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"A Tide in the Affairs of Men": Looking at Leadership in Shakespeare's Roman Plays

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Introduction

Adults often underestimate young people. Whether discussing their work ethic or their attention span, older people commonly dismiss today's students as lacking the interests, values, and stamina of "the old days." So when I have introduced the plays of William Shakespeare to my sixth grade students, parents and even some colleagues have expressed skepticism. Comments range from "The kids will hate it - they'll be bored," to "Hey, they'll get that stuff in high school," to my all-time favorite, "They won't learn anything - kids just don't get Shakespeare!"

Now, I know that's just not so. My class last year wrote poignantly about the likelihood of "love at first sight" after delving into *Romeo and Juliet*. I also worked with sixth graders comparing the standard Shakespearean *Twelfth Night* with a Theatre Grottesco version in which point of view was turned on its ear; the students' insights into character, motivation, and staging were gratifyingly impressive. And I have watched a cast of fourth through seventh graders enact *Hamlet* - quite proficiently and effectively. There was something in each play that spoke to every child, whether the lush costumes, the flashing swordplay, or a famous line that was suddenly put into context. Students in sixth grade certainly won't understand or detect all the nuances and layers of meaning in Shakespeare's plays, and they will struggle with some of the text and concepts. But there is much in Shakespeare that speaks to even young children: cadence and flow of language, exciting and powerful dramatic moments, humor, intriguing social situations, and lots of political intensity and immediacy. It is the last which captivated my interest and convinced me to introduce two Shakespearean plays during my social studies unit in the coming year.

Rationale

The passionate involvement of most of my students and their families during the recent presidential campaign took me by surprise, in a very positive way. From the advent of school in August through our school-wide celebration on Inauguration Day, the classroom became a forum for lively debate and discussion. Our weekly

current events reports turned from a chore to an eagerly awaited opportunity to update fellow students on breaking campaign news as we watched history in the making.

The 2008 presidential election of Barack Obama was historic for many reasons. Not the least of these was the fact that voter turnout in the 18 to 25 year old bracket was the second-highest in history (second only to 1972, the first year that 18-year-olds could vote). ¹ Across the country, young people hit the streets, talked to their peers, registered voters, canvassed neighborhoods, and - most important - showed up at the voting booth. They really did Rock the Vote. Clearly American Gen X was concerned about the direction our country was going and came out to influence a change in leadership. But how did they discriminate between the candidates and their potential to be a strong effective president? What lens could they use to analyze the qualities that make a good leader? Did they distinguish between charisma and leadership? And how did they learn to differentiate between substance and spin? As Peter Sloterdijk notes:

We live in a world that brings things into false equations, produces false sameness of form and false sameness of values between everything and everyone, and thereby also achieves an intellectual disintegration and indifference in which people lose the ability to distinguish correct from false, important from unimportant, productive from destructive, because they are used to taking the one from the other.²

It is essential that today's students, who will become the productive citizens of tomorrow, learn to evaluate public figures and influential policymakers and leaders. It is necessary as well that they are cognizant of the bias inherent in much of the information coming at them.

In a media age, whether in the global electronic forms with which we are currently familiar or in "early modern" forms such as theater and chronicle history, influence - the symbolic ability to interpret a nation to itself - may be the most potent political force of all. ³

History can provide excellent examples of leadership - good, bad, and mediocre - but we can look elsewhere for a more palatable and engaging lesson from a most discerning master of human character: the Bard, William Shakespeare. In *Power Plays* by John O. Whitney and Tina Packer, the authors opine that Shakespeare "probed more deeply into the problems of leadership than anyone who came before him and most who came after." ⁴ From presidents to revolutionaries, leaders have used the words of Shakespeare as rallying points for influencing the masses. Whitney and Packer go on to enumerate the leadership models they have found in Shakespeare's writing: from Hal and Falstaff, the necessity of entering the world of one's people in order to understand them; from Macbeth, the risk of forsaking one's principles; from Julius Caesar, the dangers of inflexibility and rigidity; from Henry V, the value of rallying the followers; from Henry IV, the importance of creating and following through with a viable strategy. ⁵

William Shakespeare lived and wrote in an era of intense and mutating political and religious turmoil. Internecine power struggles and shifting alliances created a volatile political atmosphere until the long, relatively stable (though often repressive) reign of Elizabeth I. As the queen aged, however, concerns about her successor weighed on the minds of her subjects. The ascendancy of James I to the throne was peaceful, but his subsequent policies changed the tenor of the country, leading to civil unrest and at least one thwarted assassination attempt: a bungled plan on the part of the infamous Guy Fawkes. James was in conflict with many members of Parliament; some regarded his legitimacy as ruler with skepticism and others disputed his avowal of the Divine Right of Kings. His contentious relationship with Parliament deteriorated to the point of his dissolving that body in 1611. ⁶

Perhaps Shakespeare's many characterizations of rulers and leaders sprang from his acute observations of the unsettled political affairs around him as well as from his deep knowledge of history. He drew upon sources such as Holinshed's Chronicles and North's translation of Plutarch's Lives as the basis for many of his history plays, tweaking details, but on the whole remaining relatively faithful to the events as they were known at the time. ⁷ Add to this his strong sense of plot and his insightful limning of human strengths and foibles - dignity, foolishness, power, lust, frailty. Whether a telling description of King Richard II in Henry IV, Part One ("The skipping King, he ambled up and down/With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits/Soon kindled and soon burnt..." ⁸) or a sumptuous account of Cleopatra on her barge (...O'erpicturing that Venus where we see/The fancy outwork nature..." ⁹), we find a wide range of leadership models in many of his plays, notably in what have come to be known as the Roman Plays: Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra.

