

Teaching Mark as Performance Literature

Early Literate and Post-Literate Pedagogies

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July 2013

Ancient Character of Mark and Contemporary Pedagogy

Presuppositions about ancient communication culture are correlated with contemporary pedagogical approaches to the teaching of biblical literature in general and Mark in particular. Historical critical study of the Bible has presupposed that ancient communication culture was analogous to the text based communication culture of the 18th-19th century. The biblical tradition has been conceived and studied as texts that were read by readers, usually alone and in silence. This presupposition is reflected in the basic methods of source and redaction criticism of the documents and in the frequent references to “the reader” in biblical commentaries.

The teaching of Mark in contemporary education utilizes a text-based pedagogy that is congruent with the presupposed character of the communication culture of Mark’s original historical context. This tradition for the teaching of Mark fits well with the text-based pedagogy of the university and the seminary with its libraries, papers, and degrees in the mastery of literary research and communication. Lectures focus on the textual history of Mark and on various documentary processes for the exegesis of the meaning of the text. Students are taught how to analyze the text by critical reading of the text with their eyes. Student projects are papers researched and written in silence and read in silence by the professors. The goal of the pedagogical process is for students to learn the theological and/or historical meaning of the texts in their original historical context on the basis of critically evaluated textual evidence. This data can then be interpreted for contemporary audiences in sermons, lectures and small group study. The presupposition is that this pedagogical approach is congruent with the experience of the original readers and communities. It is also presumed that this pedagogy will produce a vital engagement with Mark in the context of contemporary culture.

Recent historical investigation of ancient communication culture and of Mark within that culture has led to different conclusions about that culture and Mark within it. Ancient communication culture at the time of the composition of the Gospel of Mark was an early literate culture in which literacy had great cultural power but in which the great majority of people were unable to read. Current estimates are that literacy in the 1st century ranged from a maximum of 15% in urban communities to as little as 2-3% in rural areas. Documents were copied by hand, were relatively expensive, and were owned primarily by communities and wealthy individuals. There was no mass distribution of documents, minimal evidence of private reading and even less of silent reading. Publication of documents was by performance for audiences. The grammatical literature of Greek rhetoricians and grammarians shows that ancient literature was composed as

sounds with careful attention to cola and periods as breath units of sound.¹ When Mark is heard in the context of this communication culture, it is a skillful composition of sound structured for performance to audiences.

An additional characteristic of ancient communication culture was the centrality of memory. A trained memory was the goal of ancient education. A daily activity for children in Jewish and Greco-Roman schools was the memorization of a text, often a part of the Scriptures in Jewish schools and of rhetorical speeches in Greco-Roman schools. Written compositions were structured to facilitate memory and performances of written compositions were often done from memory. Indeed, since ancient manuscripts were a string of undifferentiated letters, it was necessary to virtually memorize a composition in order to perform it, even with a manuscript in hand.

This reassessment of the character of Mark raises the question of appropriate contemporary pedagogy. In as far as historical critical methods of scholarly study and pedagogy are based on the assumption of continuity between the communication culture of the 18-19th century and the biblical world, those methods and pedagogies are a historical anachronism, a reading back into the ancient world of a much later communication culture and its pedagogies. If our goal is to learn and teach about the meaning of Mark in its original historical context, we need to develop pedagogical methods that are congruent with the original character of Mark as performance literature. The pedagogical theory is that there will be more understanding and energy for students in learning about Mark in a manner that is more congruent with the original character of Mark. The first dimension of pedagogical reassessment is, therefore, the development of teaching methods that will give students an experience of Mark in its original context as an epic story that was performed for audiences in one evening.²

Furthermore, 21st century students of the performance literature of the Bible live in a post-literate world in which digital communication technology rather than mass printing is the dominant means of mass communication. In this culture, the pedagogical methods of the 18th-20th century are increasingly archaic. The underlying cultural hermeneutic in digital culture is the priority of experience rather than concepts. To enable students to have a vital experience of Mark as a performance event is more likely to be meaningful for them than an exposition of the theological doctrine implicit in the document. Therefore, a combination of the pedagogical approaches of early literate culture and the pedagogies of post-literate, digital culture will open new possibilities for the teaching of Mark in the future.

