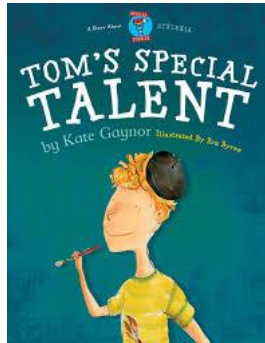


Literacy to Teach Diversity

Grades 6-8 ELA

Disability in Reading

Tom's Special Talent



Gaynor, K., Byrne, E. (2008). *Tom's special talent*. Special Stories Publishing

Book Selection Rational: Despite grade level differences, I selected *Tom's Special Talent* because of the self-esteem issues faced in middle school. Using this book can help with the understanding of dyslexia as well as reminding students that all students have strengths and weaknesses.

Purpose: During this series of mini lessons students will engage in various activities to better understand students with a disability in reading. In addition, students will work with peers to identify strengths in our own classroom community to improve self-image.

Lesson One

Before reading the book

Engagement: Teacher will begin discussion introducing the idea of learning disabilities (what a disability in reading is) as well as self-image. Teacher will discuss dyslexia and what it is to the class.

Activity: Students will take a few minutes to journal on the topics introduced as well as self-reflect on their own self-image. Students may also include specific questions regarding learning disabilities to be addressed in lesson four. Guiding questions:

1. What is self-image in your own words.
2. Can you identify your own strengths and weaknesses?
3. How do you think a learning disability would affect you?

Closing Statements: Students will be given an opportunity to participate in class discussion and share thoughts, answers, or questions with the class.

Lesson Two

Tom's Special Talent – All pages

Reading: Students will work in groups reading the book. Students are to read the book during this time.

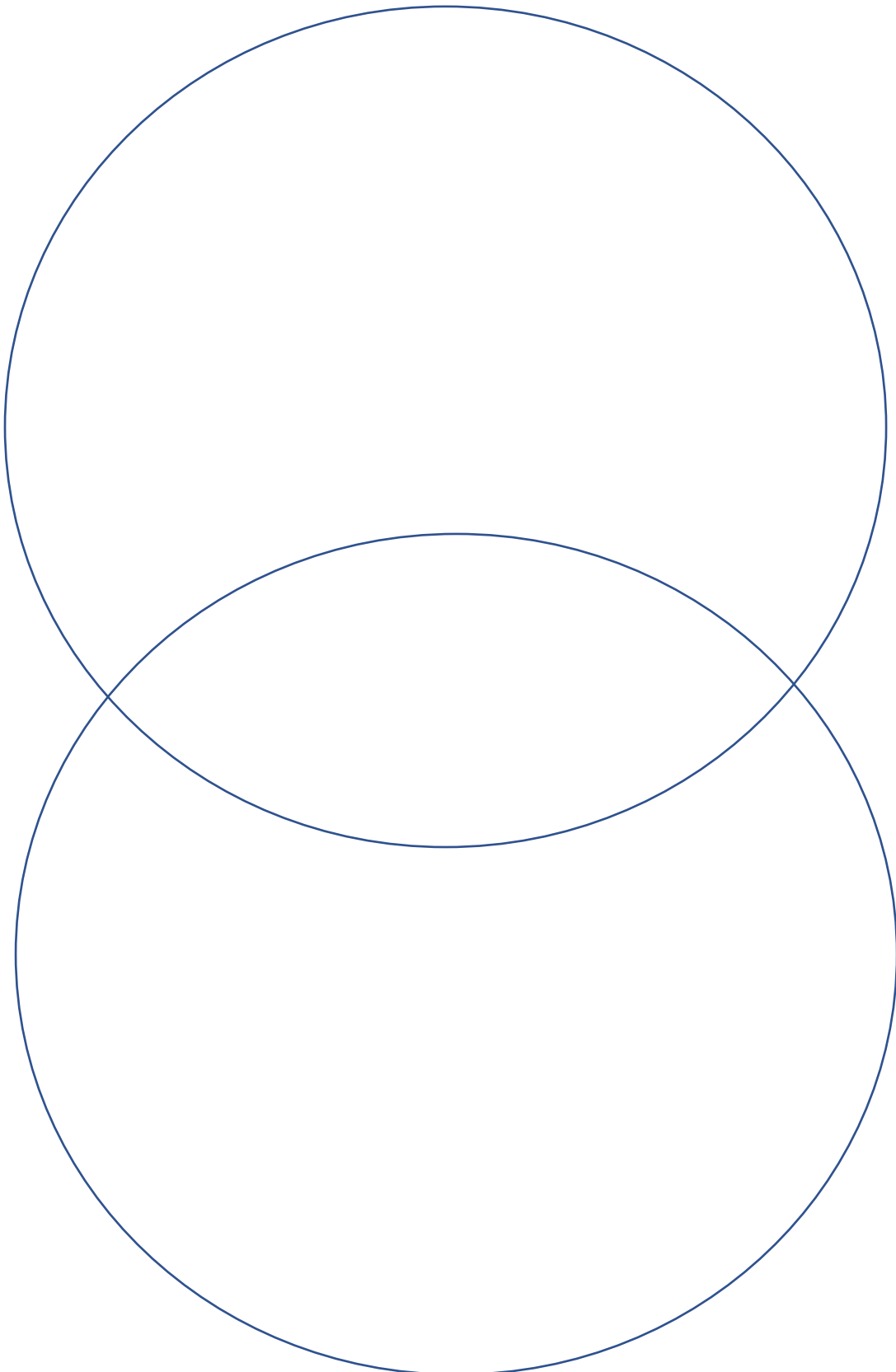
Activity/Engagement: Students will work with their peers to identify themes in the book. Using the attached Venn Diagram, complete the activity as directed.

Guiding questions:

1. Why might Tom be struggling to read?
2. Do you think everyone is good at something?
3. Can you come up with something you think your peers are good at?

Closing Statements: Students will be given an opportunity to participate in class discussion and share thoughts, answers, or questions with the class.

Directions: Using the diagram below complete with a peer with your talents and special abilities. What are some similarities and differences?



Lesson Three

Tom's Special Talent – All pages

Activity/Engagement: Working individually, students are to go to the website below and read the article. Upon completion of the article students are to compare in their journals what they read in the article about dyslexia to *Tom's Special Talent*. Students may add questions they have about learning disabilities in journal to be addressed in lesson four.

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/dyslexia.html>

Guiding Questions:

1. What similarities do you see in the article to the characters in the book?
2. What is dyslexia?
3. Based on the “What it’s like” section, what challenges might you face if you were dyslexic?
4. What does acceptance of others mean to you?
5. What does diversity mean to you?

Closing Statements: Students will participate in small group discussion on acceptance as well as diversity and what it means to them. Students will complete an exit ticket.

1. What are 3 things you learned about dyslexia from the reading today?

Lesson Four

Tom's Special Talent – All pages

Activity/Engagement: Students will return to their small groups from last class and create a poster board about a learning disability in reading, acceptance, and diversity. Posters will be

displayed around the room as a reminder to be kind to others and remember everyone has a special talent.

Closing Statements: Students will be given a few minutes to complete a gallery walk of completed posters while doing a 3-2-1 (3 things they noticed about the topic and poster, 2 questions they have, and 1 positive comment). Questions from the previous lessons have been reviewed and answered. Class will participate in class Q & A session to address questions throughout the previous lessons.