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Current Belief in ELT and Its Implication in English Classrooms
May 18, 2013

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Mark Twain’s *Luck* and Its Potential Communicative Learning Activities for EFL Students

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Abstract

Literary works as authentic texts are believed to have some strength to be used as materials in language teaching. By those texts, teachers will have more potential in designing learning activities. Short stories, especially, are interesting for both students and teachers for they are moderately comprehensible. Many literary works, positively, draw students into enjoyable learning activities.

Mark Twain’s *Luck* is a short story published in the 19th century. It is chosen as the subject of this paper for Mark Twain is one of prominent authors with his well-known writings. It is chosen for it has a potential as an effective media in teaching literature with its easy theme and narrative sequence, humor, and considerate language. This paper, therefore, is aimed at revealing possible learning activities using communicative language teaching strategy as proposed by Diane Larsen-Freeman (2000). This strategy focuses on making the communicative competence the goal of language teaching and by acknowledging the interdependence of language and communication.

Language game, picture strip story, scrambled sentences, and role-play are learning activities designed to teach Mark Twain’s *Luck*. The first activity is implemented to enrich students’ vocabularies related to the story. Picture strip story and scrambled sentences activities are done to make the students comprehend the narrative sequence of the story in enjoyable situations. Role-play activity, moreover, is put into practice to give students opportunities to communicate. The implementation of those four activities makes both teachers and students in EFL class have more pleasant learning activities. Considerate teachers, therefore, would be able to implement the literary work and activities suggested in this paper.

Keywords: communicative learning activities, language game, picture strip story, scrambled sentences, role-play, short story

INTRODUCTION

The length of teaching experience does not guarantee the quality of teaching. It cannot be taken for granted that a teacher who has been teaching English for ages is an expert of English teaching. When the teacher is only stuck with the same materials and the same techniques for many years, it implies that there is no creativity in the learning activity. What then can be expected from such a learning activity but boredom? Though boredom indeed may come to both the teachers and students due to the routine teaching and learning activity, it can be reduced by creating newness. Curran states that learning takes place somewhere between boredom and newness (cited in Hines, 1995).

Teaching prose in English Department, for instance, is at risk of producing boredom for the teacher and students. An assumption that students of English Department are those who are already good at English and what they need is analytical skill has driven the teacher too often neglect the enjoyment aspect of English teaching. The common perception that learning should be serious and solemn in nature proceeds. Having asked students to copy the textbook and read the course outline, the teacher expects the well-prepared students who have made their textbook colorful with the highlighter here and there. The students have enriched themselves with new vocabularies they find in their reading at home and some information about the intrinsic aspects of the literary work. When the teacher enters the classroom, the next situation can be predicted. As the students may vary in their competence, some students are gazing at their textbook because they have not finished reading it or because they have difficulties in understanding the text. While the others are confidently looking at the teacher hoping to be asked. The teacher, then, asks what they think of the story, who the main characters are, where the story takes place, what the theme is, etc. Next, the class jumps into discussion. Students who have not finished reading the text will be quiet during the class while those who are smart and diligent will dominate the discussion. The teacher will explain some aspects of the story missed by the students and at last give the conclusion of their discussion. This kind of experience happens week by week, text by text. How do the teacher and students feel then? Do they feel excited to look forward the upcoming class? An effort is done to make the class more academic, student-centered and more communicative. The teacher, in the next term, asks
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Juliati, M.Hum.

has participated in English Education - UNS International TEFL Conference

"Current Belief in ELT and Its Implication in English Classrooms"

held by English Education Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty
Sebelas Maret University
May 18, 2013
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