

## **MARTI THROUGH AN ESP LESSON**

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The Cuban people have always followed Martí's ideas, hence we are more internationalist, more humans, more intransigent, more anti-imperialist each day.

Martí is inside every Cuban, he is in our ideals, in our actions, that is why he is called "The Teacher". But he also has to be the teacher of the coming generations: his teachings, his values, his ideas have to take root in our children and young people who represent the future of the country. When we deepen into his work, we not only enrich our knowledge, but also we reinforce our patriotic and moral convictions, and we feel that we are invincible for the strength of our ideas.

We always talk about Martí, about the importance of studying his literary work so as to know him better and then be better ourselves, but sometimes teachers can't find the appropriate way or the opportunity to approach him in a natural way in class. There is no doubt that it happens because we do not master most of his vast work which in fact covers a great variety of branches of knowledge.

This paper aims at showing how through an ESP lesson it is possible to approach Martí, to know more about his personality and, at the same time, to make use of his writing so learn English and other subjects.

The pedagogical university students who receive English for special purpose (ESP), that is, those who are not majoring in English, had always been worried about the fact that the texts that were used in their classes to develop reading abilities in the foreign language were little motivating and had nothing to do with their needs, hence their lack of interest for this subject.

From the pedagogical point of view it has been proved the importance it has to take into account in the teaching-learning process what is significant to the students, what they really need, so as to achieve satisfactory results. Because of this the English Department of the Pedagogical University "Félix Varela" from Villa Clara has set to the difficult task of designing a system of texts based on the

peculiarities of each specialty to improve the quality of the teaching of English in these groups of students.

In the search for appropriate texts, some of Martí 's writings were revised and three of his chronicles about painting seemed to be useful to develop English reading skills specifically to the third year students of Plastic Arts. It was the year selected because these students had already developed some English reading abilities in the previous course, which would allow them to understand Martí 's work. Besides, the contents of these chronicles were related to knowledge already acquired by them.

In these writings, "The Stebbins Gallery", "The Old Masters of Leavitt's", and "The Nude in the Salon", all published in The Hour, New York, in 1880, Martí described and gave his criteria about relevant painters from different countries. It was amusing to see the knowledge our National Hero had about painting, how he was able to discern every detail in a picture, how he knew the individual characteristics of each painter, and how he was able to assert when a piece of work was an original or a copy.

For this experience, the chronicle selected was "The Nude in the Salon". This text, apart from offering valuable information about famous painters, also talked about the nude, a subject the students had received in the first year of their studies and which provided a great deal of possibilities for the integration of knowledge.

In the lesson that was taught, the English teacher exchanged ideas with the students, making reference to some of the painters who had used the nude in their work of arts. In this exchange the students also talked about the skills they had developed in using this topic in their paintings and then they speculated about the content of the text based on the title of it.

All this was done to activate the students' knowledge about the nude and to help them develop the reading ability of anticipating or predicting content.

It was in the activities that followed, through the tasks assigned by the teacher to develop other reading skills, that the students got in contact with Martí 's

ideas about the topic. This is the moment they really met him in one of his many facets: art critic.

Once the students had worked with the text and had got the information it provided, they were asked to point a sketch of some of the pictures described by Martí in his chronicle.

As independent work, they were assigned two tasks: The improvement of the sketches in the plastic arts workshop, under the supervision of one specialist of this subject, and also the translation of the text into Spanish.

When checking the independent work, the students stated that the lesson had been very useful for them and that they had enjoyed it greatly: they had acquired knowledge and developed abilities not only in their specialty (Plastic Arts) but also in the foreign language (English) because to draw the pictures and to translate the text into Spanish, they had needed to understand the chronicle in English. Besides, they had learned more about Martí, something they really valued and thanked the teachers for.

The above experience is considered a positive one. It has proved once more that Martí 's literary work is a valuable source of knowledge in our lives and that it can always teach us new and important things from which we can nourish our mind and our soul.

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