



**CEL F Summer Institute '10**  
Subject: ELA Grade: 7<sup>th</sup>  
Boston Latin School [public], MA Teacher: Caroline O, Keri O, and Joe C  
Unit Title: The Pearl (Lesson 2 of 2)

**MA State Standards addressed by the lesson** (Include minimum of two state frameworks goals for this subject and grade level that this lesson aligns to):

1. Standard 8: Understanding a Text: Students will identify evidence in a text used to support an argument.
2. Standard 13: Nonfiction: Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the purposes, structure, and elements of nonfiction or informational materials, and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.
3. STANDARD 2: Questioning, Listening, and Contributing: Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.
4. STANDARD 19: Writing: Students will write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.

**National Education for Sustainability Standards addressed by the lesson** (Include minimum of two EfS standards that this lesson aligns to):

1. **EfS Standard 1** – Students understand and are able to apply the basic concepts and principles of sustainability (i.e.: meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs).
2. **EfS Standard 2** – Students recognize the concept of sustainability as a dynamic condition characterized by the interdependency among ecological, economic, and social systems and how these interconnected systems affect individual and societal well-being. They develop an understanding of the human connection to and interdependence with the natural world.

**Brief Summary of Unit (including curricular content and unit goals):**

*The Pearl* by John Steinbeck chronicles the life of Kino, an indigent Mexican pearl diver who finds “the pearl of the world.” In finding the pearl, Kino, the protagonist, realizes he can change his family’s future with this new wealth. He can provide his son Coyotito with an education; he can provide his family with a house; he and his wife Juana can have a proper wedding—all accomplishments he associates with a fulfilling life. The novella explores the theme of wealth and the greed brought out in Kino due to his possession of the pearl. *The Pearl* provides students with an opportunity to explore concepts of social status in regards to disparities between the rich and the poor. It also allows students to engage in a discussion about the imbalance of power. At a deeper level, the novella introduces students to the concept of sustainability by addressing the ideas of equity and limits within a community.

After the students have finished reading the novella, they will read two news articles: “Bhutan,” by Brook Larmer from the National Geographic and “Bhutan- The Last Place” a feature article from Frontline. Bhutan, a small country nestled between China and India, is considered the last Shangri-la of the world. A country that had no real semblance of technology until 1960, Bhutan has recently developed a doctrine of gross national happiness, which focuses on a balance between modernizing and maintaining happiness. Understanding that one’s happiness truly equates to one’s prosperity, in the past Bhutan has focused on providing merriment to its people over modernization. Recently, the monarchy has chosen to permit technology into the country. Many wonder if the introduction of technology will alter the doctrine of the people and how they define happiness and prosperity.

Using these two news articles as supplemental reading, the students will be introduced to the concepts of gross national product versus gross national happiness. They will also evaluate the influences technology has on a community. Taking a look at gross national indexes, along with the influence of technology on a people, students will continue to respond to the question “is *more* better?”. To gauge student understanding of sustainability, students will compare and contrast the experiences of the Bhutanese in the articles with the characters in *The Pearl*. By finding similarities and differences, students will make connections, strengthening their understanding of what defines a fulfilling life.

As a final assessment, students will create a visual representation that answers the question, “Is ‘more’ better?” The visual representation paired with a written explanation/justification will demonstrate understanding of the concept by integrating the terms equity, fairness, and limits in their discourse.

### Stage 1 – Identify desired results

#### Enduring understandings (what understandings are desired?):

##### **Students will understand that:**

*well-being and the understanding of limits is important to equity and fairness.*

#### Essential questions (what essential questions will be considered?):

What do you need for a fulfilling life?

#### Lesson question:

1. Which is more important – happiness or wealth (the acquisition of material things)? Explain your reasoning.

#### Outcomes (what key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this lesson/unit?)

##### **Students will know...**

and apply the ideas of equity, fairness, and limits to the parable of The Mexican fisherman and the American tourist, along with the novel *The Pearl*.

##### **Students will be able to...**

- find similarities and differences between the way the Bhutanese people and the characters in *The Pearl* grapple with the emergence of materialism.
- provide a personal definition of happiness.
- develop an understanding of sustainability.
- differentiate between gross national happiness and gross national product.

