

Iago and Metaphor

Daniel Addis

INTRODUCTION

Metaphors are a powerful type of language. In *The Poetics*, Aristotle says, “The greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor” (XXII 69-70). Unfortunately, most high school students do not have command of metaphor. This deficiency shackles their understanding of a vast amount of literature and muzzles expression of their feelings and thoughts. Therefore, as my students and I study *Othello*, I intend, with this unit, to improve their ability to interpret metaphors and spur them to create metaphors and use them in their writing.

Metaphors are the tools we use to express abstract thoughts. The more abstract our thoughts, conversation, and writing, the more we use metaphors (Richards 92). Consequently, in order for our students to comprehend and digest sophisticated literature, they must have the capacity to interpret metaphors fairly well.

A metaphor illustrates through comparison. This is the simplest definition of a metaphor, but, actually, a metaphor is not so simple. A metaphor is composed of two components, a vehicle, the word or phrase that describes, and the tenor, the object being described.

Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on. (3.3.166-168)

The tenor is *jealousy* and the vehicle is *green-eyed monster*.

When we interpret a metaphor, we do not merely compare the tenor to the vehicle; we intertwine the tenor and the vehicle, and this juxtaposition enkindles our imagination and induces meaning and/or image (Funk 137; Richards 96-97, 120). In other words, we compare the tenor with the vehicle and the vehicle with the tenor, and as we relate them and consider the connotations of the relationships, we perceive meaning and/or image.

There are two ways to interpret a metaphor. One is interpreting its immediate meaning by paraphrasing it. The other is elaborating its connotations. When Iago tells Roderigo to “poison his delights” (1.1.68), he is telling Roderigo to ruin Othello’s marital bliss—that is the immediate meaning, but the connotations are: Iago is evil, he will transform something that is good to something that is evil, he will cause what pleases Othello most (Desdemona) to be hateful, and he will make Othello’s relationship with Desdemona fatal for Othello.

Two metaphors may have the same immediate meaning, but their connotations can be distinct. For example, *My supervisor was slithering around our office* and *My supervisor was prowling around our office* both mean the supervisor was quietly trying to find fault with the underlings; however, the former metaphor implies that the supervisor is devious and odious, but the latter metaphor implies that the supervisor is threatening and malicious.

Metaphors reveal much about the speaker. The type of metaphor a person formulates discloses his perspective, motives, beliefs, and prejudices. When Iago yells at Brabantio, “An old black ram / Is tugging your white ewe” (1.1.88-89), he reveals his racist outlook by contrasting Othello’s and Desdemona’s skin color. High school students will probably detect the racist tones of this metaphor, but they typically overlook what diction says about the speaker, especially when it is suggestive rather than overt. They generally gather information from the narrator and the actions of the characters.

Certain metaphors arouse intense emotions and can be used as weapons. When Iago yells at Brabantio, “your daughter covered with a Barbary horse” (1.1.110), he is clearly provoking Brabantio to assault Othello. His daughter is not in the sweet arms of Othello; instead, a beast is brutishly molesting her. Such an image would incite a father to violence, even murder.

Metaphors can stimulate deep thought. Powerful metaphors create awe (Wheelwright 47). They “arrest the hearer by their vividness or strangeness and leave the mind in sufficient doubt about their precise application to tease it into active thought” (Dodd 16). Iago tells Roderigo: “Our bodies are gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners” (1.3.313-314). When we ponder this metaphor, we realize that Iago is an existentialist. He believes we are not slaves to our nature or servants to God; we are independent and free to choose. In contrast, some parables in the Gospels, describe God as the gardener; God is the sower and the vinedresser. Iago, though, considers us an unbridled will, broken free of God. He exemplifies the comment in *The Brothers Karamazov*, “If God does not exist, then everything is permitted.” Iago feels free to do evil to Othello, Roderigo, Desdemona, Cassio, and Emilia. He rejects and casts aside an Almighty whose essence is love and to whom he should obey, serve, or draw near; instead, he will please himself and do what he wants to do.

