ARTS IMPACT INSTITUTE LESSON PLAN - Core Program Year 2 Art-Infused

THEATER LESSON – **Clues to a Character through Text**

Arts-Infused Disciplines: Theater/Reading   Arts-Infused Concept: Character

Artist-Mentor: Dave Quicksall   Grade Levels: First – Fifth Grade

Examples:

Enduring Understandings

Using a text's descriptions of characters can inspire an actor to create character attributes and dynamic choices by blending the voice and body.

Target: Identifies a character's personality traits from a selected text.
    Criteria: Writes descriptive words about the character's attributes from a selected text.

Target: Incorporates physical choices to portray the character.
    Criteria: Uses character pose/posture and movement based on the clues from a *Character Map*.

Target: Incorporates vocal choices to portray the character.
    Criteria: Selects specific vocal pitch, volume, or timbre based on the character attributes from the *Character Map*.

Target: Communicates dialogue (invented or actual) using physical and vocal choices.
    Criteria: Blends voice and body to present the character's conversation to an audience.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

Before teaching this lesson, the teacher comprises a list of descriptive language and character attributes from the nursery rhymes or the story being explored. Examples of the type of words needed are: fear, happy, giant, spider, anger, tiny, old, gruff, etc.

    1. **Introduces students to a warm-up, *Statues*.** Introduces ways actors use their body to create characters that have specific physical, vocal and emotional attributes. Guides students to begin walking around the room as themselves (neutral). Teacher calls *Freeze* and then calls out a word (human or animal).The word does not have to come from the story/nursery rhyme text (rock star, parent, giant, etc.). The purpose of this exercise is to guide the students towards discovering different kinds of physical choices when investigating a character. *Prompts: I want you to just walk around the room as yourselves and when I call* freeze *I want you to freeze. When you freeze I will call out a word and then you make a statue of that word.*
Student: Walks around the room in neutral, freezes on cue, and creates a frozen *statue* cued by the prompt.
Embedded Assessment: criteria-based teacher checklist, reverse

    2. **Leads students through the exercise *I Am the Tiger*.** Introduces ways actors use their voice to create characters that have specific physical, vocal and emotional attributes. Guides

students to stand in a big circle. Stands inside the circle and walks around, prompting each student, one by one, to say the line *I am the Tiger* endowed with a different vocal pitch, volume, or timbre (pre-selected and demonstrated by the teacher). Refers to list of descriptive words made before the lesson to direct the students. *Prompts: Say the line* I am the Tiger *when I cue you. Say the line with a character attribute, so if I say* surprise *how could you say* I am the Tiger *like you are surprised? This is what I mean by* descriptive words. *How would a king sound? How would a monkey sound if it could talk? What would you need to do to your voice to make it sound that way? Remember there are many different ways to do this.*
Student: Stands in a circle with the group and when prompted says the line *I am the Tiger* endowed with character attributes to match the cue.
Embedded Assessment: Criteria-based teacher checklist

3. **Reads aloud or reviews the key story elements of a selected story/nursery rhyme.**

4. **Introduces looking at the story itself to find clues to descriptions of characters.** Hands out blank *Character Map*. Assigns characters from a selected story or nursery rhyme to each student. Guides students in a group brainstorm or individually to dig for clues in the text about their character. **Introduces the concepts of attributes and inference to the students.** *Prompts: When actors are trying to create their character they do it like a detective by looking for clues in the story. Attributes are words that describe someone. What words do you read that describe your character (physically—how he/she walks, moves or looks on the outside; vocally—how he/she talks or makes sounds with the voice; emotionally—how he/she feels on the inside). If you cannot find specific descriptive words in the text, you can "infer" them, meaning, decide what attribute(s) are appropriate based on the other clues in the text.*
Student: Contributes ideas about character attributes in a group brainstorm. (A group brainstorm can serve as an important assessment tool for the teacher to confirm that ALL the students understand the concept). Chooses a character. Finds clues and fills out the *Character Map.*
Embedded Assessment: Criteria-based teacher checklist.

5. **Leads students in another walk around the room which now transforms into a walk as their assigned character**. Ends this step when all students have met criteria. *Prompts: Let's just walk around the room as yourselves again. When I cue you, I want you to start walking as your character would walk. Think about what you wrote on your* Character Map. *What words on it would describe how you might move? How would your character walk? How does your character feel? Happy? Sad? Scared? How would the way you feel change the way you move?*
Student: Having referred to the *Character Map*, walks around the room, first in neutral and then as his/her assigned character, making appropriate changes to posture, walking, movement, etc. to create the character.
Embedded Assessment: Criteria-based teacher checklist (reverse); self-assessment (*Character Map*)

