

Lesson Plan

Out of Mind

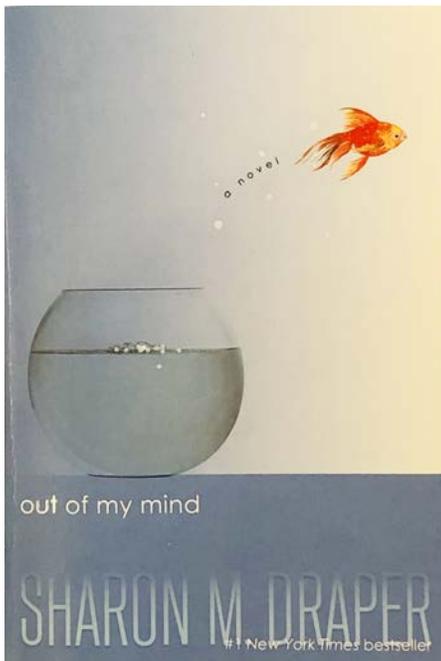
By Sharon M. Draper

Lesson: To investigate the sense of community, citizenship and character values in a world in which numerous persons with diverse conditions and capacities need to be respected and accepted.

Curriculum Connection: Language Arts

Grade Level: Grades 3 - 5

Time: 1-2 chapters/day @15-20 minutes X 16 days



Lesson Snapshot

This lesson plan has a unique structure since the book is presented as a read aloud over 7 weeks.

Each reading session can include large class or small group discussions using Option A—chapter by chapter questions, or Option B—questions from Sharon Draper’s Study Guide.

About the Book

Out of My Mind is a story filled with life lessons. Eleven-year-old Melody, who cannot walk or talk, takes on life's biggest challenge as a fifth grader — being "normal." Readers will be enthralled by Melody’s journey towards self-understanding as well as discovering a way to simply be heard.

Materials

- 1 copy of *Out Of My Mind*
- iPad or laptop available for impromptu questions
- Chart paper, markers, sticky notes, pencils

Lesson Details

BEFORE READING

1. Write "cerebral palsy" on chart paper. Using a laptop or iPad, nominate a student to quickly look up what it means and share their findings to the class.
2. Invite students to share their feelings on words. Ask any of the following questions: What role do words play in our lives? Are words valued more verbally or written? What makes you say this? If you could not talk or hardly move your body, how would you communicate your words?"

These questions can be used for individual journal topics or to generate class discussion. Ideally you want students begin thinking about how we use words.

DURING READING

1. Read 1-2 chapters each day.

AFTER READING

1. You can have a variety of group sizes to address questions: larger group, small table groups, or pairs.

See Option A or Option B questions.

Option A

Chapter by Chapter Questions

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Chapter 1

What is your opinion of the main character at this point? Why do you think the main character has never spoken a word? Why are the parents blanketing her with conversation if she doesn't speak? How do you think this character communicates?

Chapter 2

How do you think Melody feels about her wheelchair? Why do you think others see her problems first? How do you think Melody feels about the way her mind and body works? Why is she so aware of all the smells and sounds around her?

Chapter 3

Does Melody have a right to be angry? Explain. Do you think her dad knows she can understand him? Explain. Melody says she gets to "go to Where the Wild Things Are." What does this mean? Do you think she'll be able to use all this information someday? Explain.

Chapter 4

Why do people assume Melody is dumb? Do you think it's easier for Melody to put on her "handicapped face"? Explain. What do you think of Dr. Hugely? Is Melody simply a "burden" to her parents? Explain.

Chapter 5

Why do you think the other kids ignore kids like Melody? Why is the "learning community" a joke to Melody? Do you think she'd enjoy being in a different classroom? Explain. Do you think Melody likes school? Explain.

Chapter 6

What makes Mrs. V so different from everyone else in Melody's life? Why does Melody like her so much? What does Mrs. V think of Melody? Why don't more people challenge her, like Mrs. V does? How does Melody feel after being with Mrs. V?

Chapter 7

What do you think it's like for Melody to have these dreams? Why do you think the students of room H-5 are a "tough bunch"? What doesn't Mrs. Billups get? Why is she so confused? Do you think Mrs. Billups thought this class was going to be easy? Explain.

Chapter 8

Do you think Olie's life was worse than Melody's? Explain. How does Melody relate to Olie? Why does a puppy "just get it"? Why is that good enough for Melody?

