



BRITISH
SHAKESPEARE
ASSOCIATION



A MAGAZINE
FOR ALL
SHAKESPEARE
EDUCATORS

teaching shakespeare

POLICY • PEDAGOGY • PRACTICE

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SEE **SEAN MCEVOY**'S TOP READS FOR STUDENTS & TEACHERS
TACKLE TEXT & EMOTION WITH **ANDREW JARVIS**' HELP
GET INVOLVED IN THE **YEAR OF SHAKESPEARE** PROJECT
EXPLORE **SHAKESPEARE** IN THE SPECIAL NEEDS CLASSROOM

Teaching Shakespeare celebrated its launch at the BSA's Lancaster conference in February this year. Thanks to the organising committee and particularly ALISON FINDLAY, for providing this wonderful opportunity. The conference was an 'ideal occasion for anyone interested in Shakespeare in education' commented LAURA NICKLIN.

Laura is a recent graduate of the University of York's BA Language and Literature in Education programme and first-time delegate. She added: *With such a wide range of fantastic sessions on offer, it was difficult to choose between workshops offering participants first-hand experience of active methods to lectures and panel discussions specifically focused upon teaching Shakespeare. As an undergraduate student, I worried that I may be a little out of my depth, however, this was not the case. The style of each session and the willingness of those presenting to make time to further discuss their ideas provided an all-round excellent opportunity for delegates to expand their knowledge.*

"the conference was a fantastic networking opportunity to meet people who shared my passion for Shakespeare in education, and who had so much knowledge and experience to share."

Indeed, this conference season has been a bumper one for events around Shakespeare in education. In June, Jane Coles and Liam Semler led the symposium 'Unlearning Shakespeare' at Oxford Brookes. In July, a multi-sector conference in Newcastle explored notions of 'Remaking Shakespeare' while this month has seen the Worlds Together conference at the TATE, both part of the World Shakespeare Festival. Gladly, the trend looks set to continue, with a seminar on the topic looking for participants at the Shakespeare Association of America 2013 congress.

www.shakespeareassociation.org

WANTED: STUDENT AND TEACHER VOICES!

Another opportunity for participation comes courtesy of the AHRC-funded Global Communities project. We'd like to invite students, teachers, and Shakespeare enthusiasts of all kinds to participate in Year of Shakespeare, an online project documenting and discussing the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival. The aim of Year of Shakespeare is to start a worldwide discussion about

the role Shakespeare plays in global culture today. The project includes reviews of each of the 70+ intercultural productions that are a part of the Festival, over 50 interviews with audience members who attended them, links to director talkback sessions and actor interviews, and collections of online materials related to the shows. It also includes space where readers can contribute their own comments on the ideas the Festival raises, and we encourage teachers across the UK and the world to get their students involved. We're putting the Festival in a bottle for posterity and we'd like you to be a part of it! www.yearofshakespeare.com

Teaching Shakespeare is eager to share news of useful resources. For those thinking of taking a comparative literature approach to teaching Shakespeare, pairing his plays with other early modern drama, Arden has recently published several engaging editions. Sonia Massai's edition of Ford's *Tis Pity* could easily fit alongside study of *Romeo and Juliet*. Michael Neill's edition of Massinger's *The Renegado* could work with *Othello* and/or *Anthony and Cleopatra* to explore the Renaissance Mediterranean, while Ramona Wray's edition of Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam* offers a rare pathway into the work of a female playwright from the period. In terms of online resources, the *International Database of Shakespeare on Film, Television and Radio* is an authoritative online database of Shakespeare-related content in film, television, radio and video recordings is international in scope. It holds over 7,000 records dating from the 1890s to the present day.

www.bufvc.ac.uk/shakespeare/

If you would like to share your feedback on a recent conference or other event, highlight relevant publications or projects please email us at: teachingshakespeare@ymail.com

The next issue of *Teaching Shakespeare* will appear in February 2013, focussing on student experiences of Shakespeare. Members of the BSA will receive electronic copies. Print copies will be available to members and non-members through various means. Please email teachingshakespeare@ymail.com for details. Issue 1 is still available in PDF from the BSA Education Network's website www.shakespeareineducation.com

SARAH OLIVE is a lecturer at the University of York, leading the BA English in Education. Other teaching experiences include the Open University and a stint as a Resident Graduate at Bootham School, York. She successfully completed a PhD, *Shakespeare Valued: Policy, practice and pedagogy in English education, 1989–2009*, at the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham in 2011. Resulting publications have appeared in international journals such as *Shakespeare Survey*.



Photo © Sarah Olive

a few months' ago, I visited Norway on a research exchange to the University of Bergen. I was able to meet English teachers with a range of experience levels – trainee teachers, teachers pursuing postgraduate qualifications, and those with years of classroom experience – from a range of schools, including a maritime academy, an independent school, and a university college. What struck me most when talking to these teachers about Shakespeare, and teaching English more generally, was that many of the issues raised felt familiar: the pressures of time as well as the need to overcome the barrier between understanding modern, everyday English and Shakespeare's language, for example. In terms of difference, it was abundantly clear that the Norwegian teachers I spoke to feel that they have a great deal of freedom in terms of the content and methods of instruction.

Some context: the study of English usually begins here in grade one. It is mandatory for younger pupils, but becomes an elective later on. It is taught in a combination of English and Norwegian, depending on the dynamic of the group and the strength of their English. Beyond teaching English language, there is a focus on reading texts in English in preparation for oral exams. There is no written assessment of Shakespeare. Fantasy/sci-fi series are particularly popular with students including *Harry Potter*, *Twilight* and the *Hunger Games*. There is an emphasis on teaching literature (often reasonably contemporary) in English from around the world. Students

must study Shakespeare at tenth grade, according to the English syllabus. However, at this level, English is no longer mandatory for all students, so not every Norwegian school student will make his acquaintance.

