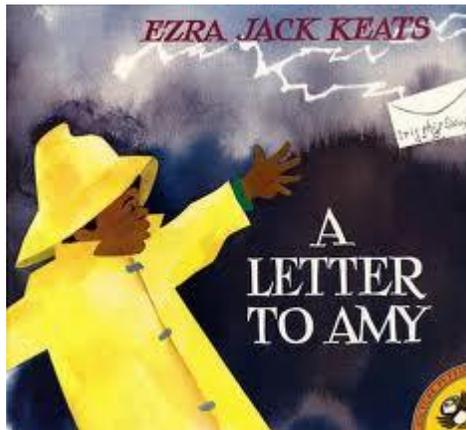


Michael Shamblin  
Creative Problem Solving Assignment  
EGT 517

**Creative Problem Solving Lesson Plan to Accompany the Novel “A LETTER  
TO AMY” by Ezra Jack Keats**



Creative Problem Solving allows for the use of divergent and convergent thinking in the manipulation of information to develop creative solutions to problems identified through the enumeration and evaluation of presented data. “The Creative Problem Solving model was developed originally by Osborn (1963), he was interested not just in theorizing about creativity, but also in finding ways to use it well” (Starko, 2010, p.38). The process was later developed by Parnes (1981) and later by Isaksen and Treffinger (1985) and each version involves both divergent and convergent stages of problem solving. The processes involved a series of steps mess-finding, data finding, problem-finding, idea-finding, solution-finding, and acceptance finding. In the early 1990’s, the stages were divided into three general components: Understanding the Problem, Generating Ideas, and Planning for Action (Starko, 2010, p.38).

This lesson plan will utilize the following components Understanding the Problem, Generating Ideas, and Planning for Action, that will allow the students to find a solution to the problem. In this lesson, I will read the story titled “A Letter to Amy” by Ezra Jack Keats. In the story, Peter wants to invite Amy to his party, but she is a girl. His solution is to write her a letter, but on Peter’s rainy walk to the mailbox, a sudden wind blows the invitation out of Peter’s hand and right toward Amy who happens to be coming around the corner. Peter does not want Amy to see the invitation because his surprise will be ruined. Peter bumps into Amy and grabs the letter just before it lands in Amy’s hand. Peter eventually ends up mailing the letter and Amy arrives at the party. With using this story, students will understand the concepts of problem and solution and will write a letter to the class explaining a problem that they have and a solution that may work.

**Title:** A Letter to AMY!

**Students:**

This lesson plan will be used for 1st grade students.

**Goal:**

To have the students understand the concepts of problem and solution so that they can write a letter to the class explaining a problem that they have and a solution that may work.

**Objectives:**

Students will:

- Participate in class discussions about predictions and story elements such as characters, problems, and solutions
- Add solutions to the problem
- Compose a story with a problem and solution

**Materials Needed:**

“A Letter to Amy” by Ezra Jack Keats, Story Map Organizer, Letter Generator

[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/letter\\_generator/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/letter_generator/), and a group of first grade students.

**Procedures:****Before (Introduction):**

I will start by having the students look at the cover and each page and have students make predictions about what they think each page is about. I will ask open-ended questions such as the following and hopefully elicit a variety of responses:

- What do you see on the cover?
- What do you think this story is about?
- What characters are in the story and what do you think will happen to them?
- What do you think will happen next? (Ask after going through each page)

**During:**

Understanding the Problem and Generating Ideas:

I will carefully lead the students into understanding the problem that is faced in the story and the various ideas Peter thought. I will read the story aloud to the students, stopping and discussing the book after each page. Ask students the following questions:

- Why is Peter writing a letter? Have you ever been faced with a problem such as Peter has and had written a letter like this or maybe to someone else to solve a problem? (Framing the Problem, helps the students express their problems in ways that will hopefully build motivation, excitement, and enthusiasm for discovering and constructing creative ideas)
- What happens when he mails it? Have you ever mailed a letter and something like this

had ever happened to you? Would you had mailed the letter or found another way to get the message across to Amy?

- How does Peter Feel at this party? Have you ever felt like this before?
- What do you think Peter wishes for? Have you ever had wishes?

I will then build upon what a problem is with the students. I will explain that most stories have a problem that a character faces. I will also ask students to brainstorm other options that Peter could have considered and to discuss how they would solve his problem. I will encourage students to compare the choice Peter made to the other options. (Students will generate ideas in which they will come up with many new possibilities. Brainstorming is used as one tool for generating options)

Preparing for Action: I will then introduce what a solution is, this is when someone decides what to do to fix the problem. I will then ask the students to describe the solution that Peter faces in A Letter to Amy and various other possible solutions. As a class, we will work on a story map organizer using the SMART Board. (Students will prepare for action in developing solutions by applying deliberate strategies and tools to analyze, develop, and refine promising possibilities, and to transform them into promising solutions)

**After:**

With using this story, students will write a letter to the class explaining a problem that they have and a solution that may work. Students will use the following Letter Generator website to type their letter. [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/letter\\_generator/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/letter_generator/) Students will then discuss their letters with a cooperative learning group and possibly to the entire class.

