

## **Devised Activity Example**

THTR 350: Theatre for Youth

Instructor: Deb Currier

[*Amazing Student name here*]

Devised Activity

THTR 350

\*This activity will be used in conjunction with a unit on research. Each student will choose a person from the site: <http://dailycaller.com/2013/11/09/the-100-most-significant-figures-in-history-slideshow/jeanne-darc> It is a list of the 100 most significant people in history. After this activity, the students will research the person that they chose individually and create a presentation detailing why the students think their person they chose from this list and the key attribute(s) that the student values in this person, now that they know what the creators of the list had in mind when placing them on the list. In addition, the students can compare and contrast characteristics that this person has in common with themselves or the person that they chose as their inspiration in the activity. Furthermore, the students will detail the struggles this person had to endure and how they might have overcome those problems. The students will be given an outline to scaffold the process of creating their presentation.

**Bridge in:** Music will be playing when the students come into the room this will be songs from the list of 30 inspirational songs that keep you motivated for life <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/30-inspirational-songs-that-keep-you-motivated-for-life.html>

*Skyscraper* by Demi L and *We are the Champions* by Queen

**Prompt:** So during this activity, there are going to be a couple rules. We are going to be sharing things and in order to create a safe and comfortable environment for people to feel it's okay to share, it's important that we don't comment. The only acceptable comment will be a thank you after the person shares. It is also absolutely okay if more than one person shares the same thing. It is not okay in this activity to make the comment, "Oh man! That was what I was going to share!" Does everyone understand? Any questions before I explain the activity? So, I want you to close your eyes (making sure that your feet are a little wider than shoulder width apart and your knees aren't locked) and think about an attribute that you have that you feel helps you get through the tough times in your life. Think about a time when you felt like things in your life were totally not going the way that you wanted them to at all. I want you to think of something positive that you did that helped to turn things around. I want you to think about one word that describes that thing. Okay open your eyes.

We will go around the room starting with the person 2 to my left so that I could insert the word swim. Hopefully, all of the words will allow me to drive home the idea that often times it is a really good strategy to have something positive to do or focus on besides what are troubles are and that gives us some time to persevere.

Now, I want you to think about a person that is in your life that you admire and you notice that even though this person seems to have some problems but they persevere through them.

I want you to think of one word that would describe a key attribute you would want a leader to have that would help to make you follow him.

### Warm up:

So now I want us to fill up this space, I want everyone to walk away from the circle and find your own personal space in the classroom. I want you to arrange yourselves so that you have at least an arms space length away from everyone. Now think about the person who came to mind whom you believe is good at navigating through tough times. I want you to think about that person and then with your eyes closed I want you to strike a pose that you feel shows the perseverance of this person. With this pose, you will be demonstrating something they do or the power you see them exhibit. Next, I want you to open your eyes and look around for a quick minute to observe the poses of power and looks of perseverance. After a couple of minutes, I will say, okay close your eyes again and I want you to imagine that in this pose of perseverance it is now no longer that person that is striking the pose. It is you. I will count down from 5 and you will transition in your mind's eye from the respected person you were imagining striking the pose to becoming yourself in that pose. Okay, now open your eyes and see your classmates as they demonstrate the abilities to persevere. Okay I am going to start counting slowly and when I reach 10, I would like everyone back in our circle sitting down.

### Main event:

After the students have rejoined the circle, we will start the discussion, by talking about the music that was playing when the students walked in. Did you notice any similarities in the songs?

Take a look at these lyrics and turn and talk to the person beside you about what themes these songs might have in common, thinking about the videos as well as the rest of the song too.

*“And bad mistakes I’ve made a few I’ve had my share of sand kicked in my face - But I’ve come through”.*

*And*

*“Go on and try to tear me down. I will be rising from the ground”.*

Students will be asked to share some themes they think the songs included.

The teacher will ask the students to choose a picture, one of the 100 most significant figures in history, the pictures will be printed on cardstock and on the back will be a small envelop with the name of the person depicted in the picture (to be used for the purpose of research in the presentation that the students will create \*see above). The teacher will explain that she wants the students to look at their picture and know that these people are on a list of 100 most significant people in history. I want you to look at the person and see if you can get some clues, look at the background...can you infer anything about the strength of that person based on where they are. It is also perfectly fine to use your imagination to project your ideas of heroic traits onto this person. So listen carefully students, we are going to count off by 6's,

Prompt: The instructor will explain that the the group (developed by counting off by 6, so the groups would be 3 or 4 students) will come together and share the characteristic that they inferred that the person in their picture has that would help them overcome a big problem. The group will decide on one word that they will use to develop a skit where the people in the group will act out a short production, to convince the class how if everyone could adopt this trait they could change the chosen problem in the world. Perhaps if students were struggling

with generating problems, we could have them draw a contemporary problem out of a hat. The group will develop a short script and everyone must have at least a spoken line. We will discuss some of the strategies that perhaps the students have heard in speeches or debates that helped to convince them or others to join a cause. The group will then need to develop a 1 minute skit to demonstrate to the class how they would change a problem in the world today using that character. The students are welcome to use the names of the people in their picture. And if they know of their characters plight they can integrate some of their knowledge about that into their skit as well. All of the groups will have an opportunity to perform their 1-2 minute skit.

### **Cool down:**

After all of the skits have been performed, the students will be asked to again find their place in the classroom and strike the pose of a person who has successfully made a difference in a problem in today's world. Then the students will high five their neighbor in congratulations for inspiring to change the world.

### **Bridge out:**

Students will again be reminded about the importance of not locking their knees and the proper position for standing while closing their eyes. Students will close their eyes and think about one word that they heard or thought about today that inspired them. We will go around the room, while eyes are still closed. Teacher will call out a name and be sure to say thank you after each word shared. Then the students will be invited to take the word that inspires them and breathe in a deep breath and take that word and make it a part of themselves.

As they are dismissed, the teacher will say, now go out and make a difference in the world.

The devised activity would probably last around an hour and a half and with the inclusion of the activity of researching the significant person in history, it could be a two week unit, with lots of inspirational activities included during that time as well.

Final Summary: I feel like the student outcomes will be that the students have use their ideas to create a script and perform a skit as well as explore some problem solving strategies (we know how much anyone need these), as well as making inferences about the characteristics of people based on details interpreted from the pictures. The students will be asked to be reflective about problems they have encountered and remember the things that they did to help them get through.

**GLE: 1.2.6** Creates a scene based on a given role and setting. Acting Techniques and Skills: Movement, Voice, Character Development, and Improvisation • Develops individual characteristics of familiar people in given situations.

**GLE: 1.2.4** Creates people and scenarios based on given circumstances.

**GLE: 2.1.1** Applies a creative process to theatre