Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival

Written by Kirby Larson and Mary Nethery

Janie Hubbard
University of Alabama

Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival presents high quality illustrations and relevant information concerning the aftermath of natural disasters, with specific attention to Hurricane Katrina. The book relates to students’ real lives because natural disasters affect many people, and, if ever faced with a natural disaster, students may find comfort in remembering this story of friendship, hope, and renewal. Young students also may begin to realize ways in which people help others during challenging times. This serves as an introduction to the importance of volunteerism in our culture. In this lesson, students are engaged in: concept webbing, discussion, map reading, cooperative group work, free-form mapping, and critically thinking about things that natural disaster survivors need and how volunteers help. Student friendly digital resources that explain hurricanes and how people adapt following natural disasters are used in the lesson.

| Book Title | Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival by Kirby Larson and Mary Nethery  
(2012 Notable)  
New York, NY: Walker Publishing Company  
ISBN: 978-0-8027-9754  
Recommended for grades 3-5  
Time: Approximately 1 hour. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Summary</td>
<td>This is a true story of Bobbi, a dog, and Bob Cat, a cat, who were left behind when Hurricane Katrina, a category three storm, touched land near New Orleans, Louisiana on August 29, 2005. Together, Bobbi and Bob Cat wandered through the devastated streets of the city trying to find food and clean water. They ended up at a temporary animal shelter where they insisted on staying together. This is when we learn Bob Cat is blind and Bobbi is his self-appointed seeing eye dog. After an appearance on CNN T.V. News, the friends were adopted together and lived happily on a ranch in Oregon.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. Culture
II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
IV. Individual Development & Identity
X. Civic Ideals and Practices

Materials:
- White board and marker
- 2 pieces of paper and pencils for each group of 3-4
- 1 read-aloud copy of the book, *Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival*
- 1 large U.S. map
- Computer, large screen & Internet connection (or pictures of hurricanes)
- 1 large piece of white butcher paper and water markers for each group

Objectives
1. Students will demonstrate their prior knowledge of natural disasters by participating in a webbing activity and discussions.
2. Students will use a map to locate the Hurricane Katrina sites relevant to this particular story.
3. Students will identify ways in which Bobbi and Bob Cat helped each other after the natural disaster (hurricane) in New Orleans.
4. Students will identify ways people can help other people after a natural disaster.

Procedures
Exploration
1. On a white board, draw a large circle with spokes radiating from the circle to form a web. This serves as a concept web for the class discussion.
2. Place students in groups of 3-4 and give each group a piece of paper and one pencil.
3. Ask each group to select one member to draw a web, on paper, like the one on the board, and write the words “Natural Disaster” in the middle.
4. Instruct groups to discuss some of the words, phrases, ideas, events, causes, and/or results they believe relate to natural disasters and write those on the spokes of the web.
5. Write one or two examples on the large web to model (e.g., flood, tornado, hurricanes, earthquake, storm, wind, fallen trees).
6. After 5 minutes, ask each group to share some of the ideas that were discussed within their small groups.
7. Write each answer on the large web previously drawn on the white board and facilitate a whole group discussion.

Assessment: Students will participate in small and whole group
discussions. Teacher will observe each student’s participation and assess prior knowledge of natural disasters.

1. Explain the purpose of the lesson, how it relates to students’ real lives, and briefly outline the procedures for the development and expansion phases. Specifically, explain the following ideas.
   - There are activities that friends and other people do every day, and then there are activities that they do during times of great hardship.
   - This book is about a dog and cat who did many things to show their friendship and help each other survive after a natural disaster: a hurricane called Hurricane Katrina that swept through New Orleans, Louisiana.

2. Show students New Orleans and the Mississippi River on a map and where these places are located in relation to their hometown.

3. Briefly explain hurricanes and show pictures by opening these websites:
   - **Weather WizKids**
     - Basic Information about Hurricanes: [http://www.weatherwizkids.com/weather-hurricane.htm](http://www.weatherwizkids.com/weather-hurricane.htm)
   - **Hurricanes for Kids Part 1**
     - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1aXoP9xL-24](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1aXoP9xL-24)
   - **FEMA for Kids**

   (NOTE: If you do not have access to Internet, show paper visuals of hurricanes and explain, scientifically, how and why hurricanes occur).

