



Odd Dot Out

Belonging:

Feeling like you are part of a group while knowing you are special for who you are.

Objective:

Students will be able to empathize with others who do not feel accepted or valued. In this activity, students will experience the relief of being part of a group or the loneliness associated with being excluded.

Materials:

Colored sticker dots (or any other kind of small, varied stickers).

Steps:

- Before the activity buy enough colored dot stickers for the size of your class to form several groups of four or five plus one unique color dot. For example, if you have twenty students you will need: five red dots, five green dots, five blue dots, four orange dots, and one yellow dot.
- Place dots on students' foreheads without allowing them to see the color. Tell them not to indicate what color another student is receiving. Make sure you put the lone sticker on a student who can handle being left out, but also a student who will express that it does not feel good to be left out.
- Inform students that they may not speak once the activity starts.
- Next, tell students they must get into groups based on the color sticker on their forehead without talking. Create a sense of urgency by telling students the activity should not be taking as long as it is and suggesting everyone should have a group. Instruct the students to huddle together once they have found their group.
- All students will eventually find their group after being rejected a few times. The student who has the sticker that does not match any group will likely not be accepted into any group and end up standing alone.
- Have students remain standing in their groups and begin a discussion on belonging, exclusion, and cliques using the following group discussion questions.

Personal Assessment:

Have students return to their seats and take out a piece of paper and number it from 1 to 8. Tell them to score themselves for each of the following statements using the following scale: 4 Always, 3 Most of the time, 2 Sometimes, 1 Rarely, 0 Never. Put the scale on the board if it would be helpful.

1. I am comfortable being myself at school.
2. I understand others' viewpoints and ideas.
3. I interact with all different types of students.
4. I don't rush to judge other students' actions.
5. I support peers who have trouble fitting in at school.
6. I share my ideas and opinions in class.
7. I make sure my teachers know me as an individual.
8. I do not bully other students at school.

Personal Reflection:

- How do you support peers who have trouble fitting in?
- Do cliques increase a students' sense of Belonging or decrease a sense of Belonging? Explain.
- How can we be more accepting and tolerant of differences? Give personal examples of how you accept differences.
- When have you been accepted for your uniqueness? Explain how it made you feel.
- Should students conform and lose their uniqueness to be part of a group?
- What makes you special and unique? How do you embrace it?

Group Discussion:

- Why did you form your group with others who had the same color dot?
- Could you have created heterogeneous groups? (Note that the instructions asked students to get into groups based on the color on their forehead, not based on like colors.)
- Why does it seem natural to group yourself with others who are like you?
- What benefits are there to being around people who are different from you?
- Ask the student who had the lone dot sticker to share his or her experience.
- Are students excluded at school? Give examples.
- How does it feel to be left out versus accepted? How did it feel when you were with your group?
- What is the difference between a clique and a friendship group? (Cliques are not permeable, hard to enter and leave. Friendship groups are open.)
- Explore ways to demonstrate acceptance in the classroom and at school.

Extended Learning:

Record the Odd Dot Out experience. Have students edit the video and create an iMovie about Belonging to share with their peers.