

## Implementing Learning Strategies Based on Metacognition

Maryann P. DiEdwardo

(University of Maryland University College and Lehigh University, USA)

**Abstract:** Student-directed pedagogical models and 21st century themes fuse to ignite a learning community for reflection, discovery and achievement to motivate the 21st century students. Writing fiction, non-fiction, poetry and screenplays as a learning community in English curriculums in distance settings with self-assessments through metacognitive pedagogy can improve student learning. Methodology centers upon activities that support preparation for learning to teach students to act as cognitive mappers to create in the new literature of the social network as the new voices for a global cultural literature revolution. By telescoping into a shorter version of oral history, writers succeed in the learning community. The framework short story fuses with multiculturalism as a focus to envision the student in a creative process to offer transformation.

**Key words:** pedagogy, learning community, writing process theory, metacognition

### 1. Implementing Learning Strategies Based on Metacognition

Flavell coined the term metacognition in the seventies of the last century (Flavell, 1979). At UMUC, My creative approach to use of metacognitive activities is based on thinking about thinking. Authentic Assessment as short story is grounded in student-centered approach through weekly conferences. The class is themed on ideas about the human condition. My students create E-journals in workbook and conferences as primary sources for essays. Writing based on keen observation and self-discovery is a part of learning to write.

Students need to find ways to enjoy the pace by excelling in their writing from the first week. The conferences will be based on the writing process of stories and will offer the chance to write from the basic skills that the students have learned before they enter my classroom. The most important ingredient to an eight-week class is to engage in activities that will offer my students a chance to “coalesce into a learning community” (Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 89).

A professional learning community represents a new approach. It emphasizes continuous learning among all in the particular community with less emphasis on hierarchy. This approach to professional development gives all a greater stake in learning improvement. It also allows for greater collaboration. In education circles, the term learning community has become a notable model. But Frameworks to Promote Professional Learning Communities (such as PLC Blog) offer solutions to educators who wish to promote the learning community framework in the classroom as an interactive model that offers regular contributions to this blog for encouragement and faculty inspiration. All contributing experts have successfully implemented the PLC at Work™ process. They invite you to post to this collaborative space (PLC Blog) at

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Maryann Pasda DiEdwardo, Ed.D., University of Maryland University College and Lehigh University; research areas/interests: metacognition, yoga therapy, student-directed learning and linguistics. E-mail: DiEdwardo7@gmail.com.

<http://www.allthingsplc.info/wordpress/>.

Howard Gardner, in *Frames of Mind* (1983, p. 78), regards the “rhetorical aspects of language as the ability to use language to convince other individuals of a course of action; the mnemonic potential of language to help one remember information; the role of language in explanation and the potential of language to explain and reflect on itself as in metalinguistic analysis”. Vincent Tinto (2003) Chair of the Higher Education Program at Syracuse University, Learning Community in higher education means.

## **2. Shared Knowledge, Shared Knowing and Shared Responsibility**

Tinto (2003) concludes: Learning Communities tend to form their own self-supporting groups and Learning Community students become more active in the learning process and remain so even after class is over. I can verify his theory. My students at University of Maryland University College tell me this fact: they truly enjoy my class atmosphere; and my class learning community is the reason.

Participation in the Learning Community enhances the quality of student learning. As students see themselves more engaged they persist at a higher rate. They want to grow as writers in learning communities that encourage writing. Students learn educational citizenship with awareness of their responsibilities in learning experience and their ability to aid others in the experience as well. Knowledge requires language; knowledge is socially constructed rather than discovered deliver a new vision. My experience reveals learning communities change writers in distance learning settings.

Learning communities are “groups of people engaged in interaction for the purpose of learning” (Cross, 1998). We can now state this same case positively in a way that includes, but goes somewhat beyond, Dewey’s doctrine that “school is primarily a social institution” and that experience is education. We can now identify the particular experience that educates: “constructive conversation. Students learn by joining transition communities in which people construct knowledge as they talk together and reach consensus. What teachers do is to set up conditions in which students can learn. And one of the most important ways teachers do that is by organizing students into transition communities for reacculturative conversation” (Bruffee, 1995).

