



Perceptions of Disability: A Smile as Big as the Moon (Book)

Est. Time: 2 Weeks Reading/45 Minutes Class Time

Synopsis

After ten years, Mike Kersjes, a special educator, was showing signs of burnout. When he came across an article about NASA's space camp, he was inspired to apply for a spot at the camp for his special education kids. In this book, Kersjes describes the rejection and resistance he and his students experienced along their journey to attend space camp.

Activity

Read the following book and be prepared to discuss the questions below in class:

Title: A Smile as Big as the Moon: A Teacher, His Class, and Their Unforgettable Journey (2002)

Author: Michael Kersjes with Joe Layden

Publisher: St. Martin's Press • New York

Questions/Discussion Topics

1. Why did special education teacher Mike Kersjes feel that his students were treated like second-class citizens?
2. What happened when the principal, Tom Keller, found out about Mike's call to the Space Center?
3. What is Tourette's Syndrome?
4. What factors helped the kids succeed at space camp?
5. Why do you think there was so much opposition to the kids going to space camp?
6. Did the kids win any awards? If so, which ones?
7. Discuss your initial perception of the kids in the book. Did your perceptions change as you continued to read? If so, how?



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