

Neurodiversity Concept

Time: 30 minutes

Day 1

The first lesson introduces the concept of neurodiversity to the students. This is the most important message of neurodiversity advocacy.

Summary

Goals

- Explain that “neurodiversity means that all our brains are different.”
- Build foundational base knowledge for students to build off of for the rest of the week

Materials

1. Projector/TV to display slides
2. Copy of [this](#) worksheet
3. Coloring utensils
4. Scissors

Discussion 2

Transition the class into a **discussion** following this structure:

- “Did we all have the same answers to every question?”
- “Why did we all have different answers?”

Display the cartoon diagram of a human body on our slides.

- Ask students which part of the body helps us make decisions
- Ask if all of our brains are similar or different.

Introduce the key word: **neurodiversity!**

1 Would-You-Rather

Begin the lesson with a brief “would-you-rather” activity in a space where students can move freely. **Pose some questions with two options:**

- “Would you rather have the ability to fly or be invisible?”
- Would you rather always whisper or always shout?
- Would you rather eat broccoli-flavored ice cream or pickle-flavored cake?
- Would you rather play outside all day or inside all day?
- Would you rather play with a big group or one best friend?

Students then move to a designated side of the room based on their choice, or stand in the middle if unsure. After everyone has chosen a position, **invite a few students from different areas to explain their reasoning.**

Drawing Activity 3

Explain to students that they are going to decorate paper brains with what makes their brains unique and different. For **example**, if a student likes dogs, playing softball, and the color green, they could draw a dog and softball and shade the background green. Once finished, distribute scissors to cut out the brains.

Equality and Fairness

Time: 30 minutes

Day 2

Summary

The second lesson of the week introduces a framework for understanding classroom accommodations and neurodivergence.

- Explain the difference between equality and fairness
- Students should leave this lesson understanding that “what I need is different from what my classmates need.”

Goals

Materials

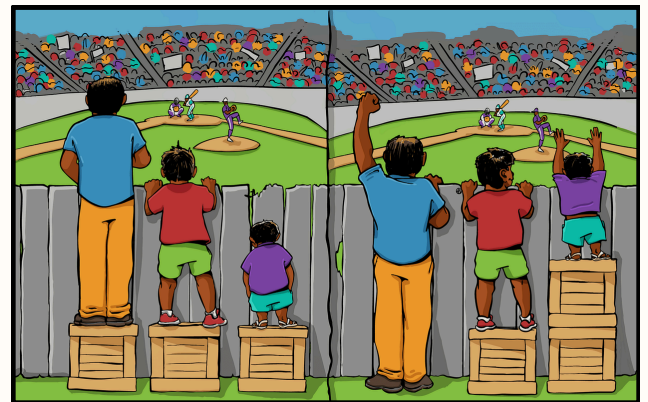
1. Whiteboard or Writing Materials
2. Printed set of these illustrations

Divide students into groups of 3-4 and give them a set of illustrations. The kids will sort these illustrated situations between “fair” and “equal” situations. (10 mins)



Story time: read the story in the slideshow to students.

Use this photo to explain the difference between fairness and equality. Ask kids for their own definitions of the two. Either ask for responses shared with the entire class (recorded on a whiteboard) or ask kids to write down their definitions.



Do we want to have a “fair” or “equal” classroom?

Final discussion →



Day 3

The third lesson of the week teaches students about acceptance of differences in communication. Neurodiversity promotes the acceptance of different forms and levels of communication.

Summary

Goals

Students should leave this lesson understanding that “People have different ways of communicating that they find easier and harder for them.”

Materials

1. Amelia Bedelia picture book read aloud ([video](#))
2. Printed set of would-you-rather prompts for whole class

Discussion

Discuss as a class: “What could Mrs. Rogers have done differently to help Amelia Bedelia understand what she *actually* meant?” Discuss the theory that communication breakdowns are a two-way problem instead of a one-sided deficit. Show students that there are many valid methods of communication and it’s important to “meet in the middle” when people have different methods. To do this, students will identify their personal communication preferences and brainstorm how to manage differences in communication.

