Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg State University Digital Commons

Open Educational Resources - English and Modern Languages | Open Educational Resources by Subject Area

1-2018

ELA for M/S: A Guidebook for Beginning Teachers

John Franklin

Pittsburg State University, jfranklin@pittstate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/oer-english

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation

Franklin, John, "ELA for M/S: A Guidebook for Beginning Teachers" (2018). *Open Educational Resources - English and Modern Languages*. 1.
https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/oer-english/1

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Educational Resources by Subject Area at Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Open Educational Resources - English and Modern Languages by an authorized administrator of Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@pittstate.edu.

ELA for M/S

A Guidebook for Beginning Teachers

John Franklin

ELA for M/S

A Guidebook for Beginning Teachers

John Franklin

Creative Commons Attribution-
NonComm-Share Alike (CC BY-NC-SA)

This work – in whole or part – may be used for
noncommercial purposes so long as the original
is credited; and, so long as any new creations
are also licensed under these identical terms.

Pittsburg State University
Zero Textbook Cost
(PSU ZTC) publication #1, 2017.

This book is dedicated to:

Mrs. Julia Gaines,
Red Bluff Elementary, Pasadena, Texas,
who taught me to read.

Dr. J. Dennis Huston,
Rice University, Houston, Texas,
who taught me to write.

And my daughters,
Josephine SiAi
and
Gemma YingLian,
who have taught me to love.

Acknowlegements

It is fitting and proper that the State Song of Kansas is "Home on the Range," a tune which contains a sentiment symbolic of this enterprise: "where seldom is heard a discouraging word." This supportive, encouraging attitude – which I find often here at Pittsburg State University – underlies this project. Indeed, my decades-long experience at PSU is that initiative is expected and welcomed.

It is with pleasure and gratitude that I recognize colleagues here at Pittsburg State University. In alphabetical order by building and last name, the following people are acknowledged for their contribution of authority, energy, talent, time and vision:

Axe Library
Jorge Leon
Randy Roberts
Deborah White

Hartman Hall
Brenda Frieden
Members of the Open Education Resources Steering Committee

Russ Hall
Pawan Kahol
Barbara McCarley

Kansas Technology Center
Rion Huffmann

Whitesitt Hall
Diane Hutchison
Jason Kermashek

Without you, this book would be but pages in a binder on my bookshelf.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

The Beauty of the Book; and, the Acronym 1

FORWARD

Guidebooks; Inherited Knowledge 2

Little Red Schoolhouse map, pg. 5

1 **Eight Pedagogical Imperatives** 7

Sunny Side School, Independence, Kansas, pg. 16

2 **Four Theories:** Bloom, Gardner, Piaget and UDL 17

Sunny Side School, interior, pg. 24

3 **Three Teaching Approaches:** Text-centered, Teacher-centered, Student-centered 25

Sunny Side School: Laura & Lindsey, pg. 29

4 **Recursive Teaching** 30

Story's Creek School, Eminence, Missouri, pg. 32

5 **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Adolescent Sociology** 33

Oswego, New York, school, pg. 39

6 **Parents** 40

Oswego, New York, school privy, pg. 43

MIDDLEWARD

Rainbows Niagara Falls 44

7 **When a Literary Selection is Challenged................46**
Pioneer School, Lamoni, Iowa, exterior, pg. 48

8 **Literary Terms..49**
Pioneer School, interior, pg. 53

9 **Constructing Tests...54**
Avonlea School, Prince Edward Island, Canada, pg. 60

10 **Writing Templates...61**
Avonlea School, interior, pg. 63

11 **Tragedy for non-English Majors................................64**
Avonlea School, bilingual blackboard, pg. 65

12 **Composing Writing Templates for *Macbeth*...........66**
First Normal School site, near Concord, Vermont, pg. 72

13 **A Writing Assignment:**
Who Dies in *Macbeth*; and, Why..................................**73**
Normal School, plaque, pg. 77

AFTERWARD
The Potion, the Cauldron and the Chalice.......................78
Lexington Academy, Lexington, Massachusettes, pg. 82

The Beauty of the Book

I believe that this book is beautiful in four ways: emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually.

Emotionally, the writing in the book is heartfelt.

Mentally, I have done much of the "heavy lifting" so that you don't have to. Because I believe that writing is often an act of editing what you've read and what you've lived, in these essays hundreds of pages of reading and years of experience are reduced to paragraphs. This brevity demands conscientious omission so that, for example "Tragedy for non-English Majors" omits "catharsis" and "hubris." If you want to see what's missing in my essay, then go thou to Aristotle and read the master.

Physically, this book is made to be handled, to be held, to be touched by your hands. Indeed, it is meant to be handy, to be carried and to be consulted.

Spiritually, this book is meant to be shared by those of us dauntless enough, courageous enough, humble enough to assume a role in one of humanity's greatest undertakings: the education of adolescents.

Acronym

ELA for M/S is an acronym.

It means English and Language Arts for Middle and Secondary Schools.

Some school districts have a different name for this teaching position. Some places may call an ELA for M/S teacher "Communications," "Communication Arts," "Literacy," "Reading," "Writing," or another name.

Forward

Guidebooks

Guidebooks are time-honored as essential to travelers venturing into foreign territory that is already settled.

When I taught high school I took summers to backpack and bike Great Britain, Ireland and France. I also toured Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Back then I used guidebooks to help prepare me for these places. The books would provide information about a country, moving from the general to the specific as it let me know about customs, people, places, sites and weather.

The best guidebooks were highly portable, illustrated and written with tone, so that I could anticipate something in advance or mull something over in retrospect. The best guidebooks allowed me the pleasure of anticipation as well as the pleasure of reflection while not hindering the pleasure of participation so that a journey was enjoyed thrice over: in its future, in its present and in its past.

The best guidebooks assumed that I am intelligent and adventurous, but naïve.

Thus it is with this guidebook.

And thus it is that this guidebook presents short, pithy chapters that can inform your experience as you journey into your first English or Language Arts classroom in a middle or secondary school.

Please do not mistake this guide's brevity with ignorance, for in addition to being open to revision with your journey's hardships and highlights, it also practices the concept of inherited knowledge.

Inherited Knowledge

Much of the information in this book is the result of inherited knowledge. As a student and teacher, for decades I have heard, read and seen more definitions, descriptions, explanations, examples and solutions than I can remember. This information has formed a content core that defies specific citation.

For example, it seems to me that I have known the definition of “metaphor” forever. But, realistically, I most likely learned it in a Language Arts class in middle school. I quite frankly can’t recall whether I learned it in the 6th, 7th or 8th grade; or, whether my teacher was Mrs. Ponder or Mrs. Stripling or whoever my 8th grade Language Arts teacher may have been; neither can I remember the name of any textbook we used in any of their classes; but, I am here to tell you that the definition I inherited from them – a metaphor is a comparison between two unlike things – was no doubt passed on to them and that it is both time-tested and time-honored.

The information – the inherited knowledge – I share in this book seems to me to beg to be presented in a place like Creative Commons.

Organization

Because I am an English teacher and a literature professor, of course I want to offer some elegance by way of organization. The organization for this guidebook is two-fold.

First, I share the Little Red Schoolhouse project, a journey I took one summer with the research assistance of two students who are now teachers: Laura Allgood and Lindsey Lockhart Viets. The three of us mapped sites of one-room schoolhouses from

the Midwest prairie of Independence, Kansas, to the gentle shore of Prince Edward Island in the Atlantic Time Zone just off the East Coast of Canada.

This project allows me the opportunity to illustrate the guidebook, providing nonverbal breaks between chapters that are meant to be akin to the scenic overlooks that offer respite along our continent's highways. You'll find one – along with a brief essay – at the end of each chapter.

The photographs are arranged in geographical order from West to East with each terminus associated with a literary figure who is a teacher: Laura Ingalls in Kansas; and, Anne Shirley on Prince Edward Island.

The photos have little or nothing to do with its chapter and may be enjoyed separately from the essays. In this way, this guidebook differs greatly from those I read before my backpacking or bicycling trips to Britain.

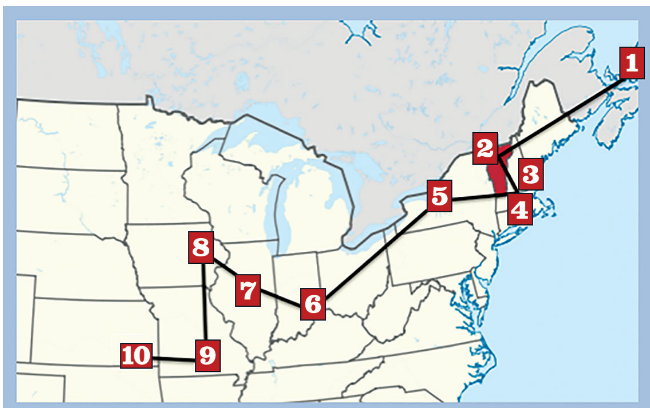
The second organizing principle divides the book into halves.

The first half presents information and knowledge that is more general in manner. Though I may relate some content to English classes, for the most part it can work across disciplines. This half can be shared with your colleagues in other departments.

The second half presents information that is more specific to English and Language Arts teachers. Though I can see where it can be adapted for use in other disciplines, it is most easily used by colleagues of mine.

Both halves are written for my students in English 478: Literature for Middle and Secondary Schools. Indeed, this guidebook is on the course's reading list.

This Forward begins the halves; dividing the halves is a short Middleward; completing the halves is an Afterward.



1. *Prince Edward Island, Canada* - Prince of Wales College; setting for Anne of Avonlea
2. *Concord, Vermont* - Columbian School (First Normal School in the U.S.)
3. *Lexington, Massachusettes* - First State Normal School; fewer than 30 minutes from setting of Little Women
4. *Framingham, Massachusettes* - Framingham State Universitiy
5. *Oswego, New York* - Oswego State Normal School (later renamed State University of New York Oswego)
6. *Hominy Ridge, York, Ind.* - setting for The Teacher's Funeral
7. *Normal, Illinois* - Illinois State University
8. *Lamoni, Iowa* - Pioneer Schoolhouse
9. *Eminence, Missouri* - Story's Creek Schoolhouse
10. *Independence, Kansas* - Replica of Laura Ingalls' house and the Sunny Side School

The Little Red Schoolhouse

Why red?
A colleague at a conference offered this answer: red paint – often used for barns – was plentiful. It made sense to use leftover red paint for schools.

