

## When Life Gives You Nuts

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*Carrillo Elementary*

*I cried when I had no shoes,  
'til I met a man that had no feet.  
~ Sallie Mae "Big Momma"*

### INTRODUCTION

I am a second grade bilingual teacher, and I am currently in a 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grade looping cycle. For those not familiar with the term, “looping” is the process by which a teacher starts at a particular grade level with a group of students and follows them to the next grade(s). I began working with this particular group of students last year as first graders. This year we are all in second grade together. I enjoy the benefits of spending so much time together and find it especially rewarding. Our extended time together has given me an increased insight into their strengths. I feel more comfortable this year than last, challenging them to do higher-level thinking on a broader scale. By looping with the students I find that I am more efficient with my teaching time. I don’t spend as much time diagnosing a problem in their learning. The majority of my time is spent intervening and addressing problems head-on and immediately. I find that parents are also more responsive this year than last. Again, I don’t spend as much time explaining my expectations or the way in which something must be done. Parents know, students know, and I know. We spend the majority of our time keeping students organized and on task. As a result, there is more time for involved in-depth study and participation in complex activities that cross curricula over time.

Carrillo Elementary is a beautiful school located on Houston’s east side. It is fourteen years old and is very well maintained. In the area of technology, students have access to two computers in each classroom, as well as a mobile laptop lab and two computer labs. Students also benefit from a plethora of manipulatives used in Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science, as well as a Science lab. The following information is provided by the HISD based on the 2004 – 2005 school year: Carrillo’s enrollment of 749 students is “97% Hispanic, 1% African American, 1% White and <1% Asian. Of Carrillo’s 749 students, 57% participate in the Bilingual Program, 17% in the Gifted and Talented Program, 6% in the Special Education Program, and 3% in the English As A Second Language Program.” Carrillo Elementary is a Title I school, “93% of the students are on Free/Reduced lunch, 63% are classified as LEP (Limited English Proficiency) and 71% are At-Risk.” When viewing demographics such as these about the student population, I believe it important to consider the demographics of the teaching staff as well. I am proud of the fact that the average number of years of experience is thirteen, and 55% of faculty has eleven or more years of experience. This says much about the depth and consistency in the teaching staff, which is reflected in the school’s “Recognized” rating from HISD.

Adversity is inevitable. It is the “down” part of the rollercoaster ride. However, we brave the plunges in anticipation of the climb. This unit teaches playwriting as a tool for helping students to learn perseverance. Many are overcome by adversity. Rising as a phoenix from the ashes is a nice thought, but this requires great skill. We must teach our children what we want them to

know. We want them to understand that there will be disappointments in life. However, they must not succumb to challenges; they must rise above them. One way to do this is to write plays that have perseverance as a core theme.

I have been teaching for eighteen years, and this is my fourth unit produced for the Houston Teachers Institute. I disclose this with some reservation, as I do not want any teacher reading this to think that only a veteran teacher can implement this unit. Admittedly, looping has given me an advantage. I have a greater sense of confidence, having spent two years with my students. I realize that this is a unique opportunity and requires the approval and support of my building principal. This unit will teach playwriting via a cross curricula study of character and setting. I've always been told that adversity builds character. That quote may not necessarily be true. It's not necessarily adversity that builds character; it's the overcoming adversity that does.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The elements contained in this unit will provide a foundation upon which the students can build. The activities contained in this unit will guide students through a journey of self-discovery. It is my hope that the students will be able to identify a variety of elements of the story and its characters. Students will develop a sense of empathy for the champion of the play that they develop. The crafting of the play will meet a myriad of objectives across curricula. I was most fortunate to acquire not only a hardback copy of the text *Koi and the Kola Nuts* but an audio cassette as well. The narrator is Academy Award winner Whoopi Goldberg. It also features Grammy Award winning musician Herbie Hancock. The following objectives are those found in the CLEAR Curriculum, approved by the HISD. ELA.2.1.04 states that the student will listen and respond to proficient, fluent models of oral reading (multicultural, classic, contemporary, fiction and non-fiction). *Koi and the Kola Nuts* addresses this objective well in that it is an African folktale. The text will serve as a base or unit theme.

