

Out of My Mind (2024) Movie – Reflecting on First Impressions, Stereotypes and Biases

Recommended Ages

Grades 3-8 (adaptable)

Key Themes

Disability, assumptions, biases, discrimination, resilience

Materials Needed

Feature length video: Out of My Mind (2024), 102 minutes

- Available to stream on Disney+
- May be available through Bruce County Library, Apple TV or Amazon Prime

Learning Goals

- Students will understand how people with disabilities are often underestimated by others, based on stereotypes or first impressions
- Students will learn about different kinds of disabilities
- Students will learn about how technology can provide support for people with disabilities (augmentative communication devices, wheelchairs etc)
- Students will reflect on unfair treatment and discrimination against people with disabilities
- Students will build empathy for people with different abilities or experiences

Lesson Instructions

1. Pre-Movie Discussions

Prior to beginning any conversations about stereotypes, biases or challenges faced by students with disabilities, it can be helpful to set a respectful tone and establish ground rules. This can be important to ensure the psychological safety of all students.

Teachers may wish to start the lesson or discussion portions off with a Teacher Talk.

Teacher Talk:

We are going to be talking about disability, fairness and people's real life experiences. It is important to make sure everyone feels included, safe and respected. Some students might have disabilities, they might have a family member or friend with a disability or they might have experienced bullying or discrimination because of who they are or how they look. These conversations can bring up strong feelings, so we need to take care of each other. Let's set some rules so we can talk about this subject in a way that is kind and respectful:

- We will only speak about our own experiences, not about someone else
- We will listen to others and try to understand their perspective
- No one needs to share any personal details or experiences unless they want to
- We recognize that making mistakes is how we learn

If a conversation starts to feel hurtful or unkind, we will pause and find a better way to explain our thoughts. You can share your thoughts in writing or privately with me if you do not want to share them out loud."

Pre-Movie Discussion

"We are going to be watching a movie about Melody Brooks. Melody is 12 years old and in 6th grade."

Play the following clip for students for a short introduction to the character of Melody Brooks.

<https://www.facebook.com/DisneyPlus/videos/1101223914627245/>

You may wish for students to share or write a few words about their first impressions or assumptions about Melody. They could reflect on questions such as:

- What are your first impressions of Melody after watching that clip?
- What things stand out to you about Melody and why? How would you describe her?
- What do you think Melody's best subject is at school?

2. Watching the Movie

Teacher Talk:

As we watch the video, let's focus on how people treat Melody and how they view her. People with disabilities often face a lot of misconceptions and assumptions about what they are capable of.

In-Movie Discussion

You may want to pause the movie at various points to help students reflect on questions such as

- What has this person assumed about Melody? Why might they feel that way?
- How is this character treating Melody differently? Why might that be?
- What do you think is most frustrating for Melody?

3. Small Group Activity

After finishing the movie, have the class break into small groups or partners to work on some reflection questions (orally or in writing).

Reflection Questions:

- How would you describe Melody after watching the full video? Is it different than your first impression of her from the first clip?
- Many characters did not seem to recognize Melody's strengths. Why do you think that is?
- Describe a time when Melody was treated unfairly. What could the other characters or Melody have done differently?
- Who or what contributed to changes in Melody's life and helped her to shine?
- Choose one character from the movie – what advice would you give them?
- What is something you have learned about people with disabilities after watching this movie?