The schools I photographed, however, are all white.

Go figure.

When first planned, the project worked backward from the East (originally it stretched to Ireland!) so that I could have an idea of how much driving I would need to do. That's why the smaller numbers are in the East and the bigger numbers are in the West. This also follows the course of settlers moving from the established East to the unsettled West.

Our plan was also to visit “spiritual sister schools” of Pitt State, schools that historically prepared teachers for classrooms. That explains the presence of college campuses; and, it provides opportunities to share a few photos.

– 1 –

Eight Pedagogical Imperatives

"Pedagogical imperatives" is a phrase I invented to draw attention to a handful of thoughts and philosophies and strategies which I have learned to take into teaching situations. In many instances, a pedagogical imperative was discovered while I taught; this experience was balanced by erudition. When I began teaching in the old days, erudition meant "book learning;" these days the term might just as well include internet research. Because of the balance between these two approaches, I believe that my pedagogical imperatives should be accessible to any teacher regardless of their level of experience.

In the next few pages, I'll explicate eight pedagogical imperatives, including It's All in the Cards; Genial Criticism; The Swiss Army Tool Approach to Teaching; The Total Relaxation Theory of the Universe; Function Follows Fun; Pet Peeves; Be Friendly, Don't Be Friends; and, Teaching As a Multi-tasking Activity.

1. It's All in the Cards

I discovered this technique for allowing egalitarian participation in class discussion while noticing two things as I taught 10th and 12th graders at Jesse H. Jones High School in Houston, Texas, for half-a-dozen years.

First: I could use my 3″x 5″ attendance cards as grade cards, and then transfer information into my grade book later, which made for a much neater grade book.

Second: Some students who unfairly dominated classroom discussion didn't do so when I shuffled the

attendance cards and asked for students to participate in random order as I drew their names. This also enabled quiet students to speak without being talked down by louder classmates.

These days I use 3 x 5 index cards instead of Houston Independent School District attendance cards, but I still need some basic information. I ask for

- Last name, First name (preferred name)
- Student ID#; contact information: phone #;
- email address

I keep grades and record absences on this card and make other notes.

Though software has replaced my grade cards, I find that random order skillfully managed still creates a productive discussion environment.

As a Supervising Professor, I have observed teachers replacing cards with popsicle sticks. The objects may be different, but the objective remains the same: egalitarian, productive, well-managed classroom discussion.

2. Genial Criticism

In many ways, I am very proud of this concept. It is very simple, very easy to use, and very easily taught. Right now it is gaining popularity in classes in both Kansas and Missouri (according to teachers who tell me they are practicing Genial Criticism).

Genial Criticism is a true balance between erudition and experience.

For erudition, the term "genial criticism" is one which Samuel Taylor Coleridge uses in an essay titled "On the Principles of Genial Criticism."

In my practice of "genial criticism" I refute the need

to be negatively critical, substituting a less threatening critical response to writing or reading.

The **first** of three questions which Genial Criticism asks is:

What part of this (essay, film, novel, play, poem, speech, story, writing, . . .) do you like best?

I have found that writers and students respond warmly to genial comments; they welcome comments that seem like praise to writers expecting negative criticism.

Here I want to point out a difference between being "nice" and being "genial." Genial is nonthreatening, good, helpful criticism – commentary that helps a writer improve writing. The best type of teacher to model, I believe, is one like the professor who taught me to write: Dr. J. Dennis Huston of Rice University. I have summarized his advice thusly: Write the way you speak; always speak correctly (and you should see the semicolon hanging in the air).

Listening to someone's writing – whether out loud or silently – with a genial attitude allows us to become active listeners intent on finding what is good in what you read. If you practice this enough then you can move beyond being "nice for nice sake" to actually being sincere.

The **second** question is:

What would I like to know more about?

This question often helps writers find more substance so that they can add length to their writing.

The **third** question is:

If I were to make a suggestion for improvement, what would it be?

By this time writers will have taken "control" of their writing in such a way that they make their own

suggestions. But remember, this is the last of three questions, and it's not right to start genial criticism at the end.

You will see me demonstrate genial criticism in connection with journal writing; and, you will have the opportunity to practice genial criticism in class.

3. The Swiss Army Tool Approach to Teaching

The first thing I bought for my first trip to Europe was a Swiss Army knife. Mine is not so much a knife as it is a tool. For example, I use the blades more for spreading pate and peanut butter than for cutting. And I constantly use the other tools: the screwdriver, the bottle opener, the can opener.

One trip to Europe I saw my Swiss Army knife as an analogy for a well-prepared English teacher: while not always apparently the best tool for the job, the Swiss Army tool is handy.

As an English teacher, you must carry a simple set of readily-accessible tools. You will choose your own tools. Mine include:

- a sense of humor that loves laughter
- a facile vocabulary fascinated by words either English or not
- a simple structure for analyzing literature
- a simple multi-discourse rhetoric
- a philosophy of education
- a willingness to read, write, listen and speak

Additionally, I advise you to display some tools of the trade in your classroom. Mine include a dictionary, a grammar book, an anthology of literature, and some personal favorites like photos, souvenirs or awards/mementoes from the profession or from students.

4. The Total Relaxation Theory of the Universe

As you teach, as you exercise authority in your classroom, you must guard against burning out either yourself or your students.

You can do this by taking reality into account.

Every once in a while, particularly after a really grueling stretch leading to an exam or a major paper, I like to take a Friday off.

Originally, this grew from my observation of the "rhythms" of high school. I found that Friday is often given over to extra-curricular activities, many of which require excused attendance by your students.

I found that it was better to schedule tests for Thursday, and grade them on Friday while students listened to music, drew on the boards, wrote, or read. These days I would expand my list to include accessing social networks or googling. This strategy also let me use Fridays as a make-up day for students who missed exams.

One of those days I took some soap bubbles to class, just for the fun of it, and blew bubbles which students chased and kept afloat. "Bubble Day" was born.

On other Bubble Days, I showed slides of travels to Europe, or listened to students' choices in music. Of course, the class Christmas party was always held on Bubble Day.

After practicing this for several years, I read about something called the "expansion-contraction" theory of the universe. I began to see connections between the way that some scientists think the universe exists, and how this is reflected in the high school year with its periods of extreme "busyness" and stress (a period of emotional and physical stress that tightens you into contraction), with the commensurate, natural need to have a period of rest (expansion into relaxation).

I found that Bubble Day helped pace students and me through the high school year.

These days we have something I never used: block scheduling. I still advocate Bubble Days, though I am ready to listen to how to adjust the schedule to fit the theory.

5. Function Follows Fun

The word "fun" can be found in the word "function."

If we can plan our lessons' purposes with the idea of fun imbedded in them, then I believe that we can teach more effectively. If we take some things that seem boring and monotonous and transform them into fun activities, then we can help students learn answers, conventions, questions, and structures with their classmates, as well as with us.

This is an idea I got from teaching, sure, but one which also comes from my reading of Vygotsky, who writes about the role of play in a child's development. Vygotsky maintains, and I agree, that when children (I would call them students) play, those players ignorant of the rules of the game quickly learn them from their more experienced teammates and opponents. If situations exist where no rule exists, then the children quickly create one.

I like to create situations which are bound by parameters and motivated by purpose, creating a situation where students derive joy from applying classroom knowledge to projects, whether the project is a group essay or a videotape project or a PowerPoint presentation or a teaching demonstration. Then, I like to let everyone work together to discover or create something – usually some kind of meaning in sounds or images, or a problem well-stated, or a solution well-

reasoned – to be shared. Of course, when it is shared, we practice genial criticism.

These days I manage projects as essential to a student-centered, task-oriented teaching approach. I hear more and more about "project-based learning," a concept that I can easily envision as simultaneously fun and fundamental.

6. Pet Peeves

Every teacher is human. I believe in letting your humanity show – this helps students become human beings as they observe you act like a human.

As humans, we're allowed to be bothered by things: actions, words, attitudes, objects, etc. I believe that we should acknowledge these things so that opportunities for "botheration" can decrease, so that your reaction to these things is understandable. Reason and logic don't always enter into this imperative: sometimes things just bother us.

Our students need to know what bothers us, I believe, so that they can learn to respect us as human beings. We need to share our pet peeves so that they can learn boundaries, and so they can know that crossing well-marked boundaries has consequences.

Different teachers have different pet peeves.

Jenny Bruenger, for example, once wrote me that she doesn't like for students to "pack up" early. Her maxim became "I dismiss you, not the bell." She used the last several minutes of class to straighten things up because the next class deserved a clean room. I think her adherence to considerate behavior was a good thing for her seventh graders to learn.

I have two pet peeves.

First, I don't like vulgarity and obscene/profane language.

I believe that English teachers should respect the language. I also believe that English teachers are role models for linguistic propriety: other teachers and our students as well as the general population look to us for guidance, authority and leadership in English. When I became an English teacher I gave up swearing. In this class, so will you. If you feel the need to mouth vulgarity, please exercise your vocabulary and find a suitable synonym.

Second, I also don't like people who talk when someone else is speaking. As we respect language, so, too, do we respect those who use it – they deserve our attention. In return, they should pay attention to us when we speak.

7. Be Friendly, Don't Be Friends

If I were your friend, then I would give you money, a place to stay, time, care, consideration, and an "A" in this class.

However, I'm not your friend: I'm your teacher.

Because I have to evaluate your performance, I need to maintain some "distance" to remain objective and fair so that I can do my job. Though I can be friendly and approachable, I can't allow you to get too close to me.

This came true-to-life for Kelynn Heardt when she coached volleyball. Because she is personable and because she cares, some of her team members wanted her to become their friend: they wanted to confide personal problems that she felt unready to handle – she needed to keep them at a distance so that she

could be their coach and not their big sister or friend.

