

Scaffolded Reading Experience for ESLs

Yan Wang

North Carolina State University

Dr. Lois Huffman

ECI 541 – Reading in the Content Areas

April 26th, 2015

I. Information

A. Background Information

- 1. Context:** This SRE is designed for English-as-a-second-language(ESL) learners in 12th Grade of Beijing Royal School. Since I am not currently teaching, I am going to teach this lesson for my former students via an online video call using WeChat. I invited three students; two of them will participate. Each has, on average, mastered 8,000-10,000 words of English, and they both have good comprehension of any sort of text.
 - 2. Text selection and complexity:** I have selected Chapter Four from John Knowles's *A SEPARATE PEACE*. I choose this book for several reasons. First, it matches their reading level, which is demonstrated in the following quantitative complexity analysis. Second, this is a classic young adult novel, and the two protagonists are exactly the same age as my students, which makes it more relevant and appealing to them. I really love the beautiful and subtle psychological description as well as the unpredictable plot structure. I hope my young writers will be inspired and in the end improve their own writing. Because of time limits, I selected Chapter Four, which is the climax of this book and contains the most elaborate dialogues and psychological description. Based on the analysis of the text's complexity below, this novel is appropriately complex for my students.
- **Quantitatively:** The book in its entirety has a Lexile level of 1100L. I used the Lexile Analyzer to assess a portion of chapter Four, and the Lexile Measure of the first two paragraphs is 1020L. Both Lexile scores are toward the current or the stretch Lexile band for ninth and tenth grade students. Since my 12th grade students are ESL students, this complexity is perfect for them to comprehend most of the text and still feel a little challenged about the new vocabulary and long sentences.
 - **Qualitatively:** The biggest challenge for my students is whether they can decode the meaning of the peace mentioned in the title from literary dialogues and psychological description. The peace referred to is Phineas's envy-free, innocent, and pure heart compared to WWII and Gene's evil jealousy. Gene is portrayed as a lonely, introverted, intellectual boy, while Phineas

was a handsome, taunting, daredevil athlete. What happened between them at school one summer during the early years of World War II is the subject of *A SEPARATE PEACE*. Gene's jealousy of Phineas as well as Phineas' innocence are depicted vividly in chapter four, with interesting dialogues and psychological descriptions. However, some vague language is used at the end of this chapter, and students may be confused about what exactly happened. There are many key words they may not be familiar with, which may influence their reading speed, but I believe they can guess the meaning according to the context if time is sufficient.

B. Philosophical/Theoretical Rationale

I believe that students' prior knowledge plays a very important role in comprehending the text. In this lesson, I especially stimulate their General World Knowledge - understanding social relationships, causes, and activities that are common to many specific situations, and Knowledge of Rhetorical Structures - conventions for organizing and signaling the structure of the text. Appropriate schemata for narrative and expository text reduce the cognitive processing time for the text (Hiller Spires).

I strongly support sheltered instruction, which may be done by contextualizing the learning tasks through hands-on so operative activities, pictures, relevant media, artistic representations of meaning, and reading-to-learn strategies modeled for the students (VVM, Pg.82). If students feel bored by instruction, no matter how valuable the text is, they won't be engaged. Sheltered instruction is more acceptable than the traditional linear instruction.

I also think student-centered instruction is more effective at increasing student motivation and depth of engagement, especially for ESL students who lack cultural background and have a language barrier. I will carefully observe their response to every strategy we use, and help them have a clearer understanding of the text, by asking questions and offering answers during reading.

II. Lesson Plan

A. Instructional Objectives:

According to **Common Core State Standards and the standard of English as a Second Language of NC ESSENTIAL STANDARDS** as well as **The WIDA English Language Development Standards**, **students will be able to:**

	Common Core State Standards and the standard of English as a Second Language of NC ESSENTIAL STANDARDS	The WIDA English Language Development Standards
1	Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).—Common Core State Standards, English Language Arts, Reading: Literature, Craft and Structure #6 (Grades 11–12)	Determine a theme of a story from details in the text, including how characters in a story respond to challenges; summarize the text.
2	Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.—Common Core State Standards, English Language Arts, Speaking and Listening, Comprehension and Collaboration #3 (Grades 11–12)	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes

B. Materials and Devices:

	Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
Students	Smart phone/ Tablet with camera and microphone Pen Paper Handout of the text	Smart phone/ Tablet with camera and microphone High lighter Paper Handout of the text	Smart phone/ Tablet with camera and microphone Pen Paper computer/ laptop Quiz sheet
Teacher	Smart phone Book(A SEPARATE PEACE) Power Point	Smart phone Book(A SEPARATE PEACE) High lighter	Smart phone Book(A SEPARATE PEACE) Quiz sheet