The goal of this paper is to outline the pedagogical methods that I have found to be effective in teaching Mark as performance literature. Future discussion about educational theory and the relationship between these methods and traditional pedagogy will be additional steps in this exploration. But a first step is to outline the new possibilities that have emerged from teaching Mark as a story told by storytellers.

¹ Bernard Brandon Scott and Margaret Ellen Lee, *Sound Mapping the New Testament*. Salem, OR: Polebridge, 2009

² For an excellent description of a highly successful university course with this structure, see Phil Ruge-Jones, "The Word Heard: How Hearing a Text Differs from Reading One" in Hearon, Holly E. and Ruge-Jones, Philip, eds. 2009. *The Bible in Ancient and Modern Media: Story and Performance*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 101-113.

Teaching Mark as Performance Literature

The major shift involved in the teaching of Mark as performance literature is to reorient the experience of Mark from text to performance. When seen from a pedagogical perspective, our present practices would be analogous to a professor of piano who taught students to study the manuscripts of piano compositions and never listened to or played the music. At every stage of the course work, experience of Mark as sound and as stories told to audiences is foundational. The possibilities range from weekly assignments and classroom experience to individual and communal research projects.

The more the pedagogical approaches of the course pursue a multi-faceted exploration of Mark as stories told by heart to audiences, the better will be the overall course experience. The presupposition of teaching Mark in this manner is that students will learn more about the character and meaning of Mark by being actively engaged in learning and telling the composition.

An Introductory Performance of Mark by the Professor

Early in the course of study preferably no later than the second class following the introduction to the course of study, a performance of Mark by the professor is the best introduction to Mark. Doing it live in front of the students is better than any recording. Until the students have experienced the Gospel as a story, the talk about it as a performed story remains abstract. Once they have experienced it, they have a much clearer idea about the subject of the course. A further positive dimension of the experience is that the students have a model for their own work on the story and the development of their skills as tellers of Mark's story.

The limitation of the professor telling the Gospel early on is that it eliminates the possibility of the students inductively arriving at their own interpretations on the basis of their study of the manuscripts and independent exploration of how they might tell the stories. On the other hand, without an initial experience of hearing the story told, many students will be at a loss because they lack previous experience with the performance of literature. Only those who had been involved in drama earlier in their educational careers have the confidence and abilities to develop as storytellers on their own. However, storytelling is significantly different than acting. In the teaching of performance for musical instruments such as the piano, it is important for students to have heard high quality performances prior to their training. This also applies to learning the performance of Mark.

Of course, the challenge for the teachers of Mark is that most have had no training or experience in performing Mark themselves. There are now resources of videotapes and organizations such as the Network of Biblical Storytellers in which there is the possibility of experiencing high quality performances of Mark. There is a sense in which the best way to learn is to tell the stories of Mark in small settings. It is also possible to do shorter segments of the Gospel rather than the whole composition as an introduction to the performance dimensions of the course. But the most energizing step is for the students to experience the whole Gospel early in the course as told by their professor.

A Storytelling Workshop

The foundational introduction to performing Mark for the students is a storytelling workshop in which each student is enabled to learn and tell a story from

Mark. For the purposes of this paper, I will outline the basic stages of a storytelling workshop.³

Learning the story – The first step in learning the performance of a Markan story is to learn the story. Good stories for an initial workshop are: the healing of the paralytic, the stilling of the storm, and Bartimaeus. My experience is that the best pedagogical approach is to dive in with no theory or introduction utilizing the methodology of the teachers of antiquity: repeat after me. The process is simply to tell the story phrase by phrase with gestures and have the students say it back with energy and gestures. I have sometimes found it helpful for a class to have an outline of the episodes of the story available preferably on a screen. The identification of the structure of the story can also be done on a flip chart or blackboard as the second step in learning the story.

An initial process is for the students to say the story back to the teacher, then the teacher tell it after a brief analysis of the story's structure, the students say it back again, and finally they tell it to each other dividing into groups of two. Sometimes it is helpful to give the students a copy of the story arranged as a sound map in case neither one of them is able to remember what comes next. But it is also possible for them to rely on their memory with only the outline as a guide. After sufficient time for the students to tell the story to their partners, a brief discussion about the process of learning a story is helpful. Many of them have never learned and told any story before and probably not a biblical story. To debrief the experience of learning and telling the story at this initial stage encourages their exploration of a native ability they did not know they had.