These days, we have to be particularly careful to maintain professional decorum and attitudes in the classroom. We read about teachers who molest their students; we learn about students who accuse their teachers of immoral behavior. We need to be professional: we can be friendly, but we can't be our students' friends.

8. Teaching as a Multi-Tasking Activity

Many college English majors think that when they become middle and secondary school teachers that they will teach English in a classroom, perhaps take papers home, read literature, prepare wonderful discussion and do little else.

The reality of the matter is that teachers must be prepared to perform more than one activity, whether that means preparing for more than one course (I have learned of colleagues who had four preparations in five courses, ranging from sophomore English to second-year Spanish; I know of a teacher in west Kansas who teaches English, coaches the swim team, cleans the pool and directs the choir).

Responsibilities will extend beyond the classroom, whether those duties include helping students board buses, taking tickets at basketball games, sponsoring cheerleaders, planning the prom, producing the school newspaper and yearbook or – depending on where you teach – disarming students.

You have to be prepared to exercise more than your talent for teaching English in order to meet the challenge of teaching.

Sunny Side School
Independence, Kansas

The western terminus of our geographical journey is near Pittsburg. Independence, Kansas, is the site of a Little House on the Prairie homestead replicating the Ingalls' life as settlers. A one-room schoolhouse graces the grounds – a tribute to a woman who, like Laura, taught pioneer children.

This photo is peopled not with pioneers, but with my two daughters and my two student researchers.

– **2** –

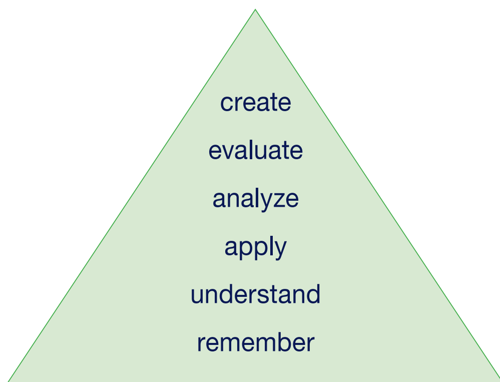
Four Theories: Bloom, Gardner, Piaget, UDL

1. Bloom

Bloom is Benjamin Bloom who – in the mid-1950s – worked with a handful of collaborators to establish a framework (often referred to as Bloom's Taxonomy) for categorizing educational goals.

His original work is important to our colleagues in the College of Education because it provides a structure for presenting and organizing classroom objectives in a manner that can be understood by administrators, parents, students and teachers.

Bloom's original thesis has been affected by research so that it is now synthesized into a pyramid best represented by this graphic which I adapted from the Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching, released under a Creative Commons Attribution license. I have modified the graphic to better suit the purposes of *ELA for M/S*.



First, the base of the pyramid is **remember**, which means that a student can recall facts and basic concepts. ELA teachers can use definitions and lists to be sure that their students are on base.

The second level is **understand**, which means that a student can explain ideas or concepts. ELA teachers can use discussion and description to determine if their students are at this level. Explanatory essays – whether digital, oral or written – can be used as an assessment instrument.

The third level is **apply**, which means that a student can use information in new situations. ELA teachers can use demonstrations to see if their students have mastered this skill.

The fourth level is **analyze**, which means students can draw connections among ideas. ELA teachers can check their students' ability to analyze information by looking at organization (popular organizing strategies include alphabetical, chronological, geographical, importance, numerical and spatial) as well as their students' ability to compare and contrast. A simple comparison and contrast essay would work well to assess whether students can analyze.

The fifth level is **evaluate**, which means that a student can justify a stand or decision. An ELA teacher can assess a student's ability to evaluate information by examining whether a student supports a thesis with appropriate—and properly cited--quotes from a literary selection.

The sixth and last level of Bloom's Taxonomy is to **create** (or produce original work), which means that a student can develop or write something that is new to them. An ELA teacher can check this ability by reading student compositions.

2. Gardner

Gardner is Howard Gardner who maintained – for our purposes – that there are intelligences other than linguistic, the dominant intelligence for ELA teachers. Independently of Gardner I realized this my second year of teaching at Jones High school.

To exemplify my discovery, I explained a difference between a student and myself in this way:

Here's how Demetrius – a basketball player – is smart:

You show him a video of a team coming up the court, heading toward the basket.

You freeze the video and give him a multiple choice question:

Will the player with the ball pass it to Teammate 1, Teammate 2, Teammate 3, Teammate 4? Or, will the player take a shot?

Demetrius, I maintained, will answer that question correctly far more often than I will because he's more intelligent than I am in that way.

At that point in my teaching career I realized that I had to teach to more than one learning style among my students if I wanted to succeed as an English teacher at Jones High School.

As is the case with Bloom, Gardner's work is rooted in the latter half of the 20th century and has evolved to absorb influences that have broadened it so that I have read of seven, eight and nine multiple intelligences. I'll adapt a Creative Commons source as most useful to us, organizing a table by way of simplifying information.

Applying Gardner is fun and works well at the

Type	Description	Learning Style	Assignment or Strategy
1. Aural-musical	Musical ability	Music, rhythm, sounds	Oral compositons such as poetry and speeches
2. Bodily-kinesthetic	Body movement control	Physical experience and movement, touch and feel	"Acting out" prepositions
3. Interpersonal	Perception of other people's feelings	Human contact, communication cooperation, teamwork	Small group projects
4. Intrapersonal	Self-awareness	Self-reflection, self-discovery	Individual projects such as research papers, reflective essays
5. Linguistic	Words and language	Words and language	Reading, writing
6. Logical-mathematical	Logical thinking	Numbers and logic	Cause-and-effect + if-then logic; organization
7. Spatial-visual	Visual and spatial perception	Pictures, shapes images, 3D	Video projects

level of differentiating instruction or accommodating learning styles. It can be particularly rewarding when you collaborate with a colleague or colleagues on interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary projects. I can easily imagine, for example, working with a geography teacher to map a character's quest across the country, thus appealing to visual-spatial as well linguistic intelligence. Or, I can just as easily imagine a student working with both you and a music teacher to create a

playlist for characters in a YAL novel, thus appealing to musical as well as linguistic intelligence.

As you apply Gardner – and do some research on your own – you will meet naturalistic, spiritual and who-knows-what's-new intelligences to add to my chart.

My advice?

If you can use them to meet your needs as an ELA teacher then do so (and please let me know about it).

3. Piaget

Like Bloom and Gardner, Jean Piaget is a 20th century pioneer. A child psychologist, Piaget delved into cognitive psychology, examining how children think.

While his work may be more important to elementary school teachers, I see it providing us an easy-to-understand parameter of sorts. The parameter is the difference between concrete and abstract thinking.

To make this difference useful to us, when we think of literature, concrete thinking will be provoked by concrete questions such as what, when, where and who.

Abstract thinking is provoked by abstract questions such as how and why.

I agree with Piaget that concrete thinking precedes abstract thinking, so that concrete questions are often a great way to begin discussing, for example, a novel.

The "what" question lends itself readily to plot; the "when" and "where" questions lend themselves readily to setting; the "who" question lends itself readily to character. Overall, these questions, I have come to believe, help reduce the anxiety of literary analysis by begging answers that are readily available and that are generally comprehensible.

As I work with English Education majors, I use the concrete and abstract questions to help students decide whether they would prefer teaching middle or secondary school. Students who like concrete questions should aim for middle school; students who like abstract questions should aim for high school, where abstract thinking should be developed and practiced.

4. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

I met UDL in a "Science for Elementary School" class and immediately embraced it as the term for what I've been trying to express for decades. UDL offered me membership in a community that recognized my efforts to "teach English to non-English majors." As a member of this pedagogical community, I am encouraged to engage in dialogue with its members, no matter what our discipline, our field, our occupation, our profession.

To provide a commonplace example of UDL: if you have ever walked through a door that opened automatically and electrically, then you have benefitted from a universal design created so that anyone can enter or exit a building or a room.

When applied to learning, universal design allows anyone to access information or knowledge.

Three key terms in UDL are:

- **Representation**
- **Expression**
- **Engagement**

Representation to an ELA teacher means that content is available in more than one form or media.

As an example, let's use Shakespeare by way of offering alternative forms to the original.

You can offer a version of *Macbeth* written in modern English.

You can watch a video of *Macbeth*.

You can attend a performance of *Macbeth*.

Each of these is a different representation of *Macbeth*.

Expression to an ELA teacher means that students can submit an assignment in a variety of forms. For example, students could write an essay about *Macbeth*.

Or, they could produce a video project of *Macbeth*.

Or, they could perform a scene from *Macbeth*.

Each of these is a different way for students to express their knowledge of *Macbeth*.

Engagement to an ELA teacher means that students are motivated to complete or create assignments, whether the assignment be an essay or a project. In the best of all possible ELA for M/S worlds, *Macbeth* would serve as the inspiration for something new or original.

To my mind, there are some connections between UDL and Gardner as ELA teachers seek alternate forms of representation **to** their students and accept alternate forms of expressions **from** their students.

I find the prospects incredibly exciting, particularly when digital or technological possibilities are available in the realm of UDL.

Sunny Side School, Independence, Kansas
interior

An interior shot of the schoolhouse in Independence illustrates some of its features. Orderly desks, patriotic portraits of presidents Washington and Lincoln, a piano and a blackboard reflect the culture, values and technology of the community and time in which these schools were situated.

In much the same way so, too, will your classroom be able to reflect your community's values. The desks may be replaced by workstations, the portraits may change to personify our recognition and appreciation of the diversity of American citizens, the piano may yield to an online source for music and you may have a smartboard rather than a blackboard.

But, you will still have people like the three here.

– 3 –

Three Teaching Approaches

I have come to recognize three dominant teaching approaches.

The one of which I was first aware is what I call a "text-centered" approach. The teachers who excel at this approach demonstrate an enviable mastery of a text. They are the ones who can recite poetry from memory (often in more than one language); they are the ones who can act out passages of drama (often in character); they are the ones who can quote paragraph after paragraph from fiction (often embellishing the prose with insightful anecdotes about authors and their lives).

These teachers love books; they love words; they love well-written literature. They express their love by sharing writers' texts with their classes.