In Julius Caesar, Brutus speaks:

There is a tide in the affair of men Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat, And we must take the current when it serves, Or lose our ventures. Act Four, Scene 3, 217 - 223. ¹⁰

A leader needs to know what to do and when. What are the qualities we look for in a leader? How do leaders achieve their status, or lose it? What role do citizens play in the evolution of political leaders? These are questions students need to ponder. These children will be influencing decision-making in the future and we need to give them the necessary tools to help create a fair, just, and sustainable world.

Objectives

I teach sixth grade in a small elementary school in the heart of Santa Fe, New Mexico. We have a mixture of socio-economic situations and learning experiences, but many of our children tend to stay at the school once they start; we don't have a lot of turnover. Approximately 55% of our students are interzoned from other schools, many from 'failing' schools. There are two classes at every level, along with a multiage first/second, third/fourth, and fifth/sixth.

This year our school is departmentalizing the fifth/sixth and the sixth grades. I will be teaching social studies and science to the three classes, although all three teachers will be working together closely and coordinating our planning. One of New Mexico's four main social studies strands is history, with a focus on world history. This unit will be an in-depth extension of our ancient history studies, specifically ancient Rome. Standards call for understanding the evolution of Roman government and identifying key historical figures. Both plays selected will dovetail with the subject beautifully.

The unit is multidisciplinary. For teachers facing the dual challenges of limited time and a multiplicity of standards to teach, an integrated curriculum is an effective way to reach all the benchmarks mandated by our state. By combining literature and history, we can both meet the requirements and practice a more fruitful approach to learning. After all, it is rare in life that we learn facts in isolation. This approach reflects my philosophy of teaching; students are given an opportunity to engage with the topics on different levels and in different forms. It is also, quite frankly, more pleasurable to teach and more fun to study by this method.

This unit will take about three weeks, five hours per week, to complete. While there will be research and writing components to the unit, the core elements will be discussion and debate. One of my goals is to stretch the students' higher order thinking skills and develop their critical thinking: to have them evaluate, analyze, and synthesize the information they glean. The unit-related activities are devised with Bloom's taxonomy of thinking behaviors in mind. This time-tested framework, developed and published by Benjamin S. Bloom in 1958 and revised by Loren Anderson in 2001, is a "multi-tiered model of classifying thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity." ¹¹ The framework is often presented visually as a pyramid or a staircase, symbolizing ascending levels of thinking. In the revised version, in which the terms change somewhat, the lower three levels, in ascending order, are remembering, understanding, and applying. Above these are analyzing and evaluating, with the apex being creating. This tool assists me in planning and clarifying lessons that align with standards and address essential questions and specific objectives. The class groupings will vary according to the task, from whole class discussion, to small groups or pairs, to individuals researching or writing. Socratic seminar will play a big role in this study; there is evidence that shows that this is one of the most effective methods for "actively engaging students in learning and fostering higher-order thinking and social skills" ¹² .

Reading comprehension, oral presentation skills, and writing will be integrated into all aspects of the unit; incorporating language arts into all content areas is a common vision and commitment across our district. Integral to these objectives are goals including literature skills, such as identifying the elements and techniques that make up the craft of the author. For much of social studies, we necessarily concentrate on nonfiction texts, but this doesn't mean that such topics as imagery, metaphor, and rhythm fly out the window; good writing is good writing, whether it's expository or narrative. However, integrating historical fiction into social studies opens the window a little wider, allowing for more focused attention on symbolism, characterization, themes, and other literary elements that shape the story and engage the reader. An additional goal for the students is the ability to identify and extract parts of the text, be it data or dialogue, which support their opinions and ideas. This skill becomes increasingly important and valuable as the students enter middle and high school and is crucial at the college level.

The broad focus of my yearlong social studies theme will be qualities of leadership, as well as the perception of leadership and the significant, sometimes persuasive role of arts, media, and peers. This "umbrella" will give us a common set of criteria for comparing world cultures. Our year-long discussions of leadership will begin with early human social structures and continue through the modern age to the present.

For sixth graders who are studying world history, much of the information found in textbooks is irrelevant and uninteresting. Although I customarily incorporate many activities in the study of the history, I have never used Shakespeare to help deliver the curriculum, except as a sidebar to the Renaissance and Elizabethan periods. The goal of this unit is to spark the interest of my students by introducing them to the interactions of individuals who became the lead actors in the dramas of the past. While historical texts give us one perspective on leadership, Shakespeare's plays can extend, widen, and deepen understanding of the character and motivation of an extensive range of players on the stage of world history.

Students will focus on two plays that support our study of ancient Rome: Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra. Both of these plays present leaders who exhibit characteristics that affect the outcomes of their projects: Julius Caesar, Octavius, Antony, Cleopatra, Brutus, Cassius. The students will identify these characteristics, determine how they affect the results of the action, and theorize how a different outcome could have changed history. They will pinpoint the passages that reveal good or bad leadership and perform those scenes, along with scenes rewritten to show an alternate outcome.

