Focus on
Folk Tales and Fairy Tales

© December 1998
Last Modified 1/31/2000

Documentation written by
Tori Christopher and Anne LaVigne
based on a lesson created by
Tori Christopher and Anne LaVigne with assistance from
Ron Michalak

Focus on Folk Tales and Fairy Tales

Grade Level: 6th Grade

CFSD Curriculum: Literature - Folklore Unit

Systems Concept(s):   Patterns over time, influence of structure on the patterns, mental models

Systems Tool(s):   Iceberg, behavior-over-time graphs (BOTGs)

Lesson Objectives:
- Students will understand how and why similar patterns exist in both folk tales and fairy tales.
- Students will understand how and why different structures produce these similar patterns.

Activities at a Glance:
- Students read folk tales and fairy tales and use the iceberg to analyze the events, patterns, structures, and mental models within them.
- Students create BOTGs of happiness for each of the stories.
- Students compare the graphs and figure out what is creating the change.
- Students write their own folk tales or fairy tales using the same pattern as a guide.

Time Allotment: Reading the stories: 2-3 periods
                        Creating BOTGs and having a class discussion: 2 periods
                        Creating a folk tale or fairy tale: 2-3 periods (could be reduced if given as homework).

Materials Needed For Lesson:
Materials: pencil, paper, chalk, chalkboard, overhead transparency of the iceberg, overhead pens, blank overhead transparency, handout with story assignment (see attached Esperero Folk Tale or Fairy Tale Assignment)
Media: none
Equipment: overhead projector

Preparation:
- Select the two folk tales and two fairy tales to be used based on the pattern of happiness.
- Create a transparency of the iceberg.
- Modify the handout to include your school name, rather than Esperero.
- Copy one handout per student

Activity(ies):
- Have students read two folk tales [1]. For this lesson, the two folk tales used were "The Wise Old Woman" and "The Stub Book."

- List the events of the story in order. For example, some of the key events in "The Wise Old Woman" are:
    - The mother and son live poorly, but happily together.
    - The lord of the town passes a law which requires people to be taken to the mountains to die when they turn 71.
    - The mother turns 71.
    - The son takes her to the mountains, but on the way changes his mind, and brings her back to hide her in the basement.
    - Lord Higa who is from another town, threatens to take over their town if they cannot solve a riddle.
    - No one can solve the riddle until the son asks his mother, who knows the answer.
    - The son tells the lord the answer from his mother and that saves the town.
    - Several more riddles are solved by the mother, but are communicated by the son.
    - The son tells the lord of the town that his mother has given him the answers to all the riddles.
    - The lord changes his mind about old people and decides to change the law to allow old people to stay in the town.

- Introduce students to the iceberg.
    - Ask, "How many people saw the movie, <u>Titanic</u>?" Most students will probably raise their hands.
    - Ask, "What was the key event that happened that changed everything for the characters in the movie?" answer: The ship hit the iceberg.
    - Ask why the ship hit the iceberg. There could be many specific factors, but most can be generalized to the idea that they did not see it soon enough to stop or turn.
    - Ask, "How much of the iceberg can you usually see above the water?" answers: Not very much, about one-tenth, or similar.
    - Show a photograph or poster of an iceberg (optional).
    - Show the graphic of the iceberg (attached).
    - Explain how this graphic is similar to an actual iceberg, i.e., can see only a small part of it. Point out the water line and then explain how most of this iceberg is hidden below the surface of the water as well.
    - Explain that in a book, if we look only at the events, then we see only the "tip" of the iceberg.
    - Explain that at this point all we can see are the events, i.e., this happened and then this happened and so on. To get a bigger picture about this story, moving deeper to the pattern level can help us see how folk tales change over time and help us see similarities between different tales. In order to move "deeper" a different set of tools is needed. Behavior-over-time graphs can help people see the pattern level.

_____

[1] See the sources section for a list of stories used. Others could be used as desired.

- Have students create BOTGs of happiness in the folk tale, "The Wise Old Woman."
    - Based on the events, what is the general trend of happiness? Graph together as a class.
    - Have students graph happiness of the main character for the folk tale, "The Stub Book" in small groups.
    - Have students share their graphs for both of the folk tales on the chalkboard.
    - Have students agree on what happened to happiness as a general trend.
    - Ask, "Are there any similarities between the graphs for the different folk tales?" In most, the main character starts out happy, moves to being unhappy, and then at the end is happy again, usually happier than when the story began.
    - Why do you think this occurs? Why do they have the same pattern?

- Explain the structure level of the iceberg.
    - The author must create a story structure which will produce this pattern of happiness. He/she must decide what will happen in the story, when it will happen, and to what degree.
    - Ask, "What structure did the author create in 'The Wise Old Woman' to create a pattern or happiness going down" Answer: policy about old people having to leave when they reach the age of 71.

