The Power of Short Stories, Novellas and Novels in Today's World

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Abstract

The current paper highlights the significant role literature can play within EFL contexts. Focusing mainly on short stories, novellas and novels, the paper seeks to discuss five points. These are: main elements of a short story/novella/novel, specifications of a short story/novella/novel-based course, points for instructors to consider whilst dealing with a short story/novella/novel within EFL contexts, recommended approaches which instructors may employ in the EFL classroom whilst discussing a short story/novella/novel, and language assessment of EFL learners using a short story/novella/novel-based course. Having discussed the aforementioned points, the current paper proceeds to present a number of recommendations for EFL teaching practitioners to consider.

Keywords: Short Stories; Novellas; Novels

Abbreviation: EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

1. Introduction

In an increasingly demanding and competitive world, students need to embrace the *four Cs:* communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Best practices in the twenty-first century education, therefore, require practical tools that facilitate student engagement, develop life skills, and build upon a solid foundation of research whilst supporting higher-level thinking. With the four *Cs* in mind, the current paper highlights the significant role literature can play within EFL contexts. Focusing mainly on short stories, novellas and novels, the paper seeks to discuss five points. These are: main elements of a short story/novella/novel, specifications of a short story/novella/novel-based course, points for instructors to consider whilst dealing with a short story/novella/novel within EFL contexts, recommended approaches which instructors may employ in the EFL classroom whilst discussing a short story/novella/novel, and language assessment of EFL learners using a short story/novella/novel-based course.

Having discussed the aforementioned points, the current paper proceeds to present a number of recommendations for EFL teaching practitioners to consider. The paper concludes with three appendices: appendix one lists the main concepts which EFL instructors need to point out as a pre-requisite for effective study of short stories, novellas and novels; appendix two presents suggested procedures for teaching a short story/novella/novel-based course, and appendix three portrays a number of co-curricular activities for EFL instructors to devise whilst reading a short story/novella/novel in class.

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2. Entering the World of Short Stories, Novellas and Novels

Each genre has its elements and features which usually distinguish it from other genres. Such elements and features require a reader's careful study. What elements and features should we focus on whilst examining a short story/novella/novel in the EFL classroom? This part of the current paper presents the elements which should be highlighted throughout the reading and discussion stages of a short story/novella/novel. To begin with, the main elements of a short story, novella and novel are: point of view, character, plot, setting, theme, and style (Al Alami, 2012). As far as point of view is concerned, Shen (2010) explains that first-person as well as third-person narrations can use different modes of point of view. For example, the 'I' in terms of first-person narration can am the protagonist in the story or an observer. In discussing point of view, therefore, it is essential to realize the difference between two dichotomies; namely, internal point of view: the viewing position being inside the story, versus external point of view: the viewing position being outside the story. In addition, it is important to be aware of the inside view: penetrating into a character's consciousness, versus outside view: observing a character's outward behavior.

Point of view, Simpson states (2010,p. 294), 'extends from the likely limited viewing position of a participating first-person narrator to the much wider point of a third person omniscient narrator'. This element requires that we differentiate between what is delineated in the fictional world on the one hand, and the perspective from which it is delineated on the other. Clark (2007) believes that point of view can be used in different ways. It can refer to a visual perspective. In addition, it can refer to the ideological framework of a text. Moreover, it can be used to differentiate between the various kinds of relation of the teller to the tale in the narrative. According to McRae (2007), the issue of point of view and narration goes further than speech and thought presentation, free direct and free indirect speech. It requires decisions about time, realistic perspectives, narrative distance, and the wider aims of narration as much as they can be assessed.

Durant, et al. (2000) explain that in a fictional text, the choice of events and the way events are described can be governed by one single point of view. This point of view could be explicitly a narrator-a character involved in the events and as such, has his/her particular perspective as well as angle on the events. The use of a narrator is an aesthetic strategy which can be employed in different ways for a variety of purposes. The simplest distinction that can be made in point of view is between two kinds of narration; namely, a first person: I narration, and a third person: the third person narration. First person narration can be found in a wide range of short stories, novellas and novels where the narrative is told by the central protagonist. First person narration can also be told by a character other than the central protagonist-the viewpoint of a minor character for example.

Whatever the case, first person narration projects us inside the consciousness of a character in the short story/novella/novel, providing the events from one defined observer's position. On the other hand, third person narration can be used in such a way that a reader is unaware of the role of the narrator, who acts as an outsider observer. Hence, the narration process seems to be operating as a window on the events taking place in a short story/novella/novel. Equally important is the fact that there are contrasting options within third person narration: internal versus external, and restricted versus unrestricted knowledge. External third person narration refers to observing events and characters from outside. Internal third person narration, by contrast, provides access to the internal consciousness of characters by telling readers the way they think as well as feel. Another difference can be made in third person narration, that is, the difference between narration with no restrictions on the knowable (omniscient narration) and narration with restrictions on the knowable.

