

Perspectives, Practices, and Insights on the Teaching of Literature: A Reflective Narrative¹

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Abstract

This reflective-narrative essay ponders and explains effective strategies employed by the author in his own second language classroom. He cultivated the skills, talents, and ideas of his own students by blending various strategies and methods that clearly define the standards and meet the demands of modern literature education. All situations and practices were taken from over a decade of experience as a language and literature teacher. Regarding the practices he mentions in his narration, most of them were carried out in the Philippine setting where language and literature teaching is very challenging due to factors faced by teachers, such as socio-economic status, the language used at home, and the learning climate. Most of the thoughts shared and explored by the teacher-writer were supported by his personal reflection and interpersonal interactions with others, be it in the classroom or in the community where he lives. He narrates his professional experiences in the teaching of literature and cites related literature to support his views. Readers of this article can learn helpful tips and strategies on how they can transform their classrooms into meaningful, innovative, and reflective environment that will benefit their learners. The main goal of this article-essay is to share and describe the most suitable and learner-centered practices in teaching literature in the second language classrooms in the Philippine educational setting.

Resumen

Este ensayo reflexivo-narrativo reflexiona sobre y explica las estrategias efectivas empleadas por el autor en su propia clase de segundo idioma. Cultivó las habilidades, talentos e ideas de sus propios estudiantes al combinar diversas estrategias y métodos que definen claramente los estándares y satisfacen las demandas de la educación moderna de literatura. Todas las situaciones y prácticas fueron tomadas de más de una década de experiencia como profesor de lengua y literatura. En cuanto a las prácticas que menciona en su narración, la mayoría de ellas fueron ejecutadas o realizadas en el entorno filipino, donde la enseñanza de idiomas y literatura es muy difícil debido a factores que enfrentan los maestros, como el estatus socioeconómico, el idioma en el hogar y el clima de aprendizaje. La mayoría de los pensamientos compartidos y explorados por el maestro-autor fueron apoyados por su reflexión personal e interacciones interpersonales con los demás, ya sea en el aula o en la comunidad donde labora. Narra sus experiencias profesionales en la enseñanza de la literatura y cita literatura relacionada para apoyar sus puntos de vista. Los lectores de este artículo pueden aprender consejos y estrategias útiles sobre cómo pueden transformar sus aulas en un entorno significativo, innovador y reflexivo que beneficiará a sus alumnos.

Literature Review

From the thoughts and tips shared by experts, the author believes that there are strategies that language and literature teachers can employ in their respective classrooms. It is through this article that professional experiences and perspectives are narrated and explored for the purpose of informing and sharing invaluable insights, practices, and perspectives. Language and literature teachers should employ a range of instructional strategies in presenting lessons and conducting pedagogical tasks. When they are aware of the needs and diversity of their learners, they are able to formulate better learning objectives.

Practices and Strategies

Verner (2018) stated that in teaching literature, always start where students come from. Sparking the interest of students will engage them. It is wise for the teacher to assign reading materials to his students for them to be prepared the activities in the next class. This may mean providing learners with fables, songs, comic books, and other exciting materials to read. The teacher can also use updated magazines, letters, diaries, and journals in the reading class. Once learners feel they are comfortable with the materials assigned by the teacher, they can move on to writing tasks. This process does not need to be very fast. It is advisable for students to take the tasks slowly until they develop the enthusiasm and confidence to participate actively. Verner (2018) also believes that the teacher has to explain the objectives behind selections and materials included in the discussions.

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Not all students will appreciate or understand why literary selections are taught in the class, especially if these students do not study humanities or English. However, different people have their own subjective reasons for studying or reading literature. Some readers use it as a tool for communication. Some may read to get information, while others read for entertainment. This is because the author believes that people are diverse in many aspects.

Widdowson (1975) explained that literary texts are unique because in literature the *what* and *how* of a text are inseparable. People communicate their thoughts, feelings, and aspirations through what they write and read. Readers can converse (in a way) with the author's thoughts through the process of reading. He further underscored that understanding how literature communicates involves understanding its *what* and *how*. This shows that literary texts cannot be easily paraphrased and there is no single interpretation of the content. Widdowson (1975) opined that in teaching literature, it is imperative for students to understand how the selections communicate thoughts or messages and should try to relate to the content. Literary appreciation can take place when learners comprehend the texts they read. Rosenblatt (1978, as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2014) defined literary texts through the readers who interact and interpret them. She maintained that the common way to distinguish literary works is through examination of the texts.

