



## Teaching Fairy Stories with Dr. Junius Johnson

### Lesson 3: Building Bridges

#### Outline:

##### Building Bridges

- This means building connections between what is going on in the heart of the student and what you are asking them to do in the classroom.
- The tale of disconnect as a student and a teacher is a tragedy and an opportunity.
  - It is an opportunity because it is easier to teach a child who already loves to read than it is to teach a child who doesn't like to read (to read anything at all).
- What does meeting a student partway mean?
  - Should we just give kids what they want? No.
  - Fairy stories provide a unique opportunity to engage students with the material.
- At the very least, lean into the fantastic elements of some of the books that we do teach. What do we gain when we do this?
  - I can teach you how to read closely from reading Homer or Harry Potter.
  - Close reading unlocks deeper interest in the story. Close reading renders the story more immersive. When we love something, we automatically close read it.
  - With younger children, reading lists are full of the books that we loved as children. As they approached sixth grade the music changes, and they become more and more focused on “important books” until that is all that is left.
  - The great books, with time and attention, will draw you in. Listen to the stories long enough to recognize that they are lovable.
- Fantastical books are better suited to illustrate certain truths.
  - It is not just a question of connecting better with our students, but it also about the care of their souls.
  - There is inside of a child that which loves the imagination, which delights in wonder, and which yearns for enchantment.
  - The food of the imagination is wonder. It is the improbable made actual, the impossible made possible.
  - If we don't educate to the sense of wonder, we are not educating the whole person.
  - Children need wonder because humans need wonder.