Chapter 9

Is Melody's disability her mom's fault? Explain. Do you think her mom ever wished for a refund? Explain. Is Penny perfect? Is Melody? Explain. How do you think Melody feels about Penny?

Chapter 10

How do you think Melody's parents know what she is saying or feeling when she can't talk? Is her mom a good mom? Why? Do you think Melody's parents get frustrated when she is trying to communicate with them? Explain. Do you think there could be a way for Melody to have a "bubble-talking machine"? Explain.

Chapter 11

What does the teacher mean when she says, "y'all got potential all stuffed inside"? How does music influence our mood and responses to problems? What do you think of Rose? Do you think the inclusion class is a good idea? Who is it helpful for?

Chapter 12

Do you think there is a way for Melody to participate more in class? Explain. Describe how Claire and Molly 'care' about Melody. Why do they act this way? Explain why the regular class assignments are so awesome for Melody? Would the other kids agree? Think about Rose talking to Melody and touching her arm. Why was this so significant?

Chapter 13

Why do you think Molly and Claire are so terrible to Melody? Do you think Mrs. V made the situation better or worse? Explain. Do you think Rose enjoyed her time? Explain. Do you think she'll still talk to Melody in school? Explain.

Chapter 14

How could a computer help Melody? How could Melody's world expand if she had access to greater technology? Is it hard for Melody to be patient with people? Explain. Who was Stephan Hawking? What could Melody learn about him?

Chapter 15

Do you think Melody's life has changed? If so, how? Melody is often frustrated. Do you think this will change? Will things be less frustrating or easier? How do you think the other kids will react? Describe why it's so significant that her dad has his camcorder.

Chapter 16

Describe how Melody is feeling at this point in the story. What are your thoughts about Claire's comment? How will Elvira change things for Melody? Could Elvira cause any problems for Melody?

Chapter 17

Is it possible for Melody to ever 'fit in'? What does Mr. Dimming think of Melody's perfect score? How did Melody feel about winning? What did the other students think? Respond to Mr. Dimming's last comment.

Chapter 18

Is Melody's anger justified? Was Mrs. V's feelings reasonable? Melody's dad thinks Mrs. V is setting her up for failure. Do you agree? Do you think the rest of the class noticed Melody's absence?

Option A

Chapter by Chapter Questions

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Chapter 19

Why is it so difficult for the rest of the world to appreciate Melody's abilities? Is it true we all have disabilities? Explain. What would be the most challenging part of having a disability that affects your body not your mind? Is Melody's family happy? Explain.

Chapter 20

Melody can now stand up for herself. How do you think that makes her feel? Is Rose still her friend? Explain. Why do you think Claire is so worried about Melody? Do you think Mr. Dimming is right - that she'll be hurt if she doesn't do well?

Chapter 21

Why does Melody describe her feelings as an earthquake? Do you think Mr. Dimming was right to apologize? Explain. Does Melody want to be on the team? Explain. How do you think her teammates feel about her being on the quiz team?

Chapter 22

Do you think Melody is happy to be on the quiz team? "...there was the team, and there was me, and we were in the same room." What does Melody mean by this comment? Claire is very concerned about how they look on TV. Why does she feel this way? Why is it important for Melody to be like the other kids as they study?

Chapter 23

Why do you think other people would be so interested in Melody? Why is it important Paul speak directly to Melody? (Think of Shane Burcaw's NBC news story!) Do you think Melody is prepared? What are your predictions? How will she do?

Chapter 24

The announcer singles out Melody. How do you think she felt? What do you think is Mr. Dimming's opinion about her being on the team now? Is winning so important to him? What is your opinion about Connor? Why do the lights seem brighter this time?

Chapter 25

Why do you think Melody is so amazed people are taking photos of her? Why was it so important that Melody introduce herself? Respond to Claire's comment. Why would she say that?

Chapter 26

Why is being invited to the restaurant so special for Melody? Why doesn't she want help us the steps? Describe Melody's feelings when she sees they have saved her a spot? Why did she feel that way? Was the evening enjoyable for Melody?

Chapter 27

Why do you think the article focused on Melody? When people say they want to be just like everyone else, what does that really mean? Do you think she is welcome on the team? Explain. Can you imagine what the other girls are whispering about?

Chapter 28

Is Claire's life fair? Explain. Did they leave Melody behind intentionally? Explain. Why wasn't Melody told about arriving to the airport early? Predict what is going to happen next.

Chapter 29

Is it possible to ever make it up to Melody? Explain. Did Mr. Dimming really want her on the team? Explain. Why do you think she wasn't included? Melody is a strong member of the team. How do you think they did without her?