Kramsch (1993) on the other hand, pointed out that grammatical form plays a significant role on how readers understand and interact with the literary texts. She added that a reader has a variety of choices for conveying a message. The choice of grammatical form enables both author and audience to define the old and new information based on contexts and situations they perceive. Similarly, Carter (1996) believed that a language-based approach to teaching literature is learner-centered, activity-based, and process-oriented. He maintained that classroom tasks are invaluable and helpful because they can stimulate learners to interpret the texts by engaging them in the process of meaning making. Celce-Murcia (2014) connected and underlined the importance of characterization in teaching literary texts by defining it as the process of assessing the characters based on what they say and do. It also involves how the author of the text describes the characters. Taking this into account, to spark student participation, the teacher may begin by asking them to describe the characters using adjectives. They can also gather pictures that depict the actions and images of the characters.

Other perspectives, insights, and practices

Suitability in teaching literature is marked by the needs, interests, cultural background, and language level of the classroom learners. As was explained by Collie and Slater (2001), the literature instructor needs to be flexible and creative when arousing the interests and attention of the learners. They further stated that if learners feel that the selections are meaningful and relevant, they will surely take time to read them. Interest, relevance, and appeal are essential in the teaching of literature. Difficulty concerning language level in many instances proved to be a hinderance in learning literature. On the other hand, Widdowson (1975) stressed the important role of literature in learners achieving awareness of social realities as they go outside the classrooms. He further explained that literature helps students develop understanding of their experiences, and how their observations can help them become better individuals.

For Carter (1996), literature serves various purposes which can involve students in making creative presentations such as advertisements, jokes, newspaper headlines, and puns. He pointed out that in using literary texts, learners are expressing their own discourses and thoughts which can encourage them to create ideas and act spontaneously. Meanwhile, Burton (1982) believed in the importance of using spontaneous conversations to check the learners' comprehension while they are evaluated on how well they have learned the concepts and values in the literary texts. Maley and Duff (1989) offered strategies in developing the writing skills of the learners. They stressed the effectiveness of composing poems as they gather ideas and explore vocabulary items that can help them improve writing skills. The cited materials that offer invaluable insights and concepts which language and literature instructors can use in the actual teaching where they are confronted by issues, challenges, and transitions.

In view of the cited materials, the current author synthesized major points about the teaching of literature. According to the studies cited, there are many strategies that can be used to facilitate a more effective instruction in the literary class. For Verner (2018), meaningful and engaging materials such as fables, songs, comic books, letters, diaries, and journals are helpful. Verner (2018) added that the teacher

needs to explain learning objectives to the class as well as the reasons such materials and selections are included for discussions.

Widdowson (1975) emphasized the importance of comprehension of learners for them to be able to participate and respond to the activities and lessons provided in the classroom. He further stated that literary appreciation will only be possible if students understand the messages and contents of the selections. Rosenblatt (1978, as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2014) believed that only through analysis of the texts that students can understand and appreciate literature. Kramsch (1993) on the other hand, underscored the need to develop the grammatical competence of learners for them to understand the lesson and perform in the class. Carter (1996) believed that a language-based approach in literature instruction is activity-based, process-oriented, and learner-centered. He added that classroom tasks can help learners engage in meaning making. Celce-Murcia et al. (2014) connected the importance of characterization in teaching literary texts by defining it as the process of evaluating and describing characters based on their thoughts and actions. Meanwhile, Collie, and Slater (2001) maintained the importance of interest, relevance, and appeal in the teaching of literature. They also believed that literature teachers have to be patient, flexible, and creative in designing lessons and materials for their students.

In summary, experts and theorists have highlighted the most effective strategies and concepts they used in their own classrooms. These perspectives and strategies are very helpful to all literature teachers in the sense that they can compare and test all strategies while they are considering the diversities and needs of the learners.

Reflections from the Author's Classroom Experiences

Varieties of specific activities and tasks are offered and explained here by the author so that readers of this article can easily reflect, and apply the tips and strategies being tested and employed by the author himself. Instructors need to incorporate such activities so that they can facilitate the learning process and create opportunities in the literature classroom. If all learners participate in the tasks and perceive all the objectives and importance of the activities and lessons, they will be able to develop literary appreciation and social awareness. The purpose of this thoughtful narration is to highlight various strategies and tasks used by the researcher in teaching literature in the classroom. The author focused mainly on the procedures, planning, strategies, and outcomes which he experienced in many fruitful years of teaching literature. Being a literature and language teacher for more than a decade brought him to the view that teaching literature is both challenging and rewarding. There were times in the past that he had to attend workshops, seminars, fora and the like so that he could get a picture of pedagogies and insights. But as he went through a meaningful and colorful journey, he was able to achieve timely and relevant methodologies in teaching literature.

