



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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Controlling Sight and Knowledge in The Tempest

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Introduction

The relationship between knowing and seeing is an essential component of any attempt to make meaning of the world around us. The fact that others create much of what we see leads to the reality that our knowledge of the world is largely constructed from the artistic work of others. This dynamic led Percy Bysshe Shelley to declare that "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." In their ability to both manufacture (and limit) the images we see, artists wield a powerful, invisible, and almost magical ability to control our perceptions of reality. This is undoubtedly true once the definition of "artist" is expanded to include the producers of cultural media; it is difficult to deny that what we see in the news, films, magazines, and Internet drastically influences how we understand the world. I believe that awakening students to this dynamic is a fundamental responsibility of those who teach literature and that studying Shakespeare's *The Tempest* provides an opportunity to do so.

One of the dangers and difficulties in teaching plays in a school setting is the loss of the experience of seeing the play performed. For this reason, an emphasis on the visual nature of Shakespeare's work is a necessary component of any such study. I believe that *The Tempest* allows for such an emphasis; due to its particularly visual and auditory nature, it requires one to especially consider the experience of the audience.

The focus of this study is on the ways in which the play addresses issues of perspective, knowledge, culture, and forgiveness. Knowledge is closely tied to perspective in the play, and what different characters see dramatically influences what they know, to the point that seeing in *The Tempest* can be considered a metaphor for understanding. This is evident when one considers how the idea of culture manifests itself in the play. Because *The Tempest* was written at a time when much of Europe was coming into contact with different cultures, the play provides a valuable lens through which to consider Europeans' understanding of themselves and the other peoples they encountered. Sight and knowledge are also directly tied to one's ability to forgive. How one sees or understands another largely determines one's capacity for empathy and forgiveness. This is perhaps one of the clearest examples of an artist's power: by causing us to see another differently, the artist can change our perceptions and allow us to conceive a previously unthinkable course of action.

Rationale

A number of factors make *The Tempest* a rich text in which to consider matters of sight and perspective. First, the play is especially visual in nature, rich with stage directions and special effects. From the opening tempest to the exotic setting and many songs and spells that appear throughout the play, the audience is constantly exposed to visual (and auditory) stimulation. This makes *The Tempest* an ideal text through which to study the experience of Elizabethan theatre and with which to highlight the centrality of performance to the work of William Shakespeare. By studying what the audience sees, students will be able to gain an understanding of both the theatre and of the play itself.

Questions concerning what the audience sees are further enriched by the probability that *The Tempest* was written specifically for performance at the new Blackfriars theatre. Much more intimate than the famous Globe, the Blackfriars allowed performers and playwrights to readily manipulate light and sound, providing them with newfound control over the physical experience of attending the theatre. By studying the effects of light and sound on the perspective of the audience, students can come to better understand a play in which nearly every character is manipulated by means of a song, a disguise, or a spell.

This very manipulation also makes the study of characters' perspectives particularly fruitful. For the majority of the play, Prospero remains the only character to see the island and its inhabitants in their entirety. Until the final act, Prospero's companions are either physically separated from each other, enchanted by Ariel, or both; their knowledge of their own situations is severely limited by what they do and do not see. By focusing on what the characters and audience of *The Tempest* see, one can uncover significant metaphorical implications concerning the power of art. In knowing the limited perspectives of the characters, one understands how vulnerable they are to manipulation at the hands of an all-powerful Prospero. In recognizing that the perspective of the audience is similarly manipulated by Shakespeare and his actors, students can understand the potential of art to affect the way they see the world around them.

The Tempest is also a play that raises significant questions concerning the ways in which different characters and cultures see and understand each other. The events that take place on the island take on very different meanings based on the perspective from which they are seen. Prospero can be seen as a lovingly caring father to Miranda or an overbearingly protective patriarch. His treatment of Caliban can be understood as the result of frustrated good intentions or the actions of a treacherous tyrant. Caliban himself can be seen as an ugly, dangerous savage or an innocent and oppressed native, fighting for his freedom. Each of these perspectives is valid in that the text is open to interpretation and supports each reading.

