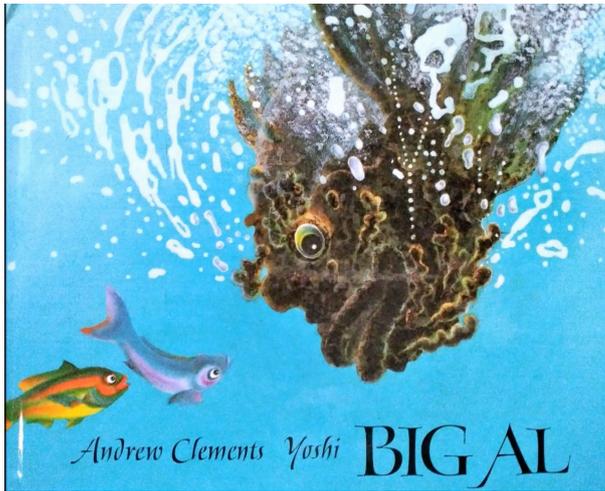


# Story Lesson Plan

## Emotion Coaching Teacher Handbook



### Read-Aloud

As you read, pause to ask questions and engage students in discussions about Big Al's feelings at different moments and how his emotions and actions change throughout the story.

### Main Themes



Acceptance, Belonging, Loneliness, Overcoming misjudgment based on appearances, Friendship

**Insights gained shape future action.**

How effective was the main character's reaction/response to the situation, given the outcomes?

**Sequences of plans, decisions, actions.**

What were the character's options to bring about desired outcomes and what did they end up doing?



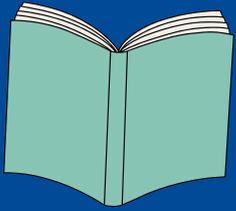
**Noticing the context.** What is happening within the main character (e.g., feelings and thoughts) and around them (e.g., others' actions)?

**Identifying the problem.** What assumptions and understandings explain the character's emotional arousal?

**Goals.** What is wanted by whom in the situation?

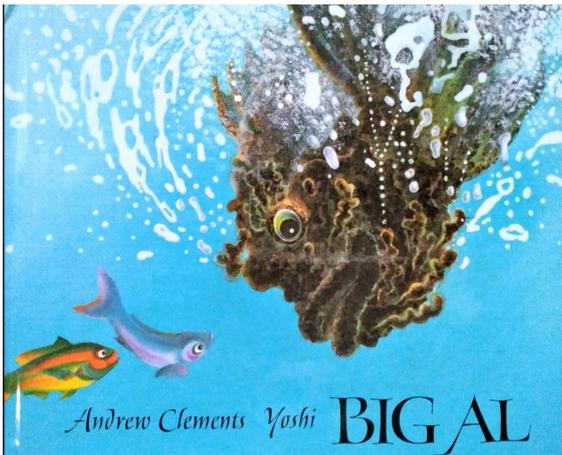
# Reading Guide & Activities

Consider how many sessions you can spend on the book. Break up lessons by conceptual chunks or pull ideas found throughout the handbook! Discussion questions are crucial for social-information processing and learning.



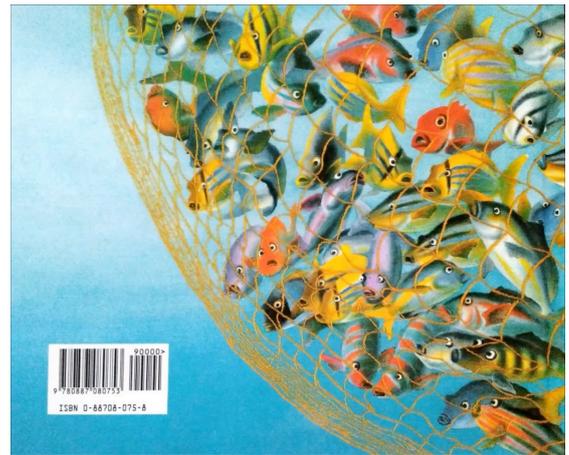
## Step 1: Recognizing the Context

### Book Front & Back Cover



#### Instructions:

Preview the front and back cover and make hypotheses about the main characters' identities, qualities, and feelings, what the main story tension might be, and how the tension might be resolved.



