

Teaching English Through Music, Drama and Pictures

Prof. Ilă-Gașpar Carmen

Școala Gimnazială Nr.12, Brașov

Have you ever wondered how to teach English using all forms of arts? It is a well-known fact that our students enter the class with different moods; some are disinterested or even bored. Our role of teachers of English is to awake their interest and make them feel that this language is not difficult to learn as long as it is done in an enjoyable way. One of the examples could be teaching Oscar Wilde's play The Nightingale and the Rose.

Stage one: Critical thinking

When teaching students literature, we can help them make critical judgments, **develop their critical thinking**. First, discuss with students how the characters in this story are symbols that represent certain ideas rather than realistically depict humans. The Nightingale may represent love and innocence in a natural world, while the Student and, especially the girl represent the false values and lack of understanding found in society.

Stage two: Interdisciplinarity Activity

A storyboard, with a sequence of sketches, is made to visualize scenes in this play. They are made by students in collaboration with the teacher who can guide them.

- 1) The class will be divided into four groups, each responsible for one act of the play. Within their group, the students choose the most important settings, events, characters and images in the act they have been assigned.
- 2) Next, they create a series of storyboards for their act. They focus on the staging of each scene (where should the characters stand? What actions are they performing? What costumes are they wearing?), as well as details such as colours and props. Students use their storyboard to present to the class an overview of the important events in their act.



- 3) Choosing accompaniment. The students select a piece of music for each scene that they think would make a good accompaniment, they even can create their own music. They perform in the play.

Stage 3: Summarizing

The teacher can ask the class: Are you ambitious? Is ambition a good trait to have? It can also be added that most successful people are ambitious, and we admire them for their achievements. Ambition, however, can sometimes lead to negative consequences, such as anguish and tragedy.



Suggest that students consider how the mood changed in the play (nostalgia, suffering, despair, defiance) and discuss with them if the music chosen reflected those mood changes. Have students summarize the message this play wants to teach. Some students may say that he would like to learn the key to perfect happiness. Others may say that he would like to learn how to be content with what he has. Students who are more sensitive may say that the nightingale's sacrifice was in vain, and that the end of the play made them sad or that they felt revolted when the girl proved to be so ungrateful and the Student so indifferent. Then, the teacher may suggest they could change the end of the story as home

assignment as the piece of music for the last scene, which I chose to be accompanied by Leonard Cohen's song 'Dance me to the end of love', may as well suggest that.

For those who don't sympathize with the Nightingale's sacrifice, and not only, the teacher could make an emotional appeal by mentioning the **elegy**. The song 'Nightingale' by Leonard Cohen would be the best choice as it can make students leave that English class carrying in mind that a sacrifice like the one made by the Nightingale should be rewarded. The song will suggest that the Nightingale *is* a symbol and should always be one. Students are provided with the lyrics:

I built my house beside the wood
So I could hear you singing
And it was sweet and it was good
And love was all beginning
Fare thee well my nightingale
'Twas long ago I found you
The forest closes 'round you
The sun goes down behind a veil
'Tis now that you would call me
So rest in peace my nightingale
Beneath your branch of holly
Fare thee well my nightingale
I lived but to be near you
Tho' you are singing somewhere still
I can no longer hear you.