Seen from Jacobs's point of view (1989), we cannot have much of a narrative without a point of view, characters, a setting, a dramatic situation, and a shaped action. Either point of view refers to a writer's method of reporting events in the third-person narrative using the pronoun him/her or in the first-person narrative using the pronoun I. Character is created in terms of description, action and dialogue. Setting is the geographical space in which the story takes place. The dramatic situation has to do with some kind of action, and the shaped action is the narrative purpose manifested in careful shaping of actions. In studying a short story/novella/novel, Roberts (1988) recommends, we should consider the issues of point of view, characterization, plot, setting, and theme. Point of view refers to first-person narrators who may have complete understanding, partial understanding, or no understanding at all; second-person narrators where using the pronoun you is required thus indicating that the speaker has more authority on a character's actions than the character himself/herself; and third-person narrators who tend to use he/she/it to either report actions and speeches, explain the inner workings of the minds of any or all characters, or focus on thoughts and responses of one major character limitedly.

As far as characterization is concerned, there are two main types of characters: round and flat. The flat character is undistinguishable from other persons in a particular group or class. Therefore, a flat character is not individual but representative. The round character, in contrast, stands out totally identifiable within the class, occupation, or circumstances of which he or she is a part. Plot may be analyzed in terms of things such as impulses, goals, ideas, values, issues, and historical perspectives. Setting is the total of references to physical and temporal objects and artifacts, which can be examined in relation to characters, organization of the work, and the atmosphere or mood of the story. Theme refers to a major idea which runs throughout a story and ties things together much like a continuous thread.

A genre of literature, a short story/novella/novel tends to manipulate the sort of language which other genres of literature normally manipulate to impress readers: figurative language. Durant et al. (2000) and Al Alami (2012), amongst a number of specialists, explain that figurative language refers to a kind of literalness. The phrases/words always have a literal meaning; in other words, the meaning which is related to each word as part of the vocabulary of the language. In constructing a non-literal meaning, a sentence should be interpreted as having meaning other than its literal one. The reader has to invent a meaning which is plausible for the sentence, relying on the context in which the word is used. The meaning must be capable of being true; it must fit with the rest of the work to have some relation with what is actually said. The processes of figuring out the literal and non-literal meanings of a text are different from each other. While working out the literal meaning of a text, one decodes the text. On the other hand, deducing the non-literal meaning requires making a guess, as well as making use of appropriate pieces of evidence.

Besides other literary devices, figurative language entails using metaphor and simile. A number of researchers believe that metaphor and simile are an integral part of examining literary language as a requirement to augment communicative competence. Littlemore and Low (2006), for example, emphasize that metaphoric competence has an important role to play in all areas of communicative competence. It can highly contribute to textual competence, grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, illocutionary competence, and strategic competence. Metaphors can be classified according to the types of transference of meaning they employ. A concretive metaphor uses a concrete term to talk about an abstract thing. An animistic metaphor uses a term usually associated with animate things. A humanizing metaphor uses a term which is usually associated with human beings to talk about a non-human thing. In addition to this categorization, metaphors can be divided into extended and mixed types. An extended metaphor is a common literary device referred to in a piece of language where several vehicles based on the same area of thought are used. A mixed metaphor, by contrast, refers to the combination of two or more metaphors the vehicle of which comes from different areas. Commenting on similes' use, a simile requires using words such as *like* and *as* in such a way where stating similarities between two people/things/points/objects is obvious to the reader (Al Alami, 2012).

Taken in sum, the main elements which we need to examine whilst dealing with a short story/novella/novel are: character, setting, point of view, theme, plot, and style. Character can be described as the personages of a text, interrelated in different ways and built up of different traits of personality. This area requires analyzing characters in terms of their function within the structure of the narrative text. Setting-time and place-involves the physical surrounding that is described in the narrative text, within which characters live their lives. Point of view-type of narrator-requires examining from whose point of view the story is told and what effect this has on the reader. Theme-text's prominent topic/issue-necessitates careful examination of the text as a whole whilst considering other areas involved. Plot – a series of actions leading to the climax and resolution - entails a chronological arrangement of events whilst considering other contributing elements such as setting. Style-writer's manipulation of language including choice of diction; grammatical structures; literary devices; as well as overall organization- requires deep analysis of the text in terms of language norms and standards. What is more, literature is representational rather than referential, requiring negotiation of meaning to make sense of language by referring it to other parts of the text in which it occurs. Figurative uses of language are ones in which what is said could be different from what is meant. The relationship between what is said and what is meant cannot be arbitrary. It is differences in the type of relationship between what is said and what is intended that give rise to the different kinds of figures of speech. It is recommended, therefore, that learners read between and behind the lines.

Some of the major questions which EFL instructors can raise to help students read between and behind the lines are: how do literary devices work in the text to contribute to a coherent piece of writing? How is the work an exceptional piece of writing? What are the relationships between various types of symbols and motifs in the text? What are the dominate characteristics of major and minor characters? And what kinds of myths and stories are embedded in the text?