In order to express complex thoughts and feelings, we must use metaphors. High school students, especially my students, commonly use metaphors in their vernacular, but they are dead metaphors; they have learned them as one learns words and expressions. Consequently, they do not truly make comparisons. If they become adept at using metaphors, they will become more eloquent, descriptive, and analytical; as a result, they will have more freedom and opportunity because they can articulately express their thoughts and feelings and understand sophisticated literature.

OBJECTIVES

As the students study *Othello* with this unit, they will enhance their ability to thoughtfully read. As the students analyze metaphors, they will become more adept at interpreting figurative language. As they make connotations from the metaphors, they will become more adroit at making inferences. As they elaborate the connotations of the metaphors, they will become more proficient at generalizing. As they analyze the diction of the metaphors and make conclusions about the speaker, they will improve their ability to deduce. As they make conclusions about a character based on the metaphors he uses, they will cultivate their ability to characterize. As they hypothesize from the metaphors about future outcomes, they will refine their ability to generalize.

This unit will enhance the students' ability to write clearly, structurally, elaborately, and eloquently. The students will write essays about Iago using his metaphors. They will use a writing process and learn to write structurally by utilizing a format. The students will learn to properly quote from a Shakespeare play and document it. They will learn to introduce a quote, state a quote, and explain a quote. They will summarize and become more adept at summarizing. They will use introductory phrases to bridge the quotes, and become more familiar with transitional phrasings.

This unit will induce students to create metaphors and use them in poetry and exposition writing. The students will create metaphors that are comparable to Iago's metaphors. They will use words figuratively to create a poem. Student poets will see that using metaphors vastly improves their poetry, and this will foster further use of metaphors in their poetry. I will encourage my students to use metaphors in their essays, especially in the closing, since metaphors make eloquent closings.

In addition, our work with metaphors and *Othello* will show the students the awesome creativity of Shakespeare and sow in them an appreciation for Shakespeare, poetry, and metaphor usage. The creative and vivid metaphors in *Othello* will amaze the students, and they will come to admire the art of Shakespeare and poetry and metaphor usage. This, in turn, will encourage them to read Shakespeare and poetry and use metaphors in their writing and speech.

During their years of schooling, students have had little exposure to metaphors; consequently, their articulation and understanding are limited, but this unit will bolster their ability to express themselves and understand the erudite writings of profound and creative writers.

INTRODUCING METAPHORS AND *OTHELLO*

Before embarking on this unit, I will introduce metaphors to my students. I will do what I have done in the past: as we read a novel, such as *The Scarlet Letter*, *Black Boy*, or *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, I will pull out metaphors, put them on a transparency, and the

students will write down the meaning on one line and a connotation on the next. I introduce this simple exercise by explaining that a metaphor *describes by comparing*. This simple definition introduces the students to metaphors, and the exercise increases their adeptness at interpreting the meaning and connotations of metaphors. In this unit, though, we will go further. The students will explain the various connotations of a metaphor, elaborate what certain metaphors reveal about a character, and create their own metaphors.

My students, for the most, are not experienced readers, so they do not have the discipline or patience to read a work of literature that takes intense concentration and whose meaning is not apparent on the first reading. They easily get frustrated. The students in my pre-advanced placement classes are more determined, but they too will struggle with a work of Shakespeare and their frustration will cause many of them to give up, and instead of diligently trying to conquer the work, they will read Cliff Notes, copy from each other, or write in an embellished way without content in order to conceal their ignorance of the work. Therefore, to make a work of Shakespeare more appealing and accessible to my students, I have downloaded a play, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, from the Internet and edited it, making some of the long speeches shorter so that the drama moves faster. This was successful with *Romeo and Juliet*, and I plan to do the same with *Othello*.

