraged to understand the consequences of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination through experiences that foster empathy, compassion, connection and belonging.

Through the use of these resources, students will be able to:

- understand and value differences among individuals
- construct an understanding of the concepts of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination
- recognize the consequences of behaviours such as exclusion, bullying and violence
- empathize with others' experiences and perspectives
- identify the capacity of each individual to take action and make a difference
- engage in hands-on activities to celebrate diversity

## PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

In many classroom settings, instruction tends to be based on either the “learning about” or the “learning for” approach. Learning *about* is a knowledge-oriented approach, mainly concerned with the assimilation and interpretation of facts, concepts, data and evidence. The learning *for* approach values acquisition or development of skills, which in turn enables students to apply the knowledge they have acquired. This resource adopts the learning *in* (or *through*) approach, whereby the actual process of learning is as significant as the content transmitted.

This approach is built on the premise that learning is reinforced through the very nature of the activities and the classroom environment created. The quality of interpersonal relationships and the methods of teaching and learning need to be consistent with the core values of the learning material. Therefore, in this resource, a caring, inclusive and safe environment is modelled in the classroom through activities designed to be co-operative, interactive and participatory.

Accommodations can be made to the materials to meet the special needs of individual students. Some recommended strategies include:

- increasing the time allotted for activities
- adapting the levels of participation required
- providing individual support during the activity
- simplifying instruction techniques
- modifying outcome expectations
- engaging multiple learning styles



# ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Many of the topics in these activities have direct applications to the themes and strands explored within grades 4–8 Language Arts, Social Science and Social Studies, Health and Physical Education, and Citizenship curricula in provinces across Canada. For best results, we recommend using this resource in an integrated fashion, linking the content and skills to your own provincial/territorial curriculum guidelines.

## TIPS FOR USING THIS RESOURCE

The term “lesson” has been used loosely to describe a collection of activities that develop student understanding around a particular set of concepts. It does not imply that this set of activities could be completed in one class. Not only are class lengths variable from one school to the next, but experience in co-operative learning, language level, special needs and group dynamics all affect the time needed to complete these activities. The teacher is the best judge of these factors.

For best results, we recommend using the entire resource in the order presented, yet we recognize this might not be possible for everyone. Consequently, the resource has been designed so that teachers can select single activities, a group of activities that form one “lesson” or a set of “lessons.” The grade levels targeted are 4–8, but many of the activities could be modified to accommodate other participants, inside and outside the classroom environment.

Although the lessons in this resource are designed to avoid high-risk situations for students, teachers themselves play a critical role in facilitating and debriefing when dealing with sensitive topics. They must be mindful of the pairings and groupings used in activities and ensure that no student feels marginalized, intimidated or silenced.

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS CANADA VIDEO

Accompanying this resource is a 12-minute video about Special Olympics Canada. The video challenges common misconceptions about the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities, while sharing the accomplishments of athletes from Special Olympics Canada. It also introduces the inspirational story of Dr. Frank Hayden, founder of the Special Olympics. Thousands of volunteers worldwide have taken up Dr. Hayden’s work to ensure that people with intellectual disabilities have the opportunity to gain self confidence and physical fitness through participation in sports. The **Special Olympics Canada** video lends both visual and emotional support to the resource.



# LESSON OVERVIEW

#	Topic	Overview	Materials Needed
1	<b>Similarities and Differences</b> (page 7)	Through classroom-wide activities and the use of Venn diagrams, students examine similarities and differences among their peers, identifying the unique talents and skills they bring to the classroom. Issues explored include the value of diversity and the important distinction between appearance and character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• newsprint and markers</li> <li>• scraps of paper (from the recycling bin)</li> </ul>
2	<b>Stereotypes and Stories</b> (page 9)	Students construct an understanding of the concept and impact of stereotypes through the exploration of fairy tale characters and traits attributed to particular animals. Alternative fairy tales are created that counter traditional messages and challenge familiar stereotypes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scraps of paper or notebooks</li> <li>• newsprint and markers</li> <li>• artistic supplies</li> </ul>
3	<b>The Role of Media</b> (page 11)	Through analysis of media examples, students examine the ways that individuals and groups are commonly presented. They identify dominant images in our culture and the stereotypes perpetuated. Students actively search for non-stereotypical images of marginalized groups and create collages that challenge typical representations of our population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Who's Doing What?</b> handout</li> <li>• <b>Media Analysis</b> handout</li> <li>• magazines (business and fashion)</li> <li>• scissors, glue, markers and newsprint</li> </ul>
4	<b>Actions and Consequences</b> (page 14)	Through the exploration of case studies, students construct an understanding of the connection between stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination and identify possible consequences. In developing alternative outcomes to the case studies presented, students begin to recognize that their everyday individual actions can impact the lives of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Case Studies</b> handout</li> <li>• <b>Scenario Analysis</b> handout</li> </ul>
5	<b>What Can I Do?</b> (page 18)	Students reflect on what they have learned in the unit and consider a range of possible actions that they could take to respect and promote diversity. They assess the difficulty and impact of a range of actions and choose two that they feel comfortable undertaking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Action Cards</b> handout</li> <li>• envelopes and scraps of paper</li> <li>• artistic supplies</li> </ul>
6	<b>Joining With Others</b> (page 20)	Students read profiles of other youth who have made a difference and explore their motivation for action. Students write a response paper on one of the youth and participate in a culminating hands-on action project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Youth Profiles</b> handout</li> <li>• <b>Action Project Reference Sheet</b></li> </ul>

# LESSON 1: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

**Objectives:** Through classroom-wide activities and the use of Venn diagrams, students examine similarities and differences among their peers, identifying the unique talents and skills they bring to the classroom. Issues explored include the value of diversity and the distinction between appearance and character.