3. Proposed Specifications for a Short Story/Novella/Novel-Based Course

With the slogan *love it live it* in mind, the author advocates designing and implementing short story/novella/novel-based courses for the purposes of honing EFL learners' language skills; augmenting their communicative competence; and developing their critical thinking skills, so that they can be well-prepared for encountering the challenges of the current century. In the author's opinion, what should characterize a short story/novella/novel-based course is its integration of the skills of communicative and literary competences within the same mold. This combination entails incorporating the two receptive skills of listening and reading, and the two productive skills of speaking and writing. As seen by the author amongst other specialists, communicative competence is comprised of four components: grammatical, socio-linguistic, discourse, and strategic. Literary competence, on the other hand, is comprised of the four components of linguistic competence, literary appreciation, cultural awareness, and critical response.

This part of the current paper aims to portray a transparent picture of the author's specifications for a short story/novella/novel-based course. As such, it presents both general aims and content organization. Logically speaking, for any language course to attain its targets, course designers have to follow a number of steps sequentially. These are: analyzing learners' needs, identifying learners' language proficiency levels, selecting target skills for enhancement purposes, stating general goals, highlighting appropriate means of assessment for course evaluation, choosing appropriate teaching input such as novels, selecting a variety of relevant approaches for teaching purposes, and designing different types of instructional activities to go with the teaching input whilst considering general aims.

3.1 Short Story/Novella/Novel-Based Courses: General Goals

Aiming at enhancement of language skills, the general goals may include: *listening* to comprehend the intended message and respond appropriately, *reading* to locate information as well as to ultimately seek inner pleasure and inspiration, *speaking* to express meaning in stretches of discourse fluently, and *writing* to convey meaning both appropriately and accurately.EFL learners should be able to identify the theme, diction, plot, writer's attitude, character's mood, conflict, and genre; recognize symbolism, irony and cohesion devices; differentiate between denotations and connotations used in a text; and shape chronological writing using appropriate cohesion devices. Moreover, EFL learners should be expected to enhance their abilities in reading and writing critically. Accordingly, they will be able to: guess meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from context; distinguish opinions, facts, and reasoned justifications; make judgments based on experience; grasp opinions and attitudes implied; and produce coherent pieces of written discourse.

3.2 Short Story/Novella/Novel-Based Courses: Content Organization

It would be helpful to select short stories/novellas/novels which illustrate various modes of narration as well as a variety of settings; characters and plots. Whatever the text, it should illustrate how writers can with their gift for words; help us to see the world in new exciting perspectives. In addition, it is proposed that each text be accompanied with seven sections. This part lists the seven sections along with the specific aim for each section.

Warm-up: The aim of this section is to arouse learners' motivation. This section may include activities such as brainstorming and advance organizers.

Reading in Action: The aim of this section is to promote foreign language reading skills, thus creating a culture of reading with particular emphasis on critical reading as an integral part. This section can include: as you read find out (speed reading for literal comprehension); keeping track (reading for detailed comprehension); close study (detailed study of story elements – character, plot, setting, style, theme, and narrator); reader's response (responding to literary texts making critical judgments); and Follow up (enrichment activities such as cultural connections and reading games).

Language Practice: The aim of this section is to enrich learners' language knowledge about vocabulary, grammar, and literary devices.

Oral Production: The aim of this section is to enhance listening and speaking skills through creating life-like situations in class, where learners are required to use English mainly for communication purposes.

Writer's Workshop: The aim of this section is to improve writing skills by focusing on a variety of writing purposes and styles. It is worthwhile mentioning that writing is considered as a process consisting of three stages: pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing.

Self-Evaluation: The aim of this section is for EFL learners to reflect on their progress in English so that they can become fully aware of what they need to improve, why, and hopefully, how.

Building up Your Portfolio: The aim of this section is to provide free practice in all four language skills, whilst emphasizing learner's autonomy through project work.

4. Short Stories/Novellas/Novels within EFL Contexts: Points to Consider

This part of the current paper seeks to offer some suggestions and tips for EFL teaching practitioners to consider, so that quality education is ensured in the long-run. For a short story/novella and novel-based course to realize its intended aims, EFL instructors should provide stimulating opportunities for learners to use language with increasing precision in contexts appropriate to the world in which they live (Al Alami, 2013). Providing such opportunities involves students' thinking, feeling, communicating, and initiating. There are then three broad tasks instructors are advised to perform: supporting learners' personal development through language and literature including intellectual; emotional; aesthetic; social and moral development, developing learners' knowledge and skills so that they can realize to the full their ability to understand English and use it accurately, and instilling in learners positive attitudes towards their own language development. In order to perform such tasks, instructors are encouraged to extend learners' understanding of the nature; structures and conventions of language, provide experiences for enhancing learners' capacities to think; feel; communicate; and initiate, take full advantage of teaching cultural tolerance and knowledge about language, and help learners develop confidence and pleasure in their own use of language.

Sufficient comprehension of a short story/novella/novel requires, amongst other factors, adequate examination of the following areas:

Language: Does the language strike readers as unusual in any ways? How and why?

Literal vs. metaphorical: What literal details are given?

Silence: What relevant information is not given? Does this have any effects on readers?

Setting: What use is made of the physical setting?

Characterization: How are characters portrayed?