To further capture the interest of my students, I will use the 1993 film version of *Othello*. Before and after reading and discussing one or two scenes, we will watch the film version of those scenes. Furthermore, before we begin the play, I will show them the first few minutes of the film. The beginning of the film is alluring, and it will capture their attention. Almost all of my students are African-American, and their attention to a work of literature and a film increases tremendously when they see that an African-American is a main character. In this case, an African-American actor is playing the role of a North African, but this detail will not diminish their interest. One aspect of *Othello* that is neglected by this film, though, is Othello's ripe age; therefore, I will inform my students of this detail by pointing out reverences to Othello's age in the text and reminding them of his middle age in discussion.

Before we read certain scenes, I will solicit students to improvise the scenario of the particular scene, and I will encourage them to use metaphors in their improvisation. For example, I will ask a student to play a father and another to play someone who is trying to enrage the father against his daughter's boyfriend. After an improvisation, we will discuss the dynamics of the scene so they will thoroughly understand, and we will bring to the light the metaphors the actors used and elaborate their meanings. This activity will connect them to a scene before we read it and encourage them to use metaphors.

If this activity does not work well or students are too bashful to perform, I will lead a discussion about how a certain scenario will play out. For example, to prepare them for Act III, Scene 3, when Iago arouses Othello's attention to Cassio and Desdemona, I will

ask the class, “How can we cleverly make someone jealous so that he doesn’t suspect that we are trying to do this?” When they bring up conspicuous ways, I will dispute them by saying, “The man will realize you are trying to start mess between him and his girlfriend. He won’t believe you. How can you do it so it is believable and he won’t suspect that you are trying to turn him against his girlfriend?”

We will choose roles and read the play aloud. My editing will make the oral reading less difficult, and I will continually emphasize the rhythm of the lines so that the readers will employ a poetic locution. When particular students read a passage gracefully and authentically, I will praise them and point out how well they read. I will join the reading and show them through example the lyrical movement of the lines. Their understanding of the flow of the lines will increase when they watch the film and hear the articulation of professional actors.

As we read, we will pause and analyze the passages, and I will especially focus the students’ attention on the metaphors that Iago uses. They will interpret the immediate meanings and the connotations of his metaphors, elaborate and discuss the profound connotations of his thought provoking metaphors, discuss the effectiveness of his pernicious metaphors, and analyze the diction of his metaphors and make conclusions about Iago’s character.

IAGO’S METAPHORS

The following metaphors are the ones we will intensely study, analyze, and use in essays.

Poison his delight. (1.1.68)

Meaning: Iago tells Roderigo to ruin Othello’s marital bliss.

Connotations: Iago is evil; he will transform something that is good to something that is evil; he will cause what pleases Othello most (Desdemona) to be hateful; he will make Othello’s relationship with Desdemona *poisonous* or fatal for Othello.

Plague him with flies. (1.1.71)

Meaning: Annoy Othello, vex him.

Connotations: Endlessly badger Othello. Make him sick; don’t let him rest.

Thieves! Thieves! (1.1.81)

Meaning: Othello has taken your daughter away.

Connotations: Othello forcefully stole your daughter; what you value above all has been stolen. Othello is a villain, an evildoer.

An old black ram / Is tuppung your white ewe. (1.1.88-89)

Meaning: Othello and Desdemona are making love.

Connotations: Othello's and Desdemona's love-making is beastly; they're snorting, grunting, and slobbering like a couple of animals; they're incompatible, for they're of two races and Othello is old. Iago is using Brabantio's prejudices and his tender feelings for his daughter to incite rage against Othello.

The devil will make a grandsire of you. (1.1.91)

Meaning: Desdemona will become pregnant with Othello's child.

Connotations: Othello is evil; he has corrupted your innocent daughter; you will have evil grandchildren. Iago is inciting hatred against Othello within Brabantio.

You'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse, you'll have your nephews neigh to you. (1.1.110-111)

Meaning: Othello will be having sex with your daughter.