#### Goals:

- To pique interest in the characters and story
- To establish a procedural norm for considering and discussing the story
- To identify whether children are accurately interpreting and making inferences from picture cues

#### Sample Facilitation Questions:

1. Who is Big Al? How can we tell which fish is Big Al?
2. In what ways is Big Al different from the other fish?
3. What do you think this book might be about?

## Pages 1-6

**Big Al is kind and friendly, but his outward appearance frightens the other fish. When the other fish avoid him, Big Al feels sad and lonely.**

### Goals:



1. **Identifying the external contexts:** Big Al looks scary and the other fish keep to themselves
2. **Identifying the internal contexts:** Big Al is a nice fish and the other fish feel frightened or distrusting of Big Al. Big Al feels sad and lonely
3. Clarifying that the external and internal contexts may differ among characters
4. Identifying that external contexts can cause internal feelings
5. Connecting children's and character's experiences

### Sample Discussion Questions:



1. What has the story told us about what Big Al looks like on the outside?
2. What kind of fish is Big Al on the inside?
3. What kinds of things might a nice, friendly person or fish do? How might they act?
4. What kinds of things might a scary person or fish do? How might they act?
5. Do looks guide actions or do feelings guide actions?
6. What do you think that Big Al might feel about what is happening with the other fish? How do we know?
7. Why isn't Big Al angry at the other fish for keeping to themselves?



### Real Life Connection

1. What does it feel like when you are sad? What might your body look like and feel like if you are sad?
2. Have you ever been afraid to play with or be near a person because of the way they looked? What did you do when you were afraid? How do you think the other person felt about what you did?
3. Is being alone the same thing as feeling lonely? What did you do when you felt this way?

## Pages 15-16

**The little fish are caught in a net, so they feel scared and helpless.**

*Wait to discuss until you have discussed previous pages.*



### Goals:

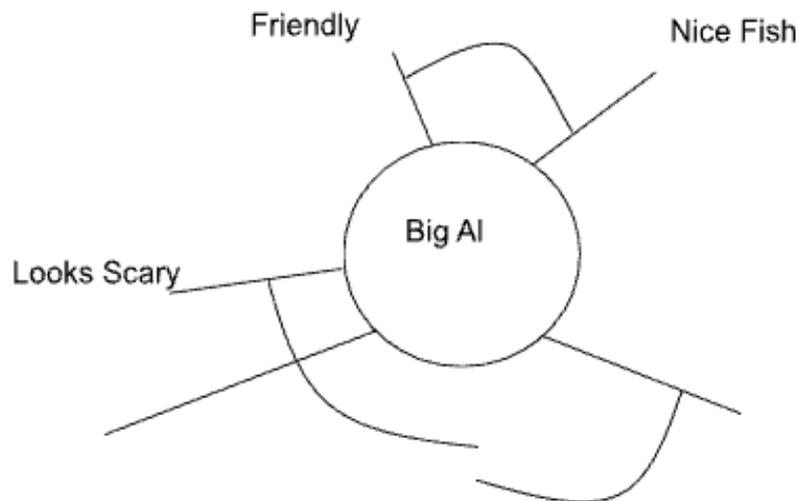
1. Identifying external and internal contexts



### Sample Discussion Questions:

1. What has happened to the little fish?
2. What do you think will happen to the fish if they stay in the net?
3. What do you think the little fish are feeling? How do we know?
4. What do you think that Big Al is feeling? How do we know?

## ***Related Activity: Character Webs***



**Materials:** Poster Board, Markers

**Directions:** Draw a generous sized circle in the center of a poster board and write "Big Al" inside the circle. After reading pages 1-6, verbally review with the group what is known about Big Al. As the group recalls Big Al, the group facilitator writes what is recalled on the poster board and links the associations with radiating lines and arcs. New information learned when reading additional pages is added to the web as needed. Facilitators can generate webs for the little fish, too, if desired.