1. Tell students that hurricanes are called “natural disasters” because they are caused by nature, and their strong winds may sometimes destroy things (e.g., buildings, trees, vehicles) in communities. **Assure students** that most communities have warning systems, meteorologists can predict when and where natural disasters will occur so we can see this on T.V., and people are evacuated. Explain that, after natural disasters, people often return to their communities to rebuild new homes and businesses.

2. Before reading the book, show the realistic photo of Bobbi and Bob Cat on the last page of the book. The photo will help students understand and remember it is a true story.

3. Read the book to students stopping to discuss the pictures and events. For example, page 3 shows strong winds, pages 4-5 show floodwaters and rescue workers, pages 6-8 show fallen trees and
destroyed furniture. [Note: pages 10-11 show red markings painted on the outside of houses. This illustrates how rescue workers have checked these houses to make sure that people are not there.]

4. While reading the story, emphasize the things that Bobbi and Bob Cat ‘do’ for each other:
   - Bobbi was abandoned on a porch after the evacuation, and Bob Cat stayed with her (p.4).
   - Every time Rich tried to touch Bob Cat, Bobbi growled (pp. 13, 14), protecting Bob Cat.
   - Bobbi barked and howled until the volunteers let Bob Cat out of his cage (p. 16).
   - Bob Cat stayed close to Bobbi (p. 17).
   - Bobbi chose to be Bob Cat’s Seeing Eye dog (p. 18).
   - At the end of each day they snuggle up together (p. 27), comforting each other.
   - “Did Bobbi snatch Bob Cat from the dirty floodwaters that had filled New Orleans?” “It is very likely that a blind cat would not have made it without Bobbi’s protection. In turn, Bob Cat’s friendship may have made Bobbi stronger and given her a reason to go on.” (p. 29).

5. Give each small group a large piece of white butcher paper and a few colored water markers.

6. Free-Form Mapping - Instruct each group to collaborate, discuss how Bobbi and Bob Cat helped each other survive, and retell/summarize specific parts of the story in which people or animals were being helped or were helping others. The free-form map should only use symbols; no words or time intensive artwork are necessary.

7. Instruct groups to use 10 minutes to complete the free-form map.

8. Ask each group to share their free form maps (retell/summaries) with the class.

9. Closure: Facilitate a whole class discussion and encourage all students to ask questions. Answer questions and clarify misconceptions before moving to the expansion phase of the lesson.

Assessment: Students will work in small groups to create a free-form map retelling or summarizing ways that people or animals helped each other survive after Hurricane Katrina. Ask students to present the free-form maps to the class. Observe each student’s small group and whole class participation and monitor by asking questions to assess understanding.

1. Reiterate that people help each other in many ways after a natural
disaster. Volunteerism is when people help other people without the expectation of payment.

2. Ask students to think of things that people might need after a natural disaster. Also ask students to consider items that are of no use (see background information for teacher websites below).

**Background Information for Teacher (Useful & Unnecessary Items):**

- [http://money.howstuffworks.com/10-worst-things-donate-after-disaster.htm#page=0](http://money.howstuffworks.com/10-worst-things-donate-after-disaster.htm#page=0)

3. Give each group one piece of paper and a pencil. Ask groups to select one person to record their ideas as they brainstorm.

4. Instruct students to meet with their groups, discuss, and agree on one particular item that natural disaster survivors might need (more than one item if the lesson is for older students). Then, brainstorm the process that volunteers might use to collect and distribute the item(s) to a large number of survivors. Ask students to consider these questions and others as they think about the ‘process’ of volunteerism:
   - Is the item(s) vitally important? If so, why or why not?
   - Is this item(s) something that everyone would think of first (e.g. water); will there be too much of it collected by others?
   - Think creatively; what else might be useful?
   - How many people might need the item(s)? Who are they (e.g., children, adults, teachers, animals, etc.)?
   - If a person wanted to start a volunteer group to collect this item(s) who should they talk with first? How would they find volunteers?
   - Where and when could volunteers meet?
   - How could volunteers collect? How could they deliver?
   - How much time might this process take?
   - Since volunteers are not paid, why would they want to help?
   - Do you know of volunteer organizations that are already working to help natural disaster survivors?

5. Each group should share their ideas with the class.

6. After groups have shared their ideas, show students the website below and extend the discussion about ways that children can help other people after natural disasters.

