*English Instructional Plan- Identifying theme and lessons learned Grades 4-5*

**Primary Strand: Reading 4.5, 5.5**

**Integrated Strand/s: Reading 4.6,5.6**

**Essential Understanding:**

* understand the essential elements and characteristics of fictional text, literary nonfiction, and poetry

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

* identify the theme(s) of a text (friendship, survival, determination)
  + thematic topic
  + lesson learned

**Primary SOL:**

4.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, literary nonfiction texts, and poetry.

b) Identify the Theme(s)

5.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, and poetry.

d) Identify Theme(s)

**Reinforced (Related Standard) SOL:**

4.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, literary nonfiction texts, and poetry.

f) Identify the conflict and resolution.

h) Draw conclusions/make inferences about text using the text as support.

i) Compare/contrast details in literary and informational nonfiction texts.

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

4.6 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of nonfiction texts.

c) Identify the Main Idea

5.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, and poetry.

b) Discuss the impact of setting on plot development.

c) Describe character development.

e) Explain the resolution of conflict(s).

m) Use reading strategies throughout the reading process to monitor comprehension.

5.6 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of nonfiction texts.

c ) Identify the Main Idea

## Academic Background/Language:

As students read fiction/nonfiction paired text, often the topic or focus of the text will be similar. Students must be able to understand how using the plot to determine the theme differs from using factual details to determine the main idea. A theme is a fictional story’s message. To identify the theme, students need to have a strong understanding of conflict and resolution and the impact these have on the character. Students should also examine how the important events of the story impacted the character and lessons learned. There are universal themes that have existed in fictional stories that date back to the origins of storytelling. Knowing these universal themes and examining text that explore these themes will help students to better identify theme and details that support.

**Materials**

* Various fictional texts
* Poster/smartboard/whiteboard to write on
* Paper and Pencils
* https://www.readworks.org/article/All-the-Pieces-Matter
* https://www.readworks.org/article/Ecological-Change

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

1. Read students the following excerpts from the paired text *All the Pieces Matter* and *Ecological Changes* one at a time. Give students time to talk to a partner about each excerpt.
   * “The next time Jason went to Ho Tep Wildlife Reserve, on a camping trip with his dad, he made a point of observing the wildlife. He spent twenty minutes watching a copperhead snake slither across the forest floor, wondering about its role in the larger system. Through his binoculars, he watched a robin build its nest near the top of an oak tree. He imagined the robin catching insects to bring back to the nest to feed her chicks. He thought about how the roots of the tree reached way down into the soil to drink the moisture there. It really was fascinating how everything fit together.”
   * “Concerned Floridians began advocating for saving the area in the 1930s. Their efforts paid off in 1947 when Congress created the Everglades National Park. Starting in the late 1970s, environmental concerns at both the national and international levels refocused attention on the Everglades. The area was designated as one of the world’s most important wetland areas.”
2. Think aloud for the students to show how both of the texts are about ecological changes even though the authors uses different genres of writing. “In the first excerpt, I noticed that there was a character thinking about an upcoming camping trip. The author helped me visualize the setting and event of observing nature and the emotions that the character had during the event. I have a prediction that the character learned something through his experiences in nature. In the second excerpt, the author gave me dates to show change and not a narrator to tell me about the changes. I could tell that the author did research about the Everglades and decided to put these facts in his writing. I began to want to do more research on the Everglades to learn more.”
   * Give students time to talk to a partner about what they noticed about the differences in the excerpts.
   * Help students to make the generalization that the first excerpt is from a fictional story and the second from a nonfiction text. In the fictional text, the author uses a character’s learning from the conflict of the story to relay the central message, or theme. Many times you have to infer the theme of the story using events, character feelings, conflict and resolution. In contrast, in the nonfiction text the author conveys the main idea through facts.
3. Have students independently read the fictional text, *All the Pieces Matter*.
   * After reading, discuss and record the evolution of the character throughout the story, any important events, and the conflict/resolution of the story.
   * Use these story elements to determine the theme of the story.
   * With the students construct a theme sentence after agreeing upon a theme from the passage.
   * Have students review the passage and document two citations or lines from the text that support the theme.
4. Repeat this process to determine the theme with other texts including narrative nonfiction and poetry.

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

* Ask students determine the theme of independent text citing two events or examples of character development to support the theme.
* Use fiction/nonfiction paired text for students to compare and contrast the theme and main idea, plot and details.
* Have students include the theme or main idea as part of written response to books read.
* Give students a universal theme and work “backwards” to find passages, poems, short stories, or songs with the given theme.

**Writing Connections:**

* Ask students to select one of the universal themes discussed. Have students write a personal narrative to describe how they learned their chosen “lesson.”
* Use mentor text for students to explore writing a “twisted story.” Have students publish stories to a platform such as Google Classroom in order for the class to engage in a discussion about how changing the character or conflict/resolution can change the theme of a story.

**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?Follow up with how it lends itself to Author’s Point of view.
* Provide sentence stems to support the discussion (e.g., "It is important to understand the theme because..." or “The author wants the reader to know...”).
* Continue to read paired text for students to deepen their understanding of theme and main idea.

**Strategies for Differentiation**

* Provide sentence stems
* Give students additional chances to practice with read-alouds in small groups
* Have students read stories/text in native language.