Chapter 30

Would Melody have made the difference? Do you think Melody did the right thing in the car? Why doesn't mom pay attention to the outburst? What happened?

Chapter 31

Is Melody at fault? Explain. Do you think Melody is a 'broken kid'? Explain. Do you think she would be missed if she was gone? Do you think 'normal' sucks?

Chapter 32

Why is Melody's opinion about room H-5 different? Where do you think Melody belongs? Did she save Penny's life? Explain. Do you think the team has regrets about leaving her behind? Explain.

Chapter 33

What do you think of Melody's autobiography? Do you think she'll share it with the class? Melody's final puzzle is so hard for her to see. Explain why. What is next for Melody?

Option B

Questions from Sharon Draper's Guide

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The novel opens with a powerful discussion of the power of words and language. How does this textual choice help capture the reader's attention?

What predictions can the reader make about the narrator of the story based on details in the text? What inferences can be made about the thought processes of the narrator's mind?

In a world that does not work for her, what seems to cause the biggest frustrations for Melody? Support your answer with specific details from the text.

Describe Melody's parents. How do they learn to communicate with Melody and help her to overcome everyday problems? Why are those efforts sometimes a complete failure? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Based on details in the text, how does Melody feel about school? How does she fit in with her classmates and what makes her different from the rest of the children in H-5? What would be Melody's ideal school situation?

Discuss Melody's teachers since she began going to school using specific details from the text. What does this say about her school system, or about attitudes at her school about teaching children with special needs?

Describe Mrs. V. What role does she play in Melody's development? Why is she a necessary addition to Melody's life? Support your answer.

What is significant about the story of Ollie the fish? How does Ollie's life mirror Melody's? Describe Melody's feelings when she is unable to tell her mother what really happened.

Describe how the introduction of Penny as a character changes the family dynamics. Analyze Melody's complicated feelings about her little sister.

How does the inclusion program change Melody's school experiences? Describe both positive and negative results of the program. Describe Melody's deep, unrealized need for a friend using specific details from the text.

What does Melody learn about friendship during the trip to the aquarium? Make a comparison between Ollie's life, the life of the fish in the aquarium, and Melody's life, supporting your answer with specific details from the text.

How does Melody's computer change her life, her outlook on life, and her potential? Why does she name it Elvira?

Why does Melody decide to enter the quiz team competition? What obstacles must she face and overcome just to get on the

team?

Use details from the text to explain what Melody learns about friendship and the relationships of children working together as she practices and competes with the quiz team. What does she learn about herself?

What is ironic about the events at the restaurant after the competition? How does this scene foreshadow the events that led up to the airport fiasco?

Describe Melody's feelings before the trip to the airport, while she is there, and after she gets home. How would you have coped with the same situation?

Describe Melody's extreme range of emotions as she tries to tell her mother that Penny is behind the car. How did the scene make you feel?

Discuss the scene in which Melody confronts the kids on the quiz team. What is satisfying about how she handles the situation? What else might Melody have done?

Why is the first page repeated at the end of the book? How has Melody changed, both personally and socially, from the beginning of the book to the end?

How would this story have been different if it had been written from a third-person point of view; from the point of view of her parents, for example, or simply from the viewpoint of an outside observer?

Explain the title of the novel. Give several possible interpretations.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Have students draft a response to ReadAble's Twitter campaign #CanYouImagine for each book. You can choose to collect student responses and make posts yourself, or if students have access to your class Twitter account, can make the post according to your classroom policy. Feel free to take pictures of your students engaging with each title.

2. Have students contemplate how they interact with all students in the school building or community. Have their attitudes or assumptions about people with disabilities shifted in any way? Have their ideas about inclusion changed? Do they think their school is inclusive? Do they have ideas they could offer to make improvements?

NOTE: This book will allow for greater discussion at the final conference in March.

3. Students can visit the "Other Stories" hub to listen to Sharon Draper speak about her book in a 3 minute video. Students can also learn more about barriers, inclusion, and other disabilities such as Down Syndrome, Chronic Illness and Epilepsy.

THE READABLEFEST WEBSITE LINKS TO "OTHER STORIES"



Right Out of Her Mind, In Her Words: Sharon Draper



Special Olympian, Devon Adelman



Kids Interview Devon Adelman: Down Syndrome



Kids interview a Teen with a Chronic Disease



Story about stranger's seizure on TTC subway



Erynn Brook's Twitter Thread