



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2012 Volume II: Storytelling: Fictional Narratives, Imaginary People, and the Reader's Real Life

Non-Violent Fictional Characters as a Means to Character-Building: Ferdinand the Flower-Friendly Bull and Chrysanthemum the Brave Blooming Mouse

Curriculum Unit 12.02.01, published September 2012

by Justine A. Ferguson

The Roots of Violence: Wealth without work, Pleasure without conscience, Knowledge without character, Commerce without morality, Science without humanity, Worship without sacrifice, Politics without principles.¹ ~ Mohandas K. Gandhi

Mission Statement

The purpose of this unit is to integrate non-violent curriculum into the culture of the school as well as influence the learning "culture" of the students' homes. This first grade unit will highlight extensive research on brain-based learning and the effects of violence on the brain. It will also emphasize the importance of developing a student's social and emotional intelligence. This unit will also assist the teacher to establish an engaging, empowering, and safe learning environment for inquiry, intrapersonal as well as interpersonal discovery.

The teacher will use the books *The Story of Ferdinand* and *Chrysanthemum* to examine the topics of bullying, non-violence, and friendship. Students will learn life lessons from fictional characters and a real-life leader, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK). Students will learn how MLK coped with and stood up to bullies in his childhood in a chapter from the book *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Young Man with a Dream*. This unit will help build critical thinking skills through experiential group and solo activities, as well as introducing interviewing skills at school and at home. The teacher will be able to encourage family participation with a simple, straightforward, and informative take-home interviewing activity for family members. This unit will partially fulfill the belief that state/national standards need to integrate non-violent curriculum - to help the teacher, student, and parent/guardian encourage non-violent behavior for better learning and healthier development. We need more development in this area for all grade levels.

School Setting

I've taught in the private and public sectors for ten years. I'm entering my eleventh year of teaching in the United States and my sixth year teaching in public schools. I have always approached educating children in a holistic fashion, meaning integrating all subject matter, especially incorporating movement, music, and art into all subject areas whenever possible.

I've been teaching in a tiny public school district that has recently started to share our superintendent temporarily with another school district to cut costs. Our humble district originally consisted of two elementary schools, with a dual principal, and one middle school. Although there is one district, only one of the elementary schools and the middle school are located in one town and the other sister elementary school is separated by a small mountain or "hill." This elementary school has a more diversified student body — multiple cultures, religions, and socio-economic situations. A large population of the students at the school where I teach qualifies for free or reduced lunch and a portion of the students is English Language Learners (ELL). All the elementary school students from both elementary schools merge into one middle school when they enter sixth grade. The middle school has incorporated the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program into its curriculum.

The three schools in the district adopted and continue to implement Susan Kovalik's Highly Effective Teaching/Integrated Thematic Instruction (HET/ITI) model. All schools remain active in creating a common vocabulary with the Lifelong Guidelines that are continually reflected upon during interactions within classrooms and assemblies. The Lifelong Guidelines are trustworthiness, truthfulness, active listening, personal best, and no put-downs. In addition to the Lifelong Guidelines are the Lifeskills which when modeled, practiced, and given space to integrate as a vocabulary help the students assimilate and understand the Lifelong Guidelines. The Lifeskills are Integrity, Initiative, Flexibility, Perseverance, Organization, Sense of Humor, Effort, Common Sense, Resourcefulness, Problem-Solving, Responsibility, Patience, Friendship, Curiosity, Cooperation, Caring, Courage, and Pride. ² The school district's intention is to create responsible and productive world citizens.

On our school website we include the description of the body-brain compatible elements of HET/ITI: "absence of threat / nurturing reflective thinking, meaningful content, movement to enhance learning, choices, adequate time to learn content, enriched environment, collaboration between students, immediate feedback, mastery and the ability to use concepts and skills in real life." ³ All these elements have distinguished our students who practice these guidelines consistently both in their K-8 classrooms and at home from other students in other school districts who enter their freshman year in high school. High school teachers appreciate our students who have acquired this system into their vocabulary and behavior.

Story Setting

I was first introduced to Munro Leaf's *The Story of Ferdinand* as a five year-old child on a ritual excursion to the library. The simple illustrations and the record accompanying it connected me even closer to the character of Ferdinand. I was unaware that this particular storybook was a favorite of Gandhi and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

⁴ I easily became a fan of this peaceful and lovable bull. This unique and gentle bull went against the norms of his species and felt content smelling flowers instead of gouging other creatures as a daily routine.

I also discovered Kevin Henkes's story of Chrysanthemum the mouse during my course as a public school teacher. The entire plot focuses on how she endures being bullied because of her unusual name by a few of her classmates in her first year of Kindergarten. This story spotlights the important Lifeskills of caring, friendship, and courage. It highlights how bullying adversely affects the character's mental health and learning at school. It also emphasizes how we need supportive adults who challenge the dysfunctional norm of enduring cruelty and the antiquated belief that bullying is just part of any student's experience during school life.

Our own dignity can only be measured in the way we treat others.

~Desmond Tutu ⁵

Motivation

Rationale and Research:

A fairly recent viral video was released online exhibiting students bullying a 68 year-old bus monitor to the point of tears. They did not cease their harassment when she asked them to stop their verbal abuse. We are currently experiencing an epidemic of bullying in American schools and all age groups are not immune from bullying.

Bullying is about "contempt –a powerful feeling of dislike toward somebody considered to be worthless, inferior, or undeserving of respect... [Bullying encourages] kids to harm another human being without feeling empathy, compassion, or shame... [The child who exhibits bully-like behavior has] a sense of entitlement, an intolerance toward differences, and a liberty to exclude... In other words, bullying is arrogance in action." ⁶

Bullying begins as young as preschool age, and educators –with the help of parents- are responsible for creating an enriching, safe, and respectful environment for *all* learners.

Just as bullying can range from mild to moderate to severe, so contempt can range from disregard to scorn to hate. The biases at the foundation of this contempt are often deeply rooted attitudes found in homes, our schools, and our society. Any bias or prejudice related to race, gender (including sexual orientation), religion, physical attributes, or mental abilities can and will be used by a bully to validate and justify contempt for an individual child or a group of children. ⁷

It's not easy to witness physically or verbally abusive behavior and it's imperative that we, as adults, intervene and model respectful behavior, and empower our students to stand up and speak up for themselves and others. It is helpful to have an active school-wide and district-wide program for life skills and an anti-bullying policy in place.

We need to address and challenge this culture of violence in our homes, schools, and neighborhoods. Violence goes against our DNA programming of being a cooperative species. ⁸ We have the ability and the power to

change any "culture," which is defined as "local behavioral variations, occurring for non-genetic and non-ecological reasons that last beyond the time of their originators." ⁹ This means that "culture" isn't necessarily in our genes, we can transform any traditionally harmful home, school, or neighborhood culture. We can integrate non-violence curriculum into our state/national standards and reach students through open discussions, literature, art, music, cross-cultural studies, everyday experiences on the playground, *and* family involvement. We can transform our violent culture into a peaceful one.

Brain and Violence

A classic study referenced in Alex Damm's article "Mahatma Gandhi and Character Education in Non-Violence" defines violence as "the deliberate physical or psychological inducing of pain." ¹⁰ The subtle intentional infliction of psychological pain is finally being taken seriously such as exclusion, harassment, "psychological denigration," and "mockery." ¹¹ In contrast, non-violence, according to Gandhi, is a universal belief in "gentleness," "love," and a refusal "to inflict psychological or physical harm on others." ¹²

Researchers have conducted various neurological studies and have shown a significant difference between the developing brains of healthy children and children who have been exposed to family and community violence. As educators we are interested in our students' brain development. Young learners are maturing during a "time of neural plasticity." ¹³ What scientists know about brain development are the following facts: "Brain development is largely guided by genetic factors, but the final form is sculpted by environmental factors and early experience." ¹⁴ Scientists concluded from one study the following affects of violence on the brain:

There is evidence from cognitive neuroscience that violence exposure causes neurobiological changes that have implications for learning, executive functioning, and self-regulation. Findings from neurobiology show that the experience of violence alters the neurochemistry of an individual in ways that may impact learning or may mimic or create learning disabilities. ¹⁵

Researchers have also discovered that emotions regulate how well a student performs when applying to the task of learning something. No matter how much time we devote to our lesson planning for our class, however, if a child is in the middle of freezing up because of a real or imagined threat, the brain is not in any position to store information or create meaningful inquiry or actively participate in classroom discussions. The main goal of the brain during that moment of anxiety is to protect the body and determine whether or not to fight, flee, or freeze. This illustrates an "inseparable body-brain partnership" ¹⁶ or "body-brain connection." ¹⁷

Once we recognize this partnership between the body and brain we can search for systems that honor this knowledge. HET/ITI is a teaching model created by Susan J. Kovalik and Karen J. Olsen. It is a "bodybrain-compatible, fully integrated instructional model... It is a comprehensive model that translates the best of what we know about learning from current brain research into effective teaching strategies and meaningful curriculum." ¹⁸