The peripheral goals of this unit include aspects of health and wellness. My students are just stepping into the teenage years; they will be going to middle schools soon. Social and peer pressure increases and children need to draw upon resources they have been taught. Students should recognize positive and negative leadership in both academic and social settings. Most teachers can quickly spot those children who have the dynamic charisma which attracts other people to them. Whether they are an Antony or a Brutus, these students influence those around them. Identifying the traits that constitute a positive leader can affect the personal choices that children make. To this end, we will examine the question of bias and influence on the characters of both these plays and look for parallels in their own lives. The Socratic seminar will be the setting for examination of these topics and students will write reflections in their journals.

My final objective is to give students the opportunity to explore and enjoy the works of arguably the finest writer of all times. To acquaint children with Shakespeare's plays, with their compelling storylines, humor, swashbuckling and often gory action, and deft characterizations, is to give them a gift which may increase their confidence and ensure an enthusiastic response to high school-mandated Shakespeare texts instead of a pained groan.

Strategies

For this unit, embedded in a larger study of ancient Rome, and ultimately of world history, pre-teaching is very important. Students will draw on prior knowledge, analysis, and evaluation to build connections to the parallel world of Shakespeare's Roman plays. I want every student to be successful and master the objectives; therefore, we will lay the groundwork from the beginning of the year.

I will present the overriding theme of leadership during our first social studies class. Students will begin with a short journaling assignment on the meaning of leadership and what qualities a good leader possesses. Using Socratic seminar method, students will refine their definitions of positive and negative leadership qualities. I will record their ideas on chart paper and tape it to the wall for future revisions and/or additions. This will act as a reference sheet for us throughout the year. During the next two weeks, we will work on a geography unit, concentrating on political maps. Students will break into groups to investigate continents and the countries on them, along the way learning about the different forms of government and discussing what type of leadership is best suited to each one. In seminar, the students will develop a rubric for good leadership. They will use it to assess the performances of various leaders, past and present, throughout the year. Essentially my goal is that the students be able to articulate and come to consensus on the qualities of good leadership. For example, the ideal leader could demonstrate a well-articulated vision that is communicated and understood by those around; self-confidence; ability to delegate and utilize the talents of the team; competence and common sense; ability to make and take responsibility for decisions; integrity; respect for others; ability to influence others. All of these and more are possibilities for the fundamental definition of this person.

The framework for all the instruction will be a system called 4MAT, introduced to me by a fourth-grade colleague. This method promotes connections between different disciplines and learning styles by moving through different lessons and activities that utilize both sides of the brain while engaging different learning styles. Howard Gardner and other researchers have demonstrated the effectiveness of identifying and teaching to the multiple intelligences. Addressing the wide range of learning styles and needs of our students has become increasingly important in the age of video games, television, and iPods. Integrated thematic

teaching offers multiple approaches that help ensure a child grasps concepts and learns necessary skills. This is an especially effective approach for special needs and struggling students, a category that seems to increase yearly. Using drama, movement, and flexible groupings can make learning more accessible to these challenged students. Because our incoming sixth graders have an abnormally high percentage of identified learning disabled and other students with low academic skills, these approaches will be beneficial in the upcoming school year.

Socratic seminars, similar to the widespread "Accountable Talk" program out of the University of Pittsburgh, will be an underlying element throughout the year. A less regimented format, Socratic seminars have many things in common with accountable, or productive, talk. There is the same emphasis on thinking deeply, providing rationales, and active listening. Socratic seminars, though, date back to the ancient Greeks. They enjoyed a revival of interest during the 1980's as a complement to Mortimer Adler's Paideia Proposal for school reform.¹³ This model of structured dialogue develops critical thinking skills, self-esteem, and comprehension through what Lynda Tredway calls "cooperative inquiry."¹⁴ Typically a Socratic seminar begins with a common text that has been read before the group gathers. The facilitator poses thought-provoking questions designed to stimulate discussion. Through conversation and debate, students work through the writing to establish meaning, consider the ideas of others, and learn to support their own ideas from the text they are reading. They learn to analyze and synthesize information and to evaluate moral and ethical questions about complex personal and societal issues. The role of the seminar leader is that of "the guide on the side": providing seminal questions, paraphrasing when necessary, modeling respect, and sharing expectations for cooperative dialogue. Students do not instantaneously form a circle and begin courteous and meaningful conversations. It is a skill that must be taught and practiced. But the rewards are many and significant. According to Tredway, teachers who have participated in research projects (both qualitative and anecdotal) report that Socratic seminars promote "metacognition, conflict resolution and interest in learning."¹⁵ Because I will be developing students' skills in the art of discussion from the beginning of the school year, they should be comfortable and competent with the process by the time we get to Rome.

The background knowledge developed during the year will be the foundation upon which the present curriculum unit is built. As part of the scope and sequence of the social studies curriculum, the students will be introduced to the section on ancient Rome, with special attention being paid to government - the time of the Republic through the Empire. Knowledge of the actual history is crucial for later discussions of the contrasts and similarities in Shakespeare's vision of events. They will also be familiar with thinking of compare and contrast because, in our study of Greece, I will have set the stage for looking at the parallels of Rome and Alexandria by studying those of Sparta and Athens.

As we study the history of Rome, students will create a timeline on colored butcher paper that is displayed in the hallway. In a small group setting, they will research important historical personages, writing a one-page summary. They will then draw their assigned person on tag board. The drawing will be cut out and put in the appropriate place on the timeline with the summary. This timeline will serve to place the Shakespearean characters in context.