A next step in learning the story is to outline the structure of human memory. Memory training has been almost wholly eliminated from modern education. An outline of the structures of the brain that enable us to remember and the mnemonic structures built into the story is helpful to students. The first of those structures are the sensory registers that register and sort the five sense data—sound, sight, smell, taste, touch—that are constantly being recorded in our brains. They are sorted by the dynamic of attention. The second stage of human memory is short-term memory that is best conceived as a workbench of up to ten items that are being processed every moment. The chunking of items of various sizes such as a set of notes in music, phrases in language, and moves in a dance is helpful in facilitating easier and quicker learning of stories.

The third stage is storing the items from short-term memory in the ordered shelves of long-term memory so that they can be retrieved. The two primary storage and retrieval systems are “episodic” storage and “syntactical or conceptual” storage. The issue for storytelling is not storage. Vast amounts of things are present in our long-term memories. The problem is that we cannot find the retrieval link to those memories stored in our memories. When students understand the way their memory works, they are able to learn stories more easily and become more consciously aware of a process that they use constantly. The absence of memory training is a major gap in contemporary education.

After outlining the structure of memory, it is often helpful to identify the mnemonic structures of cola/periods, episodes, verbal threads, gestures, and reversals of expectation built into the story they have just learned. The students can then tell the story to each other again using the analysis as a resource for remembering and telling the story.

³ For a more extensive description of a storytelling workshop, see Thomas E. Boomershine, *Story Journey: An Introduction to the Gospel as Storytelling*: Abingdon, Nashville, TN, 1988, 23-59.

The goal of this first stage of the workshop is that each student will be able to get through the story from beginning to end without leaving out anything of major importance and without adding anything of major importance. That is, the goal is that there is significant interpretive resemblance between the story as it has been traditioned to us in a competent translation and the story we are telling. At this stage in the work on a story, a workable guideline for the question about “word for word accuracy” that will usually arise is “95% content accuracy and 75% verbal accuracy”.

Listening to the story – a second stage in a storytelling workshop is listening to the story in its original historical context. This segment of a storytelling workshop can vary in length depending on the goals of the session. This is the context in which all of the data from a “performance criticism” exegesis of a biblical composition can be summarized. All of the resources of historical critical study of Mark can be utilized in this stage of a workshop: word study, Jewish and Greco-Roman background, the history and politics of the first century, archeological discoveries, tradition history, etc. This can also include an introduction to the performance traditions of the ancient world as outlined in several recent books such as Whitney Shiner’s *Proclaiming the Gospel*, Moses Hadas’ *Ancilla to Classical Reading* and David Rhoads’ articles on performance criticism.⁴

The most important finding of this literature is that contemporary performance traditions are far less emotionally expressive, dramatic, and physically active than ancient performances. The styles of the reading of Scripture in contemporary worship are a pervasive performance tradition that has determined what many now experience as appropriate performance. In fact, the literary compositions of the Bible are more widely performed than any other literature. But there is great distance between ancient and modern performance of Mark.

A further dimension of this listening is to identify the variations in tempo, volume and pauses that are implicit in the story: for example, long periods are fast, short periods slow; loud places are really loud, soft places really soft; pauses are intentionally marked, but generally the story flows with a fast pace.

The conclusion of this stage of the workshop is for the students to tell the story again. This time, however, the goal is that they will seek to tell the story in a manner that is more like the way it would have been told in its original historical context. Here the students can be encouraged to be as big as possible in their way of telling the story. This segment of the workshop can also be an introduction to the exegetical work of the course including the “performance criticism” papers the students will write.

Connecting with the story – a third stage of a storytelling workshop is to explore the connections between the experiences of each person and the story from Mark. The

⁴ Shiner, Whitney Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2003. Hadas, David Rhoads, “Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Second Testament Studies – Part 1 and Part 2” in *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 36 (3&4, 2006) 118-133, 164-183. Moses Hadas, *Ancilla to Classical Reading*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1954, pp. 50-77 for a series of citations from ancient literature showing that performance of written works was the primary mode of publication. Even historical works were published by oral recitation, as is evident in Lucian’s opening of his book, *Herodotus*, in which he tells the story of Herodotus taking the opportunity of the Olympic Games to read his work: ‘He seized the moment when the gathering was at its fullest, and every city had sent the flower of its citizens; then he appeared in the temple hall, bent not on sightseeing but on bidding for an Olympic victory of his own; he recited his Histories and bewitched his hearers’ (Hadas 1954: 60).

identification and telling of these stories will help each storyteller discover the distinctive ways in which they would tell the story. The telling of personal stories also enables each student to tell the stories they know best.

