

This inclusion and empathy activity has been gratefully included with permission by the authors. This activity is designed to point out that we should not judge someone by their performance on a test because this does not tell us the whole story.

The teacher could also point out that we all have limitations that make some things harder for us and that it is unkind to make fun of someone who is struggling because we do not know what they are experiencing or how hard they are working to overcome their challenges. This is a great opportunity to allow students to share some of the things they are good at and some of the things they struggle with.

Materials needed:

yellow paper
red paper (or any two pieces of paper that are each a different colour), scissors
glue
stick
pen
an envelope for each group.

Preparing the students:

Split students into five groups

Each group is given a box of the same materials and told to do the following:

- 1) Take the yellow paper and cut a circle out of it.
- 2) Use the glue stick to glue the yellow circle onto the red paper.
- 3) Use the pen to write "I believe in inclusion" on the yellow circle.
- 4) Put the red folded paper into an envelope.

Activity:

Students should be told that the group that finishes first will win. The teacher should ask the students whether they believe this to be fair. Students will agree that it is. At this stage, each group, but one will be given a limitation. For example, two groups are told they can only use one hand and two groups are told that they must work with their eyes closed. These groups will struggle to complete the task.

The group with no limitations will finish first. They should be congratulated for finishing the task first and for being so "smart." Inevitably, a frustrated student will state the obvious; that the activity was not fair, because some groups had limitations / differences that made the activity harder to complete.

This experience can now become an opportunity to open up a class discussion to explore and ask questions, such as:

Can we confirm that the winning group is actually the best?

How did they feel during the activity?

Was it a fair playing field?

Was everyone on an equal footing?

Would giving the groups with limitations extra time have helped to level the playing field?

How might someone feel who has these limitations?

What can we learn from this activity?

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