Speech: Does the narrator use direct speech, indirect speech, or any other methods?

Repetition: Is anything repeated again and again? Does this repetition have any effects on readers?

Narrator: What kind of narrator is used?

Perspective: Through whose eyes is the story told? Does this have any impacts on readers?

EFL learners should be exposed to a variety of purposeful learning experiences. To activate this exposure, it could be helpful to encourage learners to seek and observe interconnections between aspects of the story, draw in students' past experiences through discussion, and provide preparatory background prior to approaching difficult vocabulary and allusion. Furthermore, instructors need to encourage learners to define literary terms as necessary, making sure that everyone has a clear understanding of the story line and of the basic relationships amongst the characters. Equally important is having open-ended discussions of short stories, novellas, and novels as a learning means rather than an end. In addition, shedding light on similarities and differences between the native and non-native cultures as well as highlighting the poetic side of the story are both essential.

Classroom activities, if planned effectively, yield in positive learning outcomes. It is necessary, therefore, that EFL practitioners be aware of what activities to perform, when to perform, why to perform, and how to perform. Whilst focusing on story organization, for instance, one useful activity is compiling a chart of opposite or opposing elements in a story. Another is modifying the ending of the story and discussing the effects alternate endings would have on the story as well as on the reader, or drawing a map of the geographical movement of the story. Considering real-life situations when we read and then respond in writing, activities which simulate these situations should be devised. Keeping a class journal and contributing in writing to such a journal with many writing task-based activities would be useful, provided that each learner contributes to the journal and all contributions are read; discussed; and valued.

As far as enhancing learners' critical thinking skills is concerned, maintaining students' cognitive engagement is essential for the enhancement of critical thinking on the part of learners. Lack of engagement will, for certain, result in negative outcomes. To maintain learners' interest and engagement, it is necessary that EFL practitioners call on students randomly, not just those with raised hands. Allowing students, sufficient time following a higher level question is also important. Withholding judgment, responding to learners' answers in a non-evaluative fashion should be considered as well. Surveying the class, asking how many agree with the writer's view and why, is no less important. Asking learners to unpack their thinking and describe how they arrive at their answers would help in knowing why a particular mistake has been made. Encouraging student questioning, that is to say, allowing students to formulate their own questions, is also expected to help promote students' critical thinking skills.

Relating the discussion to effective instruction in strategic reading, it is necessary to bear in mind the steps it requires. Speaking in general terms, the steps could be: general strategy discussion, teacher modeling, student reading, analysis of strategies used by the teacher or students when thinking aloud, explanation, and discussion of individual strategies on a regular basis. A strategy which can be employed is to request students to analyze the whole overview, set purpose, preview, recall, and question. Then for each paragraph, students preview and recall, and read and recall. Lastly, students need to reorganize the whole, remembering and reviewing. A second strategy could be requesting students to preview the story, make predictions, set a purpose for reading, check, or change predictions while reading, look for answers to comprehension questions, guess meaning of unfamiliar lexical items, and retell the story using one's words.

5. Recommended Approaches at a Glance

What approaches can be employed whilst utilizing novels, novellas, and short stories within EFL contexts? The answer would normally be eclecticism; that is, selecting what could be most relevant in terms of learners' needs, lesson objectives, targeted skills, time allotments, physical surroundings and so on (Al Alami, 2014). In the author's opinion, however, the following approaches can be of use within EFL contexts.

Literary criticism: Criticism within the field of language/literature teaching is like filters through which ideas about culture, art, and society are argued about. Literature ought to be linked to a criticism of life, and literary works should be criticized according to the author and society's moral position.

Stylistics: The linking of the language of linguistics and the analysis of literary texts can be seen as the domain of stylistics.

Attitudinal approach: The learner's motivation plays a major role in honing targeted skills. Learners, therefore, need to develop positive attitudes towards the foreign language.

Semantic approach: Learners should seek to guess the meaning conveyed in a literary text. Because it is literary, the text may say something when it is about something else.

Dialectical approach: Each learner meets the literary text in his/her own way. When teacher and students share their expectations, all will emerge with a broader repertoire for appreciating literature as well as with a more personal and autonomous voice in the target language.

Communicative approach: Learners need to use literary texts as a springboard to communicate in life-like situations within classroom contexts, so that they can ultimately enhance a repertoire of communication skills for genuine communication purposes in real-life situations.

Process writing approach: In process writing, a major aim is to develop the learner's autonomous language. Learners, as such, are expected to promote their written voice using correct language. A novel/novella/short story serves as a model and inspiration for language awareness.

Student centered approach: Stressing autonomous learning, learners should always be the focal center of the teaching-learning process.

