24 May 2018 DRAFT

Competence and Confidence: Learning English with Literary Texts

Report of the External Academic Committee on Teaching Literature within the English Language Program of the Ministry of Education

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Contents:

Aims:

The overall aim of our committee's work has been to articulate a program of using literary texts in Israeli classrooms as a contribution to the wider goal of strengthening students' proficiency in English by making the experience enjoyable as well as cognitively appropriate to the achievement of oral competence.

How can engagement with imaginative literature (e.g., poems, stories, plays, movies) contribute to learning a foreign language?

A superficial, but not irrelevant answer to the question above is that if the imaginative texts make class lessons more enjoyable, the students will be more positively engaged in the learning.

Many – probably the majority of oral utterances in everyday speech are actually creative – not in the sense of competing with Shakespeare, but in the sense of producing a new, appropriate, and understandable utterance. Successful language communication, we might say, depends a speakers' being able to balance/ integrate 4 principles of language behavior:
1) follow learned rules
2) break learned rules
3) doing 1 and 2 with sufficient awareness of contextual demands so that they can
4) communicate thoughts that the speaker is likely never to have put together in this particular way before.

Students learning a new language, then, are learning to engage with others cooperatively, that is, in creative performance.

If we assume that students' competence improves commensurate with the time they spend interacting with others, and we aim, thus, to increase in as many ways as we can, the time they spend speaking English.

And if we may assume that students will be more likely to take up opportunities offered to participate when the classroom situation rewards participation and does not punish errors. The optimal learning situation will be one in which the rules they learn can be tried out in cooperative, communicative situations without negative consequences. They need, in short, to be allowed to play in their new language.

Many streams of cognitive and developmental theory support these unsurprising assertions, but we cite here just Bateson and Martin.

Patrick Bateson and Paul Martin. *Play, Playfulness, Creativity and Innovation.* Cambridge UP: 2013

p.123 "Play provides a mechanism for generating new forms of behavior or new ideas, enabling the individual to discover new solutions and ways of breaking out of a rut. Play, we argue, equips the individual with experiences that enable it to meet future challenges in novel ways."

The classroom teacher can use the creative work of artists and writers to help provide a protected, disinhibiting, non-competitive environment in which students can explore new possibilities of communicating, try out new ways of relating to others, new ways of combining familiar sense imagery and ideas.

See also Patrick Bateson, "Playfulness and Creativity," *Current Biology* 25.1 (2015) re: rule-breaking. A classroom teacher may explicitly allow the normal hierarchy within a classroom to be disrupted – viz. mardi gras, Purim – and adopt a subordinate role within a game. Humor is of course closely aligned with the kind of rule-breaking that allows relaxation and encourages joining in.

Maximizing the students' active participation during class time is best accomplished when the classroom teachers themselves are both competent and comfortable in the classroom. Recognizing the differences among teachers, students, and classroom contexts, it has been our aim to broaden the possibilities available, not to restrict them. We present our conclusions and suggestions here with the advice that classroom teachers themselves be taught a range of methodologies and once on the job be as free as possible within institutional possibilities to choose the approach that best suits their classroom, combining them according to the school context. among a set of possible methodologies.

Our committee hopes that our report will help decision-makers refocus and reground the teaching of creative texts in the Israeli English language classroom.

Refocusing: Acknowledging that the appreciation of canonical literary texts and traditions are best taught in students' native language, we see the opportunity to demonstrate how a wide range of creative texts can now step to center stage in the English language classroom with the aim of enhancing the pleasure of language learning, and thereby the students' proficiency.

Regrounding: Recent advances in the cognitive sciences, specifically in the fields of neurobiology, developmental psychology, psycho- and socio-linguistics, and literary and interpretive theory, provide important new perspectives on maximizing success in school-based language learning. The purpose of this report is to stimulate change in the English classrooms of Israel schools and in teacher-education programs in the colleges and universities.

The educational decision makers we are addressing, all of whom were themselves classroom teachers, will likely find confirmation in the new research of what their own experience has taught them are "best practices." The research, then, is not meant to replace the strong intuitions of good teachers, but to support everyone involved in the decision-making processes related to the EFL classroom, by referencing the latest work in the cognitive sciences and indicating its relevance to our aims.

Principles, or Assumptions about learning: dynamic interaction, embodiment, play

Theorists of literature and interpretation have learned these assumptions from cognitive science, but they match closely the conclusions we have evolved as teachers over the years from our classroom experiences. They are presented here as the principles grounding the suggestions for the practice that follow in Section III. More specific references to the scholarship will be found in the methodology packages there.

All of these cognitive principles and the language learning theory entailed, strongly support the classroom use of creative literary texts in English.

Language competence and performance are active and interactive behaviors. They arise from and allow **cooperative activity** among individuals and groups. Learning a second language, which for Israeli children is also a language of wider communication, affords learners wider possibilities for cooperative participation in multiple cultural subgroups.

A person who can use a language for the purposes of communication with others has learned how to **participate in a set of language games, or speech genres, each of which has its own purposes.** Reading directions on a jar of instant coffee, giving a speech, writing a sonnet, commenting on a stage play or a movie, telling a story, arguing with a sibling, or interpreting a novel or a newspaper editorial are all guided by learned genre rules. [Examples: In a sonnet, make the last two lines rhyme, in an argument, try to have the last word, when assembling a table from IKEA, assume that the instructions are not metaphorical or ironic.] The genres that we generally call literary may have been given high cultural value in specific contexts, but as many years of research has shown, they are all understood and produced by the same language-analytic and language-management brain processes.

These interactive processes are**, situationally specific, sensitive to interpersonal status relationships, rule-guided, and emotionally charged**. These processes are best learned, as children learn their home languages, by maximizing opportunities for interactive participation with mutual respect and a minimum of negative consequences. Explicit public correction of student performance isn't necessary or helpful. Active performance in a conversation between two people or in a group is largely **self-correcting**, as they observe their own success or failures within a cooperative and supportive group.

Recent advances in neuroimaging techniques help us see ever more clearly that what we think of as mental work happens in the central nervous systems, in the neurons in the brain, and in parallel to the other dynamic processes that keep bodies alive and functioning. The bodily processing that grounds all our knowledge, even what we think of as "conceptual," is built from a base of sense experience, just as is the total activity of our evolved physiology. Learning a language is not, in this way, different from learning to ride a bike. You are learning to do something, to act, and to act in response to (as with bike riding), threatening imbalance. Your performance must be properly balanced within its context.

The term language games makes reference to all genres of speech behavior including the literary genres, is not accidentally related to the idea of play. Recent work on animal and human play has been showing how important the freedom to **play** is to **creativity**, and how important creativity is to language behavior. Remember that language competence requires the ability to produce and understand sentences never before heard. Imaginative texts, in their use of language, by virtue of their genre, are playful. They are absolutely exempt from using words, sounds, rhythms, and themes in the most probable ways, because imaginative texts are most successful when they surprise their audiences with new insights. They are emotionally evocative, inviting imaginative and responsive participation. They invite playful responses from their audiences.

There can, then, **never be a single right interpretation** for an imaginative work, be it a poem or a movie. It is the freedom to play afforded by the various genres of literary texts, and

the opportunity of tapping into **personal emotions and pleasure** that recommends them as ideal subjects of focus in the language classroom. Of course, creative texts in all genres provide the same opportunities for learning vocabulary and grammar, as do non-fictional genres, and are similarly occasions for oral or written response. But it is because they also provide the freedom for creative response, because they promise that there are a lot more right answers than wrong ones, that they work with the goal of making the language classroom a place where the pleasure of emotional involvement, imaginative exploration, and language experimentation is welcome.

Performance Packages

We collect, here, five packages, each describing a different way of using imaginative texts in the English language classroom. The colleges will, we hope, introduce future teachers to these methods, helping them to understand the theoretical basis for each, and making clear that there are no rigid borders; the suggestions for activities in the packages can be modified and combined in practice, as appropriate to the level of competence of teacher and students, as long as the overall goal of maximizing student performance is maintained.

Each of the five finds its own emphasis, but are also hugely overlapping. All of them work within the understanding of cognition as embodied, and dialogic, that is, active, and interactive, and necessarily responsive and creative.
Each of the packages is grounded in one or more currently ongoing research programs in brain and cognitive sciences, as indicated in the introductions. References are given so that the teachers in the colleges, as they prepare their courses, and the student teachers, as they study, can familiarize themselves with the theoretical support for the recommendations. We suggest these possibilities as a substitute for the program of teaching that was based on a set of guidelines referred to as “hots and lots” because the theory on which it was based (from the 1950s) has been fundamentally undermined by current research.

In line with the general principle that student participation needs to be maximally encouraged, classroom teachers, if they are comfortable doing so, may explicitly allow the normal hierarchy within a classroom to be disrupted – viz. mardi gras, Purim – and adopt a subordinate role within a game. Humor is of course closely aligned with the kind of rule-breaking that allows relaxation and encourages joining in. According to Patrick Bateson and Paul Martin, “play provides a mechanism for generating new forms of behavior or new ideas, enabling the individual to discover new solutions and ways of breaking out of a rut. Play, we argue, equips the individual with experiences that enable it to meet future challenges in novel ways.” [*Play, Playfulness, Creativity and Innovation*, Cambridge UP: 2013]. p.123

Play, on this view, has no age limits. From the earliest English learning classes through the most advanced, teachers should adapt the principles stated here to their classes keeping in mind that at all levels the classroom should provide a cooperative and supportive environment in which learners can observe and practice their new language in the conditions close to real speech situations. The classroom is a protected rehearsal space in which acting proficiently is tried out and improved over time.

Learning English through Literary Texts:

Meta-Linguistic Awareness Package (with laughter)

Dr. Shulamit Kopeliovich

Rationale

The metalinguistic awareness package is rooted in the recognition as old as Aristotle's rhetoric that the form of what you say has the power to persuade. Anew in the mid-twentieth century, the idea was articulated by the Prague school grammarian, Roman Jakobson, and by structural linguists and French structuralist theorists who were struggling to be specific about how poetic language differed from ordinary language. The claim was that in non-poetic communication, the focus of both speaker and hearer was (it was presumed) on the message. Poetic communication, however, asked and rewarded attention to the language itself. Literary theorist Jonathan Culler paraphrased the efforts like this:

> The function of grammatical analysis might be to explain how it is that in particular cases ideas are generated in the minds of readers which would not have been generated if other combinations of grammatical or phonological types had been used. In other words, rather than attempt to use linguistic analysis as a technique for discovering patterns in a text, one might start from data about the effect of poetic language and attempt to formulate hypotheses which would account for these effects. (*Structuralist Poetics,* 1975:69)

Developments in linguistics, in semiotics, and in ordinary language philosophy since the 1950s have made clear, however, that "poetic" forms of language exist in many contexts of language use. What counts as a poem, or a "literature" in the honorific sense, is not determined by the form alone. Jakobson himself cited, as one of his favorite examples of the power of form, the political slogan, "I like Ike." Marshall McLuhan argued that form matters not only in poetry but in all language use. His often-cited dictum was: "The medium is the message." Not much of a leap is required to find that refocusing attention on the forms of language will help learners become sensitive to the possibilities of their target language and more proficient in using it. In today's English language classroom, the teacher can engage students with a riddle or a poem by Robert Frost.

"**A teacher with an active interest in language will arouse a similar interest in students… The more teachers understand language, the more effectively they can help their students develop their knowledge of language." (Freeman and Freeman, 2004)**

Theoretical Background

The term metalinguistic awareness was first used by Cazden (1974) to describe and explain the transfer of linguistic knowledge and skills across languages. Meta-Linguistc Awareness (MLA) means understanding how the language works. Goodman (2003) discusses the value of activities that encourage young students' enquiry into the basic principles of language structure. It has distinct aspects: phonological, morphological, semantic, and syntactic awareness. It combines well with other embodied teaching approaches.

