

Shakespearean Ruminations and Innovations

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Those that do teach young babes do it with gentle means and easy tasks.

—*Othello* 4.2

Picture my classroom in 1979. I've just threaded Orson Welles's 1948 film of *Macbeth* onto a 16mm projector, making sure that it is threaded correctly, stays on the sprockets, and the sound stays in synch. There is so much ambient light in the room that the darker scenes in Welles's noir-ish version can barely be seen on the screen. And Shakespeare's words are barely understandable above the clatter of the old projector.

But for most teachers like me in media-starved classrooms in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, this was the high point of our Shakespeare unit.

Why would viewing an old film in a classroom with a three-inch speaker and scratchy picture be the best part of a Shakespeare unit? Because for the weeks before the film arrived, my class had been reading along with the droning of old British actors on 33 1/3 LP records and answering plot-related questions from their textbook and study packets.

Nobody taught me how to teach Shakespeare until I had already been doing it for 18 years. During those years I basically replicated the methods my high school teachers had used, even though I never felt comfortable with them. I focused mainly on character, plot, and theme. Assessment consisted largely of trivia questions, and the teachers' edition of the textbook supplied plenty of those. Occasionally I would have students read peripheral parts in their seats, giving me the opportunity to take the role of the main character. My Hamlet was modeled

after the recording of Richard Burton; fortunately no recordings of my performance exist. Our school got high-tech in the late '70s when the A/V guy transferred those scratchy recordings with the clicks and pops onto cassette tapes.

I spent a lot of time discussing Shakespeare's life and times, especially because there was so much good material in the textbook we were using. My students learned about every inch of the Globe Theatre. I taught them about Shakespeare's birthplace, his wife, and his children. I thought telling them that one of Shakespeare's children was named Hamnet would get them excited about reading *Hamlet*.

Somehow my students still seemed to understand the plays, probably because I did a lot of explaining and cheerleading along the way. But after 18 years of teaching, I was burnt out. I started looking for employment outside of education. Each week I would send off my meager résumé and cover letter for all sorts of jobs. In a desperate attempt to salvage my career, I attended my first NCTE Annual Convention in Philadelphia in 1985. Following that I learned about the Folger Shakespeare Library and decided to apply for their summer Teaching Shakespeare Institute.

In July 1986, I spent four weeks with 40 colleagues from around the United States at the Folger in Washington, DC. I learned excellent ways to teach Shakespeare from some wonderful scholars, master teachers, actors, my fellow teachers, and the

Institute's director, Peggy O'Brien. It changed my career. It changed my life.

After that summer, I stayed involved with the Folger both as a participant in the 1989 Institute that created the three volumes of *Shakespeare Set Free* and as a Master Teacher and director for subsequent Institutes. After retiring from high school teaching in 2001, I began teaching preservice English teachers at Stony Brook University. In 2005 I was hired by the Folger as Senior Consultant on National Education.

So now, whenever I lead a teacher workshop, I begin by asking the teachers a simple question: "Who taught you how to teach Shakespeare?"

Veteran teachers generally react with laughter. They give each other knowing looks and winks and realize it's a loaded question. Sometimes I get answers from them such as "nobody" or "my friend down the hall" or "from some lesson plans I found online." But novice teachers look around the room nervously because they think that somehow they must have slept through that lesson in college. After all, Shakespeare is universally taught in American schools, so their undergraduate or graduate methods courses must have had some solid pedagogy that they missed. But the truth is that rarely does a teacher give a definitive answer, and when someone cites a wonderful undergraduate or graduate professor who instructed them in some useful performance-based techniques, I am thrilled and want to meet him or her. I've had a few even say that *Shakespeare Set Free* was their methods class textbook. In an extensive survey I conducted for the Folger Shakespeare Library last spring, 75% of those responding said that they actually taught *themselves* how to teach Shakespeare. A few mentioned their high school teachers, some cited various summer seminars and institutes, and others mentioned professional development courses. At the Folger, we are acutely aware of this void and are doing everything we can to fill it. This issue of *EJ* can only help.

Ken Lindblom asked me what I was looking for in editing this issue. "I want articles that teach me things I don't know," I told him. Sorting through over 60 excellent contributions, I think I've found the right mix.

