*English Instructional Plan- Identifying Theme Grades 2-3*

**Primary Strand: Reading 2.7, 3.5**

**Integrated Strand/s: Communication Multimodal Literacies 2.1,3.1**

**Essential Understanding:**

All students should:

* understand the elements of fiction (e.g., characters, setting, plot events)
* understand details are important to comprehend the text.
* understand the essential elements and characteristics of fictional text and poetry.

**Essential Knowledge, Skills, and Processes:**

* determine the theme or lesson of fictional texts (e.g., friendship, family, working hard, survival, determination)
  + thematic topic
  + lesson learned

**Primary SOL:**

2.7f, 3.5j Identify Theme

**Reinforced (Related Standard) SOL:**

2.7 e) Identify the conflict and resolution

h) Draw conclusions based on the text

3.5 g) Ask and answer questions about what is read

h) Draw conclusions using the text for support

i) Identify the conflict and resolution

k) Use reading strategies to monitor comprehension throughout the reading process

**Academic Background/Language:**

For academic language learners, it will be important to build language about conflict/resolution and theme, the moral (lesson) of the story that can be inferred. It is important to model the reading and theme identification process through various activities and fictional text. To help students to discuss theme use sentence starters such as:

* This story makes me feel...
* One thing this story reminds me of is...
* I learned...
* This character learned…

## Materials

* Various fictional texts
* Poster/smartboard/whiteboard to write on
* Paper and pencils

## Student/Teacher Actions: What should students be doing? What should teachers be doing?

1. Model thinking aloud the answers to the following questions for students:
   * What is a theme? How can we learn a lesson while reading a story? What are some lessons you have learned in past stories?
2. Go over the definition of theme with the class. Discuss how a theme is similar to the moral (lesson) of the story. It is a central lesson or idea of the story that the author wishes to convey through the character’s experiences in the story. It is important to read the entire text before identifying the theme. The theme is reflected throughout the whole story, not just one moment. Have the class discuss the universal themes they have learned previously (including but not limited to friendship, family, determination, courage, kindness, etc).
   * Create an anchor chart with the universal themes discussed.
3. Read through a book aloud such as Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream by Deloris Jordan, Mr. Peabody’s Apples by Madonna, and More Than Anything Else by Marie Bradby.
4. After reading, discuss important details from the story including the conflict and resolution. Using the anchor chart of universal themes, identify the theme of the story.
   * Practice picking out details from the story to support said theme.
5. As a class, take the broad theme and turn it into a sentence and vice-a-versa. (e.g. “determination” becomes “Never give up on your dreams.” or “Work hard for what you want.”)
6. Add the book title and theme to an ongoing anchor chart for students to reference.

**Assessment (Diagnostic, Formative, Summative):**

* On the board, write possible themes for a familiar story. Ask students to take the broad theme and convert it into a sentence and vice-a-versa.
* After deciding upon a theme for a story, have students find details from the story that supports the theme.

**Writing Connections:**

* Offer students a broad theme and ask them to write a narrative. e.g. The broad theme given is friendship, and students write a narrative story about how you learn the value of friendship.
* When students write to summarize events from a story, encourage students to add a theme sentence into their summary.

**Extensions and Connections (for all students)**

* Discuss why it’s important to understand and determine the theme of a story? What does the author want the reader to learn?
* Allow students to discuss their theme sentences in pairs before sharing in a larger group.
* Provide sentence stems to support the discussion (e.g., "It is important to understand the theme because...").
* Help students to understand the similarities between theme (fiction) and main idea (nonfiction).

**Strategies for Differentiation**

* Provide sentence starters for students as needed.
* Give students additional chances to practice with books read aloud in small groups.
* Provide students with fictional text with common themes.