**Suggestions for Introducing *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind***

1. **Scenario: Life without electricity**

Ask the students to recall the July storm that knocked out electricity to hundreds of thousands of homes during the biggest heat wave of the summer. Ask who lost electricity during the time and how they coped. What were their biggest challenges? How did they entertain themselves? What did they eat? How were their moods? Where/how did they get assistance? Were there any benefits? How long was the electricity out?

Now divide the class into groups. Ask them to think about what would happen to their lives if electricity were not out for a few days, rather it did not exist. No electronics, no refrigeration, no cell phones, no hot water, no lights, no electricity at all. Can they picture what life would be like. What would their challenges be? Might there also be some benefits? They may consider these and lots of other questions:

- How would they communicate with their friends?

- What would they do for entertainment?

- What would meals be like?

- How would they do their homework?

2. **Very short research project (20 minutes perhaps): to gain insight into Malawi**

Because students are likely to know nothing about Malawi, the setting for *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, this short exercise will help the students gain some insight into the country, its problems and its culture.

While in the reading lab, ask students to locate information about Malawi and be prepared to report what they find to the rest of the class. Students should choose one of the items on the list below. Their object is to find a reliable article, skim it, and be ready to orally report what they learn.

- Where is Malawi located? What countries border it?

- What foods are most popular?

- What is the predominant race?

- What problems do the citizens face?

- What kind of music is popular?

- How do most Malawi citizens earn a living?

- What kind of government rules Malawi?

- What is the climate like?

- What sports are popular?

- What crops are grown?

- What religions are prevalent in Malawi?

- What are the health problems affecting Malawians?

- What level of education do most Malawians achieve?

**3. Scenario: Dealing with starvation**

Divide the class into groups, and ask each group to consider the following scenario.

You are all living in a small, remote village that is 100 miles away from the nearest city. You are friends with most of the villagers and related to many of them. The village is largely self-sustaining. Villagers grow their own fruits and vegetables. A local school educates the children, and though they are poor and life is not easy, the villagers are happy and mostly healthy.

All that changes when the area is hit by a devastating drought. The once fertile land is completely dry; crops cannot grow, and the people can no longer feed themselves. Since the village relies almost entirely on the money they make from selling their crops, the villagers are facing a desperate situation. There is no food; there is no money to buy food, and the villagers are starving and dying. What are their options? How can they help themselves?

**4. TED talk**

The author, William Kamkwamba speaks at a TED talk about his experiences in Malawai and his motivation for building a windmill to bring electricity to his village. Lots of pictures of his village and villagers will help students relate to the book

<http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/william_kamkwamba_how_i_harnessed_the_wind.html>

5. **Interview with Jon Stewart**

That author is interviewed by Jon Stewart on *The Daily Show*

[*http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-october-7-2009/william-kamkwamba*](http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-october-7-2009/william-kamkwamba)