Cornelius

By Leo Lionni

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Using Lesson Plans Provided in *Thoughtfulliteracy.com*

The lesson plans and accompanying activities that we provide for each of the stories on the site can be regarded as a kind of tool for classroom management as well as a means of promoting thoughtful response to text. However, there are certain issues that the teacher needs to consider in order to maximize the usefulness of the plans.

First of all, as Gambrell and Almasi (1996) have discussed at some length, the activities we suggest are invitations to thoughtful response to text, not activities that promote recitation of details. As such, it is for most children imperative that teachers model expectations for their students. It is almost always a good idea to do some initial modeling of the activities (e.g., Question the Author, Discussion Webs, Story Impressions, etc.) as a whole class. Teachers will find that in relatively short order, there will be a number of children who will understand your expectations and who will be ready to proceed more or less independently.

When Gambrell and Almasi reviewed the relevant research literature, they found that research has suggested that children engaged in student-led discussions can achieve at higher levels than those engaged consistently in teacher-led discussion. But as teachers are certainly aware, there are several caveats that accompany these findings. First and foremost, children must be consistently engaged in the discussion so that they do not wander off task. Second, children must be held accountable for the work they have completed during their discussion time. Consequently, the activities we suggest in our lesson plans have a tangible outcome, some written record of the results of discussion. As we will see below, that record can provide us with valuable elements of progress monitoring.

Instructional Management

As Allington (2008) has pointed out, children who are at serious risk of failure will require three times the amount of high quality literacy instruction that most schools provide for them. At the same time, it is very important to maintain the stance that all children deserve to be challenged throughout their academic careers. We are taking the position that if we can provide high quality, challenging activities and monitor the extent to which students engage in those activities, we can achieve Allington's vision. To that end, we have included elements such as pre-reading activities for the students who are on grade level but who need to have collaborative pre-reading activities emphasizing higher-level thinking. These students still need a mediator to foster their inclination to stretch their thinking and the collaborative projects, prepared by the teacher serve as their mediator. This is a classic example of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. For the advanced students, we primarily rely on post-reading activities to guide their response to higher level thinking. Perhaps a model will help:

Teacher works with **Struggling Students,** giving 3 times more of her time. She works on the same story that the other students are reading. Since this is at frustration level, she follows the steps of guided reading in the DR-TA. But instead of initial silent reading, she reads the story for the students and they follow along.	**On-Level Readers** are provided with a pre-reading Anticipation Guide which directs students' attention to the same ideas that are being emphasized by the teacher as she works with the struggling readers. After silent reading, students are provided with post-reading collaborative projects.	**Advanced Readers** do not have pre-reading activities; you want to encourage them to identify their own themes. However, they are given a variety of collaborative and independent post-reading activities.

Name _____

What's Missing:

This is a reflection of only one day's activities, the day the story in the Anthology is being read. During other days students are grouped according to interest and needs. It's important to remember that teachers need to avoid the kind of labeling that could be read as ability grouping. We have taken the stance that it is not a child's ability to respond to text that is in question. Instead it is their inclination to do so. It is our hope that teachers experimenting with thought-provoking lessons will build that inclination among their students.

Using Lesson Plans

All readers are granted the permission to use, modify, and reproduce these materials for use with their classes.

Name _____

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Purpose: *This plan is implemented with struggling readers; however the teacher makes use of these themes and ideas in the creation of the wide range of collaborative projects that are used with the other students in the class.*

Underlying Theme: If characters discover that the words of others may not reflect their true feelings, they have the chance to realize that their own words can be misunderstood as well.
[Keep in mind that there is no one correct underlying theme. This is simply the one we have chosen as a basis for the plans that follow]

Pre-Reading Macro Concepts:
- Characters' reactions to differences can be positive or negative.
- Characters react to the treatment they receive from others.
- Characters can show their love of learning and desire to share their learning.
- Characters can misinterpret words expressed by others.
- **Predicting concept:** The possibility that a character can discover that actions may not always reflect one's true thoughts.

