



Activity 1: 6-8 Lessons

SO...What's the Challenge?

Activity Overview:

Students examine their personal experiences with intolerance, as a victim or a perpetrator, and consider the consequences of just standing by when others are targeted. They consider all of the “pieces” that make up who they are and watch an authentic story about a group of teenagers who mock a young girl because of her intellectual disability, one “piece” of who she is. They examine the impact of well-known people mocking those with intellectual disabilities and reflect upon the causes of intolerance and prejudice. They then brainstorm about how intolerance and prejudice could be reversed, particularly with kids their age. Finally, students create a product to influence their peers to reverse trends of intolerance and prejudice, particularly against those with intellectual disabilities. This lesson would work well in a unit that explores civic responsibility, societal influence, human experience, or peer pressure.

Activity 1:

SO...What's the Challenge?



Special Olympics is humanity's greatest classroom, where lessons of ability, acceptance, and inclusion are taught on the fields of competition by our greatest teachers - the athletes.

Cross-Curricular Connections:

In addition to language arts, this lesson extends into social studies – particularly civic responsibility – as well as technology. Students examine the rights of those with intellectual disabilities, consider whose responsibility it is to protect equal rights, and take action to help their generation protect those rights. The lesson's conclusion challenges students to create a technology-related product that helps empower their generation.

Academic Skills Addressed:

- Analyzing and evaluating the relationship between literary text and social contexts — e.g., identifying issues of significance within the text and generating open-ended questions about the text and its personal relevance;
- Communicating understanding of texts;
- Creating imaginative texts using strategies to contribute to collaborative projects — e.g., finding relationships among ideas generated by the group and exploring the ideas of others;
- Conveying meaning through text content and design;
- Identifying personal character traits;
- Posing reasoned questions drawn from previous learning and from personal experiences;
- Speaking and writing to express personal ideas; and
- Using persuasion to change perceptions and behavior.

Desired Outcomes:

Students will:

- Recognize the consequences of judging or being judged by only one personal trait or characteristic.
- Reflect upon the difficulties of standing up for what is right, especially to one's own friends.
- Identify the roots and consequences of non-inclusive, intolerant behavior.
- Influence others to reverse the trends of intolerant, non-inclusive behavior toward those with intellectual disabilities.

Time Required:

Two to three 45-minute class periods

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“A rewarding life is filled with challenge, so do not pity me. Give me a chance!”

Thomas Gatu, Special Olympics Athlete

Materials Needed:

- Student journals (or sheets of paper)
- Computer with access to the Internet
- Copies of Reproducible 1.1, *Pieces of Me*; Reproducible 1.2, *The “R” Word in Our World*; and Reproducible 1.3, *You’ve Got the Power!*

Background:

- Before beginning the lesson, you may want to watch the speech by Special Olympics Youth Leader and Notre Dame honor student Soeren Palumbo, which students will watch and reflect on during the lesson. Soeren tells the story of an incident that happened to his younger sister Olivia, who has intellectual disabilities, when she was mocked at a store by a group of teens. The speech is close to nine minutes long and can be found at: <http://www.specialolympics.org/video.aspx?id=6066&terms=soeren+palumbo>
- Familiarize yourself with the initiatives that are part of the Special Olympics Fan Community, found at: <http://www.specialolympics.org/community>

Important Terms:

inclusion, intellectual disabilities, intolerance, prejudice, stereotypes, tolerance



PART ONE

PHOTO BY: Ryan Eades



“There are all kinds of courage. It takes a great deal of courage to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends.”

Dumbledore, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

Activity 1: SO...What's the Challenge?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Write the following quote on the board as students enter the classroom, “*There are all kinds of courage. It takes a great deal of courage to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends.*” (Harry Potter fans will recognize the quote from Dumbledore in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone.*) **(Educate)**
2. Challenge students to read the quote and answer the following questions about it in their journal, or on a sheet of paper:
 - What does this quote mean to you?
 - Do you agree or disagree with it?
 - How does it relate to an experience in your own life?**(Educate, Motivate)**
3. Encourage students to share answers with the rest of the class. If time allows, expand the discussion to explore why it’s so difficult for kids their age to stand up to their own friends and how they have felt when they have or have not done so. Tell students that the theme of standing up for what is right provides the basis for this lesson. **(Educate)**
4. Distribute Reproducible 1.1, *Pieces of Me*. Students will identify the characteristics and traits that make them who they are and explore the impact of being identified by only one “piece.” Explain the directions, and give students time to complete the worksheet. Then ask:
 - *If you could only describe yourself using words from one of these columns, which column would you choose, and why?*
 - *If you could only describe yourself with one word from that column, would you be able to do so? If others only saw one “piece of you,” which would you want them to choose? Ask student volunteers to share which box they’d choose.*
 - *What are the challenges and consequences of only using one “piece of yourself” to describe who you are? What about using one “piece” to see someone else?* **(Educate, Motivate)**



PHOTO BY: Ryan Eades

PART ONE



Why does the use of the “R” word demonstrate intolerance?

Activity 1: SO...What's the Challenge?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

5. Tell students that they are going to watch a speech that illustrates the consequences of judging someone by one piece of themselves. Have students watch the Soeren Palumbo speech. You may want to show students the speech in its entirety or break it up using the guide below:
 - a. Stop the speech at 1:28 when Soeren describes the teens teasing an African-American child and using a racial slur. Ask students if they could ever see themselves or their friends doing something similar. They likely will say no, making the story’s reveal more powerful.
 - b. Stop the speech at 4:25 after Soeren polls his audience to see if they discriminate based on age, gender, or race. He then asks how many have used the terms or stayed silent when others used the terms, “retard” or “retarded.” Poll your students using the same question.
 - c. Finally, show the final part of Soeren’s speech in which he reveals that his younger sister Olivia was the real target of the teenagers at the store. **(Educate, Motivate)**

6. Hold a class or small group discussion using the following questions as a guide:
 - *Did you predict that the target of the teens’ discrimination was Soeren’s sister? If not, what was your reaction?*
 - *How do you think the teasing made Soeren feel?*
 - *How would you describe the teens who were teasing Olivia? (Students may use words like “mean,” but you may also want to introduce words like “intolerant” and “prejudiced.”)*
 - *Why does the use of the “R” word demonstrate intolerance?*
 - *Is it just as bad to remain quiet when someone is calling someone a “retard” as it is to use the term yourself?*
 - *How does Soeren’s story relate to Dumbledore’s quote from the beginning of the lesson? Why is it so difficult to be an innocent bystander?*
 - *How does the story relate to the “Pieces of Me” exercise you just completed? How would your life be different if you were judged by just one element of your life, especially if it was one you could not control?*
 - *How might Soeren’s story be different if (1) Olivia had been seen by the teens as more than a “retard” or if (2) One of the teens had stood up to the others?*
 - *What are the important lessons we can learn from Soeren’s story?* **(Educate, Motivate)**



Ask students if they think it is actually possible to reverse the trends of intolerance related to intellectual disabilities.

