Liberian Storytelling:

A Sixth Grade Folk Arts Integrated Unit with Gbahtuo Comgbaye, Liberian Storyteller

By Linda Deafenbaugh, Gbahtuo Comgbaye, and Marley Asplundh

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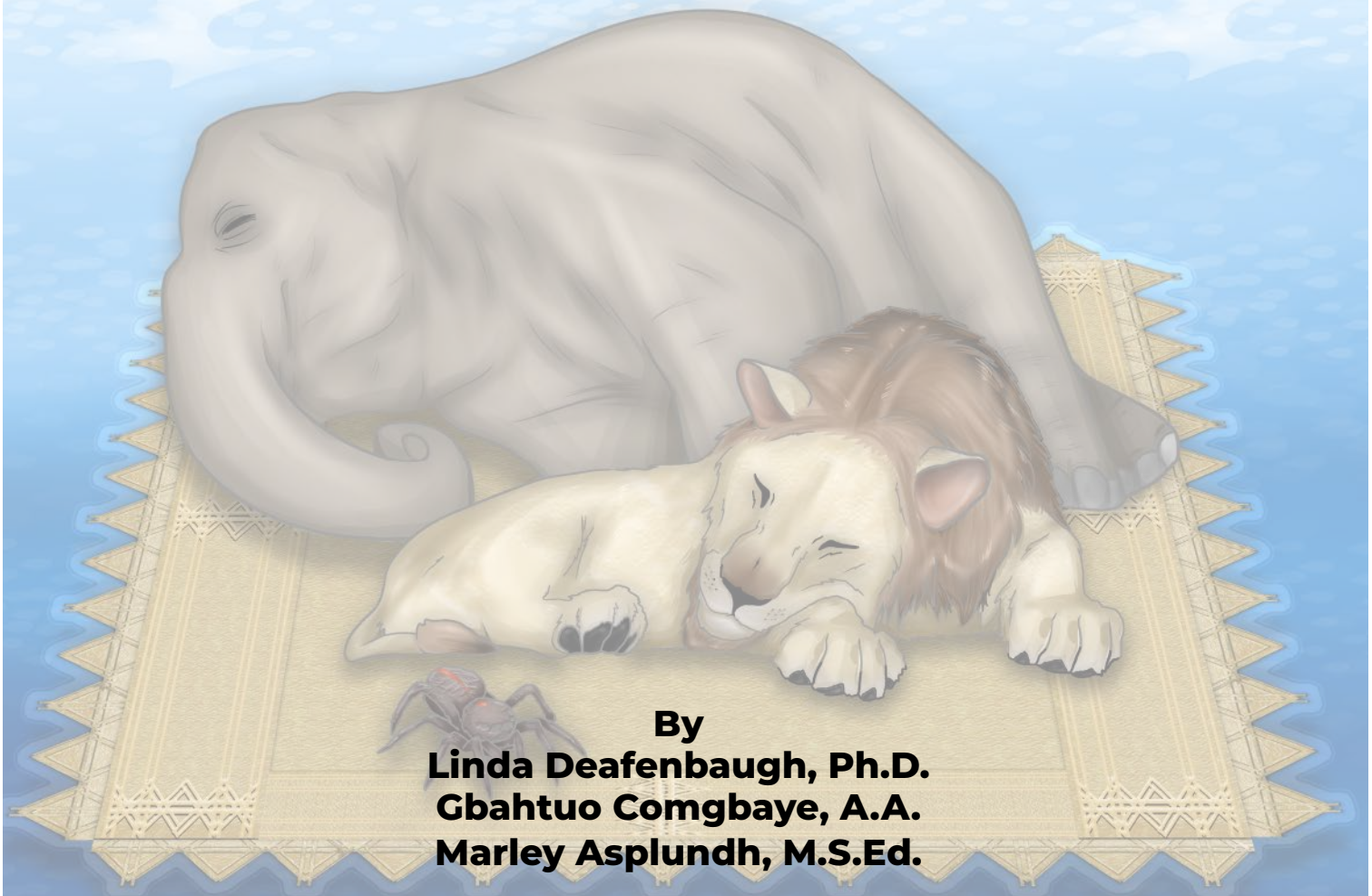

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Created by Folk Arts - Cultural Treasures Charter School

Acknowledgments

Folk arts integrated curriculum takes years to develop, pilot, refine, and revise and requires teamwork. We are grateful for the vision of the leadership team at FACTS for finding ways to carve out time and space for the educators working at FACTS to thoughtfully deliberate about folk arts education. We appreciate the community of practice at FACTS where faculty and staff regularly share their insights and experiences toward helping students deepen their learning about folk arts. This unit has been taught by six English Language Arts (ELA) teachers in the past 12 years, who each shaped the unit to layer and maximize student learning about this artform and its cultural context while developing the students' creative expression. We especially want to acknowledge the contributions made by each and every one of the following former FACTS sixth grade ELA teachers: Kathy Brody, Noga Newberg, Theresa Della Valle, Nahfeese Thompson, and Elizabeth Kim. Their hard work and expertise, developed this unit to the point that it was ready for the current sixth grade ELA teacher, Marley Asplundh, to prepare it for sharing widely with educators near and far as this curriculum. This unit never would have become as strong of a learning experience as it has for students without the efforts over the years of each FACTS' sixth grade teaching team, ELA coordinators, folk art committees, school administrators, and other peers who reviewed and provided feedback upon the concepts and lessons included in this curriculum. Their comments kept us in touch with how each lesson was working for every student, and how the curriculum document portrays this folk arts integrated unit.

We are grateful to the valuing of and commitment to folk arts in the community outside of FACTS' walls. We appreciate the vibrancy of the Liberian storytelling tradition within the communities of Liberia and Philadelphia. We extend our deepest thanks to all those within these communities, and in particular to Gbahtuo and all Gbahtuo's family members, who have supported and nurtured his creativity and commitment to this tradition. Without the work of Philadelphia folklorists, we never would have been able to learn as much as we have about this art form. We extend particular thanks to former staff of the Philadelphia Folklore Project: Debora Kodish, Selina Morales, and Toni Shapiro-Phim for their fieldwork and scholarship.

We also thank Mary Hufford for her fieldwork, scholarship and work with the Center for Folklore and Ethnography, University of Pennsylvania and the Agape Senior Citizens' Center. Her work with these organizations' service learning project engaged undergraduates and graduate students with Liberian elders who were newcomers to Philadelphia and resulted in the text *From West Africa to West Philadelphia* that we use as an important book supporting student learning in this unit. We deeply appreciate Dr. Hufford for granting full permission to us to reprint selected images and text excerpts from their book here in our curriculum.

Last, but not least, we wish to thank the many years of sixth grade students who participated in this unit and thus helped us learn so much about what works best for their learning. We learned so much from each of them. Their stories captivated their listeners' attention and helped us all think deeply about social changes that are needed in our school and in the world.

We expect this unit to continue to refine and improve as each future FACTS classroom of students engages with this artform. We are delighted with the prospect that educators near and far will pick up our curriculum, for we wish to encourage educators and their students to use the study of folklore and folkloristic approaches in their educational environment. We invite you to adapt this curriculum for use with your students and then share with us what you are learning as we all strive for a kinder and more just world for all our students.

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Introduction to the Folk Arts Integrated Unit

By Linda Deafenbaugh, Ph.D., Folk Arts Education Specialist

Welcome to our folk arts integrated unit. The Folk Arts - Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS) in Philadelphia is dedicated to developing advanced practices in folk arts/folklife education. FACTS is a K-8 public charter school located in the Chinatown neighborhood. As our mission states: "The Folk Arts – Cultural Treasures Charter School comes out of a history of struggle for:

* equity and justice for Asian American students and immigrant and refugee students of all races in the public schools;
* public investment and public space in the under-served Chinatown community;
* public schooling that engages children as active participants in working for a just society. FACTS provides students in grades K-8 with an exemplary education that utilizes traditional arts and cultures found within their own and neighboring communities as the catalyst for critical inquiry and community engagement." (Who We Are)

We recognize that students are continually learning, both inside our school walls and outside in their communities (Deafenbaugh 2015). Students have so much to learn, and each and every person in their lives is a teacher to them. In recognition of this, we universally apply the title of *Teacher* to all adults that students interact with at FACTS - be they their classroom teachers, community folk artists, or work at our front desk or recess yard or cafeteria or administrative offices.

The Power of Stories

This folk arts integrated unit partners with a folk artist, Gbahtuo Combaye, who was born and raised in Liberia. He is in residence for 10 sessions to tell stories with each of our sixth grade English Language Arts (ELA) classes. All ages love stories and people have been telling stories since the dawn of humanity. Stories continue to surround us today in our media dense world, but these media stories are primarily designed for entertainment. In so many cultures around the globe, stories do entertain to catch the listener's attention, but traditional use of stories goes so much deeper. Our curriculum guides students to explore storytelling's power as listeners to, and as tellers of, stories.

Function of Stories

When a storyteller is invited into a school classroom, the desired instructional goal could be to entertain the students and/or to tap into one or more of the functions of that story, i.e. to help teach students cooperation or stimulate a discussion on bullying. Stories have many functions beyond mere entertainment and each storytelling tradition or genre highlights some functions over others. (See a list of possible story functions)

Encountering the magic of a master storyteller weaving their tale and drawing the audience into the story is a powerful experience for students. There are many types of storytellers going into schools, like traditional storytellers, librarians, or visitors just telling their life stories, and all can bring value into the classroom. However, storytellers who come from a particular cultural group and tell their tales within their cultural community's storytelling tradition can provide even more learning opportunities - they can take students through their storytelling window into their culture and its traditions.

Instructional goals can be set for any age students to teach about a culture with the help of a traditional storyteller from that culture. Our unit shows you how we examine multiple story functions within Liberian culture with sixth graders. We guide students to become more thoughtful consumers of stories, and to learn how they, adolescents growing toward adulthood, can use stories for social change.

Craft of Storytelling

Storytellers can guide students to tell stories. Even the youngest students can be tellers of their own stories, but older students are better able to separate out the story's plot from the craft techniques the storyteller uses to animate the tale for listening audiences. Sixth graders are also ready developmentally to expand their own storytelling skills with the guidance of the traditional storyteller teaching the craft from their cultural tradition.

As a folk arts integrated unit, we stay within the practices of one culture's traditions to guide students into a deeper understanding of that culture. It's not ubiquitous storytelling that we want our students to learn, but how storytelling helps them better understand a single cultural community and how culture works. Students are also encouraged to transfer their learning about the power of stories to explore stories they have experienced in their own cultural communities and thereby gain new insights into themselves and their own cultures.

The Importance of Teaching This Unit

There are so many reasons for teaching this unit at your school. Even though it appears to involve extra work, once it is set up (and we hope the guidance provided in this curriculum makes it easier to get into place), it produces its own energy. The students are excited and the teachers each have reported enjoying partnering with the artist and teaching the unit. "This residency unit was the highlight of the year for me," former sixth grade ELA teacher Teacher Thompson told me. Graduating students too point to their work with folk artists as some of the most memorable learning experiences they had at FACTS.

Folk arts education units contribute to making education more socially just. The folklife education approach disrupts the steady diet of dominant culture knowledge and ways of knowing by including the voices and wisdom of the community in the school setting. Morales (2020) describes how important building inclusive communities is to equity in educational settings. "Folklife comes out of and reinforces common bonds between and among community members. Engaging folklife as a teaching resource in our classrooms brings the lived experiences and brilliance of community knowledge to the front. It is also a way of teaching and

reminding students of the value of the beautiful, meaningful things we do together in community. Activating traditional culture through K-elder curriculum reinforces this critical equity-building action." (p.3).

This unit teaches about Africa in ways that disrupt the colonialism legacy. Everytime the news in America shows Africa as little more than a place of chaos, warlords, terrorist attacks, famine, disease and extreme poverty, the colonialism mentality is reinforced in the minds of the media viewers. Finding coverage in the media of the rich traditions, history, wisdom, innovations, creators, problem solvers, and activists engaged in making their communities better throughout the African continent takes a lot of digging so these are not in the public eye. Thus colonialism thinking toward Africa continues.

We have much to learn from the wisdom in African communities. This unit introduces a small sliver of this wisdom to middle school students in ways that help them value it, make connections to it, and use it to learn personally meaningful life lessons. The unit encourages students to seek out tradition bearers' knowledge and equips them with the tools to engage with it. That this is a unit focused on just one cultural group does not make it the solution for eliminating all of African colonialism. But by disrupting the colonial mentality toward one African cultural group and replacing it with the inclusive, respectful approach to cultural communities that is folklife education, we can start the process. We hope that other units students encounter in schools they attend in the future will build upon these lessons.

The Sections of the Curriculum

1. *Unit Lesson Plans* presents our curriculum framework of the unit's goals and objectives and lists our assessment tools/methods. After seeing the unit at a glance, we present the plans for teaching each lesson in detail.

2. *Resources for Teaching the Unit* gives you further information needed to teach the lessons such as: handouts ready for use with students and talking point outlines for creating slides to teach lessons.

3. *Tips for Teaching the Unit* provides guidance and suggestions based upon our experience to help you make this curriculum work for your classroom and your students.

4. *Creating Your Own Storytelling Residency With a Folk Artist* provides guidance in working with a storyteller you identify to meaningfully modify this unit to draw upon your storyteller's knowledge and ways of knowing as you prepare to teach it. Throughout all parts of the curriculum you will learn from Teacher Gbahtuo, as we have, and you are welcome to reach out to him to see if he can work with your program. But it is more practical for us to consider that you will work with a griot or storyteller in an African storytelling tradition who lives closer to your school, afterschool, or community program.

5. *Tools for Planning Your Own Unit With a Folk Artist* gives examples that can guide you and your artist in drawing upon your artist's strengths when planning your unit.

Unit Lesson Plans

Liberian Storytelling is a sixth grade 12 lesson folk arts integrated English Language Arts (ELA) unit taught in 26 sessions. The sixth grade ELA teacher teaches the entire unit. The community folk artist (Liberian storyteller) is present as a co-teacher for 10-11 sessions. After looking at the curriculum framework, we present the lesson summaries to show the flow of the unit at a glance. Then we go into the detailed plans for each lessons and provide links to the resources used to teach each lesson.

Curriculum Framework

This unit was created using the *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins and McTighe, 2011) curriculum framework. Enduring Understandings (EUs) encapsulate transferable big ideas and Essential Questions (EQs) guide students to develop these understandings. Each lesson features selected EUs. EQs, Knowledge and Skills as the focus for that lesson, but often reinforces many others listed here.

Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions
Stories encapsulate cultural traditions and build community.	What cultural traditions does this story reveal?
Fables/stories are used to create change in individual and community behaviors.	How does a/this fable contribute to fostering community?
Lessons fables teach through morals can be interpreted and applied to multiple life situations.	What change does this moral seek to create (in individuals/in society)?
Characters' actions and dialogue are directly affected by their traits and can represent archetypes.	What are different interpretations of this fable? (Who might be represented by the characters? What situations could this fable represent?)
Storytellers have an essential role in helping the community benefit from stories.	How did a character's traits affect the story and their behaviors advance the story?.
	What archetypes were presented in this fable?
	How is the storyteller using each aspect of the storytelling craft to help others?
	How does this aspect of storytelling impact you and/or the audience?

Knowledge

Students will define what a fable is and know literary elements often featured in fables (archetype, moral, anthropomorphism).

Students will identify the knowledge needed and decision making craft conventions of Liberian storytelling.

Students will identify and discuss the performance techniques of the craft conventions of Liberian storytelling.

Students will identify and discuss the role/ function Liberian storytelling has in the culture.

Students can identify multiple morals and life situations applicable to a fable

Skills

Students will be able to use literary elements of fables in writing their own fable.

Students will be able to compare and contrast characters in Liberian fables

Students will be able to follow conventions of Liberian fables when writing and telling their own fable.?

Students will be able to make use of the craft techniques of storytelling as they present their own fables.

Students will be able to implement functions of storytelling when writing and telling their own fables..

Students will be able to create purposeful morals to implement inside their own fables.

Students will be able to interpret a fable with multiple morals and connections to different life situations.

Students will be able to use ethnographic skills throughout the unit (noticing deeply, making meaning, sharing with others).

Assessment

(Evidences we gather and tools to gather them)

- Daily note sheets (jot down after turn and talk)
- Homework for collecting stories sheet
- Writing graphic organizer
- Writing drafts
- Writing final version
- Telling of fable practice with feedback circle recording
- Video of fable telling
- Rubric of craft of storytelling (Audience behavior component)
- Final reflection
- Possible mid-point reflection (if needed to see how daily sheets data they are recording is solidifying)
- Homework/reflection on craft of storytelling and what they need to do after first feedback circle
- Videos of whole class discussions
- Depth of Knowledge (DoK) levels is one way of measuring progress (Webb, Christopherson, Morlan 2023; Webb 2024)
  - DoK level 1 – can name
  - DoK level 2 - can describe and give examples
  - DoK level 3 – can use/apply (demonstration of skills might show evidences of DoK level 3)

Folk Arts Integration

Folk Arts Education
Pie Components (Deafenbaugh, 2023)

Community Knowledge integrated through:

- Community folk artist-in-residence co teaching unit in the classroom
- Home investigations of students' collecting a story from a family member

FAE Student Skills in ethnography developed through:

- Data gathering = Noticing deeply when deep listening to folk artist stories and cultural information
- Data analysis = Making meaning when using observation data to support character traits and create morals when analyzing folk artist's stories
- Re-presentation = Sharing with others when creating and presenting own stories that synthesize their understanding of the folk artist's storytelling conventions

Cultural Concepts and Vocabulary understandings developed include:

- "Big Ideas" about culture - traditions, cultural rules
- How culture works - People teach and learn their culture from people. Our folk art forms (storytelling) contain what our culture values (worldview). We deepen our cultural knowledge as we participate in our folk art form (storytellers and listeners).
- FACTS folk arts standard - Recognizing folklife as an active force in our society.

Common Core Standards

Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.A
Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.B
Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.C
Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.D
Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.E
Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.5
With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.9.A
Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres [e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories] in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics”).

Reading Literature

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2
Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C
Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.6
Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Unit Lessons at a Glance

Lesson 1 (1 session)	Intro Session	**Introduction to the Unit** Background on Liberia, an introduction to Teacher Gbahtuo, and defining a fable.
Lesson 2 (3 sessions)	Pre-Storytelling Session	Setting norms for showing respect to a visiting teacher.
	Storytelling Session	**"Why Spider Has a Tiny Waist"**
	Post-Storytelling Session	Specific traits of characters in Liberian fables.
Lesson 3 (2 sessions)	Storytelling Session	**"Greedy Spider and the Magic Drum"**
	Post-Storytelling Session	Drafting a fable after choosing characters and their traits.
Lesson 4 (2 sessions)	Storytelling Session	**"Why Lion and Jackal Became Enemies in the Wild"**
	Post-Storytelling Session	Drafting a second fable using cultural values to inform their moral.
Lesson 5 (2 sessions)	Storytelling Session	**"Coyote the Troublemaker"**
	Post-Storytelling Session	Drafting a third fable using social issues in their community to inform their moral.
Lesson 6 (2 sessions)	Storytelling Session	**"Turtle's Payback"**
	Post-Storytelling Session	Introducing the different components of the presentation rubric.
Lesson 7 (2 sessions)	Storytelling Session	**"The Wisdom of the Eagle and the Deception of the Hyena"**
	Post-Storytelling Session	Drafting, revising, and/or rehearsing their fables.
Lesson 8 (2 sessions)	Storytelling Session	**"Deer and Turtle"**
	Post-Storytelling Session	Identifying important text features in published fables. Creating a foreword and choosing images for their own fables.
Lesson 9 (2 sessions)	Storytelling Session	**"Baby Mouse and Baby Snake"**
	Post-Storytelling Session	Publishing their final fable drafts and starting to practice presenting them.
Lesson 10 (2 sessions)	Feedback Session 1	**Feedback Circles** Practicing presenting their fable to a small group of their classmates and a teacher to get feedback. Repeating the process to incorporate feedback before the Story Slam.
	Feedback Session 2	
Lesson 11 (3-4 sessions)	Multiple Sessions	**Story Slam** Presenting their published fables in front of the class and giving written feedback to their peers.
Lesson 12 (1-2 sessions)	Wrap Up Session 1	**Wrapping Up the Unit** Writing reflections on the residency experience.
	Wrap Up Session 2	Celebrating and/or sharing select stories with younger students (optional).

Detailed Lesson Plan
Lesson 1: *Introduction to the Unit* (1 Session)

This lesson serves to introduce students to the shape of the unit, a brief overview of Liberian history, an introduction to Teacher Gbahtuo, and a discussion of the definition of fables. This is a standalone lesson with no visit from Teacher Gbahtuo.

Enduring Understandings

Stories encapsulate cultural traditions and build community.

Essential Questions

How does a/this fable contribute to fostering community?

Knowledge/Skills

Students will define what a fable is.

Students will identify and discuss the role/function Liberian storytelling has in the culture.

Materials

Slides developed for teaching the lesson (see Overview of the Unit Talking Points for Slides, page 48)

Copies of Reading: Liberian Languages and Community Storytelling, page 51 or copies of From West Africa to West Philadelphia book

Copies of Liberian Storytelling Unit Overview, page 50 student handout

Orientation to the Unit

Begin the lesson by introducing some logistics of how the unit will go. Students should know that there will be multiple visits with Teacher Gbahtuo. With each visit, they will hear a new fable and learn about the craft conventions and functions of Liberian storytelling. Storyteller visits will each be followed by a session done without Teacher Gbahtuo. These lessons will connect to preparing students to write their own fables.

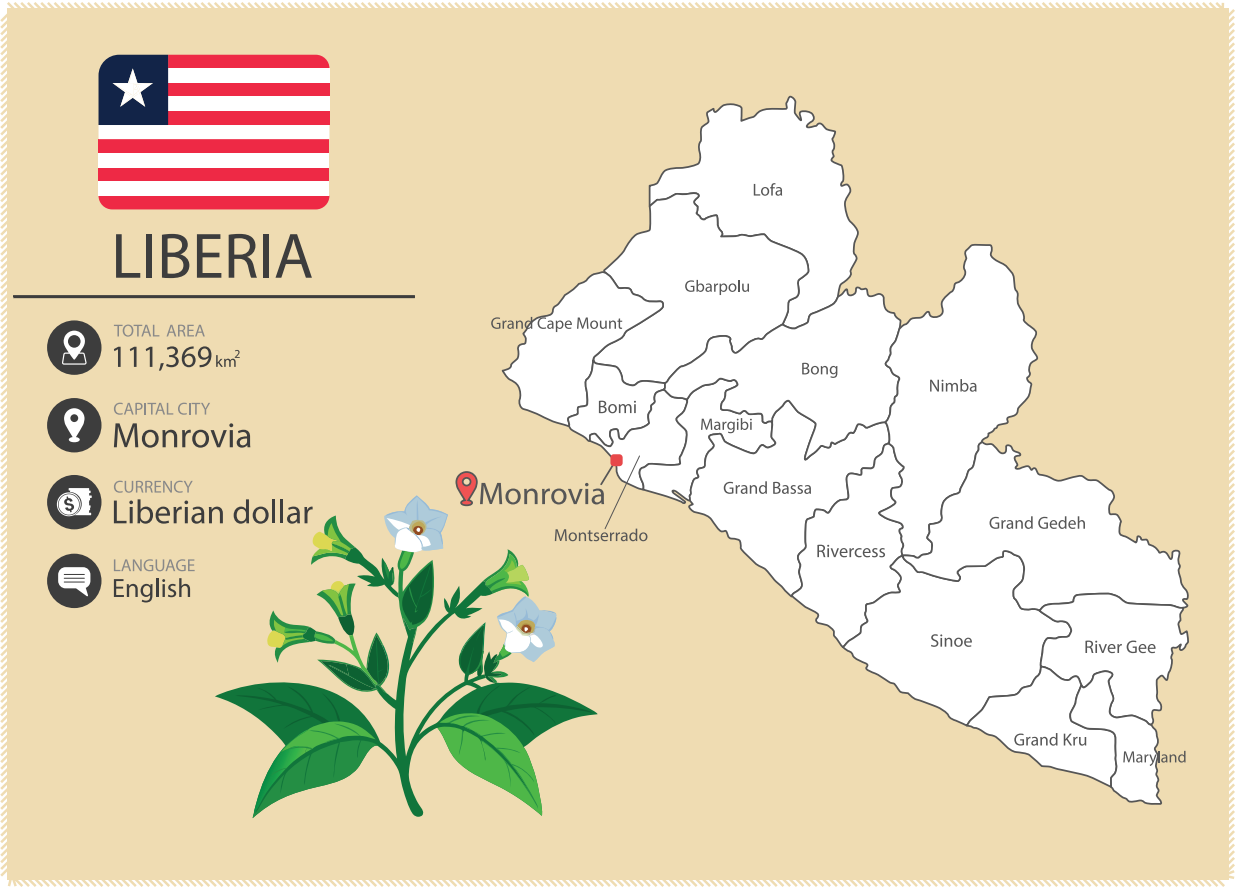
Introduction to Liberia

* Take students to Liberia using Google Earth. Note the geography in relation to the US, the continent of Africa, and who the neighboring nations are.
* Use Overview of the Unit slides to provide some basic facts about Liberian history, such as the population, the story of the nation's founding and Civil War, and the subsequent migration of many to the US.
* Introduce Teacher Gbahtuo using a biography slide.