**Materials needed:**  newsprint and markers  
 scraps of paper (from the recycling bin)

## ACTIVITY 1: WHO ARE WE?

1. The teacher seats students in a large circle on the floor and asks a volunteer to stand in the middle of the circle and get the game started. The following rules are explained.
  - The student standing in the middle asks classmates a question such as: Does anyone have more than three siblings? Was anyone born in another country? Has anyone travelled abroad? Does anyone speak more than one language?
  - Any students answering yes must stand up and scramble to find a seat in another opening of the circle.
  - The person who asked the question must also grab a seat, which leaves one person standing in the centre.
  - The student left standing poses another question to classmates and the cycle continues.
2. Class discussion follows using debriefing questions.

### Possible Discussion Questions

- Do you share many of the same characteristics with your friends/classmates?
- Did any of the things you had in common surprise you? Did any of the differences surprise you?
- How does having diversity in our classroom contribute to our experience?

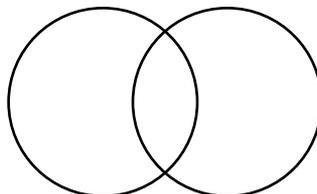
**Accommodation:** Any students with physical barriers (or the entire class, if desired) can participate with a show of hands. Alternatively, students with special physical needs could be given a role in tallying the number of responses to each question and noting whether the questions focus on features over which students have control. (In such instances, results should be incorporated into the debriefing and used as a basis for discussion.)

## ACTIVITY 2: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

**Note to Teacher:** If students don't have experience with Venn diagrams, it may be necessary to do an example as a class. It is important to be mindful of the pairings for this activity. This could be a high-risk exercise if students do not feel comfortable with their peers.

1. Students spend a few minutes individually recording a list of characteristics they would use to describe themselves. (Make sure they know they will be sharing this list with a partner.)
2. Students form pairs (ideally working with a friend or a classmate with whom they feel safe), receive a sheet of newsprint and proceed to draw the following Venn diagram using large overlapping circles.

Figure 1



3. Each student claims a circle, and partners take turns sharing their lists of personal characteristics. As students read their lists, their partners identify any characteristics that they have in common and write them in the overlapping section of the Venn diagram. Each student records those characteristics that are unique to themselves in the non-overlapping section of their circle.
4. After completing the Venn diagram, students circle characteristics that have to do with appearance, draw a rectangle around things related to their personality and put a star beside things over which they have no control or cannot change (e.g., where they were born, eye colour).
5. As a class, debriefing occurs using the following questions.

**Possible Discussion Questions**

- Did you have more similarities or more differences? Is that good or bad?
- Do you think you are exactly like anyone else? Would you want to be? Why or why not?
- How many of the characteristics you have listed relate to appearance? Personality? Which do you think are the most important kind of characteristics when looking for a friend? Why?
- Were many of the features listed ones that could be changed? Would you want to change them if you could?
- How do you think it feels when people are bullied or made fun of for things they can't or don't want to change? (It is important to raise the point that bullying tends to target fixed, superficial features such as appearance, over which people have no control.)
- Would your diagram look a lot different if you did it with someone from another school? Another city? Another country?
- Are there characteristics that all humans share no matter where they live or what they do?

## ACTIVITY 3: CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Students record a unique skill or talent they possess on a separate scrap of paper (from the recycling bin) and crumple it into a snowball.
2. Returning to a large circle, the teacher counts to three and students toss their snowballs into the centre. After another count of three, students fetch one of the snowballs, uncrumple it and read it to themselves. The teacher randomly calls on students to share these anonymous talents with the rest of the class.
3. Debriefing follows by discussing how each unique individual has something valuable to contribute to society.

**Did you know?**

- Between 1996 and 1998, about 230,000 immigrant children and youth (under 15) arrived in Canada. Nearly half came from Asia and the Pacific region. 71% could not speak either of Canada's official languages when they arrived.
- In 1996, 13% of Canadian youth were from visible minorities and 45% had at least one parent from an ethnic origin other than Canadian, British, French or Aboriginal.
- In 2001, 4% of Canadian children (under 15) had physical and intellectual disabilities, and 72% of these children had more than one type of disability.
- 3% of all Canadians have intellectual disabilities; 300,000 of them live in Ontario alone.

Immigrant Youth in Canada, Canadian Council for Social Development, 2000. Selected Ethnic Profiles of Canada's Young Age Cohorts, Department of Canadian Heritage, 1999. Disability in Canada: A 2001 Profile, Office for Disability Issues, Government of Canada. Coaching Technical Manual, Special Olympics Canada.