As educators we should ask ourselves, how do we insure "absence of threat" in our classroom and create an environment where "nurturing reflective thinking" takes place so children can grow and develop safely? "Absence of threat" and "nurturing reflective thinking"-- terms coined by Kovalik and Olsen — are aspects of the nine Bodybrain-compatible Elements for the HET/ITI model:

Given the primacy of emotions to drive attention and thus memory, problem-solving, and virtually

every other aspect of learning and performance, the number one job of a teacher is creating and maintaining an environment free from threat... [This can also mean keeping the environment clear of clutter, being aware about girls' and boys' brain development, not introducing material that's too difficult or too easy for learners - resulting in high-frustration or boredom, and practicing the delicate art of building a connected and caring community where students feel safe physically and psychologically.] Absence of threat does not mean absence of consequences. Misbehavior and failure to complete work have consequences in the real world and so should they in the classroom. What matters is fairness, consequences appropriate to the nature of the infraction, and emotional consistency of those who apply the consequences. ¹⁹

Kovalik and Olsen continue to describe "nurturing reflective thinking" as a "state of mind" which is obtained by losing awareness of time and being completely present, in their own words, "in a place where our heart, mind, and will are simultaneously interacting and to the point that outside distractions are not able to penetrate." It can be a valuable learned practice, this state of thinking reflectively. It also has the added health-benefit of lowering stress and recovering the ability to make decisions and of course to learn new content. ²⁰

The trauma students experience as a result of physical and psychological bullying or other forms of violence can be debilitating and isolating. Peter A. Levine, developer of Somatic Experiencing, and Maggie Kline, child therapist and school psychologist, define trauma in their book, *Trauma-Proofing Your Kids*, as a "result from events that are clearly extraordinary such as violence and molestation, but it can also result from everyday 'ordinary' events. In fact, common occurrences such as accidents, falls, medical procedures and divorce can cause children to withdraw, lose confidence, or develop anxiety and phobias." ²¹ The authors assure the reader that although trauma is a "fact of life," so is resilience, which is "the capacity we all possess to rebound from stress and feeling of fear, helplessness and overwhelm." ²² When we expose young learners to fictional characters as well as real-life leaders who possess "resilience" in their emotional and social experiences, we're aiding our students to internalize these characters' lessons. This connection to a well-loved and admired fictional character's and/or real-life leader's experiences can aid them in making tough choices.

Brain and Fiction

I've noticed in recent years that there's been a trend for public elementary schools to focus a considerable amount of time on teaching skills to young emergent readers on how to read non-fiction textbooks and focus heavily on non-fiction texts since there is a heavy concentration of non-fiction on state standardized tests. This is a disservice to our young emergent readers' emotional and social brain development and possibly an expectation for students to master a reading skill prematurely when they haven't even mastered storytelling elements.

Storytelling is an ancient style of teaching and learning. It is the oldest, most beloved, and effective kind of learning for humans. Listeners and readers can become emotionally connected to the characters shared in stories, thereby remembering a well-told or well-written story even long after it has been told or read. Storytelling is more effective than cramming facts into our head. Also, solely relying on non-fiction textbooks for young, emergent readers seems counterintuitive as well as counterproductive in creating a love for reading when 'how to read a text book' is overemphasized and fiction is stamped out from the lives of our young learners. We must not neglect the power of well-written fiction -- which is rich in vocabulary and opportunities for social and emotional development. We must persevere to maintain fictional narratives as the focal point for young readers.

Of course we must not eliminate non-fictional texts. However, we must remember to view fiction as a valuable tool for learners to learn all subjects. It would be beneficial to take advantage of this genre and add more narrative stories into multiple-subject curriculum units since humans recall stories and the facts integrated into them once they have invested emotionally into the story. Our time and energy as educators are much better spent focusing on introducing new subjects and concepts via narrative. A New York Times op-article written on March 17, 2012, details the incredible amount of activation that occurs in our brains when we read a narrative (or if a story is read to us):

Stories, this research is showing, stimulate the brain and even change how we act in life. Researchers have long known that the "classical" language regions, like Broca's area and Wernicke's area, are involved in how the brain interprets written words. What scientists have come to realize in the last few years is that narratives activate many other parts of our brains as well, suggesting why the experience of reading can feel so alive... The novel... is an unequalled medium for the exploration of human social and emotional life... The brain... treats the interactions among fictional characters as something like real-life encounters... The more stories they [pre-school children] have read to them, the keener their theory of mind... Novels, stories, and dramas can help us understand the complexities of social life. ²³

This has incredible implications for the use of narrative in the classroom — not only for exposing students to great writers – regardless of grade level, but also as instructing in everyday life experiences, which for many, will be a jumping-off point for dialogue and critical thinking skills. It is imperative for children and adults to continue reading well-written fiction since scientific studies show evidence that reading powerful narrative fiction is influential to the reader since it stimulates multiple parts of the brain.

When fictional characters face challenges, the reader joins them on their journey and mimics the emotional experiences the characters are going through. This can aid the reader emotionally and socially. ²⁴ This is the case when students first learn about the main characters in the two storybooks, *The Story of Ferdinand* and *Chrysanthemum*. Ferdinand the bull responds to the other characters in the story in a calm and good-natured manner. While other characters are experiencing melt-downs around him, he maintains this inner-peace that is admirable and can be something the students wish to emulate in their outer and inner lives. Chrysanthemum the mouse experiences bullying from several of her classmates. The reader accompanies her through this trauma and ultimately there is relief and humor at the end of the story to bring the audience to a full closure of the story with Chrysanthemum. It instructs students to critically think about what makes a good friend/colleague/classmate. A fantastic friend and superb scholar accept other people's differences without exclusions and put-downs. We will, instead, pull-up our peers, and especially ourselves. This is such a brilliant complement to our DNA programming of being a cooperative species.

Changing Our Norms: Inclusion and Empowerment

It is valuable for educators to question whether or not some of the tolerated norms that shape our schools and society promote productivity rather than absenteeism –both literally and figuratively- encourage healthy norms of communication rather than dysfunctional norms of communication. Morality "is the product of a complex process that although somehow primed by genes and environment, is ultimately controlled by the brain." ²⁵ Morality is shaped in a person by his/her society or by affiliation with a particular group. This is where the norms of the group influence the person. Norms occur in a "social setting" with the following conditions:

(a) participants believe that there are appropriate and expected behavior for them, (b) participants are aware of support in the setting for such beliefs, and (c) there is demonstrable statistical or objective commonality of such shared beliefs... All three characteristics of norms exist in elementary school, junior high, and high school classes... [There is] the **range of acceptable behavior**, defined as the proportion of behaviors receiving positive approval in the setting, and the **consensus** among students in their approval or disapproval of the behaviors in question. ²⁶

In *The Story of Ferdinand*, Ferdinand is labeled as different because he prefers to smell flowers and live peacefully. He is surrounded by his peers who engage in a certain behavior that's acceptable for bulls. Ferdinand prefers to be a gentle bull even though his peers' behavior is deemed ordinary and the accepted norm is butting heads because it is what bulls do best. He's doing something out of the ordinary within his community. At first his mother is concerned that he doesn't join his peer group, but then she accepts his choices since he is content to rest under the cork tree smelling flowers.

The norms of the characters in the story *Chrysanthemum* are challenged: even though they may appear "innocent" or "humorous" to the reader at first, the reader learns their ultimate destructive nature of the norms of bullying. The characters' constant harassment, exclusion, and ridicule of Chrysanthemum's identity and individuality are diffused by the end of the story. This story highlights the negative effects of bullying and how important it is to have an ally since the bully's goal is to humiliate and exclude his/her victim from the group. The music teacher challenges Chrysanthemum's tormentors by addressing the behavior immediately instead of brushing off the issue as though it is part of the norms of a school community: inclusion and empowerment are the healthy norms of a healthy school, not exclusion and isolation.

What does this mean for the classroom community and the entire school culture as a whole? We have the ability and power to change the "norms" of our school environment, whereas, long ago the belief was that students were expected to encounter some form of bullying during their career as students and this will assist them in forming their character. It is now known to be undesirable and unacceptable, and discouraging bullying and encouraging community building are the ideal norms.

Children and adults can successfully move away from group think/peer pressure that is harmful to healthy "moral independence." We can nurture this in our students by the following methods outlined in Barbara Coloroso's book *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*:

1. Teach [our students] that [they] and only [they are] responsible for the consequences of [their] actions.
2. Build [our students'] confidence in [their] ability to make good decisions.
3. Teach [our students] how to evaluate reasons on [their] own. ²⁷

Faculty at our schools as well as students' family members are key to preventing and/or correcting behavior that is recognized as bullying behavior toward peers in the classroom or siblings at home. Coloroso emphasizes the following steps that family members can implement at home. Items that are highlighted in bold italics can be applied both at home and at school:

1. Intervene immediately with **discipline**.
2. Create opportunities to "do good."
3. Nurture empathy.
4. Teach friendship skills -assertive, respectful, and peaceful ways to relate to others.
5. Closely monitor your child's [*students'*] TV viewing, video game playing, **computer activities, and**

music.