Connotations: Othello is a beast, and he is ravishing your innocent daughter; your grandsons will be beasts. Iago is trying to enrage Brabantio against Othello.

Your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs. (1.1.114)

Meaning: Othello and your daughter are having sex.

Connotations: Othello's and Desdemona's love-making is bestial, barbaric, and repulsive; they're stuck together like a couple of insects. Iago is trying to provoke Brabantio to attack Othello.

I must show out a flag and sign of love. (1.1.154)

Meaning: Iago will act like he is devoted to Othello.

Connotations: Iago will act devoted to Othello so that he can effectively deceive him and lead him to his ruin.

Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners. (1.2.313-314)

Meaning: Our will can overpower our emotions.

Connotations: We are responsible for our behavior. We are not slaves to our emotions. The will is most powerful. Weak willed people let their emotions control them. We are free to rule ourselves; we are not servants to anyone, not even God.

If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions. (1.2.319-320)

Meaning: Without our reason, our emotions and passions would wreak havoc.

Connotations: Reason alone is the rein of our sensuality, not God, not our spirit, not our conscience.

Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. (1.3.348-349)

Meaning: Iago derives pleasure from tormenting Othello and driving him to murder.

Connotations: Iago's conscience is very weak, practically nonexistent and his personality is warped, for he gains pleasure not by bringing joy to others or gaining a victory, but by causing suffering and evil.

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse / But for my sport and profit.

(1.3.359-360)

Meaning: Iago is using Roderigo as a tool to destroy Othello and gains pleasure by doing so.

Connotations: Iago does not care about Roderigo at all; he is merely a tool. He considers Roderigo a fool, and counts on him being a fool so he can use him some more.

I hate the Moor:

And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets

He has done my office. (1.3.361-364)

Meaning: Iago hates Othello because he thinks he has had an affair with his wife.

Connotation: Iago feels less of a man because his wife, feeling sexually unsatisfied with him, sought satisfaction with Othello. Just thinking of Othello having sex with his wife enrages Iago.

After some time, to abuse Othello's ear / That he is too familiar with his wife.

(1.3.371)

Meaning: Iago will tell Othello that Cassio is having an affair with Desdemona.

Connotation: Hearing that his wife is cheating on him will torment Othello. Iago will insinuate this lie subtly, so Othello, instead of thinking Iago is an instigator, will think Iago is a friend who does not want to reveal this information to him because it is painful. Iago will get satisfying revenge against Othello for having an affair with his wife by making him believe his wife is having an affair with Cassio.

And will as tenderly be led by the nose / As asses are. (1.3.377-378)

Meaning: Iago will mislead Othello.

Connotation: Othello is gullible, stupid because he will be dumbly misled by Iago. Iago will subtly mislead Othello, so Othello will feel convinced of his wife's infidelity and will not be suspicious of Iago.

Hell and night / Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

(1.3.379-380)

Meaning: Iago appeals to the devil to help him fulfil this scheme.

Connotation: Iago willingly gives himself to Satan to satisfy his hatred of Othello; he is willing to spend eternity in hell fire in exchange for destroying Othello. Iago clearly realizes he is doing evil; he seeks no justification.

He takes her by the palm: ay, well said, whisper: with as little a web as this will ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. (2.1.164-165)

Meaning: Iago will use little incidences like Cassio kissing Desdemona's hand to make Othello believe that Cassio is having an affair with Desdemona.

Connotations: Othello does not need direct proof to make him believe his wife is cheating on him with Cassio. Trifling and innocent incidences can be made to look so suspicious to Othello.

**I do suspect the lusty Moor
Hath leaped into my seat; the thought whereof
Doth, like a poisonous mineral gnaw inwards. (2.1.271-274)**

Meaning: Iago thinks Othello has had an affair with his wife and this thought enrages him.

