

**Learn. Disrupt. Rebuild@HWDSB: Building a Community of Care
Module 2 Understanding Identity and Intersectionality**

Lesson #15 – Understanding Fairness

Learning Goal: To understand the concept of fairness and discuss fair and unfair situations.

Key Vocabulary

Bias - prejudiced or favoring one person or point of view more than others.

Discrimination - the practice of unfairly treating a person, or people, differently from others.

Fair - free from bias, dishonesty or injustice

Favoritism - the favoring of one person or group over others with equal claims; partiality

Unfair - not fair, not conforming to approved standards as of justice, honesty or ethics.

Curriculum Connections

Kindergarten

Belonging and Contributing.

This frame encompasses children’s learning and development with respect to:

- their sense of connectedness to others;
- their relationships with others, and their contributions as part of a group, a community, and the natural world;
- their understanding of relationships and community, and of the ways in which people contribute to the world around them.

The learning encompassed by this frame also relates to children’s early development of the attributes and attitudes that inform citizenship, through their sense of personal connectedness to various communities.

Grades 1-3: Language

Oral Communication

1. listen in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes

Reading

1. read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning

Tools and Materials

- Bag of new pencils
- Art materials (paper, crayons, glue sticks)
- Chart paper
- Lesson 15 PowerPoint - PRI
- Situation Cards – Fair or Unfair? (copy and cut out cards for each group)

- Unfair to Fair Worksheet

Educator Pre-reflection

Before engaging in this lesson, consider/think about...

As a foundation before delving deeper into discussions regarding race, racism and oppression, it is important for students to become purposefully aware of the inequitable and unfair lived experiences of those from marginalized groups. In that pursuit, this lesson intends to

- explore and discuss issues related to fairness.
- conceptualize fairness and draw pictures of fair and unfair situations.
- brainstorm and discuss how one can show fairness toward others.

Enduring Understandings

- Fairness is the act of doing things that treat all people equally and with respect.
- Knowing what is fair or unfair is important in helping people get along with each other.

*Please be aware that discrimination and bias are heavy burdens many marginalized students carry even at a very early age due to their lived experiences. If a marginalized student is unwilling to share, participate, or even be present for these conversations, it may be due to personal triggers. Thus, enforcing them in a conversation about race they do not feel safe to participate in may cause added harm to such students. As the expert on your students' background history, triggers, body language, and classroom dynamics, please make informed and empathetic decisions to ensure a safe and inclusive setting to engage in these brave conversations.

Student Pre-reflection

Before you begin, think about...

- *What does it mean to be fair?*
- *Why is it important to be fair?*

Provocation

Divide students into two groups by the first letters of first names (i.e., A-M, N-Z) without explaining why they are being separated; direct students in each group to sit in different areas of the classroom.

- Take a moment to decide which group will be the "favoured group." Then without explaining why, give each student in the favored group a new pencil. Mention that only one group will get new pencils, and that group also will be getting other special privileges (such as extra recess time, no homework, being first in line, etc.). Students in the other group likely will protest.
- After a few minutes (or until someone in the other group says, "That's not fair!") stop the exercise.

- Explain the purpose of the exercise to students and assure them that all students will be receiving a privilege (you can decide what that privilege is) since as a teacher it is your duty to treat all students without favouritism.
- Ask: Which group were you in, the favored group or the non-favored group? How do you know? Encourage and discuss all responses.
- Ask: Do you think that giving pencils to one group was fair or unfair? How did you feel about getting the pencils? How did you feel about not getting them? Why did you feel that way?

Write the word, “fair” on chart paper as the title. Ask students to think about what the word, “fair” means to them. Have a discussion with an elbow partner or as a whole class where students share their ideas about the definition of fair. Depending on your context, have students record the responses on the chart paper or in the meeting chat.

Ask students to make suggestions about

- How the exercise could have been done in a fair way?
- If it would be fair to give the pencils to students who earned them?
- If it would it be fair if all students got them?
- Would it be fair if you picked 10 students names out of a hat to get the pencils?

Modification for Remote Learning: Divide class online and follow the same instructions. Use Whiteboard as chart paper for discussion.

Learning Task/Activity

Divide students into groups of 4 with each group getting the "Fair or Unfair" cards. Ask groups to sort the cards into a fair or unfair stack. With each unfair card they should discuss:

- *Why it's unfair?*
- *How would they change it to make it fair?*

In their groups, they should determine which of the situations they think is the most unfair and why. Ask students to share their answers.

Continue the student-directed discussions by using some of the following prompts:

- Do you think the rules in the classroom are usually fair? (Invite students to share examples)
- Why do you think it is important that the rules in the classroom are fair?
- How would you feel if only certain kids got special privileges based on what they looked like or whether they were a boy or girl?
- Have you ever seen anyone being treated unfairly or treated someone unfairly yourself? (students can discuss this or draw/write about in their journals)

- What might you do if you think someone is being treated unfairly?
- How would you feel if unfair favouritism put people in danger? Can you think of scenarios like that in the world where that is happening? (students may be able to recall incidents of anti-Black racism and police brutality, LGBTQ people being denied service in restaurants, people in wheelchairs not being able to access certain areas of a building, etc.).

Modification for Remote Learning: Divide class into Breakout Rooms for activity.

*It is recommended that you join the discussion as an equal partner with awareness that there is a significant power imbalance in student-teacher relationship. However, the co-learning during such dialogue allows authentic student voice to flourish, becomes the foundation for trusting relationships and sets precedence for a student-centered learning space where brave dialogue is facilitated based on a collective, rather than teacher directed momentum; this is at the core of the anti-oppression/anti-racist educational framework.

(Portions of this lesson have been adapted and modified from the Rights and Activism series from the Teaching Tolerance website at <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/whats-fair-0>)

Consolidation

Provide the Unfair to Fair worksheet to each student. Instruct them as follows:

"On the left side of the paper, draw a picture of something you think would be unfair or that has happened to you that was unfair. It can be something that is unfair in class, in your family, on a team or in your community. Below the picture describe the event. On the right side of the paper, draw a picture of how that same situation could change to become fair. Below the picture describe how the event would change to become fair."

Students who are comfortable may share their examples with the class.

Modification for Remote Learning: Students respond on paper or in their online/hard copy journals based on the routine in your class.

Educator/Student Post-Reflection

- What is the main idea I want to remember or take away from this lesson?
- What is my next step?
- What do I need to learn more about?
- How is my mental wellbeing after this co-learning experience?

Ideas for Going Deeper/Further Resources

Lead students in creating a class book with their fairness illustrations. Place it in the class or the school library. Read the book to other students to encourage others in the school to be fair.

Reading Suggestions

- *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*, by Doreen Cronin.
The cows at Farmer Brown’s farm find an old typewriter and type out their complaints to the Farmer who learns a valuable lesson about how to treat others.
- *This is Our House*, by Michael Rosen. Red-haired George does not allow girls, twins, short people or children with glasses in his cardboard house. But one day when everybody jumps into his house, they decide to exclude people with red hair traumatizing George and teaching him a lesson.
- *Thank you Mr. Falker*, by Patricia Polacco. Classmates make fun of fifth-grader Tricia because she is unable to read, but then a teacher helps her succeed.

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