- Explain the mental model level of the iceberg.
    - As an author writes a story, (s)he is communicating to the reader what (s)he believes about something.
    - Ask, "What do you think the author believes about old people in 'The Wise Old Woman?'"
    - Ask, "What do you think the author believes about small farmers in 'The Stub Book?'"
    - What did the people in both stories have to use in order to have their happiness go up? Answer: Brain power or thinking

- What structures did the author create in order to allow this to happen? e.g., law that eliminated old people, place for the old woman to hide, a person who could communicate her words, a series of problems that the village had to solve.

- Have students read two fairy tales and repeat the same process as for folk tales. Note: The questions will differ somewhat. When at the mental model level, the question might be, "What does the author believe about how people lose their happiness? Answer: People are given a problem which is often out of their control and often caused by magic. What does the character need in order to get their happiness back? Answer: In order to have their problem fixed, magic must help them.

- Look at the class graphs for the two folk tales and the two fairy tales.

- Ask, "Are there any similarities between the graphs for folk tales and fairy tales?" All should have similar trends.

• Pass out the handout, (see attached Esperero Folk Tale or Fairy Tale Assignment) and go over the first three questions together .

1. As we learned from the lesson where we graphed happiness over time in the folk tales and fairy tale we studied, every story had a <u>problem</u> and <u>complications</u> before the <u>problem</u> was resolved.
2. "What is the difference between a folk tale and a fairy tale in solving the problem? Folk tales require that people use their brains to solve their problems while fairy tales require that people have magic to help them.
3. What was the general trend in both types of stories? Draw a graph to represent this:
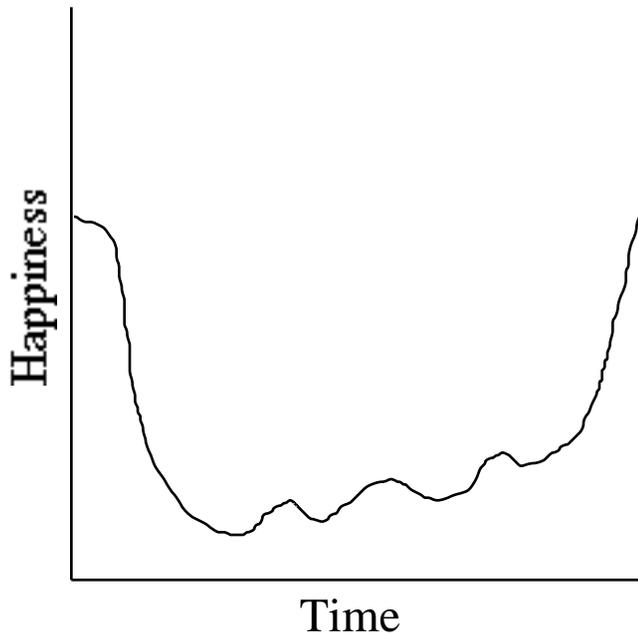
Debrief/Closure:
• Have students create their own folk tale or fairy tale.

Assessment:
• Student stories are assessed based on whether or not they produced a similar pattern of happiness using the correct structure for a folk tale or a fairy tale.

Sources:
• Folk Tales (select a minimum of two folk tales and two fairy tales; others can be used as long as they have a similar pattern of happiness)
   • "The Wise Old Woman" by Yoshiko Ushida
   • "The Stub-Book" by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón
   • <u>Abiyoyo</u> by Pete Seeker
   • <u>Lo Pro Pro: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China</u> by Ed Young
• Fairy Tales
   • Cinderella
   • Sleeping Beauty
   • Snow White

Extension(s):
• Use a similar process with other types of literary works such as tall tales or myths.

Esperero Folk Tale or Fairy Tale Assignment

1. As we learned from the lesson where we graphed happiness over time in the folk tales and fairy tale we studied, every story had a _____ and _____ before the _____ was resolved.

2. "What is the difference between a folk tale and a fairy tale in solving the problem?

   _____

   _____

3. What was the general trend in both types of stories? Draw a graph to represent this here:
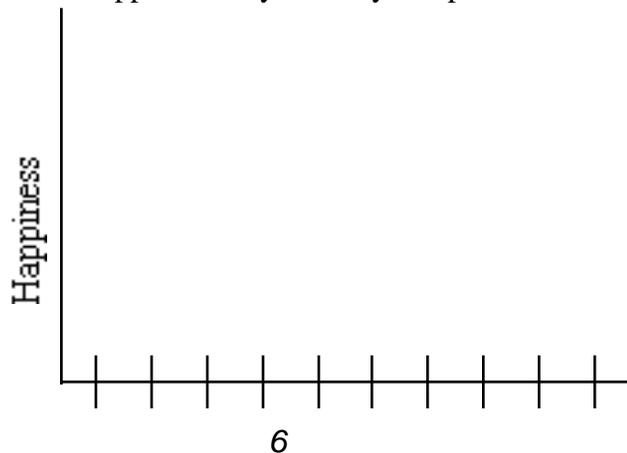
   Happiness

   Time
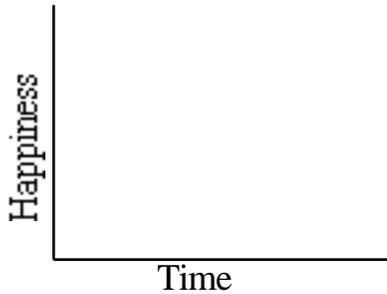
4. Now, you are going to write your own folk tale or fairy tale that should follow a similar pattern of happiness. Write your idea here and let the teacher check it. Once your idea has been approved, write a one-page folk tale or fairy tale that takes place at Esperero. Do not use real names (to protect the innocent).

