



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) and from www.osoinc.com.

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CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS — WHO WE ARE

Classroom Connections is a non-profit organization dedicated to instigating positive societal change by producing progressive educational resources for youth. Our award-winning resources are ready-to-use, curriculum-aligned and innovative in content and pedagogy. Since 1997, we have provided more than 15 free support resources to 80% of schools nationwide. To view our full range of resources, please visit our website at www.classroomconnections.ca.

Classroom Connections works with major education organizations in Canada (such as the Canadian Education Association and the Canadian Home and School Federation) and with a network of teachers from across the country. Through these partnerships, we determine gaps in available resources and develop program ideas to meet these gaps. We then work to match these program needs with potential funders and assemble a steering committee of field experts to advise on program development. New resources are pilot tested in schools and reviewed by educational specialists and Curriculum Services Canada (www.curriculum.org). School districts that have registered with us are alerted to the new resource, and it is delivered to the district for distribution within their schools.

Registration is free and the resources are provided to the schools at no cost. We believe strongly that equal access is an important factor in a democratic education system. Funding for our projects is raised through a combination of foundation, business and government donations and sponsorships. We abide by strict partnership guidelines to ensure our funding is responsible and ethical.

To find out more about our resources or to get information on registering your district, please visit our website, www.classroomconnections.ca, or contact us at info@classroomconnections.ca or 1-888-882-8865.

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

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.