Furthermore, studying *The Tempest* allows students the opportunity to consider the relationship between what Elizabethans knew about distant cultures of the New World and how they saw them. *The Tempest* is loosely drawn from the accounts of exploration and shipwreck that were making their way back to Europe at the turn of the seventeenth century, many of which documented Europeans' first encounters with (and impressions of) the indigenous people they met. There has been much debate about whether the play challenges or gives voice to the Eurocentric worldview from which it was created, and it is undoubtedly beneficial to include students in this meaningful conversation. There is, however, a larger lesson to be taken from this discussion. Students must understand that imperfect knowledge often results in a skewed perception of others; this is a valuable lesson for students to carry with them throughout their lives, a lesson that will far outlast their understanding of the particulars of Shakespeare's play.

Background

Such a course of study aligns itself with existing objectives of the school in which I teach and the goals of my literature class. New Haven Academy is a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools, a network of schools committed to a common philosophy of education. This philosophy includes emphasizing depth over breadth in curricular design and highlights the primary purpose of school as "learning to use one's mind well." To this end, New Haven Academy strives to develop in students five "Habits of Mind" that they will carry with them after they leave high school. These include:

- 1) Considering multiple perspectives
- 2) Using evidence
- 3) Finding connections and patterns
- 4) Considering how things might be different
- 5) Evaluating why it matters

These habits of mind provide a tangible definition of what it means to think well, and they are purposefully highlighted in the activities and assignments students are asked to complete in Literature class. Although students in my class are used to the challenge of considering multiple perspectives, this habit will readily move to the forefront as we study what the various characters (and the members of the audience) see as the play unfolds.

A study of sight and knowledge in *The Tempest* also aligns with my overarching goals as a teacher of literature and with previous topics of study in my junior literature class. A key objective of my course is the understanding that ideas - concepts such as freedom, fear, justice - require some form of representation in order to exist, leaving the artists and authors that give them shape with vast amounts of influence on the minds of their readers. Throughout the year my students and I have discussed the idea that representation creates reality by studying images of women in advertising, fairy tales, and literature. My students and I have also examined the intersection of visual and literary representation by studying the art of comics, using Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* as our guide. In this unit we moved from the study of purely visual texts (such as the paintings of Edward Hopper) to the mixed medium of comics and finally to purely literary texts, including poems by Ted Kooser. The intersection of visual and literary texts will be continued in this unit. More importantly, this unit aligns itself with the study of representation and reality. Shakespeare's final play is a powerful commentary on the power of authorship to control perception. Just as Prospero is able to control what other characters know by creating illusions, Shakespeare himself is able to draw his audience into an alternate reality through his use of the stage. A unit that explores the ability of kings and playwrights to control knowledge through illusion will easily fit into a larger discussion of art and reality in my literature classes.

The Play

The Tempest is often considered Shakespeare's "last" play, although the evidence for this is unclear and seems to indicate that the bard worked collaboratively on the writing of at least three more plays after The Tempest ¹. Published in the First Folio of 1623, the play was likely written in 1610-1611 and first performed before the court of King James I. It remains one of Shakespeare's most strange and spectacular plays, featuring an aging, displaced duke, an "airy spirit" named Ariel, a deformed monster whose name is an imperfect anagram of the word cannibal, magical apparitions, and fantastic staging throughout. The protagonist, Prospero, uses his magic to manipulate and control a group of men who have been shipwrecked on the island he inhabits with his daughter Miranda. As luck would have it, this group of men consists of all those responsible for the loss of his dukedom and his banishment to the island. Using his magic and his not so faithful servants, Prospero is able to force his enemies to repent and to arrange a marriage between his daughter and the son of the king. In doing so, Prospero restores himself to his rightful power. The Tempest is a play that deals with themes of illusion, forgiveness, and colonization. Prospero creates numerous false realities in order to enact his plan and restore his power. His magic, often referred to as "art" learned from "books," is commonly equated to Shakespeare's power as a playwright. This association has led some to read The Tempest as an autobiographical work representing Shakespeare's farewell to the stage. Although such a reading is often challenged as unfounded, sentimental, or simplistic, the link between Prospero's magic and the power of art remains strong. Johnston explains:

