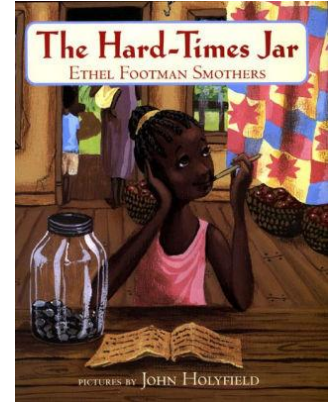


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EDCI 305A - Drama Education: a Medium for Learning
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March 29th, 2021

Abstract/Summary.

The children's book *The Hard Times Jar* written by Ethel Footman Smothers and illustrated by John Holyfield follows a girl named Emma Turner who just wants to call a store-bought book her own. Her family are migrant workers who have travelled to the crops to harvest, money is tight which means "no extras" for books that Emma desires. She hopes that her contributions to the harvesting will result in enough extras but that takes a turn when she is told she will now be attending school instead. Emma is pleasantly surprised on her first day of school, but may have taken that surprise for granted.



Why Did We Choose this Story?

- It brings awareness to themes such as "wants" vs "needs," honesty, perseverance, and taking responsibility for our actions, all of which students might still be learning, and that are necessary to understand for developing healthy habits and relationships later on in life.
- It sheds light on the topic of immigration.
- The main character, Emma Jean Turner, is one that students can empathize with, being similar in age, and experiencing certain relatable life challenges or hard times like moving to an unfamiliar place and feeling different.
- The text and illustrations appeal to both children and adults.

Key Understandings and Questions:

1. What is the difference between a "want" and a "need."
2. Why is honesty important; what does it take to be honest?

Drama Learning Outcomes:

1. Use tableaux to make predictions and showcase understanding of the dynamics at play between characters in the story.
2. Improvisation in role reflecting thoughtful consideration of the setting, and impact of the story's events on its characters.
3. Active listening and willingness to contribute/participate in classroom discussions.

Cross-Curricular Connections/Outcomes.

1. Identification and understanding of the effects that figurative language has on our ability to visualize the imagery of a story - *English Language Arts*.
2. Responding to text in personal or creative ways (drama) - *English Language Arts*.
3. Use oral storytelling processes, clarifying meaning of text through different means - *English Language Arts*.
4. Exchanging ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding, through collaborative experiences participating in group activities - *English Language Arts*.
5. Proficiency in counting coins/money - *Mathematics*.

1. Building Context.

5 minutes

Grouping:	Whole class seated in a circle, partners.
Strategy:	Brainstorm.
Administration:	Large chart paper with two sections; one labelled “wants,” and the other labelled “needs,” and writing utensils for each student.
Focus:	To build collaborative meaning.

Teacher: Before we begin story drama for today, we are going to complete a brainstorm that will help us to depict the focus of the story, *The Hard Times Jar* by Ethel Footman Smothers.

As you can see, the words “wants” and “needs” are in front of you. Turning to the person beside you, talk about what you think each of these words mean, and the difference between them. [They do]

At the front of the class, hang a large piece of chart paper with two sections labelled “wants,” and “needs.” Here, talking is used as a strategy for generating ideas. Once a minute or so has passed, stop the partner discussion.

Teacher: I am curious to hear what you and your partners discussed about what “wants” and “needs” are, and the difference between them. Could I have some volunteers to share with the class what they came-up with? [They share]

With the input from your students, generate a definition for the term “wants” and the term “needs” and write them under each coordinating section on the chart paper. Examples include:

Want: something we desire to have, and that isn’t essential to our survival.

Need: something we require because it is essential to our survival.

Teacher: Now that we have established a clear idea of what “wants” and “needs” are, turn to the person beside you and come up with one example of each term.

Here, talking is used as a strategy for generating ideas. Once a minute or so has passed, stop the partner discussion.

Teacher: With your writing utensil, I am going to have each pair join me at the front of the class and record their examples of “wants” and “needs” on the chart. While you are waiting for your turn, pay attention to what your peers are putting down– notice if their ideas are similar or different from yours. [They do]

Call each pair up to the front of the class individually and have them record their examples of “wants” and “needs” on the chart. This part of the exercise is critical to the future activity “No Extras.” Examples include:

Wants: toys, tv, vacations, etc.

Needs: food, water, shelter, hygiene items, etc.

2. This is Emma. **1 minute**

Grouping: Whole class.
Strategy: Story reading.
Administration: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
Focus: To highlight descriptive language that intensifies imagery.