Regarding pedagogy, Shakespeare tends to be taught from textbooks. These contain cut down versions of the plays – perhaps giving only two or three pages to a play, comprised of some speeches, narrative account of the plot and illustrations. Because of this, teachers will sometimes photocopy additional scenes from editions. The textbooks are also often accompanied by CDs which contain audio-recordings of Shakespearean dialogue by English actors and lesson plans. The teachers I spoke to obtain additional resources, such as production photos, from the internet or use film adaptations (particularly with American high school settings) to accompany the textbook's provisions.

My thanks to all the teachers and institutions who unstintingly participated in my research, but particularly Professor Stuart Sillars (Department of Foreign Language, University of Bergen) who arranged and enabled my visits. Wherever you are reading this in the world, I hope that you will find articles in the magazine that speak to the endeavour of teaching Shakespeare in your country. This issue, at least, includes content and authors from Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Sarah Olive

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GIBSON: 'A GREAT TEACHER'

I read Sarah Olive's article, *The Legacy of Rex Gibson*, in your first issue, with great interest and inevitably it provoked many memories of working with him. My last contact with Rex was a hastily written note, with that tell-tale Gibson characteristic of the line going on and on around the margin, sent from Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge. He had seen the first episode of Michael Wood's *In Search of Shakespeare* on BBC TV, in which boys from my school had performed extracts from Tudor comedies, which the boy Shakespeare might have known. Typically, Rex's enthusiastic comments were focussed on the work – there was nothing about the reasons why he was in hospital.

My first contact with this remarkable man was some 15 years earlier. I had written an article for the T.E.S. Rex arrived at my school one Friday afternoon to discuss it, and left hinting that the Cambridge Institute of Education would soon be leading an interesting development – the "Shakespeare & Schools Project", to which I was seconded for half a term. Two revelatory days with Cicely Berry, combined with the Gibson effect,

changed my approach to teaching. Like Cis, Rex believed passionately, that if you could get to the teachers you could get to untold thousands, perhaps millions of children – as, of course (with the help of the 27 volumes of the Cambridge School Shakespeare series, of which he was Series Editor), he has. Generous, but scrupulous in his comments, he was brave to trust 'mere teachers' to create these editions. He was a rigorous academic (draft after draft would come back covered with those explosive, foaming, sprawling marginal comments), but he saw himself as 'one of us.' A teacher. And he was – a great teacher. His influence is far-reaching and should continue to affect teaching for generations. He's often there at my elbow, guiding my thinking.

From **PERRY MILLS**, Deputy Headmaster of King Edward VI School, Stratford-upon-Avon and Director of Edward's Boys. He also co-edited the Cambridge School Shakespeare *The Taming of the Shrew* with Michael Fynes-Clinton.

www.edwardsboys.org

Visit For the full version of Perry's letter, go to www.shakespeareineducation.com

✂ Dear Editor . . . continues on page 16

SHAKESPEARE AND ASSESSMENT

SWAVESEY VILLAGE COLLEGE is an 11–16 school in Cambridgeshire. **ANTHONY PARTINGTON**, Assistant Principal, reports that the school was declared 'outstanding in all aspects' last year. The school has now partnered with another school in Peterborough, **Nene Park Academy**. The two English departments are working to develop innovative shared practices and materials.

At Key Stage 3 (aged 11–14), students experience *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*. At GCSE, the focus shifts to *Romeo and Juliet*. Those students taking A-Level English at Nene Park currently study both *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. Both schools organise regular theatre visits to outdoor Shakespeare festivals as well as regional and London theatres.

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF THE ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR TEACHING OF SHAKESPEARE?

- ✂ "Students feel that they have genuinely engaged (and often they have) with a difficult text, have made sense of it and have arrived at an original interpretation. It can be very pleasing to see the results." (AP)
- ✂ "Close reading and deconstruction of meaning." (NE)
- ✂ "An understanding of our literary heritage and the development of the English language. Having fun with old/new words, good stories." (JL)
- ✂ "Studying the whole play and gaining full understanding of themes and characters." (RJ)
- ✂ "Assessment enables students to think about things at a deeper, more meaningful level." (KD)
- ✂ "The requirement to engage with the whole text – encourages students to enjoy the whole story. The requirement to consider audience – it's important that they see the play as something physical and immediate. The requirement to focus on language features – is challenging for some, but vital for full appreciation of the way language can be shaped." (KH)
- ✂ "Students gain in confidence when they realise they can work out, and analyse, the text. Students do enjoy the stories/themes raised and discussion of them." (LS)

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THE ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR TEACHING OF SHAKESPEARE?

- ✂ "Sometimes originality of thought seems to be sacrificed. Students have to jump through hoops laid down by assessment criteria – they do not enjoy the play, if it is taught to the test." (AP)
- ✂ "Shakespeare can be perceived as inaccessible and this sets boundaries to confidence before the play is even introduced." (NE)
- ✂ "You can argue that often things are over-analysed and that it's difficult to be original about the texts as they've been taught for so many years." (KD)
- ✂ "Contexts – very difficult for modern children to understand Elizabethan contexts." (KH)
- ✂ "The extended literature study at GCSE feels contrived and takes a massive amount of time out of the curriculum. I would prefer the assessment to be by two separate essays." (LS)
- ✂ "Too rigid an interpretation of the texts – only studying extracts rather than whole plays." (JL)
- ✂ "The new linked Poetry and Shakespeare task* from the exam boards for GCSE has made teaching Shakespeare very artificial. Complete enjoyment seems to have been taken away by the condition of having to link it to other forms of literature." (RJ)

