

Enseñanza de literatura por proyectos en el aula bilingüe

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Resumen

Hoy en día con el desarrollo del método comunicativo la enseñanza de literatura por proyectos en el aula bilingüe ha dado un giro significativo a los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas. Su éxito radica en diseñar actividades que impliquen al alumno y le den la oportunidad de participar en un entorno real de comunicación. Es por tanto nuestra labor como docentes programar tareas cuya finalidad sea alcanzar los objetivos de aprendizaje que predispongan al alumnado hacia un interés y una motivación crecientes en el hábito de aprender.

Palabras clave: Proyectos, Literatura, recursos estilísticos, método comunicativo.

Title: A Topic-Based Approach to Literature in the Bilingual Classroom.

Abstract

With the development of the communicative approach in language teaching, nowadays projects have become a fancied interest in the bilingual classroom. Only by appealing to students through purposeful and dynamic activities can successful learning be achieved. Projects help greatly to give language lessons their meaningful quality. Owing to the necessity of meeting students' interests, this project has been designed and rationalized to prove that engagement and motivation are closely associated with learning. It is therefore our job as teachers to plan activities that contribute to obtain the desired goal.

Keywords: Projects, Literature, figures of speech, communicative approach.

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1. INTRODUCTION

For many years a controversy raged among teaching specialists as to which is the more important: grammar or communication, accuracy or fluency. The emphasis nowadays is on learning through experience. Closely linked with this issue is the importance of cultural knowledge and the significance of function rather than form. Countless times in teaching practice a particular mode of learning was built on strict grammar rules and accuracy. Nowadays students are naturally more interested in experimentation, in trial and error and in acquiring perspective in context-based tasks and problem-solving activities. Teachers have moved away from that comfortable delusion of grammar rules rooted in old teaching methods and have turned to an approach in which teaching and learning are viewed as a universe where heavy reliance is placed upon production and experimentation. This new method is advantageous as it improves levels of performance. Rules become internalized by practice, active learning and hands-on activities. Children become indifferent to mechanic drills. The indifference arises partly through lack of purpose as they are no longer surprised by the tediousness of endless fill-in-the-gaps activities. Student involvement is accomplished through well-defined tasks suitable to their interests and designed for the transmission of social, cultural and emotional values. Through projects personal discovery is linked to knowledge and this gives an incentive for learner motivation in order to produce an attractive outcome.

The recent emergence of projects in schools should not blind us to one fact: children, by nature, are curious, but they essentially search for meaning and substance in learning. Projects have some needs that must be met for their future success or failure: a feeling of togetherness (class work, group work), enjoyment, cooperation, personal involvement and motivation. In teaching literature the socio-cultural factor is as important as the personal one, although the latter is the one that gives students a sense of purpose. Projects do not involve mechanical instruction but rather direct experience and are therefore much more rewarding and enriching in scope and long-term learning. Learning is more by experience than by instruction.

Nowadays the task of enthusing students is more important and at the same time more difficult. Enthusiasm leads learners to an appreciation of literature and to a feeling of personal satisfaction. Literature possesses no significance except as related to students' personal experience. Teaching performance made on the basis of mechanical drills and grammar instruction is likely to yield boredom and lack of interest. With projects the learning process becomes increasingly interesting as it goes along and students develop a better understanding of themselves and of others.

Consideration of all these factors has inspired us in the development of this project: *Feelings and relationships*. All the activities have been designed for inculcating literature and a thorough grounding in students' everyday experiences. The integration of culture through experience is the basis of good teaching practice and learning. Values in literature, often seen as abstract, painful knowledge, are now applied in purposeful teaching-learning tasks which leave more time for participation, direct involvement, enthusiasm and enjoyment. Learning becomes relevant as literature is tied to personal experience as students come into contact with real life situations. Literature is geared with meaningful and purposeful activities. Therefore the use of literature offers great possibilities for student involvement.

Much has been written about what is communicative or not in language teaching and perhaps no term is so widely misused as "communication". One of the critical factors for determining how communicative any language activity is, is to ask the question "Would it occur naturally in the mother tongue under these circumstances?" Much of what we say in language classrooms is denuded of any real meaning and is only tolerable because we do **not** say it in the mother tongue. (Hamilton 2003: 6)

2. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Title: Feelings and Relationships.

