Unit 1: Turning Every Kid into a Reader--and a Character Analyst

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
Time Period: **Week 1**
Length: **8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

Turning Every Kid into a Reader--and a Character Analyst will teach students to find the books that get them excited to read, internalize real reasons to read, and widen the scope of what they are reading independently. During the unit, students will dig deeply into their novels to think, talk, and analyze characters and character relationships. In completing this unit, students will begin to develop systems for monitoring their reading and interacting with literary texts purposefully to deepen their analysis of not only the characters within the text, but also their own experiences in the world around them.

Standards

LA.RL.6.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
LA.RL.6.3	Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
LA.RL.6.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
LA.RL.6.5	Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
LA.RL.6.6	Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
LA.RL.6.10	By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above, scaffolding as needed.
LA.SL.6.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.SL.6.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
LA.SL.6.1.B	Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
LA.SL.6.1.C	Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
LA.SL.6.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
LA.SL.6.2	Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

LA.L.6.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.L.6.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

Essential Questions

- How can recharging my reading life and thinking deeply about characters impact my life and relationships?
- How can my past reading experiences shape my present and future reading life and goals?
- How can I develop powerful reading work that will push me as a reader and enhance my knowledge, creativity, and worldly awareness?
- How can I interact with a literary text to develop powerful theories and substantiate claims about characters across a text?
- How can I read in a way that I can discern the themes and life lessons conveyed by an author?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- Readers develop reading work that will take them to the next level as readers.
- Readers look to a character's change, experiences, and realizations to reveal bigger life meanings.
- Readers notice and note meaningful details within a text to develop, revise, and justify literary theories and claims.
- Readers put themselves in growth mindset, building a positive relationship with reading and setting ambitious, feasible goals.
- Readers study characters closely to distinguish their traits, motives, and complexities.

Application of Skills: Students will be able to...

- Apply active reading strategies to construct meaning.
- Apply browsing strategies to identify, assemble, and select appropriate independent texts.
- Assemble and cite relevant textual evidence to support literal and inferential claims.
- Compare and contrast character development across a fictional text to describe change.
- Construct ambitious independent reading goals for stamina, volume, and genre.
- Develop reading artifacts (logs, jots, entries, etc.) to track, monitor, and deepen readers work.
- Distinguish indirect and direct characterization.
- Employ active reading strategies across an independent text. (Question, Wonder, Think, Feel, Notice, Predict)
- Employ appropriate literary vocabulary in discussion and writing. (character, setting, plot, conflict, theme)
- Enact partner reading and accountable talk routines and habits.
- Enact the habits and routines of the readers workshop.

- interpret the author's thematic meaning.
- Read independently with increasing focus, stamina, and volume.
- Retell with an emphasis on story elements.

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

Suggested Teaching Points

The following teaching points and activities are adapted from the TCRWP curricular calendars and texts and serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add and or emphasize based on their students' needs.

Bend I: Readers Put Themselves in a Growth Mindset, Building a Positive Relationship with Reading and Setting Ambitious, Feasible Goals

- Teach readers that readers reflect on their past reading experiences and choices to shape their present and future reading.
- Teach readers that readers have many different reasons to read; and those reasons are different for everyone.
- Teach readers that readers work hard to make smart choices about what we read so that we can build an extraordinary reading life.
- Teach readers that readers use what they know of stories/fiction to read actively and with agency.

Bend II: Readers Develop Reading 'Work' that Will Take Them to the Next Level as Readers

- Teach readers that readers use artifacts to help us reflect on and improve our reading lives.
- Teach readers that readers make sense of and hold onto their reading by telling themselves and others what has happened so far in the story.
- Teach readers that readers consider what thinking work they'll do as they read. (Question, Wonder, Think, Notice, Feel, Predict)
- Teach readers that readers set goals and enact habits to stay in a reading zone.
- Teach readers that readers talk about books with passion and insight.
- Teach readers that readers jot, write, and sketch to push their thinking beyond the pages.

