



Canada C3 Digital Classroom Learning Module

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Name of School Board/District, Education Authority: Toronto District School Board

Learning Module Title: Accessibility in our Communities

Grade(s)/Teaching Division(s): Kindergarten-Grade 3

Subject(s)/Course(s): Social Studies, Science & Technology, Health & Physical Education, The Arts

Time: Interdisciplinary unit of study of up to 5 lessons, each approximately 30-75 minutes, as appropriate for students/grade level

Learning Module Topic & Description

In this learning module, students will examine the features and barriers that make their community accessible or inaccessible for all people to use. Using an inquiry framework, students will examine for themselves the strengths and needs of their local neighbourhood with regards to accessibility, and develop and implement an action plan to make their community more accessible.

Essential Question(s)

What? – Which parts of our local community are accessible or inaccessible for all people to use?

So what? – Why is it important for a community to be accessible?

What are the benefits of making our community more accessible for all?

Now what? – What can we do to make our community more accessible and fair for everyone?

Canada C3 Central Theme(s) Addressed

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Youth Engagement

Learning Objective(s)/Goals

Students will develop a greater place-based understanding of the built local environment by examining their community through a critical lens. Students will develop skills in respect, empathy, and civic responsibility by examining an issue from multiple points of view. Students will become empowered to recognize and address issues of social justice in their community through an inquiry-based, problem-solving model of learning.

Essential Concepts/Knowledge/Skills to be Learned/Applied

Creating a more accessible community is beneficial for many citizens (e.g., people who use mobility devices, families with young children in strollers, workers who make deliveries to businesses, etc.) and provides a

variety of social, economic, and cultural advantages (e.g., when it is easier to get around, people will spend more time out in their community leading to greater physical and mental wellbeing; businesses earn more when they can attract a greater diversity of customers; people feel less isolated and more included when they can access their community independently with little or no assistance).

Curriculum Connections/Big Ideas

Social Studies: The Local Community (Grade 1)

Science & Technology: Materials, Objects, and Everyday Structures (Grade 1); Movement (Grade 2);
Strong and Stable Structures (Grade 3)

Language: Oral Communication (Grades 1-3); Writing (Grades 1-3)

Mathematics: Data Management (Grades 1-3); Geometry and Spatial Sense (Grades 1-2)

Kindergarten Program: Belonging and Contributing; Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours;
Problem-Solving and Innovating

*[The above are general Ontario curriculum strands and topics. Please see

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/Curriculum/elementary/subjects.html for detailed curriculum documents.]

Teacher Goals

Teachers can adapt the activities of this interdisciplinary unit of study to meet the needs of their curriculum goals. For example, during Consolidation, the teacher may choose to guide the students' implementation of an action plan to meet particular curriculum expectations; writing persuasive letters to representatives of municipal government or speaking directly with local business owners are both appropriate forms of action but meet different curriculum goals.

Student Groupings <i>(e.g., whole class, small groups, pairs, independent work)</i>	Materials/Resources <i>(e.g., equipment, PowerPoint/Keynote slides, manipulatives, hand-outs, games, assessment tools)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - whole class - pairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - class set of clipboards, paper, and pencils to gather data and/or map during community walks - read-alouds/story books with main characters who have a (dis)ability
Instructional Strategies <i>(e.g., direct instruction, demonstration, simulation, role-playing, guest speaker, etc.)</i>	Considerations <i>(e.g., contingency plans re: technology failure, student absences or groupings, guest speaker cancellations, or safety concerns)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inquiry-based learning - community walks - guest speaker(s) - role-playing - direct instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recruit volunteers for additional supervision during community walks and out-of-school activities - when inviting in a guest speaker, consider how you will make a space that is accessible for your guest - consider that members of our community who have disabilities are more at risk of experiencing financial difficulties, and ensure you are able to compensate any guest speakers for their time and expertise - always make contingency plans (e.g., if a community walk must be postponed due to weather, if a special guest cancels their visit, etc.)

Accommodations & Differentiation Strategy (to address different needs & preferences of students)

- strategic seating, sensory tools, and other environmental accommodations during lessons, read-alouds, or guest speaker visits
- co-operative learning in pairs
- fine motor aids or assistive technology during community data collection or mapping
- any other individualized supports as directed by student IEPs

Assessment for Learning, Checking for Understanding, Success Criteria & Feedback

Assessment for this learning module will depend upon the curriculum connections set by the teacher. With your students, co-construct your learning goal(s) and success criteria, and offer opportunities for self-, peer-, and teacher-feedback and reflection for the assessment tasks (e.g., creating a map of the local neighbourhood using appropriate mapping features and spatial reasoning; using appropriate listening strategies during a visit from a guest speaker; building a strong and stable model of a ramp for a single-step storefront; writing with appropriate techniques to persuade a member of government to support community accessibility, etc.).