The theatre -- that magical world of poetry, song, illusion, pleasing and threatening apparitions -- can, like Prospero's magic, educate us into a better sense of ourselves, into a final acceptance of the world, a state in which we forgive and forget in the interests of the greater human community. The theatre, that is, can reconcile us to the joys of the human community so that we do not destroy our families in a search for righting past evils in a spirit of personal revenge or as crude assertions of our own egos. ²

In addition to the restorative power of art, Johnson points out the theme of forgiveness, seen in Prospero's decision to take pity on those who have wronged him and find themselves trapped on his island, utterly at his mercy. Urged by Ariel, Prospero realizes that "the rarer action is / in virtue than in vengeance" and forgoes the revenge available to him (V.i.27-28). Finally, the play raises significant questions regarding power and colonization. Prospero is a powerful European who, after finding himself shipwrecked on the island, unsuccessfully attempts to educate and successfully enslaves the island's sole indigenous inhabitant.

Shakespeare's portrayal of Caliban been featured in postcolonial criticism that highlights his "colonized" status and savage depiction in the play. Student engagement with questions of art, forgiveness, and colonization is central to this unit of study.

The Stage(s)

Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest* for the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the acting company in which he had a financial interest. Shakespeare and his men are often associated with the famous Globe theatre, which housed the majority of their plays. *The Tempest*, however, "seems to have been written for and performed at no fewer than three distinct venues: the court, the Globe, and the Blackfriars." ³ The Blackfriars (built inside a monastic hall of the same name) was a much smaller and more intimate setting than the Globe, and it would have attracted a much smaller and more uniform audience to performances markedly different from those at most outdoor theatres. A smaller (indoor) stage, a seated audience, a more concentrated and complicated musical performance, and the need for artificial lighting would have greatly affected the kinds of plays Shakespeare was writing for his company. ⁴ It is not surprising that a play so reliant on visual and auditory spectacle was one of the first to be written for this new setting.

Objectives

When planning units for my students, I tend to rely on the method of planning backwards outlined by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe in *Understanding by Design*. Wiggins and McTighe suggest that teachers begin with the questions that will guide their unit and the understandings that they seek to build in their students. They describe "essential questions" as "questions that lie at the heart of a subject or curriculum" and promote inquiry or "uncoverage" of a subject. ⁵ They go on to say that these questions should be open ended and produce many different plausible responses. Wiggins and McTighe also distinguish between overarching and topical understandings, describing them as insights that are either general and transferable or specific to a particular topic. ⁶ The essential questions and understandings that guide this unit are:

Essential Questions:

- When and how should someone be forgiven?
- To what extent does what one sees determine what one knows?

Overarching Understandings:

- By manipulating what we see, artists influence the way we understand the world around us.

- Our limited understanding of the world around us leads us to see others in flawed and often harmful ways.

Topical Understandings:

- Prospero is able to influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of other characters on the island by manipulating what they see and hear.
- Shakespeare is able to influence the thoughts, feelings, and potentially the actions of his audience by manipulating what they see and hear.
- Elizabethans limited, Eurocentric understanding of the New World often led them to see themselves and the people they encountered in flawed and harmful ways.

Approach

What follows is a series of activities and lessons designed to address the objectives, understandings, and essential questions that guide this unit of study. Any of these could be removed or modified if necessary, but together they constitute a cohesive exploration of perspective, knowledge, culture, and forgiveness in *The Tempest*. These lessons are organized sequentially as pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading activities. Some of them represent the application to the study of *The Tempest* of assignments or structures that are ongoing and routine in my English classes. These could easily be modified, incorporated into another classroom for the duration of the unit, or dropped altogether. I include them because I feel that they are an important element of my practice and are particularly well suited to an examination of the play from multiple perspectives.