The earliest lessons in language, mother-tongue learning within the family, combine language and bodily actions. Is has been argued that parents have 'language-body conversations' with

their children, the parent instructs and the child physically respond; new vocabulary is learned by acting it out and experiencing the movements that represent the vocabulary.

This British Council website provides an explanation of the method's application in the classroom.

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/total-physical-response-tpr

Elementary

Examples of using TPR for raising Meta-Linguistic Awareness and its further reinforcement through literature:

I give young learners a pink ribbon and a green rubber band. This way I teach the difference between the long [i:] and the short [ɪ]. They name the colors while stretching the "green" rubber and showing that the pink ribbon is short and cannot be stretched. I also teach pronunciation with the help of verbs: the kids repeat them and perform the actions: *hop!-hop!-hop!* (the short quick sound [ɒ]) as opposed to *go…-go….-go…* (the diphthong [əʊ]). They "feel" the vowels through the body movements. You can also play with adding the adverbs "quickly" and "slowly" to different commands. Then, they move to other words with these sounds and to simple songs or nursery rhymes. For example, "Row, row, row your boat…." is excellent for "rowing" movements and playing with the diphthong [əʊ]. Try it yourself!
It is extremely important to include some elements of contrastive analysis between English and Hebrew (e.g. explicit attention to the fact that Hebrew has only 5 vowels, while English has 26 including diphthongs - the kids do not need to know scientific terms, but they can learn the difference through body movements and imagination). Later, this awareness that languages differ in their internal structure can be spread from phonology to other fields.

Young learners can experience English through their own bodyily movements, acting out emotions in dance, by shouting / whispering, etc. Furthermore, developing Meta-Linguistic Awareness can draw the students' attention to the surprises in literary language and make them feel at ease with the flow of the foreign speech.

Meta-Linguistic Awareness exercises in the classroom provide opportunities to compare the target language and the mother-tongue of the speakers. All the activities mentioned in this section explicitly reinforce the differences and similarities in the structure of the languages that the students encounter in their environment (Hebrew, Arabic, languages of immigrant communities).

Intermediate

Traditionally, Literature is associated with novels, stories, poetry. Yet, the modern world of media is full of genuine interest to and active use of very short pieces that people send to each other or upload as elements of their personal profiles in the e-mail accounts, FB, What's App chats, etc., Language jokes, inspirational quotes, and short wise utterances used in EFL classes can boost appreciation of both Language and Literature, help learners who can hardly cope with long literary texts, inspire teachers to make a link between their love for Language

and the goals of Literature teaching. The choice of quotes and jokes can be finely tuned into the students' proficiency, interests, cultural outlook, and age.

Quotes and sayings

Examples of activities:

1) Who can use the following quotations as her/his personal profile? Which one you would like to use yourself?
2) Use these utterances to notice, understand, and practice the grammatical construction(s) they contain:

Never let the things you want make you forget the things you have!

"In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on." Robert Frost

Life is not only something you feel, it is something you do.

All of these quotations contain relative clauses without "that" – the construction that is especially difficult to interpret for Hebrew speakers taught to identify dependent clauses by "ש..."

Other groups of quotes and sayings may contain passive constructions, gerunds, infinitives, etc. (only one type for each set!) Myriads of quotations can be easily found in the net (just copy-paste them!)

https://www.pinterest.com/divamystiqq/wise-utterances/?autologin=true
https://www.developgoodhabits.com/wise-quotes/

Creative adjustment: the students are asked to illustrate their favorite quotes, design a collage (e-version or cardboard poster), act out a situation where the wise saying can help, create a blog with quotations, debate about them, etc.

Each short piece of wisdom is a high-quality literature piece in miniature: the sense and the language are at the highest volume there, while its short form gives the students feelings of control and competence. It can be a bridge to the world of longer literary pieces or it can be a literary piece by itself. Additional poetic genre offering very short wise literary pieces to language learners are "haiku" (modern "haiku" written in English or ancient "haiku" translated from Japanese).

Translation and Own Language Activities: the benefits of the use of short quotations and pieces of poetry in language learning can be further developed into translation activities, e.g. asking students to translate the quotations into Hebrew, Arabic, and immigrant languages and posting the translations together with the English original. The students will clearly see the differences in the syntactic structure.

In addition, wise quotes about language can boost the students' interest to helpful linguistic conceptions essential for language learning:

Example:

The following quotations use powerful metaphors that can help a teacher to show the importance of learning authentic word collocations (as opposed to direct word-for-word translation from L1):

"Words are like planets, each with its own gravitational pull." – Kenneth Burke

"Words too are known by the company they keep." – Joseph Shipley

These quotations are taken from the list of hilarious sayings about language collected by Richard Lederer in the last chapter of his book "The Miracle of Language". The book is highly recommended to all the English teachers as a valuable source of interesting facts about language and about linguistic aspects of English Literature. For example, did you know that the first line of famous modern "Knock-knock" jokes originally comes from Shakespeare's *Macbeth (act 2, scene 3)?* (Lederer, p.90)

Linguistic humor: a Meta-Linguistic key to the gates of Literature

In all the cultures, children play with the language and develop Meta-Linguistic Awareness through joyful games, tongue twisters, and songs. This children's folklore is also Literature… Let's bring it into the classroom!

There are different types of jokes that are especially helpful in raising specific aspects of Meta-Linguistic Awareness that is vital to Language learning. The following list just maps covert Linguistic mechanisms underlying language humor on different needs of English learners. Teachers can use this list to analyze both separate jokes and humorous elements in different literary texts:

1) Games and songs for practicing Phonological Awareness

What do children learn when they practice Pig Latin (a made-up language formed from English by transferring the initial consonant or consonant cluster of each word to the end of the word and adding a vocalic syllable)?

What do actually children do when they change vowels in the Hebrew song *"Shnaim sinim be kinor gadol…"?*
Actually, they playfully develop muscles of Phonological Awareness: breaking words into syllables, understanding the difference between vowels and consonants.
Can we find similar songs and games in other languages? Let's compare them to their English counterparts and use the results to teach and reinforce reading skills in the elementary school and in the remedial teaching sessions for non-readers!

2) Segmentation Jokes for practicing Phonological Awareness and Spelling

For example, famous "Knock Knock" jokes are genuine elements of the English-speaking youth culture and can be effectively used in TESOL. Their predictable patterns give the students a sense of competence:

Knock, knock
Who's there?
Beef
Beef who?
Before I get cold, you'd better let me in!

Knock! Knock!
Who's there?
Ketchup.
Ketchup who?
Ketchup with me and I'll tell you!

Knock, knock
Who's there?
Lettuce
Lettuce who?
Let us in, we're freezing!
https://lajollamom.com/kid-friendly-knock-knock-jokes/

Even the most superficial analysis of Knock-knock jokes reveals the underlying mechanism of spelling mistakes and difficulties in interpreting oral speech: wrong segmentation (dividing strings of sounds into meaningful words), multiple variants in English sound-letter correspondence (e.g. the sound [s] can be the letters *c* or *s*), inability to distinguish between long and short vowels (*beef* vs. *before)*, etc.

- Important methodological point: in real-life communication, explanations usually spoil the humor of jokes; however, in the language classroom, it is vital to provide clear explicit explanations and to practice the correct spelling. Otherwise, the jokes may reinforce confusion and mistakes.

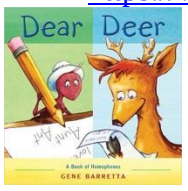
Creative Adjustment: draw pictures to illustrate Knock-knock jokes; act them out in pairs; organize a Big Knock-Knock Festival.

FYI: The English Page of the Hebrew weekly journal "אותיות" publishes one Knock-knock joke every week.

3) **Homophone jokes for practicing Phonological Awareness and Spelling**

Jokes based on homophones (words that have the same sound, but different spelling) are similar to Knock-knock jokes, but they usually do not have the element of wrong segmentation and are easier to use in the classroom.

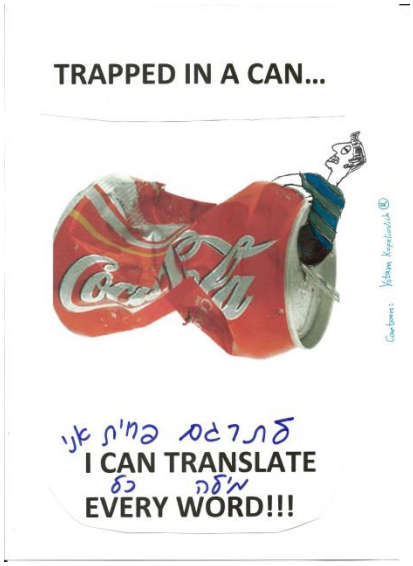
For example, use the book "Dear Deer!"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYaMP36D8s0



"DEAR DEER! … Wait until you HEAR what goes on over HERE…"

In fact, when the students learn from this book, they acquire a life-long helpful tool for eliminating spelling mistakes and clarifying the difference between confusing words: they just learn to write them down in pairs with clear pictures/translations for each word. It can help students at all the levels.

4) Jokes based on semantic ambiguity (double meaning, homonyms) for teaching Semantic awareness

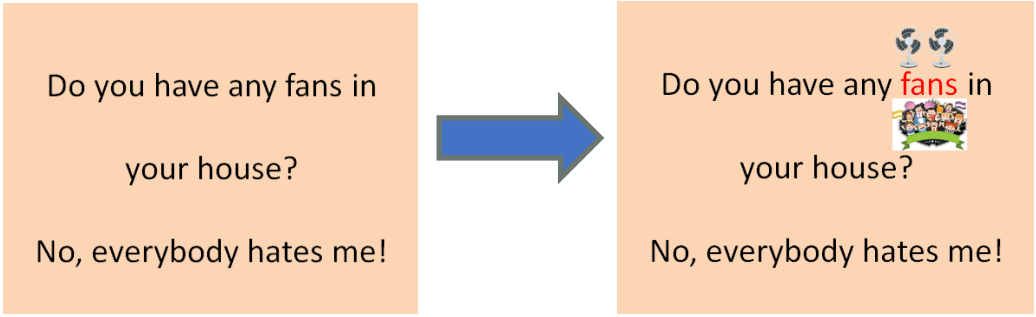


(from Kopeliovich, 2018)

To become successful readers, students should be aware of the fact that words may have more than one meaning. Majority of language jokes play around with double meaning and we can easily find semantic jokes that fit the age and level of our students:

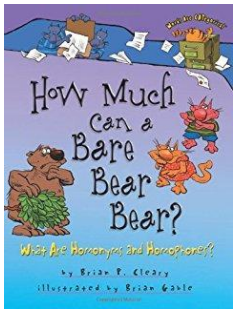
Professor to a noisy classroom: Gentlemen, order!
Students: Beer! (from "The Anatomy of a joke", 2005)

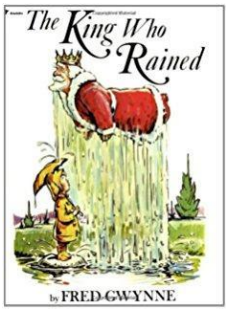
While working on semantic jokes, the students need some explicit guidance into developing effective reading-comprehension strategies:

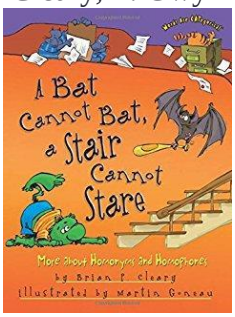


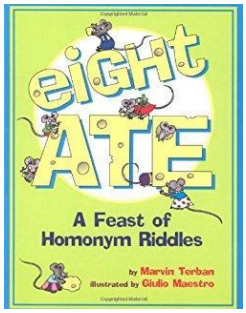
(from the project of the student Tal Peretz, Hertzog College)

In fact, both Homophone and Homonym Jokes (# 3 and #4) constitute the basis for many humorous books that can be used in the classroom as extensive-reading materials and enrichment. Recommended authors are B. Cleary, F. Gwynne, M. Terban.









