

Book Notes



A different kind of brilliant.

By Louise Cummins

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Available at www.adifferentkindofbrilliant.com

Overview

This book is written by a mum to support her son with autism to embrace his differences and recognise that he is a 'different kind of brilliant.'

Note:

- Use this book to promote discussion and understanding about celebrating differences.
- Use this book to encourage autistic students, parents and school community to see their 'differences' in a positive way.

Grades: 1-4
Stages 1 and 2

Big Ideas

We are all different.
We can celebrate our differences.

Cross Curriculum
Personal and social capability.

Australian Curriculum

Year 1	Year 4
ACELY 1656	ACELY 1688
ACELY 1661	ACELY 1694

NSW English Syllabus:

Stage 1

EN1-1A:

Engage in conversations and discussions, using active listening behaviours, showing interest, and contributing ideas, information and questions.

EN1-2A:

Draw on personal experience and topic knowledge to express opinions in writing.

Stage 2

EN2-1A:

Use interaction skills, including active listening behaviours and communicate in a clear, coherent manner using a variety of everyday and learned vocabulary and appropriate tone, pace, pitch and volume.

EN2-2A:

Experiment with visual, multimodal and digital processes to represent ideas encountered in texts.

Teaching Activities

Reading and Responding

1. Understanding emotions and reading them on others faces can be difficult for some students. Show students the page, 'All these amazing people...' Study the illustration and how each character might be feeling. Look at the illustration of Lachlan as a superhero and discuss his smile and how he might be feeling. Use the attached sheet to label different emotions. Then ask students to select three labels and complete the sentences: 'I feel _____ when...'
2. Read the section, 'Autism means your brain reacts to lots of signals and you process the world differently' and examine the illustration accompanying this line in the book. Discuss with the class how this might feel. What adaptations could you make in your classroom to support someone with autism.
3. Read the page beginning, 'Some people with autism find it harder to learn, talk, pay attention and make friends.' Expand the discussion to include the characteristics described here and think about how members of the class can support all students. Add that all students have different responses to different situations and experiences. Expand the discussion to the acceptance of all individual differences.
4. Consider the class as a community of learners and construct a list of the ways that all students can accommodate individual differences and special needs within the classroom environment in ways that will support all students to learn effectively. Carefully consider student suggestions and try to implement their suggestions where possible.
5. Make a list of the famous people with autism who are referenced in the book and add to this list with the names of other famous people who experienced difficulties but achieved significant things in their lives. Students select one person to research. Model the features of an information text that will assist students to find facts. (E.g. topic sentence in a paragraph and like information bundled together in a paragraph.) Students think of 5 questions to ask their chosen person. They research to find answers to their questions, using the attached scaffold to support the research. Continue with learning sequence 7.

Composing

6. Refer to the section of the text, 'Some people with autism find it harder to learn, talk, pay attention and make friends.' Turn and talk to a partner about how people make friends. Share student responses and create a class book with pages about being a friend. Include, how to join in a game, how to include others in a conversation, turn taking, friendly ways to talk to others and how it is alright to sometimes want to play alone. Students illustrate each page of the book. This could be photographed and added to PowerPoint or Google Slides with students reading each page. The final product could be shared with other classes or at a school assembly.
7. Students use the research they have completed on their chosen person and give their five questions to a partner to ask while they roleplay being the person they have chosen and answering the questions in first person.

Building a text set to extend the lesson sequence

Option 1: Build a text set around the idea of everyone has different strengths with books such as: Iggy Peck Architect, by Andrea Beaty and The OK Book by A K Rosenthal and T Lichtenheld

Option 2: Build a text set around understanding emotions such as: Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst and Fearless by Colin Thomson

Option 3: Explore positive mindset and the idea of the learning pit using graphics or video from James Nottingham, www.jamesnottingham.co.uk/learning-pit