6. **Engage in more constructive, entertaining, and energizing activities.**

7. Teach your child [students] to "will good..." speaking and doing what is right. ²⁸

This list of interventions can help change harmful cultural norms of our home and school.

Observing Our Communication Skills: Seek Clarity, Not Perfection

As adults and children we can all make more mindful choices in our everyday communication that can either lead us to separateness or connectedness within our communities. Mindfulness communication involves the following elements: "paying attention, letting go of control, and acceptance." ²⁹ Communication skills are key to preventing misunderstanding and assisting in conflict-resolution. There is a lot of discussion about mindfulness in the classrooms – and adding that into a daily class routine is beneficial for assisting learners to be in the present moment and help students become resilient. Marshall Rosenberg, the author of *Nonviolent Communication*, explains that communication breakdown occurs when people are imposing their moral judgments on others and not truly listening to the speaker. ³⁰ In the essay, "How Mindfulness Can Help Us Become Better Communicators," the author, Dan Huston lists reasons from Verderber's popular book, *Communicate!* about what causes conflict:

1. [We] are not aware of how we are filtering stimuli.
2. [We] are not practicing good listening skills.
3. [We] may be less sensitive to other people's needs and expectations.
4. [We] are more likely to display emotions than to describe them, since we are not necessarily aware of what we are feeling.
5. [We] are less likely to check our perceptions, or practice other forms of assertive behavior, since we are not aware of what has triggered certain thoughts or feelings within us. ³¹

Finding a communication style that is personally a right fit for the communicator is key to having a successful interaction. Rosenberg states in his book, *Nonviolent Communication* that "we are dangerous when we are not conscious of our responsibility for how we behave, think, and feel." ³² It's vital to observe our speech and listening patterns when we communicate with other people. How we say something is just as important as what we say to someone. We must keep in mind that we also need to give attention to how we're listening to the speaker and how we're receiving the speaker's message.

It's vital for educators to become familiar with various methods of communication styles; whether it be NVC or using something as effective as "I statements," educators need to find something that they're comfortable with consistently using and modeling with their students. It's a valuable tool to share once we've learned about our communication that way we can practice and share these skills with our students and continue to assist in creating a safe learning environment.

Our Missing Element: Empathy

It's not just enough to teach effective communication skills to create a safe learning/working environment; it's important to learn how to empathize with others. This is "the ability to take another person's point of view... and an emotional capacity to feel what the other is feeling." ³³ In fact, it's in our human nature to be empathic toward others and according to Dutch-born primatologist, Frans B. M. De Waal, PH.D., our morality and species depends on cooperation and empathy. ³⁴

There are many ways to build empathy in the classroom. One tool that is usually overlooked is music. "Music has the capacity to both turn on and tone down neural activity in the brain" in fact "scientists say music's ability to touch emotion lies in its ability to forge social bonds and foster cooperative behavior" ³⁵ Neuroscientist Stefan Koelsch of Freie Universität Berlin along with other neuroscientists have conducted studies on music's effect on the brain:

It is particularly effective in establishing a sense of unity, belonging-ness and trust among individuals, just listening to music creates a firestorm of activity in brain areas commonly used to understand another person's thoughts... Studies show that listening to music stimulates brain areas specialized for imitation and empathy that contain what researchers call mirror neurons. ³⁶

Music is therefore one component to help build a calm, compassionate, positively stimulated classroom community.

Gandhi: A Non-Violent Master Practitioner's Perspective

It's imperative as conscious educators and lifelong learners who always strive to improve our teaching and learning environments to reference Gandhi and his point of view of how to integrate and embody non-violent curriculum. His ideas are detailed from an article written by Alex Damm (Wilfrid Laurier University). The author raises the following question:

- How, that is to say, can we educate students' character while remaining academic, while remaining with our students on common, secular ground? ³⁷
- Damm summarizes Gandhi's belief that education should "foster a non-violent character." ³⁸ Gandhi outlined three methods to implement and have a complete non-violent curriculum. First, students can grow as a non-violent community by learning about other people's/culture's religions and to create tolerance and acceptance of our neighbor's religion. Next, students can become involved in social service learning, which is "one way to teach students a character of genuine love" so they will "exercise it through social service." Finally, students can rely on the teacher to provide "an example of non-violent character for emulation." Gandhi continues with the following advice:
- ...All teachers can afford to, validate, and reflect constructively upon students' contributions; show interest in and commitment to students; and refuse to speak in a crass or insulting manner. In this, the teacher sets an example of care or non-violence, without having to use this or other terms the expression of which might be accepted by an individual for her own behavior or normatively to refer to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons.

³⁹

This practice creates a safe learning environment for a student to show up as an authentic learner and exercise "reflective nurturing thinking."

We are human because we belong. We are made for community, for togetherness, for family, to exist in a delicate network of interdependence. ⁴⁰

~Desmond Tutu

Methods

Teachers can use the following suggested activities as a means to scaffold prior to the main lessons for the stories, *The Story of Ferdinand* and *Chrysanthemum*. It is expected that routines/procedures will be reviewed prior to each activity and lesson. All students will explore their belief systems of friendship, caring, and non-violence, connect to the characters in the stories, offer their reflections and personal advice/feedback to the characters through a series of classroom activities: discussion, drawing and writing assignments, take-home activity, and student-created skits.

Creating Our Environment: Inclusion of Students and Their Family Members

At the beginning of the school year we commence our journey by building a safe and engaging classroom community to grow and learn in. I review with my parents at the beginning of the school year the Lifelong Guideline and Lifeskills and we can both use the vocabulary in everyday situations when we're interacting with their children and with each other. I also highlight the unit that we'll be doing together in-class and at home. I focus on team-building since the emphasis is reading to the first graders on a daily basis to increase their vocabulary and assist the first graders as emergent readers. Back-to-School Night is a precious opportunity to share what I'll be doing in the classroom regarding to friendship building and anti-bullying activities - ultimately receiving support from parents to actively contribute in the community building and addressing any matters which will come up during the course of the school year. I also communicate by a class letter every-other-week. It is vital to get family participation for creating our kind and loving school community since most of the time we have to rely on this team relationship for follow through at school and at home. I want to support the parents at home and I also appreciate their help in the classroom too.

The Lifelong Guidelines are the main amendments to our class constitution. We focus on Lifeskills of friendship, caring, and cooperation in the beginning stages of developing our classroom community. It's useful to introduce students at the beginning of the year to the following devices: creating a class constitution together which incorporates the Lifelong Guidelines of being truthful, trustworthy, an active listener, doing their personal best, and being kind (instead of putting down each other, we pull each other up).

This year, with the help of my colleague, we will construct a pirate ship; (our mascot is the image of a pirate, however, it will be made perfectly clear that we are "Peaceful Pirates" aboard the ship). The name of the ship is the "S.S. Friendship" with the message - "We're all in the same boat." We will take photos of the children's heads and place the images aboard the ship with the captains (teachers) wielding pencils. The ship's sails will have the Lifelong Guidelines written on them along with the images of jumping dolphins with the Lifeskills written on the dolphins' backs. The destination will be to an island where a "Community Treasure Chest of Self-Respect" rests. Hanging on a palm tree besides the chest there will be a key with the inscription, "Master Personal Best." The school community introduces one or two Lifeskills a month and as a class we consistently refer back to Lifeskills. The school community learns a pledge with movements to accompany the Lifelong Guideline vocabulary words. The following pledge was invented by our former principal: "I am trustworthy and truthful; and an active listener too. I will do my personal best and use no put-downs on you." I highly encourage teachers to incorporate song/chant accompanied by simple bodily movements to learn Lifelong Guidelines or your school's life skills' program.

Another way to create a safe and collaborative working environment is introducing Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory to highlight the students' strengths and areas for improvement as life-long learners.

The MI Theory is defined as "problem-solving or product-producing capabilities." ⁴¹ The emphasis on this activity is to recognize and celebrate students' strengths as learners and especially to realize that students are capable of assisting others when their peers encounter difficulties with a particular subject matter instead of putting down other students' weaknesses; likewise, they can seek out assistance from their classmates who will be able to share their knowledge. The following are user-friendly terms for Gardner's eight Multiple Intelligences: Thinking/Number Smart (logical-mathematical intelligence); Word Smart (linguistic intelligence); Picture Smart (spatial intelligence); Body Smart (bodily-kinesthetic intelligence); Music Smart (musical intelligence); Self Smart (intrapersonal intelligence); People or Other Smart (interpersonal intelligence); and Nature Smart (naturalist intelligence). ⁴² This sets the classroom up as a collaborative and safe environment to learn and grow in.

