

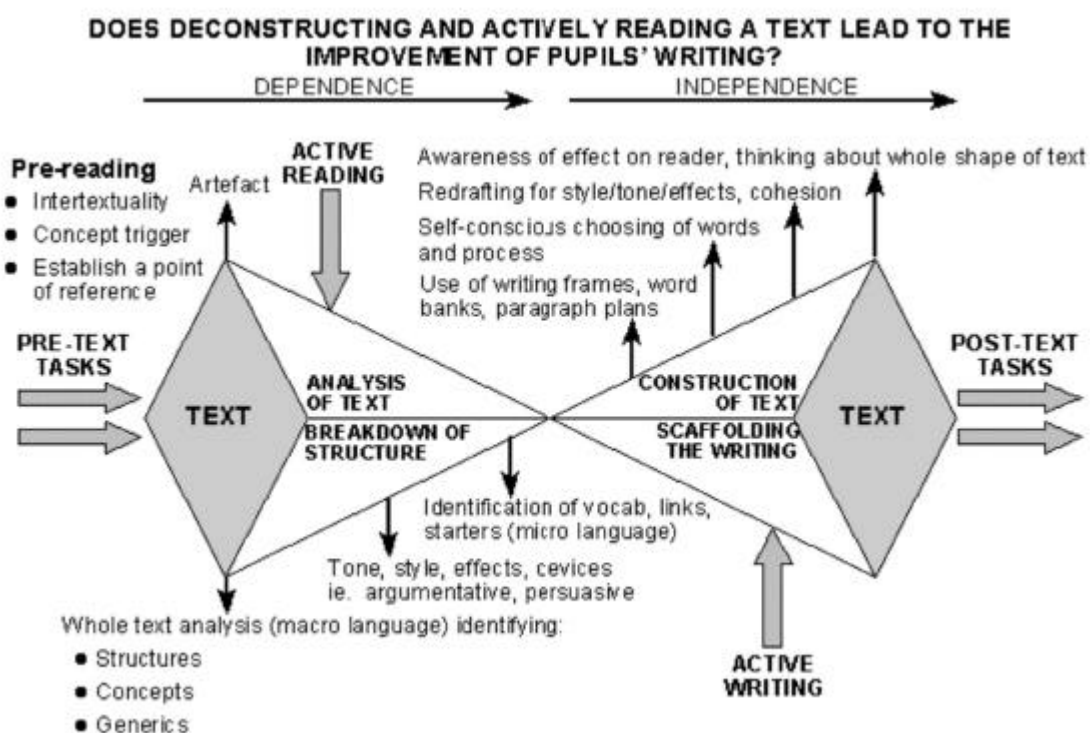
Hearts and Partners

Thematic Poetry from the NEAB Anthology

Mixed Ability Year 10

Background Information: My Year 10 group had not studied GCSE poetry before. Indeed, most of them groaned when I announced that we were going to do a poetry unit. Thus, the lesson plans that follow are an example of how I take an active approach to studying texts; accessing the seven multiple intelligences, and using a variety of teaching/learning strategies to enable all pupils to understand the poems.

LESSON ONE: "Understanding the Process" and "Pre-Text Activities"



The Big Picture: Using the Language Process Model shown above, I explained to pupils the process through which they would read, analyse, deconstruct poetry, so that they could structure and create poetry/literary essays of their own. The following tasks helped to explain. . .

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Task One: Discussing Love

Friendship groups of 4

- Pupils were given a selection of magazines and newspapers to find examples of how love is represented in the media.
- Pupils collected images and quotations about love.
- Groups had to create 5 statements about love in the media, illustrated with these words and pictures.
- Statements were put into an order so that a line of argument could be constructed.
- Statements and images were glued onto sugar paper to create a pictorial essay that was explained by each group during their presentation to the whole class.

Task Two:

- As a whole class, pupils collected examples of famous song lyrics and sayings about love.
- Pupils were given the lyrics from "Never Ever" by All Saints to show how song lyrics are set-out like poetry.
- In pairs, pupils identified six different ways of categorising love, e.g.:

Type of Love	Characteristics	Example

LESSON TWO: "Stop All the Clocks" by W.H. Auden

Class discussion: What would you do if the person you loved died? Pupils' reactions were recorded on the board.

READING THE POEM

- In the first instance, I read the poem to the class so that they could hear how the words were pronounced.
- The second time, the poem was read by the whole class with each pupil reading one line.
- The third time, each pupil read up to a punctuation point, to hear the phrasing of the poem.