In addition, many jokes from the traditional English non-sense poetry as well as L. Carrol's *"Alice in the Wonderland"* and "Jabberwocky" actually have the same semantic mechanisms:

- Mine is the long and sad TAIL… (from the Mouse's TALE, "Alice in the Wonderland")
Although not all the students are able to deal with the full text of *"Alice in the Wonderland", but* they can learn the jokes from this book and thereby touch the world of the English Literature.

5) Jokes and cartoons based on literal interpretation of idioms (another aspect of Semantic Awareness)

To acquire some basic awareness of idioms, the students need to clearly understand the literal word-for-word meaning and, then, learn the idiomatic meaning of the phrase (2+2=5!!!). It can be done effectively through funny pictures reflecting the literary meaning (just click "idioms" in the Google search for images – and you will find hundreds of ready-made printable materials!) Send the students to make projects on idioms in English and in their L1 (Hebrew, Arabic or any other language), ask them to draw idioms.

The famous children's book "*Amelia Bedelia*" by Peggy Parish is based on literary understanding of idioms by a sweet ignorant servant (the pictures and the jokes are great, while the language of the story may need adaptation).
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJJ2ZF0FI6I

Translation and Own Language Activities: All the activities based on Linguistic Humor in English can be enriched by Linguistic Humor in the students' Own Languages. For example, semantic jokes based on double meaning exist in any language and the students may find it easier to understand this crucial concept based on a joke in the mother tongue, then, move to understanding similar jokes in English; finally these semantic-awareness skills will be transferred to reading strategies and vocabulary acquisition.
While studying the English humor based on kids' peer culture, the teacher can motivate the students to find similar jokes, language games or rhymes in their own languages and spot similarities and differences.
Excellent language awareness projects can include the students' research on the origin and use of idioms in English and in other languages, on the ways of word formation, borrowing words from other languages, bilingual language mixing in multilingual homes of the students. Successful projects may be based on funny instances of machine or human translation that invade the social nets at present.
Finally, asking the students to translate jokes and rhymes from English into their mother tongue is an excellent exercise in Meta-Linguistic Awareness, including the students' discovery of unique things that cannot be translated adequately as well as their search for ways to overcome this difficulty.

Implications for Teacher Training: The students of pedagogical colleges need to experiment with Linguistic Humor having a great potential for English classrooms. Zipke (2008) speaks about using jokes for promoting Meta-Linguistic Awareness in monolingual learners of English as a native tongue. It needs systematic adjustment to the needs of TESOL learners. Many linguistic textbooks bring jokes to illustrate important theoretical points, yet, the pedagogical aspect of Linguistic Humor is not explicit there. There are many great professional materials in the field, but the students need to learn how to find, evaluate, and use them in an engaging way (see Kopeliovich, 2018).
The quotation on the cover of the book "The Miracle of Language" by Richard Lederer says: *"Richard Lederer's delight in English is in itself delightful – and … contagious"* Edwin Newman
Let's inspire this "Linguistic gold rush" in our classrooms! It will strengthen the positions of Literature as well.

Advanced

Most of the activities for the Intermediate level described in the section above can be adjusted to the Advanced level (semantic jokes, idioms, activities based on quotations), provided that the level of the language fits the students' level. In addition, more subtle Meta-Linguistic conceptions can be tapped through advanced Linguistic jokes:

1) **Jokes for promoting Morphological awareness** are less frequent than Semantic jokes and need more sophisticated Linguistic work.

For example, in L. Carroll's "Through the Looking Glass", Humpty Dumpty mentions an "un-birthday present". This phrase gives important insights into possibilities and limitations of derivational morphology. He also builds wallet words (e.g. *bread-and-butterfly*). Comparison of these word-building innovations in translations of L. Carroll's books into different languages gives fascinating insights into similarities and differences of their morphological processes. And it is just fun!

2) **Jokes based on Syntactic Ambiguity**

Unlike Semantic jokes based on double meaning of a word, Syntactic jokes are based on different possible interpretations of structures.

From Stageberg (1968) "Structural Ambiguity for English Teachers":

Patent medicines are sold by frightening people
My job was keeping him alive

Dealing with structural Ambiguity (e.g. the use of gerunds and participles that are not similar to Hebrew and are misleading because of the –ing ending) helps advanced students to overcome difficulties in dealing with the literary English language.

Books for advanced extensive reading that deal with language issues at a macro-level (insights into Socio-linguistics and Psycho-linguistics)

The following books give the students a great opportunity to think and talk about the role of language in our life:
 "*Frindle*" by Andrew Clements: It is a very simple book that can be used in Junior High and High School classrooms. It is about a child who performs a great socio-linguistic

experiment making his friends, the whole school and all the citizens of his town call a pen "frindle". It has many episodes suitable for acting out and/or making a movie. The children will learn about slang and dictionaries, development of languages; they will discuss the notorious tension between the vivid life of constantly developing words and the prescriptive approach focusing on their correct use.

 "The Story of my Life" by Hellen Keller - one of the most fascinating stories of language acquisition and the movie "The Miracle Worker": *"The language is more important to the mind than the light is to the eyes"* is just one quote from the moving real-life account of the frustrated child deprived of the basic means to express herself. She is gradually learning the sign language to discover miracles and treasures of human communication, personal growth through the use of Language.

Further Reading

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Learning English Through Literary Texts**:**

Reader Response Package (with emotions)

Dr. Klarina Priborkin

Rationale:

In order to teach literature effectively, teachers should shift their focus from attempting to understand the intended meaning of the author relying on a widely acceptable interpretation of the text, **to the meaning produced by the students themselves**. Reader centered teachers will not expect one correct answer, but rather anticipate various responses while encouraging the students to relate their personal experiences and emotions about the text. One of the most important benefits literature offers to the readers is the possibility to identify with the characters or experience the atmosphere conveyed by the text. When we encourage our students to talk about their own experiences as they are reflected in the text, we invite them to own the literature they read. According to Richard Beach *A Teacher's Introduction to Reader Response Theories*, "readers may respond to express their emotional reaction, to explore difficulties in understanding, to collaborate or verify their opinions with others, to build a social relationship through sharing responses, or to clarify their attitudes" (6). All these responses are valid reactions to the text, so even when students express confusion or estrangement a teacher could encourage them to find out what in the text creates this confusion. Reading a literary text is an opportunity for emotional self-exploration and reflection that develops the students' understanding of creative and emotional processes they are undergoing while reading a text.

Theoretical Grounding:

In "How to Recognize a Poem When You See One" Stanley Fish argues that "interpreters do not decode poems: they make them" (327). According to Fish, poems and literature, by extension, become meaningful when readers interact with them through the interpretive, literary communities they create. Fish also emphasizes that interpretive acts are "always shared and public" (335) because they always rely on the interpreters' socio-cultural milieus. While our Israeli students don't necessarily share the socio-cultural environment of the literary texts we choose to teach in the classroom, there are some universal, cross-cultural and cross-generational experiences our students can relate to. According to the Theory of Literary Universals there are certain universal, so to speak eternal themes that have always appealed to the human minds. In *The Mind and Its Stories*, Patrick Colm Hogan isolates two universal narrative structures: "heroic and romantic tragicomedy" (11). Another universal Colm Hogan points out is a universal prototype for happiness. "These structures are not only to be found across unrelated traditions; they are in fact, the **dominant** structures across traditions (11, my emphasis). In other words, teachers should be **given the freedom** to choose the universally appealing literary works that relate to their students' experiences. By responding to these texts as a community of readers and interpreters and expressing these interpretations creatively both orally and in writing, students will be able to develop their language skills while interacting with their peers in the target language. The Reader Response Package will exemplify the methods that encourage our students' creative responses to the texts in form of projects and assignments that involve group work in service of communal interpretation or group and pair work.

Examples – Elementary Level

At the elementary level the recommendation is to integrate the emotional and cognitive responses to short literary texts with the physical responses which can be manifested through dancing, pantomime, plastic and visual arts and so on. This package will provide some examples of exercises that integrate the Reader Response Theory with Total Physical

Response Approach according to which students should be able to experience language learning through their bodies. This approach enables the students to learn new vocabulary by acting it out and experiencing the movements that represent the vocabulary they study. "Created by Dr. James J Asher it is based upon the way that children learn their mother tongue. Parents have 'language-body conversations' with their children, as the parent instructs and the child physically responds to this" (British Council website). Similarly, the teacher in the classroom teaches the language by allowing the students to experience it. Students are allowed to move in the classroom, role play, create or sing together using the target language. The TPR approach differs from the playback theater approach presented in Dr. Amy Gelbart's package in the sense that it promotes inter-disciplinary language learning experience and encourages the teachers to use of the visual or plastic arts, crafts, cooking, dancing, physical education or other disciplines to teach English. In its essence the underlying idea of playback theater approach and TPR is similar – students must be allowed to experience the language they learn through their bodies, but while in playback games students perform in front of the audience of their peers, in TPR, they learn to experience the English language in their everyday lives. Thus drawing in English, building castles in English, cooking in English and so on promotes organic learning experience when students don't have to memorize a list of words, but rather naturally absorb the language through exposure and interaction with their peers. This is not to say that playback theater approach does not achieve similar goals, but rather that by using various ways of artistic self-expression, it is possible to interest more students thus involving "multiple intelligences" (Gardner) through extensive exposure various art forms.

Activities using TRP and Reader Response Theories.

"Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" Activity

Read the poem to the students several times. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine their special stars. Ask the students to describe their stars – what's the color and shape of the stars, do they have faces, eyelashes, special haircuts? Then ask them to draw and cut their stars in any way they like. You may want to create a poster of the starry sky and count the stars together. You may want to compare the diamonds mentioned in the poem to the stars and use glitter to decorate your posters.

During group work, the teacher should go around and name the materials/equipment the students are using – crayons, scissors, stickers, colored paper, glitter etc. Depending on the level, you may want to discuss the language of cooperation and polite requests. For example: Can/May I have the glue? Could you pass the crayons, please? Encourage the students to use polite language and speak English throughout the creative process. Use stickers to reward the groups that make an effort to speak English. Repeat the target words as you move from one group to another and write them on the board without translation.

Closure – the teacher might want to show the students the video of the song and ask the students to sing along.

"Mary Had a Little Lamb" Activity – If the students can read, print out the poem and distribute it as a handout. Try to read the song together as a class or sing along. Teachers may ask the students to name the characters that appear in the nursery rhyme first and then ask about the little lamb's actions. Why did it follow Mary? Ask the students to draw Mary and her lamb.

Ask students to imagine the different places Mary went to with her lamb thus brainstorming together to expand students' vocabulary. They may want to choose one of the settings and

draw it as well – ask them to describe the location they have chosen. If you have some advanced students – try to explain the connection between the words "lamb" and "snow" focusing on the words "as white as snow" – to express comparison.

"The Wheels of the Bus" Activity – Print out the poem and distribute it as a handout. Try to read the song together in class. Ask the students to stand up and repeat the actions mentioned in the song. Show the video of the song (you may want to use the website of the Mother Goose Club on your tube) and ask the students to sing along.

Intermediate Level

Drawing Poetry – using the students' artistic interpretations of poetic images to design posters.

The goal of this activity as specified in the committee's rationale is to make "language classroom a place where the pleasure of emotional involvement, imaginative exploration, and language experimentation is welcome" (Prof. Ellen Spolsky). This activity is suitable for Middle School and High School depending on the poem and the kind of activity that follows the creative, artistic response.