# Step 2: Identifying the Problem

## Pages 5-6

**The little fish have friends, but Big Al is misunderstood and doesn't have any friends.**

### Goals:



1. Identifying tension created by external and/or internal contexts
2. Clarifying the context in which the problem resides
3. Understanding that characters may perceive problems *differently*

### Sample Discussion Questions:



1. What is the problem in this story? How do we know?
2. Do Big Al and the other fish have the same problem?
3. What does it mean when someone is misunderstood?
4. Has there ever been a time when you felt misunderstood? What happened? What did you do about it?

## Pages 15-16

**The little fish are trapped in the net and need help to get out.**

*Wait to discuss until you have discussed previous pages.*

### Goals:



1. Identifying the tension created by external and/or internal contexts

### Sample Discussion Questions:



1. What is the problem here? Who has the problem?
2. Why is being caught in a net a problem for the little fish?
3. Where do you think the net came from? What will happen to the fish if they stay in the net?

# Step 3: Identifying the Goal or Intention

Pages 5-6 & 15-16

**Big Al wants to be friends with the other fish.**



## Goals:

1. Identifying what the characters want to happen and hope to achieve as an outcome.



## Sample Discussion Questions:

1. What does Big Al want to happen? How do we know?
2. What are some things that Big Al could do to solve his problem? Why do you think that Big Al will try that?

# Step 4: Formulating an Action Plan to Achieve the Goal

Pages 7-14

**Big Al tries to make friends with the other fish by changing his appearance in a number of ways.**



## Goals:

1. Clarifying the challenges for achieving the outcome
2. Identifying the ways in which the characters act upon their intentions to address the problem
3. Connecting children's and characters' experiences



## Sample Discussion Questions:

1. What is Big Al trying to do here? Why is Big Al acting in this way?
2. Do you think that this is a good plan? Why or why not?
3. How do the other fish seem to be responding to what Big Al is doing here?
4. Have you ever tried to change what you look like in order to make friends? Did your plan work? Why or why not?

## Pages 17-18

**Big Al uses his size and teeth to rip a hole in the net and save the little fish.**



### Goals:

1. Identifying the resources the character has available to achieve the outcome
2. Identifying the ways in which the characters act upon their intentions to address problems



### Sample Discussion Questions:

1. What is Big Al trying to do here? Why is Big Al acting in this way?
2. How is this plan different than Big Al's other plans?
3. How do the other fish seem to be responding to what Big Al is doing here?
4. Is Big Al trying to change or hid who he is, or is he showing the other fish the kind of fish that he is?
5. Do you think that this is a good plan? Why or why not?

# Step 5: Evaluating the Outcome

## Pages 7-14

**Some of Big Al's changes to his appearance frightened the other fish even more, and the changes that helped him to blend in could not be sustained. Big Al could not hide his natural appearance from the other fish, and the other fish remained fearful of him.**



### Goals:

1. Clarifying that plans do not always achieve the desired goal, and when that happens you need to stop and think about why your plan did not work and adjust your plan
2. Understanding of the difference between short-term and long-term solutions
3. Understanding that others may not perceive your actions the way you intended



### Sample Discussion Questions:

1. Has Big Al's plan worked? Why or why not? What went wrong?
2. What was Big Al trying to do? Why was he doing it? What did the other fish think of what he did? How did they see him?
3. Could you see what Big Al was intending by what he was doing?
4. What else might Big Al have done to show what he was intending?

## Related Activity: Problem Chart

**Materials:** Poster board, Markers

**Directions:** Create the headings identified below, and after reading pages 7-14, facilitate a discussion in which Big Al's problems, intentions, plans, and outcomes are discussed. As these items are discussed, write the responses on the board.