Activity 1: SO...What's the Challenge?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Challenge students to share examples of intolerance and prejudice toward those with intellectual disabilities that they've seen in the news or in popular culture. *Do they hear the R-word used in movies or songs? Do they hear famous people use it? If so, does that make it seem more or less acceptable?* Distribute Reproducible 1.2, *The "R" Word in Our World*, which gives four examples of the R-word being used in a form of entertainment or pop culture. Read one or more of the examples and discuss why the R-word may have been used in the example (to entertain, to insult, etc.); what the likely impact was; and what they would say to the artist or entertainer who used the slur. Finally, have students draw conclusions about the impact of using the R-word in popular culture, at school, and in the community as a whole. **(Educate, Motivate)**
2. Refer students back to Soeren's story (or another of the intolerance examples shared during the lesson). Ask questions such as: *Why do you think that the teens were mocking Olivia, considering they did not know her? What possible reasons might cause someone their age to be intolerant of others?* Reasons might include: influence from family, friends, or society; insecurity; fear; unfamiliarity; ignorance; competitiveness; need to conform; need for power; or lack of education. Have students brainstorm at least one idea for reversing or overcoming each reason on their list. For example, inviting a student with intellectual disabilities to come to their class might help overcome or reverse unfamiliarity. **(Motivate)**
3. Ask students if they think it is actually possible to reverse the trends of intolerance related to intellectual disabilities. For those who say, "No," challenge them to explain. For those who say, "Yes," challenge them to identify whose responsibility it is to make that happen. You may want to create a list of responses. Do students think that their generation shares that responsibility? Have students get out their journals again and complete this sentence, *"In order for my generation to help reverse stereotypes against those with intellectual disabilities..."* Share answers with the class. **(Motivate, Activate)**
4. Distribute Reproducible 1.3, *You've Got the Power!*, which challenges student groups to create a product or project to influence *their* generation to reverse intolerant, non-inclusive behavior related to those with intellectual disabilities. They can act upon one of the ideas from the list above or come up with a new one. Their project should be targeted to kids their age and focus on either the power of inclusion related to those with intellectual disabilities or the negative impact of prejudice or intolerance toward those with intellectual disabilities. **(Motivate, Activate)**

Activity 1: SO...What's the Challenge?



Does prejudice
and intolerance
exist at your
school? In your
community?

Reflection:

Have students reflect in their journals (or on a sheet of paper) about an experience from their own lives, at school, or in their community, when they either:

- Discriminated against someone
- Stood by quietly as a friend discriminated against someone, or
- Were a victim of discrimination.

Their reflection could be shown in words or pictures – as a drawing, paragraph, or even a poem. It should include a description of the situation, how they felt during and after the incident, and what, if anything, they would change if they could. Have student volunteers share these experiences with the class or in small groups. What common elements do the stories share? Based on the examples, would students say that prejudice and intolerance exists at your school? In your community? What about prejudice and intolerance specifically for those with intellectual disabilities? Does that exist at the school or in the community?

Suggested Assessment:

Challenge students to write a blog entry that answers the question from this activity's title: "SO ... What's the Challenge?" Their answer should include examples from the activity and from their own personal experience.

Inclusive Classroom Modifications:

- You may wish to include a scribe, read aloud or peer buddy during some of the activities. Remember that all students can learn from each other, and those who have intellectual disabilities can give unique insight and perspective into the discussion.
- Consider sending students home with the *Pieces of Me* reproducible to complete with a family member.
- For this lesson, you may also want to rephrase the questions to be more guided. Examples include:
 - For the "Pieces" activity, ask: *What do you like to do? What do you like to do but cannot?*
 - For the reflection in Part Two, Step 1, prompt students with intellectual disabilities to share their experiences if their feelings have been hurt or they have been excluded.
 - The projects in Part Two, Step 4 can take many forms, allowing students' individual strengths (e.g., drawing, painting, photos, music) to shine through. Students can express feelings using drawings of faces that represent feelings, and social stories can help get messages across. The students can also write their own social story.



“From now on, all young people, both those who compete as athletes and those who serve with them, can be a part of the Special Olympics family through SO Get Into It.”

Timothy Shriver,
Special Olympics
Chairman and CEO

Activity 1:

SO...What's the Challenge?

Cross-Curricular Extensions:

Civics

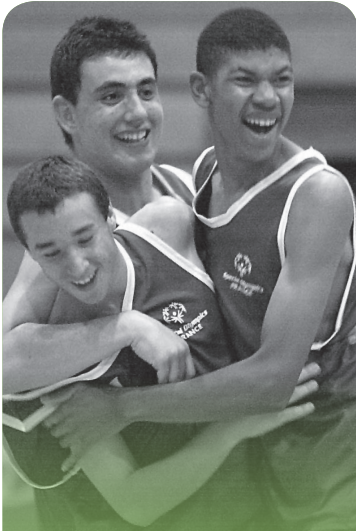
- Divide students into two groups. One group will be challenged to develop a list of rights for students their age. The other group will be challenged to develop a list of rights for students their age with intellectual disabilities. Compare lists. If appropriate, add to each list if something from the other list pertains. *Do students with and without intellectual disabilities have different rights? What conclusions can you draw from the exercise?*

General Extensions and Modifications:

- Encourage students to take and persuade their friends to take the R-word pledge on the Special Olympics Web site at: <http://www.r-word.org>
- Challenge students to write one or two letters: a letter from Olivia Palumbo to the teens who mocked her, or a letter from one of the teens to Olivia.
- In addition to the Dumbledore quote, have students identify or research other examples from literature and film of passive/reluctant bystanders and/or active/heroic bystanders (not necessarily in the face of bullying). Some examples might be: Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*; Edmond helping the White Witch in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*; Huckleberry Finn helping Jim in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; or Roy stopping Dana from his bullying on the bus in *Hoot*. Have students select one example and rewrite the plot in a way that a passive bystander becomes active or vice versa.
- Encourage students to research Terry Fox (<http://www.terryfox.org>) and write a magazine or newspaper article describing how this powerful young man was a model of activism and engagement and how he influenced change.
- Learn more about Special Olympics athlete, Loretta Claiborne from her humble and challenged beginnings while a student in York, Pennsylvania to her rise to world prominence. Athlete Loretta Claiborne's story may be one of the most inspiring, especially for young people. As a young person, she was told that her future would be in an institution. After discovering Special Olympics, Loretta became a long-distance runner...and she hasn't stopped since. Over her career, she competed in 25 marathons - twice finishing in the top 100 women runners in the Boston Marathon. The Women in Sports Hall of Fame inducted her as a member, and Runner's World magazine named her Special Athlete of the Quarter Century. Loretta speaks four languages and holds honorary doctorate degrees - the first person with intellectual disabilities known to receive such honors. Her life was the basis for Disney film, *The Loretta Claiborne Story*. In 1996, she received the coveted Arthur Ashe Award for Courage.

Learn more about Loretta at <http://www.lorettaclaiborne.com>.

Activity 1: SO...What's the Challenge?



Spread the
Word to End
the Word™

Our language
frames how we
think about
others. Help
eliminate
the use of
the R-word
in everyday
speech.

Additional Resources:

- Background information on Special Olympics:
<http://www.specialolympics.org>
- Additional information about intellectual disabilities can be found at:
<http://www.aamr.org> and <http://www.intellectualdisability.info>
- Be a Fan PSA video (30 sec):
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=26663070286>
- 3 Word video (2:45):
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=135014990286>
- Inclusion in Panama video (2:29):
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=126509085286>
- Running in Africa video (2:37):
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=126508045286>
- Eunice Kennedy Shriver Tribute video (3:51):
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=220804995286>
- “R word” speech by Soeren (9:52):
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=149050755286>
- Family Inspiration video (2:34):
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=129922390286>
- See the Athlete 1st video (31 sec): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bv4fzNYxstc>
- Joe Jonas Run for Special Olympics video (2:05): http://community.specialolympics.org/_Joe-Jonas-iWIn-Fun-Run-for-Special-Olympics/video/893530/82244.html
- End the R-word with Joe Jonas video (13 sec):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8doRD9MB0Qw>
- More Spread the Word to End the Word videos:
<http://www.youtube.com/endtherword/>



Pieces of Me

Imagine that someone you have never met has asked you to describe yourself. What words would you use? Would you list physical traits such as gender, height, or hair color? Personality traits such as kindness, good humor, or intelligence? Talents such as a soccer player, dancer, or writer?

The truth is that there are many characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, and moments that make up who you are. Use the boxes in the table below to describe yourself. The headings above each column can help to guide you.

No one will see this except you – unless you want them to!

Physical Traits (tall, short, hair color, complexion, age, gender, etc.)	Personality Traits (funny, stubborn, smart, silly, loving, driven, etc.)	Talents/ Interests (writer, athlete, speaker, dancer, problem-solver, etc.)	Things I'm Really Proud Of (accomplishments, moments, characteristics that make me proud)	Things I'd Like to Work On (traits that I'd like to improve or change)

The "R" Word in Our World

Below are a few examples from entertainment/pop culture when the "R" word was used to describe someone or something. Review the examples and think about why the R-word may have been used in the example (e.g., to entertain, to insult, etc.); what the likely impact was; and what you would say to the artist or entertainer who used the slur. What is the impact of using the R-word in popular culture, at school, and in the community as a whole?