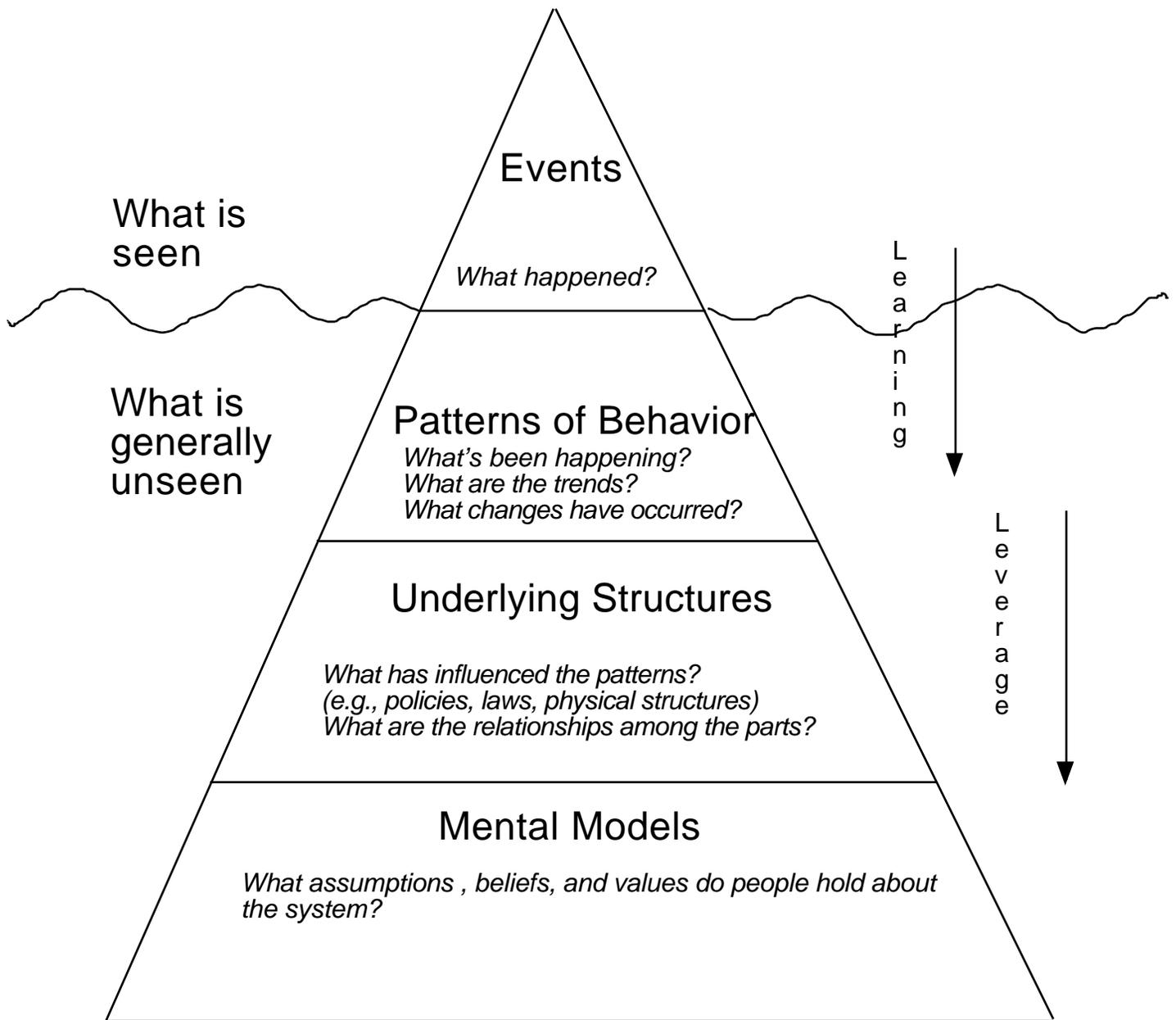   Circle the type of story you will write: folk tale   fairy tale

    Write your idea here:_____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

5. Draw a graph of the pattern of happiness for your story and plot the basic events at the bottom.

    Happiness

Iceberg...Seeing What's Below the Surface

What is seen

Events

What happened?

What is generally unseen

Patterns of Behavior

What's been happening?
What are the trends?
What changes have occurred?

L
e
a
r
n
i
n
g

Underlying Structures

What has influenced the patterns?
(e.g., policies, laws, physical structures)
What are the relationships among the parts?

L
e
v
e
r
a
g
e

Mental Models

What assumptions , beliefs, and values do people hold about the system?

Adapted by Waters Foundation, CFSD from Innovation Associates, Inc.
February 1999