

# **You're OK, I'm OK, It's Good We Are Different**

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## **Overview**

Children are not born with prejudices nor are they looking for differences between them and other children. It is a learned behavior that is encouraged by adults. My intention with this unit is to have the students explore differences and hopefully see that if everyone was the same we would not be able to learn from each other.

### **Rationale**

Children's minds are ready to learn. They are able to absorb what is taught to them at an early age. The concepts being taught must be repeated over and over in various ways for them to master them. By exposing them to these concepts of differences in nature, people, and everyday items they will be exposed to the thought that different is ok.

In the seminar Holocaust Bearing Witness, the survivors of this atrocity had a common thread of not understanding how their differences led to such genocide. Children in Philadelphia need to be exposed to much more of the world than they are offered in their surroundings. The more they learn about others the more accepting they could become.

According to Stephanie Pappas the following is about how children experience prejudice when being taught the concept by adults.

“First-graders who are told by an adult that another group of kids is "mean" evaluate that group negatively even if they have a positive interaction with the supposedly mean kids. By fifth grade, however, children rely more on their own experiences with the "mean" kids to make judgments.

Kids develop an understanding of prejudice and discrimination in a fairly predictable manner. Between the ages of 3 and 6, they begin to understand and use stereotypes. After

age 6, children start to understand other people's stereotypes, scientists have found. By first grade, they grasp that discrimination based on gender or race is morally wrong.” If in first grade we teach not to be influenced by adults prejudices would this help these children make their own determinations? Hopefully some activities on differences will help them become less discriminatory.

## **Objectives**

This unit is intended for students in first grade. They are in a self-contained classroom for all major subjects. Art, Library, Computers, Physical Education are taught by a specialist teacher outside the homeroom for 45 minutes every day. They have a 45-minute lunch/recess period . This lunch/recess time is a combination of outdoor and indoor activity, depending on the weather. Some children receive special education for math or reading for ½ hour.

The objectives are as follows:

- Exposure to different types of animals and comparing and contrasting
- Reading aloud
- Sharing feelings
- Responses to read alouds
- Writing their feelings about something that is different about them
- Using background knowledge to produce images to write about

## **Strategies**

The strategies for this unit will encompass a variety of methods. Direct instruction will be the dominant strategy. They will be using venn diagrams for comparing and contrasting. Included in the direct instruction will be read alouds of the various stories. The students will be involved in using their prior and learned knowledge to answer questions orally and write. They will engage in a variety of activities to reinforce the lessons. The writing process will be used for brainstorming, rough drafts, editing and publishing.

### Direct Instruction

Direct instruction is teacher led. Many methods can be used for direct instruction. It can be done small group or whole group. This will include the initial read alouds of the stories by the teacher. It is also the time for mini lessons on feelings.

### Shared Reading

The strategy of shared reading will be used in every lesson of this unit. Shared reading is a read aloud to the entire class. Through this method children learn reading skills by

listening to inflection, phrasing, punctuation, and questioning. After the reading children interact by discussing various skills problems, and solutions.

### Prior Knowledge

By activating prior knowledge the child begins to make connections to things they already know. They use schema to connect to self or connect to other stories that have been read by them or to them. When the child can make a personal connection the book holds much more value to their person.

### Venn Diagram

A venn diagram is used when comparing and contrasting two items. What is different about them and what is the same.

Graphic Organizers Graphic organizers are type of mapping that let the child put things in order. When using these aides it is easier for them to recall and see what the events in the story were. By connecting what is in their brain to paper we are securing the knowledge.

Modeling Modeling is the strategy where the teacher shows certain behaviors he/she is expecting from the students. It can involve the reading, writing, or math. The teacher verbally explains as they demonstrate the activity for the class.

### Shared Writing

The culminating activity will be to write about themselves and what makes them different and special. Shared writing shows the child with precise directions for the writing process. The process will include a story web, rough or “Sloppy” copy, editing with teacher, and final copy.

