

Lesson Context and Pedagogical Reflection

Level: 3rd semester Dutch

Lesson Topic: Narrating a story

Lesson Context The following lesson is used in conjunction with an abridged and didacticized version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The students have just read that Father Lorenzo has sent a letter to Romeo. The text of the letter, however, is never articulated by the script; the reader is left to construct the contents of this letter on her own. The writing goal of this activity is to reconstruct the text of this letter in a creative, while remaining faithful to the plot. This activity guides students through a text-based creative writing assignment.

The attached worksheet is matrix which serves to focus and guide students' thinking and their generation of ideas for their letters. They may do this activity in pairs/small groups or individually.

Reflection This activity provides students the opportunity to engage writing as a main skill, not as support for another skill (note-taking for a speaking task, for example). This choice writing for its own sake allows students to simultaneously occupy two subject positions. First as a letter writer and second as a playwright. Such a complex language situation requires

Integrated Modules **Vocabulary**—If, in order to convert input to intake, students need to interact with the input, this lesson using paraphrasing as a medium by which students “do something” with the text's new vocabulary. In the first activity students brainstorm plot point and features of the back-story which should provide context for the letter they will write. They are then instructed to associate citations from the text with their personal descriptions. In the manner students can learn synonyms, self-check, and recycle previously learned lexical structures.

Pragmatics—In Step 3 students need to consider the relationship of priest to penitent; the emotional force of Lorenzo's writing; the behavior he wishes to elicit from Romeo; general directness of the Dutch when giving advice and instruction. All of these are factors related to pragmatics. One shortcoming is that we do not have an “authentic” model help shown how these are expressed.

Culture—These pragmatic choices, of course, are culturally specific choices. In his description, for example, Fr. Lorenzo will likely not use the word "slecht" to refer to Juliet's state of mind, even though it means "bad." He would probably use "erg," a word that refers to more to circumstances than behavior or health. The formulae used to open and close the letter will be different from what is expected in English. The direct style is a cultural fact (some might say "imperative") that Americans generally find difficult to acculturate to. All of these cultural factors, while subtle play a role in the

construction of the text and the interpretation of models.

Lesson Objectives:

- TSWBT 1) draw inferences from a text
2) create a letter which accounts for plot and character development

Lesson Plan

Step 1: Students identify key ideas from the story thus far which are relevant for this letter from Fr. Lorenzo to Romeo. They should conceive of these ideas as they pertain to 1) the major characters, 2) actions, plot points and 3) other miscellaneous ideas students deem important. They should record their ideas in the appropriate cells on the "Lorenzo's brief" worksheet (categories in the first column).

Step 2: Students then identify in column 3 the specific citations of the text in which their concepts from column 2 are described. The point here is to help students develop skills relating to paraphrasing citations, and grounding their ideas in the text. This activity also re-activates previously learned lexical structures (both single words and chunks of language).

Step 3: Students now assume the authorial position of Fr. Lorenzo. In this step they first generate an outline of key points to include in the letter. The teacher prompts students with the following (or similar) questions, "What does Romeo need to know? What has he missed since he left? What just happened in the story to prompt Lorenzo to write this letter?"

Step 4: With this outline and their worksheet in hand, the teacher guides students through a quick activation session (2 minutes) to recall the general form of a letter and general opening and closing formulae.

Step 5: Students compose their letter, following their outlines and the worksheets. As a self- or peer-editing exercise, students re-read their letters and identify text in which the letter paraphrases the ideas from columns 2 and 3 on their worksheet. These passages are filled in in the last column of the worksheet.

Assessment: The letter is should be assessed primarily on the basis of its appropriateness (faithfulness) and contribution to the development of the characters and the plot of the story. Thus a rubric which focuses on the content, organization and comprehensibility would be most appropriate. If the teacher deems a grammatical focus to be appropriate, two elements of form seem most fitting to address. The first would be the use of tense (past) and aspect (perfective vs. imperfective)—if the target language relies on it. Another way to assess structure would be to evaluate how students describe events (reporting on events that Romeo missed since his departure) and how they provide instructions to Romeo, that is, how they use imperative mood.

Publishing: As research has shown that the act of publishing student work increases perceptions of ownership and which can positively impact motivation, two suggestions as they pertain to this assignment are offered.

1. Class wiki or blog. This format allows for peers to interact with the classmates' creation and provide suggestions for improvement as well as compliments
2. Youtube. Students can record dramatic readings of the letters— voiceovers of Fr. Lorenzo at a desk writing or of Romeo reading the letter upon its arrival. These videos can be uploaded to YouTube or another similar video hosting site.

Lorenzos brief

Waarom moest je denken als je gaat schrijven? Wat zal de inhoud van je brief informeren?

Over	I. ideeën algemeen	II. stellen uit de tekst	III. uit je eigen brief door Lorenzo aan Romeo
Personages	Julia is radeloos, en wanhopig	"er is geen hoop meer" (Julia)	"Met Julia gaat het niet als gewenst. Zij is bijna wanhopig vanwege de beslissing van haar ouders dat ze zou gaan trouwen."
Acties	Romeo is weg	"Ik moet naar Mantua gaan. Dan blijf ik leven." (Romeo)	"Romeo, sinds je naar Mantua bent vertrokken..."
Verder nog iets?			