Multiple intelligences approach: According to this approach, a teacher should seek to enhance learners' intelligences such as inter-personal, intra-personal, linguistic, logical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, and environmental.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the author has proposed a new approach which can also be employed within EFL contexts: *critical communicative approach (CCA)*. According to CCA, novels; novellas and short stories are valuable in not only broadening a reader's perspective, but also in empowering him/her with an appreciation vision. The knowledge which learners gain through reading a novel/novella/short story serves them by offering a breadth of experiences and ideas, developing critical thinking, and providing skills in communication. Whilst reading a story, students engage in characters' lives and raise enquiries about the worlds authors create. When students make comparisons with their own lives, they embark on a life-long journey of critical thinking that could make their lives rich and rewarding. Novels, novellas and short stories represent various uses of language, both conventional and literary. As learners read a novel/novella/short story, they learn the foreign language in meaningful contexts which require active interaction with the text. Moreover, novels; novellas and short stories are an immensely important area of writing that covers a vast terrain. Studied as a product, they can be considered as models of writing to be emulated. Seen as a resource, they are valuable tools for focusing on language knowledge and developing writing skills.

Obviously, the author's opinion stated above goes in harmony with a number of specialists' studies. McRae (2008), for example, believes that the use of stories in language teaching has an extremely positive effect in that stories encourage students to read for pleasure. Eager to know what will happen next, keeps the reader interested as well as keeps the reader reading. Similarly, Chen (2006) explains that narrative is one of the two modes of our thinking. Whilst communicating with others, regardless of culture and background, one can describe an incident as a way of explaining thoughts or a part of an argument. Literature provides an informal, yet supportive environment for EFL students to normally develop their language skills whilst improving their communication skills. Savvidou (2004) also argues that communicative competence is more than mastery of form and structure. It also involves acquiring the ability to interpret discourse in its social and cultural contexts. Utilizing literature, therefore, can provide a powerful pedagogic tool, ensuring learners' enhancement of foreign language skills.

The CCA incorporates two components: extrinsic and intrinsic. The extrinsic component refers to external factors such as culture, history, and philosophical background, whilst the intrinsic component includes internal factors such as analysis of syntax, lexis, and discourse. The pre-requisites for the effective study of a novel/novella/short story include: willingness to entertain risks rather than avoid them, capacity for sustainable attention, flexibility and openness to diverse cultures and views, tolerance for mistaken responses; paradox and uncertainty, as well as aesthetic appreciation of literary devices. Whilst dealing with a story, a number of analysis processes are proposed. These are: *conceptual analysis* which refers to analyzing major elements of a story, *contrastive analysis* which requires highlighting differences amongst stories considering areas like era; style; and so on, *comparative analysis* which necessitates identifying similarities in stories belonging to the same theme; genre; or era, and *critical analysis* which entails judgments reflecting upon main points/views stated or otherwise implied.

This approach assumes that critical discussions of a literary text which restrict themselves to information gained from the text can never be absolute, and should serve as a step ahead of intrinsic insight. When in class, an instructor has his/her own interpretation which may be different from those of his/her students. When instructors and learners share their interpretations within a well-planned lesson, learners will eventually acquire a broader repertoire for appreciating the literary text and a more autonomous voice in the target language. What is more, it is the context rather than the individual words that should be an area of study, for no utterance can properly be absorbed apart from the context it is originally made within. Although a literary text such as a novel does communicate, the message is sometimes multi-dimensional and in some cases there is no one single interpretation.

The CCA emphasizes the roles of: meta-cognition in relation to comprehension processes, co-operative learning in arousing students' motivation, self-assessment in raising learners' awareness of their capabilities, and learning skills in meeting individual needs. Generally speaking, the processes of dealing with a novel, novella and short story are *general awareness*: gaining an overall idea of the text, *thorough examination*: locating information requiring detailed comprehension, *interpretation*: figuring out the theme of the text, *comparison*: identifying similarities within different texts, *contrast*: locating differences within different texts, *relation*: relating the main points to one's life experiences, *evaluation*: valuing the worth of a text as a highly dignified input, and *creativity*: making novel suggestions and the like.

To end with, the CCA maybe claimed to serve four purposes: enhancement of EFL skills, enrichment of aesthetic appreciation, acquisition of communicative competence, and development of critical thinking. The ultimate outcome is expected to be comprised of pleasure reading, creative writing, effective communication, and critical thinking skills.

6. Novels and Short Stories in EFL/ESL Contexts: Language Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of instructional courses. This part of the paper discusses three points which EFL practitioners should consider to ensure quality assessment. These are: appropriate language assessment strategy, on-going assessment, and self-evaluation.

A well-thought of assessment strategy is of great help to instructors throughout the teaching/learning process. For an assessment strategy to be *functioning* effectively, it should be manageable, assist the teaching/learning process, employ a variety of techniques, reinforce what students can do, and ensure that students are aware of the criteria used to assess their work. An assessment strategy, as such, should consist of five key elements; namely, *planning*: knowing and sharing what is to be learned; *teaching and learning*: assessment as an essential part of effective teaching and learning; *recording:* summarizing success and failure; *reporting*: providing useful feedback to the parties concerned; and *evaluating*: using assessment to evaluate teaching and learning processes as well as the program/course itself. Instructors should be able to judge the effectiveness of their planning, teaching, recording, reporting and evaluating by considering and reconsidering the pace of learning of each learner, the relevance of teaching for each learner, and the appropriateness of resources (Al Alami, 2010).