### Illustrating

The culminating activity will include illustrations.

## **Classroom Activities**

The students will engage in activities for assessment in various subjects.

- Pair share discussions
- Venn Diagram
- Illustrate themselves
- Write 3 sentences about their differences.
- Sharing writing with the class

The time frame for the activities will be four lessons. Each lesson will vary in length

from about 45 minutes to 1 hour. The final lesson, which involves the writing and illustration processes, will be an ongoing activity for writing that will take one writing period for five days in a row. The lessons will all relate to books and discussions on differences. The lessons will all involve a follow up activity.

Their culminating activity will be to write about their own differences. They will choose something that makes them special because of their difference. The full writing process will be involved to create a published piece. The student will also illustrate. They will share the final piece and illustration with the class.

The following pages are the lesson plans. Page 5 is the venn diagram for lesson 1.

### *Lesson 1: How Are Animals Different*

#### Objective:

The student will be able to recognize differences in the animal world. Make a venn diagram to compare and contrast.

#### Materials:

Pictures of animals that have distinct differences

Venn Diagram Appendix 1

Paper

Crayons

Pencils

#### Procedure:

Place pictures of animals on the board or walls.

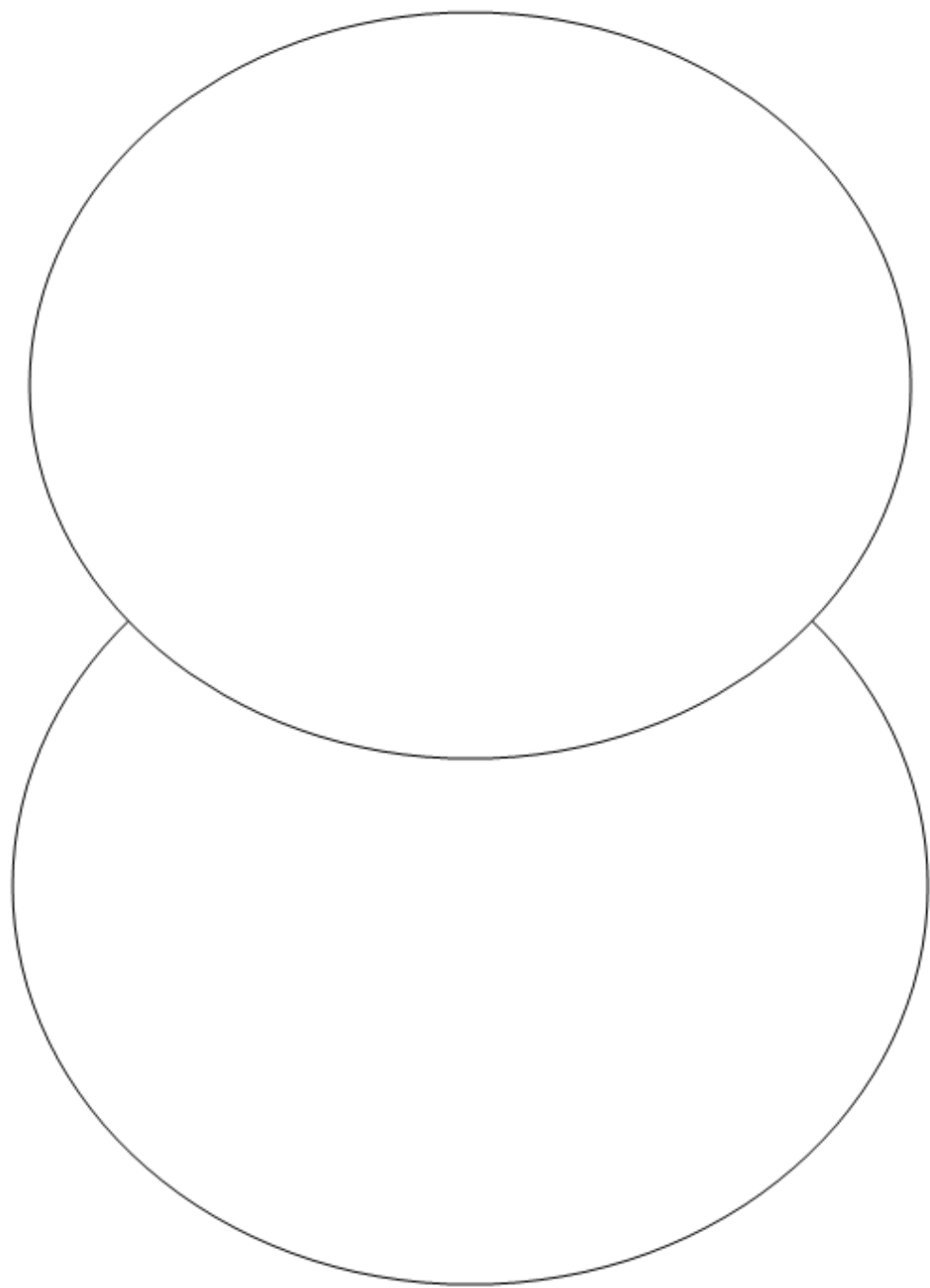
Discuss how animals are different in many ways. Colors, patterns, habitat, diet.