Considering that Catholic schools in the Philippines encourage teachers to infuse discussions and lessons with the impartation of values and religion, the author decided to include one selection reflecting prayer and faith in God. It is noted that other readers and teachers may decide what kind of material and context to be explored in the class depending on the location, setting, and beliefs. In many of our schools the affective domain in which emotions and values are taught is very important and teachers are required to include relevant selections and texts. For this reason, the author attempts to create engaging and transformative environments for his ESL and EFL learners in the literary classroom. One of the most engaging selections of the many literary pieces he has utilized in the past is "The Universal Prayer" by Alexander Pope [Appendix 1]. It must be noted that the poem was mandated to be taught in the subject *Literary Masterpieces*. In this poem, there are numerous lessons about life which could enhance the reader's relationship with God. In preparing his students for the topic, the author asked them to write their own personal prayer.

Most of his students were between 19 and 21 years old and were fluent in English and eloquent in expressing themselves. One of the reasons this selection was chosen was to develop appreciation of literature among learners, develop mindfulness, emphasize humility and forgiveness. Being a progressive university, the school implements English as a medium of instruction, so technically, students are required to communicate in English. It is a practice in the school to start and end the class with a short prayer; hence, students were not surprised when they were given an assignment to write a personal prayer.

Considering the diversity of his students, the author decided to employ differentiated instruction. It must be noted that multiple intelligence and contextualized teaching were also touched on in the series of activities he conducted. Next, let's examine how did this strategy worked.

The assignment was given to the students to prepare them and condition their thoughts. The author instructed his students to write their prayers at home where there was solemnity and serenity. In that way, they could really meditate and reflect thoughtfully. In the following session, the class read the poem aloud in small groups. The instructor taught them the correct expressions, intonation, pronunciation, and so on. After this task, they sat together to discuss the selection with thoughtful and reflective brainstorming. Then, they were asked to illustrate the tone and message of the poem in the form of posters. The members chose a writer, who collected and wrote the ideas; a moderator who organized the thoughts and directed the members; a team leader who served as the speaker of the team; and finally the individual (other) members who thoughtfully shared their views. He could gleamingly recall the moment when this literary piece was tackled in the class. Students were all participative and prudent in analyzing, exploring, and synthesizing the ideas culled from the class. All were bonded by the objectives they had set, and indeed there was a healthy atmosphere in the class.

In line with the tasks the author provided in the class, there were valid and reasonable scoring rubrics which he presented prior to the implementation. In the evaluation phase he gave the class three insightful reflection questions such as (1) *How could prayer bring you closer to God?*; (2) *Why do people pray?*, and (3) *Why are their prayers not answered?* As expected, students became emotional in dealing with the last two questions because they found them relatable and experiential. With this activity, members of the class got the chance to interact with one another, express their own thoughts, and most of all, take the opportunity to navigate their past and cultivate their experiences and engage in introspection. Since the strategies were learner-centered and outcomes-based, they effectively measured and assessed the qualities of the learners. In other words, learners were able to perform in the class by being exposed to various activities and tasks implemented by the teacher. The teacher was convinced he was able to carry out his learning goals appropriately. Both before and after the implementation of an activity or presentation of the lesson, the reflexive teacher has to ask himself/herself if the activities carried out were effective or not. The members of the class mirror the performance of the teacher and the impact of the tasks and goals designed by the latter.

The first narration was on poetry and the second was prose, a short story. One of the thoughtful selections the author treasured was *God Sees the Truth but Waits* authored by Leo Tolstoy [Appendix 2]. It must be mentioned that an adapted version of the story was utilized. Prior to delivery of this topic/lesson, the author first examined the dominant attitude of the learners, in other words he found out a little bit about his students' personalities and preferences, as well as their experiences. The lesson itself was scheduled for the fifth week of the term, and most likely, he already knew his students very well. In this school, it is a common practice that teachers require their students to submit an index card where their personal and demographic profile is provided. It includes basic information about the learners such as their name, address, age, hobbies, interests, and so on. An open-ended question is also included such as, *Why did you choose this course? What are your goals in life?*

From this point of reference, the author was able to reflect on the most appropriate strategies to use in the discussion of the literary piece and accompanying tasks. It is common among language and literature teachers provide the class with various activities to reinforce and enrich their vocabulary skills. In this case, he asked his students, who were grouped into teams of seven members, to choose five words or vocabulary items from the selection which were presented using PowerPoint. Another warm-up activity is a quiz in the class. This makes use of multiple choice and word association techniques in which students simply try to find the meanings of the words through the choices illustrated.

