Seeing with two 'I's – Ishiguro and identity in upper secondary literature lessons

Lynn Williams Leppich and Stefan D. Keller

Abstract

In this article we address competence-oriented work on literary topics in English lessons at upper-secondary level. We present, explain and interpret key aspects of, and angles on, the curriculum. Further, we discuss how learners can develop analytical, linguistic, personal and social competences by engaging with literature. Lastly, we share concrete tasks from a teaching unit based on a modern English-language novel (Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go, 2005) so as to demonstrate how open tasks and discussion questions can help learners towards a focused personal response to a work.

⇒ *Titre, chapeau et mots-clés en français à la fin de l'article*

⇒ *Titel, Lead und Schlüsselwörter auf Deutsch am Schluss des Artikels*

Authors

Lynn Williams Leppich, Pädagogische Hochschule FHNW, Institut Sekundarstufe I und II, Hofackerstrasse 30, 4132 Muttenz, lynn.williams@fhnw.ch
Stefan D. Keller, Pädagogische Hochschule FHNW, Institut Sekundarstufe I und II, Professur Englischdidaktik und ihre Disziplinen, Hofackerstrasse 30, 09.W.05, 4132 Muttenz, stefan.keller@fhnw.ch

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Literature, *Bildung* and educational standards

Literary reading and interpretation are key competences of foreign language education at upper secondary level. Traditionally, teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) have used literature in their classrooms to broaden their students' horizons by giving them knowledge of canonical literary works, to improve their cultural awareness, to stimulate their creative and literary imaginations and to develop their appreciation aesthetic experiences created through language use. Carter and Long (1991, 2) propose three models to conceptualise literary analysis in the English classroom. The first is the 'cultural model', which regards the understanding and appreciation of different cultures and ideologies (together with the developing of one's perception of feelings and artistic forms) as the primary function of literary reading. The second is the 'language model', which emphasises the fact that language is the literary medium and that literature could be seen as an instrument to teach specific structures of grammar and vocabulary. The third is the 'personal growth model', which implies that by reading literary texts, students learn to appreciate and evaluate cultural artefacts and, in broad terms, improve their understanding of different societies, cultures and the human beings living within a social matrix. In a similar vein, Lazar (1993, 11) asserts that literature should be seen as a valuable resource of motivating material and as a bridge to provide access to cultural background. Further, it encourages language acquisition, expands students' language awareness through the study of the verbal artistry that lies at the heart of literary texts (Alderson and Short, 1988; Lazar, 1993).

In the German-speaking context, this type of personal and cultural learning is sometimes described under the umbrella concept of *Bildung,* which implies a broadening of the individual horizon, an acquiring of new knowledge as much as an uplifting of the mind and its capacities of appreciating the world.

The last two decades have seen a new concept of *Bildung* introduced in (western) European countries which can be described as an 'output-oriented paradigm'. In the wake of large-scale educational studies such as PISA, governments started to specify educational standards (*Bildungsstandards*) as goals for teaching and learning. These standards describe concrete outcomes of education which society expects every student to acquire in order to live a happy and successful life (OECD, 2013; see also Rychen, 2003; Rychen and Salganik, 2001). This includes detailed descriptions of competences which describe the intended outcomes of education in specific domains, or subjects, at each level of schooling (usually in the form of 'can-do' statements) includes a system of large-scale tests aimed at evaluating to which degree students acquire the target competences, which groups of students might need special support, or how the effectiveness of teaching and learning might be improved.

The question of how – or if – the expansion of an individual mind (implied in the concept of *Bildung* and especially salient for literary learning) might be measured in a large-scale test is a thorny one and need not concern us here. Instead, we focus in this article on the productive and innovative aspects which an outcome-oriented approach can bring to literature teaching in the foreign language classroom. Three aspects are particularly salient in this context.