The student will:

- SLA.2.1.04 - Listen and respond to proficient, fluent models of oral reading (multicultural, classic, contemporary, fiction, non-fiction).
- SLA.2.3.03 - Develop increasing ability to identify and explain grade-appropriate forms and purposes, contribute relevant ideas and elaboration, and choose forms appropriate to purpose/audience through teacher-directed group writing activities (experience stories, interactive writing, and shared writing).
- SLA.2.2.21 - Read or listen to identify rhyme, alliteration, imagery, word choice, and voice.
- SLA.2.3.18 - Use mentor texts in class discussions to develop a list of attributes of effective use of language, text structure, and literary devices.
- SLA.2.2.31 - Respond to text (discussion, writing, movement, music, art, and drama) in ways to demonstrate comprehension including connecting ideas.
- SLA.2.2.12 - Analyze characters' traits, motivation, feelings, and problems.
- SS.2.4.03 - Cite examples and describe the importance of school community rules and laws that establish order, provide security, and manage conflict.
- SS.2.5.02. - Cite examples of people in the school and community that exemplify good citizenship and describe how they are good citizens.
- SCI.2.2.02. - Observe and identify parts of animals including humans (such as hands, feet, legs, arms, ears and nose). Describe the function of each part.

## **Language Arts**

Students will participate in a variety of Language Arts activities involving vocabulary, character analysis, story structure, interpreting characters' feelings and emotions, setting, and

cause and effect. Much of what students learn will be demonstrated in a variety of writing activities. Some writing will be modeled, other writing will be generated in small groups or in literacy stations. “You guide their reading and prompt when necessary, watching your students in the process of becoming independent problem solvers” (Diller 1). Their ideas will be supported with cooperative learning activities that explore every aspect of the story. By which, the students can participate fully in creating, writing, and performing a dramatic scene from the story. Students will enjoy seeing their thoughts presented in this format. It is often difficult to explain to children the power of the written word. However, their in-depth study and critical analysis will do just that. It is not enough for students merely to learn new vocabulary. They must command it.

The more time students spend learning, the greater interest they take in learning. When students have a command of their language, they feel more free to use it. By participating in the activities in this unit, students will convey their thoughts, feelings, and emotions with greater accuracy. They will use words as an artist uses paint to create a picture. As they craft the dramatic scene, they will come to realize the power of their words. In the seminar, Dr. Brown-Guillory had us write a dramatic scene. The scene was read aloud by other fellows in the seminar. However, we, as authors, were not allowed to speak at that time. Throughout the writing of the scene, I remembered the stipulation, and checked and re-checked the choice of words and their placement throughout. I initially thought this a college-level activity. On the contrary, this is just the type of writing exercises that students need. This is the very essence of what we strive to develop in our young writers. This form of interactive writing has long-lasting meaning to children. “Interactive writing is most effective when there are connections between this group writing activity and other parts of the curriculum” (McCarrier, Pinnell, and Fontas 1). Students will understand the importance of writing in clear terms that convey their thoughts. They will also understand the importance of knowing how to interpret what they read.

A great example of this is in the writing of the stage directions in the dramatic scene. A dramatic scene is one part of the whole story. Students have become very good at recalling the story. However when asked to examine specific elements of the story, they experience difficulty. *Koi and the Kola Nuts* was used for the adaptations of the dramatic scene. The adaptation yielded eighteen dramatic scenes that are located in the Appendix. The number of scenes complements the number of times the students should go through this process. Teachers may not see the quality of writing during the first few attempts. “Therefore, we must learn how to read even rudimentary text with keen perspective” (Culham 9). Several lesson plans have been included for the purpose of developing the young writer. Teachers should not hesitate to replicate the lessons in other subject areas. The unit’s core theme of teaching playwriting through the examination of perseverance is a universal one. Therefore, the unit has something to offer every student at every learning level. Gifted and Talented students can participate in the same activities as other students with learning challenges. All students, especially those whose first language is not English, will benefit from the depth of study contained in the unit. There are several opportunities for discussion and the development of problem solving strategies in peer groups. Students can learn to do what is expected, given time and opportunity. It is no secret that time and opportunity yield the best product.

The writer must understand that his written words, and only those written words, will determine how the scene is presented. I know that students can do this effectively, provided they are given the time and opportunity to do so. It is essential that they be provided those opportunities that include, but are not limited to, exercises such as the one presented to me by Dr. Brown-Guillory. Students must understand that writing is a process and they must “buy in” to that process. This unit develops writers as they craft plays.

HISD has approved use of the 6+1 Traits of Writing Program. One of the traits, voice, is one of the more difficult to teach. One reason may be because it can't be taught. It must be developed. Both the primary writer and the teacher develop during the process. Students learn that writing is a communicative skill. Teachers are provided ways in which they can help students convey their thoughts while developing their skills. The skills acquired through utilizing the 6+1 Traits strategies are the same as those necessary for playwriting.

