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PROMOTING DISCUSSION THROUGH LITERATURE

Макалада адабий тилдин көркөм искусство катары каралат жана анын бүгүнкү жашоодогу орду.

В статье рассматривается литературный язык как художественное искусство, его роль в сегодняшней жизни.

The article is about literary language as an art, its role.

To tell the truth, our experience as teachers in the high schools of Kyrgyzstan reveals that the students are not actively involved in the teaching and learning processes. They lack the necessary skills dispositions for active participation in classroom activities such as discussions. Classroom discussions is an effective instructional strategy in which the teacher and students discuss ideas on a topic or an issue. However, we usually observe that what teachers perceive as 'discussion' is generally a 'classroom recitation' strategy. Classroom recitation is a strategy where a student recites memorized materials. In this strategy, the teachers ask factual questions aimed at checking how well the students understand a particular idea or a concept . Literature identifies several distinctions between classroom recitation and discussion, assessing who is predominant speaker, type or interaction pattern, predictable sequence, overall pace, the question-answers and the kind of evaluation. Hypothetically, in a literature classroom, a teacher asks, "When and where was born E.Hemingway?" in answer he expects a student to provide a quick and brief answer that is already present in the textbook, without interacting with other students. On the other hand, the question like "How author focused on the character's inner world? " should ideally lead to interaction among the students to explore various ways and ideas about the author's attitude towards the character. The first episode is likely to happen in a classroom recitation, while the latter can further lead to discussion /1/.

If used effectively, discussion promises several benefits. Effective discussion enhances students' academic content through exposure to different ideas and thoughts, promotes thinking and communication skills. On the other hand, it also helps them in stating their ideas clearly, attentively listening to each other, responding and asking further questions. In addition, through discussion the students value the joint contributions, learn from each other's work collaboratively, accept and appreciate diversity of ideas rather than criticizing other's views.

The students have a wide variety of needs and abilities. Some possess good oral communication skills, but lack fluency and accuracy in written expression. Others are excellent in grammar, passive listening, and reading comprehension, but need training in speaking and writing. Still others are concerned about vocabulary development, structural knowledge, and academic listening and reading skills. To provide choices for this diverse student population, different courses were created that address student needs and interests in various ways.

One of these courses is centered around reading longer works of literature and viewing and analyzing their film adaptations. The course is designed to appeal to students interested in artistic expression and cultures other than their own. It targets all four skills through listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. We should not forget about motivating the students before involving to the discussion. According to psychologist Hebb (1992:260), "It is motivation that initiates behavior, directs it, and is also responsible for its cessation" and "motivation can be triggered by outside factors" /2/.

It should be notified the students that 50% of their final score would be based on their in-class participation. Those who speaks and takes part in discussions they would get the higher scores, regardless of what their utterances might be. Hoping to increase their grades, the students eagerly began speaking in class, making the class lively. However the scores are rarely enough to motivate the students.

We need to identify the individual characters too. It is investigated that there are four types of learners, *activists* -like to be involved in new experiences. They are open-minded and enthusiastic about new ideas but get bored with implementation. They enjoy doing things, but tend to act first and consider the implications afterwards. The second type -*reflectors,* who like to stand back and look at a situation from different perspectives. They like to collect data and think about it carefully before coming to any conclusions. They enjoy observing others and will listen to their views before offering their own. The thirds are *theorists,* who adapt and integrate observations into complex and logical theories. They think problems through in a step-by-step way. They tend to be perfectionists who like to fit things into a rational scheme. They tend to be detached and analytical rather than subjective or emotive in their thinking. The last *pragmatists* are keen to try things out. They want concepts that can be applied to the real world. They tend to be impatient with lengthy discussions, and are practical and down to earth.[3] However, we should design interesting and meaningful activities to motivate students so that they would participate voluntarily in discussions. Teaching oral English classes gave me an opportunity to organize a communicative English class. I began by analyzing the learning background of my students and trying to find a way to eliminate the students' psychological barriers so they would speak and discuss some literature issues.

In my teaching practice of literature, I acquired some methods of presenting pieces of literary work. The course covers the American, English, French and German Literatures. Before taking a new period, movement and a certain author, representative of a certain country's literature, I always put numerous questions, like 'what is the important fact about the author, what is his peculiar style of writing; how he gained the popularity among readers, what themes he dealt with'. In class activities I try to promote discussion while analyzing a certain writer and his work in order to find answers together with the group. The literary analysis contains the brief biography of author; summary of the extract under consideration; *the problem raised by the author; the main idea conveyed by the author; the language of the author, the usage of dialect or slang, colloquial or bookish words; the application of stylistic expressive meanings, the form of the story, whether it is description, dialogue, monologue, narration(3rd person or 1st person narration), the mood of the story (lyrical, dramatic, tragic, optimistic/pessimistic, sentimental, emotional, unemotional, pathetic, dry, matter-of-fact, gloomy, bitter, sarcastic, cheerful,) etc.*

Students often asked to read novels or plays, stories at home, after which we spend a class session working with the content of the work. At the beginning of the class discussion , it would be desirable to administer a short true-or-false comprehension quiz. This quiz encourages them to come prepared and allows us to clarify the basis premise of the reading assignment when we discuss the answers to the questions after the quiz. During this post-quiz discussion of the reading assignment , questions are initiated by the students or the teacher. The discussions works best if a variety of topics are addressed: plot development, character profiles, cultural issues, literary themes, personal reactions. The latter one necessarily should be revealed through the phrases : "*For me, this extract was interesting/ fantastic/boring/special because………., My impression on the extract was that………., The narrator (story-teller) drew a gloomy/miserable/colorful picture…, From my point of view…, I'm not convinced that…, Personally, I believe…, I think it is quite likely that…… etc.*

During discussion there may spring present-day questions of a big significance related to the problem raised in the literary work. This will become more realistic picture to compare the same problem and find the solutions . The problem of unemployment, life hardships of a young girl in Th.Dreiser's "Sister Carrie" and the same social problems of a weak, inexperienced girl have something common and is not exceptional in our society.