Bend III: Studying Characters and their Complexity

- Teach readers that readers get to know their characters by noticing their actions, thoughts, and words.
- Teach readers that readers revise their first impressions of characters by paying attention to their actions and speech over time.
- Teach readers that readers see patterns in how a character acts and responds in similar situations and ask, "Why might he/she act this way?" (Fiction Signpost: Again and Again)
- Teach readers that readers notice when characters surprise us by acting "out of character." (Fiction Signpost: Contrast and Contradiction)
- Teach readers that readers notice when a character has a strong realization and ask, "How might this realization change things?" (Fiction Signpost: Aha Moment)

Bend IV: Studying Characters to Reveal Bigger Meanings

- Teach readers that readers compare and contrast a character across a text to distinguish change.
- Teach readers that readers pause at the end of a story or a book to ask: "What life lessons have I learned from reading this book?"
- Teach readers that readers push themselves to consider the many themes of a text by asking "What lessons have other characters learned?"

Suggested Activities to Support Teaching Points

- Mini-lesson to include connection, teaching point, modeling, active engagement, and link to independence.
- Develop and use reader's notebook for modeling, exemplar entries, and a time line of teaching points
- Create authentic artifacts (logs, jots, etc.) for examination and inquiry
- Think aloud during process to model strategies, sentence stems, and problem-solving techniques
- Model creation of artifacts during read aloud
- Examine mentor and student exemplars
- Read aloud a mentor text or whole class text with strategic stopping points for teacher think aloud, turn and talk, and stop and jot opportunities
- Construct authentic anchor charts (specific teaching points + student observations + student friendly terms/examples)
- Create process checklists to guide reading work into independence
- Incorporate multimedia and visual texts as a means for active engagement and practice
- Small group strategy lessons
- Individual conference with students

Assessments

Assessment within this unit of study arrives in three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. The development and use of assessment will happen strategically throughout the unit as a means of maintaining a "pulse of learning" to ensure that students are grasping and mastering the skills and strategies intertwined within the teaching points prior to advancing on in the unit. Assessment will be formal and informal, as well as teacher-driven and student-driven. Students will be given the opportunity to self-assess their work to identify areas of weakness and development in order to develop ambitious, feasible goals. Students will also be asked to collaborate with peers in their assessment practices in order to support learning across zones of proximal development. On-going teacher assessment will take place in the context of the conference. Conferences, both small group and one-on-one conferring, are used to reinforce expectations, provide advice/or assistance, and to support growth.

Diagnostic Assessments:

- TC Running Record (http://readingandwritingproject.org/resources/assessments/running-records)

The running record forms provide a book introduction, the typed text, a sidebar of reading characteristics, a scoring guide, comprehension questions with sample responses, and space to take notes and to jot student responses. A Teacher Guidebook for Levels A-K and one for Levels L-Z+ is available in the Supporting Documents and explains in detail the assessments and includes suggestions for how to use the assessments to plan differentiated, explicit instruction for each student assessed.

Formative Assessments:

- Unit pre-assessment (On-demand performance task)
- Examination of student reading logs
- Examination of student developed jots and notebook entries
- Informal conferring and observation of independent reading habits and accountable talk
- Collection of anecdotes from teacher-student conferences: individual, small group, strategy, and guided
- Collection of observations from active engagement within mini-lesson
- Quick jots
- Exit tickets
- Student reflection

Summative Assessments:

- End of unit post assessment (On-demand performance task)
- Reading logs, notebook entries, and other evidence of students improving skills
- Published writing composition
- Portfolio (collection of process work to reflect growth across a unit)

Possible Reading-Writing Performance Assessment as Pre and/or Post: Using the story “My Side of the Story,” from *First French Kiss*, by Adam Bagdasarian, create an assessment by inserting the following prompts at the recommended locations within the text:

- After the line: “I leaped out of my chair, past my brother, in search of justice.” What conflicts are in

this story at this point? What is the explicit conflict, or the one that is most obvious, and what is the bigger conflict, that is hinted at? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

- After the line: "This apparently was all my father needed to set the wheels of his anger in motion." Why does it matter that the narrator found his father instead of his mother in this moment of crisis? How does this change how the narrator himself feels about the tape on his head? Use evidence from the story to support your answer.
- At the end of the story: How has the narrator changed by the end of this story? What lessons has he learned? Use evidence from the story to support your answer.