On-going assessment, on the other hand, is not a series of tests as some may believe. On-going assessment activities occur all the time in the normal work of the class; they do not have to be special extras. The progress of the learners should be monitored constantly. Noting how a learner uses the language in any part of class activity can be made as simple as making a tick on paper exercise as the instructor goes round the class; it does not have to take up extra time. Having on-going notation of learners' performance gives better motivation to the learners to pay more attention, which therefore, will have a formative effect on their learning (formative assessment).Further, the existence of on-going notation of learners helps the instructor to diagnose how effective he/she is at giving all the learners chances to participate. It reduces the risk of weaker or more reticent students being overlooked and of brighter and more willing students being dominant (diagnostic assessment).

Last but not least, assessment does not merely entail practitioners' assessment of their students. Self-assessment should be an integral part of EFL curricula as it serves a number of purposes. Some of these concern self-assessment as being a pre-requisite for self-directed learning, for raising learners' awareness of language, as well as for increasing motivation and goal orientation in terms of learning. Self-assessment, however, should not be excluded to learners. Instructors are also advised to self-evaluate their pedagogical practices on a regular basis to ensure quality performance.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, utilizing novels; novellas and short stories within EFL contexts can be considered of genuine support to learners. Through the utilization of a novel/novella/short story, instructors can launch students on a voyage of discovery. A literary piece offers potential benefits of a high order for EFL learners. Linguistically, a literary piece can help students master both language skills and elements. A sort of artistic writing, a short story/novella/novel serves as a model and inspiration for language awareness, contributing to the development of language skills and elements. Culturally, a literary piece provides exposure to the culture of its speakers within the context of a particular setting and people.

A short story, for instance, is a window to culture which immerses a reader into the world it depicts, surrounding him/her with its language and setting, and involving him/her with its characters, theme, plot, and so on. Aesthetically, a literary piece offers a unique experience that provides perceptive insight into man's existence within the artistic and intellectual bound of a literary framework. As such, a novel/novella/short story can be claimed to be an effective means of communicating the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual concerns of mankind.

Due to its significant role within EFL contexts, therefore, the author proposes designing short story/novella/novel-based courses. To realize aims and attain targets, EFL instructors should firstly seek to cater for learners' individual needs: language, academic, social, affective, and professional. Secondly, the selection process of appropriate novels, novellas, and short stories has to be stressed. Seen from the author's point of view, factors such as language complexity, age group's interests, variety, cultural appropriateness, length, and authenticity, relative contemporary and human values are to be taken into consideration throughout the selection process. Whilst selecting literary pieces for teaching purposes, EFL practitioners need to bear in mind that an impressive literary text should appeal to students' interests, concerns, and age. In so doing, a literary text has the potential to arouse students' motivation and instill in them a love for literature which goes on beyond class and lasts for long. Thirdly, EFL practitioners need to employ what may work most efficiently with a particular type of learners under certain circumstances. Using a variety of purposeful approaches is necessary to meet students' different learning styles and requirements. Fourthly, assessment has to be conducted effectively. Characteristics of effective assessment such as reliability, validity, practicality, and credibility should be stressed.

On a final note, a literary text should be approached as a valuable resource and a fruitful opportunity for an EFL student's personal growth on his/her own. With this recommendation in mind, two key solutions to any single problematic issue within the field of EFL could be *exposure* and *practice*. The more learners are exposed to language input as well as have meaningful practice in language use, the better the outcomes will be. To maximize the effectiveness of exposure and practice, *involvement* has a significant role to contribute with: *cognitive* involvement involving thinking skills, *affective* involvement requiring a spirit of motivation and emotion, and *interactive* involvement necessitating some action of reaction and performance.

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Appendix One: Literary and Language Terms

Appendix One lists the main literary/language concepts which EFL practitioners need to clarify at the outset of a short story/novella/novel-based course.

•**Cause/Effect**

What makes something happen is its cause. What happens is the effect.

•**Character**

The development of a character depends on the importance of the character to the story. In a short story, usually only one or two characters are developed very fully. In a novel, by contrast, more than three characters are usually developed.

•**Character's Presentation: Direct**

The author *tells* the reader exactly what the character is like.

•**Character's Presentation: Indirect**

The author *shows* the reader what the character is like, and the reader should interpret the character from: what the character says, what the character does, what the character thinks, and what other characters say about the character

•**Character's Role: Antagonist**

An antagonist character is the protagonist's opponent, for example in a fight or competition. Antagonists are usually intended to portray wickedness.

•**Character's Role: Protagonist**

A protagonist is the main character in a story who is attempting to solve the major conflict and/or trying to introduce helpful ideas.

•**Character's Type: Dynamic**

A dynamic character undergoes a permanent change in personality or attitude. It is important to evaluate the plausibility (believability) of the change a dynamic character goes through. Two questions should be considered: was the situation or experience that the character went through strong enough to cause him or her to change, and was it within the character's capabilities to undergo the change?

•**Character's Type: Flat**

Only one or two traits are usually revealed. Generally speaking, we see them in only one or two situations in the story. They are not developed. Flat characters are not always unimportant. They can be used as part of the setting, or they can advance the plot in significant ways.