According to Cross (1998) the pedagogy of learning community “enhances student learning and persistence and enriches faculty professional lives”. I agree with Cross. My whole attitude toward my teaching in the distance setting for the University of Maryland University College is joyous. Every student is a scholar after they experience my classes.

## **3. Methodology**

Globalization of the literary canon requires applications of the aspects of oral history traditions. My class is organized to become a learning community with a focus writing short stories as authentic assessments to develop student voices.

As cultures converge in global 21st century classroom, students of multiethnic backgrounds require varied models to succeed. Reading, writing and arithmetic which serve our industrial society may be enhanced by a new fourth “R” or remembrance as educational focus for the age of technology and multiculturalism. Language is the basis of classrooms whether traditional, enhanced or distance. In fact, Howard Gardner, in *Frames of Mind* (1983, p. 78), regards the “rhetorical aspects of language as the ability to use language to convince other individuals of a course of action; the mnemonic potential of language to help one remember information; the role of language in

explanation and the potential of language to explain and reflect on itself as in metalinguistic analysis”.

Language based upon oral history can connect cultures in classrooms. My presentation centers upon the short stories of Chinua Achebe and Zora Neale Hurston and student examples of multiethnic students writing their own oral histories. I also offer examples of current social networking as a framework for achievement. Students read the works of multicultural authors and create audio presentations in YouTube. Music, photography, art, pinterest, twitter and facebook become the new literature that enhances learning. Stories that students create in the new literature of the social network become the new voices for a global cultural literature revolution. Mirror the classroom by following activities that students can perform before they enter the classroom.

By telescoping into a shorter version of oral history, writers succeed in the learning community. The framework short story fuses authentic assessment and multiculturalism as a focus to envision the students in a creative process to offer transformation.

I promote detailed course syllabus that relates to all conferences for the first best practice that will keep students paced with explanations of how to finish the poetry explicative, the fiction explicative, study group project, the authentic assessment. I will review the syllabus weekly via email and announcements to remind students to stick to the scaffold plan to build the assignments in conferences step by step. I will build learning activities aligned with course learning outcomes which will include study group, student input in grading the group assignment, and student directed conferences and include case studies, small group and peer to peer activities, project based assignments such as interviews and web searches. I will enter the classroom every 12 hours. Telling students about what we do as educators and scholars is also a method I use lately that really works.

#### **4. Writing as a Learning Community**

- Studying Oral Histories with Emphasis on Metacognitive Activities.
- Writing Process Theory, Journaling, Electronic Research, Groups.
- Student-Directed Learning and Learning Communities.

Oral histories center upon the study of personal story which we use as a fundamental model in the conferences. We tell the stories of our days, weeks, events or experiences. Probe of the student writing previous achievement is one example of a metacognitive activity. During the first week of class, I ask the student to provide a sample of best writing. Next, I provide a THINK PAIR SHARE activity to create a community in the digital setting. Think of one word or set of words for assignment #1. Share this with at least one other classmate in the conference and share ideas. The skills are based on thesis and organization with skillful thesis statement, topic sentences, and transitions; clear introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion.

Content in conferences which are both short and long are based on thoughtful in-depth argument which addresses the prompt are developed through skillful use of the examples supplied as well as other kinds of support. Diction, tone, precise choices of vocabulary, tone will demonstrate a high degree of audience awareness. Mechanics, sophisticated sentence structure, command of subordination and parallelism, few errors and mastery of conventions of written English.

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perform before they enter the classroom.

The framework short story fuses authentic assessment and multiculturalism as a focus to envision the student in a creative process. The outcome: self-understanding and transformation. Most importantly, I conversationally attempt to reach out to students with explanations and constantly friendly reminders which I often link to editing sessions for papers. Online, hand written transmitted by typing into a file or combination journals are accepted in my class. I also suggest students reflect with their own words in either a virtual setting or a notebook. Please consider ALL pieces of thoughts, notes and outlines as a part of your journal. One of my students called her rhythm of writing “scratch” which compiles a journal of pre-writing thoughts that composed her semester journal. She emailed a formatted copy to me.

