

TEACHING GLOBAL UNITY

THROUGH PROVERBS, METAPHORS, AND STORYTELLING

< Graphic symbols >

Vivian Chu

TEACHING GLOBAL UNITY THROUGH PROVERBS, METAPHORS, AND STORYTELLING

by Vivian Chu

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If there is light in the soul,
there will be beauty in the person.
If there is beauty in the person,
there will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home,
there will be order in the nation.
If there is order in the nations,
there will be peace in the world.

Chinese proverb

TEACHING GLOBAL UNITY THROUGH PROVERBS, METAPHORS, AND STORYTELLING

Vision & Purpose

This workshop presents a vision and offers interactive language tasks that illuminate consciousness of the universality of human experience, perception, and wisdom in all cultures. Participants will explore hands-on materials, ideas, tools, and adaptable resources to facilitate intercultural understanding with the ultimate goal of contributing towards global peace. The theoretical framework is drawn from Michelle LeBaron's work on bridging worldview conflicts through the use of metaphors and stories to engage people in creating shared meaning.

ESL teachers working with learners from the international community have tremendous opportunities to foster understanding and amity between people of different cultures, while simultaneously facilitating language acquisition. When teachers envision language learners from abroad as co-creators in the peace process, a greater goal of helping people communicate in a common language can be to work towards global unity.

Three paths that may be explored to move towards this goal draw on active and critical use of international proverbs, collective metaphors, and storytelling in lesson design. Along these paths it is possible to illuminate consciousness of the sacred unity in humanity, beyond its external variations, as well as foster appreciation of differences between cultures.

Proverbs from around the world contain universal themes and often convey similar values. They offer common ground for people from different cultures to express their shared humanity. In the language of metaphors, the interweaving of images and words can create transcendent meaning from entities and ideas that are totally unlike. There are numerous possibilities for guided discovery of the similar ways in which people from different cultural backgrounds perceive and make meaning from their world metaphorically. Storytelling is a powerful multi-dimensional communication process that enables individuals to speak from the heart, share values, explore depth and meaning, and access creativity. All three paths are workable for learners at various levels of English language ability, and can be used to focus on supporting peace, unity, and harmony between communities and in the world.

I would welcome any suggestions or feedback you have to offer for future editions of "Teaching Global Unity through Proverbs, Metaphors, and Storytelling."

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TEACHING GLOBAL UNITY

THROUGH PROVERBS, METAPHORS, AND STORYTELLING

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TEACHING GLOBAL UNITY

THROUGH PROVERBS, METAPHORS, AND STORYTELLING

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The following is a sampling of interactive language activities from
"Teaching Global Unity through Proverbs, Metaphors, and Storytelling."

If you are interested in obtaining the whole book,
please see page 2 of this file for retailers in Vancouver
or go to www.globalunityed.com for order information.

Thank you!

Vivian Chu

GLOBAL ISSUES

A. Introductory Activities - Guidelines

1. Using Proverb Gambits

- Present some gambits (choose from page 6, based on learners' level) for discussing proverbs - express interpretations, understanding, agreement/disagreement, and invite sharing of similar proverbs from learners' cultures.
- Write a proverb or two on the board, and go over the gambits by using them to express the different facets of meaning of the proverb(s).

Eg. *Wisdom is the sunlight of the soul.* ~ Germany

Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself. ~ China

- Depending on your class size, give the learners 3-4 gambit cards, and ask them to try out the functional language on the cards to exchange thoughts and opinions on the "Proverbs on Proverbs." Learners can turn over the cards after they've used them.

2. Proverbs on Proverbs

- Initiate thought about the value of proverbs by presenting some "Proverbs on Proverbs," via overhead or handouts.
- For higher-level learners, white-out a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, etc. in each proverb (depending on particular grammar focus for that class).
- Write the missing words on the board, and have learners choose the correct word to complete the proverb before having a small group discussion.
- Ask learners to use their gambit cards to express their thoughts on the proverbs.

3. Discovering Universal Meaning in Proverbs

- This activity may be used to pair learners. Give out pairs of international proverbs that contain similar meaning, one proverb to each learner. Ask learners to walk around and explain the meaning of their proverb to others, and find the person with the proverb that contains similar meaning to their own proverb. For added effect, make a "Jigsaw Globe" with the pairs of proverbs written on each jigsaw piece. Learners can create a globe of proverbs after finding their match.
- As a sit-down activity, two partners are given four pairs of proverbs to match. After they finish, they join two other partners who have the other four pairs of proverbs. They discuss the similar meaning and subtle differences in each pair of proverbs, and share proverbs from their own culture that are similar.