### **Social Studies**

Students will use the communities of *Koi and the Kola Nuts* to examine how they establish order and manage conflict. Students can compare Koi's community with that of their own. They will use both communities to identify good citizens and responsible leadership. It is important to recognize conflict as an inexorable issue that is as old as time itself. Conflict and its resolution is the core theme. It is central to both the development of the dramatic scene and the strategies for conflict resolution. Audiences are drawn to conflict because of its familiarity. Sossaman asks, "Would you rather see a play about a couple... (a) joyfully agreeing to have a child (b) bitterly agreeing to have a child?" (18). This is not to say that students should act out conflicts repeatedly. They should, however, be actively involved in their resolutions. This provides them the time and opportunity to practice the strategies. We mustn't insult our students' intelligence by quickly dismissing conflict via artificial or contrite methods. Sossaman cautions potential writers to steer clear of creating a *deus ex machina*. *Deus ex machina* is described by Sossaman as, "any contrived, last-minute device to rescue the playwright." When Dr. Brown-Guillory presented this, I thought of the television drama series *Dallas*. The scene with Pam waking to find Bobby in the shower, realizing that all the events from the previous year were a dream was insulting to me as a viewer. I felt stupid for having invested so much time in following the characters, just to have them dismissed. I didn't watch *Dallas* much after that. On the contrary, there are those movies, books, and plays of which we just can't seem to get enough. It is impossible to eliminate, but we can improve on the way we address it.

Students must learn alternatives to "just being angry" or responding inappropriately. They must understand that although an injustice may cause someone to react, he/she must do so responsibly. Sometimes, it is best to remove oneself. Students must understand that this is not an admittance of defeat, but an opportunity for victory. As students develop the dramatic scene, they will examine the different elements of conflict throughout the story. Koi has several conflicts, and it is important to identify and examine them. It is also important to determine if they are, in fact, true conflicts. What would be a problem for one person may not be a problem for another. In the story Koi is not given an equal portion of his father's estate. In one of the lessons the students identify the series of conflicts in *Koi and the Kola Nuts*. Most conflicts involve Koi, but there are a few that involve others. Identifying those will require students to examine the text carefully and critically. This is the type of analysis that is necessary for students to have a command of the material. The knowledge gained from these activities will be used in the formulation of the dramatic scene. When students have a deep understanding for the characters and their plight, they can be more successful in developing language to express that understanding.

### **Science**

In science we will study the jungle and the unique relationships of its inhabitants. Students will compare the elements and characteristics of the jungle with those of the forest and farm. Students will use charts and graphs to organize the data compiled throughout their course of study, as well as Venn diagrams to compare data. While on his journey, Koi befriends several different animals. This is an excellent opportunity for a comparative animal study. During this process, students will see how the differences in the animals served as strengths for Koi. For

example, Koi is devastated when he is charged with the task of collecting each grain of rice that had been thrown from ten baskets onto the ground. This is seemingly impossible for a human to achieve, but all in a day's work for an ant. Students will determine how an insect can be successful where a human cannot.

## **RATIONALE**

Students will use the story, *Koi and the Kola Nuts* by Brian Gleeson and illustrated by Reynold Ruffins, as the base of their unit of study. This is the story of a young man, Koi, whose father dies. Koi's father is Chief Sudaka. Koi is away when his father dies. Consequently, his inheritance is divided among his brothers by a man designated to do so in events such as these. However, this man is lazy, and therefore divides everything quickly and does not wait for Koi's return. When Koi returns, he finds that he inherits a mere kola nut tree. Disappointed and disgusted, he leaves his village in search of those who recognize him as the son of a chief. Along the way Koi befriends an army of ants, a python, and an alligator. Koi ends up in a neighboring village. He is now out of the proverbial "frying pan and into the fire," so to speak. The villagers do not acknowledge him either. It's not that they don't believe him; they just prefer to cook him. The chief of that village staves off the natives by proposing an impossible challenge for Koi. He meets the challenge with the help of an animal that he befriended earlier. However, the villagers still call for Koi's death. To appease them, he proposes another challenge. These impossible challenges keep coming and Koi keeps meeting them – with the aid of each animal that he befriended earlier. The chief has little control of his village, which is why the challenges continue. However, ultimately the chief sticks to his word and acknowledges Koi, after which the chief gives the hand of his daughter in marriage to Koi. The villagers are happy because they get to have a feast, which was their reason for wanting to cook Koi in the first place.

Students will carefully study two key elements of the text, setting and character. Through this study, students will interpret character emotions, thought, and circumstance. Students will also note details in the text which indicate time, place, and setting. All of these elements will culminate in the evaluation portion of the unit. Students' learning will be evaluated throughout the unit. It is imperative that they leave each point in the unit with the required information, so that they are prepared to participate fully in each subsequent portion. The final evaluation of the unit and its culminating activity will be the production of a scene. The students will apply their knowledge to create a dramatic scene. This challenging and vigorous activity requires that students have not only a working knowledge of the sequence of events but also ideas about how to convey them to others. It is imperative that students participate in information processing activities such as these. Students are forced to go beyond mere surface activities such as who are the characters, what happened first in the story and where does it take place. By utilizing Bloom's Taxonomy, students will analyze and apply information on higher levels. It is important to note, however, that sometimes it is important to start on the lower end of Bloom's Taxonomy. However, it is imperative not to remain there. Students that participate fully will be more productive during the evaluation and application phases of this unit.