Pre-Reading Map:
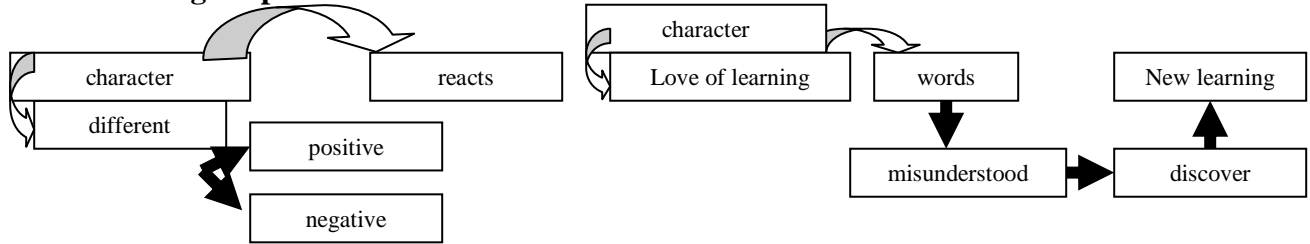
Post Reading Concepts:
- **Cornelius learned that the unkind words of the crocodiles didn't match their real feelings. In fact, they were wishing that they could do the things he could do.**
- Cornelius had learned from the monkey that with a lot of hard work and some help, he could learn to do things he had never even thought about.
- After following the advice of the monkey, Cornelius found success and decided to return to the crocodiles.
- Cornelius was with the monkey because he had left the riverbeach after the crocodiles had been unkind to him. However, Cornelius had no idea that they had interpreted his excitement as bragging.
- The crocodiles again reacted negatively to Cornelius' comments about his differences.

Post-Reading Map:

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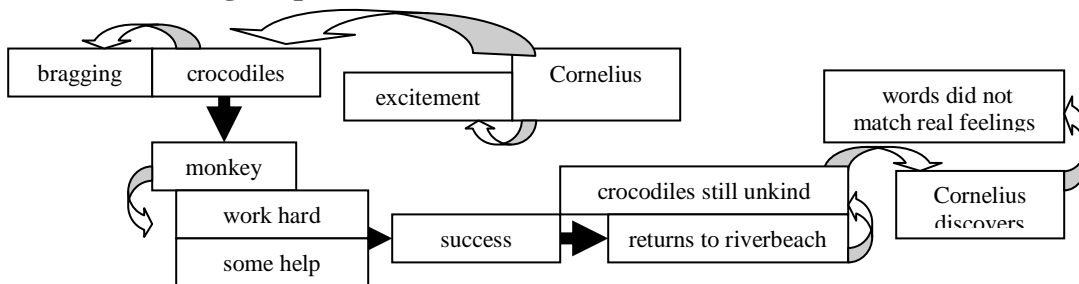
Response Prompt: Cornelius had the chance to learn that the words of characters don't always show their true feelings. Tell how Cornelius learned this lesson. Then tell how this learning could help Cornelius change.

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Name _____

Prediction Chart

|	What I predict will happen	What actually happened
Part I. **Think about the ideas we talked about and predict what you will read on pages 1 to 8.**		
Part II **Think about what you just read and look at the pictures on pages 9 to 16 and predict what you will read on those pages.**		
Part III **Think about what you just read and look at the pictures on pages17 to 24 and predict what you will read on those pages.**		
Part IV. **Think about what you just read and look at the pictures on pages 25 to 28 and predict what you will read on those pages. What did Cornelius learn? Explain.**		

Name _____

Story Impressions

Task: Read the words and phrases below.   Use the words and phrases in the order they are written to create a story. Then read the story *Cornelius* in the book to see how your story is like *Cornelius* and how it is different
.
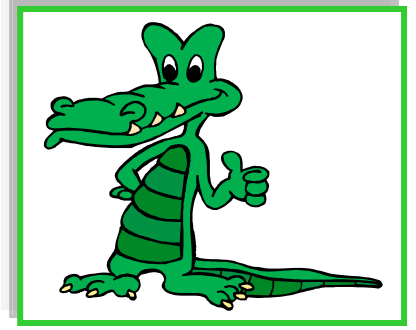
Words and Phrases to Use.

