

Artículo de investigación

General regional studies aspects and facilitation technologies in the study of creations of leading painters and outstanding writers

Estudios generales regionales, aspectos y tecnologías de facilitación en el estudio de creaciones de destacados pintores y destacados escritores

Aspectos gerais de estudos regionais e tecnologias de facilitação no estudo de criações de pintores renomados e escritores destacados

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Abstract

The article deals with landscapes of painter I.I. Shishkin (1832–1898) and XIX century writer, poet and journalist D.I. Stakheev (1840–1918) as part of general regional studies. The research is based on the possibility of correlation of the main and regional educational components in school and college literary regional studies; on the analytical technologies based on comparative contextual analysis of literary works and canvases. Among the most productive methods there is an analysis of cross-cutting subject matters, motives and images. Literary works of D.I. Stakheev and paintings of I.I. Shishkin are viewed as part of their life, work and friendly interaction. Taking into account the fact that these cultural figures lived and worked in Yelabuga we may include historical, biographical, literary and analytical records into the so-called regional component of literary and general cultural education content. However, a special interest for us is in the possibility of combining two planes: local literature and painting of a particular region and “serious” literature and “high” art of all-Russian and even global scale. Among other things the article presents facilitation technology effectively ensuring high level of research projects implementation due to three components: speed, creativity and efficiency. Detailed consideration is given to “World Café” and “Trade Show” models which are recommended for use both for study of the creative workers life and work and for handling information about their work.

Resumen

El artículo trata sobre los paisajes del pintor I.I. Shishkin (1832–1898) y escritor, poeta y periodista del siglo XIX D.I. Stakheev (1840–1918) como parte de estudios regionales generales. La investigación se basa en la posibilidad de correlación de los componentes educativos principales y regionales en los estudios regionales literarios escolares y universitarios; En las tecnologías analíticas basadas en análisis comparativos contextuales de obras literarias y lienzos. Entre los métodos más productivos se encuentra un análisis de temas, motivos e imágenes transversales. Obras literarias de D.I. Stakheev y pinturas de I.I. Los shishkin son vistos como parte de su vida, trabajo e interacción amistosa. Teniendo en cuenta el hecho de que estas figuras culturales vivieron y trabajaron en Yelabuga, podemos incluir registros históricos, biográficos, literarios y analíticos en el llamado componente regional del contenido de la educación literaria y cultural en general. Sin embargo, un interés especial para nosotros radica en la posibilidad de combinar dos planos: la literatura local y la pintura de una región en particular y la literatura "seria" y el arte "alto" de toda escala rusa e incluso global. Entre otras cosas, el artículo presenta tecnología de facilitación que garantiza un alto nivel de implementación de proyectos de investigación debido a tres componentes: velocidad, creatividad y eficiencia. Se da una consideración detallada a los modelos "World Café" y "Trade Show", que se recomiendan tanto para el estudio de la vida y el trabajo de los trabajadores

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Keywords: education; facilitation technology; general regional studies; works of D.I. Stakheev; works of I.I. Shishkin; culture; landscape.

creativos como para el manejo de la información sobre su trabajo.

Palabras claves: educación; tecnología de facilitación; estudios regionales generales; Obras de D.I. Stakheev; Obras de I.I. Shishkin; cultura; paisaje.

Resumo

O artigo trata das paisagens do pintor I.I. Shishkin (1832–1898) e escritor, poeta e jornalista do século XIX D.I. Stakheev (1840-1918) como parte de estudos regionais gerais. A pesquisa é baseada na possibilidade de correlação dos componentes educacionais principais e regionais em estudos regionais literários escolares e universitários; sobre as tecnologias analíticas baseadas em análise comparativa contextual de obras literárias e telas. Entre os métodos mais produtivos, há uma análise de assuntos transversais, motivos e imagens. Trabalhos literários de D.I. Stakheev e pinturas de I.I. Shishkin são vistos como parte de sua vida, trabalho e interação amigável. Levando em conta o fato de que essas figuras culturais viveram e trabalharam em Yelabuga, podemos incluir registros históricos, biográficos, literários e analíticos no chamado componente regional de conteúdo de educação cultural literária e geral. No entanto, um interesse especial para nós é a possibilidade de combinar dois planos: literatura local e pintura de uma região específica e literatura “séria” e arte “alta” de escala totalmente russa e até global. Entre outras coisas, o artigo apresenta tecnologia de facilitação que garante efetivamente alto nível de implementação de projetos de pesquisa devido a três componentes: velocidade, criatividade e eficiência. Consideração detalhada é dada aos modelos “World Café” e “Trade Show”, que são recomendados para uso tanto para o estudo da vida e do trabalho dos trabalhadores criativos quanto para o manuseio de informações sobre seu trabalho.