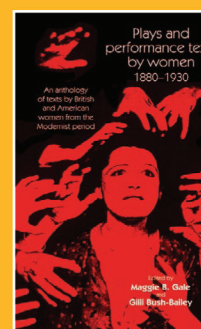
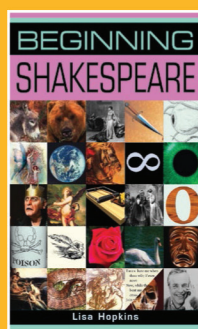
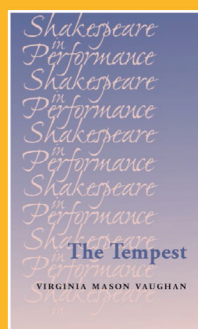
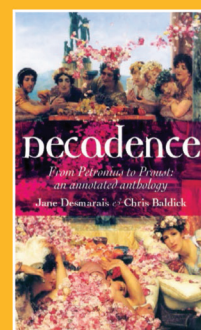
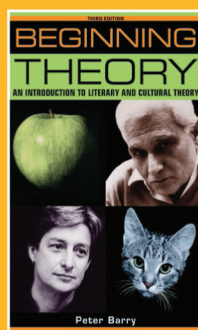
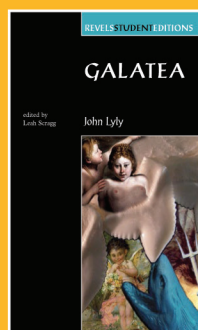
IF YOU COULD MAKE ONE CHANGE TO ANY OF THE ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR TEACHING OF SHAKESPEARE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

- ✂ In brief, responses favoured: more assessment through presentations and the study of performance (AP); more use of oral modes (NE); fewer essays and more use of listening, speaking and debates (KD); more assessment referring to the whole play and less linked to other literary forms (RJ); less emphasis on assessment in the earlier years and more on fostering enjoyment and appreciation (SG).

✂ Suggest a vox pop topic for us to cover at teachingshakespeare@gmail.com

Feature compiled by James Stredder

Manchester University Press



MANCHESTER
1824



Photo © University of Sheffield

NEGOTIATING 'THE CHILD AND THE CURRICULUM' IN NEW SOUTH WALES

SARAH GOLDSBY-SMITH is a PhD student working with Dr Kate Flaherty of the Australian National University. She teaches English at SCEGGS in Darlinghurst, near Sydney. She reflects here on assessing Shakespeare within the New South Wales (NSW) examination system.

As I sit down to write this, I can hear the busy milling of anxious year 12 students outside the staffroom door. Their final school examination, in preparation for the state wide examination they will sit in a couple of months, is about to begin. As always, English is the first cab off the rank. Some students giggle, some are stony-faced with anxiety. Others turn up at the staff room door, whey faced, hoping that their English teacher will be able to provide them with the right formula to

success. In another ten minutes, the courtyard is silent as they enter examination rooms. Lists of quotations and "techniques" litter the courtyard. And now I am free to wonder: what is it that students are actually doing in those examination rooms?

In NSW Australia, as students grow older, the rubrics that guide their study become more visible. The students become utterly focussed on the final examination that all students in the state must sit, since it generates a rank that will admit them into universities. And so, an unholy alliance between a student's ambition and the politics of a profession brew a particularly potent mixture, whereby the examination – itself built on the rubrics from the syllabus – shapes the questions that students ask in the classroom. This is true for all English studies, but what particular problem does this pose for the study of Shakespeare?

One particular experience teaching *Othello* is prescient here. I had spent a term reading *Othello* with a year 11 class, and they had become particularly interested in

the ways in which *Othello* bends the traditional rules of tragedy. The students had studied *Romeo and Juliet* the year before, and rich parallels and distinctions were being drawn between the two plays and the way they operated as tragedy. And then, as it must, came assessment time. The question posed to the entire year group (which faithfully reflected the rubric outlined by the syllabus) was this:

“to what extent is othello about too much passion and too little judgement?”

In the 45 minutes given them to answer this question, most of my class struggled to answer this question, top and tailing their ideas to work within the Victorian notions of Aristotelian tragedy from which the question proceeded. But one particular student, Lucy, quite taken with the play, decided to take issue with it. Her position was that the thesis of the question was overly focussed on *harmatia* (her own research yielded this term, not my instruction) and that this notion of tragedy was not sufficient to account for her experience of the play. In *this* play, Lucy argued, the relationship between plot and character was strangely rendered in the relationship between Iago and Othello respectively – “by heaven, he echoes me!” – finding dramatic feet in the presences and absences that the audience sees on stage. In this way, she widened the scope of the play not only past Victorian notions of Aristotelian tragedy that are particularly concerned with moral character to a wider notion of tragedy, but she began to draw distinctions between this play and other Shakespearean plays she had seen. Artfully and articulately rendered, and entirely her own work, we had to award Lucy a B. Why? Because she had not answered the question.

It is the notion of questions that makes the teaching of Shakespeare so fraught. As this student became richer in her thinking, so the richness of the play opened up possible lines of inquiry that fed her growing maturity. As she posed questions to the play, the play began to pose questions to her. Her ability to interpret had grown beyond the comprehension of the plot to an understanding of the ways in which drama makes meaning, and the ways in which Shakespearean plays had evolved notions of tragedy. And yet, parallel with this runs the importance of assessment, which poses its own question, built on its own assumptions of both pedagogy and Shakespeare. Pedagogically speaking, Shakespeare and rubrics are at odds. While *Othello* might invite my student to think outside of the box labelled “tragedy”, the assessment system requires her to work

within it. While the play *Othello* has meant many things across the 400 years since its first performance, the assessment system necessarily reifies and deifies one particular way of seeing the text. And so, we are at an impasse. Examinations pose questions to the student, and yet the text also poses its own question, invites its own lines of inquiry that are shaped by the conversations in classrooms in which those questions have been asked. Centralised assessment, notoriously, is no respecter of unique classrooms or individuals, and so students are at a crossroads. Either they take up Shakespeare's invitation to “play”, or they take up the system's command to answer questions that are not, in the strictest sense, questions. So, what are students doing when they enter those examination rooms? I hazard a guess that they are not answering questions. They are providing support for a statement posing as a question.

“as this student became richer in her thinking, so the richness of the play opened up possible lines of inquiry that fed her growing maturity.”