Music: Let's Get Retarded

The song, "Let's Get Retarded," later changed to "Let's Get it Started," appeared on the Black Eyed Peas' 2003 album, "Elephunk." Its lyrics included:

Everybody, everybody, let's get into it.

Get stupid. (come on)

Get retarded (come on), get retarded (yeah), get retarded.

Let's get retarded (ha), let's get retarded in here. Let's get retarded (ha), let's get retarded in here.

Film: Tropic Thunder

The 2008 movie, "Tropic Thunder," starred Ben Stiller as Tugg Speedman, a fading action hero, and Robert Downey, Jr. as Kirk Lazarus, an Australian star. The movie uses the R-word more than a dozen times, including these lines from the script:

Stiller (As Tugg Speedman): There were times, when I was doing Jack, that I actually felt retarded, like really retarded...In a weird way, I had to sort of just free myself up to believe that it was okay to be stupid or dumb.

Downey, Jr. (As Kirk Lazarus): Everybody knows you never go full retard.

Celebrities: Guy Ritchie/Madonna

In a 2009 Esquire magazine article, producer Guy Ritchie calls his ex-wife Madonna the R-word. His quotes include:

She's a manifester, if there ever was one. First-rate manifester. Madonna makes things happen. Put Madonna up against any twenty-three-year-old, she'll outwork them, outdance them, outperform them. The woman is broad. And, of course, here you go: I still love her. But she's retarded, too.

Television: Politically Incorrect

In the late night television show, "Politically Incorrect," host Bill Maher compared his two dogs with retarded children. The transcript of the show includes these quote:

Bill: But I've often said that if I had – I have two dogs – if I had two retarded children, I'd be a hero. And yet the dogs, which are pretty much the same thing...[Laughter]...What? They're sweet. They're loving. They're kind, but they don't mentally advance at all.

Guest 1: I'm going to throw my shoe at you for that one – oh!

Bill: What? Dogs are like retarded children.

Guest 1: My 9-year-old nephew is retarded. I've never thought of him like a little dog.

Bill: Well, maybe you should.

Guest 2: But I don't think you ought to use the word retarded. I don't think that's right.

Bill: Don't use the word "retarded"? Well, what word should we use?

Guest 2: Just a regular person.

Bill: But they're not a regular person.

You've Got the Power!

Unfortunately prejudice and intolerance toward those with intellectual disabilities has been part of our society for many years. Through this lesson, you have explored and reflected upon many examples of this intolerance including the teenagers mocking Olivia; the hurtful use of the R-word in movies, music, and television; and your own personal experiences. The good news is that your generation has the power to help reverse these trends by spreading positive messages of inclusion and explaining the consequences of intolerance and prejudice.

For this activity, you will create a message, initiative, or project to influence kids your age to help reverse the trends of intolerance and prejudice against those with intellectual disabilities. You may wish to explore the Special Olympics Fan Community (<http://www.specialolympics.org/community>) to see projects created by other young people, including songs, films, photos, and messages.

Your project should be targeted to kids your age and should focus on:

- The power of inclusion related to those with intellectual disabilities
- The negative impact of prejudice or intolerance toward those with intellectual disabilities
- Or both.

Your project can take any form. Ideas include a song, letter, commercial, blog, poem, video, series of announcements, newsletter, or series of photographs.





Special Olympics

get into it

education and engagement tools
for teachers and students



Activity 2: 6-8 Lessons Changing Perceptions

Activity Overview:

In this lesson, students will reflect on their own perceptions of those with intellectual disabilities. They then will be challenged to complete an extraordinarily challenging task and relate the experience to the frustrations and feelings that those with intellectual disabilities are often faced with daily. Student groups will then complete a jigsaw activity to learn about intellectual disabilities and will watch videos featuring Special Olympics athletes from around the world. Students revisit their initial perceptions to see if and how they've changed. They reflect on the power of sports in "evening the playing field" for those with intellectual disabilities and create a project or product that celebrates the courage and spirit of Special Olympics athletes. This lesson would work well in a unit that explores civic responsibility, inclusion, or social justice.

Activity 2: Changing Perceptions



“Sports play a critical role in the health and development of all children including those with disabilities.”

Hon. Ann Veneman,
Executive Director,
UNICEF

Cross-Curricular Connections:

This lesson extends into language arts, social studies — particularly social justice — health/science, and educational technology. Students explore how sports can be an equalizer for those who may struggle in other areas. They learn about the physical causes and effects of an intellectual disability. They are challenged to use digital tools to gather, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information about those with intellectual disabilities. The lesson also includes an infusion of videos as part of the learning, and students are encouraged to create a technology-related product in the final assessment that communicates the spirit of Special Olympics athletes.

Academic Skills Addressed:

- Understanding, acquiring, and using new vocabulary;
- Reading, comprehending, and connecting informational texts to prior knowledge;
- Developing new understandings based on informational texts;
- Creating interpretative responses to texts;
- Posing reasoned questions drawn from previous learning and from personal experiences;
- Researching information to gain new understanding of topics;
- Conveying meaning through text content and design; and
- Using a variety of techniques for oral presentation.

Desired Outcomes:

Students will:

- Identify characteristics of intellectual disabilities.
- Appreciate the contributions of Special Olympics athletes.
- Synthesize their appreciation by designing an initiative to recognize Special Olympics athletes

Time Required:

Three to four 45-minute periods



Activity 2: Changing Perceptions



“Go for the gold, we keep telling our athletes. But it is the volunteers of Special Olympics who walk away with the gold, richer for the experience.”

L. Tusak, Special Olympics Coach and Volunteer

Materials Needed:

- Computer with access to the Internet
- Copies of Reproducible 2.1, *My Perceptions* and Reproducible 2.2, *Special Olympics Fact Sheet*
- Chart paper and markers (optional)
- Art materials
- Video equipment (optional for suggested assessment)

Background:

Before implementing the lesson, familiarize yourself with videos of Special Olympics athletes, which you can show students during the lesson. These can be found on the Special Olympics website at:

http://www.specialolympics.org/video_miyares.aspx

http://www.specialolympics.org/WGU_video_charles_howard.aspx

http://www.specialolympics.org/video_santana.aspx

http://www.specialolympics.org/video_hui.aspx

(We would suggest the videos featuring Andy Miyares, Charles Howard, Maicon, and Jua Qi Hui.)

Important Terms:

intellectual disabilities, mainstream, perceptions, social justice



PART ONE



Either I shall
find a way or I
will make one.

Activity 2: Changing Perceptions

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. As students enter the room, challenge them to complete one of the following activities. Tell them that they will have two minutes to complete the assignment. (You may wish to tell them that their answers will count for a grade. This is *not* true but will help to establish a sense of urgency.)

- a. *Translate the following Latin phrase into English:*

aut viam inveniam aut faciam.

Answer: Either I shall find a way or I will make one.

- b. *Compute the following math problem:* The sum of the first and twice the second is 100, and the product is a maximum. What are x and y?