What Is a Fable

Dive into a comparison of students' present understanding of fables to what characterizes Liberian fables. Use the Overview Lesson Student Handout to guide this part of the lesson.

- Ask students how they would define a fable. You may need to trigger prior knowledge by naming some common Aesop's fables they may be familiar with. Ask what students notice the fables they are familiar with have in common and jot down how they would define a fable using the web on the handout. (Fable = short story with animals as characters, told to teach a lesson/moral)
- Read aloud page 8 paragraph 2 in *From West Africa to West Philadelphia* and ending with the first paragraph of page 9. (Reading: Liberian Languages and Community Storytelling) While listening, students should take note of the role storytelling has in Liberian culture (education of children, renewal of community life, modeling social norms). Explain that we will expand our understanding of all the functions fables have as we learn from Teacher Gbahtuo.
- Close out with a temperature check of how students are feeling about this unit: excited? Hesitant? Curious? Note any questions they have about expectations or content so far.



Detailed Lesson Plan

Lesson 2: *Why Spider Has a Tiny Waist* (3 Sessions)

This lesson sets the norms for showing respect to a visiting teacher whom we meet in the second session of this lesson. Students learn the opening and closing rituals for a storytelling event, hear their first story told by Teacher Gbahtuo, record and discuss their observations of the characters, morals, craft and function presented in this lesson. The lesson's final session digs deeper into characters and their traits.

Pre-Storytelling Session

Guide students as they consider how to be welcoming and respectful before Teacher Gbahtuo's first visit. Work together to generate norms for learning from visiting teachers. Here is sample language to use with students:

* "When we go into a new school or class for the first time, we may feel nervous/intimidated. What would make us feel welcome or comfortable in a new environment? How could we make our visiting teacher feel welcome in our class?"

Agree on three norms as a class and have them posted on the days the class hosts their guest teaching artist.

Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings

Stories encapsulate cultural traditions and build community.

Lessons fables teach through morals can be interpreted and applied to multiple life situations.

Characters' actions and dialogue are directly affected by their traits and can represent archetypes.

Essential Questions

How does a/this fable contribute to fostering community?

What change does this moral seek to create (in individuals/in society)?

What are different interpretations of this fable?

How did a character's traits affect the story and their behaviors advance the story?

Knowledge/Skills

Students can identify the knowledge needed and decision making craft conventions of Liberian storytelling.

Students can identify and discuss the performance techniques of the craft conventions of Liberian storytelling.

Students can identify and discuss functions of Liberian storytelling.

Students will be able to create purposeful morals to implement inside their own fables.

Materials

Copies of Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories, page 53

Copies of List of Common Motifs, page 54

Storytelling (Led by Teacher Gbahtuo)

Teacher Gbahtuo will introduce and teach students the beginning and ending rituals used when telling a story.

Teacher Gbahtuo leads students in presenting Why Spider Has a Tiny Waist. As students listen to the story, they fill out the Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories. When students are finished, the ELA teacher leads them into describing the traits of the characters and sharing their guesses on the story's moral. After they have given responses, Teacher Gbahtuo will then again lead the class by sharing his moral for the story he told. He then will explain a function and the aspects of the craft of storytelling in his cultural tradition that he is sharing that day. Students take notes as he does this.

- **Teacher Gbahtuo's moral:** One who wants it all, loses it all.
- **Function of storytelling:** Story as a way to learn your culture (what your culture feels is important), and the ways of your ancestors (how your culture does things) that are passed down generation to generation.
- **Craft of storytelling:** How Teacher Gbahtuo learned storytelling: After hearing what he observed in his teachers, lead students to begin making a list of the characteristics of being good at telling stories.

Crafting Morals from Motifs (Led by ELA Teacher)

Transition from Teacher Ghabtuo's presentation of moral, craft, and function.

- "So today you became familiar with beginning and ending rituals, how Liberian fables center around a moral, how Teacher Gbahtuo learned storytelling, and a couple functions of storytelling. Crafting a good moral is everything when it comes to storytelling. It's like starting with an end goal in mind, like starting the tournament game envisioning yourself scoring the winning point! So how do you craft good morals?"

Next, help students begin to brainstorm different morals from common motifs. You may choose to use the List of Common Motifs to do so. Be sure to clarify that a motif is not a moral in and of itself. Students must ask, "What do I want to teach about this particular motif?" Introduce this frame for support: "When you _____, you may _____." Have students brainstorm 1-2 morals they would be interested in drafting a story around.

Teacher Gbahtuo ends the session with the closing ritual used when telling a story.

Post-Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings

Characters' actions and dialogue are directly affected by their traits and can represent archetypes

Essential Questions

How did a character's traits affect the story and their behaviors advance the story?

Knowledge/Skills

Students will be able to compare and contrast characters in Liberian fables

Materials

Copies of stories pp10-14 in *From West Africa to West Philadelphia*

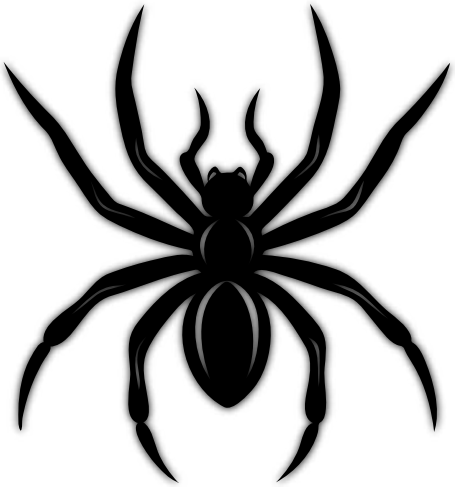
Copies of Characters in Liberian Fables handout, page 55

Present today's lesson as an opportunity to explore what kinds of characters Liberian fables have. This will begin the students' process of planning characters for their own fables. By looking at additional fables from pages 10-14 of the text *From West Africa to West Philadelphia*, students should conclude the following about characters in Liberian fables:

* Animals take the main stage
* All can speak (Introduce the term anthropomorphism - giving human characteristics or behaviors to a god, animal, or object)
* All learn a lesson

The Characters in Liberian Fables handout can be used to guide students through this work. Depending on what works best for your students, you may pair students to partner read or read independently and then do the compare/contrast work on their handout together.

Scaffolding ideas could include reading one story aloud as a class, charting observations, and then asking students to work on noting similarities and differences to another fable they read on their own or in pairs.



Detailed Lesson Plan

Lesson 3: *Greedy Spider and the Magic Drum* **(2 Sessions)**

Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings

Stories encapsulate cultural traditions and build community.

Lessons fables teach through morals can be interpreted and applied to multiple life situations.

Characters' actions and dialogue are directly affected by their traits and can represent archetypes.

Knowledge/Skills

Students can identify and discuss functions of Liberian storytelling.

Students will know literary elements often featured in fables.

Students will be able to interpret a fable in their own words.

Essential Questions

How does a/this fable contribute to fostering community?

What are different interpretations of this fable?

How did a character's traits affect the story and their behaviors advance the story?

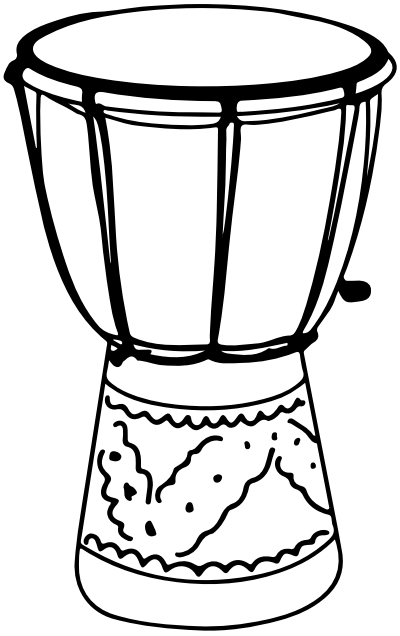
Materials

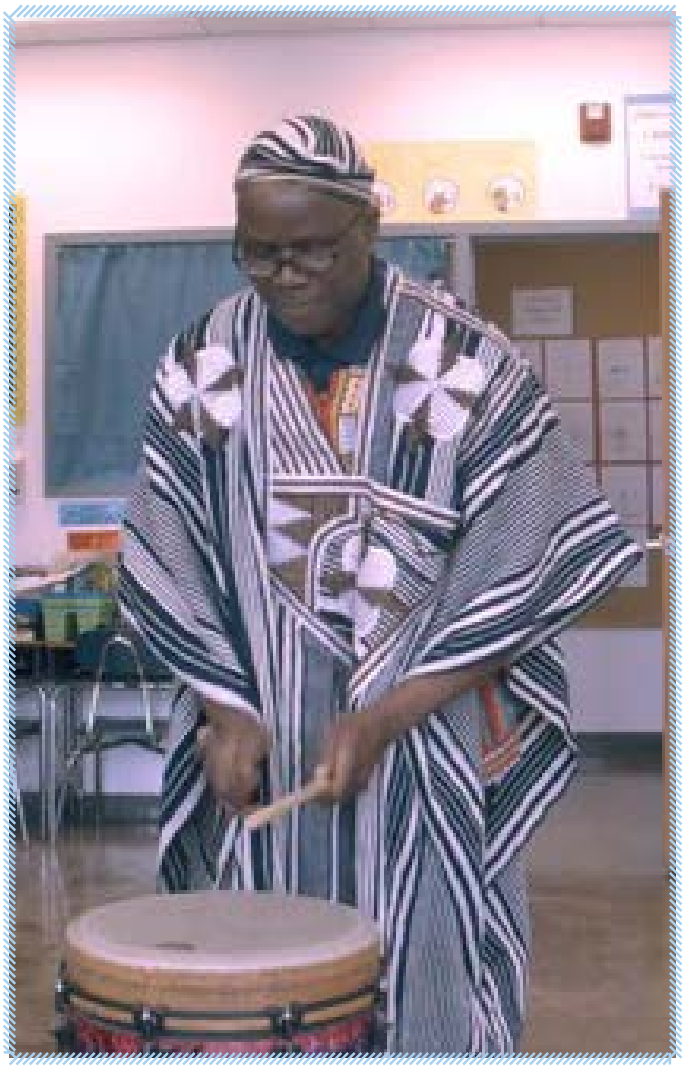
Copies of Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories, page 53

Introduction (Led by ELA Teacher)

In many cultures, there are stories about greed. Help students bridge the gap between stories they may personally know from their own cultures or others' to the one they will hear today by activating prior knowledge. Here are some suggestions to prompt students' thinking:

* "We have probably all been taught not to be greedy. Can you think of any stories that have morals around greed?"
* "When might too much of a good thing actually become a bad thing?"





Storytelling (Led by Teacher Gbahtuo)

Teacher Gbahtuo opens the session with the opening ritual used when telling a story.

Teacher Gbahtuo leads students in presenting Greedy Spider and the Magic Drum. As students listen to the story, they fill out the Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories. When students are finished, lead them into describing the traits of each character and sharing their guesses on the story's moral. When they have given responses, begin to point out which character's perspective each moral represents that students give. Teacher Gbahtuo will lead the class in the rest of the lesson, explaining the day's function and craft of storytelling. Students take notes as he does this.

- **Teacher Gbahtuo's moral:** "There is a sufficiency in the world for man's needs but not for man's greed." - Mahatma Gandhi
- **Craft of storytelling:** Stories teach morals. Morals are what a culture values. Stories give a context for the values and make them easier to remember.
- **Function of storytelling:** Stories as a way to gather together and build community. When Liberians listen to stories, they will discuss them and their many meanings since each person can hear different things in a story.

Comparing Story Interpretations (Led by ELA Teacher)

"You may have noticed that today's moral was not worded in the way that you practiced wording your morals last week. It was actually a quote from Gandhi. The structure you were given is not set in stone. Morals can come in different styles, but let's do a quick exercise in rewording today's moral to include the consequence."

Prepare students for some collaborative writing: "Discuss your different understandings of the story you heard with your partner. You already know the moral for the story that Teacher Gbahtuo shared: it centered around greed. Now, based on how you interpreted the story, how would you express the moral in your own words? Feel free to use the framework from last week to help. Then, see if you can come up with a moral that encompasses everyone's interpretations at your table."

Teacher Gbahtuo ends the session with the closing ritual used when telling a story.

Post-Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings

Characters' actions and dialogue are directly affected by their traits and can represent archetypes.

Knowledge/Skills

Students will know literary elements often featured in fables.

Students will be able to draft a fable featuring animal archetypes whose conflict clearly illustrates a moral.

Essential Questions

How did a character's traits affect the story and their behaviors advance the story?

What archetypes were presented in this fable?

Materials

Slides developed for teaching the lesson (see Animal Archetypes Talking Points for Slides, page 56)

Copies of Drafting Your Own Fables, page 57 handout

Defining Archetypes

Using slides, begin with a definition of the word "archetype." Explain that although there is room for creativity in composing fables, the fable must "make sense." One way to make sure that the fable "makes sense" or doesn't unnecessarily confuse the reader is to choose the animals purposefully: they should embody whatever traits you are trying to reinforce or teach against.

There are two questions students could ask when brainstorming animal archetypes for their stories:

* Are there stories I am already familiar with that feature animals showing the personalities/characteristics I want to include?
* Are there symbols in my own culture that I can draw on?

If students cannot come up with animal archetypes based on familiar stories or cultural symbols, suggest they do a little research on animal behaviors and relationships to help. (The San Diego Zoo website, for example, has a section with a list of different animals students could learn about and choose based on their behaviors.)

Drafting

Distribute lesson handouts and go over the steps students can take to begin brainstorming and subsequently, drafting their fables.

Students should work independently on drafting their fables while the teacher provides support as needed.

Detailed Lesson Plan

Lesson 4: *Why Lion and Jackal Became Enemies in the Wild* **(2 Sessions)**

Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings

Stories encapsulate cultural traditions and build community.

Lessons fables teach through morals can be interpreted and applied to multiple life situations.

Characters' actions and dialogue are directly affected by their traits and can represent archetypes.

Knowledge/Skills

Students can identify the knowledge needed and decision making craft conventions of Liberian storytelling.

Students will understand that Liberian storytelling allows for improvisation.

Students will be able to identify craft techniques used by storytellers in their personal life.

Essential Questions

What cultural traditions does this story reveal?

How does a/this fable contribute to fostering community?

What change does this moral seek to create (in individuals/in society)?

What are different interpretations of this fable?

How did a character's traits affect the story and their behaviors advance the story?

Materials

Copies of Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories, page 53

Copies of Story Collecting Homework handout, page 59

Introduction (Led by ELA Teacher)

We can all relate to a time when we spoke/acted rashly in the heat of the moment, only to regret it later. Ask students "Have you ever gotten really angry and said/did something without thinking it through? What happened?"

Discuss with students what they may physically feel to signal that they are getting worked up and potentially may say/do something they may regret. Brainstorm techniques to de-escalate themselves when they get really angry. Closing your eyes and taking deep breaths, walking away from a situation and returning after you have calmed down are just a couple ideas for de-escalation.

Storytelling (Led by Teacher Gbahtuo)

Teacher Gbahtuo opens the session with the opening ritual used when telling a story.

Teacher Gbahtuo leads students in presenting Why Lion and Jackal Became Enemies in the Wild. As students listen to the story, they fill out the Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories. When students are finished, lead them into sharing their guesses on the story's morals, including morals from the perspectives of different characters. When they have given responses, Teacher Gbahtuo will lead the class in the rest of the lesson, explaining the day's function and craft of storytelling. Students take notes as he does this.

- **Teacher Gbahtuo's moral**: When anger leads, trouble follows.
- **Craft of storytelling**: Good story and good storyteller characteristics, like being loud enough, making visual the events of stories with what is said (descriptive words and story details), and how it's said (actions, body movements, hand gestures, and changes in voice to convincingly BE the different characters for the audience)
- **Function of storytelling**: Storytelling to entertain. But different from acting because actors say the exact same words with every performance and storytellers do not have to. Storytelling allows for improvisation.

Story Collecting Homework (Led by ELA Teacher)

"Today Teacher Gbahtuo shared some important ways a good storyteller engages his audience. You will have one week to go on a story hunt from one of your family members or family friends. Observe whether you see your storyteller use some of the techniques Teacher Gbahtuo shared today."

- Give homework assignment (due in the Post-Storytelling Session of Lesson 5) to ask a family member to tell a story. Distribute Story Collecting Homework handout. Review the assignment with students:
- Observe the story carefully.

- Take notes about the context (who told/listened where when), about what the teller did with voice and body when they were telling it.
- Note if there was or was not a moral or lesson in the story.
- When thinking about the story you heard from a family member, describe any functions you think that story might have had.

Teacher Gbahtuo ends the session with the closing ritual used when telling a story.

Post-Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions
Stories encapsulate cultural traditions and build community.	What cultural traditions does this story reveal?

Knowledge/Skills	Materials
Students will be able to identify the role Liberian storytelling has in the culture.	Slides developed for teaching the lesson (see Incorporating Cultural Values Talking Points for Slides, page 61)
Students will be able to draft another fable, this time trying to incorporate their own cultural values into the moral.	Copies of Drafting Your Own Fables handout, page 57
	Copies of Roll a Fable Activity handout, page 63

In each session when students work on fable writing skills, they will have an opportunity to try their hand at another draft. Towards the end of the unit, they should have several drafts to choose from for their final performance.

To prepare students for their writing this week, highlight a lesson Teacher Gbahtuo has shared in terms of how fables are based on cultural values. While students can follow the same process as the first week they drafted a fable, they should pause to consider what cultural values they would like their morals to reflect. Using the slides, you can walk students through this brainstorming process with "hospitality" as an example. Allow partners to talk before students set off on independent writing so that students feel more confident beginning their writing for the day.

You can have students draft on a blank sheet of paper if they feel comfortable with the process, or you may choose to use or modify the Drafting Your Own Fables handout. If students are really struggling with drafting a fable, you can use the Roll-a-Fable Activity handout to get them started.

Detailed Lesson Plan
Lesson 5: *Coyote the Troublemaker* (2 Sessions)

Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings

Stories encapsulate cultural traditions and build community.

Lessons fables teach through morals can be interpreted and applied to multiple life situations.

Characters' actions and dialogue are directly affected by their traits and can represent archetypes

Knowledge/Skills

Students can identify and discuss functions of Liberian storytelling. (Stories can be told to help people notice something happening in the community and discuss it.)

Students will be able to make personal application of the archetypes and morals found in the Liberian fable.

Essential Questions

What cultural traditions does this story reveal?

What change does this moral seek to create (in individuals/in society)?

What are different interpretations of this fable? (Who might be represented by the characters? What situations could this fable represent?)

How did a character's traits affect the story and their behaviors advance the story?

Materials

Copies of Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories, page 53

Introduction (Led by ELA Teacher)

"Have you ever heard of the term 'collateral damage'? It's when someone or something other than the intended target is harmed. This can often happen during wartime. Can you think of how?"

Explain that sometimes this can happen in smaller social circles as well. And the source of the trouble may actually be an instigator that does not get directly involved! Preface that today's story will dig into all this, and as students listen, they should think about how the story's moral can relate to what they have experienced or see happening around them in the world.

Storytelling (Led by Teacher Gbahtuo)

Teacher Gbahtuo opens the session with the opening ritual used when telling a story.

Teacher Gbahtuo leads students in presenting Coyote the Troublemaker. As students listen to the story, they fill out the Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories. When students are finished, lead them into sharing their guesses on the story's morals, including morals from the perspectives of different characters. When they have given responses, Teacher Gbahtuo will lead the class in the rest of the lesson, explaining the day's function and craft of storytelling. Students take notes as he does this.

- **Teacher Gbahtuo's moral**: When two elephants fight, the grass suffers.
- **Craft of storytelling**: Review and add to the list of what a good story and good storyteller characteristics are. Explain that storytellers know the story really well and intentionally change the story for each audience. So the storyteller may emphasize certain aspects to make it easier for different ages to understand it. Or they expand certain aspects of the story with more details so the audience makes a connection between the story and something that is happening in their lives or in the community at that moment.
- **Function of storytelling**: Review the functions covered so far. Add: stories function to help people notice something that is happening in their lives or communities and discuss it or think about it.

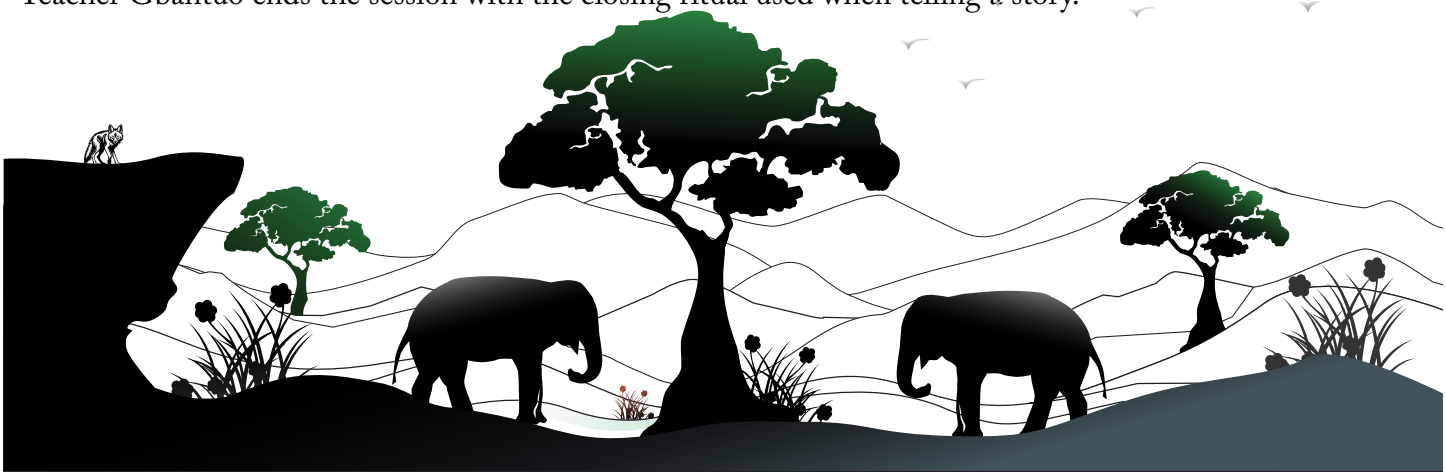
Real-Life Elephants and Coyote (Led by ELA Teacher)

"Today Teacher Gbahtuo shared how fables can be told to make a statement on what is happening in the audience's lives. So, there can be one layer of meaning that is based on the plot of the fable, but another that can be applied to real life/society. Let's dive into considering how we could apply today's fable to our personal lives."

Students discuss who the Elephants and Coyote could be in their own lives or in the school community or in the society. Layers of interpretation are possible, but guide them to think about what was happening in the story and in the telling of the story that made it possible for the listener to get layers of interpretation.

Students write/revise their own moral statements they might like to work within the fable they are creating.

Teacher Gbahtuo ends the session with the closing ritual used when telling a story.



Post-Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings

Fables/stories are used to create change in individual and community behaviors.

Essential Questions

What change does this moral seek to create (in individuals/in society)?

Knowledge/Skills

Students will be able to draft another fable, this time adapting the moral to address a social issue they observed in the community.

Students will be able to use ethnographic skills (noticing deeply, making meaning, sharing with others).

Materials

Slides developed for teaching the lesson (see Layering Social Statements Into Fables Talking Points, page 65)

Copies of Drafting Your Own Fables handout, page 57

Slides developed for teaching the lesson (see Presenting Story Collecting Homework Talking Points for Slides, page 65)

Drafting

Today's lesson is meant to gear students toward writing fables that are relevant to their communities. In order to help students add on this layer of meaning, there should be enough time given to discuss what kinds of issues are impacting them personally. You can use the questions in the Layering Social Statements Into Fables Talking Points for Slides as a guide, but any that help students zoom in or out of various community circles could work.

In preparation for today's lesson, you may want to plan a draft you will model for students. The model should be based on a relevant issue. For example, you could show how students can consider broad social issues such as "prejudice," or you could show how students can consider issues in school community/immediate friend circles such as "problems that arise from gossip" in your fable.

