

Integrating Art into Reading – Studying Character Traits, Development & Perspective

Detailed lesson plans, including stop and reflect, as well as images can be found on my website.

Teaching Points**:

Getting to know characters like we get to know a new friend (pg. 131)

As we read on, we make and revise theories (page 134)

When characters act out of character, we take notice (page 165)

**Lesson adapted from teaching points taken from:

Atif Khan, H., Calkins, L., Ehrenworth, M., & Mooney, J. (2010). *Constructing Curriculum: Alternate Units of Study*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: firsthand Heinemann.

Teacher Resources & Materials:

Wonder, By RJ Palacio

Constructing Curriculum: Alternate Units of Study (see above)

Chart paper – 6 large pieces

Markers, sharpies, and or crayons

Student Materials:

Reading notebook

Pencil

Note: This lesson can be adapted to any piece of literature and not limited to class read aloud. I have also used this strategy during *Because of Mr. Terrupt*, By Rob Buyea, read aloud.

Overview: This lesson idea came to fruition unintentionally and I didn't realize its potential impact it had on student engagement, comprehension and class discussion until I was walking around the classroom, while reading *Wonder* aloud and observing students readers notebooks. What had initially started as me drawing one characters face, Auggie, on a piece of chart paper to launch a lesson on character traits, turned into students recreating the images in their own readers notebooks to take notes and follow along. Of course after drawing Auggie, the first character introduced in the book, led to students asking me to do the same for the other key characters. While we discussed all of the primary and secondary characters in the book, I didn't draw their faces on chart paper.

Prior to each designated read aloud time, I would put up the pieces of chart paper with the characters we were currently tracking, so ideas/observations student's noticed while reading could be reviewed and/or added to. Both during and after read aloud, we would stop as a class and add/discuss observations/ideas as they arose onto the respective characters face.

I found that when students drew out the characters faces, they became active readers and participants in class discussion. It was a way for them to not only visualize the characters and make a movie in their mind, but a comprehension strategy they could transfer across all subject matters.

Duration: Tracking character traits, observations, and ideas took place throughout the entire read aloud. *Wonder* took us about 3 weeks to get through, reading anywhere from 10 minutes to 30 minutes at a time.

At various points throughout the book, I would have students stop and reflect on what they have discovered/realized about a character of their choice based on notes taken in their readers notebook and class discussion.