

Lesson 3: Designing a “Survival Experience”

by Debra Drummond (Provo City School District, Provo, Utah)

Grade Level(s)

Grade 8 English Language Arts

Lesson Overview

The purpose of this lesson is to use the Design Thinking process to deepen students' understanding of the techniques authors use to develop characters. By creating an Empathy Map, a Needs Statement, and a Prototype, students will have, in essence, written a claim based on textual evidence and created a prototype that will "meet a character's needs." They will work in teams, interview a literary character, generate ideas, and design innovative user-centered solutions.

Learning Objectives

- To engage in a design challenge
- To develop empathy, to brainstorm ideas, to synthesize information
- To conduct an interview and to share information
- To build and test prototypes

Standards

CCSS RI.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS RL.8.3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

CCSS RL.8.7: Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums to present a particular topic or idea.

CCSS W.8.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS SL.8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on Grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Preparation

- Set up PPT *Design Thinking and Character Analysis* slides
- Make copies of the “To Build a Fire” Design Challenge handout (1 per student).
- Gather prototyping materials: Creation Station materials list (1 per classroom). Note: The Creation Station (d.loft.stanford.edu) is an ideal set of prototyping supplies. Don’t feel that you have to have all of these in order to complete this challenge—basic supplies of paper, glue, scissors, markers, colored pencils will work as well.

Materials and Resources

- Prototyping materials: Creation Station Kit (available in Supplementary Materials) (1 per classroom)

Activity 1: Reviewing and Interviewing (15 Minutes)

- Review the steps of Design Thinking by showing slides 25-28 (*Design Thinking and Character Analysis PowerPoint*) and telling the class that they are going to review the design thinking process that that they can design for the “needs” of the protagonist from “To Build a Fire.”
- Show slides 29-53, and tell the class that by developing empathy, that they will deepen their understanding of the protagonist from “To Build a Fire.”
- Form teams of 4-5 students. Give each student a copy of the “To Build a Fire” Design Challenge. Be sure to have students from each of the 3 marking groups from Lesson 2 (Thoughts, Feelings, Actions) in each group. Tell them to turn to the next page. Explain that they are going to redesign the survival experience, not for themselves, not for their partners, but for “the man” in “To Build a Fire” and that they will begin by interviewing him.
- Review the questions. Tell the students to begin with these questions first, and if they have time, they can ask additional questions if needed. They are to base the ANSWERS to the questions on their understanding of the character. Authors reveal their character’s personality, motivations, and needs based on what the character says, does, thinks, feels, and even by what others say about him/her. Remind the students that they have data from the previous lesson that will help them really understand “the man.”
- Tell the students to write brief notes as they conduct their interviews, and record this in the box marked “Interview”

Activity 2: Defining Needs and Ideating (20 Minutes)

- Show slides 54-57, and tell students that they will be developing a type of CLAIM called a Point-of-View or Needs Statement.
- Tell the students to turn to the next page in the handout. Explain that the goal of this

- part of the design thinking process is to build empathy for the character's needs.
- Ask the students to take 3 minutes to think about the interview and the data that they collected in the previous lesson. Ask the students to complete the Empathy map on page 4 of the handout, including page # references from the text. Note: You may want to give the students chart paper so that they can have more room to write in their information.
- Tell the class that their next task is to capture their findings and write a Point-of-View or Needs Statement." Explain that a Need Statement is a way to synthesize what they learned in their interviews, and that there are three main parts of a Needs Statement: user, need, and insight. Tell the students that the need must be a verb, and the insight is something that stood out to them as completed the Empathy Map.
- Show slides 58-72, and tell students that they will be brainstorming numerous ways to meet the character's needs. Note: Remind students not to oversimplify. The newcomer needs more than another match. If they truly understand the character, they will see that his being overconfident in his abilities contributed to the situation. How can they honor his abilities, not insult him (he was warned, after all) and help him survive?
- Ask the students to turn to the next page in the handout. Tell the class that they are going to brainstorm possible solutions to meet the man's needs. Explain that when you brainstorm you don't judge any ideas and you try to think of as many ideas as you can to meet your partners' needs. Tell the students that they have 5 minutes and should come up with 25 or more ideas! Ask the students to write or sketch their ideas in the space provided. Note: Giving teams chart paper will give them more room for all of their ideas.

Activity 3: Prototyping, Testing, and Reflecting (25 Minutes)

- Show slides 73-77, and tell that class that now they are going to build a prototype to meet the character's need and will share their prototype with another team who will provide feedback.
- Tell the students to turn to the next page in the handout. Ask the students to choose one of their ideas that they are most excited about and explain that they are going to build prototypes for "the man." Show them the materials in the Creation Station, and tell them that will use these materials to build their prototypes.
- Tell the class that a prototype is not a model, but is a way to make an experience tangible. Explain that if they were going to build a new seating arrangement, instead of drawing a sketch, they might use the desks in the room. Remind them to think about creating something another team can interact with. Give the students 8 minutes to build their prototypes.
- After 8 minutes, tell the students that they are going to test their prototypes on another team for 5 minutes each, and that you will tell them when it is time to switch. Review the right side of the handout so that the students are aware of how to capture feedback from their partners. Tell the students to fill in the four boxes provided to capture feedback.

Troubleshooting

Note: Remind students not to oversimplify. The newcomer needs more than another match. If they truly understand the character, they will see that his being overconfident in his abilities contributed to the situation. How can they honor his abilities, not insult him (he was warned, after all) and help him survive?

Assessment

Adaptable Design Thinking Basic Rubric 1.0 with Journal Prompts for Reflection can be found at the following website:

https://dschool.stanford.edu/groups/k12/wiki/e04cb/HFLI_Rubric.html