Students should spend most of their time drafting a new fable with their new moral.

Story Share

End today's lesson by giving students an opportunity to share their homework assignments. Sample guidelines for the share are included in the Presenting Story Collecting Homework Talking Points for Slides. Sharing the story they collected, along with their observations of its telling, and comparing observations with classmates on their storytelling data collected will help set them up for the next lesson.

Detailed Lesson Plan
Lesson 6: *Turtle's Payback* (2 Sessions)

Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions
Fables/stories are used to create change in individual and community behaviors.	What change does this moral seek to create (in individuals/in society)?
Lessons fables teach through morals can be interpreted and applied to multiple life situations.	What are different interpretations of this fable? (Who might be represented by the characters? What situations could this fable represent?)
Characters' actions and dialogue are directly affected by their traits and can represent archetypes.	How did a character's traits affect the story and their behaviors advance the story?

Knowledge/Skills	Materials
Students can identify and discuss functions of Liberian storytelling. (Story as a tool used to modify the behavior of others.)	Copies of Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories, page 53
	Topic List 1 Talk for 1 Minute About SPORTS, page 67 and Topic List 2 Talk for 1 Minute About FOOD, page 68 to project

Introduction (Led by ELA Teacher)

"Like always, I have a question I'd like you all to try to answer for me. This one can be funny or dramatic depending on your experience so really give it some thought. Have you ever watched something on TV or been told a story about something that completely changed your behavior? For example, I used to LOVE squeezing through gates as a kid, but then I saw a movie on TV where a boy tried to squeeze through a gate but ended up stuck in it for ten hours! I never squeezed through gates after that. So do some thinking for me; what's an example of you having your behavior changed after watching, hearing or reading something?"

Teacher gives students an opportunity to think and share out, listening and responding to their replies.

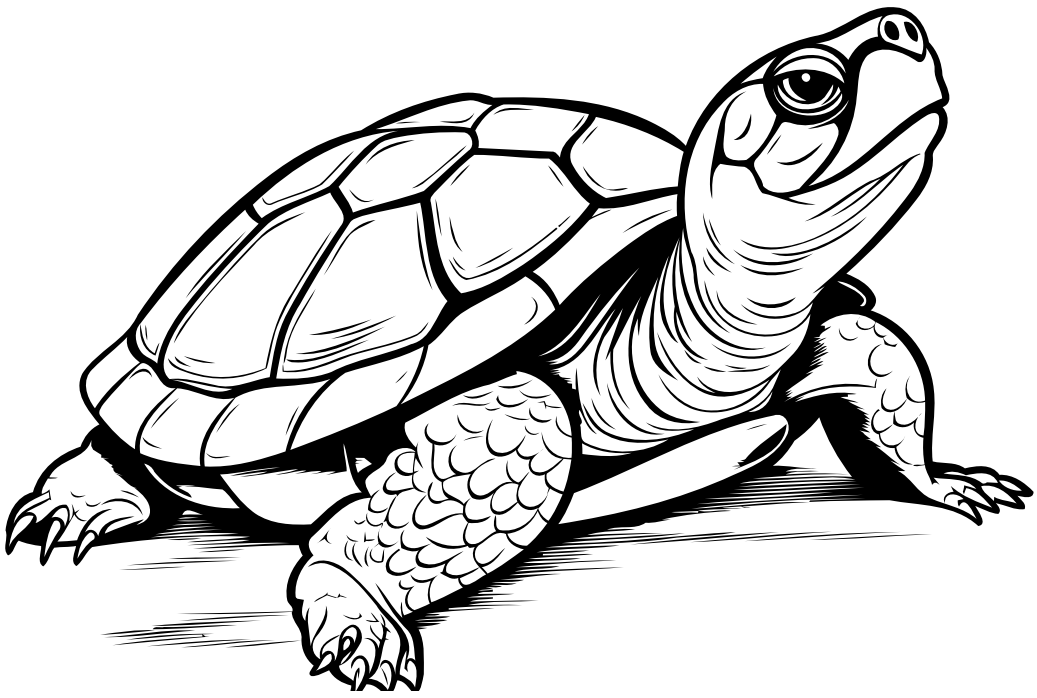
"Here's the thing; I'm bringing this up because it deals with our function of storytelling today. I really want you all to give extra attention to Teacher Gbahtuo when he begins talking about changing behavior, okay?"

Storytelling (Led by Teacher Gbahtuo)

Teacher Gbahtuo opens the session with the opening ritual used when telling a story.

Teacher Gbahtuo leads students in presenting Turtle's Payback. As students listen to the story, they fill out the Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories. When students are finished, lead them into sharing their guesses on the story's morals, including morals from the perspectives of different characters. Encourage students to give interpretations of who characters might represent in their lives or the community. When they have given responses, Teacher Gbahtuo will lead the class in the rest of the lesson, explaining the day's function and craft of storytelling. Students take notes as he does this.

* **Teacher Gbahtuo's moral**: Those who betray others must not expect others to keep faith in them.
* **Craft of storytelling**: How a storyteller uses the stage and moves on it. Pay attention to make sure everyone can hear and see. The voice is loud enough for the listener in the back of the room. The body takes a characteristic of the animal, but the face always points to the audience. How to portray small animals without being on floor, fast animals without being too fast for the audience to grasp what is happening (so taking time with movements and not rushing your words so the audience can more completely know the character of the animal), and portray the changing emotions of an animal character (Turtle was kind, caring, and angry)
* **Function of storytelling**: Stories as a way to modify behaviors in others and maintain social harmony. Certainly someone can correct a person's (friend or family member) behavior by telling them directly, but stories are a tool that can be used to correct behaviors by making the person think about what they did wrong while still making the person feel loved and supported and part of the group. Story can function as a "gentle stick" which is better than yelling at someone.



Practicing Movements on Stage (Led by ELA Teacher)

"So one thing we've learned today is the importance of space and movement. To be a great storyteller you have to be a master of your presentation space, no matter where it is. For your fable presentations coming up, you will all be working in this classroom, and it's important to be able to practice presenting on our stage. So for our next activity we'll be doing just that."

"We're going to do a public speaking activity that'll help us familiarize ourselves with the stage. We'll just have one or two brave souls help us this time and our next lesson you'll all be trying this out! I have here a list of topics; I'd like a volunteer to teach us about one of these topics for one whole minute - you can talk about anything. But as you talk you must try to move around the room - use the space to your advantage! Really try to imitate Teacher Gbahtuo's actions as you speak."

Teacher presents a list of topics to students, by projecting Topic List 1 or Topic List 2 in front of the room, and gets one to two volunteers to speak. Using a timer, the teacher times the student as they teach about their topic, coaching them into moving as needed.

Teacher Gbahtuo ends the session with the closing ritual used when telling a story.

Post-Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings

Storytellers have an essential role in helping the community benefit from stories

Knowledge/Skills

Students will be able to use literary elements of fables in writing their own fable.

Students will be able to follow conventions of Liberian fables when writing and telling their own fable.

Students will be able to make use of the craft techniques of storytelling (through public speaking activities) as they present their own fables.

Essential Questions

How is the storyteller using each aspect of the storytelling craft to help others?

How does this aspect of storytelling impact you and/or the audience?

Materials

Copies of Liberian Fables Residency Rubrics: Presentation Rubric, page 69 and Fables Rubric, page 70

Public speaking video PVLEGS to project

Copies of Topic List 1 Talk for 1 Minute About SPORTS, page 67 and Topic List 2 Talk for 1 Minute About FOOD, page 68

Introduction to the Rubric

"Today's a big day because you'll all be getting the presentation rubrics. These are a key tool to help you master your presentation. Now, we're still weeks away from presenting, but it's good to know the things that you'll be graded on beforehand."

Teacher distributes Liberian Fables Residency Rubrics: Presentation Rubric and Fables Rubric to students.

"I want you to notice how on this rubric you'll be graded on two things. The first, of course, is the fable you'll turn in. I'll be looking to see that your fable contains everything that we've discussed in this residency; morals, animal characters that have traits, etc. The second thing you'll be graded on is your performance of the fable. Not only will I want to see you use the public speaking skills we've discussed, but the craft skills Teacher Gbahtuo has been teaching as well.

Right now I want you to break into groups and look over this rubric. For now, just take a look at the performance section of it."

Explain to students that the rubric is based on a public speaking acronym: PVLEGS. A set of traits that great presenters have and practice. Tell students they will watch an introduction video to PVLEGS twice (video is one minute long). During their first viewing they will just watch, but during the second viewing, students will put a star next to two things on the rubric that they feel they'll have a challenge with when they present their fables.

Small Group Practice

"When it comes to presentations, practice is key. So for the first part of class today we'll be working on just that. Recall in our last class how a few of you did a speaking activity where you talked for one minute straight about a topic while trying to move around the stage. You'll all be trying out today in small groups using a 'mini stage' for your group in a corner or small area in the classroom. As I'm passing out a list of topics you can choose to speak about (Topic List 1 & Topic List 2), take out your rubric and look back at the areas you put a star next to; the areas you said you'd have trouble with while public speaking. Today, as you all practice, you will try out those moves! Remember, we're trying to grow as presenters here, so as one person presents, try to tell them what they did well in their storytelling and what they could do next time to become even greater."

Students begin activity in separated groups. First students will note what they will practice. Then they will note a topic they'll talk about. Afterwards, they will try to speak for 1 minute on that topic using their rubric as a guide to their actions.

Detailed Lesson Plan

Lesson 7: *The Wisdom of the Eagle and the Deception of the Hyena* **(2 Sessions)**

Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions
Fables/stories are used to create change in individual and community behaviors.	What change does this moral seek to create (in individuals/in society)?
Lessons fables teach through morals can be interpreted and applied to multiple life situations.	What are different interpretations of this fable? (Who might be represented by the characters? What situations could this fable represent?)
Characters' actions and dialogue are directly affected by their traits and can represent archetypes.	How did a character's traits affect the story and their behaviors advance the story?

Knowledge/Skills	Materials
Students can identify and discuss functions of Liberian storytelling. (Story used as a social protest against those in power.)	Copies of Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories, page 53

Introduction (Led by ELA Teacher)

For an intro to this session's fable, give the students a question to discuss that relates to either challenging power or changing the world at large. Explain that ideas of power and how stories play into it will be discussed in today's fable.

Possible thinking prompts to give to students:

* Let's imagine the school will be changing lunchtime to only being 20 minutes. How would you try to push back against this as a student?
* All parents have decided to make their children wear uniforms outside of school as well. How would you try to convince your parents to change their mind?

Storytelling (Led by Teacher Gbahtuo)

Teacher Gbahtuo opens the session with the opening ritual used when telling a story.

Teacher Gbahtuo leads students in presenting The Wisdom of the Eagle and the Deception of the Hyena. As students listen to the story, they fill out the Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories. When students are finished, lead them into sharing their guesses on the story's morals, including morals from the perspectives of different characters. Encourage students to give interpretations of who characters might represent in their lives or the community. When they have given responses, Teacher Gbahtuo will lead the class in the rest of the lesson, explaining the day's function and craft of storytelling. Students take notes as he does this.

- **Teacher Gbahtuo's moral:** Some people do not deserve help because they are selfish
- **Craft of storytelling**: Review of craft conventions you noticed students were struggling with in previous lessons.
- **Function of storytelling**: Story as social protest against power. Story as a way to change something that is wrong in society. Give an example of something in contemporary America – like a politician promising they will fix a problem you care about if you will just vote for them, but when elected, they do the opposite of what they promised. Describe the political situation that led up to the Liberian civil war. How people could not criticize the authorities without punishment, so story became the way to talk about the situation safely and help people know what was happening and how to make changes in the society.

Re-Examining Written Fables (Led by ELA Teacher)

Note to students that they've learned that fables have the possibility to change individual behaviors, to challenge power, and to even change society at large. Have them reexamine the fables they've written up to this point and answer the following questions:

- What is my fable trying to change or challenge in the world?
- Is it succeeding in that?
- What can I do to make my fable stronger in its attempt to make change?

Teacher Gbahtuo ends the session with the closing ritual used when telling a story.

Post-Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings

Fables/stories are used to create change in individual and community behaviors.

Storytellers have an essential role in helping the community benefit from stories.

Knowledge/Skills

Students will be able to implement functions of storytelling when writing and telling their own fables.

Essential Questions

What change does this moral seek to create (in individuals/in society)?

How is the storyteller using each aspect of the storytelling craft to help others?

Materials

Copies of Drafting Your Own Fables handout, page 57

Copies of Liberian Fables Residency Rubrics: Presentation Rubric, page 69 and Fables Rubric, page 70

Today will be set as a working day for fables. After today students will begin the process of choosing one fable to complete a published draft of and to use for their presentation. Students are to continue the work they started in their second, third (or most recent) draft of any of their fables created so far in the unit.

Students that consider their most recent draft complete can do the following:

1. Check their work against the Liberian Fables Residency Rubrics: Presentation Rubric and Fables Rubric
2. Double check their fable by using the rubric's section on their written fable
3. If they weren't able to in the last class, use the following questions to examine the intended function(s) of their fable:
    a. What is my fable trying to change or challenge in the world?
    b. Is it succeeding in that?
    c. What can I do to make my fable stronger in its attempt to make change?
4. Partner up with another student to practice reading your fable
5. Mark where they can do animal actions or voice changes in their story should they choose it to perform

Teachers can complete conferences with students on their fable work during this time or pull small groups of students having difficulty. It's good to have an idea of struggling students you'd like to pull immediately to check in with.

It would also be beneficial to have a handy list of teaching points related to the functions and craft of storytelling that you can use to guide students during conferences with them. If you have been recording craft conventions and functions throughout the residency as lists posted on the wall, then you can direct students' attention to this list when you conference. You can direct students with prompts such as:

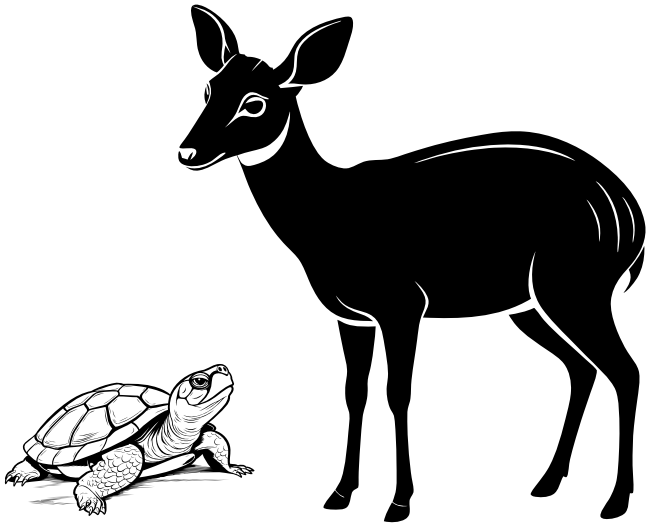
* "Remember, writers of Liberian Fables make sure their animal characters have believable actions."
* "Remember, writers of Liberian Fables always ingrain a moral in their story."
* "Remember, writers of Liberian Fables sometimes write to change behaviors in others."

Detailed Lesson Plan
Lesson 8: *Deer and Turtle* (2 Sessions)

Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions
Fables/stories are used to create change in individual and community behaviors.	What change does this moral seek to create (in individuals/in society)?
Lessons fables teach through morals can be interpreted and applied to multiple life situations..	What are different interpretations of this fable? (Who might be represented by the characters? What situations could this fable represent?)
Characters' actions and dialogue are directly affected by their traits and can represent archetypes.	How did a character's traits affect the story and their behaviors advance the story?

Knowledge/Skills	Materials
Students can identify and discuss functions of Liberian storytelling. (Stories as tools used to work towards peace and a better world.)	Copies of Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories, page 53



Introduction (Led by ELA Teacher)

A quick reminder to students that next week will be Teacher Gbahtuo's last story session with them. Also give a reminder that after today, they'll entirely be focusing on one piece to bring to a published copy and use for their performance, so to be sure to wrap up any straggling stories. Tell students that today will touch on some heavy topics. Remind students that if anything covered in today's session, or at any time while they are at school, makes them think about something difficult or heavy, they can talk privately after class to you, to another teacher or to the school counselor.

Storytelling (Led by Teacher Gbahtuo)

Teacher Gbahtuo opens the session with the opening ritual used when telling a story.

Teacher Gbahtuo leads students in presenting Deer and Turtle. As students listen to the story, they fill out the Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories. When students are finished, lead them into sharing their guesses on the story's morals, including morals from the perspectives of different characters. When they have given responses, Teacher Gbahtuo will lead the class in the rest of the lesson, explaining the day's function and craft of storytelling. Students take notes as he does this.

- **Teacher Gbahtuo's moral**: Perpetrator may forget, but victim does not.
- **Craft of storytelling**: Stories should not be too long or too short. Too long risks losing listener attention, too short risks not providing enough information within the story to understand the characters and clearly lead the listener to the moral.
- **Function of storytelling**: Story as a way of working on peace, reconciliation, and making the world better.

Teacher Gbahtuo's Personal Story (Led by Teacher Gbahtuo)

Students listen to Teacher Gbahtuo's personal story of his experiences during the Liberian Civil War and as a refugee. Afterwards, provide time for students to ask Teacher Gbahtuo any questions dealing with his story or Liberian fables overall.

Teacher Gbahtuo ends the session with the closing ritual used when telling a story.

Post-Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings

Storytellers have an essential role in helping the community benefit from stories

Knowledge/Skills

Students can identify and discuss functions of Liberian storytelling including the purpose of their fable in the greater pantheon of Liberian fables.

Essential Questions

How is the storyteller using each aspect of the storytelling craft to help others?

How does this aspect of storytelling impact you and/or the audience?

Materials

Copies of *From West Africa to West Philadelphia*

Create a slide template for students to show the foreword of their fable and pictures of their characters/settings

Introduction

Note to students that on this day they will choose which fable they want to publish and begin the process of publishing. Although Liberian fables are an oral tradition, they will also have a written version of their fable that they and others can enjoy in the future/look back on. To assist with the creation of their published draft, they'll turn to the published stories pp.10-14 in *From West Africa to West Philadelphia* for guidance.

Published Fable Inquiry

Teachers will lead students in an inquiry on the Liberian fables presented in the *From West Africa to West Philadelphia* book. Students will be broken into small groups and given copies of the book or pp. 10-14 from it. In the groups, students will read two stories and, as a group, list out text features they feel their published fables should have. Make sure to guide students to the following features:

- Forewords - Note how each fable has a few short sentences at its start where the storyteller explains the story's purpose, sometimes mentions the character traits of the animals, and often gives a quick blurb/summary of the story.
- Images - What images does this book include? Which images would be beneficial to include in your story? Images of the animals only? Or the setting as well? Would it be best to have photos of things or illustrations?

Preparing to Publish

Note to students that published copies will be written in the next lesson. For today, they must complete a few tasks to make their publish writing day effective.

- Have students decide which of their written fables they will turn into a published draft.
- Have students create a foreword for their published fable reminiscent of the ones they just observed.
- Have students brainstorm and list out the images they will include in their published draft. This prepares them for the next lesson when they go to find images, for they already will have an idea of what they are looking for.

Note: This lesson and the next can go several ways depending on the available technology. If you have a classroom with ample laptops for the students, you can have students begin their search for images after they have created their lists. You can also have students type up their published draft with the images inserted into the document. If you do not have a laptop for each student in your room however, you'll want to reserve a computer room for the next lesson. Students will be able to print out images to cut and paste onto their published draft. If you have students that want to draw their own illustrations, that could be an option too.

Detailed Lesson Plan
Lesson 9: *Baby Mouse and Baby Snake* (2 Sessions)

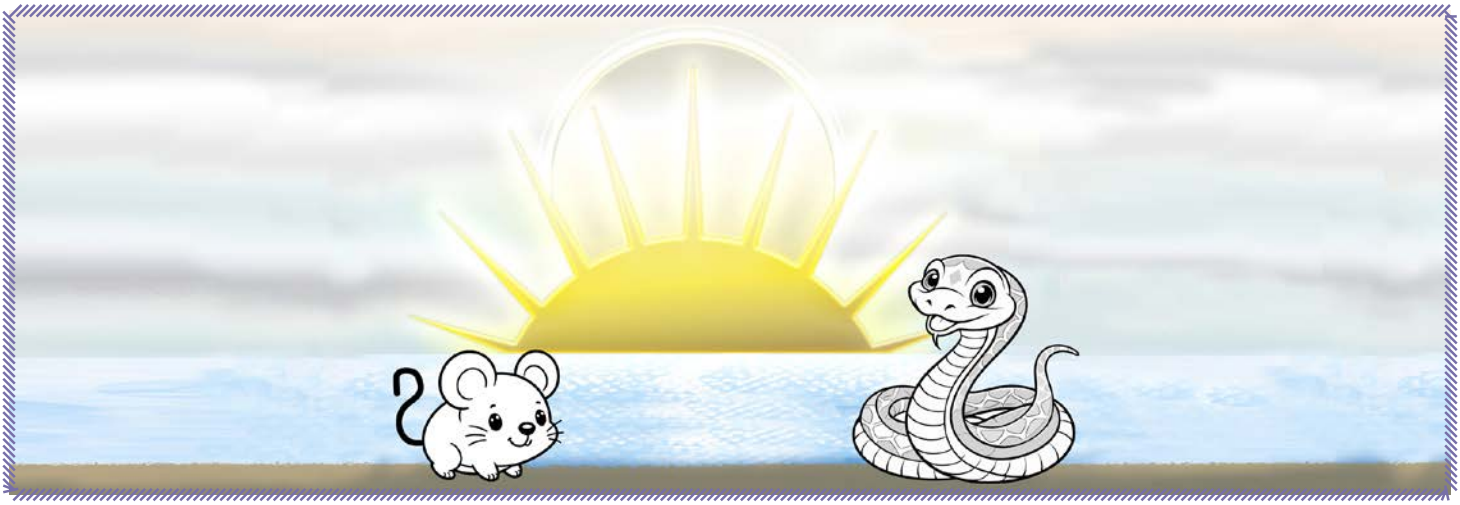
Storytelling Session

Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions
Stories encapsulate cultural traditions and build community.	How does a/this fable contribute to fostering community?
Fables/stories are used to create change in individual and community behaviors	What change does this moral seek to create (in individuals/in society)?
Lessons fables teach through morals can be interpreted and applied to multiple life situations.	What are different interpretations of this fable? (Who might be represented by the characters? What situations could this fable represent?)
Characters' actions and dialogue are directly affected by their traits and can represent archetypes	How did a character's traits affect the story and their behaviors advance the story?

Knowledge/Skills	Materials
Students can identify and discuss functions of Liberian storytelling. (Stories are a way to build communities in new lands.)	Copies of Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories, page 53
	Copies of Liberian Fables Residency Reflection: Part 1, page 71 and Part 2, page 72

Introduction (Led by ELA Teacher)

Give students a reminder that today is Teacher Gbahtuo's last storytelling day and to be sure to send him off well by listening intently and showing respect.



Storytelling (Led by Teacher Gbahtuo)

Teacher Gbahtuo opens the session with the opening ritual used when telling a story.

Teacher Gbahtuo leads students in presenting Baby Mouse and Baby Snake. As students listen to the story, they fill out the Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories. When students are finished, lead them into sharing their guesses on the story's morals, including morals from the perspectives of different characters. When they have given responses, Teacher Gbahtuo will lead the class in the rest of the lesson, explaining the day's function and craft of storytelling. Students take notes as he does this.

- **Teacher Gbahtuo's moral**: A fight between grasshoppers is a joy to the crow. Don't let others change your ways for the worse.
- **Craft of storytelling**: Review of all craft conventions.
- **Function of storytelling**: Storytelling helps immigrants build community in a new land. Story helps them hold onto their culture and keep their community strong AND story helps them adjust to the new situation of being in a different society. Gbahtuo is an artist in America. Telling his stories structures his life in another country, holds his community here together, and helps with parenting children in a different place. Children in his neighborhood stoned his house, fought his son. He took action, but knows that children are alike, though they may be told misinformation by adults.

Farewells and Reflection (Led by ELA Teacher)

Students will thank Teacher Gbahtuo for his time as class ends and ask any final questions of him.

Teacher Gbahtuo ends the session with the closing ritual used when telling a story.

Afterwards, have students complete Part 1 of the Liberian Fables Residency Reflection. This part will focus on what students learned and want to remember. Tell students they will be completing part 2 after they perform their fables for the class.

Post-Storytelling Session

Knowledge/Skills	Materials
Students will be able to follow conventions of Liberian fables when writing their own fable.	Copies of Liberian Fables Residency Rubrics, page 69 and page 70
Students will be able to implement functions of storytelling when writing their own fables.	
Students will be able to use ethnographic skills (noticing deeply, making meaning, sharing with others).	

