




## Play...Pause...SGM®!

### Animations & Narratives for Social and Language Learning





Webinar with Maryellen Rooney Moreau M.Ed. CCC-SLP and Anna Vagin, Ph.D.

A Narrative Analysis of "SOAR," an animation video by Alyce Tzue

**This is an animated short film about two characters,**  **a girl and**  **a boy, from two different places.** One character is a miniature of the other, one obviously from a planet other than  earth. Mara is the name of the girl (on the blueprint) and Lucas is the name of the miniature boy pilot from another planet or galaxy. He and his comrades are on a mission to hang stars in the sky, each having his/her own type of flying machine.

**There are no words in the film.** The music by Jack Gravina, however, serves to mark various parts of the story. The credits indicate that there are many instruments including guitar, flute, English and French horns, piano, violin, harp, clarinet and mandolin. Combined, they are beautiful.

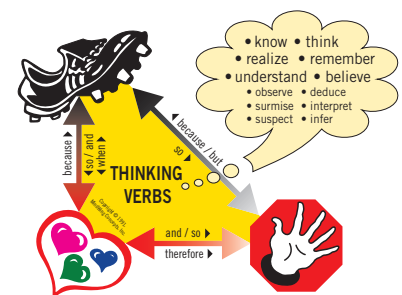
**The themes are resilience, cooperation, bravery and friendship.** We learn to name themes as we understand the plot and note the initiating events or kick-offs that are problems/troubles for characters. When this happens, there is a need to focus on characters' feelings—multiple at times—as well as on mental states or thinking verbs, so that we can track the characters' path to a plan to resolve the situation. It is the connection between the plan and the resolution that defines the theme.

**However, it is the connection among the**  **problems/troubles, the**  **feelings (emotions),**  **thoughts (mental states) and**  **plans (intents) that provides the motivation for the characters to act!**

**Was the character determined, brave, resourceful?** Then, perhaps there was *resilience*. Was there a problem solved to facilitate an outcome? Then, there was *cooperation*. Were there unknowns? Then, there was probably *bravery*. Was there a personal connection through cooperation? Then there was *friendship*.

**Characters in life use dialogue between and among themselves** to deal with and solve life's problems/troubles. When we can comprehend and express the language of the story, it facilitates dialogue.


**Thus, the Critical Thinking Triangle® of the Story Grammar Marker®** is vital for our students to understand, practice, and use as a framework for comprehension and expression..



**Characters:** A girl, interested in airplanes, their design and their flight.



**Setting:** A hilly area with trees and a table, probably a picnic table. We see the girl's multiple blueprints for plane structure and trajectory for flying.

Obviously, the flight of her own designed plane is the *planned*  *action* for the day.



**Kick-Off:** The plane crashes upon launching




**Feeling:** She is very sad and discouraged. We can tell this by her body language as she returns to the table..



**Thoughts:** She *realizes* that something went wrong. The girl might say, “I can’t seem to get this to work.”



**Plan:** To look at the blueprints again and try to alter something.

(Below is an *embedded episode*. The character is the girl, the  Setting is the same earthly landscape.)



**New Kick-Off:** A miniature satchel from above hits her on the head! As she is about to touch the satchel, a tiny plane whizzes by and hits a tree.



**Character:** A tiny person, a boy named Lucas, from a different planet or somewhere in the galaxy, has crashed his plane.



**Kick-Off:** His satchel, containing something special, has fallen out.



**Feeling:** We infer that he is feeling worried about the satchel.



**Mental State:** He is wondering where he is, in this different place. He thinks he can rescue the satchel.



**Plan:** To rescue the satchel and then to rejoin his comrades



**Attempt:** He climbs out in search of the satchel and pulls it back toward the plane.



**Attempt:** He sees Mara and attempts to point a pencil toward her as a threat. She takes his picture.



**Attempt:** He tries to get his plane down but the propeller breaks apart.



**Attempt:** Lucas sees his comrades fly away toward their destination without him.



**Attempt:** Lucas points the pencil at Mara in anger.



**Direct Consequence:** He is stuck.



**Resolution:** He sees all his comrades fly away above him. He is devastated.

\*\*\*\*\* **They look at each other** \*\*\*\*\*

## From Mara's Point of View



**Characters:** Girl and Boy



**Setting:** same landscape, but devastation of both planes



**Kick-Off:** She sees how sad the boy is. There must be internal dialogue here as she observes this situation and reflects on her own situation.



**Feeling:** She has empathy for him, having experienced similar devastation.



**Mental States/Thoughts:** She *realizes* that she had experienced failure too. She *knows* that even though he is different, he has had similar experiences as she has had, and she *knows* that he is in a foreign land.



**Plan:** To help him rejoin his comrades.


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**The next three attempts are really episodes in themselves. There has to be dialogue between Mara and Lucas to establish trust. There is fear, frustration, anger present. There are also many thoughts, realizations, memories of what had worked, etc. All these lead to plans!**




**Attempt:** Uses her pencils to make a propeller at the back of his plane but it doesn't work.



**Attempt:** (Sees the propeller roll toward her plane. This is a  Kick-Off that gives her an idea! She can put the propeller on the back of her plane and he can take it.) She puts the propeller on the back of her plane...he sits in the cockpit. It crashes. That doesn't work.



**Attempt:** Both are dejected and "rocky." Both are very upset, frustrated and sad. (Mara sees him looking dejected! This is another  Kick-Off. She feels empathy and uses one of her blueprints as a glider. She *remembers* that the wind blew the blueprint.)

*NOTE:* They work together to tie the glider on to his plane with the propeller on it. This required her to use her knowledge about flight to communicate to Lucas that she has a solution. She must communicate her intent...to help him. We could make an entire episode map about this "behind the scenes" situation. It requires much dialogue between characters.



**Direct Consequence:** It works! He flies away. They must have talked about the contents of the satchel since she looks up at the sky. We see him take out a star from the satchel and put it up in the sky. He signals to her as it twinkles! She knows he has arrived. All the sky lights up with stars; his friends are with him.



**Resolution:** She feels happy for him that he has accomplished a great task. So did she. She wonders what else is out there. She is probably encouraged to continue her work.

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"The language of thinking consists of all the words and modes of communication in natural language that refer to thinking processes and thinking products. These include words like think, believe, guess, conjecture, hypothesis, evidence, reasons, estimate, calculate, suspect, doubt, and theorize to name just a few. These are Thinking Vocabulary Words. These words describe either a kind of mental activity (thinking, guessing) or a product of mental activity (thought, guess)." (Tishman, S., Perkins, D., Jay, E. (1995). *The Thinking Classroom: learning and teaching in a culture of thinking*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon).