

Huifang_

ENGL 757

Dr. Sherwood

Lesson plan:

From “highlight” to “Voyant”

I am going to introduce “Voyant Tools” by reading and analyzing Sherman Alexie’s *Flight* with a traditional teaching method – highlight key words. This lesson plan is for a reading class of Chinese first-year college students in English major (in small and medium-sized cities, around 30 students per class). Class time is around one and half hours (there would be a small break in the middle of the class).

Rationale:

- I am inspired by Paul Fyfe’s article *Digital Pedagogy Unplugged* in which Fyfe mentioned Paanek’s analog “text-mining” of *Pride and Prejudice* with high-lighters. This makes me think of Voyant Tools. So I think maybe I can combine both ideas to create a “bridge” that will connect traditional methods and digital methods in English teaching in a Chinese context. As digital teaching methods are not so common yet in English profession in many Chinese college classrooms.
- I am aimed at Chinese first-year college students because 1) I am going to teach that class after graduating from IUP; 2) I think it’s an appropriate level to introduce digital pedagogies.
- Choosing to experiment with Sherman Alexie’s *Flight* is sort of out of randomness. But its readability for speed reading, ready chapters for group discussion, and as one of the best young adult books I’ve ever read make it a not bad choice, I think.

Objectives:

1. Experience how literature can be taught in a “digital” concept without digital tools.
2. Introduce how “Voyant Tools” can be used as a way of reading and analyzing texts.
3. Discuss digital and non-digital teaching and learning effects.

Materials:

“*Flight* chapters” handouts, high-lighters

Procedures:

1. Students are divided into groups of 2 or 3 (2 minutes).

2. Each group quickly reads one chapter of *Flight* within 5-10 minutes, and highlight one or two key words (**the ones repeat for most times or the ones with special fonts, like italics**). Try to highlight all their appearances, one color for one word (5-10 minutes).
3. Ask themselves what those highlighted words imply, then share group interpretations with other students (45 minutes).
4. Instructor briefly showcases how to use Voyant to analyze texts and how this digital tool can be more helpful when students need to read and analyze a large quantity of texts (15 minutes).
5. Discuss digital and non-digital teaching and learning effects (15 minutes).

Example:

Questions to ask after highlighting:

1. Why is *Blood, Sweat & Tears* repeated nine times in the first five pages? What are *Blood, Sweat & Tears* symbolic of?