6. Brings the students back to the circle, and from inside the circle goes one by one again, but this time **cues each student to present a line of dialogue in the context of their story/nursery rhyme.** *Prompts: Now I want you to say a line as your character would say it. Again, think about your* Character Map; *that's going to be your guide. If you don't have a line written in the nursery rhyme you can make it up. What might the spider say to Miss Muffet, knowing what kind of spider he is, and how would he sound, saying that line?*

Student: After referring to the *Character Map* for clues, stands in a circle with the group and when cued, presents a line of dialogue (from the story/nursery rhyme or invented, if there are none in the text). Changes voice to sound like the given character.
Embedded Assessment: Criteria-based teacher checklist (reverse); self-assessment (Character Map)

7. **Guides students in moving and talking like their characters** by having them move around the room, while speaking the previously chosen lines of dialogue. *Prompts: We've written our Character Map, we've practiced making physical and vocal choices and you've made physical choices for your character and vocal choices for your character. Now, how does your character move and speak at the same time? How does the way your character is moving affect the way your voice sounds?*
Student: After referring to the *Character Map*, creates movements, words and/or vocal sounds simultaneously as the character.
Embedded Assessment: Self- Assessment (Character Map). Activates checklist with comments on how they achieved criteria.

POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UPS:

1. Divides students into groups and **guides them as they act out the stories/nursery rhymes in their entirety with all the characters**, using the previous steps in this lessons to create the characters (they can also create new lines of dialogue, *Character Maps*, etc.).

2. **Leads a criteria-based group reflection session** – *Prompt: What did you see?* Remember to keep the focus on what the students saw and the different ways they met the lesson criteria.

Vocabulary	Materials and Community Resource	WA Essential Learnings & Frameworks
Arts Infused: Theater and Reading: attributes, character, emotion, inference text Theater Character Map, cue/prompt, freeze movement, physical choice, Statues	**Performances:** Broadway Center for the Performing Arts, Tacoma, WA Seattle Children's Theater, Seattle, WA **Performance Materials:** selected story or nursery rhymes Character Map, blank template	**Essential Learnings** *AEL 1.1 concepts:* character, vocal choice, physical choice *AEL 1.2 skills and techniques:* blending body and voice *AEL 2.1 applies a creative process:* conceptualization *AEL 2.2 applies a performance process:* presents *REL2.2.3 understand and analyze story elements* *REL 2.3.1 understands similarities within and between analyzing and interpreting information in literary text* **Arts State Frameworks** *Kindergarten:* imitates and uses vocal sounds; imitates and uses movement *Grade 1*: uses simple movements to imitate character *Grade 2:* identifies and describes main and minor characters; uses movements to communicate character; identifies character's feelings *Grade 3:* identifies character traits of the main character; demonstrates a range of movement to create character,; uses appropriate feelings to create character *Grade 4:* selects and uses specific vocal qualities; uses emotional and sensory recall to create character *Grade 5:* identifies and uses voice to communicate character; identifies and uses movement to communicate character; identifies and sues emotional and sensory recall to create character **Reading State Frameworks** *Kindergarten:* composes visual images from what is read aloud and/or during shared reading; identify story elements of character *Grade 1:* makes inferences after hearing or reading a story using prior knowledge *Grade 2:* describes the physical traits of characters and tells how they act *Grade 3:* supports with evidence from text how a character will act *Grade 4:* uses knowledge of situation and characters' actions, motivations, feelings, and physical attributes to determine characters' traits *Grade 5:* uses knowledge of the situation, characters' actions, motivations, feelings, and physical attributes to determine characters' traits

ARTS IMPACT INSTITUTE LESSON PLAN

THEATER LESSON – **Clues to a Character through Text**

PERSONAL ASSESSMENTS CHECKLIST

Student	Character Attributes READING	Physical Choices THEATER	Vocal Choices THEATER	Presents RUBRIC THEATER	Total Points 7
	Writes down descriptive words about the character's attributes	Uses pose/posture and movement for character attribute	Selects specific pitch, volume, or timbre for character attribute	Blends voice and body to present the character 1-4 points	

RUBRIC FOR BLENDING VOICE & BODY IN PRESENTATION OF CHARACTER

Student	4	3	2	1
	blends physical and vocal choices together and sustains the characterization throughout the entire performance	utilizes a physical choice and a vocal choice together at intervals throughout the performance	utilizes either a physical choice or a vocal choice exclusively without putting the two together	speaks and moves without making dynamic physical or vocal choices

Criteria-based Reflection Questions:

Self-Reflection: *How does the way your character is moving affect the way your voice sounds?*

Peer to Peer: *What did you see?*

Name: _____ Date:_____

ARTS IMPACT INSTITUTE LESSON PLAN — Core Program Year 2 Art-Infused

THEATER LESSON – **Clues to a Character through Text**

RUBRIC FOR BLENDING VOICE & BODY IN PRESENTATION OF CHARACTER

Student	4	3	2	1
	blends physical and vocal choices together and sustains the characterization throughout the entire performance	utilizes a physical choice and a vocal choice together at intervals throughout the performance	utilizes either a physical choice or a vocal choice exclusively without putting the two together	speaks and moves without making dynamic physical or vocal choices

ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Students	Character Attributes READING writes down descriptive words about the character's attributes	Physical Choices THEATER uses pose/posture and movement for character attribute	Vocal Choices THEATER selects specific pitch, volume, or timbre for character attribute	Presents RUBRIC THEATER blends voice and body to present the character 1-4 points	Total Points 7
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
14.					
15.					
16.					
17.					
18.					
19.					
20.					
21.					
22.					
23.					
24.					
25.					
26.					
27.					
Total					
Percentage					

Criteria-based Reflection Questions: (Note examples of student reflections.)

Self-Reflection: *How does the way your character is moving affect the way your voice sounds?*

Peer to Peer: *What did you see?*
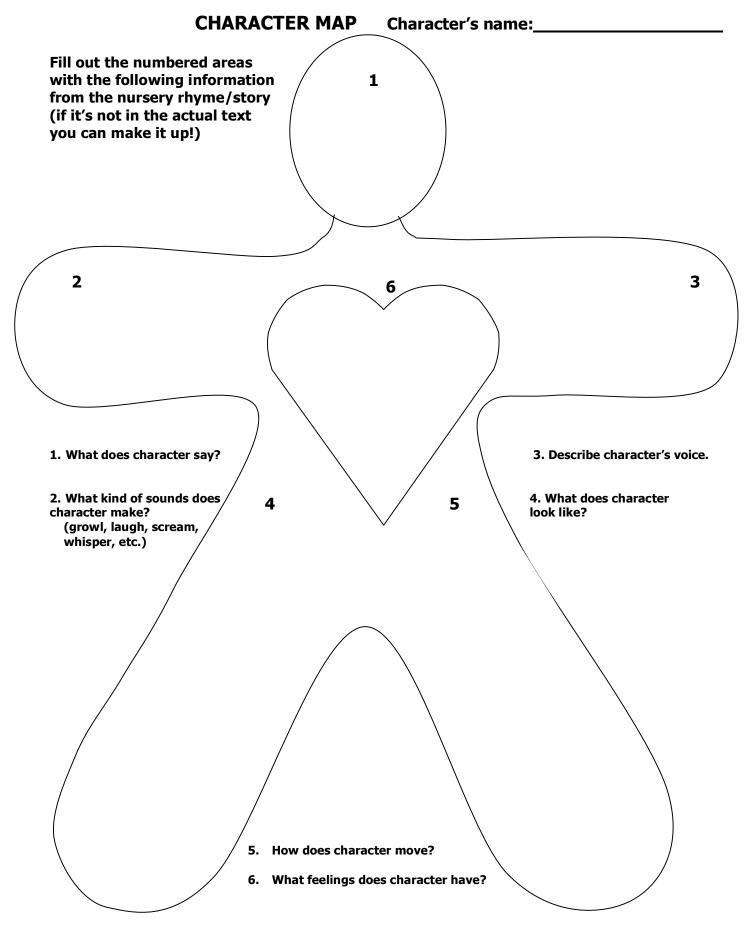
Thoughts about Learning:

Which prompts best communicated concepts? Which lesson dynamics helped or hindered learning?

Lesson Logistics:

Which classroom management techniques supported learning?

Teacher: _____ Date:_____

CHARACTER MAP   Character's name:_____

**Fill out the numbered areas
with the following information
from the nursery rhyme/story
(if it's not in the actual text
you can make it up!)**

1

2

6

3

4

5

1. **What does character say?**

2. **What kind of sounds does
    character make?
       (growl, laugh, scream,
       whisper, etc.)**

3. **Describe character's voice.**

4. **What does character
    look like?**

5. **How does character move?**

6. **What feelings does character have?**

ARTS IMPACT FAMILY LETTER

THEATER LESSON – Clues to a Character through Text

Dear Family:

Today your child participated in a theater arts lesson on **characters** and their **attributes**.

- We created a ***Character Map*** on a character from a nursery rhyme by looking through the text and looking for clues on how that character looks, moves, and feels.

- We played *I Am the Tiger* and explored the different way our **voices** can change when we become different characters.

- We presented our characters to the class by walking and talking like they would in the story.

At home you could act out your own favorite stories or nursery rhymes by determining how the characters look, move and feel.

Enduring Understanding

Using a text's descriptions of characters
can inspire an actor to create character attributes and dynamic choices by blending the voice and body