

Curriculum & Assessment Planning in Literature in English

19-20/4/2011
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OUTLINE

- I) Context
- II) Principles for curriculum & assessment planning
- III) Curriculum planning
 - Emphasising concept building & adoption of experiential learning approaches
- IV) Assessment planning
 - Assessment for learning
 - Assessment of learning
- V) Conclusion

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I) CONTEXT (1)

FROM CE/AL TO NSS: NEW CHALLENGES

- Planning: 2.5 years instead of 1.5 years
 - progressive
- Curriculum coverage: More genres to be covered, broader curriculum
 - places greater demand on students because of the unfamiliar (historical, cultural, etc.) contexts of texts
- Curriculum learning focus:
 - both creativity & analytical skills
- Student ability
 - greater learner differences

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CONTEXT (2) -- MY SCHOOL

- Catholic girls' school
 - EMI for all classes
 - Long history of offering Literature in English from S1 upwards
 - Reading habit: not very well fostered
- Planning: 6 years
 - Wide coverage: film, drama, novel, short story, poetry & portfolio work
 - Learning focus: exposure to different genres
 - Challenge in understanding unfamiliar contexts of texts

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CONTEXT (3) -- CHALLENGES

- NSS – S4 & S5 around 30 students each
- Flexibility offered to students – free choice of subjects & subject combinations regardless of academic/ English ability
- Students inclined to take BAFS, Econ
- Lit. attracts very diverse students
 - E.g. S5 class (1st NSS cohort)
Form Ranking: ranged from 2nd to last 10th
 - Students are generally good at English but there are a few less advanced ones

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II) PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING

- Progressive & Spiral Learning
 - Progressive: structured and connected
 - Spiral: revisit concepts in different contexts with increasing sophistication
- Catering for Learners' Abilities and Experience
 - Enhancing their motivation & abilities
- Flexibility, Trial & Error

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PROGRESSIVE & SPIRAL LEARNING

- Progressive
 - Structured: from simple to complex
 - E.g. concepts related to plot
Plot -> What is a story (storyline)-> Ways to tell a story (linear/ flashback; point of view)
 - Connected: how the concepts are related to and affect one another
 - E.g. point of view affects characterisation; characterisation & interaction of characters affect plot development etc.
- Spiral
 - E.g. concept of plot was first introduced in S4 *Lord of the Flies*, then revisited in short stories, and further developed as visual story telling in S5 film making and appreciation

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CATERING FOR LEARNERS' ABILITIES AND EXPERIENCE (1)

Select the genres to cover each year based on students' experience and abilities:

S4

- Short stories & Novel (*Lord of the Flies*)
- portfolio: creative writing

S5

- Film (*The Painted Veil*) & Drama (*Othello*)
- portfolio: film review

S6

- Poetry
- portfolio: long essay

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CATERING FOR LEARNERS' ABILITIES AND EXPERIENCE (2)

- Establish a strategic focus to cater for students' needs each year:
 - S4 exposure (including concept building)
 - S5 experience (including movie watching & making)
 - S6 consolidation

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ALLOW FLEXIBILITY; GAIN FROM TRIAL & ERROR

- S4 original plan: start with short stories & finish them within the year
- Too ambitious: need to cater for students' needs
 - Difficult language
 - Unfamiliar contexts
- Start *Lord of the Flies* in 1st term instead
- Postpone short stories to S4 2nd term & spread the teaching of stories over S4-S6

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III) CURRICULUM PLANNING -- EXPOSURE & CONCEPT BUILDING (1)

- Illustrate concepts in context
- E.g. S4 *Lord of the Flies*
- Progressive: 6 lessons (out of 36 lessons allocated to the novel) focusing on concept of plot
- Explore plot in connection with narrative structure and techniques

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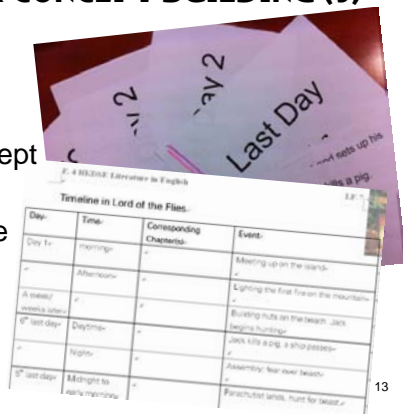
EXPOSURE & CONCEPT BUILDING (2)