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

Differentiated instruction is accomplished through pre-assessment and ongoing formative assessments that inform independent work, small group strategy lessons, and individual conferences. Differentiation in content, product and/or process addresses the needs of exceptionally able students, and scaffolding of varying degree is provided to support less ready students in meeting worthy and appropriately rigorous learning outcomes. Instructional objectives, strategies and materials emphasize relevance, authenticity, and student-centered learning.

In compliance with 504 plans and IEP's, teachers will review applicable documents, consult appropriate personnel connected with special-needs students' cases, work closely with inclusion teachers and classroom aides, and communicate with parents in an effort to see to the specific needs of all students. Due to varying dispositions and learning styles, teachers promote various strategies during all phases of the reading process. Students will have opportunities to work alone, in pairs, and in groups. The reading workshop incorporates a variety of instructional techniques to meet the continuum of learners' interests, learning profiles, and readiness levels.

Differentiating through Independent Reading: After using the TCRWP benchmark assessments to determine corresponding Fountas and Pinnell text gradient levels A-Z+, students choose appropriate "just right" books that match them as readers based on interest/readiness. The strategy or skill being taught might be the same, but the book choice, or content, is differentiated.

Differentiating though Reading Response Methods: One option to differentiate product is to allow students to use different methods to track their thinking. For example, if students are working on inferring and using their notebooks, students can choose how to record their thought process (Venn Diagram, T-Chart, etc.) to use evidence and explanation to support their decision. The teacher can assign how students respond to literature based on their reading goal or need, or the student can decide.

Differentiating through Conferences and Small Groups: Teachers should listen to students as they read and take notes during one-on-one conferences. Reading conferences can be used to encourage students' reading interests, help students find appropriate leveled books to read, and to monitor student progress. The teacher can also pull small groups for extra practice at this time. These small groups can be used to challenge higher-

level students, give additional practice to all students in small groups, or to meet with lower readers to focus on areas of weakness. Small groups are meant to be flexible and change to fit the needs of students. During this time students can share their thinking with partners and with the small group, and then receive feedback from the teacher.

Individual conferencing and small group instruction allows for instruction at various levels, remediation or enrichment of specific skills, as well as the differentiation of the method of instruction and the presentation of information. In addition to these forms of differentiation other modifications can be made. They can include, but are not limited to those suggested below.

Differentiating for special education:

