

ASOCIACION EX ALUMNOS DEL PROFESORADO EN LENGUAS VIVAS "J.R.FERNANDEZ"
DEPARTAMENTO DE ALUMNOS LIBRES



Teachers' Centre

AEXALEVI *Forum*

Issue X - November 2011

AEXALEVI *Forum*

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La Asociación Embajadora de la Maratón Nacional de Lectura

Mg. Myrian Casamassima

As we anticipated in previous issues, this year the Teachers' Centre has organized the project *La Asociación Embajadora de la Maratón Nacional de Lectura*. The spirit of the project involved rediscovering the pleasure for reading by designing creative, enjoyable activities for students. Teachers at *La Asociación* were invited to participate and worked together with the Teachers' Centre in the design and planning of suitable tasks at different levels. From September 5th to September 10th, *La Asociación* carried out the *Maratón* proper. We would like to share with you an account of the activities and to invite you to share with us the *Maratón* spirit in your institutions.

Textual Intervention and Cooperation

Stories become alive in the reading of other stories. And in the reading of other genres. But more often than not for our young and teenage learners, stories become alive at the intersection between text and media. With this idea in mind, we thought of activities in which the students would be able to relate text to films, cartoons and songs. We also thought of creating opportunities for the students to explore stories from within by being immersed

in them and by being able to intervene in the story somehow. We were inspired by Pope's ideas on Textual Intervention (2003), in which stories and other genres can be explored in a multidimensional way by working on the seen and the unseen, on the told and the untold, on the heard and on the unheard. Because this exploration also implies getting to know ourselves as readers and learners while we cooperate with others, we thought of creating classrooms where several teachers could be working together and several groups of learners, even at different levels, could be engaged in

collaborative tasks. We wanted to experiment with involving the adult learners in tasks that drew on themselves as readers when they were children and on themselves as readers now. Above all, we aimed at highlighting the value of reading and the value of cooperation.

What we did

Ode to Mulan

Lic, Carla Montoya and Prof. Luciana Berger worked on *Ode to Mulan*. Their students in *Acelerado 2* and *Acelerado 5* read the poem and connected it with the Disney cartoon *Mulan*, which helped the students understand the context of the story told in the poem.

Zephaniah

Mg. Paula Lopez Cano led her Proficiency students to the exploration of *Talking Turkeys*, in which the poet Benjamin Zephaniah makes fun of the habit of eating turkey at Christmas. Zephaniah's work on singing about social and cultural issues was related to Bob Marley's *Redemption Song*.

T-party

Prof. Sofía Freixas and Prof. Patricia Sanchez (also in collaboration with Prof. Amelia Ansedes) organized a T-party. T stands for title and the party is an occasion for characters from various books to meet and talk. The students in

Pre-adolescents Beginners and Pre-adolescents 1 wore costumes or carried to the classroom, objects representing their characters. The T-party is a big role-play where there are plenty of opportunities for interaction, with characters talking about themselves and their stories.

The Value of Reading

Prof. Gisela Frenquelli and Prof Martha Scacchi engaged their students in Seventh Year and Advanced in reflecting about the value of reading. They used as a trigger for discussion a selection of thought-provoking video clips downloaded from YouTube. Media proved to be a powerful tool to make these young people reflect about the value of books.

Body Walls

A body wall is someone's silhouette drawn on paper and filled in with phrases, drawings, cut-outs, symbols, which convey something the group of learners wishes to express about themselves. Teenagers and adults in Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Year together with their teachers Mg. Marina Falasca, Prof. Luciana Berger, Prof. Virginia Vaca and Prof. Paola Fontana enjoyed the creation of Body Walls led by special guest, Mg. Griselda Beacon and one of her collaborators, Prof. Augustina Ramallo. Griselda Beacon is an expert in Literature and a tenured

lecturer at IES Lenguas Vivas. Before the activity, students and teachers were delighted to hear stories and poems as Griselda and Agustina carried out storytelling and storyreading as they played two characters from *Alice in Wonderland*. Lic. Carla Montoya and Prof. Diana Ogando also participated in the event.

