CZU: 811.133.1`243:37.02 DOI:10.5281/zenodo.7138468

TIPS ON HOW TO TEACH POETRY "IF" by Joseph Rudyard Kipling

Angela TULEI
asist. univ., master în pedagogie, drd.
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2648-8027
Universitatea de Stat din Moldova, Facultatea de Litere,
Departamentul Limba Engleză și Limba Franceză de Specialitate

Abordarea comunicativă este pe larg folosită în învățarea unei limbi străine. Mai jos vom prezenta un proiect de lecție pentru predarea unei poezii la orele de limbă engleză, și anume a poeziei "IF" de Rudyard Kipling. Poezia este o formă de artă în care limba este utilizată pentru calitățile sale estetice și evocative, pentru a completa sau a înlocui semnificația sa aparentă. Poezia poate fi scrisă independent, în forma unor poeme discrete, sau poate apărea în conjuncție cu alte arte, în opere dramatice în versuri, imnuri sau texte ale unor cântece. Proiectul dat are o valoare practică și poate fi utilizat pe larg la ore cu studenții cu nivelul de cunoastere a limbii B1-B2.

Cuvinte-cheie: *poezie, proiect didactic, competență, cunoaștere, aplicare, integrare.*

Lesson Plan

Date	_____
Group	_____
Speciality	_____
Faculty	_____
University	Moldova State University

Level: intermediate
Time required: 12 hours (6 periods)
Classroom interactions: individual work, pair work, discussions involving the entire class.
Topic: "If" by Joseph Rudyard Kipling

Materials needed:

- handouts
- chalk and chalkboard
- a laptop computer
- projector and projector screen

Objectives:

- To enrich students' vocabulary;
- To learn about Joseph Rudyard Kipling's biography and his works;
- To analyze the poem based on language (Students will understand a poet's use of tone and mood while also analyzing figurative language);
- To develop students' thinking and analytical abilities;
- To revise various stylistic devices;
- To develop students' listening skills while watching the video;
- To build the analyzing habit of a poem, by doing several analyzing activities during the class;
- To reflect on the central ideas of the poem and to discuss this in the class;
- To analyze the values of the poem;
- To provide practice and feedback on the intertextual level of the poem (Sudents will be able to better understand poetry in their future readings).

Note! A poem is something that should be read multiple times, not just once. By having students reach this objective, they will be better able to understand other literary works throughout their English careers. When the students write their letter or journal entry for the activity, they will be thinking deeply and critically. They will be using the higher-level thinking of Bloom's. This activity will also ensure that students understand the poem and the view of the narrator.

Procedure	Steps	Description	Time required
Introduction	Stating the lesson objectives and the new topic	- Welcome the class and present the topic and the objectives. - Announce the subject of the lesson: ***Topic: "If-" by Joseph Rudyard Kipling***	
	Brain storming	- Ask students about what the function of a poem is. *What is poetry?* *What makes a good poem?* *Do you like poetry?*	

	Tapping background knowledge	- Write on the chalkboard the quotation of the lesson: **Poetry comes from the highest happiness or the deepest sorrow.** (A.P.J.Abdul Kalam) How do you understand it?	
Development of the Lesson	Motivational opening	- Ask students to analyze the pictures and to comment on what they think the poem is going to be about	
	Presentation 1 ***Handouts*** ***Handouts***	- Give students handouts about the 3 genres of literature. - Give students handouts with general information about the poem, author, period, background etc.	
	Presentation 2 ***Handouts***	- Give your group the handouts with the poem then show them the video following the link. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSSqc1qG238	
	Reading aloud	- Ask students to read the poem (every student reads only two lines).	
	Comprehension check	- Ask students to answer the questions to the poem. *a) Who is speaking in the poem and who is he speaking to?* *b) What is the tone of the poem?* *c) What does this poem remind you of in your life?* *d) What feelings does the poem awaken in you?* *e) Are there any words you don't understand? Look them up.* - *Ask students to check all the statements that are true, according to the poem.* *a) ___ You should always be calm.* *b) ___ You should neither lie nor hate.*	