Aimed at: 3rd year of ESO.

Time allotted: half a term.

Authors and works selected: Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

Objectives:

- To reinforce the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- To learn and practice English through CLIL methodology.
- To make students familiar with different literary genres (novel and drama) and a variety of figures of speech.
- To establish a close connection between the present and the past (students' personal experiences and characters' inner lives).
- To promote students' creativity, imagination and inventiveness.

Assessment: There will be two final assessment tasks. Each activity will be part of the students' language portfolio.

SHAKESPEARE'S *Romeo and Juliet*

Task 1. Warm-up and preliminary brainstorming activity. In small groups, students make a list of what may seem to be a difficult relationship for them. E.g. *Being in love with someone from a lower social class, going out with a trouble-maker, being friends with a bad guy...*

Task 2. In their groups students create a **wall poster** where they stick the ideas, attitudes or values that are good or bad about being in a relationship. They need to explain their ideas to the class. This activity will be taken as a springboard for whole class discussion on the topic. The class uses the grid below to fill in the columns with their suggestions.

Positive things	Negative things
being looked after having someone to talk to starting a family loving and being loved	lack of independence jealousy lack of communication lack of personal space

Task 3. Game: “I am in love with...”

We are going to play this game for vocabulary expansion. The teacher puts the letters of the alphabet into a box. In turns students take out a letter and come up with an adjective that best describes their boyfriends/girlfriends. They must come up with an adjective that starts with the initial letter of the name of the partner that they have selected. We should allow the class a few minutes to make lists of adjectives with the help of a dictionary before carrying out the task.

A: amazing, awesome, attractive...

B: brave, brilliant, boisterous...

C: courageous, cute, creative...

D: dynamic, determined, dull...

e.g. **With a B:** *I fell in love with (Bárbara) because she is so BRAVE*

With an A: *I fell in love with (Daniel) because he is so DETERMINED*

With an E: *I fell in love with (Enrique) because he is so ENTHUSIASTIC*

Pupils finally create an acrostic poem with the name of a classmate of their choice using a variety of adjectives. They have to explain the reason for their choices, as in the example.

BRAVE
 FANTASTIC
 DETERMINED
BEAUTIFUL
 ATTRACTIVE
PRETTY
CALM

e.g. Bárbara is BRAVE because one day she saved a little dog from getting drowned

She is FANTASTIC because...

Task 4. Song (listening practice). Students are given an example of a difficult relationship by listening to Britney Spear’s song “Criminal”. This song is about a girl who tries to explain to her Mum why she has fallen in love with a bad guy. The class listens to the song and fills in the gaps with the missing words. This is a good opportunity to come up with new words like *hustler, bluff, snitch*. Then we discuss the following question: “What would you do if you were in love with a bad guy?” This song provides lots of possibilities for personalization as it is part of the students’ music culture and at the same time it will generate lots of examples of type II conditional sentences. Students listen and respond to the song before producing a piece of written language:

"If I were in love with a bad guy, I wouldn't tell my mum"

"If I were you, I would keep it secret from your parents"

Task 5. Follow-up: writing. The activity that follows explores ways in which students move from the receptive to the productive use of language and looks at writing as a means of expressing students' own ideas and feelings. The starting point is the girl in this song. Students put themselves in the shoes of this girl. We prepare cards outlining a conflicting situation. In pairs students role-play a scene where one of them attempts to offer some useful advice to the other in "agony column" style from a teen magazine. They will be provided with some useful input for giving advice. This type of activity helps to build students' confidence as they are involved in light-hearted activities where they worry less about the language and focus more on performance in a relaxing, stress-free atmosphere.

You should/shouldn't...

You ought to/ought not to...

You had better/had better not...

If I were you, I would ...

If I were in your shoes, I would...

I suggest that you + infinitive – to...

I suggest/recommend + gerund...