One of my undergraduate students recently said to me, "You have a lot of strong opinions about

this stuff." I guess I do, and over the 23 years that I have been involved with the Folger, I've started to write them down. Here are some of them.

There are many excellent ways to teach Shakespeare, but there are also some bad ways.

Although this issue is inspired by the Institutes, publications, and national outreach from the Folger Shakespeare Library, we don't have a lock on the best ways to teach Shakespeare. In 1986, the late Rex Gibson started "Shakespeare in the Schools" in the UK, and through Cambridge University Press, he published performance-based teacher editions of the plays that teachers still treasure. Since 1983, Miriam Gilbert from the University of Iowa and Jay Halio from the University of Delaware have led NEH Seminars for high school teachers in Stratford-upon-Avon. There is a host of outstanding educational programs at institutions such as Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Massachusetts; the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland; the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey; and the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, Virginia. These theaters host professional development for teachers and have added much to the pedagogical tools we use. Shakespeare's Globe in London and the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon both have done outstanding work for teachers.

In addition to the face-to-face professional development, the Digital Age has expanded the accessibility of solid teaching strategies and resources. The Folger and these same theater companies now offer online study guides, podcasts, production stills, videos, and lesson plans. After the screening of Ian McKellan's *King Lear* this past April, PBS posted it to their site, viewable as the entire play or segmented into specific scenes.

There are also many less-engaging resources available. Those study packets and simple plot-related tests and quizzes have migrated from print to the Internet, but their worth hasn't increased. So while it may be indelicate to say this, I think there are some bad ways to teach Shakespeare, and looking over the first part of my career, I believe I tried them all.

I won't try to list all the good ways to teach Shakespeare here, but you'll find many of them in

this issue. They all incorporate higher levels of thinking and engagement, smart use of the latest technologies, close reading of the text, and student-centered strategies.

If you want students to learn Shakespeare, focus on more than character, plot, and theme.

If the only things you want your students to know after reading *Romeo and Juliet* are who's who, what happens, and what the major themes are, you may as well give them a simple plot summary or copies of SparkNotes or some other study guide. Those guides do a much better job than Shakespeare in explaining character, plot, and theme, and you can cover any play in a week or less that way. However, if your students learn only the characters, plot, and themes of *Romeo and Juliet* in your ninth-grade class, none of that will help them when they get to tenth grade and are confronted with *Julius Caesar*, which has different characters, a different plot, and different themes. And if their tenth-grade teacher focuses

on those same elements with *Caesar*, they'll be just as lost when they meet *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. However, if the entire English department focuses on unlocking Shakespeare's language, students will become steadily better at reading, understanding, and performing Shakespeare (and probably works by others). By the time twelfth grade comes around, students will be much more adept with whatever Shakespeare play they encounter.

It is more important to get students to like Shakespeare than it is to get them to understand every word.

While this may be obvious, we often find ourselves obsessed with the idea of explaining everything. As a matter of fact, many of us feel quite guilty if we don't. We scrupulously explain the minutia that appears in the glosses and footnotes in our texts. We feel it absolutely necessary to point out the various interpretations of certain speeches. And we rely heavily on outside sources to prepare ourselves before each day's lessons so that we can explain any-



Celebrating Shakespeare's birthday, Folger Shakespeare Library. Photo by Claire Duggan.

thing that might come up. I have seen veteran scholars and editors in the reading room at the Folger Library poring over texts to ascertain the precise meaning of a word or passage, and they've been at it for their whole career. Why then does it matter that your fifth-period class doesn't know a *malkin* from a *maltworm*? When we see a live production of a Shakespeare play, there are no footnotes, and we understand most of it. A well-meaning teacher once told me that she spends an entire week going over all the references, allusions, and difficult vocabulary in *Hamlet* before she begins teaching the play. "This way they'll know what everything means," she said. I can't imagine what that week felt like for the average high school senior.

In his article in this issue, "The Text's the Thing: Using (Neglected) Issues of Textual Scholarship to Help Students Reimagine Shakespeare," Scott Parsons makes a good case for looking closely at quarto and folio textual variants in Hamlet's "O that this too, too sallied/sullied/solid flesh would melt" soliloquy. "Concentrating on the one word variant in this way can help elucidate the entire soliloquy," he writes. "[T]he class need not depend on the instructor to direct student attention to operative themes or artifices of language such as metaphor; rather, the students may be able to discover such things themselves" (87).