Required equipment – A4 blank pages, crayons, pencils or any other available supplies such as colored paper, scissors, and glue.

Several posters if the teacher decides to turn it into a project rather than an exercise – optional (depending on the goal of the lesson, level and number of students)

Instructions to the teacher –

1- Read a poem of your choice in class, once, without analyzing it (make sure the students have a printed version of the poem in front of them as well). If there are some difficult words, briefly work on the vocabulary and collocations asking the students to explain new words in context by paraphrasing the sentence, providing a synonym, a definition or even demonstrate its meaning through pantomime or role play. You may also ask them to think of various word forms/parts of speech to expand their vocabulary (e.g. education, to educate, educational, educationally).

2- Ask the students to close their eyes (not necessary) and read the poem again. This time ask the students to hold on to a picture that appears in their minds when you read the poem.

3- Ask the students to draw this image as well as they can. Explain it can be an intuitive or abstract painting but it must relate to the poem in some way. **Encourage them to play with the color and shape to experience the freedom of artistic creation.**

4- Group Work - after students share their interpretations with their partners and possibly with the class, they should work in groups of 4- 5 to prepare the poster to which they will attach their drawings. They should negotiate and agree on the poster's design and the meaning behind it. They may want to decorate it in order to bring all the images together under one title, express common themes, or divide the poster into several sections. The idea is to encourage them to compare and contrast their paintings and connect them to the poem's main themes. Then, the group presents the poster to the class and explains the artistic choices. These exercises will encourage "active performance in a conversation between two people or in a group" enabling the participants to "observe their own success or failures within a cooperative and supportive group" (Rationale, Spolsky) and correct themselves if necessary.

Advanced Level

The activity begins with the same instructions to the teacher as specified in the previous section on the intermediate level and it involves drawing a picture that represents an image or other element in the poem that was read in class.

Working on oral proficiency – describe your picture, explain your artistic choices to your partner and then (optionally) to the class. You may want to think about your choice of color, characters, objects, style etc. Show which lines in the poem evoked your reaction and why? What personal experiences does the poem evoke in you?

Working on writing – in your reading journal/diary describe your drawing focusing on the colors, shapes or characters of your choice and then write down a reflection of the creative process – try to describe the process that happened in your mind when the teacher asked you to draw your image. Also reflect on your cooperation with your partner and how she or he reacted to your painting. What did you feel while and after sharing your work with your partner, your class or both?

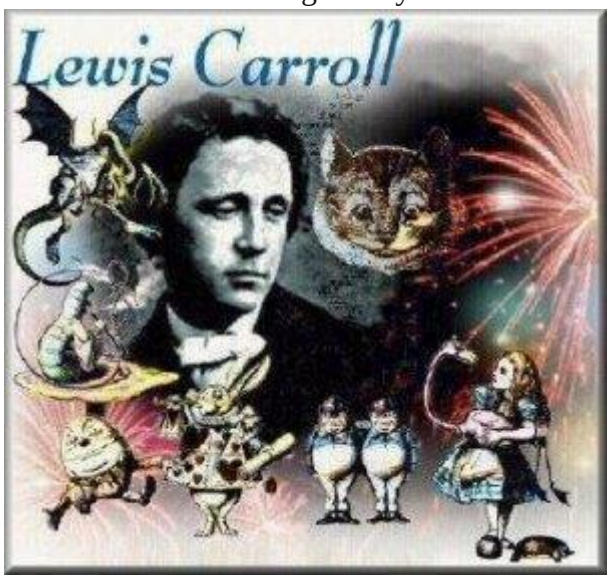
In the package entitled "Making Stuff (with colors)" by Dr. Glenda Sacks, you'll be able to find additional ideas for using visual arts in the English classroom, yet the approach suggested in this package focuses on reflection and introspection implied by the reader response approach. Students are expected to reconnect to their emotional responses and focus on personal interpretation of the texts by reflecting on their creative processes in their reading journals or diaries which can be evaluated in the end of the reading process. This personal writing will enable students to express themselves freely enabling them and the teachers to track their creative and linguistic development.

Group Work – Alternatively, students may be asked to write a reflection on their group work. Guide the students to pay attention to the group's dynamics – who made the decisions and why this particular person took the lead. Ask the students to express their feelings about the group work and encourage them to analyze the design they have chosen to represent everyone's work.

Closure – explain (visual) imagery as the figurative device that appeals to our sense of sight enabling us to paint or imagine pictures of people, objects, actions and ideas in our minds. For advanced students the teacher might want to explain how poems appeal to all of our senses through words.

An Example of a Handout

Exercise 1 - Read the following poem by Lewis Caroll, which is also an acrostic, and choose three powerful images that appeal to you. Then write 1-2 sentences describing what you see in your mind's eye in your own words.



A boat, beneath a sunny sky
Lingering onward dreamily
In an evening of July -

Children three that nestle near,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Pleased a simple tale to hear -

Long has paled that sunny sky:
Echoes fade and memories die:
Autumn frosts have slain July.

Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
Alice moving under skies
Never seen by waking eyes.

Children yet, the tale to hear,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Lovingly shall nestle near.

In a Wonderland they lie,
Dreaming as the days go by,
Dreaming as the summers die:

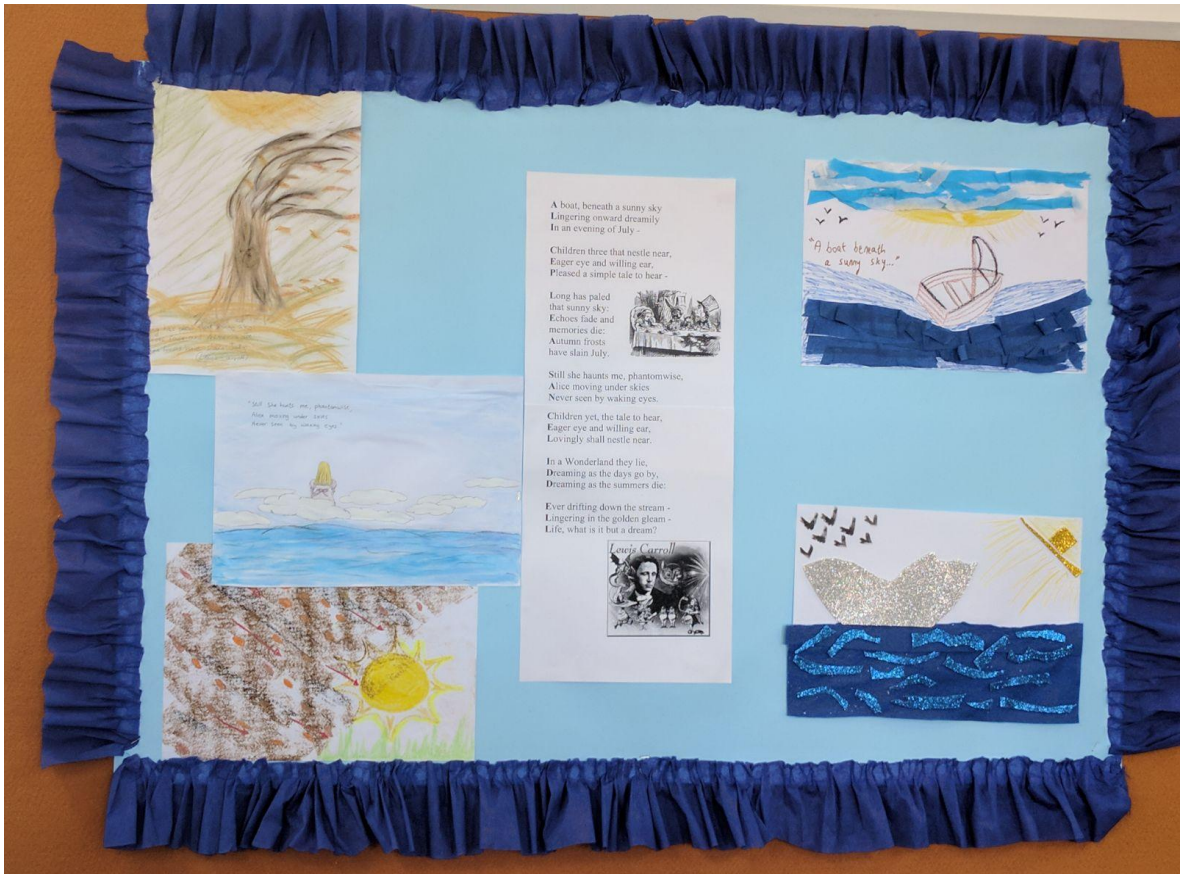
Ever drifting down the stream -
Lingering in the golden gleam -
Life, what is it but a dream?

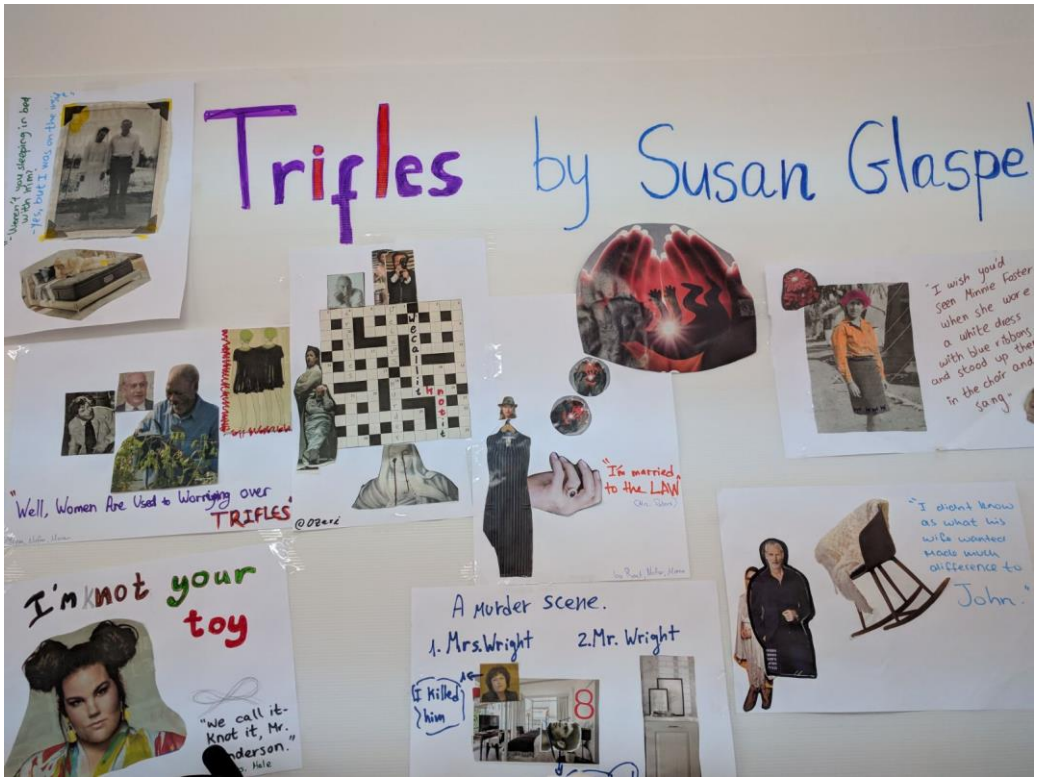
Here are a few tips to help you:

Image – representation of an experience or a sensation through language. It's a mental picture created in your mind through words. Images can appeal various sentence senses:

Crystal clear, blue sea – sight the warm, caressing water – touch
sea scented beach – smell the harsh splash of gasping waves - hearing

Examples of a Posters


A boat, beneath a sunny sky
Lingering onward dreamily
In an evening of July -
Children three that nestle near,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Pleased a simple tale to hear -
Long has paled
that sunny sky:
Echoes fade and
memories die:
Autumn frosts
have slain July.
Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
Alice moving under skies
Never seen by waking eyes.
Children yet, the tale to hear,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Lovingly shall nestle near.
In a Wonderland they lie,
Dreaming as the days go by,
Dreaming as the summers die:
Ever drifting down the stream -
Lingering in the golden gleam -
Life, what is it but a dream?
Lewis Carroll
"A boat beneath a sunny sky..."