Teacher: Everyone listen carefully to the beginning of this story.

Teacher reads from: “*Emma rolled belly-flat...*” to... “*Mama could make good her warning.*”

3. Unpacking Time. **1 minute**

Grouping: Whole class.
Strategy: Story reading.
Administration: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
Focus: To imagine what life is/was like for the Turner family.

Teacher: Let’s continue on with our story.

Teacher reads from: “*She knew exactly where they were*” ... to... “*tomorrow is apple picking.*”

4. Memories from the Past. [*OPTIONAL - omit if pressed for time*] **10 minutes**

Grouping: Groups of four, whole class seated in a circle.
Strategy: Tableau focus on picture depiction
Administration: Large cardboard box with one household item for each group (candle, frying pan, lamp, etc.).
Focus: To help students make connections; writing the past life of the Turner Family.

Teacher: _____ Take a good look at the picture of Emma her family settling into their new home.

What is in the moving boxes?

What does this picture tell us about what life was like from the home they migrated from?

How might their lives be different before they migrated?

For this activity we are going to be creating a picture with our bodies, called a tableau, to capture a moment from the Turner family's life before they migrated.

In a tableau, much like the pictures in stories such as *The Hard Times* Jar by Ethel Footman Smothers, the characters do not speak or move; they are frozen in a scene. So, in our tableau we will not speak or move either.

Show students the image on page 5 of the story. Give them a minute or two to consider the preceding question. A more in-depth description and examples of tableau may be necessary for students who are unfamiliar with this concept.

Teacher: _____ With your given group gather a large cardboard box at the front of the class, like the ones in Emma Jean's house. Inside there are common household items that someone might pack-away when they are moving.

Send one representative from your group to take-out a household item from the box. Then, in your groups, have each person take on a role of someone in the Turner Family, and make a tableau showing how they might have used the item you chose at their previous home. Off you go [They begin to work]

Examples include: family eating dinner around the candle at the table, Mama cooking breakfast with the frying pan and the other family members waiting patiently, etc.

Set up the cardboard moving box filled with household items at the front of the class. Give students approximately 5 minutes to come up with a tableau scene in their groups. Walk around to answer any questions and provide help if necessary.

Teacher: _____ I'm excited to see what our groups came up with; please take a seat in a circle. One by one I am going to call each group into the middle of the circle.

When I count to 3, the group at the center will freeze into their created tableau with a household object, and the rest of the class will carefully observe what kind of scene they are portraying. When I say

“thank you,” you and your group will emerge from the tableau and quietly take your seats in the circle.

Call each group into the center of the circle one at a time and count to 3 to indicate when they should freeze into their tableau. Allow them to free for approximately 10 seconds before saying “thank you” and moving onto the next group. Prompt the rest of the class to carefully and quietly make observations.

5. No Extras. **1 minute**

Grouping: Whole class.
Strategy: Story reading.
Administration: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
Focus: To focus on wants and needs, what does no extras mean?

Teacher: _____ Make sure you are able to see the book as we continue reading.

Teacher reads from: *“Emma emptied one box” ... to... “whispered to the hard times jar.”*

6. Needs and No Extras. **7 minutes**

Grouping: Whole class seated in a circle.
Strategy: In role improvisation.
Administration: “Wants” vs “Needs” chart at the front of the class, large clear jar filled with coins of varying values; pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters.
Focus: To solidify student understanding, and count money – math cross-curricular connection.

Teacher: _____ We have now been introduced to the Turner family’s hard times jar which is used for saving in case they run out of something that they need before pay day.

This money is not used for wants but needs.

In this activity, you will get the opportunity to become one of the members of the Turner family who must take money from the Hard Times Jar to pay for something that they need.

Take a moment to think about who you would like to become, what it is that you need, and how much money it will cost.

If you have trouble coming up with a need, refer to the chart that we made as a class showcasing some examples. [They begin to think]

Ensure that the previously created “Wants” vs “Needs” chart is still at the front of the class. Give students a minute or two to consider the preceding questions and generate ideas.

Teacher: _____ When you are ready, raise your hand and share who you are, what you need, and how much it will cost.
Walk over to the jar and take out the money you will need to fulfill your need.

Place your own “Hard Times Jar” in the center of the circle. Call on students one at a time to improvise in role and take their requested amount of money. If necessary, review the monetary value associated with each coin. Examples include:

“I’m Mama, we ran out of soap for bathing, and I need 75 cents to pay for a new bar.”