- Plot: Arrangement of events
- Summarise what happens in each chapter: jigsaw (1 lesson)
- Time line (game) (1.5 lessons)
- Worksheet -- Matching events to chapters (0.5 lesson)
- Happenings in "real" time different from novel time: Why?
- Exposure: events can be told in an order very different from their time sequence in reality, e.g. stream of consciousness

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EXPOSURE & CONCEPT BUILDING (3)

- Game & Worksheet
- Examine concept of time in plot
- Students make their own discovery



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EXPOSURE & CONCEPT BUILDING (4)

- Plot: progression of events caused by conflicts (3 lessons)
 - Structure & plot development
 - Freytag's Pyramid
 - Discussion of climax & ending
 - Other narrative techniques
- useful later in discussion of different genres, especially short stories

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CURRICULUM PLANNING -- LEARNING BY DOING (1)

- An experiential approach
- Students experience visual story telling through application of concepts
- Encourage creativity
- Prepare students for portfolio work on film review later on
- Help students with the analysis of *The Painted Veil*

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LEARNING BY DOING (2)

- film making (5 mins)
- story board (individual), select one
- group work: shoot a movie

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LEARNING BY DOING (3)

- Story board: plot construction, use of camera angles
- Concept of plot revisited in the context of visual story telling
- Movie

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LEARNING BY DOING (4)

- Students' explanation & reflections of techniques used

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CURRICULUM PLANNING -- CONSOLIDATION OF LEARNING

S6 – the way forward

- No fixed plan yet
- Focus: to reinforce the concepts and skills that students have acquired in S4 & S5
- How: exploring portfolio work and other texts that need to be covered, e.g. poetry & short stories

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IV) ASSESSMENT PLANNING -- ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING (1)

- “Seventeen Syllables”
- Activities/Tasks developed to help students understand (the background and context of) the text
- Anticipated difficulties & scaffolding activities attempted:
 - Role play & interview to deepen contextual understanding
 - Watching TV adaptation of story, visual presentation of plot & interpretation
- Students’ response: “Difficult” and “Boring”
- Needs ‘assessment for learning’ activities to know/assess how well they understand the text

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ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING (2)

Alternative strategy: Question setting

- Another example of the need for flexibility when teaching particular texts for the first time
- Open-ended activity that allows students to produce works with varied length and complexity

Objectives:

- To assess students’ understanding of the text
- To enable students to reflect upon the text
- To empower students as they become teachers setting questions on the text
- To cater for learner diversity

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ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING (3)

Procedures:

- Students pretended they were the teacher and designed a worksheet on “Seventeen Syllables”
- They were encouraged to give thought to the activity, as good and interesting questions would be selected for the class to answer
- Oral feedback on the type & quality of questions given by teachers

➤ Application: reflect understanding of the text

- Students would choose one question to answer
- The assignment would be marked by the student teacher
- Students shared and read their peers’ work before the teacher gave her feedback

➤ Peer evaluation: empowerment

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ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING (4)

The task allows **students** to:

- ✓ see where their own strengths and weaknesses lie by reading others’ work as well as their peers’ feedback on their own work

The task allows the **teacher** to:

- ✓ assess how much students have learnt and follow up with any necessary consolidation work

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ASSESSMENT PLANNING -- ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING (1)

- School-based adaptation in examination format & length: designed and changed to assess students on what they have been previously taught and to cater for their abilities
- S4 Term 1: One paper, only 1.5 hours, including concepts
- S4 Term 2: One paper, only 2 hours
- S5 Term 1: Two papers, 1.5 hours & 2 hours
- S5 Term 2: Two papers, 2 hours & 2 hours
- S6: Two papers, 2 hours & 3 hours

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ASSESSMENT PLANNING -- ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING (2)

S4 Mid-year Exam Literary concepts

S4 Final Exam Critical Analysis

S5 Mid-year exam Texts Comparison

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V) CONCLUSION

- **PRINCIPLES:**
Progressive & Spiral Learning
- **FOCUS:**
tailored based on school context & learners' needs
- **POSSIBLE APPROACHES:**
emphasise concept building and encourage experiential learning
- Allow **FLEXIBILITY**

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