Pre-reading

Research: Stages and Exploration

One pre-reading activity involves having students conduct online research on various topics relevant to the study of *The Tempest*. The class would be divided into groups responsible for researching the Globe theatre, the Blackfriars theatre, and seventeenth-century exploration. Groups would have one class period to research their topic and prepare a presentation on what they learn for their classmates. Every student will be asked to synthesize and apply what he or she learns from these presentations by answering two questions: "How would seeing a performance at the Blackfriars Theatre be different from seeing one at the Globe Theatre?" and "If you were living in England in 1605, what would you think about the 'New World' and why?" As a result, each group is charged with finding information needed by the entire class, and each student is responsible for learning from the research of his or her peers.

If necessary, students could be assigned roles within the group, including research leader, presentation leader, fact checker, time keeper, and scribe, among others. I would begin the period with a short mini-lesson on research and reputable sources. Students would then start their research by visiting wikipedia.com to gain general background information on their chosen topic. From there they would be required to verify and supplement their research through academic sources. I believe that this is a useful and realistic model of teaching responsible research that utilizes the strengths of sites such as Wikipedia (which is likely to be students' first stop for information regardless of their teacher's directions) while also pointing out the weaknesses and limitations of such research. The second class period would consist of group presentations to their peers, who would in turn be responsible for taking notes in their journals. After viewing all three presentations, students would answer the two guiding questions in their journals based on what they learned from their own research and that of their peers. Having students answer these two questions would require them to synthesize and make use of the information they have found in their research. These questions also require them to consider how the various theatres might affect the audience and to think from the perspective of the worldview from which *The Tempest* was born. Each of these questions introduces an important way in which to understand the play, one that will be further explored and developed as the unit progresses.

Postcards

Thomas McCann and Joseph Flanagan suggest another valuable pre-reading activity in the September 2002 issue of the *English Journal*. They describe an activity in which students received postcards from one of the characters in the play for each of the five days before they begin reading. By writing postcards to their students from the perspective of Prospero, Ariel, Caliban, Miranda, and Ferdinand, these teachers were able to promote sympathy for the characters and introduce various perspectives on the central events of the play. After five days, the students were asked to write a response to their character based on the information they had received and discuss what they knew about the play. McCann and Flanagan report that students "contested each other's representation of the plot because some readers felt that Caliban was telling the truth, while others felt that Prospero was the truthful one." ⁷ By writing to their students from the perspectives of the characters, the teachers were able to introduce the conflicting points of view that dominate the play, as well as build knowledge of the plot, themes, and conflict that students would encounter. I believe this to be a clever and engaging way to draw students into a unit on *The Tempest*, and I would use this activity at the start of my unit as well.

During Reading

Reading Logs

Reading logs are one of the standing assignments in my English class throughout the year. Reading logs ask students to respond to what they read by choosing to write about questions they have, characters/themes they have encountered, or connections they can make to previous logs or outside sources. Students must support their conclusions on whatever topic they choose by using and explaining evidence from the text. Furthermore, they are required to consider questions, themes, and characters from multiple perspectives; they should anticipate different answers to the same question and consider how the views of the author or a character may differ from their own. For our study of *The Tempest*, I would add the perspective of the

audience to this list. I was introduced to reading logs by a colleague at New Haven Academy and have found them to be an extremely valuable means of having students think about the literature we read. I often assign these one-page writing assignments along with reading to be completed at home or in class; students periodically choose their best two logs to submit for grading. These assignments clearly reinforce the school's goal of encouraging specific habits of mind (perspective, evidence, connection) and ask students to think deeply about one question or perspective rather than answering a broad but shallow series of questions prepared by someone else at the end of each reading assignment. Reading logs also teach independence in that they require students to choose their own direction and to recognize what they need to explore further, rather than conditioning them to rely on guiding questions. Because the thinking involved in these assignments is deep and complex, teaching students about and introducing reading logs takes some time, but this assignment could be modified to fit the needs of different kinds of classrooms.