Stories from our Childhood

Who has not become scared as Little Red Riding Hood is swallowed whole? Who has not shed a tear when Cinderella felt helpless before the ball? Prof. Vanessa Bain was in charge of guiding the students along the paths of the stories we were told and we read when we were kids. The students in Adults 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 and their teachers Prof. Mariana Goldman, Prof. Fernando Refay, Prof. Luciana Berger and Prof. Eugenia Bobes joined in to discover that the stories from our childhood can be retold and thus recreated. Vanessa chose *Little Red Riding Hood* as told by Roal Dahl as an example of how we can intervene in the stories to prompt the students' own recreations.

Storytelling and Make-up

What is the best way of becoming a character in a story? There are probably many ways, but have you ever tried make-up? This is what the children in Prep experimented as Prof. Mariana

Goldman, impersonated as Dolly the Doll, took out her brushes and began to make the children up. They had first chosen which animal they wanted to become, following Prof. Eugenia Bobes' storytelling of *The Gruffalo* by Julia Doahldson and Axel Scheffler.

Video Debate

The students in the Conversation Course got involved in the discussion of *The Hours*, the story of how the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf affects three generations of women, all of whom, in one way or another, have had to deal with suicide in their lives. Prof. Lucia Desalvo organized the debate based on previous reading and on the viewing of the trailer and scenes from the movie.

The Harry Potter Phenomenon

Prof. Jorgelina Ferro got inspired by the Harry Potter Phenomenon and organized activities for her First Year Students in which they explored not only the characters in the saga but also the book covers of Harry Potter in various languages.

Drama techniques

Prof. Paola Fontana, an actress as well as a teacher, and her students in Sixth Year resorted to drama techniques to work on the play *An Inspector Calls*. By means of these techniques, Paola managed to place her students on

stage in the classroom while she herself withdrew from the scene to allow for improvisation and acting.

High tech

Prof. Maria Magdalena Baraño developed Blogs to engage the students in the lab. She also carried out a very creative task in which the students had to write the cover of a newspaper published at the time when the events in *The Client* took place. It proved to be a great tool to explore point of view.

Silent Reading

Prof. Beatriz Petrucelli allotted time for silent reading in class. Her students in Preadolescents 2 enjoyed a special session in which there was reading and talking about the story. In recent issues of AEXALEVI Forum, we have written about the value of silent reading and about the value of sustaining it throughout. This is exactly what Beatriz attempts to do in her classes as reading silently is a usual activity for her students.

Reading and Writing Projects at Instituto Compañía de María

La Asociación provides English lessons at Compañía de María in Colegiales and Prof. Alejandra Bagattín is in charge of coordinating the courses. Alejandra and her team organized reading and writing projects based on

the books the children had been reading. Alejandra likes to include several books in the courses and they turned out to be an excellent opportunity for the children to create their own stories, their own sandwiches, their own games. The students got engaged in tasks with tangible end-products which could be shared and published after thorough work on the stories through songs, games, storytelling and reading. An enjoyable experience for them all!

The *Maratón* experience proved to be creative, rewarding and motivating. We got enthusiastic feedback from the teachers and the students who took part in the project. It was a pleasure for us to participate in these activities and see how both students and teachers enjoyed every minute of the experience

We would like to thank Prof. Marcela Russo and Hampstead Argentina for having joined us in the Maratón spirit and for having sent us photos of the reading projects carried out by their students.

Reference:

Pope, R. (2003). *Textual Intervention*. New York: Routledge.

Download materials for the Maratón.

Visit our Forum at
www.aexalevi.org.ar

Literature with “L” or “l”?

Prof. Florencia Insua

Having attended the AEXALEVI First Convention “Beyond Literature into the Media, Culture and Art” made me reflect on how teaching literature has changed over the past few years together with our society questioning and reflecting on what is to be considered literature.