	Handouts	*c) ___ Always look your best and speak in a very wise manner.* *d) ___ It's all right to dream but act on reality.* *e) ___ Realize that you will have both good and bad in your life.* *f) ___ Even if someone hurts you badly, get up and start over.* *g) ___ When you feel stressed, take some time off.* *h) ___ Adopt the ways of people in higher social positions.* *i) ___ If you follow these rules, you'll be a success in life.* - Ask students to rearrange the summaries of the four stanzas in the correct order. ***4, 1, 3, 2*** - Ask students to explain several situations listed in the poem by the author in their own words. *1. "If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster/ And treat those two impostors just the same"* *2. "If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, / but make allowance for their doubting too"* *3. "If you can fill the unforgiving minute/ With sixty seconds' worth of distance run"* - Ask students to put a check of the characteristics that Kipling finds desirable. **1, 3, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20**	
	Vocabulary work (group work) ***Handouts***	- Ask students to identify the unknown words, then give them time to look them up in the glossary which comes right after the poem. - Ask students to match the words with their meaning. **1J, 2C, 3E, 4B, 5H, 6I, 7D, 8G, 9A, 10F**	

	Finding and Supporting Evidence	- Ask students to write three quotations from the poem to support the main idea. **Even if something bad is done to you, you should not do that same bad thing in return.** *1.* ***"you can keep your head when all about you/ Are losing theirs and blaming it on you*** ***2. "being lied about, don't deal in lies"*** ***3. "being hated, don't give way to hating"***	
	Word Search (puzzle) ***<u>Handouts</u>***	- Ask students to find the hidden words in the puzzle. ***If, Kipling, Triumph, Disaster, virtue, lies, dreams, man, son, trust***	
	Actualization of the poem	- Play again the video with the poem in order to answer the questions about it.	
	Discussion (Analysis of the poem)	- Ask students questions about the title of the poem. 1. What do you imagine when you read the title? 2. Does it give a clue to the text of the poem? 3. What kind of poem is it? (social, political, philosophical, didactic etc.) 4. Why didactic? (Write on the chalkboard "didactic poetry", circle it and write students' ideas of such a poem: skills, science, philosophy, love, crafts, etc. from the didactic verses.) 5. What does this poem mean to you? (first play again the video and listen what this poem means for the man in the video, then listen to students' opinions)	
	Setting	- Ask students what the setting of the poem is. Does it have a physical setting?	

		- *The poem If does not have a conspicuous physical setting. However, after reading the poem one can visualize a setting in which a father is speaking to his son and giving him the most valuable life lesson on how to become a complete man. The token of personal philosophy and wisdom which the father imparts to his son has universal validity. Hence the seemingly domestic setting in which the moral philosophies of the poem are shared assume a much larger universal space.*	
	Tone and Mood	- Ask students what the tone and mood of the poem is. *The **tone** of the poem centers on love, sincerity, and restraint. There are no overly affectionate words, yet the message of the poet comes from the emotional tie to a child's welfare. The speaker wants his child to do well in life. By using the second person point of view, the reader feels that the poet is speaking directly to him; thus, he is drawn into the midst of the poem's alluring meaning.* *What more can the father give his son than to provide the path for him to achieve his every dream! As an example of the **mood** of the poem, think of the mother bird who pushes her baby out of the nest – she more than just hopes that he flies. She has prepared him for his flight by modeling, coaxing, and instructing. The father in the poem sets the same tone for his son.*	
	Central Idea	- Ask students to identify the central idea of the poem. *The central idea of this poem is that success comes from self-control and a true sense of the values of things. In extremes lies dan-*	

		nger. A man must not lose heart because of doubts or opposition, yet he must do his best to see the grounds for both. He must not be deceived into thinking either triumph or disaster final; he must use each wisely--and push on. In all things he must hold to the golden mean. If he does, he will own the world, and even better, for his personal reward he will attain the full stature of manhood.	
	Synopsis	- Ask students to summarize the poem in their own words. *"If" is a didactic poem, a work meant to give instruction. "If" gives an instruction in cultivating several specific traits of a good leader. Kipling offers this instruction not through listing specific characteristics, but by providing concrete illustrations of the complex actions a man should or should not take which would reflect these characteristics. The poem is about moral lessons and conduct. It contains advice from a father to a son on how to grow up to be a better person and a true man. He reminds his son that he will be a Man if he can hold on to his values and not be swayed by others. If he follows his advice, he will have a rewarding and enriching life. He will have everything he can wish for.*	
	Figurative Language	- Ask students to write examples from the poem of each of the figures of speech below. ***a) Personification*** • ***Dreams:*** *masters who can control our lives. In this case, dreams assume a human role/quality, that of being a master.*	