# LESSON 2: STEREOTYPES AND STORIES

**Objectives:** Students construct an understanding of the concept and impact of stereotypes through the exploration of fairy tale characters and traits attributed to particular animals. Alternative fairy tales are created that counter traditional messages and challenge familiar stereotypes.

**Materials needed:**

- fill-in-the-blanks list below
- scraps of paper or notebooks
- newsprint and markers
- artistic supplies



## ACTIVITY 1: FAMILIAR GENERALIZATIONS

**Note to Teacher:** This activity is designed to help students explore the concept of stereotypes within a safe and abstract context.

1. Using notebooks or a scrap of paper, students listen closely and fill in the blanks with their first responses. The teacher reads the following list out loud at a quick pace to encourage immediate response.
  - Princesses are \_\_\_\_\_. They live in \_\_\_\_\_. Their hair is \_\_\_\_\_ and their skin is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Witches are \_\_\_\_\_. Their hair is \_\_\_\_\_ and they dress in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Owls are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Wolves are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Donkeys are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Pigs are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Spiders are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Foxes are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Three friendly animals are: \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The teacher reviews responses with the class, calling randomly on students to ask which words they selected and why.

### Possible Discussion Questions

- Did many of you come up with the same or similar answers? Why or why not?
- Where do you think these generalizations come from?
- Can you think of any exceptions to these generalizations (e.g., the good witch in *the Wizard of Oz*, the spider in *Charlotte's Web*)? How do we explain these exceptions?
- What other generalizations originate from fairy tales or children's stories?
- Do you know anything about the real characteristics of the animals listed? Does what you know match with the way they are often presented? (Wolves, for example are actually very social animals with strong maternal instincts.)
- Can you think of any reason why it might be dangerous to make such generalizations? If you met a witch, would you prejudge her character? Would it affect your behaviour toward the witch?

**Note to Teacher:** Prejudice and discrimination will be defined and explored thoroughly in Lesson 4. This debriefing serves only as an introduction to the concepts.

## ACTIVITY 2: DEFINING STEREOTYPES

1. In groups of four, students complete a placemat activity. On a piece of newsprint, students write the word “stereotype” in a box in the centre of the page surrounded by four quadrants labelled A through D (see Figure 2).

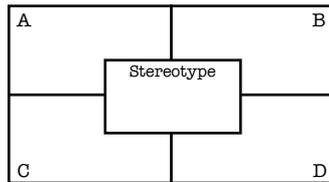


Figure 2

2. Students letter themselves from A to D and take a few minutes to individually record their understanding of the word “stereotype” or related concepts in their corresponding quadrant of the placemat. Students discuss their definitions and ideas as a group and reach consensus on a group definition to be recorded in the centre of the placemat.
3. A volunteer from each group shares the group’s definition with the class, and then students develop a definition as a class (e.g., stereotypes: generalized, unfounded statements about an entire group that are used to categorize people [often in a negative way]. They often carry the message that ALL people or things in a group are exactly the same.)

### Possible Discussion Questions

- Where do you think stereotypes come from? How do we learn them?
- Are stereotypes based on fact or fiction? (Emphasize that stereotypes tend to arise from inaccurate or unfounded information. The more we know, the more difficult it is to judge and categorize.)
- How can stereotypes cause problems in the way we relate to other people?
- What sorts of groups do you belong to (e.g., sports teams, clubs, choirs)? Are you exactly like everyone else in those groups?
- How do you think it feels to read fairy tales and stories where none of the characters share the same physical features as you?

## ACTIVITY 3: WRITING A NEW STORY

**Note to Teacher:** For the following activity, students can be allocated time in class and/or asked to complete the activity as homework. Having traditional fairy tales available for reference will help students to develop the material.

1. As a class, students discuss the components of traditional fairy tales by comparing a variety of familiar tales. Are there typical ways that the stories are structured? What kind of messages are they trying to convey? What kind of characters are usually included?
2. After some class guidelines for the genre have been established, students work individually or in pairs to create their own non-stereotypical fairy tales. The stories can be revised versions of traditional fairy tales where stereotyping is eliminated or reversed, or students can follow the model of a traditional fairy tale and create brand new stories.
3. Students work through the writing process, creating an outline and several draft versions.
4. Once the final draft is approved by the teacher, students rewrite their tales into a storybook format with illustrations.

**Extensions:** Students read their non-stereotypical fairy tales to children in younger grades as part of a Reading Buddies program.

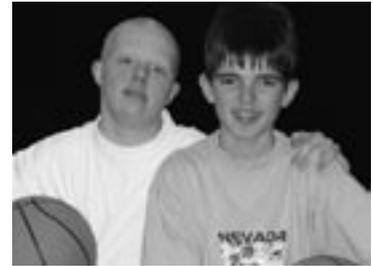
# LESSON 3: THE ROLE OF MEDIA

## Objectives:

Through an analysis of media examples, students examine the ways that individuals and groups are commonly presented. They identify dominant images in our culture and the stereotypes perpetuated. Students actively search for non-stereotypical images of marginalized groups and create collages that challenge typical representations of our population.