Since my students are in the bilingual program, English is their second language. Learning English most effectively requires active participation in the exploration of the variety of language usage. This unit provides such variety. It also utilizes a core theme that goes across curricula. Students will have countless opportunities to participate on a variety of levels. Students develop the language necessary for success in school. HISD requires teachers to use strategies that support the development of the higher order thinking skills. These skills are tested and measured on the state mandated Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. This unit provides the challenge of second language development with the support of basic ideas or core themes such as conflict and perseverance. The unit is relevant to teaching my students because it is critical that they study a

concept on many levels. By participating in the playwriting process, students will improve their written and expressive language.

## UNIT BACKGROUND

This unit fosters both a sense of self-worth and pride, while examining the problem solving strategies necessary for success in life. It also allows students to look at “less worthy” or less likely heroes for the true champions that they are. Students will learn to attain and maintain their self-respect, in spite of life’s temporal circumstances. The unit teaches, “You are who you are, regardless of where you are.” Through this course of study, students will demonstrate knowledge of the characters’ emotions, traits, and qualities in a variety of Language Arts activities. One activity, core to this unit, is the writing of a dramatic scene. In order to do this effectively, students must not only understand all the necessary elements, but present them in text so that others understand them as well.

We are all “victims” of circumstance at one time or another. However, some people appear not to have as many trials and tribulations as others. I’ve often wondered how some people always have it “together” and stay upbeat. I secretly call them Teflons™ -- nothing sticks, everything just slides right off the surface. As I’ve grown older, I’ve found this not to be true. They suffer their share of unfortunate events. It is the management of themselves during those times that determines the difference in their appearances.

Playwriting is a deceptively attractive concept. Initially, I thought that I knew exactly what I was doing. On the contrary, I had an idea that had to be developed. It is incredibly difficult to relay a thought so that others understand with the same detail suggested. It is through study that I have learned to do that, and so will my students. In the Appendix I have placed a storyboard of *Koi and the Kola Nuts*. It divides the story into eighteen scenes. I have taken one of those scenes and developed it into a dramatic scene. Teachers may choose as I did or may choose another. The important thing to remember is the craft of playwriting as presented in Stephen Sossaman’s book, *Writing Your First Play*. This book challenges writers to be clear and precise in their writing. This is essential to the play making an effective “leap” from the page to the stage. In the seminar, we studied several plays. That study was not merely reading and determining the sequence of events. We used Sossaman’s book to look at elements such as mendacity. This element of mendacity was readily visible in Tennessee Willams’ *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Our study involved assigning parts and reading. As it was read aloud, Dr. Elizabeth Brown-Guillory guided us as we worked parallel with *Writing Your First Play*. She used the play to illustrate points in the book. This same activity is effective for elementary students as well. Dr. Brown-Guillory assigned parts and excerpts were read aloud. After the readings, she guided us through Sossaman’s *Writing Your First Play* to illustrate important points. Aspiring playwrights are encouraged to “observe people, learn to eavesdrop, record brief descriptions and note details” (Sossaman 14). These are the building blocks for the construction of a good play. Dr. Brown-Guillory had us create a dramatic scene using one conflicting issue and two characters, another seemingly simple task. However, the difficulty became painfully evident when putting pen to paper. There was the overwhelming desire to include extra characters and detail. We had to evaluate all of the information, and select only that essential to the conflict that exists between those two characters. If done effectively, the audience will know much more about the characters than stated. These are ideas with which our students struggle. It is because we want to tell all we know, in hopes that the idea gets across. This is not an effective approach to playwriting, nor is it an effective approach in responding to texts. Students are often required to go beyond the text and make inferences. As they craft their own dramatic scene, employing these strategies, they will become more proficient in responding to all texts.

Adversity is a one of life's many conflicts. It is as inexorable as fate; therefore, we must develop a set of strategies that enable us to manage and resolve these conflicts. Why do some manage conflict better than others? Why do some appear to remain untouched by adversity? These are questions that children may not have the vocabulary to formulate, but they nevertheless wrestle with them. Teachers often find that these "inner struggles" are revealed in the form of misbehaviors in children. Teachers should pay special attention to children who are quick to anger or always angry. These children seem always to be in turmoil. These are the students that teachers should target in this unit. They are excellent resources for creating the voice of the play. Sometimes we are just too close to a problem to see the answer. Students can explore solutions by carefully studying the circumstances of Koi. Ironically, this unit sometimes reads as an adult self-help resource. This is because persevering adversity is a life skill. As with any skill, it becomes better with practice. Students need to understand how one's perception shapes how they view things. Koi has a terrible set of circumstances that appear to follow him at every turn. His situation illustrates the old adage, "When it rains, it pours." Through careful examination of each of those, and there were several, students develop sympathy and even empathy for Koi.