Mini-Lesson on Giving Useful Feedback

Teach a brief lesson to start the class about giving useful feedback. Most of the time in this session will be dedicated to publishing fables, but if students finish early, they can practice presenting and giving feedback with classmates.

* Note to students that feedback is based on Liberian Fables Residency Rubrics: Part 1 and Part 2. That they want to give feedback using the language from this rubric.
* Note that effective feedback gives EXAMPLES, not just uses words from the rubric.
    - Poor Example: You had good expression
    - Great Example: When you changed your voice for Mouse, you had great expression!
    - Excellent Example: When you changed your voice, you gave great expression; I could HEAR how Mouse was afraid in the story!

Publishing Fables

Today is a working day. The goal is for students to complete a published copy of their written fable that includes a foreword and images and display an adeptness with applying the function of storytelling presented throughout the residency. Students will use this time to wrap up their published drafts of their chosen fable. If students are done, they can form small groups to practice reciting their fables. At this time the teacher can pull students for small meetings or groups. Look out for students behind on their foreword or having issues with images.

Detailed Lesson Plan
Lesson 10: *Feedback Circles* (2 Sessions)

Enduring Understandings

Storytellers have an essential role in helping the community benefit from stories.

Knowledge/Skills

Essential Questions

How does this aspect of storytelling impact you and/or the audience?

Materials

Copies of Liberian Fables Residency Rubrics: Part 1, page 69 and Part 2, page 70

Before this lesson, recruit other teachers to support with Feedback Circles. Also divide students into groups ahead of time.

At the start of the lesson, remind students what they learned in the last session about giving useful feedback. Model another example of specific feedback. Explain that Feedback Circles are a chance to tell your story as if they were performing it. Jump into telling it as if you were being graded on it. At this point students should be familiar enough with their stories to tell them without looking. If students are stuck, it's okay to reference their written fable, but it's also a good opportunity to remind them that they won't be able to do that during their performance. Instead, they should remember that even master storytellers forget or change their stories, and that it's okay to make changes as they're telling it.

Encourage students to take notes on the feedback they receive so they can focus on improving those areas as they practice at home.

Divide into groups with the teaching artist or a teacher facilitating each group. Students should take their written fable and their rubric to the Feedback Circle location. They spend the rest of the session in their Feedback Circle.

* Each student stands and tells their story.
* Students give feedback first based on the rubric.
* Facilitating teacher or teaching artist then gives feedback based on the rubric.
* Facilitating teacher or teaching artist reminds students to practice at home using the feedback they received from the group.

In the second session, start by reminding students that they received important feedback last time. They should remember and apply it while rehearsing again today in their Feedback Circle. Again, review useful feedback, for it will help their peers greatly if they are even more specific with their feedback today.

Divide into groups and send them to their locations. Repeat the process of Feedback Circles. Facilitating teacher or teaching artist can also ask a self-reflective question after each student tells his/her story. "What did you work to change today based upon the feedback you received in the last Feedback Circle?"

At the end of the session when all students have reassembled in the classroom, you can preview the Story Slam and encourage more practice telling their stories at home.

Detailed Lesson Plan
Lesson 11: *Story Slam* (3-4 sessions)

Enduring Understandings

Storytellers have an essential role in helping the community benefit from stories.

Knowledge/Skills

Students will be able to make use of the craft techniques of storytelling as they present their own fables.

Students will be able to implement functions of storytelling when telling their own fables.

Essential Questions

How does this aspect of storytelling impact you and/or the audience?

Materials

Students' slides of forewords and images projected

Prompt sheets for writing compliments that you create

Each student performs their fable in front of an audience of their classmates and invited guests in a predetermined order. The teacher grades each performance using the Liberian Fables Residency Rubric: Part 1 and Part 2 while students perform.

Remind students that they are all audience members who should be treating performers with respect. They will also be graded on their behavior as audience members.

Consider implementing something for students to do in the audience to keep their focus (e.g. writing compliments).

Detailed Lesson Plan
Lesson 12: *Wrapping Up the Unit* (1-2 Sessions)

Enduring Understandings

Stories encapsulate cultural traditions and build community.

Fables/stories are used to create change in individual and community behaviors.

Lessons fables teach through morals can be interpreted and applied to multiple life situations.

Storytellers have an essential role in helping the community benefit from stories.

Essential Questions

What cultural traditions does your story reveal?

What change does your moral seek to create (in individuals/in society)?

How did a character's traits affect your story and their behaviors advance your story?

How are you as the storyteller using each aspect of the storytelling craft to help others?

How do the craft aspect of storytelling impact you and/or the audience?

Knowledge/Skills

Students will be able to make use of the craft techniques of storytelling as they present their own fables.

Materials

Copies of Liberian Fables Residency Reflection: Part 1, page 71 and Part 2, page 72

Students complete Part 2 of the Residency Reflection after the Story Slam is complete.

Optional culminating activities for a celebration session:

* A celebration "feast" activity. Perhaps featuring tastes of Liberian food like: a piece of Liberian-style fried plantains and a spoonful of pounded yam, or just have drinks and a treat.
* A buddy class activity where 6th graders decide which of the stories they heard their classmates tell should be retold to their second grade buddy class. The top 2-3 stories would then be told in the front of the room during a buddy class gathering, followed by each sixth grader telling their story just to their individual second grade buddy.
* A sharing circle activity with Teacher Gbahtuo invited back. Sitting in a circle, each student tells Teacher Gbahtuo one or two things they learned from working with him. Teacher Gbahtuo tells the students what he observed about their growth and learning in the unit.

Resources for Teaching the Unit

The documents here are either handouts designed for students to use, or talking points to guide you in creating slides for teaching some of the lessons. We recognize that instructional slides are very personal for teachers, so few teachers would likely use slides if we provided them here. Therefore, we provide talking points to show you the information Teacher Marley is including in her instructional slides. We hope seeing some of the language she uses to teach her students helps you plan your lessons.

Overview of the Unit Talking Points for Slides

Teacher Marley put the following information in her slides to introduce the unit and shares these as an example of how you might present your introductory lesson to your students.

Slide 1: Unit title

Liberian Storytelling Residency Writing Unit

Slide 2 - Biographical information to introduce the artist

She edited information about Teacher Gbahtuo written by the Philadelphia Folklore Project

Introducing Teacher Gbahtuo

Teacher Gbahtuo was born and raised in Lower Nimba County, Liberia. His hometown is close to the border of the Ivory Coast, which is where an elder storyteller named Kergongor lived. Kergongor would cross into Liberia with his singers and travel from village to village telling musical fables. Villagers from miles around would gather by the light of lanterns and bamboo torches to listen to these musical tales. Kergongor has been Teacher Gbahtuo's artistic role model since he was young. Teacher Gbahtuo's repertoire includes legends, spider stories, and call and response stories. Teacher Gbahtuo was forced to flee Liberia during the civil war and lived as a refugee in the Ivory Coast before coming to the US.

Slide 3 - Overview of the unit

Logistics

- Lesson Structure (8 stories):
  - The Story
  - The Craft/Function
  - Independent Work - Writing your own story
- Feedback Circles
- Story Slam

Slide 4 - Orientation to Liberia

Getting to Know Liberia

The classroom teacher uses images pulled from the internet and from the *From West Africa to West Philadelphia* book, such as the Liberian flag, maps of Liberia, and a picture of UN Peace Keepers to prepare to talk about the creation of Liberia as a country and its civil war in the next slides.

Slide 5 - Orientation to Liberia continued

Fast Facts

- Travel to Liberia using Google Earth
- Africa's oldest independent republic
- Population ~3.5 million (17 major ethnic groups)
- Founded in 1821 by freed African American and Caribbean formerly-enslaved people in 1821, with backing from American Colonization Society (organized by American leaders such as Ben Franklin & Thomas Jefferson)

Slide 6 - Orientation to Liberia continued

A Little History

- A civil war lasted from the late 1980s until 2003. (That's over 20 years!)
- There are ~15,000 Liberians living in the greater Philadelphia area, mostly in West and Southwest Philadelphia and Upper Darby.
- Many arrived after having spent many years living in refugee camps in neighboring African countries.

Slide 7 - Orientation to fables

Teacher Marley uses the reading on Liberian Languages and Community Storytelling the *From West Africa to West Philadelphia* book for purposes of Liberian fables and the stories in the book for the characteristics.

Looking at Fables

Now let's take a look at some of the characteristics of fables. What are fables?

What purposes do Liberian fables serve?

Now let's take a look at some of their fables together to identify some of the characteristics of Liberian fables.

Slide 8 - Preparing students for a guest teacher

Tomorrow we will hear our first story from Teacher Gbahtuo!

Think of a time when you were new somewhere - maybe when you first came to FACTS or even first came to the 5th floor this year. You might have felt nervous!

What are things that make you feel welcome and comfortable in a new environment? How could we make our visiting teacher feel welcome in our class?

Liberian Storytelling Unit Overview

Drawing by Alix McKenna

Name_____ Grade/Cluster _____ Date _____

What is a Fable?

Fable

Roles Storytelling Has in Liberian Culture:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Lesson 1 - Handout

Liberian Languages and Community Storytelling

By Mary Hufford in *From West Africa to West Philadelphia: Storytelling Traditions of Philadelphia's Liberian Elders* (2008)

The many dialects spoken in Liberia fall into four major linguistic groups: Kru, West Atlantic, Mande, and Indo-European. Through commerce since the 15th century, first with Portugal, then with Britain and the United States, Liberians have created several distinctive varieties of English. In addition to Liberian Standard English, the National language, there are ethnic and regional varieties, including forms that linguists term Liberian Vernacular English and Liberian Pidgin English. Influenced by African rules of pronunciation and grammar, these living vernaculars continue to evolve. It can be challenging for non-Liberian speakers of English to understand Liberian Vernacular Englishes. Because English is the only language understood to some extent by all, English has become a crucial medium in the diaspora for the wealth of verbal artistry preserved in Liberian oral tradition.

In Liberia, as in other West African countries, folktales have played an important role in the education of children and in the ongoing renewal of community life. In contrast to American culture, which is youth-centered, African societies in which these tales flourish tend to be gerontocracies: along with honoring ancestors, respecting and caring for the elders is one of the highest priorities in life. As Rev. Jallah put it, when the community of refugees came here, they brought their elders with them. The importance of honoring elders is emphasized in many of the stories.

Liberian storytelling is an improvisational art form, in that tellers adapt the stories to the occasions of their telling, and indeed, often compose their own stories, which conform in content and structure to community expectations. Set in African landscapes familiar to the community, the tales are populated with humans who sing, animals who talk, spirits both good and bad, and creatures with magical powers. In tales of how things came to be, aspects of the known world become signs of events in mythological time that, for example, changed Turtle's carapace from smooth to rough, or prompted Dog and Rabbit to move from the bush to the town, or caused eternal enmity between Alligator and Monkey or Hawk and Hen. Some of the stories account for interactions among species in the wild known to hunting communities: Elephant's well-known aversion to Goat, Rabbit's habit of going into shock, seeming to fall asleep, as a predator closes in, or Leopard's wariness of Gorilla (chimpanzee).

Liberian storytelling is participatory on several levels. Fables that dramatize the effects of jealousy, greed, disobedience, ingratitude, treachery, and infidelity spark critical reflection on the attributes most desirable in a parent, child, friend, spouse, or employer. Social norms modeled through the events of the story are reinforced through the structure of storytelling itself. Community storytelling encodes rules for turn-taking, orchestrates cooperation, cultivates listening and speaking skills, and encourages us to imagine the deeds of our fellow beings and their consequences from many points of view.

The formulaic opening for each story launches the flow of reciprocity between teller and audience that sustains the world of the tales in this tradition. "Once upon a time!" proclaims the storyteller. And as the audience responds, "Time!" all eyes and ears are turned toward the teller, and attention is focused on the world of the tale that is opening up. The audience knows when and how to respond throughout, for its members learned as small children to punctuate stories with vocal affirmations, and to sing in response to the teller's song. In the tales known as "dilemmas", the audience must contribute to a debate about how the story should end, and to justify their decision. For many generations these mental and rhetorical exercises have formed the training ground for ethical decision-making and oratory among Liberian children.

Moonlight signaled the time for stories in Margibi County, where Benjamin Kpangbah grew up among the Kpelle. In such places, where there was no electricity, light from the full moon provided the visibility needed for telling stories at night. Moonlight illuminated the gestures and facial expressions that animate community storytelling. In the times of diaspora and its moonless spaces, Liberian storytelling proliferates, traveling through print, radio, and the internet, and emerging at gatherings small and large, wherever it finds people eager to lend themselves to the story.

This sampler offers story abstracts and storylines for a few of the many stories told by West Philadelphia's Liberian Elders to help listeners to "tune your ears," as Rev. Jallah put it, in order to enter more fully into the storyteller's art.

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Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories

Name _____Grade/Cluster _____Date_____

Title of story:
Setting:
Characters and their traits: * * * Moral(s): Function/Use of storytelling:
Craft of storytelling:
Something I want to remember: * I want to remember ...

List of Common Motifs

- Acceptance
- Anger
- Being yourself
- Bravery
- Bullying
- Compassion
- Dreams
- Equality
- Fairness
- Family
- Fears
- Forgiveness
- Freedom
- Friendship
- Gossip
- Gratefulness
- Greed
- Growing up
- Hard work
- Honesty
- Hope
- Jealousy
- Justice
- Kindness
- Loneliness
- Loyalty
- Money
- Peace
- Perseverance
- Pride
- Regret
- Reputation
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Revenge
- Sacrifice
- Sharing
- Survival
- Teamwork
- Trying new things

Characters in Liberian Fables

Name _____Grade/Cluster _____Date_____

Title of Fable	Characters	Similarities	Characters	Title of Fable
"How Monkey Tricked Alligator" (p. 10)	• _____ • _____ • _____	• _____ • _____ • _____	• _____ • _____ • _____	"How the Animals Became Different Colors" (p. 12-13)
"Why Elephant is Afraid of Goat" (p. 14)	• _____ • _____ • _____	• _____ • _____ • _____	• _____ • _____ • _____	"Greedy Spider" (p. 15)

Bonus: Read "Three Truths that Deer Told Leopard" on p. 11. How is this story different from the others you analyzed above?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Animal Archetypes Talking Points for Slides

Teacher Marley shares the following information she puts in her lesson 3 slides as an example of how you might present this lesson to your students.

Slide 1 - Defining archetypes

Teacher Marley presents a dictionary definition of archetype.

Fable Writing Lesson: Animal Archetypes

Slide 2 - Animals

Walking students through using animals to embody archetypes in their fables.

Teaching Point: So you have your moral. Now what?

When considering which animals to feature as your characters, think about which animals fit the personalities/characteristics you are trying to show.

Slide 3 - Animals continued

Teacher Marley pulls images from the internet to depict Aesop fable animals like the Hare and the Tortoise or the Lion and the Mouse as a discussion starter.

Ask yourself:

Are there stories I know that feature animals showing these characteristics?

Slide 4 - Animals continued

Teacher Marley pulls images from the internet to show the symbolic meanings of Chinese zodiac animal traits and Native American animal guides.

Ask yourself:

Are there symbols in my culture that I'm familiar with that I can use?

Slide 5 - Animals continued

Teacher Marley pulls an image from the San Diego zoo website that shows animals interacting. This website is good for students to go to do research.

When in doubt...

Do some research on animal relationships that embody your motif.

Look up videos that show their behavior or read articles that explain their relationship and create a story around them!

Slide 6 - Start writing

Today's Task:

Write your first fable! Work on carefully selecting the animals you feature.

Drafting Your Own Fables

Name _____Grade/Cluster _____Date_____

Guideline	Example
A. Choose a motif from the list of common motifs.	A. Motif = Friendship
B. Decide what you would like to teach about that motif.	B. Sometimes you can find friendship in unlikely places.
C. Revise to include the consequence of following or not following the lesson.	C. When you keep an open mind and open heart, you may find friends in unlikely places.
D. Come up with the characters and conflict to best illustrate your story and draft!	D. Rhino - Doesn't like to be bothered by others, not very social Oxpecker - Very friendly, likes to help everyone out, but his help is not always welcome
E. Come up with the setting based on where your animals naturally live.	E. Grasslands of Africa
F. Draft your fable!	F. Story may involve how the rhino at first found the oxpecker to be weird and a nuisance, following him everywhere, but then he finds that the oxpecker is actually really helpful in getting rid of pests! Meanwhile, the oxpecker has a constant food supply and finds a strong, trustworthy friend. Win-win scenario! Rhino learns to be more open-minded.

A. Motif:

B. What I'd like to teach about motif above:

C. Moral (with consequence): When you _____

_____

may _____

_____

D. Characters with Description of Character Traits (Characters must live in same habitat in the real world):

Animal	Description of Character Traits / Role in Conflict

E. Setting (Based on where these animals naturally live):

F. Fable:

Story Collecting Homework

Name _____Grade/Cluster _____Date_____

Folk Arts Storytelling Residency Homework Due Date: _____

Ask an adult (parent, grandparent, family member, family friend, neighbor, or other adult you know well) to tell you a story. It can be any kind of story such as: a folk tale, funny story, scary story, fairy tale, fable, myth, or even a personal narrative story. (personal narrative = story about own life experiences) Observe carefully.

Who told you the story? _____

Name/Topic of the story _____

Moral of the story _____

_____

Character (People, animals)	Character's traits
Example: Mom	Resilient - would often have to find time to practice piano in between caring for other younger siblings

Observation notes: Make observations on how the person telling the story uses their body and voice and what effect it had on you, the listener.

What the storyteller did with body and voice (give details):	Effect: (or what they were trying to show)
Example: Facial expressions would change	Showed how frustrating it was to have to work around all the distractions from siblings around her

Use the other side of this page to summarize the story!

Story Collecting Homework

Incorporating Cultural Values Talking Points for Slides

Teacher Marley shares the following information she puts in her lesson 4 slides as an example of how you might present this lesson to your students.

Slide 1 - Cultural values

Teacher Marley introduces this lesson with an example.

Fable Writing Lesson

It's time to draft another fable!
As you move into another draft, think about not only whether your story makes sense and follows fable traditions but also whether your story reflects cultural values you have been taught by family, school, community, etc.

For example: Teacher Gbahtuo explained while sharing the story "Why Spider Has a Tiny Waist" that the act of sharing food at a feast with guests reflects a cultural value of mealtimes being an opportunity to connect and check on members of the community.

Slide 2 - Cultural values continued

What are some cultural values you've been taught (by family, at school, in the community)?

Examples of cultural values:

- Hospitality
- Family
- Respect for Elders
- Independence
- Community
- Freedom
- Hard Work

Note: A lot of these overlap with Common Motifs that were shared earlier in the unit.

Slide 3 - Cultural values continued

Example provided to get students thinking.

In what ways have you been taught these values?

Example: Hospitality
Way you've been taught this value:
Perhaps your family makes sure the house is tidy and clean before guests arrive and prepares special dishes that they know the guests will enjoy. You are expected to be on your best behavior when guests arrive.

Slide 4 - Cultural values continued

Example provided to get students thinking.

How can you highlight these values in your morals?

Example: Hospitality
Your story could show one animal being rewarded for showing hospitality, while another misses out because they did not extend hospitality. Perhaps the guest could even be unexpected or a stranger to show that your hospitality should be impartial.

Discussion prompt and example list provided to guide small group discussions.

Share Out:

1. What is one cultural value you've been taught (by family, at school, in the community)?
2. In what ways have you been taught this value?
3. How could the actions go within your story to highlight this value in your moral?

Examples of cultural values:

- Hospitality
- Family
- Respect for Elders
- Independence
- Community
- Freedom
- Hard Work

Note: A lot of these overlap with Common Motifs that were shared earlier in the unit.

Slide 6 - This lesson's writing task

Today's Task:

Draft a NEW fable using the same process as before, but this time, try to incorporate a cultural value into your moral.

Guideline	Example
A. Choose a motif from the list of common motifs.	A. Motif = Friendship
B. Decide what you would like to teach about that motif.	B. Sometimes you can find friendship in unlikely places.
C. Revise to include the consequence of following or not following the lesson.	C. When you keep an open mind and open heart, you may find friends in unlikely places.
D. Come up with the characters and conflict to best illustrate your story and draft!	D. Rhino - Doesn't like to be bothered by others, not very social Oxpecker - Very friendly, likes to help everyone out, but his help is not always welcome
E. Come up with the setting based on where your animals naturally live.	E. Grasslands of Africa
F. Draft your fable!	F. Story may involve how the rhino at first found the oxpecker to be weird and a nuisance, following him everywhere, but then he finds that the oxpecker is actually really helpful in getting rid of pests! Meanwhile, the oxpecker has a constant food supply and finds a strong, trustworthy friend. Win-win scenario! Rhino learns to be more open-minded.

Roll a Fable Activity

Name _____Grade/Cluster _____Date_____

Make your own animal fable by rolling the dice. First roll decides Moral Lesson. Second roll decides Character 1. Third roll decides Character 2. Fourth roll decides Object. Fifth roll decides Challenge.

Dice	Moral Lesson	Character 1	Character 2	Object	Challenge!
	It's important to think ahead.	Fox	Fly	A delicious meal	Involve the sun in your fable.
	Lead by example.	Mouse	Fish	A small pebble	Make it rain in your fable.
	Be content with what you have.	Crab	Cat	A loud bell	Music must play a part in your fable.
	Learn from others' failures.	Deer	Bull	A tall tree	Roll again to get a third character and/ or second object for your fable.
	Don't give up when things look bad.	Grasshopper	Raven	A bridge	Make your fable funny or have a joke/ humor in it.
	Kindness is king.	Wolf	Snake	A curled leaf	Involve the passing of time in your fable

EXAMPLE (rolled 5, 2, 5, 2, 4)

Moral: Don't give up when things look bad,

Fable: Mouse lived in a meadow. One day, a very strong rainstorm eroded the dirt near where Mouse lived and created a new stream in the meadow. Mouse's favorite food was now on the other side of the stream. Mouse decided he needed a bridge to get to it. Problem was, Mouse did not know how to build a bridge. All day long, hard-working Mouse would drag plant stems and little twigs and throw them in the stream. Raven was sitting on a tree nearby watching how the water carried each twig and stem downstream. Raven started to laugh loudly at Mouse and make fun of him. This made Mouse feel bad, but he ignored Raven and kept working. Deer was walking by and saw what was happening. Deer said, "Raven, you are just a big bully and no one likes a bully." Raven then felt bad for being mean, so he decided he would help Mouse. Raven went and got some pebbles and dropped them into the stream. The twigs and stems started to catch on the pebbles and before long, the pebbles, stems and twigs together made a bridge.

Moral: Write the moral you rolled here:

Characters: Write the two animal characters here:

Object: Write the object here:

Challenge: Write the challenge here:

Setting: Write the name of the setting you want to use here: (Setting has to match animals' natural habitat).

Telling of Your Fable Story

Once upon a time in the _____ (setting), there was a _____ (Animal 1) and a _____ (Animal 2). The _____ (Animal 1) was _____ (Character traits of Animal 1). The _____ (Animal 2) was _____ (Character traits of Animal 2) Describe the problem between the two animals. Then tell the rest of the story:

Layering Social Statements Into Fables
Talking Points for Slides

Teacher Marley shares the following information she puts in her lesson 5 slides as an example of how you might present this lesson to your students.

Slide 1 - Social statements

Teacher Marley introduces this lesson with an example to generate discussion.

Fable Writing

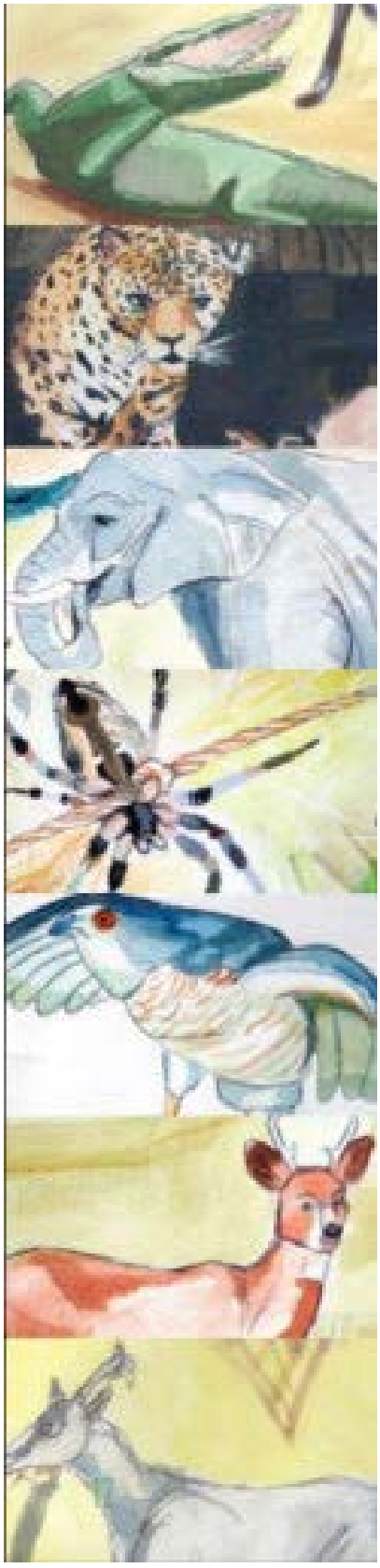
Function #5: Stories are a means to modify behavior in others in order to have social harmony. Stories are "gentle sticks" used to correct others.

