

Lesson plan

By Nicolas Ringheim

Assignment A. Practicing written skills

Write an article on Indian slum life.

Common goals 2009, English, overall aim of English as subject

§1 stk. 3.

Teaching involves topics on how people think and live in the English-speaking world, to make students familiar with their own culture in comparison with other cultures. This should enable students to develop their understanding for people with diverse cultural background and prepare for a life in a globalized world.

Learning outcomes for English 9th grade

The teaching should lead to students having acquired knowledge and skills that enable them to:

- understand spoken English in different genres, including sound and picture media, on a number of selected topics which are relevant at personal, cultural and community levels
- express themselves orally with reasonable precision, spontaneity, ease and coherence
- participate appropriately in conversations and discussions on selected personal, cultural and social topics.

Lesson aim

This subject on Indian slum and luxury is planned to last approximately two 45-minute lessons, excluding watching the film. The aim of the lesson is to learn about Indian culture since India today is the second-largest English speaking country in the world (with a total of 232 million English speakers). It is also the aim for students to practice their oral skills for communicating about complex political structures by presenting ideas and argumentation in class.

Pre-teaching

Before watching the film, students should know that this is a fictional film with the main themes of love and fate. India is being portrayed by an English director and his view of India as a foreigner, therefore some Indians feel that this is not the real India being portrayed. Many of the actors including the children and lead stars of the film were cast based on their background as children from slum areas.

The main idea of showing the film is not for students to analyze it, but for them to get a feeling of Indian culture and life seen through the eyes of a homeless boy. Though it is a story about the hardship of living on the streets, it has the very positive message of the main character getting through hardship due to his sense of purpose that reveals itself in the course of the film.

It is preferable if students are familiar with the writing a newspaper article as well as how to use the method of storytelling. The exercises that have been chosen for these lessons presuppose such this knowledge and skills, to enable the students to immerse themselves into the unfamiliar topic of an Indian sub-culture and the life of a street child.

Teaching

Immediately after watching the film there could be a short discussion in class:

- What was students' impression of the film?
- Does this film give a real impression of India?

Reading exercise

Hand out copies of text #1: *Student text on India land of contrasts* and *Glossary for India land of contrasts*. In student text #1 a number of keywords have been removed and some of these can be found in *Glossary for India land of contrasts*.

Let students read the text with the glossary as support.

At the bottom of the text there are a number of keywords that the students have to fill into the text above. This exercise could be performed two and two. At the end of this exercise ask the entire class where they have fitted the different words.

Writing exercise

Step 1: Interview

Let students interview each other in groups of 4. Two of the students play newspaper reporters (one asks questions, the other takes notes) and the two other students play either street children from India or experts/correspondents that have just returned from India after doing a study on street children. The reporter asking questions needs to go into depth about the life the children lead on the streets and answers have to be detailed too. Remember to write down questions as well as answers for later use.

Examples of questions to a street child:

How old are you? Where do you live? How many children are there in your family? What is your house like? How do you get money? How do you get food? Do you go to school? What things do you own? What is the worst thing you have seen?

Step 2: Writing

Based on information from the film *Slumdog millionaire*, the text *India land of contrasts* and the interview each student in the role of an Indian journalist has to write a newspaper article on one of the following themes:

1. As a journalist you follow a street child character from the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* and write an article about his/her situation and what happens in a typical day of his/her life.
2. As a journalist you write about one of the actors from the film *Slumdog Millionaire* giving an account of what happened in his/her life years after the film became a success. You might like to focus on how the film changed his/her life.

You may wish to revisit core principles of writing a newspaper article. This might supplement your own material:

<http://www.avisnet.dk/AvisNET/application.do?command=getDocument&documentId=B009ED546BD15C2CC12570A0004A2B80>

Articles should be written in class to enable students to get immediate teacher support.

Follow up

Students read their articles aloud in groups and discuss what was positive about it, what sounded like a real article and if there were any particularly creative parts of the story that made the article interesting to read.

After this process, the teacher should hand out old newspapers to show examples on how a newspaper is structured and, if possible, show an Indian online newspaper (cf. link below).

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>

Then let each group prepare their own newspaper using computers and layout looking as much like a real newspaper as possible. The paper should be edited with the group deciding on lead article for the front page, headlines, illustrations etc. To make it look more like a real newspaper it is possible to add advertisements and so on. Let students be as creative as possible.

Print A3 versions of the final papers and present these to the class.

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Assignment B. Practicing oral skills

Indian government planning.

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Oral Exercise

With knowledge gained from the film *Slumdog Millionaire* and the text *India land of contrasts* you are taking part in a conference where you and your colleagues have been given the following problem to solve from the Indian government:

Where and how should India invest resources to secure a better country for future generations?