Exercising Our Mindfulness in the Classroom: More Mindful Activities The Power of Music on the Mind: Calming, Activating, and Community Building

Educators can use music in the classroom to calm, activate, and encourage community building as well as teach valuable lessons. Students can also benefit from learning and memorizing vital lessons as well as remembering stories through music. According to Kovalik and Olsen, singing songs is a reliable and effective learning technique for the following reasons:

Songs are a wonderful teaching device and, along with storytelling, the best mnemonic available. They combine the power of memorable melody and the rhythm and rhyme of poetry and significantly increase the likelihood that what is learned will become stored in long-term memory. They also provide powerful hooks for retrieving memories. ⁴³

I continue to have a deep emotional connection to *The Story of Ferdinand* because I'm able to recall the lyrics of the song based on the story.

As mentioned before, thoughtfully-chosen music encourages empathy. A great musical CD that deals with differences and creating a safe community is *The Mosaic Project*. All the songs on this CD include wonderful melodies and catchy lyrics such as the following chorus from the song called, "Don't Laugh at Me:" "Don't laugh at me, don't call me names. Don't get your pleasure from my pain. Deep inside we're all the same. We all need hope and care and love. Don't laugh at me." ⁴⁴ Similarly the lyrics in the song "Fighting is Not the Solution" sums up an effective manner for all ages to communicate well together: "Fighting is not the solution. Try conflict resolution!" "Stand in each other's shoes." "I'm going to use my I statements." "I feel (very sad)." "When (I get left out on the playground)." "Because (I like dodge ball too)." "I (just want to play with you)."

Certain kinds of music have beneficial concentrating and calming effects on the nervous system especially if it's relaxing instrumental or classical. I take advantage of this to create a serene atmosphere to cue students that it's a quiet concentration time –whether it be for writing or solo work time, I've had students request "concentration music."

Music is also effective in building community. At the end of the week if students have consistently completed their work, we will have cooperative choice period. At this time students engage in social activities that will enhance students' cooperation skills. One choice activity is music and dance. This is usually the most popular of all the choices. Students are able to choose the music (usually upbeat) and create dance routines and dance with and for their peers. Music is a powerful tool educators can use in their classroom to enhance their students' learning environment.

The Power of Writing: "I Statements"

Students can reinforce their practice of "I statements" with a cloze sentence activity. First, allow the students to get used to the practice of using the "I statements," by demonstrating using the lyrics from the song, "Fighting is Not the Solution." Allow the students to practice with a partner. Offer different scenarios where students can role play in pairs and use the script from the song. After, students can use the cloze sentence activity to write and rehearse with their partners.

The Power of Breath: Breathing Techniques for Concentration and Focus

There are many breathing techniques to choose from to help create a calm and focused classroom. The first breathing/meditation technique I like to teach my class is the activity called, "Concentration Game" which requires a singing bowl. We begin by sitting on the rug or "Contemplation Carpet" with the following guidelines: Prior to the activity students are reminded to continue to breathe as they listen to the singing bowl. It's helpful to remind the students that sometimes we hold our breath when we are in deep concentration. Students begin sitting "criss-cross" on the carpet. It's useful to make them aware of their posture and constricting their breathing capacity. Allow the students a chance to mimic an exaggerated slouch, then show them how to create some length and space in their spine by inhaling and gently making the spine nice and tall, then exhaling and allowing the shoulders to relax down and keeping the chin parallel to the floor. Students actively listen (with voices off) to the singing bowl as the teacher creates a sound with the singing bowl mallet. Once the teacher removes the mallet from the bowl, listeners continue to listen and concentrate on the sound even as it starts to fade away. Once they no longer hear the sound, students raise their hand quietly with voices off. All students continue to have their voices off until all hands are raised. Students may want to remove the sense of sight if they would like to focus more. They may do so on a second round, ask if they notice a difference between keeping their eyes open or closed. The point of this exercise is to concentrate on their breath and the sound of the singing bowl.

Teach students to use breathing techniques when they're anxious - because of a test, or upset because of a problem- or in general to calm when students are unable to monitor and check in when they are over-stimulated and can't seem to ground and focus. This is also useful before a teacher exercises any conflict mediation between students. It's beneficial for the teacher and students if the adult and students practice this together. The teacher can demonstrate on him/herself by holding onto his/her belly with his/her hands, breathe in deeply (until the belly expands and move the hands); then exhale through the mouth.

Another breathing exercise that is beneficial is the 4-4-8 Breathing Technique. Students begin by inhaling through the nose for the count of four; holding the breath - keeping the mouth closed - for a count of four; then completing the cycle by exhaling through the mouth for a count of eight. Investigate other breathing techniques to use with the class and see how students' self-monitoring techniques evolve from a handful of exercises.

The Power of Movement: Brain-Body Connection

I will always incorporate mindful movement with the goal of refocusing or re-energizing the students. For refocusing, I first teach students a series of stretches and dynamic movements beginning from the top of the head and proceeding down to the bottom ending with ankle circles. I will mix in movement that will have the students crossing the midline of their body (referring back to the brain-body connection). I also teach a couple of new yoga poses each week. This is also a job for a pair of students that I like to call, "Concentration Coaches." Once the students are secure in the movements, two students lead their classmates in these

exercises accompanied by mellow instrumental music, or if they need more energy, faster tempo music. All students must ideally do this silently while focusing in on their bodies.

If the students need another energizer I will choose a movement from one of my decks of yoga activity cards and I will also share a breathing technique that is used specifically for energizing the body: "Fire breathing" is simply inhaling and exhaling through the nose rapidly, insuring the breath is not shallow, so students will see their bellies expand and contract in this exercise. Also, as the year progresses and they become proficient in these yoga movements, I have my amazing and attentive assistant choose one pose for the students to do during this time period. Also, if I notice throughout the day that students are either sluggish or wiped out I give them a break to do a standing stretch of their own choosing. I will also integrate music (focus on tempo depending on the mood of the students). Students are able to return to their work refreshed.

The Power of Personal Narratives: Sharing Our Stories

A meaningful community-building activity for the teacher, students, and the students' families is sharing of personal narratives. Initially the teacher shares a personal narrative about a childhood friendship that was memorable for him/her and to describe the activities that he/she engaged in with this playmate (something the students will adore hearing from their teacher and eventually from their family members). The goal is to share the Lifeskills that made this friendship stand out. The teacher will draw a portrait of his/her friend while students take turns sharing examples from the teacher's story of what made the friendship work. The teacher will affirm using the Lifeskills vocabulary: "Yes, my friend was a good active listener," or "My friend was caring and had a great sense of humor." The teacher can draw symbols for each Lifeskill around or on the portrait (This is also an opportunity to explain what a symbol is if students haven't had a chance to review this term.)

Students will practice sharing this activity with their classmates and then with their family members. It would be ideal to interview family members of various ages. First, they may interview a grandparent or other elder, a parent or guardian, and a sibling or cousin. They will recognize with their family members common Lifeskills that their family members from generation to generation exercised with their friends (see First Grade Family Members Interview Activity). It's valuable to set aside some portion of time for each student to share about a "Friend Story" by a family member of their choosing. There's an option for a student to bring in a family member's photo of a friend. The purpose of interviewing multiple generations is so our students can recognize commonly shared Life Skills exhibited by friends throughout the ages.

Coloroso shares Trevor Romain's list "The Top Ten Ways to Keep Your Friends" in her book, *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*:

1. Show them kindness and respect.
2. Stick up for them.
3. Be supportive when your friends need help or advice.
4. Tell the truth (but be kind about it).
5. If you hurt a friend, say you're sorry.
6. If a friend hurts you and apologizes, accept the apology.
7. If you make a promise, keep it.
8. Put some effort into your friendships; otherwise your friends might feel neglected.
9. Don't try to change your friends -accept them the way they are.
10. Treat your friends the way you want them to treat you. And one more thing: Always be thankful for your friends.⁴⁵

This list can always be referred to in class (or at home for that matter). It will provide students concrete ways to practice their Lifeskill of friendship. The following community builder activity encourages students to recognize their classmates as practitioners of good will and empowers compassionate classmates to continue to do acts of kindness.

The Power of Actions: Acts of Kindness

I will also introduce our "100 Acts of Kindness" bulletin board – it will remain up for the entire year so students can read it as their reading skills move from emerging reader to proficient/advanced reader. Our goal is to reach 100 acts of kindness. Once a week I choose five students who acknowledge their classmates exhibiting acts of kindness. They cannot nominate themselves and it can be something as simple as, "Janie held the door for a teacher," or "Logan shared an eraser with me," or "Kevin helped a Kindergartener when he got hurt." I will write down these observations on paper hearts and staple them in rows of ten on the bulletin board. This is also a good review for counting by tens up to one hundred. Students will also be given a visual reminder to keep their hearts open to kindness instead of closed and crumpled up. This is a reminder from a later activity called "The Power of Words and Actions: Blooming and Wilting."

