

## Lesson plan: Embracing Differences

*Submitted by Hannah Moore, Youth Associate, Broken Arrow Library*

### Overview

- Hannah Harrison's book *My Friend Maggie* shows students the negative impact of being a bystander to bullying, the importance of being a good friend, and how difficult fitting in can be. Maggie is teased and left out for being bigger than her classmates (among other things), rather than embraced for bringing something unique to the table. In this lesson plan, students will use post-it notes to show how differences make things more interesting *and* more beautiful.

### Resources & Preparation

- Materials and Technology
  - Post-it notes, one color for each group.
  - Book: *My Friend Maggie* by Hannah E. Harrison
- Preparation
  - Clear a large space for each group- either table tops (half a table or a whole table per group works best), or a wall/window (if available) with a space for each group.
  - Divide the class into groups. Groups of five are recommended, but this can be adjust based on available resources and classroom size.

### Instructional Plan

- Student Objectives
    - Determine whether or not having different factors is better than having everything be exactly the same.
1. After dividing the class into groups, give each group a stack of post-it notes and instruct them to line the post-its up in their assigned space. This should end up looking like a monochromatic grid.
  2. Ask the students to look at their space and the other groups' space and determine which one is best. Ask them why. Ask them what makes each cluster of post-it notes different. Is it exciting to look at? Was it fun to put together?
  3. Have each group their remaining post-it notes to another group (to their left, to their right, whatever works best in your space). Tell them they can trade out up to half of the post-its already in their space with post-its in the new color. They can place them in any order they like, so long as the entire space is still covered.
  4. Repeat steps 2 & 3 as desired.
  5. Once they've traded post-its as many times as you'd like, ask them to again look at their space and the other group spaces. Are the spaces prettier or more fun to look at? Were they more fun to make? What made them better or worse? Do the spaces look more similar or less similar than they did at the beginning of the experiment?

6. Segue way into a discussion about the importance of celebrating and including things that are different from the norm into our lives and routine- and embracing them rather than alienating them.