An outcome-oriented approach…

a) encourages educators to specify carefully what exactly is to be learnt, or taught, in connection with literature. What are the competences students are meant to acquire, how are they related and how do they build upon each other, and what exactly are the concepts we expect to take hold in students' minds?

b) focuses attention on the tasks and materials teachers use in classrooms. Competences are abstract constructs which describe educational goals, but how do students get there. To make the link between (abstract) competence goals and concrete student learning we need suitable tasks, and materials to go with them. Teachers need to consider what materials are suitable as a basis for acquiring the target competences, what type of questions they ask about these materials, what cognitive and

emotional demands these questions make on the learners, how students are going to work on them (alone, co-operatively, etc.). Setting such tasks, and designing interactional contexts to work on them, is itself a key competence for teachers;

c) encourages teachers to collect evidence what students are actually learning, the impact the materials and tasks are making on their cognitive system, and in which way their competences develop. This includes a planning of what concrete artefacts students are going to produce (texts, talks, etc.) and in what way the can be considered concrete evidence of abstract competences (Keller, 2013)

In this article, we describe ways for teachers to deal with these issues, by means of illustrative tasks and teaching scenarios inspired by a recent novel *Never Let Me Go* (2005) by Nobel Laureate Kazuo Ishiguro.

Competence descriptions of literary reading and analysis

When educational standards were first introduced in German-speaking countries, there was widespread concern among educators that literary learning and interpretation would become marginalised in school learning as it is not easily measurable (Bredella, 2005). While literary competences do not currently figure among those tested in large-scale educational studies at lower or upper secondary level, it is likely that the spectre of marginalisation has – fortunately – not in fact become a reality. While literary reading has remained a key aspect of EFL teaching, modern competence-oriented curricula have succeeded in "operationalising" literary competences with its different component parts and levels. In so doing, researchers have begun to specify in detail the individual levels and dimensions of an activity hitherto so tantalisingly (and opaquely) described as *Bildung.* Placing explicit descriptions of literary competences at the core of (upper) secondary curriculum, it is to be hoped, can only encourage teachers to give literary interpretation the place it deserves in the modern EFL classroom. At the same time, teachers need knowledge of these descriptions and an ability to use them as a basis for their classroom preparation.

The *Lehrplan 21,* the unified curriculum currently being introduced in Switzerland for compulsory schooling, has a "focus on literature" as a key component of modern education (EDK, 2016). Aims of literary education (in all languages) are described as follows:

> Schülerinnen und Schüler [erleben] Sprache als bewusst gestaltetes Produkt, das eigenes Sprachschaffen inspirieren kann. Sie erhalten Raum, in vielfältige literarische Texte aus der eigenen oder anderen Kulturen einzutauchen (z.B. Kinder- und Jugendliteratur, Comic, Hörbuch, DVD, Theater) und sich unterschiedlich damit auseinanderzusetzen (EDK, 2016).

At the level of concrete educational goals, this focus on literature should lead to students acquiring the following competences in relation with English literature.

Die Schülerinnen und Schüler können…

> … verschiedenartige Texte lesen und verstehen (Sachtexte, ästhetische Texte, Texte im Schulalltag, Texte im Kontakt mit Englisch sprechenden Personen).

> … die ästhetische Wirkung von Lesetexten entdecken und beschreiben (EDK, 2016)

The competences described in the Swiss "Lehrplan 21" as well as the KMK-standards in Germany were largely based on the descriptors of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR, 2001). The CEFR is a detailed collection of competence descriptors relating to different area of productive and receptive language use. The version published in 2001 did not contain descriptors of literary competences. In September 2017, the *European Council* published a "Companion Volume" (CEFR Comp. Vol., 2017) which extended the CEFR illustrative descriptors to include areas such as mediation, plurilingual/pluricultural competence and literary interpretation. The descriptors described in the volume can serve as an aid to translate the general aims associated with doing literature into a curricular process of cumulative learning.

As noted in the introduction, works of literature tend to evoke a reaction, and learners' reactions to literary works are an important part of upper secondary education. The Companion Volume lists four main types such responses to literary texts which are relevant for the classroom:

- engagement: giving a personal reaction to the language, style or content, feeling drawn to an aspect of the work or a character or characteristic of it;
- interpretation: ascribing meaning or significance to aspects of the work including contents, motifs, characters' motives, metaphor, etc.;
- analysis of certain aspects of the work including language, literary devices, context characters, relationships, etc.;
- evaluation: giving a critical appraisal of technique, structure, the vision of the artist, the significance of the work, etc. (CEFR Comp. Vol., 2017)

As the authors of the Companion Volume point out, there is a fundamental difference between the first two categories (engagement and interpretation) and the last two (analysis and evaluation). Describing a personal reaction and interpretation is cognitively far simpler than giving a more intellectual analysis and/or evaluation of a literary text. Therefore, two different scales describing these two cognitive domains are offered in the Companion Volume.