### Example

Problem	Intention	Plan	Outcome
Big Al has no friends.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To make friends</li><li>2. To be funny</li><li>3. To seem smaller</li><li>4. To blend in</li><li>5. To help</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Puffs up</li><li>2. Hides in the sand</li><li>3. Changes color</li><li>4. Saves fish from net</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Frightened fish</li><li>2. Worked until he sneezed</li><li>3. Worked until he was clumsy</li><li>4. Fish see he is nice &amp; they become friends</li></ol>

## Pages 17-24

**Big Al saves the fish caught in the net, who now see that he is a friendly fish and become friends with him.**



### Goals:

1. Understanding that plans need to communicate your intentions to others in order to be understood.
2. Clarifying that initial plans do not always work, so you may need to try other things.
3. Understanding that you make friends by showing others the kind of person you are on the inside.



### Sample Discussion Questions:

1. Did Big Al's plan work? Why was this plan successful?
2. What was Big Al trying to do? Why was he doing it? What did the other fish learn about Big Al here?

# Step 6: Life Lessons or Moral

## Review the Entire Story

Consider the problem solving steps & discuss life lessons from the story.



### Goals:

1. Consolidating observations from the story and arrive at morals or lessons learned
2. Applying these lessons to real life



### Sample Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think Big Al learned from his different plans?
2. What do you think the other fish learned from Big Al?
3. What did you learn from reading about Big Al and the other fish?

## ***Related Activity: Important Lessons Chart***

**Materials:** Poster board, Markers

**Directions:** After reading Big Al, facilitate discussions about what lessons were learned from reading the story. As the group shares their observations, link similar observations together and write the lessons learned on a poster board. Possible lessons learned are listed below. Note: important lessons may be addressed in the process of reading the text, and this may be completed as an additive activity while reading the text.



### ***Example***

#### **Important Lessons**

1. You can't tell what kind of person someone is by appearances alone
2. It can hurt your feelings when others misunderstand you
3. Sometimes our plans do not work out as we intend
4. It may take time for other people to get to know you
5. There are some things that you can change and some things that you cannot change
6. Just be yourself

## Related Activity: Social Information Processing Chart

**Materials:** Poster board, Markers

**Directions:** Format a poster board with sections and titles as indicated below. Using the story board, review the steps of problem solving with the group. Inform the group that they will be working together to draw and write a sentence about the part from the story that fits with each problem solving section. The pictures will be drawn in the larger areas and the sentences, or captions, will be written just below the pictures. For some groups, it may be helpful to discuss possible images and captions, preferences for story sections, and sharing markers before beginning the activity.

### Example



**1. Encode External: What is happening on the outside?**

**Encode Internal: What is happening on the inside (feelings)?**

**2. Interpret: What assumptions are made by the character? Other characters?**

**3. Goals: What does the character want to happen?**

**4. Plan: What does the character do about the problem?**

**5. Outcome: What happened? Did the plan work?**

**6. Moral: What did we learn?**

*The group can focus upon Part 1 of Big Al, where he tries to change his looks but is not successful, Part 2 of Big Al, where he shows he is nice by saving the other fish, or both.*

#### Problem Solving Board Phase 1:

1. External: Big Al's peers avoid him
2. Internal: Big Al is nice but sad and lonely
3. Interpret: Big Al is misunderstood and others think he's scary
4. Intentions: Big Al wants to show the other fish he is friendly
5. Plan: Big Al decides to change his appearance.
6. Outcome: Does not work. Other fish remain scared. Short-term solution.
7. Moral: Changing what you look like may not help you to make or keep friends.

## Problem Solving Board Phase 2:

1. External: Other fish are trapped in a net
2. Internal: Big Al forgets about his sadness and loneliness and is worried about other fish
3. Interpret: Peers are in danger
4. Intentions: Big Al wants to help the other fish
5. Plan: Big Al rips the net and the fish are saved
6. Outcome: The other fish learn that Big Al is nice and they become friends
7. Moral: Helping others is important, no matter the circumstances, and it can show others how much you really care about them.

# The End!

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