USING PROVERB GAMBITS

This proverb says ...	This proverb means ...
This proverb seems to say that ...	This proverb probably means ...
I think this proverb is about ...	I guess this proverb means ...
This proverb teaches that ...	The idea behind this proverb is ...
The message of this proverb is, " "	The teaching in this proverb is, " "
This proverb tries to express ...	This proverb suggests that ...
I agree with this proverb because...	I disagree with this proverb because ...
In my opinion this proverb is true/not true because ...	In my country, we have a similar proverb, which is "...."

PROVERBS ON PROVERBS

The proverbs of a nation furnish the index to its spirit,
and the results of its civilization.

Josiah Gilbert Holland

Proverbs are powerhouses of language:
they contain threads of common meaning
that weave the fabric of humanity.

Vivian Chu

When the fool is told a proverb,
its meaning has to be explained to him.

Ghana

A proverb is the horse of conversation:
when the conversation lags, a proverb will revive it.

Yoruba

A proverb is to speech what salt is to food.

Ethiopia

Never argue with a fool, a proverb, or the truth.

Russia

A proverb has three characteristics:
few words, good sense, and a fine image.

Moses ibn Ezra

Proverbs are maxims on their deathbed.

Maxim Drabon

All maxims have their antagonist maxims;
proverbs should be sold in pairs,
a single one being but a half-truth.

William Matthews

Proverbs are always platitudes
until you have personally experienced the truth of them.

Aldous Huxley

DISCOVERING UNIVERSAL MEANING IN PROVERBS

<p>In multitude there is strength.</p> <p align="right">~ Nigeria</p>	<p>United we stand, divided we fall.</p> <p align="right">~ U.S.A.</p>
<p>A bad peace is better than a good war.</p> <p align="right">~ Russian</p>	<p>Better a lean peace than a fat victory.</p> <p align="right">~ England</p>
<p>Unless you fill up the crack, you will have to build a new wall.</p> <p align="right">~ Ewe, West Africa</p>	<p>A stitch in time saves nine.</p> <p align="right">~ Holland</p>
<p>Where there's a will, there's a way.</p> <p align="right">~ Swahili</p>	<p>If first you don't succeed, try and try again.</p> <p align="right">~ England</p>
<p>God gives food to the birds, but they must look for it.</p> <p align="right">~ Germany</p>	<p>If you fail to plant the manioc, God will not raise manioc to feed you.</p> <p align="right">~ Zaire</p>
<p>He who is starving hates him who is eating.</p> <p align="right">~ Gabon</p>	<p>When one eats and the other looks on, there is likely to be a fight.</p> <p align="right">~ Turkey</p>
<p>Nobody cries who has not been pinched.</p> <p align="right">~ Kenya</p>	<p>An old crow does not croak for nothing.</p> <p align="right">~ Russia</p>
<p>Even though you know a thousand things, ask the man who knows one.</p> <p align="right">~ Turkish</p>	<p>See that you are wise, but also learn to appear ignorant.</p> <p align="right">~ Armenia</p>

DISCOVERING UNIVERSAL MEANING IN PROVERBS

<p>Blood is thicker than water.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Norway</p>	<p>A bad brother is far better than no brother.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Swahili</p>
<p>Gentle words open iron gates.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Bulgaria</p>	<p>Fair speech turns elephants away from the garden path.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Swahili</p>
<p>The rich break the laws and the poor are punished for it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Spain</p>	<p>The poor man must suffer for the rich man's transgressions.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Germany</p>
<p>Cook a little spit for me and I'll cook one for you.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Irish</p>	<p>You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Persia</p>
<p>Better a thousand dogs barking for you than one barking at you.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Arabic</p>	<p>One thousand friends are too little; one enemy is too many.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Turkish</p>
<p>As the country, so the proverb.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ German</p>	<p>Proverbs are the people's wisdom.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Russian</p>
<p>Better have an egg today than a hen tomorrow.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Italian</p>	<p>A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ England</p>
<p>Step by step, one should ascend the stairs.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Persian</p>	<p>Hair by hair, you may pluck out the whole beard.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Russian</p>

GLOBAL ISSUES

B. Theme-based Activities - Guidelines

1. Learning to Paraphrase Proverbs

- Elicit definitions of “paraphrase” from learners, and introduce the examples of proverbs and their paraphrases on the worksheet on page 13.
- For extra practice before writing paraphrases, elicit words from learners as a group and brainstorm synonyms.
- Place learners in pairs to discuss and write paraphrases for the 6 proverbs.