## Materials needed:

- an assortment of mainstream magazines (fashion and business)
- scissors, glue, markers and newsprint
- copies of the **Who's Doing What?** and **Media Analysis** handouts



## ACTIVITY 1: WHO IS VISIBLE?

1. Using the magazines and scissors provided, groups of four students search for pictures of people doing different types of activities. Once the groups have collected a variety of pictures, they each choose 10 that show the best range of activity.
2. Students number each picture from 1 to 10 and receive the **Who's Doing What?** handout. As a group, students complete the information requested.
3. Students are then given the **Media Analysis** handout to work on as a group. If extra space is needed, answers can be completed on a separate page.
4. A classroom discussion of students' responses follows using the questions below.

### Possible Discussion Questions

- Based on what you found, do you think the magazines accurately represent the Canadian population? Why or why not?
- Do you think that there were any stereotypes presented in the pictures? If so, what are they? (e.g., All businessmen are \_\_\_\_; All models are \_\_\_\_.)
- Did you find advertisements that specifically worked against stereotypes in our society, or made fun of the generalizations that are often made?
- Were there people in the pictures that looked like you? How would you feel if you never saw someone who looked like you in the media?
- Are there people from our population that are not represented in these photos?
- Do you think there are any consequences to the way the media portrays people? If so, what are they?

## ACTIVITY 2: CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

1. The teacher asks students to conduct an ongoing search in magazines and other media for pictures or advertisements that counter traditional stereotypes (e.g., weight, age, gender, culture) and to collect them in a file for an assigned date.
2. After materials have been selected, student work in pairs to produce “anti-stereotyping” collages to be posted on the classroom wall or in the school hallway.

**Note to Teacher:** If students had difficulty assembling images, students could create advertisements or “culture jams” that challenge stereotypes commonly presented in the media.

# WHO'S DOING WHAT?

#	Description of individual	What is the individual doing?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

# MEDIA ANALYSIS

1. What colour of skin was the most common in your pictures?
2. How old were most of the people in your pictures?
3. What body types were the most common to the people in your pictures (e.g., thin, short, heavy)?
4. Are there differences between what men and women are doing in the pictures? If so, what are they?
5. Do any of the pictures show people with physical or intellectual disabilities? If so, what are they doing?
6. In any of the pictures, are people wearing any clothing or symbols that indicate religious beliefs (e.g., a hijab, turban, skullcap, kippah, bindi)? If so, what are these people doing?
7. Are there people in your pictures that may have come from different cultures? If so, what are they doing?
8. Did you see any youth or children? What did they look like? What were they doing?
9. If you found people doing the following things, describe what they looked like.
  - playing sports
  - working in an office
  - socializing
  - caring for children
  - cleaning the house
  - playing an instrument

# LESSON 4: ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

**Objectives:** Through the exploration of case studies, students construct an understanding of the connection between stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination and identify possible consequences. In developing alternative outcomes to the case studies presented, students begin to recognize that their everyday individual actions can impact the lives of others.

**Materials needed:**  **Case Studies** handout (cut into sections with one case study per student)  
 **Scenario Analysis** handout (one per student)

## ACTIVITY 1: DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING

1. The teacher distributes **Case Study A** and the **Scenario Analysis** handout to each student. Students are given a few minutes to become familiar with the scenario.
2. In pairs, students complete the **Case Study A: Frank** section of the **Scenario Analysis** handout.
3. As a class, students discuss their responses and answer the following questions.
  - What were the consequences of the way that people acted toward Frank?
  - How could things have changed for Frank if his classmates did not make fun of him for his answers to questions?
  - What might have happened if his teacher talked to the people who made fun of him?
  - What could have happened differently if Frank was able to be on the team?
  - Do you think it was fair that Frank did not get to play hockey?

## ACTIVITY 2: ACTING IT OUT

1. The teacher divides the class into five groups and assigns each group a letter (from B to F). Students in each group receive copies of their assigned case study. After students have a few minutes to read and familiarize themselves with their scenario, they complete the appropriate section of the **Scenario Analysis** handout.
2. Each group prepares and acts out the assigned case study to the class, while the rest of the students complete the appropriate section of the **Scenario Analysis** handout.
3. Immediately following the first presentation, each group presents their scenario a second time. This time, students in the audience are encouraged to yell “Freeze” at a turning point in the story and replace one of the secondary characters in the scenario. The replacement’s task is to change the response of a character in order to impact the outcome for the main character.
4. After all of the scenarios and alternate endings have been presented, students discuss their responses from the **Scenario Analysis** handout, and the teacher debriefs the class using the questions outlined below.

### Possible Discussion Questions

- Can you think of a word to describe the assumptions you identified in the third column of the table? (Define prejudice as prejudging what someone is like because the person belongs to a particular group.)
- Can you think of any words to describe the actions from the fourth column? (Define discrimination as treating someone differently because he/she belongs to a particular group.)
- Do you think excluding someone is a form of bullying? Why or why not?
- What kind of power do you have as an individual to affect the lives of others with your actions or inaction? Do most people take that power seriously?

