

Disney OUT OF MY MIND



DEAR EDUCATOR,

Based on the award-winning young adult novel by Sharon M. Draper, the new original movie, *Out of My Mind*, follows Melody, a non-verbal wheelchair user who has cerebral palsy, as she navigates sixth grade. With the help of some assistive technology and her devoted, exuberant allies, Melody shows that what she has to say is more important than how she says it.

This teaching kit, from Disney+ and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired, picks up the movie's theme that what you have to say matters with activities that reinforce social and emotional learning skills, while opening perspectives that will help your students break free of common preconceptions about the abilities of people with disabilities.

Please share this teaching kit with other teachers and tell us what you think of it by sending back the enclosed reply card or by visiting ymiclassroom.com/feedback-outofmyind.

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dominic Kinsley
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired

Questions? Contact YMI toll-free at 1-800-859-8005, or by email at feedback@ymiclassroom.com.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Middle School

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- This teacher's guide
- Four reproducible student activity sheets
- A classroom poster
- A reply card for your comments

Additional resources available at ymiclassroom.com/outofmyind:

- A reproducible family take-home letter
- An interactive digital trivia quiz
- A teaching kit for upper elementary grades
- A curricular standards chart
- A feedback form

CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

Self awareness and expression	Empathy
Social awareness	Writing
Relationship building	Speaking and listening



ABOUT *OUT OF MY MIND*

Melody Brooks, a sixth grader with cerebral palsy, has a quick wit and a sharp mind, but because she is non-verbal and uses a wheelchair, she is not given the same opportunities as her classmates. When a young educator notices her student's untapped potential and Melody starts to participate in mainstream education, Melody shows that what she has to say is more important than how she says it. *Out of My Mind* is available November 22, only on Disney+.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Photocopy the activity sheets before displaying the poster in your classroom, and use the information below as a guide to implement them. Copy and send home the family letter, email it, or post it on your class website to extend the learning fun. Activity 1 requires magazines, markers, glue, and paper for collaging. After completing the activities, have the class brainstorm additional communication tips to add to the poster.

BEFORE STARTING

Watch the trailer at ymiclassroom.com/outofmyind to familiarize yourself with the story and themes before introducing the program to your class. Then, read the movie's synopsis to students and explain that cerebral palsy is a neurophysiological disability that impacts the brain's ability to coordinate and control movement. It can impact large muscles that control arms and legs, and smaller muscles that can impact speech, eye movement, eating, and swallowing. For more information, visit <https://cprn.org/what-is-cerebral-palsy-cp/>.



ACTIVITY 1: SWIRLING WORDS

Distribute the activity sheet and review the instructions with students. Ask students whether they share any of the same thoughts as Melody. Have students complete their word lists before creating their collages. Students might use mixed media to make their collages, create computer-generated images, or even illustrate them. Display completed student work in the classroom.

ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORING EXPRESSION

To start this activity, ask students how they might feel in the following situations:

- You got an A on your science test.
- You just moved schools and need to make new friends.
- You got into an argument with your best friend.
- You got detention for not handing in your homework.
- You dropped your favorite sweatshirt in a puddle.
- Your parents agree that you can get a cell phone.

Ask students how they might express themselves in these situations. Explain that we express ourselves differently, and some situations might be more difficult to process than others. For example, we might not feel the same way about dropping our sweatshirt in a puddle as we do about arguing with a friend. And we might not all feel the same way about each situation.

Distribute the activity sheet and review the instructions. After students complete Part 1, ask them which scenarios are more difficult to process and why that might be. Ask students to brainstorm ideas for handling trickier emotions in positive and productive ways, including talking with friends, family, or teachers for advice, journaling, trying self-care actions such as taking deep breaths, listening to music, or creating art.

Have students complete Part 2 and share their responses with partners or as a class, if they feel comfortable.

ACTIVITY 3: WHAT'S THE WORD?

To start this activity, ask students to think of words that they use in their daily lives, words that they think they would need to know if they were traveling to a place where they don't know the language, or words a historic character might need to know to navigate current-day society. Ask them to explain their word choices. How would they categorize their words?

Distribute the activity sheet and read the instructions. Have students complete Parts 1 and 2. Invite them to share their lists when done if they are comfortable

As a follow-up, ask students the following questions:

- What did you enjoy about this activity?
- What was challenging about it?
- How does this activity bring more meaning to the movie's title, *Out of My Mind*?
- What new perspective or understanding about Melody's disability and people who cannot communicate through speech do you have after completing this activity?

As an exit ticket, have students write a reflection paragraph about the activity, referring to these discussion prompts to guide their work.

ACTIVITY 4: WE ALL PERSEVERE

Distribute the activity sheet and review the instructions with students. Ask students for examples of when they persevered and kept themselves motivated. Maybe it was to complete a book, learn a skill, build something, or even make a new friend. Have them complete the page about a new goal that they have, and then use it to create a brief write-up about their goal.

