1998 FIRST BLOCKORAMA PRIDE EVENT

(20-30 minute session)

Grade: 5 to 8

Learning Outcomes & Lesson Focus

Students will:

- Identify the relevance of the term “Blockorama”
- Identify the origins of the term “Blockorama” and events related to it

Lesson Focus

As a result of the learning activities within this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify the meaning and origin of the term “Blockorama”

Resources

Lesson Materials/Supplies

- Internet access for students to research history and events

Audiovisual

- Jamea Zuberi - Blockorama (Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity): https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=113120724222963

Print/Publications

- Right to party: 20 years of Black Queer love and resilience - https://theconversation.com/right-to-party-20-years-of-black-queer-love-and-resilience-80040
- Blockorama Is Where Black Lives Mattered At Toronto Pride - https://www.thefader.com/2016/07/05/toronto-pride-2016-blockorama
- Links to Manitoba Curriculum - Kindergarten to Grade 8 - Physical Education/Health Education - Human Sexuality
- https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/physhlth/hs_k-8/
- Manitoba Teachers’ Society: @2LGBTQIA Lesson Plans - https://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2018/04/17/lgbtq-lesson-plans/
- *** CPHS Pride organization resources, if available, can be the primary resource for any research being completed by the students

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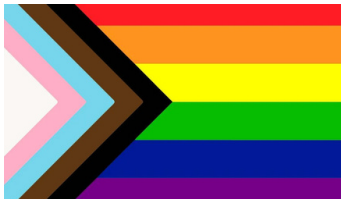
Notes to Teacher

The use of the term Pride, even outside the context of Gay Pride or the LGBTQ2+ (GSRD) communities, is sensitive due to its connection with religious or other beliefs. It will likely be necessary to acknowledge that there are both positive and negative connotations to the term pride. It might be necessary to provide lead-in knowledge to the students which introduces that discrimination and harm has taken place based on who people "love" or "are attracted to".

Acronyms

- LGBTQ2+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2-Spirit
- GSRD: Gender, Sexual, and Relationship Diversity
    - There are many versions of acronyms for this community with letters being added, removed, or reordered based on who is being represented and how. There is no perfect or authorized version for use in education, rather, being aware of any local cultural sensitivities can assist in utilizing culturally competent language.

Like Lesson 8, "Blockorama" is a term which brings an aspect of intersectionality, a concept which might be new for students. The term brings the characteristics of sexual, gender and relationship diversity with a perspective of the Black/Persons of Colour communities. One consideration is that the term applies to those communities, and not to non-Black/Persons of Colour LGBTQ2+ (GSRD) persons. It might be necessary to discuss the issues of "appropriation" if this term is used outside of Black/Persons of Colour peoples.



Suggestions for Instruction

- Blockorama or "Blocko," as it is more popularly known, is an event that brings thousands together every year to celebrate Black queer pride. Blockorama allows Black diasporic queers, trans and their families to celebrate their love and desire in a space where "blackness" emanates joy and pleasure through movement, music, art and performance.
- Blockorama was started in 1998 in Toronto by Black queer activists: Jamea Zuberi, Angela Robertson, Camille Orridge, Junior David Harrison and Douglas Stewart. These individuals were queer activists and feminists and were active in the women's, anti-racism and wider LGBT (GSRD) movements in Toronto. They were part of a community who had marched against racist police violence, fought racism in the women's movement and challenged sexism and homophobia in the Black community.
- While events have been occurring regularly since 1998, there have been concerns that Blockorama events have been positioned or moved away from the mainstream Pride events, resulting in a perception that Pride activities and parades are very white and gay focused. Blockorama organizers work continuously to integrate their celebrations with the greater Pride efforts so Black/Persons of Colour people are visible and included.

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Suggestions for Assessment

Observation

Teacher Assessment: Checklist

Observe whether the student can identify what Blockorama means and where/when the term originated.

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

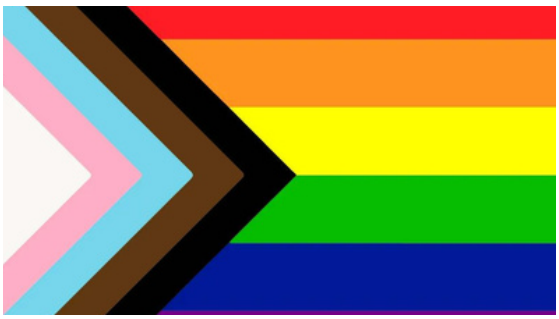
Paper and Pencil Task

Teacher Assessment: Inventory

Have students write a 250 - 500 word critique/reflection addressing the following questions:

1) Why do you think events like Blockorama, which highlight specific communities within the LGBTQ+ community, are necessary?

2) Define intersectionality in the context of Canadian Pride history, and explain why it is important/necessary. Who does intersectionality apply to, and why?



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