And so, what will my luminously bright student face next year, when it is she who stands outside our staffroom door, holding reams of scribbled study notes and lists of quotations? Is Lucy at a crossroads, forced to choose between the invitations that her compulsory study of Shakespeare will no doubt offer her and the rubrics of a centralised examination system? As John Dewey himself asks, “How, then, stands the case of Child vs Curriculum?”. Is it possible to travel both roads simultaneously, so show a student how to press the text for a wider space in which to ask questions of the system at the same time as satisfying the system. The idealist in me hopes so. Dewey thinks so, too, if we are brave enough to challenge inflexible rubrics, since teachers are the mediators between child and curriculum. As he says, “the value of (the Curriculum) is that it may enable *the educator* to determine the environment of the child, and thus by indirection to direct. Its primary value, its primary indication, is *for the teacher*, not for the child”. Lucy is the brightest student I have taught yet, and the exams she will sit are a full year away: I hope her study notes are not full of stock responses and quotations; I hope Lucy's study notes are full of questions.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM

HEATHER RUTH EDGREN graduated from Memphis State University with a degree in Special Education. She taught for two years in a self-contained Special Education classroom before moving to teach middle and high school students for the past eighteen years at Chugiak High School, near Eagle River, Alaska.

My Shakespearian stage has been a Language Arts classroom for students with special needs in a typical American high school. The players range in age from approximately thirteen through nineteen years. These students are in my classroom because some have learning disabilities in written expression and/or reading; a few are on the autism spectrum; several have above average IQ and might pick up Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* for a bit of light reading but are too challenged by the world around them to function in a "regular" classroom; while still others struggle to read at a fourth grade level (years 5 or 6 in the UK). A few are severely emotionally disturbed and might present any combination of the issues noted above as well. The day is divided into five periods, approximately fifty-five minutes in length, with anywhere from three to fifteen students assigned to a class. My stage is thus set.

I have always loved the theatre. My parents were both active in the arts community, and from an early age instilled in me an appreciation of the stage. I've always had a particular fondness for the works of Shakespeare; from his clever and amazing use (and abuse) of language and his fine sense of the comedic to his thrilling depictions of the drama and the tragedy of the lives of those born both high and low. I knew nothing, though, about teaching those works. So when a student came in one day many years ago and asked, "Mrs. Edgren, can we read *Hamlet*?" I was completely unprepared – for both the question and for incorporating teaching the play into my curriculum. I thus did my best to dissuade him. I told him I didn't know anything about teaching *Hamlet*. I negotiated by trying to garner support from his classmates, "You don't want to do *Shakespeare*, right?" That was, of course, a mistake. One thing I should have learned from being married to an attorney is you never ask a question to which you don't already know the

answer. At lunch that day I found myself trudging down to the bookroom for fifteen copies of *Hamlet*. We were on our way and I never looked back.

Teaching Shakespeare in my classroom has evolved over the years and taken a number of forms, but the end result – an overwhelming sense of accomplishment – has stayed the same. Out of a school year that is divided into four 9-week quarters (or terms) this portion of my curriculum has always taken at least a full quarter, but has taken longer depending on the cast of players. This variable length is possible due to the fact that I have a special education class and the curriculum is supposed to be designed to meet the individual needs of each child. Every year when preparing my curriculum and lesson plans for this unit on Shakespeare, I fought the battle in my head of weighing the risks of taking so much time having the class prepare and present a Shakespeare play given that there is also during the year high stakes testing, graduation exams, federal reporting on school progress, and the question of whether every minute should be spent teaching the skills the students on an academic track needed to meet state standards. For me, that struggle lasted about ten minutes. Shakespeare always won.

"you DON'T want to DO shakespeare, right?"

The Shakespeare quarter usually closely followed instruction on using vivid language to improve writing. My students worked on revising sentences by using specific nouns, vivid verbs, adding adjectives, and by the time they had worked on these things for a while we needed a break from all of the writing involved. I would then bring out the parallel editions (Shakespearean English on one side and modern English on the other) of the play. Over the years my students have done *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Julius Caesar*, *Taming of the Shrew* (you haven't lived until you've seen this play done with sock puppets!), and *Hamlet*. Every year within just a few minutes the students would begin to moan and groan and want to read only the modern version "... because Shakespeare is sooo hard!" I urged them to hang in there and stick with it and, no surprise, it only took most a few more pages to decide that "To be, or not to be? That is the question." was way more interesting than "The question is: Is it better to be alive

or dead?" I discovered early on that letting my students discover for themselves the beauty of Shakespeare's use of language is so important.

Once I had everyone's attention, I'd show a movie version of the play. I had learned from trial and error that many special needs students do best when they have something concrete on which to base what they are reading. It seemed that without this their understanding would falter, then they would lose interest altogether. I also learned from the first year, when my students took on *Hamlet*, that it was best not to try to drag everyone through the entire play. In subsequent years, I found that the students seemed to get as much out of the experience, if not more, by concentrating on a section of that year's play. I was careful, though, to make sure they understood what they were performing in the context of the whole play. So, after watching the movie version, each class would then pick a scene to perform appropriate to the size of the class. Each student then would choose a character. Following this I would hand out scripts and markers and the first assignment, which was to highlight his or her character's name every time it appeared. The class would then read through the scene together. This over the years became a process where we would discuss stage directions, underline

speaking parts (and *not* the stage directions!), and circle or underline words that were not known or understood or that the students thought would be troublesome. These words were also written in the journal that each would keep throughout the entire project.

"the LINES between ability AND disability would begin to BLUR."