The primary role of the professor in this stage of a workshop is to model and then encourage the students to tell their own stories. The hermeneutical theory underlying this process of connecting the stories from Mark and personal stories is that Mark's stories address the deep structures of human experience. The identification of that deep structure is relatively easy. In the three stories I have suggested for an initial workshop, the deep structure of the paralytic story is the experience of being paralyzed and reduced to a position of shame and dependence. The calming of the storm is about the experience of being overwhelmed with terror and fear at the prospect of being overcome by the powers of chaos. The story of Bartimaeus addresses the experience of blindness and literally sitting in the dust begging for help and then answering the question "What do you want me to do for you?"

In the workshop process, students often find it initially difficult or threatening to identify these dimensions of their own experience. I have found that sharing my own experience of these dynamics helps them to know what is being addressed by the story. So my stories of being hit by a car, overcome with fear of paralysis and death, and crying out for help have enabled students to identify their own stories and given them permission to be vulnerable in this way.

There are two possible dimensions of connecting with the story. The first is simply identifying and telling a partner the story of your experience: i.e. "When have you felt paralyzed and dependent on others?" "When have you experienced being afraid?" "When have you been unable to see any way forward?" or "What would be your answer now if Jesus asked you, 'What do you want me to do for you?'"

The other possible dimension is to tell and hear the biblical story as an immediate response to a story of a felt need. Thus, a partner might say, "Right now I feel paralyzed in relation to the paper I need to write" or "I feel ashamed about . . ." Or "If Jesus asked me, 'What do you want me to do for you?', I would say, 'I want...'" The partner can then tell Mark's story, no counsel or advice, just the story. And the partner can then share what, if anything, the story meant as it was told. It is often the case that the story has more impact than was expected. When the group as a whole comes back together, it is appropriate to ask them, "Is there anything that someone would like to share with the group that happened as you listened or told the story?" Students are generally anxious to share their experience of the stories.

The purpose of this storytelling process is to make it possible for persons to explore the personal connections that these ancient stories invite. It has always been surprisingly meaningful to people who have done this. This is not always the case and there have been instances in which persons have not discovered any significant connection. But that is rarely the case. And in a group as a whole, there have always been persons who have found that the stories connected with their experience and enabled them to see their present life situation from a new perspective. The minimal result of this process is that students can better understand the transformative impact of these stories in their original historical context. They may also help students appropriate the stories as elements of their own existential belief system.

Telling the story – The conclusion of the workshop is for the professor to gather the experience of the group in a concluding retelling of the story. In this concluding recital, the accents, emphases, and experience of the group inform the retelling of the story. Rather than talking about the story and its meaning as a source of referential information about history or theology, the telling of the story itself focuses the attention of the group on the meaning of the story as a story. It is also possible for a student to do this final retelling of the story. But my experience has been that on occasion a volunteer does not do it well because of their limited experience. For this purpose and at this moment in a workshop, the professor is best.

The storytelling workshop experience is highly generative and its value is not limited to the initial stages of introduction to storytelling processes. It can also be adapted to the needs of the curriculum at later stages in the course experience.

Regular Performance of Markan Stories in English and Greek

During every class, both the students and the professor have the opportunity to tell the stories from Mark that are either the subject or the background of the class session. It is possible to make this a required element of every class session. The students can tell the story of the day to each other in pairs and then a student can be called on at random to recite the story to the whole group. This possibility is sufficient motivation for the students to learn the stories before class. It is also an opportunity for each student to have the experience of performing a story for the whole class in preparation for the concluding communal performance of Mark.

There is surprising value in learning and telling the stories in Greek as well as in translation. The Greek tells well and is in fact better than any translation if you understand Greek. Telling the story in Greek is an excellent opportunity for students who are studying Greek to utilize their new knowledge of the language in this way. This is also an opportunity for the professor to give the students a first-hand experience of the story in its original language. If the students know the story in translation, they will be surprised at how much they can understand from an expressive and well-gestured telling of the story in Greek. It is also an advertisement for studying Greek that recruits more students for the Greek classes in the curriculum.