Palavras-chave: educação; tecnologia de facilitação; estudos regionais gerais; obras de D.I. Stakheev; trabalhos de I.I. Shishkin; cultura; panorama.

Introduction

Regional studies are one of research and education areas in modern schools and colleges. The value of literary regional studies is beyond any doubt: it helps schoolchildren and students to increase and improve knowledge about their homeland and fosters their interest in regional history. Another main focus is given to psychology and pedagogical factor showing the importance of understanding the relationship between life and literature. Study of native land culture improves knowledge of national and world literature and motivates students to handle art masterpieces with care.

Of great value is the knowledge of general area studies and regional literature being part of the main area studies and regional components in literary education. The knowledge of general area studies is viewed as the connection of writers and cultural workers to a particular region and the way that particular places influenced their work. General area studies facts may refer to journeys of a writer or a cultural worker, literary-related sites of Russia, etc. As for knowledge about region it is formed of knowledge about folklore, books about native land, about general cultural life of land being studied, knowledge

about its connection to classics of different periods and times, and about countrymen writers.

Knowledge about region and general area studies help schoolchildren and students of philology departments to develop skills of seeing image of space in a literary text and a canvas, differentiate between real location and narrative space in art works, correlate loci (city, homestead, forest, steppe, road, and etc.) with narrative crucial moments of work, define spatial type of a character, “characters of place”, etc.

Materials and Methods

Capabilities of using new technologies for study of work of cultural workers in literature and painting, literary texts and canvases are formed by correlation of main and regional educational components in school and college area studies through approaches allowing students to rely on their subjective impressions, observations, to see works of different artistic level, compare masterpieces of art and general literature background, to correlate national and regional issues of culture, to learn how to analyze literary images in different social and cultural contexts,

in different interpretations and comparisons, to differentiate between geographic, cultural and artistic space (Prokofieva, 1997).

This work was done with the help of comparative contextual analysis of literary works and canvases. We consider the analysis of cross-cutting subject matters, motives and images to be among most productive methods.

It is not by accident that we suggested using the above mentioned research approaches: they allow to rely on one's subjective impressions and observations.

No less important is to show the way of working with biographical data. For this purpose we suggest using The World Café and Trade-Show (Kaner, 2017; Rabbani et al, 2014) facilitation models allowing to handle and interpret great deal of information and to make a model or a plan of further research activities as regards the work of the author being studied.

As the result of using all the above mentioned methods students acquire skills of differentiating works of different artistic level, comparing masterpieces of art and general literature background. Students master skills of correlating national and regional issues of culture, learn to analyze literary and painting images in different social and cultural contexts and in different interpretations, etc (Ardakani et al, 2015; Lima et al, 2018; Nisawa, 2018).

Theoretical foundation of the research was provided by earlier published materials by Grakhova (2009, 2017), works of N.M. Valeev (1995, 2007), L.Yu. Dudorova (2014), S. Kaner (2017), A.G. Prokofieva (1997), S.G. Chipsanova (2007), J. Brown & D. Isaacs (2007), R. Deresh (2015), etc.

Research Results

- Cultural aspect. This article deals with work of cultural workers of the second half of XIX century: D.I. Stakheev (1840–1918), a writer, poet and journalist, and I.I. Shishkin (1832–1898), a painter, as part of general and regional area studies. Yelabuga, an ancient town on the Kama River, is what they have in common. It is in Yelabuga where they were born and in Yelabuga did their great friendship start. Another spiritual bond of the work of D.I. Stakheev and I.I. Shishkin was the subject matter of nature of their native country, and this will be the subject of our research.

The subject matter of nature has been among key subjects of art and literature for centuries. Nature comes out on top among the fundamentals of being, among apparent values relied upon by human existence. From ancient times to the present social, moral and spiritual aspirations of man have been associated with nature. The elements: earth, air, fire and water rank high in the artistic self-cognition of man.

D.I. Stakheev and I.I. Shishkin were born and raised in Yelabuga surrounded by majestic and serene Russian nature: babbling rivers, crystal lakes, wide open spaces of meadows and fields, and age-old pinewoods. Who knows if it were the "pagan" places in the woods, fairy-like babbling of brooks and trembling of leaves that inspired the development of talent of real artists in the two countrymen.

