Good Fortune in a Wrapping Cloth

Karen Maloley
Eastern Kentucky University

Good Fortune in a Wrapping Cloth is set in ancient Korea. This is a tale about a girl who painstakingly learns to sew a bojagi, or wrapping cloth, in order to be reunited with her mother who has been assigned as a seamstress for the king. Students first read or listen to the story, identifying cultural elements such as food, shelter, language, religion, arts, or beliefs. Students then identify similarities and differences between Korean culture and their own using a Venn Diagram. Students ultimately demonstrate their understanding of the Korean terms used in the story through an instructional strategy called a Mingle Party. The activities in this lesson will support and build upon students’ understanding of cultural differences as well as cultural universals.

| Title and Author of NCSS Notable Trade Book: | Good Fortune in a Wrapping Cloth by Joan Schoettler, Illustrated by Jessica Lanan  
2012 Notable Trade Book for Young People  
Walnut Creek, CA: Shen’s Books. 32 pp. (2011)  
Trade ISBN 978-1-885008-40-4  
Grade Level: 3-5  
Lesson Time: 45-60 minutes |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Summary:</td>
<td>Ji-su’s mother, a talented seamstress, has been chosen by the Korean king to come to the palace and sew bojagi, or wrapping cloths, for the royal household. Ji-su is very sad to say goodbye to her mother. She is determined to become an excellent seamstress in order to be reunited with her mother at the palace. Across the changing seasons, Ji-su practices her sewing with the help of her great-aunt. Ji-su forgoes opportunities to play in order to practice her stitches. At the first opportunity, she shows her work to the palace Sanguiwon master, who rejects one of her bojagis as imperfect. He tells her that he will check her work again before the Dano festival. When he returns, she shows him her best bojagi. She is finally accepted to become a seamstress for the king and is reunited with her mother.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| NCSS Standards: | I. Culture  
II. Time, Continuity, & Change  
IV. Individual Development and Identity |
| Materials: | • Book: Good Fortune in a Wrapping Cloth by Joan Schoettler, illustrated by Jessica Lanan |
Objectives:

1. Students will identify similarities and differences between the Korean culture presented in the book and their own culture (food, shelter, language, religion, arts, or beliefs) using a Venn diagram.

2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the cultural concepts used in the story by participating in a Mingle Party activity.

Procedures:

Exploration/Introduction:

1. Prior to reading the book, consult the glossary for pronunciation guides to the Korean terms included in the text.

2. Begin by asking students to think of something they really had to practice in order to improve their skills (printing, cursive, riding a bike, etc.). Many skills take a lot of practice to perfect.

3. Show the hand-sewn item you have selected to share with students. Insure that all students can see the item by passing it around, or having students take turns coming close to inspect the item. Point out the hand stitching and ask if they think the person who did this sewing was able to do it so well the first time they tried it?

4. Prior to reading Good Fortune in a Wrapping Cloth aloud, tell the students they will be listening to a book about a girl in Korea, a country in Asia. Allow students to identify the country of Korea on a world map or globe. Point out the location, depending on students’ prior knowledge.

Development:

5. Read text aloud to students, making sure to ask questions to check for understanding as well as to point out meanings of the unfamiliar words. Some examples include:

- Why is Ji-su sad?” (Her mother is leaving Ji-su in order to be a seamstress for the king)
- What do the people in this story believe happens when a package is wrapped with a bojagi? (It brings good luck, happiness, health, and good fortune)
- Who will help Ji-su learn to sew? (Gomo, her aunt) How do you think Ji-Su felt when she finally got to see her mother again? (answers will vary)
- What was your favorite part of the story? Why?
- What was the hardest thing you ever had to do? How did you do it? (answers will vary)
- What do you really think brought Ji-Su good fortune? Was it the wrapping cloth? (answers will vary, but students should notice that Ji-Su’s hard work brought her good fortune)
6. Put students into groups. Have them discuss and list the similarities and differences they noticed between Ji-su’s life and their own. After groups have had some time to work together, ask each group to share one similarity or difference they noticed in the story. Note this story is set in the past, not present day, so there will be some differences that have to do with changes over time. Focus the discussion on elements of culture: language, clothing, food, traditions, beliefs, etc. During the sharing, be aware of misconceptions and prepared to offer clarifying information. In addition, during the discussion identify specific places in the book that support the students’ statements.

7. Depending on the grade level and students’ familiarity with Venn diagrams, decide whether the Venn diagram will be created as a class, or by individual students. If this activity is a whole class activity, project the Venn diagram and write on it for the class. If students are completing the diagram on their own following the class discussion, give copies of a blank Venn diagram to each student.

8. CLOSURE: Facilitate a whole class discussion reviewing the elements of culture. Emphasize cultural universals. Clarify student misconceptions.

9. Mingle Party: This activity is a formative assessment of the students’ understanding of the cultural concepts introduced in the story. Prepare a set of three cards for each concept (see Figure 1). One card has the label for the concept, one card has the definition (or the concept label used in a sentence), and the third card has a picture of it. Be sure to have enough cards for each student to have one. If you have extras, hold them up and announce to the class that if they can’t find matching cards among their classmates, they need to check the cards the teacher is holding.

10. Students mingle (as at a party) to discuss the card each is holding and to match up all three cards for their concept. Students continue mingling until all students have found the matching cards.

11. When students are in groups of three, go from group to group asking each to share the concept’s label, definition, and the sentence that they matched up. Ask if anyone disagrees with his or her matches. This is the opportunity to clear up misconceptions about the concept and meanings. This also allows the teacher to identify concepts that need further instruction or clarification in future lessons.

**Expansion:**

**Assessment:**

Objective 1: Formatively assess students’ understanding of culture during the sharing portion of the lesson. The summative assessment will be each student’s Venn diagram (if they have been completed by students independently).

Objective 2: Formatively assess students’ understanding of the cultural concepts in the book by completing the Mingle Party activity.
### Suggested Extension Activities:

1) Passage of time: reread the book looking for changes in seasons. How much time passed in this story?

2) Students can create their own bogagi by cutting and sewing pieces of cloth together into a pattern. For younger children, use colored paper instead and glue them as a collage onto a background piece. Artistic skills are developed as they piece together designs on the background.

### Resources:


Links to images:
- Bojagi: (Photo credit: Angela Napili) Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Korea-Joseon-Bojagi-01.jpg

### About the Author

Karen Maloley is an Associate Professor of Elementary Social Studies Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Eastern Kentucky University. She is a former elementary and middle school educator. Email: karen.maloley@eku.edu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Bojagi</strong></th>
<th><strong>A square, hemmed cloth; similar to a quilt</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(BOH-jah-ghee)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chima</strong></th>
<th><strong>A long wrapped skirt for women and girls</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(CHEE-mah)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jeogori</strong></td>
<td>A short jacket with long ties worn by women and girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(JUH-goh-ree)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kimchi</strong></td>
<td>A fermented vegetable dish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(GHEEM-chee)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mandoo</strong></td>
<td>Korean dumplings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MAHN-doo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yut</strong> (yoot)</td>
<td>A Korean board game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Cultural Concept cards for the Mingle Party activity