Motivational Hook (process for acquiring & focusing students' attention), Time (minutes)

Introduce the topic of accessibility through an engaging read-aloud and/or guest speaker. There are many wonderful story books that feature characters with (dis)abilities. Check your local independent bookstore or library for suggestions. Some favourites from my own classroom were “Looking Out for Sarah” (Glenna Lang), “Hudson Hates School” (Ella Hudson), “Hooway for Wodney Wat” (Helen Lester), and “The Deaf Musicians” (Pete Seeger), but there are many others. When reading these with my own students, I asked them to focus on listening for both the strengths and struggles of each character (see attached *Image 1*), as a way of teaching against the stereotype that a person’s only or most important characteristic is their disability. Guest speakers are also a wonderful way for students to ask honest questions and confront stereotypes they may hold. Seek out accessibility/(dis)ability advocates from your community and ask them to visit your students to tell them about their work (or do a virtual field trip!). In my own classroom, we were very lucky to host a number of guest speakers. Before they visited, we would read a story about a character with similar (dis)abilities (i.e., deafness, visual impairment, physical disability) as a way of pre-teaching respectful vocabulary and brainstorming possible questions we might want to ask our guest speaker).

Open (process for introducing/framing module & agenda), Time (minutes)

On a community walk, examine, collect data, and/or map your school’s neighbourhood from the perspective of accessibility (e.g., take photographs of accessibility features such as automatic doors; make a tally record of the number of storefronts that have ramps or have steps; create pictorial maps showing accessibility features such as auditory street crossing signals – see attached *Image 2* and *Image 3*). Consider carefully which route your community walk will take, based on factors such as the curriculum goals you hope to achieve as a teacher, your students’ walking stamina, the weather, types of buildings and accessibility features or barriers your route will take you past, etc.

Body (main instructional & learning processes to build understanding, skills, attitudes), Time (minutes)

After the community walk, reconvene as a class to analyze the results you collected. Did your students see many accessibility features in your community? How many barriers did they tally compared to the number of accessibility features? What types of buildings were most accessible? Do the students notice any particular trends or issues? As a facilitator, guide your students to reflect upon and make connections between what they noticed and what other students in the class noticed, while continuing to come back to the essential questions of the learning module. Brainstorm and build consensus about possible action plans to be taken as a result of the information that you have collected.

Consolidation (*processes for application & practice of knowledge, skills, attitudes*), Time (minutes)

Implement the action plan that students have chosen to undertake, focusing on appropriate curriculum-related skills (e.g., persuasive writing forms, clear and compelling speaking strategies, safe use of tools and techniques when building strong and stable structures). The complexity and duration of this consolidation process will depend on the action project your students wish to undertake. Consider what types of scaffolding students will need to complete their project (e.g., how to write a persuasive letter, how to use tools safely to build a stable ramp, etc.), and whether or not you may be able to recruit volunteers to help your students achieve their goal (e.g., to take pairs of students to talk with business owners about installing ramps, to help supervise during building/construction times, etc.).

Closure (*processes for recapping, looking ahead*), Time (minutes)

Celebrate and reflect upon the success of the students' action plan. Share the results of your action project with students' families and the wider school community through a newsletter, public address (PA) system announcements, or a formal celebration event. Write thank-you cards to community partners who supported your students' inquiry project. Ask students to reflect upon the process and how they contributed to the group's goals.

Student Reflection on Learning (*i.e., critical thinking questions to extend the learning*)

Some questions you may ask students to reflect upon could be:

- What have I learned about my own strengths and struggles during this learning process?
- What was the most valuable contribution I made to the group's success with our action project?
- What are some skills I need to improve on to be more successful in future action projects I take on?
- How can I continue to advocate for accessibility in my community?
- Why is it important to have accessibility laws?
- What might be the consequences for people with disabilities in countries that do not have or enforce these types of laws?

Extension Ideas & Additional Resources

For examples of what this learning module may look like, please see these two videos about Toronto classrooms that partnered with the StopGap Foundation on community accessibility projects:

- Grove Community School (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIng6eddbf0>)
- Mabin School (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmV9LyDMurA>)

For more teaching resources about accessibility, please see:

- Rick Hansen Foundation (<https://www.rickhansen.com/Our-Work/School-Program/Educational-Materials>)
- The TeachABLE Project (<http://theteachableproject.org/lesson-plans/>)
- Canadian Museum for Human Rights (<https://humanrights.ca/human-rights-activities-classroom>)

Teacher Reflection (*e.g., notes for next time*)

The most important reflection for me while completing this learning module was acknowledging that projects such as this cannot be identically replicated from year after year or from classroom to classroom. If inquiry-based learning is truly at work, each group of students will approach this topic differently according to what they notice in their own local community. If you are interested in engaging your class in this learning module, don't aim for the cookie cutter – with your students, research local organizations to partner with, meet and talk with members of your community who have (dis)abilities, and create an action plan that serves your context.

