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Teaching Tolerance

**Name of the Article:** Size Differences

**Population:** This strategy can be used in any classroom having issues with bullying.

**Objective:** The objective of this lesson is to understand the purpose of adjectives, describe potential classmates using adjectives, and compare the use and fairness of those adjectives.

**Age/Grade Level:** K-5

**Procedure:**

Introduction: This lesson plan creates an activity that promotes a healthier mindset and creates an anti-harassment policy. It is important to teach children while they are young that speaking negatively about others will not be tolerated. Teaching young minds appropriate and kind adjectives to describe others by is a strong approach to putting an end to bullying. In this activity, the students are challenged to kindly describe a picture of someone who is a “potential classmate”. This challenges the students to think about the positive things about the student and use encouraging adjectives.

This lesson plan is intended to be used when there has been bullying in the classroom, especially about a person’s size or weight. Schools are a very common place for teasing and bullying to happen, especially for overweight children. First, the teacher will discuss important questions as to how the media contributes to the opinions of people being overweight, and at the school and community level what can be done to promote living a healthier lifestyle. Then the students will participate in an activity that will hopefully open their minds to some new ideas about adjectives and how to use them in a kind, encouraging way. In this activity, a handout called “Letter To Our New Classmate” will be passed out to the students. The teacher will show a picture to the students of someone around their age and tell the students to imagine that this person was joining their class, what can you tell about the student from the picture and how could you describe yourself to the student. The students will then use the handout given to them to fill out a “letter” using adjectives that are kind and encouraging. Then, the teacher can review with the class and call on students to hear responses of how they wrote their letter to their potential new classmate. This lesson plan also offers slightly altered plans for different subjects of school such as one for reading and language arts and another for social studies so that the assignment will relate a little more to the class. Implementing an anti-harassment or no bullying zone in a classroom is very important, especially to start in an elementary class. Encouraging the students to build each other up instead of break each other down should be taught at all ages, but starting while they are young is the best way to make sure bullying is less likely.

**Possible Adaptations:** If I were to adapt this strategy into my physical education program, I would create a physical activity out of it. I would create a game where my students would be learning adjectives, respect for each other, and also be participating in physical activity. P.E. can host a lot of bullying as well, especially if someone doesn’t run as fast as the others because of weight. I can see that this strategy would be very useful in my future classroom.

**Reflection**: I liked this article because it challenges the students to judge someone they have never met, but only in a positive way. Such as writing in the “letter” that the potential classmate looks responsible. This teaches students how to use encouraging words to lift up others.

**Reference**

[**https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/size-differences**](https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/size-differences)