My great-grandmother, Sallie Mae Lampley, acknowledged my trials and tribulations as a young girl, but never allowed me to dwell there. She stymied my "pity party" by giving only so much time to vent; then she wanted to hear what I intended to do about its resolution. As I grew older, she became even less tolerant of over reactionary responses. I remember telling her of some "devastating life-event" in middle school once. I think I went on a bit too long. Big Momma told me to, "Get off the cross; we need the wood." I was embarrassed when I realized that Big Momma was comparing my tirade to Jesus' sufferings. As always, I had to focus on the issue. Determine if it was, in fact, a true problem, and if so, establish an appropriate method of response. Naturally, Big Momma wanted to know the results. I learned many things from my afternoons with Big Momma. I learned that if I didn't want to work on a true resolution, I didn't even need to share the situation with her. I also learned that things were never as bad as I thought. Most importantly, I learned that if I thought about it long enough and ate enough of my Big Momma's homemade gingerbread, I could persevere.

Dr. Brown-Guillory's seminar on crafting plays for children provided me with the tools to effectively teach playwriting while addressing the core theme of perseverance. This is done systematically beginning with an established foundation (HISD CLEAR Objectives), constructing a frame (core theme), and building around that frame by crafting a play. The lesson plans contained in the Appendix are examples of the kinds of activities that help students master the necessary elements of playwriting.

## **LESSON PLANS**

### **Lesson One: Language Arts, Second Grade -- Do You See What I Hear**

3 Lessons (45 minutes each)

#### ***Unit Summary and Topic***

This is a unit that is designed to improve students' writing through crafting plays.

**Key Concepts:** language use, word choice, and sentence structure

#### ***Key Questions***

Who are the characters in the scene?

What is the setting?

What is the conflict?

### ***Key Terms and Vocabulary***

first, next, then, after that, last, characters, conflict, dilemma, problem, resolution, obstacles

### ***Lesson Summary***

The teacher will use a cassette recording of story without showing the book to the students. After listening to a portion of the recording, students will illustrate the scene previously heard. Prior to working independently and creating the picture, the teacher will review the key terms and vocabulary. As students learn the vocabulary, they will discuss ways of incorporating what those words mean in terms of the story they just heard.

### ***Unit Assessment Plan***

Students will assess their pictures throughout the process by listening to the recorded portion of the story as they draw. If they see something not being done, they will identify that need, and then add it. If they have not made an element of the story clear, they will adjust their language so as to produce the desired effect. After the pictures have been satisfactorily completed, the students will exchange papers and listen to the recorded portion again. They then share their comments in a group setting. This is a similar format to the one Dr. Brown-Guillory used in class. The class will determine the accuracy and detail of the pictures. These pictures will serve as their graphic organizers for the writing of the rough draft of the dramatic scene. Students will repeat the same process of sharing their drafts in the group setting. However, the recording will no longer be used. Students must now rely on what they know about the story and how they wish to convey their ideas. The students will use the information to make revisions to their first drafts and create the final drafts. Final drafts will be graded on a rubric using the 6+1 Traits of Writing standards.

### ***Objectives***

SLA.2.1.10 – Provide and follow instructions and directions with three elements.

### ***Unit Resources/Materials***

lined paper appropriate for grade level

blank paper

pencils

colored pencils

crayons

large eraser

### **Lesson Two: Language Arts/Science, Second Grade -- Blue, blue or blue?**

1 Lesson (45 Minutes)

### ***Unit Summary and Topic***

This is a unit that is designed to improve students' writing through crafting plays.

***Key Concepts:*** word choice and language use

### ***Key Questions***

- What words, other than the actual name of the color, can be used to describe the color?  
What other things are the same colors?
- What things smell like these colors?

- What things taste like these colors?
- What things feel like these colors?
- What things sound like these colors?

### ***Key Terms and Vocabulary***

adjective   simile        metaphor   verb        noun

### ***Lesson Summary***

This is a brainstorming activity. It is designed to illustrate the need to use adjectives to describe nouns. The teacher will present several shades of blue crayons (without the wrappers). By asking the students to name the color, they will discover that merely using one word will not work. This is evident from seeing several shades of the same color. They will understand that they must generate words to distinguish the crayons. In doing so, students will consider how this color is perceived through the senses. They will use simile and metaphor to describe the colors as well. This too is a process of revision done in a group setting. As a color is presented, all responses are recorded on the board for all to see. Students are invited to add or subtract from what is written there. Any changes are based on a consensus. The important thing here is the process, with students actively participating in the process of drafting and revising. As a group they support each other in the learning process and have an equal stake in success.