To make the discussion of the story more specific and comprehensible, the author intentionally wrote three reflective questions on small sheets of paper. (1) *Why did God allow the crime and culprit to go unpunished for 26 years?* (2) *If you were Aksionov would you forgive Semyonich? Why or why not?;* and (3) *What truths in life could you get from the story?* Later these sheets were given to each group for them to ponder on and brainstorm extensively. The rationale for the brainstorming session was to let students engage in an exchange of ideas where members of the groups can share and express their points of view and share their personal experiences and observations. In the discussion phase, the teacher involved the entire class through a graphic organizer which was called "Big Questions" and "Star Diagram" [Appendix

3]. Here, students were asked to answer wh- questions or information questions. Since students had already read the story beforehand, they were able to fill out the graphic organizers with related information in the context of the story. The instructor was fascinated and amazed as members of each group expressed their answers. Through this task, he could see the brilliant ideas springing from the individual members of the class.

The author did not forget to process and include the reflective questions he had earlier assigned to the group. Those questions guided the learners to cultivate deeper ideas and further explore about the message and content of the selection. Furthermore, the said questions gauged the critical thinking skills of the students as they tried to recall important details from the story and at the same time remember details. In the final output, they made was a poster in which a quotation was personally constructed by the members of the group in relation to the message of the story. In the discussion of the text, the teacher asked the class to point out important elements of the story and to identify different symbols, literary devices, and sensory images they analyzed and discovered while they were reading the material

Reflections on the teaching of literary pieces

In teaching prose and poetry, the reflective teacher has to find resources that will fit the students' needs, diversities, capacities, and experiences. True to the saying that "there is no one perfect method", the literature teacher has to explore other strategies and practices that are appropriate and relevant to the students. In the age of digital learning, the teacher has to be innovative by using the relevant and timely tools for the teaching of the literary pieces. All learners deserve to experience quality and holistic instruction supported and nurtured by meaningful pedagogical tasks and assessment tools. Since differentiated tasks are pointed out in this article, the literature teacher can provide many fruitful and engaging tasks and activities relevant to the capacity and individualities of the students. The resources can be considered but should be examined well. Experienced teachers advise other classroom teachers about using authentic materials in which learners can easily relate and feel the meanings of what they feel. Those who are new in the teaching field may listen to stories and attend workshops to improve themselves. Learners always want to experience and witness something new in the literature class; hence, they will participate if they clearly perceive the instructional objectives set by the literature teacher.

The teacher has to move away from traditional methods and teaching styles. The author has concluded that art of questioning plays a vital role in harnessing and nurturing the minds of the students in the literary class. Linked to this concept is whole-class discussion where learners can get the chance to participate in the class through leading questions. If the teacher knows how to filter responses and he/she is aware of the levels of learning under Bloom's Taxonomy, then he/she will be in the logical and reasonable ground in designing questions that will catch the learners' attention and at the same time will develop their critical and analytical thinking skills. The Taxonomy gave the language teacher ideas on how he could design learning tasks and activities. He aligned his objectives and lessons to the existing skills or competencies indicated by the taxonomy. More importantly, the teacher motivated the students to engage in critical thinking while they produced output. It served as a framework to follow in all undertakings or endeavors. Being aware of the skills and competencies indicated by Bloom's taxonomy can help the teacher describe and assess the specific level of learning the student has to achieve. From lower-order-thinking skills to higher-order-thinking skills, the teacher has a complete guide in providing relevant and timely tasks to the learners. Adhering to the taxonomy can help the language and literature teacher design and evaluate quality learning outcomes of his/her students. These outcomes are strong and there is striking evidence of learning taking place in the class.