   - [http://kidshealth.org/teen/misc/natural_disaster.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/misc/natural_disaster.html)
### Assessment:

**Students** will work in groups to identify a specific need(s) that natural disaster survivors might have and ways that ‘volunteers’ can provide the item(s). Have students present their ideas and participate in a problem solving discussion about the process of volunteerism. You may choose to use each group’s plan for grading.

### Assessment:

Students will be individually assessed on their participation in small group activities (e.g., discussion, presentation, free-form mapping, exploring the process of volunteerism) and whole group activities (e.g., discussion and attending to the ideas of others). Teacher monitoring and questioning are used to evaluate each student’s understanding. The final problem solving activity, written on paper, during the expansion phase of the lesson may be graded if needed.

### Suggested Extension Activities

1. **Accommodations**
   - The lesson is accessible to most students because of the methods used:
     - teacher read-aloud
     - small group collaboration
     - whole class discussions
     - websites with short videos and pictures
     - free-form mapping is a collaborative group drawing activity
   - The teacher may consider the following:
     - gathering natural disaster books or printing age appropriate articles from the Internet in other languages
     - sending the book home with a student to read with parents the night before the lesson
     - facilitate an “I Have, Who Has?” vocabulary game with students before reading the book (*Appendix A*).

2. **Two Bobbies Sheet**
   - [http://www.twobobbies.com/extras.htm](http://www.twobobbies.com/extras.htm)
   - For young children: Using *Microsoft Word*, insert a text box on the color sheet with the label, “How do friends help friends?” After reading the story aloud, children might write an answer to the question (e.g., share, talk, etc.), write a short story, or they can dictate a story while the teacher writes for them.

3. **Remembering the Two Bobbies Update**
   - Melinda Golis (Two Bobbies’ New Home)
   - The first website is an update article to discuss with students.
The second website describes Melinda Golis, the woman from Oregon who adopted the Two Bobbies. Students might be interested in learning how the Two Bobbies lived as adoptees, and these two websites give updated information for the teacher to share. [Note: Bob Cat and Bobbi were adopted together and lived happily on Ms. Golis’ ranch with several other beloved animals; however, Bob Cat passed away just before the book was published].

4. Saving Pets

http://savinganimalsduringdisasters.org/


http://www.mdvma.org/petowners/tips/disasterprep.asp

These websites are about saving pets in a natural disaster. Older students might research the appropriate procedures for saving pets during and after a natural disaster, including where pets might be allowed to stay. For example, some shelters do not allow pets.

### Additional References

**Books:**

**Digital Resources:**

**Author**

**Janie Hubbard** is Assistant Professor of Elementary Education, specializing in social studies education at the University of Alabama. She has taught K-6 students in the U.S. and abroad. She has written both practice and research articles based on her work with young
Appendix A

“I Have Who Has” Directions
Wrap-Around Game

1. This game is used to practice essential concepts with the whole class. The teacher must create a set of cards before the class begins. Students gain vocabulary practice and listening skills while matching the answers on their cards with questions on other students’ cards.

2. To create the cards, first choose a list of words (see list at the end of these directions); however you may add more related words. Then begin filling in the blanks on an ‘I Have Who Has’ template with these words. The last card you fill out must have the first word used for the ‘Who has ___?’

3. Hand out a card to each student. Some students may need to have 2 depending upon how many are in a set. It is important to use all the cards in a set.

4. Choose a student to go first, and ask her/him to read the card aloud. For example the student might say, “I have volunteer, who has an animal that serves as a companion for a person without sight?”

5. A second student who has the card with the vocabulary word or concept then reads that answer aloud: “I have seeing eye dog.” This student will then read the question at the bottom of her/his card. For example, “Who has moving someone from a place of danger?” Then the student with the concept/vocabulary card that answers the question responds, and the cycle continues. Every card in the set is connected to a card before it and a card after it. For best results, keep the game moving at a quick pace.

6. Play continues in this fashion until all of the cards have been played. Important Note: The game will end with the same student.
who started play.

7. Some specific vocabulary words extracted from the book or related to the story (others may be added): volunteer, jazz, Marti Gras, levee, tethered, debris, recede, devastate, temporary shelter, Seeing Eye dog, animal adoption, ear canal, eardrum, evacuate, floodwaters, Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, Louisiana, Mississippi River, Lake Ponchartrain, Utah, Oregon.