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C. B-D-A Phases:

1. Before Reading (25 minutes):

- Ask questions to activate their prior knowledge of “peace”, “friendship”, “innocence” and “jealousy”. (5`)
- Introduce the author (John Knowles) and background (WWII) with Power Point (5`)
- Pre-teach key vocabulary using the Knowledge Ratings strategy and OPIN strategy (10`)
- Introduce the main plot of the first three chapters, and ask students to predict the following plot (5`)

2. During Reading (40 minutes):

- Silent reading for the narrative paragraphs and segment the text into logical stopping points for discussion of plot (find the foreshadowing of the main plot) and prediction.
- Students and I highlight wonderful words, phrases and sentences as well as the ones we feel confused about, with specific marks, and then discuss and share our thoughts about them.

- Role-play reading for the dialogues. (Gene & Phineas) (They always love this activity. They each may have some problems of new vocabulary, although we have done the Knowledge Ratings strategy and OPIN strategy and have gone through the vocabulary they both feel unfamiliar, I will remind them with synonyms when it is necessary.)

3. After Reading (30 minutes):

- Students explore the answer of the main comprehension question using Discussion Web—Did Phineas drop off the tree accidentally or did Gene make it happen intentionally? (10``) (They may have the same answer or different ones for this, and then we demonstrate the reasons in turns, and see whether we will have a consensus)
- Students do free writing (What happened after Gene fell off the tree?) (10``)
- Students share their free writing, and we exchange our free writing and do the evaluation with PQS (Praise: underline the good points and sentences and write comments; Questions: underline the sentences where more explanation or revision is needed; Suggestion: make comments and suggestions that will help better the writing). If they are not ready, I will show them mine and ask them to revise mine. (10``)
- Show students the trailer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65DQtSyi3Gc>) of the film based on the book in order to encourage them to read the book and watch the film. **(It can be shown before reading, but some scenes need to be clipped, because they reveal the ensuing plot, which will interfere students to predict. Students will like this, because it is fun. The problem is I am not the one who play the trailer, so I can not make a pause where they will feel confused.)**

4. Assessment:

- Observation during instruction(whether they are attracted by the text; whether they are enthusiastic about the learning and discussion; whether there are any problems they are confused about; which activity is the most interesting one to them; which one they are not interested in etc.)
- Quiz with vocabulary(They are good at memorizing vocabulary, especially in the contest, so it is not a problem for them to get a full score) and comprehension questions: why, do you think, was the reason that Phineas fell down was blurred by the author? (It will be a little bit difficult

for them to answer this question. Prompts are needed here.)what does the peace mentioned in the title mean? How do you know ? (5 minutes)

5. Homework

Students continue working on the free writing and send me their draft next week. Students read the book and watch the film and compare the differences between the book and film.

III.Reflection

It was a successful lesson in general. The most wonderful parts were the Prediction, Vocabulary warm-up activities before reading, and Role play reading during reading, and the Discussion Web after reading. Students did those enthusiastically. They knew more words than I expected. They both have the same judgement of the reason that Phineas fell off the tree—Gene did it internally because of jealousy.

I did not do the silent reading as I planed, **because it was not a face to face class, and it was hard for me to observe their** facial expression to judge whether they met any problems. They read a loud, in stead, in front of their cameras, and whenever they stuttered repeatedly, I gave them prompts with synonyms. It turned out to be very efficient.

The problem was the time. I planed a 100-minute-lesson, while it was not enough. I underestimated the time for before reading. Because the text was the forth chapter of a book, and students had never read it before, they had many questions when I introduced the background and the previous plot of the book. It took me about ten more minutes to finish the introduction. And thus, we had limited time for the free writing after reading. Since the time differences between China and US, we did not finish the after reading part until the second time on the week. And their memory of the text got blurred at that time, which made us spend more time of the recall. I should have select a full short text. But if we all on campus, and we have classes every day, we can finish this lesson in two days in a row, which will have a better effect.

I asked students for feedback about this lesson, and as I expected they liked the Vocabulary activities before reading and discussion of the comprehensive questions after reading, and they did perfectly for the vocabulary quiz after reading. They also said the PQS strategy was very helpful and practical for the assessment of the free writing. They liked the trailer which verified their prediction and imagination. They said they would definitely read the whole book and watch the

movie as well. There were two things they said I need to do for them. First, they need some time to have a break after finishing reading, and second, they want to know what others think of the comprehensive questions. I was quite inspired by their suggestions, and I realized that I could show students other people's reviews of this text (Chapter four) on Goodreads or Amazon and see whether they support any of those and whether they would change their ideas.