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Analyzing Representations of Individuals with Disabilities in Picture Books

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Teaser Text

Using a critical literacy stance to close read disability representation in picture books encourages students to challenge stereotypes about disability that they encounter in texts, media, and everyday interactions.

Pause and Ponder

- How are people with disabilities typically represented in children's literature?
- What representations of disabilities are currently in your classroom library? How have students engaged with these texts or discussed these identities?
- How might we support students in critically questioning the messages that texts send about disabilities?

Teachers can use children's literature to start meaningful conversations about disability representation in classrooms. As the examples below demonstrate, some children's literature may offer rich representations of disability, while others contain implicit messages and stereotypes worthy of critique.

In *Last Stop on Market Street* by de la Peña (2014), CJ and his Nana ride the bus across town to volunteer at a soup kitchen after church. CJ questions his grandmother about their community.

*A man climbed aboard with a spotted dog.
CJ gave up his seat. "How come that man can't see?"
"Boy, what do you know about seeing" Nana told him. "Some people watch the world with their ears."
"That's a fact. Their noses, too," the man said, sniffing the air. "That's a mighty fine perfume you're wearing today, ma'am."
Nana squeezed the man's hand and laughed her deep laugh.*

In *John's Whistle* by Ferreirós and Wimmer (2013), John uses different whistles to communicate instead of speech.

"The problem was that when John was at the age when other children begin to speak, John didn't. And as he grew up, whenever he wanted to ask for something or express how he felt, he could only whistle."

After John loses his crush, Claire, while on a walk in the woods, he miraculously shouts her name and is cured.

The excerpts above convey different messages about disability. While the quote from *Last Stop on Market Street* encourages readers to question deficit views of those with disabilities (in this case, blindness), the language of *John's Whistle* conveys that a disability (in this case, muteness) is a problem that must be cured. In this article, we offer tools for planning close reading lessons to critically examine disability representation in picture books.

We draw on our experiences as former elementary educators and current teacher educators and acknowledge how difficult this work is to enact, particularly in classrooms where there are a variety of reading abilities. We suggest a two-day structure in which teachers follow a traditional interactive read aloud with a close reading lesson as a scaffolded method for teachers to support students' increased access to critical literacy conversations about disability.

Below, we review research on close reading and its potential application as a tool for critical literacy. Then, we explore how children discuss disability during read alouds. Next, we provide guidance for text selection and analysis. Finally, to support teachers in planning close reading lessons to critically examine disability representation, we present three prompting guides (*Tables 1- 3*) and a sample lesson plan based on *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay* by Cari Best.

Close Reading

Close reading became a popular method in elementary teaching beginning in the early 2010's due to the Common Core State Standards' (CCSS) emphasis on students acquiring "the habits of reading independently and closely" (CCSS Initiative, 2020). During close reading, the teacher introduces a short challenging text and guides students through multiple readings to

deeply examine specific aspects of the text across multiple instructional lessons (Brown & Kappas, 2012; Serravallo, 2018). Targeted questioning is utilized to promote critical thinking skills such as synthesis, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.

By studying the text together, close reading serves as a scaffold for reading a text that might be difficult to tackle alone. It encourages rereading as part of a transferable process that students can apply to other complex texts. Waters (2014) found that close reading helped students with diverse literacy profiles “to deepen their comprehension and their understanding of the implicit message within the narrative through reading excerpts closely” (p. 20).

Initial CCSS guidance documents emphasized that close reading “focuses on what lies within the four corners of the text” (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012). The intention of this approach was to encourage teachers to utilize text-dependent questions to model for students how to persist through difficult reading experiences, but a “four corners of the text” approach has the consequence of de-emphasizing the reader’s “own perspective, background, and biases in order to uncover the author's meaning in the text” (Ferguson, 2014).

Close Reading and Critical Literacy

Over the past decade, practitioners and researchers have reshaped the teaching of close reading to acknowledge that readers make meaning not just within the four corners of the text, but also through other factors such as prior linguistic and text experiences as well as the sociocultural context (Serafini, 2013/2014; Fisher & Frey, 2012). Recognizing that close reading requires an interaction between readers and texts, Lehman and Roberts (2013) advocate for a model of close reading that encourages the use of lenses of analysis. Miller (2013) explains this process:

Using lenses to focus readers' examination on one element of text such as characterization, word choice, or text structure, students collect information about what they read. Looking for patterns in a text, students evaluate the choices writers make and develop a deeper understanding of the text and its greater message." (Miller, p. X)

This definition of close reading not only acknowledges the reader's positionality, but also acknowledges the writer's perspective and encourages the reader to evaluate it. This opens up space to examine what messages the author intentionally or unintentionally conveys, which is the practice of critical literacy. Critical literacy in the context of school is a stance foregrounding justice and designed to challenge unequal power dynamics (Freire, 2018). Principles of critical literacy include the understanding that anything constructed through language is always informed by perspectives and ideological beliefs. Therefore, any text can be deconstructed to better understand the presence of power and ideology (Jones, 2012).