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Suggested Texts

Short Stories

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Nessa Rapoport. "The Woman who Lost her Names" *Schocken Book of American Jewish Fiction*. New York: Schoken, 1992.

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Graphic novels

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Sfar, Joann. *The Rabbi's Cat*. New York: Pantheon, 2005.

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Drama

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Learning English through Literary Texts:
Acting Out Package (with movement)

Dr. Amy Gelbart

"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."
George Bernard Shaw

"Through spontaneity we are re-formed into ourselves."
Viola Spolin

Rationale: Improvisation and Performance

This methodology package describes how dramatic techniques and improvisational games can be used in the English language classroom. Pre- and in-service teachers are introduced to this way of teaching by workshops and academic courses. The goal is to encourage the understanding of active, bodily learning, helping teachers to shift their existing mental models of classrooms and learners, (Henderson, Putt and Coombs 2010, Senge 1990).

Theoretical Grounding

Many areas of developmental psychology have, in the last 25 years, refocused their research on the embodiment of cognition. Philosopher Mark Johnson, describes the linkage:

> Our reality is shaped by the patterns of our bodily movement, manipulation of objects, the contours of our spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of our interaction with objects. It is never merely a matter of abstract conceptualizations and propositional judgments…The structures of our bodily experience work their way up into abstract meanings and patterns of inference. (The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason, 1987: xix)

Theories of embodied learning posit that action, movement and gesture can enhance and facilitate learning experiences (Macedonia and Repetto 2017, Goldin-Meadow, 2009), from infancy to adulthood (Troffatter & Kontra, Goldin-Meadow & Beilock 2012). Embodied learning also supports learners with different intelligences and offers opportunities for all learners (from gifted to learning disabled) to gain confidence and proficiency. Researchers suggest that these can lead to more meaningful and authentic language learning, more effective acquisition of English language structures and vocabulary, and the bolstering of students' beliefs in their ability to learn (Boudreault 2010, Wessels 1987). It encourages the use of a lexical approach to language learning (for example, "chunking") that has proven to be very effective for language learners (Lewis 2000). Teaching literature through performance motivates students to play with language, follow rules and be willing to make mistakes without fear.

Discussions of the relationship of this work to educational contexts have examined two similes extensively. The first is teaching as a performance (Pineau, 1994, Eisner, 1983, Whatman, 1997, Fusco, 2000) and the second, teaching as an improvisation (Sawyer, 2011, Johnstone, K. 1989). The first captures the importance of the active body in the classroom, of the teacher as a model of behavior, not just as a conduit for content. However, on this view, when teachers enter their classrooms, they are taking the stage, and their students are relegated to the role of audience. This simile fails to recognize the importance of

student activity. Adding participatory improvisation, however, produces student-student and student-teacher collaborations and the creation and construction of new knowledge. When we think of learning as an improvisation we capture the idea that both the teacher and the student profit by seeing themselves as learners.
Improvisation is defined as a creative act executed without planning and while listening and responding to others in real time (Gerber 2007, Magerko, Manzoul, Riedl, Baumer, Fuller, Luther and Pearce 2009; Nachmanovitch 1990). Just as during pretend play, it encourages the construction of imaginary worlds where teachers and students co-exist in their classrooms. Like children pretending, they function on two levels, real and imagined, with "one foot in the pretend world and the other in the real world, masterfully existing in both" (Lillard p.355). This leads to the creation of something unexpected, playful and surprising. Those improvising must be able to live in the moment, connect to intuition, focus on the process and not the product, and demonstrate a willingness to make mistakes (Magerko et al. 2009 p. 117). Some of the principles necessary for successful improvisation include active listening, saying "yes and…" to ideas (collaboration), and following the rules.

Integrating drama and improvisation activities, because they are process-oriented and encourage group collaboration and not individual achievements (Taylor 2000, p. 5 and Richards 2006, p 5), teaches responsiveness to others, and fosters a positive social climate and raises academic achievement. (Batdi and Batdi 2015; Aykaç, 2008; Baird & Salmon, 2012; O'Neill, 2008). Susan Hillyard claims that teaching through performance, affects "five dimensions [of] developmental processes within the growing person: social development, physical development, intellectual development, creative development and emotional development." (2010)

This can potentially lead to a shift in the "politics of the classroom" (Tomkins 1990) from Paulo Freire's "banking model" (2000) to a more democratic and collaborative environment. This classroom would be a space where voices are heard and respected, many answers are possible, and a playfulness that is connected not only to the games themselves, but to a willingness to take chances and make mistakes, and to get to know each other in different ways.

In the EFL classroom, adopting this type of approach for the teaching of literature can provide opportunities for increased production of language that utilize all four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), enhance interactive communicative skills, foster empathy, and develop multiple intelligences.

My own research (in preparation) suggests that utilizing these techniques to engage the students actively contributes to improved cooperative behavior in the classroom. When students and teachers begin to play games, the rules become an integral part of their language, practice and world. Everyone understands the importance of following the rules of a game. The classroom and its rules become another game, with a set of rules that must be upheld, followed and adjusted – according to the unfolding circumstances. In addition, there is current research that demonstrates the relationship between rule following and creativity (Kern 2006). Though following the rules seems limiting and antithetical to creativity, Kern claims that rules are essential to unlocking creative potential (2006).

Examples (Anchoring Methodologies in Activities)

All of the following suggested activities can be adjusted to students from elementary school through college level. This section will be followed by a section that relates to Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced levels.

Lessons implementing these techniques will involve various components (games and warm-up activities that encourage listening skills, following rules, mutual respect, seeing other students' perspectives, playing with language (introducing figures of speech, language chunks and grammatical structures via games) on a regular basis. Just as rules are an important aspect of being able to play a game successfully, they also get students used to following classroom rules and lead to greater creativity (Kern 2006). All of these games can be adjusted to meet specific goals (like identifying the characteristics of fairy tales or learning conditional sentences).

Check - in - I feel like… (Lexical approach). This is an exercise that should be repeated and adjusted regularly. I am listing just one variation here. Students are asked to express how they currently feel using the sentence opener, "I feel like…" They should be encouraged to add as many details as possible. It is an excellent method to take the class "temperature." Teachers can become aware of what their students are feeling and change directions if necessary. They can discover students who are having difficulties and those who are beginning to feel more confident.
An example: I feel like a red apple that dropped off a tree and was picked up by an angry boy and thrown against a wall. OR - I feel like a car stuck in a terrible traffic jam.

After deducing together or reviewing what the figure of speech, simile is, poems like Langston Hughes' "Harlem" can be taught. Students can then re-write the poem (as individuals or in pairs) by replacing the similes with other ones, changing the title accordingly, and then performing or enacting their poems.

This is a story about… After studying a work of literature, each student has to start a sentence, "This is a story about…" and complete it by adding what he thinks the essence of the story is. The teacher must insist that every student begins his sentence with the proper words, utilizing a lexical approach to language, while giving each student the opportunity to express what he would like to highlight. This can be done in groups of four or in pairs. The teacher should emphasize that students listen to each other actively. If done in pairs, they then have to share with the entire class what their partner said. "Shahar said that the story is about…"

50 Voices - Take a fairy tale, a bible story or a holiday story that everyone is familiar with. Students stand in a "U" shape with the opening of the "U" being the stage. As each student crosses the stage, he must become (voice, body language, facial expression) a character, object or an idea from the chosen story. Crossing the "stage" takes only about 5 seconds, and this is done for 2 or 3 rounds. Students should be encouraged not to plan and not to make what they are depicting clear. If they are playing with "Cinderella," they can be encouraged to bring a number of glass slippers - with different perspectives and emotions. After the game, groups of students can be asked to make a list of the characteristics of the genre.

Monologues - After reading a short story or a poem, students can be asked to improvise (first person) monologues of characters, ideas, and objects from within the story or poem. Students can be asked to write this and practice it at home or in class (as individuals or in pairs). They can be asked to perform an improvised monologue from their seats or in front of the class.

For beginners, the teacher can give each performer a note with a suggestion and have them "perform" their monologues. For more experienced students, teachers can allow them the freedom to choose what voices from within the story they would like to enact and create their own interpretations. Teachers should emphasize the use of body language and facial expressions. Students can be asked to bring a monologue from the author's perspective. After each monologue, the "audience" has to guess who or what the student was trying to depict and explain the connection to the story.

Reading Aloud… Based on Cicely Berry's voice techniques, students are asked to read a poem aloud to themselves and together while walking around the room, looking for the text's meaning and new interpretations.

Examples (Anchoring Methodologies in Activities) – for the Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Levels

In the following section, I will give examples of techniques with specific literary works and levels. **Whenever possible, Newbery and Caldecott medal winners can be chosen from as wide a variety of genres as possible.**

All of these recommended portions of lesson plans require clear rules to be explained and upheld; rules of the games and rules for the classroom. These rules include things like students actively listening to each other, saying "yes" to other students' ideas, and other principles of improvisation listed above. These activities can only be executed successfully if students have become accustomed to following the rules of these games. There are many simple games that are good starting points for the EFL classroom that successfully integrate these rules in the classroom. I provide a few examples below. As mentioned earlier, because these methods take an embodied learning approach, it supports learners with different intelligences and offers opportunities for all learners (from gifted to learning disabled) to gain confidence and proficiency.

I'd like to emphasize that all the suggestions below are intended to be adjusted and adapted to the goals of the individual teachers. Teachers should pick and choose. In addition, this is far from an exhaustive list of possibilities.

Elementary Level - Beginning Learners

Suitable literary materials for Elementary EFL Learners include nursery rhymes, songs, picture books (Dr. Seuss, Maurice Sendak, etc.), poetry (Shel Silverstein, Jack Prelutsky, Kenn Nesbitt)

For elementary school learners, the use of nursery rhymes that are chanted, recited or sung, that involve hand and body movement, and facial expressions can be highly effective. They take an embodied learning approach which supports learners with different intelligences and offers opportunities for all learners (from gifted to learning disabled) to gain confidence and proficiency. They easily integrate aural and oral comprehension, raise phonological awareness and improve pronunciation. They can be used to introduce learners to letters, numbers, vocabulary, simple chunks of language, etc.

Performing Emotions with Picture Books
Materials –

1. Paper plates, glue, colored pencils/markers
2. Mercer Mayer's *I Was So Mad.* (Other options: Patricia Godwin's *I Feel Orange Today*, Janan Cain's *The Way I Feel*.)

The teacher opens the lesson with a series of improvisational games that encourages listening and group focusing, like **Count to 10.** She explains that the rules of this game are for students to make eye contact with each other, breathe deeply, listen carefully and not speak when others are speaking. They must count to 10 in the order of the numbers, without planning who will say each number. Any time that two students say a number at the same time, the class starts to count again. (This is a game that should be played regularly because it teaches many important rules for successful classroom management.

Once they have played for 5 minutes, she introduces the topic of the lesson – emotions. She then asks students about their emotions, eliciting responses and examples from students. At the teacher's request, emotion faces are drawn on the board to represent happy, sad and angry.
Students watch the short Sesame Street video, 'What Makes Me Happy" ("Ernie and Friends – Happiness"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0SFThlja_c
After discussing the content of the video, the teacher can write "I am happy when I… (play, run, swim)…" on the board and students can be asked to share what makes them happy in pairs and then share with the entire class.