Slide 2 - This lesson's writing task

It's time to draft another fable!

As you move into another draft, think about what kinds of social issues you have been affected by.

* What issues have you heard about in the news lately?
* What are some topics that your family has been discussing?
* What are some issues you have noticed in the school community? In your friend groups?



Drawing by Alix McKenna

Presenting Story Collecting Homework Talking Points for Slides

Teacher Marley shares the following information she puts in her lesson 5 slides as an example of how you might present this lesson to your students.

Slide 1 - Sharing stories collected

Teacher Marley likes to present a slide of the group discussion guidelines so students can easily refer to them throughout their small or large group sharing.

Sharing stories and observations

Sharing Guidelines

So many of you heard wise stories from your elders! Take turns sharing what you heard.

- Share what you noticed your storyteller do that was similar or different from how Teacher Gbahtuo tells stories.
- Share your observations about what your storyteller did with: Story ⇔ Craft

Thanks for Sharing!

Topic List 1 - Talk for 1 Minute About SPORTS

Talk about a popular sport.

Talk about your favorite sport.

Talk about winter sports.

Talk about jogging.

Talk about why many people like sports.

Talk about the most expensive sport.

Talk about sports you would like to try.

Talk about a sport you don't like.

Talk about the most dangerous sport.

Talk about what you do to keep fit.

Talk about your favorite sports star.

Talk about sports you played as a child.

Talk about money in sports.

Talk about a sport that looks really difficult to do.

Topic List 2 - Talk for 1 Minute About FOOD

Talk about your favorite dish and how to cook it.

Talk about foods you dislike the most.

Talk about why healthy food is important.

Talk about your favorite care or restaurant and why you like it.

Talk about the most unusual food you've ever eaten.

Talk about what you usually eat for breakfast/lunch/dinner.

Talk about who is the best cook you know.

Talk about fast food.

Talk about table manners you know.

Talk about dishes you cook the best.

Talk about the best food for a party.

Talk about foods you can't live without and why.

Talk about GM (genetically modified) food.

Talk about why people become overweight.

Presentation Rubric

Points	3	2	1
Poise	I stood straight throughout my presentation and used all the space available to me.	I stood straight throughout my presentation, but stood in one spot throughout it.	I did not make use of the space around me or stand upright in my presentation.
Voice	My voice was loud enough for the room to hear and changes to reflect the characters speaking their emotions.	My voice was loud enough for the room to hear, but did not change to reflect emotions/was monotone.	My voice was hard to hear and did not change to reflect character emotions.
Life	I presented my story with lots of energy, absorbing the audience into my fable.	I presented my story with some energy.	I presented my story with little energy.
Eye Contact	I maintained eye contact with the audience throughout my presentation.	I give brief eye contact throughout my presentation.	I do not maintain eye contact throughout my presentation.
Gestures	I use many different gestures to act out animal movements in my stories.	I have a few gestures in my story, but don't act out animal movements.	I had no or only one gesture or animal movement in my story.
Speed	I tell my story at a steady pace, not going too fast or too slow, showing that I memorized my story.	I told my story at a steady pace, but had moments where I rushed through or spoke too slowly.	I told my story too quickly or too slowly.
Participation	I quietly listened to my classmates' fables as they presented.	I quietly listened to my classmates' fables, but had to be redirected by the teacher.	I did not give my full attention to my classmates as they presented and had to be redirected several times.

Fables Rubric

Points	3	2	1
Development			
Characters	My fable features animal characters with traits and believable actions.	My fable features animal characters that show traits, but some do unbelievable actions.	My fable does not feature animal characters with traits or believable actions.
Dialogue	My fable contains only meaningful dialogue and is well balanced with description.	My fable contains mostly meaningful dialogue and could better balance with description.	My fable contains unnecessary or unimportant dialogue and is unbalanced with description.
Moral	My fable has a clear moral that relates to the story I told.	My fable has a moral, but one that doesn't completely relate to the story.	My fable has no moral or has a moral that does not match the story presented.
Structure			
Story Structure	My fable is easy to understand with a problem that has a resolution.	My fable is difficult to follow, but presents a problem.	My fable is difficult to understand and does not present a problem.
Writing Conventions			
Spelling	My written fable has very few spelling errors. Any errors do not interfere with understanding.	My written fable has some spelling errors. Errors may interfere with some understanding.	My written fable has many spelling errors. Errors may interfere with understanding.
Grammar	My written fable has very few grammatical errors. Any errors do not interfere with understanding.	My written fable has some grammatical errors. Errors may interfere with some understanding.	My written fable has many grammatical errors. Errors may interfere with understanding.

Liberian Fables Residency Reflection

Name _____Grade/Cluster _____Date_____

Part 1: Reflecting on Fables

You've heard many fables from Teacher Gbahtuo this residency. Which story do you consider the most important for you? Why?

Why do you think FACTS makes students take the time to listen to fables through this residency?

Stories have the power to change so many things and connect so many people. Explain how you decided on the moral of your story. What did you consider when crafting your story?

Part 2: Reflecting on Presentation

Which part of your performance did you consider easy to do? Why?

Which part of your performance did you consider tough to do? Why?

How do you think you can apply the craft of storytelling moves in your life outside of the residency?

Tips for Teaching the Unit

We have learned so much over the years about making this unit work better for students, teachers, and for our artist. Every time we noticed something working well, or noticed that an improvement was needed, we discussed it and made adjustments. Some of the tips we, as reflective practitioners, are sharing here are major insights into challenges and others are subtle nuances that simply make instruction smoother. We hope our anecdotes shed the light of our experiences as guidance in the instructional practices or challenges you encounter as you create your own folk artist-in-residency storytelling unit.

After Teacher Linda provides some information on integrated folk arts/folklife education units, Teacher Marley presents the structure of instruction for the sessions with and without Teacher Gbahtuo and tips on co-teaching with a storyteller. Teacher Marley then covers many useful tips for teachers in aiding student learning and assisting students with aspects of the unit they find challenging. Teacher Gbahtuo then shares some insights into cultural context that can stimulate other storytellers to reflect upon their own tradition's cultural context and teachers to contemplate the cultural context to include in their units. Teacher Gbahtuo's reflections on his learnings in the classroom provides tips for storytellers and teachers to consider when a member of the community shares their knowledge in the classroom setting.

Folk Arts/Folklife Education

By Linda Deafenbaugh, Ph.D., Folk Arts Education Specialist

Integrated folk arts units[1] are designed to simultaneously address content area goals/standards and folk arts/folklife education goals/standards. Our Liberian storytelling unit is designed as a folk artist-in-residence model where the folk art form is centered. ELA goals/standards and folk arts/folklife education goals/standards are both addressed through students' studying of the folk art form of Liberian storytelling.

Folk arts/folklife education expands the learning resources available to students to include community knowledge and community ways of knowing. By expanding the knowledge students learn and their experiences with different cultures' ways of teaching and learning it, we make progress toward equipping[2] students to positively interact with those who are culturally different from themselves.

Everyone has so much to teach us in this diverse social cultural world.

Folk arts are the creative expressions of a cultural community. To study a folk art form opens the door for students to learn not only that art form, but the culture that gives meaning to it. To study a culture through its folk art, opens the door for students to learn how to investigate a culture and how culture works. When students begin to understand that culture, though complex, is something that is knowable and can be studied, they begin to realize they have ways to understand their own culture and to explore all the cultures they encounter throughout their lives. Folk arts education teaches students the skills of ethnography[3] to explore culture, which include: Noticing deeply, Making meaning, and Sharing with others (data collection, data analysis, and re-presentation).

Folk arts integrated units following the folk artist-in-residence model include a focus on one folk art form (i.e. storytelling) in one culture (i.e. Liberian) taught by someone who is very knowledgeable of that culture's art form (tradition bearer, i.e. Teacher Gbahtuo). In our unit, these rich stories become the texts and examples used to address ELA content area goals. But the stories are not taught in isolation, the tradition bearer contextualizes them and shows how this folk art form is an essential part of the culture that creates them (Community Knowledge[4]).

1 There are many ways to design student learning experiences to accomplish folk arts integration and we invite you to learn more about them through the resources of the professional organization for this field, Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education including their Journal of Folklore and Education.

2 To learn more about folklife education's methods and its benefits to students, see the Deafenbaugh publications from 2015, 2017, and 2023 full citations and links are in the bibliography.

3 There is a useful chart in Deafenbaugh, 2023, (see p.98 of that article) that explains the skills of ethnography in more detail.

4 The Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School Folk Arts Education Pie is available in Deafenbaugh, 2023, (see pp.102-3 of that article). It provides more detail on Community Knowledge, FAE Student Skills, and Cultural Concepts and Vocabulary.

Our units guides sixth graders to approaching the studying of culture by:

1. experiencing one culture's stories and ways of telling stories
2. discovering one culture's traditions (practices done and why) and worldview (what is valued, seen and understood about the world)
3. exploring what is involved in becoming a storyteller in one culture's tradition (Liberian Dan communities)

Through experiencing the telling of stories in the way they are told within this tradition and through the activities on story/storytelling context, the students learn and practice the skills of ethnography.

Ethnography is a respectful way to explore and learn about a culture. When listening to stories Teacher Gbahtuo tells, students practice *Observing deeply*. When puzzling through the multiple morals in the story, students practice *Meaning making*. When creating and telling their own stories to fit within the rules of Liberian storytelling conventions, students practice *Sharing with others* (FAE Student Skills).

Though a tradition bearer can guide us into numerous cultural concepts and processes, in this unit we selected the cultural processes of rules and meanings, i.e. storytelling craft and functions (Cultural Concepts and Vocabulary).

At FACTS, students have many opportunities throughout the nine years they are in the school to learn and practice ethnographic investigation skills, particularly in the folklife education integrated units in different content areas. Each of these integrated units builds upon the units students experienced before and introduces more depth in the ethnographic inquiry skills and in student understanding of cultural concepts and processes. In each integrated unit, the cultural concepts and processes students work with builds nuance in their terminology so they become better equipped to discuss cultural complexities and explain aspects of how culture works with each subsequent folk artist-in-residence learning experience.

Tips From the ELA Teacher Perspective

by Marley Asplundh, M.S.Ed., 6th Grade ELA Teacher

Notes on the Structure of the Unit

A unit that is a residency with a folk artist will be a shift in your classroom. If you aren't used to co-teaching, you will need to adjust to that as a practice, but even if you are, the artist in your classroom likely doesn't have teaching experience. There are challenges that will result from this fact, some of which I lay out in the "Co-Teaching" segment below, but there are also opportunities for a positive shift in your classroom as well.

Last year, I taught this unit December through February, spanning our winter break over the New Year. The students and I had gotten comfortable with each other at that point in the year, and while our routines felt effective, it turned out that a guest teacher was just the thing we needed to change our daily pace.

On the first day of the unit, students were interested, surprised, and a little concerned hearing that they would be learning from a guest teacher over the following weeks. But on Teacher Gbahtuo's first day, they were all in awe: quiet, reserved, and so focused on what Teacher Gbahtuo was saying. It wasn't just the change of pace that created a shift in the classroom environment, but the extent of Teacher Gbahtuo's skill and experience, as well as the magic of learning through story.

During this residency, students learn in a new way that combines school and community ways of knowing and make great learning progress doing so. The co-teaching relationship is essential to learning, and when you learn to navigate it effectively, it helps students meet the standards we set for them. Teacher Gbahtuo is a gracious and understanding co-teacher, ready to defer to my leadership as the classroom teacher. During a given storytelling session, he delivers rich instruction through his storytelling, and I am nearby, monitoring students. When I see them losing focus or I notice an opportunity to deepen their thinking, I feel confident to pause Teacher Gbahtuo to address what I noticed. I wasn't sure how to navigate this early on in the residency, but through building our co-teaching relationship, I knew we had the mutual respect to be able to tag team the instruction. Because of this, students were able to learn through an artform that was new to them while also meeting the standards we expect of 6th grade readers and writers.

The lessons in this unit comprise multiple sessions that are taught across multiple class periods or days. Most lessons follow this structure:

- ✳ Storytelling Session
  - Teacher Gbahtuo is present. His storytelling is most of the teaching.
  - The ELA teacher's role during storytelling sessions is to:
    - » Lead the introduction written into each session. Usually, the introduction serves to activate students' thinking around the topic or moral of the day's fable.

- » Lead students' brainstorming about the moral after Teacher Gbahtuo has finished telling the story. After he finishes, prompt students to finish filling out their Note Taking Sheet for Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories if they haven't yet. The sheet asks students to note a moral. Ask students to share their thoughts in partners or small groups and then share a few out to the whole class. Encourage and note the details of different morals, emphasizing that there is no one interpretation of any story. Once the students have finished sharing their morals, Teacher Gbahtuo will share his interpretation of the moral for that story, as well as the craft and function highlighted in that lesson's story.
- » Lead the activity after the presentation on craft and function. Sometimes there won't be enough time to complete the activity, depending on the lesson, so it can be completed in the post-storytelling session or in other flexible time as needed.

* Post-Storytelling Session
  - Teacher Gbahtuo is not present, so the ELA teacher leads this whole session. This session focuses on students developing their own stories and storytelling skills.

Note: Lesson 2 includes a Pre-Storytelling Session. This is in place of the introduction that is usually a part of the Storytelling Session, because it requires more time. If the ELA teacher would like to take more time with an introduction to a Storytelling Session in another lesson, it may be useful to treat it as its own Pre-Storytelling Session and take time in an earlier class period to teach it.

Co-Teaching

This residency unit is co-taught by Teacher Gbahtuo and the English Language Arts teacher. The ELA teacher leads all sessions where Teacher Gbahtuo isn't present, but they also help to facilitate on the days he is there telling stories. Both teacher and teaching artist are active facilitators and instructors in every session they are present in.

At FACTS, there is an emphasis on the importance and necessity of co-teaching. Teachers and students are taught that all adults at school have something to teach, which is why we address everyone with the title "Teacher." This residency is no different. Teacher Gbahtuo visits to teach something the ELA teacher cannot on their own - his Liberian culture, his storytelling artform, and his own life story. The ELA teacher has a knowledge of the rest of the curriculum, as well as a knowledge of the students, their needs, behaviors, and abilities. The folk artist and the classroom teacher, thus, must be partners and active co-teachers for this residency to successfully introduce students to the artform and coach them to become storytellers themselves.

In order to be able to effectively navigate this co-teaching partnership, the teacher and artist need to establish a rapport. This will help you plan effectively for the unit and will be necessary to communicate and adapt in the moment when it's required. To initiate this partnership, the teacher and folk artist should sit down and meet together before the start of the unit to share expectations and questions. In this meeting, share any important information about the students. Are they likely to interrupt? Are they hesitant to participate? Discuss possible scenarios with the artist and how to handle them if they arise. The artist might not be familiar with the pacing in your classroom, so discuss how to handle a scenario where they are

running over time. Through everything you discuss, emphasize that you want to truly partner with the artist and navigate any challenges with respect.

I started this unit in the winter, after I'd been teaching my students for about 3 months. At this point, they were comfortable with me and often pushed the boundaries in ways that sometimes verged on disrespect. I was aware that young adolescents will naturally do this and felt comfortable correcting them when their behavior was disrespectful or inappropriate. However, I was concerned how this would go with a new adult teaching them. Would they be rude? Would something they say come across as disrespectful? What if they get bored? They don't know how to hide that yet! I also knew Teacher Gbahtuo would be sharing personal stories. What if they were insensitive about what he shared? At the beginning, some of these worries were eased. Teacher Gbahtuo's presence alone was commanding.

The kids were entranced from the moment he opened the first storytelling session and politely followed directions. I was relieved. But, as the lessons continued, I saw that students were getting comfortable with Teacher Gbahtuo the same way they had with me. They weren't as careful about looking like they were paying attention, they started calling out, and sometimes gave snarky answers to questions. And just as I had feared, on the day Teacher Gbahtuo shared a story of a trauma he faced in his life, a student asked a well-intentioned question that came across as prying and was too much to ask Teacher Gbahtuo to answer in the moment.

In these scenarios, I felt out of control not being the teacher leading the lesson. I wasn't eager to interrupt Teacher Gbahtuo's story to tell a student to pay better attention. I also didn't want to intrude on a moment of vulnerability and generosity as he shared something personal as a teachable moment for the students. This helped to teach me a balanced approach I needed to take. I needed to relinquish control and let the students see Teacher Gbahtuo as their teacher. He is a master storyteller who has the skills to teach students something I can't. I needed to let students feel the freedom of folk arts education, learning by doing and experimenting and essentially pushing the boundaries. I also, though, was still responsible for my students and was responsible for making sure they treated Gbahtuo with respect. To this end, I practiced quiet redirections – a tap on the shoulder, whisper in the ear, or catching eye contact and giving a look – especially when an individual student's behavior was impacting their own learning, the learning of others, or starting to show disrespect. When needed, though, I grew comfortable with interrupting Teacher Gbahtuo. This happened when multiple students' behavior was inappropriate and needed to be corrected immediately. I also jumped in when questions got off track or too invasive and suggested that we discuss it later.

After months of working to gain command as the leader of my classroom, it was difficult to practice relinquishing control, but it was an essential exercise for this unit and for the betterment of my teaching as well. This co-teaching relationship challenged me to have to address disruptive and disrespectful behaviors in new ways and helped me build tools that I continue to use beyond this unit.

Moral

In each Storytelling Session, Teacher Gbahtuo tells a story and students share their interpretation of the moral. Students define and practice identifying morals in the first lesson of the unit, before Teacher Gbahtuo comes to share his first fable. It is vital that students have a clear understanding of what a moral is, but it is equally important that they see that there can be more than one moral for each story. A clear and firm understanding of moral from the beginning of the unit will allow for a deepening of thinking

as the unit progresses. Making connections to students' knowledge of theme and motif will help transfer their learning into and out of this unit. So going into the unit, you could make the explicit connection between theme and moral, while also emphasizing the differences. After the unit, you can use the process of identifying a moral to help students with the process of identifying themes and lessons in other pieces of fiction and nonfiction.

Students in 6th grade will grasp the concept of morals and will share more insightful morals as the unit progresses. They will also begin developing their own morals for the fables they write, which may offer teachers a particular insight as well. Students will write fantastical stories with creatures that are aligned with the folk artist's style, but the morals they craft come from their own lives and understanding about the world around them. Their morals might reveal issues in the class or their individual struggles. As issues reveal themselves through morals, use the opportunity to address them. It's possible that a moral might hint at something more concerning than what you can address alone, like a mental health concern or a threat of violence. If your school has mental health support services, ask for help when addressing these issues. Students are learning that stories are a way to make change, even in the most serious situations. Assume that their fables are grounded in the truth, and help them see the power of storytelling first hand by responding to any issues they present.

Craft and Function

Teacher Gbahtuo brings his expertise as a storyteller to this unit beyond just his knowledge of stories. In each lesson, Teacher Gbahtuo shares his moral after the students share their interpretations. He also shares an aspect of the craft and a function of storytelling that relates to his story that day.

Craft grounds the technical elements of this unit. Craft is how students meet the expected writing standards for the unit, but craft is also how students create authentic fables in the Liberian tradition.

Some examples of issues we have encountered in reviewing students' story drafts

by Linda Deafenbaugh

Once, we had a student write a story about suicide, and in another year, a student write a story about violence to others. Their stories went way beyond the harm and even death that was in Teacher Gbahtuo's stories. In both of these cases, we contacted the school social worker and the school principal who regularly deal with concerning situations with students and their families. As teachers, we cannot know what actions might be taken to help students because of confidentiality regulations. But by notifying our social worker and principal, we are confident that whatever additional support the students might need could be put into place, and that at minimum, one of them would talk to the students privately. In both cases, we were advised to let these students continue to write their stories because the opportunity to express their feelings creatively has its own benefits when a youth is dealing with difficulties. However, in neither case were we to permit these students to tell their story to the whole class. Suicide in particular is considered to be too triggering to other young teens - even if these are just animal stories. We thus set up private tellings of these stories to an audience of a teacher or two.

In two other years, we noticed that many students were writing stories about the same social problem. One year a prevalent theme was "mean-girl" stories, i.e. stories of social isolation and exclusion. Another year, the prevalent theme was male predator and female prey where the female animal had to figure out ways to keep from being prey. The 6th grade teaching team agreed with the student writers that the students in those years were actually facing these social problems. Again, we went to the school counselor and principal who were able to provide teachers with resources and activities they could use with their classes to openly discuss these issues. Teachers then led discussions with the students in their daily morning meetings about making their class community a place where everyone felt included, valued, and safe.

As these examples show, student stories can indeed be effective in triggering social change in their community.

The different craft moves Teacher Gbahtuo models and teaches the students range from how to think about characters to how to embody them. He reveals decisions he as a storyteller makes when telling a story, like how to improvise or elaborate on a story for different audiences. This storytelling tradition is unfamiliar to many of our students, so emphasis on craft is essential to their learning as storytellers.

Function is the "why" in Liberian storytelling. As students hear stories from Teacher Gbahtuo, they will learn that storytellers use stories for different reasons, to entertain, to teach, to make social change. At the beginning of the unit, Teacher Gbahtuo proves that he can surprise his audience and make them laugh. As the unit progresses, Teacher Gbahtuo generously and courageously shares personal stories that show students how story can help to understand and forgive after enduring hardships. As important as the technical writing moves students learn through lessons on craft are, the understandings they build about the impact of storytelling are even more important as life lessons.

Scaffolds and Modifications

Teacher Gbahtuo's storytelling is engaging for every audience, but young students cannot learn only by watching. FACTS teachers have developed graphic organizers, worksheets, and rubrics to help students categorize and organize their thinking.

We use scaffolded structure to:

* Help students generate ideas that fit the conventions of Liberian fables
* Guide drafting to include the craft and function techniques they are learning
* Direct revision to produce fables that meet the expectations

These scaffolds are useful for all students, and often necessary for English language learners and students with IEPs. We have combined the scaffolds we use into the handouts provided. If you need more or other scaffolds, please feel free to modify our handouts to meet your students' needs.

Idea generation can be a significant barrier for young writers. Once they have an idea, you can guide them through the writing and revision process, but if they have nothing, it is much more difficult to support them. Use resources early on in drafting to help students come up with ideas that work and guide them away from those that won't.

Common Writing Challenges

There are challenges that come with this unit, both common to other writing curriculum and unique to the specificity of this residency unit. Here are some of the common challenges students face, and advice for how to address them.

Adding Detail

Upon the first invitation to start drafting their first fable, some students may dash off and write until they think they've finished. This enthusiasm may be dampened, though, when you stop by their desk to read through their work, compliment them on their progress, and then ask for more detail. You might find that these students' animal characters aren't quite realistic, or that there are holes in their plot, or that their proposed moral doesn't quite align with the lesson their characters learn. Encourage them to revise. I have

found that regardless of the unit and type of writing, students are resistant to revise, whether it's because they don't feel like putting in more effort, they think it's good enough already, or they aren't sure how to revise. In this case, remind them that following the specific conventions of Liberian fables they have been learning are necessary. Ask them to think like Teacher Gbahtuo. Guide them to the resources they have available to them while they work. Remind them that they will be performing these stories, and it's better to prepare in advance than to try to compensate on the spot in front of an audience.

Unrealistic Characters

In this unit, the students will learn that Liberian storytellers walk a thin line of "realism" when it comes to their characters. The characters talk and enact social and cultural rituals that are not realistic in the animal world. Some characters have access to minimal human-like capabilities or magic and all of them have motivations that we read as human. However, characters are by and large limited to the traits and actions that correspond to their physical characteristics and behaviors in the real world. No story should be about Lion being weak or scared or timid, unless the story explains how Lion came to be strong or brave.