Answer: $x=50$, $y=25$

After a few minutes of trying, discreetly distribute answer sheets to some groups but not others. Once time is up, ask students to discuss or journal about their feelings about the exercise. Tell students that these feelings will serve as a springboard for the rest of the lesson and to keep the exercise in mind as they move forward. Ask: *How did the exercise make you feel? Did you sincerely try to complete the challenge? For those that did not get the answer sheets, did it increase your frustration when other groups got the answer and you didn't?* **(Educate)**

2. Distribute Reproducible 2.1, *My Perceptions*, which asks students to answer preliminary questions about people with intellectual disabilities, based on existing knowledge and perceptions. Give students time to complete the worksheet. Ask student volunteers to share answers for each question. **(Educate)**
3. Tell students that this lesson will hopefully broaden their existing perceptions about people with intellectual disabilities. Challenge students to share everything they already know about intellectual disabilities. This list could include factual information, historic perceptions, how people with intellectual disabilities are treated, emotions, etc. Create a list on the board or on chart paper with this information. **(Educate)**
4. Then challenge students to create a second list with questions for which they'd like to learn the answers. Encourage them to create questions that help to give them a balanced picture of those with intellectual disabilities. **(Educate)**
5. Once the class list has been developed, organize questions into categories or topic areas. Examples might include, "Local, National, International Statistics;" "Causes;" "Historic Perceptions;" "Capabilities;" or "Feelings." Each category will then have a few different questions under it. Challenge each group to select one of the categories/questions to research. Encourage students to use the Internet or print resources; to conduct interviews, if possible, with local organizations, educators, or people with intellectual disabilities; or to use observation if available. **(Educate)**

PART TWO



In what ways do sports and particularly Special Olympics help those with intellectual disabilities to change their perceptions of themselves?

Activity 2: Changing Perceptions

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Once student groups have completed their research, mix up the groups so that the new groups include one person from each original group. Have each group member teach or share his/her original group's research with the new group. **(Educate)**
2. Then, have the class come back together and ask students to share something they've learned that has changed or broadened their perceptions of intellectual disabilities. **(Educate)**
3. Have students refer back to Reproducible 2.1: *My Perceptions*. Review answers. Have student volunteers share their answers to #4. Ask students to share what they know about the Special Olympics program. Distribute and have students read Reproducible 2.2, *Special Olympics Fact Sheet*. **(Educate)**
4. Instruct students to watch one (or more) of the videos about Special Olympics athletes, which can be found at:
<http://www.specialolympics.org/videos.aspx> and
<http://www.youtube.com/specialolympicshq>
After watching, ask the following questions:
 - *Would students change any of the descriptive words they circled on Reproducible 2.1?*
 - *Would they change their answer to #4?*
 - *What characteristics do they think describe Special Olympics athletes? Why does it take a special kind of bravery to do what they do?*
 - *In what ways do sports and particularly Special Olympics help those with intellectual disabilities to change their perceptions of themselves?***(Educate, Motivate)**
5. Finally, challenge students to summarize how their perceptions of those with intellectual disabilities have changed since the beginning of the lesson. **(Educate, Motivate)**



Activity 2: Changing Perceptions



Create a “3 word project” that represents the courage, spirit, or triumphs of those with intellectual disabilities.

Reflection:

Define and share examples of metaphors, analogies, and similes. Then challenge students to reflect on what they have learned about intellectual disabilities in the form of a metaphor, analogy, or simile. Compare responses and have students explain their reflections with the class.¹

Suggested Assessment:

When students think of people with intellectual disabilities, what three words come to mind? Have students watch the “3 word videos” on the Special Olympics website (http://www.specialolympics.org/three_word_video.aspx). Then challenge them, individually or in groups, to create a “3 word project” that represents the courage, spirit, or triumphs of those with intellectual disabilities. Their project could be a poster, video, rap, commercial, poem, sculpture, work of art, or some other creative product. **(Motivate, Activate)**

Inclusive Classroom Modifications:

- For inclusive classrooms, you may want to alter the difficulty of the activities in the introductory exercise. Activities could be presented with increasing levels of difficulty so that everyone can be successful up to a point. You can also include physical challenges to demonstrate the point. Students may also use pictures of facial expressions to demonstrate feelings.
- Consider sending the *My Perceptions* reproducible home with students to complete in advance. Alternatively, students with disabilities could work with a peer buddy to complete it before the class starts.
- For the research section, students with intellectual disabilities can be a resource and share what they’d want others to know about intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics athletes may want to bring in medals, pictures, swim badges, or other mementos to share with classmates.



PHOTO BY: Ryan Eades

¹ Adapted with permission from *Connecting Thinking and Action: Ideas for Service-Learning Reflection*. Denver: RMC Research, 2003.

Activity 2: Changing Perceptions



PHOTO BY: Ryan Eades

“Playing sports with Special Olympics has given me the opportunity to express myself like many other athletes...”

Anthony Green, Special Olympics Athlete

Cross-Curricular Extensions: Social Studies

- Have students create a timeline with significant milestones in the history of the Special Olympics.
- Students research how access, opportunities, and equal rights have changed for those with intellectual disabilities in the past 25 years. Research can include Internet and print resources and interviews.

General Extensions and Modifications:

- If possible, invite local Special Olympics athletes, coaches, or volunteers to the class to speak to students about the organization, and the training and experiences of those involved.
- Encourage students to follow local athletes as they prepare for their competition in regional and national Special Olympics competitions and hold countdown events to help build excitement and interest.
- Have students imagine that they have been asked to write a speech for the Opening Ceremonies of the 2010 Special Olympics World Summer Games. Have them write a 3-5 minute speech that inspires athletes, reinforces the Special Olympics mission, and captures the spirit of the Games.
- Host a showing of the film, *The Ringer* (<http://www.foxsearchlight.com/theringer>), for the school community.
- Watch the 2009 Global Youth Rally. Actor Johnny Knoxville, with Eddie Barbanell as his side, both stars of Fox Searchlight’s film *The Ringer*, spoke about his genuine friendship with Barbanell. Barbanell exhorted everyone to bury the R-word. “The word that we should use is respect,” he said. http://www.specialolympics.org/2009_youth_rally.aspx
- Have students research Special Olympics Unified Sports programs to see if there are ways to get involved at: http://www.specialolympics.org/unified_sports.aspx

Additional Resources:

- Background information on Special Olympics: <http://www.specialolympics.org>
- Additional information about intellectual disabilities can be found at: <http://www.aamr.org> and <http://www.intellectualdisability.info>

According to a definition by the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, a person is considered to have an intellectual disability based on the following three criteria.

- Intellectual function level (IQ) is below 70-75.
- Significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skill areas (e.g., communication, self-care, home living, social skills, leisure, health and safety, self-direction, functional academics, community use, and work).
- The condition manifests itself before the age of 18.

Answer the following questions based upon your existing knowledge or perceptions of intellectual disabilities:

1. Do you personally know anyone with an intellectual disability?

2. If the answer to #1 is yes, briefly describe this person. What adjectives would best describe him or her?

3. Based on your experiences or perceptions, circle five words from the list below that you think would best describe someone with an intellectual disability. You can also add your own words to the end of the list.

Limited

Competitive

Tough

Brave

Scared

Thoughtful

Clever

Champion

Joyful

Frustrated

Happy

Hopeless

Athletic

Sad

Uncoordinated

Capable

Resilient

Independent

4. Do you think that someone with an intellectual disability could be a successful athlete? Why or why not?

5. Complete this sentence. When I think of someone with an intellectual disability, I think of...

Special Olympics Fact Sheet

With sports at the core, Special Olympics is a leader in the field of intellectual disability and the world's largest movement dedicated to promoting respect, acceptance, inclusion, and human dignity for people with intellectual disabilities. With programming in the areas of health, youth and education, family support, research and policy change, Special Olympics has...

- More than **3.1 million** athletes
- **228** Special Olympics Programs
- **30** Olympic-type summer and winter sports
- **7** regional offices around the world, including Ireland, Egypt, South Africa, Singapore, China, Panama, and the United States
- More than **750,000** volunteers
- More than **300,000** coaches
- More than **30,000** competitions around the world each year

Special Olympics Mission

To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics Vision

The Special Olympics movement will transform communities by inspiring people throughout the world to open their minds, accept and include people with intellectual disabilities and thereby celebrate the similarities common to all people.

Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in Special Olympics, an athlete must be at least eight years of age and identified by an agency or professional as having one of the following conditions: intellectual disability, cognitive delays as measured by formal assessment, or significant learning or vocational problems due to cognitive delay that have required specially designed instruction.

Competition

Special Olympics athletes are divided to compete in categories based on gender, age, and ability level. All Special Olympics activities reflect the values, standards, traditions, ceremonies, and events embodied in the modern Olympic movement. These Olympic-type activities have been broadened and enriched to celebrate the moral and spiritual qualities of persons with intellectual disabilities so as to enhance their dignity and self-esteem.

