



Sport-of-the-Month



floor hockey

February

This month's theme: **diversity**

Goals:

- Understand the meaning of the word *diversity*.
- Understand the importance of diversity in the classroom and communities of all types.
- Examine diversity in the classroom and the school community.

Floor Hockey in Special Olympics

Floor hockey is generally played in the style of ice hockey, except that the game takes place on a flat floor surface such as a basketball court. Players on each team attempt to shoot a ball or puck into a goal using sticks, usually with a curved end.

Week 1:

Start this lesson by brainstorming ways in which you can group your students. You may want to look at some of the previous months' lessons for ideas. Some suggestions for how you might divide your class include

- Hair color
- Gender
- Who likes pepperoni pizza
- Who owns a cat
- Who plays baseball
- Who plays the piano
- Who likes broccoli

This is an excellent opportunity to reinforce students' graphing skills. Track how many students fit into each category. Next, have your students each create one graph depicting the results of your impromptu diversity poll. (Younger students may need to work in small groups.)

How do Special Olympics activities impact students? Here's how one teacher answered:

"We have created an expectation in our school community: All students should be included, respected, and treasured whenever it is in the best interest of the kids. Our administration and staff are very supportive."





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Take Action!

- Encourage your students to gather a group of friends with and without intellectual disabilities to attend a sporting event, dance, or school function. Diverse groups add to the fun!

Week 2:

Use the student-generated diversity poll graphs created in Week 1. Give the graphs to students randomly so that no one ends up with the graph he or she created. Next, have students create an artistic vision of the class as represented in the graph they have. For example, students might make a construction paper pizza with a slice cut out to represent the students who don't like pepperoni pizza, make a collage to represent the variety of hair colors in the class, do a drawing incorporating different-colored music notes to reflect the number of piano players and non-players in the class, and so forth. Younger students may need to work in small groups. Give them many different kinds of art supplies, including paper, crayons, and glitter.

When students are done, ask them the following questions:

- Does the picture you created look like our class?
- What is different about the picture you created?
- Are there more or fewer students in the class than in your artwork?
- What art techniques did different students use to represent the same data? What other techniques can you think of that would work as well?

Finally, collect the artwork and the original graphs from your students for next week's activity.

Week 3:

Gather your students and show them some of the artwork from Week 2 and the graphs from Week 1. Brainstorm to describe the class that is portrayed in both activities.

Does it look like a class made up of lots of different types of people? Who would like to be a part of such a class? Do the classes portrayed in the graphs and artwork look like your class?

Then talk about how these many different "pictures" they have made all represent different ways to look at the same group of individuals. Explain that a community is made up of many individuals who come together to pursue similar goals. The class is made up of a teacher and many individual students coming together to form a classroom community with a common set of learning goals to achieve. The same can be said of a club or a group of sports competitors, such as in judo. While they may compete against each other, they share a common goal of enjoying their sport.

Continue to talk about the many differences within a group or community while stressing the fact that such *diversity* makes a community vibrant and exciting.

February events:

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Fans in the Stands

No one likes competing in front of empty bleachers. Fans in the Stands makes it easy for students to rally together to support Special Olympics athletes at competitive events. Fans in the Stands brings together groups of friends to design posters, gather at a local Special Olympics or Unified Sports® game or tournament, and cheer like crazy! Contact your local Special Olympics office for more information.

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Week 4:

This week, walk your students through Special Olympics' slideshow titled "The Power of Sports" available at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>. This slideshow presents an easy 12-slide overview of Special Olympics and the diversity of participants and volunteers involved. It will enhance your young students' understanding of Special Olympics and reinforce the positive nature of diversity.

After reviewing the slideshow, brainstorm with your students ways to celebrate the diversity in your classroom, grade, and school communities. To demonstrate ways in which both sports and diversity unite us, allow students to play the online Special Olympics game "We're More Alike Than We Are Different" found at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.

