

# Inclusiveness

This week we take a look at the school building and culture to evaluate them for inclusiveness. Does the school have inclusive school spaces for all students? Does it offer a welcoming environment? This week will round out the inclusiveness unit and prepare students for the final project, which is to create a welcome packet for new students.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

## Main Lesson

### Whole Class Lesson

30 minutes



### Making Inclusive School Spaces

This lesson is designed to get students thinking about how inclusive - or exclusive - the school is in terms of space, design, and culture. Working in groups they will evaluate the physical spaces of the school and the people, things, and activities in those spaces, rating each for its level of inclusivity and brainstorming how to be more inclusive. (See page 3 for lesson details.)

## Mini Lessons

### For Small Groups

15 minutes



### Inclusiveness Obstacle Course

Have students do tasks that are more challenging if you can't walk, see, or read. For example, give students something to read out loud that is not in their native language. Blindfold them and ask them to take notes off of the board. Tie their arms behind their back and ask them to write their names. Tell them to solve a complicated math problem without a calculator (or have two groups solve math problems; one group gets calculators and the other doesn't - it will quickly become clear that the situation is unfair). Then, have them reflect on how these and other types of challenges might impact students in our school. Do all students have equitable access to school equipment, materials in their native language, etc? If not, how would this impact their ability to be successful?

### For Partners

15 minutes



### Classroom Inspection

Pair students up and have them "tour" the classroom. Have pairs observe different elements of the room. Students should identify any potential obstacles that they see. Have them also note if the room's aesthetic feels inclusive and inviting. What evidence is there that all students are welcome? What might be missing?

### For Individuals

15 minutes



### Walk A Mile

Pretend you are a new student in your class. What would make you feel most welcomed and included right away? Journal your ideas.

## Technology-Focused

15 minutes



### Evaluating Tech

How much of your school work or school-related information (grades, etc.) is online? Do you use this technology? Do your parents? Do you have access to good Internet? What happens to the students who do not have access to the Internet or computers at home? Discuss what the school could do to ensure every student has equitable access to technology to be successful at school.

As a home extension, invite students to ask their parents how much they use the school's website or campus portals to look at grades, etc. Are their parents engaged in the school's use of technology?

# Making Inclusive School Spaces

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## Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

## Required Materials

- Large sticky notes ([like the ones found here](#), or large pieces of butcher/poster paper taped to the wall)
- Dark markers for writing on the notes
- Timer to keep group work on time

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Evaluate the school environment for inclusive design.
- Evaluate the school culture for inclusivity.

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

There is a lot of pressure on teachers: pressure to have students who pass their state tests, pressure to close the achievement gap, pressure to make sure everyone is at or above grade level, and pressure to be the best. Sometimes the pressure we feel is positive and it propels us toward improvement, it challenges us to grow in our craft, and it inspires us to try new things. Sometimes the pressure we feel is negative and it makes us become self-critical, induces self-doubt, or leads us toward poor choices.

When you feel pressure, identify a few things:

- 1) Is the pressure you feel positive or negative?
- 2) Does the pressure lead you to grow or improve?
- 3) Does the pressure challenge you in a way that feels good or bad?
- 4) Does the pressure you feel lead toward greater inclusiveness?

Identifying how the pressure makes you feel or where it will lead you is the first step in knowing how to respond. Sometimes we will need to reject the pressure outright, and sometimes we will need to accept its challenge. Sometimes you can reframe negative peer pressure so that it serves you in a positive way. Regardless, you are in control of how you respond!



## Share

5-7 minutes

This week we are going to talk about how inclusive our school is (or isn't!) and brainstorm ways we can make our school culture even more inclusive. Why is it important for a school, especially, to be an inclusive environment for all students? (Invite student response. Encourage them to think about their rights as students to learn in a safe space. Think about the “respect effect” from the first unit and how we thrive in environments where we are respected and cared for and where kindness matters. We can learn better if we feel like we belong.)



## Inspire

15 minutes

For this lesson we are going to take a hard look at the various spaces within our school building and evaluate how inclusive they are for all students.

For example, if you have lunchroom: the people, like we mentioned, are students, lunch staff, teachers; an activity could be sitting at a table and eating. This can make you feel included if you have friends to sit with, but you might also find the lunchroom to be a place where kids are excluded because they don't have friends to sit with. Or, let's say the lunchroom does not have any wheelchair accessible tables. This is an attribute of the layout and "things" in the room. This could make someone in a wheelchair feel excluded because there is no good place for them to eat. (Have you ever even noticed if there are wheelchair accessible tables before?!)

Or, if the classroom is the place you are evaluating, the teacher is a person you could list, and an activity could be when the teacher greets everyone as they walk in the door. This is an inclusive activity that makes everyone feel like they are an included, important part of class.



## Empower

15 minutes

I am actually going to put you into small groups for this activity but we will come back together at the end to share our ideas. On the walls you'll see very large sticky notes and on the top of each note is a location in the school: lunchroom, classroom, hallway, locker room/gym, school grounds (outdoors), and school office.

In your small groups, I want you to draw on your sticky note a three-column chart. Across the top, in column 1, write PEOPLE/THINGS; in column 2, write ACTIVITIES/ATTRIBUTES; and in column 3, write INCLUDE/EXCLUDE. Then, below each column heading fill out the appropriate information. So, for lunchroom, under "people/things" you could write students, teachers, lunchroom staff, benches, tables, chairs, etc. Then write what you (or others, such as staff and teachers) do in the lunchroom. Or perhaps you could evaluate the layout of the lunchroom under "activities/attributes", listing your ideas in single file order. Then decide what each activity/attribute does best, including or excluding (or maybe both) and why.

As you brainstorm your ideas, try to think of as many things as you can; don't stop at just one example. And try to think outside the box, like the wheelchair-accessible table or how our school promotes a variety of religious cultures or traditions (for example - do we only decorate for Christmas or are Jewish traditions also included?!). The goal of this activity is to gauge how inclusive these important spaces in our school are.

When you are done with your brainstorm and notes, rate your space's inclusivity on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. This will help us gauge which areas we need to work on most when we create our welcome packet for new students in the project for this unit. So, in our

lunchroom example above, maybe you find the lunchroom is about a “3” because people are often both included but also excluded.

If your students did the “Fairness Fix-It” Mini Lesson from Week 2, they can use some of their ideas from that lesson to help them with this exercise.

Give groups about 8 minutes to work and then return for whole group sharing. Have the small groups share their ideas and their rating; discuss the rating and see if others agree with it or not.



## Reflect

5-7 minutes

The whole class discussion may spill into the wrap up and that is okay! Remind students that they have a responsibility to be includers everywhere, but especially at school. If there were areas of the school that feel less inclusive than others, challenge students to make those places in particular feel and be more inclusive of others.