In my observation, often romantic relationships can be discussion topic. There have been written wonderful works about love, for example in Stendhal's novel "The Red and the Black", the problem of marriage, family values and hypocrisy of people caused the hot discussion of students. They debated on this issue, expressing agreement and sympathy, some disagreed and criticized the writer's portrayal of characters. Everyone discussed the topic enthusiastically, but

they did not have to reveal their personal experiences. At the end of analysis they will state their own view-points, likes and dislikes, what changes they would apply in the work, how would they complete the end of the story.

Sometimes no matter how interesting the class may be, some students become distracted by outside voices, sights, even changes in weather. Whenever I notice this happening, I try to attract the students' attention, for example, if it rains, we ask what writers wrote about rain, raindrops, the voice of rain, they try to remember any English, Russian or Kyrgyz writer or poet , if remembered recite the rhyme or name the work, then they will be asked to describe the weather using some stylistic devices: epithets, metaphors, oxymoron etc, to make the description more colorful and expressive. Various creative activities enable students to develop a sensitivity toward the language. When students understand words and phrases and use them in real situations, they can communicate better. These activities also enable them to demonstrate the optimal use of different learning techniques and participate actively in their learning.

Vocabulary development is another integral part of class discussion following a reading assignment. We vary activities: vocabulary journal discussions, vocabulary card games, and group activities focused on vocabulary development. Students keep vocabulary journals of unfamiliar words they find interesting or important. We also conduct other group activities that are not vocabulary oriented but instead focus-on content. Working in small groups as a homework assignment, students create plot summaries and character sketches, conduct role-playing based on situations from the text, or design surveys to be administered to native speakers.

Finally, each reading passage of a literary work is accompanied by a writing task. Students write journal entries on issues of interest, essays on controversial themes, speeches that a character from the novel might have delivered, fictitious letters from one character to another, newspaper articles about occurrences in the book, descriptions of settings in the book, and a variety of other papers related to the content of the passage. The teacher asks the student in pairs to write short story using some phrases they have learned from the original text, these are read aloud in class, and students make comments on their groupmates' paragraphs.

Sometimes, if possible after the novel is read and discussed, we may suggest the film version. Before presenting the movie version, we should arrange pre-viewing activities for the film adaptation include questions about a possibly different ending for the movie; predictions on how literary techniques, such as first-person narration or inner monologues, might have been translated into film, and discussions about choices of actors, set design, music, and other elements of film-making. During the viewing of the movie, we take time out for language learning activities, such as guessing dialogues, completing scenes, fill-in-the-blank exercises.

Students also keep track of the differences between the book and the movie, which we later chart and discuss. They watch the adapted version of the epic-work "Beowulf", compare the book and movie, write film reviews, enact a movie critics' debate, interpret the work from a variety of film theoretical perspectives. It is suggested "What if" activity, that requires students to speculate if they were in situations experienced by story characters. Finally, students research any themes related to the movie, then they give presentations or write essays on their views and findings.

Novels and plays are read in the course of literature and movies have been a favorite part of teaching language for several years. If literature and film adaptations are used together it stimulates discussions and debates and create speaking opportunities.

From various approaches of teaching discussion, we noted that there are several practical ways for school teachers to conduct effective discussions:

-Teachers need to develop knowledge and understanding about discussion either through professional development workshops, courses or seminars or by independently reading literature on discussions and discuss them with other colleagues.

-Teachers should plan and prepare before discussions as it is a prerequisite of conducting effective discussions. They can prepare by finding relevant resources, assigning students multiple sources of information prior to discussions, formulating thought-provoking questions and preparing purposeful assessment techniques (e.g. checklist, rating scales).

-Teachers need to encourage student to interact by creating conductive seating arrangements, developing classroom rules for better participation and providing feedback for further improvement. They should encourage students to interact in small groups or in pairs prior to a class discussion.

-Language should not be a barrier in discussions thus teachers may provide opportunity for students to express their ideas in the language students are comfortable with. They should gradually encourage the use of English by providing more materials and help reading and understanding of the topics.

The issues of education are very complex and deeply rooted and may need a radical change. Nevertheless, teachers still have opportunities to the improve quality of teaching and learning, starting from their classroom.

Successful literature-based strategies help foster personal and emotional intelligence while developing students' language skills. Quality literature provides models for rich, natural language, enrich vocabulary stock and model new structures. To quote Bassnett and Grundy (1993:7), "Literature is a high point of language usage; it marks the greatest skill a language

user can demonstrate. Anyone who wants to acquire a profound knowledge of language will read literary texts in that language".

Literature

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