

Residency Sample Lesson Plan

Directions: Complete this lesson plan for a sample student residency. Fill out all the areas that apply to your lesson.

Teaching Artist Name	The Williams Project (fac. Ryan Purcell, Dedra D. Woods)
Course Title	James Baldwin's <i>Blues for Mister Charlie</i>
Course Type <i>(please check all that apply)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural arts residency
What grade(s) is the residency for?	10-12
Schedule Information	<u>6</u> Number of sessions (6 – 8 total) <u>3</u> hour 1 st session, <u>1</u> hour each subsequent session <u>8</u> Total hours

Course Description:

The Williams Project presents a professional, fully produced performance of James Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie* as an in-school matinee, followed by a talkback with the cast and creative team. Facilitators follow up with five sessions in the classroom to explore how the themes of the play interact with the students' lives. This lesson plan includes cross-cultural communication and strategies of political resistance.

Materials & Space:

This program requires an auditorium or theatre for the first performance, preferably but not necessarily with the ability to turn on stage lights. After that, classrooms, pens or pencils, and paper are all the required materials.

Big Idea:

James Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie* deals explicitly with America's history of racial violence, and how it shapes the way Americans have been conditioned to treat each other. The students in this program will have to wrestle with racism, discrimination, and multicultural environments throughout their lives. By providing a safe and creative process for responding to this play, we will support students in developing personal and expressive ways of responding to this challenge. It will sharpen their critical and historical understanding of identity and clarify their moral vision for the future.

Lesson Objectives and Student Learning Assessment

Learning Objectives <i>What I want my students to know and be able to do.</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>What I will observe in my students – traits that can be seen and/or heard.</i>
1. Collaboration - Students will be able to work together on sensitive topics respectfully and productively.	Students will work on group projects across racial and gender lines; they will make room in groups for each person to have their voice heard; they will handle disagreements without personal attacks.
2. Empathetic communication - Students will be able to imaginatively enter into another student’s perspective and identify with what their classmates feel.	Students will role-play each other’s experiences respectfully, paraphrase and acknowledge what they hear from other people; ask valuable questions about each other’s experiences.

Vocabulary (optional):
<i>Community Agreements-</i> Our sessions will require building community agreements for how we will treat each other throughout our time together.
<i>Acknowledgement-</i> We will use this term very specifically, as a kind of speaking that is meant to reflect another person’s perspective without inserting any of our own point-of-view into what we just heard.

Instructions:

Since Day 1 of this Lesson Plan is the presentation of the play itself followed by a discussion with the artists, this is an outline of Day 2, the first day in the classroom.

Sample DAY 2: Exploring Differences

- Opener: Viewpoints (10 minutes)

Based in Anne Bogart’s work with Viewpoints, we will begin the class with an exercise that will get the students moving their bodies, and using all of their senses to begin to notice new things about themselves, the physical space, and each other. This will shift their thinking from the cognitive space into a more experiential space.

- Activity #1: Thinking on a Spectrum (each round should take 5-7 minutes, 35 minutes total)
 1. Prep: We label one corner of the room COMPLETELY AGREE. The other corner of the room is COMPLETELY DISAGREE. Students are told that they will hear a series of statements. They should reflect on how much they agree or disagree with the statement and then move to the part of the room that reflects their level of agreement. (5 minutes)
 2. Round 1: We read several innocuous statements (e.g. “breakfast is the most important meal of the day” or “playing a sport is important for everyone”) and

allow students to arrange themselves throughout the space, to get them comfortable with the concept.)

3. Round 2: We continue with the same kinds of statements, and begin to ask students why they chose to stand where they are standing. The goal is to allow students to get comfortable expressing personal opinions that will be different from other people in the room.
 4. Round 3: We move into statements about the play, beginning to look at more sensitive subject matter and continuing to ask students at different places in the room to express why they chose to stand where they are. Statements might include things like:
 - a. The play reminded me of Seattle.
 - b. Richard's aggressive behavior caused his own death.
 - c. I was surprised when Lyle was found not guilty of the murder.
 - d. I agree with Rev. Henry that the black people in town needed to respond without violence.
 5. Round 4: We transition from the play into more personal explorations of the themes:
 - a. Racism is still a big problem in America.
 - b. Things are better for me than they were for my parents.
 - c. Seattle is less racist than other places in the country.
 6. Round 5 (if time permits): We shift the exercise by asking students to stand somewhere different from what they really believe: "If you strongly agree, you can stand somewhere in the middle or on the other side. If you're in the middle, go to one of the ends." As we continue to make statements, we ask students to justify the position they chose, even though we know it's not their true feeling about the statement. The goal here is for students to start imagining how they might empathize and be able to communicate with people who hold views different than their own.
- Closer: Reflection Circle (10 minutes)

We will stand in a circle and ask the students to share one thing they learned about themselves or each other during the exercise.

Remaining Sample Sessions:

Day	Daily Goal	Supporting Activities
1	The students will have a profound shared experience exploring themes of race and violence in America.	Presentation of James Baldwin's <i>Blues for Mister Charlie</i> .
3	The students will build conversational skills to develop empathy.	Interviews: We will teach students the basics of an Inquiry/Acknowledgement interview model and then give them a guided structure for interviewing each other about a problem they are facing in their life.

4	The students will begin to explore their personal narrative.	Using prompts from James Baldwin's essays, poems, plays, and short stories, students will write a personal narrative in one of these forms.
5	The students will build a process for collaborating with each other on personal narratives.	In small groups, students will share and respond to each other's personal narratives using acknowledgement and paraphrasing. They also will ask questions.
6	The students will share their personal narrative publicly.	Based on the work from the past two weeks, we will end our time together with a showing of the personal narrative pieces.