Make an effort to have as many students as possible share in the given time frame – ideally at the end there will be no remaining money in the jar. Here, the goal is for students to understand that the “Hard Times Jar” can only be used for needs, and that there are no extras leftover to spend on wants. When the activity is finished, have students return the coins that they took.

7. Unpacking Time. _____ **3 minutes**

Grouping: Whole class.
Strategy: Story reading.
Administration: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
Focus: To understand the protagonist better.

Teacher: _____ Let’s continue on getting to know Emma Jean.

Teacher reads from: *“The next morning” ... to... “as the bus drove up.”*

8. What is Emma Thinking About? [OPTIONAL - omit if pressed for time] **7 minutes**

Grouping: Whole class divided into two rows, a volunteer to play Emma.
Strategy: Conscience circle.
Administration: Backpack or books for Emma to carry.
Focus: To hear the thinking of Emma.

Teacher: _____ For this activity I will need a volunteer to be Emma, you will not have to speak aloud but listen very carefully. [Student volunteers]

The rest of you need to create a circle with Emma standing in the middle.
[They do]

As Emma stands in the middle of her new classroom surrounded by no-one who is chocolate-brown like her, you will share the thoughts you think are going through her mind in that moment.

This could be either one word feelings or small phrases of what Emma is thinking.

Only one person will speak at a time as Emma walks around the circle passing each of you. If you have nothing to share, put your head down.

If this activity has not been done before students may find it confusing, make sure that the students understand the task and perhaps show them an example before applying it to the story context.

Teacher: _____ Are there any more questions? Remember Emma, walk very slowly so you can hear every thought. [Everyone shares]

Thank you everyone for sharing, now find your own space and we will continue the story.

9. None can be Taken Home. 2 minutes

Grouping: Whole class.
Strategy: Story reading.
Administration: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
Focus: To discover an internal conflict within the protagonist.

Teacher: _____ Let's continue on and see how Emma's first day of school goes.

Teacher reads from: *"But she didn't feel fine" ... to... "no one would miss them."*

10. No one Would Miss Them. 5 minutes

Grouping: Whole Group.
Strategy: Describing a picture.
Administration: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*; the picture of Emma sneaking off with books from school.
Focus: To describe the picture and what is happening.

Teacher: _____ Everyone needs to make sure that they can see the pictures clearly because you need to be able to look at it very clearly. Find a spot that allows you to do that. [They do]

Looking at this picture, what do you notice?
What is the main focus of this picture?
How do you think Emma might be feeling in this picture?
What is this picture telling us about what might happen next in the story?

The students answer the previous questions and depending on the time and the age group the following set of questions can be asked as well.

Teacher: _____ What else do you notice happening in this picture?
What is the mood of this picture?
Whose feelings does this picture captivate?
Why do you think that?
Does anyone have an idea what might happen next in the story?

11. What are These Books Doing Here? **1 minute**

Grouping: Whole class.
Strategy: Story reading.
Administration: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
Focus: Should Emma have taken those books home?

Teacher: _____ Let's discover what happens next with those books.

Teacher reads from: "*At home, Emma*" ... to... "*Yes, you do,' Mama said.*"

12. What Would You Say? **10 minutes**

Grouping: Pairs.
Strategy: Improvising Dialogue.
Administration: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
Focus: To predict the interaction between Emma and her teacher.

Teacher: _____ Emma has just be caught with books that she knows she shouldn't have taken and her mother is telling her she must confess to her teacher. How do you think this encounter will go?

Everyone needs to find a partner. [They do]
One of you will be Emma and the other will be her teacher. The scene will be set in the classroom and will focus on Emma confessing about the books she took.

This scene will be improvised, in order to do this successfully establish with your partner who will speak first and space yourselves away from other groups. [They do]

This is not a long scene, think about how Emma may be feeling when she goes to speak with her teacher, or how the teacher is going to feel after knowing Emma broke a classroom rule. [They improvise]

Walk around observing what the students are acting out, making notes of specific ideas that you will be able to share back with the whole class.

Teacher: How did everyone's scenes go? Would anyone like to share what happened in their scene or show us? [They do]

13. Emma Squeezed the Quarters. 1 minute

Grouping: Whole class.
Strategy: Story reading.
Administration: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
Focus: The rewards of honesty.

Teacher: Now let's finish the story and see how it ends.

Teacher reads from: "*Monday morning*" ... to... "*the store-bought kind.*" (The end)

14. Flashbacks and Flash Forwards. 10 minutes

Grouping: Groups of four.
Strategy: Freeze frames (with thought tracking).
Administration: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
Focus: To allow students to create a beginning, middle and end to the story through freeze frames.

