**NOVITAS ROYAL**
RESEARCH ON YOUTH AND LANGUAGE

# TEACHING POETRY WITH MULTIMEDIA MATERIALS:
## TENNYSON'S "THE LADY OF SHALLOT"

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**Abstract:** Despite the contention regarding its suitability as foreign language teaching content, literature has begun to regain its popularity as many researchers argue that it can be viable communicative material. The current study consists of three parts. First, it discusses how literature can be used as content in communicative EFL classrooms, with particular emphasis on the use of multimedia materials. Second, it presents a suggested lesson plan for approaching Tennyson's poem *The Lady of Shallot* by making use of the available images and music with the aim of developing the language skills of a group of Turkish prospective EFL teachers while they try to understand the poem. Finally, it presents some of these students' views on the lesson, which they made as contributions to a course blog set up by the course instructor/researcher.

**Keywords**: English literature, English as a foreign language, teaching poetry, The Lady of Shallot, multimedia materials

**Özet:** Edebiyatın yabancı dil öğretimine içerik olarak uygunluğu yıllardır tartışma konusu olmuştur. Son zamanlarda edebi metinlerin, iletişimsel dil öğretiminin çerçevesi içerisinde öğretim materyali olarak etkili olabilecekleri araştırmacılar tarafından savunulmaktadır. Bu çalışma üç bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birincisi, çoklu ortamlı öğretim materyallerine vurgu yaparak edebi metinlerin iletişimsel yabancı dil sınıflarında içerik olarak kullanımını tartışmaktadır. İkincisi, görsel ve işitsel materyal kullanarak aday İngilizce öğretmenlerine yönelik Tennyson'un *The Lady of Shallot* isimli şiirinin öğretimi için örnek bir ders planı sunmaktır. Son olarak, araştırmacı tarafından kurulan bir internet günlüğü (blog) kullanılarak toplanan, öğrencilerin ders hakkındaki düşüncelerini sunmaktır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** İngiliz edebiyatı, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, The Lady of Shallot, çoklu ortamlı materyaller

## Introduction

Literature courses are a common component of tertiary-level English courses worldwide (Alvstad & Castro, 2009; Arıkan, 2005). In the English as a Foreign Language (hereafter, EFL) teacher education programmes in Turkey, literature courses have had an integral part in both higher education reforms made in 1998 and 2006 (YÖK, 2007). Although the role of literature in EFL contexts has been a matter of debate for some time due, it has begun to regain popularity recently as researchers have shown that it is possible to incorporate literary works into the current communicative framework of foreign language teaching (Arıkan, 2005, 2008; Chambers & Gregory, 2006; Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000; Maley, 2001; Duff & Maley, 2007).

Certain works of literature have captured the imaginations of artists from other disciplines. One such work of English literature is Tennyson's narrative poem *The Lady of Shallot*, which inspired Tennyson's contemporaries, the artists of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, and more recently the New Age musician Loreena McKennit in her album, *The Visit,* which was released in 1992. As a result the written word of the poem is brought alive through images

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and music which can capture the imagination of the reader and draw them into the world of the poem (Carratero Gonzales, 2012). In practical terms for the EFL teacher who teaches literature, these different media can form an important source of teaching material when teaching the poem.

The current study has three aims. First, it will discuss the views on using literature as content in communicative EFL classrooms, giving emphasis to multimedia materials. Second, it presents a suggested lesson plan for making use of the available images and music to develop students' language skills while at the same time helping them to make sense of Tennyson's poem, *The Lady of Shallot*. Finally, it presents the opinions about the lesson of a group of Turkish prospective EFL teachers, which they made as contributions to a course blog set up by the course instructor/researcher.

### To include or not to include: the debate about the role of literature in EFL classrooms

The place of literature in EFL contexts has been a matter of contention for some time. The debate can be related to the changes that have taken place over the last century in the view of how languages are learned and the different needs of learners. As Maley (2001) pointed out, a century ago literature was an integral part of any foreign language teaching programme and was given precedence over language use. However, as the need for functionally competent users of English increased, literature began to be regarded as "an irrelevance, at worst, positively harmful" (p. 180).

