

TEACHER NARRATED STORY Example

‘Birdbrain and Featherhead’ adapted by Frederick Wichman from a folk tale of Kauai

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TELLING TECHNIQUES	Emphasis	Repeat	Pause	Volume	Pace
STORY TEXT					
<p>Tutu Nāhulu was the most skillful feather lei maker in all Kaua’i. Her two grandsons were excellent kia manu, birdcatchers, who collected the feathers that she tied into lei. The oldest boy, who was as quick and darting as the forest birds, was named Featherhead, and the younger boy, who was as slow and patient as the ocean birds, was named Birdbrain.</p> <p>One day, Tutu Nāhulu and her grandsons went to collect feathers of the wild forest chickens. They walked straight up to Mount Wai’ale’ale. There the boys built a house to shelter them from the rain.</p> <p>From the doorway Tutu Nāhulu heard the crowing of the wild forest chickens. Tutu Nāhulu loved to eat wild chickens. “Grandsons,” she said, “please catch some chickens for me to eat.”</p> <p>The two birdcatchers, who always did whatever Tutu Nāhulu asked them to do, went to catch some chickens. First, they made an offering to Ku-huluhulu-manu, who was the god of all birdcatchers. Ku-huluhulu-manu was covered with black and red feathers and had large white staring eyes and a long beak lined with sharp teeth. A single yellow feather hung down over his forehead. If the god was pleased, the yellow feather would flutter and the two birdcatchers would catch many birds. If Ku-huluhulu-manu was angry, the boys knew they would catch nothing at all. This morning the yellow feather fluttered and the two boys set out happily to catch wild chickens for their grandmother.</p> <p>After searching for a while, Featherhead finally said to Birdbrain, “You go that way to catch chickens and I’ll go this way. We’ll meet here at twilight. Then we’ll make a pile of all the birds we catch and divide them up. Every chicken that has two holes in its beak will belong to me. Those that have one hole will be yours. The one of us who has fewer chickens must pluck the feathers and grill the birds over a fire.”</p> <p>Birdbrain agreed happily. Soon Birdbrain saw a green grasshopper sitting on a blade of grass, singing its song. Birdbrain held his hand very still until the insect forgot it was there. Then he</p>					

scooped it up in his hand and popped it into a small gourd bottle that hung from his malo. As he walked along he caught several more grasshoppers.

Birdbrain found a small grassy spot with some bushes around it. He took a long thin cord, tied a small loop at one end, ran the other end of the rope through this loop, and made a larger noose which he spread out on the ground in a circle. He tied a grasshopper to a stick which he pushed into the ground in the center of the circle. Birdbrain then took the other end of the rope with him and crawled under a bush to wait.

Birdbrain waited very patiently. The insects in the grass began to sing again and the little birds began to flit about in the trees. A chicken peered out from behind a bush, carefully watching the grasshopper that was sitting on a leaf scraping its back feet together. Then the chicken rushed over and caught the grasshopper in its beak. Just as it tilted up its head to swallow the insect, Birdbrain pulled his end of the rope and the noose closed quickly, catching the chicken by its legs. Birdbrain caught six wild chickens.

As twilight approached, Featherhead and Birdbrain met at their appointed spot and divided all the chickens they had caught. Birdbrain had his six chickens but Featherhead had caught none at all. Yet whenever Birdbrain looked at a chicken, he saw it had two holes in its beak and handed it to his brother. "This is yours," he said. "It has two holes in the beak." All six chickens had two holes in its beak, so only Featherhead got to carry chickens back to his grandmother.

Birdbrain had to pluck the feathers from all the chickens. He put the soft brown feathers into a covered bowl and the long red tail feathers into another bowl. When all the chickens were plucked, he built a fire and roasted the birds. Tutu Nāhulu and Featherhead enjoyed eating the wild chickens very much, but Birdbrain was so tired he just lay down and went to sleep.

Tutu Nāhulu woke Birdbrain to ask, "Why did you have to clean and cook them all without help?"

"Featherhead told me that all the chickens with two holes in its beak belonged to him," Birdbrain said. "We didn't catch any birds with only one hole."

Tutu Nāhulu smiled fondly at Birdbrain. "Every chicken has two holes in its beak. Featherhead fooled you. Would you like to fool Featherhead this time?" she asked. Birdbrain nodded his head eagerly and grinned as she whispered in his ear.

Birdbrain opened some gourds his grandmother gave him. He took out a ball of sticky breadfruit gum and smeared himself from head to foot. Then he shook out the feathers that filled the other bowl and rolled himself in them until he was completely covered with soft brown feathers. He stuck some long black and red feathers in his hair and small white feathers around his eyes and more feathers around his mouth. In the center of his forehead he put one long yellow feather.

He looked like Ku-huluhulu-manu, the god of the birdcatchers. Birdbrain flapped his arms and ran down the path after his brother, crowing as loudly as he could.

Featherhead heard something running up behind him, crowing like a rooster. "Birdbrain, you can't scare me!" he said and turned to laugh at his brother. But it wasn't Birdbrain he saw on the path! It was a giant chicken with a crest of red and black feathers, large eyes and a hungry, wide-open mouth. There were feathers all over the monster's body, even on its toes. It was waving its wings fiercely and Featherhead thought he had never seen anything more horrible in all his life.

'There he is! Koko, koko! There he is!' the feathery monster yelled, pointing right at Featherhead. "There is the chicken thief! I shall catch him and eat him!"

Featherhead was sure this was Ku-huluhulu-manu coming after him. He threw his bundle of chickens at the monster and ran home as fast as he could, never once looking behind him.

Birdbrain laughed and laughed. Tutu Nāhulu's plan had worked very well. That night it was Featherhead's turn to cook their dinner. Birdbrain picked up the chickens and walked happily home, plucking feathers off himself and crowing like a rooster: "Koko! Koko!"