Assessment Plan 2

**Standard 2**: Reading for all Purposes

**Prepared Graduates’ Statements**: Read a wide range of literature (American and world literature) to understand important universal themes and the human experience.

**Concepts and Skills Students Master**: Increasingly complex literary elements in traditional and contemporary works of literature require scrutiny and comparison.

**Evidence Outcomes**: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. (CCSS: RL.9-10.3)

**­­­Context:** This activity is designed for Billy, a 15 year-old student in a ninth grade English class which is currently reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. The student is a white male who is involved in athletics, specifically football and basketball. He is believes that he will get into college on a sports scholarship, so he does not have to work hard and do well in school. He knows his strengths are in athletics, but chooses to believe that he can’t be school smart too.

**Reading Focus**: Billy will turn in homework assignments, but refrains from participating in classroom discussions. The assignments which Billy turns in are often done half-heartedly and with little effort. When asked how the reading is going, he will state that the book is too hard for him or that he is not a good reader. He says that he is not as smart as other students in the class, so he can’t participate in discussions with them about the reading or turn in assignments on the same level. This plan is designed to help Billy gain confidence in his reading skills, become an active participant in discussions, and to turn in the quality work that he is capable of.

**Instructional Strategies**: The focus for this plan will be to create a classroom environment where Billy will be able to develop social and emotional confidence as a reader. These classroom activities will be completed by every member of the class, because they will benefit every student, but they are designed specifically to encourage Billy.

1. Give students a chart with academic words for character analysis at the beginning of class. Ask students to try to use these words in discussion today.

2. Students will begin class by independently answering a journal prompt which will ask them for their personal response to the text. Ask students which of the characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* did you most enjoy? Which did you least enjoy? Did any of the characters remind you of yourself? Why?

Students will write independently and then share in small groups of their choosing. Finally, students will be encouraged to share as a class and discus why they felt the way they did. (10 minutes)

3. Students will participate in Inferring a Characters Emotions activity. This is a game similar to charades where students will be given a situation a character in the book experiences. The student will have to act out the emotion of how they would expect the character to respond and the other students must guess the emotion. This activity will be done in small groups of 5 or 6. Teacher will walk around and visit each group and answer questions. When finished, students will discuss why they chose the emotion that they did. How much of their decision depended on the situation and how much did they depend on their understanding of the character? (15 minutes)

4. Student will then complete Life-Size Character Map activity. This activity will have students pick a character they identify with and pinpoint specific motives, emotions, relationships, desires, ect. of that specific character. In this activity, students will trace themselves on butcher paper and turn their outline into a character map, labeling according to handout sheet. The finished products will be proudly displayed on classroom walls when they are complete. Teacher will walk around and help individual needs and questions. (20 minutes)

5. Discuss as a class how specific character traits directly affect how characters respond emotionally to events that happen to them. Encourage every student to share how their experiences in class today (Character Emotions Activity and Character Mapping activity) help shape their responses. Ask students to draw conclusions between these two activities; how to character traits affect emotional responses? Have students think about how their own character traits affect their own emotion responses. Do they see parallels between themselves and characters in the book? (15 minutes)

6. For homework, students will write a one to two page paper comparing themselves to a character in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. They will look specifically at how similar character traits affect similar emotional responses in the two, building off the work they had done in class. Ask students to use the chart handed out at the beginning of class in their paper.

**Assignment Sheet/Materials**: See attached for assignment sheets, butcher paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, tape.

**Assessment Tools**: I will assess Billy’s (and other students’) understanding by:

* Participation in small group and class discussion. I will be listening to make sure Billy is participating and making meaningful contributions and connections using the words from the character analysis handout. (Pre-Assessment)
* Reviewing character maps. Character maps should include all labeled components and show comprehension of the text. Maps should be neat and effort should be obvious. These will be graded for completion only. (In-Process-Assessment)
* Reviewing homework assignment. The paper should draw on the in-class activities and students’ knowledge of the text. I will be looking for specific examples of character traits and appropriate emotional responses for both the character and the student. Academic language, from the character analysis handout, should be evident. Grades will be based on 1) chosen examples, 2) comparisons drawn between the two, 3) use of academic language. (Post-Assessment)

**Research Base**: On page 28, Kylene Beers asserts that if a student is unwilling to participate in group discussions and does not believe he is a good reader, like Billy does, then this student needs help gaining confidence and learning to be an active participant in classroom activities. In chapter thirteen, Beers makes a few suggestions as to how to achieve this. Suggestion #2 asks teachers to “create a classroom that encourages risk”. Beers says teachers can do this by making sure students know each other’s names and are respectful of each other’s work and thoughts. I incorporated this in my plan by hanging the student’s character maps up in the classroom. This shows the students that I, as a teacher, value their work and their thoughts and want to display them for others to see. This will give the students confidence in themselves and their work and makes the room more personal for them.

Her third suggestion entails “provide(ing) various ways for engagement”. She says that students first need time to “warm-up” by themselves and get their thoughts together. It is best to then give them time in small groups, of their choosing, before sharing as a class. I structured my journal writing activity at the beginning of class in a similar fashion. This will hopefully help Billy gain confidence in small steps to speak up in class discussion. The journal writing activity also encompasses Beers’ fourth suggestion, “encourage an aesthetic response”. This suggestion asks students to make a personal connection with the text. The sorts of questions we can ask to elicit this response from readers ask for their opinion rather than for straight facts and information. The journal question asks students what they think about characters in the text and ask them to draw parallels between the characters and themselves. Similarly, the homework paper asks students to draw connections between the characters’ traits and emotional responses and their own.

Beers’ last suggestion asks teachers to “give students words to use to discuss their reading”. She says that readers like Billy may be reluctant to speak up because they don’t know what to say. Giving students a sheet of “academic words” will help them feel more confident and give them some help contributing thoughts to group conversation. I provided a similar sheet of words focusing on character at the beginning of this lesson and encouraged students to use the words in discussion as well as in their paper. Because Billy is an athlete, I also tired to incorporate activities where Billy was being active or using his body to learn. The charades activity and the character map activity cater to Billy’s kinesthetic learning style and will hopefully help him fell more comfortable and excited about learning.

Beers, K. (2003). *When Kids Can’t Read, What Teachers Can Do*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.