

Book Notes



A different kind of brilliant.

By Louise Cummins

Self-published in 2019

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: 1-2
Stages 1

Big Ideas

We are all different.
We can celebrate our differences.

Cross Curriculum

Personal and social capability.

Australian Curriculum

Year 1

ACELY 1656

ACELY 1661

Year 4

ACELY 1688

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 in texts.

Teaching Activities

Reading and Responding

1. Show students the book cover and read the title. Ask students to predict what this story might be about. After students share their predictions, explain that this is a story about being different and all of us are different and unique in some way.
2. Read the book to students. Ask them to recall information about Lachlan. Explain autism to students in clear, child friendly language. Ask students what famous people are mentioned in the book. What did they all have in common? Discuss differences in students in the class in a respectful way.
3. Reread the page beginning, 'And don't worry about labels...' Discuss how everyone in the class has strengths. Ask each student to explain how they are, 'a different kind of brilliant.'
4. Examine the cover. Use the visible thinking routine, 'I see, I think, I wonder' (reference: www.visiblethinkingpz.org) to explore the cover illustration. Discuss how this illustration impacts on readers' understanding of the text. Why has the boy been drawn facing the horizon? What is significant about the rainbow? (Note: the definition of the autism spectrum as being like the layers in a rainbow.)
5. Explore symbolism in the illustrations on the cover. Symbolism is defined as the use of a symbol that represents something else, particularly in relation to a quality or concept developed and strengthened through repetition. (NSW English Syllabus, page 149) Rainbows are often used as a symbol for peace and serenity. On the front cover the boy (Lachlan) is gazing towards the horizon. The horizon can be used as a symbol for peace. How do these two symbols apply to this story?
6. Read the section: What is autism? at www.adifferentkindofbrilliant.com and discuss how students can support any students with autism in their class or school to feel accepted and respected.

Composing

1. Reread the line from the book, 'In fact, the only label that is important is your name, Lachlan.' Ask students what they know about their name. How was it chosen? Do students like their given name? Has anybody's name been changed or anglicized? Ask students to research their name and its meaning and create a class name dictionary with names and their meanings.
2. Discuss what a coat of arms is and show students some examples. Teacher models how to draw a shield and divide it into four quarters. The teacher draws a quality or strength they feel they have in each quarter (or design Lachlan's shield with the students referring to his strengths as described in the text.) Add a motto such as 'A different kind of brilliant,' or the teacher writes their name across the middle. Students then have a go at designing their own shield. They can orally or in writing explain their choices for each quadrant.
3. Prepare a PowerPoint to share at assembly with one slide per student outlining how they are a different kind of brilliant.

Building a text set to extend the lesson sequence

Option 1: Build a text set around the idea of diversity with books such as: **Giraffes can't dance** by Giles Andreae, **Thelma the Unicorn** by Aaron Blabey, **What I like about me!** by Allia Zobel Nolan, **It's okay to be different** by Todd Parr and **Stellaluna** by Ashley Spires

Option 2: Build a text set around names with books such as: **The name jar** by Yangsook and **Chrsanthemum** by Kevin Henkes

Option 3: Build a text set to explore how different people see the world: **The black book of colour** by Menena Cottin and multimodal texts showing the use of sign language.