2. Matching Heads & Tails Proverbs

- This activity may be used to place learners in pairs. Give the beginning or the end of a proverb to each learner. Ask them to find the person with the beginning or end of their proverb, and then discuss their interpretations of the proverb using the gambits. Two partners can also exchange their proverbs with two other partners, discuss the meaning, and share similar proverbs from their culture.
- As a sit-down activity, learners work in pairs to join the beginning and end of the proverbs. Choose from among the 10 themes between pages 14 to 23 (4 proverbs per theme). After learners finish matching the heads & tails, they identify the theme of each set of 4 proverbs, suggest their meaning, and discuss how some themes are interconnected (freedom/oppression; poverty/social responsibility).

3. Comparing Proverbs Charts

- The charts can also be used as answer keys to the last activity. Hand out one chart per pair of learners. Ask them to collaborate on interpreting the meaning of each proverb, agree on a paraphrase, and write it in the box next to the proverb.
- Provide scissors for learners to cut the proverbs boxes from the paraphrase boxes. Ask learners to exchange their set of proverbs and paraphrases with another pair of learners, so that each pair of learners have a new set.
- Learners will match proverbs with the paraphrases others wrote, and discuss whether they agree with the paraphrases and how they would revise the wording. They will join the learners who wrote the paraphrases, and discuss differences in their interpretations of the proverbs.

4. Thematic Questions

- Choose appropriate questions (from page 24-25) relevant to the theme of the lesson for learners to discuss in small groups.

MATCHING HEADS & TAILS PROVERBS - PEACE / WAR

War is always	the sanction of failure. ~ Dominique de Villepin (French Foreign Minister)
If you can't get through,	walk around. ~ Finnish
He who chastises one	threatens a hundred. ~ Italy
It is well to be united in thought,	that all men have peace. ~ Hawaii
Permission is needless	to him who has the power to take without it. ~ Spain
Gentleness skillfully	subdues wrath. ~ Japan
The soldiers's blood,	the general's name. ~ Jamaica
May it end with threats	and not come to blows. ~ Samoa

PROVERBS CHART - PEACE / WAR

War is always the sanction of failure. ~ Dominique de Villepin (French Foreign Minister)	
If you can't get through, walk around. ~ Finnish	
He who chastises one threatens a hundred. ~ Italy	
It is well to be united in thought, that all men have peace. ~ Hawaii	
Permission is needless to him who has the power to take without it. ~ Spain	
Gentleness skillfully subdues wrath. ~ Japan	
The soldier's blood, the general's name. ~ Jamaica	
May it end with threats and not come to blows. ~ Samoa	

GLOBAL ISSUES

C. Extension Activities - Guidelines

1. Metaphors

- Elicit from learners general ideas or definitions of the word "metaphor."
- Present quotations on metaphors (page 45) via overhead or handouts.
- Discuss the value and effectiveness of metaphors to communicate the universality of human consciousness and perception.
- Ask learners to share metaphorical phrases from their own culture.

2. Decoding Metaphors in Proverbs

- Present "Decoding Metaphors in Proverbs (1)" - on overhead, handouts, or as cut-up cards for matching. Guide learners into exploring how metaphorical words in proverbs link with symbols and meaning.
- Learners can offer their own variations of interpretations of meaning drawn from the symbols.
- Give learners "Metaphors in Proverbs (2)," ask them to discuss the proverbs, and complete the chart by identifying the metaphorical words (hint: they are nouns). Discuss different interpretations of symbolic meaning, and write them down.
- After learners have a breakdown of a proverb into metaphors with variations of meaning, they can write different paraphrases of the same proverb.

3. Collective Metaphors - Words & Pictures

- For low level learners, pre-teach vocabulary and begin with a word/picture matching exercise, with "Collective Metaphors - Words and Pictures."
- Ask learners to write some words they associate with the metaphorical pictures.

4. Collective Metaphors - Intuitive Connections

- With intermediate and advance learners, form "Intercultural Groups" and ask them to brainstorm ideas, using nouns, verbs, and adjectives related to the collective metaphorical words on page 51. Use about 10 metaphorical words for one class.
- On the board, make a chart of the metaphorical words, have each group write out the words they associate with each of the collective metaphors.
- Highlight the similarities and differences in perspective from each Intercultural Group. Follow this activity with "Haiku Poems" on page 52.

Metaphors



The overwhelming message of their totality is that
we are all in one world
and there are interconnections everywhere.

P.R. Wilkinson

The metaphor shows us
the universe is full of cousins.