History and Leadership

Special Olympics began in 1968 with the First International Special Olympics Games at Soldier Field in Chicago. Since then, millions have benefited from the movement.



Reproducible 2.2

Special Olympics Fact Sheet

J. Brady Lum is President and Chief Operating Officer.

Timothy P. Shriver is Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of Special Olympics Board of Directors.

The Lead Board Director and Vice Chair is **Stephen M. Carter**, Chief Executive Officer, Superior Essex, Inc., the Board Vice Chairs are **Nadia Comaneci**, Olympic Gymnastics Gold Medalist; and **Raymond J. Lane**, Partner, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded Special Olympics in 1968.

Special Olympics Initiatives

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes™ is an initiative designed to help Special Olympics athletes improve their health and fitness, leading to an enhanced sports experience and improved well-being. Athletes receive health services at Special Olympics competitions, while healthcare professionals learn about the health needs of Special Olympics athletes, gaining confidence in volunteering their skills to an underserved population and thus creating more inclusive medical practices.

Youth and Schools Outreach – Special Olympics is leveraging sports as a platform to teach acceptance and inclusion to young people around the world. Project UNIFY® is a program which builds Special Olympics in schools and is engaging, motivating and activating young people through many existing programs including the **Get Into It®** K-12 service-learning curriculum, **Special Olympics Unified Sports™** and the "R-Word" campaign which is building respect through language. Global Youth Summits are also held to unite youth from throughout the world in the spirit of change. In addition, the **Special Olympics Young Athlete Program** provides opportunities for young athletes between the ages of 2 ½ and 7 years of age to learn basic sports skills and motor activities to prepare them for Special Olympics competition.

Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs) offer athletes the opportunity to take active leadership roles both on and off the playing field. Athletes serve on the Boards of Directors, officiate competitions, coach other athletes, act as spokespersons and make decisions about the future of Special Olympics.

Special Olympics Unified Sports® is a program that brings together people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same athletic team.

Family Support Network gives families support in communities within Special Olympics. Understanding the challenges of raising a special needs child, Special Olympics has created the Family Support Network to provide a connection for families of Special Olympics athletes. There are more than 100 networks in more than 60 countries.

Benefits of Special Olympics

Special Olympics Fact Sheet

Individuals who compete in Special Olympics develop improved physical fitness and motor skills and greater self confidence. They exhibit courage and enthusiasm and build lasting friendships. These life skills enhance their ability to live normal productive lives. More than ever, Special Olympics athletes hold jobs, own homes, go to school and successfully confront life challenges on a daily basis.

Through millions of individual acts of inclusion where people with and without intellectual disabilities are brought together through Special Olympics programs, longstanding myths are dispelled, negative attitudes changed, and new opportunities to embrace and celebrate the giftedness of people with intellectual disabilities are created. Ultimately, the Special Olympics movement can transform communities by inspiring people throughout the world to open their minds, accept and include people with intellectual disabilities and thereby celebrate the similarities common to all people.

Funding

Special Olympics receives funding in support of the movement from individuals, corporations, foundations, government and restricted grants. The vast majority of funding received is from individuals through the Special Olympics direct mail program.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics is the movement's largest grass-roots fundraiser and public awareness vehicle for Special Olympics in the world, made up of more than 85,000 law enforcement officers in all 50 U.S. states, eleven Canadian provinces and 43 countries. Since 1981, the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics has raised more than US\$272 million, with a record US\$34 million raised in 2008 alone.





Special Olympics

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Activity 3: 6-8 Lessons

What Does my School Look Like?

Activity Overview:

In this lesson, students take a literal and figurative snapshot of their school with regard to tolerance/inclusion of those with intellectual disabilities. They start by creating a picture of their school based on their own perceptions. Then they repeat this exercise as if they were someone with an intellectual disability to see how the experience changes. Student groups design a method to assess current attitudes, access, and programs for those with intellectual disabilities at their school and then assess how their school is doing in these areas. Finally, students report their results to the school community. This lesson would work well in a unit that explores social justice or employs service-learning.

Activity 3:

What Does my School Look Like?



“Disabilities are yet another manifestation of global diversity. Let us always be committed to the fundamental principles of dignity and equality for all human beings.”

Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General, United Nations

Cross-Curricular Connections:

In addition to language arts, this lesson extends into mathematics, visual arts, technology, and service-learning. Students can use visual arts skills such as sketching, photography, technology, and video skills when they create the pictures of their school. This lesson also serves as the investigation portion of a traditional service-learning process.

Academic Skills Addressed:

- Discovering patterns and relationships among ideas in a collaborative process;
- Using a process to evaluate multiple perspectives;
- Developing ideas using creative thinking, problem posing, and problem solving strategies;
- Posing reasoned questions drawn from previous learning and from personal experiences;
- Engaging in an inquiry process;
- Receiving and exploring the ideas of others;
- Synthesizing data to conduct an evaluation; and
- Conveying meaning through text content and design.

Desired Outcomes:

Students will:

- Reflect upon the current environment of tolerance/inclusion for those with intellectual disabilities at the school.
- Understand how a person with intellectual disabilities might see the school.
- Assess the school’s current attitudes, access, programs, and climate.
- Communicate the results of the above assessment.
- Identify strategies students can take to create a more tolerant/inclusive school environment.



PHOTO BY : Ryan Eades



“I’ve learned so much from Adam and I’m sure he’s learned some from me. If you take the time to make them your friend, they’re the same as everyone else.”

Tommy Oreste, Special Olympics Youth Summit participant

Activity 3: What Does my School Look Like?

Time Required:

Three to four 45-minute periods, plus time outside of class

Materials Needed:

- Art materials, cameras, and/or video equipment
- Copies of Reproducible 3.1, *A Picture of Your School*

Background:

Before beginning this lesson, you may wish to research the answers to some of the questions that your students will research with regard to intellectual disabilities. This will help you guide their question development and research plans. You may also want to determine if there are specific resources/staff who can help them learn the answers. For example, there may be special education staff or guidance counselors who could come to the class to be interviewed.

For more information about assessing and reflecting upon the existing school community and identifying community assets, refer to the Investigation section of the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide* available for download at: <https://getintoit.specialolympics.org/educators>

Important Terms:

asset, inclusion, intellectual disability, mainstream, perceptions, tolerance



PART ONE



How can people who go to the same school see it from completely different perspectives?

Activity 3: What Does My School Look Like?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Ask students to close their eyes and think about their school. Have them answer the following questions:
 - *If you were asked to describe your school using three words, what words would you choose?*
 - *What does the school look like when you see it from the street, as you enter it, as you move from place to place?*
 - *How does your school look different now than it did on your first day? How might it look different once you've graduated?*
 - *What assets does the school have that help to make it unique? (Educate)*
2. Challenge students to draw, photograph, or videotape a “picture” of their school from their own perspective. (You may wish to give students time to walk around the school.) (Educate)
3. Have students present the images they've created. Did any students create the exact same image? Ask students: *How can people who go to the same school see it from completely different perspectives? If you were to give the school a grade related to your own picture of it, what grade might you give, and why? (Educate)*
4. Ask students to think about how their school may “look” to someone with an intellectual disability. You may want to review the definition of intellectual disability found in Activity 2. Ask: *What three words might students with intellectual disabilities use to describe the school? Would the classrooms look the same to someone with an intellectual disability? The cafeteria? The programs? The other kids? (Educate, Motivate)*
5. As a class or in small groups, have students take a walk around the school and challenge them to imagine how it might look through the eyes of someone with an intellectual disability. *Is this exercise challenging or easy? Do you know whether there are students at the school with intellectual disabilities? What do you know about the programs, resources, assets, perceptions, and opportunities at the school for people with intellectual disabilities? Would knowing this information help to give you a clearer picture? (Motivate, Activate)*



PART TWO



PHOTO BY : Ryan Eades

Are students with intellectual disabilities encouraged/allowed to sign up for sports teams, clubs, and special programs?