The particular strength of these logs in the context of this unit is the requirement to consider multiple perspectives. Students are likely to see various events and characters in the play quite differently, particularly because of the pre-reading "postcard" activity. Reading logs will encourage students to become aware of their own views and also challenge them to recognize that others in the class will see things from an entirely different perspective. In this way, students will use logs to keep track of what various characters see throughout the play and consider how this variety of viewpoints contributes to their understanding of the island. These logs are often shared and form the basis of informal discussion in the classroom. Such sharing of perspectives will further help students consider the events of the play from many different angles and appreciate the complexity of the illusions that drive *The Tempest*.

Seminars

Another staple of the work done in my English classes is seminar discussions, which would be useful to apply to the study of *The Tempest*. These discussions are almost entirely student directed; I participate only as a member of the group, usually saying very little during the course of the conversation. Seminars take many forms, but they are typically characterized by an opening question, a lack of predetermined speaking order or structure, and communal exploration of the ideas raised by a text. I use a rubric to grade these discussions that very closely resembles the one used for reading logs because I am assessing the same aspects of student thought in each case. Although one assignment requires discussion with classmates and the other is written individually, in each case I am looking to see if students are able to explore multiple perspectives, use evidence, and make connections based on what they have read. Often the class is divided evenly into an inner circle and outer circle. The former is responsible for discussion, while the latter is responsible for taking careful notes to be reviewed at the end of the discussion. I find that this arrangement makes the discussions more intimate, and it draws students who would not otherwise participate into the discussion, but seminars could be organized in many ways, and they can also be easily modified to suit the needs of any particular classroom.

I would choose at least two points in the unit at which to have four such discussions, two based on the text of the play itself and two based on supplementary readings. The first such discussion would take place at the end of Act 1, scene 2, focusing on Prospero's treatment of Caliban and the question of whether or not his slavery is justified. The next day the inner and outer circles will switch roles and conduct a seminar discussion of their own. They will discuss Montaigne's essay "On Cannibals" and consider the question of how this material relates to the play. These two days of discussion complement each other by addressing similar questions of colonization and equity, both in the play itself and in the primary source documents that helped

inspire it. I would also pair two more seminar discussions near the conclusion of *The Tempest*, after Prospero's magical illusions have largely played themselves out. The first of these discussions would be based on Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," which questions artistic manipulation such as Prospero's from a philosophical perspective. It would be useful to begin such a conversation with the unit's essential question regarding sight and knowledge, leading students to make connections among Plato's work, *The Tempest*, and their lives. At the play's conclusion, the final seminar would address the resolution of the conflict by exploring the unit's other essential question regarding forgiveness. Ending with the discussion of these two essential questions would cause the class to consider the play as a whole in relation to the ideas that guide the unit and pull together all they have learned in studying the play.

Staging

Students are often asked to perform scenes from various plays studied in English class. This common activity takes on new importance based on the visual and auditory nature of *The Tempest*. I provide students with a list of requirements whenever they are asked to perform in class. This list typically includes a variety of components designed to encourage students to make interpretive choices; performances must often include laughter, crying, movement in unison, direct address to the audience, unexpected entrances and so on. For our study of *The Tempest*, I would modify this assignment to highlight what the audience sees and hears. Each three-to-five minute performance would include many of the usual criteria, but it would also require students to play music at some point in their production and make special use of lighting, costume, or props. In doing so, students will be engaging in the types of decisions that would have been particularly salient to those performing *The Tempest* at the Blackfriars theatre. After each performance the audience is asked to write a one-paragraph "review" of what they saw; these reviews would be focused on the question of how the visual and auditory effects shaped their experience of the scene. These performances would emphasize yet another perspective critical to Shakespeare's play: that of the audience.