Critical literacy scholars argue that reading a text disconnected from one's personal and broader social context is impossible and irresponsible and that close reading should include "both what lies *within* and *outside* of the text" (Ferguson, 2014). Learning to read is far more than understanding an author's meaning. The language used in texts often serves the author's own interests and perspectives and omits others' points of view. Drawing on prior knowledge and experiences supports readers in understanding a text as imbued with power, positioning, and a variety of perspectives, rather than neutral.

Critical literacy should not be confused with the ability to read critically, which involves the higher-order thinking skills of analyzing, evaluating, interpreting, and questioning (DiYanni, 2017). Critical thinking skills are fundamental to both close reading and critical literacy. Critical literacy uses those skills to read in opposition to texts, questioning the power and ideology of the

text and how the reader is influenced by it. Close reading provides a method to support students in engaging in critical literacy practices.

Disability Representations in Children's Literature

Research has explored how children discuss social issues during read alouds, including research on race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (e.g. Jones, 2012; Kessler, Mills, & Reilly, 2020; Ryan, Patraw, & Bednar, 2013). However, there is little empirical scholarship that examines the teaching of children's literature that represents individuals with disabilities.

Scholars and educators have outlined the landscape for what disability representation looks like in children's literature (Ayala, 1999; Pennell, Wollak, & Koppenhaver, 2017), finding that individuals with disabilities are often absent from children's literature, or portrayed in negative and stereotypical ways. Scholars have also given suggestions for how to select texts that promote inclusive thinking (Andrews, 1998, Nasatir, & Horn, 2003) and provided methods for engaging students in discussions of disability representations in texts (Ostrosky, Mouzourou, Dorsey, Favazza, & Leboeuf, 2015; Prater, Dyches, & Johnstun, 2006). These suggested practices include preparing questions about the content of the story, explicitly teaching about a disability and related vocabulary, and facilitating discussions about the similarities between main characters and students.

Studies have shown that increased exposure to characters with disabilities can lead to more positive interactions between students with and without disabilities and limit some of the unintended consequences of inclusion experienced by students with disabilities, such as poor self-confidence and emotional insecurity (Adomat, 2014; Cameron & Rutland, 2006). In contrast, other scholars have found that representing people with disabilities in classroom texts was not enough to shift student mindsets. For example, students often conformed to school and

societal expectations of anti-bullying when discussing children's books featuring characters with disabilities, often providing educators with shallow, formulaic responses to read alouds (Wilkins, Howe, Seiloff, Rowan, & Lilly, 2016).

To move beyond surface level conversations, teachers must recognize when students are giving socially acceptable responses, and then make space for students to express potentially problematic perspectives or misconceptions about individuals with disabilities. While teachers may want to discourage negative attitudes about individuals with disabilities in the classroom, Wilkins et al. (2016) argue that a true change in attitude will not be possible without fostering an open dialogue through questioning that encourages students to explain their reasoning. Educators can use close reading with a critical literacy stance to pose questions that elicit the unpacking and challenging of beliefs about individuals with disabilities conveyed by literature and society.

Moreover, disability scholars have utilized close reading as a methodological approach to analyzing disability narratives (Ashby & Causton-Theoharris, 2009), adult literature and media (Fraser, 2013), and disability representation in children's literature (Ghaida, 2016). The practice of close reading for disability representation that has been effective with adults can inform teaching practices that explore disability representation in read alouds with elementary students. Close reading with a critical literacy stance gives readers the tools to uncover the messages about disability explicitly or implicitly sent through picture books.

Preparing for a Lesson

To prepare for these lessons, teachers should ensure that students are already familiar with the transferrable process of close reading a text and lenses for close reading (e.g. plot, character, and word choice). It is also important to build students' background knowledge about disability. Teachers will want to determine what students know about disability, who identifies

or has family members who identify as having a disability, and what assumptions students may have about individuals with disabilities.