When the students have been exposed to the background information, I will bring in Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra and introduce the objectives of the unit to the students. I will write the names of the six main characters we will examine on the board - Julius Caesar, Antony, Brutus, Cassius, Octavius, and Cleopatra - and ask what they all might have in common and what the students think we will be doing next. This exercise helps the children sort through the information they have learned and make connections and predictions. I will explain that we will compare and contrast the leaders they "know" from history and the characters they will

meet through Shakespeare's plays, reminding the children of our leadership rubric. We will also discuss the differences in text structure between a nonfiction text (we will be using a juvenile biography of Julius Caesar) and a play, focusing on the elements and conventions of a script, which may be unfamiliar to students. On the overhead projector, we will compare a paragraph from Ellen Galford's recent children's biography *Julius Caesar: The Boy Who Conquered an Empire* with a scene from the play involving him. Students will use a Venn diagram graphic organizer to visually demonstrate the similarities and differences.

In this context, we will also review strategies that good readers use to increase reading comprehension and how they can be used in reading the plays. Renowned reading specialists like Debbie Miller (*Reading With Meaning*), Ellin Oliver Keene (*Mosaic of Thought*), and Stephanie Harvey (*Strategies That Work*) advocate approaches that will assist students in accessing meaning in Shakespeare's work. Here are some ways students can use these strategies in this unit:

1. Making connections to oneself, other text, or to the world: Compare your knowledge of Roman history to Julius Caesar or fighting over an empire to the war in Iraq.
2. Predicting what will happen next: Will Antony or Octavius win the battle of Actium and why do you think so?
3. Questioning: Why did Cassius need Brutus on the conspiracy team?
4. Inferring: What can you tell about Caesar as a ruler from Antony's speech?
5. Visualizing: Close your eyes and think about Antony's speech to the mob. What do you see? Hear?
6. Summarizing: What was the gist of Brutus' speech in the orchard?

Reminding students of these strategies will set them up for a more successful experience.

Getting to know William Shakespeare will be our next undertaking. To activate prior knowledge, we will start with a large K-W-L chart, a graphic organizer which helps children understand what they already know and record what they have learned. Students write down what they already know about Shakespeare (K) and what they want to know (W). Then we start the information session. Pauline Nelson's *Starting with Shakespeare* has a wonderfully informative and entertaining "biography ladder" that I will use with the students. The four steps build on each other: "The Bard's Bare-Bones Bio", "Better Bio", "Best Bio", and "The Bard's Beefy Bio - Second Helpings!" I will divide the class into groups of varying size, and each group will present the biographical information assigned to them to the class. After the groups share, we will go back to the chart to record what we have learned (L). A brief summary of Elizabethan theater will complete this knowledge set.

My students will need multiple approaches and scaffolding during this unit. I will start them out with a synopsis of the plot, one per day. Using *Shakespeare for Beginners*, I will read the story, stopping to write the characters on chart paper as we go. To help the children keep the characters straight, I will use different colors for different factions; for example, in *Julius Caesar* all the conspirators could be red (fittingly) while Antony and Octavius and crew can be blue. The charts will remain posted for the entire unit so that children have resources to help with comprehension. Once the children are secure in the storyline, we will move on to the selected text.

For my purposes, students will not be reading the entire plays. Excerpts will be chosen for their relevance to the concept of leadership and will be listed in an appendix. An example would be the opening lines in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

Nay, but this dotage of our general's O'erflows the measure. Those his goodly eyes
That o'er the files and musters of the war Have glowed like plated Mars, now bend,

now turn The office and devotion of their view Upon a tawny front. His captain's heart, Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper And is become the bellows and the fan To cool a gypsy's lust.
Philo: Act One, Scene One, 1 - 10

Apart from pausing over key speeches, however, I will summarize the intervening action for the children as we move through the plays to ensure the continuity of understanding.

I will use a variety of resources to introduce the text, including manga (also known as graphic editions - a sort of comic book format) and child-friendly versions of Shakespeare (No Fear and others). Graphic novels and manga appeal to both children and teens and are especially effective in encouraging struggling readers, especially boys and ELL, to read; pictures help readers decipher meaning by giving contextual clues. These appealing books "require the reader to be actively engaged in the process of decoding and comprehending a range of literary devices, including narrative structure, metaphor and symbolism, point of view, the use of puns and alliteration, intertextuality, and inference." ¹⁶ No Fear Shakespeare editions have the original text on the left page with a modern "translation" on the right page, making it easy for students to understand (students can also access No Fear Shakespeare online at <http://nfs.sparknotes.com/>). Film clips of the two plays will be used as we study specific scenes. Not only will this deepen the comprehension of the material for a variety of learning styles, it will also model dramatic presentation and give a visual backdrop to help children understand the setting. Students will focus on use of body language, inflection, and sets to provide insights into the characters.

Elements of drama will be discussed as a prelude to a culminating theater/film project at the end of the unit. We will talk about the purpose of a script - to perform for people who are not reading the text. How does an actor get the message across to the audience? Before the students get the text, I will model reading a script, first with no emphasis and stopping at the end of each line, and then using phrasing and expression. Students will report their reactions and emotional responses as listeners. They will also discuss how their understanding of the text increases with the dramatic reading.

Text selections will be assigned for homework so that students will all be familiar with the material when they come to class. When they come into the room, there will be a "Do Now", a short journaling activity, on the board. They will sit down and write in their journals (anticipatory set). The journaling will be related to their reading and will serve to focus the top

ic of the Socratic seminar.