1. hatched	2. crawled	3. upright
4. annoyed	5. walk away	6. met
7. monkey	8. stand on my head	9. amazed
10. learn	11. work	12. help
13. happy	14. proudly	15. smiled

Story:

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Name _____
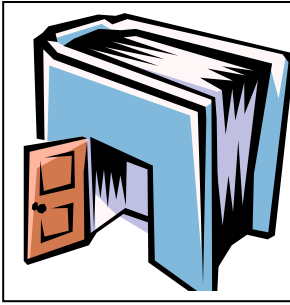
Thinking Ahead

Read each sentence. Decide if you think it is true or false. Put a check under the Agree box if you think it is true. Put a check in the Disagree box if you think it is false. When you have finished, share the reason for your decision with your peer.   Then read the story *Cornelius* to discover how these ideas fit the story.

Sentences

Agree   **Disagree**

1. **People who brag always know that they are bragging.**

1. _____   _____

2. **People who are angry with someone will tell the person why they are angry.**

2. _____   _____

3. **When people are excited about something, they want others to be excited too.**

3. _____   _____

4. **People should be proud of the skills that they have.**

4. _____   _____

5. **People should always try to talk about their problems.**

5. _____   _____

6. **People need other people to help them learn new things.**

6. _____   _____

7. **The words that we say always show the feelings that we have.**

7. _____   _____

8. **People learn about other people by watching what they do.**

8. _____   _____

Name _____
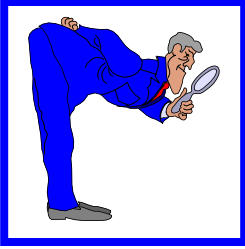
Be a Detective As You Read……..

Read the story boxes below before you read the story. Then write notes in the boxes as you find ideas in the story. After you finish the story and the story map, talk about your ideas with a classmate.

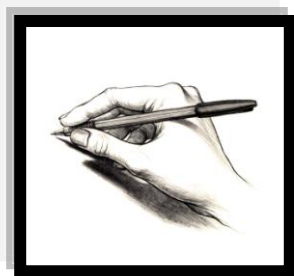|	
Character is excited.	Character is rude.
Character runs from a problem.	Another character is excited.
Character learns new skills.	Character changes his mind.

Which character learned a lesson?

Write the lesson here:

Question-the-Author

Answer after reading pages 1 through 8. Why didn't the author tell you why the crocodiles were angry?

_____

_____

_____

Answer after reading pages 1 through 8. Do the crocodiles have a good reason to be angry with Cornelius?

_____

_____

_____

Answer after reading pages 9 through 16. Does the author think the monkey is more like Cornelius or more like the other crocodiles?

_____

_____

_____

Answer after reading pages 17 through 24. Does the writer think that Cornelius knows why the other crocodiles are unkind to him?

_____

_____

_____

Answer after reading pages 25 through 28.   How did the writer show that Cornelius learned a lesson about words?

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_____

Name _____

Read each question and then answer under the "Yes" box. Be sure to tell why the answer can be yes.
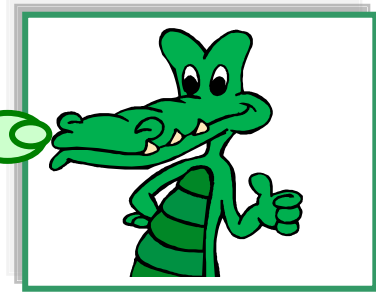
Yes

	Could the crocodiles have had a reason to be annoyed with Cornelius?