I agree with sensing the climate of the class. It is a sensation or a spiritual aspect of teaching that often tends to make us humble immediately. And humility does help in the virtual setting. Often, it is one student who may email me to let me know that some are confused. However, that happened in my early teaching years. To verify that I am on track and expressing thoughts simply yet intelligently and with organization, I ask students to create conferences and I might call a conference: critique the web site design. For effective and timely feedback to students, seven days per week, I use technology that seems more conversational such as chat, texting, or telephone conferences to teach virtually.

## **5. Pedagogical Model**

Through student-directed pedagogical model, my class fuses into a learning community for reflection, discovery and peer editing for student motivation and success. I actively engage students. Through the paradigm of active learning, we engage in reading key articles by scholars in the field in blogs, wikis, web sites, books, pamphlets, newsletters, or journals or other material demonstrating techniques of close reading in order to explicate a text with terms of the literary scholar that apply to writing across the curriculum and differentiating among major literary genres to converse, to analyze, and to use cultural heritage.

Students possess qualities of memory based upon human every day experiences similar to those experiences within literary works they read. I play pod casts of sample student essays that show how students recall events or conditions based upon the relationship of reading to memory. One of my students recalls her own beliefs in mercy killing and relates her heritage based upon family and cultural beliefs in the right to life. Students use life story writing next to recount experiences that may help them find thesis. We write for a global multiethnic and ageless audience. Stories can indeed reach all readers. To write, we engage memories of readings, life experiences and imagination. Accordingly, these three patterns compose voice on the written page. But, writing is an essential like skill needed for human dignity.

Social justice as a paradigm for the English classroom in both WRTG101 and my courses in the COMM Department resounds with tension and resolution dependent upon the silent resilience of the individual. Mythological Literary Criticism and Film Theory as a lens into archetypes through analysis of personal essays on identity by James Baldwin, Bernard Cooper, Eric Liu, N. Scott Momaday and Brent Staples compared to the themes of masculinity the Films Finding Forester, In America, The Avengers and the popular DVD series Freaks and Geeks and The Twilight Series (reveal) visions of the human condition. In Finding Forester, Jamal, African American, is urban youth, with serious issues, the absence of his father. Furthermore, Jamal’s struggles compare to the comic book figure Thor. Based on Nordic legends, Thor is also without his father’s full presence (father is

in a coma). Both are archetypes who live out the masculine identity through story and emotions. In America also explores the relationship between a male AIDS patient who is also black to Irish immigrants with striking mythological and archetypal consequences. Pop culture themes in DVD series *Freaks and Geeks* and *The Twilight Series* also portray masculinity in the archetypal universes created by current imaginative writers. *Freaks and Geeks* explore males weaker than the female protagonist. *The Twilight Series* present masculinity of the different eras to show domination of the feminine as opposed to the masculine.

In comparison, Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* is the story of the orphan Oliver, who runs away from the workhouse only to be taken in by a den of thieves. Combining elements of Gothic Romance, the Newgate Novel and popular melodrama, Dickens created an entirely new kind of fiction, scathing in its indictment of a cruel society, and pervaded by an unforgettable sense of threat and mystery. *Oliver Twist* reflects a major thematic concern for author Charles Dickens, that of social justice. This is reflected in his depiction of character types and narrative structure. His interest and concern is with highlighting the plight of the poor and the attitudes within society towards them. Dickens was concerned with writing for a wide increasing literate public, meaning that his audiences were able to recognize his shape characterizations and insightful social commentary. In particular, Dickens used characterization to comment on the social and moral implications of the industrial revolution on British society. Dickens's tale of childhood innocence beset by evil depicts the dark criminal underworld of a London peopled by vivid and memorable characters: the arch-villain Fagin, the artful Dodger, the menacing Bill Sikes and the prostitute Nancy.

In UMUC classes, we focus on own histories and write creative non-fiction to reveal new writing techniques that combine creative non-fiction and fiction as writing is a new way to heal. Our class is about freeing the interpersonal interior pains from the constraints of such happening as abusive childhoods and results of other disturbances to develop neurons and heal through writing about personal history.