It was as early as in the second half of XIX century when intact nature was shown in the Russian literature and art as the greatest value of the human world. D.I. Stakheev (literature) and I.I. Shishkin (painting) were not attracted by flamboyance of romantic landscapes. They set up principles of realistic nature representation. In their view it is not just a background and its role is much more significant.

In our opinion the mastership of D.I. Stakheev and I.I. Shishkin lies in the fact that they never represented nature only for its own sake, but always implied man "rising above it".

In his works D.I. Stakheev represents man as having understood his domination of nature and "having risen above it" and started to misuse it, making nature his slave. It turns out that nature "without being reflected with man's presence and labour" is "chaos", and man intruding into it creates chaos.

This is how the writer sees man "rising above" nature: "We keep going and again see the doing of czar of nature: he fells everything he sees; no matter whether it is a young pine-tree having just grown two meters high above ground, or a hundred-year-old tree protecting small bushes from the storm! He fells everything without a second thought. If this czar of nature needs bark lime trees, he would bark a lime tree from the bottom upwards and leave it barkless, and would fell another one with bark as firewood..." (Stakheev, 1992, 357). And the writer ends the description of this sad picture with a bitter remark: "The riches of our czardom are great, and no one is surprised at this barbarous deforestation" (Stakheev, 1992, 358). Showing

how man tragically affects the fate of the “Russian forest” D.I. Stakheev follows the way of N.A. Nekrasov (“Sasha”) and is being followed himself by L. Leonov. We may identify with certainty the “dark pinewoods” in his “Timber merchants” (1868) as a tragic character. He addressed the discord and confrontation between man and nature that had started since the age of romanticism. The main motif is the distressing, painful and tragic break between man and nature.

D. I. Stakheev is sorrowful seeing how “dark pinewoods” are getting thinner “year by year”: “We know that every winter in these dark pinewoods one can hear hundreds of axes and crash of thousands of trees hitting the ground...” (Stakheev, 1992, 356). The czar of nature fells everything he sees, “he couldn’t care less about all kinds of theories... You might deliver thousands of lectures about forestry, and I shall still do whatever I like because I neither trust these lectures nor understand them (Stakheev, 1992, 357). Such approach of man-master to the forest is illustrated with sad short landscape descriptions emphasizing thriftlessness, lack of culture and barbarous attitude of timber merchants to natural resources. “Now the winter is gone, “violet-coloured patterns of icebound rivers” turn into muddy water, the whitewater of brooks and springs is full of melting snow from mountains and valleys. Shallow rivers turn into big rivers and for two spring months their timber is floating down the river... In an infinitely long convoy they are floating to the banks of uninhabited Kama River...” (Stakheev, 1992, 357). Timber merchants fells forest without end, fail to float it in time and the timber rots. And windfall timber also rots: “all around is being felled and floated, and this windfall timber would lie and rot, as it must have been ordered to let it lie there for safekeeping”. Peasants are not allowed to take this timber as “it is state-owned!” (Stakheev, 1992, 357).

When talking to merchant Kuskov the author is surprised at the barbarous deforestation: the rafts going down the rivers “are heavy loaded with huge piles of bark – the bark from lime trees, the life taken away from trees, and so much bark we see, so many trees in the forest are devoted to destruction...” (Stakheev, 1992, 358). And these convoys are followed by new ones carrying bast, bast bags, and bast sponges. All this was barked from lime trees. And for final profit “lime trees would dry up and rot yielding no benefit to man”.

As for Kuskov, he believes his approach being “efficient” and “prayerful”. Answering the author’s remark the merchant says, “A bast bag

costs only seven or eight kopecks while I think I’ll have to spend thirty and even as much as forty kopecks for a canvas bag ...” (Stakheev, 1992, 359). Merchant Kuskov is obsessed with the idea: what income the forest may bring and how he can sell it at a profit (See: 4). This is all he would think of seeing the magnificent view of the pinewood.

One more issue is raised in “Timber merchants” story: why rational approach is important to forestry: “... the God gave us forest not only for felling: rivers do not grow shallow near forest, soil moisture is maintained near forest, air is better near forest, forests enrich soil...” (Stakheev, 1992, 358-359). Where there is forest there is Motherland and prosperity. The image of Motherland and its future is a cross-cutting subject-matter of all Russian literature of XIX century inherited by writers of XX century.