	Were the crocodiles like the monkey in any way?

Name _____

Who learned more in this story, Cornelius or the other crocodiles? Be sure to explain your answer.
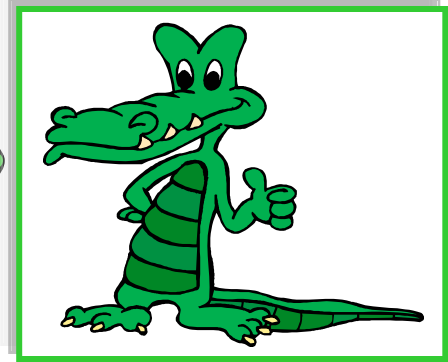
Cornelius

The crocodiles

Name _____

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Somebody	Wanted	But	So
Cornelius			
The crocodiles			
The monkey			
Cornelius			
The crocodiles			

Name _____

Directions: You have finished _Cornelius._ Read the tasks below and think about the story. After everyone in your group is finished responding to these scenes, meet together and share your responses.

Task One:
Think about how the crocodiles must have felt when they heard Cornelius telling them things that he could do. What do you think made them act the way they did? If you were in their shoes would you have reacted like they did? Why or Why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Task Two:
Think about how Cornelius felt when he met the monkey. Then think about how he acted after he heard what the monkey could do. What do you think made Cornelius act that way? If you were in his shoes do you think that you would have acted like he did? Explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Task Three:
Think about how Cornelius felt after he learned his new tricks from the monkey. Then think about why he would want to go back to the river beach and what happened when he got there. What would have happened if Cornelius had not turned around? Why could Cornelius smile? If you were in his shoes do you think that you would have stayed at the riverbeach? Explain.

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Name _____
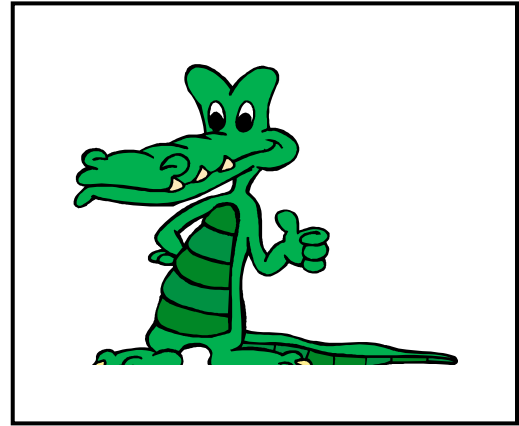
	How was foolishness shown in this story? Explain your answer.
	How was wisdom shown in this story? Explain your answer.
	How was the idea that words do not always show true feelings shown in this story? Explain your answer.

Name _____
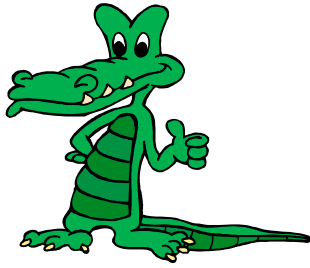
Directions: Read each trait in the middle column. Then rank that trait for each of the two characters:

5 = Highest possible;
4 = very high;
3 = some;
2 = a little; and
1= almost none.
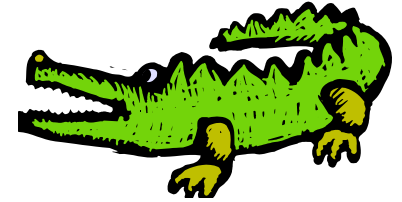
Cornelius					Category	Another crocodile				
5	4	3	2	1	Happy with how he was born	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Showed that he was foolish	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Showed that he was rude	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Showed that he was wise	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Showed that he liked to learn	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Showed that he could work hard to meet a goal	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Learned that it is not always easy to change	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Showed that it is important to appreciate help from others	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Showed that he can think about what others do	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Showed that he did not always think about the words he said	5	4	3	2	1

Name _____