

Materials for Developing Language Skills through Literature

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Abstract:

This paper throws light on the need for the selection criteria of literary texts. While such criteria are essential, it is very rarely that a teacher is allowed to choose books for the class. We could say that the prescription of literary texts is one of the necessary “evils” of our curriculum. It is essential because the availability of a larger corpus of literature for selection is not to be expected or possible for each teacher, and even if it was; it is doubtful whether each teacher would be willing or able to exercise a sophisticated choice for his or her learners at all times. It is an “evil” because it is the prescription of such texts for examinations that have brought about a form of teaching that ignores the needs, problems, and progress of the learner. By focussing on the book as content, note-taking, and rote-learning are encouraged, rather than the appreciation and the interpretation of texts and the activity of meaning-making by the learner.

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1. INTRODUCTION

While it is true that literary texts can usually prescribe, it is also true that they can be tough for many learners. The broad spectrum of students in a significant General English College Classroom ensures that not all students will have the same or equal or even satisfactory grasp at the text. We could say that the prescription of books does not provide the scope for interaction which exists when the teacher selects books, keeping the level of the class in mind.

: There are, however, a need and room for the selection of texts and/or tasks serving as steps for the appreciation of a prescribed text. Seen in this way, the choice of appropriate books is an essential part of the methodology of teaching literature, especially if we think of the struggle that the weaker student faces with literature.

The selection of texts and the construction of tasks are essential activities, then, for every teacher of English. If interaction in the classroom is essential to us, we will try to make the road easier for students by anticipating the difficulties that lie in their path.

This paper will help us think of the objectives of materials for developing literary skills and will also discuss the ways in which literature can be used as a resource for language learning.

2. SELECTION CRITERIA

When we speak of selection criteria, we again go back to the question of grading in terms of difficulty. In what ways would a text be difficult for our class? Whatever the difficulty might be, we might argue that the difficulty is a subjective matter, varying from person to person. So while we cannot always meet and understand every specific difficulty faced by learners, we should not, for instance, choose texts that are obviously inappropriate and very difficult as

regards language and ideas, because we will then have to choose simpler texts that can act as an introduction to the prescribed texts in terms of form and theme[1]. Difficulties are also to be seen relatively; we will have to balance one type of difficulty with another. Culturally alien ideas could be demotivating, for instance, if not taken care of at the beginning stages of reading a text, but if, on the other hand, there is a thematic understanding, cultural difficulties could very well be taken care of, because they could prove to be very small hurdles to the student. Wordsworth's "Daffodils" is a case in point. It is really a matter of judgment on our part to select the kind of difficulty we want to address, and the kind of difficulty that we could take for granted, at least for a time.

Teacher initiative and judgment are crucial if poems are to be selected for leading on to the prescribed texts.[2][3] Ways of dealing with text length and linguistic difficulties have been suggested in a few articles dealing with methods, and it is our teaching objective that will finally influence every chance we take. The Teacher here will have many choices like; "Do I let students guess meanings of words from the context, do I gloss over them or do I explain them? Such choices will finally depend on our objective and on our understanding of the text and class.[4][5]

3. THE OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING LITERATURE

Any thought of training materials will likewise need, in any case, the targets of the materials. The connection between writing and language has been seen in various manners in showing materials, and this thus has affected showing targets in materials. While it has concurred that there are aptitudes to be created in the valuation for writing in essence, it is additionally certain that language is the premise of writing. From an ELT point of view, the thought of the connection between language and writing is significant.[6][7]

We can consider two ways to deal with the study of writing.

1. Using writing as an asset for the advancement of language, for example, Duff and Malay's writing (1990)[8]

2. Using language to consider writing and its structures. This is an incorporated methodology, where the emphasis falls on the two zones, language, and writing, for example, Cook and Long's *The Trap of Words* (1987) [9] and Lott's *A course in English Language and Writing* (1986).[10]

4. LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE : USING LITERATURE AS A RESOURCE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

Duff and Maley's writing (1990) have an accompanying point: "to utilize artistic messages as an asset for animating language exercises." The book depends on the rule of dynamic learning, and in this way on exercises that guarantee student inclusion with writings. There is no basic discourse, clarification, or meta language truly connected with abstract writings: writing isn't viewed as a frightened or even as continually having an artistic quality. Actually, even 'awful' conventional composing is utilized as an asset by educators on the off chance that it can invigorate exercises[8].

Preparing the learner for difficult texts is an important part of this book. It also discusses longer texts, such as stories or novels[11][12][13]. It discusses ways in which teachers could use texts of their own choice and has tasks that give opportunities for discussion and for the development of language skills.[14]

5. EXPLORING LITERATURE THROUGH LANGUAGE

Carter & Long's *The Web of words* (1987) is an example of a book that focuses on developing literacy skills through a linguistic analysis of texts. While helping the reader to appreciate authentic sources, the book also claims to elicit a response to language as well. Language competence and literary appreciation are developed in relation. It has the point of helping the student to "comprehend and acknowledge abstract writings. It centres on specific highlights of the language to create energy about the style, impacts, and systems of composing. "To each other. It can be called an example of an integrated approach, designed specially for the intermediate and advanced learners of English.[15][16]

The book prepares learners for a range of reading strategies for interpreting and appreciating literary texts. It encourages group and pair work and incorporates techniques from language teaching and elementary linguistics.

The three main genres of prose, poetry, and drama are represented in this book, and this is particularly important "because some literary conventions and forms are specific to western literature, and learners from other cultures will need access to them." The texts chosen are modern and come from all parts of the world.

The book is structured under ten approaches to the teaching of literature, e.g., summary and narrative prediction[17], language and dialogue and setting, text and phonology[18], writing and patterns of language[19], structures of vocabulary[20], literary, and non-literary discourse, introduction to stylistic analysis, etc.

The teacher can move through the book as judgment dictates, the texts are not graded.

6. TASKS BASED ON THE PROCESS OF READING LITERATURE

What is the natural process of reading literary texts? Richard Rossner (1989) suggests tasks for the literature class that follows the natural process of reading a text. He suggests different tasks for different stages:[21][22]

1. Pre-reading tasks on the theme and on the vocabulary[20].
2. Tasks for the first reading, tasks focussed on personal reactions
3. Tasks for detailed comprehension
4. Lecture- based tasks

7. ROSSNER GIVES TIPS TO ENGLISH TEACHERS FOR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

1. The ability to work out simple tasks, with clear, economical instructions.
2. This means to ensure that all students have access to texts by using photo copiers, the blackboard, posters, or dictation.
3. Ways of monitoring the class- moving about the room to acquire or give feedback.
4. Right timing, call the class to order after a group activity with a pre- arranged signal (a clap, or rising of the arm).
5. Means of "sampling" attainment on a task, where random groups are asked to summarize or report tasks completed.
6. Planning classes so that they contain an appropriate but varied quantity of activities.
7. Means of giving clear task instructions, how you want the class to work-in groups, pairs, or individually?

Rossner's suggestions are valid, of course, for language tasks as well.

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