Not only writers of XIX century were distressed by undermining of “nature domination”, but artists as well.

Composition of “Forest felling” (1867), one of early paintings of I.I. Shishkin resembles Stakheev’s story. The foreground showing felled pine-trees, fur-trees, stumps and felled birch stem carelessly thrown away is dramatic not only in its form, but in its meaning as well. The trees in the middle ground attract attention to the depths of the forest. We see the forest frozen motionless waiting for execution of the sentence given by “czar of nature” which is attributing the landscape features of genre painting and giving it credibility (viewed by many critics as naturalism).

I.I. Shishkin is not showing wrong doing of men to nature, and he didn’t plan it in his work. On the contrary, in his works he is trying to reflect the ideas of Russian nature which are most common, typical and dear to consciousness of people. Thus in his painting “Rye” nature is not just an abstract landscape motif. It shows continuous transformative creative activity of man. The landscape is imbued with the spirit of folk’s perception of nature, which is spiritualized by man’s presence and labour.

Starting from the middle of XIX century landscape painting acquired new meaning. Landscape gets realistic and emphasized national features. The objective of artists was to show nature of their native land, dear to a common man and his ideas.

Landscapes in Shishkin’s paintings are filled with fine poetry. Folkloristic character of

imagesisdeeply developed in his canvases. Thus the subject-matter of “Backwoods” is fabulousness, recollection of forest legends he heard as a child; in his work the painter is trying to reflect folk’s ideas of forest and nature; he shows backwoods, depths of the forest full of mysteries and mysticism.

In another painting “Amidst the open valley” (1883) a song motif turns into the motif of the painting. The name of the painting reproduces the first line of a Russian romantic song, similar to folklore which in fact became a folk-song.

The motif of the painting corresponds to its name. Magnificent vast valley coming to the fore is the symbol of vast expanse of the Russian landscape. A country road and a glinting ribbon of the river are disappearing in the distance; the outlines of a small church are hardly visible through the blue haze... The view so familiar to a Russian, known and loved since childhood evokes feelings of some sadness, and at the same time peacefulness and even serenity. In this way a generalized image of native land is created. The artist managed to render song motif of the painting, its epicism, monumentality and melancholy and even the pensive mood of the Russian romantic song.

A single oak-tree rising above the vast valley as a proud bogatyr (brave man) is the center of interest in the painting. Its image is associated with the images of ancient Russian epos folk tales.

The great artist had a deep feeling for truth of the earth and sought to uncover its secrets. And it came out to him and responded to him and nothing escaped the searching look of the artist. His canvases were full of life and radiant with long scale of tones and feelings. Even sounds can be heard in his paintings: murmur of the forest, noise of the wind, voice of the stream, and babble of birds. And following harsh critics saying that a landscape should not be shown as a stand-alone self-contained image I.I. Shishkin managed to show the great power of this subject of pictorial art.

Folklore motives were also an important part of work of D.I. Stakheev. Tranquil, quite provincial Yelabuga town with its regular and quiet from olden times life-style appeared to be breeding grounds for the future writer on matters of everyday life and future painter, formed their perception of reality, love to Motherland, world view and world perception. From childhood the young masters developed feeling for the poetry

of surrounding forests, fields and rivers, listened to legends and folk tales of the region reflecting the consciousness of people. All this couldn’t but leave its mark on their talented works.

- **Methodological aspect.** We shall present methodology of organizing in-class learning activity to study the writer’s and painter’s work based on facilitation technology.

Considering facilitation in terms of area study we may define it as professional organization of group work (pair-work) aimed at students’ clarification and achievement of target goals. Previously we have already described methodology of organizing area study (See: 2). In this article we present a World Café model which can be used both for study of life and work of cultural workers under consideration and for handling information about their work.

Facilitation method ensures high level of research projects implementation using three components: speed, creativity and efficiency. For example, speed is provided by focusing on key subject-matters and issues, stimulating creative effort, getting contribution to the work from students, and work process efficiency. Creativity is provided by interactive work process, use of modern facilitation methods and tools stimulating bright ideas, solutions and implementation plans. Efficiency is provided by involving all brains in the work; students understand that they deserve credit for the results of work done; effective work plans are made (Dudorova, 2014).

Characteristics of using World Café in group work.

Objective: study/discuss a well-structured topic or issue/issues.