Next, students can watch the short Sesame Street video "Kermit and Elmo Discuss Happy and Sad"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhv1h3V8Nz4
Once they have watched, students can be asked to do the same as above.

Next, students are presented with the cover of Mercer Mayer's book, *I Was So Mad,* without the title. They are asked to predict what the book will be about. Then the title is revealed. Students are then asked to share under what circumstances they have been angry. Fellow students can raise their hand if they identify with the feelings. The book is read aloud to the class. During the second reading, students are asked to translate.
The structure of the sentence, "I was so…" is written on the board. The story can also be chanted by the entire class. Other emotion words (sad, happy, angry, afraid, surprised) are listed. Students are asked to share what makes them feel these emotions. Then they are divided up into the different emotions and draw their own emotion paper plate. (Later, these can be hung up in the classroom.)

Before playing the following game, the teacher must emphasize the rules of the game and make sure students uphold these rules. In pairs, students are asked to take turns expressing one of the feelings (using their faces only). Once that student claps and returns to himself, the other student says, "Michael was so mad." Then they change roles.

After this activity, students can be asked to draw a page for a collaborative picture book. They choose one emotion, draw a picture depicting a situation that makes them feel this way, and write "I am so mad/happy when I…" (with their own name at the bottom of the page). This can be collected and turned into a class book or hung on classroom walls.

At the end of the unit, teachers can ask students what they do when they are angry. They can then watch and practice the method of breathing demonstrated on the Sesame Street video about anger:
"Belly Breathe with Elmo"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDOpylA

Intermediate Level

Suitable literary materials for junior high school EFL Learners include nursery rhymes, fables and fairy tales, songs, poetry (Karen Hesse, Paul Fleischman, Shel Silverstein, Jack Prelutsky, Kenn Nesbitt), short stories, teen/young adult fiction (Lois Lowry, Madeline L'Engle, Norton Juster), graphic novels (like Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*), etc.

Learning and Performing Fables:
Materials: A series of fables from different cultures, (such as "The Fox and the Grapes," https://www.moralstories.org/the-fox-and-the-grapes/, "The Ant and the Dove" https://www.moralstories.org/the-ant-and-the-dove/), colored paper, crayons, pencils.

Videos of a number of fables are watched in order to introduce students to fables. A discussion of the characteristics of fables can be elicited from the students and written on the board.

Once games are introduced, the rules of the games must be introduced clearly and upheld in order to gain all of the benefits these techniques can provide. A series of warm up/focusing games (such as **Count to 10** – see above) should be played first, in order to get students into the proper frame of mind.

In groups of four, students are asked to read a fable together, discuss it, list the characteristics of it and write a one-line summary of the fable and then share it with the class. They then draw cartoons with word bubbles and the moral of their fable is written at the bottom. Once they have done that, they prepare a performance of their fable to the class. A script may be written and submitted to the teacher for editing, or this could be an improvisational dialogue. If there are 4 students and 2 characters in the fable, the group can be asked to perform the fable twice, with each version performed by two students, emphasizing different emotions. Body language and affect should be emphasized.

While each group performs, students have to write the title of each fable, a list of characters and the moral of the fable. A discussion introducing literary terms (such as characters, plot, theme) can follow the performances.

Once all of the groups perform and students have been exposed to all the different characters, names of characters (prepared in advance) are put in a hat and each student chooses a character. They can then be asked to write and/or perform a monologue from the point of view of the character they have received. If they are acting, the use of body language and facial expression should be emphasized.

All of these activities require clear rules of listening and respecting each other. These activities can only be executed successfully if students have become accustomed to following the rules of these games.

Advanced Level

Suitable literary materials for high school EFL learners include fairy tales, songs, poetry (Karen Hesse, Paul Fleischman, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, including collections, like *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children* by Jack Prelutsky and *Poems to Learn by Heart* by Caroline Kennedy, Shel Silverstein, Jack Prelutsky), short stories, teen/young adult fiction (Louis Sachar, Sharon Creech, Avi), graphic novels, etc. Many of the materials listed for junior high school can be appropriate as well.

Performing Short Stories

Materials: The short story, "The Chaser" by John Collier (1,060 words), (published in 1940, *The New Yorker*) http://ciscohouston.com/docs/docs/greats/chaser.html

Once students have been introduced to and read the story more than once using a selection of the teacher's methods of choice (listening or watching videos, reading along with the text, paraphrasing and translating, and as homework - re-reading the story and writing a list of ideas they have noticed during the second reading), the teacher can choose whether to introduce or review the basic literary tools that she wants to emphasize for the story (characterization – round and flat characters, setting – cultural, historical, physical, plot structure – diagramming, discussion of themes and symbols and applying them to the story), etc.

All of the techniques listed above (**Portions of Lesson Plans (Anchoring Methodologies in Activities -** Check-in, 50 Voices, Monologues, This is a story about…) can be implemented before or after the literary text is discussed. Students should be encouraged to express their ideas about the story in writing and orally. Students can be asked to write and perform the story using different emotions and body language, to write new endings of the story and perform it, turn the story into a poem and recite for the class, turn the story into a play and record themselves performing it (audio or video).

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Learning English Through Literary Texts:
Themes Package (with argument)

Dr. Doron Narkiss, Simone Duval, Dr. Daniel Feldman, Dr.Laura Major, Dr. Michele Horowitz

The **Themes Package** uses themes expressed in English literary texts to guide learners and instigate the discussion of social issues by their interactions with a set of related written, oral, and visual creative works in English. Portraying the connections between "word and world", that is, representing complex psychological, social and cultural conditions in the world has always been one of the functions of literature. The assumption is that creative literary texts, because they clarify and enhance their audience's engagement in their social world, have long had an important role to play in the education for civil life. In this package, the emphasis on interactive response to particular issues anchored in texts (domestic, economic, symbolic, etc.), involves but subordinates attention to traditional formal literary concerns. Ideas, in short, are focal, verse form, functional.
While the classification of literary texts according to genre, time and place of composition is basic to traditional literary study, given the low absolute number of texts that learners will be exposed to in the course of their English studies, other concerns predominate, such as the relevance of a particular text to Israeli children, and the accessibility of the genre to which it belongs. Texts in a range of genres may be studied together via activities that allow students to recognize the different perspectives that may be taken toward the same or related content. The students are expected, over time, to recognize the different ways the English language is used to represent situations, to persuade and to argue.

Theoretical Grounding

Paolo Freire's idea of "thematic investigation" (chap. 3 of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* first published in Portuguese in 1968, translated by Myra Ramos into English, 1970), seems appropriate to classrooms in which a new relationship between teacher, student, and society is enacted. The classroom itself is understood as the site of sociopolitical investigation, while the "banking model" of teaching, in which students are understood as empty accounts, to be filled by the gold of their teachers' currency is rejected. Freire's model was an explicitly Marxist approach, intended to bring about change in the lives of the Brazilian adult illiterates with whom he worked. He recommends learning as a revolutionary undertaking of a person in extremis, having lost hope, who sets out to uncover the mechanism of oppression that has placed him in this situation. While our students are not usually *in extremis,* and encouraging revolution is not our aim, what recommends this method to us is its view of the classroom as a place of discovery that is not walled off from the rest of the students' lives, but a place where they can not only observe how language works but take full part in debating the important issues in their surroundings. They are preparing, thus, to be citizens who are aware of their surroundings and can contribute to the articulation of problems and remedies. To this end, the teacher encourages close and critical reading of texts with the aim of helping pupils recognize the language structures of persuasion and argument. There is something of "the new rhetoric" in this, in the words of Ch. Perelman (*The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*: 1958, trans Wilkinson and Weaver, 1969). The new rhetoric not only manipulates inherited forms of argument but does so by taking into account the speakers' audiences and their likely presuppositions. In this approach, we encourage students to listen carefully to the positions of others, and to actively and consciously make inferences to the assumptions of others. We want to teach them not just how to express themselves, but to

recognize the ways language is used dialogically in bi-directional social settings. The themes chosen for elaboration, on this view, need to be timely and even controversial within the students' context.

How it Works

Teachers should limit their own direction of pupils' work by preparing assignments for them to work on, sometimes individually and at different times as part of a group, using task-, problem- and project-based approaches. For example, instead of a teacher calling attention to the images in a text, they can ask the students to seek out and identify repetitions of ideas in different words throughout the text. We would like to emphasize the addition of literary texts at the elementary-school level, in other words the literature component should be present from the start as impetus to further reading, whether literary or not.

The literary text with which this approach begins should move readers toward a consideration of the actual social, cultural and political conditions of today's world and the students' own classroom, and only secondarily (if at all, and only according to an individual student's interest) into the "background" in which the work was produced and to which it responded at its writing. The literary vocabulary may be taught as needed, as a necessary tool for rhetorical critical focus.

The best of these thematic approaches allow learners to find their own themes, having begun with a literary text set by the teacher, and chosen, of course, to raise an important issue, even to be provocative. Young learners may be engaged by "The Owl and the Pussycat" – two mismatched friends who escape from social oversight to make their own happiness. Even young pupils can be encouraged to consider the intended audiences of the songs or poems they hear and read.

The poems of Emily Dickenson can be read by intermediate level learners. For example, here's a provocative poem:

> I like a look of agony
> Because I know it's true.
> Men do not feign convulsion
> Or simulate a throe.
> The eyes glaze once -
> And that is death
> Impossible to feign
> The beads upon the forehead
> By homely anguish strung.

What is perhaps most provocative about this poem is the speakers' stance. How to describe her emotions? Yours?

Five point students should enjoy agreeing or arguing with Wordsworth's sonnet – the first quatrain of which is this:

> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
> Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

Having studied the teacher's choice of text, ideally in small groups, the students themselves – at least the older ones – add other texts, not necessarily literary or even verbal, that connect the starter text to their own personal interests. The teacher can make suggestions at this point, and several texts can be examined for their applicability. It is important that the continuing texts not be simply extensions of the first. The idea is not to build a research project but to "teach the conflicts" in the words of another theorist, Gerald Graff (*Beyond the Culture Wars: How Teaching the Conflicts Can Revitalize American Education*, 1993). The students should be exposed to arguments from as many perspectives as possible, in each case studying how the arguments are made; e.g., assessing the source and the strength of the support. They will, themselves, engage in exercises that ask them to change perspectives, say, arguing for a position they expect an opponent to take. The presentation and assessment of their investigations and arguments can be in many mediums, too, including video, drama, plastic arts, etc. – in a way, not so far from Freire's insistence that thematic investigation must proceed from the engagement of the very body and mind of the investigator.

If it seems appropriate, the head of the English program within a school can provide each English teacher with topics and beginning texts. As far as possible, however, the students themselves should be involved in finding material that continues the discussion after the study of the first text. The inclusion of other texts and materials expands the use of critical reading to the world beyond literature – useful, even necessary twenty-first century skills. It is possible to imagine an expanded, systemic adoption of the approach that could lead to interdisciplinarity among subjects learned in the same school, all focusing on a common theme. Indeed, the thematic approach, broadly considered, could be the basis of a school- or grade-wide program (e.g. studying a literary piece on whales in English, student research on the importance of whale products in 19th century households (lighting by means of whale oil was expensive and the introduction of kerosene allowed poorer people to use its artificial light), the Book of Jonah in Bible (plenty of conflict there), and endangered marine mammals in Biology classes). A school's decision to focus on a theme in English could promote and structure school-wide activities such as English Days.

Possible Themes

Childhood
Immigration
Multiculturalism/ Diversity
Environment
Identity

Sample units

Using Edward Lear's nonsense works, we suggest short examples for lessons within units related to the theme of diversity in Elementary and Junior High Schools.