The first scale relates to "expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)" and focuses on expression of the effect a work of literature has on the user/learner as an individual. Key concepts operationalized in this scale include the following:

- explaining what he/she liked, what interested him/her about the work;
- describing characters, saying which he/she identified with;
- relating aspects of the work to own experience;
- relating feelings and emotions;
- personal interpretation of the work as a whole or of aspects of it.

This model thus links with the "personal growth model" (above) and translates it into a series of typical descriptors characterising stages of acquisition. The descriptors in this scale are the following:

C1	Can describe in detail his/her personal interpretation of a work, outlining his/her reactions to certain features and explaining their significance. Can outline his/her interpretation of a character in a work: their psychological/emotional state, the motives for their actions and the consequences of these actions. Can give his/her personal interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and the themes in a story, novel, film or play.
B2	Can give a clear presentation of his/her reactions to a work, developing his/her ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments. Can describe his/her emotional response to a work and elaborate on the way in which it has evoked this response. Can express in some detail his/her reactions to the form of expression, style and content of a work, explaining what he/she appreciated and why.
B1	Can explain why certain parts or aspects of a work especially interested him/her. Can explain in some detail which character he/she most identified with and why. Can relate events in a story, film or play to similar events he/she has experienced or heard about. Can relate the emotions experienced by a character in a work to emotions he/she has experienced. Can describe the emotions he/she experienced at a certain point in a story, e.g. the point(s) in a story when he/she became anxious for a character, and explain why.

Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature) (CEFR Comp. Vol., 2017, 113)

Progression up the scale is characterised as follows: At the lower levels learners can say whether they liked the work, say how it made them feel, talk about characters and relate aspects of the work to their own experiences, with additional detail at B1. At B2 they can give more elaborate explanations, comment on the form of expression and style and give their own interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and the themes in a story, novel, film or play. At the C levels, they can give broader and deeper interpretations, supporting them with details and examples.

While the above set of descriptors has focused on the learners, the second scale related to literary reading the Companion Volume focuses on analysis and evaluation of different genres and text-types in literature. It thus concerns more formal, intellectual reactions to literature. Aspects analysed include the significance of events in a work, treatment of the same themes in different works and other links between them; the extent to which a work follows conventions, and more global evaluation of the work as a whole. Key concepts operationalised in the scale include:

- comparing different works;
- giving a reasoned opinion of a work;
- critically evaluating features of the work, including the effectiveness of techniques employed.

The descriptors in this scale are the following:

C1	Can critically appraise a wide variety of texts including literary works of different periods and genres. Can evaluate the extent to which a work meets the conventions of its genre. Can describe and comment on ways in which the work engages the audience (e.g. by building up and subverting expectations).
B2	Can compare two works, considering themes, characters and scenes, exploring similarities and contrasts and explaining the relevance of the connections between them. Can give a reasoned opinion about a work, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and formal features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others. Can evaluate the way the work encourages identification with characters, giving examples Can describe the way in which different works differ in their treatment of the same theme.
B1	Can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in everyday language and explain the significance of events and the connection between them. Can describe the key themes and characters in short narratives involving familiar situations that are written in high frequency everyday language.

Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature) (CEFR Comp. Vol., 2017, 114)

In this scale, the progression of competences is characterised as follows: there are no descriptors for A1 and A2. Until B2, the focus is on description rather than evaluation. At B2, learners can analyse similarities and differences between works, giving a reasoned opinion and referring to the views of others. At C1, analysis becomes more subtle, concerned with the way the work engages the audience, the extent to which it is conventional, whether it employs irony. At the highest level (not shown in the table above), learners can recognise finer linguistic and stylistic subtleties, unpack connotations and give more critical appraisals of the way in which structure, language and rhetorical devices are exploited in a work of literature for a particular purpose.

Having such levels of competences as intended outcome of teaching is useful, we would argue, to provide a set of targets for tasks and teaching. In order to make such descriptions useful for the ESL classroom, however, teachers need a suitable model of tasks as the basis for scenarios in which these complex competences can be acquired.

Tasks as bridges between literature and classroom leaning

Descriptors of literary competences will not have any tangible effect on classroom learning it teachers do not manage to 'translate' them into motivating tasks for students (Keller, 2013). When speaking here of tasks, we refer to this concept here in the sense of a challenge for students to grapple with, in interaction with a topic, or a problem for them to solve. Competence-oriented tasks can be seen as bridges between the abstract world of competence descriptors, and the concrete world of student learning in the classroom (Keller, 2013). In all subjects and on all levels, good tasks for learning …

- are related to an important aspect of the curriculum, a 'core competence';
- are challenging and activate students on a cognitive level;
- are motivating for learners in the sense that they present something which is new and unknown to them;
- give learners the opportunity to bring their previous knowledge to the task;

- give all learners the chance to solve them;
- have a potential for internal differentiation, i.e. contain different levels of difficulty or can be solved at different levels;
- contain elements of an authentic situation
- require intense social interaction and peer learning of students.

