

Approved for use in High School Reading Lab

Summary of the Work:

Eleven-year-old Melody has a photographic memory. Her head is like a video camera that is always recording. Always. And there's no delete button. She's the smartest kid in her whole school-but NO ONE knows it. Most people-her teachers and doctors included-don't think she's capable of learning, and up until recently her school days consisted of listening to the same preschool-level alphabet lessons again and again and again. If only she could speak up, if only she could tell people what she thinks and knows. But she can't. She can't talk. She can't walk. She can't write. Being stuck inside her head is making Melody go out of her mind-that is, until she discovers something that will allow her to speak for the first time ever. At last Melody has a voice . . . but not everyone around her is ready to hear it.

Rationale:

Students will utilize this novel as a supplement to the Read 180 curriculum. A brilliant protagonist who does not have the ability to speak (due to cerebral palsy) will help inform students responses to the essential question: How does the brain impact perception?

Students will learn empathy and gain understanding through the protagonist. The first-person narration is witty and heartbreaking at times.

Students in the reading intervention setting will also find the high-interest and low readability of the novel appealing.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

"A gutsy, candid, and compelling story. It speaks volumes." —*School Library Journal* (starred review)

"Unflinching and realistic." —*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"Melody, diagnosed with cerebral palsy, cannot walk or talk. Despite her parents' best efforts, the outside world has defined her by her condition. Melody's life changes when inclusion classrooms are introduced in her school, and she interacts with children other than those in her special-needs unit. To these children, Melody is "other," and they are mostly uncomfortable with her sounds and jerky movements. Normal problems of school friendships are magnified. Preparation for a trivia competition and acquisition of a computer that lets her communicate her thoughts reveal Melody's intelligence to the world. Melody is an entirely complete character, who gives a compelling view from inside her mind. Draper never shies away from the difficulties Melody and her family face. Descriptions of both Melody's challenges—"Going to the bathroom at school just plain sucks"—and the insensitivities of some are unflinching and realistic. Realistically, Melody's resilient spirit cannot keep her from experiencing heartbreak and disappointment even after she has demonstrated her intellect. This book is rich in detail of both the essential normalcy and the difficulties of a young person with cerebral palsy. (*Fiction. 10 & up*)

—*Kirkus March 10, 2010*

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

New York Times Bestselling Novel for nine weeks
 Over 18 months on the New York Times Best Seller List
 Winner of the 2011 Bank Street College of Education Josette Frank Award
 Kirkus Reviews Best Children's Book of 2010
 A San Francisco Chronicle Best Book of The Year
 The Virginia Readers' Choice Reading List for 2011-2012
 A Parents' Choice Silver Honor Book
 Essence Magazine Book of the Year
 A 2011 Notable Children's Book in the English Language Arts
 Top 10 Book of the Year for Shelf Awareness
 Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) Choice of 2011
 2011 IRA Teachers' Choice Book
 2011 IRA Young Adult's Choice
 2013 Young Hoosier Book Award
 Buckeye Children's Book Award from Ohio
 Black-eyed Susan Book Award
 Beehive Book Award
 Receiver of the SAKURA Award
 A NCTE Notable Children's Book in the Language Arts

Readability

- Lexile Score: 700
- Readability Level: 4.3

Learning Resources Guidelines

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: CCSS 9-10.1, 9-10.2, 9-10.3, 9-10.5, 9-10.6, 9-10.9

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

Notes on the Text:

This novel is fast-paced and will keep reluctant readers engaged, which results in boosted reading comprehension. The characters are thoughtful and entertaining. Students will draw connections to topics brain function, communication, and perception. *Out of My Mind* is written at a 700 Lexile which is appropriate in the reading intervention setting at the high school level. Students can access the concepts and apply associated topics throughout the text.

Connection to the Curriculum:

The novel demonstrates literary techniques such as foreshadow, metaphor, symbolism, and unique narrator voice.

Additional Connections:

Students will make connections from the novel to previously read fiction and informational texts and the film, Awakenings, regarding brain function and perception.