Forms of Communication

Students should move around the classroom to indicate their response to the following would-you-rather questions:

1. Would you rather share ideas by speaking or by writing them down?
2. Would you rather read quietly or read out loud?
3. Would you rather talk to someone in a quiet room or a busy, loud room?
4. Would you rather give short answers or explain everything in detail?
5. Would you rather explain with drawings or with speaking?
6. Would you rather look at someone in the eyes while you’re talking to them or look away?
7. (Four corners question) Would you rather use your voice, your hands, your drawing, or your writing to explain something?

Scenario-based Discussion

Using the scenario provided in the slides, which depicts two students with different forms of communication, display how people might convey their feelings to one another under different environmental stressors. Emphasize that understanding how communication works between two people is something that varies by situation.

Applying Concepts

Day 4

Time: 45 minutes

Students will synthesize the concepts taught in the first three days and learn how to apply all concepts to real-life situations.

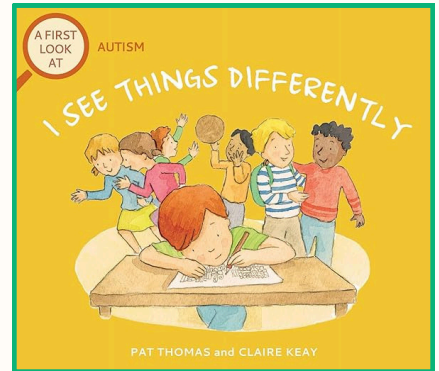
Goals

- Students will synthesize and apply neurodiversity concepts and learnings from past days to various real-world situations and contexts

Summary

Materials

1. Paper
2. Crayon/Markers
3. Picture book: [I See Things Differently: Helping Kids Understand Autism and Neurodiversity](#)



Read-aloud book

Picture book read-aloud: [I See Things Differently...](#)

High-Five Invitations

Group students into two anti-parallel lines. Students from each line will high five their peers in the other group, sharing with them one unique, one-sentence invitation such as "I'm going to play with XYZ, would you like to join?"

Final discussion

How can I apply what I've learned in my day-to-day life?

Commitment to Neurodiversity Acceptance

Time: 35 minutes

Day 5

Day five, the last day of our curriculum, is dedicated to helping classrooms commit to incorporating neurodiversity acceptance and celebration in their communities. Students will learn about the “ripple effect”, and understand that small actions can make a big impact on other people. Students will close out the week by making individual commitments to answer the guiding question, “How can I commit to accommodating and celebrating neurodiversity and neurodivergence going forward?”.

Materials

1. Original *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* picture book (linked here) OR a way to play this video for the class
2. A copy of this worksheet for every student
3. Scissors
4. Writing implements

Lesson Agenda

Read aloud (10 mins)

Begin the lesson with a read aloud of *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff. If the classroom already owns this book, it can be read aloud by the instructor. If not, the linked video can be played.

This book introduces the ripple effect—that small actions can have big impacts—which will be discussed in the context of kind actions in the following class discussion.

All-class extended discussion (15 mins)

Brainstorm as a class (write down answers on the board if possible): “What happened just because the mouse was given a cookie?”

It’s not important that the class remembers every single resultant action, but continue until the students have produced a good collection of actions.

Say: “Look at everything that happened just because the mouse was given a cookie! Small actions can have big results.”

Read the class the short story (on the slideshow, linked) about a first grader’s small act of kindness to a classmate and how that small act completely changed the classmate’s day for the better.

Brainstorm on the board: “What are small kind acts we can do that might make a big difference for somebody else?” (ex. Inviting somebody to play at recess, sharing a toy, giving a compliment)

Drawing activity (10 mins)

The final activity will guide students through making individual commitments to kindness.

Pass out the cookie worksheets (linked here) and scissors and instruct students to cut out their cookie.

Say: “Remember how just giving one mouse one cookie caused all of this (gesture to list of resultant actions generated earlier) to happen? Just one small action can have big effects. On your cookie, write one small act of kindness that you can take to have a big effect on someone else.” The list of examples from before may prove helpful here.

This cookie → act of kindness analogy may go over their heads, but the activity remains valuable. Once individual commitments are written, the paper cookies can be sent home with the students or hung up as a classroom display, perhaps with a caption along the lines of “If You Give a Friend Some Kindness...”.