Cheryl Hogue Smith examines one rhetorical device in her article, "No Reason without Rhyme: Rhetorical Negotiation in Shakespeare." Citing examples from *Comedy of Errors*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, she points out, "In all three, Shakespeare's use of rhyme affects auditors differently, and if we can help students see the importance of the rhyme (or lack thereof), we may be able to help them better understand and appreciate Shakespeare's works" (92).

The best way to get students to like Shakespeare is by getting them to perform Shakespeare.

Performing Shakespeare does not mean having students sit at their desks reading aloud, or having students stand in front of the room reading aloud, or the teacher acting out scenes for the class. It also doesn't mean memorizing a sonnet or soliloquy and reciting it privately for the teacher. It means engag-

ing students with the words in such a way that requires them to make informed decisions about the text and then speaking those lines and interacting with their classmates. It might also mean working with a group of their classmates to edit a scene, create a director's prompt book for it, figure out what sort of minimal costumes and props they need, and perform it in a classroom or schoolwide festival.

Susan C. Biondo-Hench's "Shakespeare Troupe: An Adventure in Words, Fluid Text, and Comedy" shows what can happen when students get completely immersed in performing scenes. As Biondo-Hench wrote, "as the scene started to flow, once again I was able to observe and to experience Shakespeare's transformative power, the power that emerges when students are offered performance-based opportunities" (37). Edward L. Rocklin's "Stand and Unfold Your Self: New Moves for Exploring *Hamlet*" demonstrates ways to move from "What do these words do?" and "What can these words be made to do?" to more encompassing questions that look at how every element of a play raises performance questions. Teaching the plays in this manner, Rocklin writes, "you will have enabled students . . . to become better readers, more creative inventors, and more alert spectators not only of *Hamlet* but of other plays by Shakespeare" (84).

Acting out a scene is a form of close reading: it's close reading on your feet.

Students learn Shakespeare best when given the opportunity to get the play up on its feet. The amount of analysis that goes into presenting a scene cannot be duplicated with lectures or study questions. Simply reading the play does not produce the same results. While some of your colleagues and some administrators might think that the noise coming from your room and the delighted faces leaving your class mean that there's not much learning going on in your classroom, nothing could be further from the truth.

The "Student Voices" column is testimony to the value of performing scenes. As Orubba Almansouri writes, "The language was so different from what we speak right now, and therefore it wasn't easy to memorize. But I felt the words and their meanings. They were so powerful and I understood why they weren't common like many other stories"

(35). Aram Balian adds, “By performing Shakespeare’s words with emotions and gestures, I began to appreciate the messages he was trying to get across. I understood the intricate plot. I discovered the rich nuances of the phrases and began to feel a true affection for the characters. I related to Demetrius’ desire to impress Theseus. I laughed at Bottom’s hilarious antics. I felt Pyramus and Thisbe’s pain. Through my performance, I recognized Shakespeare’s masterful use of subtle ironies and sarcastic remarks” (36). Jessica Sawdy concludes, “When you read it by yourself silently, you’re examining Shakespeare from the outside and trying to look in. When you’re acting it out, though, you’re inside the play, looking out at the world. Then it comes alive” (36).

Sometimes it is better to teach just part of a play rather than the whole play.

In the Folger survey, we found that more than half of those we polled said that the biggest challenge they face when teaching Shakespeare is “not enough time.” With the state-mandated tasks facing teachers today, time has become even more precious. We’ve heard of some schools that have even felt it necessary to drop Shakespeare from some grades to get everything else in. A simple way to deal with the obstacle of time is to teach only a portion of a play, yet I often find teachers feel guilty about skipping scenes.

Nearly every Shakespeare play is cut in production. *Hamlet*, at over 4,000 lines, would take more than four hours to perform if a director chose to use every word. If you teach *Hamlet*, you know how long it can take. One solution is to leave out all the Fortinbras scenes. Sure, they provide an excellent contrast to Hamlet’s inaction, but my seniors could go on to lead perfectly happy and productive lives without knowing that. *Macbeth* at 2,349 lines is a bit more manageable, but if you’ve ever struggled through act 4, scene 3, where Malcolm is testing Macduff’s loyalty, you know how difficult it is to explain that to mystified 16-year-olds.