You should/shouldn't have + past participle

You ought (not) to have + past participle

Expressions to show reactions

That's a difficult/delicate/tricky situation.

Be sympathetic/honest.

Who is right/Who is in the wrong?

Don't think twice about + gerund

You have to nip this problem in the bud.

You're making a mountain out of a molehill.

It's just a storm in a teacup.

Put yourself in his/her shoes.

Don't put up with it.

Stay firm/strong.

Agony Aunt – Problems

- My boyfriend's Mum is constantly dropping hints about wedding bells and buns in the oven.
- My girlfriend does not want to have children and I've always said the same but now I'm starting to have second thoughts.
- My boyfriend/girlfriend does not help out around the house. He/she doesn't cook, clean or wash up.
- My boyfriend gets on really well with his ex; he chats with her regularly on the phone.
- I have fallen in love with my best friend but I don't know how to drop hints about my feelings.
- I'm 18 and my boyfriend has just proposed to me. I love him but I think it is too soon to get married?

Task 6. Students watch this video on flattering comments to learn about different vocabulary items that may be used to pay compliments: <http://simpleesl.com/english-worksheets-activities-and-games-giving-compliments/>. Then they complete a wordsearch with some useful vocabulary items like:

Compliment, beautiful, great, wonderful, handsome, pretty, cute, good-looking, drop-dead gorgeous, stunning, radiant, a head turner, a traffic stopper.

This is an excellent activity for vocabulary development. Students will be encouraged to add more words to the list with the help of a dictionary, if necessary.

Task 7. Reading and literary analysis. Students read an extract from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet (ACT II, SCENE II beginning: *"But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?..."*) where Romeo pays compliments to her lover. We will have an opportunity to analyze 17th century vocabulary in order to have an in-depth knowledge of this passage (*yonder, thou, art, 'tis, doth...*). This is an excellent way to introduce literary language and figures of speech like **metaphors, personification and hyperbatons**. Students will be encouraged to identify and discuss some of the most common figures of speech selected in this scene like:

METAPHOR: *"Juliet is the sun"* = she is blonde

PERSONIFICATION: *"Her eye discourses"* = she gives away a lot through non-verbal communication

Task 8. Writing. As a follow-up activity we show students examples of common everyday compliments in order to carry out a light-hearted activity. Students write their names on a piece of paper. We mix names together in a bag and redistribute them so that each student has a different name. Now pupils must write a compliment to that person and read it to the class. We are going to teach them the following words to create a romantic atmosphere:

"Sweet", "Honey", "Baby", "Sweetheart", "Darling", "Sweet little thing", "My dearest", "Sweetie".

Examples of compliments:

María, my sweet little thing, Heaven must be missing an angel!

Pablo, my darling, there must be something wrong with my mobile phone. It doesn't have your number in it!

Task 9. We listen to Katie Melua's song *"If you were a sailboat"*, which contains lots of examples of conditional sentences used as compliments. Students match up the beginnings and endings of conditionals as they listen to the song. Using the structure of this song as a basis for poem writing, students are encouraged to offer their contributions to this whole class poem, beginning with the structure:

If you were a (NOUN GROUP) + conditional tense

If you were poison, I would softly kill myself.

If you were a perfume, I would smell you non-stop.

If you were a cell phone, I would hold you close to my ear all night long.

Task 10. Listening and speaking. Now students watch this video from YouTube (a summary of Romeo and Juliet's story): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRrvQ1vZxcg> and discuss some comprehension questions about the play in order to give them an idea of what the story is all about. After that they will be prepared to plunge into the reading of a modern English version of the book. All the activities planned will make students realize that feelings have not changed so much over a five hundred year period and that they can relate to characters in 17th century England.

Task 11. Final assessment. Once students have read the play, they have to write a newspaper article announcing the deaths of these two lovers based on the six Ws: **what** happened, **when** did it happen, **where**, **who** was involved, **how** did it happen and **why**? They must write an interesting news headline like: *Breaking news. Romeo Montague, from the city of Verona, has been found dead...* so that readers want to find out more about the story. Students should be encouraged to find more information about the time when the story is set.