Activity 3: What Does My School Look Like?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Tell students that this activity will help them get a clearer picture of what their school looks like to those with intellectual disabilities. Have students create a list of questions that will help them form a clearer picture. Possible questions include:
 - How many students at our school have intellectual disabilities? Note: If there are no students with intellectual disabilities, students may need to focus on the perception-related questions below or rephrase the questions to determine access, opportunities, and programs if a student with intellectual disabilities were to enroll.
 - Are students with intellectual disabilities mainstreamed into general classes?
 - Are there specific classes that only those with intellectual disabilities attend?
 - Are there staff members dedicated to those with intellectual disabilities?
 - Are students with intellectual disabilities given access to special classes like art, physical education, and music; to computers; to lockers; to the media center, etc.?
 - Are students with intellectual disabilities encouraged/allowed to sign up for sports teams, clubs, and special programs? If so, do they participate?
 - What are the perceptions of other students regarding those with intellectual disabilities? Do they interact during classes? Sit together during lunch? Participate in extracurricular activities together?
 - Are there opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities to interact and get to know one another?
 - Are there opportunities for those with intellectual disabilities to share their talents and strengths with other students?
 - Do students with intellectual disabilities feel welcomed and included at the school? What programs exist to help them feel welcomed and included? **(Educate)**

2. Divide students into groups of three or four. Distribute Reproducible 3.1, *A Picture of Your School*, which challenges students to develop a research plan to learn more about inclusiveness for those with intellectual disabilities at their school. It also challenges them to use this information to conduct an assessment of how their school is doing with regard to tolerance and inclusiveness for students with intellectual disabilities. You will see that there is a step in the plan where students must get your signature. You may want to consider the following before signing off:
 - a. Will the questions they've chosen help them learn more about inclusiveness and tolerance related to intellectual disabilities at your school?
 - b. Can the questions be answered?
 - c. Is their plan reasonable and well-thought-out?
 - d. Can it be completed within the timeframe you've set? **(Educate, Motivate)**



Have small student groups brainstorm strategies they could take to help move the school environment toward tolerance and inclusivity.

Activity 3: What Does My School Look Like?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

Part Three

1. Give students ample time and assistance with resources to help them answer their questions. This may require time outside of class. You may also want to ask staff members and/or those with intellectual disabilities to come to class to be interviewed. **(Educate, Motivate)**

Part Four

1. Challenge students to use the answers they've uncovered to create a picture of their school, related to inclusiveness of those with intellectual disabilities. They can create this picture through words (e.g., a newsletter, paragraph, speech, etc.) or images (e.g., a drawing, photo essay, videotape, etc.). This may also require time outside of class to complete. **(Motivate, Activate)**

Part Five

1. Have small student groups brainstorm strategies they could take to help move the school environment toward tolerance and inclusivity. **(Motivate, Activate)**
2. Then have groups share their ideas with the rest of the class. **(Motivate, Activate)**
3. Challenge the class to select 1-3 strategies that make the most sense and determine how they could implement each and measure their success. **(Motivate, Activate)**



Activity 3:**What Does my School Look Like?**

Based on what they've learned, have students rate/assess their school with regard to inclusiveness for students with intellectual disabilities.

Reflection:

Encourage students to further reflect upon the inclusivity at their school. Challenge student groups to imagine that they were given an unlimited budget to implement three new programs to help make the school more inclusive toward those with intellectual disabilities. Have them write about and describe what programs they would implement and the strengths and weaknesses of each. Then have them imagine their budget was cut and they could only choose one of the three new programs. Which would they choose, and why?

Suggested Assessment:

Based on what they've learned, have students rate/assess their school with regard to inclusiveness for students with intellectual disabilities. They can base their assessment on a grade similar to a report card, a numeric system, or a descriptive rating ranging from "excellent" to "poor." Their rating should include an explanation with evidence from their research.

Inclusive Classroom Modifications:

- The first activity may be a bit abstract for those with intellectual disabilities. In inclusive classrooms, you could ask students to write descriptive words or draw a picture of the place that they think of when they think of school. You may wish to provide some suggestions.
- In Part Two, students with intellectual disabilities will likely ask different questions from the other students. They may focus on questions such as, "Can I play on the football team?" or "Why do I always have to sit in the front of the classroom?" These students can also serve as a resource to help answer some of the other students' questions.
- Set up Part Three in advance. If students with intellectual disabilities are part of a group, the group can assist as needed. If they wish to go out on their own, they may need direction toward specific resources.
- In Part Four, the product should focus on the student's strengths. Some students may be good with words, whereas others are good at drawing pictures or creating computer-generated products.
- For the assessment, you may wish to provide a grading system along with specific descriptions for each grade.



PHOTO BY : Ryan Eades

Activity 3:

What Does my School Look Like?



Invite a local Special Olympics athlete to the school to learn what would make him or her feel included at their school or a place of work.

Cross-Curricular Extensions:

Mathematics

- Have students design, graph and analyze a survey as part of their research.

Visual Art

- Have students use the visual images they've created to design a mural for the school that represents their vision for a more inclusive school.

General Extensions and Modifications:

- Have students report the results of their research process with school-related stakeholders such as other classrooms, administration, staff, parents, and those from the community.
- Invite a local Special Olympics athlete to the school to learn what would make him or her feel included at their school or a place of work. Find your Special Olympics Program here:
http://www.specialolympics.org/program_locator.aspx
- Encourage students to start an inclusiveness/tolerance club to discuss issues and ideas to make the school more inclusive to all.

Additional Resources:

- Additional information about intellectual disabilities can be found at:
<http://www.aamr.org> and <http://www.intellectualdisability.info>
- Explore Special Olympics studies conducted on youth attitudes here:
http://www.specialolympics.org/uploadedFiles/LandingPage/WhatWeDo/Research_Studies_Description_Pages/Policy_paper_youth_attitudes.pdf and
http://www.specialolympics.org/research_impact_china_games.aspx
- End the R-word with Joe Jonas video (13 sec):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8doRD9MB0Qw>
- More Spread the Word to End the Word videos:
<http://www.youtube.com/endtherword/>



A Picture of Your School

During this lesson, you created a "picture of your school," based on your own perspective. That image was probably different than those created by other students in your class. Now your challenge is to create a second picture from the perspective of a student with an intellectual disability. How might the image look the same? How might it look different? What information can help you best create that picture? Below is a list of steps that will help you complete this assignment.

1. Identify 1–3 questions that could help you see the school through the eyes of someone with an intellectual disability. Choose questions from the list you developed with your teacher or create your own. Think about questions that will broaden your perspective. For example, simply identifying the number of students with an intellectual disability will not necessarily give you insight into how those students see the school. However, it can help lead you to other questions. Write your questions on the lines below:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. Create a plan to help you answer those questions. The plan may include interviews, surveys, observation, a series of photographs, or video. Include a timeline to help you implement your plan. Write your plan and timeline below (or on a separate sheet of paper), and then get approval from your teacher.

Teacher Signature: _____

3. Implement your plan.
4. Based on what you've learned, create a picture of your school through the eyes of someone with an intellectual disability. You can create your picture through words, photos, video, a drawing, or another product. Be sure to include information about inclusiveness and tolerance.
5. Your final step is to use this information to rate or assess your school with regard to inclusiveness and tolerance for those with intellectual disabilities. Choose a grading system similar to a report card; a rating system ranging from "excellent" to "poor;" or a numeric system with "10" being the best possible score. Include a justification for your answer.





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Activity 4: 6-8 Lessons

How Can I Create Change?

Activity Overview:

In this lesson, students will be introduced to the story of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the founder of Special Olympics, to illustrate what is possible when someone sees what is, imagines what can be, and then makes it happen. They then will reflect and make connections between her story and what is happening within their own school. They select an issue or problem from their school assessment in Activity 3 that they'd like to change or affect in some way. Students develop a plan to create change including a timeline, list of steps and stakeholders, and measures for success. They will also create a method for sharing their actions with others and celebrating their success. This lesson would work well in a unit that explores civic responsibility, social justice, or service-learning.