## **6. Designing Authentic Assessments as Models to Nurture and to Motivate**

The short story as an authentic assessment engages students. By the concentrated study of sets of short stories that contain meaningful themes, characters and human emotions, readers can significantly conquer self-doubt and break down self-imposed borders. Through reading, analyzing, discussion and eventually writing short stories, creators develop self-understanding. The most important aspect of the short story as a literary powerhouse for both teacher and student remains the fact that reading and writing the genre can elicit personal transformation. Students will be able to weigh and assess their challenges as they recall heroines or heroes throughout history. In essence, writing students are starting their own historical journeys into the world of literature where adjectives, adverbs, diction, thesis, point of view, voice, tone, theme, style, imagery, language, verbs and parallelism ignite the inner journey toward a clear student writer voice.

Authentic Assessment engages student writers by breaking down interior interpersonal borders. As a framework for teaching composition or introductory literature classes, the short story concentrates on the understanding of the themes of literary consciousness. My presentation centers upon the short stories of Chinua Achebe and Zora Neale Hurston.

The most important aspect of the short story as a literary powerhouse for both teacher and student remains the fact that reading and writing the genre can elicit personal transformation. Students can write a few pages of text that reveal understanding of the self through interpretations that they learn. By telescoping thoughts and

writing into a shorter version, young writers succeed, and we as educators can powerfully change the methods we use to teach. I connect intrapersonal interpersonal intelligences and linguistic intelligence.

Writing short stories is my authentic assessment at the University of Maryland. The framework I design with short story as a methodology focuses on the student writer in a creative process to offer transformative frameworks. Certainly, the short story as a genre transforms through centering story upon the self-discovery of the writer to promote change and personal growth. Furthermore, I use the short story as an authentic assessment to break down borders between the academic desert of literature as a viewed subject to literature as an experienced vast space that transforms.

Albert Chinualumogu Achebe born on November 30, 1930 is one of the most significant writers to emerge from contemporary Africa with a literary vision that has profoundly influenced the form and content of Modern African Literature.

The short story “Girls at War” by Chinua Achebe from the collection of his short stories entitled *Girls at War and Other Stories*. New York: Anchor Books, 1972 as well as his important novel, *Things Fall Apart*, are the foundation of my introductory lessons in writing for composition students. I form the discussions by offering the idea that Achebe has created a singular important voice, his own spiritual quest to revitalize his nation of Nigeria through his literature. To connect cultures, mine and theirs, the literary scholar and the 21st century students, we watch the music video by The Roots called “Things Fall Apart” which was named after the Achebe’s novel and uses the same themes with a few changes to depict the tensions of the clashes of culture in the city.

*Things Fall Apart*, published in 1958, is the original African novel in English. Its most striking feature is to create a complex and sympathetic portrait of a traditional village culture in Africa. Achebe is trying not only to inform the outside world about Ibo cultural traditions, but to remind his own people of their past and to assert that it had contained much of value. All too many Africans in his time were ready to accept the European judgment that Africa had no history or culture worth considering. The language of the novel is simple but dignified. When the characters speak, they use an elevated diction which is meant to convey the sense of Ibo speech. This choice of language was a brilliant and innovative stroke, given that most earlier writers had relegated African characters to pidgin or inarticulate gibberish. One has the sense of listening to another tongue, one with a rich and valuable tradition.

Zora Neale Hurston born in 1891 and died in 1960 “has been rediscovered in a manner unprecedented in the black tradition. Several black women writers in America today, have openly turned to her works as sources of narrative strategies, to be repeated, imitated, and revised, in acts of textual bonding...Hurston claimed that she wanted to write a black novel and not a treatise on sociology. It is this urge that resonates in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved* and Alice Walker’s depiction of Hurston as our prime symbol of ‘racial health’ — a sense of black people as complete, complex and undiminished human beings, a sense that is lacking in so much black writing and literature. In a tradition in which male authors have ardently denied black literary paternity, this is a major development one that heralds the refinement of our notion of tradition: Zora and her daughters are a ‘tradition within a tradition’ a black woman’s voice” (Gates, p. 289).

The short story “Girls at War” by Chinua Achebe and “Magnolia Flower” by Zora Neale Hurston suggest that themes are the first element of literary thought that break down interpersonal borders. Achebe recreates with energy and authenticity, the major social and political issues that confront contemporary African on a daily basis. Hurston uses mythic realism modernism, imagery of the river and “The Mighty One” to create a thematic world with allegory and myth as vehicles for the representation of the conflicts and dilemmas that African American

share with all other human beings (Gates and Lemke Introduction).

