

A Body of Knowledge

I didn't know how much I knew!



Complexity



7-13 years



60-90 minutes



4-24 children



Discrimination



Education and
leisure



Health

Type of activity

Making a collage, discussion

Overview

Children draw the outline of a body and write in knowledge and skills relating to its different parts. They discuss how to acquire this knowledge, and what happens if parts of the body develop differently, or if certain rights are denied.

Objectives

- To reveal children's knowledge and abilities – to themselves and others
- To raise awareness of ways and places of learning
- To discuss the right to education
- To become aware of people with disabilities

Preparation

- Collect magazines.
- Tape together four pieces of flipchart paper for each small group. (Be aware of the size of your participants. They may need more paper!)

Materials

- Large sheets of paper
- Markers
- Magazines for cutting out pictures
- Scissors, glue and other materials for making a collage

Instructions

1. Introduce the topic by reminding the children that everyone has a human right to learn and develop as much as possible. Observe that they already have a lot of knowledge and skills that they probably don't think about. Ask them, for example, to name a few things that they know how to do, but which they didn't know when they were five or six years old (e.g. reading, writing, counting money, telling the time). Explain that this activity will look at the right to learn and develop.
2. Divide the children into groups of four and give each group materials for making a collage and a sheet of paper large enough to draw the outline of one of the children on it. Explain the activity:
 - a. Each group will draw a life-size outline of one of the children in the group. The outline should fit onto the flipchart sheets: if your children are tall, they can tape more sheets together. Groups should write the names of all the children in their group on the paper.
 - b. Ask the children to think about what they know and are able to do best. For each thing they know or can do, they should think about which part of the body is needed. They can include physical skills (e.g. singing, riding a bicycle), cognitive skills (e.g. doing maths, remembering jokes) and personality traits (e.g. being a friend, keeping a secret).

- c. Ask them to make these ideas visible: invite them to draw, paint, write or paste words and pictures onto the appropriate parts of the body. For example, if someone is good at football, they could draw a ball on the figure's foot, – or on the head; if someone is a good reader, they could cut out a picture of a book and place it near the eyes or head of the figure; if someone is a good singer, they could draw musical notes coming from the figure's mouth.
 - d. Ask them to think of other things that they know or can do, not just what they do best.
3. Allow the children to work on this task until their figure is almost completely covered with drawings, pictures, slogans, and so on.
 4. Bring the children together and ask each group to introduce their 'child' to the others, explaining some of the skills and knowledge they have included. If possible, stick the figures up on the wall, or arrange them on the floor so they are visible to everyone.

Evaluation

1. Discuss the activity by asking questions such as these:
 - Was it easy to find things you are able to do?
 - Are there any differences between the drawings? Are you surprised by any of the drawings? Why?
 - Did you miss out any important abilities?
 - Do you remember where you learnt the skills and knowledge in your pictures? Do you remember who you learned them from?

At this stage, you could ask individual children to write some of the sources of knowledge mentioned in the discussion onto the diagrams, or you could write these in yourself.

2. Relate the activity to human rights by asking questions such as these:
 - Do you think that all children have the opportunity to learn the things you have mentioned? Why or why not?
 - What is needed for children to be able to learn these things?
 - What happens if some of these sources of learning are missing?
 - For example, what if there are no schools? How can children learn to read and write? What happens if they don't learn these skills? Does it matter? How might it affect the rest of their lives?
 - What if there were no other children to play with, no family members to learn from, and no youth groups or clubs?
 - What if a child has a disability and cannot go to school, join a club, or play with other children?
 - What things need to change in order for children with disabilities to be able to fully take part in places where they can play and learn with others?
 - Why is it so important for children to be able to learn and develop?
 - What other human rights do children have that are important for their development?

Suggestions for follow-up

Stick the drawings up around the room so that the children and others can see them.

The activities 'Blindfolded' and 'Silent Speaker' allow children to consider how they might cope with

a disability. 'Dear Diary' looks at the same event, as experienced by different children, including one with a learning disability and another with a chronic illness.

Ideas for action

Invite someone with a learning disability or a local organisation working with this target group to come and talk to your children about learning disabilities and alternative learning strategies.

Explain the concept of learning styles to the children (See Chapter III), emphasising that there are many different kinds of intelligence and ways of learning. Encourage the children to share experiences about their own learning styles and about methods which they find easier or more challenging. Invite the children to suggest ways of supporting each other's learning.

Tips for the facilitator

For younger children, it can be helpful to have some A7-sized cards with pictures or words that give examples of skills and knowledge, so that they only have to put the card next to the right part of the body. You can also provide empty cards for further ideas.

If you are short of large pieces of paper, you can prepare human silhouettes yourself using A3 or larger sheets.

Be aware that not every child or every cultural setting will be comfortable about drawing around a child. If this is the case, or if you do not know the group well, you should prepare an outline before the session. Be careful to make an outline that children of all genders can identify with.

Some children may have difficulty remembering how they learnt something, especially if they learnt it from a person outside the formal education system. Remind them that they learn a lot from each other as well as from family members and other adults in their lives. Help them to see that a great deal of learning comes through contact with other children, and this method may not be possible for some children with tactile sensitivity. It is not necessary to identify the source of every skill the children have listed! The goal is to enable the children to recognise the importance of different sources of learning, both in relation to knowledge and skills.

In the debriefing, help children make the connection between the way they acquired knowledge or skills, and the difficulties for certain children without access to those methods, or to the relevant places, institutions, people or contexts.

Reinforce the point that everyone has an equal right to learn, although they may not all learn in the same way. Make sure that you yourself are prepared to support any children with special learning needs in your group. How, in general, should schools or youth clubs work with and support such children?

Adaptations

This activity could also be run with each child drawing his or her own outline and identifying their own skills and knowledge.