The perceived problems related to using literature to teach foreign languages can be grouped under two main headings: those related to literature as a subject matter; and those concerning the traditional methodologies of teaching literature. As a subject matter, literature was seen to be rife with drawbacks such as linguistic difficulty, historical, geographical and social remoteness from the learners, difficulty of text length, and the fact that it lacks functional authenticity (Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000; Duff & Maley, 2007). Methodologically, traditional approaches to teaching literature were based on the pedagogy of classical language instruction, which focused on correctness of interpretation and meaning, giving credit to neither student, nor indeed, teacher opinion (Chambers & Gregory, 2006; Arıkan, 2005, 2008). Techniques frequently used in these approaches included rote learning, reading aloud and translation, which are considered out of line with the current communicative approaches to foreign language learning (Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000).

However, as Duff and Maley (2007) pointed out, using literary texts as foreign language teaching material has begun to gain more acceptance recently. Authors supporting the use of literature have stressed the motivating power of literary texts, and the fact that it encourages language acquisition, expands students' language awareness, develops students' interpretative abilities, and educates the whole person (Lazar, 1993). Parkinson & Reid Thomas (2000) added that literary texts are non-trivial, and that they are open to differences in interpretation, providing a basis for opinion gap activities. Duff and Maley (2007) emphasised that literature is a means for transmitting culture and thus provides an opportunity to develop tolerance and understanding about different cultures. They also remarked that studying literature involves affect and emotion, and thus involves students personally and at a deeper level of processing which makes the material more memorable. In an empirical study, Arıkan (2005) reported that Turkish prospective EFL teachers found studying literature beneficial because they were able to develop their language skills, they were introduced and sensitized to different worldviews and ideologies, and that reading literary texts was appealing. In other words, literary works are now viewed as a means of language study, rather than the ultimate goal

(Alvstad & Castro, 2009; Hişmanoğlu, 2006), and can be integrated well into language courses (Savvidou, 2004).

*Placing literature within the communicative language teaching paradigm*
As suggested in the works mentioned above, it is possible to approach the teaching of literary texts within the framework of the communicative language teaching paradigm (hereafter, CLT) currently favoured in the field. To serve as a reminder, CLT derives from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology and educational research with a focus on "methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learner participation in communicative events" (Savignon, 2005, p. 637). Although definitions of the term CLT are diverse, the main features of the approach can be summarised as follows: a focus on all components of communicative competence;  engaging learners in authentic, functional language use for meaningful purposes; classroom tasks which prepare students with the necessary skills for communication in real-world contexts; encouraging learner autonomy; the various roles of the teacher; and finally, students as active participants in the classroom by means of learner-centred learning (Brown, 2007).

There are a number of approaches specific to the teaching of literature (see, e.g. Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000; Saraç, 2003; Timuçin, 2010; Van, 2009). Van (2009) reported that EFL teachers in Vietnam found the Reader-Response and Language-Based approaches most suitable for using in their contexts. The Reader-Response approach emphasises the crucial relationship between reader and text, and importance is attached to the different interpretations that different readers can have of the same text (Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000; Saraç, 2003; Van, 2009). The Language-Based approach is a broad approach with the general claim that integrating literature into the EFL class will help students improve their English knowledge and proficiency. At one end of the continuum, proponents see literary texts as a resource to provide meaningful input and stimulating language activities. At the other end, followers of the language-based approach are more concerned with the literary text itself and aim to provide students with the skills they need to interpret a text through close stylistic analysis. There are also those who argue that language-based activities which students are familiar with can act to bridge the gap between language study and the more unfamiliar literary-based activities (Lazar, 1993). Van (2009) remarked that a language-based approach fits well within the CLT paradigm because of the wide variety of language activities that can be used, such as brainstorming, predicting, rewriting stories, opinion gap activities, collaboration, with the overall aim of improving the four skills.

*Materials in communicative language teaching*
One characteristic of CLT materials is their wide variety. As Tomlinson (2001) pointed out, instructional materials in foreign language teaching are anything which can be used to facilitate the language learning process. Materials do not only have to be linguistic, they can also be visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. In addition to being printed, they can also be presented through live or recorded performance, or on the internet. Tomlinson added that research on foreign language teaching materials was scarce. This is certainly the case for research on the use of different materials in literature classes in Turkey. Given Chambers and Gregory's (2006) remark that modern societies are moving "from a word-and-print to an image-and-icon world" (p.49), it would perhaps be pertinent for teachers to include elements of this image-and-icon world in their literature classes in order to engage their students.

A number of studies which have investigated the use of images and multimedia in literature courses have been carried out in the Turkish EFL teacher preparation context. For example, the results of a study by Arıkan (2008) revealed that students were interested in participating in internet group discussions set up for an English Literature course. In an experimental study, Arıkan (2009) also reported that literature classes supported by visual materials increased students' success in final achievement scores and helped to create a positive classroom atmosphere. More recently, Yeşilbursa (2011) found that students who contributed frequently and promptly to an English Literature course blog tended to outperform those who did so to a lesser degree. The findings of these studies suggest that it would be beneficial for students to include multimedia material and techniques in literature courses.

### Why teach The Lady of Shallot?

Given the problems about teaching literature in EFL contexts discussed in a previous section "Materials in communicative language teaching", at first glance Tennyson's poem seems to have a number of drawbacks as potential teaching material. First, its length (19 stanzas, 171 lines) may put off teachers from considering it. Second, it could be argued that a poem written by a man in Victorian England about an enchanted medieval lady who lived in a tower has little cultural or social relevance to 21st century prospective EFL teachers in Turkey. Moreover, Akyel & Yalçin (1990) warned that Turkish students were generally put off reading poetry in any language after years of analysing Ottoman poetry in Turkish lessons at high school.

However, there are a number of benefits which could work to outweigh the disadvantages. First, it is a narrative poem and thus has a storyline and characters which can be worked on before dealing with the linguistic aspects of the poem. As Chambers and Gregory (2006) noted "there have never been any non-storytelling cultures" (p.17), and so the narrative aspect of the poem could have a universal appeal. Second, the language is not particularly difficult or deviant, and students do not seem to have problems understanding it. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the subject matter is non-trivial. The story itself can be traced back to medieval Italy, and must have inspired Tennyson enough for him to have written the poem. Moreover, over the years it has inspired artists from different disciplines to create related works of art. In fact, collaboration between poetry and painting was widespread in the nineteenth century, and most notably, followers of the Pre-Raphaelite movement frequently made pictorial representations of poems, *The Lady of Shallot* being one of these (see, e.g. Carratero Gonzales, 2012). More recently, the New Age musician Loreena McKennitt (1992) adapted the poem to music, which is perhaps a sign of the enduring appeal of the poem. Fourth, despite the fact that the poem was written almost two centuries ago, there is still an ongoing debate regarding the possible interpretations of the poem (see, e.g. Stockstill, 2012). For the EFL teacher who teaches literature, all these works provide excellent material to build a multimedia, interactive lesson around the poem.

To return to the problems, the length can work out to be an advantage, because there is more time to develop characters and plot, which support the reader. Furthermore, longer texts can be easier to process than shorter texts, which can be more condensed and allusive (Duff & Maley, 2007). As for the lack of social and cultural relevance, Chambers and Gregory (2006) argue that introducing students to unfamiliar concepts, people and lifestyles through literature helps them to understand other cultures and to decentralise their own biographies, circumstances, communities and views. As Çubukçu (2010) pointed out, poetry is an excellent starting point to encourage critical and creative thinking in students.

**The aim of the current study**
The purpose of the current paper is threefold. First, it discusses the role of literature within the CLT paradigm. Second, it presents a lesson plan that is based on the language-based approach to teaching literature, and that is aimed at introducing the story of Tennyson's poem *The Lady of Shallot* through a series of communicative activities before students are involved in more detailed analysis of the poem. Finally, it also aims to present the students' personal responses to the way in which the lesson was conducted, which were expressed in the form of comments to weekly posts on a course blog set up by the course instructor/researcher.

**The Context**
*The ELT programme of universities in Turkey*
The ELT programme offered by the departments of Foreign Language Education is a 4-year long undergraduate programme leading to a BA degree. Admission to the programme requires completion of Turkish secondary education, or a foreign equivalent, and attainment of the required score on the national university entrance examination (for more detail, see Cakiroglu & Cakiroglu, 2003). Graduates from the programme are employed in Ministry of National Education primary and secondary schools, universities or in the private sector.

Similar to all teacher education programmes in Turkey, the ELT programme is determined by the Council of Higher Education (*YÖK* in Turkish). The programme currently in operation was introduced in the autumn semester of the 2006-2007 academic year (see YÖK 2007). It aims to provide a solid foundation in the major theoretical and methodological issues of ELT, in addition to opportunities for practice teaching.

*The English Literature I and II courses*
The course involved in the current study was the English Literature II course which is given in the fourth semester of the ELT programme, which is part of the curriculum in all Turkish faculties of education since the 2006 academic year (YÖK, 2007). Following on from English Literature I in the third semester, English Literature II is a three-credit mandatory course of three contact hours a week that involves a survey of the major literary periods and exemplary works in order to provide a background to the "Literature and Language Teaching I and II" courses in the fifth and sixth semesters of study. English Literature I covers the periods from Anglo-Saxon literature to the English Civil War, and English Literature II starts from the Restoration to the twentieth century. Although YÖK (2007) provides a general description of the course content, the materials and methodology to be used are left to the course instructor.
At the time of the current study, the course instructor was using *Focus on English and American Literature* (Brodey & Malgaretti, 2002). This book provides students with a selection of representative authors and their works of different genres from the origins of English literature to the present day. Example excerpts are accompanied by pre-reading exercises to activate the readers' schemata, and post-reading exercises which include personal-response questions together with text analysis exercises. Hence, the book presents unfamiliar elements of literary analysis within the more familiar framework of teaching reading skills (Lazar, 1993).

*The lesson*
This section will describe the rationale behind the stages of the lesson, a detailed plan of which is provided in the Appendix. In the previous lesson, the students had read about the historical and cultural issues behind Victorian literature. They were also familiar with the life of Alfred Lord Tennyson. The whole of the three-hour lesson was allocated for *The Lady of Shallot* as an example of Victorian poetry. The first two hours were set aside for a number of

language based integrated skills activity with the aim of eliciting the students' existing knowledge of the main themes and context of the poem, focusing on specific content, and discussing students' initial responses to the text, after Savvidou's (2004) suggested outline. In the final hour, the students focused on the text analysis and personal response activities based on the extract of the poem given in the course book (Brodey & Malgaretti, 2002, p. 203-204). This final hour is not discussed in this article.

The first activity is the elicitation (Savvidou, 2004) aiming at pooling together what the students might already know about the general theme of the poem. Taking the medieval castle and the word "Lady" from the title, the instructor shows Picture 1 in Appendix 1 to activate the students' knowledge about medieval romances and the themes of courtly love and Arthurian legends, which they had covered in the English Literature I course. The instructor specifically focuses on Arthur's castle Camelot and his knight Sir Lancelot, both of which have a central role in the poem. At the end of this activity, students should have the basic idea that the plot of the poem centres around the love between a lady and a knight.

The second activity is a speaking activity to be done in groups. Pictures 2-9 in Appendix 1 were chosen specially to depict key points in the plot to help the students discover the story for themselves before they are presented with the original. The instructor needs to remind the students that the lady in all pictures is the same person, although they appear to be very different. This is also an opportunity to remind students that different people can interpret the same language in different ways. As John Ruskin (cited in Tennyson, 2005) said of the Pre-Raphaelite representations of the poem, "they are always another poem, subordinate, but wholly different from the poet's conception, and serve chiefly to show the reader how variously the same verses may affect various minds" (p. 354). This activity also helps to raise the students' awareness about the interconnection between the various artistic disciplines, and how one work of art can inspire artists from different fields to create others. In this activity, students work in groups to look at one picture in detail. The questions written on the back of the pictures are asked in order to elicit the aspects of the picture which are related to the plot. There may be a number of vocabulary items unfamiliar to the students, such as 'weave', 'loom' and 'tapestry'. These words are deliberately not pre-taught at the beginning of the lesson to encourage the students to learn them from their peers or the instructor. At the end of the activity, the students should have examined and discussed their assigned picture in detail. There is an element of surprise in this activity, as the students generally believe the story should be happy. However, the pictures challenge this initial expectation.