Theme: Diversity [can be school-wide, grade-wide, interdisciplinary]

1. Elementary School

External texts: Edward Lear's drawings from *Nonsense Botany* and about ten of his limericks with their accompanying illustrations.

> [Lear (1812-1888) was a skilled draughtsman, ornithological illustrator and landscape artist. He drew dozens of hybrid illustrations of strange plant-human hybrids, all nonsensical and delightful, such as the "Maypeeplia Upsidownia" plant or the "Phatfacia Stupenda" flower. His limericks are usually printed in four-line stanzas, but can (and should) be easily unpacked into five lines.]

Access to information – on Lear's life
Social interaction – learners work in pairs and groups
Presentation – learners present their work
Literature – rhyme, lineation, beat
Theme – diversity of plant and animal worlds, plant-animal symbiosis

Overall objectives

SWBAT identify "hybrid" creations in Lear's nonsense drawings;
SWBAT see and name the components;
SWBAT understand the humor.
SWBAT find rhymes and repetitions of words and sounds in the limericks;
SWBAT write their own limericks / draw their own hybrids
SWBAT explain the concept of diversity in Lear's drawings and limericks.

Vocabulary – limerick, nonsense, drawing, artist, painting
Text type – limericks, information sheet
Reading, listening, writing, reciting
Pair and group work

The two main topics of this short unit are Lear's drawings and limericks. Either one, or both, will be presented and used stressing the diversity contained in them – plant-animal, text-drawing, oddities that have no counterpart in reality. Despite this, they entertain and open us to the possibilities of diversity.

2. Junior High

External texts: Edward Lear's poem, "The Owl and the Pussycat", with original illustrations.
Access to information – on inclusion and exclusion
Social interaction – learners work in pairs and groups
Presentation – learners present their work; problem–solution structure
Literature – structure, ballad, allegory, symbolism
Theme – Diversity and Inclusion, finding a place for those who don't fit in

Overall objectives

SWBAT identify nonsensical elements in the poem;
SWBAT understand the narrative;
SWBAT see the possible symbolic referents and underlying structure of the poem.
SWBAT find material on inclusion and exclusion on many possible levels in society;
SWBAT create a presentation on an issue of diversity.

Vocabulary – nonsense, drawing, artist, painting, diversity, inclusion, exclusion, difference
Text type – poem, material on diversity
Reading, listening, writing, presenting
Pair and group work

The starter for this short unit is a poem about animals. Its narrative form makes it a good prompt for understanding the predicament it contains. Lear's solution suggests other possibilities for solving problems of difference and for discussing and encouraging diversity.

Advantages and disadvantages
From https://msu.edu/~zenkcarl/Thematic%20Unit-%20A%20and%20D.html

Thematic Units: Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages:

- **Connections**
  - Helps students understand connections and how to connect
  - Draws connections from the real world
  - Makes connections through a common theme
  - Focuses the learner on the mastery of objectives/overall goals
  - Models the resources used in research
- **Variety within Learning**
  - Makes for well-rounded students (experienced many different ways of learning)
  - Keeps students engaged through making learning activities fun/variety
  - Teacher is able to be creative, authentic, and original (as well as the students)
  - Expands assessment strategies
  - Can integrate all subjects and use literacy within those subjects
- **Classroom Culture**
  - Students have choice in what they learn- topic choice
  - Utilizes collaborative and cooperative learning
  - Share the same learning goals
  - Creates a community of learners
  - Student centered
- **Curriculum Advancements**
  - Technology in the classroom
  - Compacts the curriculum
  - Integrates word processing skills into creative activities
  - Time savers - teaching multiple subjects at one time

Disadvantages:

- **Interest Issues**
  - Some students may lose interest
  - Student/teacher could become bored with one theme
  - No participation due to low motivation or interest
- **Content Issues**
  - Students miss a day - may miss the connections
  - Finding enough resources/information to cover every aspect of the topic
  - Intertwining the benchmarks within that one topic may be difficult
  - Missing out on some content that could be covered
  - More work for the teacher
- **Classroom Culture**
  - With student choice- may cause arguments, unwilling to want to be involved because it wasn't there first choice
  - **Inaccessible to some students due to cultural, academic, or ability differences**
    - Cultural – e.g. never experienced winter

- Academic – lower level students having a hard time with concepts within that theme – but expected to connect
- Ability – EFL students do not receive a variety of language practice – mostly on one topic

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Learning English With Literary Texts:

MAKING STUFF PACKAGE (WITH COLORS)

Dr. Glenda Sacks

Rationale

Teachers today are particularly challenged by students who have difficulty concentrating in lessons. Some of us have found that the unexpected introduction of kinetic activity into the ESL classroom – the surprise use of textures, colors, materials, and collages, connected in different ways to imaginative texts and stories is one way to engage students who find it difficult to concentrate on grammar rules and the short texts that are used to illustrate these rules. The imaginative use of drama, images, and drawing, in connection with literary texts can have an electric effect on classroom dynamics. Instead of teaching lists of vocabulary words, tenses and modals, for example, activities in which students actually move their bodies and manipulate art materials freely, even playfully, in connection to the poetry or stories they are reading supplies an invigorating emotional underpinning to their language learning experience. The introduction of images, drama, and individual activities such as collage making, into the discussion of texts enables the teacher to bridge a gap between the student's understanding of a narrative in his own native language and the new vocabulary and grammar that is being introduced. The play of colorful materials, splicing and recombining images in response to a text, can act as a catalyst in the language classroom, encouraging the students to play with their English, as they gain confidence in self-expression.

Theoretical Grounding

Creative texts and images, as Andy Clark argues, can be used as external scaffolding. Clark has borrowed the term from Lev Vygotsky's theory of external support for learning. What has already been experienced becomes the support for new learning. Clark uses the metaphor of "the Mangrove effect" describing how seeds of the trees establish roots in shallow waters, eventually building a woven trap of roots to catch soil and debris, slowly forming a small island. The tree, thus, in a reversal of
the expected sequence, actually builds its own foundation and its community with other trees. He sees the same process of growth in human thinking (1997:207-8). This trapping of English words and ideas through the use of literature is crucial. Students will have islands of English words in context and their own understanding of narratives in their native language will enable them to relate to the English texts and continue building a cluster of meaning, "trapping" words and ideas using literature, art and images. The emotions already connected to artistic materials, for example, or to the performance of a pantomime, already part of a person's cognition, become the scaffolding for the grammar and syntax of English as they are encountered in the literary texts the teacher has chosen. Karmiloff-Smith (1979, 1992) describes this as maximal exploitation of states of representation already achieved by prior learning.

Literature and the kinetic, material, elaborations the students produce form a web or a loop of engagement; they provide the motivation for the students to find the words they need for a writing project. The learning thus emerges and expands out of the need for creative solutions. Rather than having lists of words imposed, students will take the initiative to find the words they themselves need and thus are more likely will remember them. Student writing, at the end of a project in which they have themselves moved their

bodies and/or produced some creative art, is a "representational redescription" in their new language of something they already knew.

Below are excerpts I have chosen from some other theoretical texts outlining and encouraging the benefits of using students' own production of creative artwork as an aid to learning English in primary and intermediate schools. Once students are in high school, the use of literature in the English lesson changes. Rather than being the springboard for English lessons, literature for the bagrut becomes the central focus of the lesson and there is a need to understand and analyze these literary texts. To the extent that the students will have already been helped to feel comfortable with creative work since primary school, this shift should be more easily achieved.

- The positivist psychologist, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, describes the ultimate state of happiness as a state of "flow" in intense concentration produced by use of skill, goals and rules. This concentration and absorption in an activity, at its best, transcends everyday reality (1997: 72). One may just now and then reach this state in the ESL classroom when students are engrossed in creating a project that involves rules and skills that they need to acquire through practice and apply creatively. I have witnessed students not going out to break when the bell rings because of this intense feeling of flow they experience when immersed in an exciting project.
- Ken Robinson (2009) argues that intelligence is diverse, dynamic and distinctive, and allows people to solve problems in a variety of ways. No two people are the same and the standardization in many educational systems kills the spirit of learning. He argues that finding one's passion is crucial in order to develop one's full human potential. Building on this idea I argue that literature opens the door to the range of emotions and creative ideas that enable this journey towards finding one's passion. Thus, English lessons are not only about words and grammar but also about exploring and expressing ideas (sometimes using the student's native language which then gets translated into English), emotions, fantasies and stories that originate within the students psyche as the result of reading and discussing a literary text.
- Below, Karen Randel (2002) explains why it is important to encourage drawing and writing together. Bringing drawing materials into the lesson immediately introduces a new and pleasant element. The switch to many colors and larger sheets of paper is in itself an exciting change from the quotidian use of lined paper is in and of itself an exciting change from the quotidian use of lined paper. Assuming the goal is to tap into those strategies and procedures that result in greater creativity and appropriate student challenge, and recognizing that scripted formats fall short on both counts, the question that remains is why not simply focus on unscripted writing formats. The major reason cited is that for many students, the process is just too frustrating and the anxiety generated by a blank page is sometimes too great a challenge (Ellis, 2003). The risk involved is that students will turn off to the creative writing process completely. Allowing students to paint and draw before writing is one way to address the added challenge unscripted writing tasks present without dictating storylines. It appears somewhat obvious that having a visual to refer to while writing reduces the cognitive load, leaving more resources available for developing story elements such as plot, setting, character and crisis. Advocates of teaching visual literacy, Flood and Lapp (1998), state that using visual arts in the classroom motivates learners to use a variety of means such as drawing,

drama, and multi-media presentation in addition to reading and writing to communicate ideas. Flood and Lapp (1998) contend that employing instructional strategies that include visual arts may encourage students to more willingly accept the challenges of creative writing. (from *Visual Arts: Effective Means to Enhance Creative Writing Quality*: 2002.

- Susan Rich Sheridan (2002) below describes using representation and writing together as one sees in comics. She explains the cognitive cross-modal implications of using this technique. Comics have a positive association in the minds of students, and they are already aware of the conventions of comic writing: the squares, the thought bubbles, talk bubbles and kinetic word sounds, as well as the dynamic figures and stories that are illustrated. The use of comics is a wonderful way to teach English in the classroom because students are able to apply these easy rules of comics already learned in their native language to a literary text.

A Cross-Modal Strategy Defined

The brain's modules and hemispheres work together. A term to describe this integrated process is cross-modality. A cross-modal teaching strategy describes a dual process in which a deliberate transfer of information is achieved—from one mode of representation to another. Meaning occurs at the confluence of the two modes and transformation is part of the process. The purpose behind the transfer is inter-influence: each mode of representation enhances and extends the other. Cross-modal creations abound. For instance, a cartoon is a cross-modal, image/text production. What varies is the degree to which a transfer of information is deliberately constructed between image and text. In the cartoon, the illustration and the text go hand in hand, and the image interprets the text or vice versa. from *The Drawing/Writing Experience*:

Sample Lesson Plans for Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Levels (All exercises can be adapted for different levels.)

Below is a brief overview of lessons based on the principles and ideas I have outlined above. There is no significant difference between the way student teachers are taught these methods and how they are put into practice in the classroom. The principles are the same for both student teachers and their pupils.

Elementary lesson on the present progressive tense based on the poem "Bear in There" by Shel Silverstein.

Students are presented with a poem that models the present tense about a bear found in a refrigerator. It goes on to describe what it is doing "He's nibbling the noodles/He's munching the rice..." The students are then encouraged to find their own animals in the cupboard or fridge and to use the present progressive to describe what they are doing. If they want to use one or two sentences from the poem they may copy these sentences into their own poem. Copying reinforces modelling. After writing the poem the students can illustrate what they have written and read their poems out to the class.