Connotation: Thoughts of Othello having sex with his wife enrages Iago so much he cannot control his hate. Iago, contradicting what he said before about reason having control over our emotions, is being controlled by his emotions and is not thinking clearly. Just as Iago is tormenting Othello by inciting suspicions of his wife's infidelity, Iago is tormenting himself with suspicions of his wife's infidelity.

**I'll have Michael Cassio on the hip,
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb—
For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too— (2.1.281-284)**

Meaning: Iago thinks Cassio had an affair with his wife too.

Connotations: Iago is neurotic. No evidence of his wife's infidelity has been mentioned. It is feasible that Othello had an affair with his wife, but believing Cassio has had one too is beyond belief. It is more likely that Iago is paranoid and is insecure about his manhood and seeks to strengthen his manhood by destroying the lives of two men whom he suspects have made him look like a weak man.

**When devils with the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now. (2.3.311-313)**

Meaning: Evil people achieve their evil stratagems by appearing to be kind.

Connotations: The best way to successfully torture people is to act like their kind friend so they will trust us and be vulnerable when we inflict pain. We should be suspicious of people who are very kind.

**So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all. (2.3.320-323)**

Meaning: Iago will use Desdemona's goodness to destroy Othello. The more kindly she treats Cassio and the more she feels sorry for him, the more Othello will think she is having an affair with him.

Connotation: Evil people relish using the goodness of people to inflict pain on others. Sometimes our goodness can be manipulated by evil people.

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord, / Is the immediate jewel of their soul. (3.3.156-157)

Meaning: Our honor is priceless.

Connotation: Iago speaks ironically: he speaks of honoring a person's name, yet he deviously plots to demean Othello's, Desdemona's, and Cassio's honor.

**Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on. (3.3.166-168)**

Meaning: Jealousy destroys the jealous person.

Connotation: Iago is ironic and devious again: by warning Othello not to be jealous, he makes Othello more jealous. Iago tells Othello the truth, but instead of the truth helping Othello, it makes him more vulnerable to Iago's evil.

**Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ. (3.3.323-325)**

Meaning: Little incidences strongly persuade jealous people that their loved one is cheating on them.

Connotation: The suspicions of jealous people arise primarily from their minds, so any trifle can spark their jealousy.

The Moor already changes with my poison. (3.3.326)

Meaning: Othello has become upset because he is beginning to believe that Desdemona has been having an affair with Cassio.

Connotation: Iago is leading Othello to his death by his insinuations. Iago's insinuations are turning good Othello into a fiend.

**Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons,
Which at the first are scarce found to distates,
But with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the minds of sulphur. (3.3.326-330)**

Meaning: Dangerous conceptions or suspicions at first do not torment a person, but in time they inflict great suffering.

Connotations: In time, Iago's insinuations will wreak havoc on Othello and cause him to act madly. Iago is subtly deceiving Othello and leading him to his doom.

I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion. (3.3.392)

Meaning: Othello's suspicion of Desdemona and Cassio having a liaison is terribly tormenting him.

Connotation: Iago is being devious: just mentioning that Othello is being eaten up with passion causes his passion to consume him more. Each time Iago acts like a friend, giving good advice, the more devilish he is and the more harm he does to Othello.

Othello: If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.
(wounds Iago)

Iago: I bleed, sir, but not killed. (5.2.286-288)

Meaning: Iago is the devil disguised as a man; he is evil.

Connotation: Iago lacks emotion about his behavior and his destiny and feels no shame or fear about being evil, belonging to the devil, or going to hell. Iago has become consumed by his hatred or his obsession with vengeance and has become what he has deviously warned Othello: eaten up by his passion.

