

Deciphering Desdemona, Huck Finn, Uncle Jules and Anne Frank—Teaching Literature to the Literature Naïvetés

Apisak Pupipat

Thammasat University
apisakubu@yahoo.co.th

Literature appears to be a crucial component in every Thai university's English language major program. It is taught for three main reasons: (1) For the students to gain insights into the use of the English language and to enhance their linguistic awareness; (2) to improve their thinking skills, analytical, critical or creative; and, (3) to develop their intercultural awareness, especially when translation works are used. At Thammasat University, an established state-run institution in Bangkok, a regular four-year English language major program demands that the students do two compulsory literature classes: English through Literature 1 and 2. This is for the students to have a broader world view, besides the language and thinking improvement. However, the 16 students in this Literature 2 class did not seem to enjoy it despite the teacher-researcher's efforts and enthusiasm. What went wrong? Was there too much to cover? Were the materials too difficult or not interesting for these third-year students? Were there too few engaging activities? Was the teacher's teaching approach not effective? Or was the word 'literature' in the title of the course a 'psychological hindrance'?

Based on an in-depth interview of the 16 students, the teacher-researcher finds out and reports the findings to the session participants, along with samples of the course materials, activities and evaluation instruments used.