My suggestion is that the story regularly be told in Greek as an element of the class session. This is a significant additional preparation for the professor and may not always be possible. But it has great pedagogical value as the students become more familiar with the sounds of Mark in its original language.

Performance Criticism Exegesis Papers

A foundational pedagogy for teaching Mark as performance literature is lectures and required papers on performance criticism exegesis. I have found this to be the most difficult change in reorienting the teaching of Mark to the original character of Mark as stories composed for performance to audiences. The exegetical methods that have been the basis of academic biblical pedagogy need major reformation because of the degree to which traditional exegesis is tied to the study of Mark as a text. For the purpose of this paper, I will outline the distinctive elements of a performance criticism exegesis. And I would also acknowledge that this is a work in progress rather than a finished product.

Many elements of textual exegesis remain central to a performance criticism exegesis such as word studies, Jewish and Greco-Roman background, comparison with

other forms of the story in the other Gospels, and the context of the story in Mark. These elements are, however, refocused on these elements in the experience of the stories for ancient audiences. Word studies are refocused on the sounds of the words and their connotative as well as denotative associations from previous usage in the storytelling tradition. The Jewish and Greco-Roman background of the stories needs to identify the stories that would have been known by the audiences. When heard against this background, Mark's stories were both allusions and contrasts to the stories floating around in the ancient communal memory. The comparison with other forms of the stories in the Gospel tradition in the context of performance also calls attention to the development of the sounds, structure and overall impact of the stories in the Jesus storytelling tradition. And the analysis of the context in Mark is based on the assumption that the audiences have just heard the preceding stories and will have those sounds and experience of those stories freshly in mind.

There are also new elements of performance criticism exegesis. The most immediate and the most difficult to teach is the sound mapping of Mark's stories. The analysis of the sounds of Mark's story is based on the descriptions of cola and periods in the Greek grammatical and rhetorical literature. The mapping of the sounds is not unlike writing out the sounds of a musical composition. But there are no conventions of manuscript arrangement of these stories as there are with music: i.e., rests, volume markings, accents, indications of tempo, mood identifications. It may be that there are melodic signs implicit in the Greek manuscripts just as the Masoretic editors made the traditional chant melodies explicit by the development of the trope markings in the Hebrew text. The traditions of Byzantine chant may afford some clues about this subject area but at this point little is known. The major problem is that the current arrangement of Mark's composition in English prose sentences and paragraphs virtually blinds us to recognizing the rhythms and structures of the sound of Mark.

There is great value, therefore, in reformulating the writing of the Markan manuscripts in the structures of sound. While necessarily ambiguous at this stage of our communal research, the sound mapping of Mark restructures the basic conception and experience of Mark's story regardless of the accuracy of the analysis. Thinking of the sound map as a script for the story is sometimes helpful to students doing a sound map for the first time.

Another element of performance criticism exegesis that is initially difficult for students is the analysis of the dynamics of the story as a story. Because virtually all of the exegetical works on Mark and, therefore, the models of exegesis focus on the identification of the theological and historical meaning of the story, students need help in identifying the meaning of Mark as a story. All of the elements of narrative criticism—point of view, characterization, plot, norms of judgment—are important dimensions of performance criticism. But there are also distinctive elements to the performance criticism study of Mark as an oral narrative rather than as an ancient novel read by readers.⁵ The most important of these distinctive elements is the relationship between the storyteller and the audience. The basic facts of audience address are relatively easy to

⁵ Mary Anne Tolbert Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989

identify.⁶ The storytellers addressed the audiences, usually as Jesus addressing various groups in his teaching (e.g., 3:23-29; 4:3-9, 11-32; 8:34-9:1; 10:42-45; 13:4-36) but sometimes as himself addressing the audience as themselves (e.g. 1:1; 6:52; 7:3-4). But the extension of those basic facts to the identification of the impact of the story is outside the experience and training of most students.

It is, therefore, important for the professor to provide a steady stream of performance criticism demonstrations in the classes so that students have something to work with. But students await the production of full performance criticism commentaries in order to have a wider range of models to work with in their exegetical study of Mark as performance literature.

Student Production of Digital Storytelling of Mark

The re-conception of Mark as performance literature also opens the possibility of Mark's being told with the full range of digital production resources. This is an area of potential creativity for which we have few models but that has great potential for creativity and a truly new hermeneutic. Potential elements of these productions are:

- 1) Videos of a person telling the stories of Mark
- 2) Archeological pictures, maps, and other images from the first century.
- 3) Film clips that have related themes to Mark's story
- 4) Videos of personal stories of the meaning of Mark's stories for individual persons
- 5) Music videos of the dynamic equivalent contemporary images and music that are invited by Mark's story
- 6) Musical background for the digital performance of Mark's story

Because of the ready availability of high-quality digital production technology, a new world of hermeneutical possibilities is now available for creative engagement with Mark's story.

Performance of Mark in Worship

Student performance of Mark in worship services as the Scripture recital for the day brings the study of Mark as performance literature to another level of knowledge and experience. This can be at student led worship services in a university or seminary or for local churches. The current performance of Mark in virtually all churches is done in an emotionally distant style with which we are all familiar. Telling the story by heart brings a new level of vitality and interest to the performance of the Scriptures in a worship service. The frequent response of congregation members is something like: "I feel like I never heard the story before." The performance needs to be steadily rehearsed with supervision and direction by the professor. But, if done well, the telling of Mark in worship is a significant experience for students and for congregations.

⁶ Thomas E. Boomershine, "The Medium and Message of John: Audience Address and Audience Identity in the Fourth Gospel" in *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture*, eds. Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher. New York: T&T Clark, 2011 and "Audience Address and Purpose in the Performance of Mark" in *Mark As Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, eds. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

A Communal Performance of Mark

A concluding communal performance of Mark is an excellent ending for a course on Mark. The students and professor divide up the story and tell it in sequence. It is possible to invite the academic community as well as interested persons from the wider community to such a performance. If an audience is invited, the students need to practice the stories intensively as they would in preparation for the performance of a play. The professor functions as the director of the performance. It is important for the director to provide clear feedback and direction for the individual students. This work can be done best in individual coaching sessions but that is very time intensive work. Managing the mix between positive encouragement and reinforcement and suggestions/directions for ways of improving the telling of the story requires sensitivity and courage for the professor.⁷ These communal performances for invited audiences have been highly energizing experiences for students and audiences that are never forgotten. They do, however, require a lot of preparation.

It is also possible for this concluding performance to be an “in house” event in which the members of the class tell the stories they have learned to each other. We have told Mark in a classroom, the community chapel and a private home or apartment. I have invited classes to my home and we have sat on the floor around the living room and told Mark in the circle. We have passed around food and/or put various dips, fruit, crackers, bread, etc. in the middle of the group where everyone can reach it in the ancient style. These celebrations of the learning of the Mark by the class have been universally positive experiences. Students learn a lot about themselves and about Mark in this process. And the ante is much lower than for an external audience. But the benefits from a public performance are also greater because of the higher investment of time and energy.

Conclusions

This is then a sketch of some pedagogical approaches to teaching Mark as performance literature. I have been doing various aspects of these approaches for more than forty years. They have been consistently positive. In fact, my only regret in retrospect is that I sometimes hesitated to use these processes in my courses. This pedagogical approach is so different than normal academic teaching that I was sometimes anxious about the responses of students and colleagues. That anxiety has not been inappropriate. Some colleagues have been critical and have even opposed teaching in this manner. It does not always fit well with the role of biblical courses in a traditional seminary or university curriculum. And when the word has gotten around, some students have been reluctant to take the courses because of the performance expectations. Others, however, have heard about the overall quality of the educational experience and have wanted to take the course. The net was an overall increase in the number of students.

All of that is of minor significance in comparison to the value of a vital experience of Mark. These conflicts are an inevitable dimension of a major paradigm shift in biblical interpretation. In the end these pedagogies bring new vitality and interest to the teaching of Mark. Most important, this approach gives students a deeper understanding and experience of Mark in its ancient historical context and opens a new range of possibilities for the interpretation of Mark now.

⁷ Doug Lipman, *Improving Your Storytelling: Beyond the Basics for All Who Tell Stories in Work or Play*: August House Publishers, 1999.