**Hatch End 7 Weeks January – March 2015**

English Department

Manny Vazquez

**Focus**

Planning time was spent with three teachers, with co-teaching taking place with all three. The teachers chose the schemes of work (SOWs) they wanted to develop with an emphasis on developing the language and literacy skills of the more advanced learners of English. The SOWs chosen were:

* (A) Preparation for the Reading / Writing IGCSE Exam paper
* (B) Poetry for the GCSE English exam
* (C) An Advertising / Media Unit

**Please note – all attachments start with the corresponding letter A, B or C for ease of reference (e.g. ‘Teacher A Resource 1’ etc)**

**Themes**

Teacher A Preparation for the Reading / Writing IGCSE Exam paper

Teacher A’s focus was on exam preparation for the IGCSE English paper (Paper 1 Reading), where candidates are required to respond to a lengthy reading passage. One of the tasks requires summary writing which is a skill relatively new to most students as they are rarely required to do this anywhere else in the curriculum. Therefore it needs to be explicitly taught.

A quick search on Google will show that the art of summary writing is by no means a single discrete skill, but can vary greatly in terms of the subject matter and reason for why something is being summarised. Likewise the requirements in this exam call for a bespoke approach, starting with the additional skill of students being able to pinpoint within the passage the section they need to summarise. The first lesson started with a KWL chart, inviting students to share in pairs what they knew about summary writing, and what they would like to know:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What I know about summary writing | What I’d like to know about summary writing | What I learned |
|  |  |  |

Students then in pairs were given an ordering task where they had to sequence the steps in the order they felt they needed to do them (see Teacher A resource 1).

Following feedback and discussion around the correct order (which is the order in resource 1), they then discussed in pairs which of the steps they felt were more or less challenging, and they needed to work on (see Teacher A resource 2). The consultant then got the students to focus exclusively on the verbs, asking students to identify and highlight these within the section to be summarised as in this kind of summary writing the verbs are a key part in helping students identify and make the sufficient number of points they need to include within the summary. The students then attempted the task themselves. Feedback from the students and from Teacher A suggests that this procedure and the resources significantly helped the students develop their ability to tackle the summary question in this exam.

The next three lessons focused on developing reading comprehension skills and imaginative written responses to the unseen texts. Teacher A chose an extract from the author Bill Bryson (see Teacher A resource 3). The consultant modelled an approach around ‘building the field’, in other words creating a strong context with attendant vocabulary prior to the students encountering the actual text. The text itself describes a camping trip undertaken by Bryson and a friend in which they encounter a bear at night. The first activity involved a listening task in which the teacher read out a short edited extract and the students had to guess what was happening (see Teacher A resource 4). This was then followed up with activities which built the context by focusing on specific aspects of grammar, namely verbs and adverbs (see Teacher A resource 5). Both resources 4 and 5 extended what Teacher A had originally planned and would have used had the consultant and this project not been happening (see Teacher A resource 6).

The final lessons focused on imaginative writing, asking students to consider what they would have done when faced with an unknown presence in the dark. Teacher A had prepared a set of very useful resources which guided the students through the planning for their writing (see Teacher A resource 7) and the consultant added a further input which drilled down to the noun and verb phrases and modal verbs the students would need to help them write, thereby combining the input from both teachers (see Teacher A resource 8).

Prior to the students starting their first drafts, the class focused on one final activity designed to help them sequence the events in their imaginative writing. This involved revisiting the steps in the original text Bryson had undertaken himself (see Teacher A resource 9).

Teacher B Poetry for the GCSE English exam

Teacher B’s focus was on helping her advanced learners use and explain quotations in their responses to pre-20th Century literature. The text chosen was a poem – My Last Duchess – a challenging piece given the style of English it is written in (see Teacher B resource 1). Teacher B shared existing resources with the consultant already available in the department; these included explanations and guides to the text, a modern day English version and ‘setting the scene’ materials (see Teacher B resources 2 – 5). On reviewing the resources, the consultant suggested some additional ones which would further contextualise the sense of Renaissance Italy and gender roles of the time. The first classroom activity asked the students to rank a set of contemporary pictures in terms of how much a status symbol they were (see Teacher B resource 6) and following a discussion, the class were then asked to do the same with objects from 16th Century Italy (see Teacher B resources 7 & 8). The purpose of these activities is to build the field of knowledge, prior to the students being introduced to a challenging text.

