

Students Reading and Viewing the American Novel in a University EFL/ESL Context: A Picture of Real Life

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Abstract : Research has indicated that ESL/EFL (nonnative students of English) students have difficulty in reading at the university as often times the requirements are long texts in which both cultural and linguistic factors impede their understanding and thus their motivation. This is especially the case in literature courses. It is the author's view that if readings are selected according to the students' interests and linguistic level, related to life situations and coupled with film study they will not only be motivated to read, but they will find reading interesting and exciting. They will view novels, and thus literature, as a picture of life. Students will also widen their vocabulary repertoire and overcome many of their linguistic problems. This study describes the procedure used in a 20th Century American Novel class at one English medium university in Lebanon and explores students' views on the novels assigned and their recommendations. Findings indicate that students significantly like to read novels, contrary to what some faculty claim and view the inclusion of novels as helping them with expanding their vocabulary repertoire and learning about real life which helps them linguistically, pedagogically, and above all personally during their life in and out of the university. Annotated texts, pictures and film will be used through technological aids to show how the class was conducted and how the students' interacted with the novels assigned. Implications for teaching reading in the classroom are made.

Keywords : language, literature, novels, reading, university teaching

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