Understanding Through Stories

This is a four-week course for 6th-8th graders based on five 50-minute classes a week.

Course Description and Course Goals

- Since this is a storytelling-based course, speeches will hereby be referred to as stories.
- Each of the four weeks has a “theme” story that will be presented on the last half of the class on Thursday (if needed) and on Friday’s class.
- Monday through Thursday will be in-class exercises to develop the story, as well as homework assignments (these can also be done as in-class exercises).
- These stories will provide a better grasp and understanding of personal identity, how to understand others, how to give effective feedback, and how to develop empathy through stories.

Texts, Materials, and Supplies

- You, your imagination, and your way of communication!
- Any worksheets and exercise instructions will be provided.

Grading

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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Assignments and Homework

- These will be assigned in class
- Mulligans can be pulled: if a student totally freezes, they can say “Mulligan!” at the end of their story and can either do it again right there OR they can wait until everyone else has gone to do it (the end of Friday’s class or beginning of Monday’s class). It has to be said by the time they get back to their seat: “if their butt is in the chair, they can no longer declare”

Attendance, Participation, and Classroom Climate

- Attendance is very important! Each class depends on your presence as your partner for the day/week needs you to complete the day’s activity
- If you miss a Monday, you will need to get the assignment details from the instructor, who your partner is, and start developing your story of that week
- If you miss a Tuesday-Thursday, you will need to catch up with your partner on how their story is being developed and how you could continue developing yours
- If you miss a Friday, you will need to perform your story on Monday (grades that are docked or affected in any way via attendance is up to the instructor)
- If you miss an entire week, you will not be able to make up the grade(s) from that week unless otherwise stated by the instructor
- Any exceptions will be made on a case-by-case assessment and is up to the instructor
Course Schedule

Week 1: The Story of You (1-3-minute story; time is a suggestion/estimate and does not need to be a requirement)

- **Monday:** Introduction of the unit and the assignment, short lesson on “sounding written” and how internalization is different than memorization, hand out an activity sheet and do Activity Sheet 1, partners will be assigned for the week; the homework, Your Background worksheet will be handed out

- **Tuesday:** Complete exercise 1; homework is to rehearse story at least twice (once on your own and once to another person [if possible])

- **Wednesday:** Begin class with a recollection of the story you told yesterday (does not need to be word for word) and complete exercise 2; homework is to keep practicing

- **Thursday:** Start* telling the final version of your story to your partner(s), the method for grading will be explained on this day, and (depending on class size) start presenting your stories**
  - *the stories are most likely finalized by Wednesday, but by directing the class to tell the final version, it creates a more conscious awareness of it
  - **This could be done in any number of fashions: by partners, by a sign-up sheet, by volunteers, etc.

- **Friday:** Start/continue presenting stories (finish at the beginning of class on Monday if needed)
Week 2: *Your Side of the Story* (3-4-minute story)

- **Monday:** Introduction of assignment, partners can remain the same or they could switch, short lesson on how to deal with the parts you feel are misunderstood, complete worksheet 2 individually, and finish for homework if needed
- **Tuesday:** Get with partner and complete exercise 3
- **Wednesday:** Complete exercise 2 with partner, rehearse/develop story at home by yourself
- **Thursday:** Start telling the final versions, begin presenting if needed
- **Friday:** Start/continue presenting stories (finish at the beginning of class on Monday if needed)

Week 3: *Exchanging Stories* [learning to understand someone by walking a mile in their shoes; performing someone else’s story] (3-4-minute story)

- **Monday:** Introduction of assignment, partners can remain the same or they could switch, short lesson on learning someone else’s story and explain exercise 5
- **Tuesday:** Complete exercise 5, homework is to rehearse story at least twice (once on your own and once to another person [if possible])
- **Wednesday:** Class will begin with a recollection of the story you told yesterday (does not need to be word for word), complete exercise 2; homework is to keep practicing
- **Thursday:** Start telling the final version of your story to your partner(s), and (depending on class size) start presenting your stories
Katie Powell

- **Friday**: Start/continue presenting stories (finish at the beginning of class on Monday if needed)

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**Week 4: Reflection of the Past (3 Weeks) (3-4-minute story)**

- **Monday**: Introduction of assignment, partners can remain the same or they could switch, short lesson on how to craft a reflection story, do the Class Activity Questions worksheet, and start exercise 6
- **Tuesday**: Complete exercise 6; homework is to rehearse story at least twice (once on your own and once to another person [if possible])
- **Wednesday**: Begin class with a recollection of the story you told yesterday (does not need to be word for word), complete exercise 2 with your buddy; homework is to keep practicing
- **Thursday**: Start telling the final version of your story to themselves/the teacher, and (depending on class size) start presenting your stories
- **Friday**: Start/continue presenting stories (finish at the beginning of class on Monday if needed). Complete the Reflection Questions (this is a graded assignment that will be handed in)