On getting started, we would spend a week or more reading the scene to be performed with the students taking time each day to work on the words they had identified as being difficult for them. We discussed what was happening in the scene generally, why each student's character might be doing the things he or she was doing, and took time to answer each other's questions. Fairly quickly as the week proceeded the lines between ability and disability would begin to blur. Getting through those first few days of reading was always a challenge, but everyone kept a list of words in his or her journal to work on. The playing field began to level. Then I would throw in the curve ball. I would announce that it was time to put down their scripts as they knew the story, I challenged each student to put the character into his



Photo © Heather Ruth Edgren

or her own words. This was easy for some and nearly impossible for others. If a part involved anger or violent emotion, I wasn't surprised to find that my emotionally disturbed boys could generally do a good job with it, but slowing down impulsivity and helping them to think through what actions would be appropriate in portraying the part could be a challenge. Not having a script to read from would pretty much cause my students on the autism spectrum to shut down, so anticipating this and working with them to recognize the social cues given by their peers and drawing them back to their character was a must. I found that students who struggle with reading have a chance to show their comprehension when they do not feel bound to words on a page. For those with a disability in written expression this was also a liberating experience, in that they could express their knowledge verbally. In sum, this part of the curriculum was a very powerful one. It challenged many students right at their area of need as well as challenging the teacher to discover ways to best assist those students through the process. Further, doing this allows an alternate way of assessing the level of understanding of students with disabilities in reading and written expression. Finally this was also a fun time, allowing students to experiment with theatrical techniques such as blocking, voice level modulation, and interacting with one another's roles. We also learned what to do about the giggles, and other things that came up.

Through this time, we continued to work on writing skills, as I hadn't thrown this task completely out the window! As noted, each student kept a journal. This was done "in character." I could check for comprehension at any time by reading a student's journal. If someone wrote something that did not go along with their character, I had a record of where their understanding began to stray from the mark. Journal assignments would vary and could be as simple as a diary entry explaining how they felt about a situation or as complex as having the student draft, again in character, a formal letter with instructions to a member of a royal household.

In the first few years there were no costumes or sets, just an overhead projector as a stage light. Then each year I began to add these things in. By the fifth year or so we had a few costumes, some set pieces, simple lighting, and a four switch light board. These relatively simple additions helped to pull each group of students together into a cohesive team. As they worked on creating sets and costumes, the students would chat back and forth about the scene and the characters. Often when a student identified something about the part or the play that he or she didn't understand there was another student who would step in and assist the

peer. When this would happen, I could step back and watch the students in my class literally teach each other – often while up to their elbows in papier-mache and paint. I found it particularly effective to introduce something new: lighting, a video camera, a prop – when the students were working on blocking and were becoming tired of doing the same thing over and over. The whole dynamic changes the first time the set pieces are put in place, then that change is compounded when costumes are added to the mix. Each of these events served to heighten the energy and expectation of my students.

“students who struggle with reading have a chance to show their comprehension when they do not feel bound to words on a page”

So what was it that I was ultimately looking for? What was the learning goal that I wanted my students to reach? They had scripts. They were told they did not have to memorize their lines, but they had to be familiar enough to be able to read them. Suddenly, I had non-readers reading. Perhaps not in any traditional sense, but the students *felt* like they were reading, and not only that, they were reading Shakespeare just like the general education class down the hall. It took the stigma away for them, and if you don't think children in a special education class are not conscious of being "different," you need to take another look. And many of my students *did* memorize their lines. I was particularly surprised to find that I had several students over the years with speech problems who spoke their lines clearly and without difficulty when performing their part. Were my students learning? You bet! Was it worth taking nine weeks to do? Absolutely!

An extension of this article, exploring in greater detail Heather's rationale behind and aims for teaching Shakespeare with special educational needs students is available via the BSA Education Network's website www.shakespeareineducation.com

If you would like to join the British Shakespeare Association and be part of an international community of teachers, researchers, theatre practitioners and enthusiasts, then visit our website at www.britishshakespeare.ws or email britishshakespeare@ymail.com

ask an expert

ASK . . . JOHN JOWETT

In this feature, we take readers' questions about Shakespeare and ask an expert to answer them. This issue we gave queries from PETRONILLA WHITFIELD, Senior Lecturer in Voice and Acting at Arts University College, Bournemouth on *Measure for Measure* to JOHN JOWETT, Deputy Director of the Shakespeare Institute. John has edited *Measure for Measure* for both *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* and *The Oxford Shakespeare*.

What does Claudio mean in his speech, 'Ay, but to die, and go we know not where' – when he says 'delighted spirit' – why is the spirit delighted? Does 'delighted' have a different meaning here from being pleased?

And what does Claudio mean when he says: ' . . . or to be worse than worst Of those that lawless and incertain thoughts Imagine howling . . . tis too horrible'?

DELIGHTED SPIRIT

I agree that there's a real difficulty in this reading. Why indeed should a spirit suffering torment in the afterlife be described as 'delighted'?

The word is sometimes explained as something more like *delighting*, in other words, 'having the capacity to experience delight'. It could instead mean that the spirit was once in the past full of delight, before its torment began. However, both these explanations strike me as contrived. And they are obstructed by the obvious and inescapable meaning 'full of delight', which is the exact opposite of what Claudio means. I suspect that this would have been almost as much a difficulty in Shakespeare's day as it is now.

It's worth considering the possibility that there's an error in the text. Shakespeare might originally have referred to the spirit that Claudio later describes as 'blown with restless violence round about/The prestant world' as *dilated*, meaning 'spread around, diffused through space, unrestricted in scope'. This would be in contrast with the confined dead body in its 'cold obstruction'. Spellings were highly variable in Shakespeare's day, so a spelling such as 'delated' (which is found elsewhere in Shakespeare) could quite easily be confused with 'delited'.

If the reading is *dilated*, we find a similar idea in *Hamlet* (1.1.135–6) and the word itself, again in contrast with the idea of confinement, in *Troilus and Cressida* (2.3.244–5). Earlier in the present scene in *Measure for Measure* Isabella has already contrasted 'a restraint . . . To a determined scope', referring to a spirit fettered by bad conscience, with 'all the world's vastity', freedom to wander anywhere. 'Dilated' therefore fits in with the play's insistent concern with the opposites of freedom and restraint.