Another teaching approach is a "teacher-centered" approach. The teachers who practice this approach excel at expressing personality in a classroom in such a way that students find them attractive. Often students will feel enabled or empowered by teachers who use this approach; often students who respond positively to this approach begin to think of their teachers as their friends.

These teachers are skillful at creating communities, helping their students meet Maslow's third level: the need for belonging. It is not unusual for college students who respond to this approach to "major" in such teachers – to take every course this type of professor offers – simply because they enjoy being in the presence of such a teacher.

A third teaching approach is a "student-centered" approach.

This is one I have come to use after going through an initial phase I call a "student-text centered" approach that I developed as a first-year high school teacher. I developed a student-text centered approach because my students had no books; faced with this situation I decided to have students write – we then analyzed their writing.

A teacher who practices a student-text centered approach can use the skills of a text-centered teacher by analyzing student writing the same way they do a literary text.

But this approach evolved into a student-centered approach when I realized that I can read students as if they are expository and narrative texts. When I realized that students are filled with information that I could use to help me teach them; and, when I realized that we are all characters in the story of the course that I am teaching to them then my focus shifted from their words on the page to their lives in my classroom. A teacher who practices a student-centered approach can use the skills of a teacher-centered teacher by creating communities within a classroom.

A successful teacher must be able to practice each of these approaches. Here's why:

For the text-centered approach: sometimes students in ELA for M/S classes simply have to master a text. Or, they must master the process of reading for information in a text.

For the teacher-centered approach: sometimes students in ELA for M/S classes simply have to follow the leader. When that leader is their instructor, then they must learn to follow instructions.

And, for the student-centered approach: sometimes students in ELA for M/S classes simply have to learn

to cooperate with the other people in their classroom, including their classmates and their teacher.

An easy way to identify which approach is being applied is to look at a class quantitatively.

If students are learning individually then there's a good chance their teacher is taking a text-centered approach.

If students are learning in a large group or whole classroom environment then there's a good chance they are engaged with someone using a teacher-centered approach.

If students are in small groups performing task-oriented activities then there is a good chance their teacher is practicing a student-centered approach.

Additionally, approaches can be identified by purpose.

Tests, for example, when taken individually reflect a text-centered approach.

Demonstrations or role-modelling are often best done with a teacher-centered approach.

And group presentations and projects often benefit from a student-centered approach.

Through your years of teaching you will become adept at determining when and how to use each approach.

Still and all, though, I believe that you will master one teaching approach above the others. And, I believe that you will recognize the one that suits you best.

For me, the moment of recognition that the student-centered approach works best for me came after a trip to Great Britain where I indulged in the total relaxation theory of the universe and took some time for recreation after a year of teaching.

On a flight from London to Toronto I sat in Row 17

of an airliner. As is my custom, I used that number to select a chapter of the *Tao The Ching* upon which to meditate for this part of my journey.

While meditating on the chapter, I realized that if I substituted the word "teacher" for the words "ruler" and "Sage" while substituting the word "student" for the word "people" (all the while accounting for pronouns) that I could use this to explain to myself what I try to do in my classroom.

Since that flight I have read several translations of the *Tao* and now offer this amalgamation of my readings:

- The best teacher is quiet yet authoritative, self-disciplined and well-prepared, enabling students to express their learning.
- The next best teacher is one students love and praise.
- Third comes a teacher students fear.
- Fourth comes a teacher students despise.
- When teachers lack faith in students,
  Then students will be unfaithful to teachers.

When a teacher's task is accomplished, then the students say, "We have learned it by ourselves!"

At this point, my students are ready for their next teacher.

By primarily using a student-centered task-oriented approach in my classroom I have to believe that my students will reach a point where they no longer need me. At this point I know that I have accomplished my task as a teacher.

Sunny Side School, Independence, Kansas
Lindsey and Laura look longingly elsewhere

You cannot blame your students for wanting to be somewhere other than your classroom. After all, you are the only English major in the room and if you are like me then honestly there are some days when even you don't care about figurative language, parts of speech or strategies of persuasion: you'd just rather be elsewhere.

This is apparently the case with PSU Honors College student research assistants Lindsey and Laura looking longingly out the window of the schoolhouse situated at Independence, Kansas.

– 4 –

Recursive Teaching

You should grow accustomed to the idea that you will have to do things more than once. You are going to have to present material several times so that the majority of the students in your classroom will grasp it. You want to do this in such a way that the majority of your students will remain mentally and academically engaged in what you have to offer.

Here is a way to do this so that you can also move from a text-centered approach to a student-centered approach in your classroom. This way has three steps. Not only does it move from text-to-student-centered, but it also moves from the general to the specific.

Step 1. Present Material to the Whole Class

Step 2. Identify a Student Whose Work Exemplifies the Material

Step 3. Assist Individual Students as They Work with the Material

Step 1 is large-group instruction where you take instructional material and present it to the class. It may be something as simple as a non-English major's definition of tragedy, for example, so you can emphasize Franklin's definition of tragedy: two things happen: someone – usually the tragic hero – falls from a high place; and, someone dies.

When you present this definition you can ask that students apply this definition to literature or movies that they know about. Because he's still so widely read, Shakespeare is an easy place to look, especially since the word tragedy appears in the title of some of his plays.

At this point in Step 1 you can have students

write their response to a prompt: Identify a literary work that fits our definition of tragedy. Identify the character who falls from a high place; and, identify a character who dies.

Step 2 begins as you walk around your classroom observing your students' responses to the prompt. As they write, you can look for an example that you can share with classmates.

When you identify a suitable response, ask that writer if you can share it with classmates.

Then, present the material again. Repeat the instructional material that you first gave the class (something like Franklin's definition of tragedy) followed by your student's example. Then, solicit more examples from your students.

I know that we ELA for M/S teachers are capable of giving our students plenty of examples, but I believe that this student-centered Step 2 is important because it allows you to repeat the concept; and, it allows students to see that one of their classmates can master the concept.

After they see their classmate's example, students are ready for **Step 3:** at this point you require that everyone in class do what their classmate did. Some will want to copy their peer's response so that you have more than one student cite *Romeo and Juliet* as an example of tragedy because Romeo and Juliet die, but that's okay: you can change things slightly and remind them of other characters (such as Mercutio and Tybalt) who die. Remember: often in a tragedy more than one character dies, so you can ask students to provide more examples.

Like Step 1 and Step 2, Step 3 repeats the material you offer to the class. But where Step 1 is something as general as a definition, with Steps 2 and 3 you

become more specific with a student's example serving the class before every student in the class gives an example. By the time you're done, you will have gone through the material three times with examples that each student should remember.

Story's Creek School
Eminence, Missouri

Josie's 3rd-grade teacher, who used to be a forest ranger, told me about Story's Creek schoolhouse.

Schools such as this one served as centers for farmers and their families as siblings, cousins and in-laws gathered to celebrate or honor a community's cycle of life.

– 5 –

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Adolescent Sociology

During World War II an American psychologist named Abraham Maslow organized a structure to explain our species' motivating forces. Most commonly called "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs" the structure allows us to see that humankind seeks to meet its basic needs first. As lower-level needs are met, people can identify more civilizing needs.

I believe that identifying our needs means that we are conscious of our place on the hierarchy. As teachers, identifying our students' position on the hierarchy means that we can more effectively meet their needs. This will also help us understand when learning is not taking place: it's impossible to meet our students' need for understanding, for example, if they are hungry or insecure. Conversely, if their needs for sustenance and safety are met then we have a much better chance of helping them understand our subject matter.

There is more than one representation of Maslow's Hierarchy.

Here's one that works with middle and secondary school students and their teachers. Although it is presented as a pyramid with the highest need (one rarely achieved by the human species) at its apex, in fact it should be read from bottom to top. There are eight levels in this model with each corresponding to a need. You can visualize it with the help of the following graphic.

Let me begin my discussion at the most basic – the most essential – level and work my way up.

The **first** and most fundamental needs are biological and physiological.

To us as teachers this means that our students must meet nutritional needs – they must be healthy – and that their clothes must provide them adequate protection from the physical environment. Open to discussion is what teachers should do if our students' parents are unable or unwilling to meet this need for their children. Personally and professionally I advocate feeding, clothing and sheltering those adolescents for whom this need is unmet.

Continuing toward the top, the **second** level of needs is that of safety. Our students need rules and they need these rules to be enforced equitably by adults.

Among dangers which demand our attention and presence is bullying. While there are various methods

and reasons for bullying, I believe that a sympathetic adult (not to be confused with an adolescent's friends: there are numerous and various examples of sympathetic adults in Young Adult Literature; many of these characters are middle and secondary school teachers) is a powerful agent to help adolescents meet this need.

If students have met the first two needs then they are ready to join a community where the **third** need – the need for belongingness – can be met. In the best of all possible worlds, a student's family would be the first group to which a son or daughter, sister or brother would belong.

Beyond family, a student's culture may determine a community that is not family. Church, extracurricular activities including the arts and athletics and volunteerism all provide communities that meet this need.

From a teacher's perspective, the classroom and its coursework should be a community for the student. This community should have expectations that are clearly and consistently communicated. This community should reflects its teacher's personality. And this community should realize its transient and transitional nature: the students in your class are on their way elsewhere. They will join other communities. But they should be welcome to return to yours.

A quick word about competition among communities in schools: you can't blame students for wanting to join other communities, groups and teams. I know that it can be frustrating when sports, for example, seems more important than academics and students appear to be players rather than scholars. But as Language Arts and English teachers we can do two things:

1. We can communicate our class expectations to advisors, coaches and sponsors; and,
2. We can join their community by attending events such as contests, games and performances.

The next level – the **fourth** level – is a very important one. It is the need for individuality.

While we want our students to join our classroom, we also want them to recognize and cultivate personal gifts or talents that they may possess. We also need them to realize that not everyone has the same ability and so students achieve different levels of success in our class. As students become more individual, achievements exemplify their success and their self-esteem becomes stronger. If a student is a healthy, growing, progressing, maturing individual then they will realize that they will not always succeed at everything they try; and, they will also realize that this is part of who they are. As teachers, we should not lie and say they succeed when they do not. Neither should we assume responsibility when they do not succeed. Instead, we should accept our students for who they are and what they aren't. We should tolerate them as they meet their need for individuality.