(Blömeke, Risse, Müller & Eichler, 2008)

It is obvious that tasks – in the complex sense outlined above – go far beyond small-scale activities which teachers might set to manage the micro-structure of their lessons. Instead, they are complex scenarios. Particularly for language learning, Hallet (2011) has proposed the following model to describe the different aspects or dimensions of such a complex learning-task:
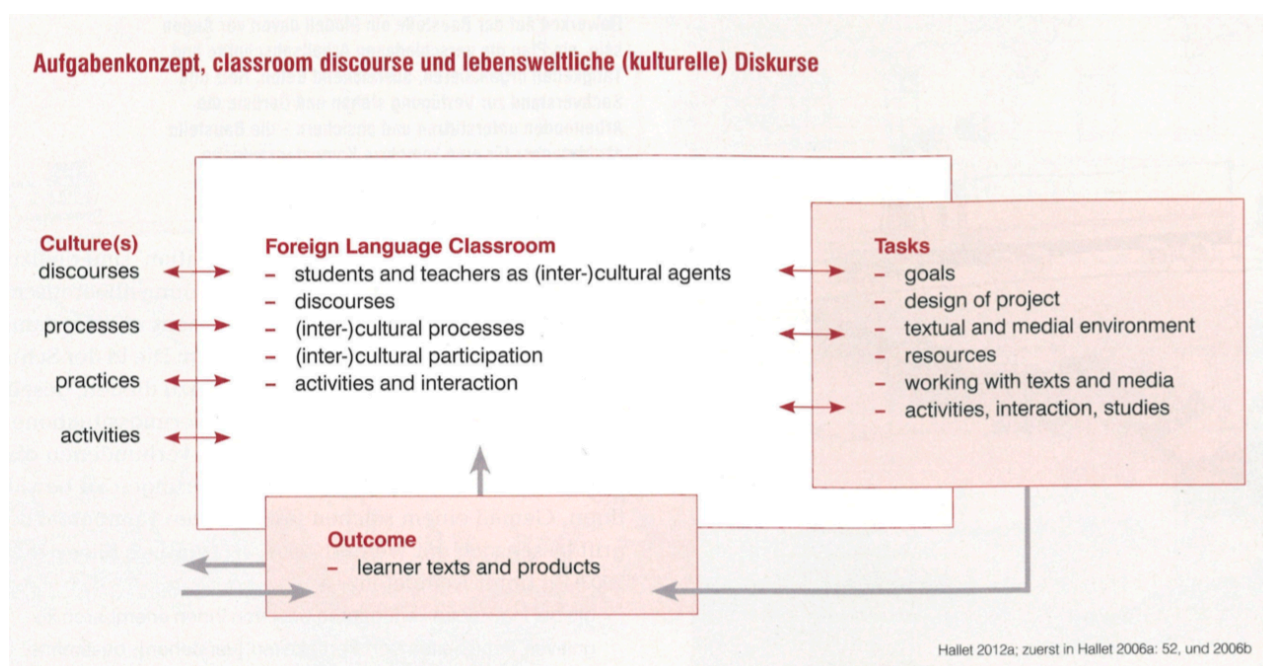
On the left hand side of the model we find culture that surrounds the classroom or in which it is embedded. This culture will have certain activities (buying a train ticket, flirting with a person one is attracted to), practices and customs (dressing up in fancy costume in February, drinking tea at four o'clock) and discourses (political, social, literary, etc.) which define it. While literary works are themselves discourses arising of such cultures, they also shape and define them as fictional descriptions. It is in this way that learners can understand key aspects of a specific culture without actual travel or human contact, by opening the pages of a novel or analysing the stanzas of a poem. This experience involves time-travel to past and future worlds of fiction, and should thus not be interpreted to narrowly in the context of literary study.