Another way to conserve time is to select scenes from several plays that are linked thematically. For example, you might focus on “Fathers and Daughters” and choose and edit scenes from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* 1.1; *The Tempest* 1.2; *Othello* 1.3; *Hamlet*

1.3; *King Lear* 1.1 and 4.7; *Romeo and Juliet* 3.5; and even *Pericles* 5.1. This “Shakespeare Sampler” provides some wonderful scenes for students to read and perform and introduces them to more than a single play. Other possible sampler themes are “Love at First Sight”; “Deception and Deceit”; “Letter-Reading Scenes”; “Shakespeare’s Strong Women”; and “Ghosts and the Supernatural.”

Shakespeare is for students of all ability and reading levels, of every ethnic origin, in every kind of school.

Too often teachers tell me that I don’t know what kind of students they have, and that’s why they don’t teach Shakespeare to them. While only 8% of the teachers we surveyed said that they always use “modern English” translations of Shakespeare’s plays, 45% said that they use them “some of the time.” In the “Teacher to Teacher” feature, Caitlin Franco writes about using *No Fear Shakespeare* initially with her seventh-grade students in the Bronx. “By the end of the unit, students were actually reading the ‘pure’ version of *Romeo and Juliet* in class,” she writes. “Once in a while, we referred to the *No Fear* version so students could see the accompanying visuals, which they always enjoyed. But they were no longer overwhelmed or intimidated by the ‘pure’ version” (33). Joseph R. Scotese relates why he only uses Shakespeare’s words. “Shakespeare’s plots are nothing that can’t be found by perusing tonight’s lineup on prime time. But those words—oh, those words—there is nothing that approaches them” (34).

As Peggy O’Brien notes in her introduction to the first volume of *Shakespeare Set Free*, in 1623, two members of Shakespeare’s acting company compiled 36 of his plays into a collection we call the First Folio. She writes, “The introduction to the book is entitled ‘To the great Variety of readers.’ The introduction itself begins ‘From the most able to him that can but spell . . .’ They meant it in 1623. I mean it right now. Teaching Shakespeare to all kinds of students is not only possible; it’s essential” (p. xii).

In “Words, Words, Words: Reading Shakespeare with English Language Learners,” Christina Porter demonstrates some excellent strategies that she uses with her students including using abridged texts, warm-ups, and “chunking.” She concludes by

writing, “For these students who have so many challenges, being able to read a difficult text and discover that unique language is something to celebrate, not something to condemn, is especially meaningful” (49).

In ‘Who’s There?’: Shakespeare and the Dragon of Autism,” Christopher Renino discusses how Shakespeare has revealed much for two boys with autism. He writes, “Words have pulled Dan and Nick out of the vortex of isolation and allowed them to connect in sophisticated ways with each other and other human beings. Teaching them reading and facilitating their self-expression has helped them to see patterns in and form ideas around millions of otherwise unconnected facts and fragments of experience. The study of Shakespeare brings beauty, joy and order to the potentially limitless chaos of human motives and emotions” (55).

There are wonderful plays to teach other than the Big Four.

Our survey showed that the high school English canon hasn’t changed much in the past 100 years. Here, in order, are the four most-taught plays with the grades in which they are mostly taught:

1. *Romeo and Juliet*, ninth grade
2. *Macbeth*, eleventh grade
3. *Hamlet*, twelfth grade
4. *Julius Caesar*, tenth grade

There has been some research into why those four plays were originally included. It had a lot to do with entrance exams in universities such as Harvard (*Hamlet*) and the connection with early 20th-century curriculum that included Latin and Rhetoric (*Julius Caesar*). Note that the Big Four are all tragedies, yet many teachers tell us how successful the comedies are because their students relate to quarreling lovers and comic situations much more than they do to usurping kings, assassinations, and political intrigue.

It is also worth noting that creeping up right behind *Julius Caesar* is *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, the play most often performed by high school theater groups. I’ve always been struck by the irony that while some students are performing *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* on Friday night in the school auditorium, their teachers are teaching *Julius Caesar* instead.