Our Fictional and Real-Life Teachers: Ferdinand, Chrysanthemum, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Family Members

Students will be introduced to two non-violent fictional characters, Ferdinand, a bull, and Chrysanthemum, a mouse. Prior to introducing the character of Ferdinand the bull to students, create a KWL (What I Know/What I Want to Know/What I Learned) chart and process students' prior knowledge and questions about the animal. Define the terms fact and fable. Ask the question from Seymour Simon's *Animal Fact/Animal Fable*, "Bulls get angry when they see red. Is this a fact or a fable?" (It's helpful to have a visual of a bull/perhaps a matador with a red cape.) Take a survey by creating a T-chart with the words, "fact" and "fable." Have a volunteer tally the students who believe it's a fact and the students who believe it's a fable. You may read from the story that it is a fable:

There are many stories that tell us that bulls become angry when they see red. The trouble with these stories is that bulls are color-blind. It's the motion of an object in front of it that angers a bull. Bulls will get angry if you wave anything in front of them. ⁴⁶

This is imperative to share with the students so that they are aware of the true natural behavior of bulls and why Ferdinand is such an anomaly in his story.

After sharing the stories of Ferdinand and Chrysanthemum, it's helpful to share a supplementary realistic fiction book called *Say Something*, which encourages the students to ask the question, "Is it okay to stand by and watch and not do anything about bullying?" Students will also learn about their responsibility as bystanders when witnessing other people's victimization.

After reading *The Story of Ferdinand* I share with the class the childhood bullying experiences of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I read part of the chapter "Learning and Living" from the biography *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Young Man with a Dream* that examines MLK's behavior after being harassed by a bully. He knows how to stand up and speak for himself and he refuses to engage in physical violence. Physically fighting and settling with violence are the norms of his peer group. Readers and listeners learn about the courage, confidence, and integrity it took for MLK to stand by his convictions and do what was right for him and the rest of his community.

Students will also have a chance to interview the characters of the story. One student may volunteer and role-play as either Ferdinand or Chrysanthemum. I will provide stuffed animals for the volunteer to hold. This role-play will occur after each story has been read to the class. The teacher can elicit the first questions to "Ferdinand." This is a helpful activity to do prior to the Character-Think Portraits. Some questions for Ferdinand could be the following (Students may not ask yes/no questions):

1. "Why do you like to smell flowers under the cork tree?"
2. "Why don't you like to butt heads like other bulls?"
3. "Why weren't you sad that you couldn't stay in Madrid?"

The same method can be used prior to creating a Character-Think-Portrait for Chrysanthemum:

1. "What are things you can say to Victoria, Jo, and Rita to tell them to stop?"
2. "How can you get the help from your classroom teacher?"
3. "Why do you think the classroom teacher didn't do anything to stop the bullying?"

This encourages deeper character analysis by the class and can move into role-playing in pairs about ways to stand up and speak out for change in behavior deemed disrespectful.

The duration of this unit can be last up to two school weeks not counting the community-building activities in the beginning of the school year. It's helpful to make frequent references to the characters throughout the course of the year to remind students about which character would they choose to be if they predict what the outcome may be depending upon their actions? As the students' writing abilities strengthen, the teacher may create more opportunities to reconnect with familiar story characters as well as real-life leaders by using letter-writing assignments: creating inquiries about how each character would respond to everyday stresses.

The timeline and amount of activities and material can be adjusted according to the teacher's preferences. The teacher has the flexibility to add his/her content that meets the needs of his/her classroom's demographics and the teacher's personality. Ultimately the teacher, students, and students' family members are responsible for creating a safe environment to learn and grow in. During this time of community building the learners will be learning about the basic story elements, character, setting, and plot along with Lifeskills.

For the discussion-related activities students will share in pairs sequencing of events, summarizing of the story, and the main idea of the story - what the author is attempting to share with the reader and the students' analysis of the Lifeskills exhibited or not exhibited by each character. For the drawing and writing assignment students will create a character-think-portrait of both Ferdinand and Chrysanthemum. A character-think-portrait is modeled first by the teacher. Before designing the portrait, show students several examples of pictures of portraits and have them guess the meaning. A simple description of a portrait is a painting of the head of a person. Next, follow these directions for the remainder of the activity:

1. Vertically tack or tape up a blank piece of construction paper onto the board.
2. Draw an outline of the head of Ferdinand. Then draw in eyes, ears, mouth, and maybe a flower somewhere.
3. Draw out three think clouds.
4. On the side of the board elicit ideas from the students about what Ferdinand may have been thinking throughout the events of the story. For example, "I like flowers." Students create simple sentences. Write out all the simple sentences for students to reference when they arrive at the point to write their sentences onto their lined paper and paste it on the think bubble.

5. Write out one of the sentences in a blank think cloud. Make sure students have strips of lined paper for their writing so they can paste one to three sentences on their self-created posters.
6. Students may get their materials and go to their seats once they've reviewed the directions together.

This exercise can be repeated for *Chrysanthemum*. Students can choose how *Chrysanthemum* is thinking at the beginning, middle, or end of the story. Example, "I like my name," or "I don't have any friends," or "I am proud of my name!" Again, depending on the student's writing ability, he/she may draw/write in one, two, or three think bubbles. At the end of the unit students will design a student self-think-portrait about what they think about friendship, bullying, and one thing they think they can do to build their classroom community. In both the character-think and student self-think portraits students identify the thoughts/beliefs/Lifeskills that were outstanding for both characters. Students will be encouraged to reflect on their personal practice of Lifeskills at school and at home.

The Power of Words and Actions: Blooming and Wilting

Students will have an opportunity to learn about words of kindness. They will hear and see from *Chrysanthemum*'s experience that words of violence are just as harmful as acts of violence. After reading *Chrysanthemum* each child receives a paper heart to actively participate in this activity. Tell the students that this heart represents *Chrysanthemum*'s heart. Explain to students that every time students hear a cruel put-down they fold/crumple the heart. Read from the scene where *Chrysanthemum*'s classmates are taunting her during music class (no page numbers are listed in the book, turn to the page of the music teacher scene). Ask the following questions to the students: Could our words/judgments harm other classmates/family members?

Tell the students that they will have a chance to repair *Chrysanthemum*'s heart. Ask how this can be done. Recall any characters in the story who stood up for *Chrysanthemum* or made her feel respected. Read from the two pages when Mrs. Twinkle is standing up for and uplifting *Chrysanthemum*. Every time students hear a kind word/compliment uttered by Miss Twinkle, students can open up one fold at a time. Tell students they can do acts of kindness and speak words of kindness – both are powerful ways to open people's hearts and strengthen our school and home communities.

Students can focus on the words, "bloom" and "wilt" and embody these words by rereading the passages which explain how *Chrysanthemum* wilts in response to her classmates' cruelty and how she blooms in response to her music teacher and how her self-confidence soars as a result of her "knowing" rather than "thinking" that her name is perfect.

An added vocabulary enrichment activity is to integrate the vocabulary words "bloom" and "wilt" into a life science activity. What do flowers need to bloom? Students will review that if a plant or flower does not receive water, food, and light they will wilt.

Students can be empowered to be loving and kind family members, friends, classmates, and world citizens. Consistent and compassionate non-violent curriculum and character development will assist students to recall the choices that were made by fictional characters and real-life people. Students gain the confidence and self-control vital for their personal and professional success. They can pause and ask one of these questions when faced with a choice to say and do what's right:

- "What would Ferdinand do?"
- "What would Martin Luther King, Jr. do?"
- "What would I do?"

Appendices

Dear First Grade Family Members, August/September, 2012

WE ARE *THE*TEAM!

It is my strong belief that a student is not successful without the help of a team – which translates to teachers, staff, and especially family members. Family members who are active participants in their child's academic career (primary – secondary) encourage students to be dynamic scholars who take responsibility for their learning. Developmental psychologists share that self-discipline and not IQ is one of the most important factors for academic success (1). Family members who model behaviors to help their child become successful self-disciplined scholars lay a strong foundation for their child's future success as an active world citizen. (So, primary caretakers are *crucial* and *valued* role players in their child's academic and social development!)

WHAT WOULD FERDINAND DO? HOW WOULD I TREAT CHRYSANTHEMUM? WHAT WOULD MLK DO?

Our Fictional and Real-Life Teachers

In the beginning of our school year students will be introduced to two non-violent fictional characters, Ferdinand, a bull, in the narrative *The Story of Ferdinand* and Chrysanthemum, a mouse, in the narrative *Chrysanthemum*. After sharing the stories of Ferdinand and Chrysanthemum, we will read together the realistic fiction book called, *Say Something*, which encourages the students to ask the question, "Is it okay to stand by and watch and not do anything about bullying?" We will then learn about a time in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s childhood when he was bullied by a classmate and how he handled the situation.