IMAGINE HOWLING

This passage continues Claudio's nightmarish deliberations on the possibility of an agonizing afterlife. To paraphrase a little freely, the sense of the passage you quote is roughly 'to be even worse than the very worst of those whom we imagine to be howling in hell when our thoughts are completely out of control'. Of course, Claudio is probably talking about his own thoughts, his own imaginings, as well as the possibility of his own sufferings after death: 'for me to be worse than those I myself have imagined howling'. Claudio is in prison for breaking the law, but his 'lawless' thoughts are wandering everywhere, even if some of his ideas about death seem to be informed by his experience of prison.

Incidentally, the original Folio text of 1623 is significantly different here. It reads:

**or to be worse then worst
Of those, that lawlesse and incertaine thought,
Imagine howling, 'tis too horrible.**

This could be taken to indicate:

**or to be worse than worst
Of those – that lawless and incertain thought –
Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible.**

This way, if the punctuation is taken at face value, 'that lawless and incertain thought' is a parenthesis, with 'that' now acting as a demonstrative adjective. The passage might be paraphrased: 'or, to take the idea that's worse than the worst of all these things considered so far, just imagine the *howling*. That's the really crazy and dodgy thought, far too horrible.'

It kind of works that way. But I think editors are right to change the punctuation. The alteration of 'thought' to 'thoughts' confirms that it's the thoughts that do the imagining, though I don't think this common emendation is really necessary.

“IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD”

ANDREW JARVIS is an experienced actor of Shakespeare. He spent nine years with the Royal Shakespeare Company and five with the English Shakespeare Company, with whom he won the 1988 Manchester Evening News Award for Best Actor playing the title role in *Richard III*. He has worked more widely in West End productions and as a teacher and director for over twenty years, including three years as Head of Postgraduate Performance Courses at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. He draws on this rich experience here to consider the relationship between text, thought and emotion, offering practical exercises adaptable to the classroom.

The route to all acting expression lies in serving the text. For the actor, that service is not located in private preoccupation with the world of feeling – a common and dangerous misapprehension. It is located in the world of public expression, in the compulsion to speak and to intervene beyond oneself.

Text is the concrete embodiment of thought. It is not the embodiment of emotion. Emotion is determined by thought – it follows thought. An actor does not therefore need to concern himself with it. Emotion is dependent upon, or a by-product of, thought processes. Hence, for any actor, but particularly for the Shakespearean, treating the text as an unfolding thought process is the route to the release of full and true expression. It is an act of discovery. The individual words are the building blocks of that discovery – an actor must think each one through in order to reach the thought’s implicit unknown completion. Emotion, dynamic, and colour become inevitable and unavoidable presences. They will be automatically allowed into the clarity of the expressed thought at the moment of communication. Using the student’s own choice of a Shakespearean monologue, the following is an opening movement in training.

RECOGNITION OF THE INDIVIDUAL THOUGHT

Two chairs placed three feet apart. The actor sits on one chair and is asked to recognise where changes of thought take place through the speech. On that recognition,

they must stop speaking, move to the other chair and continue to where they believe the next thought change occurs. The process is continued through the speech: a simple physicalisation of thought change.

Oscar Wilde said: “How do I know what I think until I’ve said it.” This exercise starts a process of recognition for the actor of the improvisatory nature of thought, its unexpected twists and turns, its own lack of knowledge about where it is headed until the moment of completion. A character speaks aloud in order to discover the details of what they are thinking.

THE CLARITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL THOUGHT’S EXPRESSION; THE REMOVAL OF ‘ACTING’

The actor stands against one of the rehearsal room walls – the tutor stands against the opposite wall. The actor is asked to communicate each individual thought across the space – without moving away from the wall. It must be communicated as pure information only. It must be understood by the tutor.

There is usually a lot of ‘acting’ which takes place at this point – imposition: what the actor thinks the character feels about what they are saying. Huge courage is required to strip away that ‘acting’ – to stand there, in effect naked, just the speaker and the words. Using the individual word as the building block to the expressed thought.

ESTABLISHING THE NEED TO COMMUNICATE

The actor begins again, from the same position against the wall. Then, after the completion of two thoughts, begins to walk very slowly towards the tutor – still stationed against the opposite wall – retaining total eye contact. The actor arrives at a position as close as possible to the tutor – literally eyeball to eyeball.

The actor then repeats the exercise – but is told that this time the tutor will try to get away from the actor following the moment of close proximity. He will run, put obstacles in the path, hide – anything to resist being talked to. The actor’s task is to not let the tutor get away, to keep as close as possible, to need to communicate: “You will listen to what I have to say!”

By being offered variants of this resistance exercise, the actor will, by repetition and direction from the tutor, discover the greater verbal energy and clarity required

in order to earn the right to be listened to. Crucially, the actor will experience the truth that any pre-planned expression has been replaced by discovery.

“a character speaks aloud in order to discover the details of what they are thinking.”

FILLING THE COMMUNICATION WITH FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

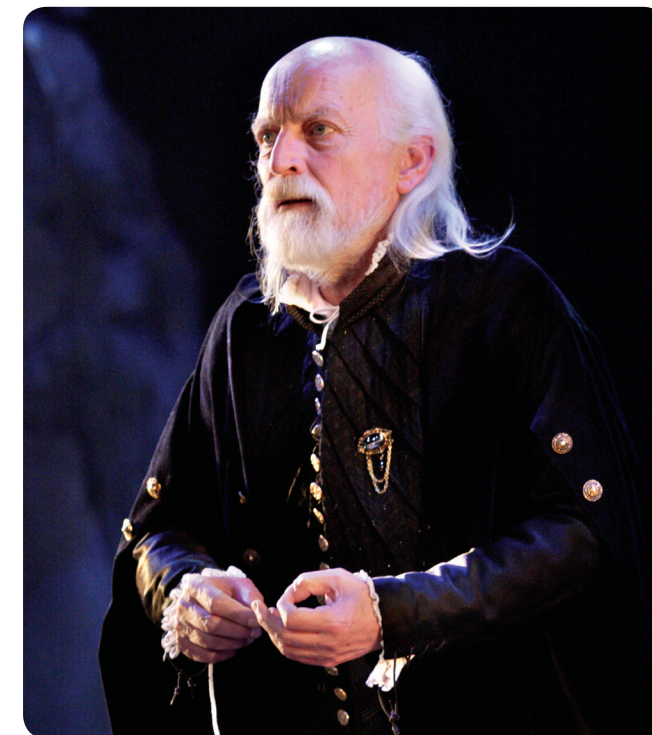
Expression is now confirmed in the thought, not a direct expression of the character’s guessed at emotional state, but rather an exploration of the emotion involved in telling someone else about that state. It is central to an understanding of the thought/emotion relationship for an actor. When we speak, it is in order to try to describe the emotion being experienced, to understand it, to come to terms with it. Words are not the direct expression of emotion. As in our everyday lives, extreme emotion prevents us from speaking. In order to speak, we have to put a lid on that emotion. Then we can talk about it.