After our students have met these first four needs we arrive at a level where many of my colleagues believe we ought to begin: the **fifth** level is the need for understanding.

This is where subject matter is important; now we have arrived at a place where content governs. Here, you may teach material to meet your students' need to understand their communities and themselves; and, because we are ELA teachers, we need to help our students learn to express their understanding.

The **sixth** of Maslow's levels is the need for aesthetic appreciation. Here, students take their understanding of, for example, a sonnet and become aware of, for example, the beauty inherent in a poet's choice of a word.

As students meet this need we as teachers should be aware of the potential for chaos as they try to balance their communities, their individualism and their understanding while they read literature and express their understanding and appreciation of drama, fiction and poetry. Achieving this goal may be a messy business demanding our patience, our guidance and our tolerance. But, if a student meets this need then your reward is two-fold:

1. You have the pleasure of discussing your course content with someone who cares; and,
2. You may very well be on your way to meeting your need at the eighth level of Maslow's Hierarchy.

The **seventh** need in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is the need for self-actualization. Perhaps the best way to explain this need and show how it is met is to provide examples of historical figures who are self-actualized. Religious figures include – in alphabetical order – Allah, Buddha and Christ. A more recent example is Mother Teresa. These people have experienced personal development and are self-fulfilled. That they do so by helping others leads to the last level.

At the **eighth** level, people help others to self-actualize. I believe that good teachers recognize and respond to the need for transcendence. I believe that good teachers help students recognize and meet their needs. I believe that good ELA teachers, particularly, help their students meet the needs for understanding

and aesthetic appreciation and then help them achieve self-actualization.

Adolescent Sociology and Ethnic Values

Beyond Maslow, here are nine observations to help raise your awareness of the sociology of adolescents:

1. Adolescents range chronologically from age 10-18
2. Young adolescents (middle school) create communities with their own gender; they exhibit a "pack mentality" with conformity highly valued; being "different" risks ostracism
3. Middle adolescents (grades 9-10) begin to associate with other genders; individuality becomes more important than conformity
4. Later adolescents (grades 11-12) treasure personal relationships
5. Families remain important by providing rules and expectations
6. Peers allow for contrast with families and provide culture for individual growth
7. Friends are loyal, honest and trustworthy
8. Good teachers are fair, tolerant, positive role models who communicate well
9. Here are some observations about ethnic values, in alphabetical order by culture:
   a. African-Americans value church and respect
   b. Asian-Americans value family more than individuals; shame is a powerful regulator of behavior
   c. Latinos value cooperation, family and respect for elders
   d. Native-Americans value Nature and tribal connections
   e. White-Americans value independence and individualism.

Oswego, New York, school

Some one-room schoolhouses have been more than refurbished or renovated: they have been repurposed.

Such is the case with this one, which serves as a Welcome Center for Oswego, New York, on the banks of Lake Ontario.

Notice how international this building has become as it features flags of two countries framing its front porch: the USA and Canada.

– 6 –

Parents

Besides the depth of knowledge of your subject matter and the need to organize your own life, the greatest difference between middle-and-secondary-school and college is parents. In college, parents are legally excluded from areas where students are treated as adults with the rights and responsibilities of adulthood. When parents contact me about grades, for example, I remind them that they need to ask you that question: your right to privacy is legally more important than their desire to know your grades. If they assert that they pay your tuition then I reply that your finances are not my business. When parents contact me about your class attendance then I invite them to join our next class so that they can see for themselves if you're coming to class.

College aside, in preK-12 parents are very influential, for all the right reasons:

1. They are legally responsible for their children who are your students

2. At the elementary school level they can help in three ways:

   a. by reading to their child
   b. by establishing family routines that emphasize the importance of school; and,
   c. by appearing on campus in supportive roles.

3. At the middle and secondary school levels they can continue all three of the above (though they may read silently with their child rather than orally to their child) and add a fourth:

   d. Communicate about goals and influences regarding their child.

We can identify and describe four types of parents. In alphabetical order they are:

1. **Assertive:** this person establishes rules but recognizes exceptions and is willing to negotiate solutions to situations (this works well with blended or small families and younger adolescents)
2. **Controlling:** this is a self-centered person who demands/needs obedience (this works well with large families and with young children)
3. **Laidback:** this person provides less structure and more independence for their child, allowing outside influences such as a job or an activity to help organize their routines (this works well with individual children and older adolescents)
4. **Missing:** this person is absent from a child's life, expecting their children to raise themselves; I believe their children will look to their friends and sympathetic adults for help (this does not work well for children or adolescents; it can work well for college students).

The dynamic relationships among parents, children, students and teachers can create situations that are facilitative, successful and rewarding for everyone. One of the best parts of teaching is cooperating with parents so that an adolescent who is their child and your student achieves a mutually desirable goal. When this occurs then I believe that a teacher can reach the transcendent – the top – level of Maslow's revised hierarchy.

However, sometimes the dynamic relationships among parents, children, students and teachers can create situations that are embroiled in conflict.

Before you are burned by a conflict with a

parent try to establish and maintain this model of professionalism. It has three parts:

1. Keep specific records of attendance, behavior and grades for your students; note dates, quote remarks, name people (use this information mostly for genial criticism – speak of what you like best about your student, but be prepared to use it in your defense – speak of what you'd like to see more of: attendance, for example, with attendance records to support your criticism)
2. Emphasize the student; remember that students in your class have different responsibilities than a child in a parent's home (avoid letting a parent make a conflict personal; a student who learns to hide behind a parent who is attacking you loses opportunities to mature to the fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy: the need for self-esteem and independence)
3. Know your rights and responsibilities in the event of a dispute; be ready to request assistance in resolving a conflict, whether that assistance is from your employer or your professional affiliate (good administrators who support you while helping you improve as a teacher are worth their weight in gold: if your school has a good one then count your blessings; likewise, teacher organizations can provide advocacy if you feel besieged).

Before concluding this chapter I want to write a few words about what my generation calls "helicopter parents." These are people who "hover" over their children. They can be seen as overprotective and interfering. While I can see them providing safety and security to their children, I can also see them as

authoritarian parents who will try to treat you as they treat their child.

With these parents I believe that it is essential to learn their goals as soon as possible. If their goal is, say, as simple as having their child make an "A" in your class, then be sure to communicate how you can collaborate to meet those expectations. And, find time to meet this parent with the goal of creating a community, of working "with" – rather than "for – this person. Hopefully, this will benefit your student, enabling this person to move from the second to the third level of Maslow's hierarchy.

Oswego, New York, school privy

Bathrooms are important places, this "privy" in Oswego reminded me. They provide privacy for natural and for social activities.

As a teacher, you may have to develop a policy to distribute hall passes for students who say they need to go to the bathroom.

And, you may have to interrupt activities for which bathrooms are not designed but for which they are used.

As a student teacher you may have to adjust or regulate your biorhythms; you may have to consume less coffee, for example, or ration liquids over the course of a day to accommodate your schedule.

Middleward

Niagara Falls Rainbows

The Little Red Schoolhouse project led to Niagara Falls, a geographic spectacle of some beauty.

I was prepared for the noise. The Falls do, in fact, roar.

I was prepared for the water. There is, in fact, a great deal of it.

What I wasn't prepared to experience was the rainbows, one of which you see over Josie's shoulder (that's Canada in the background).

The rainbows were simply breathtaking, inviting me to take some time to appreciate them.

Amidst the constant roar and flow, these colorful smiles are there.

Thus it is with teaching.

Amidst the constant roar and flow of our profession I ask you to seek, to regard, to appreciate, to treasure rainbows.

– 7 –

When a Literary Selection is Challenged

When I moved from teaching at Jones High School to teaching at a university I changed communities.

At the university level, I enjoy greater academic freedom than I did when I was a high school teacher. My college students are presumed to be adults with the emotional maturity and intellectual curiosity required to read a range of challenging literature.

When I taught high school, in contrast, my range was limited by two parameters: one was the textbook adopted by my district; the other was the local community and its values. While the concept of textbooks has broadened with the expansion of technology, still, some things remain the same for English teachers: books; and people who object to them.

With the booming popularity of Young Adult Literature, students and teachers in middle and secondary school English and Language Arts classes have access to literature depicting characters, plots and themes that can create discomfort. Add to this the well-established canonical titles that can prove challenging to some people's cultural values and you can see conflict fomented at a community level.

If you want to venture outside the school-district-adopted textbook, then here is some advice to meet the challenges of those who want to censor your selection:

1. Check to see if your school or district has a protocol to address the issue of challenges/ censorship

2. Check with professional organizations such as the American Library Association, the National Council of Teachers of English or state affiliates for guidance
3. Issue a statement of intent to teach the literature; seek acknowledgement or consent or permission for your student to read the literature from the adult responsible for your student's welfare
4. Be prepared to compromise: offer a second selection or solicit a selection that addresses similar themes or presents proximate plots or depicts analogous characters
5. Always always always keep your administration apprised of your intention and strategy – no principal wants to be surprised by an angry parent with a disruptive agenda.

Beyond this advice, you may want to compose a statement justifying your selection. If so, then look to State standards for your authority; and, check your school and district's mission statements. It doesn't hurt to quote your employer as justification for doing your job.

And, I believe most important, learn and respect the values of your community. Such knowledge will help you with issues of propriety and influence your selections.

Pioneer School, Lamoni, Iowa
near Madison County

You never know when you might find a one-room schoolhouse.

I was driving on the Interstate in Iowa, travelling to a conference in Illinois, up the road a bit from John Wayne's birthplace when I took a break at an Amish rest stop.

There I found this one, refurbished by a college professor in honor of one of her teachers.

It's nice to know that there are professors with whom I share ideals and values.

– 8 –

Literary Terms

Every discipline has its language, created so that disciples can understand one another.
Literature is no different.
If there is a difference, it is in the dictionaries and glossaries available to us as English teachers. I like to use my textbook's glossary for two reasons:

1. It is available to my students; and,
2. It creates a standard for application and assessment. In other words, essays and exams become easier to grade because I don't have to look up a bunch of different definitions; nor do I have to argue with students who haven't used the glossary, as per instructions.