Next, characters in the two short stories “Girls at War” by Chinua Achebe and “Magnolia Flower” by Zora Neale Hurston signify that interpersonal knowledge students need to filter the literature into meaningful attributes that echo their own lives or aspects of their contemporary culture. Gladys, a beautiful girl who has been forced to become a woman kept by some army officer in her struggle for survival during the war dies in the last scene in a drama “Shattering of Sky” as the reality of the Biafran war in Nigeria. The death forces the reader to see the reality and truth of war. Achebe deals with the themes of African American Tradition, the disintegration of the old tribal customs to political turmoil in Nigeria. On the other hand, Hurston creates Magnolia who experiences the abuse of her father because she fell in love with John; runs away with her lover, then comes back forty years later with her same lover, John by her side, to revisit and to find redemption.

## 7. Conclusion

Students possess qualities of memory based upon human every day experiences similar to those experiences within literary works they read. I play pod casts of sample student essays that show how students recall events or conditions based upon the relationship of reading to memory. One of my students recalls her own beliefs in mercy killing and relates her heritage based upon family and cultural beliefs in the right to life. Students use life story writing next to recount experiences that may help them find thesis.

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Illustration #1 Practical Applications

1. Power Point Case Studies of Class Community creates a Learning Community Atmosphere
2. Student Examples in Blogs and Wikis create Learning Community Criteria
3. Youtube Audio of my teaching strategies with catalysts such as stories enhance the Technology Learning Community
4. Study writing in coffee house or cybercafe free writing encourage learning community relaxation and hands on practice on how to begin to teach writing of story
5. Handouts with methodology and lessons create calm and confidence in the learning community
6. Designing personal course objectives with active learning and scaffolding offer practical solutions to learning strategies to create a balanced learning community for all types of learners
7. Participants start online or hard copy journals that are based on life story to enhance the privacy of the learning community to prepare students

Illustration #2

Frameworks

Maryann P. DiEdwardo, Ed.D.

Linguistic Framework

1. Curriculum Design includes selected works of Achebe and Hurston.
2. Read and discuss short stories; continue discussion online in blogs.
3. Deconstruction: analysis of characters, plot, setting and language.
4. Research biographical and historical background.
5. Interpret language using reader-response theory by New Historicism.
6. Connect cultural observations with inclusion of personal narrative.
7. Writing process: drafting.
8. Writing process: submissions.
9. Writing process: presentations.
10. Critique

Rubric for Authentic Assessment

Purpose: The purpose of this assessment is to demonstrate your ability to devise a project strategy, to create a final well designed presentation, to integrate your findings with your own personal views and knowledge in your own words in one of the following formats:

Choice #1 Writing

Pick one of the following:

Travel Journal

Sample Assignment: Create a travel journal based on a personal experience and study of course content this semester.

Place Memory

Reflection on process and designing your own life history project about a living or deceased person's home or vacation spot.

Interview friends or family members.

Creative Non-Fiction Story

Find a way to engage in storytelling, framing life histories, or remembrances about your own hometown in a travel journal.

Engage in remembering place.

Film Analysis

Write a short summary of your favorite character's language patterns.

Telescope into the dialogue and setting, costume, and lighting, then review all aspects of specific scenes as a way to see ideas in visual form. Mystery is a style, a tone, a set of principles that guides a writer and allows a theme to develop a purpose for writer's voice.

Music Analysis

Relate the language in the literary selection to the film OR MUSIC such as the sound track

Choice #2 PowerPoint

Pick one of the following:



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Select a writing project from above and place the project into a PowerPoint.

Demonstrate selections of websites and sound bites through video stream or online media like news transcript about how places help or hinder people. Relate the project to our stud this semester.

Choice #3 Video or Audio

Make a YouTube audio project. Authors can use ANY WRITTEN WORD if the author is dead for 75 years. You can read your own audiotape of a work of Shakespeare.

Choice #4 Facebook Page

Facebook Page on an author whom we studied this semester.

Where and how to submit: The final project should be submitted as attachment using the Authentic Assessment in the Assignment folder.