The actor and the tutor sit closely together facing each other. The actor maintains the level of his communication, but now generalises an emotion through the first few lines: for example, taking great joy in the sharing of the thoughts. Then the same lines are repeated, this time with a contrary emotion throughout: perhaps a resentment towards the listener. In both cases, the tutor ensures that the required emotion is not imposed onto the language, but organically fills the language from below.

Now, at each change of thought, the actor must cut from one of the pre-planned emotions to the other, and then back again at the next change – and so on throughout the speech. Then the exercise is repeated with the emotional order reversed.

The actor is then asked to repeat the exercise, this time using as many different colours of expression as possible – including pace, volume, physical position – without repetition. An ever changing dynamic from thought to thought.

The actor will recognise that each thought is capable of being expressed in many ways – 147 I always say – none of them necessarily connected to what the actor judges to be the character’s emotional basis at the time. The same freedom of wide-ranging and often contradictory colours which we achieve in our everyday lives. Acting truth becomes present in the moment of communication.



SHAKESPEARE’S ADVICE TO THE PLAYERS

The clues on performance expression which Shakespeare has left for us in his texts are most fully present in only the Folio edition of the plays. Modern editorial practise, with the best of intentions, has “tidied up” these original clues in the interests of clarity and literary correctness. In doing so, they have obscured what I believe to be the record of performance and authorial intention present in the first collection of the plays from 1623 – the First Folio.

The next step therefore, is to introduce the young actor to these records. The areas for study, which will now perform take considerable time, both in class and in the actor’s life – years would be the correct limit – cover considerable categories:

- The use of verse and the use of prose
- Scansion – regularity against irregularity
- Line-endings – end-stopped against enjambment
- Punctuation
- Capitalisation
- Imagery
- Rhetorical device

Far too simple a break-down! But all critical to understanding how the character is thinking from moment to moment. These are no longer Shakespearean poetic devices, but rather the specifics of “My” language, “My” modes of thinking. “In the beginning was the Word” – and then came the emotion.

AGAINST OWNERSHIP

JENNIFER CLEMENT is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English, Cinema Studies, and Digital Humanities at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, where she teaches Shakespeare and pre-1800 literature. She has published articles on Shakespearean adaptations, Elizabeth I, and eighteenth-century drama. She is currently working on a book on humility in early modern English literature.

It's not unusual for the word "ownership" to turn up in discussions of teaching Shakespeare. Students, it appears, should come away from a course feeling that they "own" Shakespeare, and that they should have some sense of mastery over his plays. Performance approaches to teaching, for many, promise this sense of ownership through the bodily experience of speaking the lines and acting. Yet is ownership truly desirable, or even possible? What are the implications when we use a term like ownership in a pedagogical context? What do we mean when we say Shakespeare can be owned?

"OWNERSHIP can mean either the state of OWNING something, or a feeling of BEING RESPONSIBLE for ADDRESSING an issue."

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ownership can mean either the state of owning something, or a feeling of being responsible for addressing an issue. In our capitalistic culture, the first meaning tends to dominate, and this is the meaning that most easily comes to mind when thinking about what happens when students study Shakespeare. Yet the second meaning holds more potential for understanding what Shakespeare in the classroom can do for students. To think of Shakespeare as an issue to be addressed, rather than as a stable body of knowledge to be mastered, offers students and teachers the chance to explore the multiplicity of Shakespeares now available to us, and even to ask why Shakespeare has assumed such a dominant position in Anglo-American educational systems.

So what *do* we mean when we say that students should come to "own" Shakespeare? Usually those who

use the term mean to say that students should gain confidence, an appreciation of Shakespeare's art, and, perhaps, a greater stake in their society, and these are worthy goals. Unfortunately, at a time when liberal arts education itself is threatened by neoliberal governments with highly utilitarian agendas, the ownership model suggests acquiescence with the idea that money is paid for students to acquire Shakespeare much as they would acquire a new car or a house, instead of pushing them to explore the boundaries of received knowledge.

Another problem with ownership as a concept is that it tends to come with the assumption that we all know what we mean when we say a student can come to "own" Shakespeare, as if the identities of both student and Shakespeare are fixed and that neither student nor Shakespeare needs to change in the process of education. Yet even a cursory glance at the history of Shakespeare scholarship and performance indicates that there are many versions of Shakespeare and many ways of understanding his writing. And not only do students change through education, they *should* change. Education should be a means of pushing students to challenge what they think they know about the world, and about themselves.

There is no one right way to describe how students can come to some kind of relationship with Shakespeare. But if I were to be pinned down, I would suggest the word "participation" to describe what I want students to achieve in the Shakespeare classroom. Rather than coming to *own* a static and easily-defined Shakespearean corpus, students should come to *participate in* the ongoing process of creating meaning out of the texts that have come down to us in many forms over the years. In my view, participation implies the growth of confidence and knowledge as much as ownership, without the latter term's neoliberal connotations. And what it adds is a far greater sense of how the learning process – whether based in performance, literary analysis, or a mix of the two – depends on the student's active engagement with Shakespeare, an engagement that at its best can change Shakespeare as much as it can change the student, and, perhaps, also the teacher.