I remember when I was a student at the Teaching Training College, the discussions over the definition of literature, basically the difference between Literature (with capital “L”) and literature (with small “l”) in the literature field and “English vs. Englishes” in the language field. At the time, I perceived this discussion as a matter of terminology. I could not perceive then its philosophical (and why not, political) meaning and its influence on teaching.

Literature (with capital “L”) can be defined as “writing that is valued for its beauty of form, especially novels, poetry and plays” (Oxford Paperback Dictionary, 1983 edition) or “writings in prose or verse; especially writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest” (Merriam-Webster

Dictionary, online edition). However, in the post-modern age, the definition of literature as such began to be challenged and revised. Much of this movement was connected to a change in paradigm beginning in the 1970s, which changed the focus of attention from the writer to the reader. Reader-oriented theories such as Reader Response Theory considered reading not as a one-way process but as “a dynamic interaction between reader and text” (Iser, 1980:107 in Mishan, F., *Designing authenticity into language learning materials (2004)*). For reader-response theory “text has no value until it is read”. (Gilroy and Prakinson, 1997:215 in Mishan, F., *Designing authenticity into language learning materials (2004)*). Therefore, because readers add meaning to text, they become active agents in the process of

interaction, transaction and negotiation between them and the text.

All these changes paved the way for the definition of literature to take a new shape. Nowadays, we may refer to the co-existence of Literature (with capital “L”) by what we mean canonical literature and literature with little “l” as to texts ranging from popular fiction, fables, jokes, proverbs, advertising, soap opera, even movies as text to be read, interpreted and analysed.

This new definition of literature has no intention of devaluing canonical literature but, on the contrary, to suggest a democratization of the teaching of literature by including canonical texts together with works of literature of small “l” as another resource of creative language use.

This change in paradigm can also be associated with the term “World Englishes”, first raised in 1978, by which we refer to localized varieties of English in different sociolinguistic contexts where the multicultural backgrounds influenced the use of colonial English in different regions.

Together with this new definition of “literature” and “English vs. Englishes”, expressions other than the canon began to be explored and many are already speaking about English Literature with small “e” to refer to

works of literature by authors born in the colonies who write from the perspective of the colonised, for example, J.M.Coetzee, awarded Nobel Prize in Literature in 2003.

I believe that one of the main advantages of this change of paradigm that started about forty years ago but still seems to be in process, is the emergence of teaching our students the importance of plurality and respect for other views, perspectives and approaches. As teachers of English, even those who do not specialize in literature, we have the possibility to offer our students a broader picture of literature as a means of expression in many forms and in many ways. To help students work with tolerance to differences and understand that differences should not separate but enrich us. It is crucial for teachers to understand that in this globalised world we need to expose our students to different Englishes, different cultures and different views of the world to help them become readers and speakers with resources to face this complex world we live in.

References:

<http://books.google.com/> Mishan, Freda, *Designing authenticity into language learning materials (2004)*

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/literature>

<http://www.makarand.com/acad/teachingliteraturetoday.htm>

Can we “read” a film?: Approaching Film as Text

Prof. Florencia Insua

The use of audio-visual material has become more widespread in the last few years thanks to the access to technology in institutions and at home and the need to fulfill the expectations of the new digital learner. Films have become part of our lessons. After all, it is a fact that students see many more films than the books they read. What seems to be rather new, though, is the approach of teaching film as text.

The word “text” comes from Latin and has to do with weaving. The idea is that both in books or films there are elements that cross over each other and join in order to create something in our minds similar to weaving. Reading is a wonderful experience. Nothing seems to be good enough to replace the pleasure to hold, smell and read a book. Books teach us about ourselves, invite us to discover new worlds, which we can only imagine. They also teach us about others and make us reflect on human condition. They do it with words, words we need to add meaning to and use our experience and imagination to create this world books make us get into.