Engage students to share what differences they see.

Model a venn diagram of a cat and a dog.

Children form partner groups then create their own diagram with their partner by choosing two animals with differences and similarities.

Share with another partner group.



## Lesson 2: The Color of Me

### Objective:

The student will see their own difference in color in order to gain tolerance

### Materials:

Book "The Color of Us" by Karen Katz

Paper

Crayons

Pencil

### Procedure:

Read book aloud carefully showing illustrations

Make predictions about what color the next child thinks they are

Brainstorm different colors the children in the class would be described as, make a list

The children draw themselves

They complete this sentence under their picture

"I am the color of \_\_\_\_\_."

Share with the class

End with discussion on different colors of people and it makes for a more interesting colorful world. We can get along with all colors.

## Lesson 3: A Bad Case of Stripes

### Objective:

The student will be tolerant of obvious differences in looks

### Materials:

Book "A Bad Case of Stripes" by David Shannon

Paper

Crayons

Pencil

### Procedure:

Read book aloud

Discussion on how the girl felt when she looked different from everyone  
How did she feel at the end  
Draw a picture of how you would look if you ate a food of choice  
Write a sentence how you would feel when people laughed or pointed at you looking the way you drew  
Write a sentence how they could have said something nice to you

#### Lesson 4: Don't Laugh At Me

Objective:

The student will be able to feel feelings about disabilities and differences

Materials:

Book "Don't Laugh At Me"  
CD of song

Procedure:

Read aloud book  
Pair share feelings about the people in the book  
Listen to the song  
Practice singing  
Perform as a group at an assembly or for another class

#### Lesson 5: Self writing piece

Objective: The student will be able to write a complete piece on how they are different in order to realize how that makes them special

Materials:

Paper  
Pencil  
White board  
Paint  
Paper

Procedure:

Brainstorm on white board how each child is different

Student writes rough copy of their differences and how it makes them special  
Edit with teacher  
Write good copy  
Illustrate self showing difference by painting

## **Bibliography**

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## **Standards**

The School District of Philadelphia has a core curriculum that is aligned with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in Math, Social Studies, Literacy, and Science. The following standards will be assessed at the end of the unit:

1.1.1.G.1 – Retell a story in a logical and sequential order including some detail from text

1.1.1.G.3 - Connect the new information or ideas in a story to real life events

1.1.1.H.6 - Demonstrate connections with information while reading

1.4.1.A.2 - Select appropriate illustrations to accompany story

1.5.1.C.2 - Include a beginning, middle and end when writing a story

5.2.1.A.3: Understand how people can work together and get along

5.2.1.C.11: In small groups address and resolve a situation in which someone is treated unfairly