		• ***Triumph and disaster*** *are imposters who can lead us astray. Success is personified as* ***"Triumph"*** *and can make us complacent (mulțumit de sine). Failure is personified as* ***"Disaster"****. It can influence us to believe that failure is permanent.* • ***Will*** *is personified as a person who encourages us not to give up.* ***b) Metaphor*** • ***Unforgiving minutes*** *refer to time that waits for no man, it is like a race where every second is important.* • ***Worn out tools*** *refer to the feeling of total exhaustion that can force someone to give up.* • ***Make one heap of all your winnings*** *is compared to a pile of money won at the gambling table.* • ***Walk with Kings*** *means to socialize with important people.* • ***Talk with crowds*** *refers to mixing with all kinds of people.* ***c) Symbol*** *(a symbol represents an idea)* • ***Knaves*** *represent scoundrels, liars or conmen.* • ***Kings*** *represent the important people in society.* • ***Common touch*** *represents humility.*	
Values	- Ask students to identify the values represented in the poem. *The values of the poem are old-fashioned, conservative, and even aristocratic. Kipling comes by all these values honestly. Recall that he was born in British India and spent parts of his life in England, America, and South Africa. He was an educated aristocrat who achieved fame*		

and influence in his life. What is called ***"aristocratic" values*** *include* ***courage, risk-taking, self-discipline, leadership, the "stiff upper lip"(people who do not show their feelings when they are upset – oameni ce auxinexpresivitate), hard work, taking responsibility, and stoicism (tărie, fermitate morală).***

Besides ***aristocratic values****, the poem also has a sub-theme of* ***democratic values****. Kipling was a warm-hearted man who loved, not hated, India, unlike our stereotype of the colonial British. What is called "democratic" values include* ***humility, respect for everyone, not returning evil for evil, and egalitarianism.***

Here is a list of values with quotes from the poem:

- ***courage/fortitude:*** *"If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew ..."*
- ***risk-taking:*** *"If you can make one heap of all your winnings ..."*
- ***self-discipline:*** *All the behaviors described in the poem require self-discipline.*
- ***leadership:*** *"If you can keep your head ..." and "If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken ..." both describe situations usually encountered by leaders. There is also "talk with crowds ... walk with Kings" which seem to assume a person with some power and influence.*
- ***the "stiff upper lip":*** *"And never breathe a word about your loss." This value is less about having no feelings than about not displaying your feelings publicly nor complaining about your losses and hardships. Contrast it with stoicism, below, which is not quite the same thing.*

- ***hard work:*** *"If you can fill the unforgiving minute ..."*
- ***taking responsibility:*** *"If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken ..." is about sticking to your policies rather than blame-shifting. "Stoop to build 'em up with worn-out tools" is about starting over when your work has had a setback through no fault of your own. In this case, the person is taking responsibility for work that is theirs to do, although the need for the work is someone else's fault.*
- ***stoicism:*** *Stoicism is a Greek value that involves actually not caring too much about any one thing or person. It is a cold, self-protective value, and it clashes somewhat with the warm, democratic values below. "If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster ..." implies that a person should be unmoved no matter what happens. "If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you, /If all men count with you, but none too much" is another stoic value. The idea is that we should not care about another person enough that mistreatment from them could possibly shake our inner calm. I doubt that, in real life, Kipling achieved this state in its pure form.*
- ***humility:*** *"But make allowance for their doubting too." This line calls us to be confident, but still able to recognize that we can be wrong. Also, is is impossible to "not return evil for evil" without being humble.*
- ***respect for everyone:*** *"If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue, /Or walk with Kings -- nor lose the common touch"*

		• ***not returning evil for evil:*** *"Or being hated, don't give way to hating" This value was most clearly articulated by Jesus.* • ***egalitarianism:*** *"And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise." Egalitarians always take care not to look better than other people, not to stand out from the crowd.* *It is amazing the number of values that Kipling sketched in this poem. Trying to live up to it could take a lifetime.*	
	Text evaluation	- Ask students to define the message of the poem. *What more can the father give his son than to provide the path for him to achieve his every dream! As an example of the* ***mood*** *of the poem, think of the mother bird who pushes her baby out of the nest – she more than just hopes that he flies. She has prepared him for his flight by modeling, coaxing, and instructing. The father in the poem sets the same tone for his son.*	
Assessment/ Hometask	Writing	- Ask students to select one of the common situations in everyday life and write about an experience in their own life. • ***"If you can keep your head when all about you/ Are losing theirs and blaming it on you"*** • ***"If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you"*** • ***"Or being lied*** **about, don't deal in lies"**	

Bibliography

1. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46473/if---
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUQPHkYLayM