

ReelEducation

LESSON: My Dad Matthew

Film Length: 6 minutes

Lesson Length: 40-50 minutes

Grades 4 to 8

ReelAbilities
FILM FESTIVAL
TORONTO

Ontario 
An Enabling Change Project
with the Government of Ontario

Miles Nadal 

Lesson Title: My Dad Matthew

Learning Objectives:

- Examine how people make assumptions about others.
- Discuss why it is important to not make assumptions about others.
- Develop an awareness that people who have disabilities have many abilities.
- Understand that communication can take many forms.
- Develop oral communication skills and use media forms to convey meaning.
- Develop an awareness that creative thinking and/or technology can help overcome barriers for people with disabilities.

Curriculum Connections:

Grades 4-8

Oral Communication

Language Arts

Social Studies

Health

Media

Equity and Inclusive Education

Synopsis:

This uplifting short story, told by 14-year-old Elijah, is about his great admiration for his dad, Matthew. Matthew teaches at university and has cerebral palsy. He communicates by using a pointer and a keyboard. This father and son teach us about acceptance, love and achievement.

Film Length: 6 mins – Documentary -USA

Resources:

Screener Link: <https://vimeo.com/175718388>

Password: matthew

Websites:

LINK: learning.blogs.nytimes.com

Materials:

Before viewing activity, task cards, chart paper, sticky notes

Time: 40-50 minutes

Before Viewing

Every day, most people communicate ideas to each other by talking with one another. How do you communicate? What are other ways to communicate?

In this activity you are going to work in groups to build something with toothpicks and marshmallows. Partner A is given a task card, is not allowed to talk, or show their partner the task card. Partner B will follow Partner A's instructions to build an object. Partner B may ask questions. You have ten minutes. Group students into pairs.

Give Partner A the task card.

TASK CARD.

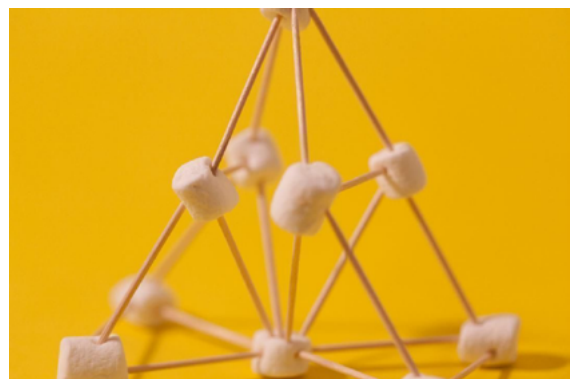
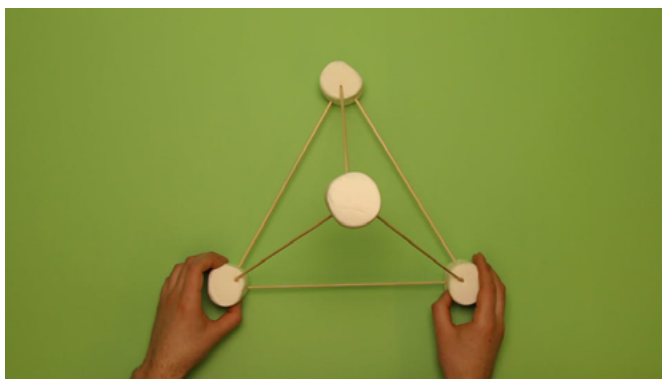
You are going to instruct your partner to build a pyramid like the one below.

You may not talk or touch the materials.

Your partner may ask questions and you can nod yes or no.

Select the pyramid image to use on a task card.

The pyramid you choose should be challenging for students to explain to each other.



After building the pyramids ask students these questions:

Were you able to communicate with your partner?

Were you able to accomplish this task?

What worked well and what did not?

Tell students: Even though you were not able to communicate using your voice, you found other ways to communicate effectively. Not talking was a barrier, but you found other ways to communicate.

We are now going to watch a movie about an accomplished adult who does not use his voice to communicate but finds other ways to communicate effectively.

After Viewing

Discussion Questions:**1. What does Elijah tell us about his dad at the beginning of the movie?**

That he's a normal dad who likes technology and sports. That he is a professor and has university degrees from Berkeley. He is an advocate for people with disabilities.

2. How does Matthew's dad communicate?

He uses a board with a pointer.