The third activity is based on collaboration to make meaning (Van, 2009). The students work in new groups, with one representative for each picture in a group, to sequence the pictures to tell a coherent story. The instructor does not give clues about the plot because the aim is to encourage the students to fill in the gaps between the pictures for themselves. In fact, the instructor can stress at this point that it is quite possible for different people to interpret the same material in different ways according to their background knowledge and expectations, which is an important aspect of learning literature. At the end of the activity, each group should have devised a story to fit the pictures, although it is not expected for all groups to arrive at the same story.

In the next activity, the instructor reads the story of the poem, putting the pictures in the correct order on the board. The students are told to listen for the differences between their own story and the original, and thus there is an information gap and the students have a

purpose for listening. The differences are then discussed as a whole group. In this way, at the end of the first lesson hour, the students are familiar with the plot of the poem.

At the beginning of the second lesson hour, the students are introduced to parts of the text for the first time. The students are given eight cards with the extracts from the poem corresponding to the eight pictures they worked with in the previous hour. The purpose of the activity is to match the extracts with the pictures using linguistic clues from the poem, which acts as a bridge between the familiar and unfamiliar (Lazar, 1993). The poem is treated in a similar way to reading material in an EFL lesson, and the initial focus is on language content rather than literary style or techniques of the kind described by Timuçin (2010).

Activity six provides the students with the opportunity to both read and listen to the poem extensively just to enjoy it, much as they might do in real life. Although giving students the transcripts of listening passages when listening to them for the first time is not usually recommended, the fact that the listening/reading material is a poem makes the activity more authentic. Indeed, people will often read and listen to poetry together when the two media are available (see, e.g. Carratero Gonzales, 2012). Moreover, the listening aspect of the lesson is not the main focus, but a means to facilitate the reading process. This activity has a pivotal role in the lesson because the poem is presented using all the available media - the printed word, pictures, and sound.

Activity seven is an individual activity in which the students write down their initial personal responses to the poem in a basic way. This activity is conducted initially through writing rather than speaking due to the personal nature of the responses. Again, contribution to class discussion is on a voluntary basis because not all students will necessarily have something to say, or their initial reactions may be too personal to share (Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000).

The purpose of the final activity is to raise the students' awareness of some of the different possible interpretations of the poem and to show that the work has a meaning beyond that of a simple fairytale. Stockstill (2012) pointed out that while the most common interpretation of the poem has been that of the isolation of the artist and the sacrifices s/he had to make to carry out his/her art, an alternative interpretation could be that of "a woman and a woman's lot in the world" (p.13). In other words, the poem could be a representation of Victorian view of the role of women in society. These two arguments, and any possible alternatives that the students may have, form an opinion gap that can be the basis of a classroom discussion (Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000) and also encourages them to think critically and creatively (Çubukçu, 2010).

The evaluation stage of the lesson was made through contributions to the course blog, which is described in more detail in the following section. This stage aimed to provide a voluntary platform for the students to share their opinions about the texts that had been covered during class after they had had some time to reflect on the content. It must be stressed at this point that the students were originally asked to share their reactions to the content of the course. However, even though the researcher had not requested so, a number of students also made comments on the materials and activities which had been used during the lesson on *The Lady of Shallot*. These comments provided feedback for the researcher on how the students had received the lesson. The following section will present the emerging patterns of these comments.

**The students' comments on the lesson**
*Data collection and analysis*
The data of this study consist of the comments made by the students to the *Lady of Shallot* large state-run university in the Western Black Sea region of Turkey, the course instructor set up a course blog (available at http://aibuenglit09.blogspot.com) to accompany the material covered in the weekly lessons of the English Literature I and II courses (see Yeşilbursa, 2011 for more details). After each weekly lesson, the researcher made a post on the blog summarizing the main points covered in the lesson, sometimes adding relevant links and extra material that could not be dealt with in the lesson. The students were invited to make comments to the weekly posts in order to express their personal reactions to the content of the literary works that had been studied. They were encouraged to be truthful in their responses, and they were reminded that they did not have to feel anything, nor were they obliged to like the works that were covered (Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000). The course blog helped the students to consolidate the material they had covered during class time, and also gave important insight to the researcher regarding the students' conceptions of and reactions to the texts covered.