### ***Unit Assessment Plan***

This group activity is assessed throughout. The final product will be displayed and maintained as part of the existing print-rich environment. This lesson should be repeated several times using different colors. Evidence of mastery will be noted in writings graded on a rubric.

### ***Objectives***

SLA.2.3.03 – Develop increasing ability to identify and explain grade-appropriate forms and purposes, contribute relevant ideas and elaboration, and choose forms appropriate to purpose/audience through teacher-directed group writing activities (experience stories, interactive writing, and shared writing).

### ***Unit Resources/Materials***

1 box of 96, 64, 48, 24 or 16 crayons  
butcher paper  
marker

### **Lesson Three: Language Arts/Music, Second Grade – Music, Music, Music**

1 Lesson (45 Minutes)

### ***Unit Summary and Topic***

This is a unit that is designed to improve students' writing through crafting plays.

### ***Key Concepts***

- Music is used to enhance the telling of a story.
- We can associate certain kinds of music with certain types of elements in the plot.

### ***Key Questions***

- Should music be a part of audio recordings of books?
- How would you describe the piece of music accompanied with this particular scene in the story?

- Does music help the story to be told?
- How does music help the story?

***Key Terms and Vocabulary***

tone                  pitch                  loud                  soft

***Lesson Summary***

The teacher will use an audio recording of the story *Koi and the Kola Nuts*. Students will concentrate on one part or scene from the story. They will identify the elements of that scene by discussing character, plot, and setting. Students will note the musical accompaniment. They will describe the music played during the scene. Students will compare the action in the story with the tone and pitch of the music. They will note similarities and respond to the connections between music and plot. This lesson can be repeated using any of the eighteen scenes included in the storyboard provided in Appendix B.

***Unit Assessment Plan***

Students will apply the knowledge that they learned from the activities using *Koi and the Kola Nuts* to the assessment activity. This activity is repeated with an audio recording of *Peter and the Wolf*. After listening to the recording once, students will identify the characters as their musical accompaniment is played.

***Objectives***

SLA.2.2.31 – Respond to text (discussion, writing, movement, music, art and drama) in ways to demonstrate comprehension including connecting ideas.

***Unit Resources/Materials***

- audio recording of *Koi and the Kola Nuts*
- audio recording of *Peter and the Wolf*

***Equipment:*** CD/Cassette player

**Lesson Four: Language Arts, Second Grade -- I Make It, You Take It**

1 Lesson (45 Minutes)

***Unit Summary and Topic***

This is a unit that is designed to improve students’ writing through crafting plays.

***Key Concepts***

Students will understand that one of the purposes of language is to relay ideas. In order for those ideas to be communicated accurately, the language must be clear and specific.

***Key Questions***

How do you get others to understand what you mean without telling them?

***Key Terms and Vocabulary***

first                  next                  then                  after that  
 last                  above                  below                  left  
 right                  on                  inside                  outside

### ***Lesson Summary***

Students will create a simple drawing. Students will take turns describing their drawing to their partner. This process takes place as one student keeps his/her drawing hidden, as they describe it to the other. The other student replicates the drawing according to the instructions given. When completed, the drawing is shown to the first student. This serves as the first informal assessment. They switch roles and repeat the process. The students then create a second drawing. This time they will write the instructions on how to replicate it. Students will be given a blank piece of paper. The written instructions will be exchanged among the class. Students will then reproduce the drawing as per the instructions on the written page. The first part of the lesson serves as a preparation for the second. The dialogue between the students provides them the opportunity to clarify themselves. The teacher debriefs the class after the first part. The teacher should point out that no one made a mistake. This is the time and place for revision and clarification.

### ***Unit Assessment Plan***

The teacher will pair the written directions with the drawing. Each student will receive two grades. The first grade will be based on how well their directions were written and another for how well they followed directions.

### ***Objectives***

SLA.2.3.03 – Develop increasing ability to identify and explain grade-appropriate forms and purposes, contribute relevant ideas and elaboration, and choose forms appropriate to purpose/audience through teacher-directed group writing activities (experience stories, interactive writing, and shared writing).

### **Unit Resources/Materials**

paper                  pencils                  crayons

## APPENDIX A

### Dramatic Scene

#### *KOI AND THE KOLA NUTS*

An Adapted Dramatic Scene

by

Cheryle Boyd-Julien

#### CAST OF CHARACTERS

CHIEF FULIKOLLI: A chief from a neighboring village. He enjoys the privilege, but not the responsibility, of his position. He has the power to save Koi from his trials, but caves to community outcry.