Picturing Characters

Having students study and create depictions of the characters of the play would also be appropriate, allowing for further examination of the relationship between sight and knowledge. I would devote a sequence of two class periods to this activity. The first class is to be an opportunity to choose a character and depict him or her visually through drawing or collage. Working in groups, students first choose and discuss their character, finding at least five examples of description in the play itself relating to that character's physical appearance or temperament. Group members then settle on at least five adjectives to describe their character based on these passages. They then go about creating a visual depiction that is true to their characterization and Shakespeare's language, seeking to incorporate quotes into their visual depiction whenever possible.

In the next class period we would study the way each character was represented by students and notable artists. This lesson also provides the opportunity to differentiate between observations and inferences. I chose to focus this activity on depictions of Prospero, Ariel, Miranda, and Caliban. Not only are these characters central to the action of the play, but they also seem to provide the greatest latitude in terms of artistic interpretation. Images are available online through Google, but searching Artstor yields results of a much higher quality. I chose four images found on this database, created by William Rimmer, Heinrich Fuseli, Joseph Wright, and William Hogarth. Each image features Prospero and Miranda, and most also include both Ariel and Caliban. These images not only allow students to discuss an artistic interpretation of each individual character, but also allow them to critically examine relationships that exist between the characters. For each image, students are first asked to list observations describing what they saw. They are then be asked to make

inferences and conclusions about the character based on their observations. In doing so students will recognize the difference between these two processes and also become aware that what we see and what we know is open to both interpretation and manipulation. Students will undoubtedly focus on different aspects of each character, again stressing the differences of perspective in the play. This aspect of the activity could be heightened by asking students to make observations only about the character from whom they received postcards, while leaving the interpretation of the character in the image up to the rest of the class. This would challenge students who may be particularly invested in a character to be objective in describing only what they see in the painting, while allowing other students to possibly "project" various interpretations onto the image. Examining the differences between these viewpoints would lead to fruitful discussion. A concluding activity (one that could be completed in class or for homework) would involve writing about the differences or similarities between the images students created and those they studied in class or defending one of the images as the most accurate depiction of a character.

Post Reading

Shakespeare Behind Bars

At the conclusion of studying the play, and after discussing forgiveness in a Socratic seminar, students would be well prepared to view a documentary titled Shakespeare Behind Bars. This film follows a group of inmates at the Luther Lockett Correctional Complex in La Grange, Kentucky as they take part in a full-length production of *The Tempest*. The film is striking and at times difficult to watch; many of the inmates involved have been both perpetrators and victims of disturbing crimes. Many have also become skilled actors through their annual participation in a production of Shakespeare's work. Most affecting, however, are the questions these men raise about the human need and capacity for forgiveness; as one inmate states, "the people who need forgiveness the most deserve it the least." Viewing this film would undoubtedly deepen students' understanding of the play itself, as well as add another layer to the dialogue surrounding its themes. Potential questions for discussion could focus on the connections between the characters and the men who play them, as well as whether or not these men deserve forgiveness.

More importantly however, *Shakespeare Behind Bars* would further drive home the power of Shakespeare's themes and his art. It would be extremely valuable for students to consider the film itself as yet another work of art, edited and pieced together by directors and producers, and not unlike *The Tempest* itself. The film is a stark example of how seeing something or someone from a different perspective can deeply influence what we know about the world around us. A series of writing prompts and discussion questions both before and after the film could help students consider *Shakespeare Behind Bars* in this way.

I would ask students to respond in their journals to the essential question "When and how should someone be forgiven?" and discuss their thoughts before viewing the film. I would then ask students to answer the same question in the context of three different scenarios, so that the question now becomes:

- When and how should someone be forgiven for stealing?
- When and how should someone be forgiven for rape?
- When and how should someone be forgiven for murder?