If we think about it, films do something quite similar. They do it through words

together with visual and auditory resources. Films combine images, stories, metaphors and symbols. But we add meaning to them when we incorporate our experience, understanding and interpretation.

As teachers we need to make students see that films are more than a story with pictures. Films are often made with an audience in mind. Film studios spend millions of dollars in pre and post production. Therefore, film analysis must always include the reason for the director’s choices about the shooting and editing. Also, students’ background knowledge becomes useful when discussing common elements of the different genres together with the historical, political and social context of the film in question.

When we decide to introduce the use of films in our lessons, we must do some research about technical aspects of film study. We do not need to be cinema experts but we do need to be acquainted with some concepts and points of analysis: shot types, shot length, camera angles, lighting, colour, *mise en scène* (defined as “the arrangement of everything that appears in the framing – actors, lighting, décor, props, costume –, a French term that means “placing on stage.”), soundtrack, imagery, point of view and time manipulation among others. The more elements we add to the discussion, the richer and more complex the analysis will be.

Another aspect to consider when working with films is the scenes we should choose to focus the analysis. We cannot analyse in depth every single scene. Otherwise, we would be working with one film throughout a whole term. There are key scenes which will help us organize the analysis:

- **Title sequence and opening-scene:** these scenes will establish genre, style, time, location and main characters.
- **Scenes which present conflict:** they help us understand the conflict around which the plot is built.

- **Scenes related to sub-plots:** subplots give films more dimension. They offer diversity by giving us a detour from the hero's journey. The subplots will have a beginning, middle and end and will interweave with the plot in some way.
- **Climax:** the scene which determines a turning point
- **Closure/denouement**

When working on film as text the questions you could ask your students could go along these lines:

Why did the director choose this shot?

What did he/she want us to think?

What did this scene make you feel?

In what way do sound /camera angles/ lighting/ affect our perception of the scene?

Some activities you can try with your students when approaching film as text can include the following:

- Show a scene with the sound turned off.
- Ask students to listen to the same scene with their eyes closed.
- Choose a scene and work on visual imagery.
- Choose a scene and analyse the *mise en scène*

- Spend a whole lesson on symbolism/allegory

The conception of film as text is a metaphor that suggests that in both, book and film, we can “read” a story. If we work carefully enough we will be teaching our students strategies of film analysis. If we use a wide variety of activities we will be offering our students many tools to see films in a different, more critical way and if we are lucky by the end of the course they will have learned to see films in a new light.

Sources:

“Film as text” available at <http://www.sssc.vic.edu.au/dpd/blade.htm>

“Film as text” available at <http://garrygillard.net/writing/filmastext.html>

<http://www.elementsofcinema.com/directing/mise-en-scene.html>

<http://www.filmscriptwriting.com/>

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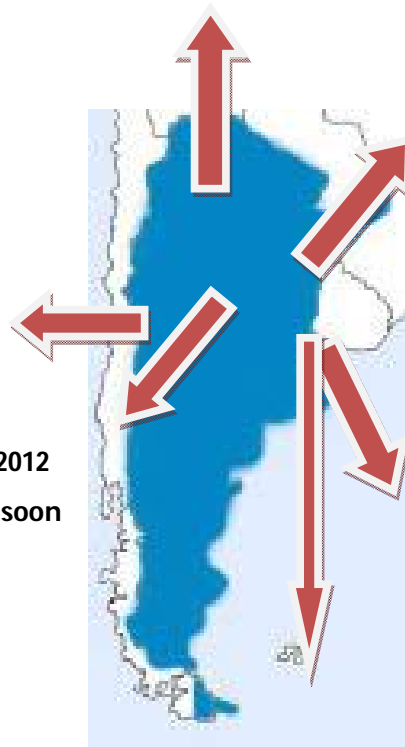


**AEXALEVI Teacher Development
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Pearson and Colegio San Carlos.
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**SHARE Convention.
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**AEXALEVI FIRST CONVENTION
Main sponsor: Oxford University Press
Buenos Aires. October 2011.**

AEXALEVI First Convention

October 28th and 29th , 2011

Beyond Literature into the Media, Culture and Art

Mg. Myrian Casamassima

We are contemporary with change. Change is happening now. While we see, hear of or experience the virtual world pervading ELT; while some claim that the days of Communicative Language Teaching are gone; while we witness the transition towards ELSish approaches in our EFL contexts that are in turn being redefined; while in the midst of abundance in terms of resources, others urge us to go back to bare essentials and to teach unplugged; while all this is going on, we have elbowed our way through the crowd and taken off, as it were, two days to reflect on the convergence of Media, Culture and Art by taking a stride beyond Literature in an atmosphere of cooperation among colleagues. We have been led by highly prestigious speakers. We have successfully held our AEXALEVI First Convention.



Liliana Luna and Verissimo Toste

The AEXALEVI Convention was born out of a need to create a high-quality opportunity to think about and to value the teaching profession and the learner.

La Asociación is committed to quality work, to raising the standards of

English Language Teaching in Argentina. We believe in building up a community with strong bonds among its members and with other institutions.

Our First Convention has counted with the support of I.E.S. Lenguas Vivas “Juan Ramón Fernández” and A.P.I.B.A., and the sponsorship of Oxford University Press, Pearson, SBS, Cambridge University Press and Hampstead Argentina.



The audience explores intercultural awareness led by Martha de Cunto.



En mis manos by Artist Hernán Flores has become the symbol of the AEXALEVI Convention: The caterpillar has changed into the butterfly, which flutters its wings ready to explore the open, to fly towards growth.



Griselda Beacon displays story carpets.

We were enthusiastic to see that the projects that Verissimo Toste talked about and that Griselda Beacon encouraged in her students at Lenguas were possible because results and tangible end-products were shared with us, especially through the work of Sofia Cardini, Agustina Ramallo and Guadalupe Lopez in their classrooms. We became analytical, keen observers led by Martha De Cunto in intercultural awareness and by Maria Cristina Llorente in the world of viewing. And in the world of technology, Cecilia Sassone helped us analyze ranges of

resources. We dreamed with Maria Teresa Manteo and Maria Laura Galizia and their sweet poetry and tales. We were delighted to enjoy Fernanda Bigotti's acting. We witnessed Art created on the spot with Artist Hernán Flores. We got deep into Literature with Gabriela Leighton and into diversity with Florencia Perduca. And with Maria Cecilia Pena Koessler, we began to understand other codes and other languages. We got our maximum inspiration with Claudia Ferradas.

Yes, we are certainly contemporary with change. We are wholly immersed in it and willing to take wise decisions. We need to learn from others and with others. This has been the spirit of the AEXALEVI Convention.

When teacher-centredness was over, and for many years, we were concerned with the learner as an individual: What he or she needed, wanted, preferred. This is the way in which we perceived the world of ELT. After all, it is our perception and definition of reality that creates a need. And as reality changes, our perceptions and definitions of needs also evolve.

We live now in the world of plurality. Who dares to deny it? We talk about Englishes, Literatures, curricula, cultures, literacies, competences. Is this therefore the world of multi? *Multi* means more than one. It may capture the plurality, but it does not seem to capture the relationship between the

individuals. Multicultural sounds very much like lots of cultures. But how do they relate to one another? We live in a world where plurality does not mean a *lot*; it means diverse. And diversity needs to be interrelated to become one and to make sense. *Beyond Literature* has attempted to reveal this nature, that of an interrelated world, where Literature, or rather the Literatures, strives to become one with the Englishes, the Cultures (yes, with a capital letter), the literacies in curricula which fosters the development of the competences by redefining text and reader, and allowing them both to experience the Media and to create Art. *Beyond Literature* has meant a celebration of this diversity.

Declarado de interés por el Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires.



Gabriela Leighton and Claudia Ferradas



Maria Cecilia Pena Koessler



Artist Hernán Flores and Maria Laura Galizia

See more in 