Intermediate Level:
Lesson involving comics, writing and literature based on the poem "My Papa's

Waltz "by Theodore Roethke:

The students are told to draw a comic strip of "My Papa's Waltz" by Theodore Roethke showing the different scenes described in the poem. They are told to draw thought bubbles to show what the little boy and his mom are thinking and to use words from the poem to express these thoughts. A weaker group can be allowed to copy one or two sentences from the poem into the thought bubble. Copying is a writing skill that depends on hand/eye co-ordination, and the physical activity of writing (neural programming) will help imprint the words, vocabulary and meaning into the student's memory.

Intermediate and Advanced Levels

Talk-back poems and dialogues based on "I Too Sing America" by Langston Hughes and "I Sing America" by Walt Whitman

Students were asked to "talk back" to Langston Hughes' poem "I Too Sing America" (1922), which itself was written as a defiant response to Walt Whitman's "I Sing America." Instead of taking the perspective of a persecuted African American at the turn of the twentieth century, students were asked to write the poem from the perspective of one of the successful and famous African Americans in America today. Using the scaffolding of the actual poem, the students were encouraged to rewrite the poem or a dialogue expressing different points of view. The writing exercise may be preceded by oral interactive role-playing.

On the day I taught this poem, I entered the class dressed up in furs and jewels. I had the students (tenth-grade) dressed in black garbage bags, crouching on the floor. I berated them, accusing them of stupidity and laziness. At first, they sat helplessly staring at me, while some of them protested weakly about my tirade. They then listened to Hughes' poem read out by one of their fellow students, and it became clear that I was their "mistress" and that they were my servants. After arguing about Whitman's poem (which had been posted on the board), they began to protest more strongly about their worth as human beings, shouting angrily at me and finally bursting out singing together "We will overcome," a famous civil rights song. At this point I stopped the role play and we stood quietly, emerging out of the imaginative spaces described by Bolton (1995) and Harris (2000), and slowly getting back to ourselves. Afterwards, we sat in a circle and discussed their feelings and ideas while engaged in role-play and related their interpretations to the poems.

After engaging in role play and reflecting on the poems, the students concluded that Hughes' poem was partly a projection of his feelings of inferiority as a black man, thus going beyond the more obvious interpretation of his poem being about his anger as expressed in the phrases; "nobody will dare say to me" and they will be "ashamed." When they read Whitman's poem, they realized that although there was no expression of racism there, there is unintentional racism expressed in the poem by virtue of omission of people of color. As a response to the poems the students, in pairs, wrote imaginary dialogues between the poets, an example of which is presented here.

Girls in 10th grade at *Pelech High School for Girls*, Kiryat Ekron.

An Example of Creative Writing Based on the Role Play in the Pictures: an imaginary dialogue between Langston Hughes (LH) and Walt Whitman (WW) written by two of the students pictured above.

LH: I too sing America, even though you did not include me in your song I am too part of the beautiful melody.
WW: That is because you and your negative feelings did not notice that I included everybody, all the races and all the colors.
LH: Oh yeah? So why did you write just about your jobs? Mechanics, carpenters, masons, boatmen… Where are the servants mentioned? What belongs to him?
WW: Well…
LH: Anyway you mentioned carols. We are not the people the poem is talking about.
WW: What do you mean?
LH: We are not the happy people, singing out in the streets to the crowd. We are the ones left behind in the kitchens and the fields without any rights or respect!!!
WW: Clearly my purpose was not leaving you outside. We are one nation! Not a group of different people. We must not fight!
LH: Well how come I don't feel that I belong in my own nation?
WW: That is because you don't pay attention to the details, to the happiness in the song.
LH: Happiness for me is freedom and equality!

Advanced level:

"Ping-Pong" poetry using the scaffolding of the original poem to create a new one Based on "Stop the Clocks" or "Funeral Blues" by W. H. Auden.

The game of ping-pong involves two people hitting a small ball back and forth on a large green table. The back and forth nature of the game perfectly describes the method I use in the classroom to assist students in writing proficiency courses to write poetry. Here the poem is used as a type of scaffolding around which students built their own

interpretations of the poem. The end result is a wonderful poem that couldn't have been written otherwise, and which gave the students a feeling of self-confidence and satisfaction about using the English language in a creative way.

Students are asked to give me lists of words under a variety of headings, for example, "the sea," "war," "the environment" which are written up under each heading that are connected to the topic. For example, under the word "war" students could call out the following words associated with the topic of war: tanks, guns, soldiers, wounded, dying, suffering, death. This word list involves nouns, abstract nouns and verbs and it is important to make the students aware of the parts of the sentence. It is helpful to write a (n) for noun and a (v) for verb next to the appropriate words.

Students are asked to underline all the nouns in the poem in pencil and all the verbs in pen (different colored pencils can be used) and to choose one of the word lists from the board and to substitute those words underlined with new words from these lists. They are then required to change the words in the brackets in the poem below.

Stop the Clocks **by W. H. Auden.**

STOP (the clocks) CUT OFF (the telephones)
PREVENT (the dogs from barking with a juicy bone).
SILENCE (the pianos) and WITH MUFFLED (drum)
BRING (out the coffin) LET (the mourners come).

LET (aeroplanes circle) MOANING (overhead)
SCRIBBLING (on the sky the message) HE (is dead) PUT
(crepe bows around the white necks of public doves,) LET
(the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves).

HE WAS MY (North, my South, my East and West)
MY (working week and my Sunday rest)
MY (noon my midnight my talk, my song)

I THOUGHT (our love would last for ever) I WAS (wrong).
THE (stars) ARE NOT WANTED NOW (put out everyone)
PACK UP (the moon and) DISMANTLE (the sun)
POUR (away the oceans and) SWEEP (up the wood)
FOR (nothing now can ever come to any good)

The following poem was written by two student teachers at Achva College in 2007 after the Second Lebanese War, and it clearly describes their feelings about this horrific event.

Stop the War, Cut off the Sirens
Stop the war, cut off the sirens
Prevent kids from dying
Silence the cries of pain with prayers,
Bring out the flowers, let the doves fly.

Let the dead be buried and the moaning begin,

Scribbling words on graves, “He was young and now he’s dead”
Let the flags fly at half-mast
Let the wounds heal.
He was my hero, my brave soldier
My defense and my hope,
I thought that him we could never lose, I
was wrong.
The tanks are not wanted now, neither the guns
Pack up the bullets and dismantle the bombs
Pour away the gunpowder and sweep up the blood
For now it is time for peace to come around.

As can be seen, all the nouns and verbs have been altered to express their sadness about the war and their hope for a peaceful future.

Further Reading:.

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Assessment for the Literature Module (Bagrut)

Suggestions for use in English programs that have adjusted their teaching according to the recommendations of the Performance Packages

Disclaimer: Our committee members can claim no expertise in assessment beyond their own experience. For that reason, we have left the two-part internal bagrut as is has been, adjusted only for the new classroom realities we hope our performance packages will encourage. We have no justification for the allocation of percentage weights to the different parts of the test, and hope
that specialists in language assessment can be consulted.

Overview: Oral exam and log

The suggested revisions to the internal bagrut exam in literature, **5 pts**, are intended assess the ability of students to respond creatively to previously unseen literary texts orally and in writing. The 4 pt exam will have simpler texts as unseens, and require fewer pieces of work for the log. It is not recommended, however, that the unseen texts be shorter - that would actually make them more difficult to understand and give less room for response.

Creative Response

Throughout the years of studying literature in school, from the elementary levels, students will have become accustomed to producing creative, even playful, oral responses to literary texts. There is clearly a gradient scale here - some schools and some teachers will have had more interest in and more success with interactive classes, and the oral examination must allow for more traditional text interpretation and less creative display where appropriate. The goal is certainly not to embarrass students who find public performance difficult. Spontaneous use of English, however, is important. The oral exam can be more or less playful but should not reward rehearsed performance.

Classroom activities will have included reading aloud, acting out, impromptu oral responses (arguing with one of the characters, for example) as well as written responses (in the form of letters to fictional characters, for example), creative responses using art materials, composing answering poems, and various other reader response possibilities. The assessment described here assumes that the teachers have indeed been conducting classes with the interactive methods described in the packages and that both teachers and students have come to feel comfortable with these language and performance activities.

By the time students reach the Bagrut exam creative oral response will have become an integral part of their ELT education and the goal of the testing will be to assess the level of their comfort in responding spontaneously and creatively to a literary text in English. It is worth repeating here our belief that the use of literary texts in place of the more usual reading comprehension texts with language teaching goals in mind is that imaginative writing allows and encourages an enhanced level of comfort in the production and comprehension of oral, spontaneous speech.

<u>The Oral Internal Literature Exam: 50% of the final grade</u>

The students will be examined by their teacher and one other person, each exam taking about 10 minutes. Three sessions may be arranged within the school. We had in mind 10 or 12 students in each of 3 different sessions (winter, spring, summer?)

1. Students will sit in a quiet classroom and receive a selection of pieces they have not seen before (unseens): They will choose one of the 3 texts as the subject of their examination and prepare an oral response to it.

- A poem- no more than 14 lines
- A short excerpt from a play- including an exchange between characters - c. 200 words
- A short excerpt from a short story- about 150-200 words including a section of direct speech

2. Students will have half an hour to read and plan a response. They can use dictionaries and should take notes. Schools should allocate 3-4 rooms for students to work individually at the same time.
3. They will then be called before the examiners individually to present their response orally.

Examples: the student might argue with the character's plans or intentions from the point of view of another character imagined to be within the text or within the student's own context. (What my grandmother would have told him!, how the characters in a dramatic exchange might be costumed. A student response might consist of questions about the plot, characters, language, or context of the text: perhaps what we might call "research" questions such as topics they might like to pursue, ideas suggested by the text for further exploration. There should be room, here, for good students who just aren't very "performative." be

4. It is assumed that student response will be quite short, and the teachers will have to prompt further discussion. Examiners will have to be ready to interact with the student in order to explore with her/him the implications of the response in relation to the text read. (The examiner might ask: what might have happened to the character (s) just before, or just after the section you read? Who might approve or disapprove of the actions you read about? What is the physical setting of the text you read? outdoors? in a pub? Notice, there are no right answers here - what is being judged is language flow. The student can use Hebrew, if necessary, and the teacher can supply vocabulary, if necessary, in order to keep the discussion going for the time allotted, but of course the less Hebrew the better the grade. The discussion might conclude with the student orally presenting a rationale for their response.

5. Evaluation will be based on
   a) The quality of the response with the use of an assessment rubric. The creative use of language will be weighted, and adventurousness encouraged.
   b) Oral proficiency with the use of an assessment rubric

<u>The Log: 50 % of the final grade</u>

Throughout 10th, 11th and 12th grades, students will learn various literary pieces representing an array of genres (including speeches). The log should demonstrate that the student understands the implications of the reading in our current world. The student will compile an on-going log that will comprise the following.

1. Creative, playful, imaginary written responses to literary pieces
2. Recordings of oral responses
3. Written or recorded rationales for the oral responses

The log will consist of 6 responses

At least 3 will be written- on three different genres. The remaining 3 can be presented as oral recordings or in writing.

Assessment rubrics will be provided for evaluation of the log.

All of the above will be evaluated internally.

Teaching literary elements and close readings

The teaching of literary elements and the encouragement of careful and close reading remains a central part of the curriculum. However, schools/teachers will have the opportunity to determine how much time to spend on it. The ability to discuss literature in familiar literary vocabulary such as symbol, metaphor, imagery, rhythm, allegory, etc., is given value in the curriculum and should manifest itself in the log performance; however, this skill will not be tested in the oral "unseen" exam.

Appendix of suggested response types

- Speaking to a character
- explaining a thematic element in the text
- performing a character
- performing a scene that immediately preceded the excerpt read
- performing a scene that immediately followed the excerpt read
- a conversation with a character's parents