Activity 4: How Can I Create Change?



Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

Background on Service-Learning (NYLC Standards)

The National K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice guide educators in their integration of service-learning experiences, including those for K-12 students. This lesson provides a number of suggestions for service-learning experiences that extend from any of the previous lessons and capitalize on the classroom visit from a participant in the Special Olympics movement. The Standards are at the core of the service-learning experiences outlined in this lesson. They include:

1. Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.
2. Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.
3. Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society.
4. Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.
5. Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.
6. Service-learning experiences are collaborative, mutually beneficial and address community needs.
7. Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.
8. Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

For more information on service-learning and how to implement service-learning experiences in your classroom, review the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide* available for download at:

<https://getintoit.specialolympics.org/educators>



Activity 4:

How Can I Create Change?



“Every person, regardless of whatever different abilities they may have, can contribute, can be a source of joy, can beam with pride and love.”

Eunice Kennedy Shriver

Cross-Curricular Connections:

This lesson extends to social studies, particularly social justice, and service-learning. Students experience a traditional service-learning process as they identify a problem; learn about it; identify a solution; create a plan; implement that plan; and celebrate success.

Academic Skills Addressed:

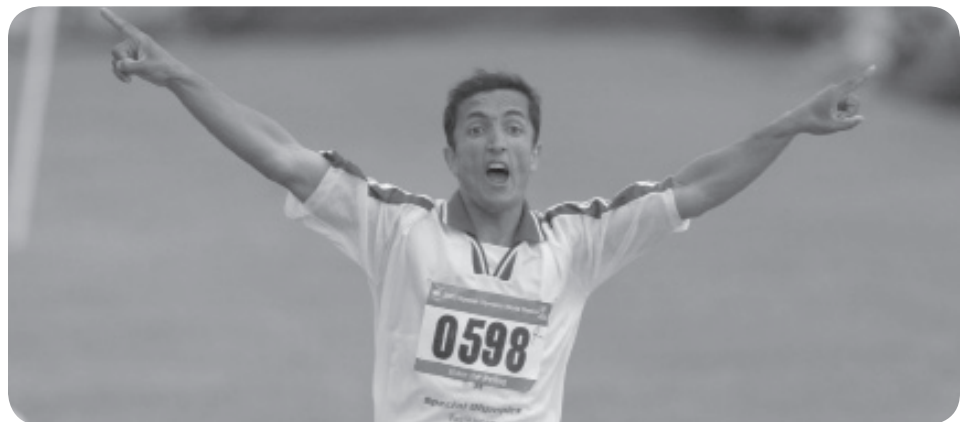
- Using critical thinking to analyze texts, including identifying and evaluating multiple perspectives;
- Discovering patterns and relationships among ideas and characteristics;
- Identifying, summarizing and justifying an issue or problem;
- Engaging in an inquiry process that includes generating questions and conducting research to learn the answers;
- Developing ideas using creative thinking, problem posing, and problem solving strategies;
- Synthesizing data to conduct an evaluation;
- Writing and following a detailed plan; and
- Summarizing and reporting information to others.

Desired Outcomes:

- Make connections between Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s vision and actions to create Special Olympics and their own qualities and possible actions.
- Identify one problem or challenge within their school related to tolerance/inclusiveness for those with intellectual disabilities.
- Work collaboratively in the planning and implementation of a plan to change or positively impact the problem or issue they chose.
- Communicate their progress and consider how they can sustain their efforts.

Time Required:

Three to four 45-minute class periods for background and planning, plus additional time (one semester or more) to implement and assess their project.





“If people would believe in us like Special Olympics and see what we can do, they would be amazed. My ambition in life is to turn ‘no’ into ‘yes’. If someone says I can’t do something, I want to prove I can.”

Suzanne O’Moore,
Special Olympics
Australian Athlete

Activity 4: How Can I Create Change?

Materials Needed:

- Computer with access to the Internet
- Copies of Reproducible 4.1, *What Is? What Could Be? How Can I Make It Happen?*, and Reproducible 4.2, *Creating a Positive Change at Your School*

Background:

- Before beginning this lesson, you may want to review stories and videos about Eunice Kennedy Shriver on the Special Olympics website. The following links are recommended:

http://www.specialolympics.org/eunice_kennedy_shriver_biography.aspx

http://www.specialolympics.org/eunice_kennedy_shriver_how_it_began.aspx

<http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org/sitemap/videos>

- Review the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide*. This is a supplemental guide that can be downloaded at:

<https://getintoit.specialolympics.org/educators>

Important Terms:

service, stakeholder, visionary



PART ONE



“You are the stars and the world is watching you. By your presence, you send a message to every village, every city, every nation. A message of hope. A message of victory.”

Eunice Kennedy Shriver

Activity 4: How Can I Create Change?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. As students enter the room, have them listen to the audio recording of an excerpt from Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s opening remarks at the Opening Ceremonies for the 1987 Special Olympics World Games (<http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org>). The recording says, “*You are the stars and the world is watching you. By your presence, you send a message to every village, every city, every nation. A message of hope. A message of victory. The right to play on any playing field? You have earned it. The right to study in any school? You have earned it. The right to hold a job? You have earned it. The right to be anyone’s neighbor? You have earned it.*” **(Educate)**
2. Ask students what words they would use to describe the excerpt, how the speaker’s words likely made the audience feel, and what the speaker’s purpose may have been. Then ask if they know whose voice they are listening to, what event the words are from, or who the audience is. Share with students that the speaker is Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Founder of the Special Olympics. The excerpt was from her speech at the Opening Ceremonies from the 1987 Special Olympic World Games and the audience was the Special Olympics athletes themselves. **(Educate)**
3. Ask students: *What do you know about Eunice Kennedy Shriver? What words might you use to describe her? What do you know about her legacy? Her family? Her accomplishments?* **(Educate)**
4. Distribute Reproducible 4.1, *What Is? What Could Be? How Can I Make It Happen?* Read the directions with students. Instruct them to read articles and watch videos about Eunice Kennedy Shriver from the Special Olympics website (see Background information above) in order to complete the activity sheet. Discuss the answers. **(Educate)**
5. At the Opening Games in 1968, the Mayor of Chicago turned to Mrs. Shriver after she declared the games open and said, “The world will never be the same.” *What did he mean by this? What type of person sees what can be, rather than what is, and works to make it happen?* Ask students for the names of others – whether they know them personally or not – who have displayed these same qualities. *What positive changes have these people created? How might the world be different had these people not made their visions a reality? Do you think you possess these same qualities? Why or why not?* **(Educate, Motivate)**





PHOTO BY: Ryan Eades

Challenge groups to select a problem that is authentic, that they can truly impact, and that is interesting and meaningful to them.

Activity 4: How Can I Create Change?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Have students refer back to their school assessment from Activity 3. Ask: *How would you describe “what is” with regard to tolerance and inclusion at school? Do you think “what is” is good enough? What improvements could be made to create a more inclusive environment for those with intellectual disabilities?* **(Motivate, Activate)**
2. Distribute Reproducible 4.2, *Creating a Positive Change at Your School*. Challenge student groups to select one issue, problem, or challenge related to inclusion/tolerance at their school that they would like to change or affect in some way. Before beginning, you will want to think about whether to allow students to select their own groups or whether to assign them. As with any project, groups should be set up to work collaboratively and effectively. The activity sheet asks them to justify the issue they’ve chosen, conduct research, determine how they can positively change/impact the problem, and create and implement a detailed action plan and timeline for doing so. The process is broken down into steps. Below you will find tips to help you move students through the process. More information about service-learning and additional guidance about each step can be found in the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide*. **(Motivate, Activate)**
3. You will notice that there are ideas for student reflection after each step below. Thoughtful reflection allows students to deliberately think about their process, their role within the project, and more importantly their role within their school community. It is most useful when it is intentional and continuous throughout the experience. Students can reflect verbally or through writing, or with a combination of the two.