A key deciding factor in marks awarded for their essays was how well they understood, explained and used quotations. The consultant suggested an activity which would break the task down into manageable steps and also give the students the opportunity to discuss the quotes and ‘make them their own’, so to speak. A number of key quotes were put on one set of cards, with another set of cards being the modern English translations, and a third set being ‘explanation’ cards. The students were given the first two sets and asked to divide these into ‘old’ English and modern English. Then they were asked to match them together, so as they are doing this they are implicitly understanding the original version. Once these were checked, the students were then given the set of explanation cards and asked to match an explanation to reach pair of quotes cards (see Teacher B resource 9). Teacher B commented on how effective a classroom activity this had been.

In the final two lessons the class were preparing for a controlled assessment where they have to respond to a newspaper article. The one chosen by the department was about the dangers of junk food (see Teacher B resource 10). Again the consultant suggested some additional activities which would help build the field and also deal with a lot of the figurative language in the text. Teacher B resource 11 invited the students to guess what the article might be about as each picture is revealed. It also dealt with the idiom ‘a ticking time bomb’. Teacher B resource 12 then helped prepare the students to position themselves in terms of a point of view. This was then followed up by a probability activity which further helped them argue their points in terms of the article, helping students be more accurate in their use of terms like ‘*rarely … occasionally … seldom… always …*’ etc (see Teacher B resource 13). A further activity done on the board pre-taught a number of words and phrases encountered in the text which were likely to be beyond the vocabulary range of many of the EAL students.

Teacher C (Advertising / Media with a focus on computer Games)

Teacher C wanted to focus on strategies to consolidate pupil knowledge of key terms and to develop the ability of pupils to articulate and use these terms in both speech and writing. She also wanted strategies to help her students become active readers of longer texts. One of the key tasks in this module had students comparing different types of games, such as Call of Duty, and their written assessment involved an analysis of the type of game it is, its appeal and how it is marketed

The idea of active listening tasks was introduced and modelled over the first 3 lessons. The distinction was made between receptive and productive listening activities: in receptive ones the students just listen and do; in productive ones they listen, do and recycle the language verbally. The first activity used was Bingo (receptive):

Procedure:

1. Students draw their own bingo card

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

2. Students populate their own card from a list offered by the teacher. If the bingo card has 6 words, then the students should choose from a list of 8 or 9 words.

3. Teacher reads out each definition twice. Each definition has a number. Students cross their word if they think they have it and also write the number in the box. This is important as the number helps the teacher check if the student has crossed out the correct word.

4. The first student to complete their card shouts ‘bingo!’.

5. Teacher checks the answers ‘what was number 1?’ etc

(see Teacher C Resource 1)

This was then followed with the use of a productive listening activity:

Purpose

* Starter / consolidation activity to introduce or consolidate key terms.
* To encourage pupils to develop skills in verbalising definitions and listening for information.

Procedure

1. Teacher reads through list of terms used from the topic so they hear the terms.
2. Teacher reads out each sentence twice - pupils fill in the box next to each word with the number of the matching sentence.
3. Class check.
4. Do gap fill.
5. Class check.
6. Pupils turn answers over so they cannot see them. Teacher elicits sentence / definition e.g. “back row only, put your hand up if you can put ‘predator’ into a sentence”.

(See Teacher C resource 2)

Teacher C then moved on to activities where students differentiated between different types of commercial computer games and considered their appeal to particular audiences in terms of gender, age, etc. This involved students in sustained reading of longer texts and the teacher was keen to develop the ability of the students to read for meaning and to read at length. The consultant introduced one strategy to achieve this. It involves an initial phase where students build up a vocabulary list of words they think will appear in the text and generate some questions they think the text will answer. Students are then given the text and asked to underline any of their words they can find (scanning), and then on the second reading check whether their questions are answered (reading for meaning). An example of the kind of target text students were working with can be seen in Teacher C resource 3. Teacher C did this activity herself and was very pleased at the end of a successful lesson where there had been high student engagement with what was a challenging text from the internet. Teacher C used resource 4 as the scaffold to help the students read for meaning and read at length.

 Impact

All three teachers tried out the strategies which were directly modelled in a co-teaching situation.Teachers were then asked to try similar strategies in other lessons.

Manny Vazquez

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