For example, students may believe all disabilities are physical, or that having a disability is a bad thing because it requires working with a special teacher and leaving the classroom. On the other hand, some students may proudly claim their own disabilities or disabilities of their family members and view disability as a part of their everyday lives. These conversations might be a part of morning meetings or social emotional curriculum, or they could be a part of social studies instruction that might introduce some of the history of the disability rights movement.

Selecting the Text

Next, teachers will need to select the text they plan to read with students. Previous scholarship encourages teachers to evaluate the representations of disabilities in children's literature (Ostrosky et al., 2015; Nasatir, & Horn, 2003), seeking out positive examples to read in classrooms. We find it helpful to begin with explicitly positive *and* explicitly negative representations that students can more easily identify. Checklists such as the one developed by Nasatir & Horn (2003, p. 5) can help teachers determine what aspects of the representation to highlight and discuss.

Building on the discussions of students' own experiences with disability, teachers may introduce problematic representations of disabilities that are oversimplified or unrealistic. Students can practice their critical literacy skills by identifying how individuals with disabilities are often portrayed as villainous, foolish, helpless, or superpowered. Tables 1-3 below offer questions to facilitate these discussions.

Close reading with a critical literacy stance invites students to evaluate representations of disability. Rather than avoiding negative representations, reading texts that include them enables

students to challenge and critique stereotypes of disability, which they will inevitably encounter in other texts, media, and everyday interactions. For example, Stratton (2020) asked students to identify the negative representation of those with limb differences in a variety of pirate texts, and compare it to the representation of wheelchair rugby Paralympian Nick Springer. This lesson opened up students' conceptions of what it means to move; students were able to identify new types of movement after engaging with Springer's example. As Stratton's work demonstrates, students can take ownership of this process and then apply it to other texts.

Once students have developed the skills to identify more one-dimensional representations, teachers can introduce texts that feature nuanced portraits of individuals with disabilities as whole, rounded individuals living their everyday lives. Titles that could be utilized for lessons include Rukhsana Khan's *King for a Day*, Maria Gianferrari's *Hello Goodbye Dog*, Holly Robinson Peete and Ryan Elizabeth Peete's *My Brother Charlie*, Alan Rabinowitz's *A Boy and A Jaguar*, and Donna Jo Napoli's *Hands and Hearts*; these texts all include nuanced representations that can foster rich discussion. Resources to find additional texts are included in the "More to Explore" section.

For our lesson plan (*Tables 4-6*), we selected *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay*. This text is told from the perspective of the main character, Zulay, who sings, dances, and studies with her friends. Zulay, who is blind, surprises her class by declaring that she will run in the field day race wearing her pink shoes. She trains with a special teacher and runs the race alongside her peers. We selected this text as a nuanced depiction of a character with a disability in order to highlight both the positive opportunities and approaches to critique that teachers might employ. We intend for this lesson to take place after students have engaged in instruction to develop their

background knowledge of disability. Before tackling this lesson, students should participate in other read alouds with more straightforward positive and negative representations.

Analyzing the Text

After choosing a picture book that represents an individual with disabilities, we recommend reading the “Close Reading for Disability with a Critical Literacy Stance” charts (*see Tables 1-3*) to consider whether the disability representation lends itself to consideration through the lens of plot, character, or word choice. We have developed these charts throughout our work with elementary teachers. These charts, while not exhaustive, provide a starting place in considering the metanarratives to critique and the positive representations to celebrate.

Once you have selected the text and the lens that you will use, you’ll want to re-read the book alongside the chart for your selected lens. Identify the questions that will yield productive conversations and important scenes that align with those questions. To close read, you won’t revisit the entire text and you won’t utilize the entire chart; rather, you will identify a few short scenes and the questions that best fit those selections. In the lesson plan for *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay* (*see Tables 4-6*), we selected the lens of plot to consider disability representation in scenes where the problem is introduced and solved. While there are ways that we could analyze both character and word choice in this text, that analysis would occur in separate lessons. Across time and texts, additional lenses for analysis can be added.

Lesson Planning for the Text

We know that it is difficult to include ample time for nuanced discussion of disability in one lesson. This can sometimes lead teachers to oversimplify, focusing questions they ask on teasing or bullying rather than explicitly discussing disability. We recommend following an interactive read aloud with a close reading lesson; revisiting a text through close reading serves

as a way to make these critical text conversations accessible through incorporation of re-reading and purposeful questioning. By bringing close reading practices to a picture book, rather than a longer text, we leave space for students to engage with complex ideas.