# CASE STUDIES

## CASE STUDY A: FRANK

Frank has an intellectual disability, and sometimes it is hard for him to keep up with the rest of the class. He likes to participate, but when he gets an answer wrong a couple of his classmates make fun of him. They think that because he has a disability he belongs in a special school, or worse, held back in an earlier grade. The teacher pretends not to notice these jokes, but Frank knows she hears. He doesn't participate in class discussions very much anymore. Instead, he focuses on his number one passion — sports. Frank is a talented athlete, but when he went to try out for the school hockey team, he needed a little extra help with the rules, and the star player on the team told him to stop wasting their time. He was proud of himself, though, because he skated really fast and shot the puck really well. When he came out of the change room after the tryout, though, the coach said that the team was full, so he couldn't play. The next day he heard that people were still trying out, so he thought they just didn't want him on the team. Frank loved playing hockey. It made him feel good about himself to know he could do something really well, but after that day he decided that he would never play hockey again.



## CASE STUDY B: THEMBA

Themba's family moved to Canada from Africa after a war broke out in his country. He knew they were very lucky to leave their hardships behind them and start a new life in a free country, but it would not be easy. Themba had to leave his friends behind, start a new school and learn a new language in a completely foreign culture. But nothing prepared him for the way his new classmates would treat him. They called him "backwards," made fun of his English and the colour of his skin and no one would sit with him in the cafeteria at lunchtime. One day he finally built up the courage to try to befriend a couple of guys who had moved to Canada from Eastern Europe only three years ago. He thought they might understand his situation. But when he sat down at their table in the cafeteria, they told him to go back to where he came from. He felt so bad at that moment that he almost wished he could leave the country. That was the last time Themba made an effort with his classmates. He spent the rest of his time at school alone.



## CASE STUDY C: MELANIE

Melanie's mother has been on welfare for the past six months and has not been able to buy her new clothes for school. Melanie is embarrassed to wear her older brother's worn-out hand-me-down jacket while everyone else in school is wearing the latest fashions. She keeps to herself most of the time, hoping no one will notice her. But lately a few other girls in the schoolyard have been bullying her, asking her where she buys her clothes, when was the last time she took a shower and if she sleeps on the street. What hurts Melanie the most is that one of the girls, Lisa, used to be her friend, until Lisa was accepted by the more popular crowd. Lisa is not the one shouting out the insults, but it hurts just as much when she laughs at their jokes. Melanie comes home upset everyday and blames it on her mother, but she knows it's not her mother's fault and, in the end, it leaves her feeling worse. She wants to quit school and get a job so she won't have to worry about money anymore. If her mother has a problem with that, Melanie thinks she'll just have to run away.

# CASE STUDIES

## CASE STUDY D: SONIA

Sonia has been playing soccer since she was five years old. Her older brothers and their friends spend every summer's night playing in the park, and they have always treated her like one of the guys. Sonia could not wait to try out for the soccer team at her new junior high school, which has some of the best sport facilities in the city. But only three people signed up for the girl's soccer team this year, so it was cancelled. Sonia was devastated and left with no choice but to try out for the boy's team. She could not believe it when they started making fun of her, telling her to go join the cheerleading squad. And to make matters worse, the girls made fun of her too. Some hid from her in the locker room and started calling her names. Sonia hated the way they whispered about her. One day she couldn't control her anger and got in a fight with a girl who made fun of her. She was suspended from school and warned that if it happened again she'd be permanently expelled.



## CASE STUDY E: TIM

Tim was born with a physical disability for which he needed a wheelchair. In his old school, he had been class president and one of the smartest students in his grade. Some of the kids were even jealous that he had his own set of wheels while the rest of them needed to walk. But Tim was just transferred to a new school where he would be more academically challenged. It was wheelchair accessible of course, but with so much commotion in the hallways it was hard to get around, and no one offered Tim any help. He decided to run for student council and put together a great campaign, but he just wasn't attracting the support he had hoped for. In a panel interview in front of the entire school, Tim was asked what sort of leadership he could possibly have to offer given his disability. Tim's parents and teachers had always told him he could be anything he wanted to be, except maybe a runner. Tim had dreamed of becoming a politician, maybe even prime minister of Canada. But suddenly that idea seemed impossible. He dropped out of the race for student council and gave up on his dream of a political career.



## CASE STUDY F: FATMA

Fatma was born in Canada where she was raised in a religious Muslim family. Like her mother and her sisters, she wears a hijab (head covering) everyday. In the big multicultural city where she grew up, lots of her friends wore hijabs and no one treated it as uncommon. But Fatma's dad just got a new job, and the family moved to a smaller community where everyone seemed to look the same. Fatma stood out like a sore thumb at her new school. To make things worse, it was the year of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center. She felt the fear and hatred in other students and knew they thought she couldn't be trusted. Finally one day, a couple of students vandalized her locker, writing "terrorist" on it with a thick black marker. When Fatma saw what had been written, she started to cry and demanded to know who wrote it. Other students in the hallway knew who was responsible and felt sorry for Fatma, but no one approached her. The next week they were told that Fatma had switched schools. It was too late to say sorry or reverse the damage that had been done.