Group size: class (20-30 students).

Room: a class-room in which students can be split in groups of 4-5 at separate tables.

We define The World Café as a way of organizing a live conversation to discuss the main topic of the meeting in a friendly atmosphere.

Classroom learning models:

Model 1

1. Divide the main topic into subtopics (according to the number of subgroups).
2. Split the students into groups (if possible, equal in number meeting their interests).

3. Work in groups. The students prepare material on the topic and present it on the blackboard or a flipchart paper sheet (15-30 min).

4. Presentation of work results:

4.1. Recorded group activities results are hanged in the class-room.

4.2. Groups are transformed to present the results (for example, group members count off: ones form a new group and all twos form another group, etc.).

4.3. The groups move around the classroom, shifting from first results to the next ones until they see all presented materials. Presentation is delivered by a group representative who has been involved in developing these results. In this way every demonstration board will have a new presenter from presentation group.

5. Reflection (summing-up). Initial groups reunite to sum up the results of the work done and outline an action plan for the next classes.

Model 2

1. Define topic of discussion (one topic per each roundtable).

2. Students are suggested becoming “a host” of the round table and accepting “guests”. The host of the roundtable is to be a student interested in the topic and ready to work on it over the course of the classes.

3. The students go to the tables they are interested in and start the discussion of topics. “The host” writes down the results on a flipchart paper sheet. Duration: 15 min. After finishing the discussion participants move to another table.

4. At another table “the host” quickly shares the results of the previous conversation with the new guests. Based on these materials the new group discusses the declared topic and “the host” writes down the results.

5. Reflection (summing-up). Every roundtable “host” sums up the discussion results of all participants.

In our opinion, the most productive is a learning activity organized in the atmosphere of group discussion, “in the situation of debate and collaborative research when students discuss different problem solutions” (Chipsanova, 2007). The main principle of the teaching is dialog-based teacher – student and student – student interaction. Gradually “we see internalization of these group actions and turning them into individual problem solving” (Chipsanova, 2007). Such activities bring about quality enhancement of teaching students through organizing group work. We suggest organizing such work as a Trade Show (Kaner, 2017).

A Trade Show is a convenient way of presenting information in a group. Recommended: for continuous presentation of at least three people, provided that each presentation is at least 5-7 min long.

In traditional college classes several speakers deliver their presentation one by one in front of the class. Trade Show suggests that there should be simultaneous presentations in front of subgroups.

Participants watch the presentation, ask questions to the presenter, make notes or fulfill a task set before the presentation. Then they move to another “station” with another speaker. The speakers give their presentations to another subgroup.

Such way of organizing activities has several advantages:

- in a small subgroup every participant is involved and takes an active part in work which makes the discussion more significant;
- moving from one “station” to another keeps the students pro-active, relieves the feeling of being overloaded with presentations.

Based on the above, we give an algorithm of organizing a trade-show as part of classroom learning.

1. Decide upon places for speakers to make their “stations” for presentation in advance. Every speaker is to have his own “station”.
2. The speakers shall take their places at a set time. The groups shall start their “moving”. If possible, there should be the same number of participants in every subgroup.
3. Agree upon time for presentation and following questions and answers in advance.
4. At the end of the time tell everybody to leave the “station” and move to the next one (decide upon the way of moving, e.g. clockwise, in advance).
5. Ask the speakers to show their presentations again for the new audience.
6. Repeat the steps as long as necessary so that all students in the class could see all presentations.
7. Gather all students of the class for general discussion.

Trade-Show, as a facilitation method, is a way of organizing self-regulating interaction, providing every participant (student) with:

- control over the course of interaction;
- chance of influencing the course of discussion and being heard;

- full authorship of the obtained results.

Conclusion

Summarizing the above we would like to point out that works of D.I. Stakheev and I.I. Shishkin should be viewed as part of their life, work, creative and friendly interaction. Due to stay of the cultural workers in Yelabuga we may include historical and biographical, literary and analytical materials into the so-called regional component of literary and general cultural education content. Of special interest for us is the possibility of combining two planes: local literature and painting of a particular region and high art of writing and painting of all-Russian and even global scale (Yelabuga – the Kama region – Russia – the World).

The presented facilitation technology helps to organize and hold classes at school and college for different learning levels. The detailed methodology of organizing learning activity based on The World Café facilitation model allows handling and interpreting great deal of information and make a model or a plan of further research activities as regards the work of writers and painters being studied.

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