KOI: The son of a chief who has died. Upon his father's death Koi is omitted during the division of the family fortune. Koi decides to leave his village in search of those who will recognize him as royalty and treat him accordingly.

VILLAGER #1: One who is free with his speech and guarded with his identity.

VILLAGER #2: One who has the courage to speak; only he echoes someone else.

VILLAGER #3: A woman, who no matter what, feels as though she is always slighted.

THE VERY LARGE WOMAN: A persistent and influential villager. She makes her opinions known as she ingratiates herself among the town cliques.

ALLIGATOR: A grateful soul who was befriended by Koi. Koi provided him with kola nuts to appease the rainmaker. Alligator "accidentally" ate the Rainmaker's dog, and the Rainmaker planned to return the favor.

AT RISE: *At the opening of this scene KOI has completed a series of three trials. Each trial is to be the supposed only or last. His last trial required him to collect all the rice thrown from ten baskets. On this morning the ten baskets of rice sit before the hut of CHIEF FULIKOLLI. KOI sits in front of the baskets, eating a wild plum. The stage has a jungle backdrop. Portions are brought onto and removed from the stage to depict changes in location.*

#### CHIEF FULIKOLLI

(Chief Fulikolli stands proudly and bellows as he speaks in very loud and stately voice.) You perform well, now you go free.

#### VILLAGER #1

(Hiding behind others, but speaking out loudly to the group) He's a sorcerer!

#### VILLAGER #2

(Hiding as the other Villager, but remaining unseen and speaking loudly) He's the devil!

#### VILLAGER #3

(Standing boldly, seen by all, as she makes her proclamation) Whatever he is, he cheats us of a feast!

THE VERY LARGE WOMAN

(Whispering to a very short man standing next to her, but loud enough for the audience to hear)  
Let Chief Fulikolli free him. We will catch him outside the village and cook him ourselves.

KOI

(KOI overhears what the VERY LARGE WOMAN has whispered to the man.) I am afraid to go!  
Your people want to eat me, and they will overtake me when I am outside the village.

CHIEF FULIKOLLI

(CHIEF FULIKOLLI begins to speak authoritatively, but melts into submission, speaking in an almost pleading tone.) There will be no feast...yet. I will test the boy one more time. I shall throw my medicine ring into the deepest part of the river. If he brings it back to me, will you honor him as the son of a chief? (The CHIEF raises his arm over his head and speaks.) It is decided.

VILLAGERS #1, #2 AND #3

(Speaking in a half-hearted unbelievable unison) We promise, CHIEF FULIKOLLI! We promise, we promise!

(CHIEF FULIKOLLI and his people go to the river. CHIEF FULIKOLLI throws his medicine ring into the deepest part. Then all go back to the village, leaving KOI alone on the bank. KOI looks despondently into the river.)

KOI

Even CHIEF FULIKOLLI tries to destroy me. I do not even swim. (KOI wades into the river. He sees the long, gray nose of an alligator gliding toward him. KOI is frightened.)

ALLIGATOR

Do you remember me?

KOI

(KOI speaks hesitantly.) I'm not so sure. All alligators look the same to me.

ALLIGATOR

(Speaking lively and eager to have KOI remember him) You gave me your kinja full of kola nuts and saved me from the wrath of the Rain Maker.

KOI

(Speaking slowly and hopelessly) I am glad that you still live. As for me, this is the night before I die. I must bring up the chief's medicine ring from the bottom of the river by dawn, or I shall be cooked.

ALLIGATOR

You don't say. Perhaps I can help you. I think I swim a little better than you.

(The ALLIGATOR dives under the water and comes up with a small clam shell. He dives again and brings up a fish. The alligator dives in and out and in and out of the water all night. When the sun begins to rise, the alligator comes up for the last time. He has nothing. It is too late. CHIEF FULIKOLLI and his people will arrive in moments. KOI is certain he will be cooked. Near tears, KOI speaks to ALLIGATOR.)

KOI

I thank you, ALLIGATOR. You have helped me as though you were my brother. But it is no use. I will be cooked.

(ALLIGATOR smiles. Looped on one of his biggest and sharpest teeth is CHIEF FULIKOLLI's medicine ring.)

KOI

(Jumping and moving about in a lively fashion) That is it! That is IT! (KOI takes the ring and dances with it to the village. When CHIEF FULIKOLLI sees that KOI holds the medicine ring he smiles. He takes off his leopard skin robe and puts it on KOI's shoulders. The chief stands stately and proclaims...)

CHIEF FULIKOLLI

Surely this is the son of a chief! (CHIEF FULIKOLLI claps his hands and the most beautiful woman KOI has ever seen walks out of a nearby hut.) And this is my daughter. She shall be your wife.

