

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

'SOMEONE LIKE ME' ESSAY COMPETITION

PRIMARY SCHOOL RESOURCE AND LESSON PLAN

This resource has been developed to assist the delivery of development education in the primary classroom and to encourage entries into the Department of Justice and Equality's Primary School Essay competition.

PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON

- Develop student's knowledge and understanding of disabilities
- Celebrate difference amongst students and the way each student learns
- Promote critical thinking, empathy and reflection on issues of disability
- Encourage students to adopt the theme of 'Someone like me' and creatively express this in the form of an essay, audio or video submission for the Department of Justice and Equality's Primary School competition
- Have fun through interactive learning!

LESSON 1

Teaching strategy: discussion, open-ended statement

Objective: to enable pupils to acquire accurate information regarding the definition, prevalence and genesis of disabilities in Ireland

STAGE 1

Definition of special educational needs¹:

"Special Educational needs" means, in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.

Prevalence of disability:

Approx 595,000 (13%) people² in Ireland have disabilities of whom over 53,000 are children under 15 years of age

¹ Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

² Central Statistics Office, Census 2011, Profile 8: Our Bill of Health

Causes of disability

Some people are born with a disability resulting from a genetic cause. Others have a disability because of problems at birth, an illness or an accident in early childhood

STAGE 2

In pairs ask the students to list the words they have heard to identify people with disabilities. Ask each pair to report their findings to the class, which the teacher records on the white board.

Explain to the students that people with disabilities request that appropriate language is used when describing disability. Distinguish the various types of disabilities from each other.

Present the following to the class:

- Never identify people solely by their disability instead say 'a person with a disability'
- Avoid the use of 'suffers from a disability'
- Do not use the word 'handicapped'
- Refer to those without disabilities as 'non-disabled' instead of 'normal'
- Never use words that convey negative attitudes

STAGE 3

Using a brainstorming model: discuss and list things your students like to play at break time and in their spare time. Point out similarities and differences in list

.....

LESSON 2

.....

Teaching strategy: Discussion

Objective: Celebrate difference amongst students and how each person has their own positive impact on society

Teaching material: Illustrative books focusing on a fictional children's character with a disability (suitable book to be chosen by teacher to reflect age profile of class). Suggestions include:

- 'Looking after Louis' by Lesley Ely
- 'The Bravest Boy I Ever Knew' by Lisa Eichlin

- 'Trueman Bradley: Aspie Detective' by Alexei Maxim Russell
- 'Thank you - Mr Falker' by Patricia Polacco
- 'A Boy and A Jaguar' by Alan Rabinowitz
- 'Dad and Me in the Morning' by Patricia Lakin

STAGE 1

- Read 'Looking after Louis' (or similar book) out loud to the class. 'Looking after Louis' is about a boy with autism.
- Have an open and honest discussion about a specific quote or lesson learned from the story i.e. quote from 'Looking after Louis' - 'I think we're allowed to break rules for special people'

STAGE 2

- Have students get into small groups and draw pictures of what they may have thought as 'special treatment' but really is necessary for some students (or a relevant lesson outlined from your chosen book)
- Remind students that Louis 'almost smiles' when he is given a compliment. Have students sit in a circle and give the student next to them a compliment to make them 'almost smile' (or a suitable gesture from your chosen book)

STAGE 3

- Encourage the students to ask questions about the book and about people with disabilities

LESSON 3

Teaching strategy: discussion, practical

Objective: To better help students understand the competition theme 'Someone like me' and to assist them with their entry submission 'Essay, Video, Audio' to the competition

Theme: Someone Like Me

The theme of 'Someone Like Me' celebrates each student's individuality. While we all share common interests with our peers, such as taking part in school lessons, sport and social activities, when taking part in these activities, each and every one of us has our own unique way of doing things, ranging from how we learn, our play time interaction and how we communicate with each other. 'Mary' might be the best in class at art but 'John' always scores the winning goal for the team and 'Jane' tells the funniest jokes. In our world, we all learn things

differently and may have dissimilar interests and this competition is all about embracing that everyone is a little bit different. 'Someone like me' – distinctive and gifted in our own way.

STAGE 1

- Host an open discussion of what the theme 'Someone like me' is, what it means and encourage the class to come up with ideas
- Give confidence to the students to engage in conversation and ask questions on their interpretation of the theme

STAGE 2

- Introduce the students to the various forms of submissions: essay (200 words) or a video or audio clip of up to 5 minutes in length and outline the planning stages of each:
 - Writing and editing an essay
 - Filming and editing a video clip
 - Recording and editing an audio clip

STAGE 3

- To consolidate what the students have learned, they can now create an essay, video or audio submission under the theme of "Someone Like Me". Discuss the students' ideas with them and how they can use their imagination to think of what they would most like to say
- Explain that one winning essay, video or audio (from each school) will be entered into the Department of Justice and Equality's Primary School Essay competition and that they may have a chance to win great prizes and the opportunity to attend the final event in Dublin in early December

For further details on the Department of Justice and Equality's Primary School Essay competition, entry details, deadlines and prizes, visit www.primaryschoolscompetition.com