Sometimes, it can be unclear if a student is crossing the line into something unrealistic. This year, a student started drafting a fable about how Rabbit wished to fly and was granted the magical powers to be able to do so and became the first bird. To me, it seemed to not quite fit (one animal becomes another, heavy influence of magic, rabbits don't fly in the real world…), but one of my co-teachers disagreed – we had heard legends that explain how things happen from Teacher Gbahtuo, why couldn't this student write one? I ended up sharing with the student that I felt conflicted about her idea, and we discussed why. This discussion helped her revise her idea while still holding on to the things she liked about it.

Issues With Morals

The concept of a moral might be unfamiliar to your students. When I introduced it this year, I asked my students if they knew what a moral was. Some had a vague sense, but none of them could confidently name that it is a lesson that a story teaches. As we discussed morals and saw examples of morals, they quickly began to understand how it connects to the more familiar concept of theme. As we heard stories from Teacher Gbahtuo, most of them got quite good at identifying morals. But when they started drafting, I discovered I had set my expectations for how they'd be able to craft and write around a moral a little too high to start. Some students started with fantastic ideas for morals, but their fables didn't really teach about it. Some of them had thoughtful fables, and stated a moral that only touched on a surface level problem. Some of them had their hearts set on certain morals, but couldn't come up with an idea for a story that would demonstrate it. There are lessons and resources in the unit that instruct students how to make a moral meaningful, and even how to craft different kinds of morals for different goals. Remind students of these lessons and the resources they have to help them craft their moral-aligned tale. Often, the biggest hurdle here (and in other stages of drafting) is that students get too attached to their first idea and don't want to let go of it. Encourage them that they can create a new idea that will be just as exciting and will make their writing process easier if they let go of the idea that isn't working.

Excluding Plot Elements

Since fables are presented differently and include elements that students might not be used to, (and even because fiction writing is much less common in our curriculum), students may exclude crucial story elements. We have tried to prevent this as much as possible through scaffolding the drafting outline and requiring students to

- list a setting
- assign traits to their characters
- include a beginning, middle, and end to their story
- center the story around a problem
- teach a lesson using a meaningful moral.

If students aren't doing this, look over their outline with them to make sure they've planned all of these elements and are actually including them in their draft.

Ignoring the Rubric

In every assignment that I grade with a rubric, I try to introduce, explain, and have students interact with the rubric as early as possible. The rubric for the fables has been revised and refined to both grade them fairly and to be accessible for students. Despite our best efforts, however, some students don't understand the invaluableness of the rubric as a tool. Start by reminding students that it is a tool that they should use. If it seems like they don't understand what the rubric is saying, try sitting with them and looking at a specific element of it. Show them how you would score them based on that element without revision and work together to brainstorm a revision that would help them improve the score in that section.

Feedback to Students

As a teacher, as detailed in the Common Writing Challenges segment above, you will be giving lots of feedback throughout the writing process. This is likely a common practice for you in your writing instruction. However, students will likely not have experience with a writing unit that relies on feedback in the specific ways it occurs in this folk artist-in-residence unit. A crucial component of the residency is the Feedback Circle.

Feedback circles occur at the end of the unit, once the folk artist has finished telling all of their stories and once students have drafted multiple fables and picked one to perform. In this process, each student will practice performing their fable in a small group of their peers led by a teacher. (The folk artist also leads a group.) Each student will then hear feedback based on the rubric they've been working with while drafting, for it will be used when they will be graded.

It is important to keep the feedback circle groups as small as possible so that each student has the chance to practice and receive feedback within a class period. Ideally, each student will get about ten minutes, five to perform and five to hear feedback. This means that you will likely have to recruit help from teachers who

haven't been present for all of the teaching during the residency, which means they will need some coaching to be able to lead the feedback circle. Here are some suggestions for recruiting and coaching teachers to help run feedback circles:

- Ideally, teachers who volunteer to help have some background understanding of the unit and have maybe been in your class to see the folk artist telling a story. If not, be sure to explain some of the basic conventions of Liberian storytelling. Use the rubric as you explain so that teachers can connect to it as a tool and use it to help guide students.
- Explain the specific role of the teacher in a feedback circle. Both students and teachers are asked to give feedback, but the teacher has a unique perspective that it is important to share. Instruct them to give their feedback last and listen as the other students give feedback, so they can fill in with any advice students didn't give, or reiterate the points that will be most important in their performance.
- The teacher also holds the role of the facilitator of the feedback circle. This doesn't mean the teacher should take too much control. In fact, a feedback circle is at its most influential if students help to run it. This communicates to the performer that feedback from their peers is just as important as feedback from teachers. However, if students aren't giving meaningful feedback, are disengaged, or are being disrespectful, it's on the teacher present to help correct that.
- Invite these teachers to the Story Slam! It will be rewarding for teachers to see how their feedback impacted the students' performance and the students will have a sense of importance having more adults in the audience.

Students also need coaching on how to give good feedback. Use instruction time to teach it as a lesson. First, you need to teach or remind students how to give constructive feedback that won't hurt their classmates' feelings. Structures like a compliment sandwich (compliment, feedback, compliment) can help to remind students to be considerate when sharing their thinking. It's helpful to ask students to empathize when thinking about feedback. Asking how they would feel only hearing negative things about their writing or performing can be a helpful reminder (that teachers sometimes need too).

Beyond the delivery of feedback, you also need to teach the quality of feedback. This once again comes down to the rubric. Comments like "your story was interesting" or "I didn't like your characters" are of course unhelpful, and those can be solved easily by asking students to choose a specific section of the rubric to choose to give feedback on. However, students can still be too general when using the rubric. Feedback like "I like your story structure" or "your dialogue needs improvement" aren't much better. Coach students to use the specific details written into the rubric when giving feedback. "Your fable only had description from the narrator, so you should try to add in more dialogue when the characters are talking to each other" is a much more specific comment that gives the student an idea for how to change rather than leaving them knowing there is a problem that they don't understand how to solve.

Though most of your effort will likely be focused on students giving meaningful feedback to each other, students should also be taught how to receive and use feedback. You might consider including adjusting for feedback as part of a homework assignment after feedback is given. You could frame the assignment like this: "For homework tonight, focus on one area of the rubric that your classmates gave you feedback on.

Practice making whatever improvements they suggested." You might even want to require that they either discuss with a classmate or do some writing about how they plan to do this and then some time the next day to reflect on that process to help them understand what they need to do and to be able to learn from it.

Scaffolding this reflective process for 6th grade students is essential as this kind of self-awareness is something that many of them are still developing. Without guidance, they don't yet understand how to use feedback and reflect on the ways they improve by using it. This unit offers valuable opportunities to build up reflection skills and track how their work improves with feedback and reflection, which if practiced can be used across other writing assignments as well.

Performance

Performance, a central element in this unit, can be daunting for adolescent learners. At the beginning of the unit, they will be skeptical about the Story Slam. However, there are many supports in place to make sure that students will be able to perform and feel proud of their accomplishments.

The drafting, revising, and performing process helps students to develop their writing and performing skills, but it also reinforces the life skills we teach at FACTS of:

* Perseverance through a new task that might feel difficult
* Active listening to give thoughtful feedback and consider what they can learn from other storytellers
* Caring while giving constructive feedback, understanding that it is vulnerable to receive it
* Effort to improve what you have already done

Students are guided through a preparation process for the Story Slam.

1. Students each draft multiple fables so they have a choice which to revise and perform at the end of the unit. Throughout the unit, encourage students to write prolifically so they have the most choice possible.
2. Students receive a rubric that shows what is expected of their written fables as well as their performance. They will be honing the writing skills from the first lessons of the unit, and they will get a chance to practice the performance skills long before the Story Slam. We incorporate games and practice with small groups to make these performance skills less intimidating.
3. Once students have chosen and revised their final fable draft, they will have the chance to practice presenting their fables in a Feedback Circle. Each circle is led by a teacher and has a small group of students. We frame this as a process for growth and teach all students to be thoughtful and caring while they deliver feedback on each other's work. This process is repeated twice before the Story Slam.

The Feedback Circle process is an important revision step, but it won't be enough rehearsal for a strong performance. Encourage students to rehearse their stories at home too in order to be sufficiently prepared. It is especially useful to rehearse after each of the Feedback Circles so that they can rehearse the best version of their fable.

The Story Slam is an exciting culminating event for students and teachers both. The students will be nervous, but they will also be prepared. You can help them by making sure you prepare well for the Story Slam as well.

- **Duration**: Plan on the Story Slam taking more time than you anticipate. It is better to fill extra time than to scramble to find the time to finish performances. It's best to spread it out over multiple days if possible so that students don't get burnt out listening to each other's stories. That being said, make sure to build the same level of excitement and importance across the days so that students don't feel that it's less important to share their story towards the end.

- **Order**: It's smart to pre-plan the order of story presentations. It's best to start with a confident and enthusiastic performer who can set a high energy tone for the Slam. You may ask for volunteers who would like to perform first, or check in with students who you think might do well.

- It is also important to think about when to position students who are nervous or who aren't well prepared. If you think they would benefit from an extra day to practice, consider positioning them later, but if that will just give them more time to worry, reassure them that performing early will mean they can get it out of the way quickly.

    - It is good for students to know when their turn will be, but too much notice isn't a good thing. You might post the order at the start of each session so they can see when they'll be performing without having the time to worry or ask you to reposition them.

- Audience: Students need reminders on how to be good audience members for a performance. Students will often be able to share what they know of being a good audience member if you ask them. It may also help to remind them that they will all be on stage and should think of how different behaviors in the audience might make them feel. It can help to have adults in the audience as well, so consider inviting other teachers to come watch. Teachers who have helped with Feedback Circles or the drafting process will likely be eager to see how the students do, and those who weren't able to support might be interested to watch as well! If there are people in the audience who aren't familiar with the art form, consider preparing an introduction to explain what the students are doing and specific things they have worked on.

    - In order to keep students engaged, I had them work on compliment cards. Each student was tasked with writing compliments for half of the class as they watched. This helped to maintain the positive atmosphere and the task kept students engaged, but it did take up extra time.

- Celebration: Remember that the purpose of the Story Slam is to celebrate the hard work the students have put into learning a new art form, writing and rehearsing their fables, and standing in front of an audience to perform them. Keep the audience engaged, excited, and positive. You will likely need to be grading while you watch, but try to keep focus on the accomplishments rather than the score on the day of presentation.

    - At FACTS, each grade is paired with another grade in a buddy system. Our 6th grade students are paired with 2nd grade students, and throughout the year, they meet to do activities together, often on special celebration days. We didn't coordinate with buddies this year, but we have in the past. So consider how a younger audience could add to the sense of celebration while planning your Story Slam and other culminating activities to wrap up the unit.

Formal Reflection

The students will have learned about Liberian storytelling and become storytellers themselves by the end of the unit. It is important to guide them through a reflection that helps them recognize everything they have learned and accomplished once the unit has finished. The reflection will prompt them to make connections between what they've learned and their own lives to help them internalize what they've learned and make it their own.

Reflection might feel unfamiliar as part of the writing and assessment process for students, but the other forms of assessment in this unit are much more typical to an ELA curriculum. The included rubric offers specific guidance to teachers for grading student work. But it also serves as a useful assessment tool on its own for students since it could be read and understood by them without requiring further explanation.

Tips From the Teaching Artist Perspective

by Gbahtuo Comgbaye, A.A. in culture, science, and technology, Liberian Storyteller

Teacher Gbahtuo's Bio

Our very talented storyteller, Gbahtuo Comgbaye, was born in Nyor-diaplay village in Upper Nimba County, Liberia. His early education was focused on the traditions of the Dan people. He learned all types of stories including: Kweze (Dan term for legends), spider stories, and call and response stories, known as Dangbei among the Dan ethnic group. In the dry season, a traveling storyteller, Kergongor from Ivory Coast, would visit his village with an entourage of musicians to theatrically tell musical fables. Kergongor became an artistic role model for young Gbahtuo. Gbahtuo did not attend western-style public schooling until he was a teen, but once in school, the teacher would enlist his help telling stories to teach the younger children.

During Liberia's civil war, Gbahtuo was forced to flee his homeland, and live as a refugee in Ivory Coast before coming to the United States. Currently, he resides in Philadelphia, where he works as a care provider for adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. He continues to practice his storytelling in community and school performances for adults and children. You can learn more about him and his artform in the 2011 article "Our stories are for survival": Gbahtuo Comgbaye, Liberian storyteller.

Colonialism and Liberia

Although Liberia was not colonized directly by the United States of America, it was under the protection of the US after some of the freed formerly enslaved people were repatriated in Liberia in about 1821. Before the coming of these settlers, Liberia was there - though it was not a republic. When the Portuguese went there, they called it "The Pepper Coast." Later, it was named "The Grain Coast." After 1822, it was named "Liberia" (The free land). The capital city (Monrovia, named after President James Monroe), was once called "Christopolis." Liberia has a total of seventeen ethnic groups. These ethnic groups, called "tribes," are dispersed all over the country with the indigenous residing in the interior of the country.

Most of the tribes, including the Dan ethnic group that I am a member of, have always had their own methods of education. These are the "Bush schools" which are referred to as "Poro" for teenage males and "Sande" for teenage females. The Poro taught the young men how to take care of the family by means of farming techniques for growing food in our tropical rainforest environment, cutting palm, and hunting. On the other hand, the Sande society taught the young women how to keep home by scratching the farm, harvesting, cooking, and serving men.

Storytelling and parables are some of the most important aspects of education one obtains from the Poro and Sande societies. When the settlers arrived from the USA, they made lots of changes to our traditional practices. For example, the settlers only knew large plantation style agriculture and not the slash-and-burn small farm practices traditionally used. One of the first changes these settlers made was to cut down the time of the Poro society from four years to four months, thereby limiting the amount of education one obtains from the traditional educational system. Storytelling is primarily education to us, but the settlers saw it as entertainment, so storytelling remained while many other traditional practices were abolished by the settlers. Although there continued to be entertainment in the villages in the forms of traditional dances which were staged on special occasions including: naming ceremonies, marriages, farming dances and so on, the main form of "entertainment" became storytelling.

Storytelling became a "modern" form of education because it incorporates both males and females.

The Bush schools continued and storytelling continues to be part of them. However, Poro society is only for men and not women. Whatever education that is taught in the Poro is only for men. When men join the Poro bush for four months, women are forbidden from seeing them until graduation. Similarly, when females join the Sande society for three months, they are also not allowed to be seen by any men until they have graduated. Therefore, storytelling became the only form of traditional education that could be shared by both men and women.

What a Typical Storytelling Event Looks Like in My Village

A day or two before the storytelling event in my village, the town-crier (announcer for the chief) will announce around town that there will be a storytelling session in the village. This announcement will specify the venue for the occasion as well as what to bring to the gathering. My village is composed of five quarters (neighborhoods). Each quarter hosts the storytelling events based on the agreement from the quarter chief and the town-chief. Normally, the elders of the host quarter will meet with the storyteller beforehand to enlighten the storyteller on what the burning issues are within the quarter.

Sometimes there have been unresolved disputes in the quarter. Sometimes there had been issues of theft that the chief had been dealing with. This meeting enables the storyteller to select a story to fit the situation. The announcement by the town-crier is done at sundown the day before. Because Liberia is so close to the equator, sundown is very close to 6pm all year round. Around this time, people have all come back to town from their farms or working in the forest and are about to go to bed. In my village, people go to bed around 7pm to 8pm since we get up everyday at sunrise, which is very close to 6am.

Once the venue has been identified, the following day people go and select their spots at the venue during the daylight since the storytelling events are done in the dark, from 6pm to 10pm (sundown to night). Some

people take with them long bamboo chairs to accommodate their family. Sometimes a generous quarter chief whose quarter is hosting the event, takes the initiative to provide sitting places for all. The town chief, the quarter chiefs, the town crier and important visitors from neighboring villages are the dignitaries of the occasion and have to be seated before the storyteller and entourage arrive. Mothers are warned to feed their breast suckling children before the event starts to prevent unnecessary noise during the event. When all are seated, the signal is given to the storyteller to come out.

The storyteller, who may be dressed in one of many styles of dress, will come out with his entourage singing the entry song. For the dress code, the storyteller and group may not dress in the same styles at all times. Sometimes, they wear pieces of woven cloth tied from the right side of the neck to the left side or vice versa. Sometimes they paint designs in a white chalk all over their bodies. (White chalk is the white part of clay soil always obtained near a swampy area). The audience then goes into an applause welcoming the storyteller and his drummers and singers on the stage. The audience during the storytelling in my village do not just clap, every round of clapping is followed by the phrase "Yaa-te-te." This phrase had no direct interpretation. It's just a phrase which signifies that the audience is enjoying the event. Sometimes in the middle of the event, when something logical, funny, nice or enjoyable is said by the storyteller, the crowd will normally burst into this phrase. Depending on the instruments of choice, the storyteller and group will sing songs related to the story of the day and shout "A-saa-pleo." The audience will then respond "Ha-ye-yoo."

Throughout the night, the storyteller will narrate stories related to the hints he had been given earlier by the quarter chiefs. Sometimes the program ends up being one long fable for the entire night where the storyteller will interject jokes, parables and humor. Or the teller tells at least two stories, or the maximum of three stories followed by remarks and comments. Sometimes, the storyteller starts an interesting story and might not get to the end of it when the time runs out. Sometimes, the storyteller intentionally does this to entice the audience to return to hear the ending during the next night of storytelling.

At the end of the session, the storyteller sings the closing song and shouts "Ka-zuo." The audience responds "Baa." At this point, the storyteller and entourage leave the stage while the audience cheers. This is immediately followed by an announcement from the town chief who will announce the next venue, date and time of another storytelling event. On the next storytelling occasion, the storyteller always makes sure to start exactly from where he stopped a night or two earlier and the rounds continued. In the days, weeks and months that follow storytelling events, the parables, morals and the entire lessons from these community occasions become the household discussion throughout the length and breadth of the village.

Drum and Its Importance in My Village

The uses and importance of drums can be noted from the day you are born in my village and begin to notice things. Children all over the community play with drums. Most importantly, there is an enormous drum placed in the middle of the village solely used for communication purposes. There are people designated in the town to play this huge drum and trained in the circumstances when it can be played. For instance, this drum can only be played to inform and alert those on the farms about an imminent attack on the village, an emergency involving the villagers, or a ceremony in the town that is worth celebrating. There is a specific way that this drum is played to indicate if any of the above is happening. The villagers automatically know the sounds and could interpret them accordingly. Those designated to play this drum can be fed with food from

the communal farm grown by the villagers since these people are also considered "Town-watchers" and could not go to the farm to fetch their own food. Drumming is also an important part of storytelling events. Of course, storytelling involves totally different drums, rhythms and beats than the enormous village drum and its communication sounds.

Ritual at the Beginning and End of the Stories

Just as every important meeting/gathering starts with an opening ritual, like a sentence, song or prayer, ritual is just how a storytelling event starts. The only difference is that storytellers choose how they want to start and end. Some storytellers follow the routine in the village where they play a "talking drum" (a drum that is squeezed under the arm to make many different tones that are played in patterns to sound like language). Or they hit a drum a number of times, sometimes four times (a count for men) or three times (a count for women). After this, they shout a Dan language phrase "I-saa-pleo" (are you ready to listen?). The audience answers "Ha-ye-yoo" (yes we are). At the end of the storytelling, a storyteller could play an instrument and shout another phrase "Ka-zuo" (thank you) to which the audience answers "Baa" (yes).

My style of ritual during the storytelling I do is to play a rhythm of choice on whatever drum is available and end it with another rhythm. I make the ending rhythm the same, telling my audience thank you for paying attention. The reason why beginning and ending rituals are important is that people who arrive late at the event will ask one another, "Has the storyteller opened the floor yet?" meaning "Has the ceremony officially opened?" In the village, people rarely come to the storytelling events late. But no matter how dear this event is for the people in my village, some people still got late. It is outrageous for modern Liberians in the diaspora and elsewhere, who now have watches, to be late for ceremonies and meetings. Before colonization, people in my village did not have a watch or clock. Their descriptions of time were:

- morning sun (describing mid-morning) which is between 8:30AM to 10AM
- warm morning sun (describing time from 10AM to 12 noon)
- sunny (12 noon to around 3PM)
- evening hot sun (referring to 3PM to 6PM)

As confusing as this would appear to the western world, Liberians before watches made appointments with one another using these descriptions and honored those appointments well. In this modern era however, many Liberians now have a deficit for time. In fact, it's now often said, "A time for an event is the time you have when you get there." People nowadays get late for events all over the world - no matter how important an occasion is to them.

My Connection to the Art of Storytelling

I act storytelling, I live storytelling, and I talk storytelling everyday of my life. Storytelling has such a soothing effect on my life in many ways. I always view myself as having a positive impact on the society I live in. Unknown to myself, I have been a problem solver. There are things that have happened to me in life that should have left a negative imprint on me, but inversely, it makes me stronger. Each time I get angry, I turn to my own stories for relaxation. One parable my mother always gives, which I still use frequently today is, "People carry your word, but will never carry your silence." When I'm confronted with issues, no matter what the source, I sit back and think, "Is it worthy to respond? What type of response is necessary here?" To me, storytelling is like teaching a lesson from a college lectern or preaching an instructive sermon on a pulpit. "What insight or lesson can the children/people learn today from this moral-filled lesson? Who is going to be impacted by this story?"

Cultural Context

If I'm narrating a story in my village, my audience sees what I see and knows what I know, because we all share similar spaces and grew up talking about them. Here in the USA however, it's quite different. The majority of those constituting my audiences do not know most of the animals I refer to, nor have they seen most of the trees and tree products I always refer to during the storytelling. They do not even know the foods we eat in Liberia when I mention them in class. Because of this, I bring pictures of the animals, trees or the tree products, like "chalk" (herb mixed with soil) which is used to cure the sick.

Social Interaction on the Theme

Each time I am to start a story lesson, I ask the listeners questions relating to the moral themes in the story I will tell, such as: "Who among you had been angry before? How did you deal with it? Who in your family has angered you the most?" I ask these questions when I'm dealing with teenagers and about to tell a story on topics indicative of this age group. It is noticeable for me to do this during the sixth grade storytelling unit sessions. I also do this type of questioning to get the listeners thinking about the theme when I tell stories to adults. Different questions depending on the topic in the story. This turns into a sharing moment for adults as well as teenagers. This section is important to me because what listeners share enables me to

know the baselines people are at when it comes to tolerance of social interaction behaviors. Then at the very end of the story lesson, they often discover insights into whether their approaches or solutions on problem solving need to be revisited or augmented.

Spider Versus Anansi in West African Fables

Spider is Anansi and Anansi is Spider. It's said in West Africa that due to his colorful, manipulative and shady character, he called himself "Anansi" in some countries and referred to himself as "Spider" in others. The truth behind the name comes from a story from the Ashanti tribe from Ghana. It is believed that Anansi was a smart but manipulative god. His father's name was Nyame. According to the tale, Nyame loved his son Anansi and advised him repeatedly to give off his mischievous ways but to no avail. Consequently, the father changed his name to Spider. To date, most people in some parts of West Africa and the Caribbean refer to him as Anansi while some places, especially in Liberia, call him Spider.

Observation of Impact

When I am telling a story, I enjoy observing my listeners to see or hear the impact that the stories are making on them. This feedback is self-evaluation for me. I remember one time when I was narrating the story about the Lion and the Jackal in the sixth grade class at FACTS. When I got to the point where the Lion said to the Jackal, "Come get on my back; I want to prove to the animals that you don't ride my back." The looks on the faces of the students were amazing. They were like "What is going on?" At another time when I shared my tortured story and ended by saying, "I still help those who tortured me." One of the kids in the sixth grade class, repositioned his glasses with his hand on the glasses rather than holding the handle of the glasses. At another time, when I mentioned that "My torture was my holocaust," the teacher in the class that day began to shed tears.

How Can the Students Follow the Rules of Liberian Storytelling

Although students will always be students, there are rules the children should be guided to follow as if they were narrating stories in the village or listening to a storyteller in the village. If a child is learning to be a storyteller, he is learning wisdom. There is a parable in the Dan language which says, "A child who washes his hands clean, eats with the elders." When a child is learning to be a storyteller, s/he must follow the rules entirely, not because s/he is a child, but because that is how s/he learns the rules of storytelling.

Students should first master their stories i.e. know them inside and out. There is nowhere in the village for any storyteller to consult a paper. There is none. There is no cellphone to consult. Mastering the stories is the first priority because the storyteller is the one that wrote and crafted the story.

The next rules concern the process of narrating their stories. Let the student master the craft of changing the voice to make distinction between the characters. This is important because if a person is listening to the story from a distance, s/he will know when the Lion is speaking or it's the Turtle's voice. Making use of the stage is also important because it does not keep the audience bored, as well as, it allows the storyteller to be seen by all members of the audience. Facial expression is a huge one in storytelling. There are times the storyteller squints his eyes in a gesture to explain something. This can be a humorous moment for the

audience. Another important rule to teach the students is not to get on the ground when demonstrating the movement of smaller or crawling animals. Movement demonstrated with the hands is very effective. Beginning and ending rituals signal that you have started or have ended the event.