Step 1: Select a Problem or Issue

- The first step is often the most difficult. Some groups won’t know where to start. Others will have difficulty agreeing. You may want to start this step by creating a class list of problems from Activity 3 from which groups can choose. Challenge groups to select a problem that is authentic, that they can truly impact, and that is interesting and meaningful to them. Encourage them to write a problem statement that justifies their choice.

Reflection Questions: *Why did you choose this problem? Why is it meaningful to you? What influenced your group’s final decision? What will happen if no one addresses it? How can addressing it make a difference?*



Plan a community tolerance day where community members are encouraged to work alongside people of different disabilities to accomplish a task.

Activity 4: How Can I Create Change?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

Step 2: Learn about the Issue

This will be one of the most time-consuming steps and likely will require time outside of class to complete. Help students understand the benefit of learning as much as they can about their issue. Give them access to as many resources as possible. Encourage students to interview students with intellectual disabilities, staff members, and other stakeholders. Additional ideas to help students investigate their issue can be found in the Action Plan section of the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide*.

Reflection Questions: *How did you feel about the research process? What went well? What challenges did you face? What surprised you? What did you learn about your school, or your friends? What did you learn about yourself? How can what you've learned help you?*

Step 3: Identify a Solution

Help students assess several options to come up with the best solution. Benchmarks are included in the worksheet. You may want to have them share ideas with each other to assist the process. Examples of solutions include:

- A community campaign to end the use of the R-word.
- A community tolerance day where community members are encouraged to work alongside people of different abilities to accomplish a task.
- Development of a buddy program where children with intellectual disabilities are paired with an older teen.
- Ability Awareness Day, where those with intellectual disabilities share their strengths and talents with community members.
- Elementary School Blitz, where middle school students speak about tolerance at local elementary schools.
- Development of a club or team where high school athletes help coach children with intellectual disabilities.
- Raising money to support a Special Olympics athlete.
- Decorating community store windows to encourage tolerance.

Additional ideas to help students identify their solution can be found in the Decision-Making Process section of the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide*.

Reflection Questions: *How did you come up with your solution? How will it impact the problem or issue? How will your school look different if it works? How will this make you feel?*

PART TWO



All parties involved should be encouraged to share what they have learned, celebrate the results of the service project, and look ahead to the future.

Activity 4: How Can I Create Change?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

Step 4: Create a Plan

Here is where students will create their plan for making change, the timeline, and the benchmarks for success. Encourage students to present their plans to another group to help them consider possible challenges and obstacles. Additional ideas to help students create their plan can be found in the Action Plan section of the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide*.

Reflection Questions: *What are you most looking forward to about your plan? How will you define success? Will you be able to make adjustments if necessary?*

Step 5: Implement the Plan

This too will be a time-consuming step in the process. Students will need ample time to complete their plan. Encourage them to assess the plan along the way and to make whatever adjustments can help them be successful.

Reflection Questions: *How is your plan working? Is your group working well together? Does your plan need to be adjusted? Can anyone outside the group help you? What have you learned?*

Step 6: Demonstrate Outcomes and Celebrate Success!

Regardless of the specific outcome, the process of trying to change “what is” to make a more inclusive school should be shared and celebrated by students. Although this step is listed at the end of the process, both sharing and celebration can be done throughout the process rather than at the end. All parties involved should be encouraged to share what they have learned, celebrate the results of the service project, and look ahead to the future.

Reflection Questions: *What can you be proud of? Who have you helped? How have you helped to get closer to “what can be?” How can you extend this to other areas of your life? Whose responsibility is it to help improve your school? What lessons can you share with others? What skills have you learned?*

Suggested Assessment:

Have students use the original three questions of the lesson (*What Is?, What Could Be?, How Can I Make It Happen?*) to report on their project to others at the school or community. Along with answering these questions, their communication should include what they’ve learned and how the project can extend to other areas of their life. **(Motivate, Activate)**

Activity 4: How Can I Create Change?

PHOTO BY : Richard Corman



Invite Special Olympics athletes to class to share input on and ideas about the projects.

Cross-Curricular Extensions: Technology

Encourage students to create a video and present what “was,” what now “is,” and how change happened.

Inclusive Classroom Modifications:

- To engage all students in an inclusive classroom, use the students with intellectual disabilities as a resource. Ask them if they think a certain issue can be solved and how. Ask them what they would like to see happening or changing.
- Special Olympics has a program called Global Messengers. Athletes involved in this program can be invited or students at the school can get involved and assist students with intellectual disabilities to write a speech that helps convince stakeholders of the importance of the proposed change.

General Extensions and Modifications:

- Have students generate ideas for sustained, student-led school improvements.
- Have students write press releases about their projects to send to local news media.
- Have students present their projects to school and district/county leaders; community leaders; and local government officials.
- Invite Special Olympics athletes to class to share input on and ideas about the projects.
- Have students plan a parent/community night to share what “was,” what now “is,” and what made change happen.

Additional Resources:

- Background information on Special Olympics: <http://www.specialolympics.org>
- Additional information about service-learning: <http://www.servicelearning.org>



What Is? What Could Be? How Can I Make It Happen?

Eunice Kennedy Shriver was a visionary who dedicated her adult life to making the world a better place for those who are intellectually disabled. She saw what was, imagined what could be, and did all she could to make it happen. Read the articles and watch the videos on the Special Olympics website about Mrs. Shriver (www.eunicekennedyshriver.org). Then complete the questions below:



WHAT IS? What was life like for people with intellectual disabilities that inspired Eunice Kennedy Shriver to want to change things?

WHAT COULD BE? In what ways did she think their lives could be better? What did she think was possible?

HOW CAN I MAKE IT HAPPEN? How did she make her vision a reality?



Reproducible 4.2

Creating Positive Change at Your School

In this activity, you and your group will select a problem or issue in your school community that you would like to positively impact, related to tolerance/inclusion for those with intellectual disabilities. The activity is broken down into several steps to help guide you along the way.

Step 1: Select a Problem or Issue

In this step, you and your group should identify a problem or issue at your school related to inclusion/tolerance for those with intellectual disabilities. Along with identifying the problem, you must also justify why you chose it as a problem or issue to change/impact. You may want to refer back to the school assessment you completed in Activity 3. Since you are working as part of a group, it may be difficult to agree on one issue. Therefore, you may want to take some time to list all options and discuss the pros and cons of choosing each. Don't forget to listen to all group members and compromise when possible. The issue you choose should:

- Be important and meaningful to all group members.
- Be something that you can truly impact or change.
- Be an authentic need or problem at your school.

The issue/problem we have chosen is: _____

I know it is a problem because: _____

Step 2: Learn about the Issue

Knowledge is power! Now that you have selected the issue, spend time learning about it. You can learn from online resources, human resources (people), and community resources. Develop a list of questions and find the answers. This will help lead you to a solution. The research can include:

- What you already know.
- The history of your issue or problem, what's already been done.
- The current situation.
- Interviews with potential stakeholders/collaborators.

Step 3: Identify a Solution

Here's where you begin to move from "what is" to "what can be!" First brainstorm several ideas for solving/impacting the problem with your group. Then evaluate how each idea will positively impact the problem, foster an environment of tolerance/inclusion, help those with intellectual disabilities, whether it is feasible, whether you have the resources and time to implement it, and whether you will enjoy doing so, etc.

Our solution is: _____

Step 4: Create a Plan

Now it's time to create a plan to implement your solution. Your plan should include the steps you will take, your timeline, who can help you, what you will need to implement your plan, what challenges you may encounter, how you will overcome them, and how you will know when you've reached success.

Step 5: Implement the Plan

Follow the steps and timeline you've developed. You will want to assess your plan along the way to make sure that you are moving toward your goals. Your plan may need to be adjusted as you implement it. Just make sure that all group members are aware of any changes.

Step 6: Demonstrate Outcomes and Celebrate Success

In what ways have you moved from "What Is?" to "What Can Be?" What specific progress can we identify along the path toward, "What Can Be?" What challenged you, and what can you learn from those challenges? How can you share your progress and strategies with others within and outside of your school?



PHOTO BY : Ryan Eades