•**Character's Type: Round**

Round characters are complex and many faceted. The reader sees them in variety of situations. Because they are well developed, they are realistic and therefore, itis difficult to describe them in definite terms. When describing the traits of a round character, it is important to back up your understanding with reference to behavior, events and description in the story. Other people may interpret these characters in different, but equally valid ways.

●**Character's Type: Static**

Astatic character does not undergo any basic personality change, or a significant change in attitude in the story. They are essentially the same at the end of the story as they were at the beginning. Flat and stock characters are always static. Round characters may be static or dynamic.

●**Character's Type: Stock (Stereotype)**

These characters have occurred so often in literature that their nature is immediately known. They do not exist in real life, because they are predictable and follow a set pattern in their behavior.

●**Classify/Categorize**

When you classify, you look for ways things are alike.

●**Compare/Contrast**

When you compare, you tell ways things/characters/ideas/aspects are alike. When you contrast, you tell ways things/characters/ideas/aspects and different.

●**Conflict**

Conflict arises from the difficulties the protagonist encounters when trying to achieve his or her goal.

●**Conflict: Person vs. Environment**

The protagonist is against a facet or belief of society, or against any outside force that is not necessarily a person.

●**Conflict: Person vs. Him or Herself**

The protagonist is in conflict with something within him or herself-physical, mental, emotional, moral or spiritual. This type of conflict is also called an internal conflict.

●**Conflict: Person vs. Person**

The protagonist is pitted against one or two other characters.

●**Context Clues**

If you come to a word you do not know, look for clues in the sentence or paragraph. These context clues can help you figure out what the word means.

●**Inferences /Drawing Conclusions**

Authors sometimes give hints in a story instead of telling you everything. When you figure out what the author means, you draw conclusions.

●**Inferences/Predicting Outcomes**

When you predict outcomes, you use clues and what you know to figure out what will happen next.

●**Irony**

Irony is a literary technique by which an author can express a meaning contradictory to, or opposite from, the one literally stated. Something is not as it appears to be. The main types of irony are: *verbal irony* meaning that a speaker knowingly states the opposite to what he or she means, *situational irony* meaning that the opposite happens to what is expected, and *dramatic irony* meaning that a speaker unknowingly says or does something that is the opposite of what he or she would say or do if they were aware of the circumstances.

• **Main Ideas/Details**

The important ideas in a story are called the main ideas. Details tell more about the main ideas.

• **Plot**

Plot is the series of events that take place in a story.

• **Plot: Linear Outline**

Not all stories begin at one point in time, and continue forward through time to a conclusion at a later date. To understand the basis of plot, you need to have a clear idea about linear plot outlines. A linear plot outline consists of the following developments:

Exposition: The exposition provides you with background information about which you must be aware in order to understand or receive full benefit from the story. It is not always revealed at the beginning, though this is common. The exposition may include any or all of the following: a description of the setting, antecedent action which is the actions or events that occur prior to the opening of the story, and atmosphere or mood which is the feeling the story conveys to the reader.

Initial Incident: The initial incident is the incident that first begins the conflict.

Rising Action: The series of events and crisis that lead up to the climax.

Crisis: An individual event within the rising action that creates tension and pushes the conflict toward a resolution at the climax.

Climax: The highest point of interest, at which the reader learns the outcome of the conflict.

Denouement: A wrapping up of "loose ends." The unanswered questions about characters' lives or sub-plots in the story may be answered. A denouement is not always present.

• **Point of View**

Point of view is important because it can set both the tone of the story and amount of information which the author can give about the thoughts and feelings of the characters. It also influences the degree to which you identify with the protagonist.

• **Point of View: First Person**

The narrator is a character in the story. Therefore, the story is written in first person (using *I/my/me/mine* and *we/our/us/ours*). In this case, the author is limited to revealing only the thoughts and feelings of the narrator, and to being only in places the narrator is able to be. If the narrator is the protagonist, strong identification on the part of the reader with the protagonist is more easily achieved.

• **Point of View: Limited Omniscient**

The narrator is able to reveal the thoughts and feelings of only one character (usually the protagonist). This point of view attempts to combine the advantages of both omniscient and first person since narrator is able to be in places this character is not, while there is also a strong identification with the protagonist since we can see only into this character's mind and heart.

• **Point of View: Objective**

The narrator only reveals what is seen and heard, and cannot reveal any character's thoughts or feelings. The narrator has the ability to move from place to place and time to time, but simply records the action much like a camera.

• **Point of View: Omniscient**

The narrator is able to reveal the thoughts and feelings of more than one character. He or she is able to move from place to place, as well as through time, as is needed.

•**Sequence**: The sequence is the order of events in a story. One event happens first then another happens, and so on.

•**Setting**

Setting refers to both the time when and location where a story takes place. The amount of description depends on the importance the setting has to the story. In some cases, the setting may have a great influence on other elements of the story, thus bearing on the characters or their development, on the mood, or on the theme of a story. In other stories, the setting is only important in that it must take place somewhere at some time, but has little influence on the other elements of the story.