Teacher: For this next activity, it is going to be something very similar to the tableau activity we did earlier. Can someone remind us what a tableau is again? [Someone volunteers]

We are going to slightly modify a tableau for this activity, called flashbacks and flashforwards.

As we have all just read, Emma got six shiny quarters from mama for doing the right thing and telling the truth to her teacher. This will be our starting point for this freeze activity.

When I clap my hands, I will give each group a moment to whisper amongst your group of four and decide what moment you are going to capture before Emma's mother gives her six quarters.

When I say the word past, your group will take a moment and then silently move and freeze into any moment before this encounter with her mother.

There are no creative bounds to how far in the past you would like to go, you could capture the moment when Emma was confronting the teacher when Emma was picking apples, or even before this story even began, invite students to use their imagination.

Teacher: _____ When I say the word future, your group will create a moment that is after this encounter with her mother.

Repeat directions so students have a clear understanding, ask for student explanation of the activity.

Teacher: _____ Let's start the activity.

Place students into groups and allow them time to get organized with their groups about what their tableau will portray.

Teacher: _____ If I come over and tap you on the shoulder while frozen, I would like you to say a few words speaking in the role as your character. You will get 30 seconds to respond before I will go and pick someone else.

Walk around the classroom encouraging students to create a different moment for each new freeze frame.

Teacher: _____ Great work everyone.

15. Closure. _____ **3 minutes**

Grouping: Whole class seated in a circle.
Strategy: Discussion/reflection.
Administration: Large space for students to form a class circle/prompt questions.
Focus: To build collaborative understanding of the main themes.

Teacher: _____ Now to finish our story drama for today, we are going to do a seated share. Can everyone please form a large circle sitting cross-legged and allowing everyone equal space to fit into the circle. [They do]

Asking the following questions to guide student responses

Can you explain the difference between a want vs. a need?
Do you think that sometimes we take things for granted?
Why do you think honesty is important?

You could also mention the brainstorm chart activity at the beginning of the lesson and ask if their thoughts changed. Make note of any students who need support/extra attention

Materials:

- Activity 1: Large chart paper with two sections; one labelled “wants,” and the other labelled “needs”; writing utensils for each student.
- Activity 2: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
- Activity 3: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
- Activity 4: Large cardboard box with one household item for each group (candle, frying pan, lamp, etc.).
- Activity 5: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
- Activity 6: “Wants” vs “Needs” chart at the front of the class, large clear jar filled with coins of varying values; pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters.
- Activity 7: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
- Activity 8: Backpack or books for Emma to carry.
- Activity 9: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
- Activity 10: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*; the picture of Emma sneaking off with books from school.
- Activity 11: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
- Activity 12: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
- Activity 13: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
- Activity 14: Text of *The Hard Times Jar*.
- Activity 15: Large space for students to form a class circle/prompt questions; “Wants” vs “Needs” chart.

References

- Miller, C. S., & Saxton, J. (2016). *Into the story 2: More stories! more drama!* (1st ed.). Intellect.
- Smothers, E. F., & Holyfield, J. (2003). *The hard-times jar*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Swartz, L. (2014). *Dramathemes: Classroom literacy that will excite, surprise and stimulate learning* (4th ed.). Ottawa, ON, Canada: Pembroke Publishing.

Self-Assessment: Hard Times Jar Story Drama

5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

For each statement, place a check under the box that describes your participation on the topics below

Questions to ask myself	<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Not this time</i>
1. Did I stay focused and engaged?				
2. Did I fully participate in the activities?				
3. Did I challenge myself to try something new?				
4. I felt comfortable sharing my ideas with the Group throughout the various activities?				
5. I listened to other group members' ideas.				

For each statement, place a check under the box that describes your understanding of the topics below

I _____ (select one)	<i>Fully Understand</i>	<i>Mostly Understand</i>	<i>Somewhat Understand</i>	<i>Do not Understand</i>
6. The difference between a “want” and a “need.”				
7. Why honesty is important.				
8. The impact the events had on the character.				
9. The drama techniques we used today (Ex. tableaux, improvisation, conscience circle).				
10. What it takes to be honest.				
11. How being in role or character helps me identify with the characters better.				

Circle three words that describe your drama experience with this story drama. Then underline the one you would like to work on next time.

Trustworthy	Leader	Cooperative	Good Listener
Confident	Risk Taker	Imaginative	Curious
Communicator	Problem Solver	Playful	Believer