We designed a lesson plan template (*Tables 4-6*) that reminds us to plan for accessible, student-centered instruction. Our template is laid out in three columns: teacher actions, structures, and accessibility. By planning for structures and accessibility at each step in the lesson, we ensure that diverse learning needs are accounted for throughout. We also ensure that student voices are centered during instruction by consistently matching up teacher direct instruction with structures for student interaction. This lesson plan is designed for 45-50 minutes of instruction in third grade.

This lesson plan utilizes *Table 1*, the prompting guide for plot. We have divided the lesson plan into three sections to consider what teaching occurs before, during, and after reading. Before reading, it is important to set the purpose for the lesson; this includes goals for both critical literacy and close reading. In addition, it is important to make connections to students' prior knowledge about disability and to remind students of the previous day's interactive read aloud. For example, we set the purpose for reading *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay* by asking "What stories are typically told about people with disabilities?" and encouraging students to attend to how elements of the plot teach about disability in both positive and negative ways.

During the re-reading of the text, we use explicit think-alouds to demonstrate for students how the problem in the story represents Zulay's disability. This occurs when the teacher models, "I notice that when Zulay says she wants to run the race, the class is, 'silent as stones.' I know that when something I say is met with silence, I feel uncomfortable. I bet that's how Zulay is feeling." We also provide opportunities for students to try this work out with a partner, using

questions from *Table 1* at pre-selected stopping points. Studying both the illustrations and the text, students recognize moments when Zulay is doubted because of her disability, and when she is affirmed or treated equally.

After taking notes and discussing the different elements of plot, the class notices a pattern. Students notice that the people around Zulay doubt her, and this impacts her own confidence. Similarly, students notice that Ms. Turner supports Zulay, and that helps her feel ready for the race. To guide students in developing their big idea about representation, we use prompts drawn from *Table 1*; students might share, “The author could have had Maya and Chyng support Zulay. Instead, they doubt their friend,” or, “There seems to be more than one way disability is represented in this text: some of the kids think it’s a problem and Ms. Turner and Zulay don’t.” This discussion can lead students to a critical idea like, “The way people react to a person with a disability can affect how they think about themselves.” With practice, students can use this process to evaluate other texts.

Conclusion

While engaging in close reading with a critical literacy stance once is beneficial, the more comfortable students become with reading this way, the more they will be able to apply it across different media and in everyday interactions. We recommend that educators try re-reading the same picture book over the course of several days, trying out different questions from *Tables 1-3* each day. Educators can revisit this practice throughout a unit and a school year, ensuring that individuals with disabilities are thoroughly represented in their classrooms *and* classroom libraries. Teachers might create a dedicated bulletin board where students can post their noticings about disability representations in books, television, and films. Consistently engaging in close

reading with a critical literacy stance will encourage students to challenge stereotypes about disability that they encounter in texts, media, and the world.

Take Action!

1. Take inventory of your classroom library. Note how people with disabilities are represented in the books you have and what additions would support critical conversations.
2. Read and discuss a children's book that includes disability representation with your colleagues. Use *Tables 1 – 3* to prompt discussion. Reflect on your questions and thinking.
3. Conduct a read aloud of a children's book that includes disability representation. Identify what your students react to, notice, and question. This data will help you plan your close read with a critical literacy stance.
4. Teach your students about close reading. Lehman and Roberts's *Falling in Love with Close Reading* is a valuable instructional resource.
5. Teach a two-day sequence: an interactive read aloud of a children's book that includes disability representation, followed by a close read with a critical literacy stance. Listen and learn from your students.

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| Read to get the gist | Read with disability in mind | Look for a pattern | Develop a new understanding |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| What is this story mostly about? | What details about disability are present in the plot ? | How do these details about disability that are conveyed through the plot fit together? | What messages are conveyed about disability in the plot ? |
| | Where is the story set? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are characters with disabilities excluded or included in the setting? Is the setting constructed for characters with disabilities to function independently? | Thinking about these questions makes me feel/think/wonder.... |
| | What is the problem? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a character's disability a problem that needs to be overcome? Is the problem something that anyone might face, but happens to a person with a disability? Is a character with disabilities the cause of the problem? | Disability is represented positively/negatively in this text with story elements like... |
| | What are the other main events? What is the climax of the story? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are obstacles unrealistically easy or impossibly difficult to overcome? Is violence or bullying a plot point? Are the main events centered on a non-disabled character taking care of a disabled character? Does someone else speak for a character with disabilities? Do characters with disabilities help others? | The author could have_____but instead_____. |
| | How is the problem solved? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does a character with disabilities solve the problem? Does someone else solve the problem for the character with disabilities? Do people work together to solve the problem? Is disability cured by magic? | There seems to be more than one way that disability is represented in this text. _____and_____. _____. |
| | What is the theme of the story? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the lesson learned by the character with a disability, by others, or both? Is a character with a disability inspiring? Are everyday accomplishments celebrated? Do characters need to learn kindness to help a person with a disability? | |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do characters with disabilities learn to use tools to support their independence? | |
|--|--|---|--|

