**Information**

*Grade 4*

*25 students – whole class lesson*

*Arts– 60 minute lesson*

**NYS Arts Standards**

Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

* Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.

Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

* Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts

* Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society

**Common Core ELA Standards Grade 4**

**Text Types and Purposes**

W.4.1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

* + Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose.
  + Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.

W.4.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

* + Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  + Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

**Learning Objective**

Students will be able to understand the acts of a ten-in-one sideshow

Students will be able to recognize their own personal talents

**Materials:**

* Paper
* Pencil
* Guest speaker: Scott Baker, the "Twisted Shockmeister"

**Skill and Strategy**:

Skill: Comprehension

Strategy: Character Traits

**Justification**:

In the early 20th century Scouts were sent to scour the globe for people who possessed eccentric qualities that could be featured in a Coney Island show. The more obscure translated to more popular. Collections of people with similar stories were grouped together for performances. A ‘ten in one’ as they were (and still) billed featured shows that included ten different acts. A variety show of sorts the Beared Lady, the Sword Swallower, the Fire Eater, and the Escape Artist, the Snake Charmer, and the Cortionist became standard in the sideshow industry.

These shows allowed people to connect and have a relationship with someone who understood what it was like to live with that specific exceptionality. They feel a greater connection, understanding, and support system out of a group of people who share a personal trait. There is also truth in that a successful community is one that reflects diversity and understanding and integrates several populations.

If a student has not been to Coney Island and witnessed a sideshow personally there is a strong chance that he/she has experienced an act of some sort in public. This can then spawn into a discussion of sideshow culture. What does it mean to be in a performance of this type? Each act in a ‘ten in one’ highlights the unique ability of an individual or group. This can serve as a great exercise in discovering the unique ability of each student in the classroom. What role would students play in a classroom ‘ten in one?’ This also allows students to play ‘scout’ from a Coney Island show as they make it their quest to discover and understand hidden talents of their classmates.

**Set / Implementation Procedures:**

**Reflection 20 minutes.**

* Review sideshow acts from the previous day
* Present guest speaker: Scott Baker, the "Twisted Shockmeister"
  + Discuss Sideshow by the Seashore
  + His acts:

Fire Eater   
Human Blockhead   
Glass Eater   
Escape Artist   
Master Magician   
Ventriloquist   
Eats Live Crickets and Lit Cigarettes   
Swallows and Regurgitates Razor Blades   
Performs Levitations   
Two-Faced Man   
Anatomical Wonder   
Outside Talker   
Inside Lecturer   
Mental Flosser

* Model independent task on white board.
* Journal. 3 fill-in/short answers
  + My favorite thing about myself is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Why?
  + I really like when I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Why?
  + I am happy when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Student share.

**Connection 20 minutes.**

* Scott Baker, the "Twisted Shockmeister" will explain Sideshow by the Seashore.
  + Baker has already been previewed of the lesson and has been asked to specifically highlight the support and community aspect among the troupe members.
* Model independent task
  + For this task the students will be randomly given the name of another student in the class. They must answer the following questions based on that person. For the example the name Anthony was used.
* Journal. 3 fill-in/short answers
  + My favorite thing about Anthony is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Why?
  + I really like when Anthony \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Why?
  + I am happy when Anthony \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Student share.

**Conclusion 20 minutes**

* Discussion of activity.
  + Potential Questions
    - Did you find it hard to describe yourself
    - Were you surprised about what the other person wrote about you?
* Pose question ‘What act would play in a sideshow?’
  + Remind students that they just 6 wrote positive things about themselves all of which are special talents they have.
  + Chart student responses
  + Allow students to volunteer to share a preview of their talent.
* Explain the class ten-in- one performance.

**Modifications:**

This lesson requires students to engage in a variety activities. For our writing activity and journal reflection, if the student is having an issue with handwriting or motor issue they can either use a computer to type or I will serve as a scribe for their ideas. If a student has ‘stage fright’, a phobia, or genuine concern about performing in front of other they can be assigned as a stage manager, sideshow scout, or crowd member. Because this work involves self-reflection and independent work I anticipate certain students struggling with generating, gathering, and sorting their ideas. For these students I would suggest writing ‘each idea that pops into their head’ on a post-it. That way students will have visual and tactile representation of their specific trait which can be sorted at a later time.

**Extensions/Follow-up Activities:**

For this lesson a trip to Sideshow by the Shore to see a professional sideshow troupe perform would be extremely beneficial to the students especially if they have never seen a show of this type before. Ideally this trip would take place before our own ten-in-one as a means to facilitate ideas and gain a sense of ‘stage’ and observe what it means to perform.

I believe a follow-up conversation could be had regarding acceptance, inclusivity, and social justice. I would center this discussion around language and what words we use to describe people such as ‘freak’ as in ‘freak show’ as our discussion launch point.

As previously mentioned this industry allowed the sideshow performers to connect with one another because of their shared characteristic. An assignment like the ‘I am from’ poem would allow students to reflect upon what groups do they feel most connected with and why? In that same vain, what aspects of an identity do students feel most define them? Who decides what aspect of identity is defining? If someone were to look at Lionel the Lion they might assume that he was defined by his hairy face. Aside from his hairy physique and gymnastics abilities, Lionel was praised for his ability to speak five languages and had high aspirations for becoming a dentist. It is in this sense that the sideshow offered a platform for education, understanding, and sympathy which is essentially the goals for a discussion of this nature. Students must first look into themselves and who they are in order to better understand who their classmates are.

**Assessment of Student Learning:**

Students will be assessed on:

* Ability to converse, listen, and participate in all discussions
  + Raised hand
  + Respect our guest
* Level of engagement during independent journal time
* Participate fully and cooperate with classmates