

Wednesday 10th August 2005

**University of Delaware
English Language Institute**

**P4L Program, summer 2005
Moroccan Educators ELT Conference**

Presenter: Mr Kamal Zerhari

Topic: Reading and listening for fun using stories in “Nasreddin Hodja”

Target population: In-service middle and high school teachers

Rationale: The idea of this workshop came to me during the sessions on the teaching of reading and listening when a number of colleagues made use of the book to illustrate the different ways it might be used in class. The book seems to have a big pedagogic potential as it has appealed to almost everybody and will certainly engage our learners as well because of the familiarity of the character and of its cultural content. In addition, the humoristic nature of the book will probably breathe some life in our classrooms which will certainly enhance learner motivation and involvement. It should go without saying that people like to read, tell, and listen to stories, jokes and anecdotes, therefore it seems logical that the book will tap on the learners’ natural propensity to story-telling thus doing without the requirement of creating any extrinsic motivation for a listening or reading lesson. What I propose here is a possible approach of using the book as a supplement to the regular curriculum. The texts can be used on a regular basis to begin a class, to close it, or to break the tempo of the regular class work. I feel it is my duty to remind my colleagues that the approach suggested here is original in the sense that it gives some latitude for the learners to choose not only the reading text but also the way they want to use it. The pedagogical justification for this can be traced in a learner-centered philosophy .There are bound to be some surprises as often is the case when one ventures into un-trodden paths. It is my conviction that it is always worth trying something new. So let us try and see.

Objectives:

- a. to explore participants’ experience of supplementary material,
- b. to familiarize them with an instance of such material,
- c. to have them reflect them on a possible approach of using the the book in their classes,

Procedure:

a. In plenary: The supervisor greets participants and brainstorms the importance of supplementary materials in EFL classes in their context, then shows the book and asks what background information they know about the main character of the book. Teacher will come up with different ideas .

To give teachers a feel of the book the supervisor hands out copies of stories from the book and asks teachers to read through them and think of how this material might be used in class: as reading or listening material and say why.

b. In groups: Groups are formed on the basis of which teachers have opted for which skill development they think the book is to be used. The group who chose to use the book for listening sit together and appoint a reader who picks up a story at random and reads it. The others listen and later ask questions of the reader either to re-read the story, complete a piece of information, or request some vocabulary explanation. Another reader is appointed and the same procedure is followed so that everybody in the group has taken part.

The group who opted for using the material in the book as reading each picks up a text reads it silently and as they finish and feel they are ready, they take turns and tell the story in their own words to the group.

The pedagogical justification for this approach is for the students to exercise some choice over what skill they prefer to use at that particular moment of the day. It is common practice that it is the teacher or the textbook who decide whether a text is to be read or heard. This activity is some sort of role reversal where some initiative is given the learner, particularly as the reading texts are designed for relaxation and humor after an hour of serious work or to start a session when the learners are tired.

c. Panel discussion: Teachers discuss the feasibility of the approach in their context and raise potential issues and limitations of the approach and suggest alternatives.

Materials: Copies from "Nasreddin Hodja"