

“Whiteout/Blizzard”

Developed by:

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Discipline / Subject:

Physical and motor development, language development

Topic:

Building a team through trust and dependence

Grade Level:

All ages

Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:

Enough blindfolds for half of the class- can use fabric, towels, handkerchiefs, etc.

Maps/Atlases

GPS

Compasses

Lesson Summary:

When mushers are out on the trail they depend on their dog sled team to help them navigate the trail. Having a trusting relationship with their dogs but especially their lead dogs is important when they are navigating through snow storms.

Can you think of a time when you needed help with something? Who did you trust to ask for help? What things do we use to help us get from place to place? (Maps, compasses, GPS, etc)

At school we have become friends with each other over the year and we have learned to take care of each other, depend on each other and trust each other. We are now a team!

Divide your team into pairs. Each pair will take turns being the “lead dog” and the “musher”. The lead dog will be responsible for taking the hand of the “musher” (who is blindfolded) and guiding them through the “whiteout/blizzard” to a designated checkpoint(s). After some time have your students change roles and maybe even partners.

After everyone has taken a turn being both the “lead dog” and the “musher” talk about their roles: what did it feel like to be the lead dog? How did you like being the musher? How did you communicate with each other?

*If you were to do this exercise as the beginning of the year it would be less successful, wait until the end of the year after relationships have been formed to get the most out of it.

Standard’s Addressed: MN Early Childhood Indicators of Progress

1. Social competence and relationships
2. Listening and Speaking
3. Risk-taking
4. Imagination and invention
5. Gross motor development

Learning Objectives:

1. To work together- both leading and following
2. To trust familiar people
3. To communicate clearly with others

Method of assessment for learning

Observe the students ability to lead and follow. Are they willing to take a risk?

Notice, do their peers understand them as they communicate?

Procedural Activities

- Divide your students into teams of 2
- Give each team one blindfold
- Have the team decide who is going to be the “lead dog” and who is going to be the “musher”
- Have them take turns leading each other to designated “checkpoints” while emphasizing the important of trust and communication

Materials Students Need:

None

Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:

Do you live in a place where your students might not know what a whiteout/blizzard is? Share this short clip with them and talk about it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r24Mtf0EXYk>

Other Information:

You could use this as an opportunity to talk about diversity. Some people have low vision or are blind. What adaptations can people use to navigate in their daily lives? You could talk about seeing eye dogs, braille, canes, glasses etc.

You could also connect this activity to weather and meteorology or orienteering.

Modifications for Special Learners/ Enrichment Opportunities:

Some students might have a hard time “losing” one of their senses. You can adapt this lesson by using noise cancelling headsets instead of a blindfold. This would eliminate the students ability to verbally communicate with their partners and would give them the safety/security to see them but would still involve an element of trust.

For older students or to set up the challenge in this activity you could try to have one “lead dog” that is responsible for guiding a few “team dogs” (blindfolded) and a “musher” (blindfolded). This would take much more communication and trust but might be fun!