Teacher: Explain to the students that Matthew spells most words but the board also has common sight words that we use often, such as "is", "with", "would", "and", "but", "where" and words he uses often such as "disability", "computer", "family" and "friend".

3. What does it mean to be an advocate? How is Matthew and advocate?

A person who uses effort to support someone or ideas. Matthew supports disability awareness by giving speeches.

4. What does Matthew say about attitudes?

People's attitudes towards people with disabilities hurt people with disabilities. It is attitudes that are disabling people.

5. What does Elijah say about making assumptions?

People make assumptions about what a person can do based on their own experience and how they look. Assumptions can change.

6. What does Elijah say about acceptance of people with disabilities?

We shouldn't just accept people with disabilities, we should see people for what they can do and the abilities they have.

Optional: Discussion Activity

CONSIDER USING AGREEMENTS DISCUSSION TECHNIQUE.

When the first student answers a question, ask another student if they agree or disagree with that answer, and why or why not? Then ask another student what they would like to add to the answer. Then ask another student, and keep going until at least three to five students have participated in each question. This keeps the discussion moving along and students are required to listen to and think about what the last person has contributed.

Learning Activity

Tell Students: Elijah talked with us about making assumptions. Assumptions happen when you look at someone and make a judgement about what they are like and what they can do. Most of the time we are unaware of our assumptions. Let's look more closely at assumptions.

In pairs or small groups ask students to look at the first set of photographs and think about what they know about athletes (swimmers, weightlifters, and hockey players). Ask them to use and record some adjectives and phrases to describe them.



Then show the students the second pictures. Ask the students what they notice about the second picture. (They are people with disabilities.)



Note to teacher:

Peter is founder and co-owner of Top Shape Fitness Consulting Inc. Peter was born with spina bifida. A multiple award-winning fitness expert, he is recognized as one of the best adaptive exercise specialists in the world. Peter is a member of Canada's National Adaptive Rowing Team.

LINK: www.topshapeinc.com



Note to teacher:

Cassidy Sheng died of cancer at age 14. Cassidy swam with the Variety Village Flames in Toronto, Ontario, and aspired to compete at the Toronto 2015 Parapan American Games. Cassidy lost her leg from an earlier bout of cancer and was featured in the Canadian Paralympic Committee's "It's More Than Sport" recruitment ad campaign which launched in December 2012, when she was 12.

YOUTUBE LINK : [It's More Than Sport Campaign](#)

LINK TO ARTICLE: www.independentsportsnews.com



Note to teacher:

One of the few Paralympic athletes to win a Paralympic gold medal in both the summer and winter Games, Brad Bowden has been a constant force up front for Team Canada in para ice hockey since 1999. In 2019 he was inducted into the Canadians with Disabilities Hall of Fame.

LINK: paralympic.ca/team-canada/brad-bowden

Ask Students:

When you described the various athletes, why did you not think that the body builder or hockey player might also use a wheelchair. Why did you not describe a swimmer without a leg?

This is called an assumption. We made an assumption that a person who is an athlete would not also have a physical disability.

2. Sticky Note Activity

Have students write a reason why it is important to be careful to not make assumptions about others. Discuss sticky note suggestions.

3. Writing and Media Activity

Students create a media piece similar to Elijah's story which examines assumptions. Students write a blog post, use a voice recording, media, technology or other product approved by the teacher to answer these questions:

What assumptions do people tend to make about you or someone you know? It could be based on how you look, dress or speak. Maybe it is about your interests or where you live.

What facts would you offer to counter these assumptions?

How can you avoid making assumptions about others?

Teaching Tip: If students are having difficulty thinking about a scenario, use this resource to generate ideas.

LINK: <https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com>

Wrap Up

Ask students: Tell me something you learned from the lesson?

Make point form notes on chart paper. Answers may vary.

Suggestions

There are many ways people can communicate.

We should not make assumptions about people based on how they look.

We all make assumptions that we should think about closely.

Making assumptions can hurt people.

People with disabilities can have challenges but there are ways to overcome them.

Enrichment

Students research a person with a disability who appears to be accomplished in his or her life.

Students report their findings in a presentation, movie or other project format approved by their teacher. Eg. Stephen Hawking, Temple Grandin, Michael J. Fox.

RESOURCES

[Northern Arizona university](#)

[National Council of Independent Living](#)

[Independent Living Canada](#)

[wretchesandjabberers](#)

[nonspeakingcommunity](#)