- *Learning Environment:* Allow space for students to choose; Use preferential seating; Provide opportunities for movement; Vary activities both in and out of desk/table
- *Curriculum:* Adapt amount of work required; Use different forms of assessments that demonstrate different learning styles; Allow different visual aids, concrete examples, hands-on activities, and cooperative groups to learn new concepts; Allow work to be completed in various formats
- *Teaching and Learning Styles:* Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner- use multiple teaching styles to teach a new concept; Use concrete examples and move towards the abstract; Provide an overview of lesson at beginning; Monitor the rate and manner in which the material is being presented
- *Time Demands:* Allow extra time to complete tests; Give different versions of tests; Follow a routine; Set specific time limits for test
- *Cooperative Learning:* Use flexible grouping; Use student choice in grouping; Assign peer helpers to check in on one another
- *Behavior Concerns:* Give clear expectations of goals for the class period; Be consistent in follow through with both positive and negative consequences; Use of cues; Give immediate positive reinforcement and feedback; Avoid power struggle
- *Attention/Focus Concerns:* Give notification of transitions; Use of cues to refocus; Seat near teacher or in area of less distraction; Introduce assignments in sequential steps; Make sure books/materials are on the correct pages
- *Organization:* Give copy of notes; Allow student to leave unnecessary materials in a nearby area; Color-coded materials; Use of binder system; Use a checklist for work in smaller units
- *Written Expression:* Allow use of manuscript, cursive, or typing for assignments; Leniency in spelling and neatness (to an agreed upon level); Provide a copy of notes; Avoid pressures for speed or accuracy
- *Visual Processing:* Give highlighted/color coded copy of notes; Avoid copying notes from the board; Check in with student to be sure that visuals are comprehended from the beginning of lesson; Avoided cluttered worksheets keeping them clear and well defined
- *Language Processing:* Give both written and verbal directions; Slow the rate of presentation and paraphrase information; Keep statements short and to the point Allow for extra wait time; Use student‘s name before asking a question; Use of visuals and hands-on materials; Familiarize students with new vocabulary before lesson
- *Audio Processing:* Provide a copy of notes; Use of a checklist; Keep statements short and to the point; Use of eye contact; Have student sit closer to instruction; Use of student buddy to check in with sitting nearby; Use of visuals; Stop and check in for understanding
- **Content specific modifications may include:**
    - Instruction aligned to student's performance level according to Teacher's College Reading Continuum

- Personal student goals designed to move student along Teacher's College Reading Continuum

Differentiating to extend learning for gifted students:

Reading programs for the gifted should take into account the individual characteristics of the children, capitalize on the gifts they possess, and expand and challenge their abilities. Tasks should be commensurate with ability and achievement. Accommodations may include:

- Compacting the regular curriculum; acceleration of content and/or text at a pace and depth appropriate to the capacity of able learners
- Inquiry reading and independent study opportunities; use of more advanced books
- Focus on developing higher-level comprehension skills, along with higher level questioning
- Exploration of literary tropes and elements (i.e. craft, irony, symbolism, foils, unreliable narrators, and multiple perspectives) on a highly abstract level and with highly nuanced applications
- Special emphasis to the critical-thinking components of the standard scoring rubrics
- A wider and more in-depth array of related topics and cross-curricular connections
- Opportunities for students to engage in peer instruction
- Requiring more initiative and independence from students, emphasizing metacognitive skills that foster self-directed learning
- Encouraging students to apply insights revealed in group discussions to their own analysis of literature

Differentiating for ELL's:

General modifications may include:

- Strategy groups
- Teacher conferences
- Graphic organizers
- Modification plan
- Collaboration with ELL Teacher

Content specific vocabulary important for ELL students to understand include:

- Contrast , Contradiction, Conflict, Theme, Empathy, Narration, Point of View, Scene, Tension, Analyze, Critique, Story Elements, Inference, Evidence, Genre, Evaluate

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

Consistent with the concept of differentiated instruction, students should learn the knowledge and skills of this unit in conjunction with concepts from various content areas. While some teachers will provide instruction that includes specific concepts from various content areas, all should direct students to specific text and online resources pertinent to various content areas. Also, teachers will consult grade-level content area teachers on

concepts covered in their classes, allowing subjects, lessons, and experiences to reinforce each other.

