


Literacy to Teach Diversity

Book: Swartz, E. (2019). *Finding perfect*. Square Fish. (Grade Level: 3rd – 7th)

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- The image shows the cover of the book 'Finding Perfect' by Elly Swartz. The title 'FINDING PERFECT' is at the top in a light blue font. Below it, the word 'PERFECT' is written in large, colorful, block letters (P is purple, E is green, R is red, F is blue, E is yellow, C is orange, T is pink). The author's name 'ELLY SWARTZ' is at the bottom in a small, black font.
- The book will be broken up into 4 parts: Chapters 1 – 12, Chapters 13 – 24, Chapters 25 – 37, Chapters 38 – 51
 - Chapters will be read outside of class as a homework assignment. At the beginning of each lesson the students will be given a “pop quiz” over the chapters assigned. These lessons will be done once a week over 4 weeks.

Day 1:

- **Objective:** The student will recognize that every person’s definition of perfect varies. This is an introductory assignment to the book, *Finding Perfect*, the students will be reading.
- **Materials:** Paper, Venn Diagram, Pencil, Markers.
- **Procedures:**
 - **Demonstrate and Explain:**
 - Define, draw, or explain your idea of perfect.
 - Students will be given time to think about their definition and write it down along with their brief explanation of why.
 - When the students are done, they will be divided into small groups and given a Venn Diagram to complete.
 - Within their groups students will talk about their definition of perfect. They will then complete the Venn Diagram comparing/contrasting their definition with their groupmates.
 - **Reflect**
 - The students will be asked to return to their desks, and we will discuss how the definitions varied.
 - The teacher will write the dictionary definition of perfect on the board.
 - How was each student’s interpretation of the word different? Do you think everyone’s interpretation is correct?

Day 2:

- **Objective:** The student will understand pop culture references to Mental Illness, and stigmas that may come with them.
- **Materials:** Video Clips from *Monk* and *Rain Man*, Poster paper, and markers.
- **Procedures:**
 - **Demonstrate and Explain:**
 - The teacher will provide two different clips:
 - from the TV Show *Monk* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Vr8bwYpaGg>)
 - from the movie *Rain Man* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lz-ihW8RXSM>)
 - The class will be divided into groups to watch those clips.
 - Once they are done watching the clips, the groups will create a list identifying the characteristics that are compulsive or peculiar.

- Each group will present their list to the entire class, we will discuss how one person might find a behavior odd but to someone else it is not.
 - What behaviors do you have that bring you comfort? (i.e., organizing your CDs in alphabetical order, organizing your closet, etc.)
 - What is something that bothers you when it is out of place? (i.e., a tank top is mixed in with t-shirts, mud on your shoes, volume is on an even/odd number)
- **Reflect**
 - How are the characters in the clips like Molly, the main character in *Finding Perfect*?
 - Do you think that you have “quirky” characteristics?

Day 3:

- **Objective:** Students will be able to define stigma, students will be able to identify stigma in movies and newspapers
- **Materials:** Group Scenarios for Stigmas, Dictionary, Pencil and Paper.
- **Procedures:**
 - **Demonstrate and Explain:**
 - The students will define the word stigma for the classroom.
 - Students will look up the definition in the dictionary and write it down.
 - When finished, they will create a mnemonic for themselves to remember this definition.
 - Then the class will be divided into groups of 3.
 - Each group will receive a different scenario about how the media often perpetuates mental illness stereotypes and be asked to use drama and role play the executives in the scenario and respond to the movie pitch.
 - Scenario 1: Movie executives for Smash Hit production company are being pitched an idea for a movie called *Psycho Stranger* by a screen writer. In the story a psychotic killer is on the loose. Everyone is worried that they will be the next victim.
 - Executive 1 thinks it's a great idea;
 - Executive 2 has just been educated about the stigma of mental illness by an advocacy group;
 - Executive 3 has a brother who has a mental illness.
 - Scenario 2: A snack food manufacturer, Yummy Tummy, has hired an ad agency to come up with a name and campaign slogan for their new spicy potato chip. The ad executive is pitching the name Crazy Chips. The slogan will be “The taste will drive you insane!”
 - Executive 1 thinks it is a great idea.
 - Executive 2 thinks it is stigmatizing.
 - Executive 3 has a sister with a mental illness.
 - Scenario 3: TV writer is pitching an idea for an after-school children's special. It is about a girl who is afraid to bring her friend home to her house because she thinks she will be embarrassed by her sister is mentally ill. In the end when she finally does bring her home, she finds out that her friend has a mother who has a mental illness and has kept quiet about it too.
 - Executive 1: Thinks the story is boring and would like to spice it up by having the mentally sister threaten the friend with a butcher knife.
 - Executive 2: Has been educated about the stigma of mental illness but is worried that no one will want to watch.
 - Executive 3: Has a mental illness but has not revealed it.

- **Reflect**

- After the role playing, discuss the difficulties of challenging a stereotype.
- How might a stigma prevent someone from feeling open? Seeking help?
- Can you see how the stigma of being “crazy” prevented Molly from opening up to others about her thoughts and compulsions sooner?

Day 4:

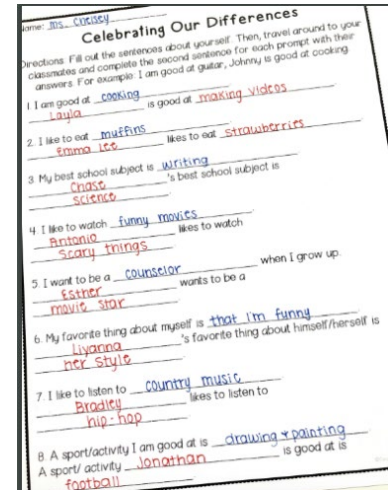
- **Objective:** Students will understand diversity and its importance.

- **Materials:** Construction paper, Worksheet, pen/pencil

- **Procedures:**

- **Demonstrate and Explain:**

- The teacher will have the students complete the interactive worksheet with their own answers.
- Students will then move around the room to answer the blanks about their peers. Students should not have the same student on the worksheet more than once.
- When finished they will return to their desk and complete the foldable activity.
 - S/he will receive a piece of construction paper, fold the paper in half (hot dog) and then 3 (hamburger). The students will then cut the top portion of the 3 sides.
 - The top will say “I am unique because...”
 - Middle will say “My classmates are unique because...”
 - Bottom will say “I am glad we are different because...”
 - On the inside the students will put the answers to these questions.



- **Reflect**

- Teacher will introduce the acronym “WALLS”
 - *Watch your language* - Make sure you are not using language or comments that stigmatize people
 - *Ask questions* - Much can be learned by asking questions to a counselor, doctor, or a person who has a lived experience with a mental illness.
 - *Learn more* - Great resources are available online to help educate you. Increased education means fewer misunderstandings and less stigma.
 - *Listen to Experiences* - consider asking someone you know about their experience. If you are considerate and respectful, they may be comfortable speaking to you. If you have lived experience, consider sharing your story with others.
 - *Speak out* - Help reduce stigma by speaking out when others stigmatize people or spread misconceptions.