## Stage 2 – Determine acceptable evidence

### **Performance tasks (what evidence will show that students understand?):**

“Is More Better” Poster -- Students will make a visual representation of the idea “more is better.” In their own words, students will explain how their visual representations reflect and illustrate their understanding of equity, fairness, and limits.

**Extra Credit Opportunity:** Find a current news article that either relates/connects to the concept of gross national happiness and/or helps you answer the question “is ‘more’ better?”.

### **Other evidence (quizzes, tests, prompts, observations, dialogues, work samples):**

- Students will be able to answer six key questions as journal responses.
- Students will watch a nine minute National Geographic video about the country of Bhutan, commenting on information.
- Students will conduct a discussion about the emergence of technology in Bhutan.

## Stage 3 – Learning plan

### **Learning activities (what will students do and what will you, the teacher do, to prepare the students to achieve the desired outcomes?:**

Prior Activity)

Students will have read The Pearl and have completed The Mexican fisherman and American tourist parable activities.

Activity 1)

Have students write a one-page response to the following: Describe your Shangri-la (paradise). What would it include? Have students share their ideas with the class.

Activity 2)

Have students write a one-page response to the following: Does the presence of information technology affect your happiness i.e., television and the Internet?

Activity 3 part A)

Students will read a brief one-page synopsis on Bhutan in order to familiarize and gain preliminary information about the country. The synopsis is an abbreviated news article from Frontline, entitled “Bhutan-The Last Place: The Story.” Here is a link to the article:

<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/bhutan/thestory.html> .

Activity 3 part B)

After reading the article from Frontline, students will watch a nine-minute video on Bhutan from the National Geographic. While watching, students will be instructed to take notes and comments on any interesting or surprising images or information provided. Following the video, students will participate in a class discussion where they share their notes. The watching of the video and discussion will aid in minimizing any initial misconceptions about the Bhutanese people and their doctrine on gross national happiness. Here is the link to the video:

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/video/player?titleID=1410476524#/?titleID=bhutan-enlightened-experiment&catID=1> .

Activity 4)

For homework students will read an 11-page article from National Geographic entitled “Bhutan,” by Brook Larmer. Students must provide a paragraph response to the reading, inserting evidence from the article. In a second paragraph, students must share their definition of gross national happiness and gross national product.

Activity 5) In the next class, groups of students will share their paragraph responses they wrote from the “Bhutan” reading. Then groups will work on the following task: Trace the events in the novel *The Pearl*. What were the possible positives and resulting negatives that the pearl brought to Kino and his family? In contrast, for the Bhutanese, what are the positives and negatives of the introduction of television and Internet?

Next, each group will be assigned a particular stakeholder i.e., Older Bhutanese Generation, Youth of Bhutanese, Monks, Westerners, Entrepreneurial Bhutanese, and Tourists. Each group will write a one-page monologue in the perspective of the assigned stakeholder, based on the information provided in the readings. Following the written monologue, groups will write a paragraph response to a prompt that reflects the stakeholder's perspective on sustainability (for or against with supporting evidence).

Students may fill out the "3 Legs of Sustainability worksheet" to help answer the prompt [3 Circle Venn template.doc](#). They may also consider the four pillars of gross national happiness. Groups will present their work to the class.

These series of informal assessments will help students understand the key ideas about sustainability. Focusing on Bhutan's current experience, and gross national happiness, students will be able to evaluate and consider how the environment, economy, and equity play influential roles in determining a balanced society. Students should refer to the three legs of sustainability as they reflect and write their various responses.

#### Activity 6) Final Assessment

##### "Is 'more' better?" Poster Project

1. Research and find an image that helps you answer the question "Is more better?"
2. Describe the image and explain how it helps you answer the question.
3. Answer the question: Is "more" better? Explain your answer in 1-3 paragraphs. Make certain to reference the ideas of equity, fairness, and limits in your response.

This will be the culminating assessment that will address the sustainability concept of well-being. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the three legs of sustainability.