These questions will provide valuable context for the students as they consider the film. It would be extremely interesting to compare their preliminary responses to their feelings after watching the men of Luther Lockett discuss their lives and work to understand Shakespeare's play. Although these inmates are guilty of each of the crimes mentioned, most students are likely to leave the film with a highly sympathetic view of these men. Many students may revise or reconsider their previous convictions regarding forgiveness, an outcome that can of course lead to a crucial realization about the power of art. By experiencing a work of art, students will come to see and understand the prisoners of Luther Lockett in new ways. This change of perspective is a manifestation of the magical power represented by Prospero in *The Tempest*; students' understanding will be altered by what they see. Furthermore, students will realize that such a change in perspective is often a necessary prelude to forgiveness. Indeed, Prospero himself cannot forgive his enemies until he sees them (and himself) differently.

Pre-Reading Lesson: Research

Essential Questions

When and how should someone be forgiven?

To what extent does what one sees determine what one knows?

State Standards

- 1.1 - Students use appropriate strategies before, during and after reading in order to construct meaning.
- 2.4 - Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.
- 3.2 - Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Homework1

- 1st Night - Finish group presentations on either the Globe, the Blackfriars, and 17th-century exploration.
- 2nd Night - None

Objectives

Students will know:

- Characteristics of the Globe and Blackfriars theaters.
- Causes and effects of 17th-century exploration.

Students will be able to:

- Hypothesize differences between attending performances at the Blackfriars and Globe theaters.
- Imagine how Europeans would have thought about indigenous peoples.

Day 1

Opening

Students should respond to the following prompt in their journals:

How do you find information when conducting research and how do you know you can trust it?

Students should share and discuss their responses. I expect that many students will mention Google.com or wikipedia.com in their descriptions of research strategies. After students share their responses, I will ask them if they can identify any weaknesses in how they conduct research and where they find information. I will then explain the strengths and weaknesses of Wikipedia; although it provides a valuable and often thorough overview of a topic, its openness precludes it from being a sufficient source. Students should rely on Web sites affiliated with educational or governmental institutions whenever possible to ensure their accuracy.

Research

Students will be divided into three groups and be assigned a topic to research for the class. Topics will be the Globe theater, the Blackfriars theater, and 17th-century exploration. Students should be made aware of the fact that they will be sharing their findings with the class in some form of presentation and that each student will need to use information found by other groups. Students should begin their research by visiting wikipedia.com for general background. They should use the information they find to formulate questions and topics for further exploration and use wikipedia.com references and/or "Google Scholar" to find additional information.

Presentation Prep
If students have completed their research, they should use the remaining class time to being constructing their presentations, which may take any form students decide to use but should be aimed at conveying their research findings to their classmates. Students who need the time to continue their research may do so. Presentations will be completed for homework.

Day 2

Presentations

Each group will present their research findings to their classmates by describing characteristics of the Globe and Blackfriars theatres as well as causes/effects of exploration in the 17th-century. During these presentations the rest of the class will take notes in their journals, recording key information from the presentations.

Synthesizing and Hypothesizing

After each group has presented their research, I will remind students of the two questions introduced in the previous lesson. Each student will then synthesize their knowledge and notes from all presentations to hypothesize about performances at the two theatres and the worldview of Europeans during Shakespeare's time. Each student should answer the following two questions in his or her journal:

How would seeing a performance at the Blackfriars Theatre be different from seeing one at the Globe Theatre?

If you were living in England in 1605, what would you think about the "New World" and why?

Discussion and Predictions

Students will share their responses to the two speculative questions that guided their research. I will encourage them to explain what specific information from the presentations led them to their conclusions. After students have been able to share and discuss their responses, they will receive their second "Character Postcard." Based on these postcards and their research, students will discuss their predictions about what they expect to see in the play itself.

During Reading Lesson: Picturing Characters

Essential Questions

When and how should someone be forgiven?

To what extent does what one sees determine what one knows?

State Standards

1.3 - Students select and apply strategies to facilitate word recognition and develop vocabulary in order to comprehend text.

1.4 - Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral and visual texts.

Homework

Day 2 - After creating and studying various visual representations of the characters in the play, students will be asked to choose one image as the most accurate and defend their choice with a one-page written assignment that uses evidence from the text.

