Landmark Teaching Principle™ #4

Ensure Automatization through Practice and Review

TEACHING LITERARY ELEMENTS

When teaching literary analysis to students with language-based learning disabilities (LBLD), it is essential to use very specific language. One way to accomplish this task is to consider a piece of literature as the combination of several different elements, such as:

Setting •	• Theme
Characterization •	• Irony
Conflict •	• Symbolism
Plot •	

Each of these elements should be taught explicitly and separately, looking at a short story or chapter in a novel that best displays each one in order. The spiral back and practice come as new elements are introduced and previous ones are reviewed.

STEP 1: **INTRODUCE** THE CONCEPT.

- If the class starts off their exploration of literary elements by studying setting, the teacher should first go over the definition of setting (the context in which a story occurs), as well as its components (time, place, mood, social environment).

STEP 2: **MODEL** AND **EXPLICITLY TEACH** THE CONCEPT.

- The teacher should guide the class towards understanding how to describe the setting of a scene in a story. Below are two suggestions for how to accomplish this task. They should be modeled with the whole class before asking students to complete them independently so that the directions and expectations are clear.

- Photos: give each student in the class a photo (different photos or the same one) and ask the students to describe the setting that they see in that photo.

EXAMPLE:
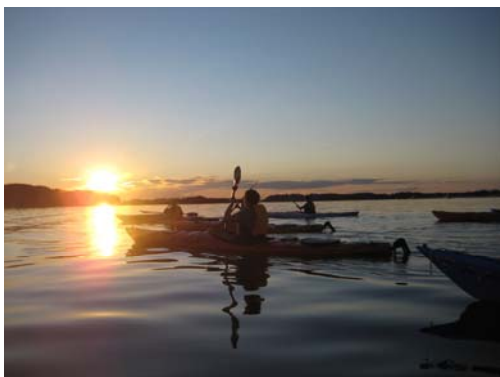
The setting of this photo:
- *Time: sunset*
- *Place: on the water*
- *Social Environment:*
  a small group of people
  in kayaks
- *Mood: calm and relaxing*

- _Writing_: give students a paragraph that describes the setting of a scene and ask them to underline the words and phrases in that paragraph that establish setting.

EXAMPLE:

> _It was pitch black and rainy that scary October night. The sides of the dark, stone mansion were covered in moss and the metal doorknocker was heavy under the lost traveler's hand. After several desperate knocks, an old man opened the door. The traveler was relieved at the prospect of being out of the storm, but sensed that something was not quite right with the old man, now smiling crookedly as he gestured for his guest to enter._

The setting of this paragraph:

- _Time: rainy October night_
- _Place: dark, stone mansion_
- _Social Environment: lost traveler and old man_
- _Mood: scary_

STEP 3:   PRACTICE.

- As a class (or in small groups) read a short story and identify the setting of the story. Students may also be encouraged to discuss how that setting impacts the characters, the conflict, the plot, etc.

STEP 4:   REPEAT AND SPIRAL BACK.

- Once students can identify and explain the setting of a story, move on to teach them characterization using steps 1 and 2 above. However, when the class reaches step 3 to "practice," ask them to describe the setting **and** the characters. Repeat this process with each literary element until students can discuss or write about a work of literature using specific language to describe all 7 elements.

HOW DOES THIS ENSURE AUTOMATIZATION?

- Students are exposed to new concepts and asked to return to previously learned skills and concepts as a means to building the language skills to analyze literature.