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## *Incorporating Literature in ESL Instruction*

Review by

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INCORPORATING LITERATURE IN  
ESL INSTRUCTION. Howard Sage.  
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-  
Hall, 1987. pp. 92. paper \$7.00.

*Incorporating Literature in ESL Instruction* is a resource/textbook for teachers who know there is a better way, a more "real" way, to teach English to their non-English speaking students than hit or miss dialogues and false "situations." This book is for teachers who are moving from pattern practices and these dialogues to contextual meaning in their classroom approach. It is for ESL teachers who love literature and want that to be the medium of learning and want to know how to go about making it the medium.

The book has six chapters, beginning and ending with a discussion of the role of literature in ESL teaching and the rationale for using it, and includes two extensive chapters, one on teaching poetry and the other on teaching short stories. The final chapter is a most helpful discussion on how to select the literature to use--what

language traits and cultural content the selections should have, and what to make sure the selections don't have.

The two central, and also the most meaty, chapters, those on poetry and short fiction, discuss the rationale in more specific terms. Also included are a general reaction of students to learning English through literature, criteria for selecting literature for ESL instruction, and a "how to" section, plus detailed guidance for classroom activities.

Aside from illustrating points with a variety of poems and poets, the author discusses in depth the various "entry points" of one particular poem, possible questioning techniques and possible student responses. After this overview, guidelines are given in the context of a seven-point class discussion plan, leading into a model lesson complete with student responses to the suggested interpretations. A worksheet is included. Divided into 1) narrative base, 2) speaker, 3) form or structure, 4) language, rhyme and rhythm,

5) character and 6) theme, this worksheet provides specific questions to ask and suggestions for projects. This section ends with criteria for choosing poems, including subjective check-points and precise post-discussion activities, such as sentence-combining, doing cloze exercises, writing "found" poems and, of course, writing poems.

The short fiction chapter follows a similar format, with the model worksheet highlighting plot, structure, background, pace, length, style, character, theme, tone, and visual view ("Sketch the final scene. What would compose the foreground? Background?")

Well-researched with frequent references, this text implores, persuades and convinces us that, since "inherent in literature is (the) function of conveying knowledge", we can enrich our students' total learning environment by exposing them to English in this way. Also, the student has the "opportunity to experience a unique kind of discourse" by learning the language in a literature context.

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