INTERPRETING IAGO'S METAPHORS

As the students and I read, analyze, and view one or two scenes of *Othello*, we will analyze the pertinent comments of the characters and interpret the metaphors that all the characters use. Then, on an overhead projector, I will present Iago's metaphors that appear in those particular scenes, and the students will interpret their meaning and connotations and record their interpretations on a sheet of paper. On the overhead projector, I will display one metaphor at a time by covering the subsequent ones with a sheet of paper. As the students interpret them, I will encourage them to freely discuss their interpretations. The following is an example of the procedure:

Metaphor Interpretation Lesson Plan

After we read, analyze, and view Act I, Scene 3 on the overhead I will display the metaphors of that scene that Iago uses (see "Iago's Metaphors"). The students will copy each metaphor and, on their paper, tell the meaning and the connotation. "A" is the meaning; "B" is the connotation. The students' papers will look like this:

Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills (mind) are gardeners.

A. *Our mind can control our emotions.*

B. *Only weak willed people let their emotions control them.*

After the students analyze each metaphor, I will elicit some of their interpretations and induce the students to discuss them. The students' comments will lead them to uncover more about Iago and *Othello*, and it will help those who have trouble interpreting metaphors.

This lesson will be repeated with all the metaphors detailed in "Iago's Metaphors."

ESSAYS ABOUT IAGO'S METAPHORS

Often I will assign an essay question about Iago that requires the students to quote and interpret some of the metaphors he uses. In their essay, they will state a conclusion about Iago and demonstrate it by presenting and quoting relevant metaphors and elaborating their meaning and connotation. Furthermore, I will direct them to create a metaphor that signifies that main idea, and they will use it for the closing of the essay. Below is an example of such a lesson:

An Essay Lesson Plan

After examining the first two scenes of Act I and doing the metaphor interpretation exercise, the students will write an essay on the following question: *Through his metaphors, what is Iago trying to do to Brabantio?* To answer this question the students will have to quote and explain the metaphors that Iago uses.

To teach them how to write a good essay that uses quotes, I will follow this process: First, we will discuss what is the answer to the question and mention quotes that support this conclusion. I will note down their answers on the chalkboard:

Iago angers Brabantio

Says Othello is ravishing Desdemona like a beast.

The students will use these notes to compose their topic sentence. I will encourage them to amplify the notes with descriptive words by eliciting from the class a short list of pertinent descriptive words, and I will add some myself. For example, the class and I may come up with: *infuriates*, *enrages*, and *incenses* to replace *anger*. Then we will find three metaphors that demonstrate this topic sentence. To do this, they will examine their metaphor interpretation assignment and check off the metaphors that support this conclusion about Iago. I will inquire which metaphors they checked off, and the class will come to a consensus about which particular metaphors substantiate the topic sentence. I will jot those metaphors on the blackboard with the meanings and connotations that the students have formulated. I will show them the proper way to punctuate and document a quote from a Shakespeare play by inserting the documentation—(1.1.75-76)—and explaining the meaning of the numbers. I also will explain that when we quote three or more lines, we should write them in verse, indenting them but without quotation marks. Finally, I will have them come up with a metaphor that articulates the thesis of their essay—*Iago, through his provocative comments, is enraging Brabantio to commit*

violence against Othello. To help them, I will give them an example: *Iago is pouring gasoline on the flames in Brabantio's heart.*

The notations and comments mentioned above will resemble the outline below, which I will write on the chalkboard:

Topic Sentence

*Iago angers Brabantio (infuriates, enrages, incenses)
Says Othello is ravaging Desdemona like a beast*

Details

"An old black ram / Is tugging your white ewe" (1.1.88 – 89).

*Their lovemaking is disgusting, nasty,
Othello is snorting, grunting, and slobbering.*

"You'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse, you'll have your nephews neigh to you" (1.1.110 -111).

Othello is roughly having sex with her.

Othello is ravaging his sweet, innocent, virgin daughter.

"Your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs" (1.1.114).

Othello and Desdemona are stuck together like insects.

Closing

Use a metaphor that signifies the main idea of your essay.