A few examples on possible solutions:

- Free and accessible education for all (teach more people how to read)

- Better infrastructure with more roads and railways (will make it easy to move people and goods around the country)
- Communication infrastructure (help more people have phone and internet, cheaper communication)
- Better/cheaper hospitals and health checks for all (help children and sick to lead a better life)
- Social reforms to help people in the slum area.

Process

Step 1.

On your own you have 7 mins. to think of one or two things you think should be improved in India. Take notes on what and what kind of implications it would have for the citizens of India if you made that change.

Step 2

With another person, take 2-3 minutes each to share why you think your idea is a good idea. Then agree upon which of the ideas or combination of ideas should be presented in the next round.

Step 3

Now the pairs break brake up and each person goes to a new group that consists of 4 people, that they have not talked to before during this assignment. Now each person in the group has to share the idea that the original pair agreed upon. Take 2-3 mins. each to present the idea to the group. When everyone in the group has shared their idea, the group agrees upon one of the ideas or perhaps shape a new idea from the 4 presentations.

Presentation

The group prepares a presentation on their idea that is both visual and oral. This can be done with posters, PowerPoint etc.

All students are given one or two votes to distribute to ideas not their own to select the best idea from the class.

Follow-up

As a follow up to this activity each student could write the diary of an Indian exchange student of their own age who came to Denmark for one week, lived in their house and went to their school. The point of the assignment would be to understand how this person would see their lives and what things they believe would be different or difficult for the person visiting them.

Poverty vs. Success

Fight against all odds

By Ana Milosevic

Ask pupils to write down what they know about poverty in India. Give them no more than 5 minutes. Let pupils share their knowledge in class and have a general class discussion to discover what else they may know about India.

You could also make the class discussion into a game, The Value Line: Have the pupils standing and draw a line on the floor with numbers 1-5 along the line. Ask a question like: **Is a country without poverty a well-functioning country?** Pupils then choose where to stand on the line: If you agree strongly, go to 5 and if you disagree strongly, go to 1. Ask pupils for their reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the statement. You can make up more relevant questions this way, and have the pupils being active at the same time.

You can find more background information at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_in_India

Below are some pictures that the pupils can talk about in pairs, groups or as a whole class:



Slum dog millionaire

India cast poverty / slum vs. luxury

To give the pupils background information on poverty to prepare them for watching the movie, you might like to discuss questions like:

- How would you feel if you were living like these children?
- How do the pictures affect you? What do they make you feel?
- In how many ways are your lives different from the lives of these children?

You may wish to explain that the children in the movie start out as real 'slum' dwellers who did not own anything before this movie. The following are some YouTube videos on the movie for the pupils to watch in class. The first video shows the 'Slumdog' children celebrating winning an Oscar. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-6lCvUQsLs&NR=1>

Questions for this video might be:

- What did you think of the video?
- Do you believe that the children will have a better life after this movie?
- If you were one of these children, how would winning an Oscar have made you feel?

You could choose for pupils to make a written assignment, writing a short story with the title: 'If I was famous'. It is important to make pupils put themselves into the position of the Slumdog children. The written assignment could be read out in class, exhibited on the class wall or presented as a power point show.

Presenting the short stories in class, could be done in a 4x4 structure: Ask pupils to work in groups of 4, where pupil #1 read or tells his/her story, pupil #2 list all the good things in the story, pupil #3 suggests a few things to improve and pupil #4 is the group secretary who takes notes. Roles will change as new pupils present their short stories. This will give pupils the change to speak in a small and relaxed group setting rather than in the whole class.

The second video is an interview with Slumdog Millionaire director Danny Boyle where he talks about how he is going to change the child actors' lives.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TclCV3adgk>

Ask the pupils different kinds of questions about the video to begin a debate. You could ask questions such as:

- Do you believe the director will change the children's lives?
- What do you think of the changes he talks about?
- Are these changes sufficient to actually change the lives of the children?

The third and last video is a shocking new report about Rubina. She is one of the children from the real slums in Slumdog Millionaire. Her father is offering to let someone adopt her for £200,000. This video is a bit longer than the other two and the language is not standard English. This requires you as a teacher to give listening support, perhaps by regular pausing of the video.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7K6xdAclh8E&feature=related>

Before doing any activities, make sure you talk to the pupils about their feelings after having watched this video.

For activities and to ensure variation, you need to arrange a different task: Ask pupils to write 5 questions they would ask Rubina's father if they were ever to meet him. If you feel that pupils would benefit, you could arrange this as a hot chair debate. Have a pupil act the father and all other pupils ask 'the father' their questions.

The hot chair can be supplemented by the Value Line. Ask students to transform their questions into statements. Let a student read out a statement and ask the other students to agree or disagree by placing themselves on the value line (cf. above).

Rounding off, pupils could discuss what new things they have learned and what they believe happened to Rubina. This is a link to an article about Rubina and what happened:

<http://bougies.wordpress.com/2009/04/20/>

The following link has more background facts about Rubina:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubina_Ali#Personal_life