In order to gain insight into the students' reactions to the materials and activities that were used in the lesson, the comments to the post on *The Lady of Shallot* were subjected to content analysis. This is a qualitative research technique in which the many words of a text are classified into fewer categories with similar meanings which are defined according to the focus of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher read and re-read the comments in order to identify the themes and patterns that emerged from the data. The findings of the content analysis are provided in the following section.

**Findings**
This section will discuss the findings of the content analysis which was aimed at revealing the students' opinions on the activities and materials used during the lesson on *The Lady of Shallot*. Although 84 students were enrolled on the English Literature II course, 61 students commented on post related to the poem on the course blog. Of this total, 18 students left comments although they had been absent during the lesson. These comments were disregarded, which left 43 comments to be subjected to content analysis.

The reading and rereading of the comments revealed that they could be explained by two broad categories. The first category was divided into 3 sub-categories: 'poem only', in which the students referred to aspects of the poem and its content alone; 'poem/materials', in which they made reference to the materials, namely the song and the pictures, in addition to the poem; and 'poem/materials/activity', in which the students mentioned how the activity had helped them comprehend the poem, in addition to the poem and materials. The second broad 'valence' category referred to whether the students mentioned liking or disliking any aspect of the lesson, or indeed did not mention either liking or disliking it. This category was divided into the 'positive', 'negative' and 'neutral' sub-categories, respectively. Table 1 (see Appendix 2) presents a matrix which gives example comments for each combination of categories and the frequency of occurrence of such comments. The comments have been shortened due to pace constraints. All grammatical and spelling errors are original.

As the findings in Table 1 show, a majority (n=39) of the students made positive comments. Of this total, 25 commented on their enjoyment of the poem, song and/or pictures. The example given in Table 1 shows how one particular student appreciated the many different aspects of the poem, including the narrative, the theme, the artistic representation, and the

possible interpretations. This would suggest that the use of the audio-visual materials with the poem had helped the students to enjoy the poem (Carratero Gonzales, 2012).

The second largest category was the positive comments on the poem, material and activities (n=8). As the example in Table 1 illustrates, students making such comments appreciated both the presentation of the poem using different media, and the use of activities to help them understand the plot of the poem. Three comments in this category also mentioned that the use of the song helped to overcome any potential problem related to the length of the poem. For example: "the song by Loreena McKennitt. It was so impressive and relaxing that although it was a bit long, I wasn't bored". Finally, 6 students mentioned their appreciation of the poem without any mention of materials or activities. The example given in Table 1 demonstrates how one student had been awakened to the different possible interpretations of the poem, which might suggest that the lesson had helped to raise his awareness of critical approaches to poetry (Çubukçu, 2010).

Three students made negative comments. As it can be seen from Table 1, these students gave the content matter of the poem as a reason for disliking it. More specifically, they found the story too ambiguous and they wanted more concrete explanations of who the lady was, why she lived alone in a tower, and why she was cursed. However, despite disliking the story, one student mentioned that she enjoyed the song. Another remarked that the activities had helped him to comprehend the poem, although he had found the story complex and sorrowful. It is expected that some students will have negative reactions to works that are studied, and they can be encouraged to express their reasons (Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000). Finally, perhaps unsurprisingly given the emotional nature of poetry (Saraç, 2003), only one student made a comment without any overt statement of emotional reaction. This comment presented a summary of the plot of the poem.

**Conclusion**
This paper has presented a lesson plan for using multimedia materials in the teaching of a long, narrative poem based on a language-based approach to literature teaching to prospective EFL teachers. The comments that the students posted on the course blog were also presented as feedback on the lesson. To summarise, it was shown that literary works can fit well within the currently popular communicative framework of teaching foreign languages. A majority of the students who contributed to the blog made positive comments regarding the materials, the activity and the poem. The comments would suggest that the song in particular helped to overcome the problem of length. The visual material and the matching exercise helped them to comprehend the plot of the poem. The fact that only three students made negative comments would suggest that the subject matter of the poem is not very far removed from this group of students' interests.

