

JIGSAW TEACHING TECHNIQUE APPLIED TO A LITERARY TEXT

Humelnicu-Christofi Simona-Elena,

profesor de limba engleză, Școala Gimnazială Nr.29, Galați

Rationale for text choice

For my *reading lesson* I have chosen an extract from the first chapter of the novel “Pride and Prejudice” written by Jane Austen as an authentic example of reading material. As Watkins (2005) states authentic texts give exposure to ‘real’ English and can be motivating for learners. This novel extract is appropriate for upper-intermediate learners and it is relevant for a reading activity, as the topic enables further discussion.

The choice of this text was based on a study case conducted among upper-intermediate students about literary texts in English they enjoyed. The novel of Jane Austen “Pride and Prejudice” was one of their favourite novels. (Lazar. G, 1993) Moreover, ‘upper-intermediate learners can read with a large degree of independence, including a novel excerpt and also have a broad active reading vocabulary’. (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages- Council of Europe,2001).

“Pride and Prejudice” continues to be popular today and has universal themes and appeal for students in different countries around the world. The learners have the opportunity to bring their own background knowledge and experience of the world and easily find an element of the book in which they are able to connect with the story. (See Appendix1)

The aim of *lead -in* is to get the learners interested in the topic of the lesson through an initial whole class discussion. The students answer the questions regarding the most important aspects, choose their top 3 and compare them to the early 19th century English society. In this way, they see the similarities and differences between two societies and familiarize with the language that will come in the text.

The *lead-in* ‘creates expectations, arouse the students’ interest in the subject matter of the written text’ (Harmer,1991) and ‘makes an explicit link between the topic of the text and the students’ own lives and experiences’ (Scrivener ,2011)

During *pre-reading* stage, students are asked to make predictions on the subject of the novel extract and also state their opinions about the opening line. They write down their predictions that will be confirmed or disconfirmed in the initial reading. The *pre-reading* stage helps to activate learners’ top down processing. ‘In the top-down approach, readers start with the overall context, the ‘big picture,’ and use their own background knowledge to make predictions about the content of a text’. (Nunan.D 2015).

This reading task is suitable for the learners as they approach the text in order to get the overall idea and confirm their predictions. In the *gist-reading* stage, learners are not expected to read every word, skim the text- ‘as if they were casting their eyes over its surface’. (Harmer 2007)

The *initial reading* is a *jigsaw approach*: students are put into two groups A &B and receive either the first or second page of the extract. They skim their pages, make predictions about their reading and share their findings with the other group after reading in order to confirm their predictions. As part of this, students are asked to underline the unknown words to be clarified before the second reading. According to Scrivener (2011), ‘skimming is a top-down skill, involves reading quickly to get the gist of the passage, ‘without worrying about small items or individual words’.

A *jigsaw reading* motivates students to read and share their answers ,’a technique that gives students a reason for reading and then sharing what they have found’(Harmer 2007), as well as enabling peer learning whereby they divide the ‘labour of learning’ (Amador &. Mederer, 2013) The chapter is long and a jigsaw approach breaks down the text to a manageable length and skimming is easier for the learners.

The *second reading* encourages students to read for a more detailed understanding of the text. Before the second reading, my aim here was to pre-teach blocking vocabulary, especially where the vocabulary has a different meaning to common or contemporary usage. Then students do a vocabulary exercise matching the words with their meanings. Students A&B are given 4

statements each, scan the pages that they read and determine if the statements are true or false. The true or false statements are paraphrased sentences from the reading text. After completing the task, the students come together in pairs and check each other answers.

Scrivener (2011) states that 'reading for detail or intensive reading is reading texts closely and carefully with the intention of gaining an understanding of as much detail as possible. Scanning involves looking through the text to find keywords that are important. Scanning is a top-down skill'.

These sub-skills help students to respond the text in a meaningful way, understand the writer's purpose, the text structure and content. This reading task practices scanning which is often used in combination with reading for detail. Students scan the text for finding the unknown words and reading for detail for answering true and false statements.

The final phase, *post-reading*, has the purpose of helping the learners build up what they have read. Students have the opportunity to respond to the novel extract in the follow-up activity which is speaking. Students will be given a set of discussion questions related to the key topic of the reading. These questions are also related to the second reading task so they should have a clear idea of what these questions relate to the target language and how to transfer it in the speaking activity.

This speaking activity is targeted to develop learners' confidence in using the target language in freer communication. It provides an opportunity for learners to react to the text and give their opinions. According to Nunan, D (2015), the speaking task may seem to be a simulation of what the learners are expected to do in the real world.

The key aspect of my output activity is immersing students in the culture of the novel's setting. Additionally, literature engages the learners more emotionally than other texts, so providing the learners to react to what they read in the literature further enhances this emotional engagement, which ultimately leads to better retention of what they read.

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Appendix 1

Pride and Prejudice

by Jane Austen

Volume One

Chapter 1

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do not you want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."

This was invitation enough.

"Why, my dear, must you know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four¹ to see the place, and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas², and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"Oh! single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? how can it affect them?"

"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

"Is that his design in settling here?"

"Design! nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he *may* fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."

"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you the best of the party."

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly *have* had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be any thing extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

"In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood."

"It is more than I engage for, I assure you."

"But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general you know they visit no new comers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for *us* to visit him, if you do not."

"You are over scrupulous surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying which ever he chuses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy."

"I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving *her* the preference."

"They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters."

"Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves."

"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least."

"Ah! you do not know what I suffer."

"But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood."

"It will be no use to us, if twenty such should come since you will not visit them."

"Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all."

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts,³ sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three and twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. *Her* mind was less difficult to develope. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented she fancied herself nervous.⁴ The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.