Discussions in Socratic seminar will focus on several questions. Who were these people as history records them? How did they advance as leaders and how did they fail or succeed? Is charisma the same as good leadership? Can an effective leader also be a flawed human being? Is there a down side to being a leader, both for one's own character and for the well-being of the populace or social group? What is the meaning of the phrase "The ends justify the means"? Are there any times when that statement might be true? Do you think the playwright used his writing to influence or change the way the audience thinks about a historical figure? Do you think that this happens today? What is the role of the media in shaping public opinion? The importance of quality questioning cannot be overemphasized; it is difficult to hold meaningful discussions and debates with questions that elicit basic recall answers.

After the seminar discussion, students will work in small groups. Each group will choose one of the six characters made available from the plays and examine them carefully in the context of the play. Each one is a

leader - what are the character traits that demonstrate leadership? How do those traits (idealism, impatience, resentment, willfulness, etc.) impact the events? If each had been a different leader, how might history be different? The group will use sticky notes to record their reading strategies, as described above. They will pinpoint the passages that answer these questions. As a group, they will create a large poster of their character which lists and evaluates his/her leadership traits with a plus or minus sign. Overall effectiveness as a leader will be indicated with thumbs up/thumbs down sign next to the head. Quotes from the text will be added to support the group's evaluation.

The group will also work cooperatively to create and write a five or more paragraph alternate outcome for its character, essentially changing history by giving the subject different qualities. The alternate ending writing component will utilize the RAFT strategy: Role (character, judge, historian, reporter, etc.) / Audience (self, peers, government, judge, etc.) / Format (interview, video, primary document, brochure, etc.) / Topic (text or time period, personal interest, essential question). This engaging, creative, and flexible method, which has students demonstrate knowledge by taking an unusual perspective and writing to a specific audience, works well for differentiating instruction; different RAFTs can be developed to meet the skills and needs of each student. The students will be given a rubric outlining the expectations and will be assessed on their product.

In addition to this task, each student will choose one character from the plays and write a short essay detailing his/her leadership qualities and the effect they had on the success or failure of his/her objectives. Students will follow the Step Up to Writing process for expository writing. Each child will have a copy of the student-friendly version of the 6+ Traits of Writing rubric for this assessment so the expectations and requirements are clear.

Vocabulary building will be incorporated into all activities. Our writing will be guided by the Step Up to Writing program, which has an excellent exercise for establishing meaningful connections for important vocabulary. We will focus on cross-over terms from social studies, but the language of the Bard will also be included. Words will be displayed on a bulletin board which also includes important or interesting quotes from the plays.

We will wrap up the unit with a theater performance either for our grade level or for the school or possibly a technology tie-in by filming a fusion version of the plays. Using Shakespeare With Children: Six Scripts for Young Players, students will examine how a complex play like Julius Caesar can be simplified and still be effective. They will pick a scene, then rewrite and perform it. The performance aspect of this unit is very important. This is another assessment in that I will provide an oral presentation rubric and evaluate the students according to the criteria. But it is also a chance for them to show their creativity and to have a good time. By this time, I hope they will have a sense of community and will feel comfortable enough to enjoy the medium that was Shakespeare's milieu.

Activities and Lesson Plans

From the beginning of the school year, students will be actively laying a foundation for the implementation of this unit. In this section I will present one preliminary activity along with lesson plans specific to the study of Rome. Activities are designed to be easily modified to accommodate a wide range of learners. Our social studies classes are seventy-five minutes long; lessons can be modified for shorter time slots. I have structured the majority of students' activities in pairs or groups. This allows more support for children who are struggling

and gives solid students an opportunity to act as peer tutors.

Preliminary Activity: Setting the Stage

The students will be introduced to our yearlong theme of leadership on the first day of social studies class. In this way, they will be oriented from the beginning to the overarching idea that will permeate our inquiry.

Anticipatory Set: As students enter the classroom, they see two questions on the whiteboard: What is leadership? What are the qualities of a good leader? They do a quick five-minute journaling (called in some circles a "Do Now") to generate ideas as well as questions. Students share their ideas with the others at their table.

Direct Instruction: The students then gather in a circle. The teacher gives them specific direction in the use of Socratic seminar. Students learn basic concepts, roles, and responsibilities involved in using this method. Emphasis is put on the idea that often there will be no right or wrong answer; perhaps even more questions will be generated. The teacher models the techniques with several students and then asks for any questions.

Activity: Students decide on "The Rules of the Road", a few simple agreements to maintain active listening and courteous behavior. The class then addresses the two questions on leadership. Students offer ideas, which the class discusses. The teacher or a student volunteer records responses on chart paper. If the conversations stall, the teacher acts as a facilitator and asks a question or two to get the ideas flowing again. When the students have finished, the charts are posted on the wall. During the remainder of the year, students add to them as they acquire new information, insights, or ideas.

In subsequent seminars, students will discuss the additional questions as we refine our concept of leadership.

Background Activities: Lessons on Rome

Before examining Shakespeare's depiction of Rome, students gain knowledge of the founding of Rome, the Roman Republic, and the rise of the Roman Empire. Studying the beginnings of Rome familiarizes them with Tarquin and Junius Brutus, who figure in Marcus Brutus' decision to join the conspirators in assassinating Julius Caesar (Brutus, Julius Caesar, Act Two, Scene One). As the students learn about the Roman Republic, they are able to comprehend the social, economic, and political background necessary to understand the world of Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra. The major public figures in the real-life historical drama become familiar to them, including those who are also characters in the play. The students look at the fall of the Republic with Rome's descent into civil war, and the rise of Octavian (Augustus Caesar), who ushered in the Pax Romana by establishing political and economic stability. This gives them a context for the end of Antony and Cleopatra, a glimpse of what follows.

