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EDUC 13: DISABILITY IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The Portrayal of Epilepsy in Meena Meets Her Match

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Book Analysis

Abstract

Epilepsy is a spectrum disorder characterized by random and unprovoked seizures that affects approximately 470,000 children living in the U.S. (Epilepsy Foundation, n.d.). Despite this prevalence, few contemporary, middle-grade books reflect the experiences of children with epilepsy. Books that appropriately reflect diverse experiences are validating and important in a multicultural world (Bishop, 1990). Not only should books represent students with multiple diverse experiences (such as living with epilepsy), but also they must do so in an empathetic, inclusive, and informative way. This Book Analysis Project critically considers how epilepsy is portrayed in *Meena Meets Her Match* (Manternach, 2019), a contemporary, middle-grade book in which the protagonist, a third-grade girl, is diagnosed with epilepsy. In the analysis, the portrayal of epilepsy in Manternach's book is discussed in accordance with epilepsy research, testimonies, and other evidence-based sources. In addition, two plans for lessons intended to teach middle-grade audiences about living with epilepsy are presented.

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