Table 1. Close Reading for Disability with a Critical Literacy Stance: Plot

| Read to get the gist | Read with disability in mind | Look for a pattern | Develop a new understanding |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| What is this story mostly about? | What details about disability are conveyed through character actions and development ? | How do the details about disability that are conveyed through character actions and development fit together? | What messages about disability are conveyed through character actions and development ? |
| | Who are the main characters? Who are the secondary characters? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who tells the story? Is the character with a disability a rounded character? Who has power in the story? | Thinking about these questions makes me feel/think/wonder.... |
| | How are characters with disabilities described? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a character with a disability seen as a burden? Do the characters illustrate a stereotype (e.g. wise, evil, childlike, angelic, godly, superpowered, unfriendly)? | Disability is represented positively/negatively in this text with story elements like... |
| | How are characters with disabilities illustrated? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are characters with disabilities depicted as ugly, deformed or monstrous? Are they shown with outdated or problematic accommodations? Is the illustration style the same for characters with a disability as other characters? | The author could have_____but instead_____. |
| | What emotions does the character with disabilities experience? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the character's emotions tied to their disability (shame, fear, embarrassment)? Are the emotions of the character with a disability oversimplified? | There seems to be more than one way that disability is represented in this text _____ and_____. |
| | What are the characters with disabilities' relationships like? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are characters with disabilities excluded? Are characters with disabilities oversexualized or undersexualized? Do characters without disabilities trivialize disability? | |

Table 2. Close Reading for Disability with a Critical Literacy Stance: Character

| Read to get the gist | Read with disability in mind | Look for a pattern | Develop a new understanding |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| What is this story mostly about? | What details about disability are present in the word choice ? | How does the word choice convey messages about disability? | What central idea about disability can be formed from word choice ? |
| | What words are used to describe individuals with disabilities? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the words positive or negative? Does the author avoid naming the disability (e.g. special, differently-abled)? Is the language too simple? Is the language condescending? | Thinking about these questions makes me feel/think/ wonder.... |
| | What words make you feel an emotion? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What tone is created? Do the words make you feel pity toward the character? Admiration? Connection? | One pattern I see is _____ with words like _____ |
| | How does language work to position readers and characters? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who might feel like an “insider” or an “outsider” when reading this text? What perspectives are centered and marginalized in this text? What words change your understanding? | Some words fit together, like _____ and _____ make me feel _____ |
| | What words help you make an image in your mind? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do illustrations and words match? Is there more information in the illustrations than the language? What do the differences tell you? Are you able to imagine individuals with disabilities from a variety of different racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds? | These words fit together because they sound _____ |
| | | | The author could have _____ but instead _____ |

Table 3. Close Reading for Disability with a Critical Literacy Stance: Word Choice

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Close Reading Lens: Plot Text: <i>My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay</i> by Cari Best Key Understanding: The way that people react to a person with a disability can affect how they think about themselves. | | |
| BEFORE READING | | |
| Lesson Sequence | Structure | Notes on Accessibility |
| Display <i>My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay</i> under a document camera and a story mountain anchor chart created on first read of text. | Activate prior Knowledge | Displaying the chart provides a visual to support recall. |

| | | |
|---|--------------------|--|
| “Use the story mountain from yesterday to help you summarize the read aloud. Partner B share first.” | Turn and talk | Partnerships of students within the same reading level range are predetermined and assigned Partner A/Partner B with the higher reader as Partner B. |
| One partnership summarizes for the class. | Class discussion | Summary should give students access to an accurate recap. |
| “Today we are going to re-read this story to deepen our understanding. We will consider how the plot of this story teaches about disability in both positive and negative ways. Before we close read, let’s reflect on what we have learned about disability. What stories are typically told about people with disabilities? Partner A share first.” | Think, pair, share | Think time allows students to process the question before responding. |