•**Summarize**

To summarize means to retell in as a few words as possible. A summary gives only the most important information.

•**Synonyms/Antonyms**

Synonyms are words that have the same or nearly the same meaning. Antonyms are words with opposite meanings.

•**Theme**

Authors use stories to send messages to readers.

Appendix Two: Short Story/Novella/Novel Based Course-Proposed Procedures

As pointed out in Part three, for a short story/novella/novel-based course to function effectively, the course should include *warm-up, reading in action, language practice, oral production, writer's workshop, self-evaluation* and *building up portfolio* sections. The current appendix proposes procedures for instructors to adopt/adapt/modify whilst dealing with a short story/novella/novel in the EFL classroom.

1.   Warm up: A suggested procedure for instructors to consider could be:

-Set the task.
-Elicit an example of the kind of answer you expect.
-Ask students to work in pairs / groups.
-Elicit answers from different students asking them to justify their answers.
-Avoid any indications of whether students' predictions are correct.
-Use this stage to introduce /elicit some key vocabulary when appropriate.

Reading in action: For the teaching of the reading section to be conducted effectively, it is essential that practitioners consider the following sequence: cognitive and affective interaction with the story as a whole, exploration of details, reconstruction of story elements, reflection on literary texts, and aesthetic appreciation of literary texts.

As you read find out: The main task is speed reading to check answers to assigned questions. A suggested procedure for instructors to consider would be:

 - Allow silent reading of any questions.
 - Set a time limit for the reading task.
 - Students read silently during the task.
 - Elicit the correct answers asking students to indicate where they have found them.
 - Write up the answers as you go along.

Keeping track: This part checks whether or not learners have understood the story in detail. A suggested procedure for instructors to consider could be:

-Students do the task either individually or in groups.
-Elicit answers and comments from the class.
-Develop any ideas and answer any questions they have.

Close study: This part is for EFL learners to focus on one story element at a time: character, plot, setting, theme, style and narrator. Instructors may adopt the procedure for *keeping track,* allowing time for more detailed and focused reading.

Reader's response: Instructors need to provide sufficient time for students to relate the story to their own experiences, whilst encouraging them to express their personal opinions freely.

Follow up: This part is meant to enrich what has been dealt with before. Based on a student's language proficiency level, he/she can be presented with enrichment or remedial activities as the case requires.

2. **Language practice:** A suggested procedure for practitioners to consider could be:

-Encourage students to guess the meaning of vocabulary items from contexts, and then to use the new vocabulary items in meaningful sentences of their own.
-Encourage students to derive the grammatical/structural rule from the given context, and then to apply it to new contexts giving meaningful examples.
-Encourage aesthetic sense of literary texts by offering students sufficient chances for thorough reading and analysis of the text in hand.

3. **Oral production:** A suggested procedure for instructors to consider could be:

-Explain the task.
-Revise key language to be used in the discussion.
-Divide learners into groups, appoint a discussion director, and assign roles.
-Give learners a time limit, monitor carefully, and provide adequate feedback.

4. **Writer's workshop.** A suggested procedure for instructors to consider could be:

-Tell the learners whom they are writing for and why.
-Encourage revising and proofreading by using the revising checklists the course provides.
-Guide students to contribute to the classroom journal to be published by each group during class work.
-Read work aloud only sparingly.
-Offer sufficient encouragement and praise.

6. Self-Evaluation: Instructors need to make sure that learners fill in self-evaluation charts on a regular basis.

7. Building up Your Portfolio: This section is intended for autonomous learning purposes. Instructors need to offer support whenever needed.

Appendix Three: Co-Curricular Activities

Appendix Three presents six co-curricular activities which can be devised whilst teaching a short story/novella/novel-based course. Instructors can adopt what best suit(s) their learners.

1. Summarize the story

Learners may be encouraged to use *a Story Pyramid* to write an eight-line summary of a story they have read. The following example delineates what this activity requires.

Line Point

1.	Name of Character
2.	Two words describing one of the main characters
3.	Three words describing the setting
4.	Four words stating the main problem/issue
5.	Five words describing an event at the beginning of the story
6.	Six words describing an event in the middle of the story
7.	Seven words describing one event at the end of the story
8.	Eight words describing the solution to the problem or the end of the story

2. Write riddles about main characters

Having chosen a number of the stories learners have read, they need to write some clues about the main characters' traits, in a *guess who*.

3. Make a class post book

Learners may find writing different types of letters to stories' main characters of fun and interest to them.

4. Compare and contrast using graphic organizers

After reading two different versions of the same story, learners should be encouraged to create a *compare and contrast diagram* to write down both similarities and differences between the two versions.

5. Write acrostic poems

Learners need to select a key word from a story they have discussed, and write it down the left hand side of a blank paper. Learners then need to compose a poem about the key word, where each line begins with a letter of the key word.

5. Develop point of view by thinking like one of the main characters

Instructors need to encourage learners to write a specific event or quotation from a story they have read, and then depict what the character(s) is/are thinking at that time by either writing the thoughts or drawing pictures inside the outline of the head.