On the right hand side of the model, we see the tasks which teachers set in the classroom and which 'import' the culture into the classroom. The textual and medial resources contained in it form the basis for leaners' interaction with the target culture. To structure this process, a good task for learning will have goals, a clear design and specific activities to complete. This includes, in the middle of the model, various processes of interaction among peers with each other. It is obvious that this concept of tasks goes far beyond the type of short, form-focussed task often associated with foreign-language learning. As the competences they relate to are complex and manifold, the tasks necessarily need to be complex and manifold as well.

Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* as an example of competence-oriented literary analysis

The following lessons from a teaching unit on Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) illustrate how teachers can use tasks to link competence-goals and student learning in the literature classroom. Bearing in mind the general goals set out above, it should be easy to understand why this novel fits the bill for upper secondary learning. It deals with a fictionalised world and yet its main themes – friendship and love, life and death amongst others – are grounded in our own everyday reality. The novel is set in a dystopian version of late 1990s England, where the lives of ordinary citizens are prolonged through a state-sanctioned program of human cloning. The clones, referred to as students, grow up in special institutions away from the outside world, such as 'Hailsham' where the protagonist grows up. As young adults, the students begin to donate their vital organs. All "donors" receive care from designated "carers," clones who have not yet begun the donation process. The clones continue to donate organs until they "complete," a euphemism for their death after the donation of three or four organs.

The sample teaching scenarios below are drawn from a teaching unit which is pitched at a class in their fourth semester and upwards of Gymnasium education and set out to work especially with the following learning objectives from the Companion Volume above, with overall learning goals as follows:

Students …

- can evaluate the extent to which a work meets the conventions of its genre. (C1)
- can describe and comment on ways in which the work engages the audience (e.g. by building up and subverting expectations). (C1)
- can give a reasoned opinion about a work, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and formal features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others. (B2)
- can evaluate the way the work encourages identification with characters, giving examples (B2)
- can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in everyday language and explain the significance of events and the connection between them. (B1)
- can describe the key themes and characters in short narratives involving familiar situations that are written in high frequency everyday language. (B1)

From the objectives specified for each lesson below and the accompanying commentary, it will become clear that this unit is multi-layered in its approach and does not privilege any one level over another, choosing instead to build on the lower level competences and use these as a springboard for the higher-level ones. Students with at least a strong B2 level in English language and the related literary competencies can therefore find easy access to this unit, with the teacher able to increase the level of complexity and/or abstraction through discussion management or by requiring more or less sophisticated answers.

Typically, tasks which encapsulate the lower-level objectives (such as characterising the protagonist, or identifying key themes) will produce answers which can be relatively easily anticipated and categorised. More complex tasks look at extrapolating or synthesising, and require students to transfer knowledge, make connections and ground their own opinions in textual evidence.

Differentiation to accommodate high-performing students/classes can be achieved by carefully shaping class discussions or engagement with individual groups to push students to deliver more. At the other end of the spectrum, in terms of support, students can be provided with regular chapter summaries with gap fill, etc. or guided discussion questions with or without prompts. Working with an annotated text can help students with vocabulary issues. Ultimately, viewing the film – as well as providing access to a further genre, offering contrast and supplying discussion points – will help consolidate what students take away from the novel.

The premise behind this teaching unit is to depart from strict adherence to the text only, whilst at the same time promoting and enabling an understanding of key passages. To this end, students can work with all of the following: the novel itself, the 2010 film adaptation of the novel, press articles on scientific development, samples of mix tapes, Ishiguro's speech on receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature (easily accessed on YouTube), the (fictional) Judy Bridgewater song which symbolises both the depths of human love and

the fear of losing those whom one loves (again, readily available on YouTube). The teacher can extend the range of input, materials and 'props' as he/she deems fit and beneficial.

Lesson 1 / Kathy's story – chapters 1& 2

This lesson serves to introduce students to the novel. Students engage with the novel as an unknown quantity, working with the first chapter as an unseen passage to analyse and evaluate.

In terms of objectives, students…

− can evaluate the extent to which a work meets the conventions of its genre. (C1)
− can describe and comment on ways in which the work engages the audience (e.g. by building up and subverting expectations). (C1)
− can give a reasoned opinion about a work, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and formal features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others. (B2)
− can evaluate the way the work encourages identification with characters, giving examples (B2)
− can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in everyday language and explain the significance of events and the connection between them. (B1)
− can describe the key themes and characters in short narratives involving familiar situations that are written in high frequency everyday language. (B1)

Tasks:

− Focus on character: What do we learn of the protagonist, Kathy H.? Which other characters do we encounter? What relationships do you see here?
− Focus on setting: Where is the story taking place?
− Focus on narrative perspective: Who is speaking to us here? What do we learn about her situation? How does she engage us in her story?
− Focus on lexis: Which words particularly stand out in this chapter because they raise questions? What questions?