# SCENARIO ANALYSIS

<b>Case Study</b>	<b>Stereotypes presented in the scenario</b>	<b>Negative assumptions made about the main character</b>	<b>Negative behaviour or action taken toward the main character</b>
<b>A: Frank</b>			
<b>B: Themba</b>			
<b>C: Melanie</b>			
<b>D: Sonia</b>			
<b>E: Tim</b>			
<b>F: Fatma</b>			

# LESSON 5: WHAT CAN I DO?

**Objectives:** Students reflect on what they have learned in the unit and consider a range of possible actions they could take to respect and promote diversity. They assess the difficulty and impact of a range of actions and choose two that they feel comfortable undertaking.

**Materials needed:**  **Action Cards** handout (cut up and placed in envelopes — one set per group of three)  
 extra envelopes, scraps of paper and artistic supplies

## ACTIVITY 1: FOUND POETRY

1. The teacher asks students to write down a phrase that stands out for them from the activities they have done in the **Celebrating Diversity** unit. Alternately, students can think about the concept of diversity and write down a related phrase or set of words that comes to mind.
2. Standing in circles of up to 10 students, each student reads his or her phrase out loud in turn.
3. Students can reposition themselves in the circle and repeat the exercise to create new combinations. Purposeful adjustments can be made to improve the flow of their found poetry before it is presented to the rest of the class.
4. Poems can be put on posters with graphics, to display in the classroom or in the school.

## ACTIVITY 2: EVALUATING ACTIONS

1. The teacher divides the class into groups of three and provides each group with an envelope containing 20 **Action Cards**. Group members then spread the cards out so all students can read them. Students have a few moments to read and consider the actions.
2. Groups organize the cards in three to four categories of their own choosing, giving each category a title, printed on a scrap piece of paper. Students visit another group's table to compare how they chose to categorize the actions.
3. As a class, students discuss the different ways that the groups organized the material and the reasons for their choices (e.g., time commitment involved, attitude versus action).
4. Returning to their groups of three, half of the groups are asked to rank the cards from the actions they think are the easiest to take to the actions they think would be the most difficult. The other half of the groups rank the cards from those that they think could have the most impact to the ones they think would have the least impact. Class discussion follows.

### Possible Discussion Questions

- Was it hard to agree on the rankings within your group? Why or why not?
- For the groups that looked at impact, was it difficult to judge what the potential impact could be? Why or why not?
- Looking at how groups rated the actions, is there any connection between the difficulty of the action and its potential impact?
- Can you think of some other actions you could take to celebrate diversity?

## ACTIVITY 3: PERSONAL COMMITMENTS

1. Individually, students choose two specific actions that they feel comfortable taking by the end of the school year. Students write these actions on a piece of paper, seal them in an envelope with their name on the outside and hand it in to the teacher.
2. At the end of the school year, the teacher returns the envelopes to students and asks them to write a reflection on whether they were able to undertake these actions.

# ACTION CARDS

Make friends with a student who is always excluded or made fun of.	Smile and say hello to students you don't know.
Be conscious of how much emphasis is placed on appearance and clothing, and point it out to your friends.	Write a letter speaking out against stereotypes you come across in movies, TV shows and other media.
Don't take part in name calling, teasing or bullying and don't use language that describes any group of people in a negative way.	Try not to prejudge other people because of how they look or what they are wearing.
Offer assistance to someone with a disability who looks like they could use a hand.	Introduce yourself to new students in your class, school or neighbourhood and include them in your group of friends.
Go to an ethnic restaurant, watch movies about a different culture, attend a cross-cultural music event or a religious service with which you are unfamiliar.	Imagine how your day might be different if you were of the opposite gender, your parents earned more or less money, you were born into another religion or culture, or you had a physical or intellectual disability.
Start a diversity club or a peer tutoring club to help students learning English as a second language or students with intellectual or learning disabilities.	Spend time with an elderly relative or visit someone in a retirement facility and ask questions about that person's life experiences.
Say something when you hear people making offensive jokes or comments about individuals or groups.	Encourage and help other people if you notice that they are having trouble with a task.
Encourage your school to celebrate the holidays of other cultures or ask your teacher if you could make an international calendar as a class project.	Volunteer or collect donations for an organization that helps people with disabilities, families dealing with poverty, children with illnesses, etc.
Plan an event or a speaking engagement in your class, school or community to celebrate diversity.	Ask classmates who speak different languages to teach you some new words.
Don't buy toys for yourself or others that reinforce stereotypes.	Get involved if you see someone being bullied or discriminated against.

Adapted from The Embracing Cultures Project  
 ([www.freethechildren.org/cultures/takeaction/75ways.html](http://www.freethechildren.org/cultures/takeaction/75ways.html))

# LESSON 6: JOINING WITH OTHERS

**Objectives:** Students read profiles of other youth who have made a difference and explore their motivation for action. Students write a response paper on one of the youth and participate in a culminating hands-on action project.

**Materials needed:**  copies of the **Youth Profiles** handout for all students  
 the **Action Project Reference Sheet**

## ACTIVITY 1: YOUTH IN ACTION

1. The teacher asks students to read the **Youth Profiles** handout and create and complete a table like the one in Figure 3.