All students will explore their belief systems of friendship, caring, and non-violence; connect to the characters in the stories and produce reflections and personal advice/feedback to the characters as well as to each other through a series of classroom activities: discussion, drawing and writing assignments, and student-created "I Statements" skits. There will already have been multiple discussions about what makes a good friend and a good scholar by the time we start reading the stories. A fantastic friend and superb scholar accept other people's differences without exclusion and put-downs. We will, instead, include and pull-up our peers. This is a wonderful complement to our DNA programming of being a cooperative species (2).

WHAT WOULD MY PARENTS DO? WHAT WOULD I DO?

Family Members as Teachers – Our Children Will Do What We Do, Not What We Say to Do

One of the most important activities that family members will be participating in is the enclosed take-home *Family Member Interviews Activity*. It is important that students have an opportunity to interview at least three members from three different generations (If family members are far away, students may conduct an interview by phone.)

The enclosed *Family Member Interviews Activity* describes in detail what's required for the students to complete the activity. **This activity is due by _____.** **Please take the time to complete this activity with your child.**

Students will have an opportunity to present their completed activity in class. We will have students share at

certain times during the week. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me about this project. I look forward to our communication and correspondence.

Warm regards,

Your Name Here

Add YOUR SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT Here:

1. Bronson, Po, and Ashley Merryman. *NurtureShock: New Thinking About Children*. New York: Twelve, 2009.
2. de Waal, Frans B.M.. "The Antiquity of Empathy." *Science* 336, no. 6083 (2012): 874-876.

First Grade/*Family Members Interviews Activity/A Good Friend*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions:

In the next two weeks ask at least THREE different family members about their friendships when they were little.

WHO TO ASK:

1. grandparent/great aunt/uncle,
2. parent/guardian/aunt/uncle and
3. sister/brother/cousin

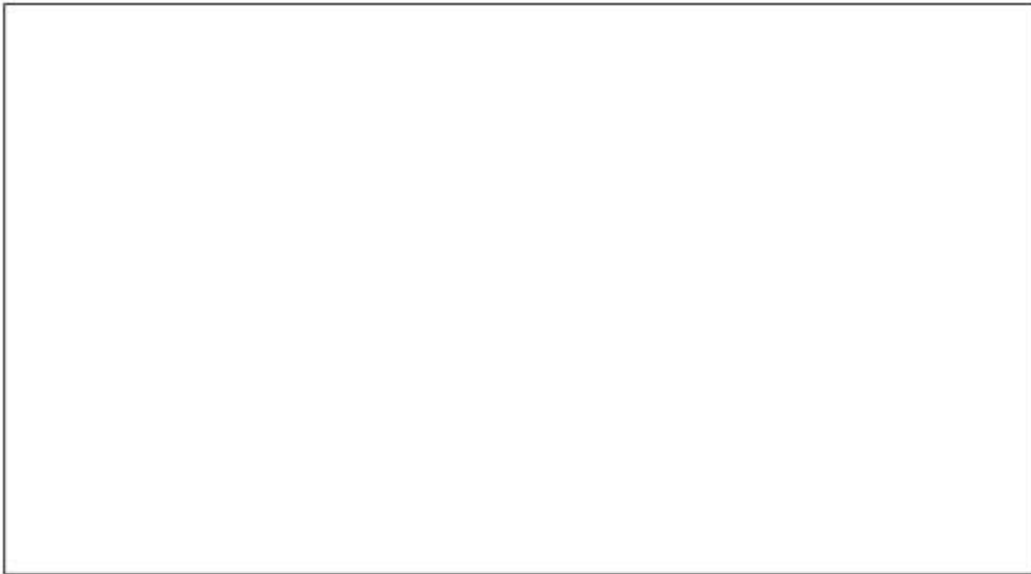
WHAT TO ASK:

"What makes a good friend?"

WHAT TO BRING (optional):

A photo of a family member and his/her friend -label the envelope on the outside with student's name, family member's name and family member's friend's name.

Draw a picture of one of your family members being a good friend to his/her friend. Choose two Lifeskills from the word bank to complete the sentence. Write in the period (.) at the end of the sentence. Read the sentence.



A good friend uses the Lifeskills of

and

THIS SPACE IS USED FOR your own Life Skills vocabulary. The following list is The 18 LIFESKILLS. "They are the day-to-day definition of the Lifelong Guideline of Personal Best. The LIFESKILLS are the personal/social parameters for everyone" – students and adults.*

Friendship~

Integrity~

Initiative~

Flexibility~

Perseverance~

Organization~

Sense of Humor~

Effort~

Common Sense~

Resourcefulness~

Problem-Solving~

Responsibility~

Patience~

Curiosity~

Cooperation~

Caring~

Courage~

Pride~

*Susan Kovalik and Karen D. Olsen, *Exceeding Expectations: A User's Guide to Implementing Brain Research in the Classroom* -Glossary, X.4

First Grade Writing/"I Statements"/Use after the song, "Conflict Resolution"

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Finish the two "I" sentences. Choose the words from the word bank or make up your own. Write in the period (.) at the end of the sentence. Read the sentences to your partner.

Example:

I feel *sad* when I get left out *in a game*.

Because I like *tag too*, and I want to *play with you*.

Your turn:

1. I feel

sad/ mad/ bad/ _____

when I get left out

on the playground./ in a game./ _____

2. Because I like

monkey bars/ playing games/ _____

and I want

to play with you./ play in the game./ _____

First Grade Writing/*Chrysanthemum/Wilt/Bloom*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: In the first box draw a picture when Chrysanthemum wilted in the story. In the second box draw a picture when Chrysanthemum bloomed in the story. Write a sentence to go along with your pictures. Write in the period (.) at the end of the sentences. Read the sentences.

1.	2.
----	----

1. She wilts when

2. She blooms when

Endnotes

1. <http://www.wisequotes.com/>
2. Susan Kovalik and Karen Olsen. *Exceeding Expectations: A User's Guide to Implementing Brain Research in the classroom*, 3rd ed. United States: S. Kovalik & Associates, X.4
3. <http://brisbane.ca.campusgrid.net/home/Highly+Effective+Teaching>
4. Peter D. Sieruta, <http://collectingchildrensbooks.blogspot.com/2008/05/ferdinand-classic-book-oscar-winner.html> (2 May 2008).
5. Desmond Tutu, "Truth and Reconciliation," in *The Compassionate Instinct: The Science of Human Goodness*, 256.
6. Barbara Coloroso, *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, 20-21.
7. *Ibid*, 21.

8. Frans B. M. de Waal, "The Antiquity of Empathy," in *Science*.
9. Robert M. Sapolsky, "Peace Among Primates," in *The Compassionate Instinct: The Science of Human Goodness*, 31.
10. Alex Damm. "Mahatma Gandhi and Character Education in Non Violence: Its Relevance in Religious Studies Today," in *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 4.
11. Ibid, 5.
12. Ibid, 5.
13. Suzanne Perkinsa, "Violence Exposure and the Development of School-Related Functioning: Mental Health, Neurocognition, and Learning," in *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 94.
14. Tomada, Akemi et al. "Exposure to Parental Verbal Abuse Associated with Increased Gray Matter Volume in Superior Temporal Gyrus," in *NeuroImage*, 280.
15. Suzanne Perkinsa, "Violence Exposure and the Development of School-Related Functioning: Mental Health, Neurocognition, and Learning," in *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 89-98.
16. Susan Kovalik and Karen Olsen. *Exceeding Expectations: A User's Guide to Implementing Brain Research in the Classroom*. 3rd ed. United States: S. Kovalik & Associates, 2.2-2.3.
17. Peter A. Levine and Maggie Kline, *Trauma-Proofing Your Kids: A Parents' Guide for Instilling Confidence, Joy and Resilience*, 18-19.
18. Susan Kovalik and Karen Olsen. *Exceeding Expectations: A User's Guide to Implementing Brain Research in the Classroom*. 3rd ed. United States: S. Kovalik & Associates, 2.2-2.3.
19. Ibid, 2.9.
20. Ibid, 2.11.
21. Peter A. Levine and Maggie Kline, *Trauma-Proofing Your Kids: A Parents' Guide for Instilling Confidence, Joy and Resilience*, 2.
22. Ibid, 1.
23. Annie Murphy Paul, "Your Brain on Fiction," in *New York Times*, March 17, 2012.
24. Maurice Elias. "From Preschool to Adulthood: Building Social and Emotional Skills with Fiction." www.edutopia.org/blog/social-emotional-learning-fiction-teaching-maurice-elias.
25. Manuela Fumagalli, Alberto Priori, "Functional and Clinical Neuroanatomy of Morality," in *Brain: A Journal of Neurology*, 2011.
26. David Henry and Wing Yi Chan, "Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Effects of Sixth-Grade Setting-Level Norms for Nonviolent Problem Solving on Aggression and Associated Attitudes," found in *Journal of Community Psychology*, 1010.
27. Barbara Coloroso, *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, 169.
28. ibid, 106 and 124.
29. Dan Huston, "How Mindfulness Can Help Us Become Better Communicators," found in *Teaching with Joy: Educational Practices for the Twenty-First Century*, 51.
30. Marshall Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication*,
31. Sharon Colangelo, Carolina Mancuso, and Mimi Duvall. *Teaching with Joy: Educational Practices for the Twenty-First Century*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 52.
32. Marshall Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication*, 21.
33. Philip A. Cowan, Carolyn Pape Cowan, and Neera Mehta, "Feeling like partners," in *The Compassionate Instinct: The Science of Human Goodness*, 102.
34. Frans BM. De Waal, "The Evolution of Empathy," in *The Compassionate Instinct: The Science of Human Goodness*, 16 -17.
35. Susan Gaidos. "More Than a Feeling," in *Science News*, 24-29.
36. Ibid, 24-29.
37. Alex Damm, "Mahatma Gandhi and Character Education in Non-Violence: Its Relevance in Religious Studies Today," in *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 4.
38. Ibid, 5.
39. www.plato.stanford.edu/entries/morality-definition/
40. Barbara Coloroso, *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, 72.