The diverse genres of narrative reading make this highly feasible, and mini-lessons can apply to concepts from multiple subjects. Here are some of the possible correlations:

- historical fiction: social studies
- science fiction: science and mathematics
- fantasy: mythology and folklore
- fan fiction: literature

Writing Workshop

- apply language and ideas from read alouds and independent reading
- utilize read alouds and independent reading as mentor texts
- expand written vocabulary from read alouds and independent reading
- apply sentence, paragraph, and narrative structure from mentor texts
- utilize other elements of author's craft seen in mentor texts and independent reading books

Content Areas: Science, Social Studies, Health

- read just right books in the content areas
- use mentor texts to deliver social studies content
- compare content area ideas and issues to character struggles in read alouds and mentor texts
- apply reading skills and strategies to the reading done in the content areas

Study Skills

- use graphic organizers to support reading
- use checklists and rubrics to monitor progress
- use Venn diagrams and t-charts to gather, compare, and contrast events
- use highlighters, note cards, post-its, and other tools to keep track of events, details, and ideas
- keep a log and notebook

The Arts

- analyze illustrations in books for details
- compare illustrations to other forms of art
- illustrate a passage that was just read to show details, ideas, and lessons
- act out a scene from a book to better visualize how a character feels

Suggested Mentor Texts and Other Resources

Teaching Resources:

- Beers, Kylene and Robert E. Probst. *Notice and Note: Strategies for Close Reading*. New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2013. Print.
- Calkins, Lucy McCormick. *The Art of Teaching Reading*. Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc., 2001. Print.
- Ehrenworth, Mary, Hareem Atif Khan, and Julia Mooney. *Constructing Curriculum: Alternate Units of Study*. New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2010. Print.
- Serravallo, Jennifer. *The Reading Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Readers*. New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2015. Print.
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Reading Curricular Calendar, Sixth Grade 2016-2017: "Turn Every Kid Into a Reader--and a Character Analyst."

Suggested Mentors and Class Texts:

- "Talk to Me" by Avi from *What Do Fish Have to Do with Anything? and Other Stories*
- "No Guitar Blues" by Gary Soto from *Baseball in April and Other Stories*
- "Marble Champ" by Gary Soto from *Baseball in April and Other Stories*
- "Born Worker" by Gary Soto from *Baseball in April and Other Stories*
- "My Side of the Story" by Adam Bagdasarian from *First French Kiss and Other Traumas*
- "Carrots" by Adam Bagdasarian from *First French Kiss and Other Traumas*
- *Edward's Eyes* by Patricia MacLachlan
- *The Tiger Rising* by Kate DiCamillo

Suggested Multimedia Texts:

- "Presto" short film by Pixar (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CB1Pukr0nFQ)
- "Feast" short film by Pixar (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2U9Jj-jCHbk)
- "Dug's Special Mission" short film by Pixar (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kwh4GCZsyqY)
- "The Present" short film (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOVzU0er3Lo)
- "Ascension" short film (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6UcW9xLxwo)
- "Be Brave" commercial (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAlyHUWjNjE)

21st Century Skills

CRP.K-12.CRP1.1	Career-ready individuals understand the obligations and responsibilities of being a member of a community, and they demonstrate this understanding every day through their interactions with others. They are conscientious of the impacts of their decisions on others and the environment around them. They think about the near-term and long-term consequences of their actions and seek to act in ways that contribute to the betterment of their teams, families, community and workplace. They are reliable and consistent in going

	beyond the minimum expectation and in participating in activities that serve the greater good.
CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP5.1	Career-ready individuals understand the interrelated nature of their actions and regularly make decisions that positively impact and/or mitigate negative impact on other people, organization, and the environment. They are aware of and utilize new technologies, understandings, procedures, materials, and regulations affecting the nature of their work as it relates to the impact on the social condition, the environment and the profitability of the organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP6.1	Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization. They can consider unconventional ideas and suggestions as solutions to issues, tasks or problems, and they discern which ideas and suggestions will add greatest value. They seek new methods, practices, and ideas from a variety of sources and seek to apply those ideas to their own workplace. They take action on their ideas and understand how to bring innovation to an organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP11.1	Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks-personal and organizational-of technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.
CRP.K-12.CRP12.1	Career-ready individuals positively contribute to every team, whether formal or informal. They apply an awareness of cultural difference to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction. They find ways to increase the engagement and contribution of all team members. They plan and facilitate effective team meetings.