

CELTA P/T

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Assignment 3: Skills Related Tasks

- 1 -

I decided to use the “Metro” article on *Big Brother* for my skills related task. I think it is an appropriate text for English language learners, because the article was published in “Metro” – a free newspaper which students will immediately recognise (proven that they have lived in London for more than 2 weeks). I also think that the use of an “authentic” text could be hugely appreciated by the students; the ability to read and understand a newspaper they see daily is an enormous confidence booster for them. The article deals with contemporary issue, and the topic is not culturally biased as the concept of *Big Brother* will be known to European students and possibly to other students with a little bit of an interest in the western culture. But, most of all, this article is perfect for a reading activity, as the topic is known to be a very controversial one and would make it a great discussion/ productive skill extension. I would use it with an intermediate/upper intermediate level students (depending on the individual students too, trying not to match the level to the strongest students, but also making sure the students are not bored or unchallenged because I focus too much on the weaker ones).

- 2 -

I think a good starting point for this lesson would be playing a trailer of *The Truman Show* movie and start from there. Many students will be familiar with the movie already and if they are not, the trailer provides a good explanation of the problem in the movie. The idea of being invigilated 24/7 is put across quite bluntly in the trailer alone. The trailer is also a good aid to use, should any

students have problems with a sentence in the text “The Truman Show-style concept”. Students could first discuss with partners whether or not they have seen the movie, how they feel about being filmed, do they know any other movies/books/TV programs where this idea is explored . After eliciting *Big Brother*, ask some additional, personalised questions like “Have you ever watched BB?”, “Would you like to be one of the contestants?”, “Have you ever applied for the show?”. Then I could move to the first reading activity.

- 3 -

Although there are plenty of new vocabulary items in the article, I think students would not have any significant difficulties with grasping the overall meaning of the text. I am not a fan of pre-teaching vocabulary, I agree with Jeremy Harmer here, who claims that "by giving them some or all of those words we deny them [a chance to practice tackling authentic texts]" (Harmer, 203)ⁱ. I think that students get the better grasp of the word if they work themselves towards the meaning, e.g. from the context, and in this article I would only pre-teach key vocabulary, such as *contestants*, *to air sth*, *to screen sth*, *pittance*. I would use pictures/movies and CCQs to convey the meaning. For the remaining vocabulary issues I would count on the students to try and convey the meaning from the context or give them a matching exercise of words and synonyms to be completed in pairs in the pre-reading stage of the lesson.

- 4 -

I would use this article to practise skim reading. It is not long, but consists of enough paragraphs to cater for the teacher to set up skimming activities.

My activities for practising skim reading through this article would be as follows:

- ✓ Match the paragraph with the heading
- ✓ Put the scrambled paragraphs in order.

I would remind/explain to the students that skim reading is a skill that requires quick reading and ability to choose only important information. After instructing activity, give them the handout to match headings with paragraphs and give the students quite conservative time limit (2 minutes), as they need the push to read quickly and finish before the time is up, otherwise the students tend to focus too much on unknown vocabulary instead (Riddell, 102)ⁱⁱ. After that, pair and then group feedback.

Then give out another handout with scrambled paragraphs and give them another 3 minutes to put them in a correct order, followed by pair and group feedback. For this task I prepared two various copies. If the group is energetic, I would just ask the students to number the paragraphs from 1-6. If the group is low on energy and needs some kinaesthetic and personalised activities, I would give them scissors, glue and a blank sheet of paper, so they would have to cut the paragraphs up and glue the correct order.

- 5 -

For the more detailed understanding task, I would use 2 activities, which I think will be suitable.

- ✓ a set of questions with multiple choice answer.
- ✓ a True/False questionnaire about the article, each followed by "why?" so the student can also identify the fragment of the article containing the relevant information.

David Riddell says that answering multiple choice and T/F questions required *scanning* the text for specific informationⁱⁱ but I truly think that this activity could be used as the detailed reading task. Because students would have already skimmed the text by then, additional scanning would supplement the initial task

and together it could form a comprehensive and detailed reading activity. Particularly if the questions were not too easy with an obvious answer.

- 6 -

For the last part of the lesson I would put pictures of Big Brother contestants engaged in various activities in the house (sleeping, cooking, working in the garden, cleaning, dancing etc.) around the classroom. I would also play a short clip of Davina McCall reporting from a Big Brother house. Students will be put in pairs and told that they are news reporters broadcasting from outside the Big Brother house and that their producer gave them 10 minutes to prepare the topic and wants them to mention specific items (new vocabulary from the lesson, put on the board). The students can walk around the classroom and decide what information they would like to include in the broadcast. After ten minutes each pair stands in front of the rest of the classmates and "broadcast" their story on Big Brother.

ⁱ Harmer, J. *The Practice Of English Language Teaching*. 3rd Edition. Longman, 2001.

ⁱⁱ Riddell, D. *Teach Yourself Teaching English as a Foreign/Second Language*. McGraw-Hill, 2003