

Exploring Anxiety

Based on "What If..." written and illustrated by Anthony Browne

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EDCI 305A Story Drama Lesson Plan

Grade 4

Author: Anthony Browne

Illustrator: Anthony Browne

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Reference: Browne, A. (2014). *What if ...?* Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.

Characters: Joe, Mom, Tom, Friends

Summary: Joe is invited to a friend's party but can't remember which house it is at and doesn't want to show up at the wrong one. This makes him feel anxious and he begins to think about all the negative things that could happen at the party. Joe decides he doesn't want to go to the party anymore. Mom convinces him to go to the party. While walking over to the party with his Mom, Joe continues to feel very anxious. After Mom drops off Joe at the party, Mom is worried if Joe will have any fun. Joe ends up having a good time at the party. When Mom picks him up Joe is very happy and wants to have a birthday party of his own.

Rationale:

- The book *What If...?* Addresses social anxiety in children.
- The book *What If...?* Emphasizes the support children receive from parents.
- The book *What If...?* Shows that children are able to overcome their feelings of anxiousness when they are supported.
- The book *What If...?* Shows that children are able to gain confidence when facing new and intimidating situations.

Key Questions:

- **What is anxiety?**
A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.

- **How might anxiety make you feel?**

Worried, scared, dread, restlessness, fear of the unknown, sick.

- **How can you help a friend who is anxious?**

Help them if they think something is scary, talk to them, ask if there is anything you can do to help.

- **Who can you talk to if you're anxious?**

Parents, brothers, sisters, teachers, counsellors, friends.

Drama PLO's

- Express a variety of ideas and perspectives through drama
- Demonstrate collaboration skills during drama
- Demonstrate commitment while presenting drama work

Cross-Curricular Connections

- Language Arts
 - use speaking and listening to respond, explain, and provide supporting evidence for their connections to texts
- Health and Career
 - describe interpersonal skills necessary to build positive relationships (e.g., cooperation, inclusion, communication skills, empathy, respectful behavior)
- Social Studies
 - formulate strategies to address problems or issues

Activities

1. Warm-Up

(5min)

Grouping: Entire Group

Strategy: Mill/Freeze

Administration: None

Focus: To get students comfortable with different types of emotions. To get students moving and comfortable in the drama environment.

Teacher: Our first activity today is a warm up activity. What we are going to do is when I say "mill" walk around the room randomly. Make sure you all use the entire space of the room. When I say "freeze" stop where you are. Once you are frozen, I will then say an emotion (happy, sad, scared, worried, excited), use your facial expressions and body language to make this emotion to some of your peers. (Repeat this 3 times) Now mill, and when I say "freeze" find a partner and act out your first day of school using the emotion I give you (happy, sad, scared worried, etc...) (Repeat this 2 times)

2. Exploring Anxiety

(8 min)

Grouping: 4 groups – divided evenly

Strategy: Brain-storm

Administration: Chart paper with questions for each group, markers for each student

Focus: To discuss with peers what their understanding of anxiety is.

Teacher: I'm now going to number you off 1-4 (assign each corner to a number.) With your group use the chart paper and markers provided to you in each corner to brainstorm answers to the questions at the top of the paper. (*Questions will be the same as the key questions outlined at the beginning of this story drama.*) Your answers can be in point form. Spelling doesn't matter. Make sure everyone

in the group shares an answer. Please write whatever first comes to your mind. This is a brainstorm, there is no right answer. You have 10 minutes, when the time is up we are going to discuss as a class.

3. Discussion

(8 min)

Grouping: Whole Group

Strategy: Debrief Group Thoughts

Administration: None

Focus: To provide story context and begin to develop engagement.

Teacher: Now that we have had a chance to brainstorm with our groups, group 1 can you please tell us which question was at the top of your paper and share some of the ideas you came up with.

Listen to groups thoughts, thank them for their ideas.

Repeat with groups 2,3 and 4.

Teacher reads from beginning of story to page 2 "Not if they're HORRIBLE!"

4. Moving into role

(5 min)

Grouping: Groups of 2

Strategy: Building Role

Administration: None

Focus: To build commitment to the story

Teacher: Find a partner, somebody be A and somebody be B. A, you are Joe, B you are Joe's Mom. Your first line is by Joe "What if they're horrible!" Now improvise a scene for 45 seconds about the conversation Joe and his Mom would have before the party. Make sure to focus on both characters emotions and thoughts that could be happening during this time in the book.

Give students the option to share their scene. If lots of students are keen pick three groups due to time constraints.

Have students come back together

Continue reading from page 2 to "but how do you know?" on page 14

5. First Thoughts

(5 min)

Grouping: 1 Joe, 8-10 Students

Strategy: Conscience Alley

Administration: None

Focus: Get students to think about what could be going through an anxious mind.

Teacher: Now I need some volunteers and one person to be Joe. I need an even amount of people to line up on each side with enough room for Joe to walk in-between. As Joe walks by you will say what you think he is thinking inside of his head at this point in the story, it can be a word, a phrase or a sentence.

Students line up, Joe walks through, and students say what Joe might be thinking.

Continue reading from page 14 to "the door opened slowly..." on page 20.