Table 4. Before Reading Plan for *My Three Best Friends and Me*, Zulay

| DURING READING | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| Lesson Sequence | Structure | Notes on Accessibility |
| Display blank Close Reading anchor chart. “We will be using this chart to keep track of our thinking as we close read this text. Create one in your notebook.” | Create T-chart | Refer to <i>Figure 1</i> . Provide students who need support with fine motor skills a pre-made t-chart. This allows them to focus on the literacy content. |
| Display p. 23-24 of the book. “I’m going to re-read a scene. This part of the story comes right after Zulay’s classmates choose field day events. Listen for the problem and think about how this element of the plot teaches about disability.” | Set purpose for reading | A document camera gives students equal access to the text, allowing them to refer back for evidence rather than relying on recall. |
| Read p. 24. “First, I notice that when Zulay says she wants to run the race, the class is, ‘silent as stones.’ I know that when something I say is met with silence, I feel uncomfortable. I bet that’s how Zulay is feeling. I’m noticing the faces Zulay’s friends make when she says that she wants to run the race. Maya’s mouth is making an ‘oh’ and she’s looking at the back of Zulay’s head. Chyng’s mouth is pushed to the side and she is giving Zulay side-eye. This makes me think that her friends doubt she’ll be able to run the race.” | Follow along with read aloud | By citing evidence both from the written text and the illustrations, students who are not yet decoding at this text’s level are included. |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| “I’m going to record this event in my t-chart on the left in red.” | Take notes | Color code the chart so that students can visually differentiate where to record their thinking. |
| “Listen as I continue reading. Jot down what you notice about the problem and obstacles the character faces. Remember you can use the illustrations and the text.” Display and read pp. 25-26. | Follow along with read aloud | Students with language-based learning disabilities could draw in their t-chart. |
| Have students record in their t-charts. | Stop and jot | Prompting students to record their thinking before they share benefits students who need extra time to access vocabulary. |
| “Share what you wrote with your partner. Partner A share first.” Listen to partnerships to identify one to share. | Turn and talk | Coach partnerships to abbreviate names in their note-taking for efficiency. |
| Add one example to the plot column. | Take notes | Refer to <i>Figure 1</i> . |
| Read p. 27 and use the routine above. | Follow along with read aloud, Stop and jot, Turn and talk | Record names of students who would benefit from further instruction. |

 Table 5. During Reading Plan for *My Three Best Friends and Me*, Zulay

| AFTER READING | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| Lesson Sequence | Structure | Notes on Accessibility |
| “Let’s review our chart and think, ‘How do these details about disability that are present in the plot fit together?’ Discuss the patterns you notice with your table. Use a blue colored pencil to record your thinking in the second column on your chart.” | Small group discussion Take notes | Coach students to act out the events to help them think about how Zulay might feel. |
| Provide questions to prompt student discussion. Choose a pattern to record on the anchor chart and share. | Class discussion | Refer to <i>Table 1</i> for sample questions. Refer to <i>Figure 1</i> . |
| “Let’s use the pattern to grow a bigger idea. Turn and talk: ‘What messages are conveyed about disability in the plot?’” | Turn and talk | |
| Encourage students to actively listen as you whip around the class to share. | Whip around | Whipping around provides everyone an opportunity to speak, demonstrating that all students have valuable ideas. |

| | | |
|---|------------------|---|
| Draw on the following prompts for discussion: “The author could have _____ but instead _____.” and “There seems to be more than one way that disability is represented in this text. _____ and _____.” | Class discussion | Listening to everyone’s ideas sets students up to participate in this discussion. |
| Record a critical understanding on anchor chart. | | Refer to <i>Figure 1</i> . |
| “Today we used close reading to think critically about how the plot of this story teaches about disability. Close reading helps you understand texts more deeply, analyze how characters with disabilities are represented, and interpret messages that authors send about people with disabilities. When you are reading, look for examples of how disability is represented.” | | Connecting lesson goals to future reading sets students up to transfer learning. |

Table 6. After Reading Plan for *My Three Best Friends and Me*, Zulay

| Plot Element | Pattern | Critical Idea |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Z. says she will run in the race. Her friends doubt that she can.</p> <p>Z. notices that kids are laughing as they practice, but she isn't. She starts to doubt that she can run the race.</p> <p>After practicing with Ms. T, Z. feels ready for the race.</p> | <p>The class doesn't believe Z. can run the race. That makes Z. believe it, too. But really, she can!</p> <p>Ms. T thinks Z. can run in the race, and she helps Z. do it.</p> | <p>The message the text sends is that the way people react to a person with a disability can affect how they think about themselves.</p> |

Figure 1. Anchor Chart