The next ten most-often taught plays are the following:

1. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*
2. *Othello*
3. *The Taming of the Shrew*
4. *Much Ado About Nothing*
5. *Twelfth Night*
6. *The Tempest*
7. *King Lear*
8. *The Merchant of Venice*
9. *As You Like It*
10. *Richard III*

It is clear from this list that teachers are venturing beyond the standard canon in their massaging of the syllabus. Teachers have also discovered the value of teaching Shakespeare’s sonnets. In their article, Donna Denizé and Louisa Newlin trace the sonnet tradition from Petrarch to Shakespeare to the Harlem Renaissance writer Claude McKay and demonstrate why it matters that students see the continuum.

The best way to use video may not be showing the tape or DVD from the beginning to the end.

The affordability of DVDs has had a significant effect on how teachers use videos. Online access to Shakespeare scenes on YouTube, Google Video, and many theater archives has expanded the classroom possibilities even further. Our survey told us that the majority of teachers no longer use the film simply as a reward for “getting through” a play and that their students are no longer seeing the movie as a week off from learning. About 65% said they show different versions of scenes while reading the play. Some told us that they use selected scenes on video to get through difficult sections rather than reading the text. The Folger concurs that incorporating these performances into the regular classroom teaching of Shakespeare is not only legitimate but desirable. I accidentally discovered that turning on the closed captioning transforms the viewing of a Shakespeare film. While my students initially complained, I noticed that their comprehension level soared when they watched with captions. Suddenly they picked up names, images, and difficult words—elements that had frustrated previous students.

Christy Desmet demonstrates some excellent resources and applications in her article, “Teaching Shakespeare with YouTube.” She writes, “Participating in a virtual network of Shakespearean artists, both as producers and critics, gives students a real stake in the shaping of Shakespeare for our time” (69). While many told us that YouTube is blocked in their school, others said they download the appropriate clips onto a flash drive and show these clips in class while reading a scene. Others simply post links to the clips they want onto a basic website or blog and, with appropriate assignments, have students view them outside of class.

In “Where to Be or Not to Be: The Question of Place in *Hamlet*,” John Golden illustrates some fascinating techniques that he uses to study film versions of Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” speech. After doing close analyses of a host of productions, he has his students transform the scene once again. Some of the suggestions he has gotten are “Hamlet in a school hallway, stock still as classmates taunt him as they pass by; Hamlet standing on the rails of a bridge looking over the edge; Hamlet as a hospice doctor; and memorably, Hamlet as a terrorist” (63).



Old Reading Room, Folger Shakespeare Library. Photo by Julie Ainsworth.

Golden adds, “The power of this type of transformation and of all these activities is that students begin to see how the long-dead Shakespeare can still be alive in today’s world” (64).

Josh Cabat takes video one step further by having his students re-mix Shakespeare with mash ups and directors’ Yak Tracks. In “‘The Lash of Film’: New Paradigms of Visuality in Teaching Shakespeare,” he concludes with two points: “The first is that the use of images in the classroom no longer represents a kind of supplemental or ancillary literacy: it is literacy The second is that regardless of how we feel about visuality, our days of showing clips from films as a supplement to the text to an essentially passive audience are numbered” (57).

In “Shakespeare, our Digital Native,” Christopher Shamburg and Cari Craighead have their students create “DIY” Shakespeare with remixes for audio and video. In their conclusion they say, “Connecting the values of performance and the trends of digital culture can turn Shakespeare into a Trojan horse—a deceptively simple concept that can be filled with powerful ideas” (77).

Studying Shakespeare’s life doesn’t help students understand his plays.

Let me clarify this. Teaching about Elizabethan times and customs can be quite helpful in the context of teaching a play, especially if it helps to illustrate a line or situation. For example, in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* 1.2, Francis Flute objects to the role he has been given in the “Pyramus and Thisbe” play. “Let me not play a woman,” he says. “I have a beard coming.” To explain this line, I point out the Elizabethan stage convention: Women were not allowed to perform on stage so boys played the women’s parts because their voices hadn’t broken yet. In this scene, the actor playing Flute would be prepubescent because, as he says, he has a beard “coming.” Another example is when Petruchio tells Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*, “We will return unto thy father’s house . . . with ruffs and cuffs and farthingales and things.” I explain that a ruff is a starched and pleated circular collar worn by a man and a farthingale is a structure of hoops worn under a woman’s skirt. And you can’t teach *Romeo and Juliet* without explaining that the role of an Elizabethan

Nurse was to breastfeed babies and take care of infants and young children.