Name	What issue is the youth addressing?	What inspired the youth to take action?	List five personal qualities you would use to describe the youth profiled.
Nancy			
Anitra			
Alex			

Figure 3

2. Students discuss the following questions as a class.
- Do you think that you have to be personally affected by an issue in order to get involved?
  - Are there any similarities among the youth profiled?
  - Do you think that their actions have an impact on the lives of others? How?
  - Do you think there's a stereotype that children can't make a difference? Are children discriminated against because of that stereotype? If so, how?
  - What do you think are the benefits of joining with other youth to get involved in an issue? What do you think are the challenges?
3. The teacher asks students to write a response paper on one of the youth, including the following information.
- Why did you choose this particular youth?
  - Explain the issue pursued, action taken and motivation for wanting to make a difference.
  - Do you share any personal characteristics or life circumstances with the youth you have chosen? Explain.
  - Imagine you have an opportunity to interview the youth you have chosen. Write five open-ended questions (i.e., can't be answered yes/no) that you would like to ask that person.
  - Do you think that youth have the ability and opportunity to really make a difference? Why or why not?

**Note to Teacher:** There are a lot of people who are making a difference everyday in our world, such as Dr. Frank Hayden, who founded the Special Olympics, and Craig Kielburger of Kids Can Free the Children. Other inspiring profiles of youth in action are available at [www.freethechildren.com/cultures](http://www.freethechildren.com/cultures).

## ACTIVITY 2: TAKING ACTION

1. As a class, or as part of a school initiative, students undertake a culminating hands-on, action-oriented performance activity. For guidelines and other suggestions, see the **Action Project Reference Sheet** (page 22).

# YOUTH PROFILES

## NANCY LA NEVE

In eighth grade, Nancy started a campaign in her school called “Collect the tabs to get the wheels rolling.” Nancy organized the collection of pop-can tabs for an organization that sells the recovered aluminum in order to buy wheelchairs for people who can’t afford them. She had never been involved in any projects like this before, and she didn’t have any personal experience with disabilities. However, she was anxious to contribute something to her community. She connected with other youth from her school, and by the end of the school year about 800 students had collected over 100,000 tabs. When the representative came to collect the tabs, he was shocked as the students wheeled in boxes stacked on boxes to the gymnasium. The look on his face motivated Nancy to see that she could really make a difference. Since then, Nancy has become an active volunteer in a youth organization called TakingITGlobal, and she represents the voices of over 2 million secondary school students as an executive member of the Ontario Student Trustees’ Association. Now, at age 16, her leadership is an inspiration to students across the province. According to Nancy, “Once young people make the decision to get involved the hardest part is over. If young people believe in themselves and in what they have to offer, then they can achieve absolutely anything!”

For a profile on Nancy visit [www.takingitglobal.org/community/profile.html?memberid=375](http://www.takingitglobal.org/community/profile.html?memberid=375).

## ANITRA SUMBRY

Sometimes, walking down the hallway of her high school, Anitra Sumbry would hear someone say, “Oh, there’s the Oreo.” She was one of the few African-American students in her classes, and most of her friends were white. The joke was meant to imply that she was white on the inside and black on the outside. She started to question the labels people place on others because of the colour of their skin, and she became concerned with the discrimination and racism occurring in her own school. Anitra had already visited other cultures and had even volunteered overseas in Zimbabwe, Kenya and Thailand. She knew first-hand that the colour of a person’s skin could not define who they were, and she wanted other students to understand that as well. In 2002, Anitra decided to take some time out of her studies to become a motivational speaker with the Embracing Cultures Project. Since then she has been touring schools across North America, delivering school-wide presentations and leadership training workshops to help prevent others from experiencing discrimination in the hallways.

For profiles on Anitra visit [www.freethechildren.org/youthinaction/all\\_star\\_anitra.htm](http://www.freethechildren.org/youthinaction/all_star_anitra.htm) or [www.volunteernow.ca/take\\_action/anitra\\_sumbry\\_bio.htm](http://www.volunteernow.ca/take_action/anitra_sumbry_bio.htm).

## ALEX APOSTOL

Since he was 14 years old, Alex has been actively committed to making a difference in the lives of others. Alex became concerned about the homeless people he saw sleeping on the streets of his community, many of whom were close to his own age. He began distributing food and supplies to people on the streets, and he listened to their stories. Alex realized that many of these youth were victims of abuse, struggled with psychological problems or had no financial or emotional support. Living in the streets was not a choice for them, but a necessity. Alex realized how fortunate he was to have the comforts of his life, and he became very active in working to eliminate poverty and social inequality. Participating in a program called Leaders Today, Alex runs leadership workshops for students and organizes campaigns and fundraisers. He has also volunteered overseas, helping to build schools in war-affected developing countries. Now 18, Alex is finishing high school and is planning to continue his work in this area.

For profiles on Alex visit [www.freethechildren.org/youthinaction/all\\_star\\_alex.htm](http://www.freethechildren.org/youthinaction/all_star_alex.htm) or [www.volunteernow.ca/take\\_action/alex\\_apostol\\_bio.htm](http://www.volunteernow.ca/take_action/alex_apostol_bio.htm).