41. Susan Kovalik and Karen Olsen. *Exceeding Expectations: A User's Guide to Implementing Brain Research in the Classroom*. 3rd ed. United States: S. Kovalik & Associates, X.5.
42. Sara Bernard, "Elementary School Kids Show Their Multiple Intelligences," www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-immersion-enota.
43. Susan Kovalik and Karen Olsen. *Exceeding Expectations: A User's Guide to Implementing Brain Research in the Classroom*. 3rd ed. United States: S. Kovalik & Associates, 10.17.
44. Brett Dennen, The Mosaic Project, © 2004, The Mosaic Project, Compact disc.
45. Barbara Coloroso. *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, 119.
46. Seymour Simon. *Animal Fact/Animal Fable*, (no page numbers in text).

First Grade English/Language Arts and Math Common Core Standards and Science Content Standards For California Public Schools Covered in Unit

on Core State

Reading Standards For Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
2. Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
3. Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

Craft and Structure

4. Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.
6. Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text. (Can be used for 1st person in *Say Something*)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
9. Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories. (Compare and contrast the experiences between the characters Ferdinand, Chrysanthemum, and the girl in *Say Something* – she was a bystander and bullied.)

Writing Standards

5. With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers

and adults in small and larger groups.

- a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
 - b. Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.
2. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- a. Give, restate, and follow simple two-step directions.

Language Standards

Conventions of Standard English

2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- a. Capitalize dates and names of people.
 - b. Use end punctuation for sentences.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

5. With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

Number and Operations in Base Ten (1.NBT)

Understand place value

2. Understand that the two digits of a two-digit number represent amounts of tens and ones. Understand the following as special cases:
- a. 10 can be thought of as a bundle of ten ones – called a "ten."

Life Sciences

2. Plants and animals meet their needs in different ways. As a basis for understanding

this concept:

- a. Students know different plants and animals inhabit different kinds of environments and have external features that help them thrive in different kinds of

places.

- b. Students know both plants and animals need water, animals need food, and plants need light.

e. Students know roots are associated with the intake of water and soil nutrients and green leaves are associated with making food from sunlight.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works Cited

"Brisbane School District - Brisbane, CA - Highly Effective Teaching."

www.brisbane.ca.campusgrid.net/home/Highly+Effective+Teaching (accessed June 20, 2012).

Bernard, Sara. "Elementary School Kids Show Their Multiple Intelligences." www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-immersion-enota (accessed July 20, 2012).

Colangelo, Sharon, Carolina Mancuso, and Mimi Duvall. *Teaching with Joy: Educational Practices for the Twenty-First Century*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

Coloroso, Barbara. *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander: From Preschool to High School: How parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence*. New York:

HarperResource, 2003.

Cowan, Philip A., Carolyn Pape Cowan, and Neera Mehta, "Feeling Like Partners," in *The Compassionate Instinct: The Science of Human Goodness*. Editors Keltner, Dacher, Jason Marsh, and Jeremy Adam Smith New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.

Damm, Alex. "Mhatma Gandhi and Character Education in Non-Violence: Its Relevance in Religious Studies Today." *Teaching Theology and Religion* 14, no. 1 (2011): 3-12.

"elacontentstandards1.pdf ." www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/

[glcfirstgradecurriculum.pdf](#)(accessed June 20, 2012).

Dennan, Brett, The Mosaic Project, © 2004, The Mosaic Project, Compact disc.

Elias, Maurice. "From Preschool to Adulthood: Building Social and Emotional Skills with Fiction."

www.edutopia.org/blog/social-emotional-learning-fiction-teaching-maurice-elias (accessed July 20, 2012).

Gaidos, Susan . "More Than a Feeling." *Science News*, August 14, 2010.

Henkes, Kevin. *Chrysanthemum*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1991.

Henry, David , and Wing Yi Chan. "Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Effects of Sixth-Grade Setting-Level Norms for Nonviolent Problem Solving on Aggression and Associated Attitudes." *Journal of Community Psychology* 38, no. 8 (2010): 1007-1022.

Keltner, Dacher, Jason Marsh, and Jeremy Adam Smith. in *The Compassionate Instinct: The Science of Human Goodness*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.

Kovalik, Susan, and Karen Olsen. *Exceeding Expectations: A User's Guide to Implementing Brain Research in the Classroom*. 3rd ed. United States: S. Kovalik & Associates, 1994.

Perkinsa, Suzanne , and Sandra Graham-Bermannb. "Violence Exposure and the Development of School-Related Functioning: Mental health, Neocognition, and Learning." *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 17, no. 1 (2012): 89-98.

Levine, Peter A., and Maggie Kline. *Trauma-Proofing Your Kids: A Parents' Guide for Instilling Confidence, Joy and Resilience*. Berkeley, Calif.: North Atlantic Books ;, 2008.

Manuela Fumagalli, Alberto Priori, "Functional and Clinical Neuroanatomy of Morality." *Brain: A Journal of Neurology*, 135, no. 7 (2011): 2006-2021.

Millender, Dharathula H., and Al. Fiorentino. *Martin Luther King, Jr.:Young Man With a Dream*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1983.

Murphy Paul, Annie. "Your Brain on Fiction." *New York Times*, March 17, 2012.

Rosenberg, Marshall B.. *Nonviolent Communication A Language of Life*. 2nd ed. Encinitas: PuddleDancer Press, 2007.

Sieruta, Peter D.. "Ferdinand: Classic Book, Oscar Winner, Song, Tattoo." *Collecting Children's Books*.<http://collectingchildrensbooks.blogspot.com/2008/05/ferdinand-classic-book-oscar-winner.html> (accessed June 20, 2012).

Simon, Seymour. *Animal fact/animal fable*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1979.

The Mosaic Project, Dennen Brett. *Children's Songs for Peace and a Better World*, 2004.

Tomada, Akemi, Yi-Shin Sheu, Keren Rebi, Hanako Suzuki, Carryl Navalta, Ann Polcari, and Martin Teicher. "Exposure to Parental Verbal Abuse Associated with Increased Gray Matter Volume in Superior Temporal Gyrus." *NeuroImage* 54, no. 1 (2012): 280-206. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20483374> (accessed June 20, 2012).

Tutu, Desmond. "Truth and Reconciliation," in *The Compassionate Instinct: The Science of Human Goodness*. Editors Keltner, Dacher, Jason Marsh, and Jeremy Adam Smith New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.

de Waal, Frans B.M.. "The Antiquity of Empathy." *Science* 336, no. 6083 (2012): 874-876.

www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/sciencestnd.pdf

www.plato.stanford.edu/entries/morality-definition/

www.wisequotes.com/ (accessed June 20, 2012).

Resources/Recommends

For Younger Student Audiences/Readers

Chapman, Carol, and Kelly Oechsli. *Herbie's Troubles*. New York: Dutton, 1981.

Hajdusiewicz, Babs Bell. "Bulldog Bully." *More! Phonics Through Poetry: Teaching Phonemic Awareness Through Poetry*. Culver City, CA: Simon & Shuster, Good Year Books, 1999.

Henkes, Kevin. *Chrysanthemum*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1991.

Howe, James, and Melissa Sweet. *Pinky and Rex and the Bully*. New York, N.Y.: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1996.

Leaf, Munro, and Robert Lawson. *The Story of Ferdinand*. New York: Viking Press, 1936.

Penn, Audrey, and Barbara Gibson. *Chester Raccoon and the Big Bad Bully*. Terre Haute, IN: Tanglewood Press, 2008.

Seskin, Steve, Allen Shamblin, and Glin Dibley. *Don't Laugh at Me*. Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press, 2002.

Simon, Seymour. *Animal Fact/Animal Fable*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1979.

Spelman, Cornelia, and Nancy Cote. *When I feel Angry*. Morton Grove, Ill.: A. Whitman, 2000.

