The Writer’s Secret:
Storytelling as Metaphor and Model for Teaching and Learning

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Introduction

Do you believe that all knowledge is constructed?  
Yes   No

Do you believe that knowledge connects like a story?  
Yes   No

If so, then why do we often teach as if it doesn’t?  
?

(Boyer, 1987; Davidson, 2017; Foucault, 1981; Taylor, 2010)
Purpose

Storytelling is our original pedagogy, and it is fundamental to the process of meaning-making for humans, according to many cognitive scientists. Narrative structures help us to shape the bits and pieces of our experiences into a whole (Campbell, 1988; Richardson, 2002). However, the pedagogical heritage passed down to us by storytellers has largely been ignored by educators, particularly those outside the Humanities. This might change as more scholars and professors recognize the benefits of using stories and storytelling for teaching and learning in a hyperconnected world (Gabriel, 2000; Lang, 2016; McDrury & Alterio, 2002; Moon, 2010; Rossiter, 2002).

This presentation will help us to tell a new story about teaching and learning in higher education, one where storytelling itself is the main character. Using narrative principles recognizable across academic disciplines, you will learn the instructional design strategies that promote creative thinking and the self-directed learning habits that are necessary for lifelong learning.

“In my twenties and thirties and even on into my forties, James Joyce and Thomas Mann were my teachers.”

Joseph Campbell
Storytelling as a Metaphor for Constructivism

Constructivism views knowledge as a social creation. Vygotsky, a key proponent, claims that language plays a major role in how humans learn. Bakhtin, his contemporary, extends this view by describing the dialogic and interconnected nature of creativity as *authoring*. Similar ideas can be found across the disciplines.

- **Mills**
  - Social Imagination
  - Sociology

- **Bateson**
  - Metapatterns
  - Anthropology

- **White**
  - Historical Narrative
  - History

- **von Bertalanffy**
  - Systems Thinking
  - Biology

- **Sylvester**
  - Matrix
  - Mathematics

- **Goodman**
  - World Making
  - Philosophy

- **Barabási**
  - Network Theory
  - Physics

- **Woolf**
  - Spider’s Web
  - English

- **Bruner**
  - Life Narratives
  - Psychology
Principles of Constructivism

1. Knowledge is dialogic
2. Knowledge is connective
3. Knowledge is narrative
4. Knowledge is interpretative
Storytelling as a Model for Lesson Design

Beginning, middle, and end as a narrative structure can serve as a model for assignment creation and framing (teaching), its re-creation by students (learning), and its evaluation for proficiency by instructors (assessment). The structure promotes intertextuality and interdisciplinarity for lifelong learning.

Wiggins & McTighe
Backward Design

McDrury & Alterio
Storytelling and Reflection

Lang
Small Teaching

Kristeva
Intertextuality

Klein
Interdisciplinarity

Angelo & Cross
Classroom Assessment Techniques

Rossiter
Stories in Adult Education
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish the learning goal</td>
<td>Design assignment to achieve the goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify required material and activities</td>
<td>Evaluate demonstrations of proficiency</td>
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Principles to Practice

A GUIDE TO MATRIX THINKING
Research the four terms in each case box to learn how they relate, then determine how one case relates to the next case. Review the multimedia sources on YouTube as needed for added depth and comprehension. Use the information for general knowledge or portfolio assignments.

CASE 1
1. 'The Merchant of Venice'
2. Jewish Unfair Laws
3. 1978 Marquette Decision
4. Credit Card Debt Crisis

CASE 2
1. 'Death of a Salesman'
2. The American Dream
3. Student Loan Debt Crisis
4. Student Loan Predatory

CASE 3
1. A Raisin in the Sun
2. Predatory
3. Fair Housing Act
4. Subprime Mortgage Crisis

CASE 4
1. "To Kill a Mockingbird"
2. The Scottsboro Boys
3. Central Park Five
4. Miscegenation Laws

CASE 5
1. Mail Runners
2. Transportation Acts
3. Wall Street Trade
4. 1985 Credit Riots

MULTIMEDIA SOURCES ONLINE
1. The Merchant of Venice
2. Shakespeare Study: Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice"
3. English Shakespeare, Authorship Controversy
4. The Debt Trap: Dating the NBER Report
5. The Secret History of Credit Cards
6. Michael Hudson: Money & Debt
7. Robert Reich: Our Kids
8. American Dream Myth: Citigroup or Inequality
9. David Greer: the Occupy Wall Street!

SOURCE WATCH
Always remember that sources need to be qualified-A. Are they used to write your assignments and case papers?

1. What makes the source unreliable or not valid? How can you verify it?

2. What kind of frame of reference is used in the source or source is presented? What do you think is taking place or meaning?

3. Are the ideas in the source in line or not fit with the source? What is the source or representation? What does it say or mean to you?

4. How important is the source? What evidence is being used to support it? Is the evidence logical?

5. What experts are present in the source? What is the source or support? Is the evidence logical?

6. What message do you draw or make sense of the source or source is presented? What do you think is taking place or meaning?

7. What are the key points in the source that you agree with or challenge? What do you think is taking place or meaning?

8. How important is the source? What evidence is being used to support it? Is the evidence logical?

9. What are the key points in the source that you agree with or challenge? What do you think is taking place or mean?
Summary

1. All knowledge is connected by language, the tool that allows us to make meaning.

2. Disciplines are the various ways that we have chosen to organize knowledge in academe.

3. Our institutional structures are incongruent with the interconnected nature of knowledge.

4. We must realign if we are to improve teaching and learning in a network economy.

5. As metaphor and model, storytelling moves us toward this goal.

6. Storytelling is how humans learn over a lifetime, and writers have always known this.
Resources


To learn more, visit [www.missed101.com](http://www.missed101.com)