THERE'S MORE ONLINE!

Visit ymiclassroom.com/outofmymind for a digital trivia quiz for students and to view the trailer.

RESOURCES

Disney+ – onDisneyplus.disney.com

YMI – ymiclassroom.com/outofmymind



Activity

1

SWIRLING WORDS

Reproducible Activity

In *Out of My Mind*, Melody is a very smart, curious sixth grader who loves words and language and has cerebral palsy, which is a disability that affects the part of the brain that controls muscles and coordinates movement.



In the movie, we hear Melody's thoughts in voiceover. We find out that she thinks about many of the same experiences as the other kids in her class. And, Melody is witty. Just listen:

Here's a list of things I'll never get used to: butts in my face because people don't see me, staircases, people who say "Hi" but sound so sad, how J.Lo's hair always looks perfect, early mornings, the feeling of pop rocks in my mouth, that dessert is not considered a complete meal.

Imagine a voiceover of your thoughts. Use the prompts below to get a sample of the words that swirl through your mind when you think about some familiar topics. Then, create a collage of words and images that brings your swirling words to life and shows who you really are.

Hobbies _____

Skills and talents _____

Family _____

Pets _____

Favorite band or celebrity _____

Favorite holidays/seasons _____

Favorite foods _____

What I'm most passionate about _____

Hopes and dreams _____

Things that puzzle me _____

Things that I really enjoy _____

Add your own ideas: _____



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**Activity
2**

EXPLORING EXPRESSION

Reproducible Activity

At the start of her story, Melody uses images on cards, sounds, and pointing to express herself and communicate. It's a good reminder that there are many ways we all express ourselves besides speaking. Look at the words and phrases listed across the top of the chart below. These are all ways we express ourselves.



PART 1: Complete the chart below to show how you might communicate your feelings and thoughts in each situation listed on the left using the methods of expression listed across the top. Add a situation of your own in the last row.

PART 2: For many people, music and emotions have a connection. Think about how you feel when you hear your favorite song. Music can inspire and soothe us, and sometimes even make us sad. It can also bring us together. Read each friendship situation below. Think about how the friend might be feeling. Then, on the back of this sheet, identify a song that you would suggest to inspire them or encourage them to persevere.

1. Your friend's parents took away their phone privileges until their grades improved.
2. Your friend is team captain and worried about the championship game this weekend.
3. Your friend shared a secret with another friend, who told everyone the secret.
4. The history final is coming up and your friend is just a few points away from an A.

Situation	Emotion Word (How you would feel)	Facial Expression	Body Movement	Image That Reflects the Emotion
You find out your friends went to the movies without you.				
You got a new haircut and your friends think it's very cool.				
You want to be friends with a new student, but your best friend thinks they are weird.				
You failed your math test.				



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Activity
3

WHAT'S THE WORD?

Reproducible Activity

When Melody gets an Augmented and Alternative Communication (AAC) device, she can finally speak her thoughts. With this device she can tell her parents that she loves them – and why she likes pop rocks. It also lets Melody show off her wit and humor at school, especially when her dad helps her program some words and phrases of her own.

PART 1: If you programmed an AAC device for a kid your age, what words and phrases would you include? Words like “friend” for sure, and probably phrases like “Can you help me?” List your ideas in the spaces below.



Top Ten Words

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Top Ten Phrases

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

PART 2: The AAC device isn't complete without some humor. It might come in handy when striking up a conversation with a new friend! On the back of this sheet, write one funny (and appropriate!) joke the AAC device should have stored in its memory.



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Activity
4

WE ALL PERSEVERE

Reproducible Activity

From communicating with her AAC device to joining a new class to making the Whiz Kids team, Melody keeps moving forward despite obstacles. She perseveres! Perseverance can help you learn new things; succeed in school, sports, and hobbies; become a good friend; and achieve your goals.

Make a perseverance plan for a goal you hope to achieve. Outline your ideas using the graphic organizer and tips below. Then follow your teacher's directions to write a short essay based on your ideas.

MY GOAL

GOAL TARGET DATE

This goal is important to me because _____

Strengths I have that will help me achieve this goal: _____

Challenges I may face: _____

Ways I will persevere and stay motivated: _____

Achieving this goal will help me _____

When I achieve this goal, I will feel _____

GOAL PROGRESS TRACKING

Break your goal down into smaller steps. Include dates or time frames by which you plan to have taken these smaller steps toward achieving your goal.

STEP 1: _____

STEP 2: _____

STEP 3: _____

STEP 4: _____

STEP 5: _____

PERSEVERANCE TIPS

Try these ideas to keep moving toward your goal!

- Practice positive self-talk. (Say, "I can do it." Or "I believe in me.")
- Talk with a trusted adult or friend.
- Picture your result (make a vision board of motivational images to support your goal).
- Listen to inspiring music.
- Take a break (ride your bike, dance, take deep breaths).
- Collect motivational quotes or stickers.
- Don't give up!



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