Author unknown

Metaphors allow understanding and experiencing
of one thing in terms of another.

John Searle

The act of giving a thing a name
that belongs to something else.

Aristotle

In the world of metaphors,
there are no boundaries, ownership, or conflict.

Vivian Chu

Decoding Metaphors in Proverbs (1)

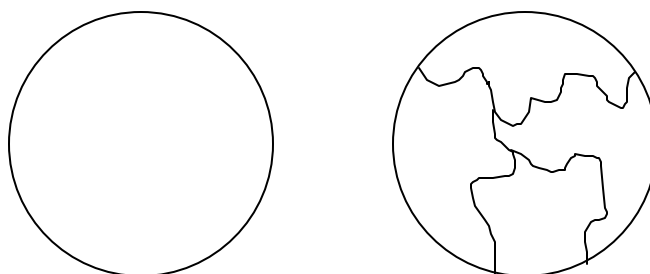
Proverb	Metaphor	Symbolic Meaning
<p>There is no discrimination in the forest of the dead.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ African (Annang)</p>	<p>Forest</p> <p>The Dead / Death</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a place of equality - a reality shared by all of humanity
<p>All the world smiles in the same language.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Mexican</p>	<p>World</p> <p>Smile</p> <p>Language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all people - express joy - way to communicate
<p>There is no prison like a guilty conscience.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Welsh</p>	<p>Prison</p> <p>Conscience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a place of constriction - knowledge of right or wrong
<p>Better a good keeper than a good winner.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ English</p>	<p>Keeper</p> <p>Winner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a care giver - a taker
<p>Riches disclose bad qualities which poverty conceals.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Arab</p>	<p>Riches</p> <p>Poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - wealth that is misused as a source of vice - lack that restricts vice
<p>Justice knows no friendship.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Estonian</p>	<p>Justice</p> <p>Friendship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - objectivity, impartiality - favoritism

Project: A Unified World

Task 1:

- Form four teams.
- Each team will create one of the four countries in a unified world.
- Each country will be embodied with metaphorical symbols (pg. 49-50) and conceptualized with proverbs from the chart on the following page.
- Cut the poster into a circle, section it into four pieces, and cut out the pieces.
- Each team will work on one piece of the world.

Example:



Task 2:

- Outline the land and ocean boundaries of your piece of the world.
- Give your country a name, represent the name with a metaphorical picture, and draw it onto your piece of the world.
- Each facet of your country – Government, Education, Environmental Policy, Social Support System, Justice System – is to be directed by the values and wisdom imbedded in proverbs on the following page.
- Choose three proverbs from each category, and use them as catalysts to writing your country's constitution.

Task 3:

- Each team will present their country.
- Discuss how the four countries can co-exist in harmony.
- Uncover any foreseeable conflicts.
- Negotiate changes that may be needed to each country's constitution for the unified world to evolve peacefully.
- Join the pieces of the world together.

A Unified World

Government	Education	Environmental Policy	Social Support	Justice System
Power can achieve more by gentle means than by violence.	If you wish to learn the highest truth, you must begin with the alphabet.	When you drink water, remember the source.	In the forest, tree leans on tree; in a nation, man on man.	Though the sword of justice be sharp, it will not slay the innocent.
There must be peace in the district to have law and order in the country.	Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself.	If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.	One cannot help many, but many can help one.	Justice knows no friendship.
Where the water rules, the land submits.	He who has imagination without learning has wings but no feet.	Better a good keeper than a good winner.	When numerous fishermen come together, multitudes of fish are caught.	Truth is not uttered from behind masks.
Much power makes many enemies.	Learning is weightless, a treasure you can always carry.	Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today.	Communities begin by building their kitchen.	Do not judge until you have heard both sides of the argument.
Government is best which governs least.	Knowledge is madness, if good sense does not direct it.	He that has some land must have some labor.	Charity begins at home.	To spare the ravenous leopard is an act of injustice to the sheep.
Convert great quarrels into small ones, and small ones into nothing.	Education is light; lack of it is darkness.	Nature is the true law.	If several join in an enterprise, then there is no disgrace should they fail.	A fox should not be on the jury at a goose's trial.
Equality breeds no war.	Never let schooling interfere with education.	Prudence does no harm.	Learn to handle a writing brush and you will never handle a begging bowl.	If it is thought that justice is with us, it will give birth to courage.
The people's government, made by the people, is answerable to the people.	With all your knowledge, know thyself.	Suffer the consequences of your deeds.	Do your duty and be afraid of none.	Who refuses to submit to justice must not complain of oppression.