Sample History Lessons

Anticipatory Set: As an introduction, students read the legend of Romulus and Remus and discuss it in a Socratic seminar circle. They relate this myth to others they have studied.

Direct Instruction: This is a three-day lesson. Day One: Using film clips from Rome: Power and Glory and the CD from Eyewitness Books' Ancient Rome, the teacher gives a summary of the history of Rome. Creating a quick timeline on the whiteboard, s/he shows the rise and fall as an overview. Students are reminded of the founding myth and trace Rome's beginnings up to Junius Brutus driving Tarquin from Rome. Day Two: Begin the class with an outline of the structure of Rome's government during the Republic. Students relate what

they learn to what was studied earlier about types of government. Day Three: The teacher directs investigation of Julius Caesar and the civil war following his death. Students read of the ascent of Octavian and his subsequent crowning as Augustus Caesar.

Activity: Day One: Students work together to create a timeline. Groups of four take a section and carefully write and illustrate the pertinent information. All groups then combine their sections into one large timeline hung in the hall. Days Two and Three: In pairs or small groups, students begin to research a pivotal person for this era and write a one page summary of his/her life. Part of the research and writing are assigned as homework on Day Two so that the focus on the third day is on assembling the information together. Students then draw their person on a 9" x 12" piece of tagboard, making sure the person is dressed appropriately and colorfully. The figures are cut out and attached, with the research summary, to the timeline. The class then does a "gallery walk"

Lesson One: The "Players" Meet the Play

After the students have a firm grasp of the history of Rome, Shakespeare will enter the stage.

Anticipatory Set: The teacher writes six names on the board: Julius Caesar, Brutus, Cassius, Marcus Antonius, Octavius, Cleopatra. Students work in small groups to find the connections between these characters, using their knowledge of Roman and Egyptian history. The teacher asks each group to predict what the class will do with these people, reminding them about our yearlong leadership theme.

Direct Instruction: After hearing from each group, the teacher introduces the plays by showing the students different versions of Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra. The teacher asks the students the difference between the plays and the nonfiction texts they have used in learning about Rome. As they respond, the teacher writes their replies on the board. This list will be a springboard to discuss the difference in structure and format between a play script and an informational text. As this conversation occurs, the teacher uses the overhead (or similar device) to project two side-by-side texts: the first is an excerpt from a nonfiction page about Julius Caesar and the other a scene from the play in which he is present.

Activity: In pairs, students complete a Venn diagram (a graphic organizer consisting of two overlapping circles) to specify the properties of each form and sort them into their similarities and differences. This 15-minute exercise compels the students to closely analyze both of the texts. When a pair finishes, the two students come up and input their findings on a large Venn diagram on the board. If they are adding new information, they can write it in the appropriate spot. If someone else has already input the same observation, they put a check next to the other pair's information to show that they had that thought, too. When the giant diagram is complete, students review their findings.

Lesson Two: Why Shakespeare?

To put the plays in perspective, we will spend a day looking at Shakespeare's life and place in the Elizabethan Renaissance period.

Anticipatory Set: Students work in small groups to activate their prior knowledge and generate questions about William Shakespeare and the age in which he lived. One student is chosen to be the recorder and another the reporter. After "buzzing" for five minutes, the reporter from each group shares the team's knowledge as the teacher takes notes on a large K-W-L chart. The chart remains so the class can fill in what was learned as they proceed.

Direct Instruction: Using a premade world history timeline, the teacher puts one star on the era of the Roman Republic and another on the Elizabethan age, the time of Shakespeare. This visual representation helps students understand the historical time difference and brings up the question of why Shakespeare wanted to write about Julius Caesar. The class is then divided into four groups, ordered in size from very small (about 2-3 students), somewhat larger (4-5), larger still (6-8), and very large (8-9). Excerpts from the book *Starting with Shakespeare* are presented to each group. Each extract has an increasing amount of information which piggybacks onto the previous piece.

Activity: Group One, the smallest set, reads "The Bard's Bare-Bones Bio". "The Bard's Better Bio", which adds additional information, goes to Group Two. The second largest team tackles "The Bard's Best Bio", while "The Bard's Beefy Bio - Second Helpings!" is the province of the largest troupe. Students in each group work together to summarize the biographical information assigned to them and decide the best way to present their knowledge to the class. Presentations start from smallest group to largest; each member of the team is required to convey a portion of what has been learned. After sharing, the teacher returns to the K-W-L chart to record new data that the students have learned (L). The lesson ends with a brief YouTube kid-produced video called "Uncovering the Ages", a slideshow presented and narrated by three middle school students. It shows the interior of the Globe Theater and gives pertinent facts about Shakespeare and Elizabethan theater.

Assessment

Assessment for the unit includes both informal observations, participation checklists for Socratic seminars, and formal written assignments, which will be evaluated using the 6+ Traits of Writing rubric and an expectation sheet outlining the required components.

Informal assessments (formative) will be taken as the students work on their activities or at the end of class or a film clip. These can take several forms, including "exit cards", quick checks by questioning after direct instruction, K-W-L group discussions, or individual or group dialogue during students' activities. Along with comprehension and knowledge, I will be looking for student engagement, teamwork and collaboration, communication skills, and time management.

Participation rubrics are designed to both give me information and to encourage students to join in the conversations during the seminar. Students will be expected to contribute in a meaningful way to get credit for the seminar.

