

# **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

# Principles for Design

1.

Establish the learning goal

2.

Design assignment to achieve the goal

3.

Identify required material and activities

4.

Evaluate demonstrations of proficiency

# 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.

<p><b>CASE 1</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'The Merchant of Venice'</li> <li>2. Jewish Usury Laws</li> <li>3. 1978 Marquette Decision</li> <li>4. Credit Card Debt Crisis</li> </ol>	<p><b>MULTIMEDIA SOURCES ONLINE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Jewish Americans: They Came to Stay</li> <li>2. Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice'</li> <li>3. Frontline: Shakespeare Authorship Controversy</li> <li>4. The Debt Trap--Dateline NBC Report</li> <li>5. Frontline: The Secret History of Credit Cards</li> <li>6. Michael Hudson: Money &amp; Debt</li> <li>7. Robert Putnam: Our Kids</li> <li>8. American Dream Myth: Stiglitz on Inequality</li> <li>9. David Graeber on the Occupy Wall Street...</li> </ol>	<p><b>SOURCE WATCH</b></p> <p>Always remember that sources need to be qualified before you use them to write your link justifications and case papers.</p> <p>(1) What makes the source credible or not credible? How can you verify it?</p> <p>(2) What kind of frame or perspective is used to make arguments and/or present ideas? What is the source trying to get you to believe or (re) consider?</p> <p>(3) Are the ideas in the source mainstream or marginal? Does the source promote understanding and clarity? Is there an agenda?</p> <p>(4) What problem or question does the source try to address? What are the thesis and main points? Are they supported well? Is the evidence logical?</p> <p>(5) What experts are present in the source? Should you consider investigating the work of these experts for yourself? Is their work being used in the proper context?</p> <p>MISSED101.COM</p>
<p><b>CASE 2</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'Death of a Salesman'</li> <li>2. The American Dream</li> <li>3. Student Loan Debt Crisis</li> <li>4. Student Loan Redlining</li> </ol>	<p><b>MULTIMEDIA SOURCES ONLINE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Raisin in the Sun (1961 Full Movie)</li> <li>2. Racism in America: Crisis in Levittown</li> <li>3. Race: The House We Live In</li> <li>4. The Pruitt-Igoe Myth</li> <li>5. Bill Moyers on Mortgage Mess</li> <li>6. Global Financial Meltdown</li> <li>7. Fault Lines for Sale--The American Dream</li> <li>8. S1: What is Securitization</li> <li>9. Fair Housing Act: Looking Back, Looking...</li> </ol>	
<p><b>CASE 3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'A Raisin in the Sun'</li> <li>2. Redlining</li> <li>3. Fair Housing Act</li> <li>4. Subprime Mortgage Crisis</li> </ol>	<p><b>MULTIMEDIA SOURCES ONLINE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. American Experience: Scottsboro 1-2</li> <li>2. To Kill A Mockingbird (1962)</li> <li>3. bell hooks and Kevin Powell on Black Masculinity</li> <li>4. Emmett Till Murder Case</li> <li>5. Slavery by Another Name PBS</li> <li>6. 13TH   Official Trailer [HD]   Netflix</li> <li>7. Ken Burns: Central Park Five</li> <li>8. Remembering Mr. and Mrs. Loving</li> </ol>	
<p><b>CASE 4</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'To Kill A Mockingbird'</li> <li>2. The Scottsboro Boys</li> <li>3. Central Park Five</li> <li>4. Miscegenation Laws</li> </ol>	<p><b>MULTIMEDIA SOURCES ONLINE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Racism--A History</li> <li>2. Slavery in the Making of America</li> <li>3. Tap Dancing is the Story of America: S. Zee</li> <li>4. Irish History: Cromwell...God's Executioner</li> <li>5. Scottish Slaves in Barbados</li> <li>6. The Invention of the White Race by T. Allen</li> <li>7. Nell Irvin Painter: The History of White People</li> <li>8. 35th Partier Lecture: "White Trash: The 400-Year History of Class in America"</li> </ol>	
<p><b>CASE 5</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'Moll Flanders'</li> <li>2. Transportation Acts</li> <li>3. Irish Slave Trade</li> <li>4. 1863 Draft Riots</li> </ol>		

## LEARNING LOG FOR MATRIX MAPS 1

Describe the connection(s) between cases 1 and 2.

Exercise Begins

/ /

Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

/ /

Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

Describe the connection(s) between cases 2 and 3.

Exercise Begins

/ /

Write a summary of the multimedia source you selected to better understand this assignment.

Exercise Ends

/ /

Comment on your learning experience and how it relates to the biography you selected.

# 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

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