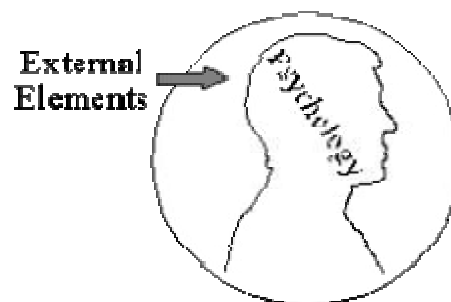
CLASS PERFORMANCE OF THE POEM

The poem lends itself to a dramatic choral reading, so I split the class in half, and gave each group a tape recorder. Their task was to perform the poem in a way that would draw attention to the different moods of each verse, and emphasise the active words like "Stop".

ANALYSING THE POEM

Task One: Mind Mapping - What is happening to the narrator's world?

A diagram was drawn of all of the external elements that the narrator wanted to control now that his lover was dead. Within the mind, the narrator's feelings/thoughts connected with these external elements were listed, e.g.:



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Task Two: Objective Correlative

I explained how traditional language can often be seen as being inadequate in expressing people's feelings about love, e.g. Annie Lennox's song: "No More 'I Love You's / Language is changing outside the words". Thus, we discuss how Auden uses objects to represent feelings within this poem, e.g.:

Physical Object	Idea Represented
Clocks	Time

Task Three: Language and Form

- What are the sounds of this poem and why are they included?
- Underline all of the active/instructional words in the first verse. What is important about their positioning within the verse?
- In the third verse, the word "my" is repeated. Underline the examples and explain why Auden emphasises this word.
- This poem is very regular in rhyme and in form. Explain.
- Which are the most powerful lines within the poem, and why?

LESSON THREE: Childhood Love

"I am Very Bothered" by Simon Armitage

Task One: Memories of Childhood Love

- Pupils did 5 mins stream of consciousness writing about being six years old in the playground.
- In pairs, pupils listed the strategies used and games played by primary school boys and girls to get each others' attention e.g. kiss chase.
- Pupils discussed the ways in which they and their friends attract the attention of the opposite sex at the ages of 14/15.

Task Two: Analysis of Viewpoint and Language

- In different coloured pens, pupils underlined the phrases expressed by the adult narrator, and those of the young boy.
- Pupils identified the language of science e.g. "Bunsen Burner" in contrast to the romantic language e.g. "Naked flame".
- Pupils identified the blank verse of the first stanza that changes into irregular rhyme within the second and third verses, but uses enjambement to emphasise certain points.

Task Three: Writing Poetry

Pupils wrote a poem to an old school friend, apologising for something cruel that they had done when they were much younger. The template/characteristics of the original poem were used as a structure.

LESSON FOUR: "I Wouldn't Thank You for a Valentine" by Liz Lochhead

Task One: Valentine's Day

- The class 'Wordstormed' the traditional presents and symbols of love given on Valentine's Day.
- Pupils made a list of the positive and negative aspects of celebrating Valentine's Day.

Class Discussion: Is Valentine's Day an event which gives lovers an opportunity to show their love, or a day that commercialises love and puts people under pressure? From the discussion we established the social messages that are attached to this day.

Task Two: Analysis of the poem

The class listened to the NEAB tape reading of the poem.

- Pupils identified and listed the romantic conventions and gifts written about in this poem. We discussed the definitions of "stereotypes" and "cliches" within this context.
- Pupils charted the way in which Lochhead satirises these romantic gestures, e.g:

Romantic Gesture	Satirical Comment
"Something flimsy"	"In the wrong size"

Pupils answered the following questions in their exercise books:

- Identify the alliteration in the poem. What affect does this device have on the sound of the poem?
- Identify the repetition. Why are certain phrases repeated?
- Identify the rhyme scheme.
- What do the last two lines mean? What are the other possible interpretations?

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Task Three: Gendered Language

Question posed: "How do we know that it is a woman narrating this poem?"

Pupils had to find phrases that were examples of gendered language and discuss how they were gender stereotypes.

Pupils then had to imagine they were an alien who found this poem. They made a list of their observations about men and women from this poem:

<i>Women are . . .</i>	<i>Men are . . .</i>
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Homework:

Imagine you are the person who received this poem. Write a poem in response to this rap attack, using the same template of rhyme and form.

LESSONS FIVE AND SIX: Speaking and Listening Task - Group productions of a tape to help the teaching of two poems

Pupils were put into mixed gender groups of 4. Their task was to create a professional poetry teaching tape that could be used in any Year 10 class to help other pupils understand the poems that had been studied.