White, E. B., Garth Williams, and Edith Goodkind Rosenwald. *Charlotte's Web*. New York: Harper, 1952.

Yarrow, Peter, Laura Parker Roerden, and Linda Lantieri. *Don't Laugh at Me*. New York: Operation Respect, 2000.

For Older Student Audiences/Readers

Lineger, Maria. *The Project Happiness Handbook*. Palo Alto, CA.: Project Happiness, Inc., 2009.

Millender, Dharathula H., and Al. Fiorentino. *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Young Man with a Dream*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1983.

Pastan, Amy. *Gandhi*. New York: DK Pub, 2006.

Seskin, Steve, Allen Shamblin, and Glin Dibley. *Don't Laugh at Me*. Berkeley, CA.: Tricycle Press, 2002.

White, E. B., *Charlotte's Web*. New York: Harper, 1952.

For Educators/Parents

Bronson, Po, and Ashley Merryman. *NurtureShock: New Thinking About Children*. New York: Twelve, 2009.

Brown, Lyn Mikel, and Mary Madden. *From Adversaries to Allies: A Curriculum For Change*. Waterville, ME: Hardy Girls Healthy Women, 2005.

Colangelo, Sharon, Carolina Mancuso, and Mimi Duvall. *Teaching with Joy: Educational Practices for the Twenty-First Century*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

Coloroso, Barbara. *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander: From Preschool to High School: How parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence*. New York: HarperResource, 2003.

Damm, Alex. "Mhatma Gandhi and Character Education in Non-Violence: Its Relevance in Religious Studies Today." *Teaching Theology and Religion* 14, no. 1 (2011): 3-12.

Fumagalli, Manuela , and Alberto Priori. "Functional and Clinical Neuroanatomy of Morality." *Oxford Journal* 7, no. 135 (2012): 2006-2021.

Gaidos, Susan . "More Than a Feeling." *Science News*, August 14, 2010.

Gibbs, Jeanne. *Tribes: A New Way of Learning and Being Together*. Windsor, CA: Center Source Systems, 2001.

"Hardy Girls Healthy Women." Hardy Girls Healthy Women. www.hardygirlshealthywomen.org/ (accessed April 12, 2012).

Hart, Sura, and Victoria Hodson. *Respectful Parents, Respectful Kids: 7 Keys to Turn Family Conflict into Cooperation*. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press, 2006.

Henry, David , and Wing Yi Chan. "Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Effects of Sixth-Grade Setting-Level Norms for Nonviolent Problem Solving on Aggression and Associated Attitudes." *Journal of Community Psychology* 38, no. 8 (2010): 1007-1022.

Keltner, Dacher, Jason Marsh, and Jeremy Adam Smith, editors. *The Compassionate Instinct: The Science of Human Goodness*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.

Kovalik, Susan, and Karen Olsen. *ITI, the Model: Integrated Thematic Instruction*. 3rd ed. United States: S. Kovalik & Associates, 1994.

Kovalik, Susan, and Karen Olsen. *Exceeding Expectations: A User's Guide to Implementing Brain Research in the Classroom*. 3rd ed. United States: S. Kovalik & Associates, 2001.

Kovalik, Susan, and Karen D. Olsen. *Exceeding Expectations: A User's guide to Implementing Brain Research in the Classroom ; ITI Brain Research From Theory to Practice*. S.I.: Susan Kovalik, 2005.

Kovalik, Susan, and Lanitta Jaye Delk. *Bodybrain-Compatible Instruction in Grades K-6: Teacher Handbook*. Rexford, N.Y.: International Center for Leadership in Education, 2009.

Levine, Peter A., and Maggie Kline. *Trauma Through a Child's Eyes: Awakening the Ordinary Miracle of Healing*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2006.

Levine, Peter A., and Maggie Kline. *Trauma-Proofing Your Kids: A Parents' Guide for Instilling Confidence, Joy and Resilience*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books ;, 2008.

Levitin, Daniel J.. *This is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession*. New York, N.Y.: Plume, 2006.

Lineger, Maria. *The Project Happiness Handbook*. S.I.: Project Happiness, Inc., 2009.

Mahan, Amy L., and Kerry J. Ressler. "Fear Conditioning, Synaptic Plasticity and the Amygdala: Implications for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder." *Trends in Neuroscience* 35, no. 1 (2011): 24-35.

Murphy Paul, Annie. "Your Brain on Fiction." New York Times, March 17, 2012.

Newberger, Eli H.. *The Men They Will Become: The Nature and Nurture of Male Character*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1999.

"Olweus Bullying Prevention Program." Clemson University. <http://www.clemson.edu/olweus/evidence.html> (accessed May 5, 2012).

Perkins, Suzanne , and Sandra Graham-Bermann. "Violence Exposure and the Development of School-Related Functioning: Mental health, Neocognition, and Learning." *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 17, no. 1 (2012): 89-98.

Rosenberg, Marshall B., and Riane Eisler. *Life-Enriching Education Nonviolent Communication Helps Schools Improve Performance, Reduce Conflict, and Enhance Relationships*. Chicago: PuddleDancer Press, 2003.

Rosenberg, Marshall B.. *Teaching Children Compassionately How Students and Teachers Can Succeed with Mutual Understanding*. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press, 2004.

Rosenberg, Marshall B.. *Nonviolent Communication A Language of Life*. 2nd ed. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press, 2007.

Schoeberlein, Deborah R., and Suki Sheth. *Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness: A Guide for Anyone Who Teaches Anything*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2009.

Siegel, Daniel J.. and Tina Payne Bryson. *The Whole-Brained Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind, Survive Everyday Parenting Struggles, and Help Your Family Thrive* . New York: Delacorte Press, 2011.

Smith, Elsie. *Nurturing Nonviolent Children: A Guide for Parents, Educators, and Counselors*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008.

Tomada, Akemi, Yi-Shin Sheu, Keren Rebi, Hanako Suzuki, Carryl Navalta, Ann Polcari, and Martin Teicher. "Exposure to Parental Verbal Abuse Associated with Increased Gray Matter Volume in Superior Temporal Gyrus." *NeuroImage* 54, no. 1 (2012): 280-206. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20483374> (accessed June 20, 2012).

"Violence Prevention Works from Hazelden Publishing." Violence Prevention Works from Hazelden Publishing. www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/index.page (accessed May 5, 2012).

de Waal, Frans B.M.. "The Antiquity of Empathy." *Science* 336, no. 6083 (2012): 874-876.

"elacontentstandards-1.pdf. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/glcfirstgradcurriculum.pdf> (accessed June 20, 2012).

Movement

Yoga Planet 50 Activity Cards or Yoga Pretzels 50 Activity Cards (found at www.yogaed.com or www.barefootbooks.com)

Zuleikah. *Take a Minute - For Your Life*. Swan Lake Publishing. (Founder of Storydancer Project.com)

Music

Brett Dennan, *The Mosaic Project*, © 2004, The Mosaic Project, Compact disc.

Slim Gaillard and Slam Stewart. *Slim and Slam*, © 1938. Cedar, Compact disc.

Bill Hayes. *Ferdinand the Bull*, from *Bill Hayes Sings the Best of Disney*. MP3 single.

Documentaries

I Am. HD-DVD. Directed by Tom Shadyac. Los Angeles: Flying Eye Productions, 2011.

Project Happiness. DVD. Directed by John C. Sorensen. Palo Alto, CA : Spring Communications/Grace Creek Media/Beyond Words Publishing, 2011.

I will need your active assistance with the goal to create a safe learning environment. It's vital for the success for *all* of our children in this classroom if *all* of us are on the same team together – supporting each other and supporting our children in safe and respectful ways that allow our children to grow and are allowed to learn from their mistakes –by building a school community that treats others the way we wish to be treated. The students are more motivated, excited, and engaged in an inclusive and supportive climate – where it's safe to make mistakes and learn from each other.

WE ARE A LOVING AND KIND CLASSROOM:

Class Constitution/Lifelong Guidelines/Teaming Up Together

ALL people (regardless of age) learn and work best when they are in a safe, caring environment. Our Classroom Constitution simply states the **LIFELONG GUIDELINES:**

- 1) **Be trustworthy.** (Treat others the way that we wish to be treated - because harming others in words and actions make us distrustful.)
- 2) **Be truthful.** (Be our self, use "I statements," and admit when we make mistakes.)
- 3) **Use active listening.** (Take turns listening to adults *and* classmates. Raise our hands when we want to speak and be heard. We let others finish their thoughts. We reflect on what we have heard. We share our thoughts when it's our turn.)
- 4) **Do our personal best.** (Practice the lifeskills, actively participate, take pride in our work - and allow others as well as our self to shine in class!)
- 5) **Use "Push-ups" - not "Put-downs."** (Encourage our self and others to do our personal best. Speak kindly to our self, our teachers, our staff, our family members, and our classmates -compassion and understanding build us up personally and support and strengthen our community.)

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use