Heritage and Non-Heritage Students

There are youngsters in the US who came as derivative refugees through their parents. In fact, some of them, including my own, were born in various refugee camps in the world. Liberian immigrant or refugee children that were born in Liberia should learn the culture as well as Liberian Heritage children born here, or born in other parts of the world and then came here. It is important for Liberian Heritage youngsters to learn their culture in the United States because you want them to remember as many aspects of their culture as they can. Assuming that Heritage kids know and understand Liberian culture is a mistake. They may be able to remember parts of the symbols, language, norms, values or artifacts, but their knowledge is incomplete. I basically approach teaching all students as if they are Non-Heritage youngsters.

The time we spend in the storytelling sessions of this unit is not enough time to teach all students (both Heritage and Non-Heritage) the major elements of Liberian culture. After the eight weeks of storytelling, I believe the students usually walk out the sessions having learned something from Liberian culture. One powerful tool discussed in the lessons are the morals of the stories. Morals are life lessons learned from any actions and interactions. This is applicable in all cultures or groups.

What is the importance of learning Liberian cultural knowledge to Non-Heritage youngsters? Well, not everyone looks and acts the same in the world. We all come from all walks of life and different backgrounds. We find ourselves together here in this American culture sharing this space together. In order to share this space in harmony, one must know and accept that not everyone will look, talk and dress the same. Culture is one thing people travel with wherever they go. When the war erupted in Liberia and many of the people fled, they fled with nothing else but their culture. It's therefore extremely important for the Non-Heritage students to learn other cultures so they can learn to live with others and accept them for who they are without judging them.

Craft and Functions of Storytelling

The craft of storytelling is as important as the functions. The craft takes the story and the characters to the audience whereas the function serves as the purpose for the story, i.e. how the story is being used to accomplish something. Every storyteller is different. They employ their own methods of presenting the stories to the audience. Gestures, tones of voice, movements are different for all storytellers. No matter what style a storyteller selects, a few things are common to all storytellers: they have to make sure that the animals are seen in the imaginations of the listeners through their actions on the stage.

Storytellers have to change their voices so that all animals do not talk the same way. The best practice that has proven successful overtime for me is to do self practice (practice without an audience). How will the animals with deeper voices sound when under stress? When angry? When experiencing a caring emotion? Another important technique I suggest 6th graders consider is to detach your own voice from the whole story and use a voice you think fits the animal based on its size. What the students want to avoid is to be

talking like a regular teenager or a disrespectful teen. One mistake that most teens make is that they try to sound like their classmates. This is completely contrary to what one should do to excel at storytelling. If you listen to your friends, use their examples to make yours different and better.

Unlike the craft, function is the product of what the storyteller wants to achieve. The craft and all its presentational techniques and styles are done with the function of the story on the mind of the storyteller. Without a function, craft and everything you do will be of no use.

Let me mention one last but important thing in regards to what I do here in America as a storyteller versus what I do in the village as a storyteller. If I'm doing storytelling in the village, I will not write down the craft and function of the story. The reason is clear. The most important thing is for me to mention the characters. Immediately upon mentioning the characters, my audience already knows the animals and their characteristics. I do not have to further write it down. Here in the US, many of my audience do not know these animals, so I therefore have to improvise by saying more about the animals' characteristics and by showing these characteristics through the craft.

In the village also as the storyteller, I do not have to list the function because the moment the story is going on, the audience already knows what I'm aiming at. Those in the village also live in closer proximity to one another and meet frequently to discuss the stories. But here in the US, I have to give my student audiences the functions because they live in different places and all the people they share with are their colleagues during school time, their teachers, and their parents at home.

Lesson on My Torture Story

At some point in time during my storytelling sessions in this unit, I share a personal story about what I went through during the war in Liberia. The reason I share this story each time is for the students to know that we as humans are unable to avenge ourselves. From my standpoint as a Christian, God says that vengeance belongs to me. So I want the students to know that the force of good surpasses evil. This is a practical way I say this to them, "People who were trying to kill me, I forgive them." This will allow the children to make their own judgment. They can ponder that if a teacher who was harmed severely can forgive those who harmed him, why wouldn't I forgive those who did less harm to me? My main purpose when I tell my torture story is to allow the children to ask all questions they deem necessary to ask. I believe in the philosophy that says: "A foolish question is the one that is never asked."

In addition to this, my advice to other storytellers is that though you were not tortured, always try to be a role model. Storytellers in my village are special. They are not special because they demand respect, they are special because they are people who are exemplary. They are peace builders and peace makers because of their roles in the village. Some teachers may think that this is my personal story I shared with the kids and therefore, it may be an intrusion for the students to ask questions.

Again, I say that it is totally necessary for the students to ask their questions. The questions from the youngsters do not traumatize me, but rather, they strengthen me.

The Lesson I Learned From the Feedback Circles

The feedback circle to me is an opportunity for the students to relax and talk to their peers. It is a challenge for most of the students to stand up before all their classmates and narrate their stories perfectly in the storytelling slam. Some do, but most don't. Even at that, they are aware of their own pitfalls. Because they are aware of their own problems, it's always beneficial when they get in the feedback cycle to talk. It is at this point that they sincerely share opinions with one another.

Another important thing for me is that I consider the feedback circle as a means to evaluate myself. What did I not do correctly? Did I not emphasize this aspect? All these questions can come rolling in my head when I'm in the feedback circle with the students. Because I'm not reading from a script when I'm doing the storytelling, it is a bit harder to remember every little detail that I went through with the Moon class to the Sun class. This may seem little when doing storytelling, but it's really a big deal. Anything the storyteller forgets to emphasize may make a big difference on the minds of the students. For instance, if I emphasize the changing of the voices in the Moon class but forget to do the same in the Sun class, many of the students in the Sun class will have some deficits with regards to voice changes to match the animals. Therefore, I try my best to give my best to all the classes. I try to remember every detail or important things I mentioned in one class to be given to the next class. Many times however, Teacher Linda reminds me and says, "Please remember to mention what you just said to the next class."

Story Slam Celebration

In my village, storytelling season is a really big deal. First and foremost, it is done during the dry season where food is plentiful. The storytelling season is a month-long event for the village. At the end of the season, there is a feast staged by the villagers. Sometimes, the town chief kills a cow for the climax of the session. If the storytellers during the year were only comprised of the village storytellers, a cow may not be slaughtered. The slam will be marked by a big feast where sheep, goats, or guinea fowl will be killed, but not chicken. If the event for the year comprised or included a guest storyteller, like my role model Kergongor from Ivory Coast, the chief and the village elders will have to make sure that the feast contains the killing of a cow. This is done so that foreign or guest storytellers will be attracted or enticed to come for the following year. It is important to mention here why chicken is not slaughtered during any occasions in my village. Chickens are considered "family" to the Nyor region of my clan. The rest of the Dan speaking people in the clan eat chickens, but not my village. When there were intertribal wars in my clan, it was reported that chickens were important for our defense. Whenever enemies came to invade my village, the roosters in the village would crow at unusual times thereby waking the men of the village to get into position for the defense of my village. After years of this observation, the Nyor people who comprised my village decided that eating chicken was a taboo for the people of my village.

Here at FACTS, the tradition has been changing over the years because I'm not always there anymore during the story slam. I wanted it to be the time where the students will be able to see, and taste, a few of the food items indicative of the traditional foods that I mentioned during classes. If we can re-introduce this once more, and have me involved during the planning process, we may not include all of the food, but samples of the mostly discussed ones during the storytelling events.

A few years ago when we initially incorporated food into the unit wrap up celebration at FACTS, I discussed with the students what foods they would like to taste. It was before the covid restrictions on serving food, so we considered which foods could be brought to sample and those ones that were impossible to make and bring to school. For the foods that we could not physically bring, we just showed them pictures of the food and discussed how they are prepared. We calculated the quantity of foods needed to provide tastes and the amount of styrofoam cups and plates including plastic spoons to buy. This was a wonderful addition to the final unit celebration activities in the past and the budget for this was always $100 or below.

Unlike the story slam events in my village, I want to add something else during the story slam or wrap up celebration at FACTS. I want to find a little time to ask the students what they remembered during the sessions and whether they were able to apply any morals after the sessions ended. The students can, and do, write about this, but I also love to hear it from them as it helps me improve too.

Collaborative Process with the Teachers at FACTS

From the beginning of this residency unit at FACTS till now, I have received tremendous assistance from the teachers. I have always worked in a friendly and welcoming environment. When I first came to the school, before my residency had been structured by Teacher Linda, we were all scrambling to make the residency meaningful academically or as a topic that fit somehow. At the time, we did not involve other teachers because the evaluation process was not too clear. The students worked in groups of four or five and a story would emerge for the group. The students dramatized the story with each person in the group either acting as a character in the story or reciting a specific line. At the end of this activity, we usually did not know whether individual students were actually able to create their own stories.

But then we worked together to improve the unit. Now, at this time, everything has come together. To me, each aspect of the process of this unit presents a beautiful learning experience for the students: creativity, critical thinking, critical analysis and public speaking, thanks to our Folk Arts Education Specialist, Dr. Linda Deafenbaugh. Most of the teachers on the sixth grade team volunteer their services during the assessment times for the students (feedback circles and story slam). These teachers really value this learning experience for their students and support it, so it works well. Most of them usually also take their time to come and visit my class when I am telling stories and provide sincere feedback, which always strengthens me. If I have the means to attend a teachers' faculty meeting, I will extend my thanks and appreciation to the staff of the whole school and ask them to make recommendations for how to improve my residency.

Working with new teachers every year has always been a challenge, especially if Teacher Linda is not present at the beginning of the residency. Maybe the phrase "Liberian storytelling" spells something different in each of their minds. My recommendation: if a new teacher takes over the class, the teacher and the folk artist should have their own discussions in addition to the planning meeting with the folk artist, teacher, and director of folk arts at the school. In this way, the folk artist and the teacher can better get to know each other and figure out ways to teach together. I'm sure this curriculum contains much information that will be an introduction and provide welcoming and useful lesson details for any new teacher who will take over the classes of this residency, and guide any future folk artist working with them.

Creating Your Own Storytelling Residency With a Folk Artist

Guidance in Creating Your Own Unit

By Linda Deafenbaugh, Ph.D., Folk Arts Education Specialist

We recommend that those using this curriculum have a storyteller in residence as your partner in co-teaching it. This curriculum is easily adaptable to the storytelling traditions of many African cultural groups, so your storyteller need not necessarily be a member of a Liberian community. Nonetheless, we advise that the storyteller you partner with authentically have the knowledge of an African cultural group's storytelling tradition. We would thus advise against, for example, partnering with someone reading or retelling African folktales from books who was not otherwise a storyteller in an African or African diaspora community context since that person might not have the depth of cultural knowledge needed for this curriculum.

As tempting as it might be to go to the many resources readily available in the form of library books of written out African folktales or videos on the internet of these stories being told, we advise against doing this to teach this folk arts integrated unit. Books and videos treat African folktales as static things (one version was written down, one telling was filmed) and do not help guide students to experience African storytelling situated within the vibrant griot tradition that uses improvisation amidst other craft techniques to achieve a variety of functions in the community. The excitement and dynamic interplay of storyteller and audience is an experience all students deserve to have.

Identify an African Storyteller

This curriculum is geared to working with African storytellers who are part of the African diaspora in the USA. FACTS' community, Philadelphia, is blessed to have such a large and vibrant Liberian community with so many talented folk artists and traditional knowledge bearers. We also have been fortunate to have had folklorists doing fieldwork within the Philadelphia Liberian community to identify some of these tradition bearers. Though you might be in one of the many places that may not have large communities of African immigrants and/or folklorists doing fieldwork to identify traditional storytellers, let us suggest some resources you could consult to begin to identify the knowledge bearers near you:

- A very valuable resource are the parents of your own students, particularly if any are African immigrants, for they can point you to community organizations and people who may know the storytellers in their midst (whether these storytellers have prior experience telling stories in schools or not).
- Community members within a community know who is best at telling stories and can direct you to them. So one option is to enjoy getting to know an African immigrant community, and organizations within it, by doing your own fieldwork investigations!
- To discover who else is doing fieldwork near you, go to Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education. They can direct you to folklorists and fieldwork that has been done in your region.
- Arts education organizations (like regional or state arts education organizations, Young Audience programs, local arts organizations or museums) may have rosters of artists that could include African storytellers who do school residencies.

Learn About Their Tradition From the Storyteller

Once you have identified a storyteller in an African storytelling tradition, talk with them to learn more about the traditional knowledge they could share with your students. You are seeking to build a long-term relationship with this traditional knowledge bearer since we are certain you too will become excited to repeat this unit with students over multiple years. Some productive topics for your get-to-know-you conversations could be: how the storyteller learned, where/when/how they tell stories for their community, what are some stories they tell and why, etc.

Keeping the knowledge bearer grounded in and speaking about their own lived experiences is important. They can always authenticity share with students a wealth of detailed information if they speak about what they know of their own tradition and/or experience in their own community/village. Asking them to speak about the traditions of other ethnic/cultural groups, or of a whole country/region, or of all of Africa is to ask for generalizations and stereotypes. It is uncomfortable for anyone to be asked to be a spokesperson for a country/region/continent or cultural group they have no membership in (besides, being counter to the aims and practices of folklife education). The more you know about your storyteller and their experiences with their tradition, the better you both can plan your unit.

Work with the storyteller to begin to identify the various functions of stories in their cultural tradition. Some useful questions to ask your storyteller might be: Are there different types of stories? Are there particular occasions or events that happen that trigger the telling of one type of story over another type? Are there particular messages or lessons that a storyteller wants their audience to gain when they tell a story or a type of story? In the Summaries of Teacher Gbahtuo's stories, he gives examples of village circumstances that could trigger a storyteller to tell this story. We invite you to share Teacher Gbahtuo's examples with your storyteller as a prompt to stimulate examples from their experiences.

We also invite you to share Teacher Gbahtuo's tips section with your storyteller at some point in your conversations. Though Teacher Gbahtuo's experiences with his storytelling tradition will be different from your storyteller's experiences, there are likely to be some similarities which will open the door for your storyteller to discuss aspects of their tradition with you in greater depth.

Plan Your Unit to Draw Upon Your Storyteller's Strengths

Though the knowledge bearer you find might not have prior experiences in schools, we hope our curriculum will guide both you and them to creating a meaningful learning opportunity for your students. Ask your storyteller what they might hope your students would learn from them by hearing their stories and learning about their storytelling tradition. As your conversations together continue, one entry point might be to share this curriculum with your partnering storyteller and begin planning by engaging in discussion about our lists of selected Liberian craft and functions to determine alignment with their approach to storytelling. Craft and functions that are the same as in our curriculum could be kept and others can be replaced or added from the more possible functions list until your partnering storyteller feels that your students would be learning the important components of their storytelling tradition. Then the storyteller can pick stories from their repertoire that illustrate the aspects of the craft clearly and align with the function highlighted in each lesson.

Just as we as educators are continually developing our education skills, partnering artists also welcome developing their education skills through this partnership. For example, Teacher Gbahtuo did not have prior experience as a folk artist in residence before coming to FACTS, but as a seasoned storyteller, he has connected with the students extremely well from his first day at FACTS to the present. All the cultural knowledge he has shared with our students has been equal in value to the stories themselves. However, Teacher Gbahtuo has more cultural knowledge gained through his lived experiences than he will ever have time to share in the classroom. Through our talking with him about his knowledge and experiences, we helped him to select the parts he wanted to include and to shape those parts in the best way for the unit. Here are three examples:

1. We discussed how some details about the cultural and environmental context of Teacher Gbahtuo's homeland had to either be previewed before each story or added to his stories to increase student understanding[5]. Our urban students had no familiarity with many ordinary Liberian cultural practices or his homeland's climate, flora and fauna. West Africa's two seasons means farming happens in the wet season and this can be accompanied by food scarcity because seeds are in the ground and plants are not ready to eat yet. Harvest with food abundance and celebrations (that can include storytelling events) happens in the dry season. Our students would know that the word "yam" refers to a yellow root vegetable prepared in many American families' Thanksgiving dinners, but never were exposed to the root also called "yam" in West Africa that is enormous in size and is the central starch of many meals in that region of the world. Though palm oil is an ingredient in so many packaged foods our students may eat, they would not know what this plant looks like or how the nut releases its oil when pounded in a mortar and pestle. Though modernization is happening all the time everywhere, including in Africa, many of the daily life practices there are traditional and necessarily involve people cooperating and working closely together to ensure everyone's welfare.

2. A cultural context detail identified as important for student understanding was the cultural tradition of many gathered at mealtime around a common plate of food to eat it with their hands rather than using spoons or forks. Once, Teacher Gbahtuo made a critical comment about the practice, and I was surprised because I had never seen or heard anyone be critical of this tradition. When asked to explain this perspective, he explained how in Liberia, practicing the tradition of communal eating using hands made it harder to control the ebola epidemic when it was raging there. We agreed that the story he was going to share with our students in that lesson had no connection to the ebola epidemic, so we turned our discussion to what were the functions of this eating tradition prior to the epidemic? Gbahtuo described how eating communally affirmed and built unity and community. By seeing who wasn't present for a meal, one could check in on them. He was the oldest son in his family and so got to be the first one to eat from the common plate for the children and youth. He was very aware that he could have eaten the best pieces of meat or the largest portion, but if he did, the youngest children would go to bed hungry. In this way, he learned to care for others and they learned to trust him as someone who would be there for them. After our discussion, Teacher Gbahtuo was better able to select the aspects he would share about his eating tradition to be most informative and educational while keeping within the time limitations he had for providing contextual information for that story.

5 Teacher Gbahtuo decided to preview flora and fauna in each story by showing pictures of the plants and animals before he started to tell the story. He also would briefly explain cultural practices as part of the story, like healing with herbs mixed with mud and applied as poultices, when these customs came up in the tales.

3. Teacher Gbahtuo wanted to share his personal narrative experience of being tortured for it illustrated the function of stories in working on peace. This was so important to him that he wanted to lead off the residency with this function. We discussed how his sharing this difficult experience was beneficial for students, but timing was significant for maximizing educational impact. The students first needed to get to know him before hearing this story so they would be empathetic to his experience. We did not want to risk students treating his torture story as a TV drama designed for viewers to consume which sensationalizes horrific events without presenting their tragic real consequences. We all agreed that the working on peace function would be best shared later in the story sequence, because students would then be likely to connect with his story in a human-to-human way. We also reached out to the school social worker. We wanted to plan support for any students who might find Teacher Gbahtuo's story triggering of emotions relating to events that had happened in their lives or in their families' experiences. We also planned in to check in with Teacher Gbahtuo himself after each telling of his torture story to ensure that he felt emotionally supported as well.

We knew that if students were ever to ask questions about specific cultural aspects, Teacher Gbahtuo could give them so much more information. But first, we needed to establish the basics he would teach all students in the limited time available.

Supporting Your Artist Through Co-Teaching

We saw above how Teacher Marley's sessions are structured, but it's useful to point out that she and Teacher Gbahtuo have evolved to doing more team teaching from working together for several years. When we were just developing this unit, the co-teaching method we first used for the Liberian storytelling folk arts integrated unit was one teaching, one observing[6]. The lead of who was teaching would shift between teacher and artist as the lesson activities changed throughout each session the artist was there. The person observing would always be modeling attentiveness to the one teaching and could assist students needing help or interject a question to the one teaching if they felt the students would benefit by having additional information at that particular moment. A FACTS teacher involved in a different folk arts integrated unit, Avalon Brimat Nemec, explained why planners would pick some co-teaching methods over others this way. "...the pattern of unequal contribution does seem like the most appropriate option at the beginning of any folk arts residency, as the expert bearer of cultural knowledge should be the primary teacher. Not only does this process allow students time to get acquainted with the teacher, it also reflects the classroom teacher's respect for the teaching artist and their way of teaching." (p. 53 Nemec and Osayande, 2020).

Our Building a Structure for Co-Teaching handout can be used as a starting point for discussing with your storyteller which of the lesson segments they would feel most comfortable with to lead instruction. If, for example, your storyteller does not feel comfortable to be the lead teacher in the co-teaching method of one teaching, one observing during the craft and function of the storytelling activity segment of each lesson, consider restructuring that activity to build on their strengths. They have the knowledge of their artform that your students need, but perhaps not the skills or confidence to lead the teaching of it. At FACTS, we have used a method called facilitation in other residencies with this situation. In facilitation, the teacher and folk artist plan out the cultural information and personal experience stories the artist wants to share. Then they plan out the questions the teacher will ask them in the classroom to lead the folk artists through the sharing. Facilitation is especially helpful with community knowledge bearers who do not realize that they

6 Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals (Friend and Cook, 2012) lists six main co-teaching methods: 1) one teaching, one observing; 2) station teaching; 3) parallel teaching; 4) alternative teaching; 5) teaming; and 6) one teaching, one assisting.

need to replicate the experience and content for each class of students they work with, i.e. by telling the same narratives, demonstrating the same craft techniques, and making the same points about story functions. Besides providing an opportunity for artists to develop their teaching skills, facilitation can add a layer to your unit of modeling for students the ethnography skill of interviewing.

Effective co-teaching is built on a strong relationship. Through the process of recruiting/identifying the storyteller, getting to know them and their artform, and meshing this curriculum with the strengths of your storyteller, you will have established the basics of the storytelling unit you will teach and how you will work together to teach it. You can also pick up many tips on teaching the unit from Teacher Gbahtuo, Teacher Marley and myself in the Tips for Teaching the Unit section of the curriculum.

Build in Reflection for Continuous Improvement

The next important step in developing your unit is to establish the reflection opportunities that happen each year. These could be thought of as further opportunities for detailed planning, but ones that are backed by observational data and thoughtful discussion. By setting multiple opportunities for reflecting with your storyteller, all involved will be able to share their observations, discuss issues as they arise and make adjustments to subsequent lessons. Observation and reflection are practices that continually improve the learning experience for students and contribute to building the working relationship of the teacher and storyteller team.

Based on our practice, we provide some guidance for reflection opportunities that we have in place. All minimally involve the teacher and folk artist, but ours often also include others involved in the unit's success such as: Special Education or ELD teachers, the ELA department coordinator, the Folk Arts coordinator, the Principal or even FACTS' Executive Director. I would often be at these reflection opportunities to guide the discussion through an agenda, facilitate that all perspectives and observations were shared, ask questions to probe issues more deeply, and take notes to record the points being raised. I would audio record these meetings just for documentation so we could go back and listen to our prior discussions if ever we wanted to refresh our memories of the direction we were going in.

Reflection opportunities	When occur	Length	Focal topics
Planning meeting	1-3 months before unit begins	1 - 1 ½ hours	Review the unit's schedule with a focus on artist visits and content of those sessions. Review the ideas generated in last year's evaluation meeting of what we want to try this year. Plan logistics that can make each lesson go smoothly. Review strategy for enlisting support with feedback circles and story slam.
Debriefing	Every day the artist is in the classroom	5-15 minutes as close to the day's sessions as possible	What went well today that we should repeat? Any problems or issues today? What should we try differently in the next class session?
Evaluation meeting	1-4 weeks after unit ends	1 - 1 ½ hours	What did we actually do this year? Describe in detail. (Highlight differences from what we planned to do.) What did we observe that went well? What did we observe that did not go well? What did we notice in student work about their learning? What ideas do we have for next year? (What to keep/change) What did/didn't work well for artist/teacher communication/working together?

Reflection is such a powerful tool that we regularly engage students in reflecting upon their learning as well. These student reflections help students make connections and reinforce their learning. The student reflections double as a tool for providing insights into student learning to all teaching the unit.

The reflection sheet we are currently using is here, but we continually review and adjust the questions within it. Our teachers and storyteller have both made changes to the unit, or their teaching of the lessons, based upon what students wrote (or didn't write) about in their reflections.

Tools for Planning Your Own Unit With a Folk Artist

These documents are designed for use by storytellers and teachers, not for use with students. The summaries of stories, functions, and craft lists are what Teacher Gbahtuo uses in this unit. Much in them is unique to him as a Liberian storyteller. However, we present them as examples of stories, functions, and craft conventions that you can use as a starting point when planning your storytelling unit for your students. We also provide details of the co-teaching structure that was very useful with new teachers to the unit as an example for you to consider or adapt for your residency.