Commentary:

The teacher helps guide students towards an appreciation of the opening of the novel, eliciting from them features about the confessional style of Kathy H's narrative and significant lexis such as 'donor' and 'carer' which hint at what is to come. Maybe add some kind of final evaluation: A relatively straightforward task asking students to analyze basics of characters and perspective can help them acquire a number of key competences of literary analysis.

Lesson 2 / Scientific development

Students have read to the end of chapter 6 for this lesson and are here invited to focus on what is implied rather than explicitly spelt out in the early chapters of the novel – the fact that Hailsham students are cloned beings created in the name of science to help others live longer.

In terms of objectives, students…
− can evaluate the extent to which a work meets the conventions of its genre. (C1)
− can describe and comment on ways in which the work engages the audience (e.g. by building up and subverting expectations). (C1)
− can describe the way in which different works differ in their treatment of the same theme.
− can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in everyday language and explain the significance of events and the connection between them.
− can describe the key themes and characters in short narratives involving familiar situations that are written in high frequency everyday language. (B1)

Tasks:

− Focus on deduction: How did these chapters develop the ideas planted in chapter 1? How far were your predictions about the story correct?
− Focus on story and plot / genre: How do the novel and film present the story differently?

- Focus on theme (expansion): What key scientific development is at the heart of this story? What else is currently happening in the world of biomedical science?

Commentary:

The teacher elicits what students have learnt from their reading. What clues were there in the preceding chapters as to how the story would continue? The teacher could usefully employ pictures representing different aspects or moments in order to elicit student contributions.

The teacher proceeds by showing students the very first moments of the film, pausing at the opening black screen so that students can read the text and allowing Kathy to introduce herself in a hospital setting. The teacher invites students to compare what they know of the book with how film begins. How do these different approaches change student perception and expectations of the story?

In a third phase, the teacher facilitates a 'placemat' activity on developments in the world of science. Each group of 4 (three can work too, with adjusted timing) receives a large piece of paper divided up into four segments and with the words 'Biomedical science: quo vadis?' Working silently to begin with, students note their thoughts and questions about this very broad topic (which can initially be introduced by a short press article, e.g. on robots performing surgery). At a signal from the teacher, students turn the page 90 degrees so they can comment on their neighbour's ideas and answer his / her questions. This procedure is repeated twice until, on the final 90-degree turn, each student has his/her own segment in front of him/her. In a group puzzle setting, students then share with students from other groups what they have 'discussed' about a variety of medical developments (e.g. recent cloning of monkeys, operations carried out by robots).

Lesson 3 / Identity

At this stage, students have read as far as chapter 9 (the end of part 1). In this lesson, they consider what is bound up in the term 'identity', both in the context of Ishiguro's novel and as relating to their own lives.

In terms of objectives, students…

- can critically appraise a wide variety of texts including literary works of different periods and genres. (C1)
- can evaluate the extent to which a work meets the conventions of its genre. (C1)
- can describe and comment on ways in which the work engages the audience (e.g. by building up and subverting expectations). (C1)
- can evaluate the way the work encourages identification with characters, giving examples. (B2)
- can describe the way in which different works differ in their treatment of the same theme. (B2)

Tasks:

- Focus on cultural background: What can you tell other students about the following: the Sony "Walkman", mix tapes as a cultural phenomenon, UK boarding schools.
- Focus on socio-historical background: Where does this story take place? What is the 'lost corner' of England? Where would your own 'lost corner' of Switzerland be and what would it look like?
- Focus on key theme / author: What does Kazuo Ishiguro have to say about identity in his Nobel speech? Where do you see the topic of identity in *Never Let Me Go*? What does identity mean to you?

Commentary:
Students research a topic connected with the cultural background ahead of the lesson and then form groups where each has looked into a different topic. They share their findings and discuss how these are related to the novel and what their importance is. In a follow-up plenary session, the teacher draws student attention to the idea of the 'lost corner' of England where Hailsham is located and, showing a map of the United Kingdom with East Anglia highlighted, leads a class discussion on the basic dimensions of this concept. Working in pairs, students imagine their own 'lost corner'.