The author believes that flexible and reflective teachers need to note the various strategies to effectively guide and enhance the literary skills of their students. Nowadays, the teacher has to be resourceful and flexible to provide learner-centered tasks and activities in which students can maximize their potentials and cultivate their skills. "Literature is life" as they say, so in this case, we, as literature teachers have to make our students feel that they experience life under our supervision and instruction. Students have to feel they are engaged in meaningful and thoughtful reflective journey. As they do this, literature teachers do their own introspection to make their principles, perspectives, and strategies grow. Through careful planning, they can create lesson plans for the successful presentation of literary texts and contexts, helping our students develop an appreciation of literature, cultural awareness, and a cultivation of values. He knows teachers are unique beings with their own ways of handling and directing learners who have different needs and ideas. Through daily interaction with their students, they can modify strategies and

realign their objectives. The best teachers are those who are receptive to changes and innovations, but teachers should not forget to align their objectives to the vision, mission, and objectives of their school. They should continue to upgrade their skills in order to improve personally and professionally. Indeed, teaching literature is an endless journey where teachers can meet people from all walks of life and their own readings can take them to many places on earth. Their dreams, goals, and aspirations as builders of the future come into existence through teachings and insights.

One of the useful lesson plan formats was adapted from TEFLen Training College (n.d.). It details all the steps which the teacher can apply in teaching reading and literature. In this lesson plan, the components are:

- warm-up where the teacher provides a review of the past lesson;
- introduction/skimming where the teacher provides short tasks to lead the students to the lesson or topic;
- scanning where students go directly to the handouts or modules;
- vocabulary presentation where the learners unlock difficulties;
- critical awareness is the stage where intellectual questions are discussed and explained;
- and the last part is evaluation and homework where the learners do pedagogical tasks that serve as continuing framework of their learning experience.

Perspectives and Plans for the Future

The author suggests that literature and language teachers should not be stuck with limited resources and traditional approaches of instruction. If these teachers are open to professional advancement and reflective practices, they can provide more engaging and effective pedagogical tasks and assessments to learners. In the future, the readers and instructors will reinvent and retool themselves so as to meet the varied expectations and needs of the students. They can use many approaches and strategies that have been tested and validated by fellow teachers, and can also do peer consultation to get reliable feedback from colleagues. The journey of a literature teacher does not end in the four walls of the classroom. The teachers can always impart and share their knowledge through research and publication, and this is the path they could take. They can engage with their students by providing them the best lessons and activities to improve their horizons and decisions in life.

Conclusions and Reflections

Creative language and literature teachers can easily blend other strategies and methods to facilitate quality instruction for target learners who would like to improve their competencies and appreciate the values and insights provided by the literary pieces. The author has enumerated the common strategies being employed in his own classroom which he finds effective and suitable to diverse learners in any settings or context. Differentiated instruction is an appropriate strategy which involves different tasks catering to the needs, experiences, and uniqueness of the learners

The author offers advice to language and literature teachers in the classroom settings. It is advisable for the language teachers to frame critical-thinking tasks for students to be involved in, so they can discover their own skills and potentials. An example of this is dividing the class groups with an equal number of members in each. For each one, the teacher will assign pantomime presentation, poetry development, debate, poster-slogan, and interpretative dance. With a clear rubric, the language teacher can inform and remind the target learners how they can best perform following the suggested criteria which the rubric explains. All activities should be interactive and engaging since learners do not want to get bored when they are in the classroom.

On the whole, the language and literature teacher can combine any of the methodologies and strategies which he thinks are appropriate and effective in literature instruction. Considering the age, diversity, belief, attitude, gender, and readiness of the learners is highly essential in the sense that these factors are determining points or bases for successful learning outcomes.

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Appendix 1

The Universal Prayer (Pope, 1738)

By Alexander Pope

Father of all! In every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood:
Who all sense confined
To know but this – that thou art good,
And that myself am blind:

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill;
And binding nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.

What conscience dictates to be done,
or warns me not to do,
This, teach me more than Hell to shun,
That, more than Heaven pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away;
For God is paid when man receives,
To enjoy is to obey.

Yet not earth's contracted span,
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round:

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land,
On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, oh teach my heart
To find a better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so
Since quickened by thy breath;
Oh lead me where so ever I go
Through this day's life or death.

This day, be bread and peace my lot:
All else beneath the sun,
Thou know if the best bestowed or not,
And let thy will be done.

To thee, whose temple is all space,
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies!
One chorus let all being raise!
All nature is incense rise!

Appendix 2

Summary of *God Sees the Truth but Waits* (Tolstoy, 2020)

In Russia during the nineteenth century, a young, attractive businessman named Ivan Dmitrich Aksionov lived with his wife and children. Although he had been a bit wild in his youth, he had now settled down and lived a responsible productive life. One day, he decided to make a trip to a fair where he could sell some of his merchandise. Although his wife had a bad dream about this trip, Aksionov decided to proceed. On the way, he stopped at an inn where he met another merchant, a person he knew. They decided to stay at the inn in rooms next to one another. The next morning, he proceeded on his way. After traveling twenty-five miles, however, he was stopped by a local police officer who questioned him closely about the time he had spent at the inn. It turned out that the other merchant had been found with his throat slit open, and Aksionov seemed a likely suspect since he knew the man and since their rooms had been adjacent. Aksionov vehemently denied any involvement in the murder. However, when his bags were checked, a bloody knife was found.