6. Approaching the Party

(5 min)

Grouping: 1 students sitting in the seat as Joe, rest sitting on the floor around Joe.

Strategy: Hot Seat

Administration: None

Focus: To show Joe's thoughts and feelings when he first sees Tom's house.

Teacher: I need a volunteer to sit in this seat and be Joe. Don't be nervous, you will only have to answer a few questions about how you think Joe is feeling, there is no right or wrong answer. [Student volunteers] Now I need volunteers from the audience to ask Joe about what he's thinking and feeling at this

moment in the story. You don't need to raise your hand, if you have a question for Joe, just ask.

Teacher facilitates question period. Once student (Joe) has answered five questions, teacher ends question period and thanks all involved for their contributions. Teacher should have some sample questions to ask Joe incase students are nervous and do not provide any suggestions at the beginning of this activity.

Continue reading on page 15 until "and Joe went in..."

7. Putting yourself in Joe's shoes

(5 min)

Grouping: Individual

Strategy: Hot Write

Administration: Every student needs paper and pencil

Focus: To have each student reflect individually on how Joe is thinking/feeling when he first enters the house. This allows for students to truly express their thoughts without the fear of being judged by their peers.

Teacher: We are going to pause there. I would like everyone to find a space in the classroom on their own and grab a pencil or pen and a piece of paper. You will have one minute to write down your thoughts reflecting on how you think Joe is feeling when he first walks into the party. Feel free to write whatever you want or whatever you think. Once you have found your quiet space, you may begin.

Students begin writing for 1 minute.

Teacher: Alright freeze. Does anyone wish to share what they wrote down with the class? (*Teacher takes 2 or 3 volunteers without putting any pressure on students to share their work*)

Continue reading until page 16 until the line... "But what if he's REALLY unhappy?"

8. Choosing sides

(6 min)

Grouping: Two volunteers, Joe and Mom. Class is given option to side with Joe or Mom.

Strategy: Tapping in

Administration: None

Focus: Students are able to give the opinion on who would be feeling more anxious in this particular situation, Joe or Mom. Students will be able to justify why they picked their specific person.

Teacher: I would like to ask for two volunteers for this next exercise. One volunteer will represent Joe and the other will be Mom. The two volunteers are going to stand on either side of the classroom. (*Teacher selects two volunteers and asks them to go to opposite sides of the room*) As for the rest of the class, I want each of you to pick a side with either Mom or Joe. I want you to pick the person who you sympathize with most. Who do you think has a harder role in this situation Mom or Joe? Please go the side of the room your selected person is standing on.

Students get up and walk to specific sides of the room.

Teacher: Now that you have chosen a side, I need one more volunteer. This volunteer is going to walk around the classroom and lightly tap people in the classroom. If you are tapped and you may share your thoughts on why you think

your selected character has a more difficult task when leaving the other and how you sympathize with them more. If you do not wish to share your thoughts please say pass and the next person will be chosen.

Continue reading until page 17....."Two hours later"

9. Inside the party

(8 min)

Grouping: Groups of 5

Strategy: Tableau

Administration: None

Focus: Focus is for students to collaborate together and create a tableau of what they think a situation within the party would look like.

Teacher: We are now going to split up into groups of 5. I will number you off from numbers 1 to 5. *(Teacher should designate where each student with each specific number will go)* With your group, I am going to give you two minutes to create a tableau. A tableau is a still image that you will hold for three seconds to present to the class. Your tableau should represent what you think is going on inside the party at Tom's house.

Give students two minutes to create a tableau. Teacher should go around from group to group to make sure students are on the right track. Call groups up one by one to present their tableau.

Continue reading until the end of the story

10. Thinking about our story

(5 min)

Grouping: Individual

Strategy: Reflection

Administration: Pencil and paper for each student

Focus: Encourage students to think about anxiety and be comfortable talking about it. To relay the message that being anxious is okay.

Teacher: Okay class, now that we have finished reading, we are going to reflect on what we have learned throughout this story and our exercises. For the final five minutes, you will need a pencil and paper and use this time to write about your thoughts on the book. Some questions to consider answering would be "have you been anxious? What helped?" "Is it okay to feel anxious?" You will not have to share your responses with the class so don't feel intimidated when writing. Once you have finished your reflection, if you are comfortable, you may hand it in to me at the front.

Have students find a quiet spot to work for the final five minutes

Assessment:

Teacher can assess student's individual understanding of anxiety by reading over their hot writes and final reflections. When assessing student's comprehension of anxiety in a group setting teacher will be able visually asses the interactions between students and what they come up with during the classroom activities. We will also asses students based on the scale below based off the competency profiles.

	Does not Meet	Minimally Meets	Meets	Exceeds
Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect and engage with others• Acquire, interpret and present information• Collaborate to plan, carry out, and review constructions and activities• Explain/recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments				
Creative Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generating Ideas• Developing Ideas				
Critical Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze and Critique				
Positive Personal and Cultural Identity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationships and cultural contexts• Personal Values and Choices• Personal Strengths and Abilities				
Personal Awareness and Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well-being				
Social Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Valuing diversity• Building Relationships				

References

Browne, A. (2014). *What if ...?* Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.

Miller, C. S., & Saxton, J. (2004). *Into the story: Language in action through drama*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.