\*Additionally, students may visit the website “You’ve Got To Be Kidding!” Students will solve real life problems by choosing the best advice in this game. Arthur from PBS kids helps children

with decision-making skills in which they will read each scenario that is presented, select a possible solution, and see if it was the correct decision. The game offers reasons why it is a good decision, or if it is not why not. Each correct decision means another step into the tree house.

<http://pbskids.org/arthur/games/yougottobekidding/index.html>

**"Tips" for you and the group to remember to keep the process open-ended and productive.**

Effective discussions consist of engaging students in discussing relevant content and this promotes active learning. Discussion can provide a socializing mechanism, examine and clarify confusing concepts, and foster critical thinking among students. To keep the process open-ended and productive, I will have ground rules in place. I will remind my students that that in order to create a climate for open and honest dialogue and to encourage the broadest range of viewpoints, it is important for the class to treat each other with respect. Name-calling, accusations, verbal attacks, sarcasm, and other negative exchanges will not be tolerated. In expressing viewpoints, students should remember to try to raise questions and comments in a way that will promote learning, rather than defensiveness and conflict in other students. Learning is both about sharing different views and actively listening to those with different views. I will remind my students that they are to keep the discussion and comments on the topic. In addition, everyone is expected to share something, but if a student is called on and if there is no response, he, or she is allowed to say, "Pass," and the question will be asked to another student. I will make sure that I continue to ask divergent questions that allow many possible appropriate responses. This is at the heart of many activities that encourage creative thinking. Additionally, I will make sure that I use wait time, a brief pause between the question and the response (3-5 seconds) (Starko, 2010, pp. 237-242). When students are brainstorming, I will make it a point to establish effective

rules: criticism is ruled out, freewheeling is welcomed, quantity is wanted, and combination and improvement are sought (Starko, 2010, p.130). In addition, creative work requires applying and balancing three abilities that can all be developed: synthetic, analytic, and practical ability. The most powerful way to develop creativity in your students is to be a role model. Children develop creativity not when you tell them to, but when you show them (Williams).

## References

Starko, A.J. (2010). *Creativity in the classroom: Schools of curious delight* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) New York: Routledge.

Williams, M. W., & Sternberg, R. (n.d.). *Teaching for Creativity: Two Dozen Tips*. Retrieved March 23, 2012, from Center for Development and Learning: [http://www.cdl.org/resource-library/articles/teaching\\_creativity.php](http://www.cdl.org/resource-library/articles/teaching_creativity.php)

# Problem and Solution Organizer

**Book Title:** A Letter to Amy

**Characters**

---

---

---

**Problem**

---

---

---

**Solution**

---

---

---



**Letter Generator**

Open Save

POSTAGE PAID

**Are you ready to write a letter?**

Here you can learn the parts of a letter and how to write your own letter.

Enter your name and click Continue to get started.

Your Name:

Sample

View a sample letter

Continue

The interface is designed to look like a letter envelope. At the top, the title "Letter Generator" is written in a large, bubbly, orange font. Below the title is a circular "POSTAGE PAID" stamp with wavy lines to its right. In the top right corner, there are two buttons: "Open" and "Save", and a small red square with a white "X" icon. The main content area is a dark orange color. The central text asks "Are you ready to write a letter?" in a bold, black font, followed by a subtitle: "Here you can learn the parts of a letter and how to write your own letter." Below this is a dark red rectangular box containing the instruction "Enter your name and click Continue to get started." and a label "Your Name:" followed by a white text input field. To the left of the input field is a small icon of a letter with a red "Sample" label. At the bottom of the interface, there are two buttons: "View a sample letter" with a left-pointing arrow and "Continue" with a right-pointing arrow.

It was "A Letter to Amy" by Keats. As a 4 yr old child discovering picture books in the early 70s, I adored the artwork of Keats and loved to trace the watercolor images with my little fingers. What made his book even more important to me was the fact that my own name was in the title! My friend introduced me to Ezra Jack Keats, a white guy who writes stories about african people in urban settings, and I thought, "I could really like his work." So I read the book she had on hand, "A Letter for Amy". I was intrigued with how the unique art style captured a cityscape setting. Children can also get creative ideas on how to make their own invitation to their birthday or other special parties. When I've read the book in my classroom, that's exactly what we did. Materials List: A Letter to Amy (Ezra Jack Keats), chart paper with a letter heading addressed to parents, writing utensils, copy paper. Unit Plan " Cross-Curricular Four-Year-Olds Sample Unit 8. Prekindergarten Unit Lesson Plan Information. The following Sample Unit Lesson Plan Template provides guidance as you think through the design of a unit lesson. The unit lesson plans will integrate the Unit Plans for PreK ELA and PreK Math into the lessons. Therefore, it is important to develop the Unit Plan first, so that you will see the big picture of where you are and where you wish to go. This wi