There are a number of limitations to this study. For example, it cannot be claimed that every literary work should be approached in this way, because not all pieces of literature will be suitable. In addition, the responses of the students to the lesson are limited to the comments that were made on the blog. Moreover, this study did not set out to be an experimental study in which the effect of using the materials and activities on students' comprehension and retention of the poem was measured. Thus, no claims can be made about the effectiveness of the current plan over a one that did not utilise the materials and activities. Further studies could be conducted to investigate this matter.

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**Appendix 1**

**Lesson Plan: Teaching Tennyson's The Lady of Shallot with multimedia**
**Materials needed**
1. The following pictures are required with the given questions written on the back where applicable:

**Picture 1.** The title page of an early copy of the poem. Retrieved 16 April 2006 from http://www.lib.udel.edu.udspec/exhibits/recent/pyle.jpg (Used in first activity. No questions on the back).

**Picture 2.** Howard Pyle "The Lady of Shallot Weaving". Retrieved 16 April 2006 from http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/images/pylelsw.htm
(Questions: What is the woman in the picture doing? Why do you think she is doing it? Where do you think she is? Do you think she looks happy with what she is doing?)

**Picture 3.** Sidney Harold Meteyard "The Lady of Shallot". Retrieved 16 April 2006 from http://faculty.stonehill.edu/geverett/rb/metelady.htm
(Questions: What colours are predominant in this picture? What kind of mood do these colours create? Describe the woman's state of mind. What do you think might do after this scene?)

**Picture 4**. Howard Pyle "Lancelot". Retrieved 16 April 2006 from http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/images/PYLELSLA.HTM
(Questions: Describe the man in the picture? What do you think he is? Where could he be coming from? Where could he be going?)

**Picture 5.** William Holman Hunt "Lady of Shallot". Retrieved 16 April 2006 from http://faculty.stonehill.edu/geverett/rb/huntlady.jpg
(Questions: Describe what is happening in the picture. What is the mood of the picture? Why do you think the woman has stood up? What do you think might happen after this scene?)

**Picture 6**. John William Waterhouse "The Lady of Shallot". Retrieved 16 April 2006 from http://faculty.stonehill.edu/geverett/rb/watelady.htm
(Questions: What state of mind do you think the woman is in? Why could she be in the boat? What might have happened before this scene? What might happen after it?)

**Picture 7.** John Atkinson Grimshaw "The Lady of Shallot". Retrieved 16 April 2006 from http://www.maryjones.us/jce/Shallot.html
(Questions: Describe the mood of the picture. How do the colours contribute to it? What is the woman doing in the boat? Who do you think she is? How do you think she got there? Where do you think she is going?)

**Picture 8.** Gustave Doré "The body of Elaine on its way to King Arthur's palace". Retrieved 16 April 2006 from http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/images/gdpalace.htm
(Questions: Who do you think the woman in the boat is? What do you think has happened to her? How do you think it happened? Where do you think the boat is going?)

**Picture 9.** Dante Gabriel Rossetti "The Lady of Shallot". Retrieved 16 April 2006 from http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/list.php?m=a&s=du&aid=3

(Questions: Describe what is happening in the picture? Who do you think the man is? Who do you think the woman lying in the boat is? What do you think might have happened before this scene?)

2. A copy of Loreena McKennit's (1992) album *The Visit*.

3. Cards with eight extracts of the poem (lines 37-45; lines 59-63; lines 69-72; lines 109-117; lines 122-126; lines 131-135; lines 145-153; and lines 163-171).

4. A Powerpoint presentation of the poem as abridged by Loreena McKennitt (1992) with corresponding pictures.

**Lesson objectives**
At the end of this lesson, students will:
1. have grasped the plot of the poem;
2. be familiar with the language of the poem;
3. understand the different interpretations of the poem;
4. have developed their collaborative skills working in groups;
5. developed their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills;
6. appreciated the influence of literary works on artists in other disciplines.