Sometimes, though, teachers are caught in situations where a glossary or a dictionary is not at hand; or, if they are they may be incomplete or – in the case of online or classroom dictionaries – they may not be literary enough.

With those thoughts in mind, I want to present a short list of literary terms I encounter either as a teacher or as a Supervising Professor. The definitions I offer are time-honored, offered by my middle and secondary school language arts and English teachers, by my college professors, by my interns and student teachers, by their cooperating teachers and by my experience as a literature teacher, student and professor. I'll present them in alphabetical/numerical order. I have restricted the list to 26 words, a number I believe to be useful.

1. **act:** a major section of a play, generally numbered
2. **allegory:** the second (usually deeper or hidden) meaning to a story
3. **allusion:** a reference to a culturally familiar thing
4. **analogy:** comparison between two unlike things; crucial in helping readers progress from concrete to abstract thinking
5. **antagonist:** character opposed to the protagonist
6. **biography:** the expression – originally spoken then mainly written but now often electronic, as in PowerPoint tributes – of a person's life
7. **character:** figures – generally people but can also be animals, ideas, machines or objects – manipulated by an artist for literary purposes
8. **conflict:** opposition of forces, most easily identified as
    i. Character opposed to another character
    ii. Character opposed to environment (often Nature)
    iii. Character opposed to self (often as a result of maturing)
    iv. Character opposed to society (often a clash of values)
9. **drama:** a major genre, generally a literary work composed to be performed on a stage before an audience
10. **essay:** a minor genre, generally a short piece of prose composed to express a person's ideas
11. **fiction:** a major genre, a work of imagination, generally a novel or short story, written in prose
12. **film:** a minor genre; when we study this form as a literary genre we call it film – when we watch it for fun we call it a movie – either way the form

is originally visual then combined visual with audio; it is unique in its history and its use of technology

13. **foreshadowing:** clues provided by a writer to heighten a literary effect, usually a narrative's climax; generally, the clues are at the level of character or plot
14. **Freytag's pyramid:** a venerable device that presents the structure of a narrative as an upward sloping line (exposition and rising action) culminating in a point (climax) followed by a downward sloping line (falling action and resolution)
15. **genre:** a type of literature; the major genres are drama, fiction and poetry while the minor genres are essay, film and graphic literature; all are worthy of our attention
16. **graphic literature:** a minor genre; a story (usually fiction but also biographical and historical) presented in panels that contain pictures; it appeals to visual learners
17. **hero:** a character whose bravery, idealism and perseverance can be supported by examples
18. **irony:** occurs when words and meaning are the opposite; the ability to recognize irony is a major achievement in a reader's education: this means a reader can comprehend more than a merely literal meaning, opening the door for allegory, allusion, metaphor and simile
19. **literature:** electronic, oral or written forms of artistic expression composed to entertain and enlighten an audience
20. **metaphor:** a comparison of two things that

are not alike; its purpose is to expand a reader's comprehension and delight

21. **plot:** the organization of incidents in a narrative or drama (this time-honored definition, written in chalk on many a board means – most simply – what happens in a story)
22. **poetry:** a major genre, a work of literature characterized by sentences broken into lines with stanzas standing in for paragraphs or scenes
23. **point of view:** the origin of presentation for a story; generally, there are three points of view:

    i. 1st person: a reader is limited to what a character experiences and knows
    ii. 3rd person: a reader is limited to the presentation of a single character
    iii. Omniscient: a reader is aware of characters' actions, feelings and thoughts

24. **setting:** the community, place and time of a story or play; community enables values to be discussed
25. **symbol:** a concrete object with more than one meaning, which can be abstract; like analogy, this enables readers to move from concrete to abstract thinking
26. **theme:** the central idea of a work of literature

Pioneer School, Lamoni, Iowa
interior

When I expressed interest in seeing the inside of the schoolhouse, a friendly cashier at the rest stop/ restaurant/ gift shop handed me a key.

The interior's frigid temperature struck me like a sno-cone. I had trouble changing camera lenses and my filters fogged.

With the freezing air all around me I had no problem imagining what it was like to be this school's teacher and "fire up" the classroom's stove before the first students opened the door.

– 9 –

Constructing Tests

There are seven different kinds of tests you can give students in your English or Language Arts class. They are:

1. Essay
2. Fill-in-the-blank
3. Identification/matching
4. Multiple choice
5. Short answer
6. True-False
7. Vocabulary

Any of these may be given orally, though usually I gave vocabulary tests orally and the others in written form.

1. Essay exams are – to my mind – the highest form of test. This kind of test demands organized responses to a writing prompt that can evolve from class discussion. Because I view essay questions as two-part questions, I would first review a concrete reading of a literary selection, repeating the lower-order "what," "when," "where," and "who" questions we answered in class. Then, I would use this information to lead students to an abstract "how" or "why" question.

   I would provide formal guidance, including the number of paragraphs required in the essay. And, I would provide a choice of questions. Of course I was aware of cheating: I knew that word would get around school so that sixth period students knew about the questions from their first period friends. Providing five options to all

classes while requiring that two be answered during the exam created enough confusion that I could change one or two things – say switch a question's focus from a protagonist to an antagonist – and disrupt the chain of cheating. The best thing about essay exams is the level of creative interaction you have as you serve as a facilitator between literature and students. I found it exciting to guide my students toward literary epiphanies; and, I found it gratifying to read their revelatory responses.

2. Fill-in-the-blank tests work best for me when I want to emphasize key words in a definition or quote. As was the case with sentences used to exemplify vocabulary, context is important. When making this kind of test item, it's best to use the sentence to guide a student toward an answer. With definitions I would accept a synonym; with quotes, only exact words were acceptable for the blanks.

3. Identification/matching exams are easy to make and easy to grade. I provide a list of the words such as character names, literary terms or vocabulary words in one column; in another column I would offer phrases such as character traits or definitions. Students would match a word with a phrase. While I saw some teachers use the alphabet to identify words so that students would simply write a letter in front of a phrase, I prefer that my students write the word. After all, they know the alphabet; but, I want them to learn the words we use in class.

   I would mix things up with this kind of test. Sometimes I would have more words than

phrases; sometimes I would use a word more than once. Remember: when you have the same number of words as phrases then mistakes travel in pairs.

4. Multiple choice is popular for teachers who use machine-graded exams. They are also popular with testing companies. Students like them because they provide opportunities for guessing.

When I use multiple choice I concentrate on concrete information. I want my students to demonstrate that they have mastered a concept or a text and this is an easy way to do so.

When I construct multiple choice exams I offer at least three choices; if I offer four choices then I take advantage of the opportunity to insert some humor. I try to refer to both a text and to class discussion either in the test item or the choices.

I would use multiple choice exams to promote class discussion by grading tests in class. When I did this I would give an answer and if students had different answers then they could explain their reasons. In this way I could discover badly-worded items or confusing choices. Students learned that if I was wrong then I would try to make it right.

5. Short answer is a good compromise between the lengthy responses of essay exams and the minimal responses of fill-in-the-blank, identification and multiple choice tests. Often I found that this was a way to see how much attention students paid to discussion. I could pose questions we talked about and observe whether or not students responded with the

same language that we used in class. When it was the same then I knew that they were taking notes and had studied for the test. When the answers differed, sometimes the differences were delightful as test takers attempted to connect what they remembered to the question.

Short answer is also a good way for students to write without worrying about grammar and usage – I tell students that it's okay to write in fragments and that sometimes a one-word answer is sufficient.

I design these tests so that I can provide partial credit: they are never worth only one point. I want to motivate my students to write something, reminding them that if they leave the answer space empty then I don't have a reason to reward them with some sort of credit.

6. True-False tests are great for middle school students, who think in terms of black or white, love or hate, right or wrong, true or false. The tests continue to be fun to many students through the first one or two years of high school because they only have to choose between two options.

   However, as students enter their junior and senior year of high school they begin to think more independently and their argumentative and rhetorical powers of persuasion become greater. By this time in their lives, students can see between the black and the white of a situation noticing the myriad possibilities that exist. As students' ability to think abstractly becomes more powerful, they can argue why they selected an answer that you say is wrong;

and, they will try to convince you why they are right. For this reason, I all but gave up on True-False tests for my high school seniors. I only used them when testing unarguable facts.

7. When I gave oral vocabulary tests I would take the words from a list. Generally, I wrote the alphabetized list on the board on a Monday and left it there on Tuesday and Wednesday. I would erase the list before classes began on Thursday. I would give the test on Thursday with Friday as a make-up day. The list would be 20 words long and consist of literary terms and vocabulary taken from the literature. Definitions would be found in footnotes or in our textbook's glossary. My master list would have the words and definitions and an example of the word being used in a sentence where the sentences provided context for the word's meaning. We would go over the list as I pronounced the words.

When I administered the test I would pronounce the word twice; then, I would pronounce the word again, followed by its definition; then, I would pronounce the word followed by an example of it being used in a sentence.

Students would spell the word on their answer sheet.

If we had enough class time then we would grade the tests in class; otherwise, I would grade them during my off period or in the time between the final bell and sign-out time.

The best things about students grading their own tests is that they had immediate feedback. It was fun to see studious students discover that

> they spelled a difficult word correctly. The smiles I saw, the exultant sound of "YES!"es that I heard were more gratifying than the penciled marks I used to grade vocabulary tests.

A general rule of thumb for constructing tests is that the longer it takes to make a test, the shorter it is to grade. Multiple choice tests take a long time to compose, but you can grade them quickly. Conversely, essay exams take a long time to grade, but are fairly fast to put together.

Another general rule of thumb is that the longer it takes to answer, the more a question should be worth. An essay requires more effort than multiple choice and this should be reflected in the credit an essay receives.

A word about technology and constructing tests:

These days you can construct tests using apps or websites. I notice that many of these tests are multiple choice, that students take them in real time, that the app keeps time, registers answers and tabulates results. This alternative representation is often similar to a game, with music and a timer.

My reaction to this is that it is a great way to review information at the end of a lesson: it's fun, it's interactive, it appeals to different kinds of learner (bodily-kinesthetic; visual-spatial).