Continuing the theme of place (both in geographical terms and in terms of belonging), students examine the concept of identity. In a short lead-in task, they brainstorm what identity is all about and how it can usefully be defined. They then listen to Kazuo Ishiguro speak on the subject in the first part of his Nobel acceptance speech. In a follow-up task (either in lesson-time or as a homework assignment), they write about what identity means to them.

Lesson 4 / The outside world

In this lesson, students consider how those at Hailsham can and should be prepared for the outside world. The focus is on analyzing their existence in comparison to the existence of those in the outside world to see which situations, norms, customs and exchanges might be new for them once outside the safe environment that Hailsham offers them. Students brainstorm ideas and, depending on the class, might be keen to simulate and perform corresponding role plays.

In terms of objectives, students…

– can describe and comment on ways in which the work engages the audience (e.g. by building up and subverting expectations). (C1)
– can evaluate the way the work encourages identification with characters, giving examples. (B2)
– can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in everyday language and explain the significance of events and the connection between them. (B1)
– can describe the key themes and characters in short narratives involving familiar situations that are written in high frequency everyday language. (B1)

Commentary:
In this lesson, students are invited to identify as far as they can with key figures in the novel – Kathy, Tommy and Ruth. They examine the constraints of the Hailsham students' realities and the situations in the outside world for which they might find themselves unprepared. This also requires them to consider linguistic elements such as the chunks and set phrases employed in a variety of scenarios such as buying a train ticket or ordering a snack in a café. This task can be further complemented by a checklist activity – students draw up a list of do's and don'ts reflecting socio-cultural conventions for modern life.

Lesson 5 and 6 / Decisions

For this lesson, students have read to the end of chapter 7of part 2. In this lesson they review what they have learnt of and from the novel so far and, by means of discussion questions suitable for various classroom settings, they examine some of the more philosophical questions raised. They also engage further with the film adaptation of the novel.

In terms of objectives, students…

– can critically appraise a wide variety of texts including literary works of different periods and genres. (C1)
– can evaluate the extent to which a work meets the conventions of its genre.
– can describe and comment on ways in which the work engages the audience (e.g. by building up and subverting expectations). (C1)
– can describe the way in which different works differ in their treatment of the same theme. (B2)

Tasks:

– Focus on plot and themes: Collect 5-6 key words to summarize what you have read for today and explain why you have chosen them.
– Focus on ideas: Deferrals - what criteria would students establish for granting a potential deferral if they were in charge? Possibles - why would they want to find their possible – or why not? What would be the implications?
– Focus on genre: Compare and contrast the following elements as you watch the first 42 minutes of the film [as far as trip to Norwich]: a) story/plot b) characters / setting

Commentary:

The teacher asks students what the most important points were in their homework reading and allows time for them to collect ideas, initially as individual work and then sharing in a pair. Students are invited to share some of their keywords and to explain, contextualize and justify these. A collage of keywords results which is representative of students' perception of their reading and which serves to both summarize and synthesize ideas of plot, character and theme so far.

In a second phase, the teacher has two central questions which can either be discussed sequentially or in parallel in different groups. The underlying motivation behind this task is again working with higher-level questions of transferring and applying knowledge from the novel and considering the implications of certain mindsets and attitudes students bring to the text.

Lesson 6 (or the second lesson of this double) is dedicated to a viewing of the first part of the film. As a starting point, the teacher elicits what students remember of the first scene of the film (as seen in lesson 2). As they watch, they should compare and contrast the differing portrayals and note a few keywords for discussion in the next lesson.

The remaining sessions in this sequence of twelve lessons see students continue to read on (at a rather faster pace, and, depending on the class, ideally with fewer content and comprehension questions along the way), aligning itself gradually more with Thaler's 'straight-through approach' than his proposed segment approach, as used in the earlier stages of this unit. Drawing on what they have read, students engage with further philosophical, moral and ethical questions raised by the novel (as exemplified by Miss Emily's lengthy monologue in chapter 22 of part 3 on the need for a safe haven such as Hailsham for young people like Kathy and her friends) and use evidence from the novel (and from the wider world) to support their ideas and views. Students view the second half of the film, which supports and challenges the opinions they have formed from their reading of the novel. The two final lessons look at the themes and the message of the novel respectively; by this stage students have completed their reading and have at their disposal all manner of knowledge from the novel. A final task invites students to share their opinions of the novel, offering a critical and balanced evaluation in the form of a verbal or written review.