Understanding a Character

Strengths & Struggles










 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creative and artistic • baking, sewing, making things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spelling and writing • teased and bullied because of his spelling tests
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basketball • shooting the basketball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard to stand and walk • muscles jump around
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good at magic • controlling feelings • kind and helpful • hula-hooping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doesn't like feeling different • couldn't eat certain foods
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • walking in the hall • kickball • doesn't need help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seeing • playing safely
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making shapes • shaping dough • making shapes with mud • matching • making cookies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seeing with his eyes • his mom didn't believe he could make cookies • feeling different
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • singing and playing music • throwing the ball to Perry • taking care of Perry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seeing
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • math • getting the bully away • handling people shouting at him 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pronouncing Rs
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pretending • running and having fun • trampoline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when people take his toys • gets mad when pool is closed • feeling excluded
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • playing the piano • sign language • singing • music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hearing

Image 1: After reading many texts studying themes of accessibility and (dis)ability, our class co-constructed this anchor chart documenting each main character's strengths and struggles. Students noticed that many character's strengths outweighed their struggles, helping them understand these characters as well-rounded individuals and thus challenging the stereotype that people with (dis)abilities are defined by their struggles.

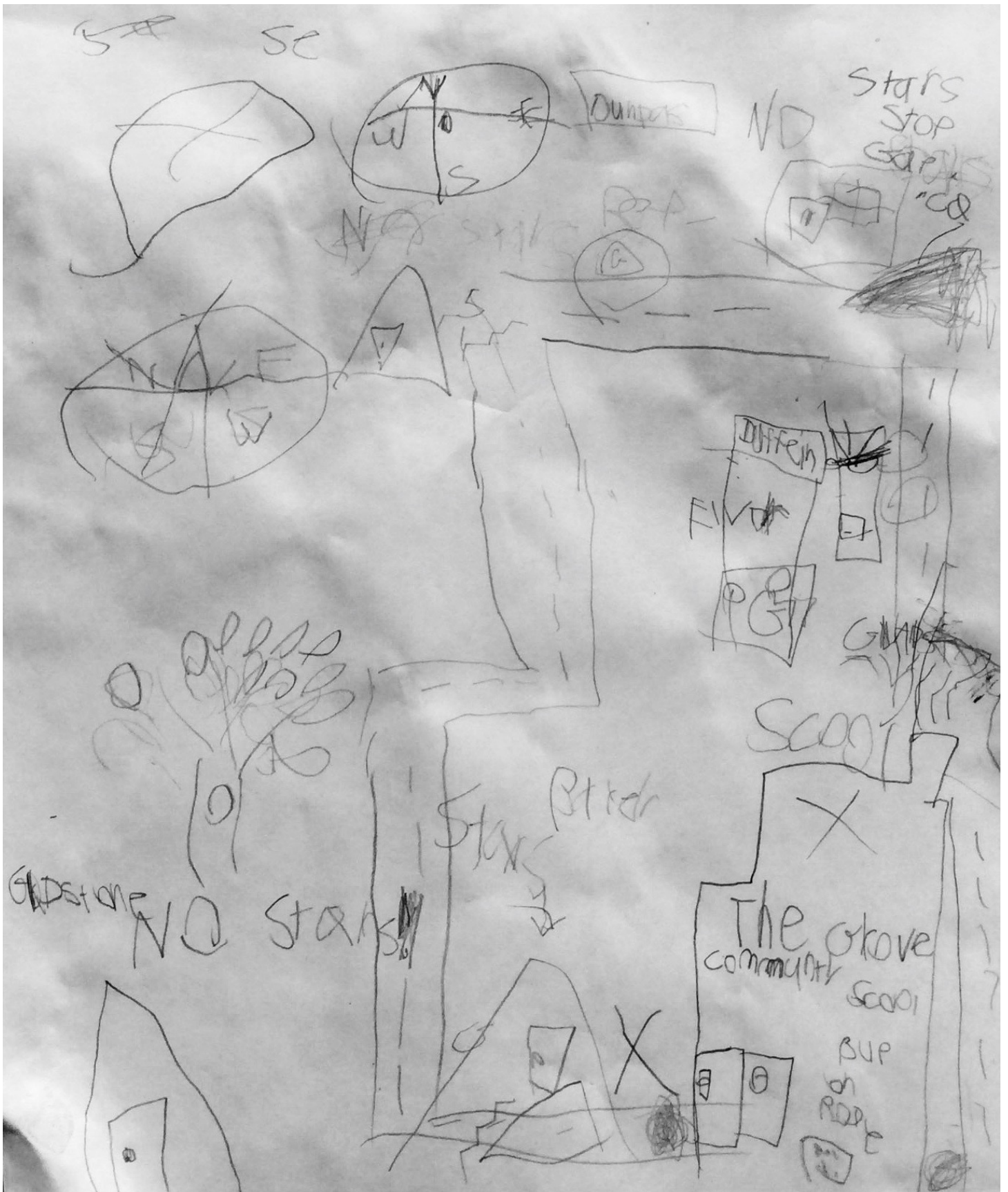


Image 2: On a community walk, students in our Grade 1 classroom used their developing map-making skills to pictorially record the accessibility features and barriers they noticed in the immediate neighbourhood surrounding our school.