Objectives

Students will know:

- The definition of characterization
- The definitions of the words noble, credulous, barbaric, petulant, and conniving

Students will be able to:

- Create and explain a visual interpretation of a character from *The Tempest*.
- Make observations and inferences based on visual depictions of characters from *The Tempest*.

Day 1

Opening

As a class we will work to define the five words on which we are focusing. I will use my computer and LCD projector to display the dictionary definitions of these words for the class and ask students to translate them into their own words. Once the class has settled on its own definition for each term, students will copy the words and definitions into their journals. Characterization 15 Students will then form groups of three. Each group will be given five note-cards, each with one of the vocabulary words printed on one side. Five pieces of butcher paper will be taped to the board, each labeled with the name of a character from the play. The group will then discuss which vocabulary word they would assign to each of the main characters. After this discussion, groups will tape their chosen words to the corresponding piece of butcher paper, matching a vocabulary word with a character. Although these will likely be similar, different student choices will reveal interesting insights and different perspectives on each of the characters. For example, Caliban and Prospero could each be considered barbaric and conniving, Ariel and Prospero could each be considered petulant, and so on. After students have made these choices, they will be asked to defend them so that they can discuss any differences of opinion. I will then explain the term characterization to the class and inform them that their choices are examples of it.

Picturing Characterization

Students will then work in their groups to choose one character and create a visual representation based on the characteristics that they have assigned to that figure. Each group should choose at least five adjectives to describe their character and depict these in a picture or collage.

Day 2

Presentations

Each group will present their visual representation to their classmates by explaining the artistic choices they have made in creating their image and which character traits they chose to focus on.

Observations and Inferences

We will then turn to various artistic depictions of the characters to practice making observations and inferences as well as to identify differences in perspective. For each painting students will be asked to first describe only what they see. After a list of objective observations has been compiled on the board and in student journals, students will be allowed to use these observations to support and explain inferences about the different characters.

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Appendix: Connecticut English Language Arts Curriculum Standards

Standard 1: Reading and Responding

- 1.1 Students use appropriate strategies before, during and after reading in order to construct meaning - While reading, students respond using readings logs that utilize questioning and connection strategies.
- 1.2 Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation - Students will create illustrations of key characters that display an interpretation.
- 1.3 Students select and apply strategies to facilitate word recognition and develop vocabulary in order to comprehend text - Students will learn new vocabulary words and apply them to characters in the play.
- 1.4 Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral and visual texts - Students discuss interpretations and responses in seminars.

Standard 2: Exploring and Responding to Literature

- 2.1 Students explore multiple responses to literature - Students consider and evaluate multiple perspectives in reading logs and seminar discussions.
Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts - Students evaluate the play using research on Elizabethan theatre, seventeenth-century exploration, and primary source documents.
- 2.4

Standard 3: Communicating with Others

- 3.2 Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task - Students present research on the Globe, the Blackfriars, and seventeenth-century exploration to classmates.

Standard 4: Applying English Language Conventions

- 4.2 Students speak and write using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task - Students communicate effectively in reading logs and seminars.

Notes

1. Gordon McMullan, Introduction to *The Tempest*, edited by Gordon McMullan (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2006), 3.
2. Ian Johnston, "You Can Go Home Again, Can't You? An Introduction to *The Tempest*," Malaspina-University College, 4 September 1999, <http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/eng366/lectures/tempest.htm>.
3. Gordon McMullan, "The *Tempest* on the Early Stage," In *The Tempest*, edited by Gordon McMullan (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2006), 254.
4. McMullan, "The *Tempest* on the Early Stage," 256.
5. Grant P. Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 2nd ed. (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005), 342.
6. Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 130.
7. Thomas M. McCann and Joseph M. Flanagan, "A "Tempest" Project: Shakespeare and Critical Conflicts," *The English Journal* 92, no. 1, Shakespeare for a New Age (Sept., 2002): 30.

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