I will tell the students and insert in the outline before each quote that they must introduce the quote before they state it. I will provide them with an example, such as *In the middle of the night, Iago yells to Brabantio outside his window, . . .* I will tell them, that they must introduce the quote, state the quote, and then explain the meaning and connotations of the quote. I will even jot this on the chalkboard to impress it upon them.

My students have to be reminded about various fundamentals of an essay, such as composing a title for their essay and stating the title of the work of literature they are analyzing.

Many high school students are not accustomed to writing essays, but they are accustomed to talking, so what they do is write an essay as if they are talking to someone. However, guiding the students to formulate notes and a format helps them compose clearly, structurally, and precisely. Furthermore, the notes provide them with *what to write* so as they write they can concentrate on *how to write*—how to elaborate and write eloquently.

After formulating notes and a format for a number of essays, the students eventually learn they should prepare and structure their writing. Many of them will independently formulate notes for an essay after they have been led to do it a few times. Directed and forced to write in a structured way teaches them that they should structure their writing.

Telling them or showing them is not as effective as having them write that way. The act of doing it more strongly imprints it in their mind.

I will follow this lesson plan with other essay topics, such as:

Act I, Scene 3: *Why does Iago hate Othello and what does he plan to do to him?*

Act II, Scene 1: *Describe and discuss Iago's psychological condition.*

Act III, Scene 2: *Describe and explain Iago's plan.*

To discuss these in essays, the students will quote and explain certain metaphors and summarize just as I described above.

When I see that many students are grasping this writing process, I will wean them off of my steady direction and tight control so they can do it independently. I will have them do steps of the process on their own, such as come up with a topic sentence or note down details that support the topic sentence. I will increase the amount of steps that they must do independently until they do the whole process autonomously. The capability to do this varies in the students, so to alleviate frustration, I will group the students so that they can learn from each other. I will particularly group the less perceptive students with the perceptive students. Moreover, I will float around the room and give assistance.

CREATING METAPHORS

I will further challenge the students to formulate their own metaphors and employ them in their writing. On an overhead projector, I will present about six of Iago's metaphors on the overhead projector, one at a time, and have the students re-explain the meaning of each one; then I will instruct them to create a metaphor which implies a comparable meaning as the given Iago metaphor. I do one myself to help them understand. For example, on the overhead projector is the metaphor: *Plague him with flies*. On the blackboard I write, *Put a stone in his shoe*. Seeing me do it clearly shows the students what to do. Sometimes I assist those who are struggling by asking questions whose answers stimulate them to formulate a metaphor. For example, for this particular metaphor, I will ask: *What little thing bothers you? What annoys you?* When they answer these questions, they will have a vehicle for a metaphor.

The students produce many creative metaphors, and when they share them with the class, they and the class get excited about creating clever metaphors. They quickly become competitive and when a student creates one that the others admire, she gives an ostentatious display. Many of their metaphors are funny, and the class rolls with laughter.

During this exercise and at other times, I emphasize that using metaphors improves the clarity and style of our writing. I make up examples: *Instead of saying a certain person was angry, wouldn't it be better to say something like: This person was burning with rage?* I also use metaphors during our conversations and instruction.

CREATING A POEM

Another way I will spur the students to use metaphors is to do an activity called “Fishing,” which entails creating a poem from four unrelated words. In order to do this, the students must use some of the words as metaphors, similes, symbols, or other types of figurative language. I begin by writing four words on the blackboard or transparency, and then I instruct the students to compose a poem using those words. I tell them to use the words in a metaphorical way, use them to describe feelings, attitudes, or the appearance of something. I will ask some of them to read their poem, and I will respond with positive comments and enlist positive comments from the class. When the poem contains metaphors, I will elicit the metaphors from the students, and we will discuss the meaning and the connotations of the metaphors. This exercise produces excitement too. Many of the students give accolades to fine poems. They really appreciate clever use of language and expressing thoughts in a descriptive and figurative way.

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