Here, experts in Shakespeare from various fields share their recommendations for inspirational reading, with a view to helping those preparing to teach his works. In addition to teaching Shakespeare at Varndean Sixth Form College, Brighton, SEAN MCEVOY has taught on the Shakespeare MA at Royal Holloway and has published widely on Shakespeare and teaching Shakespeare. He edits the Edinburgh University Press 'Renaissance Dramatists' series. Here he recommends some resources for sixth form students.



Photo © Sean McEvoy

I teach on the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, but I have also taught A Level for many years. The IB syllabus gives me enormous freedom about how I teach the plays. I like to use playtexts which offer students as much glossing of difficult language as possible. *The Oxford School Shakespeare* is ideal, edited by the remarkable Roma Gill. For ease of use I also admire the new RSC Shakespeare texts by Macmillan. When putting worksheets together I use this searchable online version of the plays: www.opensourceshakespeare.org

James Stredder's *The North Face of Shakespeare: Activities for Teaching the Plays* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009) remains for me the best argued and most useful guide to practical approaches, to which I often return.

I also like to work with images from past productions. An excellent resource here is Christie Carson's *Designing Shakespeare* website: www.ahds.rhul.ac.uk/ahdscollections

Images and videos of RSC productions and other useful contextual material can also be found at: www.rsc.org.uk/education/resources/bank

Mr William Shakespeare and the Internet remains a very useful portal to a huge range of Shakespeare websites. shakespeare.palomar.edu/Default.htm

The digital revolution has transformed the way we can use film and video in the classroom, making close comparison of moments in different productions easy to achieve. Of course YouTube is invaluable here. I would also recommend Shakespeare's Globe's DVDs of eight plays, including superb versions of *As You Like It*, *Henry IV Part One* and *Othello* because of course they also address the question of how the plays were originally staged. The Cambridge University Press *Shakespeare in Production* series is also an extremely useful resource for the teacher when working on production choices, since it offers a commentary on staging and performance alongside the

text, as well as a full performance history. The series now covers a dozen of the most frequently taught plays.

When working with short pieces of criticism the *Routledge Study Guide and Sourcebook* series provides an excellent range of selected of contextualised critical extracts as well as useful commentaries on key scenes. The material supplied on historical contexts is also very accessible. There are volumes on *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello* and *Twelfth Night*. They are must-haves for the library.

Finding criticism accessible for wider student reading for all abilities in the sixth form is not always easy. *The English Review* and, in particular, *emagazine* are both magazines with very readable short essays aimed at students. Shakespeare is well represented in their pages. The *emagplus* website, which archives many articles, is well worth subscribing to as an English Department. www.englishandmedia.co.uk/emag

My own *Shakespeare: The Basics* (3rd ed., London: Routledge, 2012) aims, amongst other things, to present the most up-to-date Shakespeare criticism to students in a straightforward way. As a general student introduction to Shakespeare, however, I would also recommend Emma Smith's *Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007) which is fresh, original and enlightening in its approach. Smith's Oxford undergraduate lectures *Approaching Shakespeare* are available as podcasts on: podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/approaching-shakespeare

There is a now a huge range of materials which can help make Shakespeare live in the classroom and help students to be engaged and excited by the plays themselves. That has to be the ultimate aim.

Who would you like to see recommending their favourite resources for *Teaching Shakespeare* in the next issue? Email your suggestion to: teachingshakespeare@gmail.com

MOZART: FIRST TAKE PART!

It was interesting to read the article *Working with Giants* (an account of the City of London Sinfonia's educational work with Mozart) in your first issue. In my experience, 'giants' seldom need apology or elucidation at the first hearing, although background information may later enhance appreciation and the teacher can add insight where least expected. I treasure a young mathematician's response to my demonstration (which could be dry!) of the Classical (Mozart) period circle of keys and the harmonics within individual notes: "But that's beautiful!" she said, after a considered pause. It is heart-warming to hear "Eine kleine Nachtmusik" sung spontaneously by departing young choir-members as: "Cla-ssi-cal, when powd-ered wigs were hot, mi-nu-ets and tri-os hit the spot. Beethoven was cool way back then" (in the words of Audrey Snyder in *The Complete History of Western Music* (Abridged)).

Shakespeare is still 'cool' in performance. To sit between cues and watch the audience (especially those brought unwillingly as 'to school') gradually respond to his genius, interpreted by fine actors and directors, is both moving

and amusing. The RSC band has laid bets on the exact moment when a particularly bored-looking audience member would start to smile, then become absorbed in the show.

Mozart's letters delight us all the more because we already know him through his music, not the other way round. Simply to take part, at whatever level, in a live production of works of genius by artists such as Shakespeare or Mozart, is the first and most important step, to be taken as early in life as possible. Even if it leads some to try swimming, rowing – or mathematics – instead!

From **GABRIELLE BYAM-GROUNDS**, Director of the ensemble English Serenata. Her varied career has included university residencies and numerous workshops for primary and secondary schools. For 25 years she worked as pro-rata flautist for the RSC.

www.englishserenata.com

✉ Send your letters to
teachingshakespeare@gmail.com

Feature compiled by James Stredder

Routledge Performance Archive

The *Routledge Performance Archive* is a developing resource produced in partnership with Digital Theatre, providing unique access to an unprecedented range of audio-visual material from past and present practitioners of performance. This ground-breaking online collection delivers essential resources direct to the classroom, lecture theatre and library.

Included are interviews with key figures in theatre history and contemporary practice; master-classes with specialist actor trainers from around the world; unique footage direct from the legendary practitioners themselves; excerpted and full-length contemporary productions; and documentaries previously unavailable to global audiences.

Recommend the *Routledge Performance Archive* to your Librarian to arrange a no obligation free trial.

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