Conclusion

In this article, we have outlined the central ideas behind a competence-based approach to teaching literature in the foreign language classroom, in this case upper secondary lessons in English. We argued that defining competences for literary analysis could add substance to the established concept of Bildung, and point to concrete sets of skills or abilities which students need to acquire for literary analysis. Further, we proposed that complex learning tasks could build bridges between abstract competence goals and student learning. Taking Never Let Me Go as an example, we suggested ways in which teachers could set tasks in such a way as to building these bridges in their own literature classrooms. We hope to have shown that choosing suitable works of literature, knowing the relevant goals and setting motivating tasks for achieving them is a key aspect of the teacher professionalism required to best support students in their upper secondary learning.

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AutorInnen

Stefan Keller leitet die Professur Englische Didaktik (Sekundarstufe) an der Pädagogischen Hochschule FHNW. In seiner Forschung befasst er sich mit der Förderung und Messung komplexer Schreibkompetenzen, mit kompetenzorientiertem Englischunterricht sowie – als Hobby – mit Literaturdidaktik für die Sekundarstufe. Seine bevorzugten Genres sind Spionage- und Detektivromane sowie Sci-Fi, Utopien und Distopien. In diesem Kontext sind erschienen:

Keller, Stefan und Langlotz, Andreas (Hrsg.) (2017): *Crime Fiction*. Sonderheft von *Der fremdsprachliche Unterricht – Englisch*, 1/2017. Seelze: Friedrich Verlag.

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Keller, Stefan (2013): *Kompetenzorientierter Englischunterricht*. Berlin: Cornelsen Scriptor.

Lynn Williams Leppich ist Gymnasiallehrerin für Englisch im Kanton Baselland sowie Lehrbeauftragte an der Pädagogischen Hochschule FHNW, wo sie seit 2010 in den Professuren der Englischdidaktik und der Professionalisierung mitgewirkt hat. In ihren Spezialgebieten der Literaturdidaktik, der Leistungsbeurteilung und der Binnendifferenzierung auf der Sekundarstufe II ist sie aktiv bemüht, Synergien zwischen der Schulpraxis und der Forschung zu suchen und zu fördern. Zu literaturdidaktischen Themen hat sie folgende Artikel verfasst:

Williams, Lynn (2014): *Poe: The Tell-Tale Heart*. In: Fremdsprachenunterricht Englisch Heft 130 / Peer Feedback. Friedrich Verlag

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Seeing with two 'I's – Ishiguro and identity in upper secondary literature lessons

Lynn Williams Leppich et Stefan D. Keller

Résumé

Cet article traite dans une approchepar compétences de la manière d'aborder les thèmes littéraires dans le cadre de l'enseignement de l'anglais au niveau secondaire II. Il présente, commente et interprète les principaux aspects et perspectives du programme scolaire. L'article examine également la manière dont les élèves peuvent développer leurs compétences analytiques, langagières, personnelles et sociales en travaillant sur la littérature.. L'article se conclut sur un exemple concret emprunté à une séquence d'enseignement consacrée à un roman contemporain en anglais (Auprès de moi toujours, de Kazuo Ishiguro, 2005). Cet exemple montre comment des questions et des formulations ciblées mais aussi ouvertes peuvent aider les élèves à se confronter à une œuvre.

Mots-clés

littérature, compétences, programme scolaire, niveau secondaire II, questions, devoirs

Seeing with two 'I's – Ishiguro and identity in upper secondary literature lessons

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Abstract

In diesem Artikel befassen wir uns mit der kompetenzorientierten Arbeit an literarischen Themen im Englischunterricht auf der Sekundarstufe II. Wichtige Aspekte und Perspektiven des Lehrplans werden dargestellt, erläutert und interpretiert. Zudem wird diskutiert, wie Schüler/innen anhand einer Arbeit mit Literatur analytische, sprachliche, persönliche und soziale Kompetenzen entwickeln können. Anschliessend wird am Beispiel konkreter Aufgaben einer Unterrichtssequenz zu einem modernen Roman der englischsprachigen Welt (Kazuo Ishiguros *Alles, was wir geben mussten*, 2005) gezeigt, wie zugleich gezielte doch auch offene Fragestellungen und Aufgabenformulierungen Schüler/innen zu einer persönlichen Auseinandersetzung mit dem Werk verhelfen können.

Schlüsselwörter

Literatur, Kompetenzen, Lehrplan, Sekundarstufe II, Fragestellungen, Aufgaben

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