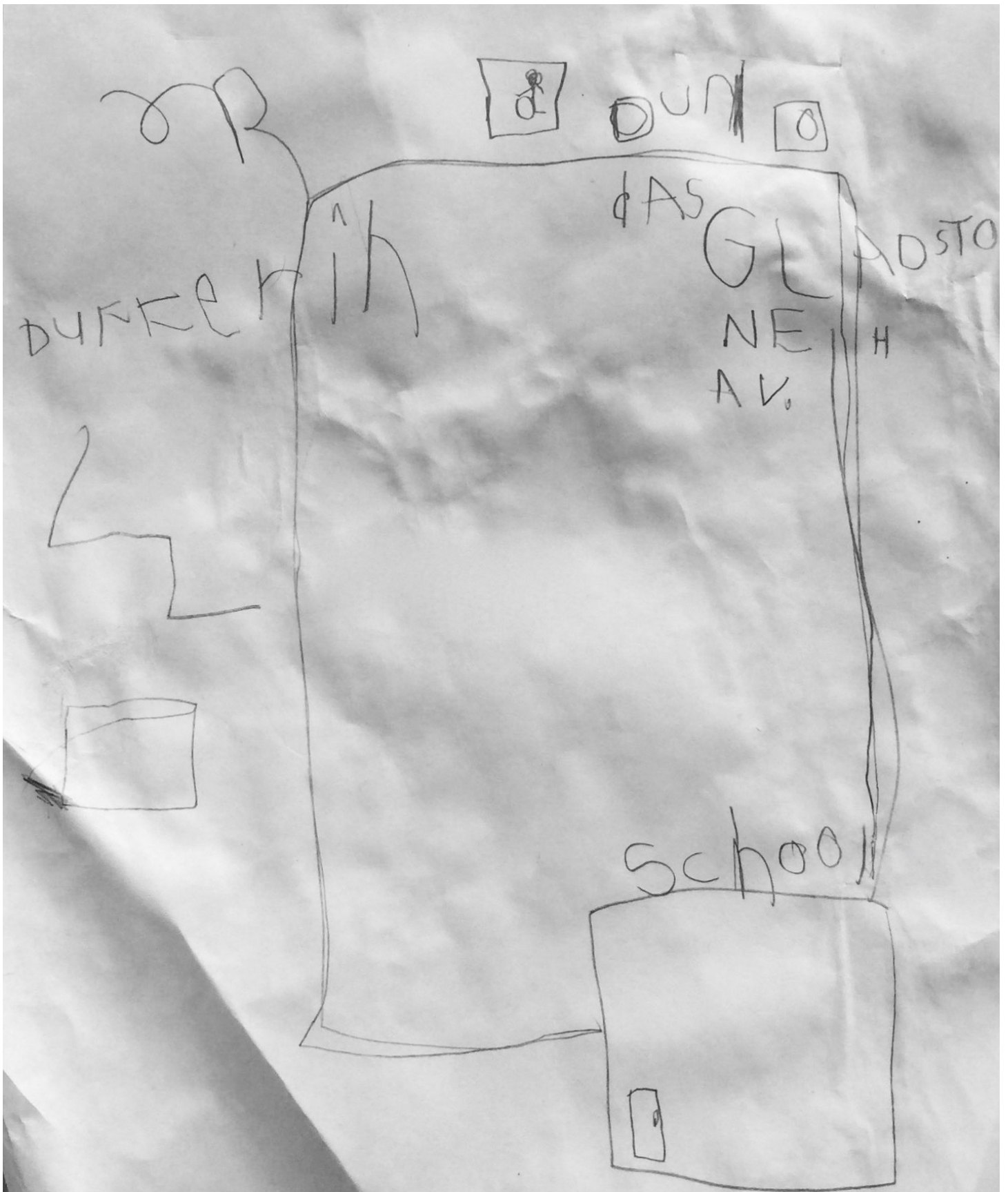


Image 3: On a community walk, students in our Grade 1 classroom used their developing map-making skills to pictorially record the accessibility features and barriers they noticed in the immediate neighbourhood surrounding our school.