**First hour**
**Activity 1**. (Warm-up, whole class discussion). The students are given the title of the poem and the students are asked to brainstorm the possible content of the poem. If they have trouble, the instructor can remind them of the medieval romances they had seen in the first term in order to elicit key concepts such as courtly love, knights, King Arthur and Camelot. The names of the knights, particularly Sir Lancelot, could be elicited. No words are pre-taught (5 minutes)

**Activity 2**. (Speaking/listening, group work). The instructor explains that the poem had inspired a number of painters and as a result it was possible to find pictures representing parts of the poem. S/he divides the class into nine groups, and gives each group a different picture, which have been carefully chosen to represent different key parts of the plot of the poem (pictures 2-10). The students discuss the answers to the questions written on the back of their pictures. The students are not given any information about the sequence of the pictures. The instructor gives help with unfamiliar words at this stage. (10 minutes).

**Activity 3**. (Speaking/listening, group work). The pictures are stuck on the board for all to see, but not in the correct sequence. New groups are formed so that each group has a student to represent each picture. Each group now works together to come up with a possible story by putting the pictures in order. (15 minutes).

**Activity 4**. (Listening/speaking, whole class) The instructor then tells the story, placing the pictures in the correct order on the board. The students listen to compare their own stories with the one the instructor reads. The instructor leads a class discussion about the students' stories and the original one. (15 minutes).

**Second hour**
**Activity 5.** (Reading, individual work) At this stage, the students are introduced to parts of the text. The students are given the cards with the eight extracts from the poem and they are asked

to match the extracts with the pictures discussed in the previous activities, justifying their answers. They check their answers with their peers before the instructor goes over the answers with the whole class (10 minutes).

**Activity 6.** (Extensive listening/reading, individual work) The students follow a Powerpoint presentation of the poem with related illustrations while listening to Loreena McKennit's (1992) song. (Note, the song does not contain all of the stanzas. Stanzas 3, the first half of 7, all of 10, 11, and 16 are omitted). (15 minutes)

**Activity 7.** (Personal response/individual work, whole class) Working alone, the students express their emotional reactions to the poem after listening to it by completing the following cue: "The poem made me feel...., because......". On a voluntary basis, students can share their responses with the whole class in a discussion about the aspects of the poem which affected them (20 minutes).

**Activity 8.** (Discussion) The instructor remarks that there have been a number of interpretations to the poem, namely "the isolation of the artist" and "the subordination of women in Victorian society". S/he presents the interpretations and gives time to the students to develop their ideas before conducting a class discussion (15 minutes)

**Evaluation.** The students write their reactions to the poem as comments to the instructor's post on the course blog.

## Appendix 2

*Table 1. Example comments according to content/valence and the frequencies of occurrence*

| Valence | Content | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Poem | Poem/materials | Poem/materials/activity |
| Neutral | The Lady of Shallot by Tennyson, the poem has a mysterious theme and in it, it has supernatural incidents, as well..unfortunately, the lady of Shallot has a very bad fate and she dies at the end, she had a life in which she is like a prisoner having nothing, just a tapestry...(*f*=1) | No occurrence. | No occurrence |
| Positive | I would like to know how Lord Tennyson would have written his poems if he had not been restricted to please and praise the Queen... I still admired The Lady of Shallot. Because of the fact that our time is different from the period when the poem was written, I could only focus on the pain she suffers and her emotional conditions. I couldn't have guessed the poem had some interpretation as they were mentioned above. (*f*=6) | This week topic was touching and a bit sorrowful. We witnessed a good harmony of poem and narrative. As for the music I found it relaxing....It is exact talent of an artist to my mind .It is open to different interpretations and it is the pure beauty of literature. Nature, emotions, believes, art..are all included in this masterpiece. I liked it very much.... (*f*=25) | ...you know from my old comments that I like literature when it is mixed with arts such as song as in our poem, movies , etc. and this is one of my favorites...I liked the teacher's teaching style ...there were pictures and we tried to guess what happened then teacher put them in order... so I liked the course and The Lady of Shallot... (*f*=8) |
| Negative | This week was not enjoyable for me, because I did not like it. This poems story was not attractive to me....There were lots of questions which were not answered... (*f*=1) | ...the song is emotional and relaxing..but the story was ambiguous, complicated. The story creates some question in our minds; for instance why Lady of Shallot was alone, what was her sin. It is mysterious, gloomy, pathetic story. (*f*=1) | ...this week's topic is a bit complex... I didn't find it attractive maybe the reason is its being sorrowful. its plot is mysterious and complex. ...images that we looked before reading the poem helped us comprehend the plot. (*f*=1) |