Although Aksionov protested his innocence, he was arrested and charged with the murder. Even his wife wondered if he might have been involved since the circumstantial evidence was so striking. A petition to the Czar for mercy was turned down. Aksionov bade his wife and young children farewell, reflecting that only God can know the truth, and that only God can provide true clemency. Aksionov continued to petition the Czar, but eventually he despaired of any earthly mercy, focusing his thoughts instead on God. After being severely flogged, he was sent to work in the mines in Siberia. During his twenty-six years of imprisonment there, his hair turned white, his happy-go-lucky personality disappeared, and his body began to weaken; he never showed any signs of happiness and frequently prayed to God. While imprisoned he became a boot-maker, thus earning enough money to buy a book called *The Lives of the Saints*.

Aksionov spent 26 years in prison which made him god-fearing and well-grounded. He was called "Grandpa" by other prisoners. Then came a new prisoner named Makar Semyonich.

After months of knowing each other, Aksionov discovered that Makar was the one who killed the merchant whom he was told he murdered. He was furious with what he found out but did not speak or utter a word about it.

Until one night, Aksionov heard some earth rolling under where the prisoners were sleeping. He went out and saw Makar. Makar told him not to tell a word about what he had witnessed or else he will kill him. When they were led out to work, a soldier noticed a prisoner took off some earth off his boots. The soldier searched for escaping plans and found the tunnel. Then they asked each of them who knew about this but they denied for they knew that if officers would know it was Makar, they would surely flog him to death. Night fell when Makar went to Ivan. He thanked him and felt sorry for what he had done to him a long time ago that made Ivan suffer for all these years.

He sobbed as well as Ivan and said that the Lord would forgive him. Makar said he would confess to the governor so that Ivan would be freed and could get back home. Ivan did not anymore want to go out of the prison for he had no family and home to go back to. He only waited for his hour to come. In spite of his refusal for Makar's plan, Makar still confessed his guilt. But when the order for Ivan Dmitritch Aksionov release came, he was already dead.

Appendix 3

Star Diagram for Discussion

GOD SEES THE TRUTH BUT WAITS
By: Leo N. Tolstoy

What
Once there lived a young merchant named Ivan Dimitri Aksenov with his family in the land of Vladimir, who in his younger days lived life to the fullest by experiencing all the material things world has to offer. Until he got married.

Where
He travelled half way met a merchant whom he spent the night drinking tea with and shared an adjoining room in the inn. Since Aksenov is not used of sleeping for long hours he decided to wake up continued his journey. Along the way of his journey, two soldiers in a troika stopped him, and began asking questions, for the merchant he met halfway on his travel was found dead. Since all evidences of the crime are pointing Aksenov guilty he was imprisoned.

How
Learning the sad fate of Aksenov, his wife remembered her dream about Aksenov was worried even considered the thought of her husband being guilty. In spite the fact that his family has forgotten him, she still serves as "grandma" to other prisoners. Then came a new prisoner named Makar who killed the merchant whom he was told he murdered. He was furious with what he found out but didn't speak or uttered a word about it. Until one day Aksenov hears some earth reling. He saw Makar and Makar warned him not to tell anyone or else he will kill him. One day a soldier noticed a prisoner took off some earth of his hat. Soldiers searched for escaping plans and found the tunnel. They asked each of them who knew about this but they were denied for they knew they will be killed by Makar was a just man. The seryator asked Ivan for he knew he was a just man. Ivan said it and his will but we could such to tell name.

When
One summer, he planned to go to Nizhny fair but his wife warned him that she had a bad dream of her husband—she dreamt about Ivan that he returned from the town with hair of gray. Ivan laughed as if he doesn't care and went Of the fair.

Why
Night fell Makar went to Ivan. He thanked him felt sorry for what he had done to him a long time ago. He sobbed as well as Ivan said that the Lord will forgive you. Makar said that he will confess to the governor so that Ivan would be sent free — back to his home. In spite of what they've talked about, Makar semyonich confessed his guilt. But when the order for Ivan Dimitri Aksenov's release came, he was already dead.