KOI

I have found a village where the people know how to treat the son of a chief.

(Suddenly a smile comes over the face of the VERY LARGE WOMAN and she sings...)

THE VERY LARGE WOMAN

We will have a wedding! We will have a wedding tonight! Now we will have a feast! Finally we will have a feast!

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Storyboard**

A storyboard is a scene-by-scene representation of the story. I have included it here as an aid for teachers. Teachers may choose to use it for immediate implementation of this unit or it may be used as a guide to write their own. This storyboard is an adaptation of the story *Koi and the Kola Nuts*. The same method is used when writing one's own play or adapting other stories into plays.

#### ***Scene 1 – The Storyteller***

A storyteller sits draped with a piece of kente cloth. Three to five children sit at her feet. She begins to tell the story of Chief Sadaka's death. The message was relayed to all the villages using drums. (sound effects – drum beating), storyteller and students exit.

#### ***Scene 2 – Koi's Journey Home***

Koi comes out from the brush, called by the drums. He begins his journey home. (sound effects – leaves rustling)

#### ***Scene 3 – The Palaver***

A wise man of the village divides the goats, cows, tusks of ivory and gold pieces between Koi's 3 brothers. (sound effects – animal sounds)

#### ***Scene 4 – Koi's Return***

Koi is offered a remaining koala nut tree by the wise man. Koi is upset with the meager offering. He removes the nuts from the tree, and wraps them in a kinja. Koi leaves the village promising never to return as the people there do not know how to treat the son of a king. (sound effects – crowd murmurs)

#### ***Scene 5 – Koi Meets Snake***

Koi encounters a snake looking for koala nuts for his ailing mother. Koi gladly offers some of them to the snake. The snake accepts the nuts and goes on his way. (sound effects – baby rattle)

#### ***Scene 6 – Koi Meets the Army of Ants***

Koi encounters an army of ants in search of koala nuts. They have accidentally eaten those of the Forest Devil and must repay him or suffer death. Koi offers them some of his. (sound effects – finger tips tapping on desk tops)

#### ***Scene 7 – Koi Encounters Alligator***

Koi finds alligator crying at the base of a mountain. He is despondent as he “accidentally” ate the Rain Maker's dog. The Rain Maker has promised to strike him dead, (sound effect – striking cookie sheets) unless he provides him with a kinja full of koala nuts. Koi gives him the remaining koala nuts and kinja.

#### ***Scene 8 – Koi Arrives At Chief Fulikolli's Village***

A disheveled Koi arrives dirty and is not greeted kindly. He proclaims his royal heritage and is verbally attacked by the villagers. One villager continuously shouts, “Cook him in the pot!” They seize Koi, and carry him away. (sound effects – angry mob chants)

#### ***Scene 9 – Koi Meets Chief Fulikolli***

Chief Fulikolli stops the mob. Koi restates his claim as Chief Sadaka's son. The chief staves off the mob under the condition that he proves himself as the son of a chief. Should he fail, he will be turned over to the villagers.

### ***Scene 10 – Koi’s First Task***

Chief Fulikolli orders Koi to chop down a tree leaning toward the village to fall toward the forest (opposite direction). The villagers leave Koi with an ax, confident of his pending failure.

### ***Scene 11 – Friend Snake’s Return***

Snake finds a hopeless Koi at the base of a tree. Snake enlists the help of his uncles, the pythons. They pull the tree toward the forest as Koi chops it down.

### ***Scene 12 - Koi’s First Evaluation***

The villagers find a successful Koi, and accuse him of using magic. The Chief proposes a second test.

### ***Scene 13 – Koi’s Second Task***

The villagers scatter ten baskets of rice and require him to collect every grain.

### ***Scene 14 – The Army Ants’ Return***

The ants are frightened by a “rain storm.” The “rain” is Koi’s tears as he contemplates his fate. They collect each grain and return them to the baskets.

### ***Scene 15 – Koi’s Second Evaluation***

The villagers are unhappy to find the task completed, and accuse Koi of being the devil. The Chief commands his release. The villagers conspire to overtake him. Koi tells the chief of their plan.

### ***Scene 16 – Koi’s Third Task***

Chief Fulikolli announces a third and final task. He will toss his medicine ring into the river. If recovered, Koi will be honored as the son of a chief. If not, he will meet the cooking pot.

### ***Scene 17 – The Alligator’s Return***

As Koi searches for the Chief’s ring, he meets alligator. Alligator find the ring.

### ***Scene 18 – Koi, The Son Of A Chief***

Koi returns Chief Fulikolli’s medicine ring. To show his gratitude he offers his daughter’s hand in marriage. The villagers celebrate the pending feast.

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