Task One:

Pupils had to create an interesting way to read two poems, thinking about the audience and purpose of this resource. The readings of the poems were rehearsed and then recorded on tape.

Task Two:

After each recording, the group had to discuss the poems, using the following pointers to guide them:

- Briefly explain the story behind the poem.
- Explain what the poet is saying about love and his/her relationship.
- Describe the rhyme scheme and lay-out of the poem.
- Describe any interesting uses of language: alliteration, repetition, imagery etc.
- Explain how W.H. Auden uses symbols (objects) to describe feelings.
- Explain how Liz Lochhead uses cliches and stereotypes of love to satirise.
- Identify the best two lines of the poem, and explain why your group thinks that they are powerful.

All pupils completed a speaking and listening topsheet for this task. As a class we listened to each tape recording, evaluating what was good and what needed improving. Each member of the class received an English certificate for this task.

LESSON SEVEN : Unrequited Love

"The Despairing Lover" William Walsh

Task One:

Pupils were put into mixed ability groups of 4/5. Each group was given an envelope full of parts of the poem. They opened the envelope and worked out how to reconstruct this poem using their knowledge about poetic conventions and content.

(20 mins)

Task Two:

Pupils were given a copy of the poem stuck on sugar paper. Pupils were given 3 - 5 mins to discuss and write down 5 methods that they used to reconstruct the poem. How did they do it?
Feedback.

Task Three:

I read the poem to the class. Members of the class read the poem - each pupil saying one line.

Task Four:

In 3 ability groups, pupils worked on enlarged versions of the poem, to investigate:

- Damon's thought process;
- How the three verses have different tones: Romantic/Melodramatic - Realism - Reflective/Philosophising.
- The language used to describe Damon and Phyllis.

Task Five:

Each group fed back to the whole class: everyone taking notes from the board.
Reflection on what had been learnt.

Task Six:

The poem was played from the NEAB tape.

LESSON EIGHT : Poetry is like Science

"Even Tho" by Grace Nicholls

One of the most exciting aspects of Nicholls' poem is the way that fruit imagery is used to represent the female narrator's feelings for her lover. As the fruit was quite exotic, I decided to buy avocados, starapples, plums, watermelon, bananas from the local supermarket and conduct a dissection and observation of their different qualities.

Task One: Investigating why Nicholl's using fruit to represent love

In friendship groups, pupils were given an example of each of the fruits used in the poem. They were instructed to dissect each piece of fruit, and fill in a chart that would collect their observations:

Type of Fruit	Colour	Shape	Skin Texture	Inner Texture

Task Two: Relating fruit characteristics to love

- As a class, on the board, we collected together all of the adjectives used to describe the fruit.
- We underlined the words that could be associated with love e.g. ripe, soft, juicy, heart of stone etc.
- We read the poem around the class, labelling the fruit words with the words that we had collected.

Task Three: Language Analysis

Pupils were given the following activities:

1. Identification of examples of Creole dialect.
2. Discussion of Creole v Standard English. Why Nicholls uses this dialect to express her feelings.
3. Explanation of first, second and third person narrative. How Nicholls moves from "I" position to "you" and "we".

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Task Four: View of Love

In pairs, pupils discussed and wrote about the version of love that Nicholls is advocating: Independent Love "And keep to de motion/ of we own person/ality."

LESSON NINE, TEN AND ELEVEN : Writing a Comparative Poetry Essay

This was the first GCSE literature essay that the pupils had ever done, therefore I gave them an essay structure to work from. The basis of the framework, was that in an exam situation, their essays should have an introduction, five points and a conclusion. Each paragraph should have the following structure: Assertion (point); Quotation; Analysis; Evaluation.

ESSAY PLAN

Question: "How is Love Represented in Two of the Poems You Have Studied?"

Introduction:

- Briefly explain which poems you are going to write about and the view of love that is expressed.
- Explain how love has been expressed in poetry throughout the ages.
- Write about contemporary images of love within the media, and how objects are used to symbolise and communicate romantic feelings.

Point One: What view of love is being expressed in the poems?

Point Two: How are the lovers described?

Point Three: What are the images of love within these poems?

Point Four: How is language and form used to express feelings about love?

Point Five: What are the poets trying to say about love?

Conclusion:

- How successful are the two poems in discussing love?
- What are the main similarities and differences between the two poems?
- Which poem do you prefer and why?

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