# ACTION PROJECT REFERENCE SHEET

Working together toward a group goal is a great way to promote respect and understanding among diverse groups. The following class or school projects provide opportunities for youth to become involved in making a difference. Encourage students to think of additional action projects related to issues of concern and be sure to incorporate the skills and experience of all your students when implementing a plan. Initiatives can be completed in groups, as a class or be built into a school-wide diversity day or week of activities.

To encourage personal ownership, engage students in the decision-making process.

1. Brainstorm a list of possible issues students are interested in, and select a specific issue through a vote, class debate or consensus.
2. Assign a research component for the topic chosen to identify the main issues, organizations working in the area and specific ways that students could get involved.
3. Develop a plan of action and a timeline identifying key steps for each stage of planning and implementation: tasks, responsibilities, dates of completion, permissions needed, logistics, budget (if applicable), etc. Allocate teams responsible for particular tasks, drawing on students' specific skills and interests. (Remember: everyone has something valuable to contribute.)
4. Most importantly, have fun making a difference!

## **Fundraiser/Drive**

Fundraisers and clothing/food drives are popular forms of school-community partnerships. Some suggestions for raising funds include bake sales, raffles, tournaments, run/walk/dance-athons, free services for donations (e.g., car washes, snow shovelling), auctions, carnivals and used toy sales. Select a non-profit organization of your choice or contact your local Special Olympics chapter, where every \$1,500 donated supports a Special Olympics athlete.

## **Embracing Cultures Project**

*Grade 7 and above:* As a class, students can choose from a series of action-oriented activities outlined on the Embracing Cultures website. Begin by inviting the Embracing Cultures Tour to your school, which features inspiring youth such as Anitra Sumbry (from the **Youth Profiles**). School visits include a school-wide presentation and a leadership workshop for 10–15 students. Involve students in coordinating and publicizing these events and recruiting workshop participants.

*All grades:* Contribute squares to the world's largest children's peace quilt, or design your own school diversity quilt (glue can be used instead of a needle and thread). See the Take Action page for more ideas and tips at [www.freethechildren.com/cultures/takeaction/index.html](http://www.freethechildren.com/cultures/takeaction/index.html).

**Note to Teacher:** Visit the Teachers Corner of this website for great resources and lesson plans that can be used as extension activities (grades 7–12).

## **March 21<sup>st</sup>: Racism Stop It!**

March 21st has been declared *International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*.

Students are encouraged to coordinate a school-wide activity to commemorate the day. Canadian Heritage Multiculturalism will provide free promotional material (including great stickers) that can be distributed at information tables over the lunch period. A speaker could be invited to kick-start an event, or the class could perform their skits from Lesson 4 or unveil their “anti-stereotyping” collages in the hallways in conjunction with this important date. See the March 21<sup>st</sup> website at <http://www.march21.com> to order materials or to sign up for their annual National Video Competition (open to students aged 12–18). Great clips from previous winning videos are posted online, which can be shown to the class or used as part of the day's activities.

# CELEBRATING DIVERSITY – EVALUATION FORM

**Educators: Please answer the following questions and fax the completed form to 416-466-3104 or mail it to 31 Cavell Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M4K 1L5.**

**1. In your opinion, please rate the need for resources related to the topics and objectives outlined.**

great need     moderate need     some need     little need

**2. Would you recommend this resource to others?**

yes     no

Why or why not?

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**3. For the lessons included please rate the following.**

Concepts presented	<input type="checkbox"/>	excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	good	<input type="checkbox"/>	average	<input type="checkbox"/>	poor
Instructional strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	good	<input type="checkbox"/>	average	<input type="checkbox"/>	poor
Fit to the curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	good	<input type="checkbox"/>	average	<input type="checkbox"/>	poor
Ease of use	<input type="checkbox"/>	excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	good	<input type="checkbox"/>	average	<input type="checkbox"/>	poor
Instructions given	<input type="checkbox"/>	excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	good	<input type="checkbox"/>	average	<input type="checkbox"/>	poor
Style of presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	good	<input type="checkbox"/>	average	<input type="checkbox"/>	poor
Educational value	<input type="checkbox"/>	excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	good	<input type="checkbox"/>	average	<input type="checkbox"/>	poor
Grade appropriateness	<input type="checkbox"/>	excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	good	<input type="checkbox"/>	average	<input type="checkbox"/>	poor
Engagement for students	<input type="checkbox"/>	excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	very good	<input type="checkbox"/>	good	<input type="checkbox"/>	average	<input type="checkbox"/>	poor

**Please comment on any of the above.**

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**4. What did you like most about the resource in general?**

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**5. In your opinion, how could the resource be improved?**

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**6. Do you have suggestions for other resources that you would like to see developed by Classroom Connections?**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade & Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

School District: \_\_\_\_\_



Celebrating Diversity was created by Classroom Connections in partnership with Special Olympics Canada and Subway.



Subway is dedicated to supporting the wonderful work of Special Olympics Canada and is pleased to help Canadian youth learn about and celebrate diversity.

For more information about Classroom Connections and other available resources, please visit [www.classroomconnections.ca](http://www.classroomconnections.ca).

For more information on the Special Olympics, please visit [www.cso.on.ca](http://www.cso.on.ca).