Avonlea School
Prince Edward Island, Canada

Prince Edward Island lays in a time zone one hour east of our Eastern time zone. Far off the beaten path, it nevertheless attracts thousands of retired educators – women by far the most – all of whom are pilgrims paying homage to Anne Shirley: Anne of Green Gables, herself a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse.

The Island features The Village of Avonlea, complete with actors playing characters recreating scenes from the books, or walking around in character interacting with visitors. It was a treat when Josie Franklin met Josie Pye.

Of great interest to me was the Village's one-room schoolhouse.

It is the one where Anne's creator – Lucy Maud Montgomery – taught in 1896-97. Avonlea moved it from its site in Belmont so that it might be preserved as a "character" in the Island's summertime theatrics.

– 10 –

Writing Templates

I stole the idea of templates from a Wood Technology major. She was a student in my writing class and wanted to explain how you could use one form to replicate thousands of objects that conformed to the first form's shape.

As I recall, she wrote about large plywood ornaments that could decorate your yard during Christmas season. The example was a snowman that was four feet high. After a master designed and cut a model, students or employees could place it on a sheet of plywood and run a power saw around it, following an outline to produce dozens or hundreds more.

I could easily see how each of these snowmen – while following a general recognizable shape – could also be individualized. People could color the shape to create various vestments, while different decorations could be added as individual artists made the snowman their own.

I wondered if I could do the same with writing assignments.

While thinking about this I made another observation. In my writing classes, one of the greatest sources of anxiety for students was getting the format right. Writers struggled with parameters such as margins and spacing and headings and titles. Indeed, I noticed that sometimes this struggle with a paper's form distracted from the focus of a writing prompt.

One day I looked at an MLA-formatted essay not just as a piece of writing, but as a shape whose outside and inside could be controlled by a master template that could be applied to writing assignments.

Then, I realized, the technology of teaching provided an opportunity for me to do what master woodcarvers had done for decades: it allowed me to design and share templates. I created a file with blanks that students could fill-in; I added parenthetical instructions to guide them.

Of course, I share templates with writers, not woodworkers: my students use keyboards, not power saws. But I believe that the concept is essentially the same; and, I believe that my template provides opportunities for students to become familiar with writing as they individualize an essay while their anxiety about format is reduced.

Avonlea School, Prince Edward Island, Canada
interior

Here is the interior of Miss Montgomery's schoolhouse from the perspective (or, if you want to get literary: "point of view") of the teacher.

I love the handheld bell as well as the slate, where it looks like some tourists have written.

As much as anything, I included this photo because I took it with a "fisheye" lens that I inherited. I include it by way of paying my respects to dear departed brother Jim.

– 11 –

Tragedy for non-English Majors

Many of you have read, studied or watched a tragedy. When I visit interns and student teachers in high school I notice that the *Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* is often taught. Some of you have read, studied and watched *Macbeth* as well.

Tragedy's history goes back to classical Greece, before the Christian era, when audiences attended plays as part of festivals.

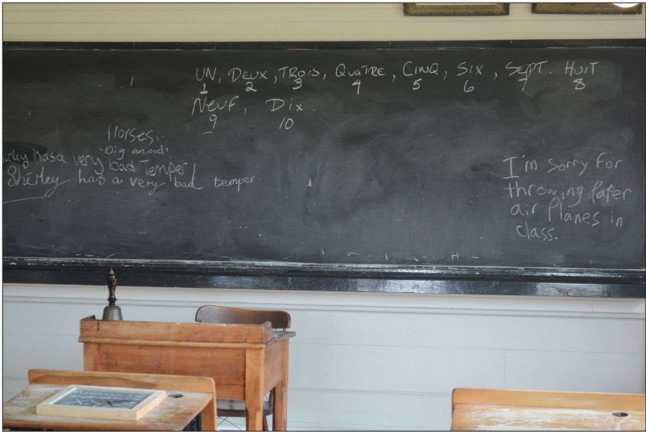
While tragedy focuses on character (tragedies are often named for characters like Oedipus or Othello or Macbeth), they are driven by an audience's expectations of plot.

For our purposes we can list two expectations of tragedy:

1. A character will "fall" from a "high place"; and,
2. A character or characters will die.

To an audience, there is no mystery in tragedy. We attend a performance, read a play or watch a movie or video expecting that someone will die and that someone will fall from a high place.

The fun is in seeing how it happens.



Avonlea School, Prince Edward Island, Canada
bilingual blackboard

This photo reminds us of the value of linguistic diversity: see the French up on the board? Miss Montgomery would have taught her students in two languages, English being the other.

When I taught high school in Houston, I had to learn to teach English to students from Cambodia, China, the ‘hood, Laos, and Vietnam as our neighborhood diversified culturally and linguistically.

– 12 –

Composing Writing Templates for *Macbeth*

Let us now combine the concepts of writing templates and tragedy and apply them to the play I taught to my twelfth-graders.

I like *Macbeth*.

I like *Macbeth* for several reasons.

One reason is that it's short.

Another reason is that I taught it to seniors when I was a high school teacher. When I taught high school I travelled to Scotland over several summers to visit the play's setting, to listen to locals talk, to hike and bike the Highland mountainside so that I might breathe the spirit of the place as well as the spirit of the play. One night I camped alongside Loch Ness waiting beyond the sun's setting of a long summer's day for a glimpse of Nessie – the Loch Ness Monster. The same play of imagination, I thought as I wrapped my sleeping bag around me, could easily cause a character to unwittingly utter one of the witches' prophecies. Add a heavy Highland mist to a gray sky and one could easily see Birnam Wood on the move.

Beyond my personal affection for *Macbeth*, it lends itself easily to teaching a basic concept of tragedy in ways that also allow students to use Shakespeare's language while working with writing templates.

Here is a non-English major's definition of tragedy, filtered by decades of teaching English to non-English majors: it's a play that has two characteristics:

1. Someone falls from a “high” place, where that place is a position of authority or professional rank or social standing or wealth; and,

2. Someone dies.

Let us take our definition of tragedy as the starting point for a writing prompt that has four instructions:

1. Provide a definition of tragedy
2. Identify *Macbeth*
3. Identify a character in *Macbeth* who falls from a high place
4. Identify a character in *Macbeth* who dies

Now, let us design a template for this prompt. This template uses MLA format.

_______________ (student name)
_______________ (teacher name)
_______________ (course)
_______________ (date due)

Macbeth:
Tragedy Defined and Exemplified

Tragedy may be defined as a play in which a character falls from a high place and characters die.

Macbeth, a play written by William Shakespeare, is a tragedy.

In *Macbeth,* a character who falls from a high place is _______________ (name of character).

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies is _______________ (name of character).

The template reflects my personality as a reader, as a writer and as a teacher. For example, it bothers-me-not that paragraphs are only one sentence long. And, it bothers-me-not that students are given the introduction for the essay. That this introduction states a definition of tragedy is simply a reflection of the recursive nature of teaching.

This template is very basic.

We can use this base to create increasingly complex templates. Let's do so by playing with the fourth paragraph. Let's add a requirement for a direct quote, properly cited. The template's paragraph would look like this:

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies is ______________ (name of character). We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes: ______________ (insert quote, followed by its Act, scene and line number; place parentheses around the Act, scene and line number to create a parenthetical citation).

Here I display another readerly characteristic: it bothers-me-not that my students write with pronouns. In the extended template, notice that I offer the "academic we" to help introduce the quote.

Now we can manipulate the template to promote a closer reading of the play. We can follow the plot so that we can connect the bodies strewing the stage of this bloody Renaissance tragedy to the tragic necessity for their deaths. We can create a more substantial template that looks like this:

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act I is _______________ (name of character).

We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes: _______________ (insert quote).

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act II is _______________ (name of character).

We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes: _______________ (insert quote).

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act III is _______________ (name of character).

We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes: _______________ (insert quote).

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act IV is _______________ (name of character).

We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes: _______________ (insert quote).

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act V is _______________ (name of character).

We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes: _______________ (insert quote).

To this point, our template has expanded from containing a simple definition with one example of a character who falls from a high place and another example of a character who dies to an essay providing six or seven examples, five of which are supported by textual evidence. The latest template reflects a student's reading journey through the play, a journey

that includes academic engagement with Shakespeare's language.

Let's move from this template to an even more complex one, one that addresses the importance of motivation in plot. Let's bring some cause-and-effect logic into our next template. Let's look at this design:

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act I is _______________ (name of character).

We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes: _______________ (insert quote).

This character has to die because _______________.

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act II is _______________ (name of character).

We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes: _______________ (insert quote).

This character has to die because _______________.

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act III is _______________ (name of character).

We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes: _______________ (insert quote).

This character has to die because _______________.

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act IV is _______________ (name of character).

We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes _______________ (insert quote).

This character has to die because _______________.

In *Macbeth*, a character who dies in Act V is _______________ (name of character).

We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes: _______________ (insert quote).

This character has to die because _______________.

We can use this last template, then, to guide a student through a reading of *Macbeth* that focuses on the concept of tragedy. With a simple definition and a writing template that allows room for examples, a student can engage with Shakespeare's language. Then, the template can expand to include the idea that plot is a basic structure of tragedy and that its narrative incidents are motivated by the plot's needs.

Let's add a conclusion to this template by way of revealing another facet of my readerly character: it bothers-me-not that a conclusion simply reminds a reader of what the writer did.

Before providing the final paragraph, however, let me promise you that in the next chapter I'll give you more about *Macbeth* and writing. I'll give you the writing assignment that leads to the template, an essay written in response to the assignment, and a way to deconstruct *Macbeth* one act at a time.

Now then:

In conclusion, in this essay I defined tragedy. I also exemplified the definition.

First Normal School site
near Concord, Vermont

Pittsburg State University has a time-honored tradition as a teacher-training institution. With this tradition in mind, as a goal of the Little Red Schoolhouse project I sought the site of the first teacher-training school in our country.

Research and the road led me to the countryside around Concord, Vermont, where I got lost. Friendly New Englanders listened to the story of the Little Red Schoolhouse project, then suggested that I ask someone else. Finally, after going in a five-mile circle I made a wrong turn and found a plaque.