But we often treat Shakespeare's life and times as a separate subject. The disconnect between the plays and Shakespeare's life has a good explanation. The textbook publishers add lots of dazzling pictures and details in the introduction to the plays, and tradition encourages teachers to teach it—all of it, even though students might have gotten similar information last year. It's also easy to teach factual details and really easy to test them. So we end up with "What year was Shakespeare born?" "How many children did Shakespeare have?" "What were their names?" "What was his wife's name?" "How old were he and his wife when they married?" "How many people fit into the Globe Theatre?" "How far was it from Stratford-upon-Avon to London?" That leaves me with one final question: "What possible reasons can we give for asking students to learn all this?"

Lynette Williamson suggests a better approach in her article "Virtual Seating in the Globe Theatre: Appreciating Film Adaptations of Shakespeare's Plays." By allowing her students to view films from any one of three areas—the Pit, the Gallery, and the Balcony—she makes the Globe come alive. She explains their roles while viewing: "[t]he pit, where 'groundlings' appreciate the special effects and watch for scenes of violence, gore, sex, and dirty jokes; [t]he gallery, where educated members of the middle class appreciate the intricacies of the plot and watch for puns, riddles, ironies, and double entendre; [t]he balcony seats above the stage, reserved for nobles and royalty who appreciate the political intrigue, the foibles of the rich and power-


ful, and pay close attention to the king's place in the Great Chain of Being" (71).

Designing Globe Theatres out of sugar cubes and Popsicle sticks, making Elizabethan newspapers, designing costumes, doing a scavenger hunt on the Internet, and doing a report on Elizabethan sanitary conditions have nothing to do with a student's appreciation of Shakespeare's language.

One of my former students came to me sobbing recently. She was in her first few weeks of student teaching and was given *Romeo and Juliet* to teach. Her cooperating teacher insisted they spend a week in the computer lab to create Elizabethan newspapers. When she said she'd rather use the performance and technology resources that she had learned in my methods class, the teacher said, "No. Open School night is coming in a few weeks, and they will look good on the bulletin board."

Enough said.

Reading over 60 excellent submissions and editing this issue has been both informative and pleasurable for me. I learned a good deal in the process and I trust you will too. To quote Gremio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, "O this learning, what a thing it is!"

In the two pieces following this article, you'll hear the voices of the past and present at the Folger Shakespeare Library. As Director of Education, Robert Young has taken up the mission of Peggy O'Brien and the late Janet Field-Pickering. I suggest you watch Folger Education in the upcoming years. We're thinking of classroom teachers all the time. 

Michael LoMonico has taught Shakespeare courses and workshops for teachers in 36 states as well as in Canada and England and is the Senior Consultant on National Education for the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. Since 1986, he has worked at the Folger's Teaching Shakespeare Institute as a Master Teacher and as the Institute Director. In 2007 and 2008, supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, he organized and directed weeklong regional Teaching Shakespeare Institutes at UCLA, the University of Tulsa, the University of Nebraska, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) and with the Georgia Council of Teachers of English in Atlanta. Michael is the author of *The Shakespeare Book of Lists* (NewPage Books) and *Shakespeare 101* (Random House) and was the founder and editor of *Shakespeare* magazine (Georgetown University and Cambridge University Press). He was an assistant to the editor for curriculum in the *Folger's Shakespeare Set Free* series (Washington Square Press) and was the technical editor to *The Complete Idiots Guide to Shakespeare*. He recently created and hosted "Mashups, Remixes, and Web 2.0: Playing Fast and Loose with Shakespeare" for the PBS Media Infusion Blog and organized and led the "Remixing Shakespeare for 21st Century Students" Webinar for PBS. He also wrote the content for the website, "Shakespeare: Subject to Change," published by Cable in the Classroom, and several articles and lessons on the PBS site, "In Search of Shakespeare." Michael taught English at Farmingdale High School in New York for 33 years before retiring in 2001. He currently teaches in the English Teacher Education Program at Stony Brook University.