There will be two writing projects during this unit. The first is the group RAFT assignment: change history by changing the leadership attributes of the assigned leader. The second assignment is a five-paragraph essay describing the character, his role in the play, his leadership qualities, and how these qualities affected the outcome of his desired goal. Students will follow the process of organizing and developing an essay that they have been learning through the Step Up to Writing program (see Appendix 4). Students will adhere to the writing process with checkpoints along the way (organization, rough draft, revision, editing final draft). They will use their copy of the 6+ Traits of Writing (a familiar guideline for them) to direct their own evaluation of their writing during the revision process. The assessment of the writing portion of the unit will be shared with the Language Arts teacher.

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Teacher Resources

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Shakespeare, William. *No Fear Shakespeare: Julius Caesar*. Prepared by John Crowther. New York: Spark Publishing, 2003. A side-by-side modern translation, along with commentaries and descriptions of each character help students understand the text.

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Filmography

Antony and Cleopatra. Dir. Trevor Nunn. ATV Network Ltd., 1974. Shown in the U.S. in 1975, this film garnered acclaim and praise for the brilliant casting and the superb performance of Patrick Stewart as Enobarbus.

The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare: Antony and Cleopatra. Dir. Jonathan Miller. BBC and Time-Life Films, 1981. Well-cast and unglamorous version of the play, with good performances from the leads. Ian Charleson captured the icy reserve of Octavius.

The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare: Julius Caesar. Dir. Herbert Wise. BBC and Time-Life Films, 1979. Low key and rather gritty portrayal; the performances are excellent, though deliberately low-key and sometimes ambiguous.

Julius Caesar. Dir. Stuart Burge. Republic Pictures Home Video, 1970. Colorful, but rather wooden performances from Charlton Heston as Antony and Jason Robards as Brutus. Sir John Gielgud is excellent as Caesar.

Julius Caesar. Dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz. MGM, 1953. Sir John Gielgud played Cassius in this earlier Oscar-winning adaptation. He was joined by Marlon Brando and James Mason in this first-rate black-and-white film.

Rome: Power and Glory. Questar, 1999. The history of ancient Rome, including origins and much regarding Caesar and Antony. Disc One is the most useful for this project. The age of students should dictate the clips shown, as there are rape scenes.

Appendix 1: Sample Quotes

Regarding Caesar:

I could be well moved, if I were as you;

If I could pray to move, prayers would move me;

But I am constant as the Northern Star,

Of whose true-fixed and resting quality

There is no fellow in the firmament.

The skies are painted with unnumb'ed sparks,

They are all fire and every one doth shine;

But there's but one in all doth hold his place.

So in the world; 'tis furnished well with men,

And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;

Yet in the number I do know but one

That unassailable holds on his rank,

Unshaked of motion, and that I am he

Let me a little show it, even in this -

That I was constant Cimber should be banished,

And constant do remain to keep him so.

Julius Caesar, Julius Caesar, Act Three, Scene One, 55-73.

He hath brought many captives home to Rome,

Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill;

Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?

When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept;

Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;

And Brutus is an honorable man.

You all did see that on the Lupercal

I thrice presented him a kingly crown,

Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?

Antony, Julius Caesar, Act Three, Scene Two, 90-99.

Regarding Brutus:

O, he sits high in all the people's hearts;

And that which would appear offense in us,

His countenance, like richest alchemy,

Will change to virtue and to worthiness.

Casca, Julius Caesar, Act One, Scene Three, 157-160.

This was the noblest Roman of them all.

All the conspirators save only he

Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;

He, only in a general honest thought

And common good to all, made one of them.

His life was gentle, and the elements

So mixed in him that Nature might stand up

And say to all the world," This was a man!"

Antony, Julius Caesar, Act Five, Scene Five, 68-75.

Regarding Antony:

Post back with speed and tell him what hath chanced.

Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome,

No Rome of safety for Octavius yet.

Hie hence and tell him so. Yet stay awhile;

Thou shalt not back till I have borne this corse

Into the marketplace; there shall I try

In my oration how the people take

The cruel issue of these bloody men;

According to the which, thou shalt discourse

To young Octavius of the state of things.

Lend me your hand.

Antony, Julius Caesar, Act Three, Scene One, 287-297

Take but good note, and you shall see in him

The triple pillar of the world transformed

Into a strumpet's fool. Behold and see.

Philo, Antony and Cleopatra, Act One, Scene One, 11-13.

Regarding Cassius:

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet I see

Thy honorable mettle may be wrought

From that it is disposed; therefore it is meet

That noble minds keep ever with their likes;

For who so firm that cannot be seduced?

Cassius, Julius Caesar, Act One, Scene Two, 308-312.

Now know you, Casca, I have moved already

Some certain of the noblest-minded Romans

To undergo with me an enterprise

Of honorable dangerous consequence;

And I do know, by this they stay for me

In Pompey's porch; for now, this fearful night,

There is no stir or walking in the streets,

And the complexion of the element

In favor's like the work we have in hand,

Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible.

Cassius, Julius Caesar, Act One, Scene Three, 125-130.

Regarding Octavius:

Antony Octavius, lead your battle softly on

Upon the left hand of the even field.

Octavius Upon the right hand I; keep thou the left.

Antony Why do you cross me in this exigent?

Octavius I do not cross you; but I will do so.

Julius Caesar, Act Five, Scene One, 16-20.

'Tis done already, and the messenger gone.