JANE AUSTEN'S *Pride and Prejudice*

Task 1. Listening and whole class discussion. Students are going to watch the film *Pride and Prejudice* with subtitles in English. Then we will pay special attention to certain relevant scenes for language work. We are going to focus on the proposal scene where Mr. Darcy declares his love to Elizabeth and he is rejected. The class will analyze what went wrong in their relationship by answering the following questions:

- Why do you think Mr. Darcy was rejected?
- What were the reasons Elizabeth gave him?
- Why is she so angry?
- Why was he reluctant to marry her in the first place?
- What makes their relationship so difficult?
- What are the differences between them: social, economic, cultural, intellectual...?

Task 2. Brainstorming. Students are going to come up with excuses for not marrying someone (real or imaginary). The teacher will write the following sentence up on the board, which students must finish with a suitable reason: *"I will never marry you because..."*

- e.g. *"You have smelly feet"*
"You snore"
"You are not my type"
"You are not the one I am looking for"

Task 3. Speaking (role-play). Using modern English, students are going to role-play the "rejection scene" in pairs. They are going to have an argument that will end up in Elizabeth's rejection of Mr. Darcy's proposal of marriage. They can transform this task into a fun activity by giving any reason for their rejection.

Task 4. Reading and writing. Students are going to read the letter Mr. Darcy sent Elizabeth after she rejects him. This letter can be found on www.theloiterer.org/ashton/year00/darcylet.html. This is a long and difficult passage. After helping them with vocabulary, students are going to make a list of the reasons Darcy presents to solve the misunderstanding that led Elizabeth to reject him and treat him with such contempt. For homework they will write the letter Elizabeth could send to Mr. Darcy apologizing for her behavior.

Task 5. Final assessment (video project). Writing and speaking. Students are going to prepare a video presentation for Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth's wedding announcement for the national TV news bulletin. They will have to act as news readers. This activity can be done in pairs. As we need to give them some input, we can take samples of wedding announcements from the press as in the example below, adapted from www.thetimesnews.com/lifestyles/weddings/bauguess-strand-1.461444. We need to work on vocabulary first by talking about the things that may be included in a wedding announcement. Words that may be useful, as highlighted in the text, are:

John Bachelor and Sarah Bride were married at 6 p.m. Sunday, May 12, 2016, at Furzton Church, Milton Keynes. The **Reverend**. A. Smithson **officiated**, and music was by Thomas Rap. The **bride** is the daughter of Anthony Robert Scudamore and Melisa Hopkins Scudamore. The **groom** is the son of Gregory Bachelor and Amanda Freeman. The bride wore a gown with a long formal dress silhouette, a loose neckline and a revealing deep v-neck. **Bridesmaids** were Julie Lock of Leighton Buzzard and Sarah Fogerty of Shenley Brook End. **Ring bearer** was Connor Hateley. **Flower girls** were Rachel Parish and Melissa Day. The groom's parents entertained with a rehearsal dinner at Emerson Valley. After a **honeymoon** in the Cies Isles, the couple will live in Berlin.

CONCLUSION

Repetitive activities in the language classroom are forgotten readily, but the influence of projects is deep in students' lives. Projects have a spontaneity and engagement in which students can develop a sense of identification with real life

situations. Literary heritage and personal experience are mutually interrelated and must not be treated separately. Characters' experiences in *Romeo and Juliet* and in *Pride and Prejudice* and students' experiences reflected through songs and meaningful activities are overlapping. The division between literature and real life in old teaching practice decreases the significance of language learning and personal development. However, songs, films or even humour and gossip generate a continuous interest in literary works that must always be developed with students' interests in mind.

The very qualities which make projects successful are their connection with students' personal interests and lives. Activities must be adapted for meeting students' needs in order to contribute to the development of the communicative functions of language. Activities are related to one another to channel students' energy into a final product that they can call their own. They learn through progression. With any project both teachers and students begin a venture into the unknown in the bilingual classroom, which leads to further research and in-depth knowledge. Every activity is an adventure that gives students the opportunity to use the target language fully and effectively without inhibitions or stress as they build up a portfolio that expands their knowledge of the target culture and literature.

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