It wasn't quite the Fountain of Youth, but it made me happy.

It turns out that the school has been gone for a while; friendly folks were directing me to a barn.

It was actually a nice barn – it was certainly very red – but I didn't take its picture.

– 13 –

A Writing Assignment: Who Dies in *Macbeth*; and, Why

Here is a writing assignment that seems to me to grow logically from our previous chapter. In a five-paragraph essay:

1. Identify a character who dies in Act I of *Macbeth*
2. Provide a properly-cited quote that shows this character died
3. Explain why the character has to die.

   Although this assignment should be written after reading the entire play, it's easy enough to divide the essay into five parts, one for each act. If you are comfortable with the concept of one-sentence paragraphs then you could easily assign five, five-paragraph essays, one for each act.

   An outline for one such essay would look like this:

Macbeth:
Who Dies in Act I; and, Why

I. Introduction
II. Cawdor dies in Act I
III. Quote from Act I
IV. Why Cawdor has to die
V. Conclusion

Now, look at the writing assignment for a longer paper:

Who Dies in Each Act of *Macbeth*; and, Why

In this essay you will:

1. Provide a definition of tragedy
2. Identify a character from each act of *Macbeth* who dies

3. Quote from each act to provide textual evidence that the character died; cite the quote properly
4. Explain why each character has to die

Next, here is a sample essay written from the assignment. Notice how it conforms to the writing template in the previous chapter.

________________ (student name)
________________ (teacher name)
________________ (course)
________________ (date due)

Who Dies in *Macbeth;* and, Why

Macbeth is a tragedy written by William Shakespeare. We know that *Macbeth* is a tragedy because it meets the two expectations of Professor Franklin's definition of tragedy for non-English majors. First, a character – Macbeth, for example – falls from a high place. And, second, we know that *Macbeth* is a tragedy because characters like Lady Macbeth, for example, die.

In *Macbeth,* we see characters die in each act. Their deaths help the plot progress.

In this essay, I will identify a character who dies from each of the play's five acts. I will provide a quote that tells how we know this character died. And, I will explain why this character died.

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act I is Cawdor, a Scottish nobleman who turned traitor against King Duncan.

We know this character dies because Shakespeare writes:

> Malcolm: I have spoke
> With one that saw him die: who did report,

That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
Implor'd your Highness' pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance. (I, iv)

[All quotations are from *OpenSource Shakespeare,* a Creative Commons source for Open Education Resources. Because of the variations in available sources, I have dropped the requirement for citing line numbers.]

This character has to die to foreshadow what happens to the treacherous Macbeth.

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act II is King Duncan.

We know that this character dies because Shakespeare writes:

Macduff: O Banquo! Banquo!
Our royal master's murder'd! (II, iii)

This character has to die so that Macbeth can become king.

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act III is Banquo, who was with Macbeth and witnessed the witches' prophecies in Act I.

We know that Banquo dies because Shakespeare writes:

Banquo: O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance,
fly! fly! fly!
Thou mayst revenge—O slave! [Dies.
FLEANCE escapes.] (III, iii)

This character has to die so that Macbeth will seek more prophecies from the witches.

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act IV is Lady Macduff.

We know that Lady Macduff dies because Shakespeare writes:

Ross: Your castle is surprised; your wife, and babes,
Savagely slaughter'd. (IV, iii)

Lady Macduff has to die so that Macduff will kill Macbeth as an act of revenge. Ironically, this also fulfills the prophecy of the Second Apparition that "none of woman born/Shall harm Macbeth" (IV, i): Macduff was delivered via C-section so he was not "of woman born."

In *Macbeth,* a character who dies in Act V is Macbeth.

We know that his character dies because Shakespeare writes:

[Re-enter MACDUFF. With MACBETH's head.]
(V, viii)

Macbeth has to die so that order can be restored to Scotland.

In conclusion, in this essay I provided a definition for tragedy. Then I identified a character who dies in each act of *Macbeth*. I provided a properly cited quote from the play for each death. I also explained why each character had to die.

In the past few chapters I have demonstrated how writing templates can be applied to *Macbeth*. You have seen how the concept of tragedy can be defined and exemplified with this approach.

Because writing templates are eminently adjustable and infinitely flexible, I believe that they can be applied to other classroom situations. Please feel free to use them to meet your classroom needs.

The First Normal School plaque
near Concord, Vermont

“Normal” schools are what teacher education programs were once called. The “normal” refers not to social behavior, but to expectations, or norms. Currently, we call these things “standards.”

As you read the plaque recognizing the Reverend Read’s accomplishment, please consider three things:

1. His school was a private one;
2. His great application of technology was the blackboard, which replaced hand-held slates; and,
3. This book follows his pathway: he, too, guided beginning teachers.

Afterward:

The Potion, the Cauldron and the Chalice

The most important thing you can bring into your classroom is knowledge of the subject that you teach.

The second most important thing you can bring into your classroom is your personality.

Your subject knowledge is like a potion concocted of the courses that are your English major.

Within the English Department and its pre-professional program, your potion consists of these courses which may be thought of as ingredients and which may be organized into categories familiar to teachers in middle and secondary schools:

I. Reading (known as literature at our level):

- A. ENGL 220: World Masterpieces
- B. ENGL 231: American Literature I
- C. ENGL 232: American Literature II
- D. ENGL 241: British Literature I
- E. ENGL 242: British Literature II
- F. ENGL 478: Literature for Middle and Secondary Schools
- G. ENGL 619: Shakespeare

Additionally, because we are a traditional, literature-based program, you get to pick four more literature courses to add to the mix. Overall, our Program offers an essential batch of ingredients powerful enough for you to decide how to teach your students to understand and to appreciate their reading assignments.

In addition to literature courses, the PSU English Department offers composition courses that may be better known to teachers in middle and secondary schools as:

II. Writing:

A. ENGL 302: Advanced Composition
B. ENGL 304: Introduction to Writing about Literature

Again, you may select electives to augment this mixture. I advise you to consider these two writing courses as ingredients for the Writing stream of your teaching potion:

ENGL 250: Introduction to Creative Writing
ENGL 301: Technical/Professional Writing

Between literature courses and composition courses we have two-thirds of our potion. The final third is linguistic in nature and is better known to our colleagues in middle and secondary schools as:

III. Language Arts:

A. ENGL 202: Grammar and Usage
B. ENGL 308: English Linguistics
C. ENGL 603: History of the English Language

The linguistics course, particularly, should help you initiate, develop and enhance your ability to communicate with students from diverse cultures.

Your potion needs a vessel to contain it. With this need in mind, the program has you construct a cauldron. The cauldron is made of courses from both the College of Education and the English Department.

IV. College of Education

A. PSYCH 263: Developmental Psychology
B. EDUC 261: Explorations in Education
C. EDUC 307: Clinical Experience
D. PSYCH 357: Educational Psychology
E. SPED 510: Overview of Special Education
F. EDUC 520: Methods and Materials for Academic Literacy

V. English Department

A. ENGL 478: Literature for Middle and Secondary Schools (also an ingredient in the literary stream of your potion)
B. ENGL 479: Techniques for Teaching English in Middle and Secondary Schools.

In addition to a cauldron in which to mix your potion, you need a container to transport the potion to your student. With the image of potions and cauldrons in our mind's eye, we can envision a chalice (so much more regal than a cup, a glass or a goblet).

Your chalice is personalized by you as you select General Education courses. In our pre-professional program you take at least 46 hours in areas ranging from basic skills to math to science to aesthetic studies to human heritage to well being. The courses you choose reflect your personality; your personality is reflected in your chalice.

Your chalice is also fashioned by the electives you take; and, finally, by your:

VI. Field Experiences

EDUC 261: Explorations in Education
EDUC 307: Clinical Experience
ENGL 480: Internship.

These hours will enable you to reflect upon your place in the profession as you observe and participate in various middle and secondary school English and Language Arts classrooms. As you craft your chalice with the guidance of a cooperating teacher and a PSU supervising professor, you will be allowed to decide how you want your chalice to be: a shiny one composed of precious metal that glitters and glows atop a stem; a transparent one composed of crystal through which students can easily see the potion you have to offer; a rollicking give-and-take tumbler that can withstand precarious circumstance and continue to remain upright; a substantial perhaps even mysterious mug with a handle that can hold warming liquids without harming hands; or, will your chalice be something unique to you?

In any event, this program will help you concoct a potion in a cauldron conveyed in a chalice from us to you to your ELA for M/S students.

Lexington Academy
First Public Normal School, Lexington, Massachusetts

Once a normal school, this building has been repurposed to serve as the gathering place for a fraternal organization (not to be confused with a fraternity).

It rests in the town of Lexington, Massachusetts, near the site of “the shot heard ‘round the world”: the Battle of Lexington and Concord.

Among the advocates for this school?

Horace Mann, for whom a building on the campus of Pittsburg State University is named.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Franklin

John Franklin (B.A., Rice; M.A., Miami of Ohio; Ph.D., Florida; Texas Teacher's Certificate) began his career at Jones High School in Houston. During that time, he combined his love for literature with a love of travel, spending 12-week summers in Britain with a backpack or a bicycle visiting the settings of the fiction, drama and poetry he taught: London for Dickens; Scotland for *Macbeth*; Canterbury for Chaucer; and, the Lake District for Wordsworth. One Fourth of July he ventured further abroad, discovering himself atop the Acropolis in Athens, thinking, "Here I am at the birthplace of democracy on the birthday of the greatest democracy that ever existed." He has spent his life since then appreciating and sharing his good fortune.

John Franklin is an Associate Professor of English, a Supervising Professor of English Education and the Director of the English Education Internship Program at Pittsburg State University in Southeast Kansas where he teaches Literature for Middle and Secondary Schools.

John Franklin with his spring 2016 Pittsburg State University
BSE English graduates, each of whom teaches
in an ELA for M/S classroom.

Back row (l to r): Anna Drenick, James Goss, Brad Gaddy,
Paige Drummond, Laura Johnson, Audrey Rhuems.

Front row (l to r): Carmen Seeley, Jazmine Colvard,
Professor John Franklin, Nicole Casey, Halle Connors.