Summaries of Teacher Gbahtuo's Stories

Teacher Gbahtuo adapted traditional Liberian stories or created his own stories for this unit. Each is presented here in summary form. For context, he has included morals that would be associated with this story in his village (these are often Liberian parables), and examples of circumstances that would trigger the story to be narrated in his village. The morals he discusses with the sixth graders in unit sessions, and the circumstances in their young lives that connect with the stories, are usually different. Those morals and themes used in the unit are reflected in the lesson plans above.

Why Spider Has a Tiny Waist

Summary

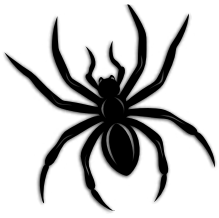
In the Yoo-blee forest in Nimba county, Liberia, feasts were scheduled in two animal villages: one in a village called Yon-lay and the other in Sua-lay. Because the both feasts were scheduled at the same date and time by the animals, Spider invited himself to be at both parties at the same time. He orchestrated a plan. He tied a rope on his waist and brought one end to the animals in Yon-lay and took the other end to Sua-lay and requested that they pull the end of the rope when the food was ready. When the food was ready at the same time, and the animals in both villages pulled their rope end, Spider passed out. From there onward, spiders have had a tiny waist ever since.

Liberian parables associated with this story

One who wants it all, loses it all.

Village circumstances that could trigger a storyteller to tell this story

It is during the harvest season that many villagers who did not make farms go to get food by harvesting for others in return for food. If some villagers choose to be a harvester on two different farms at the same time, they can't do a good job for either, and thereby lose their harvest privilege. When villagers who made farms are getting upset because they cannot get reliable help with harvest, this is the time such a story is narrated.



Greedy Spider and the Magic Drum

Summary

One day during the rainy season, Spider wandered in the forest in search of food. He came across a palm with a ripe bunch. When he poked the bunch with a stick, a seed from the palm fell and rolled in a hole. When Spider followed the palm seed, he arrived in the animal spirit world where he asked for his palm seed. The animal spirit gives Spider a “magic drum” for his palm seed. Playing this drum each time, provides all kinds of delicious food for Spider, his family and the entire animals which were dwelling in the animal village. It was pride and greed that brought Spider’s position as a leader to an end when he returned to demand the animal spirit give him another drum that he did not deserve. One day, the village animals were driven off the gathering by a whip from the drum and Spider himself received the worst of the punishment.

Liberian parables associated with this story

A. Spider’s perspective: One who rides the horse of greed, will arrive at the destination of shame.

B. From the perspective of the animals that were affected: Wrong things happen when you trust the wrong people.

Village circumstances that could trigger a storyteller to tell this story

In the village, there is something called “communal farming” where all members of the village get together and make a farm for everyone to benefit during a rainy season. When the leader of a communal farming organization (or any other organization the people have formed) begins to manipulate those they lead, this warrants such a story to both educate the public that they are being manipulated by their leader, and to educate the leader him/herself that they are being manipulative.

Why Lion and Jackal Became Enemies in the Wild

Summary

Lion had never been friendly with any other animals until he met a rabbit. Bunny rabbit respected Lion and loved him very well as a new friend. Jackal came by one day and told Bunny that Lion was weak. Not only that, but he (Jackal) rides Lion's back like his horse. Bunny reported this to Lion when Jackal left. Furious by this news, King Lion vowed to bring Jackal before the forest animals to prove that Jackal does not ride his back. King Lion looked for Jackal for over three months. (This month can be changed based on my audience and any objective for the story). One day, Lion cornered Jackal in a cave. With no way to escape, Jackal pretended that he was sick. Lion, blinded by his power, took Jackal on his back since he had no other way to carry Jackal. Seeing Jackal on Lion's back, all the animals cheered for Jackal. When Lion realized that he had made a fool of himself because he could not control his anger, he ran in shame, vowing to kill Jackal anywhere he saw him.

Liberian parables associated with this story

A. Lion's perspective: Lack of self control when angry, leads to a commission of crime.

B. Jackal's perspective: Every villain is a hero in his own mind.

C. From the Bystanders' perspectives: What can clawless animals do when a leopard picks a fight with a jaguar?

Village circumstances that could trigger a storyteller to tell this story

This kind of story is narrated in a gathering where two manipulative rivals clashed or where two alpha females from a polygamous marriage have disagreements and the elders in the village have gone to settle the disputes.

Coyote the Troublemaker

Summary

One day in the Deablee forest, Coyote met the Elephant who was the leader of the animal village in upper Deablee. He challenged the bull saying that he could defeat him in a tug-of-war. After this, he went to lower Deablee and met the leader of the animal village there who happens to be a huge Elephant bull also. He challenged this bull too, saying that he could defeat him in the same game. When the agreeable date and time arrived, the Coyote tied the rope on the waist of the bulls and went in the middle of the two villages and shouted, "War is ready." Unknown to one another, the two powerful bulls pulled one another until the entire forest was destroyed.

Liberian parables associated with this story

A. When two elephants fight, the grass suffers.

B. Elephants' perspective: A wise person always examines what is said; not who is speaking.

C. Coyote's perspective: One who causes problems for others also teaches them wisdom.

Village circumstances that could trigger a storyteller to tell this story

This type of story is employed by the storyteller when there is an issue of gossip between two powerful people or groups that may potentially risk the peace in the village

Turtle's Payback

Summary

Once upon a time, in the forest of Blee-pea, there lived a Turtle. Monkey came one sunny day and asked the Turtle for a friendship. "Can you be my friend?" said the Monkey. Turtle was a little bit confused about the fact that he lives on the ground all the time while the Monkey lives in the tree and on the ground. Monkey convinced the Turtle that it would be fine. After a few years into the friendship, Monkey invited Turtle and all his family for dinner to be held in the Monkey's village. Turtle and family walked for miles to get to the Monkey's village. Unfortunately, after covering all the distance, the Turtle found out that the location of the feast was in a tree. Turtle and family were belittled and embarrassed. They returned home. Few years later (Again, at the discretion of the storyteller, this can change to months), the Turtle invited the Monkey in the same gesture. But the rule for eating the food in the Turtle's village was that Monkeys should wash their hands for their hands to turn pink.
Monkey was humiliated.

Liberian parables associated with this story

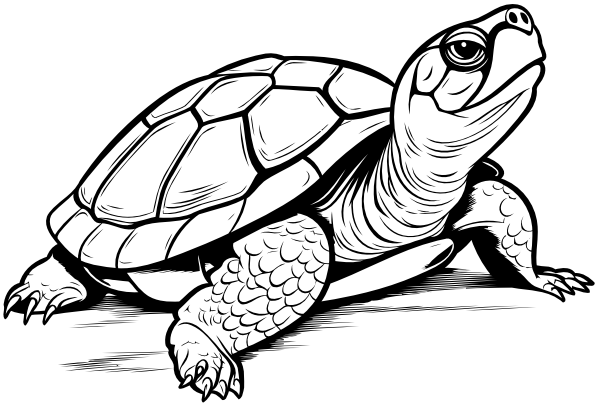
A. General moral: What causes turtles not to climb, also prevents monkey's palm from becoming clean.

B. Turtle's perspective: No matter how long the night, the day is sure to come.

C. Monkey's perspective: Those who betray others must not expect others to keep faith with them. He who sells sand as rice will receive stone as payment.

Village circumstances that could trigger a storyteller to tell this story

In my village, a storyteller employs such a story as this when a mean person (Mean is defined in my setting as someone who doesn't share food) is disappointed by someone who would not otherwise disappoint people.



The Wisdom of the Eagle and the Deception of the Hyena

Summary

One day in the Blaa-blee in Nimba county, Hyena had been caught in a hunter's trap and was fighting to break free when a Monkey came walking by. Hyena asked Monkey to help free him from the trap. At first, Monkey refused for fear of being attacked by Hyena who already has a horrible reputation. With continuous pleading, Monkey agreed to free the Hyena. Just as he feared, Hyena begins to attack Monkey. Eagle, who was on his routine flight hunting for food, saw the fight and came to investigate. Both parties explained and Eagle asked them to dramatize what transpired before the fight. When Hyena got back in the trap, Eagle asked Monkey to go about his business. It's in the trap that Hyena belonged and remained.

Liberian parables associated with this story

A. Eagle's perspective: If wisdom is measured by the size of the beard, then the goat is a philosopher king.

B. Hyena's perspective: A person is not what he thinks; he is what he hides.

C. Monkey's perspective: Anyone can make mistakes; only a fool keeps making the same ones.

Village circumstances that could trigger a storyteller to tell this story

In my village, collective judgment is very common. There are people or families who are always referred to as those who pay others' kindness with evil. When a storyteller notes that people are doing such things, it is time to employ a story of this type.

Deer and Turtle

Summary

Deer and Turtle were friends in the Yoo-blee forest. During their friendship, Turtle loved Deer, but Deer did not love Turtle. He was mean to Turtle and would say hurtful things to him. All these came to a horrible end for the Deer when at Lion's party, Deer challenged Turtle to dance and the drum burst. When Lion asked what it would take to make a good drum? To get at the Deer, the Turtle replied: "a deer skin." Deer was skinned and Turtle danced at the party to the end.

Liberian parables associated with this story

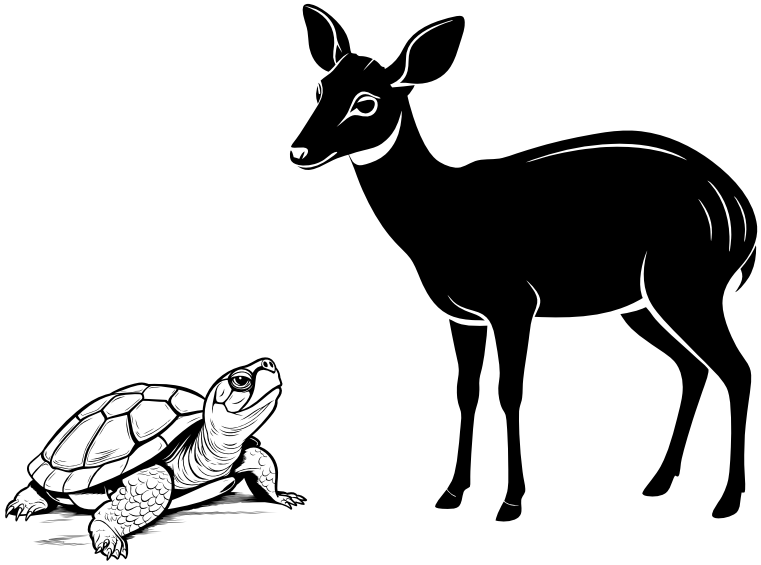
A. Deer's perspective: One who's carrying a clay pot of oil does not throw stones at others.

B. Turtle's perspective: Perpetrator may forget, but victim does not.

C. Lion's perspective: An elephant blinded by strength might inadvertently make itself a messenger for a clever rat.

Village circumstances that could trigger a storyteller to tell this story

This story is narrated in my village for those who always feel like they are more important than others; especially if their attitudes lead to situations that seem likely to potentially put themselves or others at risk.



Baby Mouse and Baby Snake

Summary

Mother Mouse and son, Baby Mouse, had moved near the Cavalla River bank in the east of Buelay town, Nimba county. Mother Snake and Baby Snake were already living near the river bank. One day as Baby Mouse got out to play, he saw Baby Snake playing near the bank. Both struck a friendship. They will lick one another's body as a way of showing friendly affection. When Mother Snake saw mouse fur in the mouth of Baby Snake, she thought that Baby Snake had eaten a prey. Baby Snake told Mother Snake that he just licked the body of his friend, Baby Mouse. Mother Snake told Baby Snake that mice were their prey and not their friends. Meanwhile, Mother Mouse had noticed the wetness on the body of Baby Mouse who told Mother Mouse about the new friend he had made. Alarmed by this revelation, Mother Mouse also advised Baby Mouse to stay away from that friend because they were their enemies. The advice from the parents of both animal babies set the tone for enmities that have existed between the animals ever since.

Liberian parables associated with this story

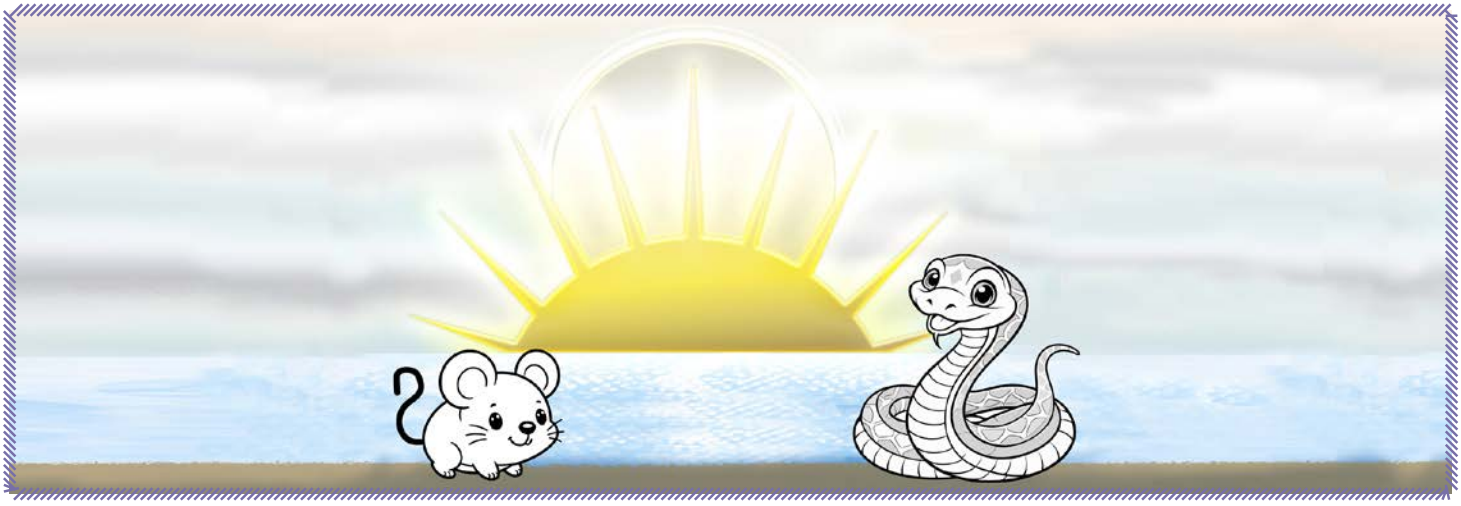
A. General moral: Children do not see race or color; neither do they see boundary between poverty and wealth; if left alone, racism will be an unknown word.

B. Snake's perspective: A cut may heal, but the cut of tongue does not heal.

C. Mouse's perspective: Only a real fool can be fooled twice.

Village circumstances that could trigger a storyteller to tell this story

This story can be narrated in my village where someone makes a distinction between children based on who's better than who.



Functions of Liberian Storytelling

By Gbahtuo Comgbaye and Linda Deafenbaugh

Every day he tells a story in the residency, Teacher Gbahtuo also teaches FACTS sixth graders a different function of storytelling for Liberians:

1. Story as a way to learn your culture (what your culture feels is important), and the ways of your ancestors (how your culture does things) that are passed down generation to generation.

2. Stories as a time to gather together, be in a community, and build community. When Liberians listen to stories, they discuss them and the many meanings each story holds. Each person can hear different things in a story and can relate different parts of the story to various experiences that person has had or will have in their lives.

3. Story to entertain. But storytelling is different from acting because actors say the exact same words with every performance and storytellers do not have to. Storytelling allows for improvisation and shaping the story to what the storyteller feels the audience needs to hear.

4. Stories as a flashlight that shines a light upon an issue and helps people notice something that is happening in their lives or communities so they can discuss or think about the issue.

5. Stories as a way to modify behaviors in others and maintain social harmony. Certainly someone can correct a person's (friend or family member) behavior by telling them directly, but stories are a tool that can be used to correct behaviors by making the person think about what they did wrong while still making the person feel loved and supported and part of the group. Story can function as a "gentle stick" which is better than yelling at someone.

6. Story as social protest against power. Story as a way to change something that is wrong in society. There are many examples – like a politician promising they will fix a problem you care about if you will just vote for them, but when elected, they do the opposite of what they promised. In Liberia, people could not criticize the authorities without punishment. So stories became the way to talk about the situation safely and help people know what was happening. Then people were better informed and could work together to make changes in the society.

7. Story as a way of working on peace, reconciliation, and making the world better.

8. Storytelling helps immigrants build community in a new land. Story helps them hold onto their culture and keep their community strong AND story helps them adjust to the new situation of being in a different society.

More Functions Storytelling Can Serve in a Culture

In addition to the functions Teacher Gbahtuo has selected to highlight in this residency, there are many other functions storytelling can serve in a culture. Here are a few more for your storyteller to consider as they decide on the functions from their culture that they will highlight with your students.

Story functions for a culture could include:

- preserving the history of a group of people
- reinforcing group unity through a common origin story
- previewing the stages of the life journey
- reframing disabilities and impediments as strengths and opportunities for developing latent talents
- demonstrating problem solving and persistence to work through difficult issues people come up against
- providing guidance in handling situations some have experienced, but others have not yet encountered
- modifying behaviors through cautionary tales that show consequences to particular actions
- developing analytic skills to get to the bottom of why characters behaved as they did
- fostering moral reasoning between right and wrong and the lesser of two evils
- puzzling out why all characters did not see the issue the same way (multiple perspectives)
- reinforcing social order by illustrating age, gender and class norms and insider/outsider distinctions
- challenging social order through revealing the flaws and inequities of norms and distinctions
- stimulating imagination and dreams of how things could be different and many, many more

Craft of Liberian Storytelling

Though Gbahtuo described important craft qualities above and the lesson plans indicate some that are taught in each lesson of this unit, we present these and more of the craft conventions Gbahtuo has shared with sixth graders over the years as a list to help your storyteller identify similarities and differences with their storytelling tradition.

The craft of Liberian storytelling consists of a set of performance techniques and decisions the storyteller makes based upon their knowledge of the conventions of their folk art form. These conventions can be thought of as the aesthetic qualities of the artform, i.e. the criteria that allows everyone to know what high (or low) quality should look like. In the village setting, where everyone knows the conventions, the audience can discuss how well or poorly the storyteller did with each aesthetic quality. Students in our unit however need the storyteller to "peel back the curtain" to reveal this behind the scenes structure, thus the master storyteller shares with students the performance techniques and knowledge needed for them to become a good storyteller in his tradition.


Performance Techniques

(body and voice reflect animals, make use of entire stage, projecting voice, use of eye contact, teller changes movements and voice for each character, poise, gesture, tempo/speed, energy – being the characters and helping us see through their eyes)

The Storytelling Event

* Do rituals that signal you have started/ended a storytelling event, and started/ended each story. For storytelling events, we use a drum and call and response to begin and end. For individual student stories, students begin by saying their story's title, setting and characters, and end by stating their story's moral.

* Dress in ways that are respectful to your listeners. Your dress can also indicate something special is about to take place. Teacher Gbahtuo dresses in Liberian style tailored clothing, and tells stories in his bare feet, as ways he connects with the history of the tradition. His mentor teacher in Liberia wore garments made of raffia. Our students either wear the school's special event t-shirt or the school uniform.

Being Heard

* Voice loud enough on every word so all listeners can hear you - even those in the back of the room/space
* Words said clearly and not too fast, so everything you are saying is understood
* Speak slowly and use pauses when needed to be sure the listeners are following along and grasping the animal characteristics

Being Seen

* Your face always points to the audience - No back to the audience! (¾ or profile face to audience can be ok, if you are sure you don't have your back to any of the listeners)
* Move around and use the whole stage so every listener can see you more clearly
* No sitting, crawling or lying on the stage/ground since the listeners in the back of the room cannot see you

Being the Characters

* Change your voice to make distinction between the characters who are talking. A large elephant and a small mouse should not have the same voice when they talk to each other.
* Let each animal's voice show the changing emotions of an animal character. How does Turtle sound when he is empathetic, curious, angry?
* Change your body to become each of the different animals. Move in ways that show characteristics of each animal like in how you stand, how you walk, with particular hand/body/head gestures, like: elephant's confident large rounded shoulders and lumbering sway, rabbit's tentative glancing around and timid hopping, jaguar's viciousness in a claw swipe.
* Use facial gestures to help convey the animal's changing emotions. A squint or a grimace, held long enough and shown to all the listeners, communicates and reinforces crow's confusion or antelope's disgust.
* Make visual the setting by indicating where on the stage each setting within the story is. If the story moves between a forest and a stream, point out where these places are on the stage and go to that part of the stage when the story is in that setting.

Knowledge Needed and Decisions Storytellers Make

(animal characters only, believable animal actions in believable settings for those animals, ritual to mark beginning and end of storytelling session, story changes depending on audience to emphasize something those listeners need, use the space in ways that help the audience imagine/be inside the setting)

Storyteller Knowledge

- Storytelling is something you learn to do. Gbahtuo learned through observation of a role-model doing good storytelling.
- Animal fable stories have morals. Morals are what a culture values. Stories give a context for teaching the values and make their moral message easier to remember.
- Storytellers create the stories they tell. Sometimes new creations, sometimes changing/modifying stories they have created before or have heard others tell.
- Storytellers live their lives so they will be respected - for the listeners will learn the lessons of their stories better if they respect the storyteller as a person. Being a respected person can include: treating others fairly and with respect, and no cheating, lying, cussing, bullying, stealing, etc.
- Storytellers are observant of the social behaviors of others, value their community and want to make their community better for everyone.
- Storytellers are observant of the animals and nature surrounding them to be able to more effectively use realistic animal characteristics and behaviors in their stories and avoid things that are too far of a stretch from the natural animal world. For example: Animals do kill other animals, but with teeth and claws - never guns. Animals do store food to eat later, but not in refrigerators.

Decisions Storytellers Make

- Selecting/changing/creating a story and its moral to tell that will best address an issue or problem area.
- Deciding ahead of time how to intentionally modify a story for a particular audience, such as: making it easier to understand for children, adding specific details that help listeners connect the story to what is happening in their lives/communities, etc.
- Know each story really well so you can easily improvise while telling it in response to the listener's engagement. Stories are not told the exact same way twice. This is in contrast to theatrical acting where an actor delivers memorized lines the same way each time.
- Stories should not be too long or too short. Too long risks losing listener engagement, too short risks not making all the connections within the story to clearly lead the listener to the moral.
- Decide how to use the stage and your body/voice to animate each character so the listeners "see" the animals and what is happening to them. This includes deciding where the settings are on the stage,

how to change your voice for each animal, and selecting movements that emphasize each animals' characteristics and emotions.

* Decisions are needed for everything in the story, including: how to show you are a small animal without you squatting or sitting down, how to show an animal moving fast without you moving so fast the audience cannot figure out what just happened, how to remind yourself to not speak too fast when the animals are arguing, etc.

Building a Structure for Co-Teaching

Co-teaching by using the one teaching, one observing co-teaching method in the sessions in which the storyteller is present. As seen, the teaching role can be designed to productively shift between storyteller and classroom teacher to support and make the most of the storyteller's strengths.

Lesson activities in a session when storyteller is present	Teaching	Observing and Assisting
Setting the tone and intro for that day's lessons	ELA teacher	Storyteller
Ritually opening the storytelling session, telling a story, and providing details that help students better understand the context	Storyteller	ELA teacher
Student engagement activity such as: notetaking, discussion, storytelling technique practice, writing, editing, etc	ELA teacher	Storyteller
Telling of a Liberian storytelling function and a craft technique and ritually ending the storyteller's teachings for that day	Storyteller	ELA teacher
Introducing a learning activity for the post-storytelling session so students can begin to think about it. Thanking the storyteller and transitioning students to their next subject	ELA teacher	Storyteller

The person assisting would always be modeling attentiveness to the one teaching and could assist students needing help or interject a question to the one teaching if they felt the students would benefit by having additional information at that particular moment.

Over time, as the teacher and storyteller get to know each other, they will naturally expand upon their collaboration. Teacher Marley and Teacher Gbahtuo have worked together for several years and now include more team teaching in their unit. Other co-teaching methods may make more sense for your unit. Learn more about co-teaching methods from Friend and Cook (2012). They list six main co-teaching methods: 1) one teaching, one observing; 2) station teaching; 3) parallel teaching; 4) alternative teaching; 5) teaming; and 6) one teaching, one assisting.

Dan proverb

“Wo yi kan ye-dea men gean.”

English translation:

To wade across a river, those who will enter the water next must closely watch those crossing now, since those in the river learned about dealing with currents and hidden rocks from ancestors who crossed to the opposite bank before them.

We sincerely hope that our experience has inspired and provided practical guidance to our readers to include African traditional knowledge in school classrooms. May your students have access to the wisdom of every culture to help them be all they can be. Now we look forward to what you will share with other educators about what you and your students are learning so we can learn from you.

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