



CEL F Summer Institute '10
Subject: ELA Grade: 7th
Boston Latin School [public], MA Teacher: Caroline O, Keri O, and Joe C
Unit Title: The Pearl (Lesson 1 of 2)

MA State Standards addressed by the lesson (Include minimum of two state frameworks goals for this subject and grade level that this lesson aligns to):

1. GENERAL STANDARD 19: Writing : Students will write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.
2. Standard 8: Understanding a Text: Students will identify evidence in a text used to support an argument.
3. STANDARD 2: Questioning, Listening, and Contributing: Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.

National Education for Sustainability Standards addressed by the lesson (Include minimum of two EfS standards that this lesson aligns to):

1. **EfS Standard 1** – Students understand and are able to apply the basic concepts and principles of sustainability (i.e.: meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs).
2. **EfS Standard 2** – Students recognize the concept of sustainability as a dynamic condition characterized by the interdependency among ecological, economic, and social systems and how these interconnected systems affect individual and societal well-being. They develop an understanding of the human connection to and interdependence with the natural world.

4. Brief Summary of Unit (including curricular content and unit goals):

The Pearl by John Steinbeck chronicles the life of Kino, an indigent Mexican pearl diver who finds “the pearl of the world.” In finding the pearl, Kino, the protagonist, realizes he can change his family’s future with this new wealth. He can provide his son Coyotito with an education; he can provide his family with a house; he and his wife Juana can have a proper wedding—accomplishments he associates with a fulfilling life. However, the potential wealth gained by the pearl brings out the greed in Kino. The novella explores the theme of wealth and the potential for greed. *The Pearl* provides students with an opportunity to explore concepts of social status in regards to disparities between the rich and the poor. It also allows students to engage in a discussion about the imbalance of power. At a deeper level, the novella introduces students to the concept of sustainability by addressing the ideas of equity and limits within a community. After the students have finished reading the novella, they will read “The Mexican Fisherman and the American Tourist” parable. Used as supplemental reading, the students will be able to comprehend the moral of the parable and make connections to the theme of sustainability in *The Pearl* and their outside world. To gauge student understanding of sustainability, students will write responses to key questions, which will scaffold their knowledge. As a final assessment, students will create a visual representation that answers the question, “Is ‘more’ better?” The visual representation paired with a written explanation/justification will demonstrate understanding of the concept by integrating the terms equity, fairness, and limits in their discourse.

Stage 1 – Identify desired results

Enduring understandings (what understandings are desired?):

Students will understand that:

well-being and the understanding of limits is important to equity and fairness.

Essential questions (what essential questions will be considered?):

What do you need for a fulfilling life?

Unit question:

Does more mean better?

Outcomes (what key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this lesson/unit?)

Students will know...and apply the ideas of equity, fairness, and limits to the parable of The Mexican Fisherman and the American Tourist, along with the novel *The Pearl*.

Students will be able to...

write responses to key questions and justify their opinions and understanding.

Stage 2 – Determine acceptable evidence

Performance tasks (what evidence will show that students understand?):

“Is More Better” Poster -- Students will make a visual representation of the idea “more is better.” In their own words, students will explain how their visual representations reflect and illustrate their understanding of equity, fairness, and limits.

Other evidence (quizzes, tests, prompts, observations, dialogues, work samples):

Students will answer five key questions in journal responses.

Stage 3 – Learning plan

Learning activities (what will students do and what will you, the teacher do, to prepare the students to achieve the desired outcomes?:

1) As a pre-reading journal exercise to *The Pearl*, students will write a response to the following prompt:

Which is more important – happiness or wealth (the acquisition of material things)?

Answering this question will give a framework for students to view the novella as they begin and finish the reading.

2) After students read *The Pearl* have them review the literary term “parable.” According to the Cambridge dictionary, a parable is a short simple story which teaches or explains an idea, especially a moral or religious idea.

3) Distribute the key questions and “The Mexican Fisherman and the American Tourist” parable packet. Here is the link to The Mexican Fisherman and American Tourist parable:

<http://www.noogenesis.com/pineapple/fisherman.html> .

4) Preview the key questions with the students and then read the parable together as a class.

5) Have students answer the first question of the packet, which asks the students to identify and explain the moral of *The Pearl*.

6) Afterward, the students should answer the following key questions:

- What does the fisherman want and what does the tourist want? Make a T-chart.
- Cause & Effect. If the Mexican fisherman followed the American tourist’s advice what are the possible outcomes? What would be the long-term effects?
- What is the message/moral of the parable?
- Describe how the parable of The Mexican fisherman and the American tourist is a paradox. A paradox is a figure of speech in which a statement seems to contradict itself. According to the Cambridge dictionary, a paradox is a statement of proposition, that despite sound reasoning from acceptable premises leads to a conclusion that seems senseless, logically unacceptable, or self-contradictory (ironic). For example, the statement “It is true; I always lie” is a paradox.

7) Students will form groups of four and discuss their answers to the questions.

8) For homework, have students respond to the following question. After reading the parable of The Mexican fisherman and the American tourist, how has your outlook changed – Is “more” better? Provide a one-page response and include textual evidence to support your ideas. This written reflection will help students strengthen their ongoing understanding of the key ideas associated with sustainability.