I have told him Lepidus was grown too cruel,

That he his high authority abused

And did deserve his change; for what I have conquered,

I grant him part; but then in his Armenia,

And other of his conquered kingdoms, I

Demand the like.

Caesar (Octavius), Antony and Cleopatra, Act Three, Scene Six, 31-37.

Regarding Cleopatra:

The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,

Burned on the water: the poop was beaten gold;

Purple the sails, and so perfumèd that

The winds were lovesick with them; the oars were silver,

Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke and made

The water which they beat to follow faster,

As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,

It beggared all description: she did lie

In her pavilion, cloth-of-gold of tissue,

O'erpicturing that Venus where we see

The fancy outwork nature:

Enobarbus, Antony and Cleopatra, Act Two, Scene Two, 197-207.

Sink Rome, and their tongues rot

That speak against us! A charge we bear i' th' war,

And as the president of my kingdom will

Appear there for a man. Speak not against it,

I will not stay behind.

Appendix 2: Implementing New Mexico State and District 6th Grade Standards

Social Studies Standards

Strand: History

Content Standard 1: Students are able to identify important people and events in order to analyze significant patterns, relationships, themes, ideas, beliefs, and turning points in New Mexico, United States, and world history in order to understand the human experience.

Benchmark 1-C - World: Compare and contrast major historical eras, events, and figures from ancient civilizations to the Age of Exploration.

1-C-5: Compare and contrast the geographical, political, economic, and social characteristics of the Ancient Greeks, Ancient Roman, Ottoman, Indian, Arabic, African, and Middle Eastern civilizations and their enduring impacts on later civilizations to include:

b) development of concepts of government and citizenship

d) contributions and roles of key figures

Benchmark 1-D - Skills: Research historical events and people from a variety of perspectives

Strand: Civics and Government

Content Standard 3: Students understand the ideals, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship and understand the content and history of the founding documents of the U.S. with particular emphasis on the U.S. and New Mexico constitutions and how

governments function at local, state, tribal, and national levels.

Benchmark 3-A: Understand the structure, functions, and powers of government

3-A-2: Describe the concept of republic as developed by the Romans and compare to other republican governments.

Benchmark 3-B: Explain the significance of symbols, icons, songs, traditions, and leaders of New Mexico and the U.S. that exemplify ideals and provide continuity and a sense of unity.

3-B-1: Describe the significance of leadership in democratic societies and provide examples of local, national, and international leadership to include:

a) qualities of leadership

Benchmark 3-C: Compare political philosophies and concepts of government that became the foundation for the American Revolution and the U.S. government.

3-C-1: Explain how Greek and Roman societies expanded and advanced the role of citizen

Language Arts Standards

Strand: Reading and Listening for Comprehension

Content Standard 1: Students will apply strategies and skills to comprehend information that is read, heard, and viewed.

Benchmark 1-A: Listen to, read, react to, and retell information

Benchmark 1-B: Gather and use information for research and other purposes.

Benchmark 1-C: Apply critical thinking skills to analyze information.

Benchmark 1-D: Demonstrate competence in the skills and strategies of the reading process.

Strand: Writing and Speaking for Expression

Content Standard 2: Students will communicate effectively through speaking and writing.

Benchmark 2-A: Use speaking as an interpersonal communication tool

Benchmark 2-B: Apply grammatical and language conventions to communicate

Benchmark 2-C: Demonstrate competence in the skills and strategies of the writing process

Strand: Literature and Media

Content Standard: Students will use literature and media to develop an understanding of people, societies, and the self.

Benchmark 3-A: Use language, literature, and media to understand various social and cultural perspectives

Benchmark 3-B: Identify ideas and make connections among literary works

Appendix 3: Overview of 6+1 Traits of Writing

Many teachers are familiar with the 6+1 Traits of Writing framework. This powerful model sets up expectations for the components of writing in a clear and comprehensive system. There are seven areas that are included: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Presentation. The last was added recently in response to teacher feedback. This model not only guides instruction, but also serves as an assessment tool. A scoring rubric for teachers, running from 0 - 5, gives guidelines for evaluating student writing; a student-friendly version of the rubric clarifies the essential skill levels for the children. I distribute and review this rubric in our first class so that they understand and are aware of my expectations from the beginning.

Additional information about 6+1 Traits of Writing can be found at <http://www.thetraits.org/index.php>. Downloadable posters and lesson plans for teaching this model are also available.

Appendix 4: Overview of Step Up to Writing

Step Up to Writing is a multilayered research-based program developed by Maureen Auman and published by Sopris West Educational Services. The program is designed to be used from kindergarten, with each grade level becoming thoroughly proficient in more complex and lengthy skills. Along with mastering writing in different genres, students also improve in the following areas: reading comprehension and vocabulary; listening and speaking; note-taking; analyzing and summarizing; and test preparation. Students learn the three most important stages in the writing process by associating them with color coding: green, yellow, blue, and red. Green is used at the beginning and the end of a paragraph. It indicates a topic sentence or a concluding sentence. Yellow comes next and stands for a reason, a detail, or a fact that supports the topic. Blue transition words aid in these supporting statements. Red follows yellow and denotes an example or explanation that substantiates the reason or fact.

This program is meant to support the writer's workshop model of prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading, and publishing. The program includes supporting posters and graphic organizers, reference booklets for students, and explicit instructions for a variety of approaches to teaching. It has been valuable in our school to promote writing across the content areas. For more information, visit Maureen Auman's website at

<http://www.readwriteconnect.com>

Notes

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